

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Reminiscences of a United States Minister at the Court of the Emperor Francis Joseph

In my last reading, I closed with some remarks upon the case of Mr. Keiley, and expressed the conclusion that the Austro-Hungarian government did not and would not make the fact that his wife was a Jewess a point against accepting him as a Minister of the United States. I do not however deny that such a prejudice does exist in that city and country, it is a social fact for which the government does not hold itself responsible; although I fear that the government shares in the sentiment to some extent. But it is too cautious to make it a feature of its diplomatic policy. It will doubtless fade away with other unreasonable prejudices. It is already much weaker than it formerly was; nor does it extend, as formerly, to all the relations of life.

There was, not very long ago, a law against the Hebrew holding real estate. But when the government had occasion to dispose of the government lands lying on both sides of the old wall encircling the old city which has now been transformed into the splendid boulevard known as the Ring, and had need of all the funds they could raise to pay debts and make costly improvements, it concluded to allow the Jews to bid. The consequence was that they bought all or nearly all that was sold, so that the new palatial buildings in the new and handsomest parts of the city near or on the Ring, have been erected by the Israelites who got the lands from the government.

It is a very strange remnant of old prejudices that in Vienna there should exist such a determination to exclude the Jews from what is there called "Court Society." The Hebrews have a very large share of the wealth of the city, altogether out of proportion to their number; they own and manage a great majority of the newspapers of the Empire, especially of the city. They are strong in the professions, especially in the medical and the law. Yet they are not received into Court Society, and no titles are conferred upon them above that of Baron. The Emperor, like other monarchs of Europe, has a fund of titles and orders which he distributes to those who have earned the Imperial favor. It is a fund which many prize higher than gold or bonds. The lowest of them is the Baron. Baron Rothschild (*sic*) has received that honor for his services to the government by effecting loans of money, and for his financial power. But no Israelite has yet been allowed in Austria to rise

higher than a baron no one has ever been honored with the title of count or duke or prince. In England the difficulty has been surmounted and a professed Hebrew has been raised to the House of Lords without prejudice to his religious faith.

For my part, I do not think that the Jews need to grieve that they have not been honored with these empty names; or with the flashy insignia which denote the numerous orders that are distributed to the favorites of the Court generally “not for any good or ill they've done.”

The Barons are the most numerous and cheapest distinction. If a father of family is made a Baron, all his children have the same title, and his wife. I am sure I should not estimate the title of Baron in Austria more than equal to that of a Justice of the Peace in this country. That wife who when her husband had been made a Justice of the Peace asked him if she was also a justice of the peace, would not be disappointed in Austria. When her husband is made a baron, she becomes a Baronin or baroness. I think that the bright and talented Jews, who have the wealth and the press, and the professions need not mourn their exclusion from these empty emblems of vanity.

Voilare

We stopped a few weeks during the first year of our residence in Austria in the hot weather in a village about 20 miles distant from Vienna which was a fashionable resort, and very pleasant. The ground is elevated, and the air is good. While there, I was invited by an elderly gentleman who was a count, and had been in the diplomatic service of Austria. He was the proprietor of valuable real estate in that village. He told me that some years before Baron Rothschild (sic) had desired to purchase this property, and had offered him 75,000 pounds sterling for it. “But,” said he, “I would not let him have it. We have too many Jews now, and I would not have the king of the Jews here.” I remarked that we had a large Jewish population in America, and found many of them among our best citizens. “Yes,” said he, “but the Americans are just as sharp as they are. They are too sharp for the Austrians.” The complaint is that the Israelites get their property and money away from the improvident Austrians, especially from the barons and counts, and so they are afraid of them. But this fear is absurd. The Israelites are not to exceed 1/50 of the population of the Empire. They are less than a million, all

told. And yet, one would infer, from hearing, even of the military men of that country talk, that the country was in danger of being swallowed up by the Jews. – This prejudice is stronger among the people than in the government. For when there have been mobs against the Israelitish people, the Emperor has interposed, and employed the army to protect them. He has often declared that they should have protection, in which I have no doubt that he is perfectly sincere. But Court Society is stronger, even than the Emperor.

Strong as this prejudice is, it is evident that if the Jews were all to leave the Empire, it would be very much embarrassed. It seems that the nearer we approach to barbarism the more violent this Semetic prejudice is.

Russia

In Russia, where they have many more inhabitants of that race, the prejudice is more cruel and unsparing. Why the Israelites remain under such a strict and intolerant authority, is not easy to comprehend.

