


# HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

## BY SIR NATHANIEL WILLIAM WRAXALL

ONE OF THE most interesting portions of my life, was the time that I passed at Naples, in the summer of 1779. Sir William Hamilton.

His Majesty's Minister, constituted in himself the greatest source of entertainment, no less than of instruction, which that Capital then afforded to strangers. He honored me with his friendship, which he continued to the end of his life. In his person, tho' tall and meagre, with a dark complexion, a very aquiline nose, and a figure which always reminded me of *Rolando* in *Gil Blas*; he had nevertheless such an air of intelligence, blended with distinction in his countenance, as powerfully attracted and conciliated every beholder. His mother, Lady Archibald Hamilton, enjoyed, as is well known, a very distinguished place in the favour of Frederic, late Prince of Wales; and Sir William himself was brought up from early life, with His present Majesty, to whom he became, after his, accession to the Crown, an Equerry. At a very early period he entered into the army, and was at the battle of Fontenoy [1], as well as, I think, at that of La Feldt. I wish that it were possible to relate with delicacy, an Anecdote that he recounted to me, of the former action. We were exposed, said he, on that occasion, as is well known, to a very severe and murderous fire of artillery, for a long time, without the power of moving: so peremptory were the orders issued, that we should remain on the ground where we were stationed. The cannon balls, from time to time, swept away whole Files, and produced sensations by no means agreeable, even among the firmest persons present. I had then an opportunity of seeing exemplified, the physical effects of fear on the human body. Many of the British Grenadiers, though capable of actively facing death in any shape, and ardently desirous to march against the enemy, yet experienced, internally and involuntarily, the most violent pains. Unable to support them, pressed by an irresistable necessity, and compelled to remain fixed in the same place, several of them *se detroussoient, presentoient le derriere aux canons de l'ennemi, & firent feu;* [2] thus endeavouring to exhibit a proof of their contempt for the very danger, of which they felt within themselves the strongest sensations.

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1 Wraxall is wrong: the Battle of Fontenoy near Tournai, was fought on 11 May 1745 when the French under Marshal de Saxe defeated the Anglo-Hanoverian army under the Duke of Cumberland, the "Butcher". Sir Hamilton joined the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards as an ensign, on 27 January 1747. He was probably present at the battle of Laffeldt near Maastricht, fought on 21 June 1747, and again a victory of the Marshal de Saxe. Fothergill Brian, *Sir William Hamilton, envoy extraordinary*, London, 1969)

2 took down their trousers, turned their back to the enemy's cannon, and fired.

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The versatility of Sir William Hamilton's character, constituted one of the most interesting features of his composition. Endowed with a superior understanding, a philosophic mind, and a strong inclination to the study of many branches of science, or of polite letters, which as is well known, he cultivated with distinguished success; he was equally keen as a sportsman, in all the exercises of the field. After being actively occupied in studying the Phenomena of Vesuvius, like the Elder Pliny; or in exploring the antiquities of Pompæia, and of Stabia, with as much enthusiasm as Pausanias did those of antient Greece; he would pass whole days, and almost, weeks, with the King of Naples, either hunting or shooting in the royal woods; or more laboriously engaged in an open boat, exposed to the rays of a burning sun, harpooning fish in the bay of Castellamare. When beyond seventy years of age, he preserved undiminished his love of these sports, particularly of fishing, which he followed with great ardour; thus mingling pursuits or passions of the mind and of the body, rarely united in the same man. I have seen him, [229] not more than two years before his decease [3], perform the *Tarentella*, an Apulian Dance, which, as it is undoubtedly a copy of the Bacchant amusements of Antiquity, demanded no slender portion of animal strength and spirits. The occasion was so remarkable, that I am induced to relate the particulars. Intelligence of the glorious victory obtained by the English fleet under Lord Nelson, before Copenhagen, arrived in London, on Wednesday, the 15th of April, 1801. Sir William Hamilton then resided in Piccadilly. About ten o'clock, that evening, I went to his house, with Sir John Macpherson. We found assembled there, the Dukes of Gordon and Queensberry, Lord William Gordon, Monsieur de Calonne, Mr. Charles Greville (Sir William's nephew), the Duke de Noia, who was a Neapolitan nobleman, Mr. Kemble, the celebrated Comedian, and his wife, the Reverend Mr. Nelson, now Earl of that name, with some other persons. Lady Hamilton, inspired by the recent success of Lord Nelson against the Danes, of which victory he had transmitted her, with his remaining hand, all the particulars as they occurred, from the 1st, up to the 8th of April, the day [230] when the dispatches came away; after playing on the Harpsichord, and accompanying it with her voice, undertook to dance the *Tarentella*.

