

COUNT BENKENDORF RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR.

Count Benkendorf 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, Constantine Count Benkendorf, 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, when on a throne in Europe seemed safe, Princess Louise, daughter of the princely house of Groby, and their firstborn, to whom they gave his famous uncle's name of Alexander, was born in Berlin in 1849.

The young Count Alexander on whom 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 his most impressive 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 grief was unrelieved in 1870. The 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 since, politics, and literature, and there are in English society many who can still remember the remarkable personality of the man whose "Schouvaloff's Memorandum" made such a stir in 1873.

A QUIAINT 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, mum, you haven't given 'em to me." 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: Yes, 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. 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 encouragement. "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 set 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 "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 hurt 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, sir; but Ol niver 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 shoe-cup-in-ere! (chieffonnier.) Mistress to maid, who had been to the pantomime: Did you see any harlequins? Maid: No, ma'am; we only had ginger-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 you in to enter. Country Servant: I should like to see her. Country Servant: Where's yer tickle? Being told not to waste gas, as we had to pay for it, our "girl from the country" said, "Tay 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 tearful, and her mistress asked what was the matter. "Oh, I don't know," she wailed. "I think the storm of that there 'Dan'oodles 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."

ABOUT SMOKING IN THE THEATRE.

(Cecil Raleigh in London Leader.) When Lord Carrington was Lord Chamberlain, 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 dreamed 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 jointly demanding from parliament a drastic revision of the laws that apply to public entertainment in this country.

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 basis of entertainment combined with tobacco, reducing 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's some 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 prevent it, if he thinks that his patrons wish it and it is a matter for contemplation that the theatrical managers have for years determined to pursue a policy of enlightenment, which they have hitherto followed in their fight over the music hall sketch. In fact, when I suffer myself to be visited by a word, wild dream of a union between theatrical managers and music hall managers for the purpose of joint demands from parliament a drastic revision of the laws that apply to public entertainment in this country.

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 of 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 so he has been stung ever since. 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."

A Seditious Occupation.

At the Eden the prices were higher, but smoking prevailed everywhere but the stalls was is. If my memory serves me correctly, and these stalls were upholstered in Utrecht velvet, white lace anti-mats covered the seats, 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 British 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 Brighton in the direction of reasonable excursions 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 Alexandria Theatre, Brighton, where smoking has been the custom, I noticed the same dull-headedness on the part of the audience to leave their seats, and any smoke!

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