

THE COMTE DE ST. GERMAIN

CHAPTER I

MYSTIC AND PHILOSOPHER

HE was, perhaps, one of the greatest philosophers who ever lived. The friend of humanity, wishing for money only that he might give to the poor, a friend to animals, his heart was concerned only with the happiness of others.

S. A. LE LANDGRAVE CHARLES, PRINCE DE HESSE

DURING the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those Masters, of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality--or call it mysticism if you prefer--has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge or teaching has been given out.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE Comte de St. Germain was certainly the greatest Oriental Adept Europe has seen during the last centuries.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

AMONG the strange mysterious beings, with which the eighteenth century was so richly dowered, no one has commanded more universal comment and attention than the mystic who was known by the name of the Comte de St. Germain. A hero of romance; a charlatan; a swindler and an adventurer; rich and varied were the names that showered freely upon him. Hated by the many, loved and revered by the few, time has not yet lifted the veil which screened his true mission from the vulgar speculators of the period. Then, as now, the occultist was dubbed charlatan by the ignorant; only some men and women here and there realized the power of which he stood possessed. The friend and councilor of kings and princes, an enemy to ministers who were skilled in deception, he brought his great knowledge to help the West, to stave off in some small measure the storm clouds that were gathering so thickly around some nations. Alas! His words of warning fell on deafened ears, and his advice went all unheeded.

Looking back from this distance of time it will be of interest to many students of mysticism to trace the life, so far as it may yet be told, of this great occultist. Sketches are to be found here and there from various writers, mostly antagonistic, but no coherent detailed account of his life has yet appeared. This is very largely owing to the fact that the most interesting and important work, done by M. de St. Germain, lies buried in the secret archives of many princely and noble families. With this fact we have become acquainted during the careful investigations which we have been making on the subject. Where the archives are situated we have also learned, but we have not yet in all cases received permission to make the necessary researches.

It must be borne in mind that the Comte de St. Germain, alchemist and mystic, does not belong to the French family of St. Germain, from which descended Count Robert de St. Germain; the latter was born in the year 1708, at Lons-le-Saulnier, was first a Jesuit, and entered later in turn the French, Palatine, and Russian military services; he became Danish Minister of War under Count Struensee, then re-entered the French service, and at the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI., he tried, as Minister of War, to introduce various changes into the French army; these raised a violent storm of indignation; he was disgraced by the king and finally died in 1778. He is so often confounded with his mystic and philosophic namesake, that for the sake of clearing up the ignorance that prevails on the matter it is well to give these brief details, showing the difference between the two men; unfortunately the disgrace into which the soldier fell is but too often attributed to the mystic, to whom we will now turn our entire attention.

That M. de St. Germain had intimate relations with many high persons in various countries is quite undeniable, the testimony on this point being overwhelming. That such relations should cause jealousy and unkindly speculation is unfortunately not rare in any century. Let us, however, see what some of these princely friends say. When questioned by the Herzog Karl August as to the supernatural age of this mystic, the Landgraf von Hessen-Phillips-Barchfeld replied: "We cannot speak with certainty on that point; the fact is the Count is acquainted with details about which only contemporaries of that period could give us information; it is now the fashion in Cassel to listen respectfully to his statements and not to be astonished at anything. The Count is known not to be an importunate sycophant; he is a man of good society to whom all are pleased to attach themselves. . . . He at all events stands in close relation with many men of considerable importance, and exercises an incomprehensible influence on others. My cousin the Landgraf Karl von Hessen is much attached to him; they are eager Freemasons, and

work together at all sorts of hidden arts. . . . He is supposed to have intercourse with ghosts and supernatural beings, who appear at his call.”[1]

Herr Mauvillon, in spite of his personal prejudice against M. de St. Germain, is obliged to acknowledge the feeling of the Duke towards the great alchemist. For on his supposed death being mentioned in the Brunswick newspaper of the period, wherein M. de St. Germain was spoken of as “a man of learning,” “a lover of truth,” “devoted to the good” and “a hater of baseness and deception,” the Duke himself wrote to the editor, expressing his approbation of the announcement. [2]