Court Dinners

Besides the two court balls which happen every year, one of which I have attempted to describe, there are two court dinners, also in the Burg Palace, during the winter, to which diplomats are invited. These are exceedingly pleasant occasions. They bring the diplomats and the Emperor and Empress and the prominent members of the nobility together, under the most agreeable circumstances. On each of these occasions, their majesties pay their respects to each member of the diplomatic corps who is present, before entering the dining room. The dinners are the very best. The Austrian Court can not be beaten in the matter of good dinners. The master of the purveying and cooking department is a high officer, and belongs to an old family of high rank in the nobility. It is a permanent office, of a dignity scarcely inferior to that of the Secretary of the Treasury.

At one of these dinners I was seated next Count Kinsky who held the office I have just mentioned. He is a very agreeable gentleman, and was not unwilling to communicate many interesting things relating to the Imperial Household and the culinary economy. I learned from him that the cellar under the palace was as deep underground as the palace itself was high above ground. That the store of wines was very large, that the government had vineyards of its own, and made much of its own wine. He offered some day if I would call at the Palace, to go with me into the cellar and show me

some of its treasures. I regret that I did not avail myself of this kind offer, as I should certainly have done, had I not been unexpectedly called upon to go to Russia.

But these Court Balls and Dinners are not all the entertainments to which the minister and his wife are invited. There are numerous dinners, and balls innumerable during the gay season, given by the secretaries and by the rich nobility, given by a great variety of societies, so that, if one should attempt to attend them all, he would have time for nothing else; and, after all, would find it impossible.

In all these dinners and suppers there were abundant supplies of wines and I've never seen any intoxication on such occasions, or anything approaching it on the part of any person, young or old, at any one of all these entertainments. Nor did any of those which I attended, run into late hours. The sitting at the dining table was usually about an hour which was followed by half an hour for smoking and conversation, when the party dispersed, some going to the theater or opera and some to their homes.

The operatic and theatrical performances are more prompt and timely than they are with us. The opera begins promptly by seven o'clock, and ends by ten; and the dinners are early, say by six so that the company attend the opera after dinner, if anyone should so desire. It is hardly necessary to add that the opera was excellent and thoroughly enjoyed.

Sunday Ball

It happened that the first ball in the winter of 1883 in which the diplomatic corps was interested, was given by count Robilant, the Italian ambassador, and it took place on Sunday. A dancing ball on Sunday seemed strange to those of us who have derived our views on the Sunday question from England or New England. The British ambassador attended, but not the ladies of his family. I think that in England and in Holland Sunday is observed as a Sabbath more strictly than with us in America. But in the capitals where the Catholic or the Greek Church prevails, Sunday is a day of amusement, as well as of religious services.

The ambassadors invite the diplomatic corps, the archdukes, and the nobility, and some times the Emperor and Empress. These are not quite so extensive as the court balls but they are very imposing and attractive, accompanied

with music and dancing; and continued till morning.

Diamonds on the floor

I remember an incident at the first Italian ball that may be worth mentioning. A princess whose hair would have been bespangled with diamonds, by some fatality shook off, or let fall, some of them on the floor; when she witnessed the rare spectacle of several gentlemen on their knees on the floor looking for and picking up the lost jewels from under the feet of the crowd. The diamonds were small, and it required sharp eye-sight to see and rescue them from the feet of the throng, to be replaced on the head of the princess.

The rooms were spacious. The young ladies were conducted into one room, and the matrons and mothers to another. The dancing did not commence till the arch-dukes arrived, which was not so early as the rest of the company. When the arch-dukes came they were met at the outer door by the host with candles in both hands, and escorted to the reception room. While that process was going on no one else could hope for the slightest attention from either the host or hostess. Indeed, while the members of the imperial family were in the house no one expected any recognition from the host or hostess, and not much from anybody else. Here came in the severest test of the men of republican or democratic sentiments. On no other occasions are the distinctions of rank or cast made more manifest than at the balls given by the ambassadors. All ranks are there; and each rank is observing and seeking society of the rank above, and absolutely for the time being, ignoring all the ranks below. I fancied that the operation of the principle of social ambition was such, as to make most people for the time quite indifferent, even to their equals. It was their superiors in rank whose notice they affected. It required some philosophy to derive pleasure from such a state of things. But the great people did not usually remain very long; and when they had gone, the atmosphere was not so close, and people breathed again more freely. – Meantime, the dance went on, and kept up the interest of the spectators. Young married people, as well as young unmarried people joined in, and enjoyed it. The host and hostess, having been relieved of the grave responsibility of entertaining the arch-dukes and arch-duchesses were not disposed to be particularly distant or shy. They had with them their masters of ceremonies who were watchful to bring to their notice such of their acquaintances as were of the company with whom their imperial highnesses were kindly and sociable. The diplomatic representatives and their families shared these polite attentions. But in the immense crowd of guests this favor

did not amount to very much. Such conversations were necessarily brief and pointless.