Sir William began it with her, and maintained the conflict, for such it might well be esteemed, for some minutes. When unable longer to continue it, the Duke de Noia succeeded to his place; but he, too, though near forty years younger than Sir William, soon gave in. Lady Hamilton then sent for her own maid servant; who being likewise exhausted, after a short time, another female attendant, a Copt, perfectly black, whom Lord Nelson had presented her, on his return from Egypt, relieved her companion. It would be difficult to convey any adequate idea of this Dance; but the *Fandango* and *Seguedilla* of the Spaniards present an image of it. We must recollect that the two performers are supposed to be a Satyr and a Nymph; or, rather, a Fawn and a Bacchant. It was certainly not of a nature to be performed, except before a select company; as the screams, attitudes, starts, and embraces, with which it was intermingled, gave it a peculiar character. I only mentioned it, in order to shew Sir William Hamilton's activity and gaiety at that advanced [231] period of life. Though a finished Courtier, he preserved such an independance of manner, without any mixture of servility or adulation, as seemed eminently to qualify him for the diplomatic profession. His conversation offered a rich diversity of anecdote. With these qualifications, it cannot excite wonder that he formed the delight and ornament of the Court of Naples. No foreign Minister, not even the family embassadors of France and Spain resident there, enjoyed in so eminent a degree the favor or affection of His

3 Sir William Hamilton died on 6 April 1803.

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Sicilian Majesty. Nor was the attachment of that Prince to Sir William, merely limited to hunting, or fishing parties. He gave the English Envoy many solid proofs of sincere regard; a regard that extended to the British crown and nation. One striking instance of this partiality took place in June, 1779, while I was at Naples. The King of Spain, Charles the Third, having written confidentially to his son Ferdinand, that he should probably be induced soon to take part with Louis the Sixteenth, by entering into a war with Great Britain, as he effectively did immediately afterwards; the King of Naples, though enjoined by his father to secrecy, communicated the letter itself to Sir William Hamilton. He even accompanied the disclosure, with the assurance of his deep regret at such a line of policy, and his firm determination never to enter into the combination against England, though himself a Prince of the House of Bourbon, and included in the *Family Compact* by name. Sir William transmitted the King's communication, as well as his assurance on the point, without delay to Lord North, then first Minister. I received this anecdote from himself at Naples.

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It was in Sir William's, and the first Lady Hamilton's company, that I learned a number of curious, as well as authentic particulars relative to the King and Queen of Naples. Ferdinand the Fourth was then in the twenty-ninth year of his age; tall, muscular, and active in his frame, capable of immense fatigue, and apparently formed for long life. His features were coarse and harsh, his nose immoderately long, like that of his father and brother, Charles the Third, and Charles the Fourth, Kings of Spain: but, nevertheless, though the component parts of his face might separately be esteemed ugly, the general expression of his countenance had in it something intelligent, and even agreeable. There was an unpolished simplicity, or rather a rude nature, in his manner, attitudes, deportment, and conversation, which pleased for a double reason; on account of its own intrinsic claim to be liked, and as being rarely found on a throne, where we naturally expect disguise, artifice, and habits of concealment. If he conversed little with strangers, he seemed at least, when he talked, always to say what he thought; and he betrayed no defect of natural understanding, though he was altogether destitute of that elegance and art, which frequently veil the want of information. He always reminded me of a rustic, elevated by fortune or accident, to a Crown: but it was, an amiable, honest, sensible, well intentioned rustic, not altogether unworthy of such an elevation.

