

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle  
Baum Leslie Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving  
Hale James Hastings Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse  
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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 5**

Lewis Goldsmith

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Lewis Goldsmith

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8424-5379-1

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

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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



## Volume 5

### BOOK 2.

#### LETTER I.

PARIS, September, 1805.

MY LORD:—Since my return here, I have never neglected to present myself before our Sovereign, on his days of grand reviews and grand diplomatic audiences. I never saw him more condescending, more agreeable, or, at least, less offensive, than on the day of his last levee, before he set out to be inaugurated a King of Italy; nor worse tempered, more petulant, agitated, abrupt, and rude than at his first grand audience after his arrival from Milan, when this ceremony had been performed. I am not the only one who has made this remark; he did not disguise either his good or ill-humour; and it was only requisite to have eyes and ears to see and be disgusted at the difference of behaviour.

I have heard a female friend of Madame Bonaparte explain, in part, the cause of this alteration. Just before he set out for Italy, the agreeable news of the success of the first Rochefort squadron in the West Indies, and the escape of our Toulon fleet from the vigilance of your Lord Nelson, highly elevated his spirits, as it was the first naval enterprise of any consequence since his reign. I am certain that one grand naval victory would flatter his vanity and ambition more than all the glory of one of his most brilliant Continental campaigns. He had also, at that time, great expectations that another negotiation with Russia would keep the Continent submissive under his

dictature, until he should find an opportunity of crushing your power. You may be sure that he had no small hopes of striking a blow in your country, after the junction of our fleet with the Spanish, not by any engagement between our Brest fleet and your Channel fleet, but under a supposition that you would detach squadrons to the East and West Indies in search of the combined fleet, which, by an unexpected return, according to orders, would have then left us masters of the Channel, and, if joined with the Batavian fleet, perhaps even of the North Sea. By the incomprehensible activity of Lord Nelson, and by the defeat (or as we call it here, the negative victory) of Villeneuve and Gravina, all this first prospect had vanished. Our vengeance against a nation of shopkeepers we were not only under the necessity of postponing, but, from the unpolite threats and treaties of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg with those of Vienna and St. James, we were on the eve of a Continental war, and our gunboats, instead of being useful in carrying an army to the destruction of the tyrants of the seas, were burdensome, as an army was necessary to guard them, and to prevent these tyrants from capturing or destroying them. Such changes, in so short a period of time as three months, might irritate a temper less patient than that of Napoleon the First.

At his grand audience here, even after the army, of England had moved towards Germany, when the die was cast, and his mind should, therefore, have been made up, he was almost insupportable. The low bows, and the still humbler expressions of the Prussian Ambassador, the Marquis da Lucchesini, were hardly noticed; and the Saxon Ambassador, Count von Buneau, was addressed in a language that no well-bred master ever uses in speaking to a menial servant. He did not cast a look, or utter a word, that was not an insult to the audience and a disgrace to his rank. I never before saw him vent his rage and disappointment so indiscriminately. We were, indeed (if I may use the term), humbled and trampled upon en masse. Some he put out of countenance by staring angrily at them; others he shocked by his hoarse voice and harsh words; and all—all of us—were afraid, in our turn, of experiencing something worse than our neighbours. I observed more than one Minister, and more than one general, change colour, and even perspire, at His Majesty's approach.

I believe the members of the foreign diplomatic corps here will all agree with me that, at a future congress, the restoration of the ancient and becoming etiquette of the Kings of France would be as desirable a point to demand from the Emperor of the French as the restoration of the balance of power.

Before his army of England quitted its old quarters on the coast, the officers and men often felt the effects of his ungovernable temper. When several regiments of grenadiers, of the division of Oudinot, were defiling before him on the 25th of last month, he frequently and severely, though without cause, reprobated their manner of marching, and once rode up to Captain Fournois, pushed him forwards with the point of a small cane, calling out, "Sacre Dieu! Advance; you walk like a turkey." In the first moment of indignation, the captain, striking at the cane with his sword, made a push, or a gesture, as if threatening the person of Bonaparte, who called out to his aide-de-camp, Savary:

"Disarm the villain, and arrest him!"

"It is unnecessary," the captain replied, "I have served a tyrant, and merit my fate!" So saying, he passed his sword through his heart.

His whole company stopped instantly, as at a word of command, and a general murmur was heard.

"Lay down your arms, and march out of the file instantly," commanded Bonaparte, "or you shall be cut down for your mutiny by my guides."

