

Spain

by Jacques Casanova

MEMOIRS OF JACQUES
CASANOVA de SEINGALT 1725-
1798 SPANISH PASSIONS, Volume
6a--SPAIN

THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA DE
SEINGALT

THE RARE UNABRIDGED LONDON EDITION OF
1894 TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR MACHEN TO
WHICH HAS BEEN ADDED THE CHAPTERS
DISCOVERED BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

SPAIN

CHAPTER I

I Am Ordered to Leave Vienna--The Empress Moderates but Does Not Annul the Order--Zavoiski at Munich--My Stay at Augsburg--Gasconnade at Louisburg--The Cologne Newspaper--My Arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle

The greatest mistake a man that punishes a knave can commit is to leave the said rogue alive, for he is certain to take vengeance.If I had had my sword in the den of thieves, I should no doubt have defended myself, but it would have gone ill with me, three against one,and I should probably have been cut to pieces, while the murderers would have escaped unpunished.

At eight o'clock Campioni came to see me in my bed, and was astonished at my adventure. Without troubling himself to compassionate me, we both began to think how we could get back my purse; but we came to the

conclusion that it would be impossible, as I had nothing more than my mere assertion to prove the case. In spite of that, however, I wrote out the whole story, beginning with the girl who recited the Latin verses. I intended to bring the document before the police; however, I had not time to do so.

I was just sitting down to dinner, when an agent of the police came and gave me an order to go and speak to Count Schrotembach, the Statthalter. I told him to instruct my coachman, who was waiting at the door, and that I would follow him shortly.

When I called on the Statthalter, I found him to be a thick-set individual; he was standing up, and surrounded by men who seemed ready to execute his orders. When he saw me, he shewed me a watch, and requested me to note the hour.

"I see it."

"If you are at Vienna at that time to-morrow I shall have you expelled from the city."

"Why do you give me such an unjust order?"

"In the first place, I am not here to give you accounts or reasons for my actions. However, I may tell you that you are expelled for playing at games of chance, which are forbidden by the laws under pain of the galleys. Do you recognize that purse and these cards?"

I did not know the cards, but I knew the purse which had been stolen from me. I was in a terrible rage, and I only replied by presenting the magistrate with the truthful narrative of what had happened to me. He read it, and then said with a laugh that I was well known to be a man of parts, that my character was known, that I had been expelled from Warsaw, and that as for the document before him he judged it to be a pack of lies, since in his opinion it

was altogether void of probability.

"In fine," he added, "you will obey my order to leave the town, and you must tell me where you are going."

"I will tell you that when I have made up my mind to go."

"What? You dare to tell me that you will not obey?"

"You yourself have said that if I do not go I shall be removed by force."

"Very good. I have heard you have a strong will, but here it will be of no use to you. I advise you to go quietly, and so avoid harsh measures."

"I request you to return me that document."

"I will not do so. Begone!"

This was one of the most terrible moments of my life. I shudder still when I think of it. It was only a cowardly love of life that hindered me from running my sword through the body of the Statthalter, who had treated me as if he were a hangman and not a judge.

As I went away I took it into my head to complain to Prince Kaunitz, though I had not the honour of knowing him. I called at his house, and a man I met told me to stay in the ante-chamber, as the prince would pass through to go to dinner.

It was five o'clock. The prince appeared, followed by his guests, amongst whom was M. Polo Renieri, the Venetian ambassador. The prince asked me what he could do for me, and I told my story in a loud voice before them all.

"I have received my order to go, but I shall not obey. I implore your highness to give me your protection, and to help me to bring my plea to the foot of the throne."

"Write out your petition," he replied, "and I will see that the empress gets it. But I advise you to ask her majesty for a respite, for if you say that you won't obey, she will be predisposed against you."

"But if the royal grace does not place me in security, I shall be driven away by violence."

"Then take refuge with the ambassador of your native country."

"Alas, my lord, my country has forsaken me. An act of legal though unconstitutional violence has deprived me of my rights as a citizen. My name is Casanova, and my country is Venice."

The prince looked astonished and turned to the Venetian ambassador, who smiled, and whispered to him for ten minutes.

"It's a pity," said the prince, kindly, "that you cannot claim the protection of any ambassador."

At these words a nobleman of colossal stature stepped forward and said I could claim his protection, as my whole family, myself included, had served the prince his master. He spoke the truth, for he was the ambassador of Saxony.

"That is Count Vitzthum," said the prince. "Write to the empress, and I will forward your petition immediately. If there is any delay in the answer, go to the count; you will be safe with him, until you like to leave Vienna."

In the meanwhile the prince ordered writing materials to be brought me, and he and his guests passed into the dining-hall.

I give here a copy of the petition, which I composed in less than ten minutes. I made a fair copy for the

Venetian ambassador to send home to the Senate:

"MADAM,-- I am sure that if, as your royal and imperial highness were walking in your garden, an insect appealed plaintively to you not to crush it, you would turn aside, and so avoid doing the poor creature any hurt.

