

ТОМАС КАРЛЕЙЛЬ

HISTORY OF FRIEDRICH
II OF PRUSSIA —
VOLUME 13

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of Prussia — Volume 13

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History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 13:*

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Thomas Carlyle
History of Friedrich II
of Prussia — Volume 13

BOOK XIII. — FIRST SILESIAN
WAR, LEAVING THE GENERAL
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— May, 1741-July, 1742

Chapter I. — BRITANNIC MAJESTY
AS PALADIN OF THE PRAGMATIC

Part, is now perhaps conceivable to readers. But as to the Second, the Germanic or Pragmatic Part,—articulate History, after much consideration, is content to renounce attempting these; feels that these will remain forever inconceivable to mankind in the now altered times. So small a gentleman; and he feels, dismally though with heroism, that he has got the axis

of the world on his shoulder. Poor Majesty! His eyes, proud as Jove's, are nothing like so perspicacious; a pair of the poorest eyes: and he has to scan with them, and unriddle under pain of death, such a waste of insoluble intricacies, troubles and world-perils as seldom was,—even in Dreams. In fact, it is of the nature of a long Nightmare Dream, all this of the Pragmatic, to his poor Majesty and Nation; and wakeful History must not spend herself upon it, beyond the essential.

May 12th, betimes this Year, his Majesty got across to Hanover, Harrington with him; anxious to contemplate near at hand that Camp of the Old Dessauer's at Gottin, and the other fearful phenomena, French, Prussian and other, in that Country. His Majesty, as natural, was much in Germany in those Years; scanning the phenomena; a long while not knowing what in the world to make of them. Bully Belleisle having stept into the ring, it is evident, clear as the sun, that one must act, and act at once; but it is a perfect sphinx-enigma to say How. Seldom was Sovereign or man so spurred, and goaded on, by the highest considerations; and then so held down, and chained to his place, by an imbroglio of counter-considerations and sphinx-riddles! Thrice over, at different dates (which shall be given), the first of them this Year, he starts up as in spasm, determined to draw sword, and plunge in; twice he is crushed down again, with sword half drawn; and only the third time (in 1743) does he get sword out, and brandish it in a surprising though useless manner. After which he feels better. But up to that crisis, his case is really

tragical,—had idle readers any bowels for him; which they have not! One or two Fractions, snatched from the circumambient Paper Vortex, must suffice us for the indispensable in this place:
—

CUNCTATIONS, YET INCESSANT AND UBIQUITOUS ENDEAVORINGS, OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY (1741-1743)

After the wonderful Russian Partition-Treaty, which his English Walpoles would not hear of,—and which has produced the Camp of Gottin, see, your Majesty!—George does nothing rashly. Far from it: indeed, except it be paying money, he becomes again a miracle of cunctations; and staggers about for years to come, like the—Shall we say, like the White Hanover Horse amid half a dozen sieves of beans? Alas, no, like the Hanover Horse with the shadows of half a dozen Damocles'-swords dangling into the eyes of it;—enough to drive any Horse to its wit's end!—

"To do, to dare," thinks the Britannic Majesty;—yes, and of daring there is a plenty: but, "In which direction? What, How?" these are questions for a fussy little gentleman called to take the world on his shoulders. We suppose it was by Walpole's advice that he gave her Hungarian Majesty that

200,000 pounds of Secret-Service Money;—advice sufficiently Walpolean: "Russian Partition-Treaties; horrible to think of;—beware of these again! Give her Majesty that cash; can be done; it will keep matters afloat, and spoil nothing!" That, till the late Subsidy payable within year and day hence, was all of tangible his Majesty had yet done;—truly that is all her Hungarian Majesty has yet got by hawking the world, Pragmatic Sanction in hand. And if that were the bit of generosity which enabled Neipperg to climb the Mountains and be beaten at Mollwitz, that has helped little! Very big generousities, to a frightful cipher of Millions Sterling through the coming years, will go the same road; and amount also to zero, even for the receiving party, not to speak of the giving! For men and kings are wise creatures.

But wise or unwise, how great are his Britannic Majesty's activities in this Pragmatic Business! We may say, they are prodigious, incessant, ubiquitous. They are forgotten now, fallen wholly to the spiders and the dust-bins;—though Friedrich himself was not a busier King in those days, if perhaps a better directed. It is a thing wonderful to us, but sorrowful and undeniable. We perceive the Britannic Majesty's own little mind pulsing with this Pragmatic Matter, as the biggest volcano would do;—shooting forth dust and smoke (subsidies, diplomatic emissaries, treaties, offers of treaty, plans, foolish futile exertions), at an immense rate. When the Celestial Balances are canting, a man ought to exert himself. But as to this of saving the House of Austria from France,—surely,

your Britannic Majesty, the shortest way to that, if that is so indispensable, were: That the House of Austria should consent to give up its stolen goods, better late than never; and to make this King of Prussia its friend, as he offers to be! Joined with this King, it would manage to give account of France and its balloon projects, by and by. Could your Britannic Majesty but take Mr. Viner's hint; and, in the interim, mind your OWN business!—His Britannic Majesty intends immediate fighting; and, both in England and Hanover, is making preparation loud and great. Nay, he will in his own person fight, if necessary, and rather likes the thought of it: he saw Oudenarde in his young days; and, I am told, traces in himself a talent for Generalship. Were the Britannic Majesty to draw his own puissant sword!—His own puissant purse he has already drawn; and is subsidizing to right and left; knocking at all doors with money in hand, and the question, "Any fighting done here?" In England itself there goes on much drilling, enlisting; camping, proposing to camp; which is noisy enough in the British Newspapers, much more in the Foreign. One actual Camp there was "on Lexden Heath near Colchester," from May till October of this 1741, [Manifold but insignificant details about it, in the old Newspapers of those Months.]—Camp waiting always to be shipped across to the scene of action, but never was:—this actual Camp, and several imaginary ones here, which were alarming to the Continental Gazetteer. In England his Majesty is busy that way; still more among his Hanoverians, now under his own royal eye; and among

his Danes and Hessians, whom he has now brought over into Hanover, to combine with the others. Danes and Hessians, 6,000 of each kind, he for some time keeps back in stall, upon subsidy, ready for such an occasion. Their "Camp at Hameln," "Camp at Nienburg" (will, with the Hanoverians, be 30,000 odd); their swashing and blaring about, intending to encamp at Hameln, at Nienburg, and other places, but never doing it, or doing it with any result: this, with the alarming English Camps at Lexden and in Dreamland, which also were void of practical issue, filled Europe with rumor this Summer.—Eager enough to fight; a noble martial ardor in our little Hercules-Atlas! But there lie such enormous difficulties on the threshold; especially these Two, which are insuperable or nearly so.

Difficulty FIRST, is that of the laggard Dutch; a People apt to be heavy in the stern-works. They are quite languid about Pragmatic Sanction, these Dutch; they answer his Britannic Majesty's enthusiasm with an obese torpidity; and hope always they will drift through, in some way; buoyant in their own fat, well ballasted astern; and not need such swimming for life. "What a laggard notion," thinks his Majesty; "notion in ten pair of breeches, so to speak!" This stirring up of the Dutch, which lasts year on year, and almost beats Lord Stair, Lord Carteret, and our chief Artists, is itself a thing like few! One of his Britannic Majesty's great difficulties;—insuperable he never could admit it to be. "Surely you are a Sea-Power, ye valiant Dutch; the OTHER Sea-Power? Bound by Barrier Treaty, Treaty

of Vienna, and Law of Nature itself, to rise with us against the fatal designs of France; fatal to your Dutch Barrier, first of all; if the Liberties of Mankind were indifferent to you! How is it that you will not?" The Dutch cannot say how. France rocks them in security, by oily-mouthed Diplomats, Fenelon and others. "Would not touch a stone of your Barrier, for the world, ye admirable Dutch neighbors: on our honor, thrice and four times, No!" They have an eloquent Van Hoey of their own at Paris; renowned in Newspapers: "Nothing but friendship here!" reports Van Hoey always; and the Dutch answer his Britannic Majesty: "Hm, rise? Well then, if we must!"—but sit always still.

Nowhere in Political Mechanics have I seen such a Problem as this of hoisting to their feet the heavy-bottomed Dutch. The cunningest leverage, every sort of Diplomatic block-and-tackle, Carteret and Stair themselves running over to help in critical seasons, is applied; to almost no purpose. Pull long, pull strong, pull all together,—see, the heavy Dutch do stir; some four inches of daylight fairly visible below them: bear a hand, oh, bear a hand!—Pooh, the Dutch flap down again, as low as ever. As low, —unless (by Diplomatic art) you have WEDGED them at the four inches higher; which, after the first time or two, is generally done. At the long last, partially in 1743 (upon which his Britannic Majesty drew sword), completely in 1747, the Dutch were got to their feet;—unfortunately good for nothing when they were! Without them his Britannic Majesty durst not venture. Hidden in those dust-bins, there is nothing so absurd, or which would be

so wearisome, did it not at last become slightly ludicrous, as this of hoisting the Dutch.

