

### COUNT BENKENDORF RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR.

Count Benckendorff comes of a family which belongs to the wealthiest nobility of Livonia. The Ambassador's uncle, Count Alexander, rendered the greatest service to the Emperor Nicholas I, notably in quelling the military revolution which broke out on that monarch's accession, and afterwards as chief of the Secret Police, in which capacity he showed equal sagacity and humanity. Count Alexander's sister was that celebrated Princess Lieven, first the friend and then the foe of Palmerston, whose copious correspondence has earned her the gratitude of all the historians of her time.

The Ambassador's own father was the brilliant general, Constantin Count Benckendorff, who commanded a division of Cossacks in 1814, and died in 1858, in a Persian town which he had just captured. This gallant soldier married in the middle of the terrible year of Revolution, 1848, his only throne in Europe seemed safe, Princess Louise, a daughter of the princely house of Croÿ-Dulmen; and their firstborn, to whom they gave his famous uncle's name of Alexander, was born in Berlin in 1849.

#### The Training Ground.

The young Count Alexander on whom now hang such great issues, was most carefully educated for the career of diplomacy, and the Franco-German war, which broke out a year or two after he had formally entered the diplomatic service of Russia, must have been to him of absorbing interest, for he had spent his most impressionable years both in Berlin and in Paris, and he had personal friends fighting on both sides in that terrible struggle.

After serving as attaché to the Russian Embassy in Rome and in Vienna, the Count retired for a time from the diplomatic service, being then only twenty-seven. His father had died when he was nine years old, but his mother still lived when her gifted son married, in 1879, Countess Sophie Schouvaloff. The Schouvaloffs, as all the world knows, are a family who have written their names deep in the history of Russian diplomacy, politics and literature and there can still remember the remarkable personality of the man whose "Schouvaloff's Memorandum" made such a stir in 1878.

#### The Old Love.

For some years the young diplomatist and his bride lived upon Count Benckendorff's estate in the Government of Tarnob and there they set on foot many agencies for improving the lot of their numerous dependants. But such a man as Count Benckendorff could not be spared, even from a service so fully equipped as the Russian Diplomatic Corps. Diplomacy claimed her own, and the Count returned to Vienna as First Secretary of the Russian Embassy. There he was able to indulge to the full his strong artistic bent, and he frequently paid visits to Italy to study the art treasures of the past.

#### A Hard Task.

Seven years ago the Count was nominated Russian Minister in Copenhagen. The Emperor Alexander had formed a very high opinion of him, and that this is shared by his present Imperial Majesty was shown in the most significant way by this appointment to a Legation, which on account of the intimate ties of blood between the royal houses of Denmark and Russia, is regarded as of peculiar importance, and as a stepping stone to high preferment. It has certainly been so in this case, for it is just about two years ago since he was appointed to succeed the astute and charming M. de Staal at Chesham House.

## A QUAINB BUDGET OF ODD ANSWERS.

The London Referee recently had an "odd answers prize competition." Among the odd answers sent in were the following:-

When the life of M. Labori was attempted, the remark was passed in the hearing of a servant, "Isn't it a shame to shoot Dreyfus's counsel?" Whereupon the servant replied: "Oh! poor dumb animal, they might have let that live!"

A lady calling on another and finding her out said, "Give Mrs. my compliments." The girl hesitated, and then held out her hand saying, "Please, mom, you haven't given 'em to me."

#### In Society.

Some years ago I was interested in a West End Private hotel. A certain Lord A. occupied the drawing-room suite. The waitress one day came to the office for a pint of port wine. "For whom do you want it?"—"For the lord above."

On making inquiries of a friend who was ill, and asking the maid what she was suffering from, her reply was, "I don't know exactly, but it is something eternal."

A coachman of the Baltic Provinces invariably came for candles for the carriage in the evening instead of during the morning hour, when stores were given out. Being at length severely reproved, he replied: "But gracious lady, I only need candles when it is dark."

Employer, just starting on a holiday, at office door: John I want you to carry this portmanteau to the station for me.  
John, the new office boy: Yus, sir. (Exit John with portmanteau.)  
Employer, calling after him: Hi, John, where are you off to? How do you know which station I'm going to?  
John: Please, sir, I thought I'd go on in front, sir, and follow you, sir.

#### WESTERN TARIFF DEMAND.

(Haverhill Gazette.)

The wheat millers of the Northwest are calling for relief from the present law in order that they may get Canadian wheat with which to operate their plants. The Lovering drawback bill, which was refused a standing in the last Congress because it touched the sacred schedule of the Dingley bill, would provide just the relief they need. At present there is nominal provision in the law for a drawback on all four manufactured from imported wheat equivalent to the duty paid upon the raw material when it is imported, but it is required that the product shall be identified with the raw material upon which the duty is paid, and, as in other lines, the cost and bother of this identification make the effort hardly worth while. What is a reasonable provision, and what is included in the Lovering bill, is that the manufacturer may collect his drawback if he can prove to the amount of raw material upon which the duty was paid, regardless as to whether the imported material can actually be identified in the exported goods.

