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LETTERS OF ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT

WRITTEN BETWEEN THE
YEARS 1827 AND 1858, TO
VARNHAGEN VON ENSE;
TOGETHER WITH EXTRACTS
FROM VARNHAGEN'S DIARIES,
AND LETTERS FROM VARNHAGEN
AND OTHERS TO HUMBOLDT

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT



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Letters of Alexander von Humboldt

Ludmilla Assing, the niece of Varnhagen von Ense, was the editor of this selection of letters from Alexander von Humboldt to her uncle – to who Humboldt had entrusted the preservation of their correspondence – in the period 1827-58. First published in 1860, Letters of Alexander von Humboldt also contains letters from Varnhagen and other distinguished correspondents to Humboldt. Some passages from Varnhagen's diary are also included to supply a vivid commentary on the letters, which present detailed records of Humboldt's life, activity, and habits of thought, and contain materials of unquestionable importance for portraying an accurate picture of his mind and character. The other letters contained in the volume illustrate his worldwide circle of correspondents. This collection was published after the deaths of both Varnhagen and Humboldt. Explanatory notes and a full index of names accompany this authorised translation from the original German.

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Letters of Alexander von Humboldt

*Written between the Years 1827 and 1858, to
Varnhagen von Ense; Together with Extracts
from Varnhagen's Diaries, and Letters from
Varnhagen and Others to Humboldt*

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT



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L E T T E R S
OF
ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT.

LETTERS

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AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN,

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND A FULL INDEX OF NAMES.



LONDON:

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1860.

“Your last letter, so honourable for me, contained words which I should not like to misunderstand. ‘You scarcely permit to yourself the possession of my impieties.’ After my speedy decease you may deal as you please with such property. We only owe truth in this life to such persons as we deeply esteem, therefore it is due to you.”

Letter from Alexander von Humboldt to Varnhagen, 7th December, 1841.

THE PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE letters have created the most lively sensation all over Germany, where, within a few weeks after their first publication, a fifth edition has already appeared. In the present eventful state of affairs they have been hailed as fresh and startling evidence of the fact, that liberal principles and a strong feeling of German nationality and unity have long been steadily gaining ground, even among the highest classes of Prussian society. Opinions and sentiments, such, for instance, as those recorded in the “Diary” after Letter CXXXIV., become portentous signs of the times when uttered by men in the position of Humboldt and Varnhagen. To this feature of the book, far more than to “the delicious bits of scandal” in it—as has been surmised, the powerful effect which it has produced from one end of the country to the other is mainly to be attributed.

The fair editor of the original Letters has expatiated at some length on the propriety of pub-

lishing them so soon after Humboldt's death. This is a question with which the publishers of the English version can have no concern. The book having once been brought before the world, the correspondence, and the effect produced by it, become matters of contemporary history, which ought not to be withheld from the public of any civilized country. Some objection may be made that certain passages, which bear upon living persons here, have been retained in the translation. But, as most of the letters containing these personal allusions have already gone the round of the papers, even the suppression would have defeated its own purpose, by creating a suspicion that the original contained passages of greater acerbity than is really the case. And with due deference to the established rules of literary propriety, it might after all be asked which is the more desirable—to be attacked while living and able to defend oneself, or to incur posthumous obloquy, which our surviving friends may or may not feel disposed to ward off from our memory?

P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following letters of Humboldt contain materials of inestimable importance for forming a true, legitimate, and unveiled picture of his mind and character. It was his will and desire that they should be made public at his death, as will be seen distinctly expressed in the extract on a previous page. Nowhere has he expressed himself with less reserve or more sincerity than in his intercourse with Varnhagen, his long tried and trusty friend, whom he loved and valued above all others. In him he reposed the most unreserved confidence, and although ordinarily in the habit of destroying most of the letters addressed to him, it was with Varnhagen that he deposited such as he considered important and desired to have preserved. He reckoned upon Varnhagen, who was the younger of the two, surviving him.

Varnhagen, however, died first, and transferred to me the duty, now become doubly such, of publishing these wondrous records of the life, activity, and habits of thought of this great man. In fulfilling so sacred a duty it became an act of piety to let every word remain exactly as it was written down. To have

presumed to alter his expressions would indeed have been to offer an insult to the shade of Humboldt!

Therefore, I have necessarily paid no greater heed to the well-meant desire of my publishers, to make even the slightest alterations, than I did to my own personal wishes and inclinations. One thing only was here to be considered— eternal truth—truth which I owe to Humboldt, to history, to literature, and to the revered memory of him who has bequeathed to me this task. Behold then the bequest, unaltered and entire as it has been deposited in my hands !

A vivid commentary on Humboldt's letters is supplied by passages in Varnhagen's Diary—the latter giving us the spoken as well as written expression of Humboldt's thoughts. Unfortunately but very few of Varnhagen's letters have been preserved or come to hand. Those we have, however, bear fully the impress of the noble friendship, the ever-active interchange of thought, the true fellowship of common labour in the cause of science and freedom, which bound Humboldt and Varnhagen together for so many years.

The letters of numerous other famous and distinguished persons, which are added, exhibit Humboldt in his wide-spread intercourse with the world, in his manifold relations to Scholars and Men of Letters, to Statesmen and Princes, all of whom sought him, and paid him homage.

LUDMILLA ASSING.

Berlin, February, 1860.

P R E F A C E

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be within my province to seek to reply to the verdict which certain journals have made it their business to pronounce on my having committed to the press the Humboldt-Varnhagen correspondence, I yet feel it incumbent upon me to notice at some length the protest of Alexander von Humboldt himself, inserted in the daily papers by the late General Hedemann, against any unauthorized publication of his letters. I am the more prompted to do this, as that protest has been published by the General with pointed reference to this publication; and, therefore, with the evident intention of producing the erroneous belief that the letters directed to Varnhagen were included in that protest. In justice to myself I must not allow such a belief to gain ground, although there is enough in the protest itself to refute it.

In this document, a portion of which has only been communicated by the General, Humboldt first of all states that more than two thousand letters were written by him every year to all sorts of persons.

He therefore says, “I contest the pretended right even of those who by chance or purchase have become the possessors of confidential letters of mine,” and then he protests against such letters being printed, even after his death.

It was of course quite natural that Humboldt should have denied the right of unrestricted publication of his letters to those who had become possessed of them by purchase or by gift; nay, more, considering the immense extent of his correspondence, even to those to whom they were originally addressed; but this by no means excludes the supposition that he might have expressly conferred such a right in any *special case*, and that consequently it might have been conferred in the present instance.

Now that such a special case existed with regard to the letters directed to my uncle, is undeniably shown by the passage affixed by me as a motto to the book, from a letter dated 7th December, 1841, of which I will quote here only the following words: “*After my speedy decease you may deal as you please with such property.*”

Such a publication, therefore, is not at variance with the protest; on the contrary, the one confirms the other. In the protest, Humboldt expressly prohibits the printing “of such letters only as I have not myself set aside for publication.” It is therefore evident, from that very document, that letters may, and even *must* exist somewhere, which Humboldt himself had set aside

for publication. The letter of December 7th, 1841, clearly points out *where* those letters existed.

Thus, instead of clashing, that protest and the present publication go hand in hand.

The permission for publication, qualified by the express clause "in case of death," is granted as explicitly as possible in the letter of December 7th, 1841.

It may be suggested that, in granting that permission, Humboldt had perhaps no distinct recollection of what letters he had sent to my uncle in former years; yet Humboldt, at all events, was thenceforward perfectly aware of the special authorization given once and for ever, and all the letters, the publication of which has been so strongly commented upon, upon the ground of their containing objectionable matter, are of dates posterior to December, 1841.

The intention of having such publication effected after the death of Humboldt was always entertained by both men. Both of them, as I have in the most positive manner been informed by Varnhagen, would in the course of years revert again and again in their conversations to this subject, and I have occasionally myself been present whilst it was under discussion.

No one has a right to impugn such a statement on my part.

Any one who is willing and able to see, will find throughout the correspondence itself the clearest evidence of Humboldt's having always acted on the supposition that these letters would be published

after his death ; nay, that he not only sanctioned it, but that he felt greatly interested and desirous himself that their instructive contents should be brought to the cognizance of the public amongst whom he had lived, soon after his death.

Ample proof of this intention occurs all through the book. I will content myself with quoting a few passages only. In the letter of 28th January, 1856, (p. 246), it is said : “I hand over to you, my dear friend, *as your own*, Madame de Quitzow,” (nickname for Princess Lieven, see letters CLXIX. and CLXXII.).

When Humboldt says in the protest, “I contest the *alleged right*, even of those who by chance or purchase have got possession of confidential letters,” and on the other hand declares, in the passage quoted just now, that he was depositing the letter in Varnhagen’s hands, “*as his own*,” just as he says in the letter of December 7th, 1841, “you may deal as you please with such *property*,” there is ample and irresistible proof of how little that protest applies to the letters sent to Varnhagen, as it could never have occurred to Humboldt to speak of an *alleged* right, where he had granted the right of property himself, and in explicit terms.

On the 1st April, 1844, Humboldt writes to Varnhagen, (p. 110): “What I in my careless conceit destroy is *saved* in your hands.” Humboldt, we may gather from this, wished himself that these instructive documents should be preserved for the benefit of

his contemporaries, and he sent them to Varnhagen, for the very purpose of saving them from being burned, as was his usual custom of dealing with the shoals of letters which he was in the habit of receiving.

On the 30th November, 1856, Humboldt writes, (p. 265): “Pray take care of my pupil’s letter” (a letter of H.R.H. the Duke of Weimar), “as well as of the paragraph in which I am mentioned as being discussed in the Belgian Chambers as a Materialist and Republican, who must be put down!”

It was therefore Humboldt himself who urged the preservation of these documents. As he took no interest in autographs, he could only have wished them preserved for the sake of their contents; witness the paragraph respecting the debate in the Belgian Chambers, as a record of the character of the times, all of which plainly marks his desire to have them laid by for the purpose of publication after his death.

Whenever Humboldt wished that the publication of one of the letters sent to my uncle should be put off until after the death of himself or of *the writer of it*, he expressly states so. Thus, in sending the letter of Arago he appends the remark (p. 63), “To his gifted friend Varnhagen von Ense, with a very urgent request to avoid any publication of it, as being an autograph letter, until after Arago’s death.”

That the letter would and should be published is treated by Humboldt as a matter of course. Only as Humboldt might die before Arago, and the letter,

even in that case, was not to be published in the lifetime of its writer, the further exceptional clause is added in the present instance, that publication must not take place before Arago's death. Such an additional caution does *not* occur with reference to other letters, as, for instance, to that of Princess Lieven, or that of the Grand Duke of Weimar, &c.

If, on the other hand, a letter of a third person was not to be published, on account of its peculiar contents, even after the writer's death, Humboldt, remembering the permission given to Varnhagen, expressly stipulates that *the document should be returned to him*. Thus, with regard to the letter of July 4th, 1854 (p. 221):—“I inclose a very crabbed letter of poor Bunsen, which you will keep very secret, and kindly *send back* to me by-and-by to my *Berlin* residence.”

In the same way, for instance, in a letter of 9th September, 1858 (p. 313), Humboldt requests the return of “three curiosa” he is sending—one of them a letter from Queen Victoria. There are other passages also to the same effect.

It is impossible to imagine a more stringent and more complete series of proofs of Humboldt's positive wish and expectation that the letters sent by him to Varnhagen should be published after his death. The fact forces itself the more strongly on our conviction, if we remember that the two men had, besides, such frequent opportunities personally of conversing upon the matter.

It may be asked, why did Humboldt specially wish for the publication of the letters sent to my uncle?

A plain and distinct answer to this question is given in the letter of December 1841, in which spontaneously granting to my uncle the *wholly unsolicited* permission to publish the letters after his death, he says: “We only owe truth in this life to such persons as we deeply esteem, therefore it is due to you.” The logical counterpart of which is: In *death* we owe it to *all*, and first and foremost to our own nation.

Why did Humboldt wish for this publication at all?

Read (p. 266) the postscript to the letter of November 30th, 1856, where, sending to Varnhagen a notice bearing on his character and political opinions, which he was anxious to have preserved, he says: “What men believe or disbelieve is usually made a matter of discussion only *after their death.*”

It was, moreover, his wish that his convictions should not be liable to be discussed. He had willed that the picture of his mind should go down to posterity pure and unfalsified.

A giant intellect, so fervently venerated and acknowledged by his nation, that the mere fact of his views being known on certain questions may exert the most powerful and incalculable influence on the people and its progress; it was that very reason which made him wish that the whole people should

be granted access to the workings of his innermost mind.

He knew well, in laying this injunction on my uncle, to what trusty hands he was confiding his request.

As to the Diaries of my uncle, they too are not to be considered as the jottings of mere idle moments. He repeatedly exacted from me the positive promise to publish them. Discussing this subject, shall I ever forget in what animated and impassioned speech he inveighed with crushing argument against those who indulged a mistaken tender regard for an individual at the expense of duty to the people and to historical truth! Foreseeing very clearly the objections which have now been raised against the publication, he described most accurately and pointedly their mental and intellectual sources.

This is all I have to say. For myself the question is settled by the fact that I have only executed the behests of both the great departed.

And I trust I am right, if, with due respect to all to whom respect is due, two such great, illustrious names as those of Humboldt and Varnhagen are to me much better authority than the opinions of those who have objected to the publication.

This is my first and last word in this affair. I cannot be expected to answer polemical attacks. It would also be the more hopeless to try and come to an understanding, as difference of opinion in this matter naturally springs from a total di-

vergence of principle and thought. I readily acknowledge the right of an opinion adverse to the publication in those of my opponents, to whom a tender regard for persons of exalted rank appears a higher duty than what is due to the people and its welfare, to the establishment of retrospective historical truth, and to the development of future political progress. With them it is impossible to argue. But if others, who profess to entertain liberal principles, chime in with that opinion, I cannot consider it my business to open their eyes to the state of their own minds.

LUDMILLA ASSING.

Berlin, 10th March, 1860.

By way of postscript to this perfect justification of the publication, the following letter of gift is now added:—

Berlin, 7th of December, 1856.

To my dear niece, Ludmilla Assing, who for many years has bestowed upon me most loving care and attendance, I have in gratitude presented all my books and manuscripts, all my literary papers and

collections, and have delivered these things to her complete, whilst my hand is still warm, so that she may even now dispose of them according to her own best judgment. If a few of these objects are still in my own keeping, it is only for the purpose of gradually arranging, selecting, and rendering them more complete. This act of donation I testify with my own hand.

KARL AUGUST LUDWIG PHILIPP VARNHAGEN
VON ENSE.

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HUMBOLDT'S LETTERS.

I.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 25th September, 1827.

ALLOW me, my dear friend, to offer you the best copy of my Paper* I have left. The last lines will make you more indulgent towards the rest.

Tuesday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

II.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 1st November, 1827.

You once said something to encourage me in my attempts at giving a vivid and true delineation of Nature (*i.e.*, one in strictest accordance with the results of observation). That your words have left an agreeable impression on my mind, you may perceive by the accompanying slight expression of my gratitude.† I have almost entirely remodelled the “Explanations,”

* “On the principal Causes of the Variation of the Temperature of the Earth’s Surface.”

† A copy of “Aspects of Nature” (*Ansichten der Natur*). In the Third Edition, *The Rhodian Genius*, vol. ii., pp. 297—308.—TR.

and added the “Rhodian Genius,” which Schiller appeared to fancy.

With kindest regards, yours,
A. HUMBOLDT.

Strange that Koreff* has never sent me a line to acknowledge all we have been doing for him here.

III.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 21st November, 1827.

Wednesday night.

As I rely more on your good nature and my own notes—which I followed strictly—than on the report of it taken down by my audience, I herewith send you, my esteemed friend, the whole of the fifth Lecture, together with to-day’s recapitulation of it. You certainly will find no anti-philosophical tendency in it. Make any use of the papers you like—only *no copying for the press*—and be so good as to send them back by Saturday. That the notes were intended merely for my own use, you will perceive from the absence of order in their arrangement. The desire, however, of acting candidly sets me above any anxiety the whisper of vanity can create in me.

A. HUMBOLDT.

These papers (the Lectures) were to have been shown to Professor Hegel, in consequence of a report that had reached him, that Humboldt had allowed expressions hostile to philosophy to creep into them.

* The well-known physician at Paris, one of Rahel’s correspondents. —TR.

IV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 15th April, 1828.

Might I disturb you to-day for a few moments, between a quarter past two and three, to ask for advice in a literary matter. My book is to be called “*Entwurf einer Physischen Weltbeschreibung*” (“Outlines of a Physical Description of the World”). I wished upon the title to have indicated the special occasion of the *Lectures*, and at the same time to have insinuated that I was giving more than the Lectures contained, and matter of another kind. “From Recollections of Lectures in the years 1827 and 1828, by Al. v. Humboldt,” has, I understand, been found absurdly pretentious. I give it up with all my heart; but “*Souvenirs d'un Cours de Physique du Monde*,” “*Souvenirs d'un Voyage en Perse*,” appear to me unobjectionable. How am I to manage the title—“Outlines of a Phys. D., by A. v. H.” (“re-written on the occasion of Lectures,” or, “partly re-written from Lectures”)? All these have a clumsy look. Adverbs are out of place in title-pages. How would it be if I were to add in small print, “part of this work *was* the subject of Lectures, in the years 1827 and 1828?” That’s long, and then the verb! “On occasion,” is perhaps better. I trust to your ingenuity. I am sure *you* will help me out of this maze.

Yours sincerely, attached and obedient,
A. HUMBOLDT.

Note by Varnhagen.—It was I myself, who had, at the table of Prince Augustus, criticised the first title he mentions; Humboldt had heard of it through Beuth.

V.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 3rd April, 1829.

I shall call, that I may thank you in person ; that I may enjoy for some few moments the pleasure of your return, and congratulate you on the favourable impression your new official activity* has produced everywhere ; and that in the present unfortunate state of my family affairs, I may entreat *pardon* from your highly gifted wife, whose friendship is so dear to me. The King never allows a book to be presented to him,—not even by Prince Wittgenstein. It must take the ordinary course. I will, however, recommend it† very, very strongly to Albrecht.‡ I am done up, and am off in a week.

Friday.

A. Ht.

VI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 26th April, 1830.

This moment returned from Potsdam, I find your valued letters and delightful present. “Zinzendorf”§ will be a source of great pleasure to me. The book displays as peculiar a character as Lavater or Cardan. The new pietistic fever which began (p. 22) to

* Varnhagen was at this time sent as Envoy Extraordinary to Kassel, having been absent from the political arena since 1819, in consequence of the great offence taken by the Court of Berlin at the liberal tendencies displayed by him during his diplomatic position at the Court of Baden from 1816.—Tr.

† One of Ranke’s works.

‡ Secretary to Altenstein; Minister of State for Educational and Ecclesiastical Affairs; formerly Cabinet Councillor under Baron Stein.—Tr.

§ A biographical memoir, by Varnhagen, of Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the famous Moravian settlement of Herrnhut.—Tr.

rage at Halle has made me smile. Your conclusion of the work is full of dignity and grace. I am delighted to hear that you are kind enough to wish to keep my “Cri de Pétersbourg,” a parody delivered before the Court—a hasty two nights’ work, an attempt at flattery without servility—at talking of things as they should be. As you, and my dear old friend your gifted wife, take an interest in all my good fortune, I must tell you that the King is sending me to the Emperor,* during the Session of the Diet. I shall probably travel with the Crown Prince, who is to fetch the Empress to the rendezvous at Fischbach.†

Yours,

A. Ht.

Let us hope Zinzendorf’s letters to the Saviour were more legible than this scrawl!

VII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th July, 1830.

I trust you, and your excellent and accomplished wife, will allow me on the eve of my departure, to offer you my warmest thanks for your new and highly acceptable present.‡ I was not personally acquainted with the man whose peculiarities you so thoughtfully develope. He was one of those who owe their distinction to their individuality, and attain to greater consequence by their actions than through their writings. Such a character excites my wonder as a curiosity—a

* Nicholas of Russia. The Russian Diet is meant.—Tr.

† A country seat of the King of Prussia, in Silesia.—Tr.

‡ “Memoirs of John Benjamin Erhard, Philosopher and Physician.” By K. A. Varnhagen von Ense. Stuttgart and Tübingen, Cotta. 1830.

man who fancies that his recollections extend to the first year of his life (the Margravine's estimate was different: *J'étais un enfant très précoce ; à deux ans je savais parler, à trois ans je marchais!*), — has, like Cardan, a Familiar in a black cloak,* — soberly makes love to old maids, only to convert them to virtue and literature,—and who looks upon the fate of German professors under German princes as more tragical than that of the Greeks. The “Church Gazette”† will not number him among believers ; and the Schimmelmanns,‡ my friend, will not give you much thanks for a book which recalls the Saturnalia of a sentimental Danish-Holstein mob. I am delighted beyond measure that you are going to take Hardenberg§ in hand—a difficult, but grateful, task, if you can only discriminate between the various epochs, and party spirit will, for once, be quiet. Even in Hegel’s case it seems at last, to my great joy, to be silenced in the Academy.

Most gratefully yours,

Friday.

A. HUMBOLDT.

We find the following entry in Varnhagen’s Diary, under the above date:—“After the Revolution of July, Alexander von Humboldt said

* Erhard was under the impression, as related in the work of Varnhagen, that he was attended and guarded by a supernatural being who always appeared to him wearing a black cloak or cape. Jerome Cardan, the distinguished physician and astrologer, entertained a similar opinion, as has been also the case with many celebrated persons in ancient and modern times, from Socrates to our own day.—Tr.

† The “Church Gazette” is the ultra-Lutheran paper, edited by Dr. Hengstenberg.—Tr.

‡ The noble family of the Schimmelmanns, one of whom was a Minister of State, were great friends of Humboldt and of the Varnhagen family.—Tr.

§ Hardenberg, Chancellor of State from 1810 to 1822. The memoir alluded to in the text seems never to have been published.—Tr.

to Gans,* who entertained extremely sanguine hopes with reference to the new Government : ‘ Believe me, my dear friend, my wishes coincide with your own ; but I have very feeble hopes. I have watched the change of dynasties in Paris for the last forty years. Each has fallen from its own incapacity. Fresh promises are always ready to take the place of their predecessors ; but they never are fulfilled, and the same ruinous course is entered on anew. I have known, and, indeed, in some instances, been intimate with most of the men of the day. Among them were some of distinguished talent and the best intentions, but they did not last. Sometimes they were no better than their predecessors, and often turned out even greater rogues. No Government has as yet kept faith with the people ; none has looked on its own interests as of subordinate importance to the public good. Until that happens no power will be permanently established in France. The nation has always been deceived, and now will be deceived again. Then again, too, will it punish these frauds and tricks, and for that it is already ripe and strong.’ ”

VIII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 23rd January, 1833.

Of course it was me your Excellency lately met in the full blaze of a noonday sun. Unfortunately I recognised you too late, as you also were too late in recognising me. Fain would I have hurried after you, but a pace rapid enough to have overtaken you would have been unsuitable in my present state. I wanted at the time to have mentioned to your Excellency a circumstance connected with Baron Bülow,† in London.

* Edward Gans born 1798, died 1839 ; Professor of Law at the University of Berlin, and representative of the Hegelian School of Philosophy. He enjoyed a great reputation for conversational power.—Tr.

† Baron Bülow was the son-in-law of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Prussian Minister in London from 1827 to 1841. He is called here *daring* by Varnhagen, because, contrary to his instructions, he cultivated the friendship of the Whigs, and especially of Palmerston ; the danger alluded to was his impending recall, and replacement by Bunsen.—Tr.

The news was fresh at the time, from a perfectly reliable source, and probably new even to you. It was an expression of the King's to the effect that the danger in which that daring ambassador was involved might be considered as blown over. Since then your Excellency has had the news from all sides, and my story is out of date.

At last we Prussians have got a general popular representation, or rather we have had it this long while, only we did not know it. My Lord Bishop Eylert* has opened our eyes and spoken the great word first—a second Mirabeau that, in lucidity of thought and boldness of expression. I can fancy not only the “Rittersaal,” but the whole Schloss, trembling as those mighty words thundered in the Assembly,—“The representation of the whole nation, of all estates and interests is—the “Ordensfest” (Chapter Anniversary!)† I bow with reverence and admiration before this colossal audacity this new, unheard-of combination, whereby the miserable Institutions which hitherto have passed current as the representative Institutions of Europe, whether as Parliaments, Chambers, States-General, Cortes and the like, were hurled back again into their nothingness. I have heard the orator only through the dumb mouth of the “State Gazette.” But your Excellency was doubtless present, and you surely pity me, and say as of old was said when a speech of Demosthenes was read, “Oh, if you had only heard the man deliver it!” To have witnessed the approving smile, the gracious satisfaction, and the cheerful glances of the as-

* Rulemann Friedrich Eylert, an evangelical bishop and author of a “Life of Friedrich Wilhelm III.”—Tr.

† The Ordensfest was the anniversary meeting of the Chapters of the Orders of the Black and Red Eagle.—Tr.

tounded audience must still further have heightened the effect.

Oh, our Protestant parsons ! They are speeding on a goodly road, and bid fair to yield in nothing to their Catholic brethren, even in the days when priestcraft was fullblown ! A canting black-coat, such as this, makes us the laughing-stock of Europe. Constitution or no Constitution, granted or denied, does not for the moment trouble me, but that the fellow should try to palm off this “Ordensfest” upon us as a substitute for it,—is a piece of impudence that deserves to be rewarded with the madhouse or the gaol. And yet there’s not a song, a street-ballad, or a caricature to lash such unseemliness ! All is still !

And now, as it is time for bed, I will lay me down, wishing pleasant dreams to you and to myself.

With the deepest respect, &c., &c., &c.

V.

(Compare A. v. Humboldt’s Note to Rahel of 1st Feb. 1833.)

IX.

HUMBOLDT TO RAHEL.

Berlin, 1st February, 1833.

That I answer you thus early, dear madam, bodes no good. In this country, if anything is to come to maturity, it must last for fourteen months. There is then hope for it. The letter, which I beg of you not to leave in your friend’s hands, will tell you all. At first, all was kind and interested attention, both when I spoke and when I wrote ; but this morning the very charming drawings were returned. The word that is underlined* might leave me still some hope, but I

* Underlined in the letter to which allusion is made.—TR.

prefer deceiving myself to deceiving others, and the decision of Beuth's* character, with whom alone in this matter the decision rests, forbids all hope. That I have advocated most actively the views *you* entertain needs no proof. That ought to be with you an historical *credo*. Oh, that you could give me a word of consolation as to my dear friend Varnhagen, the only polished pillar of the literature (in the nobler acceptation of the term) of our Country, "since," as says the bishop *with the drawn sword*, "the most distinguished talents, as such, deserve no distinction." There is nothing to wonder at in such a thing being said; but what is especially sad in it, appears to me to be the baseness of the society in which one lives here, and which is not even excited by such unworthy statements. Guard carefully, *both of you*, your better nature.

A. H.

X.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 3rd February, 1833.

I am infinitely grateful and deeply affected by your beautiful letter. Grace and euphony of language ought always, as here, to accompany grace of manner. My brother, who was here for two days, but mostly at the beck and call of princes,—who have the privilege of asking without being denied,—commissions me to tell you, my dear friend, how sensible he is of your flattering offer; but he is so much engaged in printing his quarto, on the Asiatic languages akin to the San-

* Peter Christian Wilhelm von Beuth, Privy Councillor, Director of the Department of Commerce, Trade, and Public Buildings of the Ministry of Finance from 1821 to 1845.—TR.

skrit, that he cannot accept it, albeit he considers it of very great importance. He wishes, for the sake of the great man who is now no more,* that *you* should undertake the task. I am grieved to hear that you and your gifted wife have but a fragment of health between you, which you courteously lend to one another—a kind of mutual instruction, or Azais-compensation,† which I very much lament. I have received a long letter from Mme. de Cotta.‡ It appears she is likely to take upon herself the publication of the “Allgemeine Zeitung,” another anti-salic movement. How strange that at certain times one principle pervades the entire world! The revival of faiths of yore; the inextinguishable yearning after peace; the mistrust of all improvement; the hydrophobia of all talent; the enforced uniformity of creeds; diplomatic love of protocols—*cardines rerum.*

A. Ht.

Note of Varnhagen.—I had answered, in consequence of Rahel's indisposition, in her name, the letter which had been addressed to her on the 1st, and in the postscript had expressed a wish that Willhelm von Humboldt might review for the “Jahrbücher der Kritik,”§ the concluding volume of “Faust,” which was then shortly expected to appear.

* Goethe. See Varnhagen's note to this letter.—Tr.

† Alluding to a work by Azais, “Application des Compensations à la Revolution de 1789.” Paris, 1830.—Tr.

‡ The widow of the eminent publisher.—Tr.

§ At that time the first literary review in Germany.—Tr.

XI.

HUMBOLDT TO RAHEL.

Berlin, 9th February, 1833.

I have been with Beuth again to recal to his recollection his old friendship for L. He thought it would be more to the interest of the family to separate the purely architectural drawings from the mere landscapes and engravings. The architectural were the only ones of use to his institution, and if it were an object to the family, he was prepared to purchase to the extent of some hundred thalers (400 to 500 thalers?) Uninviting as the proposal is, I thought, my dear lady, I might mention it to you. Beuth wishes, in the event of its being entertained, to treat with some one who will call on him at his own house. May the spring-time bestow on both of you warmth, cheerfulness, and strength. The Byzantine empire (I mean ours here), is seriously divided into two parties, one espousing the cause of Bunsen's "Gesangbuch," the other that of Elsner's "Liederschatz."* The sympathies of the men of the sword and of all the aides-de-camp are with the "Liederschatz." I am still undecided.

Saturday.

A. Ht.

XII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Saturday, 9th March, 1833.

A mind like yours, my noble-hearted friend, requires solitude and calm. It is ever drawing on its own re-

* Elsner's "Liederschatz" is a collection of sacred hymns.—TR.

sources. Imagine, I only learned the fearful tidings* from Prince Carolath last night. You know how warm, how long-tried, and how indulgent a friend I lose in one who was the ornament of her sex. How amiable I found her, even in the trifling business I had to arrange for her with Beuth; so familiar with all that is mutable and melancholy in life, and yet so cheerful, so full of serenity. Such powers of mind, and yet so genial, and so full of heart! The world will long appear to you a dreary waste. To know, however, that you gave to that sweet spirit until it was sighed away, whatever mind and heart and grace of manner, such as yours, my dear Varnhagen, had to give, is, after all, balm for the wound. Take care, I pray you, of your health.

A. HUMBOLDT.

XIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 3rd December, 1833.

Pardon, a thousand times pardon, that I have been so long in sending you back the classical studies of Friedrich Schlegel. I have read them carefully,

* Rahel, of whose death Humboldt is here speaking in terms of such infinite grief, requires some notice in this place. She was the wife of Varnhagen von Ense, and exercised great influence in Berlin. During the war of freedom, which preceded the Congress of Vienna, her exertions in promoting the national cause were unremitting. She accompanied her husband to Vienna in 1814, and remained until July, 1815. On her return she threw open her salons, and became the centre of all learning, intelligence, and fashion. Her decease was severely felt, and her husband published, in 1834, a work entitled, "Rahel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde." Subsequently, he published the "Galerie von Bildnissen aus Rahel's Umgang" (Two volumes, Leipzig, 1836).--Tr.

and am convinced that many of the opinions on the Hellenic age, which the moderns arrogate to themselves, lie buried in Essays prior to 1795 (a Deucalion age!). Angelus Silesius* too, whom I have now for the first time learnt to appreciate, has given great pleasure to us both.† There is an air of piety about it that strikes one like the breath of genial spring, and the mysterious hieroglyphics of our late friend render your gift doubly dear to me. Spiker,‡ in announcing Oltmann's§ death, has committed the very extraordinary error of mistaking a genitive for a signature, "Alexander von Humboldt's Astronomical Observations." I shall let it stand without putting it right. Your old and attached friend,

A. HUMBOLDT.

XIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th December, 1833.

I send you, my dear friend, a few lines from the amiable Duchess of Dessau. Every kind allusion to our (Rahel)-must be dear to your heart.

Sunday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* Johann Scheffler, otherwise known as Angelus Silesius, born in 1624, a physician at Breslau; afterwards became a convert to popery, and a priest. He was chiefly known by his religious and mystic poems, and died 1677. One of the most important of his works is the "Cherubische Wandersmann." Humboldt, in the letter above, alludes to the work published by Varnhagen at this time—which he had just received—in which Varnhagen had given extracts from Silesius. It is entitled, "Auszüge aus Angelus Silesius und Saint Martin" (von K. A. Varnhagen von Ense), Berlin, 1834.—Tr.

† Meaning himself and his brother Wilhelm.—Tr.

‡ Editor and proprietor of a popular newspaper at Berlin.—Tr.

§ Jabbo Oltmann, deceased 1833, a German astronomer.—Tr.

Dessau, 1st December, 1833.

— Accept my best thanks for the books you sent me. Each of them interested me in its own way. I lament not to have known “Rahel” personally, the more so, as having clearly realized her inner self, I would fain have made acquaintance with her outward form, and recognised in it the working of the germ within.

FREDERIKA, Duchess of Anhalt.

Still full of wonder about R., “the book of all books.” May I ask you, my dear friend, for Friedrich Schlegel’s complete works—say the third volume?

XV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 19th December, 1833.

Prevented by the tedious, restless life at Court from personally informing myself as to my friend’s health, I am driven, alas! to writing to beg you will kindly send me back the letter of the Duchess of Dessau, containing the kind expressions about our dear beatified friend.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Thursday.

XVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 27 October, 1834.

I am going to press with my work,—the work of my life. The mad fancy has seized me of representing in a single work the whole material world,—all that is known to us of the phenomena of heavenly space and

terrestrial life, from the nebulæ of stars to the geographical distribution of mosses on granite rocks, and this in a work in which a lively style shall at once interest and charm. Each great and important principle, wherever it appears to lurk, is to be mentioned in connection with facts. It must represent an epoch in the mental development of man as regards his knowledge of nature. The Prolegomena are nearly ready, containing,—The inaugural Lecture (*discours d'ouverture*) entirely recast (I delivered it *vivā voce*, but dictated it the same day); the picture of Nature; inducements to the pursuit of Natural Philosophy to be found in the spirit of the age; which are threefold: 1. *Poésie descriptive*, and vivid pictures of scenery in modern travels; 2. Landscape-painting, visible representations of exotic life,—its origin,—when it became a necessity of life and a source of exquisite delight; why the ancients, with their desire to gratify the senses, could not have possessed it; 3. The vegetable kingdom, classification according to the characteristics of the plants (not botanical garden fashion); the history of the physical description of the World; how the idea of the Universe —of the connection between all phenomena has been becoming clear to different nations in the course of centuries. These Prolegomena form the most important part of the work, and contain, first, the general heads. They are followed by the special part, comprehending the detail (I enclose part of a tabulated list): Space—the physics of Astronomy—the solid portion of the globe—its interior and exterior—the electro-magnetism of the interior—Vulcanism, *i.e.*, the reaction of the interior of a planet upon its surface—the arrangement of matter—a short Geognosy

—sea—atmosphere—climate—organic life—distribution of plants—distribution of animals—races of man—languages,—and so on, to show that their physical organisation (the articulation of sound) is governed by intelligence (the produce and manifestation of which is speech). In the special part all *statistical* results, as exact as in Laplace's “*Exposition du Système du Monde.*” As these details are not capable of being treated from a literary point of view, in the same way as the general combinations of natural science, the pure facts will be stated in short sentences arranged almost tabularly, so that the student, in a few pages, may find under the head of Climate, Terrestrial Magnetism, &c., results, in a condensed form, which it would take many years of study to acquire. Uniformity of style, (*i.e.*, harmony in the whole as a literary production) will be attained by short introductions to each chapter in the special part. Ottfried Müller has followed this plan with great success in his admirably-written work on Archæology.

I wanted you, my dear friend, to have from me personally a clear idea of my undertaking. I have not succeeded in compressing the whole into one volume; and yet it would have left the grandest impression in that abbreviated form. I hope two volumes will include the whole. No foot-notes, but notes at the end of each chapter, which may be passed over, but contain sound erudition and additional details. The whole is not what has hitherto been commonly called “Physical Description of the Earth,” as it comprises all created things—Heaven and Earth. I began it in French fifteen years ago, and called it “*Essai sur la Physique du Monde.*” In Germany I intended at first to call it

“Buch von der Natur,” after those we have in the middle ages by Albertus Magnus. All these, however, are too vague. My title at present is “Kosmos : Outlines of a description of the physical World, by A. v. H. ; enlarged from Sketches of Lectures delivered by him in 1827 and 1828. Cotta.” I wanted to add the word “Kosmos,” to force people indeed to call the book so, in order to avoid their speaking of it as H.’s physical description of the earth, and so throwing it into the class of such writers as Mitterpacher.* *Weltbeschreibung* (description of the World), a term analogous to *Weltgeschichte* (history of the World), would, as an unusual word, be confounded with *Erdbeschreibung* (history of the earth). I know that Kosmos is very grand, and not without a certain tinge of affectation ; but the title contains a striking word, meaning both heaven and earth, and stands in contrast to the “Gää” (that rather indifferent earthly book of Professor Zeune, a true *Erdbeschreibung*). My brother, too, is for the title “Kosmos ;” I was long in doubt about it.

Now, my dear friend, for my request ! I cannot make up my mind to send away the beginning of my manuscript without begging you to cast a critical glance over it. You have yourself so great a faculty in respect of grace of style, and are at once so talented and independent, that you will not hastily condemn phrases for being peculiar or differing from your own. Be kind enough to read the Address, and add a sheet, writing on it,— “I should prefer — to —,” without giving any reasons. Do not, however, find a fault with-

* Ludwig Mitterpacher, the author of a work entitled “Anfangsgrunde der Physischen Astronomie,” Vienna, 1781 (Principles of Celestial Mechanics). —Tr.

out *helping* me to mend it; and put me at my ease about the title.

Yours very faithfully,

Monday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

The besetting sins of my style are, an unfortunate propensity to poetical expressions, a long participial construction, and too great concentration of various opinions and sentiments in the same sentence. I think that these radical evils, inevitable as they are from the construction of my mind, will be diminished by strict simplicity and generalisation which exist beside it (a soaring, if I may be vain enough to say so, above observed results). A book on Nature ought to produce an impression like Nature herself. The point, however, to which I have especially, as in my "Aspects of Nature," paid attention, and in which my style differs entirely from Forster and Chateaubriand, is this, that I have endeavoured in description to be *truthful*, distinct, nay even scientifically accurate, without getting into the dry atmosphere of abstract science.

XVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 28th October, 1834.

You have comforted and cheered me by your kind letter, and still kinder care. You have entered thoroughly into the spirit in which I have approached my task; only the expression of my affectionate confidence—an evidence of the extent to which your talent is appreciated by the Humboldt family—has made you too indulgent and complimentary. Your remarks

exhibit a degree of nicety, good taste, and penetration, that makes the alteration of it a work of positive pleasure to me. I have made use of all, at least almost all—nineteen-twentieths and more. One is always a little obstinate about what one has originally written one's self. I beg you a thousand pardons for sending you some pages, which (in the new matter towards the end of the Address) I had not looked through. Some of the phrases were completely entangled. You must allow me, one of these days, to thank in person. I will then show you the corrections at the end of the Address. I should have been happy, could I have shown our (Rahel) some of these pictures of travel.

Yours most gratefully,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

If only we had, in German, a book of synonyms as good and as simply arranged as the one I send you, and which I have no doubt you are not acquainted with! It was recommended to me by the Abbé Delisle, as saving a vast deal of time in the event of one's having to look for an equivalent. You see at once the word which may be substituted. I will call for the book.

XVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Sunday, 6 A.M.

5th April, 1835.

You, my dear Varnhagen, who do not shrink from pain, and who, even sympathetically, trace and con-

template it in the depths of the heart; you must in this sad time receive some words of affection which both brothers offer you.

His release is not yet come. I left him at eleven last night, and am now hastening to him again. Yesterday was a less trying day. A state of semi-stupor, much tolerably calm sleep, and each time he woke, words of love and comfort—the clearness of that great mind that grasps and analyses everything—turned inward on itself. His voice was very feeble, husky, and of a childish treble, for which reason leeches were again applied to his throat. Perfect consciousness!! “Think of me very often,” he had said the day before; “but mind you do so cheerfully. I was very happy; and to-day has been another happy day for me, for love is the highest good of all. Soon I shall be with our mother, and gain insight into the higher and better order of things.”

I have not a shadow of hope left. I never had believed these old eyes had so many tears left. It has lasted now a week.*

XIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

*Berlin, 5th May, 1835,
Tuesday.*

I have, alas! been so haunted by a host of princely visitors, so hurried along by the blast, cold, yet unrefreshing, that I could not find time to thank you for Bollmann† and my late (brother's) biography. I

* Wilhelm von Humboldt died at Tegel, 6 p.m., 8th April, 1835.

† The memoir written concerning Justus Erich Bollmann, by Varnhagen,

was not then mistaken as regards the latter, in which I had already recognised your handiwork, and the censor's "touchings up," when the "State Gazette" fell into my hands. One should take care not to speak in such papers about men of mark, even with talent such as *yours*; the problem is a difficult one to solve, what with the family, the censor, and a public—cold as ice. The name of Mundt* reminds me of some very remarkable pages in his *Madonna*, on the propensity of Germans to give way to strong but indistinct feelings in contemplating nature. There is much truth in these observations, and I thought I read in them a condemnation of myself. So much, my dear friend, about this world, now desolate for us both.

Most gratefully yours,
A. HUMBOLDT.

I must say, I am sorry you do not wish to see the Grand-Duchess.

XX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 6th May, 1835.

I return you the parts forwarded to me, as they

(*see* "Denkwürdigkeiten," vol. iv.) is here alluded to. This person was a Hanoverian, known chiefly for an unsuccessful though daring attempt to liberate Lafayette from the fortress of Olmütz in 1791. He subsequently lived in England and the United States, where he was engaged in mercantile and financial speculations; died at Kingston, Jamaica, whither he had gone on a mission connected with the Barings.—TR.

* Theodor Mundt, an author of some note, attached to the literary school of Young Germany, one of the curators of the Royal Library at Berlin. The title of the book alluded to is "Madonna. Unterhaltungen mit einer Heiligen," Leipzig, 1835. It created a sensation at the time, and manifests talents of no mean order, but grotesqueness and want of reality preponderate in it.—TR.

might make a break in your series. I was personally intimate with almost all the people whom Bollmann so vividly and truly depicts. We see how he himself rises as he advances in life, and becomes engaged in more important affairs. Strange line of life—*médecin de sauvetage*. I have now formed a better opinion of him through you; for, without being able to get at the real cause, I found, these last few years, that Bollmann was not popular in Lafayette's family.

A. Ht.

XXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Saturday, 23rd May, 1835.

If, my dear friend, the “Morgenblatt”* of the 18th May falls into your hands, be kind enough to cast a glance at a not altogether agreeable article, “Wilhelm von Humboldt’s Burial.” My brother is there represented as dying, deserted by his family. To such misrepresentations, however, I pay little attention. I want now to guess what that other thing is which, like music, my brother “knew nothing of, and which one cannot call by its right name.” Is that God, or some sort of profligacy? I know of no such saying of his. Do try, my dear friend, to find out how the sentence is interpreted by the public. My brother’s retirement, too, from political life was so universally known that it seems extraordinary to say they do not know whether he was to blame for it? You see how gladly I avail myself of your acuteness and affec-

* The “Morgenblatt,” at this time one of the leading literary papers of Germany.—TR.

tion, for supplying my own deficiency in respect of the former.

Yours most gratefully,

A. HUMBOLDT.

XXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 28th March, 1836.

A mind like yours, my generous friend, is able to devise in its tenderness and its vigour a justification for all. I am therefore not afraid, after so long an absence, and a winter cut up by princely attendances and festivities, to come before you this morning with a request. You are the only man in this town, poor in tone and intellectually desolate as it is, who displays a soul for the measured expression of sorrowful sentiment and for harmony of style. May I beg of you to cast a critical glance over the accompanying sheets.* Ringing the changes of laudation for forty individuals has been an odious style-destroying necessity. It was settled who were to be invited to the high table. I think, too, that I have saved myself rather cleverly by certain individual hints, and a graduated panegyric. I beg you will allow me to call *to-day* towards eleven to fetch the sheets for which the printer is in a hurry, and to profit by any observations you may be disposed to make. If necessary, I will alter *sous votre dictée* at your house. It would be an act of charity if you would receive me by your bedside.

Yours, with deep respect,

Monday.

A. HUMBOLDT.

I shall call at eleven.

* Preface to Wilhelm von Humboldt's work on the Kawi language.—TR.

On the 11th May, 1836, Varnhagen wrote in his Diary: "Alexander von Humboldt called on me quite early this morning, and stayed an hour and a half. The French princes, who arrived here to-day, furnished the chief subject of conversation. The perplexity of the King is not small. He wishes to show his guests every attention, and at the same time to make these attentions appear at St. Petersburg as incivilities. Ancillon,* the minister, has not yet ventured to tell the Crown-prince the real object of this journey. He has left it to chance to inform him of it. Our princes were greatly enraged, and railed at the unwelcome visit. The Princesses Auguste and Marie, who spoke favourably of it, got hard words. There was a talk of a row in the theatre; some people, it was said, would applaud, but it was hoped far more would hiss them. An incident of the kind has already occurred on their passage through Trèves. Our princes, however, in spite of any feeling of their own to the contrary, will, in compliance with the King's desire, which has been very plainly intimated to them, be extremely polite. The Queen of the Netherlands, who happens to be here just now, and who was believed to be most hostile to them, sets a good example, and announces her intention of receiving the visitors at her house. The ambassador, M. Bresson† and Baron Humboldt, had previously advised against the visit. That it has now become an accomplished fact appears to have been brought about by Prince Metternich, who, wanting the good offices of France in Eastern affairs, and at the same time wishing to give no offence to Russia, puts Prussia forward, as, after her example, the reception of the French princes at Vienna will be a matter of course. The affair may certainly be called an event, and one likely to ex-

* Friedrich Ancillon, born 1767, at this time Prussian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He published several works connected with statesmanship and history. In politics his views were moderate, as may be perceived by his work entitled "Ueber den Geist der Staatsverfassungen und dessen Einfluss auf die Gesetzgebung" (Berlin, 1825).—Tr.

† Count Charles Bresson, Peer of France, born 1798, from an early age destined for diplomacy. He was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Berlin in 1832, and continued there as Minister Plenipotentiary. About the end of 1832, it was his diplomatic skill alone, which prevented war between France and Prussia. Louis Philippe created him a Count and Peer of France in 1837, in consequence of his successful negotiations in reference to the marriage of the Duke of Orleans.—Tr.

ercise great influence on people's minds and views—a fact obvious to every one. Our Court, every one must think, either has not the principles it has hitherto appeared to have, or it is too weak to maintain them, and is forced to feign others. In both cases bad!"

XXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 31st May, 1836.

The following refers to an article, attributed to Major von Radowitz, in the "*Allgemeine Zeitung*," in which Baron Raumer's work ("Letters on England") had been unfavourably reviewed.

The writer of these letters* must have had little to fear from any of Frailty's trumped-up charges. In his (Radowitz's) general opinion about the shallowness and tameness of this "man of vast historical research," I quite agree. Besides, von Raumer reads as if one were smarting under the corporal's rattan, and that is a thing I cannot stand, and will not forgive.

XXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Monday, 24 April, 1837.

It is a great consolation that in this city, intellectually deserted (how brilliant it was in Rahel's palmy days!), both brothers are still living in the memory of him in whom alone sound sense, delicate moral feeling, and elegance of diction have survived.

* Raumer, in these letters, had discussed, in rather unnecessary detail, the relative morality of the cooks and maid-servants in London and Berlin.
—Tr.

All my searches to-day for the separate impression of the Essay were fruitless. I have not even, I find, the special volume of the Academy for 1822, as I was then living in Paris. But this I will bring you in a few days. I will also show you the list of all my brother's posthumous works, which I have been at some pains to prepare, and which you, perhaps, will enlarge. Cotta will print them all, as well as the eight hundred sonnets and the religious poems from Spain, which are also as yet unprinted. I work with pious devotion at the arrangements for this *Edition*, so that I may die in peace before its completion.

How could I ever have suspected you, dear friend, of wanting to exhibit me at the excellent Princess's, to make a Sontag of me, in fact (after the precedent adopted in the drawing-room of the Princess Belgiojoso)! I shall be happy to lecture to a small circle of from twelve to fifteen persons, certainly not otherwise, because Berlin is a little, illiterate, and over-spiteful town, and would call it absurd if I were to have a third performance, after already having had two, unfortunately so *public*; and, besides that, I am happily no Sontag in Berlin, and the lecture can, therefore, be very properly kept a *secret de comédie*. You will be charitable enough to treat the matter in my view of it, and not to blame me.

With all respect, yours,

A. v. H.

XXV.

HUMBOLDT TO THE PRINCESS VON PÜCKLER.

J'arrive la nuit même de Potsdam et j'accepte avec plaisir l'aimable offre de Madame la Princesse pour *demain* mercredi soir à huit heures précises, car le spectacle dure une heure. Je crains de prendre jeudi, vu l'incertitude des perturbations planétaires. Toutes les personnes que vous voulez bien choisir, me sont agréables, je prierais seulement Madame la Princesse de ne pas inviter Rauch, Gans, et M. et Mad. Rühle parceque déjà ils ont passé par cet ennui. M. de Varnhagen ajoutera qui il voudra. Rien ne surpasse le tact qu'il a pour deviner qui pourrait avoir quelque indulgence à m'entendre. Mille respectueux et affectueux hommages.

AL. HUMBOLDT.

Ce mardi 2 Mai 1837.

XXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

(*No date.*)

I called, my dear friend, for two reasons:—1. To bring you the *opus* of Minister Kamptz* (“Casus in terminis,” 25 copies printed), which, perhaps, you have not yet seen, and which called forth another very violent one from the late Minister of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Von Oertzen, of scalded memory.† How one may be hoaxed you may read, p. 30 and line 2. 2. To ask you not to laugh at me if, to-morrow, you are invited to a lecture at the Princess's. I vow to

* “Der Demagogen Verfolger.”—Tr.

† Von Oertzen was literally scalded to death in a vapour bath.—Tr.

you that vanity (although I am by no means free from that) has less to do with this step than indecision of character and good nature. I thought myself obliged to give the Princess this gratification—her daughter, too, urged me strongly, and she showed me a harmless list of ten persons. If you wish to propose, or bring with you, one or more friends, I have no objection; but no one, mind, who has already heard me. Your friends are mine. I can look for indulgence from them. I maintain that a man is not altogether without merit, if, after having spent his life among figures and stones, he has given himself the trouble to learn to write German.

Yours,
AL. HT.

I hope also to be able to get you the violent pamphlet of the Strelitz Minister, in which there is much more wit (*i. e. than in that of Kamptz*).

Varnhagen in his Diary of 3rd May, 1831, remarks: “In the evening the long-talked-of lecture of Baron Humboldt, at the Princess von Pückler’s. The lecture was very fine, and made a very favourable impression. I spoke to General von Rühle* about Humboldt’s character; he entirely agreed with me, ‘that we shall never know what we have possessed in him until he is dead.’

“Baron Humboldt was with me yesterday, and brought me the little pamphlet (of which only twenty-five copies were printed), of Minister von Kamptz, ‘Casus in terminis,’ in which he places the change of dynasty in France in the best light, and justifies the Mecklenburg marriage. This was so contrary to his former principles that I said to him at once, ‘If he could see his double we should have him imprisoning himself.’ There are plenty of persons still who oppose the marriage. Duke Charles of Mecklenburg-

* General von Rühle, geographer and cartographer.—TR.

Strelitz has regularly intrigued to prevent it, and tried to form an alliance in the Mecklenburg and Prussian families—an alliance and a pledge against all marriages with the house of Orleans. In fact, there was some talk of a formal protest against it. All this in most violent opposition to the expressed sentiments of the King. Duke Charles is now really ill, from vexation and annoyance, not only at this, but other matters."

XXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 10th May, 1837.

At length, my dear friend, I can send you the Part of the Academy's Transactions, which contains the important Treatise on History. I will soon exchange with you this part, which I have borrowed, for another, which you shall keep. It appears there have never been any separate impressions of it taken. You disappeared so suddenly from the last *performance*, that I greatly fear your leaving the house on that eventful day was merely a sacrifice on my account. I am eternally oscillating between Potsdam and Berlin. To-morrow again to Potsdam, where (*on the 16th*) we are expecting the amiable Princess,* who has thrown discord into the whole Hellenic camp, and whom they will now be delighted to find not pretty enough "by far."

Most gratefully yours,

Wednesday.

A. HUMBOLDT.

Je savais depuis longtemps que le Général Bugeaud ne parlait pas français, je vois à présent que sa véritable

* Helene, Princess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, afterwards Duchess of Orleans.

langue est le Mongol. What a Timour-like proclamation that of the *armée civilisatrice*!*

My brother's Essay is, as regards *language*, one of the most finished of his productions. "God governs the world. The problem of history is to trace out these eternally secret decrees" (p. 317). That is, after all, the result; and as to this result I have at times, I will not say quarrelled, but had discussions with my brother. It is a result which at any rate falls in with the oldest sentiment of all, and one which has found utterance in every human tongue. My brother's treatise is a commentary on this vague feeling, developing, interpreting, and eulogising it. In the same way the physiologist assumes so-called vital powers, in order to explain organic phenomena, because his knowledge of the physical powers, which operate on so-called inanimate nature, are insufficient to explain this play of living organisations. Does that prove vital powers to exist? I know you will be angry with me, because you opine that the leading idea of this glorious treatise does not give me entire satisfaction.

XXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Wednesday, 17th May, 1837.

