

(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 US Minister at the Court of Emperor Francis Joseph

My diplomatic experience commenced about 3 1/2 years ago, in May 1882, when, after having been appointed and confirmed as Minister to Austria-Hungary, I sailed from New York to Liverpool, on my way to Vienna. In London I made the acquaintance of Mr. Lowell, our minister to the court of Her Britannic Majesty and found him ready to recognize the brotherhood of our Ministers. From London I proceeded to Paris which was another point on my way to Vienna where the ladies of a legation especially are accustomed to have important business, causing some delay. As the time allowed a minister for going to Vienna from Washington is 30 days, it is to be presumed, that it is intended that the wife and daughters of the Minister (if he has any) shall have a few days in Paris.

In Paris I met Mr. Hunt, our minister to Russia with his wife and daughter, and Mr. Dayton, minister to Belgium, each on his way to the court to which he had been appointed, *via* Paris.

### First Diplomatic Dinner

There we met our colleague (ministers all call each other "colleagues") Levi P. Morton, then minister of the United States to France, and he immediately arranged a diplomatic dinner, inviting all the ambassadors and ministers in Paris. This facilitated our making the acquaintance of some twenty to twenty-five of our diplomatic brethren. It was a pleasant occasion. There were princes, counts, and barons in the company as well as men without titles. This to me was the beginning of intercourse with men with hereditary titles.

### Hereditary Titles

The founders of our government were undoubtedly wise in forbidding the receiving or conferring of hereditary titles in our Republic. Not that titled persons are any worse or any better, than persons without titles; but because such titles are at war with the principles of equality of privileges among men,

and antagonize republican government. They are an important instrumentality in the hands of a monarch to keep in vogue the artificial distinctions of classes among his people, so necessary to the existence of any monarchy. They furnish a cheap bribe in the hands of the king, or the Emperor, to bind to his throne for ever the most influential men of his realm. Every sovereign of Europe has a basket full of titles and orders, with which to secure the unconditional support of the leading men of the country.

The maintenance of these distinctions may be essential to a despotism or a monarchy. Many American heiresses have been captivated with the glitter of these high sounding titles. As princes, and counts, and barons may be as good as other people, an American lady who gets one may get a good husband. But the majority of such experiences have not been encouraging.

These type persons are in their manners, gentlemen and prepossessing in their social intercourse; and for aught I know as meritorious as men without titles. From this class in foreign countries, men have generally been selected for diplomatic positions. They are as a rule, amiably polite, and agreeable to meet. I have nothing to say against the men of titles in the diplomatic corps. The greatest and best man in the continent of Europe glitter with the insignia of orders and of rank. But the system which seeks to classify citizens by the favor of Kings rather than by merit, is un-republican and unjust; and our republican ancestors were wise and patriotic to exclude it.

As I have said, at this diplomatic dinner in Paris, I first came in contact with men of hereditary titles of nobility. I was given a seat on the left of Prince Orloff, the ambassador from Russia to France. He was sociable and intelligent, and inquisitive; the kind of a man one likes to meet, when abroad. Germany was represented in that company by another Prince, a Hohenzollern. Austria was represented by Count de Beust, who had been secretary of foreign affairs in Vienna for a good many years, from which position he is supposed to have been removed, on account of his hostility to Bismarck; England by Lord Lyons. These gentlemen formed an agreeable company to meet, and the occasion was one to be remembered with pleasure. Mr. Morton was kind enough to introduce his American colleagues to the Pres. of the French Republic. He is a plain, unpretending man, who would not be suspected of dangerous ambition. I am glad to see that he has been re-elected for another 7 years. I believe that he is a safe man and a republican, which can not be said of all the French politicians.

## Arrival in Vienna

On arrival in Vienna, my first business was to get an audience with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Count Kalnoky; and when that was granted, as it was immediately, to seek through him an audience with the Emperor, who fortunately was then in the city; and the audience was speedily arranged to take place in the old, historic palace called the "Burg", within the city.