They hesitated for a moment, but the guides advancing to surround them, they obeyed, and were disarmed. On the following afternoon, by a special military commission, each tenth man was condemned to be shot; but Bonaparte pardoned them upon condition of serving for life in the colonies; and the whole company was ordered to the colonial depots. The widow and five children of Captain Fournois the next morning threw themselves at the Emperor's feet, presenting a petition, in which they stated that the pay of the captain had been their only support.

"Well," replied Bonaparte to the kneeling petitioners, "Fournois was both a fool and a traitor; but, nevertheless, I will take care of you." Indeed, they have been so well taken care of that nobody knows what has become of them.

I am almost certain that I am not telling you what you did not know beforehand in informing you that the spirit of our troops is greatly different from that of the Germans, and even from that of your own country. Every, one of our soldiers would prefer being shot to being beaten or caned. Flogging, with us, is out of the question. It may, perhaps, be national vanity, but I am doubtful whether any other army is, or can be, governed, with regard to discipline, in a less violent and more delicate manner, and, nevertheless, be kept in subordination, and perform the most brilliant exploits. Remember, I speak of our spirit of subordination and discipline, and not of our character as citizens, as patriots, or as subjects. I have often hinted it, but I believe I have not explained myself so fully before; but my firm opinion and persuasion is that, with regard to our loyalty, our duty, and our moral and political principles, another equally inconsistent and despicable people does not exist in the universe.

The condition of the slave is certainly in itself that of vileness; but is that slave a vile being who, for a blow, pierces his bosom because he is unable to avenge it? And what epithet can be given him who braves voluntarily a death seemingly certain, not from the love of his country, but from a principle of honour, almost incompatible with the dishonour of bondage?

During the siege of Yorktown, in America, we had, during one night, erected a battery, with intent to blow up a place which, according to the report of our spies, was your magazine of ammunition, etc. We had not time to finish it before daylight; but one loaded twenty-four pounder was mounted, and our cannoneer, the moment he was about to fire it, was killed. Six more of our men, in the same attempt, experienced the same fate. My regiment constituted the advanced guard nearest to the spot, and La Fayette brought me the order from the commander-in-chief to engage some of my men upon that desperate undertaking. I spoke to them, and two advanced, but were both instantly shot by your sharpshooters. I then

looked at my grenadiers, without uttering anything, when, to my sorrow, one of my best and most orderly men advanced, saying, "My colonel, permit me to try my fortune!" I assented, and he went coldly amidst hundreds of bullets whistling around his ears, set fire to the cannon, which blew up a depot of powder, as was expected, and in the confusion returned unhurt. La Fayette then presented him with his purse. "No, monsieur," replied he, "money did not make me venture upon such a perilous undertaking." I understood my man, promoted him to a sergeant, and recommended him to Rochambeau, who, in some months, procured him the commission of a sub-lieutenant. He is now one of Bonaparte's Field-marschals, and the only one of that rank who has no crimes to reproach himself with. This man was the soldier of a despot; but was not his action that of a man of honour, which a stanch republican of ancient Rome would have been proud of? Who can explain this contradiction?

This anecdote about Fournois I heard General Savary relate at Madame Duchatel's, as a proof of Bonaparte's generosity and clemency, which, he affirmed, excited the admiration of the whole camp at Boulogne. I do not suppose this officer to be above thirty years of age, of which he has passed the first twenty-five in orphan-houses or in watch-houses; but no tyrant ever had a more cringing slave, or a more abject courtier. His affectation to extol everything that Bonaparte does, right or wrong, is at last become so habitual that it is naturalized, and you may mistake for sincerity that which is nothing but imposture or flattery. This son of a Swiss porter is now one of Bonaparte's adjutants-general, a colonel of the Gendarmes d'Elite, a general of brigade in the army, and a commander of the Legion of Honour; all these places he owes, not to valour or merit, but to abjectness, immorality, and servility. When an aide-de-camp with Bonaparte in Egypt, he served him as a spy on his comrades and on the officers of the staff, and was so much detested that, near Aboukir, several shots were fired at him in his tent by his own countrymen. He is supposed still to continue the same espionage; and as a colonel of the Gendarmes d'Elite, he is charged with the secret execution of all proscribed persons or State prisoners, who have been secretly condemned,—a commission that a despot gives to a man he trusts, but dares not offer to a man he esteems. He is so well known that the instant he enters a society silence follows, and he has the

whole conversation to himself. This he is stupid enough to take for a compliment, or for a mark of respect, or an acknowledgment of his superior parts and intelligence, when, in fact, it is a direct reproach with which prudence arms itself against suspected or known dishonesty. Besides his wife, he has to support six other women whom he has seduced and ruined; and, notwithstanding the numerous opportunities his master has procured him of pillaging and enriching himself, he is still much in debt; but woe to his creditors were they indiscreet enough to ask for their payments! The Secret Tribunal would soon seize them and transport them, or deliver them over to the hands of their debtor, to be shot as traitors or conspirators.

