

ТОМАС КАРЛЕЙЛЬ

HISTORY OF FRIEDRICH
II OF PRUSSIA —
VOLUME 10

Томас Карлейль
History of Friedrich II
of Prussia — Volume 10

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=34838150
History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 10:*

Содержание

BOOK X. — AT REINSBERG. - 1736-1740	4
Chapter I. — MANSION OF REINSBERG OF MONSIEUR JORDAN AND THE LITERARY SET	4 18
Chapter II. — OF VOLTAIRE AND THE LITERARY CORRESPONDENCES	26
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	46

Thomas Carlyle

History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 10

BOOK X. — AT REINSBERG. - 1736-1740

Chapter I. — MANSION OF REINSBERG

On the Crown-Prince's Marriage, three years ago, when the AMT or Government-District RUPPIN, with its incomings, was assigned to him for revenue, we heard withal of a residence getting ready. Hint had fallen from the Prince, that Reinsberg, an old Country-seat, standing with its Domain round it in that little Territory of Ruppın, and probably purchasable as was understood, might be pleasant, were it once his and well put in repair. Which hint the kind paternal Majesty instantly proceeded to act upon. He straightway gave orders for the purchase of Reinsberg; concluded said purchase, on fair terms, after some months' bargaining; [23d October, 1733, order given,—16th

March, 1734, purchase completed (Preuss, i. 75).]—and set his best Architect, one Kemeter, to work, in concert with the Crown-Prince, to new-build and enlarge the decayed Schloss of Reinsberg into such a Mansion as the young Royal Highness and his Wife would like.

Kemeter has been busy, all this while; a solid, elegant, yet frugal builder: and now the main body of the Mansion is complete, or nearly so, the wings and adjuncts going steadily forward; Mansion so far ready that the Royal Highnesses can take up their abode in it. Which they do, this Autumn, 1736; and fairly commence Joint Housekeeping, in a permanent manner. Hitherto it has been intermittent only: hitherto the Crown-Princess has resided in their Berlin Mansion, or in her own Country-house at Schonhausen; Husband not habitually with her, except when on leave of absence from Ruppin, in Carnival time or for shorter periods. At Ruppin his life has been rather that of a bachelor, or husband abroad on business; up to this time. But now at Reinsberg they do kindle the sacred hearth together; "6th August, 1736," the date of that important event. They have got their Court about them, dames and cavaliers more than we expected; they have arranged the furnitures of their existence here on fit scale, and set up their Lares and Penates on a thrifty footing. Majesty and Queen come out on a visit to them next month; [4th September, 1736 (Ib.).]—raising the sacred hearth into its first considerable blaze, and crowning the operation in a human manner.

And so there has a new epoch arisen for the Crown-Prince and his Consort. A new, and much-improved one. It lasted into the fourth year; rather improving all the way: and only Kingship, which, if a higher sphere, was a far less pleasant one, put an end to it. Friedrich's happiest time was this at Reinsberg, the little Four Years of Hope, Composure, realizable Idealism: an actual snatch of something like the Idyllic, appointed him in a life-pilgrimage consisting otherwise of realisms oftenest contradictory enough, and sometimes of very grim complexion. He is master of his work, he is adjusted to the practical conditions set him; conditions once complied with, daily work done, he lives to the Muses, to the spiritual improvements, to the social enjoyments; and has, though not without flaws of ill-weather,—from the Tobacco-Parliament perhaps rather less than formerly, and from the Finance-quarter perhaps rather more,—a sunny time. His innocent insipidity of a Wife, too, appears to have been happy. She had the charm of youth, of good looks; a wholesome perfect loyalty of character withal; and did not "take to pouting," as was once apprehended of her, but pleasantly gave and received of what was going. This poor Crown-Princess, afterwards Queen, has been heard, in her old age, reverting, in a touching transient way, to the glad days she had at Reinsberg. Complaint openly was never heard from her, in any kind of days; but these doubtless were the best of her life.

Reinsberg, we said, is in the AMT Ruppin; naturally under the Crown-Prince's government at present: the little Town or

Village of Reinsberg stands about, ten miles north of the Town Ruppin;—not quite a third-part as big as Ruppin is in our time, and much more pleasantly situated. The country about is of comfortable, not unpicturesque character; to be distinguished almost as beautiful, in that region of sand and moor. Lakes abound in it; tilled fields; heights called "hills;" and wood of fair growth,—one reads of "beech-avenues" of "high linden-avenues:"—a country rather of the ornamented sort, before the Prince with his improvements settled there. Many lakes and lakelets in it, as usual hereabouts; the loitering waters straggle, all over that region, into meshes of lakes. Reinsberg itself, Village and Schloss, stands on the edge of a pleasant Lake, last of a mesh of such: the SUMMARY, or outfall, of which, already here a good strong brook or stream, is called the RHEIN, Rhyn or Rein; and gives name to the little place. We heard of the Rein at Ruppin: it is there counted as a kind of river; still more, twenty miles farther down, where it falls into the Havel, on its way to the Elbe. The waters, I think, are drab-colored, not peat-brown: and here, at the source, or outfall from that mesh of lakes, where Reinsberg is, the country seems to be about the best;—sufficient, in picturesqueness and otherwise, to satisfy a reasonable man.

The little Town is very old; but, till the Crown-Prince settled there, had no peculiar vitality in it. I think there are now some potteries, glass-manufactories: Friedrich Wilhelm, just while the Crown-Prince was removing thither, settled a first Glass-work there; which took good root, and rose to eminence in the crystal,

Bohemian-crystal, white-glass, cut-glass, and other commoner lines, in the Crown-Prince's time. [*Bescheibung des Lutschlosses &c. zu Reinsberg* (Berlin, 1788); Author, a "Lieutenant Hennert," thoroughly acquainted with his subject.]

Reinsberg stands on the east or southeast side of its pretty Lake: Lake is called "the GRINERICK SEE" (as all those remote Lakes have their names); Mansion is between the Town and Lake. A Mansion fronting, we may say, four ways; for it is of quadrangular form, with a wet moat from the Lake begirdling it, and has a spacious court for interior: but the principal entrance is from the Town side; for the rest, the Building is ashlar on all sides, front and rear. Stands there, handsomely abutting on the Lake with two Towers, a Tower at each angle, which it has on that lakeward side; and looks, over Reinsberg, and its steeple rising amid friendly umbrage which hides the house-tops, towards the rising sun. Townward there is room for a spacious esplanade; and then for the stables, outbuildings, well masked; which still farther shut off the Town. To this day, Reinsberg stands with the air of a solid respectable Edifice; still massive, rain-tight, though long since deserted by the Princesses,—by Friedrich nearly sixscore years ago, and nearly threescore by Prince Henri, Brother of Friedrich's, who afterwards had it. Last accounts I got were, of talk there had risen of planting an extensive NORMAL-SCHOOL there; which promising plan had been laid aside again for the time.

