

COUNT HATZFELDT AND THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE.

IF the Duke of York's Column, overlooking St. James's Park, ever makes up its mind to topple over, as it has been threatening these last few years, it is more than possible that No. 9, Carlton House Terrace will be discovered among the ruins. No. 9 is at the corner of the Terrace, and under the very shadow of the column, a house undistinguished from the rest in the row—big, yellow-painted, and rather sombre-looking—were it not that in the centre of the door there hangs a plaque, about the size of a dessert-plate, bearing a representation of the excited double eagle, the emblem of the German Empire. This is the sole outward evidence that No. 9, Carlton House Terrace is the residence of Count Hatzfeldt, the representative of the German Emperor at the Court of St. James's. It is a commodious enough house, most of the windows looking over the Park, and with the Clock Tower rising above the trees a little to the left. But there is nothing imposing about it; indeed, it is quite dwarfish compared with Count Hatzfeldt's residence near Constantinople, when he was Ambassador to the Porte. The German Embassy at Pera is a great barrack-looking structure, with as much architecture about it as a barn, but it is commandingly situated on the summit of a hill, and the outlook over the much-sung Bosphorus is one of the most delightful in the world. As Countess Hatzfeldt prefers Berlin to London, and, indeed, very rarely comes to this country, the Embassy apartments have no little fripperies denoting the taste and arrangement of a woman, but rather that serious, strictly utilitarian aspect noticed generally in rooms the occupants of which are men-folk.

There is a large misconception in the public mind as to what an Ambassador really does. Some folk think that his chief duty is to worm out secrets about the country in which he is residing, to bow and cringe to the sovereign, to checkmate other Ambassadors—to be, in fact, a spy and a double-dealer under the titles of Ambassador and Diplomat. Perhaps this was so in the old days, but it cannot be said to be so in these times. As someone has humorously written, the first ambassadorial duty nowadays is to keep a good cook: which simply means that one of his functions is to be hospitable, to be on friendly and intimate terms with Ministers, to be agreeable and kindly, and so smooth the way for little diplomatic tasks he may have on hand.

The German Ambassador has to keep his master, the Emperor William, fully informed of all that is taking place politically in England. It is his work to study the policy of statesmen, to understand public opinion, to catch the drift of apparently unimportant events, so that the Emperor may be acquainted at first hand with what is happening. Diplomatic despatches to-day are possibly not quite so interesting as during the time when there were few newspapers and no telegraphs. But still twice a week does the Ambassador send a courier over to Berlin, and not infrequently oftener than that. It is the duty of an Ambassador to protect and, if need be, defend the persons of his fellow-countrymen in the land where he is sojourning. He is not permitted—nor would it be wise were he permitted—to interfere in any way with the Government at whose Court he is an Ambassador. He must not side with one political party or

another. He must maintain a position of absolute neutrality, and yet keep on good terms with the leaders of both parties.

But high and responsible as is the position of an Ambassador, it brings with it many privileges. He is the direct personal representative of his sovereign, and in his name he can negotiate with foreign Governments. When an Ambassador comes to London—from Berlin, for instance—he brings with him a sealed letter from his sovereign in person to the sovereign to whom he is sent, saying he will approve of everything his representative does in his name. Therefore one can appreciate how important is the post of Ambassador. He practically plays the rôle of a King. In former times, nothing could exceed the pageantry of State surrounding him. When he arrived it was the King's horses and coaches that went to meet him. The most elaborate feasts and gorgeous entertainments were provided for him. He possessed the right of standing covered in the presence of royalty. Pomp was carried to its highest pitch. Now, however, an Ambassador travels by railway in an ordinary train, just like any other mortal, and his introduction to the sovereign is about the same as the formal presentation at Court. Abroad it is customary for the senior Ambassador, known as the *doyen*, to act as spokesman on behalf of the diplomatic corps when they are doing anything in concert. There is no such person in London. Every Ambassador speaks for himself and his Government. An Ambassador cannot be pressed upon a country against its wish. In order to avoid any possibility of unpleasantness, the custom is to learn beforehand whether the person designated would be favourably received. That settled, the Ambassador is always sure of a proper and courteous welcome.