You have prepared me a great treat, my much-honoured friend. I hope these "Observations on the Art of Historical Writing" will one day be added to a new part of your excellent minor works. The brain grows dizzy as one watches the profusion in which

* The proclamation by which Marshal Bugeaud initiated his command in Algiers.—Tr.

materials are borne in upon us from fresh sources in every land. *You* show us how such matter may be subordinated to mind. A thousand years hence, and things will be much simpler. Nations have been able to preserve their individuality in spite of the march of armies from one end of the Continent to the other. Since the great epoch of Columbus and Gama, when one quarter, nay, one hemisphere, of the globe made acquaintance with the other, that restless element, the sea, has made the ubiquity of a certain species of civilization, that of Western Europe, a possibility. Across each boundary line of the firm earth new manners, new beliefs, new wants force their way among the most isolated clusters of remote lands. Are not the South Sea Islands already Protestant parishes? A floating battery, a single man-of-war, changes the fate of Chili. . . .

The Princess Helene, by her sweet grace and intellectual superiority, achieved, yesterday, the mastery over much rude and stubborn matter. It was most absurd to see how some people strove to look solemn, dignified, and—silly. I am especially delighted that she goes to her new home with the greatest cheerfulness. I wish she were crossing the Rhine with a less retinue. Her mother is a worthy, well-educated lady, but timid; and as to the others who figure in her suite, there would be no great loss if they remained on this side the stream. Fortunately, the great French world is free from the petty jeering and fault-finding which reign paramount in Berlin and Potsdam, where empty-headed folk keep pecking for months together at a caricature drawn by their own feeble imagination.

I admitted Privy Councillor Müller,* (who appreciates you and your productions,) to a share in my enjoyments. But, lawyer-like, he went off upon the very first sheet, No. 63 ("Rezension des Provincialrechts von Goetze").† Would you, my dear friend, send me the first part of that review for Müller?

Very gratefully yours,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

XXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Monday, 30th May, 1837.

My dear Friend,—The Part of the "Academy's Transactions" is entirely at your disposal until I can send you a copy of it for yourself. The communication you send for our talented friend Gans is particularly agreeable to me. Hegel's historical studies will interest me specially, because till now I have entertained a wild prejudice against the theory that every nation must be the representative of some particular idea; that everything has happened "that it might come to pass" as was written by the philosopher. I shall read it carefully, and shall be quite ready to quit my prejudice.

Yours,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* Cabinet Councillor of King Friedrich Wilhelm III.—Tr.

† Review of the "Treatise on Provincial Law," by Von Goetze.

XXX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Saturday, 1st July, 1837.

To-morrow Tegel, and Monday off again to that everlasting watering-place, where the sight of the Prince of Warsaw* will not do much towards cheering up my weary soul; it is therefore not permitted me personally to present my sincere thanks. “Sophie Charlotte”† and Hegel’s “Philosophy of History” will accompany me, and afford me real enjoyment. My own taste will lead me to read *you*. There is indeed a forest of ideas for me in this Hegel, whom Gans, in such masterly style, has reproduced with the full stamp of his great individuality: but to a man like me,—spell-bound, insect-fashion, to earth and the endless variety of natural phenomena which it contains,—a dry theoretical assertion of utterly false facts and views about America and the Indian world is enslaving and oppressive. For all that I do not fail to recognise the grandeur it contains.

In you all is at once profound and gentle, and you possess what he wants, never-fading grace and freshness of language.

A. HUMBOLDT.

I have ordered my life right badly, and am doing all I can to arrive at early stupidity. Gladly would I renounce the European beef, which Hegel (p. 77) talks of as being better than the American, and take up my abode with poor weak crocodiles (alas! they’re twenty-five feet long). Pages 442—444, our worthy friend has evidently been polishing up to make them more palatable.

* Prince Paskiewitch.—Tr.

† A biographical memoir by Varnhagen.—Tr.

XXXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 4th October, 1837.

There are times, my dear friend, when you are pleased to confer durability on fleeting productions of the day, and to preserve what would otherwise be scattered to the winds, and so I send you the short Address which the papers gave in such a mutilated form. The substance of it will please you, even though you may think the language might have been better chosen had it been more thoroughly prepared. The *political* Hanover I found as you have represented it, and private conversations with King Ernest full of both rage and fear, have confirmed your view. Leist of Stade,* with his five hours' speech, has, I am told, again been doing honied mischief.

Yours,

A. Ht.

Stieglitz'† appearance here was to me like a visit from a ghost. He was Wilhelm's oldest friend, and once saved his life when he was bathing in the Leine.‡ (My brother called out to him with unexampled stoicism, "I'm a dead man, *but never mind!*") There's something "uncanny" in the influence of that man's mind.

* Leist, Councillor of State, principal adviser of King Ernest Augustus of Hanover in the abrogation of the fundamental law (*Grundgesetz*) of that kingdom, and of the dismissal of the seven Göttingen professors.—Tr.

† Stieglitz, born 1767, at Arolsen, died 1840; an original writer upon medical subjects, and physician to the King of Hanover.—Tr.

‡ The river Leine near Göttingen, where the two friends were students.—Tr.

XXXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Saturday, 22nd October, 1837. 2 A.M.

After a very depressing stay of nearly a week in Potsdam, I find on my return your affectionate token of remembrance. Accept this very evening, my dear friend, my warmest thanks. You have praised my endeavours—the object of my highest ambition—to avoid fossilization, so long as I am permitted, to be active, and to hold fast the belief that “Nature has laid her curse upon stagnation.” Youth is the emblem of Progress, and the ruling powers here (the Berlin world-elephants) *sont des momies en service extraordinaire*. Good night.

A. HUMBOLDT.

XXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Tuesday, 7th November, 1837.

The beginning of my letter is poor: the end of it more rational. But you must not lose the dramatic effect of the whole!

What you ask, my dear friend, is attended with mortal risk, involving, as it does, not only my own feelings, but those of a family who nervously suspect allusions in every word. The more telling and spirited your sketch, particularly at pp. 10—15 [“He started from leading principles” . . . “What many entirely deny him” . . .], the more unearthly everything appears in this short essay, as the softening element would be implied in the portraiture of a *complete* and, in the political and

literary world, not altogether unimportant life. This more complete portraiture is, however, now impossible; therefore, my desire will always be to care for his fame by the circulation of his literary works. To omit—to alter anything in this beautiful essay would be to rob it of charm and vigour. You have written the whole in the noblest spirit, but there are passages (Reineke Fuchs, the relation to Madame de Humboldt) which especially just now are not very pleasant to touch upon. As you expect me frankly to state my individual impressions, I will record them. They are often merely doubts.

P. 5. “A stranger to *abstract* thought” . . . The term “*middle philosophy*” refers probably to that of Kant, to which he was most strongly inclined. He especially believed that metaphysics, but of the pre-Hegelian order, was that study of his youth in which he excelled. I merely wish for a closer definition.

P. 6. “In the proper sense of the word *unproductive*? The philosophy of language, on entirely new principles, spirit of antiquity, treatment of history, depth of feeling in poetry—in all these departments he has not produced any unimportant work.

P. 8. “Style downright ice.” Soften this a little. You do so p. 30, where you have the word ‘warms.’

P. 13. “A reputation is soon gained, and the name Mephistopheles or Reineke . . .” One could wish the two distinguishing names away, as everything in the preceding one is couched in the happiest and liveliest of style. “Mephistopheles” reminds one of Duke Charles.

P. 14. This question about heart and the saying of Talleyrand, which I was not acquainted with, and

which could only be made sense of by the supposition of an insinuated reproach of political indecision, are rather unpleasant. “C’était un des hommes d’état dont l’Europe de mon temps n’en a pas compté trois ou quatre,” I have heard from Talleyrand’s own lips.

P. 15. “What many entirely denied him;” . . . very acute and fine. The old Princess Louisa said of you, “You were most to be feared when you were taking up one’s cause.”

P. 18. My brother often related that Stieglitz saved his life, but the *words*, which would have appeared boastful in his mouth, I hear now for the first time from Stieglitz. They are very characteristic and true. There is therefore nothing to desire but a word, which shall explain all, and prevent misunderstanding.

P. 23. That he had an unbounded admiration for Rahel is very, very true!

P. 28. “Principles of constitutional government.” If ever you make use of these papers, my dear friend, make this interpolation: “although at a later period in other articles he has earnestly, in the most decided way, urged the necessity for a constitution founded on a general representation of the people.” The limitation is needful. I have myself had in my hands his plan for a constitution and system of election, and in these opinions he died.

P. 31. Instead of “avarice,” too great thriftiness.

Once more I read, and being more composed, find it, on the whole, among the best things you have written. Pp. 6, 7, 10—12! 13—20, 24—27, 30!! You have reproduced all, yes, nearly all,—and that with infinite

kindliness,—which you here and there appeared to have treated rather severely. “ Il n'y a rien de maudit,” said the great painter Gérard, “ que de consulter la famille sur la ressemblance du défunt. Il y a de quoi se prendre, telle est leur exigeance ! Ils auraient fait bon marché du parent vivant.” That's what you will say of me. In conclusion, I ask myself whether I am not, by begging you in the commencement not to print the paper, robbing my tenderly and *anxiously* beloved brother of a great fame.

I *should*, indeed, be *robbing him* of fame, for who is there that could write about him with such penetrating truth and eloquence? What I therefore now wish to sacrifice, and venture to entreat of you, is after all a trifle. With your skill in composition, the change is easily made. I allude to the few lines which in pages 13 and 14 I have underlined ; Rahel's opinion (pages 14 and 15) not included. She is always gentle, just, and graceful. Receive then, my honoured friend, my warmest, heartfelt thanks. Don't answer this ; I shall call on you to-morrow about twelve.

Yours,

A. HUMBOLDT.

XXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th June, 1838.

I am very happy, my honoured friend, in being able to present you with the only volumes of the great Russian poet* which have yet appeared. May I call on you to-morrow (Sunday) at one o'clock, that my

* Puschkin.

eyes may see the beautiful eyes which have led you, to our literary benefit, into the labyrinth of Sclavonic languages?

I have called twice on Mr. K., and as he was not at home, I left a card for him, in addition to which I have written him an affectionate letter, with offers of service for Petersburg (for the journey to Geneva), but have not heard a syllable from him since. Such behaviour in a young man, who but for me would still be sitting at Orenburg as a small Cossack official, is difficult of explanation.

Most gratefully yours,

A. Ht.

If I may call don't answer this.

XXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 3rd August, 1838.

I look upon you, my honoured friend, as the arbiter not only of good taste, but also of grace and aristocratic manners. I have written two essays, which have not yet been printed, for Cotta's* new Quarterly publication, with which his advisers are much delighted: a description of the natural features of the plateau of Bogota, and on the fluctuations of the yield of gold since the middle ages. He sent me for the two (making four sheets in print) a draft on Frege for fifty Friedrichs d'or, that is more than twelve Friedrichs d'or per sheet. Much as I want money, I should like to send back half of it; but in carrying out this resolve, it occurs to me that I ought first to

* Deutsche Viertel-Jahrschrift.

make inquiries as to what may be now considered the maximum pay for articles in journals, whether six, eight, or ten Friedrichs d'or is customary ; I should then have less to return. It may be of consequence to me at some future time. Pardon this matter-of-fact question, and be indulgent enough to write me in a few days a couple of lines. I am going to-day to the island.

H.T.

In Varnhagen's Diary, of 9th August, 1838, there is the following remark : " Humboldt, in a long visit, gave me the news from Töplitz. Both the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia have carefully avoided being left alone with each other, as each apprehended embarrassment from it. The Emperor spoke on several occasions very contemptuously of the present form of French government, and was particularly severe on King Louis Philippe. Prince Metternich was gay and careless; for the present he was wholly without apprehension, but harboured the gloomy foreboding, that with Louis Philippe's death affairs would take a fresh turn and war would be inevitable. Will he try to make others think so for the nonce ? I ask. In dealing with Metternich, one must always apply the test of seeing how far any particular opinion fits in for the moment with his position."

9th of April, 1839—Varnhagen records in his Diary : " Humboldt called unexpectedly, and made the most profound apologies for not having seen me for so long a time; and now he emptied out his budget with its thousand bits of news from Paris and from here; nearly two hours of it. He looks upon affairs in France as very critical, and has written to Prince Metternich lately in this spirit, that ' To-day the French crisis is entirely internal, but to-morrow even it may take an outward turn, and how needful will it then be for Germany to be consolidated in itself, and that the absurdities of Cologne and Hanover should be put an end to.' "

On the 19th of April, 1839, Varnhagen relates in his Diary : “ Visited Humboldt, who told me a great number of things, and showed me a fine portrait of Arago, that pleased me mightily ! He spoke much of the Anglo-Russian complications in the East Indies and Persia, and related to me what he had heard from the mouth of the Russian Emperor himself on the subject. The Emperor was embittered against the English, and thought it of the highest importance to counteract their dominion in Asia. Humboldt allows that I am right in saying that a good fifty years must pass away before any real danger from Russia will threaten the English in the East, but that apprehension and zeal might even, without necessity, produce a conflict in Europe,* before it would come to a collision in that quarter ; both sides, however, would no doubt bethink themselves before bringing matters to such a pass.”

On the 25th May, 1839, Varnhagen writes in his Diary : “ Met Humboldt ‘ Unter den Linden.’ We had a long chat. He told me that people about the Court, the King excepted, who never speaks ill of the dead, and the Crown Prince, who even expressed some regret, had spoken abominably about the death of Gans. The other princes were delighted—the Princess von Liegnitz † spoke most malignantly.”

XXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Monday, 3rd June, 1839.

The book‡ which you lent me, dear friend, is a precious book, as indeed everything must be called

* Humboldt’s political insight has been verified by the events of 1854, when “apprehension and zeal” really brought about a war, the probability of which Russia seemed to have more fully foreseen than England or France.—Tr.

† The morganatic wife of Friedrich William III.—Tr.

‡ Dorow’s “Memoirs and Letters,” vol. iii.

precious which denotes the individuality of man. My brother's letters are very fine; his critique on the Chancellor does much honour to his character, and the conclusion, which appears to detract somewhat from the praise he has expressed, conceals a profound political meaning. It may have reference to another grander termination, to which that development of events might have led. I am more especially delighted with the recognition of *your* talent, of *your* powers of delineation, and the recognition of the richness of soul which (revealed to few) lies in Rahel's letters. Adam Müller's* aristocratic crotchetts and the Princess,† so boorishly natural in her amours, hunch-backed, and therefore sure to be to some degree unchaste, furnish a capital contrast between political and social rubbish: "to save the Fatherland means," says Gentz's‡ first man, "reinstating the Prussian nobility in its privileges, and leaving it untaxed, in order that after a short negotiation it may present to the monarch its 'don gratuit.' Moreover the man shall remain chained without hope of release to the soil." How the Mont-

* Adam Müller, born in 1779, at Berlin. He became, like his friend Gentz, a religious apostate and political renegade; he was at last employed in the Chancellerie of Prince Metternich, and died in 1829. Varnhagen is loud in praise of Müller's personal amiability and of his great conversational parts.—Tr.

† Sophie Wilhelmine von Baireuth.

‡ Friedrich Gentz, a native of Breslau, born 1767. In 1802 he left Prussia, entered the Austrian diplomatic service, and became a convert to Catholicism. In politics he began as an ardent liberal, but ended by being one of the most sophistical defenders of Conservative doctrines. His numerous writings against Napoleon caused much excitement, and obtained for him a subsidy of £9000 from England. Among other topics which engaged his attention was the "Junius" question, and he indicated Sir Philip Francis as the author of the letters. One of the works which obtained him great credit was a Treatise upon the "Finances of Great Britain," published at Hamburg in 1801.—Tr.

morencies of the Ukermark* must have been delighted at seeing the stuff which had lain uselessly in their poor souls, now moulded into precise dogmas in such polished language by so talented a writer! This spirit of caste is not confined to time or space. Once again, when I shall be no more, it will appear spectre-like and threatening. I am often asking myself whether Adam Müller might not again collect subscriptions among the knights who lie stretched out on the sacks in the Wool Market (like the Homeric heroes) at their ease. Benjamin Constant has very prettily expressed this immutable heirloom of pride in the parable of the shipwreck, "Grand Dieu, je ne suis pas assez indiscret pour vous prier de nous sauver tous. Sauvez-moi tout seul."

If you have a few moments' leisure just turn over the leaves of the third volume of my "History of the Geography of the Middle Ages," and see what I have said on the views entertained by Christopher Columbus in respect of Nature, and on his style, vol. iii. p. 232: The dream, p. 316. It was the subject of a reading at Chateaubriand's and Madame Récamier's, and *took*, as every outburst of feeling does when manifested between dreary steppes of minute erudition. I hope soon to be able to offer you the five volumes already out. The negligence of my bookseller prevents my doing so at present.

A. Ht.

On the 9th June, 1839, Varnhagen observes in his Diary: "Humboldt confirms the opinion I have more than once expressed, that too much must not be inferred from the silence of authors. He adduces three important and perfectly undeniable facts, as to which one finds no evidence in places where one would naturally, above all

* The Counts Arnim-Boitzenburg.—Tr.

others, expect to find it. In the records of Barcelona there is not a trace of the triumphal entry made by Columbus; in Marco Polo no mention of the great wall of China, and in the archives of Portugal nothing about the voyage of Amerigo Vespucci in the service of that Crown. ("History of the Geography of the New World," Pt. IV. p. 160, *et seq.*)

XXXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Friday, 13th September, 1839.

M. Piaget has left a very agreeable impression on me. He would probably be most useful in the *Collège Français*, as *Professeur de littérature ou d'histoire*; but the pedantic preceptorial examination stands in the way. I will use every exertion with M. von Werther; the rather unliterary moustache and the long sleek South Sea hair will, I fancy, somewhat astonish the latter.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Wonderful, indeed, that the Neufchâtel Council advise the Cabinet against Piaget. *Par jalouse de métier?*

XXXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 29th December, 1839.

It is a noble and right charitable act that you have done in lending me this little work,* which would otherwise certainly have escaped me. The praise bestowed on it by you who are able so vividly to sketch the picture

* Fr. Jacobs' "Jubelschrift für Kries in Gotha."

of a life, and to colour it so pleasingly without obliterating the outline, is of great authority. Kries,* moreover, was one of the friends of my youth. We attended Heyne's lectures at the Seminarium together. I will return you the book soon.

A. HUMBOLDT.
(In great haste.)

XXXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Wednesday afternoon, 26th February, 1840.

I lament, dear friend, having missed you ; I was suffering sadly in my foot from a wretched little whitlow on my toe, and only got to-day (for the first time) as far as the house of my neighbour Leopold von Buch.† Best thanks for Sesenheim.‡

No doubt you were right in rescuing from oblivion the little work, the character of which is German in the highest degree, and which, owing to your preface, has won such an interest with thoughtful men. There is throughout this little book a fine perception of that which a German must always hold sacred and important in the literature of his country. The writer ransacks Sesenheim and Drusenheim, as others the Troad. The proper names are unhappily less poetical. Passages pp. 12 & 13 are extremely graceful in style. Then we have the philologist in awkward indecision as to that

* Friedrich Kries, a mathematician and Professor in the Gymnasium at Gotha.—TR.

† Leopold von Buch, born in 1777, died in March, 1853,—the celebrated geologist.—TR.

‡ “Wallfahrt nach Sesenheim.” By August Ferdinand Näke. Edited by K. A. Varnhagen von Ense. Berlin, 1840.

which he has but half investigated; uncertain, as over an old manuscript which he has read too hastily. Whether Frederika's* sisters, "whose parts we have no business to take," page 48, or whether the catholic priest who had "effected her ruin," and then, according to another reading, had "not effected her ruin;" be pleased with all this—I do not decide; we are also not yet clear about the Troad and the Scamander, and Helen had in her time to put up with a deal of Greek scandal.

Your old and very grateful friend,

A. v. HDT.

XL.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Monday, 9th March, 1840.

The Crown Prince, to whom I took your "Lebensbuch" this morning, has commissioned me, my dear friend, to express to you his "friendliest thanks." In doing so he recalled to mind your "Sophie Charlotte," your "Seydlitz," your ever graceful language, and your powers of delineating critical relations in life. I read him your outspoken passage about Grimm. It pleased him much, and gave rise to a conversation about Hanover. He spoke very sensibly on the subject: "the King of Hanover does not know how to manage Germans; he doesn't know how easily they are won over if only one knows how to avail one's self of a moment of genial impulse. I should, on the very day on which the news of the close of the Göttingen election reached Hanover, have sent an aide-de-camp or civil functionary to

* The daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim, with whom Goethe, then a student at Strasburg, had a romantic and somewhat serious love affair.—TR.

Göttingen to return my thanks to the professors, and to ask them whether it would be agreeable to their feelings if I were to reinstate all the seven professors." These are words that flow from a noble nature. I shall *not* talk to the Crown Prince about your Essay on Niebuhr, with which I thoroughly agree.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HDT.

XLI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Wednesday, 18th March, 1840.

An insipid pamphlet of M. Gretsch against Melgunoff, and against a book utterly unknown to me—König's*—full of Siberia, bow-strings, secret service money, and Russian patriotism—an intolerable production! Would you like to read it, my dear friend? You are the only one of us that can understand it entirely. The book would almost reconcile me to M. Melgunoff, against whom I had begun to conceive some little dislike. I certainly have no recollection of him, or the conversation I had with him; but he must have strangely interpreted and translated in his own style the language I addressed to him, when he makes me enter the lists against one, the treasures of whose mind and the grace of whose diction as well as manner, I am always praising. Is it likely that I should

* Heinrich König, a German novelist of some note, published in 1837, assisted by a Russian friend, Melgunoff, "Literarische Bilder aus Russland" (Literary Pictures from Russia). Nicolaus Gretsch, a Russian Counsellor of State, a most prolific, but very shallow author, attacked König's book in the pamphlet to which allusion is made above.—Tr.

break out against you in the only conversation I ever had with a man who brought me a letter from your own hand? Who will attribute to me such indiscreet Orinoco manners?

Marheineke* has also been campaigning in the critical journals, more against Savigny† than against Stahl.‡ There is much sharpness in the air, and the *Blacks* give no quarter. The end of the philippic is very eloquent, arriving at the climax of the transition from the Rationalists through St. Hegel to Galileo. Unfortunately the twelve preceding pages are destitute of all colour, and indifferent in style. Görres§ and Schelling can colour better. The only thing that interests me in all this is the dramatic part, and the talent which is or is not displayed. Cæsareopapy, territorial system, nay, the “authority of a decided positive system of dogmas and of a marked physiognomy” which M. Marheineke, p. 41, wishes to see introduced, are to me horrors or carnival pleasantries. Both parties are only different sorts of compression engines, and a “philosophically” established Christian dogmatism of “marked physiognomy” is, of all corsets, to me the most oppressive.

Raumer (Karl) has published “Crusades”—cru-

* Philip Conrad Marheineke, an eminent German divine; in philosophy a follower of Hegel; died 1846.—Tr.

† Friedrich Carl von Savigny, author of the “History of Roman Law in the Middle Ages,” esteemed leader of the historical school in jurisprudence; an ultra-Conservative in politics and religion.—Tr.

‡ Friedrich Julius Stahl, a Professor in the University of Berlin, and one of the editors of the New Prussian Gazette (“Kreuzzeitung”). He was born and bred an Israelite in Bavaria, and started in early life as a republican and a demagogue. At the present time the learned Professor is conspicuous as an ultra-Prussian, an ultra-Lutheran, and ultra-Absolutist.—Tr.

§ Joseph Görres, a profound scholar, in his youth an ardent Republican, in his old age an ultra-Conservative and fanatical Catholic.—Tr.

sades against the geologists. The Saracens are Leopold von Buch (your new convert) and myself.

A. Ht.

And Sintenis* in Magdeburg, and the Neufchatel Council, "who issued a proclamation against the Deluge," all 1840. Three comets won't suffice.

I have a letter from the Marquis of Clanricarde, at St. Petersburg, dated 5th March: "No news has been heard for the last four or five weeks, of the expedition to Khiva." "It is purely an attack upon the Khan, whom they propose to dethrone and to put his brother in his place." You see he tries to appear perfectly unconcerned. What an innocent lamblike policy!

XLII.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Vienne, ce 29 Mars, 1840.

Mon cher Baron !

Ne mettant point en doute, que Monsieur le Prince Royal, auquel j'ai l'honneur de répondre aujourd'hui, vous donnera connaissance de ma déclaration, c'est à ma lettre à S. A. R. que je m'en rapporte. Vous verrez que je me mets à ses ordres, et cela toutefois sous la réserve de mon ignorance archéologique. A cette ignorance vient se joindre celle des attributions de la Présidence.

Voici en tout cas, ce que je pense d'une position

* Wilhelm Friedrich Sintenis, a Protestant minister at Magdeburg, a Rationalist, very obnoxious to the ultra-religious party of that city. In consequence of a criticism upon a picture which he published in the "Magdeburg Gazette," he was denounced from the pulpit by his opponents in 1840, and the affair made a great noise at the time throughout Prussia.—TR.

individuelle dans son rapport avec une association scientifique quelconque.

Il y a trois espèces d'hommes. Les uns sont de véritables savants, et leur nombre est fort restreint. D'autres sont amis des sciences en général, ou de telle branche des sciences en particulier ; leur nombre est bien autrement étendu. La troisième classe qui est la plus nombreuse, c'est celle des ames sèches, des esprits étroits, des *viveurs* qui souvent sont de très bonnes gens, mais pour lesquels les sciences et les arts sont du superflu.

Je me range dans la seconde de ces catégories. Moi et mes confrères pouvons servir utilement la culture morale pourvu que nous ne nous en mêlions pas trop en détail. Là où je crois pouvoir faire le bien, je regarde comme un devoir de m'y vouer ; dans la présente occasion cependant je n'aurai que de la bonne volonté à mettre dans la balance. Comme ma profession de foi est renfermée dans mes explications envers l'auguste Protecteur, c'est à ce que j'ai pris la liberté de lui dire, que je prends celle de vous renvoyer.

Il y a si longtems, mon cher baron, que vous n'êtes venu nous voir, que quand vous nous corrigerez, vous éprouverez plus d'une satisfaction ou bien des progrès fort réels, que nous avons faits sur les terrains qui vous comptent au nombre des dominateurs. Jacquin, dont la perte est très regrettable, a été parfaitement remplacé par Endlicher, homme d'un genie éminent. Baumgarten et Ettingshausen sont des savants très distingués. L'école polytechnique marche à merveille, et forme des savants et des ouvriers fort utiles. Rössl est le premier opticien de nos tems et

le jeune Voigtländer marche sur ses traces. L'établissement du Baron Charles Hügel a ouvert un nouveau et vaste champ à la botanique. Les sciences et les arts marchent ainsi à souhait. Ce qui leur manque, c'est un inspecteur tel que vous.

Vous vous plaignez, mon cher baron, de vous trouver être le plus ancien des étrangers dans l'Institut. Ce sort est sans doute triste, parcequ'il est inévitable, à moins qu'on ne fasse la sottise de s'en aller avant d'autres, mais il est naturel. J'éprouve le même sentiment, et cela sur un champ qui certes est le plus vaste des champs ! De tous les Rois et chefs de cabinet en fonction entre les années 1813 et 1815 les seuls vivants sont le Roi de Prusse et moi. L'époque n'embrasse cependant qu'un quart de siècle, tant il est vrai que 25 ans sont toute une époque historique ! Ne nous décourageons pas pour si peu de chose, et allons comme si de rien n'était.

Mille sincères hommages, mon cher Baron.

METTERNICH.

XLIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Thursday, 9th April, 1840.

Here are two salamanders.* The *black* (black-edged) King of Denmark is not only a Norway-constitutional, but also a mineralogical king, who has written very nice memoirs on Vesuvius. As his predecessor was an astronomical king, gave comet prizes, and presented *great* men, like General Müffling† and myself, with

* Notes snatched from the fire.—Tr.

† Friedrich Ferdinand Carl von Müffling, Commissioner at Wellington's

chronometers, and as he died of a comet (the night Galli discovered his), it came to pass that the Danish astronomers feared for *their* heavenly trade under an earthly (subterranean) king. I was asked to take advantage of the favour which of old was evinced for me. I therefore sought for a pretext which I never did before, of offering my congratulations on his accession. This is the occasion of the black drama. The letter is simple and intelligent.

A. Ht.

Read M. Quinet* (the passage on Goethe and Bettina), and return me the poison.

XLIV.

KING CHRISTIAN VIII. OF DENMARK TO HUMBOLDT.

Copenhague, ce 18 Janvier, 1840.

Monsieur le Baron de Humboldt ! Parmi les lettres particulières qui me sont parvenues depuis mon avènement au trône, aucune ne m'a fait un plus sensible plaisir que celle que vous m'avez adressée sous la date du 17 Decembre. Votre souvenir a le plus grand prix pour moi, et je me rappelle avec un bien grand intérêt les entretiens que j'ai eus avec vous, Monsieur le Baron, à Paris, il y a déjà nombre d'années, mais depuis vous avez enrichi les sciences de nouvelles recherches et la Sibérie exploitée par vous, comme

head quarters in the campaign of 1815, and afterwards, during the occupation of the Allies, for five months Governor of Paris; in 1841, President of the Privy Council.—Tr.

* Edgard Quinet, a French poet, published, in 1839, a work under the title of "Allemagne et Italie," betraying, in some passages, a great hostility to Germany.—Tr.

jadis l'Amérique, offre aux sciences naturelles des aperçus nouveaux, qui ne sont dus qu'à vous, Monsieur le Baron. Oui, je m'estimerais heureux de m'entretenir un jour avec vous sur ces nouvelles recherches.

Les sciences naturelles offrent toujours des intérêts nouveaux, et je ne négligerai certainement pas de concourir à leur avancement autant qu'il dépendra de moi.

Les travaux astronomiques et géodesiques de votre célèbre ami Schumacher méritent certainement ma protection. Ce savant s'est acquis un nom européen et j'apprécie ses rares mérites.—Quand aux observations magnétiques d'après la méthode de Gauss je m'occupe de les amplifier ici à Copenhague, où un observatoire établi depuis 1834 près de l'école polytechnique sera placé plus convenablement sur le rempart de la ville et nous y établirons deux différents emplacements, l'un pour les observations sur la déclinaison, l'autre pour l'appareil de l'inclinaison. Le célèbre Oersted dirigera cet établissement.

Je m'estime heureux, Monsieur le Baron, de pouvoir vous entretenir de l'avancement des sciences naturelles dans mon pays, vous y puiserez la certitude que je ne négligerai aucune occasion pour justifier les bonnes idées que vous avez de mon intérêt pour les sciences et pour tout ce qui peut tendre à éclairer mes sujets et les rendre heureux.

Je désire, Monsieur le Baron, que vous trouviez souvent le loisir de vous entretenir avec moi et je m'empresserai de cultiver des relations si agréables pour moi.

La Reine me charge de ses complimens pour vous,

et je sais is l'occasion pour me dire avec la plus haute considération, Monsieur le Baron de Humboldt,
 votre tout affectionné
 CHRISTIAN.

XLV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Saturday, 11th April, 1840.

The Crown Prince is very desirous of being allowed to look at your interesting letter from Prince Metternich. Would you, my dear friend, send it to me this evening by half-past seven?

A. Ht.

On the subject of this letter, Varnhagen remarks in his Diary of the 2nd of April, 1840: "A long autograph letter from Prince Metternich turned up at home. He declares my picture of the Vienna Congress to be perfectly true, with some slight exceptions that could be easily set right. He himself circumstantially confirms the relation of the arrival in Vienna of the news of Napoleon having left Elba—a letter of historical value!"

On the 5th of April, 1840, Varnhagen again mentions this letter of Metternich in his Diary: "Humboldt called at noon. He had heard of the letter yesterday from Wittgenstein; Wittgenstein had spoken about it to him, Count Orloff, and other strangers as a most remarkable thing. Humboldt, too, was exceedingly astonished and delighted; he gave me a letter to read that Prince Metternich had written to him on the position of certain Natural Historians in Vienna, and on the Presidency of the Archæological Society in Rome. Humboldt tells me melancholy stories of the machinations of the Rhenish-Westphalian nobles, which find favour with the Crown Prince. A scheme is on foot for erecting a grand Catholic educational establishment for the nobility, an establishment in which the Jesuits can build themselves a nest. On some one remarking that the

Crown Prince, in his absence of mind, seemed never to have reflected that the illness of the King might bring about an important change in affairs, the Minister, Von Rochow, replied: ‘ You may depend upon it he has thought of it, and has had a good many things ready to bring forward, more particularly several regulations in respect of Church matters, to which I shall feel myself obliged to offer the strongest opposition.’ ”

XLVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

13th of April, 1840.

The Crown Prince has expressly commissioned me, my dear friend, to present you his thanks for so interesting a communication. Count Alvensleben was present. All considered the letter to reflect great honour upon you and your description of the Congress,* and also to be remarkable for its noble simplicity in the relation of a memorable occurrence. “ *Et tout cela prouve que ma fille est muette,*” and that one lets a talent like yours (talent of advice, description, and well-tried worldly wisdom) lie fallow, in order that one day, at your death, as at my brother’s, men may wonder and lament that they had not earlier thought of employing you. “ Così va il mondo.”

A. Ht.

I am thoroughly Quakerised. Mrs. Fry and William Allen; little sermons in gaols (the most horrible the Quakeress, perhaps, had ever seen), and little tracts against dram drinking.

* The Congress of Vienna.—Tr.

XLVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Friday, 29th of March, 1840.

Decide, master of elegant diction and euphony—I had: “So weit Humanität (Gesittung) den Erdkreis umfasste.”

I now prefer, 1. “Er hat gleich mächtig, so weit Gesittung und Weltverkehr reichen, auf die Herrscher wie auf die Völker gewirkt” (reichen, not reichten—that I detest); or, 2. “So weit Gesittung und Weltverkehr die Menschheit veredelten;” or, 3. “Die Menschheit empfänglich machten;” or, 4. “Die Menschheit geeinigt.”

Would not No. 4 (the last) be best? Perhaps you may have an inspiration. Slip a note quietly into my hand to-night at Stägemann’s;* perhaps the old reading is best after all.

A. Ht.

“Humanität” I shall give up in any case, having read in the last volume of Campe’s Dictionary so many jokes directed against it.

“Sed quamquam, primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu, Nerva Caesar *res olim dissociabiles miscuerit* principatum ac libertatem; augeatque quotidie felicitatem imperii Nerva Trajanus.”—Tacitus in Agricola, cap. 3.

Also on that same old Nerva, (noble, refined, and literary in his taste): “Quod si vita suppeditet, princi-

* Friedrich August von Stägemann, born 1763, at Vierraden, in the Uckermark, in 1809, became Councillor of State, and subsequently editor of the “Staats-Zeitung.” Known as a poet of some pretension. Died December, 1840.—TR.

patum divi Nervae, et imperium Trajani, uberiorem securioremque materiam senectuti seposui: *rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quae velis, et quae sentias dicere licet.*"—Tacit. Hist. I. 1.

In order to avoid too special references, I shall simply give the numerical quotations ; thus : Tacit. Vita Ag. c. 3, Hist. I. 1.

Ht.

XLVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Tuesday night, 27th October, 1840.

That I was so long without calling upon you, my dear and valued friend, before and after my northern campaign, is only because there are impossibilities in life against which it is vain to struggle. I wanted to hasten to you immediately after the festivities here, but the uncertainty of my journey to Paris (I declined it because at the time it would neither have been honourable to the King or to myself, since Prussia could not play an independent part), the approaching departure of Bülow, the arrival of General Hedemann,* who is still ailing, and has his family with him, as well as a rheumatic fever which kept me six days at home, brought all to nought. To-morrow, 8 A.M., I shall have again to migrate to Sans Souci, but only, as I hope, for a few days. I now therefore take up my pen to have some little confidential talk with you. First of all, sincere thanks for your talented and noble treatment of the very ordinary "Erinnerungen von M. Arndt"! I had indeed observed the hostility evinced towards you. The tone

* Son-in-law of Wilhelm v. Humboldt.—Tr.

of your review is the noblest kind of revenge.* This man, whom I never personally knew, owes his advancement to important events, and not to himself. Strange, is it not, that in these latter days, in the evening of his life, an importance has been given him which has not arisen entirely from a love of justice?

As you love everything that is *characteristic*, I will return your kindness with another but very small one. I *present* you with a letter from Guizot, which he wrote to me, not altogether without an object, when I was at Königsberg; the underscoring is my own, as you would guess if I did not tell you. I showed the letter to the King; it was written after the Belgian,† Bülow, and Guizot had been at Windsor, and the business promised well, as it does now, when Thiers, all at once, shows himself so complaisantly weak, and Palmerston so dogmatically defiant. Do not, however, let the letter get out of your hands.

I thank you heartily for the news of the Grimms. It is of great importance to me to follow exactly the course of events. During the months that I was living on the "historical hill,"‡ surrounded, in turn, by elements the most contradictory, I proceeded independently in one course. The King had given his orders about the Grimms to others, not to me; as, however, nothing had been done by the time he returned from Königsberg, I presented a "Pro-memoria" to the King on the occurrences at Königsberg, as well as on the necessity of insisting on his own will as the only means of propitiating the

* Varnhagen had written a review on these Reminiscences.—Tr.

† Leopold, King of the Belgians.—Tr.

‡ Sans Souci.—Tr.

public mind in matters which have excited the sympathies of all, and of appointing the two Grimms, Albrecht and Dahlmann.* For Dahlmann there remained but little hope; Albrecht was invited and declined, sheltering himself behind his gratitude to Saxony. It would have been a satisfaction to the seven† if Albrecht had been appointed Professor at Berlin; at any rate they will learn in Hanover that the King has made an offer to the Elbinger. As regards the Grimms, the King has determined that Minister Eichhorn‡ shall propose to them to come as Academicians, and as they live like man and wife, offers them a pension, the amount to be fixed by themselves. That the King insists upon such matters being managed with delicacy, you may see in the negotiation with Tieck. As librarians, the excellent people are of little use, and whether Wilhelm, as Corresponding Member of the Academy, lectures or does not lecture is of little consequence. The great thing is to have them. There can therefore be no question about "*Einschmuggeln*," "*Erniedrigung*," "*zu spät ihrer gedenken*,"—*dans un règne de cent jours!* It is at least honourable to the Ladenberg administration that I have been able to induce them to propose Dahlmann in a formal and complimentary way as Professor at the University of Breslau, where there is a vacancy. I have done my duty in opening the way: the carrying out of the scheme is not in my hands. As soon as ever I return from Potsdam, I shall urge strongly upon Eichhorn that he ought at once, and purely as a matter of public

* Albrecht, a native of Elbing, one of the seven dismissed German professors. Dahlmann was another.—TR.

† Professors.

‡ Minister of Public Worship.—TR.

business, to take the affair of the Grimms in hand—an affair essentially German and of national importance.

The interference of a number of persons in these sort of matters is injurious, though excusable from the general interest they create.

I wonder, my dear friend, if you will be able and willing to read these few lines, the sense of which is less open to criticism than the sound. Diplomatist that you are, I need not implore you not to read my letter to the “Child;”* still she must be made acquainted with the real posture of affairs, in respect of which I have been guilty of no neglect.

A. Ht.

A most melancholy circumstance has occurred; the only son of my friend, the astronomer Bessel, a young man, twenty-five years of age, of extraordinary mathematical talent (he was at the School of Architecture), died yesterday. Nervous fever.

Bopp’s Review gives me great pleasure.

XLIX.

GUIZOT TO HUMBOLDT.

Londres, 24 Aout, 1840.

MONSIEUR LE BARON,—Vous êtes parfaitement aimable d’avoir pensé à m’envoyer les deux nouveaux volumes des œuvres de Monsieur votre frère. Je vous remercie, et du présent qui a eu lui-même tant de valeur, et du souvenir qui en a au moins autant pour moi. J’espère bien qu’à travers toutes nos affaires,

* Bettina von Arnim.

car ce sont vos affaires comme les miennes, je viendrai à bout de lire quelque chose de ce grand travail. Je voudrais employer mon tems d'une façon aussi complète et aussi variée que vous savez le faire. Gardez-en un peu pour travailler au succès d'une bonne et sage politique. Elle vous doit déjà beaucoup. Elle a encore besoin de vous.

J'envie au baron de Bülow le plaisir de vous voir. Je regrette infiniment sa société à Londres. La conversation, la vraie conversation, nourrie et libre, est fort rare ici. La sienne me manquera beaucoup. Je voudrais bien aller quelque jour vous faire une visite chez vous, voir de près votre pays, celui de tous où l'esprit humain joue le plus grand rôle, et son nouveau Roi, digne, me dit-on, d'un tel pays. En attendant, gardez-moi, je vous prie, Monsieur le Baron, toute votre ancienne bienveillance, et croyer à la durée comme à la sincérité des sentimens que je vous porte depuis bien long-tems.

GUIZOT.

Note by Humboldt.—Reçu à Königsberg pendant les fêtes. A. von HUMBOLDT.

L.

ARAGO TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, 12 Mars, 1841.

Je ne dois pas, je ne veux pas croire que tu m'aies demandé sérieusement,* si je verrais avec plaisir ton

* *Note by Humboldt.*—I had asked [Arago] if he thought it possible that the difference of our political wishes (war with Germany) could disturb our mutual relations?

A. HT.

voyage à Paris. Est-ce donc que tu douterais de mon invariable attachement ? Saches que je regarderais toute incertitude sur ce point comme la plus cruelle injure. En dehors de ma famille, tu es, sans aucune comparaison, la personne du monde que j'aime le plus tendrement. Il faut aussi te résigner, tu es le seul de mes amis sur qui je compterais dans des circonstances difficiles.

Je suis vraiment heureux de la pensée que je passerai quelques soirées avec la personne à qui je dois mon goût pour la météorologie et la physique du globe. Il y aura pour toi un lit à l'observatoire.

Le pauvre Savary est dans un état déplorable. Le médecin m'assure que sa maladie de poitrine ne permet aucun espoir. Quel malheur !

Tu arriveras à Paris à l'ouverture de mon cours d'astronomie. Mon nouvel amphithéâtre est d'un luxe scandaleux.

Je suis charmé de la guérison du pauvre Sheiffer* (est-ce ainsi ?). Ton bon cœur t'a toujours créé une nombreuse famille.

Adieu, mon meilleur ami. Mon attachement pour toi ne finira qu'avec ma vie.

F. ARAGO.

Note by Humboldt.—To his gifted friend Varnhagen von Ense, with a very urgent request to avoid any publication of it, as being an autograph letter, until after Arago's death.

* A preposterous French corruption of the name of Seiffert, Humboldt's valet, to whom he was much attached, and to whom he bequeathed his library.—Tr.

LI.

HUMBOLDT TO BETTINA VON ARNIM.

(Copy in Varnhagen's handwriting.)

Saturday, 21st November, 1840.

How could you, my dear madam, for one moment doubt my gratitude for information as to the real condition of these noble-minded men, for whom, after suffering such unmerited distress, and such long and shameful neglect, a position free from care is at last about to be prepared! I have considered that for the two of them in such a position in Berlin three thousand thalers would be requisite, and have acted throughout upon this supposition. The King has made it a rule never to let any matter connected with finance originate with him. He has besides, as is the case with all princes, no standard by which to measure the wants of literary men. The great minds who are to be gathered together have the same homely wants as lesser ones. He who wills the end, must, therefore, will the means as well; especially in a matter which attracts the eyes of all, and is intimately connected with the national honour. The Minister, Eichhorn, to whom all these arrangements are confided, is delighted at the expected arrival of the Grimms. He has of old been on the most friendly footing with Jacob Grimm. It is not more than an hour since I was with him, defending my view of the matter. He assures me that he will carry out everything gradually in the best manner possible, but that confidence should be reposed in him, and that he ought to be allowed to act without being interfered

with. Accept, madam, the expression of my highest esteem and most grateful sentiments.

AL. HUMBOLDT.

LII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, April 22nd, 1841.

Your letter has been a source of unbounded comfort to me. I see from it that we are the same friends still, and that you have attributed my long—and to me very sad—invisibility to the distraction of my position, and to the constant employment of energies always striving to reach an unattainable goal. In the evening of a chequered though not altogether well-spent life, it is a consolation to retain the esteem of those to whom we are united in thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. I shall thank you in person. As for Mr. L., I must intercede for him with the Princess of Prussia this very afternoon, and will also endeavour to induce her Imperial Highness* to aid me with her usual energy. With unaltered respect and affection,

Yours, A. v. HUMBOLDT.

I had occasion while at Potsdam to read to the King, at his request, Schelling's Lecture on Nature and Art (*Philosoph. Schriften*, vol. i., 1809). The passages on Raffaelle, Leonardo da Vinci, and the possibility of a new age of prosperity for Art, are as graceful as any our language can produce. The reading produced on the King the impression of a beautiful song, but the bird is now sixty-seven years old, and passes from one golden cage to another!

* Grand Duchess of Weimar, mother of the Princess of Prussia, and sister to the Emperor Nicholas.—Tr.

Varnhagen says, in his Diary of the 25th April, 1841 :—“ Humboldt called, and remained with me upwards of an hour and a half. I found him looking ill, but lively, cheerful, and more than ever inclined to chat. He praises the King for his noble way of thinking, and his good intentions, but considers him no man of action, and that when he acts he does so by fits and starts, without settled purpose or moderation. Be it, however, good nature or timidity, it is certain he often does not dare to do things which he is extremely anxious to do, and which he could easily accomplish. Thus, for instance, he is now waiting with impatience for Minister von Werther to tender his resignation, and asks Humboldt if he (Von Werther) had not expressed to him some intention of doing so.”

On April 30th, 1841, Varnhagen remarks :—“ Humboldt has many enemies among literary men, as he has at Court. Attempts are incessantly made to abuse him, but if any one opens his lips decidedly in his praise, blame is at once silenced, as few persons are capable of maintaining it. A gentleman told me lately that he did not know what to think of Humboldt, he could not arrive at any clear opinion about him. I replied, ‘ Think always what is best of him. Give him credit for invariably intending what is best, and then you will be least likely to go wrong.’ Another gentleman expressed himself ironically on another occasion thus : ‘ Humboldt was a great man, until he came to Berlin, then he became an ordinary one.’ Moritz Robert* answered that Rahel had often said, ‘ In Berlin nothing retains its place, everything declines and becomes shabby ; aye, if the Pope himself were to come to Berlin he would not long remain the Pope ; he would become something *ordinaire*, perhaps a riding-master ! ’ This saying of Rahel is most true. I remember it well, but it has never yet been put on paper. This peculiarity of Berlin deserves, however, deeper investigation. It indicates a lively power of undeveloped greatness, and may, if developed into something Positive, carry Berlin on to its highest fame ; but if it stops short in the mere Negative, it will of course become her shame ! ‘ Yonder,’ as Goethe somewhere observes, ‘ live an irreverent race of men.’ The idea is somewhat similar.”

* One of the brothers of Rahel Varnhagen.—Tr.

LIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Saturday, April 24th, 1841.

Very sorry, my dear friend, not to have found you ! Correct the title, which I must send off. Of course it is necessary to say "that this is not the lecture of 1828," and this sentence I have been wishing to introduce aphoristically into the title in smaller type ; such a thing may be unusual *after* the name, but I wish that you should approve of it.

Ht.

KOSMOS,

Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung,

Von A. von HUMBOLDT.

Nach Umrissen von Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1827 und 1828,
erweitert und berichtigt durch die Forschungen (Entdeckungen?)
der neusten Zeit.

*Naturæ vero rerum vis atque majestas in omnibus
momentis fide caret, si quis modo partes ejus ac non
totam complectatur animo.—Plin. Hist. Nat., lib. 7,
c. 1.*

KOSMOS,

Outlines of a Physical Description of the World,

By A. von HUMBOLDT.

After Sketches of Lectures from the Years 1827 and 1828, enlarged
and corrected by Researches (Discoveries?) of the latest Times.

Stuttgart.

LIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Wednesday, 28th April, 1841.

Be very kind and indulgent in reading me. I wish you to have a very complete conception of the composition of my work. In Chap. A., I have made many improvements. Cast your eye especially over p. 37, and

over the Notes. Schelling's name, pp. 37, 68 ; Hegel, p. 66. The distinct assurance (p. 64), that I am not attacking the originator of the Philosophy of Nature,* will, I trust, make my pungent severity on the "merry Saturnalia," *le bal en masque* of the maddest Natural Philosophers, more pardonable in his eyes. *Il faut avoir le courage d'imprimer ce que l'on a dit et écrit depuis trente ans.* It was a lamentable epoch, during which Germany sank far below England and France. A system of Chemistry, in which one did not get one's hands wet.

Diamond is flint arrived at consciousness—
Granite is Æther. Carus.

The side of the moon which is turned towards the earth has a different convexity to that of the side which is turned away from it. Reason—The moon would fain stretch out her loving arms ; incapable of this, she gazes fixedly at the earth, and thus has lengthened out the lower portion of her face.

Granite blocks on rocks are spasmodic products of Nature.

Forests, as everybody knows, are the hair of the animal Earth, and the distended equatorial the belly side of Nature.

America is a female figure, long, slender, watery and, at the 48th degree, icy cold. Degrees of latitude are years ; Woman is "old" at forty-eight.

The East is oxygen, the West hydrogen. It rains when eastern clouds mingle with the western. Schelling.

Petrifications in rocks are not relics of what has

* Schelling.

once had life. They are Nature's first attempts at creating animals and plants. (In Siberia dogs devoured for years one of these specimens of "first attempts,"—a putrid elephant at the mouth of the Lena).

Here are the Saturnalia for you! Give a special look at the notes *en gros*, some of which (A, p. 40-49, B, p. 55-57) I enclose.

The bulk of the work I should like to be characterized by universality of design and breadth of view, written in an animated and even, where possible, a graceful style, and with the technical expressions transformed into others which should be happily chosen, descriptive, and pictorial.

Correct freely, dear friend! I shall follow you with pleasure where I can. I want to banish into the notes some not quite ordinary erudition. The book should thus become the reflex of myself—my life—my person, now grown so very old. Treating the subject in this desultory way I can proceed aphoristically. I want rather to suggest than to lay down. Much will be perfectly intelligible to those only who are thoroughly versed in some one branch of Natural History. My mode of treatment, however, is, I think, calculated not to disturb those whose acquirements are less. My aim is to soar above the things which we know in 1841. *Mens agitat molem.* Oh, may the spirit still be there!

That such a work will not be finished by one born of the comet-year 1769, is as clear as day. The several fragments must appear in Parts of from twelve to fifteen sheets, so that those who see me buried will have something complete in every Part. So of the "Prolegomena," Nos. 1 to 4 shall come out together,

containing my “Inducement,” descriptive poetry, which you have not yet seen;—a portion of my work, from which I expect much. No. 5, containing the “History of the Theories of the World,” which I have quite ready, is to fill the whole of the Second Part.

Throughout, the simple and scientifically descriptive must be incorporated with the rhetorical. It is so in Nature herself. The glittering stars delight the senses and inspire the mind, and yet everything beneath the vault of Heaven moves in a path of mathematical precision. The main point is for the language to be always dignified; the impression of the grandeur of Nature will not then be wanting.

I am sure you will not scold me for quoting (C) in a note (all notes to be in small print, never at the foot of the page, but at the end of each section) the little-known passage of Shakspeare? I had said that the knowledge of Nature was not exactly necessary for enjoyment, but that it increased it. Pardon my haste. I am going to-morrow morning with the King to Potsdam for six or seven days.

Your grateful and unreadable friend,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LV.

HUMBOLDT TO SPIKER.

(C.)

Shakspeare’s “Love’s Labour Lost.” Act 1, scene 1.
Biron thus speaks to the King of Navarre:

“ These earthly godfathers of Heaven’s lights,
That give a name to every fixed star,

Have no more profit of their shining nights,
 Than those that walk, and wot not what they are ;
 Too much to know, is to know nought but fame,
 And every godfather can give a name.”

“ Den ird’schen Pathen aller Himmelslichter,
 Die jeden Fixstern alsobald getauft,
 Kommt ihre Glanzesnacht nicht mehr zu Statten,
 Als denen, die hingehn, unwissend wer sie sind !
 Zu vieles wissen, heisst den Ruhm nur kennen,
 Und jeden kann ein Pathe wohl benennen.”

Daignez me renvoyer cette page. Je me sers de votre belle traduction dans une note qu'on imprime dans mon *Kosmos*. Vous permettrez que je dise, from Spiker's translation. Cela me fera plaisir aurai-je à encourir la fureur du Marquis Auguste de Schlegel ou de Tieck Acorombonus ? Dites-moi s'ils ont aussi traduit ce morceau ? Amitiés.

Ht.

Note by Varnhagen. Unhappily, the translation of Spiker is bad from every point of view.

LVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Monday night, May 3rd, 1841.

I am afraid, my dear friend, that I shall have to go to Potsdam again on Thursday, and thence, on the 10th or 12th, to Paris. I am to send some copy to Cotta before then. Do not leave me so long in suspense between punishment and indulgence. I beg you to send me a few lines with the MS.

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Tuesday, May 4th, 1841.

Even if I deduct, my dear friend, the delicate and gentle words which your desire to tranquillise me has added to your *sentence*, there still remains much, very much in your welcome letter of to-day which makes me very happy.

I shall to-morrow morning, about 11, impose upon you the penance* of receiving me for a few moments, and of accepting my thanks.

The “schmeichle mich” must be a mistake of the copyist; at least, it is not so according to the best of *my* judgment. A wrong accusative, p. 44, you had better show me. It cannot be “Einsicht in den Zusammenhang;” one does look *into* it. Spiker† shall disappear. I had a foreboding of the evil, and prefer omitting the whole passage, even in English, which rather contains a panegyric on ignorance, than indicates that knowledge can increase enjoyment.

With reference to the “Saturnalia,” I see you leave me perfect liberty. You say, in mentioning the Dane,‡ “I only make the remark, I do not protest.”