In France M. de St. Germain appears to have been under the personal care, and enjoying the affection of Louis XV., who repeatedly declared that he would not tolerate any mockery of the Count, who was of high birth. It was this affection and protection that caused the Prime Minister, the Duc de Choiseul, to become a bitter enemy of the mystic, although he was at one time friendly to him, since the Baron de Gleichen in his memoirs says: “M. de St. Germain frequented the house of M. de Choiseul, and was well received there.” [3]

The same writer, who later became one of his devoted students, testifies to the fact that M. de St. Germain ate no meat, drank no wine, and lived according to a strict regime. Louis XV gave him a suite of rooms in the royal Chateau de Chambord, and he constantly spent whole evenings at Versailles with the King and the royal family.

One of the chief difficulties we find in tracing his history consists in the constant changes of name and title, a proceeding which seems to have aroused much antagonism and no little doubt. This fact should not, however, have made the public (of the period) dislike him, for it appears to have been the practice of persons of position, who did not wish to attract vulgar curiosity; thus, for instance, we have the Duc de Medici traveling in the years 1698 and 1700 under the name of the Conte di Siena. The Graf Marcolini, when he went from Dresden to Leipzig to meet M. de St. Germain, adopted another name. The Kur-Prinz Friedrich-Christian von Sachsen traveled in Italy from 1738 to 1740, under the name Comte Lausitz. Nearly all the members of the royal families in every country, during the last century, and even in this, adopted the same practice; but when M. de St. Germain did so, we have all the small writers of that period and later calling him an adventurer and a charlatan for what appears to have been, practically, a custom of the time.

Let us now make a list of these names and titles, bearing in mind that they cover a period of time dating from 1710 to 1822. The first date is mentioned by Baron de Gleichen, who says: "I have heard Rameau and an old relative of a French ambassador at Venice testify to having known M. de St. Germain in 1710, when he had the appearance of a man of fifty years of age." [4] The second date is mentioned by Mme. d'Adhemar in her most interesting *Souvenirs sur Marie Antoinette*. [5] During this time 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 Ragoocz at Dresden, and Comte de St. Germain at Paris, the Hague, London, and St. Petersburg. No doubt all these varied changes gave ample scope and much material for curious speculations.

A few words may fitly here be said about his personal appearance and education. From one contemporary writer we get the following sketch:- "He looked about fifty, is neither stout nor thin, has a fine intellectual countenance, dresses very simply, but with taste; he wears the finest diamonds on snuff-box, watch and buckles. Much of the mystery with which he is surrounded is owing to his princely ." Another writer, who knew him when at Anspach, says: "He always dined alone and very simply; his wants were extremely few; it was impossible while at Anspach to persuade him to dine at the Prince's table."

M. de St. Germain appears to have been very highly educated. According to Karl von Weber, [6] "he spoke German, English, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish very well, and French with a Piedmontese accent."

It was almost universally accorded that he had a charming grace and courtliness of manner. He displayed, moreover, in society, a great variety of gifts, played several musical instruments excellently, and sometimes showed facilities and powers which bordered on the mysterious and incomprehensible. For example, one day he had dictated to him the first twenty verses of a poem, and wrote them simultaneously with both hands on two separate sheets of paper--no one present could distinguish one sheet from the other.

In order to arrive at some orderly sequence, it will be well to divide our material into three parts:--

i. Theories about his birth and character, with personal details, some of which we have briefly noticed.

ii. His travels and knowledge.

iii. His political and mystical work.

Beginning, then, with our first division, the theories about his birth and nationality are many and various; and different authors, according to their prejudices, trace his descent from prince or tax-gatherer, apparently as fancy dictates. Thus, among other parentages, we find him supposed to be descended from:--

1. The widow of Charles II. (King of Spain)--the father a Madrid banker.

2. A Portuguese Jew.

3. An Alsatian Jew.

4. A tax-gatherer in Rotondo.

5. King of Portugal (natural son).

6. Franz-Leopold, Prince Ragozy, of Transylvania.

This last seems to have been the correct view, according to the most reliable sources that have been found, and other information to which we have had access on this point.