The old Schloss, residence of the Bredows and other feudal

people for a long while, had good solid masonry in it, and around it orchards, potherb gardens; which Friedrich Wilhelm's Architects took good care to extend and improve, not to throw away: the result of their art is what we see, a beautiful Country-House, what might be called a Country-Palace with all its adjuncts;—and at a rate of expense which would fill English readers, of this time, with amazement. Much is admirable to us as we study Reinsberg, what it had been, what it became, and how it was made; but nothing more so than the small modicum of money it cost. To our wondering thought, it seems as if the shilling, in those parts, were equal to the guinea in these; and the reason, if we ask it, is by no means flattering altogether. "Change in the value of money?" Alas, reader, no; that is not above the fourth part of the phenomenon. Three-fourths of the phenomenon are change in the methods of administering money, —difference between managing it with wisdom and veracity on both sides, and managing it with unwisdom and mendacity on both sides. Which is very great indeed; and infinitely sadder than any one, in these times, will believe!—But we cannot dwell on this consideration. Let the reader take it with him, as a constant accompaniment in whatever work of Friedrich Wilhelm's or of Friedrich his Son's, he now or at any other time may be contemplating. Impious waste, which means disorder and dishonesty, and loss of much other than money to all, parties, —disgusting aspect of human creatures, master and servant, working together as if they were not human,—will be spared him

in those foreign departments; and in an English heart thoughts will arise, perhaps, of a wholesome tendency, though very sad, as times are.

It would but weary the reader to describe this Crown-Prince Mansion; which, by desperate study of our abstruse materials, it is possible to do with auctioneer minuteness. There are engraved VIEWS of Reinsberg and its Environs; which used to lie conspicuous in the portfolios of collectors,—which I have not seen. [See Hennert, just cited, for the titles of them.] Of the House itself, engraved Frontages (FACADES), Ground-plans, are more accessible; and along with them, descriptions which are little descriptive,—wearisomely detailed, and as it were dark by excess of light (auctioneer light) thrown on them. The reader sees, in general, a fine symmetrical Block of Buildings, standing in rectangular shape, in the above locality;—about two hundred English feet, each, the two longer sides measure, the Townward and the Lakeward, on their outer front: about a hundred and thirty, each, the two shorter; or a hundred and fifty, taking in their Towers just spoken of. The fourth or Lakeward side, however, which is one of the longer pair, consists mainly of "Colonnade;" spacious Colonnade "with vases and statues;" catching up the outskirts of said Towers, and handsomely uniting everything.

Beyond doubt, a dignified, substantial pile of stone-work; all of good proportions. Architecture everywhere of cheerfully serious, solidly graceful character; all of sterling ashlar; the due

RISALITES (projecting spaces) with their attics and statues atop, the due architraves, cornices and corbels,—in short the due opulence of ornament being introduced, and only the due. Genuine sculptors, genuine painters, artists have been busy; and in fact all the suitable fine arts, and all the necessary solid ones, have worked together, with a noticeable fidelity, comfortable to the very beholder to this day. General height is about forty feet; two stories of ample proportions: the Towers overlooking them are sixty feet in height. Extent of outer frontage, if you go all round, and omit the Colonnade, will be five hundred feet and more: this, with the rearward face, is a thousand feet of room frontage:—fancy the extent of lodging space. For "all the kitchens and appurtenances are underground;" the "left front" (which is a new part of the Edifice) rising comfortably over these. Windows I did not count; but they must go high up into the Hundreds. No end to lodging space. Way in a detached side-edifice subsequently built, called Cavalier House, I read of there being, for one item, "fifty lodging rooms," and for another "a theatre." And if an English Duke of Trumps were to look at the bills for all that, his astonishment would be extreme, and perhaps in a degree painful and salutary to him.

In one of these Towers the Crown-Prince has his Library: a beautiful apartment; nothing wanting to it that the arts could furnish, "ceiling done by Pesne" with allegorical geniuses and what not,—looks out on mere sky, mere earth and water in an ornamental state: silent as in Elysium. It is there we are to fancy

the Correspondence written, the Poetries and literary industries going on. There, or stepping down for a turn in the open air, or sauntering meditatively under the Colonnade with its statues and vases (where weather is no object), one commands the Lake, with its little tufted Islands, "Remus Island" much famed among them, and "high beech-woods" on the farther side. The Lake is very pretty, all say; lying between you and the sunset;—with perhaps some other lakelet, or solitary pool in the wilderness, many miles away, "revealing itself as a cup of molten gold," at that interesting moment. What the Book-Collection was, in the interior, I know not except by mere guess.

The Crown-Princess's Apartment, too, which remained unaltered at the last accounts had of it, [From Hennert, namely, in 1778.] is very fine;—take the anteroom for specimen: "This fine room," some twenty feet height of ceiling, "has six windows; three of them, in the main front, looking towards the Town, the other three, towards the Interior Court. The light from these windows is heightened by mirrors covering all the piers (SCHAFTE, interspaces of the walls), to an uncommonly splendid pitch; and shows the painting of the ceiling, which again is by the famous Pesne, to much perfection. The Artist himself, too, has managed to lay on his colors there so softly, and with such delicate skill, that the light-beams seem to prolong themselves in the painted clouds and air, as if it were the real sky you had overhead." There in that cloud-region "Mars is being disarmed by the Love-goddesses, and they are sporting with his

weapons. He stretches out his arm towards the Goddess, who looks upon him with fond glances. Cupids are spreading out a draping." That is Pesne's luxurious performance in the ceiling.—"Weapon-festoons, in basso-relievo, gilt, adorn the walls of this room; and two Pictures, also by Pesne, which represent, in life size, the late King and Queen [our good friends Friedrich Wilhelm and his Sophie], are worthy of attention. Over each of the doors, you find in low-relief the Profiles of Hannibal, Pompey, Scipio, Caesar, introduced as Medallions."

All this is very fine; but all this is little to another ceiling, in some big Saloon elsewhere, Music-saloon, I think: Black Night, making off, with all her sickly dews, at one end of the ceiling; and at the other end, the Steeds of Phoebus bursting forth, and the glittering shafts of Day,—with Cupids, Love-goddesses, War-gods, not omitting Bacchus and his vines, all getting beautifully awake in consequence. A very fine room indeed;—used as a Music-saloon, or I know not what,—and the ceiling of it almost an ideal, say the connoisseurs.

Endless gardens, pavilions, grottos, hermitages, orangeries, artificial ruins, parks and pleasancess surround this favored spot and its Schloss; nothing wanting in it that a Prince's establishment needs,—except indeed it be hounds, for which this Prince never had the least demand.