The Secretary of Foreign Affairs is a Hungarian by birth and education. One of his duties is to do the best he can to make the representatives of foreign powers pleased with their residences near the court of his Majesty the Emperor Francis Joseph. He is an accomplished diplomatist, of experience having been ambassador of Austria-Hungary at the court of Russia, as well as having held other diplomatic posts. He soon procured the appointment for an audience with the Emperor, as I have said.

## Presentation

I was punctual, and so was the Emperor. In going to the presence of his Majesty, I passed through a series of rooms, through lines of gaily uniformed soldiers; but was guided by officers of the Court to the presence of the Emperor. The Emperor came in from another room, and the interview was held standing, and in the French language. As Mr. Phelps, my predecessor was not there, his letter of recall was first presented to the Emperor by the secretary of our litigation, who accompanied me.

The interview was pleasant, and consisted chiefly of inquiries as to what place in the United States I came from, and sundry questions relating to the state of things in our country and whether I had yet found a residence to suit me, and how long I expected to remain, and suitable answers to such inquiries.

His Majesty was in uniform as an Austrian general. He never appears in public without his uniform. This is in keeping with the true idea of an Empire. An Emperor was a Roman General in command, and so always military.

## The Emperor's Person

The Emperor is nearly, and perhaps quite six feet in height, not stout but

rather slightly built with a full beard except a spot on the chin, which is shaved close. His head is now quite bald, though he is but 55 years old. His hair, what there is of it, is quite gray, nearly white. His step is elastic, and all his movements are military. He walks like an Austrian officer. The military step of Austria is not quite the same with that of our military men. Without attempting to describe accurately the difference, there is one thing I have observed, viz.: That the Austrian soldier is trained to swing his arms freely, to correspond with and aid the movement of his legs, which I have not observed in the marching of American or English soldiers.

### Acquaintance with Diplomats

Having been presented to the Emperor, and having presented to him my credentials, the next thing to be done, was to make the acquaintance of the the diplomatic corps, beginning with the ambassadors, with whom it was necessary to ask an audience by a written request; informing them at the same time that I had presented my credentials to the Emperor and been received by him, as a Minister of the United States.

These audiences were promptly granted, and were always cordial and pleasant. As to the Ministers, they being of the same rank with myself, it was not necessary to ask any audience; but only to make the first call, which was generally accomplished by going to their residence, and, in their absence leaving cards. They then returned the call personally, and if they found me, the acquaintance began. If they came when I was not in, they left cards.

As it was July when I had that duty to perform, a majority of the Ministers were absent from the city, and the calls resulted in the exchange of cards. Nevertheless it was not in vain. For it was then in order, whenever and wherever we met, for either party to ask and obtain an introduction. Opportunities of that kind were not wanting, whether it were at a diplomatic dinner, at a ball, or at the foreign office, where the prime Minister of Foreign Affairs holds a weekly reception for the Ambassadors and Ministers of all the countries represented at that court. On Tuesday of every week, from 2 to 4 p.m., the Secretary of Foreign Affairs holds himself in readiness, to receive, at his office, any member of the diplomatic corps who may desire to see him or have any business to transact, or communication to make. They are received at one time in the order of their coming to the palace, except that the Ambassadors are received before the Ministers, and the ministers plenipotentiary are received before the ministers resident, and before the

secretaries and chargé d'affaires. This gives the members of the corps, while waiting in the anteroom their turn to be called in, opportunity to form acquaintance with their colleagues, and have a social time. This anteroom was a handsome room, adorned with some historical portraits, among which were one of Prince Metternich, and one of the Emperor Francis Joseph, a handsome youth of 18 years, as he was when his reign commenced. It is not therefore a difficult matter to become acquainted with the members of the diplomatic corps, and it was but a few days after my arrival in Vienna, before I was on pleasant and familiar terms with nearly all of them. But it was necessary to take the prescribed steps in due order. Nothing could be done until the presentation to, and recognition by, the Emperor. Then it was still necessary to proceed in the prescribed method. But there was no hardship in that. It rather facilitated the proceeding.