This theory is also held by Georg Hezekiel in his *Abenteuerliche Gesellen*, i., 35, Berlin, 1862. Karl von Weber also says that M. de St. Germain openly appeared in Leipzig in 1777 as Prince Ragozy, and that he was often known as the Graf Tzarogy, which latter is merely an anagram for Ragozy (Ragozy). This last fact we have verified in another interesting set of articles, to which we shall refer later, written by a person who knew him at Anspach under the name Tzarogy. Another writer remarks: "His real origin would, perhaps, if revealed, have compromised important persons." And this is the conclusion to which, after careful investigation, we have also come. Prince Karl of Hesse, [7] writing of M. de St. Germain, says:--

"Some curiosity may be felt as to his history; I will trace it with the utmost truthfulness, according to his own words, adding any necessary

explanations. He told me that he was eighty-eight years of age when he came here, and that he was the son of Prince Ragoczy [8] of Transylvania by his first wife, a Tekeli. He was placed, when quite young, under the care of the last Duc de Medici (Gian Gastone), who made him sleep while still a child in his own room. When M. de St. Germain learned that his two brothers, sons of the Princess of Hesse-Wahnfried (Rheinfels), had become subject to the Emperor Charles VI., and had received the titles and names of St. Karl and St. Elizabeth, he said to himself: 'Very well, I will call myself Sanctus Germano, the Holy Brother.' I cannot in truth guarantee his birth, but that he was tremendously protected by the Duc de Medici I have learnt from another source."

Another well-known writer speaks on the same point, an author, moreover, who had access to the valuable Milan archives; we refer to the late Caesare Cantu, librarian of the great library in Milan, who in his historical work, *Illustri Italiani*, ii., 18, says: "The Marquis of San Germano appears to have been the son of Prince Ragotzy (Ragoczy) of Transylvania; he was also much in Italy; much is recounted of his travels in Italy and in Spain; he was greatly protected by the last Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had educated him." It has been said that M. de St. Germain was educated at the University of Siena; Mme. de Genlis in her *Memoires* mentions having heard of him in Siena during a visit that she paid to that town.

The whole life of M. de St. Germain seems to have been more or less shadowed by the political troubles and struggles of his father.

In order to understand this we must take a brief survey of his family history, a survey which will moreover give us some clues, helping us to unravel the tangled web of mysterious elements which surrounded the life and work of the great occultist.

Few pages of history are more deeply scored with sorrow, suffering and impotent struggle than those which tell the life story of the efforts of one Ragoczy after another to preserve the freedom of their principality, and to save it from being swallowed up by the rapidly growing Austrian Empire under the influence of the Roman Church. In an old German book, *Genealogische Archivarius aus dem Jahr 1734*, (pp. 409, 410, 438), Leipzig, a sketch is given, on the death of Prince Ragoczy, of his family, his antecedents and descendants, from which we will quote some leading facts: Francis Leopold Racozi, or Rakoczy, according to the later spelling--the father of the famous mystic--made ineffectual efforts to regain his throne, the principality of

Siebenburgen. The Ragoczy property was wealthy and valuable, and Prince Francis, grandfather of the mystic of whom we are writing, had lost his life in a hopeless struggle to retain his freedom; on his death, his widow and children were seized by the Austrian Emperor, and hence the son, Francis Leopold, was brought up at the Court of Vienna. As our informant says: "The widowed Princess (who had remarried Graf Tekeli) was forced to hand over her children with their properties to the Emperor, who said he would become their guardian and be responsible for their education." This arrangement was made in March, 1688. When, however, Prince Francis came of age, his properties, with many restrictions and limitations, were given back to him by the Emperor of Austria. In 1694 this Prince Ragoczy married at Koln-am-Rhein, Charlotte Amalia, daughter of the Landgraf Karl von Hesse-Wahnfried (of the line of Rhein-fels). Of this marriage there were three children, Joseph, George and Charlotte. Almost immediately after this period Prince Ragoczy began to lead the conspiracies of his noblemen against the Austrian Empire, with the object of regaining his independent power. The history of the struggle is most interesting in every way, and singularly pathetic. The Prince was defeated and all his properties were confiscated. The sons had to give up the name of Ragoczy, and to take the titles of St. Carlo and St. Elizabeth.