Difficulty SECOND, which in enormity of magnitude might be reckoned first, as in order of time it ranks both first and last, is: The case of dear Hanover; case involved in mere insolubilities. Our own dear Hanover, which (were there nothing more in it) is liable, from that Camp at Gottin, to be slit in pieces at a moment's warning! No drawing sword against a nefarious Prussia, on those terms. The Camp at Gottin holds George in checkmate. And then finally, in this same Autumn, 1741, when a Maillebois with his 40 or 50,000 French (the Leftward or western of those Two Belleisle Armies), threatening our Hanover from another side, crossed the Lower Rhine—But let us not anticipate. The case of Hanover, which everybody saw to be his Majesty's vulnerable point, was the constant open door of France and her machinations, and a never-ending theme of angry eloquences in the English Parliament as well.

So that the case of Hanover proved insoluble throughout, and was like a perpetual running sore. Oh the pamphleteerings, the denouncings, the complainings, satirical and elegiac, which grounded themselves on Hanover, the CASE OF THE HANOVER FORCES, and innumerable other Hanoverian cases, griefs and difficulties! So pungently vital to somnambulant mankind at that epoch; to us fallen dead as carrion, and unendurable to think of. My friends, if you send for Gentlemen from Hanover, you must take them with Hanover adhering

more or less; and ought not to quarrel with your bargain, which you reckoned so divine! No doubt, it is singular to see a Britannic Majesty neglecting his own Spanish War, the one real business he has at present; and running about over all the world; busy, soul, body and breeches-pocket, in other people's wars; egging on other fighting, whispering every likely fellow he can meet, "Won't you perhaps fight? Here is for you, if so!"—hand to breeches-pocket accompanying the word. But it must be said, and ought to be better known than in our day it is, His Majesty's Ministers, and the English State-Doctors generally, were precisely of the same mind. TO them too the Austrian Quarrel was everything, their own poor Spanish Quarrel nothing; and the complaint they make of his Majesty is rather that he does not rush rapidly enough, with brandished sword, as well as with guineas raining from him, into this one indispensable business. "Owing to his fears for Hanover!" say they, with indignation, with no end of suspicion, angry pamphleteering and covert eloquence, "within those walls" and without.

The suspicion of Hanover's checking his Majesty's Pragmatic velocity is altogether well founded; and there need no more be said on that Hanover score. Be it well understood and admitted, Hanover was the Britannic Majesty's beloved son; and the British Empire his opulent milk-cow. Richest of milk-cows; staff of one's life, for grand purposes and small; beautiful big animal, not to be provoked; but to be stroked and milked:—Friends, if you will do a Glorious Revolution of that kind, and

burn such an amount of tar upon it, why eat sour herbs for an inevitable corollary therefrom! And let my present readers understand, at any rate, that,—except in Wapping, Bristol and among the simple instinctive classes (with whom, it is true, go Pitt and some illustrious figures),—political England generally, whatever of England had Parliamentary discourse of reason, and did Pamphlets, Despatches, Harangues, went greatly along with his Majesty in that Pragmatic Business. And be the blame of delirium laid on the right back, where it ought to lie, not on the wrong, which has enough to bear of its own. And go not into that dust-whirlwind of extinct stupidities, O reader:—what reader would, except for didactic objects? Know only that it does of a truth whirl there; and fancy always, if you can, that certain things and Human Figures, a Friedrich, a Chatham and some others, have it for their Life-Element. Which, I often think, is their principal misfortune with Posterity; said Life-Element having gone to such an unutterable condition for gods and men.

"One other thing surprises us in those Old Pamphlets," says my Constitutional Friend: "How the phrase, 'Cause of Liberty' ever and anon turns up, with great though extinct emphasis, evidently sincere. After groping, one is astonished to find it means Support of the House of Austria; keeping of the Hapsburgs entire in their old Possessions among mankind! That, to our great-grandfathers, was the 'Cause of Liberty;'—said 'Cause' being, with us again, Electoral Suffrage and other things; a notably different definition, perhaps still wider of the mark.

"Our great-grandfathers lived in perpetual terror that they would be devoured by France; that French ambition would upset the Celestial Balance, and proceed next to eat the British Nation. Stand upon your guard then, one would have said: Look to your ships, to your defences, to your industries; to your virtues first of all,—your VIRTUTES, manhoods, conformities to the Divine Law appointed you; which are the great and indeed sole strength to any Man or Nation! Discipline yourselves, wisely, in all kinds; more and more, till there be no anarchic fibre left in you. Unanarchic, disciplined at all points, you might then, I should say, with supreme composure, let France, and the whole World at its back, try what they could do upon you and the unique little Island you are so lucky as to live in?—Foolish mortals: what Potentiality of Battle, think you (not against France only, but against Satanas and the Ministers of Chaos generally), would a poor Friedrich Wilhelm, not to speak of better, have got out of such a Possession, had it been his to put in drill! And drill is not of soldiers only; though perhaps of soldiers first and most indispensably of all; since 'without Being,' as my Friend Oliver was wont to say, 'Well-being is not possible.' There is military drill; there is industrial, economic, spiritual; gradually there are all kinds of drill, of wise discipline, of peremptory mandate become effective everywhere, 'OBEY the Laws of Heaven, or else disappear from these latitudes!' Ah me, if one dealt in day-dreams, and prophecies of an England grown celestial,—celestial she should be, not in gold nuggets, continents all of beef, and seas

all of beer, Abolition of Pain, and Paradise to All and Sundry, but in that quite different fashion; and there, I should say, THERE were the magnificent Hope to indulge in! That were to me the 'Cause of Liberty;' and any the smallest contribution towards that kind of 'Liberty' were a sacred thing!—

"Belleisle again may, if he pleases, call his the Cause of Sovereignty. A Sovereign Louis, it would appear, has not governing enough to do within his own French borders, but feels called to undertake Germany as well;—a gentleman with an immense governing faculty, it would appear? Truly, good reader, I am sick of heart, contemplating those empty sovereign mountebanks, and empty antagonist ditto, with their Causes of Liberty and Causes of Anti-Liberty; and cannot but wish that we had got the ashes of that World-Explosion, of 1789, well riddled and smelted, and the poor World were quit of a great many things!"—

My Constitutional Historian of England, musing on Belleisle and his Anti-Pragmatic industries and grandiosities,—“how Chief-Bully Belleisle stepped down into the ring as a gay Volunteer, and foolish Chief-Defender George had to follow dismally heroic, as a Conscript of Fate,”—drops these words: in regard to the Wages they respectively had:—

“Nations that go into War without business there, are sure of getting business as they proceed; and if the beginning were phantasms,—especially phantasms of the hoping, self-conceited kind,—the results for them are apt to be extremely real! As was

the case with the French in this War, and those following, in which his Britannic Majesty played chief counter-tenor. From 1741, in King Friedrich's First War, onwards to Friedrich's Third War, 1756-1763, the volunteer French found a great deal of work lying ready for them,—gratuitous on their part, from the beginning. And the results to them came out, first completely visible, in the World-Miracles of 1789, and the years following!

"Nations, again, may be driven upon War by phantasm TERRORS, and go into it, in sorrow of heart, not gayety of heart; and that is a shade better. And one always pities a poor Nation, in such case;—as the very Destinies rather do, and judge it more mercifully. Nay, the poor bewildered Nation may, among its brain-phantasms, have something of reality and sanity inarticulately stirring it withal. It may have a real ordinance of Heaven to accomplish on those terms:—and IF so, it will sometimes, in the most chaotic circuitous ways, through endless hazards, at a hundred or a hundred thousand times the natural expense, ultimately get it done! This was the case of the poor English in those Wars.

"They were Wars extraneous to England little less than to France; neither Nation had real business in them; and they seem to us now a very mad object on the part of both. But they were not gratuitously gone into, on the part of England; far from that. England undertook them, with its big heart very sorrowful, strange spectralities bewildering it; and managed them (as men do sleep-walking) with a gloomy solidity of purpose, with a

heavy-laden energy, and, on the whole, with a depth of stupidity, which were very great. Yet look at the respective net results. France lies down to rot into grand Spontaneous-Combustion, Apotheosis of Sansculottism, and much else; which still lasts, to her own great peril, and the great affliction of neighbors. Poor England, after such enormous stumbling among the chimney-pots, and somnambulism over all the world for twenty years, finds on awakening, that she is arrived, after all, where she wished to be, and a good deal farther! Finds that her own important little errand is somehow or other, done;—and, in short, that 'Jenkins's Ear [as she named the thing] HAS been avenged,' and the Ocean Highways 'opened' and a good deal more, in a most signal way! For the Eternal Providences—little as poor Dryasdust now knows of it, mumbling and maundering that sad stuff of his—do rule; and the great soul of the world, I assure you once more, is JUST. And always for a Nation, as for a man, it is very behooveful to be honest, to be modest, however stupid!"—

By this time, however,—Mollwitz having fallen out, and Belleisle being evidently on the steps,—his Britannic Majesty recognizes clearly, and insists upon it, strengthened by his Harringtons and everybody of discernment, That, nefarious or not, this Friedrich will require to be bargained with. That, far from breaking in upon him, and partitioning him (how far from it!), there is no conceivable method of saving the Celestial Balances till HE be satisfied, in some way. This is the one step his Britannic Majesty has yet made, out of these his choking

imbroglios; and truly this is one. Hyndford, his best negotiator, is on the road for Friedrich's Camp; Robinson at Vienna, has been directed to say and insist, "Bargain with that man; he must be bargained with, if our Cause of Liberty is to be saved at all?"—

And now, having opened the dust-bin so far, that the reader's fancy might be stirred without affliction to his lungs and eyes, let us shut it down again,—might we but hope forever! That is too fond a hope. But the background or sustaining element made imaginable, the few events deserving memory may surely go on at a much swifter pace.