### Duties of Minister

When once accredited at the court, and acquainted with the corps, the duties of the Minister divide themselves into two branches: viz.:—the business and social duties. Under the head of diplomatic business, all the communications to or from, the foreign office. Our medium of communication with the government to which we are sent, is the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

### Business

If we have an international exposition in the United States, such as the Centennial, in 1876, or that recently held in New Orleans, in which foreign nations are to be invited to take part, our Minister gives the notice through the Foreign Office; or, such as in the case of the electric exposition held in Vienna two years ago, our Minister received the notice, and communicated it to our Secretary of State.

### Unity of Longitude

Our government desired to have a fixed point for the beginning of longitude established for the whole globe, in place of the different points heretofore used by different nations, and proposed to invite the nations to send to Washington members of an international Congress to consider and recommend the point on the globe which should be adopted by general convenience. But it desired first of all to know whether the European Nations would join in the object. I was instructed to ascertain whether the

Austrian Government would take part in such a Congress. I found that it was not disposed to favor it, and so reported; but before a year had elapsed, I learned from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs that its government had changed its ground, and had concluded to send a representative to such a Congress, and had actually empowered the Austrian Minister at Washington to act in that capacity. The Congress took place, and that important point was settled. France alone stood out for a time, but if she has not already yielded her preference for her own beginning of longitude, it is not probable that she will long hold out against the concurrent voice of the civilized world and scientific. It was not agreeable to the scientific men of France to change their geographical map, especially as it was to conform to the longitudinal line of Greenwich in England. But our country and the majority of the world had become accustomed to Greenwich as the initial point of longitude for maps, and it was undoubtedly the right thing to do, so that there should be uniformity in the degrees of longitude as well as in the degrees of latitude, by which the earth's surface is to be described. It may have seemed slightly presuming in our republic to propose a convention of the whole world in our capital to regulate the longitude of the earth's surface. It was obvious that Austria anticipated that the result might, and probably would be to make it necessary to substitute new maps for their old ones, and then, why should this international convention be held in America when there were so many ancient monarchies in Europe? But a majority of the nations felt the necessity for the proposed change, and generally felt also that he could be urged with a greater prospect of success by our government than any of the European Governments among whom exist so many traditional jealousies. Besides, we had more longitude than any of ancient monarchies of Western Europe.

The government proceeded with caution and modesty, and was careful not to alarm the proper self-respect, or the pride, of the older nations. The first approach to the subject was to inquire of each foreign government through our ministers, whether it would send one or more representatives to such a convention at the same time presenting the urgent reason for a movement of the kind.

Such a movement had been tried in a scientific convention which met in Italy. It brought attention to the subject but lacked the breadth of authority which came from the more general representation at the convention called by our government in Washington. I think that England and America acted very much in unison on the subject. The result was that all the world was

represented, and a great majority agreed on the beginning line of longitude. I refer to this however, at present, to show something of the nature of diplomatic services which are very frequently required.

### Naturalized Citizen in Austrian Army

An Austrian subject, who had reached the age for military duty, was summoned for examination. It was found that at that time he was not competent for the service but that it was probable that by another year he would be competent, and he was instructed to come back at the expiration of one year for re-examination. In the meantime he went to America, and declared his intention to become a citizen, remained five years, and was naturalized. Afterward he returned to Austria on a visit, and was immediately put into the Army on the ground that he had evaded the military law of Austria, and so, under the treaty between the United States and Austria, was still liable to military duty.

After he had been in the Army some six months, an application was made to me on his behalf, to get him released from military duty in that empire. His case involved the true construction of the treaty between the two countries. The treaty provided substantially that if a man left the Empire in evasion of his liability to do military duty, under the law of the Empire, he should still be liable to military service on his coming back, and to punishment for his breach of the law of Austria-Hungary.