## LETTER II.

PARIS, September, 1805.

My LORD:—I am told that it was the want of pecuniary resources that made Bonaparte so ill-tempered on his last levee day. He would not have come here at all, but preceded his army to Strasbourg, had his Minister of Finances, Gaudin, and his Minister of the Public Treasury, Marbois, been able to procure forty-four millions of livres—to pay a part of the arrears of the troops; and for the speedy conveyance of ammunition and artillery towards the Rhine.

Immediately after his arrival here, Bonaparte sent for the directors of the Bank of France, informing them that within twenty-four hours they must advance him thirty-six millions of livres—upon the revenue of the last quarter of 1808. The president of the bank, Senator Garrat, demanded two hours to lay before the Emperor the situation of the bank, that His Majesty might judge what sum it was possible to spare without ruining the credit of an establishment hitherto so useful to the commerce of the Empire. To this Bonaparte replied that he was not ignorant of the resources, or of the credit of the bank, any more than of its public utility; but that the affairs of State suffered from every hour's delay, and that, therefore, he insisted upon having the sum demanded even within two hours, partly in paper and partly in cash; and were they to show any more opposition, he would order the bank and all its effects to be seized that moment. The directors bowed and returned to the bank; whither they were followed by four waggons escorted by hussars, and belonging to the financial department of the army of England. In these were placed eight millions of livres in cash; and twenty-eight millions in bank-notes were delivered to M. Lefevre, the Secretary-General of Marbois, who presented, in exchange, Bonaparte's bond and security for the amount, bearing an interest of five per cent. yearly.

When this money transaction was known to the public, the alarm became general, and long before the hour the bank usually opens

the adjoining streets were crowded with persons desiring to exchange their notes for cash. During the night the directors had taken care to pay themselves for the banknotes in their own possession with silver or gold, and, as they expected a run, they ordered all persons to be paid in copper coin, as long as any money of this metal remained. It required a long time to count those halfpennies and centimes (five of which make a sou, or halfpenny), but the people were not tired with waiting until towards three o'clock in the afternoon, when the bank is shut up. They then became so clamorous that a company of gendarmes was placed for protection at the entrance of the bank; but, as the tumult increased, the street was surrounded by the police guards, and above six hundred individuals, many of them women, were carried, under an escort, to different police commissaries, and to the prefecture of the police. There most of them, after being examined, were reprimanded and released. The same night, the police spies reported in the coffee-houses of the Palais Royal, and on the Boulevards, that this run on the bank was encouraged, and paid for, by English emissaries, some of whom were already taken, and would be executed on the next day. In the morning, however, the streets adjoining the bank were still more crowded, and the crowd still more tumultuous, because payment was refused for all notes but those of five hundred livres. The activity of the police agents, supported by the gendarmes and police soldiers, again restored order, after several hundred persons had been again taken up for their mutinous conduct. Of these many were, on the same evening, loaded with chains, and, placed in carts under military escort, paraded about near the bank and the Palais Royal; the police having, as a measure of safety, under suspicion that they were influenced by British gold, condemned them to be transported to Cayenne; and the carts set out on the same night for Rochefort, the place of their embarkation.

On the following day, not an individual approached the bank, but all trade and all payments were at a stand; nobody would sell but for ready money, and nobody who had bank-notes would part with cash. Some Jews and money-brokers in the Palais Royal offered cash for these bills, at a discount of from ten to twenty per cent. But these usurers were, in their turn, taken up and transported, as agents of Pitt. An interview was then demanded by the directors and princi-

pal bankers with the Ministers of Finance and of the Public Treasury. In this conference it was settled that, as soon as the two millions of dollars on their way from Spain had arrived at Paris, the bank should reassume its payments. These dollars Government would lend the bank for three months, and take in return its notes, but the bank was, nevertheless, to pay an interest of six per cent. during that period. All the bankers agreed not to press unnecessarily for any exchange of bills into cash, and to keep up the credit of the bank even by the individual credit of their own houses.