Except the old Ruppin duties, which imply continual journeyings thither, distance only a morning's ride; except these, and occasional commissions from Papa, Friedrich is left

master of his time and pursuits in this new Mansion. There are visits to Potsdam, periodical appearances at Berlin; some Correspondence to keep the Tobacco-Parliament in tune. But Friedrich's taste is for the Literatures, Philosophies: a—young Prince bent seriously to cultivate his mind; to attain some clear knowledge of this world, so all-important to him. And he does seriously read, study and reflect a good deal; his main recreations, seemingly, are Music, and the converse of well-informed, friendly men. In Music we find him particularly rich. Daily, at a fixed hour of the afternoon, there is concert held; the reader has seen in what kind of room: and if the Artists entertained here for that function were enumerated (high names, not yet forgotten in the Musical world), it would still more astonish readers. I count them to the number of twenty or nineteen; and mention only that "the two Brothers Graun" and "the two Brothers Benda" were of the lot; suppressing four other Fiddlers of eminence, and "a Pianist who is known to everybody." [Hennert, p. 21.] The Prince has a fine sensibility to Music: does himself, with thrilling adagios on the flute, join in these harmonious acts; and, no doubt, if rightly vigilant against the Nonsenses, gets profit, now and henceforth, from this part of his resources.

He has visits, calls to make, on distinguished persons within reach; he has much Correspondence, of a Literary or Social nature. For instance, there is Suhm the Saxon Envoy translating *Wolf's Philosophy* into French for him; sending it in fascicles;

with endless Letters to and from, upon it,—which were then highly interesting, but are now dead to every reader. The Crown-Prince has got a Post-Office established at Reinsberg; leathern functionary of some sort comes lumbering round, southward, "from the Mecklenburg quarter twice a week, and goes by Fehrbellin," for the benefit of his Correspondences. Of his calls in the neighborhood, we mean to show the reader one sample, before long; and only one.

There are Lists given us of the Prince's "Court" at Reinsberg; and one reads, and again reads, the dreariest unmemorable accounts of them; but cannot, with all one's industry, attain any definite understanding of what they were employed in, day after day, at Reinsberg:—still more are their salaries and maintenance a mystery to us, in that frugal establishment. There is Wolden for Hofmarschall, our old Custrin friend; there is Colonel Senning, old Marlborough Colonel with the wooden leg, who taught Friedrich his drillings and artillery-practices in boyhood, a fine sagacious old gentleman this latter. There is a M. Jordan, Ex-Preacher, an ingenious Prussian-Frenchman, still young, who acts as "Reader and Librarian;" of whom we shall hear a good deal more. "Intendant" is Captain (Ex-Captain) Knobelsdorf; a very sensible accomplished man, whom we saw once at Baireuth; who has been to Italy since, and is now returned with beautiful talents for Architecture: it is he that now undertakes the completing of Reinsberg, [Hennert, p. 29.] which he will skilfully accomplish in the course of the next three years.

Twenty Musicians on wind or string; Painters, Antoine Pesne but one of them; Sculptors, Glume and others of eminence; and Hof-Cavaliers, to we know not what extent:—how was such a Court kept up, in harmonious free dignity, and no halt in its finances, or mean pinch of any kind visible? The Prince did get in debt, but not deep, and it was mainly for the tall recruits he had to purchase. His money-accounts are by no means fully known to me: but I should question if his expenditure (such is my guess) ever reached 3,000 pounds a year; and am obliged to reflect more and more, as the ancient Cato did, what an admirable revenue frugality is!

Many of the Cavaliers, I find, for one thing, were of the Regiment Goltz; that was one evident economy. "Rittmeister van Chasot," as the Books call him: readers saw that Chasot flying to Prince Eugene, and know him since the Siege of Philipsburg. He is not yet Rittmeister, or Captain of Horse, as he became; but is of the Ruppin Garrison; Hof-Cavalier; "attended Friedrich on his late Prussian journey;" and is much a favorite, when he can be spared from Ruppin. Captain Wylich, afterwards a General of mark; the Lieutenant Buddenbrock who did the parson-charivari at Ruppin, but is now reformed from those practices: all these are of Goltz. Colonel Keyserling, not of Goltz, nor in active military duty here, is a friend of very old standing; was officially named as "Companion" to the Prince, a long while back; and got into trouble on his account in the disastrous Ante-Custrin or Flight Epoch: one of the Prince's first acts, when he got pardoned after

Custrin, was to beg for the pardon of this Keyserling; and now he has him here, and is very fond of him. A Courlander, of good family, this Keyserling; of good gifts too,—which, it was once thought, would be practically sublime; for he carried off all manner of college prizes, and was the Admirable-Crichton of Konigsberg University and the Graduates there. But in the end they proved to be gifts of the vocal sort rather: and have led only to what we see. A man, I should guess, rather of buoyant vivacity than of depth or strength in intellect or otherwise. Excessively buoyant, ingenious; full of wit, kindly exuberance; a loyal-hearted, gay-tempered man, and much a favorite in society as well as with the Prince. If we were to dwell on Reinsberg, Keyserling would come prominently forward.

Major van Stille, ultimately Major-General von Stille, I should also mention: near twenty years older than the Prince; a wise thoughtful soldier (went, by permission, to the Siege of Dantzic lately, to improve himself); a man capable of rugged service, when the time comes. His military writings were once in considerable esteem with professional men; and still impress a lay reader with favorable notions towards Stille, as a man of real worth and sense. [*Campagnes du Roi de Prusse*;—a posthumous Book; ANTERIOR to the Seven-Years War.]

OF MONSIEUR JORDAN AND THE LITERARY SET

There is, of course, a Chaplain in the Establishment: a Reverend "M. Deschamps;" who preaches to them all,—in French no doubt. Friedrich never hears Deschamps: Friedrich is always over at Ruppin on Sundays; and there "himself reads a sermon to the Garrison," as part of the day's duties. Reads finely, in a melodious feeling manner, says Formey, who can judge: "even in his old days, he would incidentally," when some Emeritus Parson, like Formey, chanced to be with him, "roll out choice passages from Bossuet, from Massillon," in a voice and with a look, which would have been perfection in the pulpit, thinks Formey. [*Souvenirs d'un Citoyen* (2de edition, Paris, 1797), i. 37.]

M. Jordan, though he was called "LECTEUR (Reader)," did not read to him, I can perceive; but took charge of the Books; busied himself honestly to be useful in all manner of literary or quasi-literary ways. He was, as his name indicates, from the French-refugee department; a recent acquisition, much valued at Reinsberg. As he makes a figure afterwards, we had better mark him a little.

Jordan's parents were wealthy religious persons, in trade at Berlin; this Jordan (Charles Etienne, age now thirty-six) was their eldest son. It seems they had destined him from birth,

consulting their own pious feelings merely, to be a Preacher of the Gospel; the other sons, all of them reckoned clever too, were brought up to secular employments. And preach he, this poor Charles Etienne, accordingly did; what best Gospel he had; in an honest manner, all say,—though never with other than a kind of reluctance on the part of Nature, forced out of her course. He had wedded, been clergyman in two successive country places; when his wife died, leaving him one little daughter, and a heart much overset by that event. Friends, wealthy Brothers probably, had pushed him out into the free air, in these circumstances: "Take a Tour; Holland, England; feel the winds blowing, see the sun shining, as in times past: it will do you good!"