I made application to the foreign office, claiming his discharge on the ground that, although he had been summoned for examination he had not been enrolled in the service, and could not be held to have violated or evaded his military duty, to which he had not yet become subject. The Foreign Office agreed to this construction, and discharged the soldier.

### Citizenship renounced

Another case was where a citizen of Hungary had gone to the United States, stayed long enough to become naturalized, and some years after naturalization sold out his United States property, moved back to Hungary, bought a farm, remained there 15 years, and for aught that appeared intended to spend his days there, voted at municipal elections, and was elected to an important office, which he accepted, but when his boys became old enough to be summoned for military duty and were called for, he declared that he

was an American citizen, and that neither he nor his sons were liable to military duty; and he appealed to me as the American Minister to protect him; and also appealed to the Secretary of State, and so informed me.

I considered that he was fairly to be held to have renounced his American citizenship within the fair construction of our treaty with Austria, and that at least while he continued to remain in the home of his birth, and claimed and exercised the rights and privileges of a citizen of Hungary, the place of his origin, he could not require the United States to protect him against the laws of Hungary where he was voluntarily residing. This the Secretary of State approved.

Many cases arise under the treaties of this kind. These, and numerous other cases like them show something of the business duties of a minister.

## Social Duties

But the Social duties which are essential to the best success in our business relations with the foreign office and with the representatives of Foreign relations generally are quite different and include the members of the minister's family as well as himself. These duties are important, though not so numerous and imperative with the minister as with the ambassador, who is supposed to have higher rank and to be paid a larger salary in order to enable him to expand more freely in entertainments. Nevertheless the minister is expected to be liberal, especially the Minister of the United States, who though but a Minister represents at least one of the foremost Nations on the globe when we consider the strength, and freedom, and vigor of its institutions, the intelligence of its people, the vastness and excellence of its territory, and its power. The general opinion among foreign diplomats is that Americans are all so rich that they should entertain like Princes.

It is undoubtedly the duty of a minister not only to make the acquaintance of the representatives of other nations, but to seek to increase their respect toward the United States. It is necessary therefore to cheerfully respond to the politeness of his colleagues, in the way of social entertainments. A minister of the United States to Russia has a salary of \$70,500, while a member of the cabinet has but \$8000. The cost of mere living in Washington is probably as great as in any capital in Europe. The difference in salaries implies this duty of making his country acceptable to the representatives of other countries. If the salary were greater it would still more strongly imply

that duty.

## Court amenities

This awakens some pleasant recollections of our residence both in Vienna and in St. Petersburg. I shall first refer to the amenities of the court of Vienna. There are given by the Emperor two Court balls and two Court dinners to which the members of the diplomatic corps are invited and there are several national ceremonies annually celebrated which are of great interest, and to which the diplomats are invited; and where they are provided with comfortable seats well situated for observation. Many of these festival occasions occur in the winter season. The balls are held in the city-palace or the "Burg" as it is called, which is a very large, old, Imperial Palace, filled with curiosities of historical interest. Many of the rooms are beautiful as well as full of mementos of former Emperors, and of former times. The building exteriorly has no beauty; it is dingy with age and smoke, and closely shut in by business, and buildings of the city.

## First Court Ball

The Palace is not less than three hundred years old. The first of the court balls occurs usually sometime in January or February, and is immensely thronged. All the Imperial family, all the diplomatic corps, all the nobility, which is very numerous and the whole host of military officers who hold commissions and are present in the capital including also all the retired generals. I suppose there were not less than 5000 present on the occasion of the first court ball we attended. The Emperor and all the male members of the Imperial family as well as the officers of the army whether in active service or retired, were in full uniform, the nobility too were adorned with the orders which they had obtained from the Emperor Francis Joseph, or from any other emperor or king. The members of the diplomatic corps were also arrayed in rich uniforms with a great amount of gold lace and gold buttons always excepting the minister of the United States who wears by act of Congress a plain black, an evening dress suit. This is really the most distinguished uniform there is in the company for there was no one like it; and as the members of the corps came in, and were announced by officers of the court, they had no difficulty in knowing when to announce the Minister of the United States. His black dress suit was decisive. I have never complied with any act of Congress with more satisfaction. Gold lace is not

republican, and I am sure that I should never wish to wear it. It is heavy and uncomfortable, and to my eye it is not becoming.