In rank, an Ambassador comes immediately after the Princes of the royal blood. He has the right of a personal audience with the sovereign, but I may say that the Queen never officially receives an Ambassador unless there is present one or more of her Ministers. To be quite accurate, however, it is very rare that

Ambassadors have an audience with her Majesty. I remember Sir Philip Currie telling me at Constantinople that he was frequently called up at all hours of the night to be asked if it were convenient to hurry off to the Yildiz Kiosk to see the Sultan, who has a passion for transacting business at night-time. We have nothing of that sort in England. An Ambassador practically never officially waits upon the Queen unless it is to make a presentation from his master.

Ambassadors, like Kings, are above the law. Not the whole Queen's Bench could raise a finger against the German Ambassador, let him do whatever he will. There is not an authority in the British Isles that can touch him. And just as he is free from English law personally, so is his house. At the peril of war our Government dare not lay a finger on No. 9, Carlton House Terrace. For, according to agreement between the nations, No. 9 and the ground on which it stands is not English but as much German as though it were situated in the very centre of Berlin. So everybody in that house is under German and not under English law.

All the members of the Embassy, and even the servants, are as free from the jurisdiction of an English court as the Ambassador himself. They cannot be arrested without his consent. Should a British subject have any grievance against him or against anyone in the Embassy, the only way to get redress is to appeal to the German Emperor. But, of course, should anyone be guilty of wrong-doing the Ambassador would at once exercise his authority and hand the delinquent over to the English law. Were he to hesitate or refuse, the relationship between Government and Government would at once be strained.

There is one privilege an Ambassador possesses which makes him the envy of all mankind. He has no taxes to pay, and he is not obliged to contribute one half-penny to the chests of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Should he smoke, he pays no duty on his imported tobacco. Should his wife be fond of lace or scent, the Customs never raise the slightest



Photo by Walery, Regent Street, W.

HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT HATZFELDT.

objection. It is very wrong of folk to get their friends who are attached to an Embassy to send cigars and what-not in a despatch-bag, and so have no duty to pay, but I have known it done. While the German Ambassador can defy the Houses of Parliament, he is not supposed to defy the London County Council. He is not exempt from local rates, but—and here is a nice little anomaly—if he refuses to pay, nobody can force him.

I have been in British Embassies abroad, but in none have I seen so many busts, paintings, engravings, and photographs of the Queen as I saw of the Emperor William at the German Embassy in London. They are everywhere, and in every room. The only notable exception is in the entrance-hall, where, on a granite plinth, there is a gigantic representation of Frederick the Great, who was never so delighted as when he had the whole world by the ears. It is a fine bust; the features are vigorous and acute, though not imperious, and yet hardly the face of the monarch whose "Life" Carlyle wrote in ten volumes, and was heartily sick, before he got half through the task, at finding his hero was no hero at all. This bust is practically the only thing to be seen in the hall. The floor is laid with thick red carpet, and there are a few big dull-toned leather chairs about for the convenience of visitors.

To all men, a dining-room has more than an ephemeral interest, and the dining-room at the Embassy, on the ground floor, is one of the most interesting apartments in the house. At the upper end of the apartment is a massive painting of the Emperor on horseback, covering nearly the whole of the wall. Rudolf Wimmer, who is the artist, has done full justice to his noble sitter. The Emperor, in military attire, is mounted on a high-spirited charger, and looks out upon the world with a stern, martial-like countenance. It only requires the horse to be pawing the air instead of pawing the ground for the picture to form an admirable companion to the famous painting of "Napoleon Crossing the Alps." At the other end of the room are two other oil paintings, one of the founder of the united German

Empire, William I., and his Empress, Augusta, the grandfather and grandmother of the present occupant of the throne. The old Emperor presents a fine commanding figure, in his tight-fitting Prussian uniform. The painting of the Empress Augusta, showing a face of sweet kindness, suffers from the fact that it was painted at a time when hoop skirts were the fashion. Nobody, however loyal and courteous, can look on a photograph, and much less an oil painting, depicting a lady in a balloon-gown of a generation ago, without a smile edging its way from the corners of his lips.