Jordan, in the course of his Tour, came to composure on several points. He found that, by frugality, by wise management of some peculium already his, his little Daughter and he might have quietness at Berlin, and the necessary food and raiment;—and, on the whole, that he would altogether cease preaching, and settle down there, among his Books, in a frugal manner. Which he did;—and was living so, when the Prince, searching for that kind of person, got tidings of him. And here he is at Reinsberg; bustling about, in a brisk, modestly frank and cheerful manner: well liked by everybody; by his Master very well and ever better, who grew into real regard, esteem and even friendship for him, and has much Correspondence, of a freer kind than is common to him, with little Jordan, so long as they lived together. Jordan's death, ten years hence, was probably the one considerable pain

he had ever given his neighbors, in this the ultimate section of his life.

I find him described, at Reinsberg, as a small nimble figure, of Southern-French aspect; black, uncommonly bright eyes; and a general aspect of adroitness, modesty, sense, sincerity; good prognostics, which on acquaintance with the man were pleasantly fulfilled.

For the sake of these considerations, I fished out, from the Old-Book Catalogues and sea of forgetfulness, some of the poor Books he wrote; especially a *Voyage Litteraire*, [*Histoire d'un Voyage Litteraire fait, en MDCCXXXIII., en France, en Angleterre et en Hollande* (2de edition, a La Haye, 1736).] Journal of that first Sanitary Excursion or Tour he took, to get the clouds blown from his mind. A LITERARY VOYAGE which awakens a kind of tragic feeling; being itself dead, and treating of matters which are all gone dead. So many immortal writers, Dutch chiefly, whom Jordan is enabled to report as having effloresced, or being soon to effloresce, in such and such forms, of Books important to be learned: leafy, blossomy Forest of Literature, waving glorious in the then sunlight to Jordan;—and it lies all now, to Jordan and us, not withered only, but abolished; compressed into a film of indiscriminate PEAT. Consider what that peat is made of, O celebrated or uncelebrated reader, and take a moral from Jordan's Book! Other merit, except indeed clearness and commendable brevity, the *Voyage Litteraire* or other little Books of Jordan's have not now. A few of his Letters to Friedrich, which exist,

are the only writings with the least life left in them, and this an accidental life, not momentous to him or us. Dryasdust informs me, "Abbe Jordan, alone of the Crown-Prince's cavaliers, sleeps in the Town of Reinsberg, not in the Schloss:" and if I ask, Why?—there is no answer. Probably his poor little Daughterkin was beside him there?—

We have to say of Friedrich's Associates, that generally they were of intelligent type, each of them master of something or other, and capable of rational discourse upon that at least. Integrity, loyalty of character, was indispensable; good humor, wit if it could be had, were much in request. There was no man of shining distinction there; but they were the best that could be had, and that is saying all. Friedrich cannot be said, either as Prince or as King, to have been superlatively successful in his choice of associates. With one single exception, to be noticed shortly, there is not one of them whom we should now remember except for Friedrich's sake;—uniformly they are men whom it is now a weariness to hear of, except in a cursory manner. One man of shining parts he had, and one only; no man ever of really high and great mind. The latter sort are not so easy to get; rarely producible on the soil of this Earth! Nor is it certain how Friedrich might have managed with one of this sort, or he with Friedrich;—though Friedrich unquestionably would have tried, had the chance offered. For he loved intellect as few men on the throne, or off it, ever did; and the little he could gather of it round him often seems to me a fact tragical rather than otherwise.

With the outer Berlin social world, acting and reacting, Friedrich has his connections, which obscurely emerge on us now and then. Literary Eminences, who are generally of Theological vesture; any follower of Philosophy, especially if he be of refined manners withal, or known in fashionable life, is sure to attract him; and gains ample recognition at Reinsberg or on Town-visits. But the Berlin Theological or Literary world at that time, still more the Berlin Social, like a sunk extinct object, continues very dim in those old records; and to say truth, what features we have of it do not invite to miraculous efforts for farther acquaintance. Venerable Beausobre, with his *History of the Manicheans*, [*Histoire critique de Manichee et du Manicheisme: wrote also Remarques &c. sur le Nouveau Testament, which were once famous; Histoire de la Reformation; &c. &c. He is Beausobre SENIOR; there were two Sons (one of them born in second wedlock, after Papa was 70), who were likewise given to writing.—See Formey, Souvenirs d'un Citoyen since, in Toland and the Republican Queen's time, as a light of the world. He is now fourscore, grown white as snow; very serene, polite, with a smack of French noblesse in him, perhaps a smack of affectation traceable too. The Crown-Prince, on one of his Berlin visits, wished to see this Beausobre; got a meeting appointed, in somebody's rooms "in the French College," and waited for the venerable man. Venerable man entered, loftily serene as a martyr Preacher of the Word, something of an ancient Seigneur de Beausobre in him, too; for the rest, soft as sunset, and really with*

fine radiances, in a somewhat twisted state, in that good old mind of his. "What have you been reading lately, M. de Beausobre?" said the Prince, to begin conversation. "Ah, Monseigneur, I have just risen from reading the sublimest piece of writing that exists."—"And what?" "The exordium of St. John's Gospel: *In the Beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was*—" Which somewhat took the Prince by surprise, as Formey reports; though he rallied straightway, and got good conversation out of the old gentleman. To whom, we perceive, he writes once or twice, [*OEuvres de Frederic*, 121-126. Dates are all of 1737; the last of Beausobre's years.]—a copy of his own verses to correct, on one occasion,—and is very respectful and considerate.

Formey tells us of another French sage, personally known to the Prince since Boyhood; for he used to be about the Palace, doing something. This is one La Croze; Professor of, I think, "Philosophy" in the French College: sublime Monster of Erudition, at that time; forgotten now, I fear, by everybody. Swag-bellied, short of wind; liable to rages, to utterances of a coarse nature; a decidedly ugly, monstrous and rather stupid kind of man. Knew twenty languages, in a coarse inexact way. Attempted deep kinds of discourse, in the lecture-room and elsewhere; but usually broke off into endless welters of anecdote, not always of cleanly nature; and after every two or three words, a desperate sigh, not for sorrow, but on account of flabbiness and fat. Formey gives a portraiture of him; not worth copying farther.

The same Formey, standing one day somewhere on the streets of Berlin, was himself, he cannot doubt, SEEN by the Crown-Prince in passing; "who asked M. Jordan, who that was," and got answer:—is not that a comfortable fact? Nothing farther came of it;—respectable Ex-Parson Formey, though ever ready with his pen, being indeed of very vapid nature, not wanted at Reinsberg, as we can guess.