The ambassadors of England, Germany, France, Italy and Russia, usually gave, each winter, at least one such ball, and sometimes two or three each. Beside the dinners which were not confined to the ambassadors, frequent entertainments were given by other members of the diplomatic corps. The higher officials also contributed some splendid entertainments: – dinners, balls, concerts, and sometimes theatricals. I recollect an immense ball given by count Taaffe, the president of the ministry including the diplomatic corps, as well as all the aristocracy and nobility of the Empire, and I believe the Emperor and Empress also attended. Some heads of the old aristocratic Houses gave such entertainments and invited liberally. Prince Schwartzenburg is one of the principle of them. His father commanded the allied armies against Napoleon at Dresden. He is immensely rich, and gives annual balls on a magnificent scale.

The Princess Auersperg is now the head of the House of that name, and opens her palace as often as once a year to the Imperial household and nobility, and includes the diplomatic corps. Indeed, this old empire has many famous heads of famous houses with palaces and wealth sufficient to enable them to assist the Emperor in keeping up the munificent hospitality for which Vienna is justly famous.

Besides, there are many subscription balls where the invitations are select, but yet invite one to come at his own cost. These are equally aristocratic with the others which I have mentioned. They are well conducted and made exceedingly pleasant to those who choose to pay and come.

As I have said, some times these entertainments were varied with concerts or theatricals. I recollect one notable instance which is worth mentioning, it is so very delightful. Prince Reuss, the ambassador of Germany, and his wife, who was also a born princess, gave the use of their splendid hall to the young aristocracy of Vienna to present a play entitled “Zehn Mädchen und ein Mann.” Ten Maidens and One Man. The ladies who performed parts were ten young countesses with the princess Metternich at their head and Count Hoyes, of equally high standing, as the principal gentleman performer. The play was gotten up regardless of expense, and the training of these amateurs was admirable. All these maidens were brought out one after another, to exhibit their accomplishments. The Princess Metternich, who

was a natural actress, presented them in the most attractive style. Some sang, some danced, some played on musical instruments, and some read essays written by themselves. They each and all performed their parts admirably. The entertainment was more interesting than anything I saw on the stage while we were in Europe. I am not sure that I ever saw any thing more delightful.

I have been getting some incidents of the diplomatic life, in that city which fall in the aristocratic sphere because the representatives of foreign nations are treated as belonging to that class, as their intercourse is necessarily with the government officials who are of that class. But there is plenty of wealth in society outside of the nobility and the court aristocracy and at the same season of the year when the aristocracy are having so much gaiety, there are all the while going on perhaps just as exhilarating balls and luxurious dinners among the common people. This is especially true of the military people, who, without much wealth contrive to have about as enjoyable entertainments as the highest aristocracy.

Medical American Students

I will not omit here to refer to the American residents in Vienna who look to the minister and his family for some recognition of their nationality. The excellence of the University of Vienna, especially of the medical branch of it, has attracted the attention of medical men and students in the United States so that every winter there are resident in that city perhaps a hundred students who, with other members of their families constitute a strong colony. Some of the students have sisters, some have mothers, some wives, who come to reside with them. They were generally persons of merit. We were accustomed to invite them all on sundry occasions, to our house. A reception on the 4th of July, a dance on 22 February, and some entertainment on our national Thanksgiving, would bring together a large part of these Americans for an enjoyable time. These meetings were always cordial and happy. The medical students were hard-working young men, not very much given to society. Nevertheless they enjoyed these occasional opportunities to see each other, and to meet their U. S. Minister and his family with a decided zest. There were also some Americans residing in Vienna who had chosen Vienna as a pleasant place for sojourning, a few months. We enjoyed such occasions as brought together all these Americans ourselves, and were happy to see our American friends enjoy themselves well.

The medical students were generally young men who aspired to the highest walks of the profession, and who came to Vienna as the place affording the highest opportunities for perfecting themselves in that department of knowledge. The immense hospitals in the city, and the management thereof in any manner subservient to the uses of the professors and students gave the students the benefit of large and various practice at once which was better than mere lectures could possibly be. But this practice was also accompanied with the best practical lectures.

Foot-washing

Among the interesting ceremonies to which the representatives of foreign nations are invited, is that which is called the "Foot washing." I do not suppose that it is a strange or unusual ceremony at Rome, or in several Catholic countries. But I presume that it is more imposing, and somewhat peculiar as celebrated in Vienna by both the Emperor and Empress. Twelve very old men and as many very old women, are selected for the occasion, clothed in new plain clothes, looking clean and tidy, with hair combed carefully. They are brought in carriages to the palace (the Burg) and made the guests of the occasion. I was surprised that so many so very old people should be found in Vienna and its immediate neighborhood. The whole twenty four averaged over ninety years. When it is remembered that this ceremony recurs every year, and that they are not the same who have enjoyed the same distinction before, it speaks well for the longevity of the Viennese.