Chapter II. — CAMP OF STREHLEN

Friedrich's Silesian Camps this Summer, Camp of Strehlen chiefly, were among the strangest places in the world. Friedrich, as we have often noticed, did not much pursue the defeated Austrians, at or near Mollwitz, or press them towards flat ruin in their Silesian business: it is clear he anxiously wished a bargain without farther exasperation; and hoped he might get it by judicious patience. Brieg he took, with that fine outburst of bombardment, which did not last a week: but Brieg once his, he fell quiet again; kept encamping, here there, in that Mollwitz-Neisse region, for above three months to come; not doing much, beyond the indispensable; negotiating much, or rather negotiated with, and waiting on events. [In Camp of Mollwitz (nearer Brieg than the Battle-field was) till 28th May (after the Battle seven weeks); then to Camp at Grotkau (28th May-9th June, twelve days); thence (9th June) to Friedewalde, Herrnsdorf; to Strehlen (21st June-20th August, nine or ten weeks in all). See *Helden-Geschichte*, i. 924, ii. 931; Rodenbeck, Orlich, &c.]

Both Armies were reinforcing themselves; and Friedrich's, for obvious reasons, in the first weeks especially, became much the stronger. Once in May, and again afterwards, weary of the pace things went at, he had resolved on having Neisse at once; on attacking Neipperg in his strong camp there, and cutting short the tedious janglings and uncertainties. He advanced to

Grotkau accordingly, some twelve or fifteen miles nearer Neisse (28th May,—stayed till 9th June), quite within wind of Neipperg and his outposts; but found still, on closer inspection, that he had better wait;—and do so withal at a greater distance from Neipperg and his Pandour Swarms. He drew back therefore to Strehlen, northwestward, rather farther from Neisse than before; and lay encamped there for nine or ten weeks to come. Not till the beginning of August did there fall out any military event (Pandour skirmishing in plenty, but nothing to call an event); and not till the end of August any that pointed to conclusive results. As it was at Strehlen where mostly these Diplomacies went on, and the Camp of Strehlen was the final and every way the main one, it may stand as the representative of these Diplomatizing Camps to us, and figure as the sole one which in fact it nearly was.

Strehlen is a pleasant little Town, nestled prettily among its granite Hills, the steeple of it visible from Mollwitz; some twenty-five miles west of Brieg, some thirty south of Breslau, and about as far northwest of Neisse: there Friedrich and his Prussians lie, under canvas mainly, with outposts and detachments sprinkled about under roofs:—a Camp of Strehlen, more or less imaginable by the reader. And worth his imagining; such a Camp, if not for soldiering, yet for negotiating and wagging of diplomatic wigs, as there never was before. Here, strangely shifted hither, is the centre of European Politics all Summer. From the utmost ends of Europe come Ambassadors

to Strehlen: from Spain, France, England, Denmark, Holland, —there are sometimes nine at once, how many successively and in total I never knew. [*Helden-Geschichte*, i. 932.] They lodge generally in Breslau; but are always running over to Strehlen. There sits, properly speaking, the general Secret Parliament of Europe; and from most Countries, except Austria, representatives attend at Strehlen, or go and come between Breslau and Strehlen, submissive to the evils of field-life, when need is. A surprising thing enough to mankind, and big as the world in its own day; though gone now to small bulk,—one Human Figure pretty much all that is left of memorable in it to mankind and us.

French Belleisle we have seen; who is gone again, long since, on his wide errands; fat Valori too we have seen, who is assiduously here. The other figures, except the English, can remain dark to us. Of Montijos, the eminent Spaniard, a brown little man, magnificent as the Kingdom of the Incas, with half a page of titles (half a peck, five-and-twenty or more, of handles to his little name, if you should ever require it); who, finding matters so backward at Frankfurt, and nothing to do there, has been out, in the interim, touring to while away the tedium; and is here only as sequel and corroboration of Belleisle,—say as bottle-holder, or as high-wrought peacock's-tail, to Belleisle:—of the eminent Montijos I have to record next to nothing in the shape of negotiation ("Treaty" with the Termagant was once proposed by him here, which Friedrich in his politest way declined);

and shall mention only, That his domestic arrangements were sumptuous and commodious in the extreme. Let him arrive in the meanest village, destitute of human appliances, and be directed to the hut where he is to lodge,—straightway from the fourgons and baggage-chests of Montijos is produced, first of all, a round of arras hangings, portable tables, portable stove, gold plate and silver; thus, with wax-lights, wines of richest vintage, exquisite cookeries, Montijos lodges, a king everywhere, creating an Aladdin's palace everywhere; able to say, like the Sage Bias, OMNIA MEA NAECUM PORTO. These things are recorded of Montijos. What he did in the way of negotiation has escaped men's memory, as it could well afford to do.

Of Hyndford's appurtenances for lodging we already had a glimpse, through Busching once;—pointing towards solid dinner-comforts rather than arras hangings; and justifying the English genius in that respect. The weight of the negotiations fell on Hyndford; it is between him and French Valori that the matter lies, Montijos and the others being mere satellites on their respective sides. Much battered upon, this Hyndford, by refractory Hanoverians pitting George as Elector against the same George as King, and egging these two identities to woful battle with each other,—"Lay me at his Majesty's feet" full length, and let his Majesty say which is which, then! A heavy, eating, haggling, unpleasant kind of mortal, this Hyndford; bites and grunts privately, in a stupid ferocious manner, against this young King: "One of the worst of men; who will not take

up the Cause of Liberty at all, and is not made in the image of Hyndford at all." They are dreadfully stiff reading, those Despatches of Hyndford: but they have particles of current news in them; interesting glimpses of that same young King;—likewise of Hyndford, laid at his Majesty's feet, and begging for self and brothers any good benefice that may fall vacant. We can discern, too, a certain rough tenacity and horse-dealer finesse in the man; a broad-based, shrewdly practical Scotch Gentleman, wide awake; and can conjecture that the diplomatic function, in that element, might have been in worse hands. He is often laid metaphorically at the King's feet, King of England's; and haunts personally the King of Prussia's elbow at all times, watching every glance of him, like a British house-dog, that will not be taken in with suspicious travellers, if he can help it; and casting perpetual horoscopes in his dull mind.

Of Friedrich and his demeanor in this strange scene, centre of a World all drawing sword, and jumbling in huge Diplomatic and other delirium about his ears, the reader will desire to see a direct glimpse or two. As to the sad general Imbroglío of Diplomacies which then weltered everywhere, readers can understand that, it has, at this day, fallen considerably obscure (as it deserved to do); and that even Friedrich's share of it is indistinct in parts. The game, wide as Europe, and one of the most intricate ever played by Diplomatic human creatures, was kept studiously dark while it went on; and it has not since been a pleasant object of study. Many of the Documents are still unpublished, inaccessible; so

that the various moves in the game, especially what the exact dates and sequence of them were (upon which all would turn), are not completely ascertainable,—nor in truth are they much worth hunting after, through such an element. One thing we could wish to have out of it, the one thing of sane that was in it: the demeanor and physiognomy of Friedrich as there manifested; Friedrich alone, or pretty much alone of all these Diplomatic Conjurers, having a solid veritable object in hand. The rest—the spiders are very welcome to it: who of mortals would read it, were it made never so lucid to him? Such traits of Friedrich as can be sifted out into the conceivable and indubitable state, the reader shall have; the extinct Bedlam, that begirdled Friedrich far and wide, need not be resuscitated except for that object. Of Friedrich's fairness, or of Friedrich's "trickiness, machiavelism and attorneyism," readers will form their own notion, as they proceed. On one point they will not be doubtful, That here is such a sharpness of steady eyesight (like the lynx's, like the eagle's), and, privately such a courage and fixity of resolution, as are highly uncommon.

April 26th, 1741, in the same days while Belleisle arrived in the Camp at Mollwitz, and witnessed that fine opening of the cannonade upon Brieg, Excellency Hyndford got to Berlin; and on notifying the event, was invited by the King to come along to Breslau, and begin business. England has been profuse enough in offering her "good offices with Austria" towards making a bargain for his Prussian Majesty; but is busy also,

at the Hague, concerting with the Dutch "some strong joint resolution,"—resolution, Openly to advise Friedrich to withdraw his troops from Silesia, by way of starting fair towards a bargain. A very strong resolution, they and the Gazetteers think it; and ask themselves, Is it not likely to have some effect? Their High Mightinesses have been screwing their courage, and under English urgency, have decided (April 24th), [*Helden-Geschichte*, i. 964; the ADVICE itself, a very mild-spoken Piece, but of riskish nature think the Dutch, is given, ib. 965, 966.] "Yes, we will jointly so advise!" and Friedrich has got inkling of it from Rasfeld, his Minister there. Hyndford's first business (were the Dutch Excellency once come up, but those Dutch are always hanging astern!) is to present said "Advice," and try what will come of that, An "Advice" now fallen totally insignificant to the Universe and to us,—only that readers will wish to see how Friedrich takes it, and if any feature of Friedrich discloses itself in the affair.