There is M. Achard, too, another Preacher, supreme of his sort, in the then Berlin circles; to whom or from whom a Letter or two exist. Letters worthless, if it were not for one dim indication: That, on inquiry, the Crown-Prince had been consulting this supreme Achard on the difficulties of Orthodoxy; [*OEuvres de Frederic*, xvi. pp. 112-117: date, March-June, 1736.] and had given him texts, or a text, to preach from. Supreme Achard did not abolish the difficulties for his inquiring Prince,—who complains respectfully that "his faith is weak," and leaves us dark as to particulars. This Achard passage is almost the only hint we have of what might have been an important chapter: Friedrich's Religious History at Reinsberg. The expression "weak faith" I take to be meant not in mockery, but in ingenuous regret and solicitude; much painful fermentation, probably, on the religious question in those Reinsberg years! But the old "GNADENWAHL" business, the Free-Grace controversy, had taught him to be cautious as to what he uttered on those points. The fermentation, therefore, had to go on under cover; what the result of it was, is notorious enough; though the steps of the

process are not in any point known.

Enough now of such details. Outwardly or inwardly, there is no History, or almost none, to be had of this Reinsberg Period; the extensive records of it consisting, as usual, mainly of chaotic nugatory matter, opaque to the mind of readers. There is copious correspondence of the Crown-Prince, with at least dates to it for most part: but this, which should be the main resource, proves likewise a poor one; the Crown-Prince's Letters, now or afterwards, being almost never of a deep or intimate quality; and seldom turning on events or facts at all, and then not always on facts interesting, on facts clearly apprehensible to us in that extinct element.

The Thing, we know always, IS there; but vision of the Thing is only to be had faintly, intermittently. Dim inane twilight, with here and there a transient SPARK falling somewhither in it;—you do at last, by desperate persistence, get to discern outlines, features:—"The Thing cannot always have been No-thing," you reflect! Outlines, features:—and perhaps, after all, those are mostly what the reader wants on this occasion.

Chapter II. — OF VOLTAIRE AND THE LITERARY CORRESPONDENCES

One of Friedrich's grand purposes at Reinsberg, to himself privately the grandest there, which he follows with constant loyalty and ardor, is that of scaling the heights of the Muses' Hill withal; of attaining mastership, discipleship, in Art and Philosophy;—or in candor let us call it, what it truly was, that of enlightening and fortifying himself with clear knowledge, clear belief, on all sides; and acquiring some spiritual panoply in which to front the coming practicalities of life. This, he feels well, will be a noble use of his seclusion in those still places; and it must be owned, he struggles and endeavors towards this, with great perseverance, by all the methods in his power, here, or wherever afterwards he might be.

Here at Reinsberg, one of his readiest methods, his pleasantest if not his usefulest, is that of getting into correspondence with the chief spirits of his time. Which accordingly he forthwith sets about, after getting into Reinsberg, and continues, as we shall see, with much assiduity. Rollin, Fontenelle, and other French lights of the then firmament,—his Letters to them exist; and could be given in some quantity: but it is better not. They are intrinsically the common Letters on such occasions: "O sublime demi-god

of literature, how small are princely distinctions to such a glory as thine; thou who enterest within the veil of the temple, and issuest with thy face shining!"—To which the response is: "Hm, think you so, most happy, gracious, illustrious Prince, with every convenience round you, and such prospects ahead? Well, thank you, at any rate,—and, as the Irish say, more power to your Honor's Glory!" This really is nearly all that said Sets of Letters contain; and except perhaps the Voltaire Set, none of them give symptoms of much capacity to contain more.

Certainly there was no want of Literary Men discernible from Reinsberg at that time; and the young Prince corresponds with a good many of them; temporal potentate saluting spiritual, from the distance,—in a way highly interesting to the then parties, but now without interest, except of the reflex kind, to any creature. A very cold and empty portion, this, of the Friedrich Correspondence; standing there to testify what his admiration was for literary talent, or the great reputation of such; but in itself uninstrucive utterly, and of freezing influence on the now living mind. Most of those French lights of the then firmament are gone out. Forgotten altogether; or recognized, like Rollin and others, for polished dullards, university big-wigs, and long-winded commonplace persons, deserving nothing but oblivion. To Montesquieu,—not yet called "Baron de Montesquieu" with *ESPRIT DES LOIS*, but "M. de Secondat" with (Anonymous) *LETTRES PERSANES*, and already known to the world for a person of sharp audacious eyesight,—it does not appear that

Friedrich addressed any Letter, now or afterwards. No notice of Montesquieu; nor of some others, the absence of whom is a little unexpected. Probably it was want of knowledge mainly; for his appetite was not fastidious at this time. And certainly he did hit the centre of the mark, and get into the very kernel of French literature, when, in 1736, hardly yet established in his new quarters, he addressed himself to the shining figure known to us as "Arouet Junior" long since, and now called M. DE VOLTAIRE; which latter is still a name notable in Friedrich's History and that of Mankind. Friedrich's first Letter, challenging Voltaire to correspondence, dates itself 8th August, 1736; and Voltaire's Answer—the Reinsberg Household still only in its second month—was probably the brightest event which had yet befallen there.

On various accounts it will behoove us to look a good deal more strictly into this Voltaire; and, as his relations to Friedrich and to the world are so multiplex, endeavor to disengage the real likeness of the man from the circumambient noise and confusion which in his instance continue very great. "Voltaire was the spiritual complement of Friedrich," says Sauerteig once: "what little of lasting their poor Century produced lies mainly in these Two. A very somnambulating Century! But what little it DID, we must call Friedrich; what little it THOUGHT, Voltaire. Other fruit we have not from it to speak of, at this day. Voltaire, and what CAN be faithfully done on the Voltaire Creed; 'Realized Voltairism;'—admit it, reader, not in a too

triumphant humor,—is not that pretty much the net historical product of the Eighteenth Century? The rest of its history either pure somnambulism; or a mere Controversy, to the effect, 'Realized Voltairism? How soon shall it be realized, then? Not at once, surely!' So that Friedrich and Voltaire are related, not by accident only. They are, they for want of better, the two Original Men of their Century; the chief and in a sense the sole products of their Century. They alone remain to us as still living results from it,—such as they are. And the rest, truly, OUGHT to depart and vanish (as they are now doing); being mere ephemera; contemporary eaters, scramblers for provender, talkers of acceptable hearsay; and related merely to the butteries and wiggeries of their time, and not related to the Perennialities at all, as these Two were."—With more of the like sort from Sauerteig.

