

THE COMTE ST. GERMAIN

During the early part of the eighteenth century there appeared in the diplomatic circles of Europe the most baffling personality of history - a man whose life was so near a synonym of mystery that the enigma of his true identity was as insolvable to his contemporaries as it has been to later investigators. The Comte de St. Germain was recognized as the outstanding scholar and linguist of his day. His versatile accomplishments extended from chemistry and history to music and poetry. He played several musical instruments with great skill and among his numerous compositions was a short opera. He was also an artist of rare ability and the remarkably luminous effects which he created on canvas are believed to have been the result of his mixing powdered mother-of-pearl with his pigments. He gained world-wide distinction for his ability to reproduce in his paintings the original luster of the precious stones appearing upon the costumes of his subjects. His linguistic proficiency verged on the supernatural. He spoke German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French with a Piedmontese accent, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Chinese with such fluency that in every land he visited he was accepted as a native. He was ambidextrous to such a degree that he could write the same article with both hands simultaneously. When two pieces of paper were afterwards placed together with a light behind them, the writing on one sheet exactly covered, letter for letter, the writing on the other.

As a historian, the Comte de St. Germain possessed uncanny knowledge of every occurrence of the preceding two-thousand years, and in his reminiscences he described in intimate detail events of previous centuries in which he had played important roles. He assisted Mesmer in developing the theory of mesmerism, and in all probability was the actual discoverer of that science. His knowledge of chemistry was so profound that he could remove flaws from diamonds and other precious stones - a feat which he actually

performed at the request of Louis XV in 1757. He was also recognized as an art critic without a peer and was often consulted regarding paintings accredited to the great masters. His claim to possession of the fabled elixir of life borne witness to by Madame de Pompadour, who discovered, she declared, that he had presented a lady of the court with a certain priceless liquid which had had the effect of preserving her youthful vivacity and beauty for over twenty-five years beyond the normal term.

The startling accuracy of his prophetic utterances gained for him no small degree of fame. To Marie Antoinette he predicted the fall of the French monarchy, and he was also aware of the unhappy fate of the royal family years before the Revolution actually took place. The crowning evidence, however, of the Comte's genius was his penetrating grasp of the political situation of Europe and the consummate skill with which he parried the thrusts of his diplomatic adversaries. He was employed by a number of European governments, including the French, as a secret agent, and at all times bore credentials which gave him entrée to the most exclusive circles.

In her excellent monograph, *The Comte de St. Germain, the Secret of Kings*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley lists the most important names under which this amazing person masqueraded between the years 1710 and 1822. "During this time," she writes, "we have M. de St. Germain as the Marquis de Montferrat, Comte Bellamarre or Aymar at Venice, Chevalier Schoening at Pisa, Chevalier Weldon at Milan and Leipzig, Comte Soltikoff at Genoa and Leghorn, Graf Tzarogy at Schwalbach and Triesdorf, Prinz Ragoczy at Dresden, and Comte de St. Germain at Paris, The Hague, London, and St. Petersburg." It is evident that M. de St. Germain adopted these various names in the interests of the political secret service work which historians have presumed to be the major mission of his life.

The Comte de St. Germain has been described as of medium height, well proportioned in body, and of regular and pleasing features. His complexion was somewhat swarthy and his hair dark, though often shown powdered. He dressed simply, usually in black, but

but his clothes were well fitting and of the best quality. He had apparently a mania for diamonds, which he wore not only in rings but also in his watch and chain, his snuff box, and upon his buckles. A jeweler once estimated the value of his shoe buckles at 200,000 francs. The Comte is generally depicted as a man in middle life, entirely devoid of wrinkles and free from any physical infirmity. He ate no meat and drank no wine, in fact seldom dined in the presence of any second person. Although he was looked upon as a charlatan and impostor by a few nobles at the French court, Louis XV severely reprimanded a courtier who made a disparaging remark concerning him. The grace and dignity that characterized his conduct, together with his perfect control of every situation attested the innate refinement and culture of one "to the manner born." This remarkable person also had the surprising and impressive ability to divine, even to the most minute details, the questions of his inquisitors before they were asked. By something akin to telepathy he was also able to feel when his presence was needed in some distant city or state, and it has even been recorded of him that he had the astonishing habit not only of appearing in his own apartment and in those of friends without resorting to the conventionality of the door but also of departing therefrom in a similar manner.