**EXCELLENCY HYNDFORD
HAS HIS FIRST AUDIENCE
(Camp of Mollwitz, May 7th);
AND FRIEDRICH MAKES A
MOST IMPORTANT TREATY,
—NOT WITH HYNDFORD**

May 2d, Hyndford arrived in Breslau; and after some preliminary flourishings, and difficulties about post-horses and furnitures in a seat of War, got to Brieg; and thence, May 7th, "to the Camp [Camp of Mollwitz still], which is about an English mile off,"—Podewils escorting him from Brieg, and what we note farther, Pollnitz too; our poor old Pollnitz, some kind of Chief Goldstick, whom we did not otherwise know to be on active duty in those rude scenes. Belleisle had passed through Breslau while Hyndford was there:—"am unable to inform your Lordship what success he has had." Brieg Siege is done only three days ago; Castle all lying black; and the new trenching and fortifying hardly begun. In a word, May 7th, 1741, "about 11 A.M.," Excellency Hyndford is introduced to the King's Tent, and has his First Audience. Goldstick having done his motions, none but Podewils is left present; who sits at a table, taking notes of what is said. Podewils's Notes are invisible to me; but here, in authentic though carefully compressed state, is Hyndford's

minute Narrative:—

Excellency Hyndford mentioned the Instructions he had, as to "good offices," friendship and so forth. "But his Prussian Majesty had hardly patience to hear me out; and said in a passion [we rise, where possible, Hyndford's own wording; readers will allow for the leaden quality in some parts]:—KING (in a passion). 'How is it possible, my Lord, to believe things so contradictory? It is mighty fine all this that you now tell me, on the part of the King of England; but how does it correspond to his last Speech to his Parliament [19th April last, when Mr. Viner was in such minority of one] and to the doings of his Ministers at Petersburg [a pretty Partition-Treaty that; and the Excellency Finch still busy, as I know!] and at the Hague [Excellency Trevor there, and this beautiful Joint-Resolution and Advice which is coming!] to stir up allies against me? I have reason rather to doubt the sincerity of the King of England. They perhaps mean to amuse me. [That is Friedrich's real opinion. [His Letter to Podewils (Ranke, ii. 268).]] But, by God, they are mistaken! I will risk everything rather than abate the least of my pretensions.'"

Poor Hyndford said and mumbled what he could; knew nothing what instructions Finch had, Trevor had, and—KING. "My Lord, there seems to be a contradiction in all this. The King of England, in his Letter, tells me you are instructed as to everything; and yet you pretend ignorance! But I am perfectly informed of all. And I should not be surprised if, after all these fine words, you should receive some strong letter or resolution

for me,"—Joint-Resolution to Advise, for example?

Hyndford, not in the strength of conscious innocence, stands silent; the King, "in his heat of passion," said to Podewils:—**KING TO PODEWILS** (on the sudden). "Write down, that my Lord would be surprised [as he should be] to receive such Instructions!" (A mischievous sparkle, half quizzical, half practical, considerably in the Friedrich style.)—Hyndford, "quite struck, my Lord, with this strange way of acting," and of poking into one, protests with angry grunt, and "was put extremely upon my guard." Of course Podewils did not write....

HYNDFORD. "Europe is under the necessity of taking some speedy resolution, things are in such a state of crisis. Like a fever in a human body, got to such a height that quinquina becomes necessary.' ... That expression made him smile, and he began to look a little cooler.... 'Shall we apply to Vienna, your Majesty?'

FRIEDRICH. "Follow your own will in that.'

HYNDFORD. "Would your Majesty consent now to stand by his Excellency Gotter's original Offer at Vienna on your part? Agree, namely, in consideration of Lower Silesia and Breslau, to assist the Queen with all your troops for maintenance of Pragmatic Sanction, and to vote for the Grand-Duke as Kaiser?'

KING. "Yes' [what the reader may take notice of, and date for himself].

HYNDFORD. "What was the sum of money then offered her Hungarian Majesty?'

"King hesitated, as if he had forgotten; Podewils answered,

'Three million florins (300,000 pounds).'

KING. "'I should not value the money; if money would content her Majesty, I would give more.'... Here was a long pause, which I did not break;"—nor would the King. Podewils reminded me of an idea we had been discoursing of together ("on his suggestion, my Lord, which I really think is of importance, and worth your Lordship's consideration"); whereupon, on such hint,

HYNDFORD. "'Would your Majesty consent to an Armistice?'

FRIEDRICH. "'Yes; but [counts on his fingers, May, June, till he comes to December] not for less than six months,—till December 1st. By that time they could do nothing,'" the season out by that time.

HYNDFORD. "'His Excellency Podewils has been taking notes; if I am to be bound by them, might I first see that he has mistaken nothing?'

KING. "'Certainly!'"—Podewils's Note-protocol is found to be correct in every point; Hyndford, with some slight flourish of compliments on both sides, bows himself away (invited to dinner, which he accepts, "will surely have that honor before returning to Breslau");—and so the First Audience has ended. [Hyndford's Despatches, Breslau, 5th and 13th May, 1741. Are in State-Paper Office, like the rest of Hyndford's; also in British Museum (Additional MSS. 11,365 &c.), the rough draughts of them.] Baronay and Pandours are about,—this is ten days before the Ziethen feat on Baronay;—but no Pandour, now or afterwards,

will harm a British Excellency.

These utterances of Friedrich's, the more we examine them by other lights that there are, become the more correctly expressive of what Friedrich's real feelings were on the occasion. Much contrary, perhaps, to expectation of some readers. And indeed we will here advise our readers to prepare for dismissing altogether that notion of Friedrich's duplicity, mendacity, finesse and the like, which was once widely current in the world; and to attend always strictly to what Friedrich says, if they wish to guess what he is thinking;—there being no such thing as "mendacity" discoverable in Friedrich, when you take the trouble to inform yourself. "Mendacity," my friends? How busy have the Owls been with Friedrich's memory, in different countries of the world;—perhaps even more than their sad wont is in such cases! For indeed he was apt to be of swift abrupt procedure, disregardful of Owlery; and gave scope for misunderstanding in the course of his life. But a veracious man he was, at all points; not even conscious of his veracity; but had it in the blood of him; and never looked upon "mendacity" but from a very great height indeed. He does not, except where suitable, at least he never should, express his whole meaning; but you will never find him expressing what is not his meaning. Reticence, not dissimulation. And as to "finesse,"—do not believe in that either, in the vulgar or bad sense. Truly you will find his finesse is a very fine thing; and that it consists, not in deceiving other people, but in being right himself; in well discerning, for his own behoof,

what the facts before him are; and in steering, which he does steadily, in a most vigilant, nimble, decisive and intrepid manner, by monition of the same. No salvation but in the facts. Facts are a kind of divine thing to Friedrich; much more so than to common men: this is essentially what Religion I have found in Friedrich. And, let me assure you, it is an invaluable element in any man's Religion, and highly indispensable, though so often dispensed with! Readers, especially in our time English readers, who would gain the least knowledge about Friedrich, in the extinct Bedlam where his work now lay, have a great many things to forget, and sad strata of Owl-droppings, ancient and recent, to sweep away!

To Friedrich a bargain with Austria, which would be a getting into port, in comparison to going with the French in that distracted voyage of theirs, is highly desirable. "Shall I join with the English, in hope of some tolerable bargain from Austria? Shall I have to join with the French, in despair of any?" Readers may consider how stringent upon Friedrich that question now was, and how ticklish to solve. And it must be solved soon,—under penalty of "being left with no ally at all" (as Friedrich expresses himself), while the whole world is grouping itself into armed heaps for and against! If the English would but get me a bargain—? Friedrich dare not think they will. Nay, scanning these English incoherences, these contradictions between what they say here and what they do and say elsewhere, he begins to doubt if they zealously wish it,—and at last to believe that they

sincerely do not wish it; that "they mean to amuse me" (as he said to Hyndford)—till my French chance too is over. "To amuse me: but, PAR DIEU—!" His Notes to Podewils, of which Ranke, who has seen them, gives us snatches, are vivid in that sense: "I should be ashamed if the cunningest Italian could dupe me, but that a lout of a Hanoverian should do it!"—and Podewils has great difficulty to keep him patient yet a little; Valori being so busy on the other side, and the time so pressing. Here are some dates and some comments, which the reader should take with him;—here is a very strange issue to the Joint-Resolution of a strong nature now on hand!

