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FROM THURGAU TO THE TUILERIES.

Among the many foreigners to whom Switzerland, at one time or another extended her traditional right of asylum, there was one whom destiny called to play an outstanding role in the history of Europe and who in the fullness of time came to ascend the throne of France as the Emperor Napoleon the Third. His strange and dramatic story, in its bare outlines, is here briefly told.

Charles-Louis-Napoleon, as he was christened, was born in Paris the 20th April, 1808, the son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland and brother of Napoleon the First, and of Hortense the younger daughter of the Empress Josephine. During his childhood he came into frequent contact with his uncle and from his early days became imbued with ideas of Napoleonic grandeur.

After the fall of Napoleon and on the return of the Bourbons, the remaining members of the Bonaparte family went into exile. Queen Hortense, whose married life was unhappy and who had separated from her husband, took her children first to Geneva and later to Constance where she spent two years. She next moved to Bavaria and placed the young Prince Louis in the Gymnasium of Augsburg, where he acquired a solid education, and a German accent which he never quite lost. Most of the boy's holidays were spent in Switzerland. In 1820, Hortense, with the permission of the Swiss Authorities, settled in the Canton Thurgau. She bought the castle of Arenenberg on the shore of the lake Constance and made it her permanent home. Here Prince Louis grew to manhood in the peaceful surroundings of the Swiss countryside. He led the uneventful life of a country squire and could often be seen driving his cabriolet along the Constance road, a dark, short figure, his pale face framed in the full beard affected by the dandies of his period. (It was only in later life that he assumed the waxed moustache, and the chin-tuft known as the imperial, by which his features have become familiar). He spent his time riding, swimming and shooting, won prizes at "Schützenfests" and took an active part in cantonal affairs. Though reserved of manner, he became generally popular and there is reason to believe that the Thurgauer folk were rather proud of their distinguished guest. In 1829, the Prince joined a volunteer-unit of the Swiss artillery and received his training in the camp of Thun to which he used to go every summer. In due course he was promoted Captain in a Bernese regiment and later received the freedom of Thurgau. To all intents and purposes he had become a Swiss citizen. The great interest he took in Swiss institutions is shown by his book "Considérations Politiques et Militaires sur la Suisse." He also wrote a "Manuel d'Artillerie," a long and technical hand-book widely read by military students of his time.

In 1832, the Duke of Reichstadt, son of the first Napoleon, died and Prince Louis became the titular head of the Bonapartes and pretender to the French throne. Shortly before, he had issued his first manifesto; from now on he devoted himself completely to the task of restoring the Bonaparte dynasty to what he believed to be its rightful position. Like his famous uncle, he trusted in his star and would shrink from no personal risks to achieve his purpose. In this frame of mind, he undertook his first political venture, the

attempted Strasbourg mutiny of 1836. Under a false name and with 200,000 francs in his possession, he took lodgings in Alsace and in the dark hours of an October morning, in the uniform of a French Colonel, entered the barracks of the 4th Artillery. His purpose, to make himself master of the army, failed: the garrison, with a few exceptions, refused to mutiny and the Prince was arrested and sent to Paris. King Louis-Philippe granted him a free pardon but with the condition that he be deported to America. He was taken to New York in a French warship but within less than a year was back in Switzerland, to be at the bed-side of his dying mother. After her death he moved to Gottlieben, another château on the lake of Constance and there resumed his activities as the French pretender.

The French Government, alarmed at his return, brought pressure to bear on Switzerland and demanded his expulsion, but the Swiss resented this interference with their right of asylum and refused to comply. At this stage, the French lost patience. Early in 1838 they mobilized, an army corps was concentrated at Lyons, and an ultimatum was expected. Great excitement was aroused throughout Switzerland and hostilities might have ensued were it not that the Prince, who had become almost a national hero, solved the problem by withdrawing on his own initiative, to England.

He lived in London two years. Society opened its doors to the quiet young Frenchman with the heavy moustache and a German accent and he made many friends. At the house of Lady Blessington he met the



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beautiful Miss Howard who became what a discreet historian has described as his unconsecrated consort. But social distractions did not deter him from the pursuit of his political intrigues and by 1840 he was ready for his next adventure which was to be a descent on the French coast and a military revolution in one of the northern garrison towns. A paddle-steamer was chartered and on August 6th the Prince, with some fifty followers, landed near Boulogne. This daring expedition fared no better than the Strasbourg attempt. Once again, the garrison remained loyal, the conspirators were arrested and the Prince, heavily guarded, was taken to Paris. This time, no leniency was shown; he was publicly tried and sentenced to imprisonment for life in a French fortress. He was sent to the château of Ham, a citadel on the Somme, where he spent six silent and uncomfortable years. In May 1846, he escaped, clean-shaven and disguised as a workman, made his way to Belgium and re-appeared in London Society. But his exile was drawing to a close; the revolution of 1848 which made France a republic once more, gave the Prince his chance. He returned to Paris and before the year was out, was elected President of the French Republic. Three years later, he carried out his coup d'état, dissolved the parliament and laid the foundations of the second Empire. His youthful dreams had become true, and on 1st December, 1852, the former artillery captain from Switzerland entered the Tuileries as the Emperor of France.