M. de At. Germain's travels covered many countries. During the reign of Peter III he was in Russia and between the years 1737 and 1742 in the court of the Shah of Persia as an honored guest. On the subject of his wanderings Una Birch writes: "The travels of the Comte de Saint Germain covered a long period of years and a great range of countries. From Persia to France and from Calcutta to Rome he was known and respected. Horace Walpole spoke with him in London in 1745; Clive knew him in India in 1756; Madame d'Adhémar alleges that she met him in Paris in 1789, five years after his supposed death; while other persons pretended to have held conversations with him in the early nineteenth century. He was on familiar and intimate terms with the crowned heads of

Europe and the honored friend of many distinguished persons of all nationalities. He is even mentioned in the memoirs and letters of the day, and always as a man of mystery. Frederick the Great, Voltaire, Madame de Pompadour, Rousseau, Chatham, and Walpole, all of whom knew him personally, rivalled each other in curiosity as to his origin. During the many decades in which he was before the world, however no one succeeded in discovering why he appeared as a jacobite agent in London, as a conspirator in Petersburg, as an alchemist and connoisseur of pictures in Paris, or as a Russian general at Naples. *** Now and again the curtain which shrouds his actions is drawn aside, and we are permitted to see him fiddling in the music room at Versailles, gossiping with Horace Walpole in London, sitting in Frederick the Great's Library at Berlin, or conducting illuminist meetings in caverns by the Rhine." (See The Nineteenth Century, January, 1908.)

The Comte de St. Germain has been generally regarded as an important figure in early activities of the Freemasons. Repeated efforts, however, probably with an ulterior motive, have been made to discredit his Masonic affiliations. An example of this is the account appearing in The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry, by Arthur Edward Waite. This author, after making several rather disparaging remarks on the subject, amplifies his article by reproducing an engraving of the wrong Comte de St. Germain, apparently being unable to distinguish between the great illuminist and the French general. It will yet be established beyond all doubt that the Comte de St. Germain was both a Mason and a Templar; in fact the memoirs of Cagliostro contain a direct statement of his initiation into the order of the Knights Templars at the hands of St. Germain. Many of the illustrious personages with whom the Comte de St. Germain associated were high Masons, and sufficient memoranda have been preserved concerning the discussions which they held to prove that he a master of Freemasonic lore. It is also reasonably certain that he was connected with the Rosicrucians - possibly having been the actual head of that order.

The Comte de St. Germain was thoroughly conversant with the principles of Oriental esotericism. He practiced the Eastern system of meditation and concentration, upon several occasions having been seen seated with his feet crossed and hands folded in the posture of a Hindu Buddha. He had a retreat in the heart of the Himalayas to which he retired periodically from the world. One one occasion he declared that he would remain in India for eighty-five years and then would return to the scene of his European labors. At various times he admitted that he was obeying the orders of a power higher and greater than himself. What he did not say was that this superior power was the Mystery school which had sent him into the world to accomplish a definite mission/ The Comte de St. Germain and Sir Francis Bacon are the two greatest emissaries sent into the world by the Secret Brotherhood in the last thousand years.

E. Francis Udny, a Theosophical writer, is of the belief that the Comte de St. Germain was not the son of Prince Rakoczy of Transylvania, but because of his age could have none other than the prince himself, who was known to be of a deep philosophic and mystic nature. The same writer believes the Comte St Germain passed through the "philosophic death" as Francis Bacon in 1626, as Francois Rakoczy in 1735, and as Comte de St. Germain in 1784. He also feels that the Comte de St. Germain was the famous Comte de Gabalis, and as Count Hompesch was the last Grand Master of the Knights of Malta. It is well known that many members of the European secret societies have feigned death for various purposes. Marshal Ney, a member of the Society of Unknown Philosophers, escaped the firing squad and under the name of Peter Stuart Ney lived and taught school for over thirty years in North Carolina. On his deathbed P. S. Ney told Doctor Locke, the attending physician, that he was Marshal Ney of France.

In concluding an article on the identity of the instrutable Comte de St. Germain, Andrew Lang writes: "Did Saint Germain really die in the palace of Prince Charles of Hesse about 1780 - 85? Did he, on the other hand, escape from the French prison where Grosley

thought he saw him, during the French Revolution? Was he known to Lord Lytton about 1860? *** Is he the mysterious Muscovite adviser of the Dalai Lama? Who knows? He is a will-o'-the-wisp of the memoir-writers of the eighteenth century." (See Historical Mysteries.

From Hall's Cyclopedia of
Masonic and Symbolical philosophy.

EPISODES FROM AMERICAN HISTORY

Many times the question has been asked, Was Francis Bacon's vision of the "New Atlantis" a prophetic dream of the great civilization which was so soon to rise upon the soil of the New World? It cannot be doubted that the secret societies of Europe conspired to establish upon the American continent "a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Two incidents in the early history of the United States evidence the influence of that silent body which has so long guided the destinies of peoples and religions. By them nations are created as vehicles for the promulgation of ideals, and while nations are true to these ideals they survive; when they vary from them they vanish like the Atlantis of old which had ceased to "know the gods."