### Presentation of Corps To Their Majesties

At this ball, the diplomatic corps are assembled in one room of the palace preliminary to entering the ceremonial hall to meet the Emperor and Empress, or for introductions of such of the secretaries and attaches of the embassies and legations have not before been presented. All the ministers and ambassadors are standing in a line, ranged according to their rank & the time they have resided at that post with their secretaries and attaches behind them and the wives are ranged in a line opposite with their daughters and other ladies of the embassy or legation, and those who are to be presented, standing behind them. The Emperor and the Empress enter the room together through a door opening at the end of the room between the heads of the two columns. After they have greeted the whole company with a bow, and been greeted in like manner in return, the Emperor turns to the ambassador at the head of the column, salutes him and addresses questions or other conversation to him. After a few minutes of conversation with the first, he goes to the second and holds a short conversation with him and so on through the whole line.

The Minister or Ambassadors presents any new secretary or other new member of his legation or embassy and at the same time the Emperor recognizes those who have before been presented speaking to them or not as it may happen to strike his Majesty's mind. When he has passed in this way through the whole line of the gentlemen, he returns to the head of the ladies' column and passes down it in the same way.

### The Empress

Meanwhile the Empress passes along both lines in the same way. The wives of the Ministers and Ambassadors present their daughters and other lady members of the legations or embassies to the Emperor and Empress as they pass. I thought the Empress on the first occasion when I saw her the most beautiful and pleasing person I have ever seen in a public station. She was very tall, with the beautiful figure and able to display more diamonds to advantage than any lady I have ever seen. Not only graceful and handsome, but winning in her manners. Not at all haughty in her bearing. Not even gay, or in any way frivolous. She is charming, modest, and respectful with a

slight appearance of diffidence; speaks English well, and says she loves to speak it. With her deprecating manner, almost approaching timidity, she is self-possessed, and usually does the right thing at the right time, and does it well.

## Enter Ceremonial Hall

After these presentations and interviews, their Majesties go into the ceremonial hall, followed by a numerous train of the Imperial family and relatives, including all the arch-dukes, arch-duchesses, and their wives and husbands. The hall was already crowded with nobility and high military officers. The diplomatic corps also immediately enter the hall and go to the seats set apart for them. We were not confined to that section of the great hall, and were free to mingle with such persons as we knew or wished to know. But the Emperor & his court were very careful to see that the representatives of foreign countries should be well accommodated and politely treated.

The scene was very imposing. It is hardly possible to imagine any display of human grandeur more brilliant. The dancing began immediately after the entrance of their Majesties and their court. The dances were very lively and beautiful. There can be no question but that the Austrian ladies and gentlemen know how to dance. At 12 p.m., a signal was given to close the dance; and by a quarter or at most a half hour afterwards the ball was over and the hall cleared, and all were making their way homeward.

