

A

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REMINISCENCES OF COURT AND DIPLOMATIC LIFE
BY
GEORGIANA BARONESS BLOOMFIELD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

A

REMINISCENCES
OF
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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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*Extracts from Letters written to my Husband after
I left Russia.*

Breslau, June 6, 1851.—This is such a fine picturesque old town. I cannot tell you what a difference there is in the appearance of everything, as soon as one crosses the Russian frontier. Such a far greater air of comfort and civilisation. The cathedral here is Roman Catholic, but there is a fine large Protestant Church, and they contain beautiful tombs. There is a large painted glass window in the Protestant Church, which was given by the king, but I did not admire it. The Hôtel de Ville is extremely picturesque, and there are fine public walks, which were crowded with people.

British Embassy, Paris, June 27, 1851.—I went to the Assembly with the Normanbys yesterday. M. Thiers

was to have spoken, but unfortunately M. de St. Beuve made such a long speech on his free trade motion, that M. Thiers put off answering him till to-day, when he spoke for an hour. He has the most wonderful command of language, and such a memory for figures that in the most complicated financial debates he hardly ever refers to notes. His voice is audible, but uncommonly harsh.

I saw the President Louis Napoleon and his suite returning from the Parade yesterday. There was rather a Socialist demonstration as he was going there in the morning, and he was met with cries of "Vive la République, démocratique et sociale," so he thought it prudent to return a different road. Everything seems quiet for the moment, but no one anticipates a continuance of the lull; on the contrary, the general opinion seems to be that it precedes a storm. The revision of the Constitution is to come on in the Assembly soon, and it is to be hoped the President will get an extension of power, or rather that his re-election will be legalised, but no one knows whether this very important point will be carried or not. I saw Lamoricière yesterday at the Assembly, Changarnier, Molé, and both Baroche and Fould spoke. We are invited to dine with the President to-morrow. The heat just now is tremendous, but the air much lighter than it is in hot weather in Russia.

17 *Eaton Place, July 8, 1851.*—I had a most interesting conversation with Prince Albert the other day, and he expressed himself strongly about the line the Emperor took respecting the Great Exhibition here. I said how delighted and thankful we had been to hear that everything went off so well, and that in my last

interview with the Empress at Warsaw I could not help dwelling upon the complete success of the whole undertaking. The Prince smiled and said, "Yes; but what they cannot understand in Russia or forgive is its being, as it were, a *national fête*. Brunnow said the other day we have no nation, we only recognise the Emperor; now though unfortunately this may be the case, in these days it is a very dangerous doctrine to promulgate. I understand the Emperor was very angry at the Prince of Prussia coming here, and said all he could to alarm the King, who wrote to me to state he knew there was danger, and asked whether I would be responsible for the Prince's safety. I answered that if the King knew there was danger, in God's name not to let the Prince come, as I could not be answerable for anything; but that as far as my own convictions went, I considered the only danger was in people's own minds, and I classed that danger with the malicious reports the enemies of the undertaking had industriously spread about fifty millions of sparrows spoiling the goods, the roof of the building not being waterproof, and the whole enterprise being an arrogant, wicked work, which would infallibly bring down God's wrath upon us all.

"All these things I say I classed together, and the King was then ashamed, and allowed his brother to come, but you know just at the last the Diplomatic Corps failed us, and were very ungracious. The Empress of Russia also wrote a letter, in which she only dwelt upon the great fatigue and excitement of the Exhibition, and said she wondered how we had been able to bear it."

The Queen was most kind, and said she hoped we