

Entertaining the Son of the “Bourgeois King”

ONE of the small items of interest which has come to the Society consists of three papers, dated in the fall and winter of 1841, relating to a ball given in Boston for the Prince de Joinville. The Prince was the third son of Louis-Philippe, the “bourgeois king” of France, who came to the throne when the revolution of 1830 had deposed the reactionary Charles X. The reign of Louis-Philippe was a business régime, with Prime Minister Guizot’s advice to the discontented who did not hold property enough to entitle them to the franchise, “enrichissez vous,” as its slogan. The Prince, who had been educated like the sons of the wealthy bourgeois, was, at the time the papers were written, serving as an officer in the French navy. He had crossed the Atlantic to settle a dispute about the French fisheries off Newfoundland. He characterizes this trouble in his memoirs as totally unnecessary, and a result of the fact that Newfoundland had acquired a parliament, elections and electioneering agents who discovered that they needed a sensational popular platform, “Newfoundland for Newfoundlanders.”

After visiting the scene of the dispute, the Prince left his ship, *la Belle Poule*, in New York for repairs, and made a trip to the Mississippi. On his return to the Atlantic seaboard, he was, of course, fêted and dined everywhere, in spite of his aversion to publicity. The Boston entertainment was one of “a certain number of banquets he had to get through before setting sail, . . . given at the old town hall, called the Faneuil Hall, the cradle of American Independence.”

It took place on November 24. The first of the papers belonging to the Society which recall this occasion is a notice sent to Gardner Brewer, Esq., that a meeting of the Managers of the Ball would be held at Faneuil Hall on Tuesday afternoon, November 15, at five o’clock. “The Committee on Decorations would be pleased to have ladies accompany the Managers at this meeting.”

The ladies, or the Managers, or both, were successful in their efforts, according to the *Boston Advertiser* of November 27, which describes the decorations as “very brilliant and tasteful. . . . the whole canopied with tri-color festoons, hanging from the center of the ceiling above the chandelier to the walls on every side. The

walls and columns were decorated by flags of every variety, disposed with great taste. . . . Behind the rostrum at the head of the hall was a large and beautiful representation of *la Belle Poule* and *la Cassard*."

Supper was served in the rotunda of Quincy Hall. The covered bridge between the two buildings and the passageway to the rotunda were carpeted in white, and hung with flowers, and the table and walls of the dining room as well were covered with flowers.

All this, according to the second of the papers, had cost, up to February 18, 1842, \$4747.08, with \$334.98 as yet unpaid, \$60.50 of the sum being owed to the United States Hotel, which may have furnished part of the refreshments. The item is a scribbled account, sent to E. Smith, Jr., Secretary, from C. Andrews, the Treasurer. The receipts to that date had been \$4763.47, leaving a balance in the treasury of \$16.39. How the deficit was made up does not appear.

The third document is a regret from M. de Bacourt, the French minister to the United States, whom the Prince describes as a delightfully witty man.

The newspaper account states that "on the whole the ball was perfectly successful. Bright eyes and fair faces beamed with pleasure at more than realized anticipations, and nothing occurred to mar the harmony or interrupt the gaiety of the time."

The Prince himself, however, comments on a slight interruption of the "harmony of the time," in connection with a lady of mystery.

"I made my entry at the ball," he writes in his memoirs, "preceded and surrounded by an army of solemn stewards, wearing huge wigs, and with rather a good-looking woman, whom nobody knew, on my arm. She called herself America Vespuccia, and she began to swear like any heathen when somebody spilt a glass of lemonade on her fine velvet gown."

The newspaper mentions her vaguely as "la contessa Vespucci, a lady of both fame and notoriety," and describes her as wearing a Greek cap of silk and gold, over hair hanging in braids below her waist. The Prince himself is described as "a tall and very handsome young man, with dark hair and beard, and a countenance of marked intelligence."

If he was bored at public entertainments, he found plenty to claim his admiration in the country at large. The son of Louis-Philippe, whose interest lay with the newly arisen business classes in France, had only commendation for the industry and enterprise

of Americans. Philadelphia he found charming, and the impression of New York he carried away, even in 1841, was that of one vast bustle.

Of Boston he makes no other mention than the one quoted above, but the republican conscience of that city was repaid for the expenditure of \$5081.06 by the virtuous knowledge that the personage she had been entertaining was "a young Prince who in the discharge of the duties with which he had been entrusted had acquitted himself with an energy and intelligence which would have commanded respect in a man of the humblest origin."

Secretary's Column

ACQUISITIONS

THE following acquisitions received since the last publication of the Bulletin are gratefully acknowledged:

From Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, Vermont, miscellaneous manuscripts of unusual interest and a copy of *The Statesman*, published in New York, March 3, 1826.

From an officer of the Society, several monographs, periodicals, maps, pictures and other historical material.

From Franklin W. Hobbs, President, Arlington Mills, *Tops — A New American Industry*, and a *History of the Arlington Mills from 1865 to 1925*.

From de Twentsche Bankvereiniging, Amsterdam, Holland, Annual Reports, 1900-1916.

From the Rochester Historical Society, Rochester, New York, Publication Fund Series, Volume VII.

From J. S. M. Ward, Intelligence Dept., Federation of British Industries, London, England, *Commerce extérieur de la France, Trade and Shipping in the Dominion of New Zealand*, and *Commerce extérieur de Brésil, 1925-1926*.

From John A. Russell, Michigan Manufacturers Financial Record, Detroit, Michigan, *Joseph Warren Fordney, an American Legislator*, Russell.

From H. R. Burgess and Company, Inc., Boston, *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*, Volume IV.