A few days after that First Audience, Ginkel the Dutch Excellency, with the due Papers in his pocket, did arrive. Excellency Hyndford, who is not without rough insight into what lies under his nose, discovers clearly that the grand Dutch-English Resolution, or Joint-Exhortation to evacuate Silesia, will do nothing but mischief; and (at his own risk, persuading Ginkel also to delay) sends a Courier to England before presenting it. And from England, in about a fortnight, gets for answer, "Do harm, think you? Hm, ha!—Present it, all the same; and modify by assurances afterwards,"—as if these would much avail! This is not the only instance in which St. James's rejects good advice from its Hyndford; the pity would be greater, were not the Business what it is! Podewils has the greatest difficulty to keep Friedrich quiet till Hyndford's courier get back. And on his getting back with such answer, "Present it all the

same," Friedrich will not wait for that ceremony, or delay a moment longer. Friedrich has had his Valori at work, all this while; Valori and Podewils, and endless correspondence and consultation going on; and things hypothetically almost quite ready; so that—

June 5th, 1741, Friedrich, spurring Podewils to the utmost speed, and "ordering secrecy on pain of death," signs his Treaty with France! A kind of provisional off-and-on Treaty, I take it to be; which was never published, and is thought to have had many IFS in it: signs this Treaty;—and next day (June 6th, such is the impetuosity of haste) instructs his Rasfeld at the Hague, "You will beforehand inform the High Mightinesses, in regard to that Advice of April 24th, which they determined on giving me, through the Excellency Herr von Ginkel along with Excellency Hyndford, That such Advice can, by me, only be considered as a blind complaisance to the Court of Vienna's improper urgencies, improper in such a matter. That for certain I will not quit Silesia till my claims be satisfied. And the longer I am forced to continue warring for them here," wasting more resource and risk upon them, "the higher they will rise!" [*Helden-Geschichte*, i. 963.] And this is what comes of that terribly courageous Dutch-English "Joint-Resolution of a strong nature;" it has literally cut before the point: the Exhortation is not yet presented, but the Treaty with France is signed in virtue of it!—

Undoubtedly this of June 5th is the most important Treaty in the Austrian-Succession War, and the cardinal element of

Friedrich's procedure in that Adventure. And it has never been published; nor, till Herr Professor Ranke got access to the Prussian Archives, has even the date of signing it been rightly known; but is given two or three ways in different express Collections of Treaties. [Scholl, ii. 297 (copying "Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplom. Franc.* v. 142"), gives "5th July" as the date; Adelung (ii. 357, 390, 441) guesses that it was "in August;" Valori (i. 108), who was himself in it, gives the correct date, —but then his Editor (thought inquiring readers) was such a sloven and ignoramus. See Stenzel, iv. 143; Ranke, ii. 274.] Herr Ranke knows this Treaty, and the correspondences, especially Friedrich's correspondence with Podewils preparatory to it; and speaks, as his wont is, several exact things about it; thanks to him, in the circumstances. I wish it could be made, even with his help, fully intelligible to the reader! For, were the Treaty never so express, surely the mode of keeping it, on both parts, was very strange; and that latter concerns us somewhat.

A very fast-and-loose Treaty, to all appearance! Outwardly it is a mere Treaty of Alliance, each party guaranteeing the other for Fifteen Years; without mention made of the joint Belleisle Adventure now in the wind. But then, like the postscript to a lady's letter, there come "secret articles" bearing upon that essential item: How France, in the course of this current season 1741, is to bring an Army across the Rhine in support of its friend Kur-Baiern VERSUS Austria; is, in the same term of time, to make Sweden declare war on Russia (important for Friedrich,

who is never sure a moment that those Russians will not break in upon him); and finally, most important of all, That France "guarantees Lower Silesia with Breslau to his Prussian Majesty." In return for which his Prussian Majesty—will do what? It is really difficult to say what: Be a true ally and second to France in its grand German Adventure? Not at all. Friedrich does not yet know, nor does Belleisle himself quite precisely, what the grand German Adventure is; and Friedrich's wishes never were, nor will be, for the prosperity of that. Support France, at least in its small Bavarian Anti-Austrian Adventure? By no means definitely even that. "Maintain myself in Lower Silesia with Breslau, and fight my best to such end:" really that, you might say, is in substance the most of what Friedrich undertakes; though inarticulately he finds himself bound to much more,—and will frankly go into it, IF you do as you have said; and unless you do, will not. Never was a more contingent Treaty: "unless you stir up Sweden, Messieurs; unless you produce that Rhine Army; unless—" such is steadily Friedrich's attitude; long after this, he refuses to say whom he will vote for as Kaiser: "Fortune of War will decide it," answers he, in regard to that and to many other things; and keeps himself to an incomprehensible extent loose; ready, for weeks and months after, to make bargain on his own Silesian Affair with anybody that can. [Ranke, ii. 271, 275, 280.]

For indeed the French also are very contingent; Fleury hanging one way, Belleisle pushing another; and know not how far they will go on the grand German Adventure, nor conclusively

whether at all. Here is an Anecdote by Friedrich himself. Valori was, one night, with him; and, on rising to take leave, the fat hand, sticking probably in the big waistcoat-pocket, twitched out a little diplomatic-looking Note; which Friedrich, with gentle adroitness (permissible in such circumstances), set his foot upon, till Valori had bowed himself out. The Note was from Amelot, French Minister of the Foreign Department: "Don't give his Prussian Majesty Glatz, if it can possibly be helped." Very well, thought Friedrich; and did not forget the fine little Note on burning it. [*OEuvres de Frederic*, ii. 90.] There went, in French couriers' bags, a great many such, to Austria some of them, of far more questionable tenor, within the next twelve months.

Two things we have to remark: **FIRST**, That Friedrich, with an eye to real business on his part in the Bavarian Adventure, in which Kur-Pfalz is sure to accompany, volunteered (like a real man of business, and much to Belleisle's surprise) to renounce the Berg-Julich controversy, and let Kur-Pfalz have his way, that there might be no quarrelling among allies. This too is contingent; but was gladly accepted by Belleisle. **SECOND**, That Belleisle had instructed Valori, Not to insist on active help from Friedrich in the German Adventure, but merely to stipulate for his Neutrality throughout, in case they could get no more. How joyfully would Friedrich have accepted this,—had Valori volunteered with it, which he did not! [Ranke, ii. 280.] But, after all, in result it was the same; and had to be,—**PLUS** only a great deal of clamor by and by, from the French and the Gazetteers,

about the Article in question.

Was there ever so contingent a Treaty before? It is signed, Breslau, 5th June, 1741, and both parties have their hands loose, and make use of their liberty for months to come; nay, in some sort, all along; feeling how contingent it was! Friedrich did not definitely tie himself till 4th November next, five months after: when he signed the French-Bavarian Treaty, renounced Berg-Julich controversies, and fairly went into the French-Bavarian, smaller French Adventure; into the greater, or wide-winged Belleisle one, he never went nor intended to go,—perhaps even the contrary, if needful. Readers may try to remember these elucidative items, riddled from the immensities of Dryasdust: I have no more to give, nor can afford to return upon it. May not we well say, as above, "A Treaty thought to have many IFS in it!"—And now, 8th June, comes solemnly the Joint-Resolution itself; like mustard (under a flourish of trumpets) three days after dinner:—

"CAMP OF GROTKAU, 8th JUNE. Hyndford and Ginkel [the same respectable old Ginkel whom we used to know in Friedrich Wilhelm's time], having, according to renewed order, got out from Breslau with that formidable Dutch-English 'Advice' or Joint-Exhortation in their pocket, did this day in the Camp at Grotkau present the same. A very mild-spoken Piece, though it had required such courage; and which is not now worth speaking of, things having gone as we see. Friedrich received it with a gracious mien: 'Infinitely sensible to the trouble his

Britannic Majesty and their High Mightinesses took with his affairs; Document should receive his best consideration,'—which indeed it has already done, and its Answer withal: A FRENCH Treaty signed three days ago, in virtue of it! 'Might I request a short Private Audience of your Majesty?' solicits Hyndford, intending to modify by new assurances, as bidden.—'Surely,' answers Friedrich.

"The two Excellencies dine with the King, who is in high spirits. After dinner, Hyndford gets his Private Audience; does his best in the way of 'new assurances;' which produce what effect we can fancy. Among other things, he appeals to the King's 'magnanimity, how grand and generous it will be to accept moderate terms from Austria, to—' KING (interrupting): 'My Lord, don't talk to me of magnanimity, a Prince [acting not for himself but for his Nation] ought to consult his interest in the first place. I am not against Peace: but I expect to have Four Duchies given me.'" [State-Paper Office (Hyndford, Breslau, 12th June, 1741).]

Hyndford and Ginkel slept that night in Grotkau Town: "at 4 next morning the King sent us word, That if we had a mind to see the Army on march," just moving off, Strehlen way, "we might come out by the North Gate." We accordingly saw the whole Army leave Camp; and march in four columns towards Friedewald, where Marshal Neipperg is encamped. "Not a bit of it, your Excellency! Neipperg is safe at Neisse; amid inaccessible embankments and artificial mud: and these are mere Hussar-

Pandour rabble out here; whom a push or two sends home again,—would it could keep them there! But they are of sylvan (or SALVAGE) nature, affecting the shade; and burst out, for theft and arson, sometimes at great distances, no calculating where. The King's Army lay all that night upon their arms, and encamped next morning, the 10th. I believe nothing happened that day, for we were obliged to stay at Grotkau, for want of post-horses, a good part of it."

Hyndford hears (in secret Opposition Circles, and lays the flattering unction to his soul and your Lordship's): "The King of Prussia's Army, as I am informed, unless he will take counsel, another campaign will go near to ruin. Everything is in the greatest disorder; utmost dejection amongst the Officers from highest to lowest;"—fact being that the King has important improvements and new drillings in view (to go on at Strehlen), Cavalry improvements, Artillery improvements, unknown to Hyndford and the Opposition; and will not be ruined next campaign. "I hope the news we have here, of the taking of Carthagera, is true," concludes he. Alas, your Excellency!