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The Queen of Naples, who was not quite twenty-seven years old at this time, seemed much better fitted to represent the Majesty of the Throne, and to do the honors of a Court. Though neither possessing beauty of face, nor loveliness of person, yet was she not absolutely deficient in either; and if her figure might be esteemed too large, still it wanted neither grace, dignity, nor even attractions. She is the only Queen whom I ever saw weep in public, before a croud of both sexes, assembled in her own Palace, on a Gala Day, The Festival on which I was presented to her, happened to be the anniversary of the loss of her eldest son, who expired exactly a year before, in 1778. He was a very fine boy, of promising expectations, to whom his mother was passionately attached. The ignorance of the Neapolitan Physicians, as it was believed, had caused his death: for, being seized with a violent sickness and pain in his stomach, from which, an Emetick, promptly administered, might probably have relieved him, they had the imprudence to bleed him, and thereby brought on fatal convulsions. Such was the Queen's distress, at the recollection of the event which had taken place on this painful anniversary, that she was unable to repress her emotions. In the Presence Chamber of the Palace at Naples, she stood under a Canopy, her right hand held out to the

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Nobility and Courtiers, as they approached to kiss it; holding in her left, a handkerchief with which she perpetually wiped her eyes, that were suffused in tears. It was difficult not to be favorably impressed towards a Princess, capable of giving such an involuntary testimony of her maternal tenderness, in a place and situation, where it was impossible to suspect her of artifice or affectation.

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Having drawn this imperfect outline of the King and Queen of Naples, from my own personal observations, I shall enumerate some of the particulars respecting them, which I collected in the course of conversation from Sir William or Lady Hamilton. I mean, his first wife, who was a most accomplished and superior woman.

No European Sovereign, without exception, said Sir William, has been so ill educated as the King of Naples. He is not even master of any language, except Italian, without making a painful effort; and his ordinary Italian is a Neapolitan dialect, such as the lowest of his subjects, the *Lazaroni*, speak in their intercourse with each other. It is true that he understands, French, and converses in it when indispensable; but he rarely reads any French author, and still more rarely attempts to write in that language. All the correspondence that takes place between him and his Father, the King of Spain is carried on in the common Neapolitan Jargon. They write very frequently and largely to each other; but seldom does this intercourse embrace political subjects: their letters, of which I have seen numbers, being filled with accounts of the quantity and variety of the game respectively killed by them, in which the great ambition of each Prince, is to exceed the other. Ferdinand, indeed who scarcely ever reads, considers as the greatest of misfortunes, a rainy day, when the weather proves too bad for him to go out to the chace. On such occasions, recourse is had to every expedient by which time may be killed, in order to dissipate His Majesty's Ennui, even to the most puerile and childish pastimes. The King's education was systematically neglected: for Charles the Third, alarmed at the imbecility of his eldest son, Philip, Duke of Calabria, who, on account of his recognized debility of understanding, was wholly set aside from the right of succession, strictly for Spain, in 1759, that this, his third son, should not be compelled to apply to any severe studies, or be made to exert any close application of mind.

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I have frequently seen the unfortunate Duke of Calabria, who has only been dead a few years, and who was by birth heir to the Spanish Monarchy. He attained to manhood, and was treated with certain distinctions, having Chamberlains placed about him in constant attendance, who watched him with unremitting attention; as otherwise he would have committed a thousand excesses. Care was particularly taken to keep him from having any connexion with the other sex, for which he manifested the strongest propensity; but it became at last impossible to prevent him altogether from attempting to emancipate himself in this respect. He has many times eluded the vigilance of his keepers, and on seeing ladies pass through the apartments of the palace, would attack them with the same impetuosity as Pan, or the Satyrs are described by Ovid, when pursuing the Nymphs; and with the same intentions. More than one Lady of the Court has been. critically rescued from his embraces. On particular days of the year, he was allowed to hold a sort of Court or Levee, when the foreign Ministers repaired to his apartments, to pay their compliments to him: but his greatest amusement consisted in having his hand held up by his attendants while gloves were put upon it, one larger than another, to the number of fifteen or sixteen. His death was justly considered as a fortunate event, under such circumstances of incurable imbecility.