Let us notice what Hezekiel [9] has to say on this point, for he has made some very careful investigations on the subject: "We are, in fact, inclined to think the Comte de St. Germain was the younger son of the Prince Franz-Leopold Ragoczy and the Princess Charlotte Amalia of Hesse-Wahnfried. Franz-Leopold was married in 1694, and by this marriage he had two sons, who were taken prisoners by the Austrians and brought up as Roman Catholics; they were also forced to give up the dreaded name of Ragoczy. The eldest son, calling himself the Marquis of San Carlo, escaped from Vienna in 1734. In this year, after fruitless struggles, his father died at Rodosto in Turkey, and was buried in Smyrna. The eldest son then received his father's Turkish pension, and was acknowledged Prince of Siebenburgen (Transylvania). He carried on the same warfare as his father, fought against and was driven away by Prince Ferdinand of Lobkowitz, and finally died forgotten in Turkey. The younger brother took no part in the enterprises of his elder brother, and appears, therefore, to have been always on good terms with the Austrian Government."

Adverse writers have made much mystery over the fact that the Comte de St. Germain was rich and always had money at his disposal; indeed, those writers who enjoyed calling him a "charlatan and a swindler" did not refrain also from hinting that his money must have been ill-gotten;

many even go so far as to say that he made it by deceiving people and exercising an undue influence over them. If we turn to the old Archivarius already mentioned, we find some very definite information that not only shows us whence the large fortune possessed by this mystic was derived, but also why he was so warmly welcomed by the King of France, and was so well known at all the courts of Europe. No obscure adventurer is this with whom we are dealing, but a man of princely blood, and of almost royal descent.

Turning back to the old chronicle we find in the volume for 1736 the will of the late Prince Franz-Leopold Ragozy, in which both his sons are mentioned who have been already named, and also a third son. [10] It also states that Louis XIV had bought landed property for this Prince Ragozy from the Polish Queen Maria, the rents of which property were invested by the order of the King of France in the Hotel de Ville in Paris. We also find that considerable legacies were left which were to be demanded from the Crown of France. The executors of this will were the Duc de Bourbon, the Duc de Maine and the Comte de Charleroi and Toulouse. To their care Prince Ragozy committed his third son, to whom also he left a large legacy and other rights on this valuable property. Hence we must cast aside the theories that M. de St. Germain was a homeless and penniless adventurer, seeking to make money out of any kindly disposed person. These were the views and ideas of the newspaper and review writers of that day, put forward in the leading periodicals. Unfortunately the law of heredity prevails in this class of people, and there is a remarkable similarity between the epithets hurled by the press of the nineteenth century at the venturesome occultist of to-day and those flung at M. de St. Germain and other mystics of lesser importance and minor merit.

We will now pass from this portion of our subject to some of the personal incidents related of M. de St. Germain; perhaps the most interesting are those given by one who knew him personally in Anspach during the period that he was in close connection with the Markgraf. It appears that the mystic made two visits at different times to Schwalbach, and thence he went to Triesdorf. We will let the writer speak for himself on this point:--

“On hearing that a stranger, both remarkable and interesting, was at Schwalbach, the Markgraf of Brandenburg-Anspach invited him to come to Triesdorf in the spring, and the Graf Tzarogy (for this was the name under which he appeared) accepted this invitation, on the condition that they would allow him to live in his own way quite unnoticed and at peace.

