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Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Nietzsche
Stockton Turgenev Balzac Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Freud Zola Lawrence Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Wells
Poe Aristotle Wells Wells
Hale James Hastings Hastings Cooke
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Doré Chekhov Chekhov da Shakespeare Irving
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Pushkin Pushkin Alcott
Newton Newton Newton



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**Memoirs of the Court of St. Cloud
(Being secret letters from a
gentleman at Paris to a nobleman
in London) –Volume 1**

Lewis Goldsmith

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MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF ST. CLOUD

By Lewis Goldsmith

Being Secret Letters from a Gentleman at Paris to a Nobleman in
London

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The present work contains particulars of the great Napoleon not to be found in any other publication, and forms an interesting addition to the information generally known about him.

The writer of the Letters (whose name is said to have been Stewarton, and who had been a friend of the Empress Josephine in her happier, if less brilliant days) gives full accounts of the lives of nearly all Napoleon's Ministers and Generals, in addition to those of a great number of other characters, and an insight into the inner life of those who formed Napoleon's Court.

All sorts and conditions of men are dealt with—adherents who have come over from the Royalist camp, as well as those who have won their way upwards as soldiers, as did Napoleon himself. In fact, the work abounds with anecdotes of Napoleon, Talleyrand, Fouché, and a host of others, and astounding particulars are given of the mysterious disappearance of those persons who were unfortunate enough to incur the displeasure of Napoleon.

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SECRET COURT MEMOIRS.

THE COURT OF ST. CLOUD.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

PARIS, November 10th, 1805.

MY LORD,—The Letters I have written to you were intended for the private entertainment of a liberal friend, and not for the general perusal of a severe public. Had I imagined that their contents would have penetrated beyond your closet or the circle of your intimate acquaintance, several of the narratives would have been extended, while others would have been compressed; the anecdotes would have been more numerous, and my own remarks fewer; some portraits would have been left out, others drawn, and all better finished. I should then have attempted more frequently to expose meanness to contempt, and treachery to abhorrence; should have lashed more severely incorrigible vice, and oftener held out to ridicule puerile vanity and outrageous ambition. In short, I should then have studied more to please than to instruct, by addressing myself seldomer to the reason than to the passions.

I subscribe, nevertheless, to your observation, "that the late long war and short peace, with the enslaved state of the Press on the Continent, would occasion a chasm in the most interesting period of modern history, did not independent and judicious travellers or visitors abroad collect and forward to Great Britain (the last refuge of freedom) some materials which, though scanty and insufficient upon the whole, may, in part, rend the veil of destructive politics, and enable future ages to penetrate into mysteries which crime in power has interest to render impenetrable to the just reprobation of honour and of virtue." If, therefore, my humble labours can preserve loyal subjects from the seduction of traitors, or warn lawful sovereigns and civilized society of the alarming conspiracy against them, I shall not think either my time thrown away, or fear the dan-

gers to which publicity might expose me were I only suspected here of being an Anglican author. Before the Letters are sent to the press I trust, however, to your discretion the removal of everything that might produce a discovery, or indicate the source from which you have derived your information.

Although it is not usual in private correspondence to quote authorities, I have sometimes done so; but satisfied, as I hope you are, with my veracity, I should have thought the frequent productions of any better pledge than the word of a man of honour an insult to your feelings. I have, besides, not related a fact that is not recent and well known in our fashionable and political societies; and of ALL the portraits I have delineated, the originals not only exist, but are yet occupied in the present busy scene of the Continent, and figuring either at Courts, in camps, or in Cabinets.

LETTER I.

PARIS, August, 1805.

MY LORD:—I promised you not to pronounce in haste on persons and events passing under my eyes; thirty-one months have quickly passed away since I became an attentive spectator of the extraordinary transactions, and of the extraordinary characters of the extraordinary Court and Cabinet of St. Cloud. If my talents to delineate equal my zeal to inquire and my industry to examine; if I am as able a painter as I have been an indefatigable observer, you will be satisfied, and with your approbation at once sanction and reward my labours.