By a different hand, from the southward Hungarian regions, far over the Hills, take this other entry; almost of enthusiastic style:—

"PRESBURG, 25th JUNE. Maria Theresa, in high spirits about her English Subsidy and the bright aspects, left Vienna about a week ago for Presburg [a drive of fifty miles down the fine Donau country]; and is celebrating her Coronation there, as

Queen of Hungary, in a very sublime manner. Sunday, 25th June, 1741, that is the day of putting on your Crown,—Iron Crown of St. Stephen, as readers know. The Chivalry of Hungary, from Palfy and Esterhazy downward, and all the world are there; shining in loyalty and barbaric gold and pearl. A truly beautiful Young Woman, beautiful to soul and eye, devout too and noble, though ill-informed in Political or other Science, is in the middle of it, and makes the scene still more noticeable to us. See, as the finish of the ceremonies, she has mounted a high swift horse, sword girt to her side,—a great rider always, this young Queen;—and gallops, Hungary following like a comet-tail, to the Konigsberg [KING'S-HILL so called; no great things of a Hill, O reader; made by barrow, you can see], to the top of the Konigsberg; there draws sword; and cuts, grandly flourishing, to the Four Quarters of the Heavens: 'Let any mortal, from whatever quarter coming, meddle with Hungary if he dare!' [Adelung, ii. 293, 294.] Chivalrous Hungary bursts into passionate acclaim; old Palfy, I could fancy, into tears; and all the world murmurs to itself, with moist-gleaming eyes, 'REX NOSTER!' This is, in fact, the beautifulest King or Queen that now is, this radiant young woman; beautiful things have been, and are to be, reported of her; and she has a terrible voyage just ahead,—little dreaming of it at this grand moment. I wish his Britannic Majesty, or Robinson who has followed out hither, could persuade her to some compliance on the Silesian matter: what a thing were that, for herself, and for all mankind, just now! But she will not hear

of that; and is very obstinate, and her stupid Hofraths equally and much more blamably so. Deaf to hard Facts knocking at their door; ignorant what Noah's-Deluges have broken out upon them, and are rushing on inevitable."

By a notable coincidence, precisely while those sword-flourishings go on at Presburg, Marechal Excellency Belleisle is making his Public Entry into Frankfurt-on-Mayn: [25th June, 1741 (Adelung, ii. 399).] Frankfurt too is in cheery emotion; streets populous with Sunday gazers, and critics of the sublime in spectacle! This is not Belleisle's first entrance; he himself has been here some time, settling his Household, and a good many things: but today he solemnly leads in his Countess and Appendages (over from Metz, where Madame and he officially reside in common times, "Governor of Metz," one of his many offices);—leads in Madame, in suitably resplendent manner; to kindle household fire, as it were; and indicate that here is his place, till he have got a Kaiser to his mind. Twin Phenomena, these two; going on 500 miles apart; unconscious of one another, or of what kinship they happen to have!—

EXCELLENCY ROBINSON BUSY IN THE VIENNA HOFRATH CIRCLES, TO PRODUCE A COMPLIANCE

Britannic George, both for Pragmatic's sake and for dear Hanover's, desires much there were a bargain made with Friedrich: How is the Pragmatic to be saved at all, if Friedrich join France in its Belleisle machinations, thinks George? And already here is that Camp of Götting, glittering in view like a drawn sword pointed at one's throat or at one's Hanover. Nay, in a month or two hence, as the Belleisle schemes got above ground in the shape of facts, this desire became passionate, and a bargain with Prussia seemed the one thing needful. For, alas, the reader will see there comes, about that time, a second sword (the Maillebois Army, namely), pointed at one's throat from the French side of things: so that a Paladin of the Pragmatic, and Hanoverian King of England, knows not which way to turn! George's sincerity of wish is perhaps underrated by Friedrich; who indeed knows well enough on which side George's wishes would fall, if they had liberty (which they have not), but much overrates "the astucity" of poor George and his English; ascribing, as is often done, to fine-spun attorneyism what is mere cunctation, ignorance, negligence, and other forms of a stupidity

perhaps the most honest in the world! By degrees Friedrich understood better; but he never much liked the English ways of doing business. George's desire is abundantly sincere, not wholly resting on sublime grounds; and grows more and more intense every day; but could not be gratified for a good while yet.

Co-operating with Hyndford, from the Vienna side, is Excellency Robinson; who has a still harder job of it there. Pity poor Robinson, O English reader, if you can for indignation at the business he is in. Saving the Liberties of Europe! thinks Robinson confidently: Founding the English National Debt, answers Fact; and doing Bottom the Weaver, with long ears, in the miserablest Pickleherring Tragedy that ever was!—This is the same Robinson who immortalized himself, nine or ten years ago, by the First Treaty of Vienna; thrice-salutary Treaty, which DISJOINED Austria from Bourbon-Spanish Alliances, and brought her into the arms of the grateful Sea-Powers again. Imminent Downfall of the Universe was thus, glory to Robinson, arrested for that time. And now we have the same Robinson instructed to sharpen all his faculties to the cutting pitch, and do the impossible for this new and reverse face of matters. What a change from 1731 to 1741! Bugbear of dreadful Austrian-Spanish Alliance dissolves now into sunlit clouds, encircling a beautiful Austrian Andromeda, about to be devoured for us; and the Downfall of the Universe is again imminent, from Spain and others joining AGAINST Austria. Oh, ye wigs, and eximious wig-blocks, called right-honorable! If a man, sovereign or other,

were to stay well at home, and mind his own visible affairs, trusting a good deal that the Universe would shift for itself, might it not be better for him? Robinson, who writes rather a heavy style, but is full of inextinguishable heavy zeal withal, will have a great deal to do in these coming years. Ancestor of certain valuable Earls that now are; author of immeasurable quantities of the Diplomatic cobwebs that then were.

To a modern English reader it is very strange, that Austrian scene of things in which poor Robinson is puffing and laboring. The ineffable pride, the obstinacy, impotency, ponderous pedantry and helplessness of that dull old Court and its Hofraths, is nearly inconceivable to modern readers. Stupid dilapidation is in all departments, and has long been; all things lazily crumbling downwards, sometimes stumbling down with great plunges. Cash is done; the world rising, all round, with plunderous intentions; and hungry Ruin, you would say, coming visibly on with seven-league boots: here is little room for carrying your head high among mankind. High nevertheless they do carry it, with a grandly mournful though stolid insolent air, as if born superior to this Earth and its wisdoms and successes and multiplication-tables and iron ramrods,—really with "a certain greatness," says somebody, "greatness as of great blockheadism" in themselves and their neighbors;—and, like some absurd old Hindoo Idol (crockery Idol of Somnauth, for instance, with the belly of him smashed by battle-axes, and the cart-load of gold coin all run out), persuade mankind that they are a god, though in dilapidated

condition. That is our first impression of the thing.

But again, better seen into, there is not wanting a certain worthily steadfast, conservative and broad-based high air (reminding you of "Kill our own mutton, Sir!" and the ancient English Tory species), solid and loyal, though stolid Ancient Austrian Tories, that definition will suffice for us;—and Toryism too, the reader may rely on it, is much patronized by the Upper Powers, and goes a long way in this world. Nay, without a good solid substratum of that, what thing, with never so many ballot-boxes, stump-orators, and liberties of the subject, is capable of going at all, except swiftly to perdition? These Austrians have taken a great deal of ruining, first and last! Their relation to the then Sea-Powers, especially to England embarked on the Cause of Liberty, fills one with amazement, by no means of an idolatrous nature; and is difficult to understand at all, or to be patient with at all.

Of disposition to comply with Prussia, Robinson finds, in spite of Mollwitz and the sad experiences, no trace at Vienna. The humor at Vienna is obstinately defiant; simply to regard Friedrich as a housebreaker or thief in the night; whom they will soon deal with, were they once on foot and implements in their hand: "Swift, ye Sea-Powers; where are the implements, the cash, that means implements?" The Young Hungarian Majesty herself is magnificently of that opinion, which is sanctioned by her Bartensteins and wisest Hofraths, with hardly a dissentient (old Sinzendorf almost alone in his contrary notion, and he soon

dies). Robinson urges the dangers from France. No Hofrath here will allow himself to believe them; to believe them would be too horrible. "Depend upon it, France's intentions are not that way. And at the worst, if France do rise against us, it is but bargaining with France; better so than bargaining with Prussia, surely. France will be contentable with something in the Netherlands; what else can she want of us? Parings from that outskirt, what are these compared with Silesia, a horrid gash into the vital parts? And what is yielding to the King of France, compared with yielding to your Prussian King!"—

It is true they have no money, these blind dull people; but are not the Sea-Powers, England especially, there, created by Nature to supply money? What else is their purpose in Creation? By Nature's law, as the Sun mounts in the Ecliptic and then falls, these Sea-Powers, in the Cause of Liberty, will furnish us money. No surrender; talk not to me of Silesia or surrender; I will die defending my inheritances: what are the Sea-Powers about, that they do not furnish more money in a prompt manner? These are the things poor Robinson has to listen to: Robinson and England, it is self-evident at Vienna, have one duty, that of furnishing money. And in a prompt manner, if you please, Sir; why not prompt and abundant?