He was lodged in the lower rooms of the Castle, below those occupied by Mademoiselle Clairon. The Markgraf and his wife lived in the Falkenhaus. The Graf Tzarogy had no servant of his own; he dined as simply as possible in his own room, which he seldom left. His wants were extremely few, and he avoided all general society, spending the evenings in the company of only the Markgraf, Mademoiselle Clairon, and those persons whom the former was pleased to have around him. It was impossible to persuade the Graf Tzarogy to dine at the Prince's table, and he only saw the Markgräfin a few times, although she was very curious to make the acquaintance of this strange individual. In conversation the Graf was most entertaining, and showed much knowledge of the world and of men. He was always especially glad to speak of his childhood and of his mother, to whom he never referred without emotion, and often with tears in his eyes. If one could believe him, he had been brought up like a Prince. One day Tzarogy showed the Markgraf an invitation which he had received, sent by a courier, from the Graf Alexis Orloff, who was just returning from Italy; the letter pressed Graf Tzarogy to pay him a visit, as Graf Orloff was passing through Nuremberg. . . . The Markgraf went with Graf Tzarogy to Nuremberg, where the Graf Alexis Orloff had already arrived. On their arrival Orloff, with open arms, came forward to meet and embrace the Graf Tzarogy, who now appeared for the first time in the uniform of a Russian General; and Orloff called him several times, 'Caro padre,' 'Caro amico.' The Graf Alexis received the Markgraf of Brandenburg-Anspach with the most marked politeness, and thanked him several times for the protection which the Markgraf had accorded to his worthy friend; they dined together at midday. The conversation was most interesting; they spoke a good deal of the campaign in the Archipelago, and still more about useful and scientific discoveries. Orloff showed the Markgraf a piece of unignitable wood, which when tested produced neither flames nor cinders, but simply fell to pieces in light ashes, after it had swollen up like a sponge. After dinner Graf Orloff took the Graf Tzarogy into the next room, where they remained for some considerable time together. The writer, who was standing at the window under which the carriages of Graf Orloff were drawn up, remarked that one of the Graf's servants came, opened one of the carriage doors and took out from the box under the seat a large red leather bag, and carried it upstairs to the other room. After their return to Anspach the Graf Tzarogy showed them, for the first time, his credentials as a Russian General with the Imperial seal attached; he afterwards informed the Markgraf that the name Tzarogy was an assumed name, and that his real name was Ragotzy, and that he was the

sole representative and descendant of the late exiled Prince Ragotzy of Siebenburgen of the time of the Emperor Leopold". [11]

So far this narrative is tolerably accurate, but after this point the author proceeds with the history of what he considers the "unveiling" of the "notorious Comte de St. Germain," in which all the various theories about his birth, to which we have already referred, are retold with embellishments. Amongst other wild reports, it was stated that M. de St. Germain had only become acquainted with the Orloffs in Leghorn in 1770, whereas there are various historical proofs showing, without doubt, that he was in 1762 in St. Petersburg, where he knew the Orloffs well. We have moreover heard in Russia that he was staying with the Princess Marie Galitzin at Archangelskoi on March 3rd, 1762.

The following details were found in Russia, and sent by a Russian friend:--

"The Comte de St. Germain was here in the time of Peter III and left when Catherine II came to the throne. M. Pyliaeff [12] thinks even before Catherine's time.

"At St. Petersburg St. Germain lived with Count Rotari, the famous Italian painter, who was the painter of the beautiful portraits which are in the Peterhof palace.

"The street where they lived is supposed to be the Grafsky pereouluk ('pereouluk' means small street, and 'Grafsky' comes from Graf-Count) near the Anitchkoff bridge where the palace is, on the Newsky St. Germain was a splendid violinist, he 'played like an orchestra.' In the 'Story of the Razoamovsky family' Alexis R. was reported to have spoken of a beautiful moonstone St. Germain had in his possession.

"M. Pyliaeff has seen (he cannot remember where now) a piece of music, some air for the harp, dedicated to Countess Ostermann by St. Germain's own hand signed. It is bound beautifully in red maroquin. The date is about 1760.

"M. Pyliaeff thinks that St. Germain was not in Moscow. He says the Youssoupoff family have many MSS. in old chests and that St. Germain was in relations with a Prince Youssoupoff to whom he gave the elixir for long life. He says, too, that St. Germain did not bear the name of Saltykoff (Soltikow) in Russia but that in Vienna he did take this name.

“About the music signed by St. Germain, M. Pyliaeff now recollects that it belonged to him himself. He bought it at some sale and had it for some time. Then he gave it to the famous composer Peter Chaikowsky as a present. It must now be in Chaikowsky’s papers, but as the great musician had very little order, M. Pyliaeff thinks it very unlikely that it could be found, especially as at Chaikowsky’s sudden death all was left without any directions being given about the property.”