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Before the present King fully attained his seventeenth year, the Marquis Tanucci, then Prime Minister, by directions sent from the Court of Madrid, provided him a wife. The Archduchess Josepha, one of the daughters of the Empress Maria Theresa, being selected for Queen of Naples; and being represented to young Ferdinand, as a Princess equally amiable in her mind, as she was agreable in her person; he expected her arrival with great pleasure, mingled even with some impatience. So much more severely was it natural that he should feel the melancholy intelligence, when it arrived from Vienna, that she was dead of the small-pox. In fact, he manifested as much concern at the event, as could perhaps be expected in a Prince of his disposition, and at his time of life, for the death of, a person whom he had never seen. But, a circumstance which greatly augmented his chagrin on the occasion was, it's being considered indispensable for him not to take his usual diversion of hunting or fishing, on the day that the account reached Naples. [239] Ferdinand reluctantly submitted to such a painful and unusual renunciation: but, having consented to it from a sense of decorum, he immediately set about endeavouring to amuse himself within doors, in the best manner that circumstances would admit; an attempt in which he was aided by the Noblemen in waiting about is person. They began therefore with Billiards, a game which His Majesty likes, and at which he plays with skill. When they had continued it for some time, leap-frog was tried, to which succeeded various other feats of agility or gambols. At length, one of the gentlemen, more ingenious than the others, proposed to celebrate the funeral of the deceased Archduchess. The idea, far from shocking the King, appeared to him, and to the whole company, as most entertaining; and no reflexions, either on the indecorum, or want of apparent humanity in the proceeding, interposed to prevent its immediate realization. Having selected one of the Chamberlains, as proper, from his youth and feminine appearance, to represent the Princess, they habited him in a manner suitable to the mournful occasion; [240] laid him out on an open Bier, according to the Neapolitan custom at interments; and in order to render the ceremony wore appropriate, as well as more accurately correct, they marked his face and hands with Chocolate drops, which were designed to imitate the pustules of the small-pox. All the Apparatus being ready, the funeral procession began, and proceeded through the principal Apartments of the palace at Portici, Ferdinand officiating as Chief Mourner. Having heard of the Archduchess's decease. I had gone thither on that day, in order to make my condolence privately to His Majesty on the misfortune; and entering at the time, I became an eyewitness of this extraordinary scene, which, in any other country of Europe, would be considered as incredible, and would not obtain belief.

The Archduchess Caroline being substituted in place of her sister, and being soon afterwards conducted from Vienna to Naples, the King advanced in person, as far as the *Portella*, where the Neapolitan and Papal territories divide, in order to receive his new bride. She was then not sixteen years old, and though she could not by any means be, esteemed handsome, yet she possessed many charms. [241] Ferdinand manifested on his part, neither ardor nor indifference for the Queen. On the morning after his nuptials, which took place in the beginning of May, 1768, when the weather was very warm, he rose at an early hour, and went out, as usual to the chace, leaving his young wife in bed. Those Courtiers who accompanied him, having inquired of His Majesty how he liked her; *Dormé com un amazzata,* replied he, *et suda com un Porco.* Such an answer would be esteemed, any where except at Naples, most indecorous; but here we are

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familiarized to far greater violations of propriety and decency. Those acts and functions which are never mentioned in England, and which are there studiously concealed, even by the vulgar, here are openly performed, When the King has made a hearty meal, and feels an inclination to retire, be commonly communicates that intention to the Noblemen around him in waiting, and selects the favoured individuals, whom, as a mark of predilection, he chuses shall attend him. *Sono ben pransato*, says he, laying his hand on his belly, *Adesso bisogna un buona panchiata*. The persons thus preferred, then accompany His Majesty, stand respectfully round him, and amuse him by their conversation, during the performance.

4 Sleeps like an angel and sweats like a pig.

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However strong this fact may appear, and however repugnant to our ideas of decency; it has been for successive centuries, perfectly consonant to the manners of the Italians in general, and scarcely less so to those of the French. D'Aubigné, a grave writer, in the *Memoirs of his own Life*, does not hesitate to relate in the most circumstantial manner, the narrow escape which Henry the Fourth, his master, had of being knocked on the head, while engaged in this necessary function. Nay, D'Aubigné composed a "Quatrain" on the adventure. which he has transmitted to posterity. The story is so naturally related, and is so characteristic of the nation, that I can't resist giving it in the words of the author, which I shall not however venture to translate. Henry, who was then only King of Navarre, having effected his escape from Paris, in 1575, on which occasion D'Aubigné accompanied him; they passed the River Seine at Poissy, and soon afterwards stopped to refresh themselves in a village. Here, says D'Aubigné, the King *étant allé faire ses affaires dans un tet à cochons, une vieille qui le surprit en cet état, lui auroit fendue la tête par derrière, d'un coup de Serpe, sans moi qui parai le coup.*

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It is clear from this circumstance, that D'Aubigné must have been close to his royal master at the time. Then follows the ludicrous Epitaph which he made for the occasion, on a supposition that the old woman had killed the King.