A small oblong mahogany table stands in the centre of the room, the general characteristics of which are its dull plum-coloured walls and carpet to match, heavy walnut tables and a dark but finely worked Japanese screen, with quaint Eastern figures crawling over it, the only relief in colour, besides the bright tinted painting of the Emperor, being four white classic busts placed in each corner.

Adjoining the dining-room is the library where the Ambassador receives Lord Salisbury when he visits him as Foreign Secretary, and also the representatives of other European Courts when diplomatic affairs are to be discussed. Many an important meeting has taken place in this room, resulting in understandings between Governments about which the mere man in the street never hears anything. It is a bright and cheerful room, with blue decorations. Heavy tapestry curtains hang by the two great windows. The mantelpiece is of white marble, and its purity and whiteness is set off by the ebony clock and the ebony ornaments placed upon it. An exquisitely carved oak cabinet, the workmanship delicate and yet retaining much majesty, occupies one end of the apartment. In the centre stands an inlaid Turkish coffee-table. The two things that interested me most on the occasion of my visit to the Embassy was a sketch by the Emperor William and an oil painting by the Sultan Abdul Hamid. Count Hatzfeldt, when at Constantinople, was a close personal friend of the Sultan, and received as a mark of

personal esteem on the part of the Commander of the Faithful a painting representing some Turkish soldiers bivouacking. What artists call "the candle trick" is

drawing by the Emperor William in which he shadowed forth in allegory one of the strongest convictions of his strenuous life. The Emperor displays not merely



Photo by Bolas.

THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE.

obtained by the fire shining on the men's faces, and especially on the side of a white horse. Indeed, it is rather a good picture, although it was executed by a King. And here comes in the strange juxtaposition of things in this world! By the side of the Sultan's painting is the famous cartoon

imagination, but as tested by this cartoon he has a sense of draughtsmanship. It is rarely indeed that you have the opportunity of seeing the pictorial efforts of two monarchs in one room.

Several paintings of ancestors of the present German Ambassador hang on the walls,

as well as some rural subjects and one or two engravings, notably, one depicting the Battle of the Hague. On an easel stands a signed mezzotint of the late Frederick II., by the side of a writing-table is a photograph of the Queen, one of the Emperor and his son taken some years ago, one of the Prince of Wales, and several groups of royalty and Ambassadors taken during the visit of the Shah of Persia to this country. Near the door hangs a photographic reproduction of a sketch depicting the old Emperor William as he lay dead.

The staircase leading to the upper rooms is severely plain. Along the side there is a great stretch of wall representing polished granite, while at the turn at the top is a small stand bearing a couple of marble Cupids. Close to the roof and rather too high for anybody to obtain a really good view, are several frescoes allegorical of early Prussian history. A couple of settees and one or two gilt chairs are on the rather fine landing at the head of the stairs. In the centre is a plush-covered stand bearing a bust of the Emperor, the head half turned, the eyes somewhat indignant, and a fierce upward twist given to the moustache.

The drawing-room, which is just large enough to be comfortable, is upholstered in red and gold. The principal ornament is, of course, a large bromide photograph of the Emperor William, who presented it to his Excellency when at Osborne in 1890. The Emperor's signature is bold and prominent. The fireplace in this room is one of the most beautiful I have seen. It is of white marble with a series of classical figures—finely chiselled, the folds of the drapery having lightness and buoyancy—done in bas relief; altogether a work of art. On the top of the mantel-shelf is a curiously wrought antique time-piece with two Dresden jars, that would be the delight of any collector, standing on each side. There are two cabinets, of ebony I think, ornate with inlaid flowering brass work, that one could not look upon without being filled with admiration. On one of the walls hang paintings of King Frederick William and his Queen. On a table are fifty and one curiosities from

many corners of the world, such as most men pick up in the course of their travels. On a little writing-desk in front of one of the windows looking on the terrace and the park, is a signed photograph of the Emperor in 1883, and a large panel photograph of the Empress Frederick in her widow's weeds, given by her to Count Hatzfeldt. The only book I saw in the room was an old quarto volume of Ovid, with marvellous woodcuts, still in the best of preservation.

