

## LORD KILGOBBIN.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

Author of "Harry Lorrequer," "Jack Hinton the Guardsman," "Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER LXII. Continued.

"We had half begun to believe you had abandoned us, Mr. Atlee," said he. "When England commits her interests to inferior men, she usually means to imply that they are worth nothing better. I am rejoiced to see that we are at last awakened from this delusion. With his Excellency Lord Danesbury here, we shall be soon once more where we have been."

"Your fleet is in effective condition, well armed, and well disciplined?"

"All, all," smiled the pasha.

"The army reformed, the artillery supplied with the most efficient guns, and officers of European services encouraged to join your staff?"

"All."

"Wise economies in your financial matters, close supervision in the collection of the revenue, and searching inquiries where abuses exist?"

"All."

"Especially care that the administration of justice should be beyond even the malevolence of distrust, that men of station and influence should be clear-headed and honorable, not a taint of unfairness to attach to them?"

"Be it all so," ejaculated the pasha, blandly.

"By the way, I am reminded by a line I have just received from his excellency with reference to Sulina, or was it Galatz?"

The Pasha could not decide, and he went on:

"I remember: it is Galatz. There is some curious question there of a concession for a line of railroad, which a Servian commissioner had the skill to obtain from the cabinet here by a sort of influence which our Stock Exchange people in London scarcely regard as regular."

The pasha nodded to imply attention, and smoked on as before.

"But I weary your excellency," said Atlee, rising, "and my real business here is accomplished."

"Tell my lord that I await his arrival with impatience; that of all pending questions none shall receive solution till he comes; that I am the very least of his servants." And with an air of most dignified sincerity he bowed him out, and Atlee hastened away to tell his chief that he had "squared the Turk," and would sail on the morrow.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

## ATLEE ON HIS TRAVELS.

On board the Austrian Lloyd's steamer in which he sailed from Constantinople Joseph Atlee employed himself in the composition of a small volume purporting to be the "Experience of a Two Years' Residence in Greece." In an opening chapter of this work he had modestly intimated to the reader how an intimate acquaintance with the language and literature of modern Greece, great opportunities of mixing with every class and condition of the people, a mind well stored with classical acquirements and thoroughly versed in antiquarian lore, a strong poetic temperament, and the feeling of an artist for scenery, had all combined to give him a certain fitness for his task; and by the extracts from his diary it would be seen on what terms of freedom he conversed with ministers and ambassadors, even with royalty itself.

A most pitiless chapter was devoted to the exposure of the mistakes and misrepresentations of a late Quarterly article called "Greece and her Protectors," whose statements were the more mercilessly handled and ridiculed that the paper in question had been written by himself, and the sarcastic allusions to the sources of the information not the less pungent on that account.

That the writer had been admitted to frequent audiences of the king; that he had discussed with his majesty the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth; that the king had seriously confided to him his belief that, in the event of his abdication, the Ionian Islands must revert to him as a personal appanage, the terms on which they were annexed to Greece being decided by lawyers to bear this interpretation—all these Atlee denied of his own knowledge, and asked the reader

to follow him into the royal cabinet for his reasons. When, therefore, he heard that, from some damage to the machinery, the vessel must be detained some days at Syra to refit, Atlee was scarcely sorry that necessity gave him an opportunity to visit Athens.

A little about Ulysses and a good deal about Lord Byron, a smattering of Grote and a more perfect memory of About, were, as he owned to himself, all his Greek; but he could answer for what three days in the country would do for him, particularly with that spirit of candid inquiry he could now bring to his task, and the genuine fairness with which he desired to judge the people.

"The two years' resident" in Athens must doubtless often have dined with his minister; and so Atlee sent his card to the Legation.

Mr. Brammell, our "present minister at Athens," as the Times continued to designate him, as though to imply that the appointment might not be permanent, was an excellent man, of that stamp of which diplomacy has more—who consider that the court to which they are accredited concentrates for the time the political interests of the globe. That any one in Europe thought, read, spoke, or listened to anything but what was then happening in Greece Mr. Brammell could not believe. That France or Prussia, Spain or Italy, could divide attention with his small kingdom—that the great political minds of the Continent were not more eager to know what Comroundours thought and Bulgaria required than all about Bismarck and Gortchakoff—he could not be brought to conceive; and in consequence of these convictions he was an admirable minister, and truly represented all the interests of his country.