Cy git un Roi, grand par merveille,
Qui mourut comme Dieu permet,
D'un coup de serpe d'un vieille,
Ainsi qu'il chioit dans un tet.

6 The King having gone to relieve himself in a pigsty, an old woman who found him in that situation, would have split his head with her bill-hook, had I not fend off the blow.

His predecessor, Henry the Third, it is well known, was stabbed in the belly, of which wound he died, in 1589, while sitting on the *Chaise percée*; in which indecorous situation be did not scruple to give audience to Clement, the regicide Monk, who assassinated him. Marshal Suwarrow, in our own time, received his Aids du Camp and his General Officers, precisely in a similar manner. Madame de Maintenon, as the Duke de St. Simon informs us, thought those moments so precious, that she commonly accompanied Louis the Fourteenth to the *Garderobe*. So did Louvois, when Minister of State. The Duke de Vendome, while commanding the Armies of France in Spain and Italy, at the commencement of the last Century, was accustomed to receive the greatest personages, on public business, in the same situation. We have Cardinal Alberoni's authority for this fact. If we read the account written by Du Bois, of the last illness of Louis the Thirteenth, we may there see what humiliating functions Anne of Austria performed for that Prince in the course of his malady; over which, an English writer, more fastidious, would have drawn a veil. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and the Palatine Duchess of Orleans, though women of the highest birth and rank, as well as of unimpeached conduct, conceal nothing on these points, in their writings. The former, speaking of the Duchess of Orleans, her step-mother, second wife of Gaston, brother of Louis the Thirteenth, says, She had contracted. a

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singular habit of always running into another room, *pour se placer sur la Chaise percée*, when dinner was announced. As she never failed in this particular, the Grand Maitre, or Lord Steward of Gaston's Household, who performed the ceremony of summoning their Royal Highnesses to table; observed, smelling to his Baton of office, that there must certainly be either Senna or Rhubarb in its composition, as it invariably produced the effect of sending. the Duchess to the Garderobe. I have, myself, seen the late Electress Dowager of Saxony, daughter of the Emperor Charles the Seventh, at her own palace, in the suburbs of Dresden, rise from the table where she was playing, when the room has been full of company of both sexes; lay down her cards, retire for a few minutes, during which time the game was suspended and then return, observing to those near her, J'ai pris Médecine aujourd'huy. These circumstances sufficiently prove that Ferdinand, however gross his manners or language seem to us, by no means shocked the feelings, or excited the disgust of his own courtiers.

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In all the exercises, or exertions of the body, that demand vigour and address, continued Sir William, the King of Naples excels. He might have contended for the prize at the public games of ancient Greece, at Elis, or at Olympia, with no ordinary prospect of success. He likes, in particular, wrestling, and having heard that a young Irish Gentleman of the name of Bourke, who visited Naples not long since, was an expert Wrestler, he caused it to be signified, that he should like to try a fall with that foreigner but, Bourke had the good sense to decline a contest for the honors of the Palaestraæ, with a crowned head. He dances violently at the Court Balls; on one of which occasions, some years ago, I witnessed a scene truly original, as well as comic. When his brother-in-law, the Emperor Joseph, being on his travels, arrived here, a superb Ball was given in honor of his visit; at which entertainment, however, he declined mixing in the Dance. While his Imperial Majesty was standing near the dancers, engaged in conversation with me; Ferdinand having gone down the set, and being in a most profuse state of perspiration, pulled open his waistcoat: then taking Joseph's hand, he applied it suddenly to his own shirt behind, exclaiming at the same time *Sentité qui, Fratello mio*. The Emperor instantly withdrew his hand, not without manifesting great discomposure; and the two Sovereigns remained for a few seconds, looking in each other's faces. Surprize was equally painted in the features of both; for, as the one had never before been invited to try such an experiment, so the other had never found any individual who did not esteem himself honored by the familiarity. I had no little difficulty to restrain the muscles of my countenance on the occasion.