You know, I suppose, that the Bank of France has never issued but two sorts of notes; those of one thousand livres—and those of five hundred livres. At the day of its stoppage, sixty millions of livres—of the former, and fifteen millions of livres—of the latter, were in circulation; and I have heard a banker assert that the bank had not then six millions of livres—in money and bullion, to satisfy the claims of its creditors, or to honour its bills.

The shock given to the credit of the bank by this last requisition of Bonaparte will be felt for a long time, and will with difficulty ever be repaired under his despotic government. Even now, when the bank pays in cash, our merchants make a difference from five to ten per cent. between purchasing for specie or paying in bank-notes; and this mistrust will not be lessened hereafter. You may, perhaps, object that, as long as the bank pays, it is absurd for any one possessing its bills to pay dearer than with cash, which might so easily be obtained. This objection would stand with regard to your, or any other free country, but here, where no payments are made in gold, but always in silver or copper, it requires a cart to carry away forty, thirty, or twenty thousand livres, in coin of these metals, and would immediately excite suspicion that a bearer of these bills was an emissary of our enemies, or an enemy of our Government. With us, unfortunately, suspicion is the same as conviction, and chastisement follows it as its shadow.

A manufacturer of the name of Debrais, established in the Rue St. Martin, where he had for years carried on business in the woollen line, went to the bank two days after it had begun to pay. He demanded, and obtained, exchange for twenty-four thousand livres—in notes, necessary for him to pay what was due by him to his

workmen. The same afternoon six of our custom-house officers, accompanied by police agents and gendarmes, paid him a domiciliary visit under pretence of searching for English goods. Several bales were seized as being of that description, and Debrais was carried a prisoner to La Force. On being examined by Fouche, he offered to prove, by the very men who had fabricated the suspected goods, that they were not English. The Minister silenced him by saying that Government had not only evidence of the contrary, but was convinced that he was employed as an English agent to hurt the credit of the bank, and therefore, if he did not give up his accomplices or employers, had condemned him to transportation. In vain did his wife and daughters petition to Madame Bonaparte; Debrais is now at Rochefort, if not already embarked for our colonies.

When he was arrested, a seal, as usual, was put on his house, from which his wife and family were turned out, until the police should have time to take an inventory of his effects, and had decided on his fate. When Madame Debrais, after much trouble and many pecuniary sacrifices, at last obtained permission to have the seals removed, and reenter her house, she found that all her plate and more than half her goods and furniture had been stolen and carried away. Upon her complaint of this theft she was thrown into prison for not being able to support her complaint with proofs, and for attempting to vilify the characters of the agents of our Government. She is still in prison, but her daughters are by her orders disposing of the remainder of their parents' property, and intend to join their father as soon as their mother has recovered her liberty.

The same tyranny that supports the credit of our bank also keeps up the price of our stocks. Any of our great stockholders who sell out to any large amount, if they are unable to account for, or unwilling to declare the manner in which they intend to employ, their money, are immediately arrested, sometimes transported to the colonies, but more frequently exiled into the country, to remain under the inspection of some police agent, and are not allowed to return here without the previous permission of our Government. Those of them who are upstarts, and have made their fortune since the Revolution by plunder or as contractors, are still more severely treated, and are often obliged to renounce part of their ill-gotten

wealth to save the remainder, or to preserve their liberty or lives. A reversal of their former accounts, or an inspection of their past transactions, is a certain and efficacious threat to keep them in silent submission, as they all well understand the meaning of them.