With most Princes, the supple courtier and the fawning favourite have greater influence than the profound statesman and subtle Minister; and the determinations of Cabinets are, therefore, frequently prepared in drawing-rooms, and discussed in the closet. The politician and the counsellor are frequently applauded or censured for transactions which the intrigues of antechambers conceived, and which cupidity and favour gave power to promulgate.

It is very generally imagined, but falsely, that Napoleon Bonaparte governs, or rather tyrannizes, by himself, according to his own capacity, caprices, or interest; that all his acts, all his changes, are the sole consequence of his own exclusive, unprejudiced will, as well as unlimited authority; that both his greatness and his littleness, his successes and his crimes, originate entirely with himself; that the fortunate hero who marched triumphant over the Alps, and the dastardly murderer that disgraced human nature at Jaffa, because the same person, owed victory to himself alone, and by himself alone commanded massacre; that the same genius, unbiased and unsupported, crushed factions, erected a throne, and reconstructed racks; that the same mind restored and protected Christianity, and proscribed and assassinated a D'Enghien.

All these contradictions, all these virtues and vices, may be found in the same person; but Bonaparte, individually or isolated, has no

claim to them. Except on some sudden occasions that call for immediate decision, no Sovereign rules less by himself than Bonaparte; because no Sovereign is more surrounded by favourites and counsellors, by needy adventurers and crafty intriguers.

What Sovereign has more relatives to enrich, or services to recompense; more evils to repair, more jealousies to dread, more dangers to fear, more clamours to silence; or stands more in need of information and advice? Let it be remembered that he, who now governs empires and nations, ten years ago commanded only a battery; and five years ago was only a military chieftain. The difference is as immense, indeed, between the sceptre of a Monarch and the sword of a general, as between the wise legislator who protects the lives and property of his contemporaries, and the hireling robber who wades through rivers of blood to obtain plunder at the expense and misery of generations. The lower classes of all countries have produced persons who have distinguished themselves as warriors; but what subject has yet usurped a throne, and by his eminence and achievements, without infringing on the laws and liberties of his country, proved himself worthy to reign? Besides, the education which Bonaparte received was entirely military; and a man (let his innate abilities be ever so surprising or excellent) who, during the first thirty years of his life, has made either military or political tactics or exploits his only study, certainly cannot excel equally in the Cabinet and in the camp. It would be as foolish to believe, as absurd to expect, a perfection almost beyond the reach of any man; and of Bonaparte more than of any one else. A man who, like him, is the continual slave of his own passions, can neither be a good nor a just, an independent nor immaculate master.

Among the courtiers who, ever since Bonaparte was made First Consul, have maintained a great ascendancy over him, is the present Grand Marshal of his Court, the general of division, Duroc. With some parts, but greater presumption, this young man is destined by his master to occupy the most confidential places near his person; and to his care are entrusted the most difficult and secret missions at foreign Courts. When he is absent from France, the liberty of the Continent is in danger; and when in the Tuileries, or at St. Cloud, Bonaparte thinks himself always safe.

Gerard Christophe Michel Duroc was born at Ponta-Mousson, in the department of Meurthe, on the 25th of October, 1772, of poor but honest parents. His father kept a petty chandler's shop; but by the interest and generosity of Abbe Duroc, a distant relation, he was so well educated that, in March, 1792, he became a sub-lieutenant of the artillery. In 1796 he served in Italy, as a captain, under General Andreossy, by whom he was recommended to General l'Espinasse, then commander of the artillery of the army of Italy, who made him an aide-de-camp. In that situation Bonaparte remarked his activity, and was pleased with his manners, and therefore attached him as an aide-de-camp to himself. Duroc soon became a favourite with his chief, and, notwithstanding the intrigues of his rivals, he has continued to be so to this day.

It has been asserted, by his enemies no doubt, that by implicit obedience to his general's orders, by an unresisting complacency, and by executing, without hesitation, the most cruel mandates of his superior, he has fixed himself so firmly in his good opinion that he is irremovable. It has also been stated that it was Duroc who commanded the drowning and burying alive of the wounded French soldiers in Italy, in 1797; and that it was he who inspected their poisoning in Syria, in 1799, where he was wounded during the siege of St. Jean d' Acre. He was among the few officers whom Bonaparte selected for his companions when he quitted the army of Egypt, and landed with him in France in October, 1799.