The ceremony takes place in the great ceremonial Hall of the Hofburg or Court Palace, the same in which the court balls are held. The Imperial family and princes of the blood, arch-dukes and arch-duchesses, the nobility and aristocracy of the Empire, and high military officers, all in their gala uniforms, with swords and medals and their decorations, the insignia of the Imperial favor, and the diplomatic corps, also in uniforms, who had comfortable seats prepared for them. The hierarchy were also there in their canonicals. Here, in short were the highest aristocracy of the empire assembled, to witness the washing of the feet of twelve poor old men by the Emperor, and the washing of the feet of twelve poor old women by the Empress. The proudest and the humblest condition of humanity brought face-to-face.

Into this brilliant assembly were brought the twenty four old people, and

seated in rows facing each other with a space of perhaps twenty and perhaps thirty feet between them, the twelve old men in one row and the twelve old women in the other row, and their seats were on a platform slightly raised above the floor. Before each row was a long table. The Emperor stood at the head of the table of the old men, and six or seven arch-dukes with the crown-prince Rudolph opposite to the old men in front and the empress stood at the head of the table in front of the old women with six or eight arch-duchesses and the crown princess Stephanie at their head, in front of the old women with the table between. When these arrangements are complete, and Mass was said by the highest ecclesiastical official, a cardinal or some arch-bishop. The service was short, and then came in a train of servants in livery, servants who were accustomed to serve at the tables of their majesties, bringing a course of dishes and viands for a dinner. The Emperor acted as a waiter, taking each dish with the food from the trays on which it was brought and placing it dexterously upon the table before each of the old men. It was well done, earnestly, promptly, and cheerfully done, and as handily as if it had been his business. In doing this, he passed along the whole line, and as he returned to his place at the head of the column, he addressed one or more of the aged guests across the table, which was not a wide one, with some remark, or some question; generally inquired what had been their condition in life, and the answer more general than any other, was "ein soldat", or "a soldier."

When the Emperor had placed the food before each guest, and had returned to his first position, the first train of servants had passed out and there came in military precision another train of servants in military uniform, each bearing an empty tray, forming a line in front of the old men, but with the crown-prince and arch-dukes between, who then advanced to the table and took the dishes and the food which the Emperor had placed before the old people, and now placed them upon the trays of the second train of servants, who carried them away with the same military tread, carrying out what had been brought in, unconsumed.

Meantime the same thing had been done for the old women, by the Empress, the crown-princess, and the arch duchesses. And this was the first course. With like ceremony and like precision, five courses were served and carried away. Nothing was eaten. But all the food, and all the dishes in which it was served, the mugs of beer, and cups of wine were all preserved, and sent to the homes of the old people, so that they should have a first-class feast, and have the dishes, glasses, and mugs all for themselves, as mementos of the

greatest occasion of their lives. The beer mugs were new, and stamped with the date and purport of the occasion. Each had, also, a large sized tin-cup for water so stamped.

When the tables were removed, and the feet of the old people were bared, for the crowning part of the occasion, and the foot washing commenced. The Emperor kneeled upon the platform before the old men, with towel in hand, and one officer of the court poured from a picture, water upon each foot, another officer held a basin under to catch the water, and the Emperor wiped each foot in advanced on his knees before them, wiping one foot after another, till he had finished the job. The Empress at the same time did the same thing for the old women. I thought that she was a little more dainty in the performance of the menial and manual part of the service. Her dress prevented her from walking on her knees but I think that she faithfully knelt before each woman when she wiped her feet. I should not consider the washing very thorough. It was certainly too perfunctory to be effective, if the feet had not been well washed before. The Emperor and Empress then washed their hands in the presence of the assembly. He then put on his sword, and took his plumed hat in his hand as usual, the old people were conducted away, and carried in carriages to their several homes where they had their dinners, and were proud and happy; and that vast and brilliant assembly was then dissolved.

After all was over, I learned that some of these old people were willing to speculate a little on the gifts they had received from the Emperor, and I succeeded, through a friend in purchasing one of the beer mugs manufactured for the occasion, and bearing the date and occasion inscribed upon it, also a drinking cup for water. The government takes means to make the occasion distinguished and the subjects of it also proud of the honor. There are several other ceremonial occasions during the year on which the Imperial House appears, and their majesties take a prominent part, all tending strongly to identify the court, and especially their majesties with the Catholic Church, as the corner-stone of the Empire. These ceremonials are celebrated on certain saints days, and are very imposing.