I did not wish to mention Steffens, however much he may deserve some rebuke for his great ignorance of all experimental science, and his culpable vain laziness.

* 5th May—fast day.

† See Letter LV. with Varnhagen’s note.—TR.

‡ Heinrich Steffens, a native of Stavanger, in Norway, born 1773, a pupil of Schelling, probably his greatest disciple in the so-called “Natur Philosophie.” Pietist. Also known as a novelist. From 1831 to 1845 he was Professor in the University of Berlin, and died early in the last-named year.—TR.

I call “Saturnalia” that merry but short farce of which I lately gave you some specimens, which were not however from Steffens, but a few steps lower in the scale, from his worshippers. If Steffens were a poor scholar, oppressed by the mighty, I should be more timid ; but, since you love *autographa*, I will present you with one from which you shall learn how northern Kings believe that there is in Berlin a school of philosophy headed by Steffens, which is salutary to theologians, *et qui n'est pas celle de Hegel!!* Steffens will imagine that he was comprehended in the number of the “deep and mighty thinkers against whose advice we acted.” Besides, the perilous phrase is immediately followed by another : “Abuse of youthful energies—for serious minds which have in an equal degree turned themselves to philosophy and observation, have remained strangers to these Saturnalia.” Such a phrase is a *défense*, a *fort détaché*, and Steffens certainly imagined that he too had turned himself to experimental Philosophy, because he once went down a pit in Freiberg. By softening the matter I should spoil all, and we should, in writing, have the same courage we exhibit in speaking ; but both in the same easy and cheerful manner. Have you discovered in Steffens’s tedious autobiography (which has been dinned into me at Sans Souci) how saintliness and an aristocratic bias may be traced in him to a twofold indoctrination of some of his ancestors by an Archbishop and a King ? *Ce sont des héritages !*

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LVIII.

KING CHRISTIAN VIII. OF DENMARK TO
HUMBOLDT.

Copenhague, ce 25 Mars, 1841.

Monsieur le Baron ! C'est à moi de remercier doublement le célèbre Conseiller intime Dieffenbach de l'attention qu'il a eu de m'envoyer ses ouvrages sur l'art de guérir le strabisme et le begayement, puisqu'elle m'a valu le plaisir de recevoir votre chère lettre du 24 fevrier. Introduit par vous, Monsieur le Baron, on est sûr de réussir ; dans ce cas-ci les œuvres et la réputation de l'auteur dispensent d'en dire davantage, mais vous rendez pleine justice aux services signales que le Conseiller intime Dieffenbach a rendu à l'humanité, et je m'empresse de les reconnaître en conférant mon ordre de Danebrog à ce savant distingué. Ma lettre à ce sujet lui sera remise par mon Envoyé le Comte de Reventlau, et je recommanderai particulièrement au Chevalier Dieffenbach les chirurgiens danois qui visiteront Berlin, pour s'approprier l'art qu'il vient d'illustrer.

Le porteur de cette lettre qui j'ose recommander à votre protection est le Candidat en théologie Borne-mann, jeune homme doué de talents et de connaissances, que j'envois à Berlin auprès de mon compatriote Steffens pour étudier la philosophie ; non précisément celle de Hegel, qui trouve d'autres prôneurs à notre université, mais celle qui peut contribuer à rectifier les idées souvent exagérées de nos philosophes modernes. Steffens est retenu à Berlin par des liens sacrés, fondés sur la reconnaissance qu'il doit au Roi, mais je désire que son génie et ses connaissances ne soient pas perdues

pour nous, et que ce jeune savant profite de ses lumières, avant qu'elles ne cessent de vivifier tout ce qui vient en rapport avec mon célèbre compatriote, qui, à mon avis, vaut, à lui seul, toute une faculté académique.

Je suis avec le plus grand intérêt, fondé sur l'amitié la plus sincère et des rapports (de position) que je ne saurais méconnaître, tout ce que votre excellent Roi fait et entreprend pour le bonheur de ses sujets, pour la nationalité germanique et pour la conservation de la paix. Que ses efforts soient bénis du Tout-puissant, et ses peuples verront une prospérité affermée et augmentée, ce qui contribuera puissamment au bien-être de leurs voisins.

Le Roi a eu tant de bonté pour mon fils, je ne puis assez le reconnaître. J'envisage, Dieu merci, son avenir sous les auspices les plus heureux, fondés sur l'union avec l'aimable Duchesse Caroline de Mecklenbourg-Strelitz.

J'apprécie les vœux que vous m'adressez à ce sujet, et je suis avec la plus haute considération, Monsieur le Baron Humboldt, votre

tout affectueux

CHRISTIAN, R.

LIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, May 17th, 1844.

(Written at Varnhagen's, and left with the Preface to *Wilhelm v. Humboldt's works.*)

I am very grieved at not being able to shake hands with you before leaving, harassed as I am by the preparations for to-morrow's start; first Potsdam, then

Paris, till October. To you I turn again as the source—till Rückert* returns, the only source—of pure taste, linguistic perception, and nicest sense of propriety. Tell me (but be indulgent the while), what part of the Preface I must omit. But where you find a fault pray help to mend it. I wrote the two pages late at night in a gloomy frame of mind. They err, perhaps, in having somewhat too sentimental a tendency in their praise.

P. 1, line 2. “Noch,” because I have lived to see it.

L. 10. “Die hochbegabten Geister,” perhaps displeasing to you; “Menschen?”

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Varnhagen wrote, on November 21st, 1841, the following remark on Humboldt. “Read to-day Alexander von Humboldt’s Despatches, written from Paris in 1835, to the King. Not the least like what comes from Alexander Humboldt! They might have been written by anybody, and, worst of all, no one could have written them otherwise than they are! Such is the nature of political affairs. They resolve themselves into trifles of no intrinsic importance, but made weighty from a general understanding that they shall be so regarded. Add to this the stereotyped hypocrisy of forms, assumptions, and exaggerations, and truth must ever be in danger of being lost. And I examined myself, and confessed that were I once engaged in the like matters, I, too, should be unable to raise myself out of this groove! And then, people wonder that in England and France journalists become ministers! As though very ordinary despatches were not infinitely easier to write than first-rate leading articles!”

* Friedrich Rückert, the German poet.—TR.

LX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Friday, December 3rd, 1841.

Among that for which I have to thank you, my dear friend, I best like Hormayr's* vigorous letter. *Le style est tout l'homme.* He is not like the men we see around us, the best of whom lose themselves in “ suppressions, euphonisms, instigations, and indecisions.” His faith in Münster's† liberalism may fairly be supposed to rest on a misconception of the motives of acting. There is no doubt that Count Münster has, in the noblest way, contributed to the deliverance of Germany ; but never, we may be sure, with a view to

* Joseph, Freiherr von Hormayr was born at Innsbruck, in 1781, and was distinguished during the invasion of the Tyrol by Napoleon, whose armies, in 1809, he kept at bay, and whom he baffled at all points. At the truce of Znaim, in August 1809, the Tyrol and the Voralberg were evacuated, and Hormayr returned to historical studies, from which he was carried, together with many other persons, to a temporary prison. In 1828 he abandoned the Austrian service, and entered that of Bavaria, accepting office in the Department of Foreign Affairs. In 1832 he was despatched to Hanover as Resident Minister, and in 1839 removed to Bremen as Bavarian Representative to the Hanse Towns. Here he remained until 1846, when he was recalled to München, where he died in 1848. During his residence at Bremen he published his two most important works, “Lebensbilder aus dem Befreiungskriege”—“Pictures from the War of Freedom,” (1841—44); and “Anemonen aus dem Tagebuche eines alten Pilgermannes”—“Anemones from the diary of an old Pilgrim” (1845—47). In these works he exposed the Austrian government, in a more powerful manner than had ever been previously attempted by any German writer. He was the author of several other works, one of them a “History of Andreas Hofer” (1817).—Tr.

† Ernst Friedrich Herbert, Count von Münster, a native of Hanover, born in 1766. A well-known diplomatist, who, after occupying many high posts, among which was the Hanoverian Ambassadorship at St. Petersburg, became Minister in London, served forty-two years in various capacities, and was relieved of office in February, 1831, upon the appointment of an English Royal Duke to the Viceroyship of Hanover. He declined both rank and pension, but accepted the Grand Cross of the Bath, with the insignia of which the King himself invested him.—Tr.

letting in upon us the light which, down to the present moment has been dreaded like a spectre. Bruno [Bauer]* has found me pre-adamitically converted. When I was young the Court Clergy held opinions much the same. The one who confirmed me said, that the Evangelists had made a variety of notes, from which in later times biographies had been romanced (gedichtet). Many years ago I wrote: “Toutes les religions positives offrent trois parties distinctes ; un traité de mœurs partout le même et très pur, un rêve géologique, et un mythe ou petit roman historique, le dernier élément obtient le plus d’importance.”—I send Baron Seckendorf’s book. He is also in favour of a Constitution, to wit the “*re puro*,” in whom the people are incarnate—in a philosophical sense, of course. It must be popular; indeed, but for a shrewd suspicion on his part that it would, he would never have printed it. We should never allow such persons to be in any doubt as to our own sentiments. I have replied to him in his capacity of Vice-President, that I should read his book with attention, widely as our views differed with respect to popular representation. How murky and oppressive is the atmosphere in this the evening of my life.

With unaltered attachment, your
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

The day before the date of the above letter (December 2nd, 1841), Varnhagen wrote in his Diary :—“Humboldt with me yesterday. Accounts from Paris. What he thinks of affairs here. He thinks seriously of retiring. He knows very well that it is his name only that weighs with the King, that his influence is far exceeded by others. Thiers said to him in Paris, ‘People talk so much about

* Bruno Bauer, one of the most daring Biblical expositors of the day.—TR.

revolutionary France, but it appears to me that Prussia is in a pretty state of commotion too!' In a letter from Guizot to Humboldt much was said in praise of the King. Humboldt showed it to him. When they came to the word *succès* the King cried, 'Good God! things look but poorly in that quarter. The less we say about that the better!' Humboldt finds in fact that the tone of public feeling here has become alarmingly low. The King has enemies even in the highest circles. Minister Eichhorn is universally hated, and cuts a wretched figure at Court. There seems no longer to be any doubt about Bunsen's going to England as our Ambassador. Count Stolberg is about the only one who openly depreciates Bunsen. Humboldt makes merry with Bunsen's sanctimonious little tract, 'Passion Week.'

On December 3rd, 1841, Varnhagen remarks: "I have just received a note from Humboldt. He sends me a pamphlet of President von Seckendorf, in which 'a Constitution is demanded, to wit, the *re puro*, the incarnation of the people.' He adds: 'It must be popular; indeed, but for a shrewd suspicion on his part that it would be so he would never have had it printed.' At the end he says, in deep melancholy, 'How murky and oppressive is the atmosphere in this the evening of my life!' Hard to be Humboldt, and yet obliged to speak thus, on the pinnacle of honour and in the fullness of fame. There is in truth little that can be a source of pleasure to him, and nothing but his satirical vivacity makes life at this place in any degree tolerable to him."

LXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Monday night, Dec. 7th, 1841.

I have no time, my dear friend, for writing to thank you for your talented representation of Schwerin's* life —a work of solid historical worth. A thoroughly ap-

* "Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen von Schwerin." 8vo. Berlin. 1841.

preciative penetration into the individuality of this great man animates the whole : and in depicting, to be true to Nature is the most essential point of all. A surly counsel to [the King to] *ride away*, and a victory gained *entirely by himself*, had placed an insurmountable barrier in the hero's path. The aged hero dying standard in hand in the bloody fight, at the head of 13,000 unsympathizing men, forms a closing scene that is truly picturesque. Like Columbus he was poetically grand and prosaically penurious. In one respect (a point which I have no doubt has been overlooked by many), this work does great credit to your talent as an historian ; I mean the contrivance, indeed, by which you prevent the story of the fight being broken off by the narrative of Schwerin's death.*

I will bring you myself the “ collected works,” and prefer my request for the second part of Hormayr's† precious pepper draught.

Your last letter, so honourable for me, contained words which I should not like to misunderstand. “ You scarcely permit to yourself the possession of my impieties.” After my speedy decease you may deal as you please with such property. We only owe truth in this life to such persons as we deeply esteem, therefore it is due to you.

A. H.

On the 18th December, 1841, Varnhagen wrote in his Diary : “ I was told to-day, but quite in confidence, the romantic story of the King's

* See Coxe's “ House of Austria,” Vol. II. p. 403 ; Wraxall's Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 162.—Tr.

† “ Anemonen aus dem Tagebuche eines Pilgermaunes.” See note, p. 77.—Tr.

intended journey to England to be present at the christening of the Prince of Wales. The thing, I was told, had been very quietly arranged, and the promising opening it afforded had contributed much to making the appointment of Bunsen as ambassador palatable at the English Court. This latter part of the statement makes me rather suspicious of the whole. I am sure this is not the real state of our diplomatic relations. If, however, this story has any foundation in fact, and the project is really entertained, Bunsen must of course have something to do with it, and great results, in my opinion very dangerous things, may be expected from that. Close connection with England would be a serious matter, but intimate union with the Anglican Church and the Tories, downright ruin ! All Prussia, all Germany, all Europe would assume such a union to exist, whether it did or not. That alone would be a thousand pities, and cost the King more in the opinions of his people than he can just now afford to lose—I hope the whole is a myth ! Humboldt says : ‘The howling mania is mightily on the increase. He was howled at when he was leaving by a few; but now that he has returned, by all.’ His smart and witty remarks are truly refreshing in the midst of our dull-witted society.”

Before his departure for England, Humboldt came to take leave of Varnhagen, who wrote about it in his Diary, January 14th, 1842 : “Humboldt came to take his leave ; he departs to-morrow evening. He had called at Count v. Maltzan’s,* of whose life there was little hope to-day. ‘His death will bring us Canitz, not Bülow,’ said Humboldt, complaining. I consoled him by saying that Canitz too might be put aside. ‘And who is to come then?’ ‘Bunsen.’ ‘That would be too bad indeed. He will, no doubt, accompany the King on his return ; that is already arranged.’ Humboldt gets into a dreadful passion when speaking of Canitz, and he cannot understand how it is that I no longer fear this Canitz, arch-aristocrat, arch-theologian,—by that same token silly, I might say downright stupid,—the arch-anti-French, maliciously satirical, and often undignified, Canitz. ‘You are a Tory yourself,’ said Humboldt. ‘I do not know exactly how that may be,’ I replied,

* A Minister at that time on the point of death.—TR.

' but Canitz is honest, clever, and straightforward, will carry his point, and as to the rest, affairs and events will break him in.' " *

After Humboldt's return, Varnhagen writes, February 24th, in his Diary : " Humboldt has given me a very favourable account of England. At court, great splendour, but a simple and natural mode of private life ; conversation easy and friendly, and good-natured in its tone, even between the members of rival political factions. Peel he does not like, did not like him before, says that he looks like a Dutchman, is rather vain than ambitious, has narrow views. Lord Aberdeen's taciturnity is invincible. It has not, however, the effect of making folks believe he could if he would say something good. Bunsen has, in numerous instances, shown an utter want of tact : all the world is against him. The King more than ever disposed to take his part. Even Englishmen say, 'The whole affair of the King's journey is only an intrigue of Bunsen's.'

" With reference to our affairs here there is much speculation, surmising and assurance. For foreign affairs for the present, the pious Arnim is sent for from Brussels—at a later period Canitz will be appointed ; or, as I say, Bunsen. Count v. Alvensleben is mentioned as going to Vienna, and Radowitz, as a provisional arrangement, to Carlsruhe, until the embassy at the Diet becomes vacant. I suppose they have not yet the courage to take Bunsen and put Bülow aside ; but every month, every week, will add to their courage, and then both will happen. Maltzan's recovery is despaired of. The days on which he is somewhat better are followed by violent relapse, and his lucid intervals succeeded almost invariably by greater darkness. A sad condition !"

* Freiherr von Canitz, Prussian ambassador at Hanover, afterwards Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1846—48. His principles were of the strongest absolutist order combined with pietistic tendencies.—Tr.

LXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Monday, 28th February, 1842.

I should be glad, my dear friend, to have a couple of lines to relieve me from the anxiety I am in about your health. I have secured a pension of 300 thalers (a miserable sum, but one likely to increase) for the right gifted poet Freiligrath,* of Darmstadt, who is much impoverished, and living abroad without any settled means of support. Can you lend me his poems?

A. Ht.

Note by Varnhagen.—On Tuesday Humboldt sent me the following, together with the *feuilleton* of the “Journal des Débats,” in which Philarète Chasles rails and scoffs in a vulgar way at German literature, and the greatest German writers:—

And this wretch has, under Guizot’s administration become Professeur des Langues du Nord (litt. Anglaise-Allemande) au Collège de France. Keep this silly and insipid piece of rascality.

A. Ht.

* Humboldt seems to have had but an imperfect knowledge of Freiligrath’s circumstances at the time. The poet certainly depended on his literary labours as a means of subsistence, but he was not “impoverished,” and, at all events, accepted the pension (returned by him, two years later) only as an encouragement to his talent, having no idea that it could be meant, as would appear from this letter, as a royal alms-giving. Humboldt, it must be borne in mind, interested himself for Freiligrath—not at the request of Freiligrath himself, but at the desire of the late Chancellor von Müller, at Weimar, who, without Freiligrath’s knowledge, had asked Humboldt to use his influence in the poet’s favour.—Tr.

LXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 16th March, 1842.

Pray make yourself quite easy about the mishap. The King buys Italian pictures, but never French ones. Cherubini's portrait is certainly very fine, and, as far as I can remember, I saw it at Cherubini's own house. As he is still alive, and Ingres * is very rich, I do not comprehend how the portrait can be for sale. Tell the intelligent "Child"† you gave me the *feuilleton*.

In the last number of the "Journal des Débats" that has reached us, is a severe—very good article about the abominable Jew-law with which we are threatened, and about which I have already expressed some very strong language.

Most gratefully yours,

Wednesday.

A. Ht.

It was intended in the preamble of the law to speak of that "miracle of God in preserving the Jewish people amongst other nations, and of the will of God in keeping that people in isolation." To that I made answer, "The law was opposed to all principles of State policy, which aimed at the union of all classes; that it was a dangerous presumption in weak humanity

* The distinguished painter, for many years Director of the French Academy in Rome. He may be known to many persons in this country by Calamatta's beautiful engraving of his *Vœu de Louis XIII.*—Tr.

† Bettina von Arnim. "Kind" is a Weimar *coterie* term, which was in use among Goethe's set. It does not exactly mean "child," but rather "pet." Bettina von Arnim, who was not exactly the most unaffected of ladies, appropriated the word in publishing "Goethe's Correspondence with a Child"—meaning herself.—Tr.

to pretend to the interpretation of the primæval decrees of God ; and that the history of dark ages might tell us what excesses such interpretations were apt to encourage.”

Under an appearance of outward splendour, and in the enjoyment of the somewhat fantastic preference of a high-minded prince, I live in a moral and mental isolation, such as can only be produced by the barren condition of the mind of this divided, erudite land, repellant at poles of similar denomination,—still grumbling, and day by day contracting towards the *East*,—a true *steppe* country ! May you be satisfied with, him who has the courage, though alone in it, of adhering to his opinions (*avoir le courage de ses opinions*).

LXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 21st March, 1842.

My dear and so happily restored Friend !

It is a matter of infinite joy to me to learn from your welcome letter that the very agreeable society at the Princess's has bodily,—and with my culpable materialism I shall therefore also say spiritually,—refreshed you. Such society, mostly this same barren Berlinish ornamental matter blown together, assumes a perfectly different aspect in the house of the Princess Pückler. It is, as it were, the spirit that should inspire the State. The matter seems ennobled.

I still keep your copy of the system of “Christian Doctrine,”* having formerly at Potsdam been much

* “Die Christliche Glaubenslehre,” by Strauss. Tübingen. 1840.—Tr.

amused with the Straussian “Saviour :” we learn from that work not only what he does not believe (which is less new to me), but what is more, what was believed and taught by the black men who understand how to impose fresh fetters upon mankind, who even put on the armour of their former enemies. The passage about Spinoza I shall be glad to copy out. Will not the recent date of the Second Part of the “Christian Doctrine” (1841) be urged as an objection, in these days when people boast of lecturing from notes made a long while before ? It would seem to me to have been better strategy had he pointed out the unheard-of anachronisms, with some remarks about the new-fangled faith* in the whole historical romance of the Apostolic myth-collectors. A man who teaches so publicly himself, must put up with the publicity of the defence of those who differ from him. Such an oral introductory communication, couched in a gentle tone of remonstrance, would only make a later publication of it difficult, and produce a haughty smile or a denial. Not the Spinozistic mishap ;—no : only this abuse of the noblest intellectual powers in the service of brutalising doctrines of dark ages is really painful to me. Personally, I confess, the man possessed no attraction for me ; but I felt a sort of liking for him, as indeed I am always carried away and excited when, as in his speech on Art, the gentle breath of fancy gives warmth and life to euphony of speech. Now I have done with him. In his last speech, not that on Art, but the one delivered

* The remainder of this paragraph refers to Schelling, who had been called to Berlin by the King, and who, after a silence of thirty years, came forth as the champion of a system of mystic philosophy, which, in many respects, is diametrically opposed to his earlier opinions.—Tr.

under the glare of torches, there is a hint at going away, as after an accomplished (and well-paid) musical tour. I suppose this is only a sentimental expression to create alarm.

Now for a few answers in reference to the biography, of which I am almost frightened to think, not on account of politics, but from family considerations. I fully rely upon your promise. The man will surely never wish to give pain to so many!

Wilhelm was born in Potsdam, as his father was a Royal Chamberlain, and at the same time Acting Chamberlain to Elizabeth, Princess of Prussia. He left Potsdam when the Princess was taken to Stettin. My father enjoyed to the last the highest favour of the Prince of Prussia, who regularly every year paid him a visit at Tegel. This will explain to you the passage in the English Despatch where it is said (I think very early in 1775; "Raumer's Contributions to Modern History," vol. v., p. 297): "Hertzberg or Schulenberg could form a Ministry, but those have the greatest probability of success, although they are of a different stamp, who are considered the Prince's favourites. Among the *first* of these is Baron Humboldt, formerly a functionary in the allied army, a man of natural good sense and of a fine character; Baron Hordt, an enterprising spirit." . . . The word *functionary* is a strange mistake. My father (Major) was aide-de-camp to Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, after having served for a long time in the Finkenstein Regiment of Dragoons. He was often sent by the Duke to Friedrich II. in the worst times of the Seven Years' War. Therefore Friedrich II. writes in his letters on Wedel's *Déconfiture*, "I have said to Humboldt everything

which at such a distance can be said." (Manuscript letters which the King very lately bought in Prussia.)

My family comes from Eastern Pomerania. My brother and I were for a long time the last of our name. My mother was a Colomb, cousin of Princess Blücher, and consequently niece to the old President in Aurich (East Friesland). Her first husband was a Baron Holwede. By this marriage she had my half-brother Holwede, late of the Gensdarmes regiment. My mother had the credit of having, at the instigation of old Privy Councillor Kunth, given us an extremely careful education. Wilhelm, in his earliest years, was brought up under Campe,* then our private tutor. The foundation for his profound knowledge of Greek was laid by Löffler, the liberal-minded author of a work on the Neo-Platonism of the early Church Fathers, then Chaplain to the Regiment of Gensdarmes, and afterwards Chief Consistorial Chancellor at Gotha. After Löffler, Fischer of the Grey Friars† taught Wilhelm Greek for some years, a man who, although it was not generally known, besides mathematics had a considerable knowledge of Greek. That Engel, Reitemeier, Dohm, and Klein for a long time delivered to us lectures on philosophy, jurisprudence, and politics you already know. Whilst at the University in Frankfort,‡ for six months, we lived with Löffler, who was a Professor there. In Göttingen we both for a year frequented Heyne's philological lectures.

My father was the proprietor of Tegel (formerly a

* The well-known pedagogue, afterwards a bookseller at Braunschweig.—Tr.

† The oldest of the six colleges in Berlin.—Tr.

‡ On the Oder.—Tr.

shooting box of the great Elector, and therefore held only by hereditary tenancy, Wilhelm being the first who possessed it as a manor, and therefore Schinkel* pulled down four turrets in order to preserve the one ancient tower of the time of the great Elector) and Ringenwalde, near Soldin, in the Newmark. Ringenwalde afterwards belonged to me, and then to Counts Reede and Achim Arnim. Wilhelm, at his death, possessed Tegel, Burgörner, and Auleben (acquired through his wife at the time the Dacheröden entail was cancelled), Hadersleben, in the circle of Magdeburg, and the Castle of Ottmachau in Silesia, which after the Peace of Paris was given him as a dotation.†

Sonnet I., 394, refers to a second child, I think, which Madame von Humboldt lost in Rome. One was buried in Paris.

I implore you not to communicate to the compiler anything as if coming from me. He would certainly mention it in his Preface, and then I should be responsible for much that I fear.

Excuse this stercoran-babble of a hash.

A. Ht.

Note by Varnhagen.—He had, I suppose, just been reading of the Stercoranists in Strauss's "Christian Doctrine." Hence the word here.‡

* Schinkel, a Berlin architect, to whom that city owes a considerable portion of its great architectural splendour.—Tr.

† He was one of the Prussian diplomats who signed that peace.—Tr.

‡ Stercoranists. "Quasi videlicet doceamus, corpus Christi dentibus laniari, et in instar alterius cuiusdam, cibi in corpore humano digeri" (Formula Concordiae), in reply to the Calvinist insinuations of "Stercoranism." Strauss, Dogmatik, II., p. 601, has some very cynical remarks on the same subjects.—Tr.

LXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Thursday, 31st March, 1842.

Having this moment only returned with the King from Potsdam, I find Lao-Tseu, which has a peculiar flavour of pre-herodotic antiquity. The letter which accompanies the Chinese philosopher puts me into a melancholy mood. I see that you have not yet the courage of believing in your recovery, nor the consciousness of returning physical strength. That your intellectual vigour is not diminished, each of your letters attests. I hope I have not lost any of these letters. I wrote to you, about a week ago, a letter of four long pages about the dogmatising Christian philosopher, and on the answers to the questions of the biographer who *troubles me* with his saintly curiosity. My letter, I hope, has safely arrived. It also contains much chit-chat about my brother's early education. You do not mention my talkativeness at all. Must I be under any uneasiness about it?

We have succeeded with Bülow. He will come on Saturday. It might be the beginning of something, perhaps, or the end, *le bouquet*, the scenic effect of the stage? I yesterday dined with Tholuck* and Beckedorff† in Potsdam. I should otherwise not have seen them.

Your faithful and attached,
A. Ht.

* The well-known orthodox Theologian and Professor of Divinity at Halle.
—Tr.

† Ludolf von Beckedorff, of the Tholuck school.—Tr.

LXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 6th April, 1842.

After the insolently promulgated sentence of the Inquisition in the case of Bruno Bauer, I suppose I must no longer retain possession of your Strauss. I return you with many thanks this remarkable book, which has furnished me with much matter for thought. The method of its logical arrangement is excellent ; besides which, it imparts to us the whole history of the religious beliefs current in our time, especially the priestly craft with which people, Schleiermacher-like,* profess all forms of the Christian myths, accommodate themselves to dissentients, and, the “chalice being drained,” will have themselves put under the sod with a *cortège* of Royal carriages ; while for each of these myths a so-called philosophical explanation has been substituted.

What I do not like in Strauss is the recklessness he evinces as regards Natural History, and which allows him to see no difficulty in the evolution of the organic from the inorganic, not even in the creation of man out of primæval Chaldaic mud. That he seems to make very light of the wonderful things beyond the grave I am the more inclined to pardon him, because, with very moderate expectations, the surprise comes upon us in a much more agreeable and welcome form. For you, O happy man ! it will be no surprise. In to-day's inquisitorial formulary one phrase has struck me

* Allusion to Schleiermacher's profession of the orthodox faith on his death-bed. The King, Friedrich Wilhelm III., when hearing of it, ordered the court carriages to follow his funeral.—Tr.

as genuinely Spanish and revolting. It is that the culprit would "himself acknowledge." Neque aliud reges, aut qui eadem sævitia usi sunt, nisi dedecus sibi atque illis gloriam peperere.

I send you a "Don Juan." The language is very beautiful, and there is much imagination. I am curious to know how you like it. The constitutional Roi des Landes* said yesterday again at his table, before forty people,—the Göttingen professors had spoken in an address of their patriotism :—" Professors have no country at all. Professors, whores (that there should be no mistake in the matter, he added *des putains*), and *danseuses* were to be had anywhere for money ; they will go wherever they are offered a few groschen more." What a shame to call that a German prince !

Yours faithfully attached,

Wednesday Night.

A. Ht.

LXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 7th April, 1842.

Our unknown friend is very amiable. I have ceased to feel any anxiety. You know how to heal every wound. I send you with pleasure a copy of the few lines which, as I intended, reached the King's hands on the following morning. I made use of that round-about way because I was thus enabled more freely to express my discontent in writing. The matter is now

* King Ernest Augustus of Hanover. Les Landes is a flat tract of country near Bordeaux, in physical peculiarities similar to the Hanoverian territory.
--TR.

in better train ; perhaps, however, not irrevocably given up. I must therefore most earnestly beg you not to let those lines go out of your hands ! They would certainly find their way into the newspapers, and tend to frustrate my exertions in an important matter. The King sent for me very early, and it redounds to his honour that he heartily thanked me for the free expression of my opinion.

I did not go to Potsdam to-day, because I wished to urge, in a full sitting of the Academicians, the election of the talented Jewish natural philosopher, Riess. It turned out honourably for the Academy ; only three black-balls.

I shall be in attendance upon the King from to-morrow until Sunday. I will try to rout out for Stuttgart some autograph poem of importance of Wilhelm von Humboldt's. What I have are, unfortunately, only copies. Take care of your health, my dear friend. It is not quite firmly restored. Yours,

Thursday Night.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Friday, June 24, 1842.

Your kind remembrance, my dear and accomplished friend, conferred upon me a benefit so much the greater as I came back from Sans Souci greatly suffering from a cold. Besides, I live in all the horrors of moving to dreary lodgings in an absurd part of that Siberian quarter of the town, the Oranienburger Strasse, and have hardly an inkstand upon my table.

For the present only the expression of my grati-

tude. My affection for Marheineke, I have myself expressed to him. A thunderbolt in the form of a Ministerial Warrant, inserted in the newspapers, with some specimens of censor cleverness, would have been more salutary than the impracticable law for regulating the press, and a grand inquisitor for establishing the liberty of the press. We have so much to say to each other, and I hope yet to be able to pay you a visit before you leave. And then the cheering sight of four Crown Princes and Heirs Apparent: the one a pale sciatic creature, the next a besotted Icelander, the third a blind political fanatic, and the fourth obstinate, opinionated, and feeble-witted.* Such is the future monarchical world !

Yours,

A. Ht.

I am going with the King to the Rhine. That I could not allow myself to be paraded at St. Petersburg you will understand. The Chancellor has the pleasure of being still exposed to the coarse invectives both of the non-invited and of those who were expelled from the banquet. How glass buttons, peacock feathers, and ribbons excite men, to be sure!†

Note of Varnhagen.—Marheineke's article on the Anglican Church, in the “Jahrbüchern für wissenschaftliche Kritik,” with a few stupidities perpetrated by the censor.

Varnhagen, in his Diary on the 26th June, 1842, writes, on the subject of the new Order: “Humboldt has given me a circumstantial account of the institution of the new Order. The King at first wrote down a list of names in Sanscrit characters. This list was commu-

* The Crown Prince of Würtemberg, and the Heirs Apparent, now Kings, of Denmark, Hanover, and Bavaria.—Tr.

† Allusion to the new Order *pour le Mérite*.

nicated to Humboldt, Eichhorn, Savigny, and Thiele, for their opinion. Then it was much altered; several names were added, others struck out, and for six weeks the suspense lasted. At first, the King wanted to nominate forty-six members, as many as there were years in the reign of Friedrich the Great. The number forty he rejected on account of the ridicule thrown on the *Quarante* of the French Academy. At last he limited the number to thirty. In all this the King proceeded according to his own mind. Arago had been originally nominated by the King. Metternich was added at the King's express and constantly urged wish. Rumohr* was struck off the list. Steffens, the King thought, was in reality not strong enough, either as a philosopher or as a naturalist. Liszt was the King's decided choice, and no objections had any effect in his case. Spontini was to have had the Order, but Savigny and Privy Councillor Müller prevailed on him to omit his name. Against Moore it was alleged to the King that he had lampooned Prussia in verse. 'That is nothing to me?' was his reply. Against Melloni they objected that he had been a Carbonaro and chief of a revolutionary Junta. 'That is perfectly indifferent to me,' was his answer; and he would have nominated O'Connell had he but shown sufficient scientific qualifications. The King wished to have the names of Raumer and Ranke; but Eichhorn and Savigny only that of the latter; thereupon both were omitted. In contradiction to the opinions expressed above (in the case of Melloni, Moore, and Arago), the historian Schlosser was put aside on account of his party-spirit (?). Metternich had spoken in a bantering spirit of the See of Jerusalem, and therefore he was made a member, that he might not scoff at the Order too. Humboldt thinks that to have been the secret motive. For Metternich's sake, Uwaroff† was not named, because then the former would not have been the only one of his class. Link‡ was not considered to be important enough.'

On the 27th of June, 1842, Varnhagen added, "Supplementary remarks to yesterday's notes. Humboldt told me he had announced

* Carl Friedrich Ludwig Felix von Rumohr, the noted art critic.—Tr.

† The Russian diplomatist.—Tr.

‡ The botanist.—Tr.

to the King beforehand, that the Academy of Sciences would elect, as a member of their body, M. Riess, a Jew, and that the King had replied, he would give his assent to the election without any hesitation. ‘I hope,’ added he, ‘that your brother has not committed the folly of putting in the statutes, that no Jew ought to be in the Academy.’ Minister Eichhorn knew that the King had no scruples, but to himself the thing was disagreeable, and he thought it also offensive to Thiele, Rochow, Stolberg, and others. He therefore kept back for six weeks the application of the Academy for the Royal Assent, and then he wrote to the Academy to know whether they were aware that Riess was a Jew. The Academicians were indignant at that question, and unanimously replied that they adhered to their statutes, that they had made an election in accordance with them, and that they returned the Minister’s question as an improper one, without answering it. This rebuke Eichhorn quietly pocketed, and at last despatched to the King the request for his assent, which was immediately granted. However, the King seemed to feel some dissatisfaction on ascertaining that he was granting what Friedrich the Great had refused, viz., the admission of a Jew to the Academy. Friedrich did not give his consent to the election of Moses Mendelssohn, because, as it was believed, they did not know whether the Empress of Russia, Catherine, who was a member of the Academy, would be pleased with such a colleague.”

On the 30th of August, 1842, Varnhagen remarks in his Diary : “ Humboldt tells me of Eichhorn’s meannesses, and much of the King’s amiability, good humour, wit, and joviality. But he thinks that he does not give up his favourite views ; that he will adhere to his intentions, even if he should appear to withdraw them. The King was more pleased with Count Mortimer Maltzan than with any other of his ministers ; he had full confidence in him, and expected everything of him. Discussion about the meaning of the word *geistreich*, and in how far it was applicable to the King. Humboldt thinks also the King is anxious to travel to Greece, and that then he will be sure to go on to Jerusalem. He says it is to be feared, that at last the parsons will get him in their power, and will break his

naturally cheerful disposition. Humboldt will go with private commissions to the King of the French at Eu, then to Paris; in December he will be back in Berlin."

On the 18th of March, 1843, Varnhagen describes in his Diary a visit paid to him by Humboldt after the return of the latter from Paris. "Humboldt came to see me to-day; he has aged much since I saw him last; but his mind and heart are both fresh and vigorous. He was cheerful and happy whilst in Paris, but here at once a melancholy mood has come over him. What he found here was wretchedness; the old well-known way of trifling with dangerous things in childish hilarity. Besides, he is overwhelmed with complaints and demands. Every one wishes him to speak—to use his influence. 'Influence,' he exclaims, 'nobody possesses! not even Bunsen and Radowitz, the King's favourites; they can do nothing but humour the fancies and foibles they detect, serve and sacrifice to them, and if they were to want anything which lay beyond that sphere, it would soon be all over with them. The King does just what he likes, and what results from his early fixed opinions; and if perchance he listens to advice, it has no weight with him.' He speaks with contempt of Eichhorn and Savigny, as hypocritical sycophants, who allow themselves to be led by Thiele, Gerlach,* and Hengstenberg. The King has given up none of his former plans, and he may any moment make new attempts with them in reference to the Jews, the keeping of Sunday, the consecration of Bishops in the Anglican fashion, the new arrangements regarding the nobility, &c. He forms plans as if he were to live to become a hundred years old; he thinks of erecting immense buildings, of laying out parks and gardens, of carrying out great works of art, and also of travels. A visit to Athens has already been mooted, and in the background there no doubt looms a pilgrimage to Jerusalem! Napoleonic expeditions of peace to London, St. Petersburg, and to the Orient, and conquests of scholars and artists instead of countries! Art and fancy on the throne, fanatical jugglery round about, and hypocritical abuse in

* The saintly General, head of the Kreuzzeitung party.—TR.

sport! and with all that, a man truly intellectual, truly amiable, and animated with the best will! What will all this come to!"

LXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, April 3rd, 1843.

My dear Friend,—That I am so late in bringing you my heartiest thanks for your delightful present, is owing to my having been obliged to take advantage of a visit to Potsdam, in order to travel with you through your early years, and to make myself at home in the "enlarged" relations of the Congress of the World in Vienna. It is a happy addition; this history of your own early development. It is a real pleasure to see such spirits moving in the active world, and influencing affairs before our eyes. How unjust we once were in judging the men who tried to settle Europe in the great Congress. I cannot help saying, how much higher were our pretensions then in our unjust temper, if now, in comparison with the wretchedness which surrounds us, the personages assembled in Vienna present themselves as great Statesmen to our memory. Instead of them, we possess Court Philosophers, female Missionary Mistresses, Court Divines, and Startling-effect-preachers.

Minister Bülow complains that you did not even visit him once in his family between eight and nine o'clock. He will have to-morrow (Tuesday) a public reception evening, and you would be an ornament to his circle. He never invites by letter any who know as certainly as you do how they are dear to him.

Monday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LXX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Tuesday, June 13th, 1843.

Forgive me, my dear friend, that through Reimer's* absence, my eternal distractions and oscillations, and arrangements for a small journey to Pomerania (13th — 22nd), I was prevented from sooner bringing you the two new volumes of Wilhelm's works. I know you are not immoderately in love with his commentary on Hermann and Dorothea. It might doubtless more conveniently have been transformed into a treatise on epic poetry in general; but you may see even in the book on the Kawi language, how fondly that great intellect always united general principles with details. The sonnets are full of sublime earnestness and depth of feeling. I shall call to shake hands with you, and to ask you in what way I could safely send a copy to Mr. Thomas Carlyle. A— inspires me with little confidence, and Bülow's packets must not be too bulky. To M. Carriere† I shall send my best thanks. The "Fossil minister,"‡ I know, has proved his vitality by an amiable letter to you. There is a biography of me too, dans les biographies rédigées par un homme de rien, in which I am described as a socially malignant brute. Such a thing does not kill one, but it does not improve one much either.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. Ht.

* The well-known publisher of Berlin.—Tr.

† Now Professor of Philosophy at Munich.—Tr.

‡ Prince Metternich.—Tr.

LXXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, June 26th, 1843.

I am convinced, my dear friend, that I am giving you some pleasure in communicating to you (*alone*) a fragment of a new volume of Eckermann.* Wonderful adoration of the vigour of youth as divine source of productiveness (adoration in an old man !) ; admiration of Napoleon, unclogged by the considerations of any moral law. I must earnestly beg you not to show the fragment to our “child,”† nor to speak to Brockhaus‡ about the communication made to me by Eckermann. It might do him harm, and he is unhappy enough already. I hope that Wilhelm’s last two volumes have at length reached you through Buschmann.§ The weather was very favourable for our journey to the north. Such journeys are well adapted for deceiving princes on the condition of their people.

* The Boswell of Goethe. See Oxenford’s excellent translation of “E.’s Conversations with Goethe.”—Tr.

† Bettina von Arnim.—Tr.

‡ Eckermann had made a contract with Brockhaus, by which the latter, in consideration of the price paid to Eckermann, was to produce three thousand copies of his “Conversations with Goethe.” Brockhaus, however, had not sufficient confidence in the sale to do this ; therefore he divided the edition of three thousand into two impressions of fifteen hundred each. In the second impression there were some slight changes in the text ; upon this, Eckermann, who knew nothing about the publisher’s arrangements, and, indeed, had nothing to do with them, brought an action against Brockhaus, which went, of course, in favour of the publisher. Eckermann, throughout the transaction, appears as a headstrong and self-conceited man, with extravagant ideas in reference to his book.—Tr.

§ A very able linguist, and Sub-librarian at Berlin. He was the faithful amanuensis of Wilhelm v. Humboldt, whose work on the Kawi language he carried through the press.—Tr.

I addressed a few words "from a window" to the young men, on the intellectual links which simultaneously, and without suffering diminution by distance, are strengthened through the communication of liberal feelings and of lasting hope in all that honours the progress of mankind. You will find this little Address in the "State Gazette," such as I wrote it down immediately after having delivered it *extempore*. Without this precaution, my *friends*, whose number is daily increasing, would have distorted it. I read parts of Custine* to the King. He is a man of infinite talent, and the work is gloriously written. I know only two volumes as yet, and prefer the first, since it represents, in a masterly style, a new grandeur of tragic events. With great esteem, your

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday.

Please return Eckermann.

LXXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Tuesday, 27th June, 1843.

I am terrified, my dear friend, at the prospect of your going to Tegel on Thursday, and finding only an empty house. Bülow takes leave of the King to-day, and intends to-morrow (Wednesday) to leave for Schlangenbad with his wife and two eldest daughters. I write this in case I should not be fortunate enough (to-day) to see you before you leave. The torchlight procession in Düsseldorf might *throw a light* on many

* The Marquis de Custine, author of the well-known work on Russia.—TR.

things. I enclose (as you preserve everything that concerns your friends) the little address. Yours,

A. Ht.

LXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Sans Souci, 27th August, 1843. Sunday.

How, my dear friend, should I not hasten to thank you for your charming gift, your affectionate remembrance of one who is intellectually dwindling away! I know of nothing more graceful in composition (deep and heartfelt conception), in euphony of language, or in the *blending of the landscape tints*, than your Life Pictures, and your judgment of what has had literary value in our times. That you have thought even of me, and the unimportant words I have spoken, I call generous. Many a time have I followed you eagerly in these three volumes, along formerly-trodden but ever-inviting paths; but in this “*Sylva Sylvarum*,” nothing was more agreeable to me than what you so earnestly and truly said (ii. 256—272) about the historical error in the “genuine Germanic” separation of classes. My *rage* for politics, you see, does not leave me; and I still cling to the things of earth, as (according to Kant) I learn from you, we should not boast too much of the immortality of the soul after its so-called disembodiment. “The budding twig which has shot up within the limits of the northern realms” (I am getting wicked) has not become quite acclimatized yet; and as to waiting I have not much time for that, having waited for more than fifty-three years . . . The Germans will yet *write* many books about liberty.

The Card-player,* ii. 157, will again cause some excitement in the neighbourhood of my “hill.” I think, however, I discover symptoms of a milder tone, of which one certainly does not like to be reminded. The phrase, “*this miserable wretch,*” has, I think, disappeared. You see that I read you with pleasure, and yet not exactly out of fear alone.

A. v. Ht.

We have as yet had no conversation about Custine’s book. The first volume, as an eloquent, spirited description (dramatic, indeed!) was most successful. How thoroughly annoying such a book must be even to those who despise the idea of justifying their conduct. *Il y a des longueurs de déclamations*, a certain rhetorical shade, which wearies. I think the publication of that more than tragic letter (Princess Trubetzkoi’s) was very wrong.† Independently of the irritation that publishing it must necessarily create, there was still room to hope matters might be accommodated by a fresh petition.

What right has any one to play so desperate a game—to take life itself? A further terror for me is the literary worship paid to the scribblings of Madame Girardin and Madame Gay. Such worship might perhaps be pardoned in a lovely Grand Duchess.‡

* Czechtitzky, celebrated at Berlin as an actor and billiard-player. When he could not any longer find persons to play with him he took to card-playing, in which he got equally skilled and won enormous sums of money. It is related of him by Varnhagen that in order to revise the expression:—“Sich im Golde wälzen” (rolling in money), he covered his floor with gold pieces, and, in the presence of witnesses, absolutely rolled about upon them in a state of nudity. Fortune forsook him at length, and he used to beg persons to spit in his face; for though he had rolled in money, *he had lost it all*.—Tr.

† The sad story of the Princess Trubetzkoi is too well known, through the Marquis de Custine’s book, to need recapitulation.—Tr.

‡ The Grand Duchess Helene.—Tr.

That “St. Simonism” was the invention of a Prussian man of business tickles me immensely. As it touches the honour of Königsberg, I pass it over here in silence.

LXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

Berlin, December 29th, 1843.

Your Royal Highness,—I hasten humbly to inform you that the box containing the Universal Astrometer, the joint invention of Lieut. D. and H. v. A—, together with your gracious commands, have reached me safely. I shall of course do everything with reference to this matter that your Royal Highness may desire. Both gallant officers have already, in a letter dated Temesvar, 13th December of this year, reported the arrival of the instrument, with this very *naïve* addition, “that I might procure for both inventors a military decoration from His Majesty the King, the *Universal Physician* of all Arts and Sciences.”

But that the Universal Doctor should prescribe just this universal physic, will require a few lines to be written to His Majesty by these gentlemen themselves. The so-called Universal Astrometers were in great repute in the Middle Ages, but, in the present state of astronomy, they are not used in any observatory, the observer making his own calculations. Self-registering instruments of this sort are therefore only likely to be recommended for reward in case of their inventors being brought into immediate contact with the monarch. The King adheres to this rule even in the case of books, no written acknowledgment of

which is ever given unless they are accompanied by a letter.

Under these circumstances your Royal Highness will, I trust, not take it amiss my thanking Lieut. H. v. A. in the most friendly manner, for the confidence he has reposed in me, and urging him, in order to aid the means at my disposal for serving him and his friend according to your Royal Highness's wish and command, to send me a few lines (mentioning my name) for His Majesty the King. For the sake of security, your Royal Highness will, perhaps, be graciously pleased to allow the letter for Temesvar to be sent under your sealed envelope to the Ambassador, General von Canitz. I shall open the box at the Observatory in the presence of Professor Encke, whom, in conformity with the usual custom in these cases, I will request to prepare a Report for the Privy Council. As the epithet "sinnreich" (ingenious) may always be applied to instruments, even when they are not novel, I will try and beg for them a draught of this "Universal Physic."

With profoundest respect, I remain,
Your Royal Highness's most humble,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Monday, 1st January, 1844.

I hasten, my dear friend, at the risk of losing the Potsdam train, to tell you (for all that you were anonymous in sending it) that the King, in the midst of his bubble-blowing, lead-melting, chorister-singing, and vigils, has been very, very much delighted

with your sweet present. In its composition, full of grace and loveliness, Heaven is seen in the reflection of earthly love. The King at once guessed at the young fairies, Bettina's "cygnet brood," and wishes to be allowed to send his thanks.

A. v. Ht.

Privatissime.—I had some scruples about the hieroglyphic which distinguishes the male swan from the female, but the King thought that I was quite *arriéré* with regard to the changes which Art-life has caused in modern education.

Note by Varnhagen.—Bettina v. Arnim had sent me an exquisitely drawn and wonderfully beautiful sketch representing two naked figures, a girl and a youth standing by a tree, on the top of which a nightingale was singing. This she commissioned me to send anonymously to Baron Humboldt, in order that he might also anonymously send it to the King as a New Year's gift. The expressive nakedness of the youth might certainly create some surprise, but would easily be pardoned in Bettina. But that the King should think her daughters had drawn the sketch, is a bit too bad, unless his pretending to believe such a thing is to be construed as a sly hit at Bettina !

April 1, 1844, Varnhagen wrote in his Diary: "After a long interval another visit from Humboldt. He told me all that occupied his mind. He does all he can; but it is not much that he can do: a man of seventy-four is, after all, a man of seventy-four! He himself alluded pointedly to his advanced age. The accumulation of business pressed on him, he said, and yet he was not prepared to forego it. Court and company were to him as a club, in which he was in the habit of spending his evening and taking his glass.

"The King, he says, is occupied with nothing but his fancies, and these are mostly spiritual and religious, rituals, churchbuildings, missions, and the like. About earthly matters he takes little care, and whether Louis Philippe's death brings about a crisis, what may happen

at that of Metternich, or what our relations are with Russia, are matters of perfect indifference, nay, he hardly gives them a thought. Whoever is favourite for the time and manages to indulge his fancies, has the game in his own hands. Bunsen, Radowitz, and Canitz stand highest with him; Stolberg, only in the second rank. With all that, there is the greatest absence of mind and thoughtlessness. Rückert had, on the occasion of his recovery, sent the Queen some pretty poems. They were pronounced charming, but no one thought of the propriety of sending an acknowledgment after the receipt of such an offering. At last, long afterwards, it occurred to the Queen to do so, and Rückert was to be sent for, but he had left Berlin some three weeks before! As for Schelling, the King scarcely sees him once in a twelvemonth; since he has got him, he cares little about him; Steffens, too, though he likes him, he rarely invites. Reumont* is a slight exception in the list, and has some share in the favouritism of Bunsen and Count v. Brühl. (They are joking here about * * *, his dancing, &c. Humboldt said he was green, if he does not happen to be exactly yellow; the King replied, Everybody looks so at * * *) Bunsen has not grown wiser. He proposed to the King to buy California, to send missionaries there, &c. He energetically favours the enterprises of Baroness Helfert. He wished to send out his own son with her, and offered to supply from his private means £12,000 sterling towards establishing colonies where the missions should form the principal element. However, he withdrew his offer, seeing that he could not rely on the sympathies of the King. Meanwhile Baroness Helfert has, for the present, received from the King a present of 10,000 thalers only; but Minister Rother,† who opposed her more extended plans, was still obliged to send two agents, who were to report on the condition of the estates of Baroness Helfert in the East Indies. They also wished to induce the King to take interest in the settlements in Texas, always with an interweaving of religious interests. Humboldt had written to Bunsen urging him strongly to warn Eichhorn, and consider the hatred which his way of acting must produce, and which the King

* Alfred Reumont, a native of Aachen, Prussian Minister at Rome, a copious writer on Italian history, poetry, and archaeology.—TR.

† Minister of Finance.—TR.

certainly must share. When Bunsen was here, he spoke to him energetically to the same effect, representing the matter to him in the most serious light; but Bunsen, who had talked to him for two hours with the greatest eagerness about Egypt, thereupon answered never a word, but rose and went away. Humboldt thinks him vain enough to accept a place in the Cabinet. It seems to me that Humboldt has by far too much intercourse with Bunsen, and shows him too much friendship. The Queen, Humboldt thinks, has no Roman Catholic predilections; on the contrary, is an arch-Protestant, and more zealous even than the King himself, whom she constantly urges on in this direction. Her influence would be more effective if she understood the matter better.

"In the evening, Humboldt sent me a kind note accompanied by the book 'Russie, Allemagne, et France,' par Marc Fournier, Paris, 1844, and eighteen valuable autographs of Arago, Metternich, Peel, Stanley, Récamier, Balzac, Prescott, Brunel, Herschel, Bresson, Helene of Orleans, the Duchess of Dino, and four confidential cheerful notes of the King, addressed to him. A splendid gift!"

LXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, April 1st, 1844.

I will try, my noble-hearted friend, whether by the offer of some few unimportant presents besides the horrible Ruthenic (Little Russian) poison,* I can provide you with some enjoyment for to-night. That I am flattered in all the letters, except in the one from our friend of Solingen, has not been able to prevent my offering you what might interest you.

1. Lord Stanley, the present Minister,† to whom I had recommended a cousin of our Dieffenbach,‡ the

* "Russie, Allemagne, et France." Par Marc Fournier. Paris. 1844. The Ruthenes (who were "invented" by Metternich) are a very inconsiderable branch of the Slavonic nation settled in Galicia.—TR.

† Secretary of State for the Colonies.—TR.

‡ The eminent surgeon at Berlin.—TR.

author of an excellent *Voyage to New Zealand.** The traveller was implicated in the riots at Frankfort, for which reason it is still difficult to get him an appointment in Germany. If I could travel I would wish for no better companion.

2. The conjecture from Solingen.

3. A remarkable letter from Bresson, dated February 6th, 1839.

4. A very hearty letter from Arago, to whom I had dedicated the “*Examen de l’Histoire de la Géographie du 15me Siècle.*” I do not recollect if I have given you anything before from Arago’s hand.

5. A note from the King,† at the time when he aided me to a great extent in obtaining the liberation of young demagogues. The case here mentioned was that of young Höninghaus, in which I was certainly successful. The letter of the Crown Prince bears witness to his noble indignation against Kamptz and his like.

6. A letter from the Duchess of Orleans.

7. A letter from the King of Denmark. Simultaneously with Arago I had recommended to the King the great lunar astronomer Hansen,‡ in Gotha. Our request was complied with, and Arago also received a very kind autograph letter from Christianus Rex, once a constitutionalist in — Norway.

8. Another note from the Crown Prince, cheerful and piquant. It was of great consequence to him that

* Dieffenbach’s “*Travels in New Zealand, with Contributions to the Geography, Geology, Botany, and Natural History of that Colony, with a Dictionary and Grammar of the New Zealand Language.*” 2 vols. 8vo. London: Murray.—Tr.

† Then (1836) Prince Royal.—Tr.