The rest of the story is well-known: eighteen years of absolute, but on the whole not despotic, rule, an elegant and brilliant court, State visits (Queen Victoria found the Emperor charming) the Crimean campaign, a futile war in Italy, the fiasco of the Mexican episode, and finally, the disastrous war of 1870 which brought the Empire crashing down to the thunder of the Prussian guns.

After Napoleon's surrender at Sedan — that fatal name in the military annals of France — and a short captivity in Wilhelmshoehe, he retired to Chislehurst where he died in 1873. His widow, Eugenie, survived him by no less than 47 years. Meantime, a culminating tragedy had overtaken and put an end to the Bonaparte dynasty. The Prince Imperial, Napoleon's only son, who held a commission in the British Army, was killed in 1879, ambushed by a Zulu raiding party during the fighting in South Africa. He and his parents are buried in the mausoleum at Farnborough.

To-day, Napoleon the Third and his Empire are but a page of history while in Switzerland, where as a young man he plotted and schemed in the cause of Bonapartism, his memory has faded into oblivion.

J.J.F.S.

ROYAL HENLEY REGATTA.

We learn that both the See Club Zurich and the Ruder Club Zurich will compete in this year's Royal Henley Regatta which will take place this month.

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DOCUMENTS POUR SERVIR A L'HISTOIRE DE NOTRE COLONIE.

On the 29th of this month the Eglise Suisse is celebrating the 185th anniversary of its foundation.

It might interest our readers to learn on this occasion something of the history of our church, and we reproduce herewith an introduction and particulars, written a few years ago by a former Editor of the "Swiss Observer," Dr. A. Latt.

INTRODUCTION.

Dans sa très intéressante brochure sur l'histoire de l'Eglise Suisse de Londres, Monsieur Roehrich écrit que d'après les plus anciens documents dont il a eu connaissance il paraîtrait que des démarches infructueuses pour avoir une église suisse à Londres furent faites déjà entre 1720 et 1730.

"Le Grand Livre des Actes de l'Eglise Helvétique," cité aussi par Roehrich, mentionne que :

"La tradition était demeurée entre les Suisses établis à Londres depuis longtemps que cette entreprise avait déjà été tentée l'an 1722 sous le règne de S.M. le Roi George I, qui l'avait approuvée et leur avait même accordé le terrain pour bâtir une Eglise à la Meuse, près de Charing Cross, mais qu'ils ne s'étaient pas trouvé en assez grand nombre pour pouvoir l'exécuter."

Je viens de trouver au Record Office (S. P. Switzerland Miscellaneous, vol 50) deux mémoires au sujet de cette première tentative de fonder une église suisse. Ils sont écrits de la même main sur de grandes feuilles de papier très bien conservées. Les deux lettres sont sans date et sans adresse. La première porte une vingtaine de signatures de membres bien connus de la colonie suisse, presque tous les noms figurant dans les registres de la "Société des Suisses" ou dans la correspondance de Gaspard Wetstein conservée au British Museum, une mine inépuissable de renseignements sur les Suisses à Londres dans la première moitié du 18ème siècle.

Qui est la "Grandeur" à laquelle les Suisses s'adressaient avec tant de révérence et de confiance? — D'abord je conjecturais en faveur de Lord Carteret l'ami intime du très influent Sir Luke Schaub (un Bâlois qui était Ambassadeur anglais à la cour de Versailles 1720-24) et patron de Gaspard Wetstein, le chapelain de la princesse de Galles. — Plus tard des lettres et allusions trouvées dans d'autres collections m'ont fait penser que le généreux protecteur en question était peut-être le fameux ministre Lord Townshend, alors Secrétaire d'Etat pour les affaires étrangères. Il avait passé quelque temps à Genève et pendant plus de 30 ans il entretenait avec le gouvernement de la république ainsi qu'avec LL.EE. (Leurs Excellences) de Berne une correspondance très amicale, presque familière (voir Royal Letters, Geneva vols. 58 et 59). Finalement je viens de trouver parmi les rapports du Général Pesme de St. Saphorin (un Vaudois, ministre du Roi d'Angleterre auprès de la Cour de Vienne 1715-27) (S.P. Germany et Hungary, vols. 36-61) un passage très curieux et évidemment écrit à l'appui de la demande de notre colonie. Cette lettre éclaircit deux points restés plus ou moins douteux jusqu'à présent: la date de la démarche et le nom de Lord Townshend.

Il est facile de reconstruire les autres parties de l'affaire. Nous pouvons nous imaginer le zèle de ces pères de notre colonie à s'assurer l'appui des grands :