Opening out of the drawing-room is the saloon. It has an inlaid polished floor, and on occasion has been used as a ball-room, but, as no ladies live at the Embassy, that is a purpose to which it is not now put. Many heavy Turkish rugs are laid over the shining floor. The furniture in this apartment is also of red and gold. The walls are of a soft creamy tint, edged with gilt ornaments, so that it is the most cheerful place in the house. Photographs of friends of the Ambassador and the Countess Hatzfeldt are in profusion. In a corner stands a grand piano, with a volume of Schumann resting upon it; close by is a dainty alcove, forming a retreat where letters can be written or books read. If a woman's hand had ever anything to do with the arrangement of the rooms at the Embassy, it was with this alcove, where there are many nick-nacks, curiosities and what-not, and photographs of ladies in costumes of the last century stepping through a stately gavotte.

The Ambassador's private sitting-room is perched at the top of the house, which has one advantage at least, that it secures the best view of St. James's Park. It is a plain, unpretentious apartment, with a writing-table and a couch as the chief articles of furniture. One or two old engravings are on the walls, and one or two that are not old, such as "A Gambler's Wife," by Marcus Stone, "Twixt Love and Duty," by S. E. Waller, and "Too Late," by Heywood Hardy, while on a small side-table are some photographs of the historic meeting of the Emperor and Prince Bismarck a year or so ago.

The Ambassador's son, Count Hermann Hatzfeldt, who is one of the Embassy

secretaries, lives with his father. The son's sitting-room is much more elaborate and profuse in decoration than that of the father. Not only are the floors laid, but the walls are hung with heavy Oriental rugs. That Count Hermann delights in swordsmanship is evidenced by the number of swords and rapiers and daggers and other bloodthirsty weapons—German, Chinese, Turkish, and English—suspended on the walls and filling the corners. A curiously designed cabinet is laden with all sorts of antique china ware, and by the side of this is a wire screen, which is crammed with more photographs than the average bachelor usually adorns his rooms with. Given a place of honour, and hanging by itself in an electric blue frame, is a panelized photograph of Countess Hatzfeldt. Near to this are the photographs of Count Hermann's sisters. A big lounging chair, and a little table with the illustrated papers by its side, go towards completing the Count's comfortable quarters. A young German, like a young Briton, likes to take things easy.

The German Embassy has not always been at No. 9, Carlton House Terrace. At the time of the coronation of Queen Victoria, Prussia was only represented by a Legation, and Baron Bülow, who was the Plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James's, lived in a house in Lower Berkeley Street. It was in 1840 that Baron Bunsen, one of the most distinguished diplomats of the century, was sent by Frederick William IV. on a special mission to this country. Bunsen had a long diplomatic career at Rome—where he married an English lady, Miss Waddington—and at Berne. The post of Minister to this country was then vacant, and three names were submitted to the Queen. She selected that of Baron Bunsen. Bunsen had always looked forward to the time when there would be a united German Empire, and feeling that the house in Lower Berkeley Street was too small he, in 1841, hired from Lady Stuart de Rothesay No. 4, Carlton House Terrace. It was while Bunsen represented Prussia in this country that his office was raised from that of Minister to Ambassador. The Embassy,

chiefly through Baroness Bunsen, a lady of noble and amiable qualities, became an intellectual centre. The cosmopolitan gatherings, when those who were connected with all that was best in history, painting, music, poetry, and theology met under one roof, were among the most interesting in London.

The Prince of Prussia, afterwards William, the founder of the empire, visited Carlton House Terrace twice—once in 1841 and again seven years later. Every morning he took a walk on the terrace, generally in the company of Mr. Ernest Bunsen, one of the sons of the Ambassador, and it is interesting to know it was on his advice and suggestion the present house was selected as the Embassy. He pointed out its advantages to Mr. Ernest Bunsen because it was at the corner, and therefore much lighter than No. 4. Soon after this the house happened to be for sale, and the Ambassador purchased the remaining lease on behalf of the Prince of Prussia, who subsequently handed it over to the German Government, so that now it is the official residence.