‡ Hansen’s Tables of the Moon, published by the Royal Society of London.—Tr.

Metternich should accept the Presidency,* pour mettre la société en bonne odeur à Rome, où elle passe pour Bunso-hérétique.

9. A letter from the Duchess de Dino, now Duchess de Talleyrand. She has now been created Duchess of Sagan.

10, 11. Two more cheerful notes from the King. Le Seehund (seal), a letter recommending a somewhat coarse Danish sea captain, who offered to carry Natural Philosophers round the world for 2,500 thalers apiece—rather dear. Nothing came of it. Le seigneur Cados, Ministre Sécretaire d'Etat of the watchmaking Duc de Normandie, who wrote to the Crown Prince to complain of the unbecoming manner in which he had been treated in the “State Gazette.”

12. Brunel, the hero of the Tunnel.

13. A letter from Sir John Herschel, full of flattery.

14. M. de Balzac.

15. Sir Robert Peel. I had received a letter from Oxford, telling me that the first botanist in Europe, Robert Brown, was suddenly plunged into great pecuniary embarrassment, and that Peel would, at my request, procure for him one of the only four small pensions which Parliament voted for scientific men. I succeeded.

16. Madame Récamier. I am sure you have already got several of her letters.

17. A nice letter from Prince Metternich, to be added to the mass you already possess of his.

18. The great American historian, Prescott. What I in my careless conceit destroy, is saved in your hands. I conjure you, my dear friend, to let nobody know that

* Of the Archæological Society in Rome.—TR.

I have given you these notes from the King, although they are unimportant. It would be very prejudicial to me just now.

With unchanged esteem, yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday evening.

LXXVII.

J. W. T. to HUMBOLDT.

Höfgen, near Solingen, March 21st, 1844.

Your Excellency will not take it amiss that I venture to address you. Some time since I read in a newspaper, that *some one from Königsberg* had written to you about some secrets of Nature, namely, of taking photographs in the dark. From that I gather that your Excellency is a Natural Philosopher, and has acquaintances and friends who are also Philosophers. I, too, have made important discoveries in secrets of Nature; and my present employments not permitting me to make further progress in them, I should like, for once, to speak to you about them. Perhaps we may be useful to each other. I will gladly make a journey to Berlin to see you. Will your Excellency please, in case my visit would not be disagreeable, to write to me as soon as possible, saying at what time I could best see you in Berlin. In hopes of receiving a favourable reply, I salute your Excellency with highest respect, and remain your most obedient,

J. W. T.

Gottfried H., merchant, Berlin, could give you some account about my position and character.

Note by Humboldt.—The conjecture you formed some time since through reading a political paper, to this effect, that I was a Natural Philosopher, is certainly well founded. I have committed the crime of publishing several works on Natural Science, some as early as the year 1789.

LXXVIII.

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR COUNT BRESSON TO
HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 6 fevrier, 1839.

Chère Excellence,—Je suis heureux de pouvoir vous envoyer aujourd’hui un article plus digne de vous que celui d’hier. Gardez ce numéro des Débats. Je n’en fais pas collection.

La remarque de Mr. M. V. L.—sur le nescio quis *Plutarchus* est puérile. Du reste, son article est inspiré par une juste appréciation de votre gloire qui est nôtre aussi et que nous revendiquons.

Veuillez, chère Excellence, agréer mes affectueux et respectueux hommages.

BRESSON.

P.S. Je finissais ce billet quand celui que vous m’avez écrit ce matin m’a été remis.—Je le conserverai toute ma vie, et parcequ’il est un vrai monument historique et pour ce titre précieux d’ami que vous daignez me donner. Hélas ! oui, nous verrons bien des choses, si Dieu nous prête vie, mais qu’il fasse que nous ne revoyons plus celles qui ont déjà passé sur notre siècle ! La coalition y travaille cependant de toutes ses forces en sapant le pouvoir royal. C’est un accès de démence qui rappelle 1791. Ce sont des Girondins en herbe que nous aurions aimés, et ils

seraient les premières victimes englouties sous l'édifice qu'ils ébranlent.

Est-il donc nécessaire de faire un grand effort de raison pour voir clairement que le Roi est le ciment de toutes choses, qu'il nous tient suspendus sur le chaos, et que lui de moins ou lui de plus, la situation change de fond en comble ? En conscience, le danger vient-il de lui aujourd'hui ? et un ordre de choses si péniblement acquis, si laborieusement établi, sera-t-il sacrifié à la rancune de quelques hommes, ou à quelques vaines théories inapplicables en France, bonnes tout au plus en Angleterre, où elles sont consacrées par les âges, et, ce qui ne vaut mieux encore, administrées par les seules classes éclairées et supérieures ? D., qui est un bon esprit, m'écrit qu'il a foi dans l'issue de la crise ministérielle. M. Molé a modifié sa résolution de ne plus reprendre les affaires ; il les reprendra si on lui assure 36 ou 40 voix de majorité. La réunion Jacqueminot, qui rend de grands services, y travaille.

Voici les adieux, les derniers, de M. de Talleyrand à Fontainebleau le 2 juin 1837 : Adieu, mon cher Bresson ; restez à Berlin aussi longtemps que possible ; vous êtes bien ; ne cherchez pas le mieux. Il y aura bien du mouvement dans le monde ; vous êtes jeune ; vous le verrez.

Je vous cite ces paroles parcequ'elles rentrent dans l'esprit de votre billet, dont je vous remercie encore et qui devient pour moi titre de famille.

B.

Note by Humboldt.—Lettre du Comte Bresson, Ministre de France à Berlin. Je l'ai conservée à cause de quelques mots de M. de

Talleyrand. J'avais écrit à M. Bresson que la position en France est des plus graves, que je crois encore à la paix, parceque à côté de la sagesse des gouvernans, il y a de la médecine expectante, de la mollesse, et de la prudence timorée. Que ces choses ne peuvent cependant agir que pour un tems limité, et que ceux qui sont jeunes, comme lui, verront en action ce qui court aujourd'hui comme velléités nationales à racines profonds.

LXXIX.

ARAGO TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, 19 aout, 1834.

Mon cher ami,—Les termes me manquent pour te dire combien je suis peiné de t'avoir donné un moment d'ennui. Persuade-toi donc, une fois pour toutes, que quelque puissent être envers toi mes torts, apparents ou réels, je n'aurai jamais celui d'oublier combien tu as toujours été bon pour moi ; l'amitié que je t'ai vouée ne le cède pas à celle que tu me montres et dont je suis à la fois heureux et fier ! J'aurais bien voulu, à l'occasion de ton aimable dédicace t'en donner un témoignage public ; mais diverses circonstances de ma position actuellement si difficile et si compliquée, y ont mis obstacle. Ce n'est, au reste, je l'espère, que partie remise.

J'apprends avec chagrin que tu n'es pas content de ta santé. La mienne est détestable et je m'en inquiète peu. Tout ce que je vois journellement dans ce bas monde, de bassesse, de servilité, d'ignobles passions, me fait envisager avec sang froid les évènemens dont les hommes se préoccupent le plus. La seule nouvelle qui pourrait aujourd'hui me tirer de mon *spleen*, serait celle—de ton voyage à Paris. Pourquoi n'ai-je pas

trouvé dans tes lettres un seul mot d'espoir, même pour un avenir éloigné ?

Le monde scientifique est ici dans un calme plat ! c'est véritablement à s'en désoler. Je pars après-demain pour l'Angleterre avec Mr. Pentland. En rapporterai-je des idées plus consolantes ?

Notre observatoire est devenu à la fois élégant et très-commode. Le Bureau a décidé qu'il fallait nommer un directeur. J'ai été choisi à l'unanimité. J'aurai sous mes ordres quatre ou cinq jeunes gens avec le titre d'élèves et 2000 francs d'appointement. Sous ce rapport nous allons enfin sortir de l'ornière.

Adieu, mon cher, mon excellent ami. Mathieu, qui n'est pas encore entièrement guéri d'un cruel mal d'yeux, me charge, ainsi que sa femme, de le rappeler à ton souvenir. Tout à toi pour la vie,

F. ARAGO.

LXXX.

FOUR NOTES OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM THE FOURTH TO HUMBOLDT.

I.

23rd December, 1836. Evening.

The *quasi* nameless number has to expect the mildest of all punishments ; for, *without doubt*, i. e. *quite certainly*, the sentence will be mitigated to six months, and three years' incapacity for public employment. Some consolation, therefore, you may send as a Christmas present to the very faithful city of Crefeld. Perhaps !!?!! I may succeed in effecting a full pardon of the [prisoners in] this category.—It is indeed revolting and horrible to let the poor boy languish for so

long in that disgusting hole.—And *such parents*.—If those parents were fools and rogues, even then it would **HARDLY** be excusable.—Shall we meet to-night?

F.R. W.

II.

Cherissime Humboldt, vous connaissez tous les pré-tendants à toutes les couronnes—lisez, de grâce, la lettre ci-jointe et faites-moi connaître le *seigneur Cados*, ses père et mère et aieux, ainsi que ses droits à la couronne de France, que je tâcherai alors à lui procurer.

FREDERIC GUILLAUME.

B. 21 févr. 1839.

Pr. royal.

III.

An Episode from the Marriage of Figaro.

Il y manque quelque chose—

Quoi ?—

Le cachet.

Do you perceive the delicate allusion, my dearest friend? Your seal must help me out of nearly as great an embarrassment as the one above alluded to did the Countess Almaviva. The Prince will otherwise perceive that I have read all the flattering things that you, alas! have said about me. Pour vous divertir, I include my letter. Vale.

B. 23 March, 1840.

F.R. W.

Note by Humboldt.—Autographe du Prince-Royal de Prusse. Le Prince-Royal offrait au Prince Metternich la place de Président de l'Institut Archéologique de Rome. J'avais dû donner au Prince-Royal une lettre qu'il voulait inclure, comme elle contenait quelques éloges il a désiré qu'elle fut cachetée.

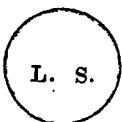
HUMBOLDT.

J'ai eu l'honnêteté et la maladresse de ne pas copier la lettre du Roi au Prince Metternich.

IV.

Je vous communique la dépèche ci-jointe de Copenague pour vous avertir de la nouvelle seccatura qui vous attend d'un phoque du Sund qui vient vous demander conseil et assistance pour tourner autour de notre globe. La présente n'étant à d'autres fins, je prie Dieu, monsieur le Baron de Humboldt, qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde. Donné en notre château de Potsdam 29 avril 1849 (1843?) vers minuit.

Sign.



L. S.

FREDERIC GUILLAUME.

Note by Varnhagen.—Everything exactly as above—as a joke !

LXXXI.

KING CHRISTIAN VIII. OF DENMARK TO HUMBOLDT.

Copenague, ce 3 mai, 1843.

Monsieur le Baron de Humboldt!—La lettre que vous m'avez adressée le jour avant votre départ de Paris a éveillé mon attention au sujet des tables lunaires qu'on doit aux travaux du Professeur Hansen, et je me suis adressé à notre célèbre astronome Schumacher pour apprendre ce qui restait encore à faire pour compléter cet ouvrage important. Suivant ses indices il a été facile de trouver moyen de continuer ces travaux, les comparaisons des observations, et moyennant les secours nécessaires et alloués Schumacher espère de voir publier ces tables de la lune

avant le terme de deux années.—On trouvera sans doute la récompense des soins qu'on consacre aux sciences dans leur avancement même, mais l'approbation des savants distingués donne une véritable satisfaction, dont on jouit doublement lorsque ces suffrages nous viennent d'une voix qui vaut bien d'autres. Jaloux de mériter toujours votre approbation, Monsieur le Baron, je désire être guidé par vos lumières, et je serai charmé toutefois que vous voudrez m'adresser vos observations scientifiques.

C'est avec la plus haute considération que j'ai le plaisir de me dire, Monsieur le Baron de Humboldt,
votre tout affectionné

CHRISTIAN R.

LXXXII.

JOHN HERSCHEL TO HUMBOLDT.

*Collingwood, 21st Dec. 1843.
Hawkhorst, Kent.*

My dear Baron,—It is now a considerable time since I received your valued and most interesting work on Central Asia, which I should have long ago acknowledged, but that I was unwilling and indeed unable in proper terms to thank you for so flattering and pleasing a mark of your attention, till I had made myself at least in some degree acquainted with the contents. This, however, the continued pressure of occupations which leave me little time and liberty for reading has not yet allowed me to do otherwise than partially—and, in fact, it is a work of such close research that I despair of ever being able fully to master all its details. In consequence, I have hitherto limited myself chiefly

to the Climatological researches in the third volume, and especially to the memoir on the causes of the flexures of the Isothermal lines which I have read with the greatest interest, and which appears to me to contain by far the most complete and masterly *coup d'œil* of that important subject which I have ever met with. In reading this and other parts of your works on this subject and of the "Physique du Globe" in all its departments, that which strikes me with astonishment is, the perfect familiarity and freshness of recollection of every detail which seems to confer on you in some degree the attribute of *ubiquity* on the surface of this our planet—so vividly present does the picture of its various regions seem to be in your imagination and so completely do you succeed in making it so to that of your readers.

The account of the Auriferous and Platiniferous deposits in the Ural and the zone in 56 lat. has also very much interested me, as well as the curious facts respecting the distribution of the Grecian germs in those regions. I could not forbear translating and sending to the "Athenæum" (the best of our literary and scientific periodicals) the singular account of the "monstre" of Taschkow Targanka—(citing of course your work as the source of the history)—in vol. iii., p. 597.

The idea of availing ourselves of the information contained in the works of Chinese geographers for the purpose of improving our geographical knowledge of Central Asia, appears to me as happy as it is likely to prove fertile—especially now that the literature of that singular country is becoming more accessible daily by the importation of Chinese books. What you have

stated respecting the magnetic chariots and hodometers of the Emperor Tching-wang, if you can entirely rely on your authority, gives a far higher idea of the ancient civilization of China than any other fact which has yet been produced.

In a word, I must congratulate you on the appearance of this work as on another great achievement ; and if, as fame reports, it is only the forerunner of another, on the early discovery of America—it is only another proof that your funds are inexhaustible ! May you have many years of health and strength granted you to pour them forth, and may each succeeding contribution to our knowledge afford yourself as much delight in its production as it is sure to do your readers in its perusal.

Miss Gibson writes word that you have more than once inquired of her when my Cape observations will appear. No one can regret more than myself the delay which has taken place ; but it has been unavoidable, as I have had every part of the reduction to execute myself, and the construction of the various catalogues, charts, and minute details of every kind consume a world of time quite disproportionate to their apparent extent. However I have great hopes of being able to get a considerable portion in the course of the next year into the printer's hands. Some of the Nebulæ are already in process of engraving. Perhaps the subject which has given me most trouble is that of the photometric estimation of the magnitudes of Southern stars, and their comparison with the Northern ones. A curious fact respecting one of them, *7 Argus*, has been communicated to me from a correspondent in India, Mr. Mackay ; viz., that it *has again* made

a further great and sudden step forward in the scale of magnitude (you may perhaps remember that in 1837-8 it suddenly increased from 2·1 m. to equal α Centauri). In March 1843, according to Mr. Mackay, it was *equal to Canopus*. “ α Crucis,” he says, “looked quite dim beside it.” When I first observed it at the Cape it was very decidedly inferior to α Crucis.

Believe me, my dear Sir, ever yours most truly,
J. F. W. HERSCHEL.

I must not forget to wish you a “merry Christmas and many happy returns of the season,” in English fashion.

LXXXIII.

BALZAC TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, Hotel de Russie, 1843.

Monsieur le Baron,—Serais-je assez heureux en allant lundi à Potsdam par le train d'onze heures, d'avoir l'honneur de vous y rencontrer, et de vous présenter mes respects ? Je ne fais que passer par Berlin, vous me pardonnerez donc de prendre la liberté de vous indiquer ainsi le temps de ma visite ; mais, n'est-ce pas d'ailleurs vous prouver à quel point je tiens à ajouter quelques nouveaux souvenirs à ceux du salon de Gérard.

Si je n'ai pas le bonheur de vous trouver, ce petit mot vous dira du moins que je voulais me rappeler à vous, autrement que par une carte. Aussi, veuillez, Monsieur le Baron, agréer l'expression de la respectueuse admiration d. v. t. h. et t. o. s.

DE BALZAC.

LXXXIV.

SIR ROBERT PEEL TO HUMBOLDT.

Whitehall, 4th Sept., 1843.

Dear Baron de Humboldt,—I was most flattered by your kind attention in transmitting for my acceptance your most interesting work on Central Asia. It will be much prized by me, as well on account of its intrinsic value as a token of your personal regard and esteem.

There is no privilege of official power, the exercise of which gives me greater satisfaction, than that of occasionally bestowing a mark of Royal favour and public gratitude on men distinguished by scientific attainments and by services rendered to the cause of knowledge.

From the very limited means which Parliament has placed at the disposal of this Court, it has been my good fortune to be enabled to recognise the merit of Mr. Robert Brown. I have just conveyed to him the intimation that Her Majesty has been pleased to confer upon him for his life a pension on the Civil List of two hundred pounds per annum, in recognition of his eminent acquirements as a botanist and of the value of his contributions to the store of botanical knowledge.

Believe me, dear Baron de Humboldt, with sincere esteem,

Very faithfully yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

LXXXV.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Vienne, Octobre, 1843.

Mon cher Baron !—Vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer un exemplaire de votre "Asie Centrale;" je l'appelle la vôtre car les découvertes appartiennent de droit à ceux qui les font, et qu'ètre l'auteur d'une découverte vaut souvent mieux que d'être le possesseur de l'objet sur lequel elle porte ! J'ai commencé la lecture de l'ouvrage que je compte au nombre de ceux que je traite, comme des esprits autrement faits que le mien traitent les productions futiles, à savoir comme une grande ressource. Tel est en toute vérité le cas ; j'ai souvent besoin de me distraire des soins de mon travail de *fabrique* ; alors je cherche de nouveaux éléments de vie et de force dans des productions sérieuses. Un livre comme vous savez en faire, est pour moi une source féconde d'éléments pareils ; aussi mon but est toujours atteint ; j'apprends et j'aime à apprendre,—et je ne me dépète pas par tout ce que vous savez ! Ce que dans vos ouvrages il y a d'admirable c'est la méthode ; vous savez tracer une ligne pour ne plus jamais la perdre de vue. Aussi *arrivez* vous, ce qui n'est pas réservé à tous ceux qui se mettent en route.

Vous m'enverrez les volumes complets, et je les attends avec un vif sentiment de reconnaissance.

Veuillez agréer, mon cher Baron, l'assurance de mes sentiments de considération distingués et d'attachement déjà fort ancien.

METTERNICH.

LXXXVI.

PRESCOTT TO HUMBOLDT.

Boston, Dec. 23rd, 1843.

Sir.—A book on which I have been engaged for some years, the “History of the Conquest of Mexico,” is now published in this country, as it was some few weeks since in England; and I have the pleasure to request your acceptance of a copy, which will be sent by way of Hamburg, through the house of Gossler, by the first packet, which sails for that port from New York in January. Although the main subject of the work is the Conquest by the Spaniards, I have devoted half a volume to a view of the Aztec civilization; and as in this shadowy field I have been very often guided by the light of your researches, I feel especially indebted to you, and am most desirous that the manner in which my own investigation is conducted may receive your approbation. It will indeed be one of the best and most satisfactory results of my labours.

As I have been supplied with a large body of unpublished and original documents for the Peruvian conquest, I shall occupy myself with this immediately. But I feel a great want at the outset of your friendly hand to aid me. For although your great work, the “Atlas Pittoresque,” sheds much light on scattered points, yet as your “Voyage aux Régions Equinoxiales” stops short of Peru, I shall have to grope my way along through the greater part without the master’s hand which in the “Nouvelle Espagne” led me on so securely.

The Peruvian subject will, I think, occupy less time and space than the Mexican, and when it is finished I

propose to devote myself to a history of the Reign of Philip the Second. For this last I have been long amassing materials, and a learned Spaniard has explored for me the various collections, public and private, in England, Belgium, France, and is now at work for me in Spain. In Ranke's Excellent history, "Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa," I find an enumeration of several important MSS., chiefly Venetian relations, of which I am very desirous to obtain copies. They are for the most part in the royal library of Berlin, and some few in that of Gotha. I have written to our minister, Mr. Wheaton, to request him to make some arrangements, if he can, for my effecting this. The liberal principles on which literary institutions are conducted in Prussia, and the facilities given to men of letters, together with the known courtesy of the German character, lead me to anticipate no obstacles to the execution of my desires. Should there be any, however, you will confer great favour on me by giving your countenance to my applications.

I trust this will not appear too presumptuous a request on my part. Although I have not the honour of being personally known to you, yet the kind messages I have received from you, and lately through Professor Tellkampf, convince me that my former publication was not unwelcome to you, and that you may feel an interest in my future historical labours.

I pray you, my dear sir, to accept the assurances of the very high respect, with which I have the honour to be

Your obedient servant,

Wm. H. PRESCOTT.

LXXXVII.

MADAME DE RÉCAMIER TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, 28 juillet, 1843.

Je n'ai pas d'expression, monsieur, pour vous dire combien je suis touchée de votre lettre, vous m'avez épargné le saisissement d'apprendre par les journaux une nouvelle aussi douleureuse qu'imprévue.—Quoique bien souffrante et bien affligée, je ne veux pas perdre un moment pour vous en remercier.—Vous savez, monsieur, qu'il y avait bien des années que je n'avais vu le Prince Auguste, mais je recevais constamment la preuve de son souvenir.—C'est à l'époque la plus triste de sa vie que je l'avais connu chez Madame de Staël, où il avait rencontré tant de nobles sympathies ; hélas, de la réunion si brillante et si agitée du château de Coppet il ne restait que lui ; il ne me reste plus à présent des souvenirs de ma jeunesse et de tout ce passé de ma vie, que le beau tableau de Corinne, dont le sentiment le plus noble et le plus touchant avait orné ma retraite. Je n'ai pas le courage, monsieur, de prolonger cette lettre et de répondre aux détails si intéressants qui terminent la vôtre, permettez-moi de ne vous parler aujourd'hui que de ma douleur, de ma reconnaissance et de mon admiration.

J. RÉCAMIER.

LXXXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

31st August, 1844.

I send you some few things which I know will give you pleasure to have in your hands.

- a. Bettina in her persecution.
- b. Two copies of my very short Speech.
- c. Two letters from Spontini, with incomprehensible allusions to Prince Wittgenstein, Count Redern, hatred of Meyerbeer, and a serious answer from myself.
- d. A letter from Gay Lussac, at the time he was dangerously wounded by an explosion.
- e. A letter from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, doing credit to his heart.

Always yours, with the highest respect.

Saturday night.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

LXXXIX.

LEOPOLD, GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY, TO HUMBOLDT.

Florence, ce 20 juillet, 1844.

Très cher Comte,—Le Professeur de Botanique Philippe Parlatore se rend à Berlin. Il m'est impossible de le laisser partir sans le charger d'une lettre pour vous, cher comte, qui exprime mes rémerciements pour les recommandations que vous m'avez faites pour que le Toscane put s'enrichir de plusieurs hommes illustres. Vous le père et protecteur de toutes les sciences naturelles connaissiez Monsieur Parlatore et un jugement porté par vous suffisait: il est à Florence, dirige le Jardin du Musée et préside à l'herbier central qui doit à lui son existence. Un autre Physicien nous a été recommandé par vous, le Professeur Matteucci; il est un investigateur de la nature, espion heureux, il mène la Science, fabrique les instruments pour l'interroger, et est maintenant sur le chemin d'importantes décou-

vertes, il fait aussi un petit voyage pour se remettre d'un travail trop prolongé. Je ne sais s'il sera aussi heureux de rencontrer celui pour lequel il conserve tant de vénération et de reconnaissance. Notre université de Pise a rassemblé tout ce que l'on pouvait trouver en fait de sciences naturelles et on en voit le fruit ; à Florence les études pratiques de perfectionnement dans le Grand Hôpital, j'espère, contribuent aussi à maintenir la médecine et la chirurgie dans le vrai chemin de science naturelle, d'observation et d'expérience. Les congrès des amateurs des sciences en Italie porteront leur fruit aussi, ces réunions innocentes mettent la science à la connaissance de beaucoup de personnes et établissent des relations utiles entre beaucoup d'hommes de mérite qui se connaissaient à peine. On avait dit une fois que vous aviez l'intention de descendre en Italie. Vous auriez mis le comble à notre bonheur, vous auriez été acclamé unanimement le vrai protecteur des sciences naturelles.

Veuillez me croire toujours votre très affectionné

LEOPOLD.

XC.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

September 2nd, 1844.

Even if Dr. Prutz,* in Halle, had written nothing

* Robert Ernst Prutz, poet and literary historian, born 1816. Among his dramatic works—the collection of which appeared in four volumes (1847-49)—the “Moritz von Sachsen” is considered the best. Prutz belonged to the sensible democratic-constitutional party. He was more dangerous, therefore, than a mere demagogue. In consequence of these opinions, he was hunted from Prussia in 1840, and from Jena in 1843; after great trouble, he obtained permission to reside in, and deliver lectures upon lit-

in his prohibited “Moritz”* but what the Fool says of the people, p. 40, “One should throw it a couple of scraps, and then it will creep back again wagging its tail to its cold kennel;” and, p. 53, the poetically beautiful verses, “I conjure you, O princes of the future,” one could understand the immense sensation created at the present time by that wonderful piece in which Moritz pushes all his friends into the water, in order to enjoy the pleasure of fishing them out, dead or alive, or at any rate so thoroughly ducked that they all catch cold. Read, my dear friend, the manuscript, but return it to me to-morrow (Tuesday) by two o’clock. The steps I am taking will, I am sure, be fruitless. By putting it on the stage some money might be obtained for those who suffered from the inundations; there the police would act as a hydraulic, or even a drying machine.

Yours,
A. Ht.

Monday.

XCI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Sept. 6th, 1844.

Like you, my dear friend, I can understand that the address † must have produced a very general commotion in “our North,” as under the sluggish Pole. He is successful in the use of figurative language, in which some of the images he brings before you are no doubt not new, yet we cannot help remarking a certain delicacy of expression and a soul for harmony. There is,

rary history at, Berlin, in 1846. He is now Professor Extraordinary of the History of Literature, at Halle, which post he obtained in 1849.—Tr.

* “Moritz von Sachsen (Maurice of Saxony),” a tragedy in five acts.—Tr.

† Delivered by the King.—Tr.

after all, something noble in this constant yearning to address masses of the people *extempore*,—in this impulse to speak with the public face to face. The magnanimity of protecting the “servants in high places,” by wrapping them in the royal purple, will not meet with much recognition. Can one then assume a hostile attitude towards the small predatory “birds of night?” A feeling of melancholy comes over one that such a highly-gifted prince, guided as he is by the most benevolent intentions, and in possession of a vigorous mind, which is ever urging him to action, should, in spite of his excellent intentions, be deceived as to the *direction* in which his policy is leading. When Parry, on the ice, wanted to reach the Pole with his numerous Samojede dogs, sledges and dogs apparently went *forward*. When, however, the sun broke through the mist, and the latitude could be ascertained, it was found that, without being aware of it, they had actually gone several degrees *backwards*. The ground over which they moved *forward* was a detached field of ice carried south by the current. Ministers are this moving icy ground. Is the current the dogmatizing Missionary Philosophy?

A. Ht.

In the letter to Spontini there is a strange mistake: la magie *diverse*, instead of la magie *divine* des sons n'a pas d'action sur la prose de la vie. It is now certain that the Empress will not come. The King will be, on the 15th (?), in Sans Souci..

XCII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Sept. 13th, 1844.

I must be off at once to the Stettin Railway, the King having arrived at nine o'clock; then to Sans Souci for some few days, where I shall spend, alas! my seventy-fifth birthday. My only reason for saying alas! is that, in 1789, I thought the world would have solved several problems more. I have seen much, but, measured by my demands, little still.

I cannot write to you to-day about your graceful description of your residence in Paris in 1810. My good genius led me at once to the passages in which the balm of your friendship breathed upon me. I have found out that I am not yet quite insensible to praise. How nobly anti-scythic was the behaviour of the Breslau University! How inventive man becomes under political restraint. Not a notion but of rope-ladders, wall-piercing, and disguises to get into the open air; and when they are in the open air, they, in right German fashion, begin to rack their brains to see if they feel better for it than before! It will then be as in the case of the Prince, "Dites-moi, si je m'amuse."

Yours,

Friday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

We here insert a page from Varnhagen's Diary of the 26th June, 1844, which mentions two sharp answers of Humboldt thus: "At the royal table in Sans Souci, Humboldt lately let fly two good shafts from his bow. The conversation turned on a Russian ordinance, and Humboldt in speaking of it mentioned the name of the Minister of Public Instruction several times. 'You are mistaken,'

interrupted the King ; ‘this was not the work of the Minister of Instruction, but of the Minister of Enlightenment. That’s quite another person from the Minister of Instruction.’ Humboldt, without being put out, accepted the correction by hastily adding, ‘Not the Minister of Instruction then, but of the contrary;’ and then continued in his usual way.”

The following piece is still finer : “General Leopold von Gerlach, who cannot leave off teasing, lately ventured to make an attack on Humboldt by saying to him, ‘I suppose your Excellency often goes to church now;’ he hoped thereby to put him in a dilemma. But Humboldt answered at once, ‘That *now* of yours is very kindly put in : you mean to point out to me how to make my way in the world.’ The canting jester was regularly dumbfounded !”

A subsequent passage of the 26th December, 1845, depicts still more vividly the attacks to which Humboldt was exposed. Varnhagen writes : “Humboldt paid me a visit, and remained more than an hour. He made a remarkable communication to me. He assures me that but for his connection with the Court he should not be able to live here. So much was he hated by the Ultras and the Pietists that he would be exiled. The pains they took daily to prejudice the King against him were incredible ; and he would be as little tolerated in other German States were he once to be deprived of the protection afforded him by the *prestige* of his office.”

XCIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Sept. 19th, 1844.

Are you in spirits just now, my dear friend, for a few minutes’ conversation on the present state of French literature ? I venture to recommend to your notice a young French novelist, M. Jousserandot, from the Franche-Comté, with a large amount of beard, and kindly and innocent vivacity, son of a rich physician,

and recommended to me from Paris. Pardon my intrusion, but we must share with each other now and then the inconvenience of letting the people stare at us.

Thursday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

XCIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

*Berlin, Tuesday night, One o'Clock,
June 3rd, 1845.*

This evening, my dear friend, the whole mystery has been cleared up! They forwarded me, this afternoon, all jumbled together, fourteen packages, which, by some oversight, had been addressed (December—May) to me at Berlin; and which were lying at the Foreign-office. We recognised your hand at once. The parcel was addressed to me, and contained, safely sealed, your important and talented political letter, and the parcel for the Comtesse d'Agoult, which I send you herewith. I am entirely innocent of the whole affair.

In the "Rhein- und Mosel-Zeitung," No. 122, May 29th, I am accused of Voltairianism; of denying all Revelation; of conspiring with Marheineke, Bruno Bauer, and Feuerbach,* and even of having caused the expedition against Lucerne, *ipsissimis verbis*, and all on account of "Kosmos," p. 381. The King had been already informed that the book was antichristian and revolutionary. So far from that being the case, however, the King writes to me, that "he could only

* Ludwig Feuerbach, a celebrated Rationalistic writer, the author of a book entitled, "The Essence of Christianity," translated by Miss Evans, published by Chapman.—TR.

say, like Alfonso to Tasso, “ And so at length I hold it in my hands, and call it in a certain sense my own.”* This is poetical, and very courteous.

With heartiest gratitude,

Yours, A. v. HUMBOLDT.

XCV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Wednesday, 4th June, 1845.

I recognise at once, by the elegance of style, the guardian genius of my weak *literary* efforts. I had not seen the delicious sheet which contained Neander’s† explanation as well. In the last moments of my preparation for departure, I offer you my warmest thanks for one of the most important of the many life-like sketches that we owe to your all-enlivening pencil.

You represent with earnestness and grandeur that which has often suffered from the detraction of an insolent popular enthusiasm, expressed in burlesque prose. This noble process of purification gives one great delight.

If Süssmilch permit, I will finish the “Kosmos,” although at the entrance to many sciences (such as Universal History, Geology, and the mechanism of the heavens) dark apparitions stand threatening, endeavouring to prevent me from reaching the interior.

What a remarkably pleasant person Madame de Hormayr is!

With unchangeable esteem and affection,

Yours, A. HUMBOLDT.

* Goethe’s “Tasso,” Act i., Sc. 3.—TR.

† The eminent theological historian.—TR.

XCVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 16th June, 1845.

I employ the last moments before going to the railway in thanking you heartily, my dear friend, for your very original portrait of Hans von Held.* I have only read half of it, and as I did so immediately after perusing your Life of Blücher, I could not but feel the deepest admiration for your talent, which enables you so fortunately to give the varied hues of the life of the soldier, and of the civilian struggling for liberty. The fatalistic word "fortunately" ought not to be used here, since the cause of success lies only in the clearness of the reasoning power and depth of feeling. In "Held," we see the reflex of our present world. Zerboni's letter on the sanguinary scene at Breslau is as noble as it is affecting. But that does not deter our soberly fanatical and white-blooded Polignacs. A first deed of violence they will try to improve upon by another more methodically planned: and all this under the rule of such a King as ours! I am very much irritated, and deeply vexed.

With old attachment,

Yours,

Monday morning.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

As I shall find no time for reading during my rapid journey, I allowed Baron Bülow in Tegel to take the instructive work from me for a few days.

* "Hans von Held," a biography, by K. A. Varnhagen von Ense. 1845.

XCVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Thursday, 4th September, 1845.

I avail myself of the first moments I have after my return from Potsdam to express to you my delight at the result of your visit to the Baths. The contrast of misfortune in my own domestic circle, with the hollow, rain-bespattered Court festivals at Brühl and Stolzenfels, was a hard trial to me. I shall acquaint Madame Bülow to-morrow with your kind sympathy. He (Bülow) progresses towards improvement with giant strides. Except a little deficiency in his memory, which, however, does not betray itself for days together, no intellectual change is to be perceived. But care, seclusion, and rest are still very desirable for him. True to the dignity of his character, he retires from office. You know, my dear friend, that he demanded his dismissal immediately upon the outrage upon Itzstein.* The state of public affairs has now become much worse. Bülow's resignation is a melancholy occurrence; but the current of events is too strong in the north of Germany for any solid reconciliation to be effected by the exertions of a single man. Tell Professor Fichte that I am already an unworthy Doctor Philosophiæ, but I accept with gratitude all that is offered from the intellectually free regions of Würtemberg.

Affectionately yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* Johann Adam von Itzstein, a well-known liberal member of the Second Chamber at Baden, born 1775, at Mainz. He was in 1831 a leader of opposition, and hated by the Court party. In 1845 he visited Berlin, and was expelled by the police, and grossly insulted. It is to this circumstance to

I inclose, for preservation, a beautiful letter from Prince Metternich, to whom I paid a visit at Johannisberg; a letter from Lord Stanley,* the Minister, and two letters from Jules Janin and Spontini.

With a book for the Countess of Stolberg.

XCVIII.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Vienna, June 21st, 1845.

My dear Baron,—Inclosed you receive my voting-paper for our future colleague. I hope that you will not look for the cause of my ready acquiescence beyond the sphere of my conviction. As regards the latter, a recommendation from you ranks so high, that the wish is immediately followed by its fulfilment.

Your “*Kosmos*” I have read, and I treated the book in the same way as I am accustomed to deal with rich collections.

I cannot better describe the impression which the work makes upon me, than by confessing that it aroused in me two sentiments antagonistic to, or rather, neutralizing, each other—one of satisfaction at the things which I knew, the other of regret at the many things which I did not know. These sentiments sink into nothing, compared to the admiration at the range of *your knowledge*, which alone could make the success of so gigantic an undertaking possible. With knowledge alone, however, the end which you proposed to yourself would not have been attainable. And here I come to

which Humboldt refers in the above letter. Since 1850, Itzstein has resided upon his property of Hallgarten, in the Rhine Province, without taking any active part in politics.—Tr.

* The present Earl of Derby.—Tr.

the true merit of the author—his powers of *description* and *method!* You have again brought to honour the old word *discipline*, as applied to the Sciences. God grant that it may regain its eternal rights in civil society as well !

Although my impressions are only of small value, the case is otherwise with those of professional men. Their judgment is heightened to admiration, and I agree with them in the opinion, that *you alone* amongst the living possess the power of solving the problem, and that the term “*Kosmos*” was the only one that could fittingly have described your undertaking. I told you that I had *read* the first volume, I am now engaged in the *study* of it. I thank you for the truly happy hours which you have afforded me—such I call those which allow me to exchange the ungrateful field of politics for that of the Natural Sciences.

Accept, my dear Humboldt, the renewed assurance of my sincere, and, to you, long-known affection,

METTERNICH.

XCIX.

JULES JANIN TO HUMBOLDT.

Hotel de l'Etoile à Bonn, dimanche soir, 10 août, 1845.

Monsieur,—Je vous prie et je vous supplie de m'accorder une chose impossible. Vous êtes le plus bienveillant ami des gens de lettres de mon pays, vous avez toujours été pour moi le plus indulgent des hommes. Voici ma prière, s'il vous plaît.

Il y a huit jours que j'ai quitté Paris, tout exprès pour parler au “Journal des Débats” du voyage de S. M. la Reine d'Angleterre sur les bords du Rhin.

Avant mon départ j'ai eu l'honneur de saluer le Roi à Neuilly, et il a approuvé mon projet. M. Guizot m'a fort encouragé, disant que cela était hospitalier de mettre à la suite de la Reine un honnête écrivain tout disposé à célébrer ces merveilleux pèlerinages qui tiennent l'Europe attentive et charmée. En même temps M. Guizot me donnait des lettres et des instructions dont je suis fier, tant de lettres me sont des recommandations honorables, tant mes instructions sont dignes de l'homme qui me les donnait.

Maintenant, Monsieur, aidez-moi ! Ce que je sollicite, ce n'est pas d'être présenté à S. M. votre Roi, c'est de pouvoir mettre un pied dans cette foule Royale. On ne me verra pas, je verrai tout, ma mission est à remplir, sauf à me montrer digne de cet honneur par le récit que j'en saurai faire. Vous le verrez, c'est une impérieuse passion, c'est la passion de l'écrivain qui me pousse.

Je n'ai pas de titres, mais s'il en faut un, dites, que je suis Lieutenant-Colonel d'une Légion, que j'arriverai en bel uniforme, et qu'enfin à faire du bien que les dignes écrivains que le Roi reçoit à la table et à qui il a accordé en toutes ces circonstances importantes tous les honneurs, font des récits du temps présent qui servent à l'histoire de l'avenir.

Je vous écris sous les plus dignes auspices, sous les auspices de M. Meyerbeer. Vous lerendrez bien heureux, j'en suis sûr, et avec lui le "Journal des Débats," où vous êtes si fort aimé, et avec tant de monde, moi votre serviteur.

J'attends bien impatiemment et cependant avec la plus parfaite soumission, votre bonne réponse. Je suis bien sûr que dans tous les cas, vous avez fait pour

m'obtenir cette faveur, tout ce que pouvait se faire honorablement.

Agréez, monsieur le Baron, l'humble hommage de mon dévouement et de mon profond respect.

JULES JANIN.

C.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 26th September, 1845.

To his dear Friend, Privy Councillor von Varnhagen.

Kings and Republics,—

Por lo que deseo la conservacion de ellos dentro de los limites permitidos. Un grave consejero dixò al Rey Don Phelipe II., viendo que iva en diversas ocasiones al poder absoluto : Señor, reconoced á Dios en la tierra como en el cielo, por que *no se canse de las monarquias*, suave govierno si los Reyes suavemente usan de él.

Cartas de Antonio Perez, p. 545.

Lors de l'insurrection des Pays-Bas on se demandait déjà “si les Rois s'en vont.” Je vous traduis le passage d'Antonio Perez : “C'est parceque je désire la conservation des Rois que je leur conseille de rester dans leurs limites permises. Un prudent conseiller disait au Roi Philippe II. voyant qu'en différentes occasions il tendait au pouvoir absolu : ‘Señor, reconnaisssez la suprématie de Dieu sur la terre comme dans le ciel, afin que Dieu ne se fatigue pas des monarchies, genre de gouvernement très-doux, si l'on en use avec modération.’”

El Dios del cielo es *delicado* mucho en suffrir compaño en ninguna cosa y se pica del abuso del poder

humano. Si Dios se cansa de las monarquias, darà otra forma al mundo.

Le Dieu du ciel est trop jaloux pour suffrir un compagnon dans une chose quelconque : il est outré de tout abus du pouvoir humain. Si Dieu se lasse des monarchies, il donnera au monde (politique) une autre forme.

A. HUMBOLDT.

CI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, October 2nd, 1845.

I kept that strange little note, with the prophecy, "que Dios se cansera de los Reyes" on my table for several days, with the intention, my dear friend, of bringing it to you. Whenever I find anything of deep meaning during my late and solitary night studies in this palace, I always think of you. Having been prevented by the arrangement "of the modus of Bülow's resignation" from visiting you, my dear friend, I determined to send you the paper in an envelope. You must attribute it to the great indignation excited in me by the general state of our public affairs. Each day brings something worse, and where the future threateningly lowers, the greatest carelessness prevails.

I have just come from Tegel, where they will be glad to see you. They beg you, particularly during next winter, very often to gladden their house with your presence.

One Doctor Cross says, in a long article in the "Westminster Review," that the style of "Kosmos" was prolix

and exceedingly mediocre; that the frequent appeals to the feelings were considered perfectly superfluous by English scholars, so that the book contained nothing new at all. There follows a denunciation of Atheism, although everywhere in “*Kosmos*” the *creation* and the *created things* are spoken of; besides, I have expressed myself eight months ago, in the French translation, most distinctly as follows:—

“C'est cette nécessité des choses, cet enchaînement occulte, mais permanent, ce retour périodique dans le développement progressif des formes, des phénomènes et des événements, qui constituent la *nature* obéissante à une première impulsion donnée. La physique, comme l'indique son nom même, se borne à expliquer les phénomènes du monde naturel par les propriétés de la matière; le dernier but des sciences expérimentales est donc de remonter à l'existence des lois et de les généraliser progressivement. Tout ce qui est au-delà n'est pas du domaine de la *physique du monde* et appartient à un autre genre des spéculations *plus élevées*. Immanuel Kant, du très petit nombre des philosophes qu'on n'a pas accusé d'impiété jusqu'ici, a marqué les limites des explications physiques avec une rare sagacité dans son célèbre ‘Essai sur la Théorie et la Construction des Cieux,’ publié à Königsberg en 1755.”

The behaviour of the Town Deputies is very noble: it is a delight and, withal, a wonder to find so much public spirit amongst people in such different stations. Hatred of one particular course unites—but only apparently.

It is, indeed, very wrong of me not to have sent an answer yet, to so excellent a man as the author of the

“ Religious Poetry of the Jews in Spain ;”* I wanted, before I did so, to read it, and terror at finding I had, on the 14th September, reached the seventy-sixth year of my age, threw me so entirely into the “ Kosmos” that I thereby neglected even duties which were dear to me. I shall personally thank Dr. Sachs, and beg you, before I do so, to excuse—I dare not say justify—me to him.

Most gratefully yours,

Wednesday night.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

The notice about Hormayr, which, however, in the political part, strangely breaks off in 1808, is very interesting. What a mass of works—150 volumes !

CII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, October 27th, 1845.

I should be sorry, my dear friend, for a friend of Thiers, warmly recommended to me by him, to leave Berlin without having enjoyed the pleasure of seeing you. M. Thomas, one of the editors of the “ Revue des deux Mondes,” is the author of a very important work on the ancient Provincial Constitution of France, composed from authentic records. I commend him to your indulgence.

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

(In great haste.)

* Dr. Moritz Sachs, a very meritorious Jewish *savant* at Berlin.—TR.

CIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, November 30th, 1845.

Gifts, my dear friend, are doubly dear, when they reach me through a hand like yours. I wrote at once to the excellent Countess. You are quite right in saying that that sweet poem proves the writer to have been wondrously imbued with her subject.

It seemed more delicate to write to Baron Hormayr and not to the Baroness. May I beg you to inclose my note, if you approve of it in point of form. That liberal-minded man has for a long time been an object of my admiration. His literary activity astounds me. I have had the pleasure to-day of seeing Dr. Sachs. I shall be happy to give the King his book myself; but it is an epoch in which nothing remains fixed—everything turns to airy images, which recur again and again, ominous and misshapen, in connexion with former fancies. Oftentimes one dreads the ulterior results of these *incitements*, by which it was hoped a better state of things would be produced.*

How is it that “Kosmos” has achieved such an unexpected success? Partly, I suppose, from the train of thought which it awakens in the reader’s mind, and partly from the flexibility of our German tongue, which renders word-painting (representing things as they really are) so easy.

I shall call upon you, my dear friend, to thank you for the manner in which you have extolled Vol-

* Humboldt’s anticipations have been indeed fulfilled.—Tr.

taire's intellectual and moral merit.* Your Revelations are charming; but Duncker-Freytag, the recruiting officer, the sentry, and the laughable suspicion arising out of the nightly attempt upon Madame Denis, will always remain very mysterious.

With unaltered attachment, yours,

Sunday.

A. v. Ht.

I cannot forget Breul, the merchant. Minister Bülow was very, very sorry that you did not find him at home. You will be extremely welcome to him and his wife, every evening from half-past seven till nine.

CIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Thursday, January 15th, 1846.

Mr. Milnes and what he may have said about the King, "who showed him no personal civilities,"† have little interest for me; but I shall be very glad if my bold interference on behalf of Prutz has at last been of service to him. This is the miserable All that I can effect in my present position; but I shall die in the conscientious conviction of never having *forsaken*, to the last day of my life, any of those who entertain opinions like *my own*. Your approval I prize *highly*, my dear friend.

The "Quarterly Review" says that my style is

* "Voltaire, in Frankfort-on-the-Main, in 1753." By K. A. Varnhagen von Ense.

† This quotation is given in English in the original.—TR.

prolix, and that I could never write a page of “vivid expression.”* With constant attachment, your

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Pardon me, like a true philosopher, for the half-sheet: I made a mistake in the address.

CV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, January 25th, 1846.

An official dinner given at the Palace to the Friedensritter (Knights of Peace),† of whom I am the unworthy Chancellor—some dreadful hours at Bülow’s, whose case grows more desperate every day—and a ball at the Palace, from which I have but just returned—yet I cannot lay me down without thanking you briefly for your intellectual food. I glory in the retrospect of a poetical age which has called forth a nobler—I should say a more vigorous one; but I gladly turn anew from the long “Threnody,”‡ “the blue eyes and the black,” and Besser’s facetious *rococo*,§ to your “Zinzendorf.” That is a great, a most successful life-picture; a form towering above all that our own deeply excited times produce in other directions. Your “Zinzendorf” always was read with admiration by my brother. How is its interest increased by what we see, or rather are looking forward to! But where are, in the intellectual glaciers

* *Sic.* in original.—TR.

† Members of the order *pour le Mérite*.—TR.

‡ Haller’s *Trauerode* is supposed to be meant, as Gentz was in the habit of quoting Haller to Varnhagen.—TR.

§ Court Poet and Master of the Ceremonies to Friedrich the First, the first king of Prussia. He was in 1684 and 1685 Ambassador in England, and died in 1728.—TR.

of the present time, personalities who can compare with Zinzendorf, Lavater, and Stilling . . .

Most gratefully yours,

Saturday night.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

I have to-day expressed to Ranke my horror at his conduct at a sitting at which I was not present, with respect to Preuss*—a much loftier and nobler nature than his own. You have probably not yet received the papers in which I am immoderately praised and blamed. (“North British Review,” and “Quarterly Review.”) In Germany my prose is often found fault with as too poetical. In the “Quarterly Review” it is called heavy, devoid of all life, *not a vivid description.*† How different are national sentiments!

CVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, February 7th, 1846.

The release of poor Bülow took place yesterday at noon. Thursday night at 11, as he was retiring to rest, he fell, as if dead, into the arms of his valet. A fit of apoplexy! He closed his eyes, and never opened them again. Towards morning his pulse was 140: bleeding had no effect. For some time before his death he had lost all consciousness. His family is sadly shocked. But the event is fortunate; his excellent wife would otherwise have sunk under the duties imposed upon her. We shall carry him on Tuesday quite privately to the Column in Tegel, that

* Johann David Erdmann Preuss, the biographer of Friedrich the Great and editor of his works.—TR.

† *Sic in original.*—TR.

supports the statue of Hope. In the midst of sorrows caused by his death, and letters to be written to Guizot, Metternich, and Aberdeen, I can only answer by a few words the beautiful and genial letter of Baroness Arnim. I have little hope that the *old regents* in Weimar will appoint Prutz or Fallersleben.* I had thought at first of Guhrauer,† whom I am sure you, too, would prefer. You know well how glad I should be at Prutz's appointment (I do not know Fallersleben personally); but the whole passage referring to the lady's sick-room, the King, and myself, must be altered; it rests on a false report. I never showed the book to the King, nor did I manage the withdrawal of the lawsuit with the King himself—who, on account of his old Kulmbacher ‡ cousin, was, ever since the publication of the play, angry with its author, Dr. Prutz—but through Minister Bodelschwingh.§ On him Prutz had left an agreeable impression, which it was not difficult for me to improve. Prutz had petitioned to have the suit dismissed. (He had not, by the way, lost all his chances in it.) It was considered advisable, as he had offered to meet the Government half-way, not to oppose him. The passage, “Our King should first be asked,” must by all means be omitted. It would offend the Grand Duchess, who, on all occasions, insists on her independence of Prussia. She had even lately to defend Chancellor

* Hoffmann von Fallersleben, the poet.—Tr.

† G. E. Guhrauer, the biographer of Leibnitz and of Lessing.—Tr.

‡ The “Kulmbacher” cousin alluded to in Dr. Prutz’s play, is the Margrave of Anhalt-Baireuth; of one of the collateral branches of the Royal House of Brandenburg.—Tr.

§ Ernst von Bodelschwingh, Cabinet Minister from 1844 to 1848, a gentleman of doubtful politics.—Tr.,

Müller, because a complaint was made by Prussia to the Court of Weimar of his having permitted a Journal which was interdicted here, to be read in one of the Weimar Clubs!! The Court of Weimar sent a dignified reply; but it seems to me hardly probable that it would appoint either Prutz or Fallersleben. *Credat Judæus Apella.* Pardon, to-day, my dear friend, this confused writing.

Your,

Saturday.

A. Ht.

CVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 20th February, 1846.

Can you guess, my dear friend, who sent me this remarkable pamphlet? Do you guess anything from the seal, and the name on the address, "M——?" Is that the author, and to what journal may the article belong? Profound it certainly is not, nor does it show any great political penetration. The passage on p. 8 the author has himself underlined, and this very passage contains a contradiction! Prussia ought to find unity in an American-like confederation. The passages (on p. 3) referring to Friedrich II. and his works, and "Kant a Guillotine," p. 5, are exactly in the style of Minister Thile. I was indignant at both of them. The author knows the name of everybody; all the scandal of the street-porters (*Eckensteher*) is affected at the liberalism of Bodelschwingh (p. 14), who still continues duly to justify the expulsion of the Baden deputies. He does not venture to visit Eichhorn with

a word of reproach. Only the last line is grand and beautiful.

With unchanging affection, yours,
Friday. A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, March 29th, 1846.

I have only just leisure to tell you, that I shall for certain be in Sans Souci from June till September, and to thank you heartily, my excellent friend, for the affectionate way in which you make mention of my brother's "Agamemnon."* To pick out with malicious spite exactly 16 lines out of 1700!! Some complained that they did not wish my brother's translation to be represented in a royal palace. Now, as the "States' Gazette" comes every evening into the hands of the King, they thought it was useful to abuse Wilhelm. The very next morning I answered the article in "Spener's Journal;" but gently, because the very well-informed and unpoetical Dr. Franz now asks for an increase of his pension. I was myself on the watch to prevent the King seeing my reply. Return me the paper. At least, up to yesterday, he had never said anything to me about it. I am working at "Kosmos," not unsuccessfully, I think; but with a heavy heart, on account of public affairs. Your news from England are very interesting.

With heartiest friendship, your,
Sunday. A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* Wilhelm v. Humboldt's translation of the Agamemnon of Eschylus.—TR.

CIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 30th March, 1846.

Again I forward you a few autographs, of little importance—in number ten—from

Villemain ;

Bessel ;

Victor Hugo ;

Rückert (you have several of his) ;

Manzoni (filled with praises of me, but not in good style);

Thiers;

The widow of Lucien Bonaparte ;

Three notes from the Duchess of Orleans.

I add to these fugitive leaves a letter to the King, which I most earnestly beg of you not to let anybody see, and *to return me to-morrow*, because I might want it. I will give you the letter by-and-by. It sometimes happens that the King, instead of writing me a note in reply, writes his answer on the letter itself. He did so yesterday. The Ministers would be content to wink at the gymnastics of the suspicious Dr. Massmann, of whom the King is very fond, and whom he wishes to retain here. My letters will show you, at any rate, that I speak my mind ; and how the wrong forces its way in, and people deprive themselves of all means for free action.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CX.

HUMBOLDT TO FRIEDRICH WILHELM THE FOURTH.

