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Gust
Shaw
1873



Madrid Saturday Morning
March 18th 1873.

Embarras du choix, my dear E, is almost as
bad as no choice at all; having within a few days
rec^d. from Paris a huge supply of paper of all sorts,
petit poulet, grand coquille, poulet d'écu etc, I have
been hesitating some time which to honor with these
lines to you: with you henchant for these things
you would be forced to scribble till ye, till ye,
after an examination of the leaves and quires on
the table near me:

Such delicious weather, ten revanche
for the rain and chills of February, we have within
four days an anticipated month of June: I
am writing in the largest sala in the house (40
feet long) both windows open on the garden
and the sunshine partly excluded: The grass al-
ready of the richest green, rose bushes fairly in
leaf, buds bursting & swelling and more than all
a magnificent tulip of the richest red directly
under our eyes in the open air - I am looking
forward with much pleasure to the 'little saint'
of Madrid; before the sun comes out with a scimitar
sword to cut up every thing like verdure.

We have had for the last week a very
disabled legation: M. Riving is still confined to his

bed tho' evidently improving; he frets himself (entirely) almost into a fever with his continued confinement & contracting his present position with his last illness at the Cottage loses the patience which carried him through at first: It is a tedious disorder, and I shall recommend him with the warm weather to move for a time to Biarritz or Bagnères - Prevost too has been confined to his bed; & thus the effective force of the Legation ^{may be} reduced to Senor Am - méo (as he's called) & Hayen. During the illness of the Chef, I have been of course the business man, and between conferences with the Minister of State, Despatches to the home Gov^t, commercial regulations & to forth, am fairly initiated into the winding ways of Diplomacy - I am thinking seriously of a snuff box, & gold headed cane -

You must continue yourself, and encourage George not to abandon the excellent practice of visiting by every steamer, on the 1st of the month: as you are on the spot in Gotham, you generally give me the latest dates and an excellent resume of the comp^s & sayings: - I have rec^d no letters since yours of the 31st Jan'y, save one from R. by a French packet written on the 22nd Jan'y. - In three days we shall look for the epistles by the Cunard of Feb. 1st - Not a line from Papa at Washington, notwithstanding his promise to write: I console myself that he has been better employed.

Notes are constantly arriving from Mrs. Arnold: who has become a little frightened at Uncle's Malady.

She begs him "to put himself in the diligence with his faithful Benjamin, and come straight to Paris," at a time when the said Uncle, barely sits up for a few hours in the day, pulled with Achesons on a sofa, and is not therefore quite in a condition to ride 6 or 8 days & nights perched up in the Coupe: I wrote last week the regular bulletin for Uncle, and tho' I said all that I could, and according to the fact to quiet her alarms, I fear my hand & seal will add to her fears:  The Jais are running the usual career, of land: some entertainments, inviting a host of a travers to people they have no right to ask, and now & then a rebuff, which I hope for their comfort they do not feel: At the first ball there were some mistakes; which the second corrected, & which was composed of the elite of the Grand monde: Mr. Thorne beneficently announced that "this would do" and that they were now at the same pinnacle of fashion & glory as himself & Mad^e Morelton; on this last occasion Cards were sent to Lady Cowley (English Ambassador) who took no notice of them whatever: The Morning Post, the fashionable Chronicle, in his Parisian correspondence announce that the "splendid salons of the Hotel Galiff were opened to the rank & fashion by Mrs. Calfort-Jones, whose daughter was recently married to" and thus the English Legation I hear of "this new American woman in Paris, and that our country men are carrying all before them."

What a wretched ambition in these foolish women; that not content with being laughed at, at home, where an interest was felt in them for their better qualities, send

them off to Paris to give balls and suppers to people who feel and act as if they honoured them, by condescending to accept their invitations.

There has been quite an interesting affair in the good Society here, which has filled the town with gossip, and given much occupation in the shape of quarrels, slights, & cuts direct among intimate friends. It is so absurd, and gives you such a good idea of the Grande & Diplomat Class, that I must give you the outlines. I believe I mentioned that the Duchess of Senaranda gave a "bal costume" on the 29. Feb. 7, to which after much negotiation, carried on by Ex: Ministers, it was settled the Corps Diplomatique & a few others should go not in costume - The Ball was very handsome and all that, and every thing went off smoothly enough: a few days after it began to be rumoured that a reputation was to be made, and that this time it should be "C'est: time de riguerer," - All very well. The dances were rehearsed, new ones practiced, and the included of course hints to the excluded how much handsomer this would be than the preceding: - nothing seemed to threaten to disturb the success of this second Ev: until the day before the fatal Sunday when the storm arose in this wise; Mr. Leal, the Portuguese Secretary was to figure as a handsome Monsieur d'Almeida, in a quadrille with his belle in the costume of the Regency, and on Saturday Ev: I was called into the presence of his Chief M. Lemia, who requested