An English soul has small exhilaration, looking into those old expenditures, and bullyings for want of promptitude! But if English souls will solemnly, under high Heaven, constitute a Duke of Newcastle and a George II. their Captains of the march

Heavenward, and say, without blushing for it, nay rejoicing at it, in the face of the sun, "You are the most godlike Two we could lay hold of for that object,"—what have English souls to expect? My consolation is, and, alas, it is a poor one, the money would have been mostly wasted any way. Buy men and gunpowder with your money, to be shot away in foreign parts, without renown or use: is that so much worse than buying ridiculous upholsteries, idle luxuries, frivolities, and in the end unbeautiful pot-bellies corporeal and spiritual with it, here at home? I am struck silent, looking at much that goes on under these stars;—and find that misappoinment of your Captains, of your Exemplars and Guiding and Governing individuals, higher and lower, is a fatal business always; and that especially, as highest instance of it, which includes all the lower ones, this of solemnly calling Chief Captain, and King by the Grace of God, a gentleman who is NOT so (and SEEMS to be so mainly by Malice of the Devil, and by the very great and nearly unforgivable indifference of Mankind to resist the Devil in that particular province, for the present), is the deepest fountain of human wretchedness, and the head mendacity capable of being done!—

As for the brave young Queen of Hungary, my admiration goes with that of all the world. Not in the language of flattery, but of evident fact, the royal qualities abound in that high young Lady; had they left the world, and grown to mere costume elsewhere, you might find certain of them again here. Most brave, high and pious-minded; beautiful too, and radiant with

good-nature, though of temper that will easily catch fire: there is perhaps no nobler woman then living. And she fronts the roaring elements in a truly grand feminine manner; as if Heaven itself and the voice of Duty called her: "The Inheritances which my Fathers left me, we will not part with these. Death, if it so must be; but not dishonor:—Listen not to that thief in the night!" Maria Theresa has not studied, at all, the History of the Silesian Duchies; she knows only that her Father and Grandfather peaceably held them; it was not she that sent out Seckendorf to ride 25,000 miles, or broke the heart of Friedrich Wilhelm and his Household. Pity she had not complied with Friedrich, and saved such rivers of bitterness to herself and mankind! But how could she see to do it,—especially with little George at her back, and abundance of money? This, for the present, is her method of looking at the matter; this magnanimous, heroic, and occasionally somewhat female one.

Her Husband, the Grand Duke, an inert, but good-tempered, well-conditioned Duke after his sort, goes with her. Him we shall see try various things; and at length take to banking and merchandise, and even meal-dealing on the great scale. "Our Armies had most part of their meal circuitously from him," says Friedrich, of times long subsequent. Now as always he follows loyally his Wife's lead, never she his: Wife being, intrinsically as well as extrinsically, the better man, what other can he do?—Of compliance with Friedrich in this Court, there is practically no hope till after a great deal of beating have enlightened it. Out of

deference to George and his ardors, they pretend some intention that way; and are "willing to bargain, your Excellency;"—no doubt of it, provided only the price were next to nothing!

And so, while the watchful edacious Hyndford is doing his best at Strehlen, poor Robinson, blown into triple activity, corresponds in a boundless zealous manner from Vienna; and at last takes to flying personally between Strehlen and Vienna; praying the inexorable young Queen to comply a little, and then the inexorable young King to be satisfied with imaginary compliance; and has a breathless time of it indeed. His Despatches, passionately long-winded, are exceedingly stiff reading to the like of us. O reader, what things have to be read and carefully forgotten; what mountains of dust and ashes are to be dug through, and tumbled down to Orcus, to disengage the smallest fraction of truly memorable! Well if, in ten cubic miles of dust and ashes, you discover the tongue of a shoe-buckle that has once belonged to a man in the least heroic; and wipe your brow, invoking the supernal and the infernal gods. My heart's desire is to compress these Strehlen Diplomatic horse-dealings into the smallest conceivable bulk. And yet how much that is not metal, that is merely cinders, has got through: impossible to prevent,—may the infernal gods deal with it, and reduce Dryasdust to limits, one day! Here, however, are important Public News transpiring through the old Gazetteers:—

"MUNCHEN, JULY 1st [or in effect a few days later, when the Letters DATED July 1st had gone through their circuitous

formalities], [Adelung, ii. 421.] Karl Albert Kur-Baiern publicly declares himself Candidate for the Kaisership; as, privately, he had long been rumored and believed to be. Kur-Baiern, they say, has of militias and regulars together about 30,000 men on foot, all posted in good places along the Austrian Frontier; and it is commonly thought, though little credible at Vienna, that he intends invading Austria as well as contesting the Election. To which the Vienna Hofrath answers in the style of 'Pshaw!'

"VERSAILLES, 11th JULY. Extraordinary Council of State; Belleisle being there, home from Frankfurt, to take final orders, and get official fiat put upon his schemes. 'All the Princes of the Blood and all the Marechals of France attend;' question is, How the War is to be, nay, Whether War is to be at all,—so contingent is the French-Prussian Bargain, signed five weeks ago. Old Fleury, to give freedom of consultation and vote, quits the room. Some are of opinion, one Prince of the Blood emphatically so, That Pragmatic Sanction should be kept, at least War AGAINST it be avoided. But the contrary opinion triumphs, King himself being strongly with it; Belleisle to be supreme in field and cabinet; shall execute, like a kind of Dictator or Vice-Majesty, by his own magnificent talent, those magnificent devisings of his, glorious to France and to the King. [Ib. 417, 418; see also Baumer, p. 104 (if you can for his date, which is given in OLD STYLE as if it were in New; a very eclipsing method!)] These many months, the French have been arming with their whole might. The Vienna people hear now, That an 'Army of 40,000 is rumored to be

coming,' or even two Armies, 40,000 each; but will not imagine that this is certain, or that it can be seriously meant against their high House, precious to gods and men. Belleisle having perfected the multiplex Army details, rushes back to Frankfurt and his endless Diplomatic businesses (July 25th): Armies to be on actual march by the 10th of August coming. 'During this Versailles visit, he had such a crowd of Officers and great people paying court to him as was like the King's Levee itself.' [Barbier, ii. 305.]

"PASSAU, 31st JULY. Passau is the Frontier Austrian City on the Donau (meeting of the Inn and Donau Valleys); a place of considerable strength, and a key or great position for military purposes. Austrian, or Quasi-Austrian; for, like Salzburg, it has a Bishop claiming some imaginary sovereignties, but always holds with Austria. July 31st, early in the morning, a Bavarian Exciseman ('Salt-Inspector') applied at the gate of Passau for admission; gate was opened;—along with the Exciseman 'certain peasants' (disguised Bavarian soldiers) pushed in; held the gate choked, till General Minuzzi, Karl Albert's General, with horse, foot, cannon, who had been lurking close by, likewise pushed in; and at once seized the Town. Town speedily secured, Minuzzi informs the Bishop, who lives in his Schloss of Oberhaus (strongish place on a Hill-top, other side the Donau), That he likewise, under pain of bombardment, must admit garrison. The poor Bishop hesitates; but, finding bombardment actually ready for him, yields in about two hours. Karl Albert publishes his

Manifesto, 'in forty-five pages folio' [Adelung, ii. 426.] (to the effect, 'All Austria mine; or as good as all,—if I liked!'); and fortifies himself in Passau. 'Insidious, nefarious!' shrieks Austria, in Counter-Manifesto; calculates privately it will soon settle Karl Albert,—'Unless, O Heavens, France with Prussia did mean to back him!'—and begins to have misgivings, in spite of itself."

Misgivings, which soon became fatal certainties. Robinson records, doubtless on sure basis, though not dating it, a curious piece of stage-effect in the form of reality; "On hearing, beyond possibility of doubt, that Prussia, France, and Bavaria had combined, the whole Aulic Council," Vienna Hofrath in a body, "fell back into their chairs [and metaphorically into Robinson's arms] like dead men!" [Raumer, p. 104.] Sat staring there;—the wind struck out of them, but not all the folly by a great deal. Now, however, is Robinson's time to ply them.

EXCELLENCY ROBINSON HAS AUDIENCE OF FRIEDRICH (Camp of Strehlen, 7th August, 1741)

By unheard-of entreaties and conjurations, aided by these strokes of fate, Robinson has at length extorted from his Queen of Hungary, and her wise Hofraths, something resembling a phantasm of compliance; with which he hurries to Breslau and Hyndford; hoping against hope that Friedrich will accept it as a reality. Gets to Breslau on the 3d of August; thence to

Strehlen, consulting much with Hyndford upon this phantasm of a compliance. Hyndford looks but heavily upon it;—from us, in this place, far be it to look at all:—alas, this is the famed Scene they Two had at Strehlen with Friedrich, on Monday, August 7th; reported by the faithful pen of Robinson, and vividly significant of Friedrich, were it but compressed to the due pitch. We will give it in the form of Dialogue: the thing of itself falls naturally into the Dramatic, when the flabby parts are cut away;—and was perhaps worthier of a Shakspeare than of a Robinson, all facts of it considered, in the light they have since got.

Scene is Friedrich's Tent, Prussian Camp in the neighborhood of the little Town of Strehlen: time 11 o'clock A.M. Personages of it, Two British subjects in the high Diplomatic line: ponderous Scotch Lord of an edacious gloomy countenance; florid Yorkshire Gentleman with important Proposals in his pocket. Costume, frizzled peruke powdered; frills, wrist-frills and other; shoe-buckles, flapped waistcoat, court-coat of antique cut and much trimming: all this shall be conceived by the reader. Tight young Gentleman in Prussian military uniform, blue coat, buff breeches, boots; with alert flashing eyes, and careless elegant bearing, salutes courteously, raising his plumed hat. Podewils in common dress, who has entered escorting the other Two, sits rather to rearward, taking refuge beside the writing apparatus.—First passages of the Dialogue I omit: mere pickeerings and beatings about the bush, before we come to close quarters. For Robinson, the florid Yorkshire Gentleman,

is charged to offer,—what thinks the reader?—two million guilders, about 200,000 pounds, if that will satisfy this young military King with the alert Eyes!

