

THE FAMOUS HÔTEL LAMBERT IN PARIS

The Future Home of Prince Adam Czartoryski and His Bride. . .

WHEN the social season reopens in Paris, for the first time in many years the famous Hôtel Lambert, at the extreme eastern end of the Ile de St. Louis, will open wide its stately doors to receive all that is most ardently royalist in the French society of to-day. The historic old house may this Winter take its part for the last time in the gayeties of Paris, for it was pretty generally known that its present owner, the young Prince Adam Czartoryski, and his brother, Prince Witold, are anxious to sell the property. Indeed, Prince Adam would have disposed of it before his marriage in September to the rich Polish heiress, Countess Louise de Corwin-Krasinska, if that could have been advantageously done, for the magnificent hotel in which both he and his brother were born is far away to-day from everything that is fashionable in Paris, and a young bride, in her first season in the gay French capital, would naturally select if not the Faubourg St. Germain—now more a tradition than anything else—the vicinity of the Bois de Boulogne or of the Parc Monceau, in preference to the Ile de St. Louis, which has hardly been fashionable since the day of Louis XIV.

If you except the Hôtel Lauzun, recently acquired by the State, and which M. Cain, the enthusiastic conservateur of the Musée Carnavalet, is already preparing as a museum, to be exclusively devoted to the period of Louis XIV., the Hôtel Lambert is the only house left on the tranquil Ile de St. Louis which gives any idea of what the residences in that part of the city once were. Of the two houses the Lambert is much the more important, both in situation and history, architecture, and art, and it is a source of deepest regret that when the State acquired a house in that vicinity it should not have been Hôtel Lambert instead of Hôtel Lauzun.

The latter, on the Quai d'Anjou, has had an interesting career, and contains some good wood carving and good frescoes, but it was utterly denuded when Count Pincondan sold it half a century ago, and must be much restored. The residence there of the great Gascon adventurer, who captured the heart of the richest heiress of France, Mlle. de Montpensier, cousin of Louis XIV. and daughter of that weakling, Gaston d'Orléans, lends interest to Hôtel Lauzun, on the graceful balcony of which the prettiest women in Paris used to gather and through the entrance to which Bossuet and Père La Chaise went many times to convert the Huguenot mother of the adventurer Antonio Nompur de Caumont, Duc de Lauzun, whose ups and downs—including the step to the throne and Bastille—were so romantic. There in later days lived the great Richelieu's great-nephew, the Marquis de Richelieu, and there later still Roger de Beauvoir resided when Théophile Gautier and Honoré de Balzac visited him, and the three together took a little trip to the hasheesh heaven. There in 1849 Gautier and Baudelaire lived together, and in the former's memoir of the latter—whom he admired more than posterity has done—will be found a record of this joint existence.

But the history of Hôtel Lambert is in some ways even more enticing. It was finished by Le Veau in 1634 for Lambert de Thorigny, President of the Cour des Comptes—he who was known as "Lambert the Rich," and whose monogram still exists on walls and doors and ceilings of the beautiful house, which Voltaire said was fit for a King.

Standing where the Rue de l'Ile de St. Louis abuts on the Quai d'Anjou, its balconies and tourelle overhanging the quai, and its garden running along both streets, tall trees nodding above the high wall that secludes it utterly, and its lofty gate between tall lodges giving entrance from the Rue de l'Ile de St. Louis into a noble courtyard, it commands one of the finest views in Paris, with the Seine at its feet and the new boulevard reaching to right and left.

All the skill that Le Brun and Le Seuer in their best period and hottest rivalry knew was spent in decorating this hotel—and the honors are with the latter. A greater part of the work still remains. Le Brun's ceiling representing the Marriage of Hercules and Hebe, which decorates the magnificent ballroom on the second floor, is still in place, and several of the salons and the staircase contain Le Seuer's work. Much, however, of the latter's best work done here is now at the Louvre. It was at the end of his nine years given to the work in Hôtel Lambert, and which much fatigued him, that he died in 1655, the year after the hotel was finished. The names of two men associated with Hôtel Lambert are even more interesting to the world at large than he for whom it was built, and they who decorated it—Francis Arouet, called Voltaire and Napoleon I.

From the possession of the Lambert de Thorigny family the house passed to M. de la Haye, "fermier général," who sold to the State the paintings now in the Louvre, and which had formerly decorated the President's workroom and his wife's bedroom. They are thirteen in number, and the subjects are all mythological.