An author friend of mine had a story in a popular weekly, and, knowing that Mary Ann was a "Constant Subscriber," told her of it with, perhaps, not a little emphasis. "Fancy, now," said Mary, with genuine interest; "and how much, sir, did they charge you for putting it in?"

During our seaside holiday my mother inquired, "Nurse, will you take some more pudding?" The reply came: "Yes, please, ma'am. I can eat more if you will let me stand up."

When my sister was a baby, the family were assembled in the dining-room. My mother rang the bell for the maid to bring up some glasses. She brought them in her hand. When told always to bring things on a tray, she immediately replied: "Shall I bring the baby on a tray, mum?"

Having breakfast with a doctor, I was amused by the following conversation:

Housemaid: Please, sir, a woman wants to see you at once, as she's run a needle into herself.

Doctor: I'll be there in a moment. Ask her to sit down.

Housemaid: Please, Sir, that's just what she can't do.

Mistress: I am afraid, Mary, you will never see the Thames on fire.

Mary: I hope not, ma'am.

The late Arthur Cecil, on taking lunch at an obscure country inn, was pleased to find there a copy of his song of "Children." When the landlady of the inn brought in the meal he beamed, and said:

"I am the composer of this song. Would you like me to put my 'autograph on it?'"

Landlady: Yes if you like; I don't suppose that will 'urt it!

On one occasion my father had cause to reprove his "man" in the workshop. The bell rings about eight o'clock in the morning to call the men to their duty. Pat turned up late. "And why weren't you in at eight?" demanded my father. "Sorry, sorry; but, O! never heard't bell till it stopped!"

Mistress: Mary, I cannot find the butter-dish. Do you know where it is?  
Mary: Yes, mum. I put it in the shove-'em-in-'ere! (chieffonnieur.)

Mistress to maid, who had been to the pantomime: Did you see any harlequinade?  
Maid: No, ma'am; we only had gentry-beer.

Country servant, having been told that sometimes when people called at the house they gave their card answers door to visitors.

Visitor: Is Mrs. Wilson at home?  
Country Servant: Yes, she be (holding door and not inviting visitor to enter).

Visitor: I should like to see her.  
Country Servant: Wheer's yer tick-ut?

Being told not to waste gas, as we had to pay for it, our "girl from the country" said, "Pay for it! Why, lauks, Miss, I thought you just lit it and it coom itself!"

Jane was very fond of reading, and liked to display her learning. One day she was unusually depressed and togrful, and her mistress asked what was the matter.  
"Oh, I don't know," she wailed. "I think the sword of that there Dam'cockles is hangin' over me!"

The clock having stopped one day, I asked the servant to tell me the time by her watch which she was wearing. Her reply was: "I am sorry I cannot tell you the right time, ma'am, as my watch is a day and a half fast."

The magistrate had just let the owner of a dog (unlicensed) off with a caution on account of the long time he had owned the dog. The next case was an Irishman who had a gun without a license. When the magistrate inquired how long Pat had had the gun, in his possession, he was rather surprised at the answer.

"I've had that gun iver since it was a little pistil, yer worship."

I asked my servant to find out for me by observation if a friend of mine was packing up to leave that same day. She replied, "I can't very well go to her room without an obstacle, or she'll wonder what I want."

Mistress: Lydie, I hope you didn't boil rain water for tea or coffee?  
Lydie: No, mum, 'cause I know that the rain water in the butt is full of midscopes.

One day, noticing my servant engaged in doing crochet work, I remarked that I had never done any in my life. The reply was, "Oh, my mother wasn't educated either."

Not being satisfied with our butter, we asked the servant to try a fresh shop, and when she brought it in, we inquired where she had got it from, to which she replied, "The Eau de Cologneal Stores."

Suffering from a rather severe cold one day, my housemaid, who was in the room, remarked: "Do you think you are going to have the influenza, ma'am?" "I hope not, Mary," I replied; "but why do you ask?" "Because you've got all the items."

A maid of ours said once to a visitor: "She's not at home, sir. She's washing her hair."

#### A DOG'S MEMORY.

(Philadelphia Press.)

"Something must have stung your dog," said a resident of this city to a suburbanite, whom he was visiting a few days ago, as he noticed the antics or a large collie which, after snapping frantically at a flying insect, lowered his head and carefully licked his right forepaw. "No," replied the owner of the dog, "that is only a little delusion of his. When he was a puppy a bee stung him on the foot you see him attending to, and ever since he has cherished a standing grudge against flying insects. Apparently the sight of one not only arouses his anger, but recalls most vividly his first experience with one, for each time after running after one, whether he catches it or not, he stops and tenderly licks the place where he was stung two years ago. As far as I know he has never been stung since then."

Backus—I suppose your wife is still very dear to you, old chap?  
Cyrus—Deader. She has running accounts in three of the biggest department stores.

## ABOUT SMOKING IN THE THEATRE.

(Cecil Raleigh in London Leader.)

When Lord Carrington was Lord Chamberlain he, being a Liberal and a broad-minded man, gave the theatrical managers of London a very strong hint that if they approached him with anything like unanimity, he would give them leave to permit smoking in their theatres whenever they desired to do so.