This morning, as early as eight o'clock, I sent to the Köthen Strasse, in order to arrange, in compliance with Your Majesty's confidential mission, an interview with Professor Massmann* upon the present crisis in his affairs. He has just quitted me, having again left a glorious impression of solidity, clearness of thought, and enthusiastic energy in influencing youth,—that *indestructible*, ever youthful institution of humanity. To be mistrustful of all inspiriting agencies, is to deprive the State of its nourishing and sustaining power. It is now two years since Professor M. has seen Minister von Bodelschwingh, but the latter had then treated him very kindly; and now it is the wish of Massmann, without obtruding himself, to be in a position to answer any question without embarrassment. As I anticipate great things from this interview, considering the noble and open character of Minister von Bodelschwingh, I must very humbly beg Your Majesty to let me be informed, whether, according to the orders you have given, the Minister is to send for Professor M., or whether

* Hans Ferdinand Massmann was born at Berlin, 1797, and is now Professor of Mediæval German Language and Literature in the University of that city. One of Heinrich Heine's *bêtes noires*, a promoter and teacher of gymnastics according to Jahn's system, which, in 1820, were put down as demagogical. In addition to the works named in the above letter, he published a magnificent commentary on the "Germania" of Tacitus. He also collected and edited the literature of the "Dance of Death," and wrote the "History of Mediæval Chess." He was summoned to Berlin in 1842, by the Prussian Government, and intrusted with the foundation of a National Institution for Gymnastics.—TR.

the latter is to take the initiative and call upon the Minister, as being induced to do so by expressions of Your Majesty. That Massmann's great merits in elucidating the poetry of the Hohenstaufen period, and the talent which he evinced in the lecture room, can have been forgotten, surprises me greatly.

In Gervinus' "History of German Literature" I find the following works noticed with approbation : Massmann's "Monuments of the German Language," 1828 ; his "Poems of the Twelfth Century," his "Legends," and "Songs of Chivalry." How should a man be dangerous to the young, whom the King of Bavaria had appointed tutor to his princes, and from whom the Prince Royal boasts to have received the most beneficial incitements to intellectual freedom, and the fulfilment of his future duties as a ruler ? The times we live in are not melancholy, but earnest. The sphere of influence and action becomes narrowed so soon as we allow suspicion to prevent us from adopting the best powers at our command. Enthusiastically attached to your person, to the splendour of your reign, and glory of the fatherland, I feel deeply afflicted when *your* noblest intentions are in danger of being misunderstood. Certainly there are very estimable people who, from mere affection towards Your Majesty, would be glad to see me either under the Column in Tegel, or once more on the other side of the Rhine. With grateful devotion, Your Majesty's most faithful,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, March 29th, 1846.

(The King wrote on the back of this letter :)

Heartiest thanks, dearest Humboldt. M. Bodel-

schiwingh will send for Massmann. In haste, as ever, your faithful,

To Alexander v. Humboldt.

F. W.

Here.

CXI.

BESSEL TO HUMBOLDT.

Königsberg, February 12th, 1846.

I have learnt, with sorrow, that your Excellency has to mourn the loss of Baron Bülow. Although I had not the good fortune to know him personally, I knew the sincere love of the uncle for the nephew, and often heard how enthusiastically it was returned. I knew him, moreover, by repute, as high-minded, talented, and sagacious. Would that I could speak words of consolation, such as I heard when my severe loss befell me !* But it is not given to every one to utter them. That time stanches the bleeding wound, which at first appeared as though it would never close, I have found from my own experience; and that death after *short* suffering is preferable to death after *long* suffering, is a truth which has often forced itself upon me !

The Chancellor, Baron Wegnern, communicated to me, on the 27th ult., the letter which he received from your Excellency. It contains the first news which I have received since the 7th November last year, on the subject of the portrait with which His Most Gracious Majesty thought to confer happiness on the poor sufferer. That its tidings were gladsome and soothing to me you may naturally suppose. Ever since the first

* The loss of his son. See Letter XLVIII.—TR.

ray of hope shone on me, it has incessantly occupied my mind. It has even awakened some superstition, since I connected with it the circumstance of my health having improved so much during the whole of December, as to excite in me the liveliest hope. This prospect of recovery, thought I, is granted me that I may still, for some while longer, enjoy the happiness which the dear picture of my honoured master is calculated to bestow!—a prospect which I cannot pretend formerly to have entertained, seeing that the experience of myself and others differ *as often* as they agree; and the result of my meditations on this mystery is this, that it belongs to the *innumerable mysteries* which lie yon side the curtain, dividing us from the great secrets of our own nature and those which Nature herself has placed between first causes and things perceptible around us. True, I made allowances for the rising superstition, by reflecting on the indisputable axiom, that vivid and cheering influences on the mind and spirit manifest themselves through reaction on the body. But why, then, has not the latter shown itself in my case? Be that, however, as it may, this fact remains—the picture of the King has ever been before my eyes in sleepless nights, and every morning gave me hopes *that* day might bring me tidings of it.

I can well understand that the care for the welfare of millions of subjects, equally dear to the heart of the monarch, rules the ruler himself; that it compels him to surrender to the pressure of the moment the adjustment of the countless and conflicting interests around him. I, therefore, fully comprehend that the King, even if he does not forget benefits

which he wishes to dispense, as he does those which he has dispensed, cannot pledge himself within any definite time to the accomplishment of that which he designs for me. I feel, moreover, well assured that I am standing on a mine, which may at any moment explode, and that *to-day* is, therefore, not master of the destinies of *to-morrow*. I thought it prudent, therefore, to confine to my own breast the hope that was working within it, of possessing that dearest of all portraits, and not even to disclose it to my wife or daughters until I could receive such further news of its actual fulfilment as circumstances admitted. An extreme aversion to spreading news which the next moment might prove unfounded, based on a sad experience that falsehood and distortion are ever in wait for such occasions ; moreover, a fear of imposing, by too early circulation of the report, a sort of constraint (*sit venia verbo*) on the King ; all these considerations seemed to me to make inviolable silence a necessity. But when your Excellency's letter to Baron Wegern spread the news without my intervention, and when the near accomplishment of my hopes presented itself to me, the obligation of silence on my part ceased ; and from that moment I began to revel, by anticipation, in the enjoyment of possessing the portrait.

The very next day (28th January) I committed to paper the testamentary directions which should dispose of the picture at my death. I consider it as the common property of our country, not only from the idea connected with it, that "*it might give pleasure to the poor sufferer,*" but also for various other reasons. I, therefore, did not wish to leave it to my

family ; but after long and careful reflection, down to the 27th of January, to bequeath it to my native town of Minden, in such form that the highest military and civil authorities of the province, together with the mayor of the town, should decide the place and mode of its future preservation. Moreover, on that very 28th of January, I took active steps towards executing other plans connected with the hope thus graciously afforded me. These plans have occupied me much during the last few months. In order appropriately to receive the portrait of our highly-revered monarch, it is requisite that the place where I intend to have it hung should be put in the best possible order ; I, therefore, passed sentence on the present fittings and furniture of the rooms, and ordered a new set, as luxurious and tasteful (for a professor you must recollect !) as I could devise. The orders for the execution of these measures were immediately despatched, so that the opening of the navigation in spring will convey to me all that I can wish for. I shall find fault with no one who calls me foolish for pursuing plans of improvement in my dwelling-place whilst the probability of my *soon* leaving it is overwhelmingly great ; but were I to defer it, the prospect of the King's portrait arriving would trouble me, instead of, as it now does, raising me above my many woes. If I do but enjoy the sight of that picture for a single day, my passage from this world to another will be, if through a narrow, through a lovely border land !

One thing more I will add before I cease wearying your Excellency with the train of consequences which have flowed from the priceless, anxiously-expected gift of my liege lord. Chancellor von

Wegnern has commissioned Professor Simson* to express to me a wish that I would cause a notice, with reference to the picture, to appear in the public prints. I declared myself opposed to that course, partly from the reasons I have before given you, and partly because such notice would come more appropriately after the picture had been received. Should this arrival happen when I no longer have the power to write, Simson knows what the notice should contain, to be in accordance with my wish.

Oh ! how I long for once to gaze upon the beauteous sight which Biela's Comet now presents ! Wichmann, here, did not observe anything of it on the 11th of January. The cloudy sky was perhaps the cause of it ; but on the 15th he clearly saw both heads of the comet. Next day he gave me an account of it by word of mouth, but I could gather no clear notion on the subject—believed, indeed, that what he called a second comet's head was only an accumulation of nebulæ, such as other comets, too, have already exhibited in greater or smaller distance from the real head. I charged him at his next observation to make as true a sketch of it as he could, and let me have it. The state of the sky, and the frequently low positions of the Comet, delayed the drawing and measurements till the 26th of January. Since that time, the second head of the Comet has been observed with the greatest

* Martin Eduard Simson was at this time not so important a person as he subsequently became. He was a native of Königsberg, born 1810 ; became Professor of Jurisprudence, and in 1848 was elected a Deputy for Königsberg in the Frankfort Parliament ; in this Assembly his influence was great, and he acted successively as Secretary, Vice-President, and President. He belongs in politics to the Gotha party—that is, the Constitutionalists. At the present time (1860), he is President of the Second Prussian Chamber.
—Tr.

attention. The observations of it made here, are the first among those which hitherto have become known. In all places, attention has been drawn to it, and measurements made; so that, in spite of the season of the year, we may expect a beautiful series of observations, which may produce great results. As far as the matter has been developed to the present moment, I think that I must recognise again a working of polar forces. The further pursuit, however, will justify, I hope, a more than superficial opinion.

Owing to the use of the incomparable heliometer, the observations of the new planet have been conducted with an exactitude far exceeding that of the best observations of the meridian. The full benefit of its use will not, however, be enjoyed unless the positions of the stars with which it is compared, are determined with equal accuracy. The whole force of the meridional observations is, therefore, brought to bear on the latter, and at my suggestion, Dr. Busch is not troubling himself about the planet itself: I have also requested Encke and Schumacher* to assist in determining the position of the stars. The former has received from hence a series of excellent observations to serve as materials for determining the orbit, and will receive a continuation of them in a few days. It is most fortunate that I arranged and published in the first volume of my "Astronomical Researches" the result of the extensive investigations I had made into the exact reduction of observations by means of the heliometer; but for that, in my present useless state, Wichmann would be unable to reduce *exactly*, and

* Encke, Director of the Observatory at Berlin; Schumacher, Director at Altona.—Tr.

would thus lose the interest which attaches to the observations of the planet only during the first period of observation, and is consequent upon the immediate calculation of the observations.

I hope that Encke's calculations will obtain, by means of this basis, such an accuracy as will, at the re-appearance of the planet, be proved perfect within a few seconds.

At last, to conclude, with deepest respect, till death,
Your Excellency's most obedient,

F. W. BESEL.

Note by Humboldt.—The last letter but one that I received from that great and noble-minded man.

CXII.

VICTOR HUGO TO HUMBOLDT.

20 mars, 1845.

Vous avez bien voulu, Monsieur le baron, et illustre confrère, me promettre que vous accepteriez de ma main “Notre-Dame de Paris,” et être assez bon pour vous charger de l'offrir en mon nom à votre auguste Roi, pour lequel vous connaissez ma sympathie et mon admiration. Je joins à “Notre-Dame de Paris” mon discours si sérieux à l'Académie. Je serais heureux que vous eussiez quelque plaisir à accueillir cette marque de ma haute et profonde considération.

Le votre

VICTOR HUGO.

CXIII.

FRIEDRICH RUECKERT TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, March, 1846.

I had the misfortune to miss your Excellency twice, when calling to express my thanks for your kindness and affability: and as I am off to-morrow to my rural solitude, I bid you heartily farewell for the summer. God grant you many a long day wherein successfully to accomplish your great work—a work which, at this moment, lies nearer to my heart than any of my own. A monument of honour, I look upon it, for Germany—its representative before all Europe. As a German, I am proud you have not written it in French.

I would also beg leave to introduce to you my eldest son, now occupied in private tuition at Jena. He must now try his fortune with your Excellency, by the delivery of this letter.

In conclusion, I beg of you to intercede for me with their Majesties, whom I was not fortunate enough to see this winter. May it be vouchsafed me to produce something worthy of their approval and of yours. You, I trust, will be assured that my disposition unsuits me to appear before the public of a capital, and is rather suited to cultivate the Muses in the quiet solitude of the country; and thither I am about to retire, grateful for the high favour of the King, and full of the sincerest veneration for your Excellency.

RUECKERT.

CXIV.

ALEXANDER MANZONI TO HUMBOLDT.

Milan, 6 decembre, 1844.

Monsieur le Baron,—Je n'avais pas hésité à exprimer ma confiance dans une auguste et parfaite bonté; mais, au lieu d'une juste confiance, c'eût été de ma part une présomption impardonnable, que d'osser prévoir sous quelle forme ingénieusement aimable cette bonté daignerait se manifester. J'ai donc acquis une seconde fois le droit précieux (on me ferait presque oublier que c'est un devoir sacré) de prier Votre Excellence de mettre aux pieds de votre noble Roi l'humble tribut d'une reconnaissance, devenue, s'il est possible, plus vive et plus profonde. Et, dussé-je paraître indiscret, je ne puis renoncer à saisir cette occasion de renouveler le respectueux hommage des vœux que, comme habitant de ce monde, et, à ce titre, *nihil humani a me alienum putans*, j'avais, depuis longtemps dans mon cœur. Cet hommage cesserait d'être pur, et perdrat ainsi son unique prix, s'il entraînait le plus léger sacrifice de ma conscience catholique, c'est à dire, de ce qui est l'âme de ma conscience. Mais, grâce à Dieu, il n'en est pas ainsi; car, parmi les caractères et les signes de la haute destinée, que je salue de loin, avec une joie respectueuse, il m'est donné d'admirer et d'aimer le développement de l'œuvre la plus excellente de la justice, qui est la liberté du bien.

Mon admiration pour vous, Monsieur le Baron, quand même elle ne se contenterait pas d'être le simple écho d'une si grande renommée, ne doit pas vous surprendre; car, si, comme j'entends toujours dire, il

n'y a pas de savant qui n'ait quelque chose à apprendre de vous, il est peu d'ignorants à qui vous n'ayez appris quelque chose. A ce propos, et au risque d'abuser de votre indulgence, je ne puis vous taire mon espérance d'avoir un souvenir de Humboldt, souvenirs moins précieux sans doute que ceux que je dois à sa bienveillance, mais qui aura aussi son prix. Mon concitoyen, le Comte Alexandre Lito Modignani, dans un voyage, qu'il a fait, guidé surtout par vous, dans l'Amérique méridionale, a été chercher, sur la montagne de Quindia, les magnifiques Céroxylons à l'époque de la maturité des fruits, en a fait abattre un, et a bien voulu, à son retour, me faire part des semences qu'il en avait recueillies. Mises en terre le printemps passé, aucune n'a encore levé ; mais les ayant visitées dernièrement, je les ai trouvées toutes saines, et il y en avait deux où l'on voyait un léger renflement à la base. Je serais heureux, et même un peu fier de posséder quelque individu, et assez rare, je crois, du peuple ancien et nouveau, que vous avez conquis à la science.

C'est avec le plus profond respect, et, permettez-moi d'ajouter, avec cette affection qu'on éprouve toujours pour un grand homme, et qu'on souhaite tant de lui exprimer, que j'ai l'honneur d'être de Votre Excellence le très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

ALEXANDRE MANZONI.

Note by Humboldt.—Written to A. Humboldt on the occasion of his refusing the Civil decoration of the Order of Merit. I had to write to him to say that he might retain his liberty in its fullest extent, and need never wear the Cross; but that a name so great and so illustrious as his, must not be wanting in the list of the Knights of the Order.

CXV.

THIERS TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, août, 1845.

Monsieur!—Je prends la liberté de vous adresser un jeune français, plein de talent, de connaissances et de curiosité. Il veut connaître l'Allemagne, et Berlin en particulier. Je n'ai pas cru pouvoir l'adresser mieux qu'au savant illustre qui fait les honneurs de Berlin aux étrangers. Permettez-moi de vous le recommander d'une manière toute spéciale. M. Thomas est mon ami particulier, et l'ami de tous vos amis de Paris. Veuillez agréer d'avance tous mes remerciements pour l'accueil que vous voudrez bien lui faire, et recevoir l'assurance de mon attachement et de ma haute considération.

A. THIERS.

CXVI.

THE PRINCESS OF CANINO, LUCIEN BONAPARTE'S
WIDOW, TO HUMBOLDT.*Paris, mai, 1845.*

Je vous adresse, Monsieur le Baron, un exemplaire de ma réfutation à M. Thiers, au sujet des paragraphes attentatoires de cet historien à la mémoire de mon mari. L'estime que vous lui portiez, ainsi que votre cher frère et votre estimable belle-sœur pour moi tous les deux de douce et noble mémoire, me fait espérer que vous recevrez avec intérêt ce témoignage de tous les sentiments que je professe pour vous, Monsieur le

Baron, et dans les quels je vous prie de me croire votre
affectionnée

LA PRINCESSE DE CANINO,
veuve Bonaparte Lucien.

CXVII.

THE DUCHESS HELENE OF ORLEANS TO HUMBOLDT.

Tuileries, 12th February, 1845.

I will no longer keep the treasure you have intrusted me with, and from which I have derived such real enjoyment. Once more, my heartiest thanks for sending it. Let me hope before long to have fresh matter for my gratitude. You see selfishness keeps the upper hand in me after a most unjustifiable fashion.

Your Excellency's well-wisher,
HELENE.

CXVIII.

THE DUCHESS HELENE OF ORLEANS TO HUMBOLDT.

Neuilly, 12th May, 1845.

Your Excellency will have to submit to being often pressed into my service; to-day, however, I appear before you with a grand request—no less than that you will give me and my cousin of Weimar,* the pleasure and profit of your company in a visit to Versailles. We think of making the trip on Thursday. The King invites you, for that evening, to dinner and theatricals at Trianon. If you are courageous enough to undertake this altered pilgrimage with us, I beg your Excellency to be here at Neuilly by half-past 11

* Prince Edward.—Tr.

on Thursday, to accompany us in our ramble. Should, however, other engagements detain you, pray send me a *candid confession.*

Accept the expression of my sincere regard for your Excellency.

HELENE.

CXIX.

THE DUCHESS HELENE OF ORLEANS TO HUMBOLDT.

(*Winter, 1845.*)

I missed at Trianon the satisfaction of bidding your Excellency farewell, and reiterating my thanks for your noble work. Allow me now, in sending a few lines to my beloved *cousine*,* to take the opportunity of doing so, and to express once more my heartfelt wish of being able, ere long, to welcome your Excellency again on French soil.

With sincerest regard and esteem,
Your Excellency's well-wisher,

HELENE.

CXX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 22nd April, 1846.

The permission to read in *your* presence has gratified me extremely; and although I must ascribe much of your warm and kindly praise to a goodness of heart which delights in giving pleasure to an aged friend, there yet remains enough to give me great satisfaction

* The Princess of Prussia (mother of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm) of the House of Saxe-Weimar.—Tr.

in my inmost heart. The wielding of our noble, pliant, harmonic, descriptive language, is but a secondary consideration. I shall certainly find an opportunity of availing myself of your excellent advice touching Flemming * and Madame de Sevigné. I have also taken with me the somewhat turgid Seneca (*Quæst. natur.*), with the view of rummaging his pages.

But now for the object of this note. The King said to me yesterday as he was retiring to rest, "Let Bettina know that she may make herself quite easy as to the principal party.† There has never been any thought of giving him up to the Russians." Myself: "You ought to write and tell her so yourself." The King: "Yes, I hope I shall." He expressed on the occasion a very kind feeling towards Bettina.

Your attached friend,

Wednesday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

What a sad thing this—the eighth attempt at assassination!‡ Strange that Ministers and Cabinet Councillors are so rarely fired at. Such events make one the more uncomfortable, as the probability or improbability of their recurrence is absolutely beyond all calculation.

* Paul Flemming (born in 1609, died in 1640,) a poet, best known by his spiritual hymns.—Tr.

† During the Polish democratic insurrection of 1846, Mieroslawski was a leading personage; he was taken prisoner and condemned to death at the great trial in 1847, but the sentence was commuted to perpetual imprisonment. In the March days of 1848 he regained his liberty.—Tr.

‡ The attempt at assassination made upon Louis Philippe on the 17th April, 1846, at Fontainbleau.—Tr.

CXXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 18th May, 1846.

I send you, my dear friend, for your collection, a very remarkable letter of Prince Metternich, winding up in a strain half theological. It is spirited and elevated in style, and towards its conclusion expresses some little dread of Pantheism.

Your old and sincere friend,

Monday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CXXII.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Vienne, ce 10 mai, 1846.

Mon cher Baron!—Vous trouvez ci-joint mon vote.* Je le donne en conscience et vous absous du crime de l'intrigue électorale qui court le monde.—Le Roi et son Chancelier sont des appréciateurs intègres du mérite scientifique, et je sais marquer la place qui m'appartient dans les avenues de la science et qui à mon vif regret est loin du sanctuaire!

Ce que je viens de vous dire, mon cher Baron, n'est ni de la forfanterie ni un excès de modestie; c'est tout bonnement l'histoire de ma vie. Vous ne la connaissez pas, cette histoire, et je vais vous la conter en peu de mots.

J'ai dans l'âge où la vie prend une direction, éprouvé un penchant que je me permettrais de qualifier d'irré-

* Note by Humboldt.—Le prince a voté pour M. Hermann de Leipzig.

sistible pour les sciences exactes et naturelles, et un dégoût que j'appellerais absolu pour la vie d'affaires proprement dites, si je n'avais vaincu mon dégoût irrésisté à mon penchant. C'est le sort qui dispose des hommes, et leurs qualités comme leurs défauts décident de leurs carrières. Le sort m'a éloigné de ce que j'aurais voulu, et il m'a engagé dans la voie que je n'ai point choisie. Une fois lancé, je me suis soumis sans perdre de vue vers quoi portèrent mes inclinations, et il m'est résulté, que ce que j'eusse désiré pouvoit regarder comme le but de ma vie intellectuelle, n'en est devenu que le soulagement. Le Roi m'a imprimé la marque d'un savant. Je sais à quoi m'en tenir à cet égard. S'il s'agit du cœur, le Roi ne s'est point mépris.

Ce que vous me dites de la prochaine apparition du second volume du "Cosmos," m'en fait attendre l'étude avec un vif désir ; on ne vous lit pas, on vous étudie, et la place d'un écolier me va en plein. Personne n'est plus appellé que je le suis, à rendre justice à votre remarque relative à l'influence que le christianisme a exercée sur les sciences naturelles,* comme sur l'humanité entière et dès lors sur toutes les sciences, car cette remarque s'est depuis longtemps fait jour en moi. Elle est d'une complète justesse et sa cause génératrice et simple comme le sont toutes les vérités, celles apprises comme celles inapprises, circonstances qui ne changent rien à l'essence d'une vérité. Le faux mène au faux, comme le vrai conduit au vrai. Aussi longtemps que l'esprit s'est maintenu dans le faux,

* Note by Humboldt.—J'avais dit sur la vivacité du sentiment de la nature ; j'avais comparé St. Basile à Bernardin de St. Pierre.

dans la sphère la plus élevée que l'esprit de l'homme puisse atteindre, les conséquences de ce triste état, ont dû réagir dans toutes les directions morales, intellectuelles et sociales et opposer à leur développement dans la droite voie, un obstacle insurmontable. *La bonne nouvelle* une fois annoncée, la position a dû changer. Ce n'est pas en *divinisant les effets*, que ceux-ci ont pu être suivis dans les voies de la vérité ; leur recherche est restée circonscrite dans la spéculation abstraite des philosophes et dans la verve des poètes. *La cause* une fois mise à couvert, les cœurs se sont mis en repos et les esprits se sont ouverts. Ceux-ci sont longtemps encore restés enveloppés dans les brouillards de la sceptique païenne quand enfin la philosophie scolastique a été débordée par la science expérimentale. Trouvez-vous mon raisonnement juste ? Si vous le trouvez, je ne suis pas en doute que vous ne partagiez ma crainte, que les progrès scientifiques véritables courent le risque d'être arrêtés par des esprits trop ambitieux, qui veulent remonter des effets à la cause, et qui trouvant la route coupée par les limites infranchissables que Dieu a posées à l'intelligence humaine, ne pouvant avancer, se replient sur eux-mêmes et retournent à la stupidité du paganisme en cherchant la cause dans les effets !

Le monde, mon cher Baron, est fort dangereusement placé. Le corps social est en fermentation ; vous me rendriez un bien grand service, si vous pouviez m'apprendre de quelle espèce est cette fermentation, si elle est spiritueuse, acide, ou putride ? J'ai bien peur que le *verdict* ne tourne vers la dernière de ces espèces, et ce n'est pas moi qui pourrais vous apprendre que ces produits ne sont guère utiles.

Veuillez recevoir les remercîments des miens pour votre aimable souvenir et l'assurance de ma vieille amitié.

METTERNICH.

CXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 30th May, 1846.

You may, my dear friend, not be indifferent as to the possession of the poem of the Crown Prince of Bavaria.* The language is less unpalatable than the Walhalla style,† and some passages in it are tender, though of no very great poetical pretensions.

Yours,

Saturday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 14th November, 1846.

What a brilliant reception, my dear friend, the fifth volume of my brother has met with at your hands! Forgive me, pray, if, owing to the sad pressure of business on the cold "historical hill,"‡ I omitted, in sending it, to add some few words of kind remembrance. With you I deplore the omissions to which you so kindly draw my attention. I think what is wanting might be supplied in the next volume. It was thought that the letters ought to be printed just as

* Maximilian, the present King. The poem is upon the death of the Princess Wilhelm, whose daughter he subsequently married.—Tr.

† The style of King Louis, the founder of the Walhalla, near Ratisbon, who is famous for the "lapidary" terseness of his language.—Tr.

‡ Sans Souci.—Tr.

my brother had prepared them for publication, and as they had been offered for sale. In no nation, I believe, can there be found another such as he, whose life was dedicated to the task of enriching the world of thought. How delighted am I with the prospect of once more seeing issue from your hands a masterpiece of sharply-defined, lively, yet delicate delineations of social and diplomatic incidents.

With unalterable attachment,
Yours gratefully,
A. HUMBOLDT.

It may, perhaps, not have been quite prudent, in a monarch historically great, to yield (albeit in the illusory atmosphere of Versailles) to the temptation of contrasting the memory of the barricades with a spectacle à la Louis XIV.,* and, for the sake of very uncertain gain, to have created great difficulties for his successor. The behaviour, however, of Palmerston and Albert-Victoria is churlish and in bad taste. Meanwhile, the sober Anglo-Americans are founding a western World Empire, threatening the commerce of the Chinese.

My MS. "On the Tissues of the Ancients," p. 106 and p. 113, appears to have been lost among the papers left by Wolf.† The "Effect of Church Music," p. 323, contains many finely written passages.

In the year 1846, we find the following remark in Varnhagen's Diary:—"In discussing the capacity of one of the younger Princes

* A reference to the Spanish marriages.—TR.

† Friedrich August Wolf, the distinguished philologist, chiefly known by his Homeric theory. He was intimate with both the Humboldts, who sometimes forwarded their papers to him for his opinion.—TR.

of * * *, an opinion was expressed that it was but small. Humboldt disputed it. ‘I deny that,’ said he, ‘I have lately held a conversation with him. Meeting me in the apartments of his mother, he said, “Who are you?” I said, “My name is Humboldt.” “And what are you?” “A Chamberlain of His Majesty.” “Is that all?” said the Prince, and he turned upon his heel and walked away. Unquestionable proof that, I think, of genius!’”

CXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 28th November, 1846.

I will say nothing to-day, my dear friend, about the glorious volume of your memoirs. You seem to succeed in everything you undertake. My object is to introduce to you M. Galuski, a talented Frenchman, who is better acquainted with Germany than you or I, and the writer of an Essay on A. W. Schlegel. He will stay here only a few days. Keep the autograph of Barante.*

Saturday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 6th December, 1846.

It may, perhaps, be some time, my dear friend, be-

* Letter of Introduction for M. Galuski from Barante to Humboldt.—Tr.

† Baron Guillaume Prospère Brugière Barante, a French statesman and savant, born 1782, in Auvergne. He was Prefect of La Vendée, and afterwards of the Lower Loire. During the Hundred Days, he resigned his post, and after the second Restoration he entered the service of the Government of Louis XVIII., in the Ministry of the Interior. In 1819 he was called to the Chamber of Peers, and formed one of the party of Broglie and Talleyrand. After the Revolution, in 1830, he was sent as Ambassador to Turin, where he remained till 1840. Among his works, the “History of the Dukes of Burgundy, of the House of Valois, 1364—1477,” made the most sensation.—Tr.

fore you see the “Cinq Jours de Berlin,” in which the Berliners (for they are introduced as the speakers) treat me as a tolerably agreeable gossip; they use me morally, but not altogether kindly. If my sayings are utterly devoid of *consistance*, I fear for the permanence of the world-fabric, the Kosmos. M. Barriere must certainly have paid *you* a visit *on the sixth day*, and it is you who have instilled all this into him. On Prussia’s *rôle*, and M. de Canitz, that paper contains some precious *morceaux* (*Cracoviana*).

For your collection of autographs I send you a complimentary letter of Mignet’s to me, and one written by myself in 1801, from *Indian Carthagena*,—a turning point in my life. The letter was addressed to *Citoyen* Baudin, then circumnavigating the globe with Perron; it was written at a time when probably no one in Europe retained the title of *Citoyen*. Baudin, instead of doubling Cape Horn and fetching me at Lima, had gone round the Cape of Good Hope to Australia.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Sunday.

I inclose a charming letter of my brother’s to Körner. It will be published in the sixth volume. I must ask you to return me this copy of it.

CXXVII.

MIGNET TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, 1 juillet, 1846.

Monsieur le Baron et très illustre confrère. Vous n’auriez pas la peine à croire combien j’ai été heureux et flatté d’apprendre que le volume sur “Antonio

Perez et Philippe II." vous avait intéressé et avait obtenu une approbation aussi élevée que celle de votre Roi. Le suffrage d'un Prince qui joint tant d'esprit à tant de savoir et qui est un des juges littéraires les plus ingénieux et les plus sûrs, ne pouvait qu'être du plus haut prix pour moi. Afin que le livre qui a été honoré de cet auguste suffrage en soit plus digne, me serait-il permis de vous prier, Monsieur et très illustre confrère, de l'offrir à votre souverain, sous la forme nouvelle, à la fois plus complète et plus achevée, que je viens de lui donner! C'est un respectueux hommage que le Roi de Prusse a encouragé par l'expression de son indulgente satisfaction et auquel vos bontés pour moi, ménageront, j'en suis sûr, un accueil favorable.

Je prends la liberté de vous adresser aussi, pour votre bibliothèque, un exemplaire de cette nouvelle édition. Des documents inattendus et fort curieux dont j'ai pu faire usage pour exposer, dans toute leur vérité, les projets de Don Juan d'Autriche, le meurtre d'Escovedo et la disgrâce de Perez, rendent l'édition précédente imparfaite.

Mais j'ai hâté de vous parler du premier volume du "Cosmos," qui m'a été remis de votre part, et où vous avez si admirablement montré, pour me servir d'une de vos belles expressions, "l'ordre dans l'univers et la magnificence dans l'ordre." Je l'ai lu avec le plaisir le plus vif et le plus profitable. C'est une exposition, pleine d'enchaînement et de grandeur, des phénomènes et des loix de l'univers, depuis ces lointaines nébuleuses d'où la lumière n'arrive à nous qu'après deux millions d'années jusqu'aux révolutions qui ont présidé à l'organisation actuelle de notre planète

et ont permis à l'homme de paraître, de vivre et de dominer à sa surface. Pour tracer cet immense tableau dans la féconde variété et sa majestueuse harmonie, il fallait, comme vous, posséder fortement toutes les sciences, avoir vu la nature sous ses aspects les plus divers et l'aimer profondément, unir enfin une imagination poétique à une intelligence sûre et vaste. Achevez vite ce bel ouvrage pour votre gloire et notre instruction, et agréez, très cher et très illustre confrère, l'expression de mes remerciements, de mon admiration, et de mon affectueux dévouement.

MIGNET.

CXXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO BAUDIN.

Carthagène des Indes, le 12 avril, 1801.

Citoyen,—Lorsque je vous embrassais la dernière fois rue Helvetius à Paris, et que je comptais partir pour l'Afrique et les grandes Indes, il ne me restait qu'un faible espoir de vous revoir et de naviguer sous vos ordres. Vous êtes instruit sans doute par nos communs amis les C. C. Jussieu, Desfontaines . . . combien mon voyage s'est changé, comment les Barbaresques m'ont empêché de partir pour l'Egypte, comment le Roi d'Espagne m'a accordé la permission de parcourir ces vastes domaines en Amérique et en Asie, d'y ramasser tous les objets qui peuvent être utiles aux sciences . . . Indépendant et toujours à mes propres frais, mon ami Bonpland et moi avons parcouru depuis deux ans les pays situés entre la côte, l'Ori-noko, le Casiquian, le Rio Negro et l'Amazone. Notre santé a resisté aux dangers énormes que présentent

les rivières. Au milieu de ces bois nous avons parlé de vous, de nos visites inutiles chez le C. François de Neufchâtel, de nos espoirs trompés. Sur le point de partir depuis la Havane pour le Mexique et les Isles Philippines, il nous est parvenu la nouvelle comment votre constance a su enfin vaincre toutes les difficultés. Nous avons fait des combinaisons, nous sommes sûrs que vous relâchez à Valparaiso, à Lima, Guayaquil. Nous avons changé à l'instant nos plans, et malgré la force des brises impétueuses de cette côte, nous sommes partis sur un petit Pilotboot pour vous chercher dans la Mer du Sud, pour voir si revenant sur nos anciens projets, nous puissions réunir nos travaux aux vôtres, si nous pouvions parcourir avec vous la Mer du Sud . . . Un malheureux passage de 21 jours depuis la Havane à Carthagène nous a empêchés de prendre la route de Panama et Guayaquil. Nous craignons que la brise ne souffle plus dans la Mer du Sud et nous entreprenons de poursuivre la route de terre par le Rio de la Magdalena, S. Fe, Popaján, Quito . . .

J'espère que nous serons au mois de juin ou commencement de juillet à la ville de Quito, où j'attendrai la nouvelle de votre arrivée à Lima. Ayez la grâce de m'y écrire deux mots sous l'adresse espagnole al Sr. Baron de Humboldt, Quito, casa del Sr. Gobernador Bn. de Caroudelet. Mon plan est au cas que je n'entende rien de vous, mon respectable ami, de visiter le Chimborazo, Losca . . . jusqu'au novembre 1801, et descendre en décembre ou janvier 1802 avec mes instrumens à Lima.

Vous verrez par cette narration, mon respectable ami, que le climat des Tropiques ne m'a pas rendu

phlegmatique, que je ne connais pas de sacrifices lorsqu'il s'agit de suivre des plans utiles et hardis. Je vous ai parlé avec franchise ; je sais que je vous demande plus que je vous offre, je ne puis croire même que des circonstances particulières pourraient vous empêcher de nous recevoir à votre bord . . . En ce cas cette lettre pourrait vous embarrasser, elle vous embarrasserait d'autant plus que vous nous honorez de votre amitié. J'ose vous prier de me parler franchement, je me réjouirai toujours d'avoir eu le plaisir de vous voir, et je ne me plaindrai jamais des événements qui nous gouvernent malgré nous. C'est par cette franchise que vous me donnerez le signe le plus précieux de vos bontés pour moi. Je continuerais alors ma propre expédition depuis Lima à Acapulco, Mexico, aux Philippines, Surate, Bassora, la Palestine—Marseille. Mais j'aime mieux croire que je puisse être des vôtres. Le C. Bonpland vous présente ses respects.

Salut et amitié inviolable.

ALEXANDRE HUMBOLDT.

Note by Humboldt. Cette lettre écrite au Capitaine Baudin à mon arrivée à Carthagène des Indes (en venant de la Havane) m'a été rendue, le Cap. Baudin n'ayant pas relâché à Lima.

A. HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, en Nov. 1846.

CXXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Sunday, 21st February, 1847.

I do not know if I have shown you a very charming letter of my brother's, written at Rome in 1805, on the occasion of Schiller's death. It was brought to

light only a few days ago, and will be published in the next volume of his works. I likewise inclose from among those received this week a very kind letter from Prince Metternich, and a very wooden and feeble one from Prince Albert. Metternich has published, at his own expense, a magnificent work, a description of his collection of fossils at Königswarth. He may, perhaps, in this, have had some slight ulterior design—viz., the appointment of himself, instead of Kolowrat, as President of the new Academy of Sciences. As to Prince Albert I had, at his request, when he was at Stolzenfels, ordered a copy of my “*Kosmos*” to be laid in his apartment, and he had the politeness not to thank me for it. Now the Black Bird* has made him polite, at least partly that, and partly — — He makes me speak of “revolving Seas of Light and *Terraces* of Stars;” a Coburg reading of my text, *quite English*,† from Windsor, where all is full of terraces. In “*Kosmos*” there occurs once (p. 159) the expression *Star-carpet*, to explain the starless spots by *openings* in the firmament. The book on Mexican Monuments, which he *makes me a present of*, I bought two years ago. A fine illustrated edition of Lord Byron’s works would have been a more delicate compliment. It is strange, too, that he never mentions Queen Victoria; who, perhaps, does not find my book on Nature sufficiently Christian. You see, I judge severely when Princes write.

Please to return Metternich and Albert soon, as I have not yet answered them. Wilhelm’s letter, too, I must beg you to let me have again by-and-by; it

* The Prussian Order of the Black Eagle.—Tr.

† *Sic.* in original.—Tr.

is the only copy there is, and I have given the original away to Schlesier,* who was most anxious to have something in my brother's handwriting.

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CXXX.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Wien, Februar, 1847.

Mon cher Baron!—Je commencerai cette lettre par vous féliciter de la nouvelle marque d'honneur que le Roi vient de vous donner. L'Aigle, sous l'ombre des ailes duquel—*sub umbra alarum*—vous avez su tant produire, se présentera bien sur votre poitrine! *Suum cuique!*

Voici ce qui me reste à vous dire!

Vous savez que je ne suis pas un savant et que je n'ai point la prétention d'en être un; vous savez par contre que je suis ami des sciences, et c'est dans cette qualité que j'ai fourni à des savans les moyens de mettre au jour l'opuscule dont je vous envoie le premier exemplaire. J'espère que vous en trouverez l'exécution convenable. Je crois être aujourd'hui en possession de la collection la plus complète qui existe des monumens d'une époque, dont je n'ai pas la prétention de fixer la date, dont la *Gossau* renferme des restes sans nombre. L'histoire qu'écrivent les hommes embrasse un point imperceptible dans celle dont la nature possède les matériaux. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai donné mon nom à une *Ammonite*; ce sont les éditeurs

* Dr. Gustavus Schlesier, a friend of Varnhagen, editor of the works of F. Gentz.—Tr.

de l'opuscule. Ce que je sais, c'est que mon nom et même celui *d'Ammon*, était ignoré quand mon filleul était en vie !

Mille sincères hommages, mon cher Baron.

METTERNICH.

CXXXI.

PRINCE ALBERT TO HUMBOLDT.

Windsor Castle, 7th February, 1847.

Honoured M. le Baron,—Whilst reading the first volume of your “*Kosmos*,” I have constantly felt called upon to reiterate my thanks for the great intellectual pleasure which the study of it has afforded me. True, I am unable to make you the return of expressing an opinion, entitled to any weight, as to the merits of this admirable work, which I have received from your own hands. In order, however, that, in the absence of such an opinion, I may still impart to the expression of my gratitude at least some apparent weight, I offer you the inclosed work (Catherwood’s “*Views in Central America*”), which, as a sequel to your own large work on Spanish America, may perhaps commend itself to your attention. I need not say with what lively expectation I am looking forward to the publication of the second volume of “*Kosmos*.”

May Heaven,* of whose “revolving Seas of Light and Terraces of Stars” you have given us so noble a description, preserve you for many years to the Fatherland,

* The German “*Himmel*,” means both Heaven and the heavens.—Tr.

the world, and to “Kosmos” itself, in unimpaired freshness of body and mind. This is the sincere wish of
Yours, very sincerely,

ALBERT.

CXXXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 27th February, 1847.

Here, my dear friend, you have at length my letter of thanks for Carriere, with three very warm introductions.

You were right in scolding me for my too great severity against the Man of the Star-Terraces. I am severe only with the mighty ones, and this man made an uncomfortable impression on me at Stolzenfels. “I know that you sympathize greatly with the misfortunes of the Russian Poles. Unfortunately, the Poles are as little deserving of our sympathy *as the Irish*,” *mihi dixit!* And we are the handsome husband of the Queen of Great Britain !

I hasten to-day to Potsdam, to fetch all the manuscripts which have fortunately arrived from Erfurt. Madame von Bülow writes, that there is in them a long and beautiful passage concerning our dear Rahel, and much that is complimentary to you.

Your attached friend,

Saturday.

A. v. H.

CXXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 27th March, 1847.

I have been more virtuous than you give me credit for, my dear friend. I have quite done with the first volume of the “Letters”* (Theresa’s property). I have scarcely found anything to alter, and on the whole, have suppressed at the outside as much as would fill three to four pages—bread and butter affairs, domestic details, a few attacks of Madame Diede on Duke Charles of Brunswick, who would be sure to take his revenge by slandering her virtue. There is in them much that is beautiful, both as regards language and thought: a life-picture of the very rarest kind—an utter disregard of all human happiness and unhappiness, in so far as it does not tend to narrow the range of ideas—much that is biblical and doctrinal in Christianity—a medley of stoicism, and contempt of the events of the day—and yet, with all that, much of delicacy and tenderness in a correspondence which was continued to within four days of his death, written on lines, to enable the trembling hand to write at all.

Occasionally, lovers’ squabbles, *qui m’impatientent*,

* Charlotte Diede, the daughter of a country parson, had become acquainted with Wilhelm Humboldt, when a young man, at Pyrmont. Referring to this fugitive acquaintance, and to a passage he there had written in her album, she, many years after, addressed herself to Humboldt, when he was a minister, on the subject of her own unfortunate circumstances. Hence arose the famous correspondence known as “Wilhelm von Humboldt’s Letters to a Friend;” also translated into English, and alluded to in the above letter of A. v. Humboldt to Varnhagen. The manuscript of these letters of W. v. Humboldt was left as a legacy by Charlotte Diede to Therese von Bacheracht, a well-known German novelist.—TR.

which, however, I have left untouched, in order to abate nothing from the impression of Wilhelm's powerful individuality. Let me repeat, that I have never struck out more than five to six lines at a time ; all that I have suppressed as tedious and irrelevant, amounts to three to four written, and scarcely two printed pages. Where, however, you meet with a very great deal, often as much as half a page, struck out thus ----- this is the doing of the old lady herself. May be, the "Daughter of the Taubenheim Pastor"/* has had some morbid attacks of prudery. The ink will prove to you, that I have had no hand in these obliterations. The first volume contains a fine passage, referring to Theresa, and much in praise of the King of Bavaria. In the second volume, there is a description of Rahel, which will give you pleasure. Bettina, as Madame von Bülow tells me, is less kindly spoken of. This I shall certainly modify.

I hope to be able to put the whole of the first volume in your hands by Tuesday ; the second shall soon follow. I will bring it to you in due time, with notes and fac-similes (which must be abridged), inclosed in a tin box, with a padlock. You will then have the entire treasure in your hands. *Salvavi animam meam.* The whole will raise a fearful and fruitful outcry, and call forth the most conflicting opinions.

In sincerest friendship, yours,

A. v. Ht.

Have the kindness to try and manage to have the

* The title of a well-known ballad of Bürger's which has passed into a designation of girlish timidity and prudery.—Tr.

book printed away from Berlin, and, if possible, not to have it advertised until it is ready for publication.

I hope my letters for Carriere have duly come to hand.

Varnhagen wrote in his Diary, 30th March, 1847:—"Just as I got home, comes Humboldt, and brings me a heap of manuscript—the letters of his brother to Madame Diede. Humboldt takes as desponding a view of matters here as myself; but he consoles himself with the reflection that the (*octroyée*) Constitutions that have been granted are radically good-for-nothing, and that in the long run some good will come out of it all. He is prepared for violence of every kind—police savagery, popular fury, armed interference. The King, he thinks, has not the least inkling of it; he is intensely happy, has got up his Opening Speech, and bestows no further thought on the 11th of April and its consequences. To Humboldt he never said one word about the Parliament. In Michelet's*

* Professor Extraordinary of Philosophy at the University of Berlin, and one of the editors of Hegel's works. From the death of Altenstein in 1840, Eichhorn, in the interests of the Pietist party, had been constantly intriguing, but without success, to obtain the removal of Michelet from this post. At length, in 1846, the latter, in an Address to the Students of Berlin, upon the occasion of their presenting him with a silver cup, made use of an expression which Eichhorn endeavoured to represent as amounting to the advocacy of Revolutionary principles. This also failed of its effect. In 1847 the attempt was renewed. In June of that year Michelet published an Essay, which was construed into an instrument of disaffection, and legal steps were taken by the "Pietists" to obtain his removal. The University, feeling this to be an infringement of their privileges, made a move against these attempts of the Pietists, which party the King had so greatly favoured. The Rector of the University, Böckh, under the circumstances, addressed himself to Humboldt, who spoke to the King upon the subject; the result was, that, although Eichhorn obtained the dismissal of Michelet on the 15th April, 1847, the King made the proposition at the same time to suspend the matter upon condition that Michelet abstained from making any further speeches of this tenor,—if not, the Decree was immediately to take effect. The Minister had, however, in this way, been enabled to cut off any appeal. The Senate of the University, impressed with the illegality of this proceeding, petitioned the King to cancel the Minister's Decree, as contrary to law. The King replied,

affair, Eichhorn has egged on the King into a state of extraordinary exasperation ; it will, however, scarcely be feasible to dismiss Michelet, notwithstanding that the King wishes it, and the Minister urges it.”

On 31st March, 1847, Varnhagen adds the following remarks :— “ Humboldt, besides, told me yesterday, that the King had implicit faith in Don Miguel, Don Carlos, and the downfall of the dynasty of July, and hoped to be able to go to Paris, in order to compliment the legitimate sovereign. Moreover, he, Humboldt, was himself looked upon as a Jacobin, who had his tricolor in his pocket. I, on the other hand, was considered a royalist; but the King was prejudiced against me : it was inconceivable that my old friend Canitz did nothing to dispel these prejudices of the King’s, and that I was not consulted nor intended to be employed in anything that was going on now. Wittgenstein,* also, had often spoken to Humboldt in the same strain. They forget one thing, that I cannot and will not, both equally positive.

“ The nobles are terribly excited ; a sudden and complete change has come over them ; their pride is rising in mighty wrath. The foul fiend himself could have devised no more effectual means by which to exasperate the whole class, than this abortion of an Upper House.

“ A dream ! I saw the King in an agony of tears, exclaiming, ‘ Have matters come to this ? Well, I will give way ! Let everything be made over to my brother, and may he succeed better than I have done ! ’ ”

that out of regard for the Senate, he would pardon Michelet, if he would unconditionally express his regret for what had taken place. This, however, Michelet refused to do, and proposed to the Rector of the University to urge upon the King that he should be allowed to retire upon a pension. As the Rector declined this course, Michelet appealed to the King himself, to whom he declared his inability to seek for pardon, because such a course implied the acknowledgment of guilt. Hereupon the King replied that the suspension of Michelet should not be removed, as the latter, instead of expressing his regret, had attempted to justify himself. He was, however, permitted to continue his Professorial functions. The year 1848 produced, amongst other results, the abrogation of this Decree of suspension.—TR.

* Prince Wittgenstein, Minister of the Royal Household.—TR.

On 3rd May, 1847, Varnhagen noted down the following pleasantry of Humboldt's :—" Humboldt said, in jest, that a certain Baron von Massow* had said in the Parliament, that the holding of liberal opinions was in itself disreputable ; if that were so, he, Humboldt, must be doubly disreputable, because Minister von Bodelschwingh looks upon an author in much the same light."

On 11th July, 1847, Varnhagen remarks :— "This morning Humboldt called quite unexpectedly, hale and active. He insists that he has not been really ill. He says, the King is, just now, living in a whirl of pleasure, often merry beyond all bounds, giving no thought to the Parliament unless reminded of it. Then, indeed, he turns grave and gloomy. The Ministers are highly incensed, especially Savigny and Eichhorn ; Bodelschwingh, perhaps, most of all, as he even now incites the King to take sharp measures. Canitz, on the contrary, is now soothing and conciliatory. Bodelschwingh can never forgive the Parliament for having snatched from him the victory,—the Premiership, which he had so long dreamed of. Humboldt is now arrived at the last sheets of his second volume ;† he will go to Paris in September."

CXXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 18th January, 1849.

That I have not thanked you sooner, my dear Varnhagen (for your kind presents, letter, and congratulations), and that I do so to-day so laconically, you will not attribute to any decrease in my true esteem and friendship. I enjoy, indeed, now, for the first time, what

* Baron von Massow, Intendant of the Royal Gardens, and High Chamberlain, died 1859.—Tr.

† Of "Kosmos."—Tr.

none but yourself can be permitted to call a “Plain Address.” Since then everything has assumed a more terrible, but at the same time a more hopeful form. But to this danger people can oppose only brute material force, and they do not know how to pluck the fruit which is offered :*—they rather wish to let it go to others. “Romuald’s Vocation”† certainly deserves to be chastised ; what an abuse of distinguished talent! *Nous en causerons* as soon as I have got over the Chapter of the Royal Order, and the bustle of the academical elections for *my* Order ; *la petite pièce* by the side of the great World-Drama. Your old and attached friend,

A. v. Ht.

The King has never been praised in a more noble way than in the “Plain Address.”

The Pamphlet, “Plain Address to the Germans on the Question of the Day, Berlin, 1848,”‡ was written by Varnhagen. But he himself, only a few months after, made the following entry, with reference to it, in his Diary, on the 10th May, 1849 :—“I am reading over again what I printed, as late as August last year, about Friedrich Wilhelm the Fourth, and what I had written after the day of homage in the autumn of 1840 ; and how do I feel now ? Whatever my occupation, waking or sleeping, I am constantly haunted, like a nightmare, by these questions of the day ; although I know well that they are only of the day, that retaliation is sure to come, and that the future will bear rich fruit. *Arise* then, O my country, arise ! Thou must pass through the throes of civil war. Go valiantly

* The Imperial Crown of Germany, offered to the King of Prussia by the Frankfort Parliament.—Tr.

† Romuald, ou la Vocation. Par M. de Custine. Paris. 1848. 4 Vols.

‡ Schlichter Vortrag an die Deutschen über die Aufgabe des Tages.”

on thy way, and may the guilt of all the blood that is shed rest only on the heads of those who force thee to enter upon this path ! It is not the momentary successes, but the failures that advance the popular cause here."

We must here mention a further visit of Humboldt to Varnhagen. The latter writes in his Diary, 12th February, 1849 :—"A visit from Humboldt. He looks upon it as absurd on the part of Ministers to think of going before the Chambers, as they could not even find men to fill up their body; even a fellow like Kühlwetter* would refuse to join them. My expression, that the Constitution graciously granted by the King was merely the thick husk inclosing the germ of a new Revolution, which would come to maturity, frightened him a little; but he was much amused with the King's 'having been at issue with logic for the last eight years.' He tells me that the King had greatly wished to re-appoint Canitz Minister of Foreign Affairs; that Eichhorn was likewise allowed again to tender advice, and that, like the wife of Privy Councillor * * *, he spoke of the 'Pietist party,' as if he had never belonged to it himself.

"The 'Staatsanzeiger'† gives the Austrian note touching German affairs. Austria refuses to leave the Confederation, and states at once the points which she will never consent to, viz., no sovereignty of the people—no other head but Austria. A slap in the face for Prussia, for Frankfort, and especially for Gagern.‡ There it is ! How everything plays into the hands of the Republic!"

* Kühlwetter, Minister of the Interior in 1848, founder of the Berlin Constabulary.—Tr.

† The Prussian Official Gazette.—Tr.

‡ Henry von Gagern, the President of the National Assembly at Frankfort, who proposed a plan, according to which Austria was to have left the German Confederation, but would have remained connected with it by a strictly defensive alliance.—Tr.

CXXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 16th August, 1849.

Whenever I have cheated myself into the belief that I have written some few lines that please my ear, I invariably ask myself whether they would please you, too, my excellent friend. You know, or rather you do not know, that the Princess of Prussia has deposited a magnificent album, with many autographs and illuminated initials, in the Palace at Weimar, in the rooms devoted to the memory of Goethe and Schiller, and to that of those men whom Schiller has reviled in his letters to Körner,—Herder, and Wieland. I have been *obliged* to write a Preface to it, which Galuski has very felicitously translated. The Grand Duchess wished a French version to be inserted in the Album for the benefit of non-German visitors. Receive with indulgence this trifling sign of life from your friend. The bloodstained horizon vastly displeases me.

Your old and sincere friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Thursday.

CXXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 15th October, 1849.

I hope, my excellent friend, that my “Aspects of Nature,” augmented, and, as to two-thirds of it, completely altered, is at last in your hands! Owing to an unfortunate confusion caused by my long absence from Berlin, it so happened that precisely *you*, in

whose hands I should like best to see my favourite work, have received it so late. Perhaps you will kindly cast a glance at the contrast between the nocturnal stir in the woods, and the stillness when the sun is at its meridian, Vol. I., 333 and 337; on the golden visions of young Astorpilco, II., 352.

With every feeling of affection and friendship,

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

In haste.

Add to your autographs a very graceful letter of the man who is now said to be in Brussels. The phrase "*votre fortune morale*," is applied with great freedom. But, the newspapers—all of them begrimed with blood-stains! What a year, when all the feelings of man are brutalized!

CXXXVII.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Richmond, ce 17 sept. 1849.

Mon cher Baron!—Je viens d'apprendre par des feuilles de ce jour, que le 9 septembre 1769 vous a vu naître, et que vous venez de célébrer ainsi votre 80^e anniversaire. Près de vous je me serais joint à vos amis pour vous offrir mes vœux; à la distance qui nous sépare, je m'avance seul vers vous et vous dirai en peu de mots, que je rends grâce à la puissance qui vous a donné des facultés qui ont rendu votre nom impérissable; naître est peu de chose; utiliser la vie est beaucoup. Vous comptez parmi les plus riches, et

vous avez fait un bien noble usage de votre fortune morale. Que Dieu vous conserve en santé et en vie !

