

THE COURT OF KING OTHO.

THE Court of King Otho has but little of "the pomp and circumstance" which are wont to characterize the palaces of princes, and none of the grandeur and lustre which a long line of kings, the wealth of nations and the revolutions of ages have shed upon the old principalities of Europe, or the magnificent monarchies of the East. The present residence of their majesties, though called by courtesy "the Palace," is, in fact, an ordinary house, and has neither lofty halls nor shady groves for comfort or amusement. They want not only a palace, which is of little importance so long as they have the name and the hope of one, but they want nobility, which is a necessary ingredient to royalty, and a deficiency which neither time nor courtesy can supply. The King and Queen of Greece, unlike the kings and queens of other monarchies, are without the bright creations of nobility; and their august persons are surrounded by plebeians, who, though they are bedecked with crosses and orders of knighthood, have not the sounding titles of earls, lords or counts. The style of living in the Court of Greece is free of royal extravagance; and if we except the royal stables, which are kept on a liberal scale, every thing about the King and his lovely consort is marked by a simplicity which is highly creditable to their good sense, and which is the more to be admired, as it is in unison with the condition of the country over whose destinies they preside. Notwithstanding, however, this appearance of poverty, which we have reason to consider as a virtue and an ornament, and the absence of the false and transient light which plays and glitters upon the Courts of haughty tyrants and long established monarchs, there is, nevertheless, in Otho's Court something which, though it may not dazzle the giddy nor bewilder the idle, serves to please the wise and interest the thoughtful. King Otho being the source of power, his Court is necessarily the centre of attraction around him, as round a centre are clustered not only the flippant courtiers of the day, but the most illustrious personages of the nation; his royal fetes and royal balls call together an heterogeneous, but interesting assembly, and presents to the eye of a stranger a "tableau vivant," where one beholds the statesman as well as the wild and untutored heroes of the Greek revolution.

Soon after our arrival in Greece and our presentation to their majesties, we had the pleasure of attending a royal ball and witnessing

the light and life of King Otho's Court. At the appointed time and hour, we repaired to what is called the "Old Palace," and were ushered through a suite of rooms into a spacious rotunda. The hall was brilliantly lighted, and crowded to overflowing with an assembly which comprehended the worth and beauty of Athens. In point of numbers and splendour, the assembly was doubtless inferior to those which enliven the levees of European monarchs, but in point of novelty and variety of costumes, it surpassed every thing of the kind I had ever seen or heard. It was indeed a gay and dazzling scene; but in order to give even a faint idea of the "tout ensemble," I must be allowed to note some particulars.

On the right of the hall stood, conscious of their stiff dignity and high importance, the representatives of the European powers, with their embroidered uniforms and gay ribands, and to the left arrayed themselves the ministers of Otho, vying with their competitors, the ministers of Russia, France and England, in the richness of their uniforms and the splendour of their trappings. At the head of the hall, and between these two ranks of laced courtiers, appeared the ladies of the Court; that is, the wives of foreign ministers, these of the Councillors of State, and Her Majesty's "dames d'honneur." These were all attired in the latest fashion of Paris; and beside those who were lost in the light of their diamonds and their brilliants, there were many whom nature had endowed with the more captivating and more valuable ornaments of female loveliness and grace; amid this bevy of bright beings, the dark-eyed daughter of Marco Botzaris shone like a morning star. The parties I have described were flanked and hemmed in by the Bavarian officers and the Greek warriors; the latter of whom being dressed in the gay and singular costume of their native land, appeared the most unique and the most interesting objects in King Otho's hall. Their "snowy camizé" and gold-embroidered jackets set off their fine persons and athletic forms, while their broad sabres, which were slung carelessly along their left side, gave them a wild and warlike air. These chiefs, or, as they are called, the Pulicars, had, formerly, no other occupation but the honourable vocation of arms; and their country being under the dominion of the Turks, they were seldom admitted into the list of regular tyrants—they were never raised to the high dignity of prime ministers, nor permitted to paint a thousand lies, or blot out whole nations with a drop of ink. They were