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Joseph, who held his brother-in-law's understanding in great contempt, eudeavoured to assume over him the sort of superiority, arrogated by a strong, over a weak mind. But Ferdinand, though confessedly his inferior in cultivation and refinement, was by no means disposed to adopt his political opinions or ideas. He even manifested, in various conversations, and on many occasions, that, defective as his education had been, he possessed as much plain sense, and even acute discernment, as the Emperor, or his brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Joseph did not, indeed, inspire any very high admiration, by his deportment, or general conduct, while he remained at Naples. He was irritable, and even irascible, where he should have shewn good humour, or command of temper. I accompanied him to the summit of Vesuvius, and with concern saw him break his cane over the shoulders of the Guide, Bartolomeo, for some slight offence which he had given his Imperial Majesty.

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Ferdinand's passions are all swallowed up in his rage for the pleasures of the field; hunting, shooting, and fishing: for, this last diversion, peculiarly adapted to the climate of Naples, must be included in the number. He thinks no fatigue, and no privations, too great for its indulgence. The quantity of game, by which I principally mean deer, wild boar of all ages, and stags of every kind, preserved in the Royal woods or parks, at Astruni, at Caserta, Caccia Bella, and other places, exceeds belief. And the slaughter made of them in some of the hunting parties, is equally beyond credibility. I have frequently seen a heap, composed only of the offal or bowels, reaching as high as my head, and many feet in circumference. The King rarely misses a shot; but, when he is tired with killing, then commences another operation. He next dissects the principal pieces of game, of which he sends presents to favored Courtiers, or distributes it among his attendants. In order to perform this part of the diversion, he strips, puts on a flannel dress, takes the knife in hand, and, with inconceivable dexterity cuts up the animal. No carcass-butcher in Smithfield can exceed him in anatomical ability; but he is frequently besmeared with blood from head to foot, before he has finished, and exhibits an extraordinary spectacle, not easily to be imagined. The Queen herself is sometimes obliged to be present at the scene, though more, as may be supposed, in compliance with the King's wish, than from her own inclination. He is equally indefatigable on the water, in harpooning or in catching fish; particularly the Pesce Spada, or Sword-fish; and he neither regards heat, nor cold, nor hunger, nor danger. On these occasions, he is usually or always attended by a number of chosen Liparots, natives of the Lipari islands, who have been in all Ages most expert sailors, divers, and fishermen.

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It is thus that Ferdinand passes the greatest portion of his time; while the Potentates of Germany, England, France, and Spain, are engaged in war. Not that he is indifferent to the felicity of his subjects, or regardless of the security and prosperity of his dominions. On the contrary, his heart, which is animated with the best emotions towards his people, impels him to manifest it by all his measures: but his defects of education, render him shy, embarrassed, and awkward; nor have his Ministers any wish to awaken, or to invigorate, the faculties of his mind. Neither Tanucci, who governed Naples during his Minority, nor Sambuca, the present First Minister, desire to see him assume an active part in the administration of public affairs. The Chevalier Acton, who is at the head of the Marine, has however, begun to put the Neapolitan Navy in a more respectable condition, than it has been for several Centuries. Already it affords some protection to the coasts of Calabria and of Sicily; which have been perpetually infested, by the Algerines, Tunisians, and other Pirates; who were accustomed to land, and to carry off whole villages into slavery, precisely as Barbarossa did, two hundred years ago. Such calamities are even now by no means unusual. It is a fact, that I narrowly escaped myself; some time since, in one of my maritime excursions round the Southern Provinces of the Kingdom, being surprized in a *Sparonara*, while lying close under Cape Spartivento. Lady Hamilton was of the party, and those Barbarians would not have respected my official character; nor still less would they have regarded the reclamations of this Government.