Notwithstanding the solicitude manifested to avoid the slightest offense to the Italian king, there is not any less care to avoid offense to the Pope as I have already shown in the instance of the Emperor declining to return the king's visit by a visit to Rome, lest it should offend the pope. It is also to be remarked that the Pope's nuncio stands at the head of all the ambassadors,

and is always the first man addressed by the Emperor and Empress when they receive the diplomatic corps.

Schönbrunn

I have mentioned the Burg Palace and the many uses made of it. It is the residence of the Emperor's family in the winter season. I have not mentioned another palace which is about as much identified with the imperial household, as the Burg. I refer to the palace of Schönbrunn where the Emperor and family reside in the summer when not absent from the city in the conciliatory perambulations to the numerous nations and races of his dominions. At Schönbrunn he receives his Royal and his Imperial friends from the capitals of the other monarchies of Europe. It was the palace of which Napoleon took possession in 1809, and where he held, for a time, his court, and gave his entertainments. There the son of Napoleon was reared, where his room is still shown, and the very bed on which he slept, and on which he died. The palace is full of interesting historical reminiscences. It was built by the great Maria Theresa, and is full of mementos of her reign. Externally it is a plain, but capacious and commodious building. In the rear of it is a spacious garden, in beautiful order, with many things in which might be described if time and your patience could afford it. But I do not propose to monopolize the proper functions of the traveler's guide. Napoleon succeeded in taking Schönbrunn and the city of Vienna, in 1809. But the army of Austria, under the command of arch-duke Charles, was on the other side of the Danube, and he could not reach it without crossing. It was a difficult undertaking to cross that large river with the whole Austrian army to oppose him. But his conquest could not be deemed at all complete, nor his own position secure, until he should be able to defeat the army under the arch-duke Charles, and disperse it.

The island of LeBeau is about 5 or 6 miles below the city. He moved out of the city, down the river, crossed over to that island by a bridge which was skillfully and very quickly thrown over, and then was able to cross the comparatively narrow stream between the island and the opposite shore, and give the Austrian general battle at Aspern, which is a village very near to the river at that point. But he fought that day under difficulties, and found it necessary to retreat back to the island where he remained with his army of 250,000 men, for a month or more. There he reorganized his forces, and recruited them. The Austrians regard the battle of Aspern as a victory for their side, and celebrated as such, and they make much more account of it than the battle of Wagram which happened when Napoleon again crossed

over to the north bank of the river with his army from the island of LeBeau.

Wagram is about 10 miles north from Vienna. It was an interesting visit to the island. By the road as traveled, the distance from Vienna to LeBeau is about 10 miles. The island was just the right size for Napoleon's army. It is easy to see where the earthworks were, and the head-quarters of Napoleon are marked by a small granite monument inscribed, "Headquarters of Napoleon in 1809." The scenery is most interesting when taken in connection with the great historical transactions which took place upon it in 1809. In the famous Battle of Wagram, Napoleon won a great victory over the Austrians, and at the same time won the daughter of the proud House of Austria, Maria Louise. It was a remarkable courtship. But I do not propose to follow the French Emperor in his conquests. If he had turned his great success against the Imperial family and the rich aristocracy instead of the poor people, he might perhaps have done some good. But his war was against the people, and without the slightest regard to their liberties or their happiness. It is impossible to regard with any complacency his wars, carried on solely for his individual grandeur, and without any purposes of improving the condition of the people.

Danube

I took a good deal of interest in the Danube as it was connected with the history, and with the property of Vienna. In the time of Napoleon the river was very crooked in the valley near the city of Vienna, and it occupied much more of the valley and it occupies at the present time. Its channel was farther from the city by at least two miles than it is now. The island, LeBeau was cut off from the north side by a much broader stream than it is now.

Some ten years ago, it was determined by the authorities of the city and the Empire, to give the river a new and more direct channel, and to bring it near to the city. They caused a survey to be made of the course in which the river should run, and then determined where the bridges should be, and built them on dry land. They then excavated the channel deep and direct, making it a good boundary of the city on the north. They let in the water and there the river runs to this day, directly by the city, under those splendid bridges, which were planned and built before there was a river to run under them.

Meantime, the old channel was not filled up, but left so that in the event of dangerously high water it could pass off through all the channels, both old

and new. I should have said that one of the reasons for the new channel was to [relieve] the city from the danger which frequently threatened it; – of inundation. This great improvement has relieved the city and country in that neighborhood.

