

biographer of the Empress, there was, in the early part of the present century, a wealthy, intelligent and attractive family residing in one of the most stately mansions. The master of the house was an opulent merchant from England, William Kirkpatrick, a Scotchman by birth. He had been the English consul at Malaga, and had married a young lady of Malaga, of remarkable beauty both of form and feature, Francisca Gravisno, the daughter of one of the ancient Spanish families.

They had three daughters, all of whom inherited the beauty, grace and vivacity of their mother, blended with the strong sense and solid virtues of their father. The eldest of these daughters, Maria, was a young lady of extraordinary beauty. Blended Celtic and Spanish blood flowed in her veins and glowed in her cheeks. Her exquisitely moulded form is represented to have been perfect. This lady married a Spanish nobleman, Cipriano Palafox, Count de Theba, who had joined the army of Napoleon, in the endeavour to liberate Spain from the despotism of the Bourbons. This marriage secured for the beautiful and accomplished Maria Kirkpatrick all the advantages which rank and wealth could confer. Her husband, Count Theba, soon received additional wealth and honor, inheriting from a deceased brother the title and estates of the Count de Montijo. He carried his lovely bride to Madrid, where she was presented at court. There her extraordinary gifts of mind and person won the friendship of the Queen, Maria Christina, who made her first lady of honor. Eugénie, afterwards Empress of the French, was her daughter.

Such were the fortunes of the Spanish branch of the family, as far as it is necessary for the purposes of this memoir to trace them.

A curious fact, however, will not escape the attention of the reflective reader. It is that, after a lapse of centuries, many migrations and vicissitudes of fortune, a lady, in whose veins flowed the blood of the ancient Kings of Scotland, should ascend the imperial throne of France. Constitutional changes, wars, revolutions, had swept away many thrones only to restore royal honors at last to the lost scion of a disinherited royal house.

William Kirkpatrick, grandfather of the Empress Eugénie, was naturally proud of his family descent, and took a deep interest in other branches of the family. In a letter to the grandfather of the subject of this sketch accompanying a present of fruit from Malaga, he signed himself as a cousin.