Recevez, mon cher baron, avec l'expression d'un vœu dont vous ne mettez pas en doute la sincérité, celle de mes sentiments de dévouement et d'amitié, dont la date est ancienne, comme tout ce qui est placé entre nous !

METTERNICH.

CXXXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 29th October, 1849.

My dear Friend,—A German letter of the Duchess of Orleans, to whom these many years I have been in the habit of sending my books, for which she has a particular liking. She writes now a hand which to me is such a sealed book, that I most earnestly beg you, with your old diplomatic skill of deciphering, to transcribe her lines for me. They appear to contain some passages about politics. The contents will be interesting to you. I, therefore, may the more readily reckon on your indulgence.

Your faithful friend,
A. HUMBOLDT.

CXXXIX.

THE DUCHESS HELENE OF ORLEANS TO HUMBOLDT.

Your Excellency,—I beg to offer to you my most heartfelt thanks for the proof of your kind remembrance of the hours spent by us together in quite

recent times, which, owing to the rapid course of events, seem already to belong to an antediluvian age.

I perceive with joy and gratitude that our conversations in my red drawing-room in the Tuilleries, and at St. Cloud, ever present to me, have not become estranged from your memory ; and I thank your Excellency for this fidelity of feeling, which, in these times, acquires a double value.

Thanks to the kindness of my beloved *cousine*,* I had already enjoyed the newly published work ; which hearts tried by the vicissitudes of life, and minds troubled by the disturbed state of the world, must hail as a refreshing spring. My son, too, has found in it much wherewith to quench his thirst for information. How many thanks do I not owe you, nevertheless, for having sent me this jewel, the value of which is enhanced by your letter which accompanies it.

How gentle and truly apposite are your words : “Men are working in this moment at a *fable convenue* ; aiming in part at the Impracticable, which they do not themselves believe !” But where will the light appear which is to lead them to clearer insight ; and what events will not be requisite to convince them of the futility of the most contradictory demands ? I share your Excellency’s belief as to the short duration of the present calm. I see in it no sign of satisfaction ; but simply apathy and indifference, the influence of which enervates, but cannot convince. Who is able to fathom the future ? The riddle of to-morrow remains hidden from us ! So much the more stringent reason for us to await in silent patience the problems which coming years must be left to solve. The delay

* The Princess of Prussia.—Tr.

shall not, however, rob us of our courage or our resignation ; on the contrary, our energies shall only be steeled by it.

The King,* during my visit to England, made many inquiries after your Excellency's health ; the Queen also received with great interest the news which I was able to give her. They retain in the most kindly memory your frequent visits in Paris. My children wish to be recalled to your recollection, to which I likewise hope from time to time to be recalled.

With sincere esteem and gratitude,
Your Excellency's well wishing

Eisenach, 23rd Oct., 1849.

HELENE.

CXL.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 31st October, 1849.

A thousand thanks, my excellent friend, for the interpretation. How have political storms destroyed that writing, once so fine, or, at any rate, so distinct ! The “beloved courier,” was my reading of the “beloved cousin,” the Princess of Prussia, who first communicated to the Duchess the new “Views.”†

A short speech which I delivered to the Town Delegates of this place, and in which I alluded to the views of my brother, a native of Potsdam, on the free development of political life, has been published with a great many misprints in Spiker’s newspaper. Here you have it from my own hand, as I wrote it

* Louis Philippe and the Countess of Neuilly.—Tr.

† In “Kosmos.”

down immediately after I had delivered it. I should have been glad if a correct version of the answer had been given in the "Constitutional Gazette," or some other truly liberal paper.

Your old and attached friend,

Wednesday Night.

A. v. Ht.

Enclosure.

I think, my most respected fellow townsmen, that I cannot express to you my heartfelt thanks in a more forcible manner than by assuring you that you have just now afforded me a pleasure as great as the honour conferred upon me is unexpected. I will not mar the pleasure that I feel, by asking how I can have deserved of you and your beautiful town such a rare distinction? Guided by the highest principle, you have, in a manner worthy of yourselves, not only evinced your care for the material welfare of your fellow citizens, but have proved your sympathy and respect for those exertions connected with the progress of knowledge, education, and the general culture of man. I accept with pride the honour of your gift as a reward for part of those exertions to which the whole of my long and active life has been devoted. Owing to the favour of two noble-hearted monarchs I have, for two-and-twenty years, had the happiness of being, almost uninterruptedly, your fellow townsman, and of finding, amid scenery in which the beauties of nature are so lavishly displayed, those incitements, without the impulse of which no animated description of Nature, professing to rise to the contemplation of the powers that regulate the Universe, is possible. It is with feelings of gratitude that I have adorned almost all my later

writings with the historical name of your town, which is so dear to me, and within whose walls besides, in 1767, my brother was born—that brother whose name is cherished in the memory of those who have preserved freedom of mind for those extended views of political life, progressing in steady course of development.

A. v. HUMBOLDT,

On the occasion of his being presented
with the Freedom of the City of
Potsdam.

CXLI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 4th November, 1849.

How happy you have made me, my dear friend, by your agreeable communication from England. But, for the sake of my brother's memory, and in order to answer those who slanderously misrepresent my stay at this Court, I am very anxious to have my answer to the Potsdam Town Delegates correctly reported in a liberal newspaper. I should like to send it to the "Constitutional Gazette," which has not yet made any mention of the affair. I have, however, no copy, except the slip of paper which I sent to you. Have the kindness to return it to me soon.

How important is the news from Paris! That reckless personage* will, perhaps, obtain the *Consulat à vie* (to which the words *durée et stabilité* allude;) but he will fall notwithstanding, and wake the slumbering lion. Liberty will not be a loser by it, and the German

* His Majesty Charles Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French.—TR.

statesmen (are there any beside H. v. Gagern?) will then find out, that there is in Central Europe the France of 1789, which people, ever since last year, have railed at as a nonentity. The centres of gravitation are shifting.

With sincerest friendship,
Yours,

Sunday.

A. HT.

CXLII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 19th March, 1850.

My best thanks, dear friend, for the kind letter you have given to M. Rio,* who had been praised to me before by Cornelius, Olfers, Radowitz,† and the King himself, for his book, “*De l’Art Chrétien*.” The new incarnation of an envoy to the Erfurt Parliament, and the surveillance of the latter in the interest of the Prince-President, has rather surprised me—but Raffaelle himself had several styles.

With sincerest friendship, and in anxious expectation,
Yours,

Tuesday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* M. Rio, to whom allusion is here made, and who was sent as correspondent for the Prince-President’s Government to Erfurt, is by profession an artist, and not a diplomatist.—Tr.

† Cornelius, the celebrated painter; Dr. von Olfers, Director-General of the Royal Museums; General von Radowitz, the well-known friend and adviser of Friedrich Wilhelm IV.—Tr.

CXLIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 2nd July, 1850.

I am delighted, my dear friend, at receiving from your hand, in this gloomy reactionary time, so pleasant a token of remembrance. I am delighted, too, with your trip to Kiel—to that small district where German spirit speaks out, consistently and freely. The present state of the world may be compared to the water-bottle which D'Alembert shook, so as to give rise to an irregular configuration of bubbles. He then, in derision of hydrostatic knowledge, in which he was himself nevertheless so great, called out, "*Calculez moi cela!*" Many of the bubbles will burst before diplomacy has been able to calculate their transitory form.

I shall express to M. de Froloff my warmest thanks. I tried in vain to dissuade him from having the work interspersed with a mass of explanatory notes and illustrations, which were meant to make it more easy of comprehension. He aimed at what was simply impossible, and seemed to understand little about the form of composition. I shall not tell him anything of all this. Hybridizing never succeeds in literature.

I have been very unwell, indeed confined to my bed; now, however, in spite of the distractions of life, I am well, diligent, and dull.

Your old friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CXLIV.

HUMBOLDT TO BETTINA VON ARNIM.

(Copied by Varnhagen.)

Berlin, 7th June, 1851.

You could not well doubt, my dearest Baroness, that I should, with the greatest readiness, meet your wishes in respect of so sterling a composer as * * *. Labouring under the malevolent prejudice of being a hater of music, which, having been incurred by my brother, has been transferred to me by the King, my own voice on a matter on which I am never consulted, is necessarily somewhat toneless, especially when church singing is in question. What between Warsaw,* Olmütz,† Russian Grand Dukes,‡ and, to mention something of a higher order, Rauch's inspiring, mighty work,§ it was impossible to obtain a hearing. Warsaw has now been succeeded by constitutional Hanover—the visit to your and my Royal friend. I have not yet seen our monarch since his return to Potsdam. I am involved in all the horrors of *cosmic* settlement—intend to abide the tide returning from Warsaw (the alluvial deposits of Batavian and Mecklenburg Highnesses), and when this rocky sea is calm again, I will act systematically, as your cheerful and spirited letter suggests. In these sad times, all that is spoken dies away, whilst even that which is

* The King of Prussia's meeting with the Emperor Nicholas.—Tr.

† The famous military show at Olmütz of about 70,000 Austrian troops, with the Emperor Nicholas, and the King of Prussia, as guests of Francis Joseph.—Tr.

‡ The two youngest sons of Nicholas, then on their grand tour.—Tr.

§ Statue of Friedrich the Great.—Tr.

written scarcely obtains notice. The latter, however, is an unavoidable necessity. In order to attain an object which is within such easy reach, a very short written petition, directed to the King himself, is needed; which I will hand to him, with warm recommendations. The excellent man begs the King for a small pecuniary assistance to enable him to go to Munich. To name a sum is not exactly indispensable, but would simplify matters. The delicate sensibility of the artist will not feel offended at my proposal, as his application is not made for his own personal benefit, but in the noble interest of Art.

With strong attachment and very grateful devotion,
Your most obedient, faithful friend,

A. von HUMBOLDT.

CXLV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 1st November, 1851.

My dear and generous friend, you have given me infinite gratification by your kind letter. I am deeply in your debt, and may, no doubt, by my long silence and apparent neglect, have given occasion more than once for strong suspicions of coolness and alienation on the score of difference of opinion. I ought never to have been under any apprehension of one possessed of such acquirements, and at the same time so well disposed. Before I received your welcome letter, with Baader's* portrait, it was my intention to bring to you in person, as soon as it should be published, the third—I am sorry to say, exclusively astronomical

* Franz von Baader, the mystic philosopher.—TR.

—volume of “*Kosmos*” (both parts bound in one), which it has cost me great efforts to complete. I was sure of a kind reception at your hands, and your letter of the 24th October, which had been lying at my house in Berlin, confirms my resolution. Ottilia von Goethe* has brought me cheering news about your health: you will, as usual, question the decision. I am quite astonished that the Minister-President,† ordinarily as cold as ice, has been greatly delighted with Ottilia, and quite inclined to meet her wishes concerning Wolfgang’s appointment to one of the situations at the Prussian embassy, in Rome. But I question whether it was imperative on his part, after having published a very clever little book on “Nature and Legislation,” to issue a collection of poems, in which there is but here and there a flash of imaginative power!

With attachment, in gloomy, worn-out times, by

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

On 24th November, 1851, Varnhagen wrote in his Diary:—“Insinuations attempted against Humboldt. The small and mediocre, who know well that, compared with a great man, they are nothing, combine in envy and malice against him, and think thus to become somebodies. One meets the other with a smile, confides to him the dislike he feels, the foibles and shortcomings he has discovered; the other takes it very kindly, answers in a similar strain, they shake hands delighted, and henceforth are staunch allies against the hero. Those professing to be among his truest friends will lend themselves to such intrigues. Taken individually, they matter very little; but in the aggregate they act by their weight; they make the day feel heavy; they clog and spoil the Good, undermine the spirits and the temper. From such rabble Goethe suffered, and Humboldt is suffering. I know all this from my own experience, having seen

* Goethe’s daughter-in-law; Wolfgang, her son.—Tr.

† Baron von Manteuffel, since 19th December, 1850.—Tr.

plenty of it in the case of Rahel! Brothers, nieces, how ready were they to ally themselves with the meanest people, in order to raise their united mediocrity above the genial radiance of her heart and mind, by which, nevertheless, they were always glad to be enlightened and warmed! Humboldt's foibles are well known, he does not conceal himself, he shows himself as he is: but let no one lay hand on his greatness, the greatness of his mind, and the no less greatness of his heart! And eighty years—what a bulwark of strength! Who dare assail it?"

CXLVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 28th January, 1852.

Here is my little *cosmic* present for you, my dear friend. I would not bring it myself, for fear of its appearing as if I wanted such an excuse for coming. Bestow a glance on pp. 1—25, Mars, p. 511, and the concluding remarks, pp. 625—630.

I hope I may drop in to-morrow, Thursday, at one o'clock? I am sure to call.

With old attachment, which will never cool,

Wednesday. A. v. HUMBOLDT.

With two yellow brochures. To Varnhagen von Ense, with the sincerest respect and attachment of his old friend, the Author.

On 29th January, 1852, we read in Varnhagen's Diary : " About 1 o'clock, Humboldt called. He is wonderfully active for his years ! He is indignant at the *coup d'état* in France, the exercise of brute force, the arbitrary banishments, but especially at the confiscation of the Orleans property. The King at first was in high glee. He, as well as the Court, thought little of the crime committed against the people and their representatives ; against Justice, and in violation of a

solemn oath. But that the Adventurer allows Universal Suffrage to remain ; that he leans upon the people and practises Socialism, and, above all, that he aspires to an Imperial crown ; this it is which makes them hate him ! Humboldt is of opinion that the establishment of the Provisional Government in the Revolution of February, which immediately met with recognition from all parts of France, was a much greater feat than that now performed by the individual who has virtually been President for the last three years, and who bears the Great Name. I reminded him of the Preparatory Parliament (*Vorparlament*), and the Committee of Fifty in Frankfurt-on-the Main. He sees in that readiness to obey, the national desire for Unity and Indivisibility which, with the French, overrules every difference of party. Humboldt states it as an undoubted fact, that Louis Bonaparte is a son of Admiral Verhuel, and his brother Morny a son of General Flahault, who had lived with both sisters in law, the Queen of Holland, and the Queen of Naples. Of Persigny—Fialin de Persigny—he speaks with thorough contempt, calling him a coarse, loutish Corporal, who has the presumption to pretend that he has found out something new about the Pyramids. Turning to our own affairs, he deplored the incapacity and wretched inanity of our Ministers ; * he said, the most stupid of all was Raumer, who was a bully to boot ; the King, irritated, angry, and capricious, would frequently indulge himself with the excuse, that he could do nothing ; he had to follow the lead of the Ministers ! ”

On 30th January, 1852, Varnhagen adds : “ Humboldt interests himself very warmly for the widow of the philologist, F., † who had done a great deal of work for him. At Humboldt’s urgent suggestion she petitioned the King for a pension, and Humboldt and Böckh‡ were to sign the application. But F. was a democrat ; not, indeed,

* The following were the principal Members of the Ministry in 1851 : Baron Manteuffel, Minister-President, and of Foreign Affairs ; Von Westphalen, Interior ; Von Raumer, Public Worship and Education ; Von Bodelschwingh, Finance ; Simons, Justice ; Von der Heydt, Commerce.—Tr.

† Franz (?)—Tr.

‡ The distinguished author of “ Political Economy of the Athenians,” and of the treatise on “ Athenian Navigation.”—Tr.

an active one, yet no disguised one, and the King might have heard of it. To counteract this, Humboldt proposed, they should ask Stahl for his signature as well. On the sole credit of his own name he can no longer get anything from the King. What a state of things! Humboldt forced to make a stalking-horse of Stahl!"

CXLVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 5th February, 1852.

I believe, my dear friend, that the letter which I have just received will go far to confirm your ideas of Paris. Galuski, the translator of the second volume of "Kosmos," is a noble-hearted, talented man, and well versed in philology; but of very moderate love of liberty. His account of his first impressions is rather an unblushing confession of the fact. He was, moreover, haunted by a dreadful fear of that which was to come. It has ever been my opinion, that even the wildest Republic can never do as great and lasting injury to the intellectual progress of mankind, and to its consciousness of its inherent titles of honour, as *le régime de mon oncle*, *le despotisme éclairé*, *dogmatique*, *mielleux*, which avails itself of all the contrivances of civilization to make the will and caprice of one man paramount. To heighten your disgust at such humiliation, which threatens to spread like a pestilence, read in to-day's (3rd February) "Journal des Débats" the reasons which, according to the "Constitutionnel," render necessary a list of candidates *recommended* for election. In yesterday's "Spener's Gazette" there was an article containing similar proposals with regard to our Second Chamber.

I hope soon to procure for you the "Histoire de

l'Académie" (by Bartholmess).* I have made many unsuccessful attempts to be of service to the widow of Professor F.

Yours, sincerely attached,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Enclosure.

"Spener's Gazette," No. 29, Feb. 4, 1852.

. . . The discussions on the Constitution of the First Chamber have frequently appeared in our columns. It may not, perhaps, be quite so generally known that the attention of the higher circles has latterly been turned to the formation of the Second one. The electoral law, as it now stands, establishes the right of voting as a voluntary function, without a corresponding duty. A compulsory exercise of the franchise appears as impolitic as it is impracticable. But whilst as many electors as please abstain from voting, they put the election in the hands of an unknown minority, who frequently, as the result of their votes, bring about an election, in which, instead of the actual political opinion of the constituency, its very opposite is represented. The principles which would serve as a rule in the reconstruction of the First Chamber have called forth as their consequence the proposal to modify the electoral law with regard to the Second Chamber, in such a way that *H. M. the King should appoint in every electoral district, at a convenient length of time previous to the election, a candidate who will be the member, unless the majority of the electors have polled in favour of another representative.* The leading motives of this plan we intend to communicate to-morrow, together with the details of the proposal.

* The title of this book is "Histoire Philosophique de l'Academie de Prusse, depuis Leibnitz jus'qu'à Schelling—particulièrement sous Frédéric le Grand." Two vols. Paris, 1851.—Tr.

CXLVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 12th February, 1852.

It may interest you, my dear friend, to find in the compass of a single sheet all that which the Orleans family intend to do in trying to resist the spoliation. The Duchess of Orleans has sent it me through the Princess of Prussia.

Do you know our Candidate, William S., a native of Dresden, screening himself behind the pseudonym of Wilfried von der Neun, who plagues me by sending to me aphoristic thoughts in manuscript?

Yours,
A. v. H.

Be kind enough soon to return the enclosed.

CXLIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 23rd March, 1852.

It is one of the many inconveniences of old age, that we are exposed to attempts at conversion. Please, my dear friend, to preserve this odd, good-natured letter among your psychological curiosities. (The man who is so thoroughly convinced of the salvation of Bernadotte, tells me, in an indirect way, that Satan wields his sceptre in my heart, as he did in that of Goethe, of pious Kant, and of Wieland.) And our Parliament!!

If it were needed, “the towns should be swept from the face of the earth,” is the wish of our diplomatist at the Diet.*

With warmest attachment, yours faithfully,

Tuesday, late at night.

A. Ht.

In the enclosed letter of Augustus Grau, dated Montgomery County, Ohio, 6th February, 1852, we read :—“A gentleman, who has travelled through a great portion of the globe, who, by the publication of so many distinguished writings, has raised for himself, on the field of literature and science, such a lasting and brilliant monument, can never have his name mentioned by any German otherwise than with the greatest respect. When the names of great warriors, who have spilt the blood of their fellow creatures on the battlefield, will be long forgotten, yours will shine in the annals of history for hundreds and thousands of years. But it is strange that the greatest naturalists, philosophers, and astronomers, who have spent the greater portion of their lives in trying to make new discoveries, and in inquiring into the powers of nature, are often quite careless with regard to their own happiness or unhappiness in the world to come. Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Kant, besides many others, were all of them distinguished characters and brilliant ideals, and they led, more or less, what is called a moral life, so as probably to keep aloof from card-playing, the bowling-alley, the play-house, and the dancing room; but their sphere of action was not in the direction of eternity, and they cared nothing about the salvation of their fellow man in the next world.” Expatiating further, in unctuous lamentation, that true fear of God was so rarely to be found, and was often missing even among princes and court preachers (almoners), the writer continued :—“The late King of Prussia, and that truly Royal lady, Queen Louisa, knew something of the new birth; as did also the late King of Sweden, the former French Marshal Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte Corvo. A poor peasant was able to give him more light on the means of salvation than one of the first bishops of the Lutheran Church. Alas! Mr. Privy Councillor, ready as I am

* Count Otto von Bismark-Schönhausen.—Tr.

to do full justice to your good moral life, to your high character as a statesman, and to your information as a scholar; highly gratified as I must feel that Berlin, nay that Prussia, has to boast of such a man as your Excellency is, my joy would burst out into a shout of holy triumph if I should have the honour of seeing you as a zealous follower of Him who died on Golgotha. Alas! without Him, my Lord Chamberlain,* we are most miserable notwithstanding all our knowledge—notwithstanding all our much vaunted learning.” Further on, the letter states:—“Goethe said, on a certain occasion, that during the whole of his life he had not had four happy weeks. This was the speech of a great and learned man. If Christ has *not* taken up his residence and dwelling in our hearts, who else can be there but Satan? One certainly must be there; one must wield the sceptre of command! It is impossible to serve two masters at the same time. Noble sir, gracious my Lord Chamberlain, I am penetrated with great respect for you and your exalted merits; I love and venerate you; I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of your shoes, which is the true language of my heart although I have been engaged in learning the rudiments of seventeen different languages, and am still able to read the writings of the New Testament in seven. Yet of the truth of the Christian religion I have not only been firmly convinced for the last thirty-one years, but I also feel daily, and almost hourly, the influence of the Holy Spirit.” The letter is signed:—“Your Lordship’s most devoted servant and brother in Christ, AUGUSTUS GRAU.” Humboldt appended to it this remark:—“An attempt at conversion from the State of Ohio.”

CL.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 13th March, 1853.

In the confusion caused by the perplexities of my desolate life, and the morally disgraceful condition

* M. Grau, in his enthusiasm, addresses Humboldt, successively, by all his various titles.—TR.

of the times, I am in a state of uncertainty, my dear old friend, as to whether I have already sent you the seventh volume of my brother's collected works! I am thoroughly ashamed of myself; but I know you have not yet learned to be angry with me. The article against Capo d'Istria,* the demand of having Strasbourg given up, sound like an irony of fate when contrasted with our present humility.

Your respectful and attached old friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

I have been deeply pained by the death of Leopold von Buch†—a compound of a noble, generous mind, quick temper, small despotism of opinions—one of the few men of original mind. He has given to his science a new form: he was one of the most illustrious ornaments of the age. Our friendship has lasted for sixty-three years, without being once disturbed, although we frequently laboured in the same field; as I found him in 1791, at Freiberg, where, although five years younger than myself, he had entered before me the Academy of Mining. This burial was to me a prelude—*c'est comme cela que je serai dimanche*. And in what condition do I leave the world?—I, who remember 1789, and have shared in its emotions! However, centuries are but seconds in the great process of the development of advancing humanity. Yet the rising curve has small bendings in it, and it is very inconvenient to find one's self on such a segment of its descending portion.

* John Anthony Capo d'Istria, President of Greece from 1827 to 1831. Recognised finally as an agent of Russia, he was assassinated by the brothers Mauromichalis, at Nauplia.—Tr.

† Died 4th March, 1853. Humboldt, in "Kosmos," calls him the greatest geologist of the day.—Tr.

CLI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 14th March, 1853.

Heartiest thanks for having offered me the consolation of the characteristic, and to me unknown expression of Fontenelle's; but twenty years are by far too short to see better things. Your "Bülow von Dennewitz," is to me great and joyful news. The treasure of fiery Leopold von Buch I return to you (inclosed). I wonder whether Friedrich Schlegel's astronomical vision is not connected with conversations which I have had with him at Vienna, on the certainty that one day we shall see in Germany the Southern Cross rise again, as it has shone over us already in *historic* times. I remind you of a passage in my "Kosmos" (II. p. 333), which may have some attraction for you by fixed chronological dates:—

"The Cross began to disappear in Northern Germany at a period so little remote as 2900 before our era. The constellation may have had an altitude of more than ten degrees above the horizon. When it disappeared in the Baltic countries from the firmament, the great Pyramid of Cheops had been standing in Egypt some five hundred years. The Shepherd tribe of the Hyksos made their invasion 700 years later. The earlier ages seemingly come nearer to us, when measured by the landmarks of memorable events."

Do not fail to work hard at your "Bülow von Dennewitz." He and I were great friends in Paris. A lover of music, he made himself very agreeable in Lafayette's

family, at the little château of Lagrange, near Paris, Lafayette's country seat, where Bülow was quartered.

Your
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

I shall bring vol. vi. in person.

Note by Varnhagen.—To console him on the score of his age, I had written to Humboldt that even eighty years may become comparative youth; witness Fontenelle, who, at a hundred, wishing to pick up a lady's fan, and not being able to do it quickly enough, exclaimed regretfully:—"Que n'ai je plus mes quatre-vingt ans!" About Friedrich Schlegel, I had told him how, at Dresden, shortly before his death, he had prophesied to Tieck, he did not know when, but certainly at no very distant period, a mighty change would take place in the heavens; all the great stars would shift their places, and gather into an immense cross.

CLII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 15th August, 1853.

After my long and tedious visit at Potsdam, my first appearance before you, my dear and gifted friend, is to trouble you with a request. To you, and you alone, I look for literary advice; since in you I find united depth of feeling and the faculty of expressing yourself with wondrous harmony. Now, in my old age, mistrust in my own powers is morbidly on the increase every day. A separate volume is to contain a selection of my brother's sonnets, in which, however, matter and form are not always in harmonious union.

I entreat you to allow me to call on you to-morrow (Tuesday), at one o'clock, to read you a preface which

has been wrung from me ! Pray do not trouble yourself to do more than say “yes,” by my servant.

Yours, in old unalterable friendship,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday.

CLIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 31st August, 1853.

There is then, after all, in this sad time, when an ominous simoom is blowing from the Pruth to the Tagus,* something to give me a great delight—your return, your kindly words, your aid ! Your glorious letter reaches me at the *bon à tirer* of a small, and, I hope, an unpretentious Preface to the Sonnets. As unfortunately it is impossible for me to thank you to-morrow in person—I am obliged to deliver at Potsdam to the King on his arrival many things I have promised—I presume to send to you, this very evening, my proof-sheet.

I most earnestly beg your severe scrutiny of the pages in which I have inserted a marvellous fragment (as if for illustration of the ideas and feelings which manifest themselves in the “Letters to a Lady”), and to note on a separate sheet what I am to *alter*, and especially what I am to *substitute*. I follow you blindly.

P. iv. I do not like :—“*Schön errungene Himmels-gabe.*”

The *pious* fragment was written by my own hand

* This refers to the impending war, which Humboldt had foreseen in 1839. See page 42, and note there.—Tr.

rather illegibly, and here and there something had to be improved in the construction of the periods; thus in p. xi perhaps you would like better, "*bei Anerkennung.*" The phrase is clumsy, even in its present amended state.

P. xiv. You will not blame the substitution of "eben nicht" for "haben nie gerade," which is even more familiar. The four lines present themselves like an aerolite fallen from the heavens. They are to be preserved though, even as a great license.

Could not you improve a little p. xiii at the bottom? Does the end of the phrase, "Stimme des Gewissens gelegt hat," seem to you clear? It does not to me. Perhaps a few words might be added to elucidate the meaning.

"Roma," the verses addressed to me from Albano, all the choruses and "Pindarica" will form another little volume.

Your long attached and profoundly respectful friend,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

The saddest news from Arago's family. Swelling in hands and feet, diabetes, and all but complete blindness. Forty years of life with him!!

CLIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 2nd September, 1853.

A thousand pardons for having troubled you while ill. I have adopted everything and acted on all your hints. But I should also like to give a place to the view you take of p. vi. Would you approve of

the insertion of the following?—“A long stay at Rome, and, perhaps, a warm interest for certain epochs of Italian poetry, seem to have inspired my brother with a particular predilection for a contracted lyrical form which, if the harmony of language is not to be sacrificed, imposes close fetters on the thought, but which he managed freely with consciousness and design;” (or would you rather have “which he managed in freedom, with consciousness and design,” or “which he managed in conscious freedom?”) “Now, if the poet, according to his innermost nature and individuality, felt most keenly a desire, to interweave with *ideas* all that springs from the feelings ——.”

That treasure of criticism, your little note, I beg to have returned to me.

Most gratefully yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Friday.

(*Remark by Varnhagen.*—I chose, “but which he managed with conscious freedom,” because this version tallied best with the metaphor of fetters, and also, in other respects, defines the subject most clearly.)

Varnhagen states, 9th September, 1853, in his Diary:—“Humboldt having sent to announce himself, arrived about half-past one, and stayed somewhat above an hour. A simple call, without any reference to business; he felt a want to speak out about several things. In the first place he descanted, with bitter scorn, on the King’s speeches at Elbing and Hirschberg,* on the utter weakness

* On the occasion of a journey of the King, when deputations of the magistrates of those democratically-disposed cities were severely reprimanded by him. Among other things, he said to the Hirschberg deputation, “It was my firm resolve not to allow you to enter my presence. As far back as 1846, I had only yielded to the most urgent prayers to pardon the town—indeed, I may say that I have had the weakness to do it. Then and there,

betrayed in these inordinate ebullitions. He then spoke with profound contempt of Raumer, the Minister of Public Worship; his coarseness and effrontery, his hatred of all science, his disastrous activity. ‘The King,’ said Humboldt, ‘hates and despises all his Ministers, but this one in particular; and speaks of him as a downright ass (*Rindvieh*), being most incensed at Raumer’s always thwarting his Royal wishes.’ ‘And yet he retains him!’ ‘As he does all of them, because he *has once* got them, and because every change is a trouble.’ Instance the brothers Schlagintweit, to whom the King wanted to grant money for a journey to the Himalaya. The Minister of Public Worship refused; the King ordered him to consult Humboldt, who reported most favourably; notwithstanding which, Raumer stuck to his own opinion, which, he said, was not changed by that of Humboldt. The King, feeling powerless against his Minister, then wrote to Bunsen, who took the affair in hand, and the brothers Schlagintweit are now receiving English aid.* ‘And this same King, who is so jealous of his power, allows it to be limited in this way?’ ‘Aye, he even is sometimes pleased with acting the part of a Constitutional King, repudiating with a sort of mischievous satisfaction, in embarrassing circumstances every responsibility of his own; pleading, in opposition to demands made upon him, the difficulty of obtaining the signature of his Ministers; nay, he will comport himself as if that “rascal of a State” were no affair of his whatever, even accuses his Minister of neglecting him for the sake of that “rascal of a State,” &c. &c. In the matter of small sums, the King often meets with the strongest resistance; in the case of large ones, he carries his point; 300 thalers for a poor literary man or

the most sacred promises were made to me, and all of you know how, in 1848, they were fulfilled. You who are here assembled have not faltered in your fidelity, but as to the town in general, I can but say that I have been unquestionably deceived.” The same dreary strain prevailed throughout the whole of the King’s speech, ending, as usual, by a free pardon on his part, couched in the memorable words, much criticised at the time—“I will again count Hirschberg among the cities nearest to my heart.” The King’s reply to the address of the townsfolk of Elbing was almost the same, *verbatim et literatim*.—Tr.

* The researches of the brothers Schlagintweit are now completed, and are announced for publication.—Tr.

artist are refused at his demand ; 40,000 thalers, for some purchase, must not be refused him.' 'What confused, ruinous management !' 'The King is quite satisfied as long as he can puddle to his heart's content in clerical affairs ; they are considered as distinct from the State altogether, and no Minister is allowed to put in a word.' 'I cannot understand this, nor is it exactly the case, as the Ministers meddle also with them.' 'The vilest fellow of the whole concern is Privy Councillor N——,* a mean sneak and hypocrite, full of hatred and venom. "The Garcia cannot sing here," he said some time ago, "she is too 'red' for that;" every representation that her singing would not be red, being in vain. I, at last, said to him, "Well, then, send to Bcthania,† and let the deaconesses sing." He will be happy to see me underground.'"

On 25th September, 1853, Varnhagen states in his Diary :—"It was said, on the presence of Humboldt, the day before yesterday, at the sitting of the Ecclesiastical Board, that the parsons had had among them their worst enemy, the Naturalist, who had put them all to shame, and before whom all their humbug and deceit vanished. 'Abellino‡ among you,' one might have called out to them."

CLV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 12th December, 1853.

You have once more succeeded, my generous friend, in affording me great enjoyment. Our departure from Potsdam, which settled down into a complete Buddhist "cold hell," having been delayed some time by the

* Niebuhr.—Tr.

† House of Protestant Sisters of Mercy in Berlin.—Tr.

‡ "Abellino, the Great Bandit," a famous melodrama, much in vogue on the German stage some forty or fifty years ago. Abellino, a young *nobile*, and amateur bandit in disguise, who suddenly turns up where least expected.—Tr.

Queen's indisposition, I have at last, since Saturday, taken up my quarters here. You have immortalized the glory of the Prussian arms, and, what touches me far nearer, the warrior who has displayed such varied accomplishments.* The gallery of your life-pictures stands unmatched in our German literature. I feel highly indignant at the infamous manner in which my friend Arago is used by the last number of the "Quarterly Review" (September) from political party-spirit, just as I was myself by the same Journal during many years, 1810-18. A note at the end of the September number states, with singular *delicacy*, that the article had been written before they knew of his death; but it was generally known in London, that he was blind and in agonizing pain from dropsy which oppressed him!!

With gratitude and attachment, and in admiration of your talent,

Yours faithfully,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday.

CLVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Thursday night, 13th to 14th April, 1854.

Accept, my generous friend, my best thanks for yourself and the agreeable confidant† of "the dæmons."‡ The King, owing to his clerical preparations, is at present inaccessible to me; and he is to go, on Monday

* "Life of General Count Bülow von Dennewitz." By K. A. Varnhagen von Ense. Berlin. 1853.—Tr.

† Bettina von Arnim.

‡ Dæmon, in the sense in which Goethe uses it, men who are the irresistible agents of Destiny.—Tr.

next, on military business to Potsdam, for five or six days; but a very warm letter of mine will be in his hands to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, at Charlottenburg.* Thus, we have at least faithfully performed our duty. I am becoming quite the responsible Minister of the *Conservatives*, as three days ago I asked the Fourth Minimum of the Red Bird† for a man who has *conserved* his estate for 150 years, viz., for the gardener Bouché, an adopted son‡ from the Champagne. It gives me great pleasure that my introduction,§ which has no other merit but that of an independent spirit and truth, has pleased you, even in respect of form. As a token of my gratitude, I send to you for your collection of autographs, a document, which, considering its date (June, 1848), is not without interest. The other papers describing only the mundane miseries of the quarrel|| which unfortunately has become public, I beg you to return to me by-and-by. Everything that is noble, is dragged down into the dust. I was obliged to write some lines in reply. I am living monotonously and gloomily—*et mourant, avant le principe.*

Your old and attached friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

I am sure to make my appearance on Monday, having on a wedding garment.

* To inform him that Savigny's Golden Wedding would be celebrated on the 17th. The Golden Wedding is the fiftieth anniversary of a marriage, both man and wife being alive.—Tr.

† The Fourth Class of the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle.—Tr.

‡ Louis von Gerlach had called in the Prussian Second Chamber, Bethmann-Hollweg, an *adopted son* of Prussia.

§ To Arago's works.

|| M. Mathieu had taken exception at its being stated on the title-page, that M. Barral was appointed by the deceased as editor of his works.

CLVII.

ARAGO TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, ce 3 Juin, 1848.

Mon cher et illustre ami,

Mon fils est parti ce jour dernier pour Berlin, en qualité de Ministre Plénipotentiaire. Il est parti animé des meilleurs sentiments, d'idées de paix et de conciliation les plus décidées ! Et voilà qu'aujourd'hui votre Chargé d'affaires s'est rendu chez notre Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, pour lui rendre compte des *inquiétudes* que la mission de mon fils a excitées dans votre Cabinet et parmi la population berlinoise. Me voilà bien récompensé, en vérité, des efforts que j'ai faits, depuis mon arrivée au pouvoir, pour maintenir la concorde entre les deux gouvernements, pour éloigner tout prétexte de guerre ! A qui persuadera-t-on, qu'animé des sentiments, dont je fais publiquement profession, j'aurais consenti à laisser investir Emmanuel d'une mission diplomatique importante, s'il avait été en désaccord avec moi, s'il appartenait à une secte socialiste hideuse, au *communisme*, car, j'ai honte de le dire, les accusations ont été jusque là ? Au reste, j'en appelle à l'avenir : toutes les préventions disparaîtront lorsque Emmanuel aura fonctionné. Votre Chargé d'affaires regrettera alors la réclamation intempestive qu'il a adressée à M. Bastide.

J'ai reçu, mon cher ami, avec bonheur ton aimable lettre. Rien au monde ne peut m'être plus agréable que d'apprendre que tu me conserves ton amitié. J'en suis digne par le prix que j'y mets. J'ai la confiance que ma conduite dans les trois derniers mois

(j'ai presque dit dans les trois derniers *siècles*) ne doit me rien faire perdre dans ton esprit.

Tout à toi de cœur et d'âme,

F. ARAGO.

CLVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Friday, 14th April, 1854.

The King having already paid his visit to church* on Thursday, I dined to-day once more at Charlottenburg, and am enabled to give you the gratifying news that, as the King told me, “ he had known of the festive day (not from Uhde !!),† and had long ago made every preparation for it.” The ingredients of the intellectual or material entertainment are, I must allow, buried for me in Cimmerian darkness.

Your faithful,

HUMBOLDT.

The Prince of Prussia knows nothing about the invitation to *noce et festin*.

CLIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 4th July, 1854.

As, thanks to my American connections, I have drawn upon me the favour of the Peace Association, I

* The King was in the habit of receiving the sacrament regularly at Easter every year, and then dined altogether in private.—TR.

† First a Privy Councillor, subsequently Minister of Justice; displaced by the Revolution of 1848; afterwards again popular at court on account of his sanctity.—TR.

am pestered by this body with its pamphlets and tracts. The last number of the "Herald of Peace," however, is so remarkable on account of the political agitation of the sanctimonious peace-Quakers, that it may perhaps afford to you, my dear friend, some moments' amusement to read the testimonies yourself. Destroy the paper!

This missive is also to be a sign of *life*—that is to say, of the fondest, truest friendship for you in these dark times of weakness and folly. From the new "Stahl-Ranke" Council of State, I have freed myself, for reasons with which old age has nothing to do. I have gone out.

I inclose a very crabbed letter of poor Bunsen, which you will keep very secret, and kindly send back to me by-and-by to my *Berlin* residence. First Heidelberg and Bonn—always between the exciting reminiscences of two Archbishops. With the dangerous propensity of the excellent man for theological controversy, and his newly invented Apostolical Church under the firm of Hippolytus,* a stay in England, somewhere in the country, between London and Oxford (on account of the libraries), would do him more good than Bonn. The Established Church, with all its intolerance, is less inconvenient in a *free* country, than a Ministerial Synod is in Prussia. I am, besides, very much afraid for the credit of Bunsen's scientific fame—of the threatening shoal of books, teeming with hypotheses on aboriginal nations, Egyptian, Indian, and disinterred Assyrian Semites; as also on the locality of

* Bunsen's work, "Hippolytus and his Age."—TR.

Paradise, for which a map is *already ordered* of Kiepert.* Maps on the opinions of people may range from the ship-binding† myth on the seashore and Himalaya to Ararat, and to Aramea Kibotos,‡ even to the Mexican Coxcox ;§ fanciful productions of fiction, which are known also to the Bible of the Mormons. (See inclosure.)

The Weimar fancies are of a more merry description; command of climate, by means of Crystal Palaces, which at the same time are taverns, superseding Nice and Madeira, and costing only one and a-half million thalers—a pleasure-ground in the desolate barrack-city of Potsdam! And such a scheme

* Kiepert, Cartographer and Professor of Geography at the University of Berlin.

† Compare the Sanskrit “naubandhanam,” “shipbinding,” from “nau,” *naris*, “bandh,” to bind; the name of the peak of the Himalaya mountain, to which the Indian Manu at the deluge fastened his ship. See “Die Sündflut nebst drei anderen der wichtigsten Episoden des Mahâ-Bharata. Aus der Ursprache übersetzt von Franz Bopp.” (Berlin, 1829), p. 9, verse 49.—Tr.

‡ A city in Phrygia. A number of coins of the times of Septimus Severus and of his successors, show a chest (*κιβωτός*) swimming on the waves, and in it are a man and a woman; a dove is sitting on the chest, a second, with a twig in its claws, flying near at hand. On the land, close by, the same pair of human beings are seen in a posture of prayer. On the chest are inscribed the two Greek letters, ΝΩ—evidently Noah. In the Sybilline books the circumstance is alluded to as follows:—

Assurgit Phrygiæ mons quidam in finibus atræ,
Arduus, alta petens, Ararat quem nomine dicunt,
Quod fatale fuit illic evadere cunctis,
Optataque frui tandem charaque salute:
Fluminis unde alti Marsyæ manat origo.
Hujus in excelso postquam cessantibus undis
Constitit arca jugo, tunc illi rursus ab alto
Ingens Immensi vox et audita Tonantis.

Σιβυλλιακοὶ Χρῆσμοι, “Sibyllina Oracula,” edit. Gallæi. Amsterdam, 1689. Pp. 159-60.—Tr.

§ Coxcox, the Mexican Noah, or Deucalion.—Tr.

hatched in the brain of a well-informed man—
 Froriep.* With true friendship, yours,
 A. HUMBOLDT.

Potsdam, 4th July, 1854.

In the era of Crystal Palaces.

I have found only lately in a letter of Gneisenau's† (in Stein's very injudiciously edited "Life," vol. v. p. 262), the following passage, which I dare say has long been noticed by you:—"H. again aims at the centre; but he is neither trusted nor *respected*, and is wanting in *character* and courage." Nothing, certainly, but pointed personal spite could have induced that very vain man, Gneisenau, to speak thus vilely of my brother. I remember, it is true, having heard him say that Gneisenau had been his enemy on the occasion of his dismissal. However that may be, all that has then been said about political institutions makes me now feel, and did so even as early as 1815-18, as if I were reading a book of the thirteenth century on physical science; dread of the provincial parliaments was the only subject to be praised, *c'est de la bouillie pour les chats.*

On this letter Varnhagen remarks, in his Diary, 5th July, 1854: "I found a long letter from Humboldt, who sent me the latest number of the 'Herald of Peace,' a letter of Bunsen's—four quarto pages, closely written—and another from Robert Froriep, in Weimar, accompanied by his excellent remarks. 'This missive,' he says, is also to be 'a sign of *life*, that is, of the fondest, truest friendship

* Robert Froriep, the Professor of Anatomy at Berlin, son of the celebrated obstetrician, at present resides at Weimar, as the proprietor of the "Industrie Anstalt," founded by Bertuch.—Tr.

† Count of Gneisenau, Prussian General Field-Marshal; the Chief of the staff of Prince Blücher at the battle of Waterloo.—Tr.

in these dark times of weakness and unreason.' Moreover : 'From the new Stahl-Ranke Council of State I have freed myself, for reasons with which old age has nothing to do. I have gone out.' Then he speaks of Froriep's phantasmagoria, who would wish to establish in the 'desolate barrack-city' of Potsdam a Crystal Palace commanding the climate, and to raise for this purpose a loan of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million thalers ! Finally, he lashes Gneisenau's perverse judgment on Wilhelm von Humboldt, expressed in a letter of the year 1818, which Pertz communicates in his 'injudiciously' edited 'Life of Stein.' Humboldt justly protests against this vile aspersion of his brother's character.

"Bunsen's letter is written in a very rambling fashion. Humboldt calls it 'a crabbed one,' which describes it very accurately. Bunsen intends to live in future at Bonn, but complains of the University having sunk very low, especially as regards the theological faculty. Dorner and Rothe* had been constantly snapped at until they left, and were replaced by the most narrow-minded and insignificant men that could have been got in the whole of Germany, such as Lange and Steinmeyer. From Hengstenberg's library, through Gerlach, all was managed for the spread of ignorance and obscurity ; these dark times of the most intelligent King of the century would be deplored and condemned, much worse than even those of Wöllner ;† all bore, besides, the reactionary stamp of the politics of the squirearchy. Hypocrisy only, and *real* infidelity were fostered by this ruinous system, and the way paved for the fiercest reaction ; with guards and the police one could do anything one liked in politics—as long as it lasted ; but the Germans had never borne with enslavement of thought, and their *curse* followed through centuries all those who had attempted it. Thus writes Bunsen ! But now only as a fallen favourite ! What was he, and how did he act previously to his disgrace ? He, too, worked for the spread of ignorance, and for the enslavement of thought ! In the same way as Radowitz, who likewise in the latter times affected liberal opinions !"

* Both Professors of Divinity : Dr. Dorner, now at Göttingen ; Dr. Rothe, now at Heidelberg.—Tr.

† The times of Friedrich Wilhelm II., the grandfather of the present King. Wöllner was a leading member of the Rosicrucians, who were then rampant in Prussia.—Tr.

CLX.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 8th July, 1854.

With a deeply-affected and grateful heart, I have received your Excellency's most valued letter. Yes, indeed, a sign of life—of life, the most vigorous, most noble! If ever the question could arise, how you have thought and felt in these dark times? such a page would be the most irresistible answer—the most brilliant evidence of an opinion and mode of action which have always kept the same line, and have never belied their principle. The letter from London (the epithet “crabbed” describes it most accurately in every respect) I duly send back, in compliance with your Excellency's command; how glad should I have been to embody it with my collection! It is a remarkable sign of the present state of things: many of its expressions strike directly home. I only wish that its writer had thus spoken in former times, *previously* to his late personal experiences. The scientific fame which you consider imperilled by the threatened shoal of writings, seems to me to have been kept, from the very outset, up by extraneous props, which being taken away, must irretrievably come down. Perhaps the political career may open again; but certainly not by the aid of literature, which seems not unlikely to be one of the objects aimed at in this sudden spring-tide of productivity. Silent repose would be much more to the purpose. This, however, can scarcely be expected at the residence decided upon, where Papist hatred is already astir, fostering and increasing political spite, which, proceeding from the fountain-head here, will continue unabated.

The late Prince Wittgenstein one day congratulated me for not being under the necessity of sitting in the Council of State, and that was the old one, in which your Excellency had a place. How much more may I congratulate you for having got clear of the new one, which has Stahl and Ranke for members ! No one will feel inclined to dispute with the latter the part of “ridiculous person;” to the former, every one will readily yield the first rank as a sophist.

The words of Gneisenau, which Pertz communicates in Stein’s “Life” (V. 262), are so completely misapplied in the case of Wilhelm von Humboldt, that one might feel tempted to interpret the H. there differently, if any plausible conjecture could be found. I have certainly heard from Gneisenau’s own mouth expressions of disapproval ; but never such extravagant ones—such as might have been so easily and completely refuted. The principal reproach urged by Gneisenau against your brother was, that he had never tried by his authority and overwhelming intellectual power to unite all those who were of one mind in a brotherhood, by means of which much might be undertaken and carried out. This reproach, if reproach it be, Gneisenau himself has deserved just as much ; and he has had plenty of it from his own people. The book of Pertz is full of unjust and trimming statements, most of which originate with Stein himself, but are with blind partiality confirmed by Pertz. He, who communicates everything, and frequently inserts even quite irrelevant matter, unhesitatingly leaves out important evidence, as soon as it is not completely in favour of his hero. The same will happen again, when he writes Gneisenau’s biography, which certainly

should, above all, be written by one experienced in military matters!

The saintly Quaker-paper was already known to me; who would have thought such monstrous absurdities possible in the English language! But our age is rich in them. Table-turning has been superseded by the psychograph; they want to press me into the belief of this folly, but I plead in excuse, that at my age people will no longer go fast ahead—that I have only arrived as yet at table-turning, of which people are tired.

This leads me to another matter, which I would not willingly leave untold. It happens, of course, very often, that sayings of your Excellency, especially words uttered at the royal table, get into general circulation—are hawked about here with great avidity, and with the most abnormal variations. Thus, only very lately, a reply to Baron Senfft von Pilsach,* in which the original version seems to me quite lost. It would certainly be desirable that, in some way or other, the true saying were recorded in an authentic form.

Repeating my warmest thanks, I remain, with truest esteem and devotedness, unalterably

Your Excellency's most obedient

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

Some strong expressions—as welcome to me as they are unexpected—in the letter from London, call to my mind that General von Radowitz has also indulged in similar ones, and had even had them printed ("Collected Writings," IV., 210, 256, 281); in the second of these passages, he goes so far as to turn the adage, "Against

* One of the political friends of Professor Stahl, at present (1860) the Governor (Präsident) of the province of Pomerania.—Tr.

Democrats, there is no help but soldiers," into its very reverse.

CLXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th July, 1854.

On my return from the Russian fête-day* at Sans-Souci, I found your agreeable letter. As I cannot refuse you anything, I enclose "Hippolytus." In return, pray satisfy my curiosity. I believe I have never in my life spoken to Baron Senfft von Pilsach; I might meet him in the streets, or at a party, and I should not recognize him. Notwithstanding all this, it is possible that I have dined with him at the King's table. From what I have heard of him, I do not feel attracted towards him. As I always sit opposite the King, I converse aloud only with him, but very freely, because I know that people will repeat my sayings, fashioning them each according to his own style of colouring, in a country where, besides, many a hint of delicate censure is lost, owing to the utter want of settled conversational language.

The judgment of Gneisenau is certainly meant for my brother. These are often but sudden ebullitions. On my arrival at Jena, Schiller wrote to Körner, "that I was far more intelligent and gifted than my brother;" afterwards, when he saw me every day and overwhelmed me with affectionate kindness, he wrote to Körner, that "I was a narrow-minded matter-of-fact person who, notwithstanding all my restless activity in my branch

* On the 7th July a grand banquet took place at Sans-Souci, in celebration of the birthday of the Emperor of Russia.—Tr.

of science, would never do anything great. Herder's works were morbid matter, thrown off from his system." (It reads exactly like a passage from Zelter's* letters.) In an autograph, from a collection in Augsburg, which was offered to me as a present, and which I returned, my friend, Prince S., writes to Koreff: "Alexander H. again accompanies the King to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in the sole capacity of bloodhound (Spürhund)." Such are the representations on the stage of life for the benefit of a gullible posterity. The Emperor Alexander told the late King that my brother had, at the Congress of Vienna, undoubtedly been bribed by the Jews to make himself useful to them, just as, according to the King of Hanover, Baron Bülow was, in the Belgian affair, by the French. In Schöning's very interesting "War of the Bavarian Succession"—interesting by the correspondence with Prince Henry, and the reflex on the present shameful state of affairs—there occurs (p. 294) a statement concerning a political scheme, which I had not known before :—the Austrian proposal to give to the Bavarian house, for the cession of Bavaria, the Netherlands as "Kingdom of Burgundy." Such a title of King of Burgundy was tried for by the Duke of M. in 1815; but he would have contented himself with Lorrain and Alsace. Napoleon had also entertained a thought of making the Principe de la Paz † for the nonce King of Baetica (Andalusia and Granada)—a reminiscence of "Télémaque"—and the King of Sardinia Roi de Numidie, although the dispenser had not an inch of ground in Africa of which to dispose.

* A musical composer, the friend and correspondent of Goethe.—TR.

† Godoy, the Prince of Peace.—TR.

With sincerest friendship, always equally incorrect
and illegible, Your most faithfully,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Sunday Night.

(As early as 1743, Austria offered to the Emperor Charles VII., in exchange for Bavaria, a kingdom made up from Alsace, Lorrain, and Franche-Comté, which were first to be conquered. See “*Mémoire de Noailles*,” vol. VI.)

CLXII.

HUMBOLDT TO BETTINA VON ARNIM.

(Copy in Varnhagen’s handwriting.)

Berlin, 8th July, 1854.

For what purpose, most gracious Baroness, has the Eternal, out of that horn of plenty which he so sparingly empties on our miserable sinful globe, poured out on you an abundance of the richest intellectual endowments, and of the still finer gifts of delicate feeling, if you credit silly talk “about those from whom I withdraw myself!” What you call your prophetic visions, were not able to frighten me, as such a gift of clairvoyance was bestowed upon me likewise! The King, as I hear (for I seldom make my appearance there in the evening, and have ceased for years to read to him myself), has not read one syllable of your book, nor expressed a wish to have it read to him. But, my most esteemed friend, when I tell you that I never pronounce to the King the words, “Cathedral-choir, opera-house, concert-room;” that I have never known even the existence of such a thing as an Academical Central Cathedral*.

* Cologne Cathedral.—Tr.

building Union at Bonn, or of the Committee of the Union of this place ; how can you expect me to be able to obtain a hearing in this affair ? Anything that might be proposed by word of mouth concerning these really very desirable matters, even by those reputed to have influence, remains now unnoticed and ineffectual.

To produce any effect, it will be necessary to address directly to the King a simple official *exposé* of the proposed plan, signed by the committee, and exact estimates for the work. No decision is formed, except in Cabinet meetings, on the report of Ministers ; for this reason, the application is to be made, concisely and accurately, in a letter to the King. In these stirring times, in which the King resides at Potsdam only for a week or so at a time, such a mode of proceeding is more requisite than ever. Of painter Ratti's Titian, political aspersions, and of "exalted *incogniti*"—I hear of them all now for the first time, and I shall be glad, on my part, to do my best in neutralizing the effect of those aspersions ; although, owing to my well-known political bias, such "essais de blanchir" are but a very feeble support. Amidst so many painful feelings, which, with your ardent noble love for everything that is true, free, generous, and good, you so unswervingly foster, you have just now, to my great joy, besides the victories of the Turks, two other causes of cheerful satisfaction. Your Goethe monument is ensured, and the grandson of the great man has obtained a congenial position at the Prussian embassy, in Rome.