M. de Voltaire, who used to be M. Francois-Marie Arouet, was at this time about forty, [Born 20th February, 1694; the younger of two sons: Father, "Francois Arouet, a Notary of the Chatelet, ultimately Treasurer of the Chamber of Accounts;" Mother, "Marguerite d'Aumart, of a noble family of Poitou."] and had gone through various fortunes; a man, now and henceforth, in a high degree conspicuous, and questionable to his fellow-creatures. Clear knowledge of him ought, at this stage, to be common; but unexpectedly it is not. What endless writing and biographying there has been about this man; in which one still reads, with a kind of lazy satisfaction, due to the subject,

and to the French genius in that department! But the man himself, and his environment and practical aspects, what the actual physiognomy of his life and of him can have been, is dark from beginning to ending; and much is left in an ambiguous undecipherable condition to us. A proper History of Voltaire, in which should be discoverable, luminous to human creatures, what he was, what element he lived in, what work he did: this is still a problem for the genius of France!—

His Father's name is known to us; the name of his Father's profession, too, but not clearly the nature of it; still less his Father's character, economic circumstances, physiognomy spiritual or social: not the least possibility granted you of forming an image, however faint, of that notable man and household, which distinguished itself to all the earth by producing little Francois into the light of this sun. Of Madame Arouet, who, or what, or how she was, nothing whatever is known. A human reader, pestered continually with the Madame-Denises, Abbe-Mignots and enigmatic nieces and nephews, would have wished to know, at least, what children, besides Francois, Madame Arouet had: once for all, How many children? Name them, with year of birth, year of death, according to the church-registers: they all, at any rate, had that degree of history! No; even that has not been done. Beneficent correspondents of my own make answer, after some research, No register of the Arouets anywhere to be had. The very name VOLTAIRE, if you ask whence came it? there is no answer, or worse than none.—The fit "History" of

this man, which might be one of the shining Epics of his Century, and the lucid summary and soul of any HISTORY France then had, but which would require almost a French demi-god to do it, is still a great way off, if on the road at all! For present purposes, we select what follows from a well-known hand:—

"YOUTH OF VOLTAIRE (1694-1725).—French Biographers have left the Arouet Household very dark for us; meanwhile we can perceive, or guess, that it was moderately well in economic respects; that Francois was the second of the Two Sons; and that old Arouet, a steady, practical and perhaps rather sharp-tempered old gentleman, of official legal habits and position, 'Notary of the Chatelet' and something else, had destined him for the Law Profession; as was natural enough to a son of M. Arouet, who had himself succeeded well in Law, and could there, best of all, open roads for a clever second son. Francois accordingly sat 'in chambers,' as we call it; and his fellow-clerks much loved him,—the most amusing fellow in the world. Sat in chambers, even became an advocate; but did not in the least take to advocateship;—took to poetry, and other airy dangerous courses, speculative, practical; causing family explosions and rebukes, which were without effect on him. A young fool, bent on sportful pursuits instead of serious; more and more shuddering at Law. To the surprise and indignation of M. Arouet Senior. Law, with its wigs and sheepskins, pointing towards high honors and deep flesh-pots, had no charms for the young fool; he could not be made to like Law.

"Whereupon arose explosions, as we hint; family explosions on the part of M. Arouet Senior; such that friends had to interfere, and it was uncertain what would come of it. One judicious friend, 'M. Caumartin,' took the young fellow home to his house in the country for a time;—and there, incidentally, brought him acquainted with old gentlemen deep in the traditions of Henri Quatre and the cognate topics; which much inflamed the young fellow, and produced big schemes in the head of him.

"M. Arouet Senior stood strong for Law; but it was becoming daily more impossible. Madrigals, dramas (not without actresses), satirical wit, airy verse, and all manner of adventurous speculation, were what this young man went upon; and was getting more and more loved for; introduced, even, to the superior circles, and recognized there as one of the brightest young fellows ever seen. Which tended, of course, to confirm him in his folly, and open other outlooks and harbors of refuge than the paternal one.

"Such things, strange to M. Arouet Senior, were in vogue then; wicked Regent d'Orleans having succeeded sublime Louis XIV., and set strange fashions to the Quality. Not likely to profit this fool Francois, thought M. Arouet Senior; and was much confirmed in his notion, when a rhymed Lampoon against the Government having come out (LES J'AI VU, as they call it ["I have seen (J'AI VU)" this ignominy occur, "I have seen" that other,—to the amount of a dozen or two;—"and am not yet twenty." Copy of it, and guess as to authorship, in *OEuvres de*

Voltaire, i. 321.]), and become the rage, as a clever thing of the kind will, it was imputed to the brightest young fellow in France, M. Arouet's Son. Who, in fact, was not the Author; but was not believed on his denial; and saw himself, in spite of his high connections, ruthlessly lodged in the Bastille in consequence. 'Let him sit,' thought M. Arouet Senior, 'and come to his senses there!' He sat for eighteen months (age still little above twenty); but privately employed his time, not in repentance, or in serious legal studies, but in writing a Poem on his *Henri Quatre*. 'Epic Poem,' no less; LA LIGUE, as he then called it; which it was his hope the whole world would one day fall in love with;—as it did. Nay, in two years more, he had done a Play, OEDIPE the renowned name of it; which ran for forty-eight nights' (18th November, 1718, the first of them); and was enough to turn any head of such age. Law may be considered hopeless, even by M. Arouet Senior.

"Try him in the Diplomatic line; break these bad habits and connections, thought M. Arouet, at one time; and sent him to the French Ambassador in Holland,—on good behavior, as it were, and by way of temporary banishment. But neither did this answer. On the contrary, the young fellow got into scrapes again; got into amatory intrigues,—young lady visiting you in men's clothes, young lady's mother inveigling, and I know not what;—so that the Ambassador was glad to send him home again unmarried; marked, as it were, 'Glass, with care!' And the young lady's mother printed his Letters, not the least worth

reading:—and the old M. Arouet seems now to have flung up his head; to have settled some small allowance on him, with peremptory no hope of more, and said, 'Go your own way, then, foolish junior: the elder shall be my son.' M. Arouet disappears at this point, or nearly so, from the history of his son Francois, and I think must have died in not many years. Poor old M. Arouet closed his old eyes without the least conception what a prodigious ever-memorable thing he had done unknowingly, in sending this Francois into the world, to kindle such universal 'dry dung-heap of a rotten world,' and set it blazing! Francois, his Father's synonym, came to be representative of the family, after all; the elder Brother also having died before long. Except certain confused niece-and-nephew personages, progeny of the sisters, Francois has no more trouble or solacement from the paternal household. Francois meanwhile is his Father's synonym, and signs Arouet Junior, 'Francois Aroue l. j. (LE JEUNE).'

"All of us Princes, then, or Poets!" said he, one night at supper, looking to right and left: the brightest fellow in the world, well fit to be Phoebus Apollo of such circles; and great things now ahead of him. Dissolute Regent d'Orleans, politest, most debauched of men, and very witty, holds the helm; near him Dubois the Devil's Cardinal, and so many bright spirits. All the Luciferous Spiritualism there is in France is lifting anchor, under these auspices, joyfully towards new latitudes and Isles of the Blest. What may not Francois hope to become? 'Hmph!' answers M. Arouet Senior, steadily, so long as he lives. Here are one or

two subsequent phases, epochs or turning-points, of the young gentleman's career.