Along the south side of the river as it is thus improved, within the city, is a park of more than 4000 acres, of beautiful ground, where the whole city go driving & horseback riding. On it, also, are two race-courses, one for trotting and the other for running. There is a fine old forest of trees upon it, and it is a charming place to take a summer drive. There is a straight avenue three miles in length for driving, and a [rotten?] row on one side of it kept in the most perfect order. In pleasant weather is made brilliant by innumerable turnouts, imperial, aristocratic, and of common people, who can afford it. It is also a favorite place for walking, used by all classes. The Emperor and Empress frequently are seen driving, and also riding on the avenue. It is a favorite recreation of the Empress. It is a place where the people of high rank, and of no rank, can see each other. An incident was told me of the shrewdness of the empress while we were there. A new secretary of the French Embassy who was rich, and a fancier of fine horses, used to make a show of his fine horses on the avenue in the Prater. When he was presented to the Empress, she at once expressed her admiration of his horses and his horsemanship. He was so flattered that he never got over it.

Water of Hock Quelle

[The] is one other feature in the comparatively recent history of Vienna which I am not quite willing to let pass from my memory, and so I take the liberty of impressing it upon yours tonight. It relates to the water supply. Not long before, or after the reforming of the Danube, I can not say which was first, the Viennese had before been supplied with the water of the Danube, as we now are with that of the Ohio, though they could do better. There was found in the side of the highest mountain of the Austrian Alps, of that region, near the foot of what is known as the Schnee Berg, Snow Mountain, an enormous spring of pure water. It was not quite a hundred miles from the city. That spring was taken possession of, and conducted through one long enclosed aqueduct to the city. It is thought that this new supply of water is the cause of great improvement in the health of the people of the city. It has proved sufficient to supply that city of about a million people. I was so much interested in this achievement of ingenious enterprise, that I went in the summer season and to this wonderful spring. It is in a mountainous region

which can hardly be surpassed in beauty of scenery by anything to be found in the Alps of Switzerland. This great fountain of pure water is called Kaiserbrunnen. The water is clear, soft, and delicious, and until very recently has been found to be sufficient to meet all the demands of that populous city. But I regret to see by very late reports that the demands have so much increased of late that the supply, in the dry season, is becoming scant, and the city authorities have notified the inhabitants of the city to be considerate in the use of it. I regret this because it indicates that the city will, at some not remote day have to look out for additional supply whether it be by resorting again to the Danube for occasional aid, or by appropriating some of her mountain Quellen or brunnen. I am quite sure that having had a taste of Hochen Quellen or mountain fountains the people of Vienna will not be satisfied to fall back on the blue Danube for drinking water. This question will furnish new scope for the ingenuity and enterprise of their engineers.

Austria and Hungary

The Empire of Austria-Hungary, like the United States, is composed of a variety of states, twenty or more, which are held together by the central authority. These different states have different languages and a diversity of religious faiths, and even widely different forms of local government. The different states would often be at war with each other, but for the reconciling influence of the Emperor personally and of the large army which is always kept on foot. That army is numerous and well trained. Austria has been compelled to adopt the Prussian system, and I should be disappointed if its army fails to do itself credit in the next war which brings it into service. My impression is that the number of men in the peace establishment is 300,000, always ready for service; and that three times as many can be called out and mobilized in a short time.

No neighbors

I recollect that on one occasion when I had an interview with one of the arts-dukes, he made some inquiries about our army, and I said "it was very small, and that the officers of the army of the empire would be sufficient to fill up our ranks." He replied, "you have no neighbors." This was partly true; but it happens that the Austrian Army is more frequently used to suppress disturbances at home, than in resisting attacks from abroad.

Czechs and Germans

In this connection, I will mention the jealousy which exists between the Czechs, or the Slavs of the Empire, and the Germans. This leads to great strife in Bohemia, and also in Austria proper. In the Empire the Slavs are in a decided majority over the Germans. Especially are they strong in Bohemia. It appears that every session of the legislature of Bohemia as well as in the Reichrath at Vienna, whenever any money is appropriated for a school, or a theater, or a church, or for any other improvement, in which the Czechs are particularly interested, the Germans make a fearful outcry, and so vice versa. The language of the Germans being entirely distinct from that of the Czechs, or Bohemians proper, there is a constant struggle to determine which shall be the official language. It requires all the persuasive influence of the Emperor to keep the peace. It has often seemed that actual hostilities would break out. There have been, now and then, mobs, growing out of this feeling. Still the union has been maintained, and I presume it will be as long as the Empire itself stands. The title of the Empire itself has changed since 1849, with the reign of Francis Joseph from "Austria" to Austria-Hungary," which is now the legal name of the Empire. Hungary has been recognized as a substantial, if not an independent part of the empire; although in Hungary the Emperor is known as King, and Hungary itself as a kingdom, while as a whole, the general government is entitled the monarchy of "Austria-Hungary."

