

men of our age, already chained him to Talleyrand, that cunning fox who, at the expense of his reputation for wisdom, and even at the risk of being laughed at, had recommended the young General to the Directory as a passionate admirer of the songs of Ossian. It was Ossian who long protected Talleyrand. Napoleon forgave the Minister who made use of his portfolio to turn the paper market to his own advantage: he forgave Talleyrand for making him the murderer of d'Enghien: verily, he did not forget Ossian. It is strange, however, that Talleyrand did not observe more closely the bent of his master's sympathies, for Napoleon had many peculiarities. In the first place he loved virtue; and the older and more powerful he became the more he preferred good morals to the songs of Ossian. In this respect he resembled all usurpers of the better sort: he felt more at his ease when breathing a moral atmosphere. Now Talleyrand was everything, high chamberlain, deputy grand viziér, everything but moral. He was the *roué* of the Bourse and of the gambling house; he carried on his intrigues without any plan, guided by the whim or fancy of the moment, and was not even ashamed of the fact that he had never led Madame Grandt to the altar. Napoleon would no longer put up with these irregular liaisons, and threatened Talleyrand with his displeasure; whereupon the Minister grumbled and married. Ossian grew fainter and fainter in the Emperor's memory, till in the forests of Poland he thought no more about him; and Talleyrand fell into formal disgrace.

This was his second period of inactivity; and he passed it in sarcasms, money speculations, and conspiracies. He had called the Russian campaign the beginning of the end, and took care to be at hand in time to take the crown from the head of the fallen hero. He gave it to the Bourbons. He could no longer bear to listen to the clanking swords of the Napoleonites, and was afraid of the epaulettes which would have guarded the imperial infant in its cradle. Talleyrand hated war because its issues defied calculation; and nothing is safer, nothing rules the bourse better than a peace not quite free from danger, a peace attended by some anxiety and requiring much diplomacy. Talleyrand now began to talk of principles, and these principles were for him the Bourbons. He had done them much service since the Polish campaign, and now wished to put the means of rewarding him into their hands. He accordingly demonstrated to the allies theoretically and practically what need there was for the white cockade. The Emperor of Russia allowed himself to be persuaded, and swore allegiance to the Count of Provence. To give Talleyrand his due, the restoration of the Bourbons was his most brilliant achievement. He exerted himself to the utmost to secure this precarious

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