In those days many were the distinguished folk who called at the Embassy: the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston, Mendelssohn, the poet Rogers, Harriet Martineau, Richard Cobden, Carlyle, Dr. Arnold of Rugby, and many others. In 1854 Bunsen suddenly resigned his position of Ambassador in London. He was one of the closest advisers of Frederick William IV., and at that time strongly urged the King that Prussia should declare against Russia, and thus force Austria to join Prussia, an event which, it was hoped, would have put a stop to any war in the Crimea. The King, however, refused, and so Bunsen sent in his resignation. In a month or so he received his recall, and the rest of his life was devoted to literary and philosophical pursuits at Heidelberg and Bonn.

Among the other Ambassadors who have lived at No. 9, Carlton House Terrace, Count Münster, the present German Ambassador to the French Government, is the most distinguished. The tall, well-built Hanoverian, who loved driving a

coach and four through Hyde Park, and was an authority on cooking, is remembered kindly by all who had anything to do with diplomacy. He was never tired of railing at German cooking and praising that of England, and he had an absolute horror of the way fish was served at the table of his imperial master. His second wife, Lady Harriet St. Clair Erskine, who was the daughter of the third Earl of Rosslyn, was as enthusiastic as he on the art of cooking, and actually wrote a book on the way to prepare dainty dishes. "Who like me," wrote the Ambassador in the preface, "has had the luck of possessing a wife who idealised material things?" Perhaps it was his good fellowship, the fact that his wife was a Scotch lady, that he liked England and English ways, which made Count Münster so popular in London. But long before that, Münster had played an important rôle during the exciting times of the 'sixties, when he struggled hard against the North German Confederation to save the King of Hanover. But when the Hanoverians became Prussians, then he threw himself into the cause of the German Empire, and worked as few men work, next to the Emperor William and Bismarck. Bismarck, I believe, had a profound contempt for the despatches of Count Bernstorff, his immediate predecessor, but what he thought of those of Münster, who is still a graceful and learned writer, we know not.

Count Hatzfeldt, the present Ambassador, is a man who has seen long diplomatic service. In 1862 he went with Prince Bismarck to Paris as one of his secretaries. When the German Foreign Office was mobilised at the outbreak of the Franco-German War, he was a close personal attendant on the Chancellor. Bismarck had a high opinion of the Count, and continued his steadfast friend. A year or two after the peace, Hatzfeldt was appointed Imperial Minister at Madrid. But he was intended for higher work. Germany had been gaining an ascendancy at the Porte, and after the Treaty of Berlin he was despatched to the banks of the Bosphorus to maintain, if possible, the ascendancy which Germany had acquired in

the councils at Constantinople. The Sultan, Abdul Hamid, has a quite understandable dislike of Ambassadors, and would, no doubt, prefer to follow the plan of his ancestors and shut them up in the Seven Towers, while he went to war with their masters. Count Hatzfeldt, however, was an exception. During the three years he lived in the big house just outside Pera he was a personal friend of the Sultan. Then he went back to Berlin and succeeded Herr von Bülow as Foreign Secretary. No man was better fitted for the post. But in 1885 there was a transference, and he then became Ambassador in London.

Few people have any idea of the mass of work that has to be gone through at an Embassy. I leave out the constant interviews between Count Hatzfeldt and Lord Salisbury on matters of foreign policy between the two countries. The amount of correspondence that passes between Carlton House Terrace and Berlin every week is bewildering. The staff consists of Count Arco Valley, First Secretary; Count Hermann Hatzfeldt, Second Secretary; Baron Ritter, Third Secretary; Baron Eckhardtstein and Baron Oppel, Attachés; Captain E. Guelich, Military and Naval Attaché; and Mr. A. W. Schmettau, Director of the Chancery. Twice a week at least are despatches sent by means of the Prussian couriers who spend their life travelling between the German capital and London. So secret and important are they oftentimes, that the documents cannot be entrusted to the post. The fear, of course, is that some interested eyes might have a peep at them on the way. And yet it is an admittedly groundless fear, for frequently, when both the Prussian couriers were away, German despatches have been sent in the bag of the Queen's Messenger carrying despatches to the British Ambassador at Berlin. Count Hatzfeldt, who is not strong in health, only occasionally goes into society. Most of his life is spent in the little room that looks over the trees in St. James's Park, and above which, at night, he can see the glare of the light on the top of the Clock Tower, telling that the British Parliament is sitting.

J. F. F.