"PHASIS FIRST (1725-1728).—The accomplished Duc de Sulli (Year 1725, day not recorded), is giving in his hotel a dinner, such as usual; and a bright witty company is assembled,—the brightest young fellow in France sure to be there; and with his electric coruscations illuminating everything, and keeping the table in a roar. To the delight of most; not to that of a certain splenetic ill-given Duc de Rohan; grandee of high rank, great haughtiness, and very ill-behavior in the world; who feels impatient at the notice taken of a mere civic individual, Arouet Junior. *'Quel est donc ce jeune homme qui parle si haut,* Who is this young man that talks so loud, then?' exclaims the proud splenetic Duke. 'Monseigneur,' flashes the young man back upon him in an electric manner, 'it is one who does not drag a big name about with him; but who secures respect for the name he has!' Figure that, in the penetrating grandly clangorous voice (VOIX SOMBRE ET MAJESTUEUSE), and the momentary flash of eyes that attended it. Duc de Rohan rose, in a sulphurous frame of mind; and went his ways. What date? You ask the idle French Biographer in vain;—see only, after more and more inspection, that the incident is true; and with labor date it, summer of the Year 1725. Treaty of Utrecht itself, though all the Newspapers and Own Correspondents were so interested in it, was perhaps but a foolish matter to date in comparison!

"About a week after, M. Arouet Junior was again dining

with the Duc de Sulli, and a fine company as before. A servant whispers him, That somebody has called, and wants him below. 'Cannot come,' answers Arouet; 'how can I, so engaged?' Servant returns after a minute or two: 'Pardon, Monsieur; I am to say, it is to do an act of beneficence that you are wanted below!' Arouet lays down his knife and fork; descends instantly to see what act it is. A carriage is in the court, and hackney-coach near it: 'Would Monsieur have the extreme goodness to come to the door of the carriage, in a case of necessity?' At the door of the carriage, hands seize the collar of him, hold him as in a vice; diabolic visage of Duc de Rohan is visible inside, who utters, looking to the hackney-coach, some "VOILA, Now then!" Whereupon the hackney-coach opens, gives out three porters, or hired bullies, with the due implements: scandalous actuality of horsewhipping descends on the back of poor Arouet, who shrieks and execrates to no purpose, nobody being near. 'That will do,' says Rohan at last, and the gallant ducal party drive off; young Arouet, with torn frills and deranged hair, rushing up stairs again, in such a mood as is easy to fancy. Everybody is sorry, inconsolable, everybody shocked; nobody volunteers to help in avenging. 'Monseigneur de Sulli, is not such atrocity done to one of your guests, an insult to yourself?' asks Arouet. 'Well, yes perhaps, but'—Monseigneur de Sulli shrugs his shoulders, and proposes nothing. Arouet withdrew, of course in a most blazing condition, to consider what he could, on his own strength, do in this conjuncture.

"His Biographer Duvernet says, he decided on doing two things: learning English and the small-sword exercise. [*La Vie de Voltaire*, par M—(a Geneve, 1786), pp. 55-57; or pp. 60-63, in his SECOND form of the Book. The "M—" is an Abbe Duvernet; of no great mark otherwise. He got into Revolution trouble afterwards, but escaped with his head; and republished his Book, swollen out somewhat by new "Anecdotes" and republican bluster, in this second instance; signing himself T. J. D. V—(Paris, 1797). A vague but not dark or mendacious little Book; with traces of real EYESIGHT in it,—by one who had personally known Voltaire, or at least seen and heard him.] He retired to the country for six months, and perfected himself in these two branches. Being perfect, he challenged Duc de Rohan in the proper manner; applying ingenious compulsives withal, to secure acceptance of the challenge. Rohan accepted, not without some difficulty, and compulsion at the Theatre or otherwise:—accepted, but withal confessed to his wife. The result was, no measuring of swords took place; and Rohan only blighted by public opinion, or incapable of farther blight that way, went at large; a convenient LETTRE DE CACHET having put Arouet again in the Bastille. Where for six months Arouet lodged a second time, the innocent not the guilty; making, we can well suppose, innumerable reflections on the phenomena of human life. Imprisonment once over, he hastily quitted for England; shaking the dust of ungrateful France off his feet,—resolved to change his unhappy name, for one thing.

"Smelfungus, denouncing the torpid fatuity of Voltaire's Biographers, says he never met with one Frenchman, even of the Literary classes, who could tell him whence this name VOLTAIRE originated. 'A PETITE TERRE, small family estate,' they said; and sent him hunting through Topographies, far and wide, to no purpose. Others answered, 'Volterra in Italy, some connection with Volterra,'—and seemed even to know that this was but fatuity. 'In ever-talking, ever-printing Paris, is it as in Timbuctoo, then, which neither prints nor has anything to print?' exclaims poor Smelfungus! He tells us at last, the name VOLTAIRE is a mere Anagram of AROUET L. J.—you try it; A.R.O.U.E.T.L.J.=V.O.L.T.A.I.R.E and perceive at once, with obligations to Smelfungus, that he has settled this small matter for you, and that you can be silent upon it forever thenceforth.

"The anagram VOLTAIRE, gloomily settled in the Bastille in this manner, can be reckoned a very famous wide-sounding outer result of the Rohan impertinence and blackguardism; but it is not worth naming beside the inner intrinsic result, of banishing Voltaire to England at this point of his course. England was full of Constitutionality and Freethinking; Tolands, Collinses, Wollastons, Bolingbrokes, still living; very free indeed. England, one is astonished to see, has its royal-republican ways of doing; something Roman in it, from Peerage down to Plebs; strange and curious to the eye of M. de Voltaire. Sciences flourishing; Newton still alive, white with fourscore years, the venerable hoary man; Locke's Gospel of Common Sense in full vogue,

or even done into verse, by incomparable Mr. Pope, for the cultivated upper classes. In science, in religion, in politics, what a surprising 'liberty' allowed or taken! Never was a freer turn of thinking. And (what to M. de Voltaire is a pleasant feature) it is Freethinking with ruffles to its shirt and rings on its fingers;—never yet, the least, dreaming of the shirtless or SANSULOTTIC state that lies ahead for it! That is the palmy condition of English Liberty, when M. de Voltaire arrives there.

"In a man just out of the Bastille on those terms, there is a mind driven by hard suffering into seriousness, and provoked by indignant comparisons and remembrances. As if you had elaborately ploughed and pulverized the mind of this Voltaire to receive with its utmost avidity, and strength of fertility, whatever seed England may have for it. That was a notable conjuncture of a man with circumstances. The question, Is this man to grow up a Court Poet; to do legitimate dramas, lampoons, witty verses, and wild spiritual and practical magnificences, the like never seen; Princes and Princesses recognizing him as plainly divine, and keeping him tied by enchantments to that poor trade as his task in life? is answered in the negative. No: and it is not quite to decorate and comfort your 'dry dung-heap' of a world, or the fortunate cocks that scratch on it, that the man Voltaire is here; but to shoot lightnings into it, and set it ablaze one day! That was an important alternative; truly of world-importance to the poor generations that now are; and it was settled, in good part, by this voyage to England, as one may surmise. Such is sometimes

the use of a dissolute Rohan in this world; for the gods make implements of all manner of things.