Hitherto Duroc had only shown himself as a brave soldier and obedient officer; but after the revolution which made Bonaparte a First Consul, he entered upon another career. He was then, for the first time, employed in a diplomatic mission to Berlin, where he so far insinuated himself into the good graces of their Prussian Majesties that the King admitted him to the royal table, and on the parade at Potsdam presented him to his generals and officers as an aide-de-camp 'du plus grand homme que je connais; whilst the Queen gave him a scarf knitted by her own fair hands.

The fortunate result of Duroc's intrigues in Prussia, in 1799, encouraged Bonaparte to despatch him, in 1801, to Russia; where Alexander I. received him with that noble condescension so natural, to this great and good Prince. He succeeded at St. Petersburg in ar-

ranging the political and commercial difficulties and disagreements between France and Russia; but his proposal for a defensive alliance was declined.

An anecdote is related of his political campaign in the North, upon the barren banks of the Neva, which, in causing much entertainment to the inhabitants of the fertile banks of the Seine, has not a little displeased the military diplomatist.

Among Talleyrand's female agents sent to cajole Paul I. during the latter part of his reign, was a Madame Bonoeil, whose real name is De F---. When this unfortunate Prince was no more, most of the French male and female intriguers in Russia thought it necessary to shift their quarters, and to expect, on the territory of neutral Prussia, farther instructions from Paris, where and how to proceed. Madame Bonoeil had removed to Konigsberg. In the second week of May, 1801, when Duroc passed through that town for St. Petersburg, he visited this lady, according to the orders of Bonaparte, and obtained from her a list of the names of the principal persons who were inclined to be serviceable to France, and might be trusted by him upon the present occasion. By inattention or mistake she had misspelled the name of one of the most trusty and active adherents of Bonaparte; and Duroc, therefore, instead of addressing himself to the Polish Count de S---lz, went to the Polish Count de S---tz. This latter was as much flattered as surprised, upon seeing an aide-de-camp and envoy of the First Consul of France enter his apartments, seldom visited before but by usurers, gamblers, and creditors; and, on hearing the object of this visit, began to think either the envoy mad or himself dreaming. Understanding, however, that money would be of little consideration, if the point desired by the First Consul could be carried, he determined to take advantage of this fortunate hit, and invited Duroc to sup with him the same evening; when he promised him he should meet with persons who could do his business, provided his pecuniary resources were as ample as he had stated.

This Count de S---tz was one of the most extravagant and profligate subjects that Russia had acquired by the partition of Poland. After squandering away his own patrimony, he had ruined his mother and two sisters, and subsisted now entirely by gambling

and borrowing. Among his associates, in similar circumstances with himself, was a Chevalier de Gausac, a French adventurer, pretending to be an emigrant from the vicinity of Toulouse. To him was communicated what had happened in the morning, and his advice was asked how to act in the evening. It was soon settled that De Gausac should be transformed into a Russian Count de W— —, a nephew and confidential secretary of the Chancellor of the same name; and that one Caumartin, another French adventurer, who taught fencing at St. Petersburg, should act the part of Prince de M— —, an aide-de-camp of the Emperor; and that all three together should strip Duroc, and share the spoil. At the appointed hour Bonaparte's agent arrived, and was completely the dupe of these adventurers, who plundered him of twelve hundred thousand livres. Though not many days passed before he discovered the imposition, prudence prevented him from denouncing the impostors; and this blunder would have remained a secret between himself, Bonaparte, and Talleyrand, had not the unusual expenses of Caumartin excited the suspicion of the Russian Police Minister, who soon discovered the source from which they had flowed. De Gausac had the imprudence to return to this capital last spring, and is now shut up in the Temple, where he probably will be forgotten.