The third owner of the house was Gen. Dupin, and from him it was purchased by Mme. du Châtelet, and there Voltaire for some time made his home, and there began the composition of his "Henriad," during

his singular liaison with his Emily. During the Empire it was occupied by the Comte de Montalivet, who was at the head of public works, and then, in 1815, the conference was held which decided for France that the cause of Napoleon was hopeless.

But no family in Europe is more interesting than that to which the property belongs to-day. It was bought in 1842 by Prince Czartoryski, whose son, Prince Ladislaw, married, in 1872, Princess Marguerite Adelaide Marie de Bourbon-Orléans, daughter of the Duc de Nemours, second son of Louis Philippe, and the Nestor of the family. This branch of the Czartoryski family consists to-day of two sons, the Prince Adam Louis, who was born at Hôtel Lambert, in November, 1872, and the Prince Witold Casimir Philippe Jean, also born there, in March, 1876, and the two young men are among the richest on the Continent, in spite of the fact that their grandfather, the famous Polish patriot, Prince Adam Casimir, for whom they are both named, lost his Polish estates, including the famous château at Pulawy, which was a veritable museum of art, after the revolution of 1834, of which he was the leader. Fortunately for the Czartoryskis, they owned vast estates in Galicia and in one of the German provinces, so their loss of property was the least of the grief of the family after the final fall of Poland, which exiled them forever from the land of which their early forefathers had been Kings.

The history of the Czartoryski family is a romance. They were nobles in the early part of the fourteenth century and the line has never been broken. They took their title when Gedywin, Grand Duke de Lithuania, acquired Czartoryski in Volhynia—a province of West Russia—and he died in 1341. They were crested hereditary Princes in the fifteenth century in Russia, in the sixteenth in Poland, and in June, 1785, in Austria. Originally the family was more proud and ambitious, more noble and brave than rich, but in the seventeenth century a Czartoryski made a rich marriage with the Morszyn family, and since then rich marriages have been the rule among them. Of that first rich marriage three children were born, two sons, Michel and Auguste, and one daughter, Constance, who married Stanislaw Poniatowski, compagnon d'armes of Charles XII., and of that union came a King of Poland. The second son, Auguste, married one of the rich Sieniawski family, who brought to him the estates in Galicia that the eldest son still holds, and from that time the ambitions of the family were boundless for Poland, of which they barely escaped again being Kings themselves.

They were ardent patriots and yet many politicians have held them to blame for the final fall of Poland. Rich, overbearing in the earlier generation, they were too closely allied to the Russian nobility and believed too much in Russia. This fatal trust brought about internal strife and in the end the judgment of the Czartoryski family proved faulty, though their zeal, patriotism, and popularity were never questioned in a cause they helped to lose, but which it is now conceded no one could have saved.

One of the most interesting figures in the family history is a woman, Princess Isabella Dorothea—or Fortunée, some call her—born in 1743, daughter of Count de Flemming of a famous Saxony house, and married when very young to Adam Czartoryski, son of Auguste, mentioned above. She was one of the best-educated women of her time, and, like the famous heroines of the Fronde, she mixed gallantry and politics in a shocking manner. She was the mistress of the famous Prince de Repnin, who was sent to Warsaw as the representative of the Russian Government, and whose cruelty is a scandal in Polish history of that time.

The Princess Isabella was beloved in vain by the King of Poland, as well as won by Repnin, and later adored by the famous Gascon adventurer Lauzun—he who clandestinely married the grand mademoiselle. The story of her affair with the Prince Repnin—to whose passion for her the Czartoryski family owed their safety, and to which the Russian sacrificed finally the favor of his Empress, his post, his fortune, and his career—is told with perfect frankness in a letter published in 1821 in the memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun, which, having been suppressed by the censorship of Napoleon, were printed with the less scrupulous permission of Louis XVIII. This is a letter in which the Princess repulses Lauzun, while confessing her penchant for him. Needless to say, Lauzun did not take that kind of repulsing too seriously.