As that admirable public instructor, the Levant Herald, had frequently mentioned Atlee's name, now as the guest of Kulbass Pasha, now as having attended some public ceremony with other persons of importance, and once as "our distinguished countryman, whose wise suggestions and acute observations have been duly accepted by the imperial cabinet," Brammell at once knew that this distinguished countryman should be entertained at dinner, and he sent him an invitation. That habit—so popular of late years—to send out some man from England to do something at a foreign court that the British ambassador or minister there either has not done or cannot do, possibly ought never to do, had invested Atlee in Brammell's eyes with the character of one of those semi-accredited inscrutable people whose function it would seem to be to make us out the most meddlesome people in Europe.

Of course Brammell was not pleased to see him at Athens, and he ran over all the possible contingencies he might have come for. It might be the old Greek loan which was to be raked up again as a new grievance. It might be the pensions that they would not pay, or the brigands that they would not catch—pretty much for the same reasons—that they could not. It might be that they wanted to hear what Tsousicheff, the new Russian minister, was doing, and whether the farce of the "Grand Idia" was advertised for repetition. It might be Crete was on the tapis, or it might be the question of the Greek envoy to the Porte that the sultan refused to receive, and which promised to turn out a very pretty quarrel if only adroitly treated.

The more Brammell thought of it, the more he felt assured this must be the reason of Atlee's visit, and the more indignant he grew that extra-official means should be employed to investigate what he had written seventeen dispatches to explain—seventeen dispatches, with nine "inclosures," and a "private and confidential," about to appear in a blue-book.

To make the dinner as confidential as might be, the only guests besides Atlee were a couple of yatching Englishman, a German Professor of Archaeology, and the American Minister, who, of course speaking no language but his own, could always be escaped from by a digression into French, German, or Italian.

Atlee felt, as he entered the drawing-room, that the company was what he irreverently called afterward a scratch team, and with an almost equal quickness, he saw that he himself was the "personage" of the entertainment, the "man of mark" of the party.

The same fact which enabled him to perceive all this made him especially

guarded in all he said, so that his host's efforts to unveil his intentions and learn what he had come for were complete failures. "Greece was a charming country—Greece was the parent of any civilization we boasted.—She gave us those ideas of architecture with which we raised that glorious temple at Kensington, and that taste for sculpture which we exhibited near Apsley House.—Aristophanes gave us our comic drama, and only the defaults of our language made it difficult to show why the member for Cork did not more often recall Demosthenes."

As for insolency, it was a very gentleman-like failing; while brigandage was only what Shell used to euphemize as "the wild justice" of noble spirits, too impatient for the sluggish steps of slow redress, and too proud not to be self-reliant.

Thus excusing and extenuating where-in he could not flatter, Atlee talked on the entire evening, till he sent the two Englishmen home heartily sick of a bombastic eulogy on the land where a pilot had run their cutter on a rock, and a revenue officer had seized all their tobacco. The German had retired early, and the Yankee hastened to his lodgings to "jot down" all the fine things he could commit to his next dispatch home, and overwhelm Mr. Seward with an array of historic celebrities such as had never been seen at Washington.

"They're gone at last," said the minister. "Let us have our cigar on the terrace."

The unbounded frankness, the unlimited trustfulness, that now ensued between these two men was charming. Brammell represented one hard worked and sorely tried in his country's service; the perfect slave of office, spending nights long at his desk, but not appreciated; not valued at home. It was delightful, therefore, to him, to find a man like Atlee to whom he could tell this—could tell for what an ungrateful country he toiled, what ignorance he sought to enlighten, what actual stupidity he had to counteract. He spoke of the Office—from his tone of horror it might have been the Holy Office—with a sort of tremulous terror and aversion: the absurd instructions they sent him, the impossible things he was to do, the inconceivable lines of policy he was to insist on; how but for him the king would abdicate, and a Russian protectorate be proclaimed; how the revolt at Athens would be proclaimed in Thessaly; how Skulkeoff, the Russian general, was waiting to move into the provinces "at the first check my policy shall receive here," cried he. "I shall show you on this map; and here are the names, armament, and tonnage, of a hundred and ninety-four gun-boats now ready at Nicholief to move down on Constantinople."

Was it not strange, was it not worse than strange, after such a show of unbounded confidence as this, Atlee would reveal nothing? Whatever his grievances against the people he served—and who is without them?—he would say nothing, he had no complaint to make. Things he admitted were bad, but they might be worse. The monarchy existed still, and the House of Lords was, for awhile at least, tolerated. Ireland was disturbed, but not in open rebellion; and if we had no army to speak of, we still had a navy, and even the present Admiralty only lost about five ships a year.