Character of the country

This realm embraces a magnificent country, with all the variety so desirable to a great nation. In extent, it does not compare with the United States. Still it is extensive and populous, and has a vast quantity of fertile lands. The Danube, the longest and finest river in Europe, traverses the whole empire lengthwise, from West to East, making a broad family of fertile lands, and these are kept in a high state of culture. There are, also, on the southern border, the Tirel and the Styrian Alps, affording beautiful and splendid scenery, and a wholesome climate. On the north and east are the Carpathian Mountains, between Hungary and Prussia and Russia. Indeed, the Empire has a wonderful variety of scenery and a various abundance of products. Though it is composed of many nationalities, they are generally industrious and peaceful. Hungary has a vast body of fertile lands, and rivals Russia, and even United States, in its grain and pork.

There are also minerals, abundant and various. The climate and soil are such

that everything that can be cultivated anywhere in the temperate zone, can be produced there. Silk, grapes, wines, all kinds of cereals and roots. Manufacturing of every kind is successfully carried on. The finest glass, pottery, iron and steel wares abound, and machinery of every kind. The government is careful to protect home industries whether agricultural or mechanical, and industrial; and their manufactured articles are very good. One of the most interesting features of Austria-Hungary is the industry of the people, whether in the agricultural, or manufacturing field of labor. –

There is a good deal of wind in Vienna which carries away the malaria, and I consider the climate as both pleasant and wholesome. The winds are not blizzards or hurricanes but they are such as to indicate an almost constant movement of the air, to prevent all stagnation, causing neither damage to property, nor danger to persons.

The Empire is rich in picturesque, beautiful, and comfortable summer resorts, in the mountainous regions, and the distances are not far to go, to find them. The old Emperor of Germany goes every year into the Austrian Empire to be recruited (*sic*) by the Gastein air and water. There he remains for the full term of what they call a “cure,” for almost three weeks, on each visit. In 1884, I was in Gastein, and saw him with his numerous retinue arrived in that picturesque village. He took possession of the largest and best hotel, and more than filled it. The Emperor was looking well. As he came into the town the ladies met him and presented him with a bouquet of his favorite flower. This was the blue flower, which is adored mother Louisa loved, and so he prefers it to all others, and the people recognize this preference when they complement him with bouquets. Every year the old Emperor feels it necessary to experience the rejuvenating power of the Springs of Gastein.

Gastein

Gastein is situated high up among the mountains which rise far higher. The air is bracing even in the heat of summer, and snow appears even on the summits of the mountains. There is a cascade of beautiful water in the village, a fine mountain stream comes foaming down, and falls not less than 300 feet in a quarter of a mile. This stream however, is not the water of the spring, which gives fame to Gastein, as a watering place. There are copious springs outside the mountain torrent, which are used for baths, and have, or are supposed to have, wonderful efficacy. It is pure and transparent, so that when the deep bath-tub is filled with this water, you see the bottom quite as

clearly as when it is empty; and it seemed to me that you could see it more clearly, as if the tub were illuminated. I cannot learn that there have been found any ingredients in the water of a mineral character. It is supposed that there is an electric quality in it, that gives it its wonderful restorative effect. The baths are certainly most agreeable. The scenery is in the highest style of Alpine beauty, and nothing can be imagined more delightful for driving or walking. I found a field-glass, useful to look at the lofty heights which looked down upon the village and its vicinity. There are many charming pleasure resorts in the Empire, and no country is richer in efficacious springs.

The Emperor has two brothers. The oldest is Carl Ludwig, and the youngest is Ludwig Victor. They are next in rank to the Emperor, and on many public occasions accompany their majesties. Arch-duke Carl has his third wife. He is a popular man of high character, and is a useful assistant to the Emperor in his court duties. His wife is an Italian princess, and so beautiful as to be regarded as a rival to the Empress herself. She has the advantage of being considerably younger. The arch-duke Carl has four or five children, the oldest of whom is a very promising young man, handsome and very rich.

Ludwig Victor, the youngest brother is unmarried, and I could not see that he was of any particular use to anybody. He has made the Emperor some troublesome times, by his frivolity. The other arch-dukes, who are established in their palaces in the city and in the neighborhood, are men of good character, and very much respected. These members of the imperial House are pillars of support to the imperial government. The Emperor has now been reigning 36 years, and is in good health at the age of 55 years. The Empress, I think, is 48, and still retains her beauty. But it is said that she suffers from rheumatism. They have three children, one son, the crown prince, and two daughters. The oldest daughter is married, as well as the crown prince. Youngest daughter is not yet married. I think she is about 20 years old, a very nice and accomplished girl, but without her mother's beauty.