With unalterable esteem and friendship,

The Old Man of the Mountains,

A. v. Ht.

CLXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 10th July, 1854.

You, my dear friend, certainly would never have thought me guilty of such a rude knock-down answer in the far east Pomeranian* style. I have not the least notion of the question on the spiritualization of pine-wood of the King's table, where every one believes in it as implicitly as in the Persian hosts which have been seen high in the air in the Eichsfeld.† The "drama"‡ of the *Kreuzzeitung*, like everything that proceeds from this vile party, pining with poverty of mind and intellect, bears the impress of cowardly malice! There is no reason for condoling with you, as you are in possession of a treasure—the powerful support derived from the invigorating reminiscences of the great times of 1813. I, too, have always kept aloof from the "*Revue des deux Mondes*," written as it is with ingenious subtlety and craftiness. People may hate the same thing, but it does not follow that they hate it from the same motives. The Paris Liberals of these days think it quite right, in Berlin fashion, like muzzled dogs, to bark but not to bite, "as, without

* The Pomeranians are noted for the sturdy bluntness of their manners. It is a standing joke to speak of East Pomerania (*Hinter Pommern, Pomerania Posterior*) with a "save your presence."—TR.

† A plateau in Germany, part of which belongs to Prussia, and part to Hanover.—TR.

‡ The editor of the "*Kreuzzeitung*" was arrested, under criminal law, because he refused to name the authors of several articles containing indictable statements, and the "*Kreuzzeitung*," from these circumstances, could not appear for several days.—TR.

the saviour of the country, they would all of them have been drowned in blood.” *Credat Judæus apella.*

Yours faithfully,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday, having been to another funeral.*

A working man, a stranger, addressed me at Benjamin Constant’s funeral—“N’est ce pas, mon bon Monsieur, vous n’avez rien de si beau en Prusse, mais ce sera bien plus beau, quand nous enterrerons M. de La Fayette.”

CLXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VAERNHAGEN.

Berlin, 29th July, 1854.

Just as the virtuous Order of St. John, near the Wilhelmsplatz, calls “Hurrah for chastity!”† thus in Spain the virtuous “insurrection” shouts “*Viva el pudor!*” (Isabella) “*Viva la moralidad!*” (the disinterested Christina); but would you have thought it possible (July, 1854!) that the Minister of Public Worship‡ should likewise, although *until now* in vain, have shouted “*Viva el pudor!*” He has, quite *officiellement*, proposed to the King that the breechless groups on the bridge should be removed by royal order, and *shut up* in the arsenal, without any fear of the press; as the new Frankfurt Federal Slavery-of-the-Press Law is

* Of Borsig, the manufacturer of locomotives; a few days before, Mrs. Amalia Beer was buried. Humboldt, in his eighty-sixth year, attended both funerals.

† The palace of Prince Charles of Prussia, Grand Master of the Order of St. John, is situated on the Wilhelmsplatz. Thence the agitation against the breechless group of statues on the palace bridge, is said to have proceeded. The Prince, it should be added, does not apparently enjoy among his countrymen a great reputation for the exalted character of his virtue.—Tr.

‡ Raumer.

merely a counterpart of those ingenious Berlin dog-muzzles, which are to prevent us literary men from biting, although not from barking, and which ought to have a place assigned to them in the Munich Crystal Palace. How these muzzles have been botched again and again! The third cry, "*Viva la libertad!*" has forced its way through the Peninsula, notwithstanding all the supercilious denials.

Yours faithfully,

At night.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CLXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 31st July, 1854.

Alas, no! I was mistaken in the belief that the purchase of the monument for Weimar* had been accomplished, and that the enlargement of the monument, such as our fair excellent friend had wished, was the only thing given up. In the spheres where I am familiar no active support is to be thought of for the present. The expression, "Art in itself is a garment," is of great ingenuity and beauty. Most gratefully,

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday. In haste for the railway.

In the United States a great deal of good feeling has certainly sprung up for me, but the general aspect of affairs there leaves me under the sad impression that

* This passage appears to refer to the design, by Rauch, of a Goethe-Schiller monument for Weimar, rejected on account of the poets being represented in classical costume. The design ultimately adopted was that of Rietschel. Bettina von Arnim seems to have interested herself very warmly in favour of Rauch.—TR.

liberty, in that country, is but a dead machinery in the hands of utilitarianism, very little calculated to ennoble and rouse the powers of mind and heart, which, after all, ought to be the main object of political freedom. This explains their indifference to slavery. But the U. S. are a Cartesian vortex, carrying away and leveling everything to dull monotony.

CLXVI.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 8th January, 1855.

Your Excellency will please to accept my most heartfelt thanks for always graciously remembering me, in kindly dispensing your valuable gifts. In readiness of receiving, in appreciation of the gift, in gratitude for the generous donor, I hope I shall not be surpassed by any one. This Preface, couched in beautifully measured, thoroughly accomplished, but tenderly elegiac language, is the most worthy and lasting monument for the prematurely departed Prince,* concerning whom I have heard also from other quarters enough to make me deeply deplore the early death which has carried him off in the very prime of manhood. I shall try to procure his work, which is so highly recommended by your Excellency.

The dark curtain of clouds which just now veils the light of day, is quite in keeping with the shadows which have overcast at least my heart and soul. I

* Prince Waldemar of Prussia, known to the British public as having been present at the battle of Sobraon. The work alluded to is the description of his travels in India, printed for private circulation. A copy of it is in the library of the Army and Navy Club. Prince Waldemar died 17th February, 1849.—Tr.

have never been able during the last few days to rouse my spirits.

With my warmest wishes for you, and with unalterably faithful esteem and grateful devotedness,

Your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CLXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 26th April, 1855.

My esteemed friend,—A strange missionary attempt, clothed in a sort of idyllic ghost story, political and religious, of monstrously bombastic “neat” style, has come to hand, which I must communicate to you. It is very likely the work of a man, rather than of a woman. The “warm” eighteenth birthday, on which the bond of love is stated to have been completed, is more than I understand; nor have I any desire for manual magnetism. I think it much more convenient not to give any answer whatever. The Saturnalia of despotism and flattery, the unblushing festival of *oblivion*, as if there were no history of 1813 and '14, is now over among the free islanders—a sort of monkey’s comedy. There is only one consolation which upholds me, that out of all this something will grow, which will be quite contrary to what either of the parties have intended. That is *le principe*, which will survive all of us. I am cruel enough to include you among “all of us.” The Cassel book seems to

have been of good use to my brother Wilhelm in the spheres above.

With much attachment and esteem,
Yours faithfully,

Wednesday.

A. HUMBOLDT.

I beg you will return me the ghost-story.

Note by Varnhagen,

To HUMBOLDT'S LETTER OF 26TH APRIL, 1855.

An "Unknown" (lady) dares to send "Words of the Power of the Spirit." "They are given her with the injunction to transmit them." Humboldt is requested, in case he should return an answer, to have the letter delivered with the address, A. W., at 120, Lindenstrasse, in the ground-floor shop on the left hand of the entrance of the house; he would then hear more. A wayfarer, resting himself, is portrayed. Wilhelm appears before his brother Alexander, and exhorts him to think of Heaven, how beautiful and bright it is there, and how cloudy on Earth.. As a token of the truth, he reminds him of the eighteenth warm birthday, "when they vowed love to each other, a pledge which outlasts death, and which he hereby redeems." A piece of bombastic balderdash, in which the word "neat" (sauber) is of frequent occurrence, and becomes conspicuous just because it is so very inappropriate.

As to the above address, Humboldt remarks: "There is at that place a Mrs. von Wenkstern's boarding school, and a widow, Mrs. Poppe."

CLXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th August, 1855.

I had with great regret heard already from the highly-gifted Princess Wittgenstein, that you, my generous friend, were more than usually ailing.

Please to receive me with forbearance, on Sunday at 1 o'clock, notwithstanding my having so long staid away, thanks to my inconvenient trilogy of Berlin, Tegel, and Potsdam. I will then also bring to you a small letter of thanks to your cousin, the Imperial Brazilian Chargé d'Affaires at Madrid. This "History," based on monumental records, seems to grow very important; but how strange to send the book without the first pages, and the notes without a beginning!* I doubt whether, in my cosmic untidiness, I shall ever recover those beginnings. Having yesterday seen the Prince of Prussia for nearly one hour by himself, I shall be able to report to you some not uninteresting, although not precisely decisive matter. The Prince, whom I take to be a lover of truth, assured me that, faithful to his principles, he had spoken out everywhere to the purport, that war would probably have been avoided if Prussia and Austria from the very beginning had earnestly and actively co-operated with the Western powers against Russia. At Petersburg they had objected that the Emperor Nicholas would not have yielded, even in this case, which he, the Prince, doubted

With faithful attachment,

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

You will kindly interpret to me, when we meet, the mythological name of Sorocaba.†

* "Historia geral do Brazil, tomo primeiro." The pieces here wanting he had sent on a previous occasion as samples.

† Francisco Alfonso de Varnhagen places his name at the bottom of the dedication to the Emperor. On the title-page is written: "Por um socio do Instituto Historico do Brazil, Natural de Sorocaba (the birthplace of the author west of Rio)."

Varnhagen states in his Diary, 11th August, 1855 : "About one o'clock Humboldt called, looking very well, quite hale, fresh, and in high spirits. If, a short time ago, as Dirichlet* thought, his looks made a less gratifying impression, it was owing to indisposition, which has vanished. First, the book of my cousin was introduced, which he praises, and for which he thanks him in a letter. I was not able to explain to him the expression Sorocaba. Humboldt has only lately been decorated with the Great Brazilian Order, on account of a sentence of arbitration which he had been requested to pronounce between Brazil and Venezuela, concerning a considerable tract of territory. 'In former times they wanted, in Rio de Janeiro, to arrest me and to send me back to Europe as a dangerous spy. The order for it is still shown there as a curiosity, and now I am made arbitrator. I have of course decided in favour of Brazil, as I was craving for the great Order, and the Republic of Venezuela has none to give!' These words, uttered with the most humorous irony, made me exclaim : 'How times are changed!' 'Yes,' he at once rejoined ; 'the Warrant for my arrest, and now the great Order!' 'Oh no,' I replied ; 'I did not think of this personal incident, but of the historical change; in times of yore such arbitrations were left to the Pope.'

Humboldt saw the last two volumes of Stein's "Life" lying in my room, and expressed his dissatisfaction at their arrangement, the poor text, and the unsifted contents of the book; he said, the golden snuff-box, with diamonds, which the King had already sent to Pertz, far exceeded his deserts. Flagrant and paltry injustice to old Prince Wittgenstein, on the part of Stein. Pertz likewise was unjust to Wittgenstein. Stein's had been anything but a firm character, no one had more readily changed his opinions and views (which Beyme † in his times

* Professor of Mathematics at Berlin.—Tr.

† Beyme was an enemy of Stein's. When Stein, in 1807, returned to office, one of the conditions under which he accepted the situation of Chancellor of State, was the removal of Beyme from about the person of the Monarch. Beyme was therefore appointed President of the Court of Exchequer (Kammergericht) in Berlin, being succeeded as Cabinet Councillor by Albrecht (mentioned before). It is therefore hardly fair to refer to Beyme's authority in anything affecting Stein's character.—Tr.

had already asserted and proved by facts) : his earlier liberal opinions on finance, municipal institutions, trade and commerce, he had borrowed from the age in which he lived; but had afterwards completely abandoned, and even combated them, when such was the fashion of the day. He had so ignominiously deserted his former principles, that Kunth—a friend of his earlier years who had remained faithful to those principles, and yet had not wished to compromise Stein—had burned upwards of three hundred of his letters, since, as he said, they would bring shame on the man for whom he had such reverence, exposing his contradiction with himself. Speaking of the Prince of Prussia, Humboldt said the Prince had said at St. Petersburg, just as he had previously done here, that the war would have been avoided if Prussia, at the very outset, had assumed a resolute attitude; the Emperor Nicholas would then have yielded. The imperial family were quite united, not excepting the Grand Duke Constantine, who did not appear to him as dangerous as he generally was represented to be. The Empress Mother (dowager) said they were all of them children; she was obliged to remain with them to keep them in order. The war was severely felt; all was at a dead lock, the country was drained of men, the armies not numerous enough. Poland, the Baltic provinces, Finland occupied only by scanty forces. The main part of the army was in the Crimea, the losses enormous, and no possibility to make up for them. Gortschakoff reported the daily losses in fighting to amount to 180 or 200 men, an appalling sum total for the month. Nesselrode was planning new negotiations, but in the meanwhile great blows would very likely be struck on one side or the other: they were not without serious apprehensions about Sebastopol. The Prince is gone from here to Erdmannsdorf to the King, from thence he will hasten to Baden. The King has with him at Erdmannsdorf, Lieutenant-General von Gerlach; amongst others, also, R.,* unless he has already become tired of him, as will happen so often. Humboldt speaks of R. as being decidedly a Jesuit; he calls him Ignatius, and sneers at and ridicules him over and over again. ‘The great destinies of Italy leave the King altogether unmoved,

* Thus in the original, but evidently referring to Raumer, Minister of Public Works.—Tr.

but a painted window-pane, a flourish on an old monument, a family name, that was what deeply interested, engaged, and delighted him; and for such frippery R. was the very man he wanted. The same was the case with Bunsen, with whom the King corresponded on theological and patristic curiosities. He has encouraged him to write against the Bishop of Mayence.* Bunsen, on the other hand, made it a condition that he should be allowed to refer in his articles to the King's orders, as otherwise all that he could say would be wanting in authority and effect. Humboldt is of opinion that Bunsen, after all, would not be able to resist the allurement of being summoned here, even if it were not to an official position, but only to a personal one about the King.

"The Duke of Coburg-Gotha aims at aggrandisement of territory, and accession to a higher title; that of 'King of Eastphalia' has been proposed, and the King, in joke, speaks of him as if he already were crowned such !† France and England are counted upon in this plan; flattery and compliance are readily offered to Bonaparte, who would then be gladly acknowledged a protector of a new Confederation of the Rhine. Thus fares German unity! It is most eagerly betrayed by

* Baron Wilhelm von Ketteler. Mayence belonging to the Arch-diocese of the Upper Rhine, the head of which is the Archbishop of Freiburg, the Bishop took an active part in the quarrel of that prelate with the Government of the Grand Duke of Baden.—Tr.

† Humboldt himself repeatedly mentions in his letters that there were things at Court about which he was never spoken to. Owing to this imperfect knowledge of the facts, he mistakes in this instance a mere joke between the King and the Duke for a serious affair of state. We are the more happy to be enabled to give from authentic sources the true version of the case, as Humboldt's severe remarks were directed against a prince who, instead of entertaining any selfish dynastic ambition, has on the contrary gone so far in his generous readiness to make any sacrifice for the cause of German Union, as to offer to serve as a Prussian-German Minister under the Prince Regent of Prussia. "As to the Kingdom of Eastphalia, this is a joke which often passed between the King of Prussia and the Duke. It refers to a memoir of Chevalier Bunsen's, at that time (the commencement of the Crimean war), Ambassador at the English Court, who laid down in his despatch, that the Kingdom of Poland ought to be restored under the Royal house of Saxony, and that the Thuringian countries ought then to be united into a Kingdom of "Eastphalia" under the rule of the Duke of Coburg. The King and the Duke had at the time many a good laugh at this memoir and its eccentric schemes."—*Extract from a Letter from Germany.—Tr.*

its own sworn defenders.' At last Humboldt added:—' If one has the misfortune of being compelled to live with such wretches as Gerlach, Raumer, and the rest who have gained a footing at this Court!' He drove from me to the Köthen Strasse, to look at a picture, I remaining behind in great excitement. I was not able to remember or write down the tenth part of what he had said!"

On the 12th August, Varnhagen makes the following postscript:—"Speaking of the position of Prussia, Humboldt said it reminded him of a pleading which he had once heard in Paris; the counsel for the prosecution, in the matter of a box on the ear, had wound up, triumphantly exclaiming:—*'Au fond nous n'avons pas reçu le soufflet, nous n'avons eu que le geste!'*"

CLXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 13th January, 1856.

Smile, my dear friend (you are perfectly right in doing so !) at the strange lines from Princess Lieven, and also at my importunate inquiry. Madame de Quitzow, who has never written to me for the last twenty-five years, wants to know from me, whether the Emperor Paul, during the epoch of his political insanity, had caused the proposal to be made by Kotzebue, that instead of the armies, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs should engage in single combat. I was at that time (1799 and 1800), traversing the Delta of South America, and had no knowledge whatever of the anecdote which the Russian Princess (who, as it now appears to me, has a very strong leaning towards Western ideas and predilections), wishes to have authenticated. According to rather unreliable accounts which I have gathered, the proposal was, that the Monarchs themselves, not the

Ministers, should enter the lists for the duel. I entreat you, my generous friend, to write me a few lines as to what your excellent memory supplies on the subject ; and even more earnestly do I entreat you to give me some reassurance as to your health at the return of this abominable frost. Bunsen writes, that he is expecting a fourth edition of his “ Letters.” The excellent, or rather the useful book being so extensively bought and read, does it prove that the German public has been less chloroformed for action than we thought ? *Dubito.* The German host of (*dicunt*) a very dirty hotel, which, bearing my name, has for many years flourished by the side of a more cleanly one named after Jenny Lind, in San Francisco in California—sends me from time to time German Californian newspapers. Descanting in a late number on the moral and intellectual condition of the English, French, and Germans, the editor says : “ We Germans are a tribe of thinkers, deeply engaged in our innermost mind with the world of thought ; we also have, over all the other nations settled here, *the great advantage* of troubling ourselves very little, or not at all, about municipal and political affairs.” Thus we boast on the shores of the Pacific ; we buy the “ Signs of the Times,”* but scarcely five in a hundred of us will go to the poll. It is too inconvenient. We are thinking.

Your old, affectionate friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Has not the very pleasant young Tyrolese poet, Adolphus Pichler—his actual profession is that of

* Bunsen’s “ Signs of the Times,” also translated into English.—Tr.

geologist—called on you? I do not expect during this quite*. . . . at least obnoxious and humiliating year any peace, but merely the farce of useless diplomatical negotiations.

(*Note by Varnhagen.*—In the fourth line, “Madame de Quitzow” is an evident mistake instead of “Madame de Lieven.” What may have been the cause of this name, which is here utterly without meaning, having been brought forward, cannot be guessed.)

(*A later note by Varnhagen.*—The Princess Lieven is very intimately allied with, some even say secretly married to, M. Guizot, the ex-minister. Guizot, pronounced in German fashion, easily turns into the name Quitzow, a very well-known one in the “March of Brandenburgh.” Humboldt, always inclined to be satirical, especially in such a case, may have here applied to her, with full intent, that nickname, which, perhaps, was already current at Court. [This version is quite correct.])

CLXX.

THE PRINCESS LIEVEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, le 8 janvier, 1856.

Vous ne m'avez pas oubliée, mon cher baron. Je le sais par deux messages bienveillants que le baron Brockhausen m'a portés de votre part. Je l'ai bien chargé de vous en témoigner ma vive reconnaissance, mais je trouve mieux encore de vous la dire moi-même. Aujourd'hui je la fais servir de passeport à une question que je me permets de vous adresser.

Vous, qui savez tout, pouvez-vous vous souvenir du fait suivant? L'année 1799 ou 1800 l'empereur Paul imagina de proposer un combat en champ clos, où l'Angleterre, la Russie, l'Autriche, je ne sais pas quelle puissance encore, videraient leurs différends

* These two passages are illegible in the original letter.

par la personne de leurs premiers ministres, Pitt, Thugut, etc. La rédaction de cette invitation fut confiée à Kotzebue, et l'article inséré dans la gazette de Hambourg. Voilà le souvenir bien distinct qui me reste. Je n'ai pas rêvé cela. Pouvez-vous compléter cette tradition ? je ne rencontre personne qui puisse s'en rappeler. J'ai pensé que vous pourriez venir en aide à ma mémoire, et j'y tiens, parcequ'on croit que je radotte.

Vraiment Paul I^r n'était pas si fou. Ne trouvez-vous pas notre temps plus fou que celui-là ? quel chaos ! et pourquoi ? . . .

Mon cher baron, je vis ici dans un petit cercle intime de vieux amis qui sont aussi les vôtres et qui vous conservent un bien bon souvenir. Quel plaisir nous aurions à vous y voir, et oublier ensemble les tristesses du jour. Ah que les hommes et les choses valaient mieux jadis ! Est-ce un propos de vieille femme que je vous tiens ?

Adieu, mon cher baron. Je vous demande souvenir et amitié, et je vous promets bien la réciprocité. Toute à vous.

LA PRINCESSE DE LIEVEN.

CLXXI.

VAENHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 27th January, 1856.

It is with grateful pleasure that I have received the copy your Excellency was good enough to send me of your Address to the Delegates of the City of Berlin. Were it not that it might be thought presumptuous in me to praise, where praise has become

habitual and supererogatory, I would say the Address evinces as much sterling value in its subject-matter, as it does intellectual greatness in its treatment. To my mind, however, its finest aspect is the—shall I say happy or masterly?—way in which you make mention of the King,—as dignified as it is delicate, as hearty as it is graceful; in fine, it must be the unanimous judgment of every fine-feeling person that this mention of him is at once appropriate and delightful. In your Excellency's last letter the expression, “Madame de Quitzow,” puzzled me a good deal at first, but I think I can boast of having solved the riddle by the strength of my head, as the Jews say when we speak of racking our brains, and I cannot help recognising, in this little piece of malice, not only a merry conceit, but also, all the circumstances of the case considered, a mild form of punishment. The Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar desired to speak to me here, but I was forced to stay at home with my rheumatic sufferings !

In truest admiration and grateful devotion, unchangeably your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CLXXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, the 28th January, 1856.

My ever wakeful ambition has met with an ample reward in that the Master of Diction (I avoid the term “word-builder”) accords me such pleasing praise in respect of my mode of mentioning the King, and my relation to him. To praise in another qualities in which that other does not abound, is to lead him

to the more honourable way, and to justify one's self before one's own nation. A wild man of the woods, whom they fancy they have tamed at Court, stands in need of such justification.

I hand over to you, my dear friend, as your own, "Madame de Quitzow," whom I was only able to ask back to-day from the Queen. General Thile, the old Minister, was firmly of opinion that the Guizots from the neighbourhood of Montpellier were, in fact, disguised, expatriated, Frenchified relics of the Lang-Kloder Quitzows, turned Protestant with their patronymic softened down accordingly. And your poor excellent Dora, who is so much pitied by all your friends for her sufferings which you so delicately alleviate: remember me to her very kindly.

Yours faithfully,

A. HUMBOLDT.

Night.

The Grand Duke, whom you have escaped, has charged me to greet you on his part. He has wonderful theories, too, which he has most likely picked up somewhere or other, (Bœotia, you will remember, was near the Athens of olden times,) and misunderstood them. According to him there are two classes of sculptors; the inferior, to which Rauch inclines, who works from *without to within*, while the superior (Rietschel) works from *within to without*. But what a scandal, Philarète Chasles * in the "Journal des Débats!" I wrote to Paris: "vulgaire dans les idées comme dans les formes du langage, indigne d'un littérateur du collège de France."

* The pun contained in the original is untranslatable. Der Schall Philarète, Philarète of the empty sound.—TR.

CLXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, Thursday, 7th February, 1856.

As it is just possible, my dear friend, that you may not have seen the work of Montalembert (the *quondam* friend of Lamennais whom he accompanied to Rome), I shall, I hope, be affording you some little pleasure in offering you *for a few* (say five or six) *days*, the loan of the King's copy of it. The only hit in it at the France of the present day is at the end, p. 284—298. I wish only the whole of it could be translated and published in Germany entire. Most gratefully yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

How fares good old Dora? I played the Patriarch yesterday till seven o'clock at Potsdam, at a christening at the house of a very well educated and handsome daughter of my Siberian valet, Seiffert. She is the wife of the traveller Möllhausen, who, at the recommendation of Ambassador Gerolt and myself, accompanied, in the capacity of topographer and draftsman for the American Government, the exploring expedition of St. Louis, San Francisco, and Panama (the expedition of Captain Whipple). A year ago the King made young Möllhausen Keeper of the Royal Libraries at Potsdam. There was yesterday, in the "Journal des Débats" (I think Feb. 5), an excellent article by Laboulaye, on the "Domestic Institution," and Pierce's infamous extension of slavery into parts where it had never been before!!

Keep the very mediocre verses, "On gentle Ilm."

CLXXIV.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 14th March, 1856.

Your Excellency's kind and valued presents came into the retreat which this bleak second winter has imposed on me, more gladdening and more lovely than the sunshine that accompanies it. Allow me, in returning you my repeated thanks, most earnestly to assure you that I know how to estimate as they deserve all the favours I receive, and most of all the friendly feeling which induces you to remember me so graciously, and study so kindly my gratification! The pencil lines of dying Heine are a dear memorial to me, and shall remain religiously preserved in the envelope inscribed by your Excellency's hand. To-day's gift, too, the thoughtful combination of Archimedes and Franklin, respecting their monuments, I have read with the warmest interest.

I observe that you fear neither wind nor weather, and fortunately have no need to fear them, if an honourable duty has to be performed. Our times furnish us with some singular tasks. The fact of the Chief of the Police being killed in a duel is, perhaps, the first occurrence of the sort in the States of modern Europe.* The calling to Paris a Minister of Foreign Affairs to bring the Brandenburg writing-sand for the ready-made facts there, appears also fabulous. But—Allah is great!

In truest admiration and grateful devotion, your Excellency's most constant and obedient

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

* Allusion to the death of Hinckeldey, killed in duel by Baron Rochow, a Member of the "Junker Partei (Squirearchy)."—TR.

CLXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 14th April, 1856.

As the oldest Prussian official connected with mines, and being proud of the position, I felt called upon to speak. My confidence in your indulgence is so great, my dear and generous friend, that I even dare to offer to *you* these unimportant lines in print. Count B. deserved this praise, for that being of liberal tendencies, mining was thriving under his auspices; and although he has some time since resigned the direction, he is still scientifically occupied with it. With unalterable fidelity, yours,

Monday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Note by Varnhagen. With the speech delivered on the occasion of the Jubilee (9th April, 1856) of his Excellency Count Beust, Privy Councillor and Chief Inspector of Mines.

CLXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 11th September, 1856.

As you take a lively interest, dear friend, in the Slavery Question, and in all that concerns myself, I send you Gerolt's last letter. It has arrived very late, but is sure to interest you. Buchanan, unfortunately, is to be President, not Fremont, the learned traveller, who has four times performed the overland journey to California with a view to surveying it, and to whose exertions it is owing that California has not become a Slave State.

I beg you *not* to return the letter and its enclosures. And now, after this African folly, for another piece

of madness, more serious and more compromising; not so royalistic in its tendency, but Bernese-aristocratic, flavoured with some little railway interest (whether the line by way of Neufchâtel or Chaux de Fond is to be patronized), that is to say, with share dabblings. And the heroic Count, who accomplishes the *coup d'état à la Napoléon*, comes inspired (?) from Berlin, while we have a Minister at the Diet whom to-day we deny ever to have acknowledged. How is one to get out of this? Such will be the case with our three Transpontine possessions—the Jade,* the Zollern (the discovery of Columbus-Stillfried),† and Neufchâtel. I pity the Constantinopolitan Pourtalès who steps in between his dynasty (the Prussian Grafenthum) and his official liberalism, engaged in bitter feud. Fortunately the English Parliament is silent just now. Yours faithfully,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CLXXVII.

THE PRUSSIAN AMBASSADOR VON GEROLT TO HUMBOLDT.

New York, 25th August, 1856.

My dearest, kindest sir,—Since my last letter to your Excellency of the 8th instant, I have been rendered happy by your letter of the 27th of July, from which I learn with the warmest sympathy of your late indisposition. I return my most heartfelt thanks for the news your Excellency has kindly communicated, and hasten to send, according

* The Bay of Jade, the projected Prussian war-port in the German Ocean.—TR.

† The principalities of Hohenzollern in Swabia, the cradle of the Royal house. They were, with the consent of the princes, their owners, incorporated with the Prussian monarchy by Friedrich Wilhelm IV.—TR.

to your wishes, two extracts from New York papers ("New York Herald" and "Courrier des Etats Unis"), which contain your publication on Slavery in Cuba, as well as Mr. Thrasher's apology for it, published in the journals here, and which certainly is very lame.

The affair has caused great excitement everywhere here, and could only be welcome to the opponents of Slavery, who have elected Fremont for their candidate. A few days ago a mass meeting of the German electors in Fremont's interest, many thousands in number, was held here, and in the evening a brilliant torch-light procession was arranged in his honour.

The Slave Question becomes every day more serious. While the House of Representatives reduces the Government estimates for the army, news arrives daily from Kansas of sanguinary conflicts between the freesoilers and the slaveholders. It is hoped, however, that when the presidential election is over (in November), internal quiet will once more be restored. The unhealthy climate of Washington has driven me away for some days, the heat during the last month having been insufferable, and now intermittent fevers are setting in. I leave to-day for Albany, where the Society of Naturalists holds a sitting, to which I am invited. I shall meet there many noted *savants*, and at some future time will give your Excellency an account of them. M. Heine* is very pleased at the favourable opinion your Excellency has expressed of him. Mr. C—— and the whole

* Not the poet, but a German painter of that name who accompanied the United States Expedition to Japan.—TR.

fashionable world have long since betaken themselves to the hills or seaside; and I shall not see him again for three or four weeks.

Mr. Fillmore would be the best President, but he seems to have little chance against Fremont and Buchanan. The Knownothings have lost all their influence.

My poor wife and children count the days till they shall see me again, and my own longing is not less next year, or as soon as Congress has finished its sitting, to get back to all that is dear to me at home.

The immediate departure of the mail for England obliges me to break off to-day, and I close with the most fervent wish that these lines may find your Excellency in the best health.

With unchangeable admiration and friendship, I remain, your Excellency's most obedient,

GEROLT.

CLXXVIII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 13th September, 1856.

The great influence of your Excellency's name in the United States furnishes a pleasing proof of the progress of cultivation in that quarter, and offers a sure promise of the eventual triumph of those principles of benevolence which you have professed throughout a long and active life.

I thank you heartily for the letter and its printed inclosures, which it gives me extreme satisfaction to be able to place in my collection.

Fremont's prospects are for the moment clouded;

but the latest news describes his party as exceedingly active, and his cause as not quite hopeless.

Home affairs,—for even though enacted in foreign lands, they are still, by virtue of their origin, home affairs—one would rather not touch upon at all. It is difficult to find the right terms in speaking of them, and, if one does find them, one cannot use them. Yet all who judge of them with unprejudiced minds, are singularly unanimous in condemning them.

To the genuine good old Prussians, Jade Bay, Neufchâtel, and even Zollern, are but very secondary considerations, and out of all connection with the nucleus of the Prussian State.

I am afraid that, as regards Neufchâtel, too much importance is attached to a momentary approval on the part of France, and that frightful complications will arise in consequence. Reynard takes a malicious pleasure in inciting his friends to dangerous enterprises. How they will come out of them is their affair!

Madame Bettina von Arnim has, within the last few days, made me a present of about a thousand manuscript papers for my collections; one of the most valuable among them is a letter of your Excellency's to Ludwig Achim von Arnim, on the subject of Fossils. It bears no date, but I should think it must have been written some time between 1820 and 1830.

I know right well the day on which I write these lines—the eve of that day* which, above all the days memorable and dear of our times, certainly will be celebrated far and near with the greatest enthusiasm.

* Humboldt's birthday.—Tr.

May your Excellency receive with kind approval
the modest expression of my most fervent wishes !

In truest admiration and grateful devotion,
Your Excellency's most obedient
VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CLXXIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 22nd September, 1856.

The Grand Duke of Weimar, who has just left me, charges me to beg you earnestly, my honoured friend, to receive him to-morrow (Tuesday) between nine and eleven o'clock. He is absolutely bent on calling upon you.

Yours faithfully,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday.

CLXXX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 23rd September, 1856.

Cher et *introuvable* ami !—How the Improbable can become the True ! How is it that Royal footmen and royal coachmen were unable to find you out, and looked in vain in the prosaic “ Directory ” for your address ? This address I send at once to the Grand Duke, who has the vexation of feeling he has made you, dear friend, await him in vain. May he be more fortunate in his next attempt ! The inclosed is a Berlin *curiosum* for your archives.

Faithfully yours,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Tuesday, two o'clock.

CLXXXI.

(Inclosure.)

GRAND DUKE KARL ALEXANDRE OF SAXE WEIMAR
TO HUMBOLDT.

Au Chateau de Berlin, Mardi matin.

Si j'eusse eu l'art du Marquis de Saint-Germain,* si je ne me trompe, dont on raconte qu'il sortit un beau matin par quatre portes à la fois, je n'aurais pas eu meilleure volonté, pour trouver M. de Varnhagen que je n'ai eu. Tout a été néanmoins inutile. On n'a pas pu me dire où il demeure, et c'est en vain que j'ai arpente la Maurenstrasse. Comme la nature m'a créé de tous les grand-ducs le plus entêté, je ne persiste pas moins dans mon intention de voir l'invisible, et je m'empresse d'y parvenir en priant Votre Excellence de me dire où demeure effectivement M. de Varnhagen. Pardonnez-moi de vous importuner de nouveau, mais en conscience je ne connais pas d'autre chemin plus court et plus droit. Je me signe avec l'attachement inépuisable de l'admiration, et de la vénération de Votre Excellence le plus dévoué,

CHARLES ALEXANDRE.

CLXXXII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 24th September, 1856.

Your Excellency has had no small amount of

* The Marquis of Saint-Germain, a personage of the eighteenth century, greatly renowned for magical art.—TR.

trouble on my account these last few days, for which I really feel ashamed. But most of all I regret to have missed your kind call, which always is an honour as well as a profit and a pleasure. That the Grand Duke should not have been able to find me yesterday, although he drove up and down the Mauerstrasse, and had inquiries made several times, would be indeed inconceivable, if Court servants were not quite a peculiar species. I have lived nearly thirty years, in the best house in the street, in which the Grand Duke, too, has been before, when calling on the Prince Wilhelm of Baden. To-day, then, he found me correctly, and at eight o'clock in the morning too. He was very gracious and obliging, spoke pretty freely, and with much kindness; more particularly he mentioned your Excellency's name with the greatest admiration and gratitude. His real motive only appeared quite at the end of his visit. Your Excellency, in referring him to me with it has done me a great honour, but at the same time put me in no small embarrassment. The matter is of importance, and may establish the happiness of a worthy man. The request itself does credit to the Grand Duke also, and I shall be very glad if I can be of any service in aiding his noble purpose. I will think about it, and dutifully communicate to your Excellency the result. On the first impulse I named the young, much gifted H., but to no purpose, as the Grand Duke doubted his proficiency in French. The visit lasted nearly an hour, and the conversation turned upon all sorts of curious themes. My share in it, at least the physical part thereof, can have afforded him but

little pleasure, as cold, cough, and asthma have made sad havoc with my voice, and rendered it all but inaudible.

With best wishes for your Excellency's health, in truest admiration,

Your most grateful and obedient,
VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CLXXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 24th September, 1856.

To-morrow, as a victim to the Queen and her loneliness, I shall bury myself again at Potsdam; but before doing so, dear friend, I wish to put matters straight as regards the Grand Duke and myself. The Grand Duke has visited you (and it does him honour), not for the purpose of consulting you, but out of respect for your fine talents and personal character, because, as he said, the idea was hereditary in his house, that one must see two men in Berlin—you and me.

We ought to receive that kindly as an inheritance of the *old gentleman* and her Imperial Highness,* who is a dignified lady. He had no idea of speaking to you of what he seeks and will not find—equal capacity for science and poetry, the history of geographical discoveries and arts, painting, cameos, sculptures, refined manners, proficiency in speaking and

* The old gentleman is Karl August, Duke of Weimar, the friend of Goethe and Schiller, and grandfather to the present Grand Duke. Her Imperial Highness is the late Grand-Duchess Maria Paulowna, sister to the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, daughter-in-law of Karl August, and mother of the present Grand Duke of Weimar.—Tr.

writing French, and at the same time a good reader. Such a man must be born specially for the purpose. I said "*j'aviseraï*," and quite accidentally added, "I would ask *you*." It was not till he was taking leave,—which he did in official form, with some rather overstrained compliments to "youthful age,"—that he asked me whether he should be running counter to my feelings if he were to propound the riddle to you. The motive of his visit was, therefore, to give proof of his "hereditary admiration," and to create sensation; and this at eight in the morning on the day of his departure, must have cost him a little self-sacrifice. To "engraft" upon him the excellent H., one might send H. for four months to Paris and London; but would a talent like H.'s bear such a slavery? *J'en doute.* Warmly yours,

Wednesday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Gerlach will separate himself from the King, and supplant Reyher* in his office. He would thus remain near the King, nay nearer, for the motive of many a little excitation (contact-electricity) would thus be removed.

CLXXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 9th November, 1856.

I have neglected to inform you, my honoured friend, that I had punctually, indeed within a few days of learning it, fulfilled your wish by sending

* General of Artillery and Chief of the Staff.—TR.

the letter you directed to me to Weimar, and at the same time warmly recommended the proposed “private secretary.” A German letter of Prince Metternich, expressing his sentiments in graceful language, will interest you. I make you a present of it for your collection. The occasion was a plaster mould and cast (at which the Prince himself has worked) of an old Egyptian Stele, of granite, which he had received from Mehemet Ali, twenty-five years ago. The aged Prince presented me with this cast (from three to four feet high) because he wanted me to decipher the long inscription it contained in Demotic characters. This has been performed by the talented young Egyptologist Dr. Brugsch, author of a Demotic grammar, which has been generally admired abroad. Dr. Brugsch, who had the first edition of his grammar (written in Latin) printed while he was still a pupil in the first class of Dr. August's Gymnasium* (the second edition in French), has found a deal of very curious astronomy in the inscription; and to give pleasure to the old Prince, Brugsch has published the whole as “Stele-Metternich,” in the Oriental Magazine (“Zeitschrift für das Morgenland”), and in the “Athenée.” Brugsch is the son of a poor cavalry sergeant, has spent two years in Egypt at the King's expense, and is well acquainted with Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Koptic, and Persian. Excuse my horrid scrawl, which is hardly readable, and my savagely-incorrect style.

Surely the letter of the Maccaroni King to Louis Philippe, in the “Spener'sche Zeitung,” has not

* Dr. August's Gymnasium—the “Kölner Gymnasium” at Berlin.—Tr.

escaped you? *Non v'a bisogno*—quite like Rochow-Seiffart, in his best style to the Elbingers—“It is not at all necessary for my people to think,—I think for them. The people that has so often betrayed me, bends under my power.” Your faithful

A. HUMBOLDT.

CLXXXV.

METTERNICH TO HUMBOLDT.

Königswart, 14th October, 1856.

Many thanks, my old friend, for the explanations of the “Stele” with which M. Brugsch has connected my name. I beg you will hand the excellent *savant* the few lines inclosed which I have addressed to him. On my return to Vienna I shall make use of the copious results of the deciphering of this monument, in order to indicate to Archaeologists, in a circular, the mode of taking casts. Being utterly ignorant on the subject, I never doubted that I could do better than address myself to you, in order to become enlightened as to the scientific value of this gift of Mehemed Aly, which has been slumbering for years in my extensive collections. My best thanks to you, as well as to M. Brugsch.

I have had the happiness of finding the King in good health, and kindly disposed as ever towards me.

Recollections of great events in the course of a long life form a strong bond of union between men, and its strength is tested by its defying the storms of time. More than half a century had elapsed since I first came in contact with the young Heir-Apparent. The changes that have occurred in this long period belong

to the domain of history. That they have never deprived me of the Royal confidence, either in the case of the father or the son, fills me with pride ; that is to say, with a feeling which is better designated by the term of soul's and heart's content than by the word of doubtful virtue which has escaped my pen.

You, my senior by three years, have just celebrated your eighty-seventh birthday. We may both confess that we have understood the “art of living.” That we shall do well to cultivate this art still longer, I hope no one will dispute.

With true friendship and esteem,

METTERNICH.

CLXXXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 20th November, 1856.

I want your literary assistance, my dear friend. Our great landscape painter, Hildebrandt, who has travelled in Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, and lately made a voyage to the North Cape, has finished a beautiful sketch in water colours of my “Interior household,” to replace a smaller one, many hundred copies of which have been exported for sale in America. La renommée, fruit d'une longue patience de vivre, augmente avec l'imbécillité. I am obliged to make an inscription with my own hand to this portrait of mine.

This is not easy. I entreat you to come and see me on Saturday, at one o'clock if you can. You shall guide me. Yours most gratefully,

Thursday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CLXXXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 21st November, 1856.

I begged you yesterday, my dear friend, to gladden me with a visit on Saturday. To-day I beg you not to come. I hear with regret that you are suffering. The great picture of Hildebrandt will remain some time longer at my house. Any later day will do for me as well. I only beg that you will kindly send me word, the day before, when I may expect you. Pray make the hour twelve, because then I am sure to be at leisure. As to myself, I feel always as if I should like *to jump out of my skin*. I am pestered in my old age as if by mosquito stings; and, to crown all, I have the honour of being consulted from time to time by an extra-super-Christian Mr. Foster (resident at Brussels), as to whether I believe the souls of the lower order of animals come within the scope of *redemption*—whether, in fact, bugs and gnats are to be partakers of heavenly bliss. If they are, I am threatened with them hereafter, and therefore shall find those well-known “animal spirits” with which I have made such close acquaintance on the Orinoco, hymning their songs of praise.

Your old and attached friend,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Friday.

Thus the infamous party, which sells negro children of fifty pounds weight, and gives away canes of honour,* (as the Russian Emperor does swords of

* Allusion to the Sumner-Brooks difficulty in the House of Representatives at Washington.—Tr.

honour, and as Gräfe* makes noses of honour) proving that all white labourers had also better be slaves than freemen,—has triumphed. What a monstrosity !

On the 22nd November, 1856, Varnhagen writes in his Diary :—
 “ Started at half-past twelve and drove, in a tremendous rain, to Humboldt’s. He was delighted at my coming, and led me at once into the room, where Hildebrandt’s great water-colour drawing (framed) was hung. Really an excellent painting, in the rich variety of which the figure of Humboldt (sitting) is prominent. Now arose the question of the inscription to be chosen for it. I had rightly opined that he did not so much desire me to propose an inscription as to approve of one he had already fixed on. Contrary to my expectation it was not a short sentence, but a tolerably long address—a rhetorical composition contrasting felicitously the exploring traveller with the philosopher on his return home. Several alterations were at first approved of, but at last rejected. The picture has been presented by Hildebrandt, not to Baron Humboldt, but to his valet, Seiffert. It is to be engraved. We looked at the rooms. In three of them his materials for study lying about. All three heated to 19° Reaumur, to me an insufferably high temperature. A large library not warmed. Pictures by Madame Gaggiotti,† whose talent he praised highly. He was surprised and pleased at finding that I also knew her. He complained of irritation of the skin. I told him it was a known complaint, *pruritus*—‘ *senilis*,’ he added directly. He had, in a box, a live chameleon, which he showed me, and of which he said ‘ that it was the only animal which could direct one of its eyes upwards, while looking downwards with the other; only our parsons were as clever, directing one eye to heaven, and the other to the good things and advantages of the world.’ We talked also of Neufchâtel; the King, he said, was hoping for the best, counting on Louis Bonaparte. Manteuffel did not see things in so favourable a light, but was merry about them notwithstanding. The Russian Chancellor, Count von Nesselrode, said to Humboldt on his last visit, that the

* A celebrated surgeon at Berlin.—Tr. † An artist, native of Rome.—Tr.

present constitution and bearing of Switzerland had made a very favourable impression upon him, and was well adapted to win esteem and favour for the Republic."

CLXXXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 30th November, 1856.

My dear Friend,—I have just received a letter from my "pupil," which, for language and clearness of ideas, deserves moderate commendation. I do not mean to answer it until I have seen you, my dear friend. The last fifteen lines of the letter I can neither read nor understand. I had written to him about the laying down of the telegraphic wire between Newfoundland and Ireland, but had not offered him anything.* I cannot read what is underlined. Pray take care of my pupil's letter, as well as of the Notice in which I am mentioned as being discussed in the Belgian Chambers as a Materialist and Republican, who must be put down! I cannot guess where the "Diné" of Baron d'Arhim (Armin) may have been. Perhaps I have said, "I was as liberal as Arago," but surely never "I was a Republican." Pray put M. Jobard† among your archives, dear friend.

Yours faithfully,

Sunday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

What men believe or disbelieve, is usually made a matter of discussion only after their death,—after one has been officially buried, and a funeral sermon

* See next letter.

† Jobard—the well-known Belgian savant and political economist.—TR.

read over one, by Sydow.* The “Spener’sche Zeitung” contains every day, side by side with the news from Neufchâtel, and the evacuation of the Danubian Principalities, a *bulletin de la santé* of two little silkworms at the Court Gardener, Fintelmann’s. How everything decreases in importance ! I often dated my letters from the once historical hill of Sans-Souci. Now the Pfaueninsel (Peacock’s Island) † becomes historical by recording the domestic life of two small silkworms. Thus the world changes ! It is true when the Angora goats in France rendered the Richelieu Ministry famous, the “Moniteur” said, in the same way, “Le moral des chèvres s’améliore de jour en jour.”

CLXXXIX.

KARL ALEXANDER, GRAND DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR,
TO HUMBOLDT.

Weimar, 29th November, 1856.

As I fortunately have the honour of being known, really known to your Excellency, I may hope that you will not judge my readiness to acknowledge your and Baron Varnhagen’s painstakings, by the length of time which has elapsed since the 31st ultimo, when I received your letter. Let my sincere thanks find here their place; the very nature of the affair itself was cause of the delay : it is one that does not allow of a hasty resolution, and, therefore, I write to-day, partly because I do not like to appear ungrateful, and

* Von Sydow—one of the chaplains of the Prussian Court who usually preaches the funeral sermons of people of rank or note buried at Berlin. The well-known author of the “Report on the English System of Education.—Tr.

† An islet in the Havel at Potsdam.—Tr.

partly because I wish to secure to myself the possibility of coming to a firm resolution. For this I require time and choice. Both are secured to me by your and Baron Varnhagen's courtesy; for you both propose that the young man should come to Weimar, that I may first become acquainted with him. The question now is, when this can be done; for I do not wish to call * * * here, by at once heralding forth his appointment. Nothing then remains for me but to request your Excellency to inquire when the gentleman in question will be able and willing to make a journey to the banks of the Ilm? At this question I ought, no doubt, to pause, and pass to the expression of my special thanks for the curious news which you have had the kindness to communicate to me. If I add the question, whether your Excellency could send me the map for my admiring inspection, and if you should chance to find this question importunate even to admiration, then I shall take refuge in your kindly feeling for me, which has often made me proud, and to-day, perhaps, indiscreet. Yet am I proud of your kindness; but as kindness is always coupled with truth, I rely on the latter for your decidedly refusing my request if it should be inconvenient to you, whose most respectful and grateful pupil is your

KARL ALEXANDER.

CXC.

JOBARD TO HUMBOLDT.

Bruxelles, le 26 novembre, 1856.

Monsieur le Baron,—Vous ne serez peut-être pas

fâché d'apprendre les rôles qu'on vous fait jouer dans les tristes débats de notre politique religieuse.

L'ancien ministre Dechamps qui était à votre droite au diner du baron d'Arhim et qui s'étonnait si fort de vous avoir entendu dire que vous étiez républicain comme votre ami Arago, ayant mêlé votre nom à ceux des croyants illustres qui professent les idées catholiques ; voici ce que lui répond un journal libéral ce matin :

“ M. Dechamps, dans la dernière homélie qu'il a prononcée à la Chambre, a cité le nom de M. de Humboldt pour prouver que la science pouvait parfaitement être subordonnée au dogme. Or, il faut convenir, comme M. Devaux l'a fait remarquer, que l'exemple ne pouvait être plus mal choisi. M. de Humboldt est un de ces rationalistes purs, contre lesquels M. Dechamps a déjà écrit tant de lettres. Si M. de Humboldt avait enseigné en Belgique, il eût été bien certainement poursuivi dans les lettres pastorales et destitué par M. Dechamps lui-même, si M. Dechamps avait été Ministre. Et voilà cependant comment l'on écrit l'histoire, et comment l'on apprécie les plus hautes questions de notre avenir intellectuel et moral !”—

Voici une autre opinion philosophique pure et claire :

“ Toute et quand fois vous fonderez votre église sur la bêtise humaine, les portes de l'esprit ne prévaudront pas contre elle, parcequ'il y aura toujours de grosses bêtes, de vieilles bêtes et de petites bêtes pour la soutenir et la réparer. La raison pure n'a pas les mêmes chances.” Votre tout dévoué.

JOBARD.

CXCI.

LINES BY VARNHAGEN ON HILDEBRANDT'S PICTURE OF
HUMBOLDT'S STUDY, AND ON THE MOTTO APPENDED
TO IT BY HUMBOLDT HIMSELF.

Spätes Daheim des einst in rüstig kämpfender Jugend
Weitgewanderten Forschers, der, gleichwie Höhen
der Erde,

Höhen des Ruhmes erstieg, hat dargestellt uns der
Mahler,

Schön, reichausgestattet mit herrlichen Schätzen
des Wissens :

Werke der Kunst, der Natur, und Schrift und
Geräth des Gelehrten.

Aber ihn selbst inmitten des neidenswerthen Besitz-
thums

Sehen wir froh sein Reich mit sinnigem Blicke
beherrschen,

Deutende Sprache verleihen dem wundervollen
Gemählde,

Durch lichtvoller Gedanken beredsam glückliche
Fügung

Schaffend ein neues Bild, ein geistiges, staunendem
Anschaun !

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

Berlin, den 1 December 1856.

See here by the hand of the Painter, in faithful pic-
ture presented

The Home of the Sage in the evening of Life. (In
Youth he had wandered

Through many a far-lying Land and lustily battled
 with Fortune,
 Scaling Earth's loftiest Regions, he scaled too the
 Summits of Glory.)
 Beauteous and richly endowed with many a treasure
 of Learning :
 Gems, too, of Nature, and Art, and Books, and skil-
 ful contrivance.
 Meanwhile o'er his glorious Realm thus teeming
 with wonders of Science,
 Hovers with gladsome approval the bright beaming
 eye of the Master
 Crowning each part of the Picture with wreaths of
 appropriate diction,
 Words that flow fast from the heart, betokening
 deepfelt emotion
 A thought-builded picture of Home, unveiled to the
 wond'ring observer.

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

Berlin, 1st December, 1856.

CXCII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 3rd December, 1856.

And so, my dear friend, my pedestrian prose has led you back (I should be proud of it, only that your favour is bestowed on the whole world), to the highest, noblest rhythm. Even more *timidly* than the poor, for whose sake the superannuated, silvery-pated old man shows himself for five groschen, I offer to you my fervent thanks. How gloriously, and with what good taste you render the English “Home,” by our

“ Daheim !” Your poetry is incomparably grand and beautiful, an exaltation of the subject, full of graceful and grave suggestions as to what is to be gathered from Nature, Art, and the implements of a scholar’s household. Would that my brother Wilhelm, who, in his correspondence with Wolf, discussed at such length these more or less exact hexameters, had lived to enjoy the honours thus poured upon our family.

Your advice, even when unrhythmically expressed, is to me as a command. I shall follow it at once, as you have made the matter very much easier for me. *Alea jacta sit.* Could you, dear friend, transcribe the last ten lines of the Grand Duke’s letter into your own artistic characters, in order that I may guess what it is I have promised him ? Of Fremont,—whose portrait reminds one very much of Chateaubriand’s,—a biography dedicated to me has just appeared at New York. “ Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont, by John Bigdon (?).” The dedication says : “ To Alexander von Humboldt, this memoir of one whose genius he was amongst the first to discover and acknowledge, is respectfully inscribed by the author.” Delicate words, rather artificially strung together. Then follows a reprint of the letter which I wrote to him from Sans Souci in the name of the King, on forwarding him the large gold medal of the Society of Science and Art, 1850, for the greatest barometrical survey that had ever been made—500 geographical miles, from Missouri to the Pacific. It closes with the words, of which Sans Souci need not be ashamed : “ La Californie, qui a noblement résisté à l’introduction de l’esclavage, sera

dignement représentée par un ami de la liberté et des progrès de l'intelligence." The biography has some wonderfully romantic scenes in it—one, where, cold and hunger having driven them frenzied and half mad, they sing and pray, and Fremont exacts an oath from them, not to murder and devour one another. When I shall have satisfied my curiosity, I will send you the book. For the present, here is a miracle which a Military Chaplain in Magdeburg has wrought upon Assemann in Quedlinburg. I have cleared the matter up on natural principles. You will find it on page 34. Gratefully yours,

A. von HUMBOLDT.

Note by Varnhagen.—The water-colour drawings of Hildebrandt, among them the Humboldt one, were exhibited in the Art Union at five groschen a-head, for the benefit of the poor.

"Self-murder; a Folly and a Crime." Two Sermons. By Dr. Friedrich Crusius, Military Chaplain, Magdeburg. 1855. 8vo. Besides this miracle (long-harboured thoughts of suicide, suddenly deserting a conscience-stricken mind at the invocation of the name of Jesus), the work is curious for an allusion it contains to Schleiermacher. At page 34 we read, "Is it not related of a learned Divine that upon one occasion he had a very great *temptation* to commit suicide? Such is the influence that mental and bodily sufferings can exercise even upon right-minded and God-fearing men."

CXCIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 17th December, 1856.

Another grateful, very simple, and amiable letter from the Grand Duke. He desires the visit to take place in February, and wishes that the drama may begin with a request to search in the Records.