Till long after midnight did they fence with each other, with buttons on their foils—very harmlessly, no doubt, but very uselessly, too; Brammell could make nothing of a man who neither wanted to hear about finance nor taxation, court scandals, schools, nor public robbery; and though he could not in so many words ask: What have you come for? why are you here? he said this in full fifty different ways for three hours and more.

"You make some stay among us, I trust?" said the minister, as his guest rose to take leave. "You mean to see something of this interesting country before you leave?"

"I fear not; when the repairs to the steamer enable her to put to sea, they are to let me know by telegraph, and I shall join her."

"Are you so pressed for time that you cannot spare us a week or two?"

"Totally impossible! Parliament will sit in January next, and I must hasten home."

This was to imply that he was in the House, or that he expected to be, or that he ought to be, and, even if he were not,

that his presence in England was all-essential to somebody who was in Parliament, and for whom his information, his explanation, his accusation, or anything else, was all needed, and so Brammell read it and bowed accordingly.

"By the way," said the minister, as the other was leaving the room, and with that sudden abruptness of a wayward thought, "we have been talking of all sorts of things and people, but not a word about what we are so full of here. How is this difficulty about the new Greek envoy to the Porte to end? You know, of course, the sultan refuses to receive him?"

"The pasha told me something of it, but I confess to have paid little attention. I treated the matter as insignificant."

"Insignificant! You cannot mean that an affront so openly administered as this, the greatest national offense that could be offered, is insignificant?" and then, with a volubility that smacked very little of want of preparation, he ran over how the idea of sending a particular man, long compromised by his complicity in the Creton revolt, to Constantinople, came from Russia, and that the opposition of the Porte to accept him was also Russian. "I got to the bottom of the whole intrigue. I wrote home how Tsousicheff was nursing this new quarrel. I told our people facts of the Muscovite policy that they never got a hint of from their ambassador at St. Petersburg."

"It was rare luck that we had you here; good-night, good-night," said Atlee, as he buttoned his coat.

"More than that, I said: 'If the cabinet here persist in sending Kostalergi—'"

"Whom did you say? What name was it you said?"

"Kostalergi—the prince. As much a prince as you are. First of all, they have no better, and secondly, this is the most consummate adventurer in the East."

"I should like to know him. Is he here at Athens?"

"Of course he is. He is waiting till he hears the sultan will receive him."

"I should like to know him," said Atlee, more seriously.

"Nothing easier. He comes here every day. Will you meet him at dinner to-morrow?"

"Delighted! but then I should like a little conversation with him in the morning. Perhaps you would kindly make me known to him?"

"With sincere pleasure. I'll write and ask him to dine—and I'll say that you will wait on him. I'll say: 'My distinguished friend, Mr. Atlee, of whom you have heard, will wait on you about eleven or twelve.' Will that do?"

"Perfectly. So then I may make my visit on the presumption of being expected?"

"Certainly. Not that Kostalergi wants much preparation. He plays baccarat all night, but he is at his desk at six."

"Is he rich?"

"Hasn't a sixpence—but plays all the same. And, what people are more surprised at, pays when he loses. If I had not already passed an evening in your company, I should be bold enough to hint to you the need of caution—great caution—in talking with him."

"I know—I am aware," said Atlee, with a meaning smile.

"You will not be misled by his cunning, Mr. Atlee, but beware of his candor."

"I will be on my guard. Many thanks for the caution. Good-night!—once more, good-night!"

(To be Continued.)

Not to be Deceived—Count d'Orsenne one day accompanied the first Napoleon on a hunting excursion. The emperor had been complaining of thirst, and someone seeing a woman at a distance, called to her. The woman did not know Napoleon or any of the escort. She gave the emperor a glass of water mixed with a little brandy, and then curtsied for payment. "There, my good woman," said Napoleon, pointing to Count d'Orsenne, "there is the Emperor. Ask him for money; he pays for us all." The woman blushed and looked embarrassed; then, turning to the Count, she scanned his splendid uniform with the eye of a connoisseur, and said: "He? Pooh! nonsense! Do you think I believe that? The emperor is not such a coxcomb. You, sir, look more like himself." The emperor was much amused at the remark, and gave the woman a double louis.