"I, madam, am an insect, and I beg of you that you will order M. Statthalter Schrottembach to delay crushing me with your majesty's slipper for a week. Possibly, after that time has elapsed, your majesty will not only prevent his crushing me, but will deprive him of that slipper, which was only meant to be the terror of rogues, and not of an humble Venetian, who is an honest man, though he escaped from The Leads.

"In profound submission to your majesty's will,

"I remain,

"CASANOVA.

"Given at Vienna, January 21st, 1769."

When I had finished the petition, I made a fair draft of it, and sent it in to the prince, who sent it back to me telling me that he would place it in the empress's hands immediately, but that he would be much obliged by my making a copy for his own use.

I did so, and gave both copies to the valet de chambre, and went my way. I trembled like a paralytic, and was afraid that my anger might get me into difficulty. By way of calming myself, I wrote out in the style of a manifesto the narrative I had given to the vile Schrotembach, and which that unworthy magistrate had refused to return to me.

At seven o'clock Count Vitzthum came into my room. He greeted me in a friendly manner and begged me to tell him the story of the girl I had gone to see, on the promise of the Latin quatrain referring to her accommodating disposition. I gave him the address and copied out the

verses, and he said that was enough to convince an enlightened judge that I had been slandered; but he, nevertheless, was very doubtful whether justice would be done me.

"What! shall I be obliged to leave Vienna to-morrow?"

"No, no, the empress cannot possibly refuse you the week's delay."

"Why not?"

"Oh! no one could refuse such an appeal as that. Even the prince could not help smiling as he was reading it in his cold way. After reading it he passed it on to me, and then to the Venetian ambassador, who asked him if he meant to give it to the empress as it stood. 'This petition,' replied the prince, 'might be sent to God, if one knew the way;' and forthwith he ordered one of his secretaries to fold it up and see that it was delivered. We

talked of you for the rest of dinner, and I had the pleasure of hearing the Venetian ambassador say that no one could discover any reason for your imprisonment under the Leads. Your duel was also discussed, but on that point we only knew what has appeared in the newspapers. Oblige me by giving me a copy of your petition; that phrase of Schrotembach and the slipper pleased me vastly."

I copied out the document, and gave it him with a copy of my manifesto. Before he left me the count renewed the invitation to take refuge with him, if I did not hear from the empress before the expiration of the twenty-four hours.

At ten o'clock I had a visit from the Comte de la Perouse, the Marquis de las Casas, and Signor Uccelli, the secretary of the Venetian embassy. The latter came to ask for a copy of my petition for his chief. I promised he should have it, and I also sent a copy of my manifesto. The only thing which rather interfered with the dignity of this latter

piece, and gave it a somewhat comic air, were the four Latin verses, which might make people imagine that, after enjoying the girl as Hebe, I had gone in search of her as Ganymede. This was not the case, but the empress understood Latin and was familiar with mythology, and if she had looked on it in the light I have mentioned I should have been undone. I made six copies of the two documents before I went to bed; I was quite tired out, but the exertion had somewhat soothed me. At noon the next day, young Hasse (son of the chapel-master and of the famous Trustina), secretary of legation to Count Vitzthum, came to tell me from the ambassador that nobody would attack me in my own house, nor in my carriage if I went abroad, but that it would be imprudent to go out on foot. He added that his chief would have the pleasure of calling on me at seven o'clock. I begged M. Hasse to let me have all this in writing, and after he had written it out he left me.

Thus the order to leave Vienna had been suspended; it

must have been done by the sovereign.

"I have no time to lose," said I to myself, "I shall have justice done me, my assassins will be condemned, my purse will be returned with the two hundred ducats in it, and not in the condition in which it was shewn to me by the infamous Schrotembach, who will be punished by dismissal, at least."

Such were my castles in Spain; who has not built such? 'Quod nimis miseri volunt hoc facile credunt', says Seneca. The wish is father to the thought.

Before sending my manifesto to the empress, Prince Kaunitz, and to all the ambassadors, I thought it would be well to call on the Countess of Salmor, who spoke to the sovereign early and late. I had had a letter of introduction for her.

She greeted me by saying that I had better give up wearing

my arm in a sling, as it looked as if I were a charlatan; my arm must be well enough after nine months.

I was extremely astonished by this greeting, and replied that if it were not necessary I should not wear a sling, and that I was no charlatan.

"However," I added, "I have come to see you on a different matter."

"Yes, I know, but I will have nothing to do with it. You are all as bad as Tomatis."

I gave a turn round and left the room without taking any further notice of her. I returned home feeling overwhelmed by the situation. I had been robbed and insulted by a band of thorough-paced rascals; I could do nothing, justice was denied me, and now I had been made a mock of by a worthless countess. If I had received such an insult from a man I would have soon made him