"M. de Voltaire (for we now drop the Arouet altogether, and never hear of it more) came to England—when? Quitted England—when? Sorrow on all fatuous Biographers, who spend their time not in laying permanent foundation-stones, but in fencing with the wind!—I at last find indisputably, it was in 1726 that he came to England: [Got out of the Bastille, with orders to leave France, "29th April" of that year (*OEuvres de Voltaire*, i. 40 n.)] and he himself tells us that he 1728.' Spent, therefore, some two years there in all,—last year of George I.'s reign, and first of George II.'s. But mere inanity and darkness visible reign, in all his Biographies, over this period of his life, which was above all others worth investigating: seek not to know it; no man has inquired into it, probably no competent man now ever will. By hints in certain Letters of the period, we learn that he lodged, or at one time lodged, in 'Maiden Lane, Covent Garden;' one of those old Houses that yet stand in Maiden Lane: for which small fact let us be thankful. His own Letters of the period are dated now and then from 'Wandsworth.' Allusions there are to Bolingbroke; but the Wandsworth is not Bolingbroke's mansion, which stood in Battersea; the Wandsworth was one Edward Fawkener's; a man somewhat admirable to young Voltaire, but extinct now, or nearly so, in human memory. He had been a Turkey Merchant, it would seem, and nevertheless was admitted to speak his word in intellectual, even in political circles; which

was wonderful to young Voltaire. This Fawkener, I think, became Sir Edward Fawkener, and some kind of 'Secretary to the Duke of Cumberland:'—I judge it to be the same Fawkener; a man highly unmemorable now, were it not for the young Frenchman he was hospitable to. Fawkener's and Bolingbroke's are perhaps the only names that turn up in Voltaire's LETTERS of this English Period: over which generally there reigns, in the French Biographies, inane darkness, with an intimation, half involuntary, that it SHOULD have been made luminous, and would if perfectly easy.

"We know, from other sources, that he had acquaintance with many men in England, with all manner of important men: Notes to Pope in Voltaire-English, visit of Voltaire to Congreve, Notes even to such as Lady Sundon in the interior of the Palace, are known of. The brightest young fellow in the world did not want for introductions to the highest quarters, in that time of political alliance, and extensive private acquaintance, between his Country and ours. And all this he was the man to improve, both in the trivial and the deep sense. His bow to the divine Princess Caroline and suite, could it fail in graceful reverence or what else was needed? Dexterous right words in the right places, winged with ESPRIT so called: that was the man's supreme talent, in which he had no match, to the last. A most brilliant, swift, far-glancing young man, disposed to make himself generally agreeable. For the rest, his wonder, we can see, was kept awake; wonder readily inclining, in his

circumstances, towards admiration. The stereotype figure of the Englishman, always the same, which turns up in Voltaire's WORKS, is worth noting in this respect. A rugged surly kind of fellow, much-enduring, not intrinsically bad; splenetic without complaint, standing oddly inexpugnable in that natural stoicism of his; taciturn, yet with strange flashes of speech in him now and then, something which goes beyond laughter and articulate logic, and is the taciturn elixir of these two, what they call 'humor' in their dialect: this is pretty much the REVERSE of Voltaire's own self, and therefore all the welcomer to him; delineated always with a kind of mockery, but with evident love. What excellences are in England, thought Voltaire; no Bastille in it, for one thing! Newton's Philosophy annihilated the vortexes of Descartes for him; Locke's Toleration is very grand (especially if all is uncertain, and YOU are in the minority); then Collins, Wollaston and Company,—no vile Jesuits here, strong in their mendacious mal-odorous stupidity, despicablest yet most dangerous of creatures, to check freedom of thought! Illustrious Mr. Pope, of the *Essay on Man*, surely he is admirable; as are Pericles Bolingbroke, and many others. Even Bolingbroke's high-lacquered brass is gold to this young French friend of his.—Through all which admirations and exaggerations the progress of the young man, toward certain very serious attainments and achievements, is conceivable enough.

"One other man, who ought to be mentioned in the Biographies, I find Voltaire to have made acquaintance with,

in England: a German M. Fabrice, one of several Brothers called Fabrice or Fabricius,—concerning whom, how he had been at Bender, and how Voltaire picked CHARLES DOUSE from the memory of him, there was already mention. The same Fabrice who held poor George I. in his arms while they drove, galloping, to Osnabriick, that night, IN EXTREMIS:—not needing mention again. The following is more to the point.

"Voltaire, among his multifarious studies while in England, did not forget that of economics: his Poem LA LIGUE,—surreptitiously printed, three years since, under that title (one Desfontaines, a hungry Ex-Jesuit, the perpetrator), [1723, VIE, par T. J. D. V. (that is, "M—" in the second form), p. 59.]—he now took in hand for his own benefit; washed it clean of its blots; christened it HENRIADE, under which name it is still known over all the world;—and printed it; published it here, by subscription, in 1726; one of the first things he undertook. Very splendid subscription; headed by Princess Caroline, and much favored by the opulent of quality. Which yielded an unknown but very considerable sum of thousands sterling, and grounded not only the world-renown but the domestic finance of M. de Voltaire. For the fame of the 'new epic,' as this HENRIADE was called, soon spread into all lands. And such fame, and other agencies on his behalf, having opened the way home for Voltaire, he took this sum of Thousands Sterling along with him; laid it out judiciously in some city lottery, or profitable scrip then going at Paris, which at once doubled the amount: after which he invested

it in Corn-trade, Army Clothing, Barbary-trade, Commissariat Bacon-trade, all manner of well-chosen trades,—being one of the shrewdest financiers on record;—and never from that day wanted abundance of money, for one thing. Which he judged to be extremely expedient for a literary man, especially in times of Jesuit and other tribulation. 'You have only to watch,' he would say, 'what scrips, public loans, investments in the field of agio, are offered; if you exert any judgment, it is easy to gain there: do not the stupidest of mortals gain there, by intensely attending to it?'

"Voltaire got almost nothing by his Books, which he generally had to disavow, and denounce as surreptitious supposititious scandals, when some sharp-set Book-seller, in whose way he had laid the savory article as bait, chose to risk his ears for the profit of snatching and publishing it. Next to nothing by his Books; but by his fine finance-talent otherwise, he had become possessed of ample moneys. Which were so cunningly disposed, too, that he had resources in every Country; and no conceivable combination of confiscating Jesuits and dark fanatic Official Persons could throw him out of a livelihood, whithersoever he might be forced to run. A man that looks facts in the face; which is creditable of him. The vulgar call it avarice and the like, as their way is: but M. de Voltaire is convinced that effects will follow causes; and that it well beseems a lonely Ishmaelite, hunting his way through the howling wildernesses and confused ravenous populations of this world, to have money in his pocket. He died with a revenue of

some 7,000 pounds a year, probably as good as 20,000 pounds at present; the richest literary man ever heard of hitherto, as well as the remarkablest in some other respects. But we have to mark the second phasis of his life [in which Friedrich now sees him], and how it grew out of this first one.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.