ROBINSON.... "Two hundred thousand pounds sterling, if your Majesty will be pleased to retire out of Silesia, and renounce this enterprise!"

KING. "Retire out of Silesia? And for money? Do you take me for a beggar! Retire out of Silesia, which has cost me so much treasure and blood in the conquest of it? No, Monsieur, no; that is not to be thought of! If you have no better proposals to make, it is not worth while talking.' These words were accompanied with threatening gestures and marks of great anger;" considerably staggering to the Two Diplomatic British gentlemen, and of evil omen to Robinson's phantasm of a compliance. Robinson apologetically hums and hahs, flounders through the bad bit of road as he can; flounderingly indicates that he has more to offer.

KING. "Let us see then (VOYONS), what is there more?"

ROBINSON (with preliminary flourishings and flounderings, yet confidently, as now tabling his best card).... "Permitted to offer your Majesty the whole of Austrian Guelderland; lies contiguous to your Majesty's Possessions in the Rhine Country; important completion of these: I am permitted to say, the whole of Austrian Guelderland!" Important indeed: a dirty stripe of moorland (if you look in Busching), about equivalent to half a dozen parishes in Connemara.

KING. "What do you mean? [turning to Podewils]"

—QU'EST-CE QUE NOUS MANQUE DE TOUTE LA GUELDRE (How much of Guelderland is theirs, and not ours already)?'

PODEWILS. "Almost nothing (PRESQUE RIEN).

KING (to Robinson). "'VOICI ENCORE DE GUEUSERIES (more rags and rubbish yet)! QUOI, such a paltry scraping (BICOQUE) as that, for all my just claims in Silesia? Monsieur —!' His Majesty's indignation increased here, all the more as I kept a profound silence during his hot expressions, and did not speak at all except to beg his Majesty's reflection upon what I had said.—'Reflection?'" asks the King, with eyes dangerous to behold;—"My Lord," continues Robinson, heavily narrative, "his contempt of what I had said was so great," kicking his boot through Guelderland and the guilders as the most contemptible of objects, "and was expressed in such violent terms, that now, if ever (as your Lordship perceives), it was time to make the last effort;" play our trump-card down at once; "a moment longer was not to be lost, to hinder the King from dismissing us;" which sad destiny is still too probable, after the trump-card. Trump-card is this:

ROBINSON.... "'The whole Duchy of Limburg, your Majesty! It is a Duchy which—' I extolled the Duchy to the utmost, described it in the most favorable terms; and added, that 'the Elector Palatine [old Kur-Pfalz, on one occasion] had been willing to give the whole Duchy of Berg for it.'

PODEWILS. "Pardon, Monsieur: that is not so; the contrary

of so; Kur-Pfalz was not ready to give Berg for it!"—[We are not deep in German History, we British Diplomatic gentlemen, who are squandering, now and of old, so much money on it! The Aulic Council, "falls into our arms like dead men;" but it is certain the Elector Palatine was not ready to give Berg in that kind of exchange.]

KING. "It is inconceivable to me how Austria should dare to think of such a thing. Limburg? Are there not solemn Engagements upon Austria, sanctioned and again sanctioned by all the world, which render every inch of ground in the Netherlands inalienable?"

ROBINSON. "Engagements good as against the French, your Majesty. Otherwise the Barrier Treaty, confirmed at Utrecht, was for our behoof and Holland's."

KING. "That is your present interpretation, But the French pretend it was an arrangement more in their favor than against them."

ROBINSON. "Your Majesty, by a little Engineer Art, could render Limburg impregnable to the French or others."

KING. "Have not the least desire to aggrandize myself in those parts, or spend money fortifying there. Useless to me. Am not I fortifying Brieg and Glogau? These are enough: for one who intends to live well with his neighbors. Neither the Dutch nor the French have offended me; nor will I them by acquisitions in the Netherlands. Besides, who would guarantee them?"

ROBINSON. "The Proposal is to give guarantees at once."

KING. "Guarantees! Who minds or keeps guarantees in this age? Has not France guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction; has not England? Why don't you all fly to the Queen's succor?"—Robinson, inclined to pout, if he durst, intimates that perhaps there will be succorers one day yet.

KING. "And pray, Monsieur, who are they?"

ROBINSON. "Hm, hm, your Majesty.... Russia, for example, which Power with reference to Turkey—"

KING. "Good, Sir, good (BEAU, MONSIEUR, BEAU), the Russians! It is not proper to explain myself; but I have means for the Russians' [a Swedish War just coming upon Russia, to keep its hand in use; so diligent have the French been in that quarter!].

ROBINSON (with some emphasis, as a Britannic gentleman). "Russia is not the only Power that has engagements with Austria, and that must keep them too! So that, however averse to a breach —"

KING ("laying his finger on his nose," mark him;—aloud, and with such eyes). "No threats, Sir, if you please! No threats' ["in a loud voice," finger to nose, and with such eyes looking in upon me].

HYNDFORD (heavily coming to the rescue). "Am sure his Excellency is far from such meaning, Sire. His Excellency will advance nothing so very contrary to his Instructions.'—Podewils too put in something proper" in the appeasing way.

ROBINSON. "Sire, I am not talking of what this Power or that means to do; but of what will come of itself. To prophesy

is not to threaten, Sire! It is my zeal for the Public that brought me hither; and—'

KING. "'The Public will be much obliged to you, Monsieur! But hear me. With respect to Russia, you know how matters stand. From the King of Poland I have nothing to fear. As for the King of England,—he is my relation [dear Uncle, in the Pawnbroker sense], he is my all: if he don't attack me, I won't him. And if he do, the Prince of Anhalt [Old Dessauer out at Gottin yonder] will take care of him.'

ROBINSON. "'The common news now is [rumor in Diplomatic circles, rather below the truth this time], your Majesty, after the 12th of August, will join the French. [King looks fixedly at him in silence.] Sire, I venture to hope not! Austria prefers your friendship; but if your Majesty disdain Austria's advances, what is it to do? Austria must throw itself entirely into the hands of France,—and endeavor to outbid your Majesty.' [King quite silent.]

"King was quite silent upon this head," says Robinson, reporting: silence, guesses Robinson, founded most probably upon his "consciousness of guilt"—what I, florid Yorkshire Gentleman, call GUILT, as being against the Cause of Liberty and us!" From time to time he threw out remarks on the advantageousness of his situation:—"

KING.... "'At the head of such an Army, which the Enemy has already made experience of; and which is ready for the Enemy again, if he have appetite! With the Country which alone I am

concerned with, conquered and secured behind me; a Country that alone lies convenient to me; which is all I want, which I now have; which I will and must keep! Shall I be bought out of this country? Never! I will sooner perish in it, with all my troops. With what face shall I meet my Ancestors, if I abandon my right, which they have transmitted to me? My first enterprise; and to be given up lightly?"—With more of the like sort; which Friedrich, in writing of it long after, seems rather ashamed of; and would fain consider to have been mock fustian, provoked by the real fustian of Sir Thomas Robinson, "who negotiated in a wordy high-droning way, as if he were speaking in Parliament," says Friedrich (a Friedrich not taken with that style of eloquence, and hoping he rather quizzed it than was serious with it, [*OEuvres de Frederic*, ii. 84.]—though Robinson and Hyndford found in him no want of vehement seriousness, but rather the reverse!)—He concludes: "Have I need of Peace? Let those who need it give me what I want; or let them fight me again, and be beaten again. Have not they given whole Kingdoms to Spain? [Naples, at one swoop, to the Termagant; as broken glass, in that Polish-Election freak!] And to me they cannot spare a few trifling Principalities? If the Queen does not now grant me all I require, I shall in four weeks demand Four Principalities more! [Nay, I now do it, being in sibylline tune.] I now demand the whole of Lower Silesia, Breslau included;—and with that Answer you can return to Vienna.'

ROBINSON. "'With that Answer: is your Majesty serious?'

KING. "'With that.'" A most vehement young King; no

negotiating with him, Sir Thomas! It is like negotiating for the Sibyl's Books: the longer you bargain, the higher he will rise. In four weeks, time he will demand Four Principalities more; nay, already demands them, the whole of Lower Silesia and Breslau. A precious negotiation I have made of it! Sir Thomas, wide-eyed, asks a second time:—

ROBINSON. "Is that your Majesty's deliberate answer?"

KING. "Yes, I say! That is my Answer; and I will never give another.'

HYNDFORD and ROBINSON (much flurried, to Podewils). "Your Excellency, please to comprehend, the Proposals from Vienna were—'

KING. "Messieurs, Messieurs, it is of no use even to think of it.' And taking off his hat," slightly raising his hat, as salutation and finale, "he retired precipitately behind the curtain of the interior corner of the tent," says the reporter: EXIT King!

ROBINSON (totally flurried, to Podewils). "Your Excellency, France will abandon Prussia, will sacrifice Prussia to self-interest.'

PODEWILS. "No, no! France will not deceive us; we have not deceived France." (SCENE CLOSES; CURTAIN FALLS.) [State-Paper Office (Robinson to Harrington, Breslau, 9th August, 1741); Raumer, pp. 106-110. Compare *OEuvres de Frederic*,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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