Lauzun describes her as of medium height with a perfect figure and the most beautiful eyes and hair in the world, exquisite teeth, and a very pretty foot. She was marked with smallpox and consequently her skin lacked freshness. Her manners were charming and her movements of inimitable grace. She was a fine musician and an exquisite dancer. Wherever she went—in London as well as Paris—she drew about her clever men, and her chateau at Pulawy was full of art treasures. It was there she withdrew to pass the last years of her life, and she was there during the revolution of 1830, which her son, Prince Adam Casimir, led. Although she was at that time in her eighty-seventh year, she took an active part in the revolution. Her

chateau became a military hospital and a refuge for her unfortunate country people, and she was only induced to leave it when Russian bullets pierced the walls of the very room in which she sat. She went to Wysock, in Galicia, where her daughter—the Princess d'Wurtemberg—lived, and there she died June 17, 1835.

Her two sons, Prince Adam Casimir and Prince Constantine, were educated at Oxford and Edinburgh, and while both were under twenty-five, they fought in the second Polish revolution of 1793 and were sent to St. Petersburg as hostages. There the elder son became very intimate with the Grand Duke, who was afterward Emperor Alexander. At the age of twenty-seven he was sent to Sardinia as Ambassador. During all his youth he used his position, his wealth, his influence in the endeavor to secure justice for Poland, and, while outwardly loyal to Russia, was at heart hopeful for the national independence of his native land. In 1821, while Curator of the University of Warsaw, an uprising of the students was treated by the Russian Government exactly as the late insurrection has been—students were sent to Siberia, were condemned to imprisonment and to military service. In vain he pleaded for leniency, and, being unable to secure it, sadly resigned and withdrew to his estates and for nine years kept out of public affairs. When Poland made its final fight he was, in 1830, elected President of the provisional Government, and held the office until the awful days of August, 1831, when he entered the Polish army as a common soldier and only left when all hope was lost. He fled to Paris and was excluded from the general amnesty declared by the Russian Government for other Poles. His estates in Poland were all confiscated and his wealth—such as had escaped destruction—was seized. It was a sad loss, but their estates in Austria and Prussia still left them rich. He was sixty years old when he came to Paris, and continued to take a deep interest but no active part in politics. In 1848 he freed his peasants in Galicia and gave them their lands in fee, and he died in Paris in 1861, his brother, Constantine, preceding him. His son was the Prince Ladislaw who married the daughter of the Duke de Nemours, sister of the Duke d'Alençon, whose wife was a sister of the late Empress of Austria, and both of whom met with such tragic ends.

The two young Princes of this branch—there is another branch of the family in Vienna—half a dozen young Princes and Princesses—are both under thirty. The

younger has a fine estate in Prussia—Château de Goluchowo-Poznanie—and since the death of their parents, (the Princess Marguerite died in October, 1833, and the Prince Ladislaw in the following June,) the Paris house in the Ile de St. Louis, is often closed a year at a time, although at all times the family is most generous to the public, which is admitted two days in the week to see the pictures and wood carving and furniture.

As the palace is kept always ready for the young princess, who are liable to come to Paris at any time, a visit to it is much more interesting than to any similar hotel in the French capital. The garden is always beautiful and is exquisitely kept. The long dining room is filled with heavy furniture and cases of arms, and its adjacent smoking room, which occupies the roomy tower at the corner and overlooks the quai from one of the prettiest balconies in Paris, is full of Oriental treasures, and the valets are not averse to show them to those who know enough about art to make it worth while. They will even relate—if properly encouraged—as they let you examine some priceless Persian rugs, souvenirs of the young master's recent visit to the Shah of Persia, the story of journeys across Persia which occupied twenty-seven days by carriage, to the wonderful Winter palace of the ruler of that picturesque land, where young Prince Adam was royally fêted, and from which he returned laden with gifts.

It cannot uphold its charms as a residence against its neighborhood. As even the Prince's valet says with regret: "We are the only family left on the island and the master's friends find it odd to come here to visit." It is true that dirty children play at the very gate and the electric car twangs its gong under the very walls. Wealth to-day is not as arrogant as it used to be, and the proximity of misery hurts many more than it offends them.

Even this Winter Hôtel Lambert cannot be gay until February, owing to the death of Prince Henri d'Orléans, a second cousin of Czartoryski family, so those who come to Paris may yet have a few opportunities to examine a residence which gives to-day a very good idea of what a French interior was like two hundred years ago. It will be a pity to see the house disappear, for it shares to-day with Hôtel Lauzun the honor being the only object that a pilgrimage to the Ile where the second crusade was preached can have.

MILDRED ALDRICH.

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