## Second Ball

In a week or two after the first court ball, we received invitations to another court ball. This time the invitations were not so general. The inferior officers of the army were left out, and many others. Still the "Ceremonial Hall" was filled, and the dancing was as brilliant as ever. I omitted to say that at the first ball there were refreshments abundant, though not with much formality. But the supper at the second ball was elaborate and carried out with more method and in a manner to bring together the nobility and the Imperial family and the representatives of foreign countries. As we entered the great ceremonial and dancing hall after the greetings by and presentations to the Emperor and Empress, we were each presented with a card showing us at what table and in what room we were to sit at the supper, and what arch-duke or arch-duchess or prince was to preside, and who were to sit at the

same table. Each table accommodated about twelve persons. Many of these persons were strangers to the diplomats and their families. But it was expected that conversation should proceed without introductions. The difficulty was to find any interesting topic of conversation among persons wholly unknown to each other. The tables were not so large that conversation could not be carried on among friends and acquaintances with pleasure. On the first occasion of this kind, (and I shall confine myself to my experience on this first occasion), I found from my card that the arch-duchess Maria presided at my table; the wife of the popular arch-duke Rener, and a daughter of the famous arch-duke Charles who led the Austrian armies against Napoleon, in 1809. She was not a beauty, but looked well for a lady of 60 or more years, and was full of intelligence.

The arch-duchess was careful in directing our conversation to a member of the diplomatic corps to introduce some subject relating to the country represented by him asking some question perhaps which would be very easy to answer, but which helped to carry on the conversation. She did what could be done to keep the guests in good humor, and to make them sociable. Yet, as many of the nobility were strangers to the diplomatic families, and spoke no English, conversation was liable to flag. It was interesting to observe the enormous display of ornaments worn by some of these Austrian Ladies. This however applies only to married ladies. For the young ladies do not wear diamonds. The countissins (as the maiden countesses are called) dress well but simply. But the diamonds which the Countesses wore, and the pearls, make all such ornaments seem cheap, if not worthless. Neither diamonds nor pearls could make rich dowagers handsome. There were some fine looking women but as a general thing the handsomest were not so heavily loaded with jewelry. Still all were very richly dressed. Those of the highest rank had coronets blazing with diamonds.

But coming back to my table, I may mention that there were six or seven of these rich but plain looking dowager looking countesses bedecked with diamonds. Next me sat the wife of the Minister of Japan, a pretty, little, modest person who could not speak either German, French, or English. I dare say that by this time she can speak English and perhaps French. For she was not dull or indolent, but only new to the place. Her husband was a general and spoke, or tried to speak, English. But I could understand his wife, whose face was full of expression, tho' she spoke neither English nor German, better than I could him. She sat on my right, and on my left sat a row of bediamonded countesses who, although they did not look haughty or

forbidding on that occasion, did not invite conversation. The prospect of interesting conversation was not encouraging as we took our seats at the table. The bright and intelligent questions of the arch-duchess helped considerably. She talked to me in very good English. To some she talked in French, to others in German. But she could not talk to the Japan minister's wife in any language. On the left of the archduchess sat a rather stout, handsome gentleman, dressed in a rich and beautiful uniform, with the insignia of numerous orders such as a prince might wear. As there seemed nothing else to do, I concluded to try to start some conversation with him. I had heard him speak no English, but presumed that he could speak German. I at first tried my imperfect German upon him; but he answered me in English, promptly and pleasantly. He easily knew who I was, because I was dressed in plain clothes. I found that he spoke English as if he had been accustomed to it. I also found that he had been in America and that, more than once, had traveled extensively in the United States. Besides that, he had been around the world and did not care who knew it. Not that he was boastful or conceited. He was willing to put himself in easy communication with me and help me make the conversation amiable and interesting. But after all I did not then learn the name of this agreeable man. Nor did I learn who he was until sometime after, when according to diplomatic usage it became the duty of my wife and myself to ask an audience of certain royal personages who resided in Vienna away from the home of their birth, such as the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Nassau, or the Prince of Coburg, and their wives. To my surprise, when we called upon the Prince of Coburg who is the grandson of Louis Philip, whose wife is the sister of the wife of the crown prince of Austria and daughter of the King of Belgium. I found my agreeable friend of the supper table. We afterwards, in a separate audience but in the same palace saw also his mother, a daughter of King Louis Philip. She was willing to talk freely of historical and political matters. But she said that France had no tolerable government since that of her father. She is an old lady and quite deaf, so that we talked with her through an elastic tube. She was evidently waiting, like a great many others, with the expectation that the House of Orleans would be restored to the throne of France.