In his admirable little treatise, *Our Flag*, Robert Allen Cambell revives the details of an obscure, but most important, episode of American history - the designing of the Colonial flag of 1775. The account involves a mysterious man concerning whom no information is available other than that he was on familiar terms with both General George Washington and Dr. Benjamin Franklin. The following description of him is taken from Campbell's treatise:

"Little seems to have been known concerning this old gentleman; and in the materials from which this account is compiled his name is not even once mentioned, for he is uniformly spoken of or referred to as 'the Professor.'" He was evidently far beyond his three-score and ten years; and he often referred to historical events of more than a century previous just as if he had been a living witness of their occurrence; still he was erect, vigorous and active - hale, hearty, and clear-minded - as strong and energetic every way as in the prime of his life. He was tall, of fine figure, perfectly easy, and very dignified in his manners, being at once courteous, gracious and commanding. He was, for those times and considering the customs of the Colonists, very peculiar in his method of living; for he ate

no flesh, fowl or fish; he never used for food any 'green thing,' any roots or anything unripe; he drank no liquor, wine or ale; but confined his diet to cereals and their products, fruits that were ripened on the stem in the sun, nuts, mild tea and the sweets of honey, sugar or molasses.

"He was well educated, highly cultivated, of extensive as well as varied information, and very studious. He spent considerable of his time in the patient and persistent conning of a number of very rare old books and ancient manuscripts which he seemed to be deciphering, translating or rewriting. These books and manuscripts, together with his own writings, he never showed to anyone; and he did not even mention them in his conversations with the family, except in a most casual way; and he always locked them up carefully in a large, old-fashioned, cubically shaped, iron-bound, heavy oaken chest, whenever he left his room, even for his meals. He took long and frequent walks alone, sat on the brows of the neighboring hills, or mused in the midst of the green and flower-gemmed meadows. He was fairly liberal - but in no way lavish - in spending his money, with which he was well supplied. He was a quiet, though a very genial and very interesting, member of the family; and he was seemingly at home upon any and every topic coming up in conversation. He was, in short, one whom everyone would notice and respect, whom few would feel well acquainted with, and whom no one would presume to question concerning himself - as to whence he came, why he tarried, or whither he journeyed."

By something more than a mere coincidence the committee appointed by the Colonial Congress to design a flag accepted an invitation to be guests, while in Cambridge, of the same family with which the Professor was staying. It was here that General Washington joined them for the purpose of deciding upon a fitting emblem. By the signs which passed between them it was evident that both General Washington and Doctor Franklin recognized the Professor, and by unanimous approval he was invited to become an active member of the committee. During the proceedings which followed, the Professor was treat-

ed with the most profound respect and all of his suggestions immediately acted upon. He submitted a pattern which he considered symbolically appropriate for the new flag, and this was unhesitatingly accepted by the other six members of the committee, who voted that the arrangement suggested by the Professor be forthwith adopted. After the episode of the flag the Professor quietly vanished, and nothing further is known concerning him.

Did General Washington and Doctor Franklin recognize the Professor as an emissary of the Mystery school which has so long controlled the political destinies of this planet? Benjamin Franklin was a philosopher and a Freemason - possibly a Rosicrucian initiate. He and the Marquis de Lafayette - also a man of mystery - constitute two of the most important links in the chain of circumstance that culminated in the establishment of the original thirteen American Colonies as a free and independent nation. Doctor Franklin's philosophic attainments are well attested in Poor Richard's Almanac, published by him for many years under the name of Richard Saunders. His interest in the cause of Freemasonry is also shown by his republication of Anderson's Constitutions of Freemasonry, a rare and much disputed work on the subject.

It was during the evening of July 4, 1776, that the second of these mysterious episodes occurred. In the old State House in Philadelphia a group of men were gathered for the momentous task of severing the last tie between the old country and the new. It was a grave moment and not a few of those present feared that their lives would be the forfeit for their audacity. In the midst of the debate a fierce voice rang out. The debaters stopped and turned to look upon the stranger. Who was this man who had suddenly appeared in their midst and transfixed them with his oratory? They had never seen him before, none knew when he had entered, but his tall form and pale face filled them with awe. His voice ringing with a holy zeal, the stranger stirred them to their very souls. His closing words rang through the building: "God has given America to be free!" As the stranger sank into a chair exhausted, a wild enthusiasm burst

forth. Name after name was placed upon the parchment: the Declaration of Independence was signed. But where was the man who had precipitated the accomplishment of this immortal task - who had lifted for a moment the veil from the eyes of the assemblage and revealed to them a part at least of the great purpose for which the new nation was conceived? He had disappeared, nor was he ever seen again or his identity established. This episode parallels others of a similar kind recorded by ancient historians attendant upon the founding of every new nation. Are they coincidences, or do they demonstrate that the divine wisdom of the ancient Mysteries still is present in the world, serving mankind as it did of old?

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