If the Emperor should die, the crown-prince should have no son, the daughters would not inherit the crown because there are sons of Carl Ludwig, who would be preferred. For although the greatest monarch who ever sat upon the throne of Austria was a woman, the famous Maria Theresa, yet she herself made it impossible for any other woman to hold that position under the role of dissent which prevails for the throne of that empire. The rule is that females may inherit the throne, but not till all the males of the blood shall be exhausted. Under that rule, she came upon the throne. But she

married a husband and had sixteen children. Most of them, and I think all of them lived to adult age, and two of them, viz. Joseph, after him Leopold, became Emperors. But there is very little prospect of the male descendants of Maria Theresa ever being exhausted. There is a picture in the palace of Schönbrunn, representing all her children, sixteen in number, with Marie Antoinette among them, taken while they were all living, and a beautiful picture it is. She was undoubtedly the greatest woman Austria ever produced. I would recommend to any one who should visit Vienna, go through the Schönbrunn palace deliberately. It is identified with the great Empress, Maria Theresa, who built it and with whose mementos it is full. Her descendants are justly proud of her record, and the visitors who go through that palace, learn from the conductor who is furnished them, and who makes a running comment on every room, and its contents; getting many interesting facts associated with its history, and especially with the great empress who long resided in it. –

In the last week in June 1884, I received a dispatch in cipher from the Secretary of State. I could not read it, because we had no key to it. It was in figures, & a new one, and no key had been sent to the Vienna legation. We had a key to a cipher in letters, and I so telegraphed back, and immediately received a dispatch in another cipher, which read as follows viz., “Would you like to be promoted to St. Petersburg?” After consulting with my wife and daughter, I answered “Yes. I would like it.” In a few days I observed that my name was sent into the Senate for minister to Russia and the appointment was confirmed. The commission was some time in coming so that it was the middle of August before it reached me; and no letter of recall did in fact reach me in time to be presented to the Emperor before it was desired by the department that I should go to Russia. I stated however to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs that my letter of recall was on the way and that it would be a favor if I could have my final and farewell audience in anticipation of its arrival especially as the Emperor chanced to be then in the city. He promised to have it arranged, and it was arranged, and the audience was had with the Emperor. I was unwilling to leave the Empire where I had been so well treated, without the usual farewell greeting. It is sometimes done, but is not satisfactory to the Court. I was alone with the Emperor and the audience was in German. The Emperor speaks no English, but is fond of German, his native language. I mention this to show what proficiency I had made in the German language. The audience was pretty long, and very agreeable; he being evidently gratified to have it in German, and without the intervention of an interpreter. Of the emperor, Francis Joseph, I wish to say,

that I regard him as a just man, a man of great industry, and kindly in all his ways. I can not recur to my experiences at his court and to my intercourse with him personally without feelings of great respect and regard. I think that his people in Austria have absolute confidence in his wisdom and justice, and undoubtedly the prevailing confidence in the Emperor is a powerful tie which binds so many nations to the union of the Austrian-Hungarian tribes and peoples. The Empress was absent from the Empire, and we therefore had no final audience with her. The Emperor expressed his polite regret that we were going away and said that our residence in Vienna had been most satisfactory to him and his court. I should have said in its proper place that when we arrived in Vienna, we found that we could not hire such a house as we ought to have, already furnished; and that it would be necessary to purchase furniture. This was a disappointment. But we had conformed to the necessity of the case, and bought our furniture; and the question now was, what to do with it? We concluded to take it with us, which was not a light thing to do. Still, it was better than to buy another set of furniture in St. Petersburg as we should have to do, if we did not take it along.

We were very fortunate in our selection of a dwelling in Vienna; and that is a matter of no small importance in such a case. A suitable house is worth all it costs in diplomatic life; and I am sure we did the best we could in that particular, both in Vienna and in St. Petersburg. The cost of transportation in that country is high. But we transported all our movables from V. to P. And placed them in a satisfactory house which had been procured for us by our secretary. The cost of removal of our property to St. Petersburg was about a thousand dollars.

If I have been a little more particular in some of the statements than seemed to be necessary, it is because it is impossible to tell how many of the members of this club may hereafter go into diplomatic life, and it may be useful for them to know before hand "how it is themselves." —

Here I propose to pause in giving my diplomatic experiences, long enough to show what use we made of the first leave of absence granted me while we were residing in Vienna.

Alphonso Taft

March 6, 1886