We saw in the house some beautiful mementos of her father, in the days of his power. Among others was a fine, full-length portrait of life size. Frequently, afterward we met the Prince, and always found him agreeable and talkative. The Prince owns, and with his mother and family occupies a large and commodious palace in Vienna, and I presume feels much more at

home in the Austrian court than he would just now feel in Paris, where I think he was born. Being of royal descent and having a wife so nearly related to the Imperial family, sister of the Crown Princess, he is entirely at home in this Austrian court and attends all the court festivities. He also holds a position in the Austrian army, in which I think all the Orleans princes would be welcome.

### Duke and Duchess of Cumberland

There is also the Duke of Cumberland who by inheritance would be King of Hanover and Grand Duke of Brunswick, and whose wife is a daughter of the King of Denmark and sister of the Empress of Russia and of the Princess of Wales and of the king of Greece. He also has a palace near the palace of Shonbrun, three or 4 miles from the city. His children are so related to the English royal family that if the descendents of Queen Victoria should fail, (a remote contingency), he and his descendents would inherit the English crown. Bismarck excluded him from his throne, and incorporated his dominions in the German Empire, but could not get his acquiescence to the proceeding although he offered him a very large sum as an indemnity. The Duke is very rich and could be vastly richer if he will only give up his claim to the crown of Hanover. But that he will not do.

It happens that my wife and I had our audience with the Duke and Duchess about the time when the Crown Prince of Russia or of Germany was having a festival on account of the arrival of his son at the age of majority; or perhaps it was on account of the birth of a grandson. Mrs. Taft, not thinking of the cause of their residence in Vienna instead of Hanover, inquired of the Duchess whether they would visit Berlin on that festival occasion, as many of the Austrian Imperial household were about to do. She remarked smiling that they never visited Berlin. Mrs. Taft apologized for the mistake of asking the question, but the Duchess took it in good part. Our audience with them was very entertaining and satisfactory. The Duchess is one of the most sincere and agreeable women we have met anywhere. She is brighter [than] her husband the Duke, and a great deal handsomer. He is very homely though he looks like a straight-forward and honest man. His grand-father Ernest, the English Duke of Cumberland was brother of the Duke of Kent the father of Queen Victoria and inherited the throne of Hanover when the queen inherited the crown of England. Victoria, being a woman could not take the crown of Hanover. He is therefore a cousin of Victoria.

These foreign dukes are treated with great consideration at the Austrian court. On one occasion I observed that he had the honor of escorting the Empress into the ball room. The Bourbon pretender to the French crown, count Chambord, had his residence in Austria, and was always at home at that court. As one after another of the Grand Dukes and Kings of Europe are excluded from their thrones, they come to Vienna where they are always welcome, and where they find sympathy, and are treated with the honor and respect which belonged to their former state. As these personages have nothing to do, or nearly so, they make themselves very agreeable in their palaces. It is probable that their presence at the court of Austria tends to keep up the hope in that Imperial atmosphere, that the French Republic will sooner or later give place to the ancient regime of royalty; when these ex-princes will return to power. And there is evidently some impatience on that subject. But their faith is very strong, and it is not likely to die out as long as the pretenders can bask in the sun shine of the court of the Austrian Empire. It is certain that the Austrian Empire and especially the capital, affords a very pleasant refuge for princes and Grand-dukes who are uncomfortable at home.