As this loss was more ascribed to the negligence of Madame Bonoil than to the mismanagement of Duroc, or his want of penetration, his reception at the Tuileries, though not so gracious as on his return from Berlin, nineteen months before, was, however, such as convinced him that if he had not increased, he had at the same time not lessened, the confidence of his master; and, indeed, shortly afterwards, Bonaparte created him first prefect of his palace, and procured him for a wife the only daughter of a rich Spanish banker. Rumour, however, says that Bonaparte was not quite disinterested when he commanded and concluded this match, and that the fortune of Madame Duroc has paid for the expensive supper of her husband with Count de S— —tz at St. Petersburg.

LETTER II.

PARIS, August, 1805.

MY LORD:—Though the Treaty of Luneville will probably soon be buried in the rubbish of the Treaty of Amiens, the influence of their parents in the Cabinet of St. Cloud is as great as ever: I say their parents, because the crafty ex-Bishop, Talleyrand, foreseeing the short existence of these bastard diplomatic acts, took care to compliment the innocent Joseph Bonaparte with a share in the parentage, although they were his own exclusive offspring.

Joseph Bonaparte, who in 1797, from an attorney's clerk at Ajaccio, in Corsica, was at once transformed into an Ambassador to the Court of Rome, had hardly read a treaty, or seen a despatch written, before he was himself to conclude the one, and to dictate the other. Had he not been supported by able secretaries, Government would soon have been convinced that it is as impossible to confer talents as it is easy to give places to men to whom Nature has refused parts, and on whom a scanty or neglected education has bestowed no improvements. Deep and reserved, like a true Italian, but vain and ambitious, like his brothers, under the character of a statesman, he has only been the political puppet of Talleyrand. If he has sometimes been applauded upon the stages where he has been placed, he is also exposed to the hooting and hisses of the suffering multitude; while the Minister pockets undisturbed all the entrance-money, and conceals his wickedness and art under the cloak of Joseph; which protects him besides against the anger and fury of Napoleon. No negotiation of any consequence is undertaken, no diplomatic arrangements are under consideration, but Joseph is always consulted, and Napoleon informed of the consultation. Hence none of Bonaparte's Ministers have suffered less from his violence and resentment than Talleyrand, who, in the political department, governs him who governs France and Italy.

As early as 1800, Talleyrand determined to throw the odium of his own outrages against the law of nations upon the brother of his

master. Lucien Bonaparte was that year sent Ambassador to Spain, but not sharing with the Minister the large profits of his appointment, his diplomatic career was but short. Joseph is as greedy and as ravenous as Lucien, but not so frank or indiscreet. Whether he knew or not of Talleyrand's immense gain by the pacification at Luneville in February, 1801, he did not neglect his own individual interest. The day previous to the signature of this treaty, he despatched a courier to the rich army contractor, Collot, acquainting him in secret of the issue of the negotiation, and ordering him at the same time to purchase six millions of livres—L 250,000—in the stocks on his account. On Joseph's arrival at Paris, Collot sent him the State bonds for the sum ordered, together with a very polite letter; but though he waited on the grand pacificator several times afterwards, all admittance was refused, until a *douceur* of one million of livres—nearly L 42,000—of Collot's private profit opened the door. In return, during the discussions between France and England in the summer of 1801, and in the spring of 1802, Collot was continued Joseph's private agent, and shared with his patron, within twelve months, a clear gain of thirty-two millions of livres.

Some of the secret articles of the Treaty of Luneville gave Austria, during the insurrection in Switzerland, in the autumn of 1802, an opportunity and a right to make representations against the interference of France; a circumstance which greatly displeased Bonaparte, who reproached Talleyrand for his want of foresight, and of having been outwitted by the Cabinet of Vienna. The Minister, on the very next day, laid before his master the correspondence that had passed between him and Joseph Bonaparte, during the negotiation concerning these secret articles, which were found to have been entirely proposed and settled by Joseph; who had been induced by his secretary and factotum (a creature of Talleyrand) to adopt sentiments for which that Minister had been paid, according to report, six hundred thousand livres—L25,000. Several other tricks have in the same manner been played upon Joseph, who, notwithstanding, has the modesty to consider himself (much to the advantage and satisfaction of Talleyrand) the first statesman in Europe, and the good fortune to be thought so by his brother Napoleon.

When a rupture with England was apprehended, in the spring of 1803, Talleyrand never signed a despatch that was not previously