The permission, as he symbolically says, shall be followed by the material part. You will, dear friend, easily be able to bring that about.

To-morrow I shall have another burial beneath the Column at Tegel, which bears Thorwaldsen's promise of *Hope*.* My eldest niece (daughter of my brother, wife of General Hedemann)—born at Paris, in 1800, a few days after Baroness Humboldt had returned from Spain—has died, after suffering for three months from disease of the liver, combined with dropsy. She was an amiable, cheerful matron, and lived in the enjoyment of excellent health during forty years of matrimonial happiness. I am burying my whole race.

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Wednesday Evening.

CXCIV.

KARL ALEXANDER, GRAND DUKE OF SAXE WEIMAR,
TO HUMBOLDT.

Weimar, 16th December, 1856.

Like Nature, ever called on and ever bestowing, because ever benign, you respond by constantly new kindness to constantly recurring requests. Your Excellency's proposal, regarding the young *savant*, which agrees also with Baron Varnhagen's plans, is such an excellent one, that I can only beg that you will have it carried out. For this purpose it appears to me desirable that Baron Varnhagen

* The Column at Tegel was erected above the family burial-place of the Humboldts, and is surmounted by a statue of *Hope*, the work of Thorwaldsen.—Tr.

should inspire the young man with the idea of seeking in our rich Archives further matter for his work, and applying to me for permission so to do, I should grant it immediately, following it up by the substantial part. The time from February next year seems to me the best for the literary researches. The real purpose of this journey would remain a secret, and thus I should feel quite at liberty to see him and take him or not. I thank you with all my heart for the printed enclosure. You have also performed this by no means easy task, with a master-hand ; you were better fitted for it than any other, because you, more than most men, have spoken to the world by deeds. I mean to obtain "Petermann's Journal." My admiration for you is an earnest of the real sincerity of my aspiration. Your interest for it I beg you to continue, as also your kindness for your grateful admirer and servant,

KARL ALEXANDER.

CXCV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 7th February, 1857.

Whenever I read anything at Berlin that excites my literary or political interest, my thoughts revert at once to you. Lasaulx,* at Münich, of the worshipful Company of Baader, was known to me hitherto only as a man of the "Kreuzzeitung," and of Schubert's "Shadow World." In the new historical work which

* Lasaulx—Franz von Baader—Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert, German philosophers, of rather cloudy and illiberal tendencies.—Tr.

he sends me, I find, not exactly original views, but, by implication, a variety of positive information which I had not expected to meet with in Lasaulx. Numerous quotations show a strong predilection for my brother's views. The passage respecting the Slavic Messiah is also very remarkable; indeed, altogether, the notes offer a very graceful classical anthology. President Gerlach and his brother, to whom Prof. Gelzer from Basel, and others of opposite opinions have been officially directed for the Neufchâtel negotiation, I do not think would be capable of similar things. If the work of Lasaulx, with its wishes for the regenerated old German Imperial Constitution, has not been sent to you, dear friend, look through it, if you please, if only for the sake of the notes.

My cutaneous complaint is much better, therefore my nocturnal diligence is also progressing favourably. The last (fourth) volume of "Kosmos" will consist of two parts, that is to say, of two volumes, each containing thirty-five sheets, of which the first is already printed; they are now at press with the second. Both parts, however*, are to appear together, that the effect may not be diminished. The arrogant and incautious manner in which this miserable Neufchâtel business has been managed here, exposes Prussia to great humiliations at Paris. Vengeance will be taken on Prussia, for Waterloo, as it has been on Russia. With sincere friendship,

Yours,

A. v. Ht.

* From the Temperature of the Earth's Interior, to the Races of Man.

CXCVI.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 9th February, 1857.

Your Excellency receives herewith, with warmest thanks, the book which you have kindly intrusted to me. I have read it with very varied feelings: I might almost say with painful interest. The author, it is true, makes concessions, and gives opinions of which I should not have thought him capable, as little as of the luxuriant erudition of his plentiful quotations. But the handsome anthology of notes cannot cover the kernel of the text, which is a very bitter one: the justification of negro slavery, a brutal eulogy of war and standing armies, and the usefulness of *aristocratic* revolutions. In spite of his all-embracing civilities, that look like invitations to those of different opinions, the author, after all, offers them only the diet of the "*Kreuzzeitung*," but a little more delicately prepared than Professor Leo uses to do it, whose "*dirt of civilization*" (*Bildungsdrück*) and "*scrofulous rabble*" are only seasoned a little more highly. *Latet anguis in herba!* Altogether, I always feel rather queer when philosophers measure and foretel the march and steps of the life of humanity, and mean to find laws for the possibilities of millions of years from the sparse dates of our still very slender history of a few thousand years. Neither Fichte, Schelling, Steffens, nor Hegel have been particularly felicitous in this attempt; the determination of the ages is best left to poets. Besides this, our author is still remarkable for confessing that he

does not quite believe in his own doctrine; he would not "resign our national ideal in practical life, the restoration of Emperor and Empire, although his theoretical faith in its realisation is not great." (Page 157.) Whoever can write such a thing has, properly speaking, condemned himself. A kind answer from the part of your Excellency the author may still be entitled to expect—a sympathizing one you will not be able to give him.

To hear that your health, your activity, and your labours maintain themselves, and progress in the usual way, is refreshing news, and an encouragement for us others, who require great examples not to get weary in our daily work—*δληγον τε φιλον τε*. I rejoice greatly in the intelligence of the new volumes of "Kosmos," and I say with Schiller, on the occasion of a completed masterpiece of Goethe's, "I thank the Gods that they have spared me to see this."

The Neufchâtel affair even, in its present stage, presents a greatly foreboding aspect, and from the very beginning I disliked the relations to Paris—looking much like snares in which many a thing will remain caught. The zeal of certain people is not at all meant seriously for the affair itself; but it serves as an excellent means for other purposes which no doubt they will attain. Yet I do not fear for the future; the light cannot be extinguished and must be victorious, only the moment of the eclipse is ugly and heavy.

With cordial wishes, great admiration and devotion, unchangeably your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CXCVII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 20th February, 1857.

Will your Excellency pardon me, if I claim for a moment your precious time? Not for myself, but in a literary matter from which I cannot withdraw my personal interest, if only for old acquaintance-sake. Professor Franz Hoffmann, in Würzburg, who, with self-denying perseverance—one might almost say, in spite of wind and weather—is occupied in editing Franz von Baader's works, has now, as a conclusion to his task, commenced a biographical sketch of his author, and is anxious that the fact should not remain unmentioned of Baader's having been a contemporary of your Excellency at the Mining Academy at Freiberg. It would be invaluable to him to obtain a word of explanation from you on this point—a hint only as to whether some nearer relations existed between you and Baader at that time,—whether he made any particular impression on you? I should not dare to trouble your Excellency with this, without premising that a simple "No" would dispose of the matter in the event of his not having been so fortunate, and a single line in case he was. The throng of visitors, and your Excellency's abrupt departure, cost me the pleasure I should have had in offering respectful homage to you at the Artists' Festival. It is twenty years and more since I ventured on such a troubled sea.

We hear singular reports. I hope that it is only a hoax which names M. Niebuhr, Minister of Finance, and M. Wagener, Privy-Councillor.

With repeated entreaty kindly to pardon me, in deepest admiration and truest devotion unchangeably
your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

On Humboldt's attack of illness, Varnhagen writes in his Diary, on the 27th February, 1857: "A call from M. Hermann Grimm :* he comes from Humboldt's house, and has spoken to the valet Seiffert: it is not a cold, in fact not a light indisposition, that has befallen Humboldt; but a fit of apoplexy. He did not feel quite well after the Court ball on Tuesday evening; he rose in the night to drink a glass of water; he did not wish to disturb the servant; he fell. Seiffert heard the noise, and found his master lying on the floor, consciousness and speech returning only after a while. Dr. Schönlein gives no great hopes; the patient did not pass the night favourably. If we lose Humboldt it would be a dreadful loss. He is a counterpoise to so much that is bad and mean, which after his death would venture boldly forth and make itself conspicuous. Honour and reputation of science are incorporated in him; both will sink if he is no more. There is no name in Germany, in Europe, which is equal to his; no character in Berlin greater and more acknowledged than his. And how painful would his loss be to me! More than fifty years of my life are connected with his name and acquaintance; he has besides known all those who were my most intimate and dearest friends."

On the 14th March, 1857, Varnhagen relates in his Diary :— "When the King was with Humboldt, Schönlein said to the latter, that for some time he would not be able to stand firm on the left side, upon which Humboldt replied: 'For all that, I do not mean to sit on the Right with Gerlach.' "†

* Son of Wilhelm Grimm.—TR.

† In the Prussian House of Representatives, the Ministerial party (at that time ultra-conservative, now liberal) always sit on the right hand of the President's chair.—TR.

CXCVIII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 17th March, 1857.

I cannot deprive myself of the pleasure of offering your Excellency my heartiest congratulations on your fortunate and complete recovery. The finest and strongest evidence of this is your epistle to Privy Councillor Böckh, which we have read in to-day's papers, and for which I can find no epithet sufficient to express my appreciation. Nobody else can boast of such a dedication. The receiver well knows how to appreciate it as the highest and most beautiful of all the gifts that have been offered to him: from what a vigorous mind and warm heart has it proceeded, and how finished and graceful alike is its expression! That it contains narrative, too—narrative, I might almost say, worthy of Herodotus—is of incalculable value, as evincing the freshness of youth combined with the experience of age. Your Excellency must pardon this outpouring of my heart. You do not require my words, but I find it impossible to suppress them; and I will not, therefore, pass over my most fervent wishes in silence—that the brilliant star which a cloud had veiled may still for a long time shine on us in its wonted splendour, and may augur in home and foreign circles, as heretofore, bliss and prosperity.

In deepest admiration, thankfully and truly your devoted,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

These lines are not so presuming as to expect an answer.

CXCIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

*Berlin, 19th March, 1857.**At night.*

How could I deprive myself of the pleasure of thanking you, dearest, most thoughtful, most attached of all my friends! Not alone indulgence, no: expressions of praise have fallen to my lot in respect of my address to Böckh—praise for the form and language it is clothed in, and that from the lips of a master of language, and of delicately turned expressions of goodwill. You have given me much pleasure; more than you suspect. The nature of my nervous complaint—which caused a temporary paralysis, leaving the functions of the brain entirely unimpaired, pulse unchanged, sight preserved, and uninterrupted use of the limbs at will, in perfect order—has remained incomprehensible to me. There are magnetic thunderstorms (the Polar light), electrical storms in the clouds, nervous storms in man, strong and weak ones, perhaps only a mere sheet-lightning—a forerunner of the other. I have had grave thoughts of death: *comme un homme qui part, ayant encore beaucoup de lettres à écrire.* Other interests that will ever remain alive in me fix my thoughts on the recollections of yesterday!! I believe myself in course of full recovery, but having had to rest much unoccupied in my bed, sadness and discontent with the world have increased in me. This I say only to *you.* Soon I shall come to you and thank

you in person from my inmost heart. Everything around us excites a feeling of shame.

With warmest friendship, your most faithful

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Varnhagen writes, on the 19th March, 1857, in his Diary;— “Unexpectedly a letter from Humboldt; I had made a postscript to my congratulation that these lines were not so presumptuous as to expect any answer. Yet he answers, and in the most obliging, most kindly manner. He gives a singular report of his illness. The bad rumours were all false, at least exaggerated; he has never lost consciousness nor speech, his pulse has remained as usual, yet he has not concealed to himself that it might draw to a close. ‘I have had grave thoughts of death: *comme un homme qui part, ayant encore beaucoup de lettres à écrire.*’ Grandly and beautifully he adds, ‘Other interests that will ever remain alive in me fix my thoughts on the recollections of yesterday!! (The 18th March). I believe myself in full recovery, but having had to rest much on my bed unoccupied, sadness and discontent with the world have increased in me. This I say only to you.’”

CC.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 6th April, 1857.

If you, dear friend, understand the Grand Duke’s letter as I do, * * * must start on his journey. I had proposed, you must know, that he should come to Weimar under pretext of studying the records; that he should bring a letter from you or me; that he should be invited, and in case he was not approved of, merely be asked if he was returning to † †. This was the Shibboleth of the inopportune conclusion of the drama, *quod Deus avertat*. I had proposed also to pay in advance the sum agreed on. On this point the

tyrant's reply is not quite clear. I suppose * * * will go *via* Berlin. Shall we then give him the letter of recommendation with the galvanic stimulants? I shall be guided by your wishes.

Your faithful

Tuesday.

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Keep the Grand Duke's letter, which closes very prettily and tastefully.

CCI.

KARL ALEXANDER GRAND DUKE OF WEIMAR TO
HUMBOLDT.

Weimar, 3rd April, 1857.

My behaviour with respect to * * * originated in a mistake. The fact is, I thought and expected that after he had (it was in January, I think) applied for, and at once upon applying obtained, my permission to institute researches in the archives here, he would have come at once. It was only in that event, of course, that I should have reimbursed him his travelling expenses, and so just these last few days I have been wondering that I have neither seen nor heard anything of * * *.

Then came your Excellency's second letter, which, by requiring information from me, gave me all the information I require. I hasten to answer your question by informing you that * * * might come here in about ten days, and that I should in any case be prepared to furnish him with the sum your Excellency yourself has named.

According to agreement, we should both—the traveller and myself—consider ourselves still as

entirely free, and in consequence observe the necessary *discretion* as to the real object of this journey. Dante would have spoken still more truly if he had said, “Viver, ch’è un correr’ a l’eterna gioventù.” You prove it, for your immortal genius rises ever and anon in eternal youth. Its goodness is also an evidence of this.

In thankful admiration and affection,
Your faithfully devoted,

KARL ALEXANDER.

CCII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 7th April, 1857.

Your Excellency’s kind and most welcome communications, or at least the substance of them, I forwarded yesterday in all haste to † †. I hope that M. * * * will start at once on his journey, but I expect an answer from him before he does so, and as I do not believe that he can make the détour *via* Berlin, considering the short time on which the Grand Duke has fixed, it will be best for him to receive at Weimar the letter of recommendation which is to introduce him.

The Grand Duke insists on discretion, in which he is quite right! It is convenient for him, and delicate and considerate for the other party. * * * has in this respect behaved quite correctly till now. I am very anxious to know the result of the whole affair; provided that, on the whole, affairs are about to assume a satisfactory form. Its success would give me extreme

satisfaction. To your Excellency's mediating and protecting hand the warmest thanks and blessings, at all events, will be due !

I am much rejoiced at the new present which you make me of the Grand Ducal epistle. Not only is the conclusion in good taste and delicate, but the style on the whole has pleasant turns ; the admiration for your Excellency, especially, is expressed in a way the heartfelt sincerity of which is unmistakeable.

For some days past I have lived wholly on recollections of bygone times and relations. I have been spell-bound in a magic circle by the Correspondence between Gentz and Adam Müller, which has just been published by Cotta, and I must once more, in inward contemplation, live through the entire contents of those life-pictures. I was intimate from early life with both these men, and have had much to do with them—personally upon friendly terms, but in matters of opinion much opposed to them. The superiority of Gentz over the younger friend, who was much over-valued by him, was never doubtful to me, and is here confirmed anew. Only at the last, when the murder of Kotzebue distracts and confuses his mind, the force of terror drives the Statesman, once such a lover of the Light, into those gloomy and misty regions, into which his alarmed friend had long since withdrawn. This correspondence is unique in its way. The discussions, explanations, mutual incitements, friendly approaches, and feuds, have the charm of a drama. In Adam Müller is concealed, moreover, the complete germ of the *Kreuzzeitung*'s party, but only in ideal height as yet, without any contact

with reality, and therefore without odious vulgarities.

Your Excellency has kindly promised me a couple of lines on Franz Baader; may I modestly remind you of this, by the remark that literally a couple of lines will answer the purpose?

With truest admiration and grateful devotion, unchangeably, your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CCIII.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

Berlin, 10th April, 1857.

I have the gratification of being able to apprise your Excellency that * * * will leave † † for Weimar on the 14th instant. Strong as his wish was to make the détour *via* Berlin, if only for the purpose of laying at your Excellency's feet the sincere expression of his unbounded gratitude for your many gracious and kindly exertions on his behalf, the short period allowed him by the Grand Duke has obliged him to renounce the fulfilment of it. I venture, therefore, to ask you for the letter of recommendation to the Grand Duke which you so kindly promised. In fact, it need only be a couple of lines to introduce him. I will send it without delay to Weimar, so that M. * * * may find it there on his arrival. The young man knows very well that the journey thither does not imply any decision, and that he must be prepared for a refusal; but he is happy that, after such a long and doubtful pause, this progress in the plan has taken place, and that the road is open. Your Excel-

lency's fortunate inquiry has been the cause of this, dispersing immediately the clouds of misunderstanding. His truly grateful heart is deeply touched by your kindness. To these feelings of his my own are most cordially united, in this instance again, as in so many former ones.

With most fervent wishes, in truest admiration and attachment, unalterably your Excellency's most obedient,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CCIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 13th April, 1857.

Here, my dear friend, is * * *'s letter of recommendation for the records, just according to your instructions. May the affair succeed !

Affectionately yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

CCV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 21st April, 1857.

I lament, dear friend, not being able to accept your and your kind niece's invitation to take coffee with you on Thursday, as I shall be back late and tired from Charlottenburg on that day. Many unimportant matters have accumulated during my indisposition which must be dispatched after dinner, because they are miserable decoration and dedication affairs—an offering of betel where one is not disposed to give money.

The Fourth Class* acts like betel-eating—it gives the jaws occupation, but there is no nourishment in it. The King hopes to have a grand winding-up with me on Thursday. I beg that you will write to Professor Hoffmann in Würzburg to say how much obliged I am to him for his “Torso;” but no help must be expected from the King, not only (which you will *not* say) because a little spectre-fear (alias horror) of Baader’s Catholic zealotry has taken root in the King, but also because all literary assistance in the Cabinet dwindles down to presents of 40—45 thalers. Instead of making use in the Preface of a miserable letter of recommendation for Baader to Dresden, which may have been written in an attack of spleen, I enclose a few lines as desired by you.

In old friendship your

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

(Enclosure.)

FROM HUMBOLDT’S LETTER TO VARNHAGEN.

You ask, dearest friend, what earliest impressions I received from Franz Baader. I saw him first in June, 1791, when, after the journey with George Forster to England, and after the stay at Hamburg, at the Commercial Academy of Büsch and Ebeling, I completed my studies of Practical Mining at Freiberg. For eight months I enjoyed almost daily the society of this amiable and thoughtful man. Franz Baader had published at that time his work on Caloric, and he had a passionate turn for Chemical Physics, with a slight dash of ideas on Natural Philosophy. He was diligent in visiting the pits, occupied more

* Of the Red Eagle.—TR.

with the practical mining and smelting business than with Geology ; profound in his observation of facts ; cheerful and satirical, but always gracefully so ; never intolerant towards those of different opinions. His powers of imagination at that time did not seem to be directed to religious subjects. He was generally beloved, but at the same time feared ; as is usually the case with the feeling of intellectual superiority. His political tendency was liberal. It was the time of the Pillnitz meeting in our neighbourhood—a time and neighbourhood which favoured political expressions.

CCVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 25th April, 1857.

“ Oracle’s gate, abyss of the State archives, analogies that lead to the bottom of the sea”—this is less beautiful than the last letter.* Raffaele had several styles. What surprises me is, that before the Hanoverian journey, he appears not to have seen * * * out of mere curiosity. Keep the empty letter, my dear friend ! The bottom of the sea refers to a map of the ocean, from Newfoundland to Ireland, which I have recommended to the Grand-Duke, and which he cannot procure, because it is published by Perthes in the neighbouring Carthage !! The “ Times ” flatters itself, quite seriously, that the French race will die out—it is true, that the pug-dogs have died out already.

Yours,
A. v. HUMBOLDT.

* See the next letter.—TR.

I have disagreeable remnants of correspondence with a certain Dr. Gross Hoffinger,* at Vienna, who accuses himself of having written against Prussia in 1848, and now requires recommendations from Prussia to the Austrian Government; have you any recollections of him?

Note by Varnhagen.—“In the neighbouring Carthage,” Gotha, on account of the bitter jealousy of this place against Weimar, which stands for Rome!

CCVII.

KARL ALEXANDER, GRAND DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR,
TO HUMBOLDT.

I have safely received your Excellency’s letter from the hand of * * *. Accept my sincerest thanks for those lines—for that new mark of your kind feeling for me, which I find always the same. The bearer of them is for the present buried in the abysses of my archives. As soon as I return from Hanover, whither invitations call me for a few days, I shall summon the explorer up to daylight, in order to explore him; waiting for further development from the future, as the expecting people did before the gate of the oracle. The analogy leads me from abyss to abyss, and so I arrive from the archives to the bottom of the sea. That map of it which you wrote to me about, where can I obtain it? When I inquired for it, some time ago, at Gotha, my inquiry

* The less said of him the sooner mended, having long ago been justly consigned by Gutzkow to the “servants’ hall” of literature. He tried by the most nauseous flattery to make his way at Vienna, and, wonderful to say, did not even succeed in that paradise of all the literary scum of Germany.—TR.

was fruitless. Therefore I return to the source, the ever-plentiful and kind one, and sign myself

Your most grateful and devoted

KARL ALEXANDER.

Weimar, 22nd of April, 1857.

CCVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 28th May, Thursday.

I am getting alarmed, dear friend, on account of Weimar. The Grand Duke is everywhere, save at, Weimar-Athens. What becomes of our warmly recommended friend? Has he had an interview with our eloquent Prince? You have omitted to congratulate me on the order of Grand Officer,* which the "Hamburg Moniteur" bestows upon me, but which I received fifteen years ago from Guizot. It is very interesting to hear Raumer; he was in Pesth, Milan, dining with the Archduke, and with Cavour. He has returned not quite without a bias in favour of the Austrian Government in Lombardy; somewhat in the same way as republicans who visit the United States, where arsenic, torture, and Fremont's negroes cause to Cuba-greedy Buchanan an indictable colic. *Multa sunt eadem sed aliter.* The Russian Minister Noroff, Department of Culture and Education, whose leg was shot off at the hip at Borodino, and who was in Egypt and Palestine with his wooden leg, even climbing the Pyramids, is here, and sitting among the students, as an occasional auditor of Johannes Müller† and Dieterici;‡ his companion, the

* Of the Legion of Honour.—Tr. † The celebrated physiologist.—Tr.

‡ The statist.—Tr.

young Count Ouwaroff (author of a great work on the Hellenic antiquities of the Chersonese) attends Michelet and Böckh. Both these Russians are very agreeable people ; the first (it is said) rather too ecclesiastical, but without the spirit of persecution, both much attached to our more liberal student's life, and to the absence of all police officers in the University building. I did not like to undeceive the one-legged Raumer, as they are soon leaving. *Decipitur mundus.*

Your old loving and tedious friend,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Note of Varnhagen.—“The United States, where arsenic, torture, and Fremont's negroes cause to Cuba-greedy Buchanan an indictable colic.” This passage refers to the occurrence that President Buchanan, in an hotel, with many of his adherents, was attacked after dinner by a violent colic, so that poison was suspected, and it was discovered on a judicial investigation only that tainted water had caused all the mischief.

CCIX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, Thursday, in haste. 4th June, 1857.

A regular Grand Ducal letter, indelicate without justification, cutting all short by saying, as he leaves (according to the agreed upon Shibboleth), “Auf Wiedersehen.” Moreover, silent about wantonly caused expenses. Neither you nor I will “steer farther into this ocean of inquiry,” as acquaintance with the candidate does not secure his election. I am thinking of answering it somewhat ironically. Perhaps it may be agreeable to you, my dear friend,

to have one autograph more of the now Orleanist Thiers in your archives. Duvergier de Hauranne, too, came from his pilgrimage to Eisenach. The Duchess goes to England. Keep both the letters, the wicked and the simple and good one.

Your

A. v. H.

I expect to come to Berlin on Saturday with the King; the Queen will go on Monday.

CCX.

KARL ALEXANDER, GRAND DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR,
TO HUMBOLDT.

Ettersburg, 1st June, 1857.

Your Excellency will perhaps have learnt already that I have seen and repeatedly spoken with * * *, but have after all not given him the appointment. He has interested me—I may even say that he has pleased me; but the secretary, who not only has to inform me of all that appears worthy of notice in science, art, and literature, but who has to manage the correspondence, the verbal and social intercourse in different languages—such a secretary I did not believe to have found in him, and I durst not appoint him on trial. Nothing else was left to me than to withdraw. I did it in order to steer farther into the ocean of inquiry, whether you still can and will allow the goodness which you have hitherto always evinced towards me to further lighten my path as a star auguring happiness and good fortune. I may indeed desire, but I dare not ask it, although we

had agreed that the acquaintance with the candidate was not necessarily to be followed by his election.

I now retire to my various wood solitudes of Thüringen with books of every kind, among which I look forward with special pleasure to Barth's book of travels. I bow in respect before such a perseverance in the love of science, before such a noble strength of will; and how much more before his model, before *you!* acknowledging myself your most devoted, most thankful servant,

KARL ALEXANDER.

CCXI.

THIERS TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, 14 mai, 1857.

Mon cher Monsieur de Humboldt,—Je prends la liberté de recommander à vos bontés, pour moi et pour les français en général, M. Duvergier de Hauranne, qui va en Allemagne pour la montrer à son jeune fils. Vous connaissez trop bien notre pays pour que j'aie besoin de vous dire quel rôle considérable et toujours honorable M. Duvergier de Hauranne a joué dans nos assemblées, où il a été toujours fidèle à la cause de la liberté raisonnable, et non seulement fidèle, mais singulièrement utile. Aujourd'hui, rentré dans la retraite et livré à l'étude, il va voir votre excellent pays, et j'ai pensé que je ne pouvais mieux faire que le recommander à votre bienveillance. Ce sera pour son jeune fils un souvenir impérissable que d'avoir vu le savant illustre qui honore le plus notre siècle, et que nous français nous avons la vanité de considérer comme français et propre autant qu'il est allemand.

Je ne vous écris rien des affaires courantes de notre monde, car M. Duvergier de Hauranne les connaît, et vous les fera connaître mieux que personne.

Agréez le nouvel hommage de mon respectueux attachement.

A. THIERS.

CCXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 19th June, 1857.

To my great delight, I have received, during an excursion to Tegel, a splendid portrait of you, my valued friend, through M. Richard Zeune. I do not know which to admire most—the graceful, characteristic, vigorous resemblance of the features, so dear and so attractive to me (a proof of the artistic talent of your niece, Ludmilla Assing), or the inscription of your hand, pregnant alike with thought and expression. I have copied the last myself, and handed it about, because it belongs to the best that our language can produce in the shape of ingenious aphorisms. The thanks I owe you have been inconscionably delayed by the arrival of the brothers Schlagintweit from Cashmere, Thibet, and the Kuenlün-mountains, which they crossed. The latter form the northern boundary of Thibet, as the Himalaya does the southern. (All the mountain passes, the most convenient to the travellers, are 18,000 feet high !) They are going to the King to Marienbad—not, however, with the 340 boxes, which they have brought with them. Of the liberal Grand Ducal Mightiness (not liberal as to the prosaic charm of coin), not a syllable, probably because he expects new proposals, new sacrifices from us. The

Hungarian honorary friar* and the Princess alone remain a problem to me. Your truest,

A. HUMBOLDT.

The Emperor Napoleon has skilfully repaired all that formerly may have been mysterious by sending me some amiable letters, rich in delicacy of expression, from Prince Napoleon (Plon Plon), and from Walewski. As Niebuhr, in his capacity of Privy Counsellor of Prussia, is publishing a work on the Noric language, you ought not to be surprised at anything, not even at the movement for *free* election in *free* France. I think a couple of weeks at Branitz would do you good.

CCXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 30th June, 1857.

I have no words, my dear friend, to express to you and the amiable and highly-gifted artist and author Miss Ludmilla Assing, what a treat you have given me in my solitude, by “Elisa von Ahlefeldt!” What a treat is in store for all those who will snatch it away from me for days to come! Who can read of such a fate, so tenderly, so simply, and so nobly told as this is, by Miss Ludmilla, and not be moved, not led to reflect upon those feelings of agony which the most noble and cultivated minds know to take upon themselves on account of partly imaginary passions, to gratify which, the perilous Institution of lawful Matrimony furnishes no adequate means?

* Liszt. Humboldt calls him so on account of his having been received into the order of the Franciscan friars.—TR.

Elisa von Ahlefeldt loved, in Adolphus von Lützow,* merely the energetic representative of a noble political opinion. The motive for dissolving the matrimonial tie, indelicate on his part, has something depressing in it. Immermann is willing to be loved, but, like Elisa, shudders at the marriage bond and—marries after all ! !

The character that interests me most is Friesen,† who in 1807 was of such assistance to me in the matter of the “Mexican Atlas,” and whom I valued so highly, and by whom I was beloved. I have mentioned him with tenderness in the “Essai Politique sur la Nouvelle Espagne.” Had I known on what a beautiful work Miss Ludmilla was engaged, I should have wished to have presented her with some few lines. However, the book will see many editions. As unhappily I have to go to Tegel for a night, I beg to know, dear friend, whether I may call on you on Friday at 3 o’clock, and if I may nourish the hope of finding Miss Ludmilla with you? So much talent for Art, joined with literary ability, in one person, is a rare luxury. The like of this may lead to harm. The course of affairs in this world with its avenging balance will never allow any excess of joy and woe. Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Tuesday.

In haste and incorrect.

Enclosure.—A letter from Friesen, dated 1807, with the following remark in Humboldt’s handwriting :—

* The well-known leader of that free corps, serving with which Theodor Körner was killed.—Tr.

† A volunteer in that corps, killed in the Ardennes by a French shot from an ambuscade.—Tr.

A little present for Fräulein Ludmilla Assing, the noble and gifted author of “Elisa von Ahlefeldt,” an autograph of my dear young friend Friesen. With feelings of heartfelt gratitude,

A. VON HUMBOLDT.

30th June, 1857.

Varnhagen wrote on the 4th July, 1854, in his Diary:—“Humboldt was telling us yesterday of the times when he lived in a side-wing of George’s country house, where he was so engaged in his Magnetic Observations, that, on one occasion, for seven consecutive days and nights, neglecting his proper rest, he visited the magnet-house every half hour to see for himself how matters stood. He subsequently took turns with others, who relieved him. This was in 1807, just fifty years ago. I have often seen the little magnet-house at that time when I used to visit Johannes von Müller, who also lived in a part of the house, and Fichte, who inhabited a summer-house in the middle of the garden. When old George—a rich distiller—showed his garden to strangers, Humboldt went on to tell us, he did not neglect to boast of ‘his *savants*:’—‘Here I have the celebrated Müller, here Humboldt, and Fichte also, who, by the by, they say, is only a philosopher.’”

CCXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 6th July, 1857.

Ignorant on the subject of modern German poetry, to the extent of not having even heard of the fame of M. * * (*) of the terribly dull (he calls it so himself) state of Mecklenburg, I wish, my dear friend,

* The Mecklenburg poet mentioned in this letter, is Herr Friedrich Wilhelm Rogge, whose collected lyrical and dramatic works appeared in 1857, at Decker’s, Berlin.—Tr.

you would fix the amount of courtesy with which I am to reply to the man.

Before me lie eight volumes at a honorarium of forty louis-d'ors each, four for me, four (as usual) for the King, and a nonsensical letter. The man seems to have celebrated in song the great Napoleon and Ney; but to have knocked in vain at the door of Napoleon III., Stephanie, Walewski, and Edgar Ney. He wants to impose on me the task of reading at once a Trajan, a Bianca, and a Henri IV. Nor does he seem to have a settled notion as to what he may expect from the King, which is rather discouraging to me in delivering his poems.

"Elisa von Ahlefeldt," that delicate and tasteful work, has given much satisfaction at Tegel, where Kaulbach and I were yesterday. Not in Tegel, but at Berlin in the circles of Court chaplains and officers, who perchance might not be averse to the honorary title of Councillor of the Consistory, the ecclesiastical question has been started whether it be permissible to have a friend besides the husband? What at Berlin could escape being gossipped about and dragged through the mud!

Gratefully yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Monday Night.

I shall send for the two little volumes in a few days. My kindest and most grateful respects to Fräulein Ludmilla, the poet-artist, who harmoniously unites poetry and a noble talent for reproducing Form.

CCXV.

VARNHAGEN TO HUMBOLDT.

8th July, 1857.

The two little volumes of poetry kindly sent me by your Excellency evince, no doubt, literary culture of no mean order, and a clever treatment of language and metre; but there praise ends. Talent of this sort is very plentiful, and if accompanied by no particular preeminence, ought to be treated as commonplace. The claims founded on such performances are out of all proportion, and especially in the present case, where not only acknowledgment but direct reward is demanded. I know little of the author. His reputation certainly is but small. That his youth has been one of hardship, and that his means are still circumscribed, is sad; but yet the mode by which he seeks to relieve himself, by appeals to the great and powerful, by unprincipledly paying court to men of every shade, displeases me greatly, as does also his letter to your Excellency, to which you have awarded its fitting epithet. In the answer you are about to give him, your inexhaustible and always even benevolence and kindness furnish an ample guarantee that the harsh words I have uttered on the subject will be appropriately tempered down. My niece Ludmilla thanks your Excellency from the fulness of her heart for the kindly interest you have expressed on her behalf, and which, during all her life, she will count among the greatest treasures that can fall to her lot. We paid a visit yesterday to Madame Gaggiotti Richards,

and found her, lovelier than ever, in the midst of her artistic occupations. The whole family entertain feelings of the warmest devotedness towards you, and this alone would endear them to us. The personal amiability of the beautiful artist is enchanting.

Now-a-days nothing literary, let it be ever so harmless and peaceful, can make its appearance here without the parsonic and fanatical spirit stirring. This ordeal even the little book could not escape, and the fair author must still expect to meet with many a disagreeable remark from this quarter. But she has had the good fortune *de manger son pain blanc le premier*. The best and most beautiful has fallen to her lot by your Excellency's approval, and she can well afford quietly to leave the after-ration of coarse black bread alone.

We think of starting on Monday for Dresden, and hope some weeks hence, on our return, to find your Excellency happy and in good health!

With profoundest respect and grateful devotion,
Yours most obediently,

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE.

CCXVI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 16th September, 1857.

An inquiry as to letters and parcels from the 8th to the 22nd of August, gives me, my dear friend, the pleasing assurance of your return to monkish Berlin, where (Supplement to No. 215 of "Aunty Voss,"* 15th September) the (author of) "God in

* The "Vossische Zeitung" is always called "Aunty Voss," "Tante Voss," and the "Spener'sche Zeitung," "Uncle Spener," "Onkel Spener." —TR.

History”* is, on the strength of a received and unexplained kiss,† which M. Merle d’Aubigné was compelled to bestow, accused of Rationalism and sinful Romanism, and where—a much more agreeable process—Pastor Kind boasts of having been kissed on the shoulder by a pretty Neapolitan chambermaid, with all the fervour of Evangelical semi-conversion.

As owing to the approach of my tiresome birthday, I have received since the eighth August upwards of three hundred letters and parcels, I know nothing about the date at which yours came to hand, but remember perfectly well receiving a letter on black-edged paper, dated “Madrid, 15th July,” from your distinguished kinsman, Adolfo de Varnhagen, and subsequently a fragment of his history. I shall send him my best thanks. His history is not devoid of interest. You are aware that by the appointment of a Finance Commission in the Cabinet Council, it was hoped that Minister von der Heydt, whose activity has

* Bunsen.

† The reader should be reminded that in September, 1857, a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance took place at Berlin. On the occasion of the presentation at Potsdam, Merle d’Aubigne of Geneva, and Bunsen—old friends—met for the first time after a long interval, and, in keeping with an abominable continental custom, greeted each other with a kiss. A fraction of the “Faithful” was much disgusted at that, and among them more particularly one Pastor Krummacher, from Duisburg, a brother of, and no less a zealot than, the well-known Court preacher Friedrich Adolf Krummacher, who interrogated the Genevese as to the reason of meeting so cordially a person like the author of the “Signs of the Times.” Upon this, the historian of the Reformation explained, with strict injunctions to spread it among the “Brethren,” that Bunsen was a dear friend of his of long standing; that he never swerved from his friends; that, however, it had not been he who had embraced Bunsen, but that the latter had taken the initiative; and that, as regarded Bunsen’s doctrine, he was far from approving its errors: this explanation seems to have removed the scruples of the pious interpellant and of the other “Brethren.”—Tr.

lately been too independent to be agreeable, would be got rid of. The man has, however, displayed a noble energy, and the King has postponed the whole Commission (a piece of Niebuhr's handiwork).

With warmest friendship, your

Wednesday.

A. v. Ht.

My respects to your gifted niece.

It was hardly politic, I think, in "God in History" to accept the Royal offer, in spite of its repetition (I am sorry for it), for he is a man I respect, and much will be attributed to him, of which he is altogether innocent.

CCXVII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 14th October, 1857.

Written on returning the letters of Gentz to Garve.*

My best thanks ! I was already in possession of the letters, and had revelled in them. Nothing can add to my brother's reputation. Strange that Ancillon should have been able, for such a length of time, to impose on the astute Gentz.

A. Ht.

On the 3rd of December, 1857, Varnhagen remarks in his Diary :—
"Called on Humboldt; Director von Olfers just leaving; told us that

* Christian Garve, philosopher, translator into German of Ferguson's "Moral Philosophy," Burke "On the Sublime and Beautiful," Paley's "Moral Philosophy," Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and of several works of Aristotle and Cicero.—Tr.

Rauch had died at Dresden. The next to leave was General Count von der Groeben,* who was very friendly, and glad to hear I could find him somebody to re-edit Schenkendorf's poems. Humboldt full of kindness for Ludmilla and myself. Talks about the King; about Schönlein, the Princess of Prussia, Doctor Lassalle, whose work—"The Philosophy of Heraclitus the Obscure of Ephesus"—he has attentively perused in three nights; about Friesen; he spoke with contempt of the "Kreuzzeitung;" praises Count von der Groeben on account of his honourable sentiments, and Minister von der Heydt on account of the pertinacity with which he insists on resigning his office. He has received a letter from the Queen; the King wishes to see him, therefore he is going over to Charlottenburg. He is hale and in good spirits. I have read much in Lassalle. The external appearance of such a great and important work excites respect. It makes a singular impression upon me, one after the other the props and authorities by which I have made my way falling and disappearing. Every one who has grown old has experienced and must bear this; but in our times the changes take place more quickly and energetically than in former periods, and, in respect of these, I am more than usually sensitive. Even where the contents are of no import to me—where, in fact, I lose nothing by them, because the objects are not immediately within my sphere—that experience is still somewhat painful to me. I find it so now again with regard to Schleiermacher; his book on Heraclitus was hitherto the last word, the final opinion on this philosopher. Even Hegel's opposing hints were not capable of making away with this once-adopted view. We used to rest upon it as upon a soft pillow. Now comes the new criticism, and draws it unceremoniously away! It is true Lassalle pushes another large and well-filled one in its place, but the change is unpleasant. And yet I am rejoiced by the never-resting labour of the mind—by the penetration, the erudition, the free and bold progress.

* General von der Groeben, one of the saintly; Prussian commander in Baden during the Revolution in 1848.—Tr.

CCXVIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 11th January, 1858.

I, too, my valued friend, am suffering again from my cutaneous complaint, a troublesome consequence of old age. You at least have your full liberty, and can nurse yourself. I have no liberty, am worried by every one, most pitilessly and most inevitably of all by the Post-Office. The friendly reminiscence of Mrs. Sarah Austin is very flattering to me. I have to thank you for it, as for many other things. Be kind enough also to become the interpreter of my gratitude and sincere esteem for that gifted lady and her brother John Taylor, to whom I am so much attached. Livingstone's accounts are especially interesting to me, in consequence of the view he takes of the capacity for improvement in the negro race, at a time when, under the pretext of free labour, France on the one hand, and North America on the other, are countenancing, in a most disgraceful manner, the kidnapping of slaves in Africa. The political accounts on India by Captain Meadows Taylor were unimportant. Perhaps you would like to have for your archives original letters of Count Walewski, Prince Napoleon (the son of King Jerome, who is going to Egypt), Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and the copy of a letter in very good style by the Pasha of Egypt, the original of which I was obliged to give to Dr. Brugsch.

Doctor Michael Sachs will not desist from my glorification in Hebrew. Say many kind things to

the noble General Von Pfuel,* on whom I will call as soon as I can.

Your faithful, but always equally unreadable,
A. von HUMBOLDT.

CCXIX.

PRINCE NAPOLEON TO HUMBOLDT.

Paris, ce 13 Octobre, 1857.

Monsieur le Baron—Monsieur Mariette † ne m'a remis qu'il y a quelques jours votre lettre du mois de juillet, dans laquelle vous me parlez de Monsieur le docteur Brugsch‡ et de l'envoi de sa grammaire démotique que je n'ai pas encore reçue. Je tiens à ce que vous ne m'accusiez pas de négligence à vous répondre; aujourd'hui je ne me sens guère le courage de vous parler même de science, votre cœur et votre esprit, doivent être bien affligés par la maladie de votre souverain et ami qui nous donne de vives inquiétudes, je dis *nous*, parceque les quelques jours que j'ai passés à Berlin m'ont fait apprécier les qualités éminentes du Roi et m'ont vivement attaché à lui. Que Dieu le conserve, c'est un vœu sincère !

Recevez, Monsieur le Baron, l'assurance de mes sentiments de haute estime et considération.

NAPOLEON.

* Ernst von Pfuel, Prussian General and Minister of War, served with distinction in the wars against Napoleon; quitted active service in October, 1848; acquired great fame by the erection of great military swimming schools, in which swimming is taught upon a very practical method invented by himself.—Tr.

† The Egyptologist.—Tr.

‡ Heinrich Brugsch, favourably known by various works of great merit on Egyptology; Professor at Berlin.—Tr.

On the 18th February, 1858, Varnhagen reports in his Diary : “Went to Humboldt. With admirable presence of mind he thinks immediately of everything of which our presence can remind him ; he says the most flattering things to Ludmilla on her book, for the second edition of which we shall not have long to wait ; he will give her some notes on Friesen,* which he would have liked also to communicate to the Leipzig Gymnastic Society for the Commemoration which the latter had intended for him ; but after their first inquiry, they have not applied again. With the Grand Duke of Weimar he is very much out of humour, having had several hours lost to him and the brothers Schlagintweit by that personage at his successive calls ; they soon observed that he did not care to instruct himself in the things which had been prepared for him, but had only desired to converse with them, investing each of them with the Order of the Falcon. As to * * *, he made the same excuse to Humboldt as he has to me, *viz.*, he required noble birth in his private secretary, which Humboldt finds quite abominable, but quite in accordance with the personal prejudices of the Grand Duke ; the father, who had also been no very remarkable person, had at least masked this manner of thinking, but the son professed it without any disguise. Once, after a gentleman not belonging to the nobility had left the company, he expressed with great satisfaction the comfortable feeling, “Now we are among ourselves !” Another time, when it was noticed that there were thirteen at the dinner table, he replied consolingly, there were two commoners among them, who did not count for anything ! And this he told Humboldt in French, because, as he said, those two would certainly not understand that ! ! † Humboldt complained bitterly of the burden of the shoals of letters with which he was pursued—at least four hundred in the month he had to read—many beginning with ‘My

* Friesen was one of the favourite pupils of “Old Father Jahn,” the founder of that system of Gymnastics, which was put down as *traitorous* in 1820, and which has since spread all over the world. The “Turner,” as the German Gymnasts are called, are among the most active members of the “National Union” party.—Tr.

† The Grand Duke of Weimar wrote upon the margin of a copy of the German edition of this book, the words : “This is a lie !—KARL ALEXANDER,” and then sent the book to the library at Weimar.—Tr.

aged friend,' or, 'My noble youth in age,' or also in this style, 'Caroline and I are happy, our fate rests in your hands.' He praised Princess Victoria, as being not exactly pretty, but as having pleasing and simple manners, and eyes full of soul."

CCXX.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 19th February, 1858.

You see, dear friend, that in spite of many a little fault-finding of M. d'Avezac's, who has learnt to quote from Malte-Brun, your name's-sake does you much credit.

But it is incomprehensible that M. D'Avezac is completely ignorant of a map of Juan de la Cose, of 1500, six years before Colon's death, which I privately published in 1830, and of a work in largo quarto, under the title, "History of the Navigator, Chevalier Martin Behaim," by W. Ghillany and Alex. Humboldt, 1853, which treats on the origin of the name of "America."

A. Ht.

Rummaged all through in one night. The noble youth in age, Vecchio della Montagna.

(Herewith the book, "Considérations Géographiques sur l'Histoire du Brézil. Examen critique d'une nouvelle histoire générale du Brézil, par M. François Adolphe de Varnhagen. Rapport fait par M. D'Avezac. Paris, 1857." In octavo.)

CCXXI.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 7th March, 1858.

I suppose, dear friend, that the indiscreet and almost silly book of Normanby has not yet reached you. I shall not return it to Lady Bloomfield without offering it to you. Run through it by the table of contents, and be kind enough to return it me in four or five days. It describes a badly acted comedy.

Your most attached

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

Sunday night.

My respects to your amiable niece.

(A Year of Revolution. From a Journal kept in Paris, in 1848. By the Marquis of Normanby, K.G. London, 1857. Two vols. 8vo.)

On the 8th of March, 1858, Varnhagen observes in his Diary : " Humboldt sends me, with some friendly lines, the book of the Marquis of Normanby on the Revolution of 1848. He calls it an indiscreet and almost silly book. I call it a stupid, and, as far as its contents are concerned, a treacherous one ; it shows how injurious it is to have anything to do with diplomatists, especially with an unofficial one, as the Marquis then was, to whom both Lamartine, as well as Cavaignac, have lent too ready an ear. He is one of the dullest and most tedious Englishmen that ever existed."

On the 9th of March, 1858, Varnhagen adds to his judgment on Normanby the following : " Read farther in Normanby. He is a poor simpleton, but, by means of his ill-written book, one learns how to understand sufficiently the contemptibility of Louis Philippe, the baseness of Guizot—the destructive influences of sneaks and

rogues. Moreover, he is a master in the art of toning down all that is most animated and buoyant in these mighty events to mortal tediousness.

CCXXII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 13th April, 1858.

I am touched by the kindness of your lines, and by the remembrance of the gifted Miss Ludmilla. As Illaire* was with me yesterday, I prepared everything to become useful to M. * *, the much respected clergyman of † †, in the little matter of one of those toys, which do not, indeed, feed their possessor, but afford a pleasant pastime; even of a steeple-chase, late in life, with the difficulties,—and the prospect of deliverance from the Acheron of the Fourth Class.

I shall write to Illaire for the Third Class, but entreat you to freshen up my memory a little. * *'s title? I think he does not preach, does not even distribute any longer the little wafers so hostile to the chemically analogous bread of the Protestant Union. But I fancy he is a Protestant power in † †.

I here subjoin for your and Miss Ludmilla's conversion, some fancies on the Cosmic drought of Berlin before the deluge and the fiery destruction of the world, which a little degenerated potash in the innocent feldspath of granite will produce in the latter

* Cabinet Councillor to Friedrich Wilhelm IV.—Tr.

days : *de la géologie hébraïzante*, as I have imprudently called the like of this in my “Kosmos.”

Yours,

A. v. Ht.

Tuesday.

“Thoughts on the First Rainbow in connection with certain Geological Facts. London, 1852.” The book is by W. Bateman Byng, but has been only now sent to Humboldt by the retired Captain-Pilot, Mr. F. A. Fokkes, in Hamburg.

On the 24th of April, 1858, Varnhagen remarks in his Diary : “Yesterday Humboldt talked very humorously of the letters which he had received ; a number of ladies in Elberfeld have formed a league to work at his conversion by anonymous letters, and have announced the fact to him. From time to time these letters arrive. From Nebraska he has been requested to pronounce his opinion on the whereabouts of the swallows in winter. I asked him if that was not an open question ? ‘Yes, indeed,’ he replied ; ‘I know as little about it as anybody ; but,’ he added, with playful importance, ‘I have not written that to the people in Nebraska, because we ought never to confess such a thing.’”

CCXXIII.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Potsdam, 19th June, 1858.

On the whole tedious and full of internal contradictions, but yet historical and alas ! true on account of the mythical German-Americanism, pages 76—80, and pages 33, 35, 75. Charm of a language without gender : “Fermez les lèvres et serrez les dents.” From *der* and *die*, laziness has made *de*, and at last a neutral life-killing *the*.

On page 88 the reason is given why my friend Fröbel has not been shot (*erblumet*, Anglicé, Blumed).

A. Ht.

It is a very long time since I have seen you, on account of that dreary Potsdam.

(*Notes by Varnhagen*.—With this was sent “The German Emigration and its Significance in the History of Civilization. By Julius Fröbel. Leipzig, 1858.” A copy sent by Fröbel to Humboldt.

In the “Anglaises pour Rire,” it is said:—“Ouvrez la bouche et serrez les dents, et vous parlerez anglais!” This may have been in Humboldt’s mind, but in a mistake he wrote *fermez* for *ouvrez*.

Page 35, Fröbel says:—“Moreover the English and the German languages are but two different dialects, or rather different stages of development. The English is the superior of the two, viewing it in the point of the history of civilization; for the abolition of grammatical forms evinces a higher mental development, as is generally acknowledged.” Humboldt has written in the margin “Oho!”

Page 88, Fröbel alludes to Austria’s great mission in the future. Such passages occurring in a work that appeared in 1848, and communicated opportunely to Prince Windischgrätz by his aide-de-camp, effected the pardon of Fröbel, while his colleague, Robert Blum, was cruelly shot.

CCXXIV.

HUMBOLDT TO VARNHAGEN.

Berlin, 9th Sept. At night, 1858.

My warmest thanks, dearest friend, for your friendly lines. I am not indifferent to the gratitude of

the excellent * * : they were uncivil enough here not to give me a syllable, to say that my request had been complied with. As you and your gifted niece, Miss Ludmilla, love "Curiosa," and in my patriarchal age all shame of self-praise has long since disappeared, I communicate to you a letter from Queen Victoria, who through the Princess of Prussia had asked me for a few passages, in my own handwriting, from the "Aspects of Nature" and from "Kosmos," (a poetical description of nature): another letter from the American Minister of War, who has been obliging to me in behalf of the traveller Möllhausen, the son-in-law of my Seiffert, for whom he procured the appointment as draughtsman in the two expeditions to the coast of the Pacific, and who, *mirabile dictu*, has put aside all political grudge against me on account of my friendship with Fremont. The last letter, morally speaking, gives me more enjoyment, although immeasurably exaggerated with its big epithets.

It is also, alas ! true that nothing has as yet been finally decided regarding the Regency, necessary as such a settlement has become for the completely wasted honour of the country. May the Prince of Prussia keep what he has till now promised : that under no other condition than with the express title of Regent, would he continue to act ; but how to take the initiative, considering the seclusion of the King, whom I myself have not been allowed to see since his return ? To leave the initiative with the Chambers would be acting hastily, and in a spirit of ignoble fear. *Alea jacta*, and the sum of intelligence

which is called into play, seems poorly and economically doled out.

What do you know, my dear friend, of M. Iwan Golowin, who with impudent and unheard-of indiscretion, represents me to the public photographically in the most terrible “négligé de costume, même,” as I have written to him very much offended, “en me dotant de deux fautes de français—venaient,” instead of “viennent,” “pourrait,” instead of “pouvait.” What liberties men take to make others serve their turn! I entreat you to send me back by Sunday morning,—when I must go to Tegel with Baron Stockmar *père*,*—the three Curiosa, the copy of Victoria, the letter of the Minister of War, and “Rovira,” by Golowin.

The unsteadiness of my gait (“ma démarche”) increases sadly in persistence. Beware of such long patience in living. Reputation increases with imbecility, and the part of the “dear youthful patriarch,” the worthy senior of all living *savants*, “Vecchio della montagna,” becomes a very inconvenient one, even if there exists a maiden within the bills of mortality, whom the senior is to establish in Tegel, because the place is near Berlin; and she might come to town, if informed in right time, to close my eyes. In truest admiration and friendship,

Yours,

A. v. HUMBOLDT.

My naughty friend Lassalle—Heraclitus the Obscure—has been banished from Berlin, in spite of

* Baron Stockmar, attached for many years to King Leopold of Belgium.
--TR.

all the promises given to me by the Prince of Prussia and Illaire.* A hope was held out that the Obscure should return in a few months (after the elections) to the still more obscure Pythagoras. What a dispensation of justice !

(*Note by Varnhagen.*—Iwan Golowin had begged Humboldt's permission to dedicate to him a Russian drama, “Rovira;” the French letter in which Humboldt accepted the dedication, has been added to the little book in *fac simile*.)

CCXXV.

HUMBOLDT TO LUDMILLA ASSING.

Berlin, 12th October, 1858.

What a day of grief, agony, and misfortune was yesterday for me ! I had been summoned to Potsdam by the Queen, to take leave of the King. He was weeping, in deep emotion. I returned home about six o'clock this afternoon, and opened your sad letter, my dear, beloved, highly gifted friend ! To think that he should be removed from this mortal scene before the Nonagenarian—the Old Man of the Mountains !

It is not enough to say that Germany has lost a great author—the one who knew how to mould language most nobly in the expression of the most delicate sentiments ; yet how trifling is the form when compared with such penetration, such pregnant intellect,

* Not quite accurate, in so far as, during the absence of the above-named, and as it appeared later, without their knowledge, Minister Westphalen had insisted upon Lassalle's expulsion.

such nobility of soul, such knowledge of the world. What he was to me,—now quite isolated, you alone, with your beautiful, accomplished mind, can fully comprehend. I shall soon come to tell you.

In deepest affliction of soul, yours,

A. HUMBOLDT.

THE END.

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