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The power of the Neapolitan Kings is moreover fettered by many impediments which would be very difficult to surmount, even for a Prince of the greatest talents, or of the most vigorous character. In Apulia, as well as in Calabria and Sicily, the great feudal Barons still retain privileges, that render them almost independent of the Crown; and which they consider as

7 a Maltese open boat, with a foremast and a mutton sail, Bonnefoux and Paris, *Dictionnaire de la marine à voiles*, Paris, 1855.

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impreſcriptible, having conſtituted their birth-right for Ages, under the various Dynasties that have reigned over this beautiful country. The Church enjoys revenues and immunities, not less incompatible in many respects, with civil order and obedience. But, Ferdinand is greatly beloved by his people, who know, and who do justice, to his good intentions. He is even far more popular than the Queen. That Princeſs, who poſſeſſes an active mind, and very conſiderable parts, as well as ambition and love of power, has aſſumed a ſhare in the Adminiſtration, for which she is by no means unqualified: yet is she leſs eſteemed than her huſband; who, if he is not ardently attached to her as a wife, treats her at leaſt with great conſideration, kindneſs, and confidence. They live together in conjugal union, though Her Majeſty is not exempt from the frailties and weaknesses of her ſex. Indeed, the air, manners, and ſociety of this Capital, are all very inimical to female virtue. From the time of the firſt Jane, Queen of Naples, ſo famous in the Annals of gallantry, down to the preſent day, these countries have exhibited ſcenes of diſſolute pleaſure, or rather, of unreſtrained licentiouſneſs. They will probably ever ſo remain. Yet, concluded Sir William, if I were compelled to be a King, I would choose Naples for my Kingdom. Here, a Crown has fewer thorns, than in any other country. His very want of political power, enſures his repoſe; and the ſtorms which deſolate Europe, pass over his head. Placed at the extremity of Italy, he is removed out of the way of conteſt and hoſtility. A delicious climate, ſhores, to which the Romans retired when, maſters of the world, in order to enjoy a luxury unattainable elſewhere, and which are ſtill covered with the remains of Roman ſplendor, or Grecian magnificence; all the productions of the Levant, which are to be found here, blended with those of the Mediterranean; a ſplendid Capital, palaces, wood, game, every thing ſeems aſſembled in this enchanting Bay, that can conduce to human enjoyment. Such is the favored poſition, and the enviable lot of Ferdinand the Fourth. Such, indeed, as here deſcribed, it might be conſidered without exaggeration, in 1779; though during the awful convulſions which have ſhaken Europe ſince that period, produced by the French Revolution, his ſituation has undergone a material change.

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The impunity with which the great Nobility perpetrated the moſt atrocious crimes, and the facility that they found in evading enquiry, or in eluding juſtice, conſtituted at that time, one of the worſt features of the Neapolitan Adminiſtration. Lady Hamilton, who had been ſeveral years reſident at Naples, where she died not long afterwards 8, related to me various inſtances illuſtrative of this fact. Some time ago, ſaid she, a Sicilian lady of high rank, was by order of the Court, brought priſoner here, from that Iſland. She had committed ſo many, aſſaſſinations or murders, that her own relations having denounced her, called on the Government to arreſt the further courſe of her crimes. It was believed that she had diſpatched ten or eleven perſons, by the dagger, or by poiſon; particularly by that ſpecies of poiſon, denominated Aqua tophana [9]. I had the curioſity to viſit her, during her confinement. She received me in her bed, ſat up, converſed with great cheerfulneſs, offered me Chocolate and other refreſhments, and ſeemed to be perfectly at her eaſe. In her perſon she was delicate, feminine, and agreeable, her manners polite and gentle. Her age did not exceed three or four and twenty. From her deportment, one could not have ſuſpected her to be capable of ſuch atrocities. Though her guilt was unqueſtionable, she was not put to death. Confinement for life, in a Convent of a ſevere Order, together with certain acts of religious mortification or penance, which they are compelled to undergo; these conſtitute the puniſhments uſually inflicted here, on culprits of high birth.

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8 The first Lady Hamilton died on 57 August 1782, aged forty-four.

9 In fact Aqua Trophana, named after his *inventor*, Trophana, an Italian poiſoner of the XVIIth century. It is said to have been the favoured weapon of the Grand Orient under Philippe d'Orléans, Cagliostro and Mirabeau.

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