Even foreigners, whom our numerous national bankruptcies have not yet disheartened, are subject to these measures of rigour or vigour requisite to preserve our public credit. In the autumn of last year a Dutchman of the name of Van der Winkle sold out by his agent for three millions of livres—in our stock on one day, for which he bought up bills upon Hamburg and London. He lodged in the Hotel des Quatre Nations, Rue Grenelle, where the landlord, who is a patriot, introduced some police agents into his apartments during his absence. These broke open all his trunks, drawers, and even his writing-desk, and when he entered, seized his person, and carried him to the Temple. By his correspondence it was discovered that all this money was to be brought over to England; a reason more than sufficient to incur the suspicion of our Government. Van der Winkle spoke very little French, and he continued, therefore, in confinement three weeks before he was examined, as our secret police had not at Paris any of its agents who spoke Dutch. Carried before Fouche, he avowed that the money was destined for England, there to pay for some plantations which he desired to purchase in Surinam and Barbice. His interpreter advised him, by the orders of Fouche, to alter his mind, and, as he was fond of colonial property, lay out his money in plantations at Cayenne, which was in the vicinity of Surinam, and where Government would recommend him advantageous purchases. It was hinted to him, also, that this was a particular favour, and a proof of the generosity of our Government, as his papers contained many matters that might easily be construed to be of a treasonable nature. After consulting with Schimmelpenninck, the Ambassador of his country, he wrote for his wife and children, and was seen safe with them to Bordeaux by our police agents, who had hired an American vessel to carry them all to Cayenne. This certainly is a new method to populate our colonies with capitalists.



### LETTER III.

PARIS, September, 1805.

MY LORD:—Hanover has been a mine of gold to our Government, to its generals, to its commissaries, and to its favourites. According to the boasts of Talleyrand, and the avowal of Berthier, we have drawn from it within two years more wealth than has been paid in contributions to the Electors of Hanover for this century past, and more than half a century of peace can restore to that unfortunate country. It is reported here that each person employed in a situation to make his fortune in the Continental States of the King of England (a name given here to Hanover in courtesy to Bonaparte) was laid under contribution, and expected to make certain *douceurs* to Madame Bonaparte; and it is said that she has received from Mortier three hundred thousand livres, and from Bernadotte two hundred and fifty thousand livres, besides other large sums from our military commissaries, treasurers, and other agents in the Electorate.

General Mortier is one of the few favourite officers of Bonaparte who have distinguished themselves under his rivals, Pichegru and Moreau, without ever serving under him. Edward Adolph Casimer Mortier is the son of a shopkeeper, and was born at Cambrai in 1768. He was a shopman with his father until 1791, when he obtained a commission, first as a lieutenant of carabiniers, and afterwards as captain of the first battalion of volunteers of the Department of the North. His first sight of an enemy was on the 30th of April, 1792, near Quiévrain, where he had a horse killed under him. He was present in the battles of Jemappes, of Nerwinde, and of Pellenberg. At the battle of Houdscoote he distinguished himself so much as to be promoted to an adjutant general. He was wounded at the battle of Fleures, and again at the passage of the Rhine, in 1795, under General Moreau. During 1796 and 1797 he continued to serve in Germany, but in 1798 and 1799 he headed a division in Switzerland from which Bonaparte recalled him in 1800, to command the troops in the capital and its environs. His address to Bonaparte,

announcing the votes of the troops under him respecting the consulate for life and the elevation to the Imperial throne, contain such mean and abject flattery that, for a true soldier, it must have required more self-command and more courage to pronounce them than to brave the fire of a hundred cannons; but these very addresses, contemptible as their contents are, procured him the Field-marshal's staff. Mortier well knew his man, and that his cringing in antechambers would be better rewarded than his services in the field. I was not present when Mortier spoke so shamefully, but I have heard from persons who witnessed this farce, that he had his eyes fixed on the ground the whole time, as if to say, "I grant that I speak as a despicable being, and I grant that I am so; but what shall I do, tormented as I am by ambition to figure among the great, and to riot among the wealthy? Have compassion on my weakness, or, if you have not, I will console myself with the idea that my meanness is only of the duration of half an hour, while its recompense-my rank-will be permanent."

Mortier married, in 1799, the daughter of the landlord of the Belle Sauvage inn at Coblenz, who was pregnant by him, or by some other guest of her father. She is pretty, but not handsome, and she takes advantage of her husband's complaisance to console herself both for his absence and infidelities. When she was delivered of her last child, Mortier positively declared that he had not slept with her for twelve months, and the babe has, indeed, less resemblance to him than to his valet de chambre. The child was baptised with great splendour; the Emperor and the Empress were the sponsors, and it was christened by Cardinal Fesch. Bonaparte presented Madame Mortier on this occasion with a diamond necklace valued at one hundred and fifty thousand livres.

During his different campaigns, and particularly during his glorious campaign in Hanover, he has collected property to the amount of seven millions of livres, laid out in estates and lands. He is considered by other generals as a brave captain, but an indifferent chief; and among our fashionables and our courtiers he is held up as a model of connubial fidelity—satisfying himself with keeping three mistresses only.