Smoking in theatres was then opposed by many of the older managers, who imagined or dreaded that when once smoking began, the privilege of smoking would be claimed by the public as a right in all theatres, whether their managers desired it or not. This they regarded as a desecration of the higher drama, and their influence carried so much weight that nothing further was done.

On Thursday, however, the theatrical managers assembled together, and so far as may be gathered agreed to notify the Lord Chamberlain that they had no objection to smoking being permitted in the theatres if the managers of such theatres came forth and individually asked for that permission. It is, I notice, asserted that they did this out of sympathy for the provincial theatrical managers, who were suffering by music hall competition. I do not quite follow this argument, because provincial theatres are not licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. Plays running in the provinces are, but the Lord Chamberlain has never said that he would withdraw the license of a play if performed in the presence of tobacco.

However the facts may be, the manager's decision may be taken as indicating a very important change of opinion. Personally, I have never felt any doubt whatever that this change would come since what smoking was permitted over fifteen years ago. It was my good fortune that I saw at the old Gaiety Theatre at the foot of Raucecoursehill in Brighton, in that theatre smoking was practically universal. It was not officially permitted, that is to say, it was not advertised as an attraction, but it was publicly tolerated. How or when it began nobody seemed to know, but there it remained, and later on its example was followed at the Eden Theatre in Brighton, a much more ambitious establishment.

At the Old Gaiety the price of the stalls was 1s., if my memory serves me correctly, and these stalls were upholstered in Utrecht velvet, white lace anti-macassars covered the backs of the seats and the refreshments were above the usual quality, the whole place was admirably managed, the audience respectable and most orderly in their behavior, and the shows of their class decidedly good.

#### A Seditary Occupation.

At the Eden the prices were higher, but smoking prevailed everywhere just the same. Ash trays and matches were provided in the private boxes, and in one particular the behavior of the audience was very remarkable. Few people smoked when the curtain was up; those that did were men that had lighted pipes or cigars in the interval. When the curtain was down, however, nearly every second person was smoking. As a result, a large number of them did not go out to the bars. Apparently the fertility of Brightonians in the direction of reasonable excuses was limited, and when the occupier of a stall was unable to tell his lady companion that he was "going out to have a smoke" he could not think of any other reason for getting near the bar.

Later, when I visited the Alexandra Theatre, Sheffield, where smoking for years has been the custom, I noticed the same disinclination on the part of the audience to leave their seats, and any-

body who takes the trouble to watch carefully will observe the same thing in music halls. The people who go to the lounge or promenade are the people who patronize the bars but the people who occupy seats do not leave them often, and frequently never leave them at all.

#### Making For Righteousness.

It is not generally known that in the North of England a number of music halls at the present time are being built that contain no drinking bars at all. These halls are to be run on the two shows a night principle, and this class of entertainment combined with tobacco, reduces the need for refreshments in a place of entertainment absolutely to nil.

Smoking and two shows a night seemed to make for righteousness in the music hall. It seems highly probable, therefore, that smoking will only make for good in the theatre. At any rate, it is perfectly clear that a manager ought to have the right to permit it if he thinks that his patrons wish it, and it is a matter for congratulation that the theatrical managers have for once determined to pursue a policy of enlightenment, which is the absolute reverse of that which they have hitherto followed in their fight over the music hall sketch.

#### The Industry of Amusement.

How few people realise, does one man in a thousand realise, that public amusement is in this country an enormous industry? How many people are familiar roughly with the figures? When first you consider them they are almost astounding. In Great Britain and Ireland there are today over five hundred places of public entertainment, legitimate theatres and music halls, without counting assembly halls and places given over occasionally to entertainment. The estimated value of these five hundred places of amusement is over £40,000 each. The total value is over twenty millions of money!

More than thirty thousand people are engaged in the amusement industry and their wages average a great deal over £3 a week each. This means £90,000 per week. Taking a year as forty working weeks, this means three millions six hundred thousand per year spent in actual wages, connected with the industry of amusement.

A kind of the people concerned are migratory, and move about in companies spending thousands per week upon railway fares, bill posting and newspaper advertising. Yet this mass of invested capital and public enterprise is at the mercy of laws that were enacted to restrain thieves, regular bear pits, and houses of ill fame. At least one-half of the industry is connected with theatres, and the sole commodity dispensed in the theatre is drama, and the whole of the drama is at the mercy of one man, the Lord Chamberlain, who is not responsible to anybody, and from the decisions of whom there is no appeal.

Local authorities in the provinces license the buildings, and the Lord Chamberlain licenses the music halls, and when they play sketches the Lord Chamberlain is invited to prosecute them. It asserts that he has no funds at his disposal wherewith to do so, but he gives sanction to the prosecutions, and now the theatrical managers are asking the Lord Chamberlain to give them a privilege hitherto enjoyed only by the music halls—permission to smoke, because that privilege is wanted by the provincial managers over whom the Lord Chamberlain has no control.

It will indeed be a fitting climax if this meaningless muddle terminates in a smoke.

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