### Head-quarters of Diplomacy

Austria has long been regarded as the head-quarters of diplomacy. The dominions which are controlled and governed by the Hapsburg House have been increased and extended far more by negotiations than by battles. These dominions are made up of almost as many different countries and races as there are different states in our American Union. The Emperor and his government are constantly engaged in conciliating these different countries and races, so that they may all be satisfied to be governed by the one Imperial family of the house of Hapsburg. The central position too of the Empire as between the East and the West, and between the North and the South long made it the most convenient point at which to carry on negotiations between the different powers of Europe. It is also to be born in mind that in the course of its history Austria has first and last had possession of portions of many of the surrounding nations, and has had great influence in most of them. Under Charles V and Philip II it was closely associated with the governments of the central powers of the continent. The northern provinces of Italy long remained parts of the Austrian dominions, and still the relations between the Empire and the kingdom of Italy are close and delicate. The Imperial family is closely allied by blood and by marriage with the princes and nobility past and present, of Italy, as well as of Spain, and of

Bavaria and Wurtemberg, and several others of lesser powers of Europe. The result of this historical situation is that the diplomatic relations of Austria with all the European nations has always been delicate; and that Vienna has been the point at which many of the most important negotiations have taken place which have affected most decidedly the history of Europe. Hence too it happens that the Imperial government is keenly alive to every, even the slightest consideration which may, in any manner affect its diplomatic relations with its neighbors.

The foreign office in Vienna is always therefore very considerate of the representatives of foreign powers. It has become a habit of that court. This brings to mind the case of Mr. Keily which has made so much discussion recently and has disturbed the equanimity of our own State Department. Mr. Keily's happened after I left Vienna, so that I have no personal knowledge of the facts in the case; and yet, from what I do know, of the considerations which are habitually regarded as important by the foreign office of that Empire, I think I can pretty well understand how this matter has taken the course which it has. The Secretary of State seems to apprehend that the Austrian government raises the question of race, and makes an objection to Mr. Keily, that his wife is a Jewess. I see that the Austrian Foreign Office denies that it has made such a point, but claims that Count Kolnoky, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs only incidentally remarked that Mr. Keily would find it a disagreeable circumstance if he were to be a Minister at that Court, that his wife would not be received in Court Society. That the remark was confidential and entirely of a friendly character, & not given as expressing a purpose on the part of the Government of Austria to exclude him, or to do anything tending to that end, but simply stating a fact which might be well for Mr. Keily to know. It is also stated by the Secretary of State that the Austrian government had been prevented by the interposition of the Italian Government from receiving him. This also is denied by the Foreign office of the Empire, as I understand.

#### Mr. Francis' Statement

I see also by an article published in the Troy Times by Mr. Francis, who was our Minister at that time at that court that he discredits the assertion, or rather the construction given to the correspondence by Mr. Bayard. Without scrutinizing too closely, the words used in the correspondence, I feel a moral certainty that the real objection on the part of the Austrian Government to Mr. Keily was that he had expressed himself so strongly and so publicly in a

manner hostile to its neighbor and friend the king of Italy. It was not that Mr. Kiely had declared himself a friend of the Pope; for there is no government more friendly to the pope than that of Austria. But Mr. Kiely had entered into the controversy between the Pope and the King, and made himself a partisan in that particular contest. Now, of all the delicate relations which Austria has toward any foreign Nations, there are none so delicate as those toward the Pope and the King of Italy who are both represented at the Austrian court, though their pretensions are entirely inconsistent with each other. With its own idea of the relation it bears to both the King and the Pope, the Austrian government regards it as unwise to accept as Minister a man of declared hostility to either of these very jealous neighbors. It is a part of the same cautious policy which prevented the Emperor Francis Joseph from returning the call which King Humbert of Italy made upon him some years ago at Vienna. It would be displeasing to the Pope to have his friend the Emperor of Austria, come to Rome to visit his enemy. So the king's visit has gone unreturned.

The Austrian government feels that it can not afford to offend either the Pope or the King. At the same time it stands upon its acknowledged right to accept only such foreign ministers as are *personae gratae*, and to exercise that right without just offense.

I should expect that this course would be taken wholly independent of the fact that the proposed Minister's wife was a Jewess, or that the Italian government should interpose to prevent his acceptance.

Alphonso Taft

February 13, 1886