We have said that the political events in his family had to some extent shadowed the life of M. de St. Germain; one remarkable instance of this we will now cite: it is, as far as we know, the only one in which he himself makes any direct reference to it, and it occurs some time later than the events which we have just been relating. After the return of the Markgraf from Italy, whither he had gone in 1776, and where he had heard some of the legends and fabrications above referred to, he appears to have sent the writer whom we have quoted to Schwalbach to see the Graf Tzarogy, and to test his bona fides. We will continue the history as he gives it. “On his arrival, he found M. de St. Germain ill in bed. When the matter was explained to him, he admitted with perfect coolness that he had assumed from time to time all the names mentioned, even down to that of Soltikow; but he said he was known on all sides, and to many people, under these names, as a man of honor, and that if any calumniator were venturing to accuse him of nefarious transactions, he was ready to exculpate himself in the most satisfactory manner, as soon as he knew of what he was accused, and who the accuser was who dared to attack him. He steadily asserted that he had not told the Markgraf any lies with reference to his name and his family. The proofs of his origin, however, were in the hands of a person on whom he was dependent (i.e., the Emperor of Austria), a dependence which had brought on him, in the course of his life, the greatest espionage. . . . When he was asked why he had not informed the Markgraf about the different names under which he had appeared in so many different places, the Graf Tzarogy answered that he was under no obligations to the Markgraf, and that since he offended no one and did no person any harm, he would only give such personal information after and not before he had dealings with them. The Graf said he had never abused the confidence of the Markgraf; he had given his real name. . . . after this he still remained at Schwalbach.” A little later the author of the paragraph just quoted remarks: “What resources M. de St. Germain had, to defray the necessary expenses of his existence, is hard to guess.” [13]

It appears curious to us that the writer knew so little of contemporary history. As we have seen, all the sons of Prince Ragozy were amply provided for, and the proofs were even more accessible than they are in our day. He goes on to say in conclusion: "It would be an ungrateful task to declare that this man was a swindler; for this proofs are required and they are not to be had." This is truly an ingenious statement, but borders somewhat on libel; to speak of any one as a swindler without any proof is beyond the bounds of ordinary fairness, and it is especially incongruous in view of the final paragraph, which is as follows: "As long as the Graf had dealings with the Markgraf, he never asked for anything, and never received anything of the slightest value, and never mixed himself up in anything which did not concern him. On account of his extremely simple life, his wants were very limited; when he had money he shared it with the poor."

If we compare these words with those spoken of M. de St. Germain by his friend Prince Charles of Hesse, we shall find they are in perfect accord. The only wonder is that a writer who speaks such words of praise can even hint that his subject might be a "swindler." If such words can be rightly spoken of an "adventurer," then would it be well for the world if a few more of like sort could be found.

We shall find similar extraordinary contradictions in various writers as we proceed further with the life of M. de St. Germain.

Footnotes

1. AKSAKOF, A., *Psychische Studien*, *Monatliche Zeitschrift*, xii., p. 430. Leipzig, 1885.
2. MAUVILLON, J., *Geschichte Ferdinands, Herzog von Braunschweig-Lüneberg*, ii., p. 479. Leipzig, 1794.
3. GLEICHEN (E. H. Baron de), *Souvenirs*, Paris, 1868, p. 126.
4. GLEICHEN, *Op. cit.*, p. 127.
5. D'ADHEMAR (La Comtesse), *Souvenirs sur Marie Antoinette, Archiduchesse d'Autriche, Reine de France, et sur la Cour de Versaille*, Paris, 1836.
6. WEBER (Dr. Carl von), *Aus vier Jahrhunderten. Mittheilungen aus dem Haupt-Staats-Archive, Zu Dresden*, i., p. 312. Tauchnitz, Leipzig, 1857.

7. HESSE-CASSEL Karl, Prinz de), Memoires de Mon Temps, p. 133. Copenhagen, 1861.

8. Ragozy is the German spelling of this name. In Hungary it is written Rakoczy.

9. Op. cit., i., 45.

10. This is the son, mentioned by Prince Charles of Hesse, who was placed under the care of the last of the Medici.

11. Curiositäten der Literarisch-historischen Vor- and Mitwelt, pp. 285, 286. Weimar, 1818.

12. Told by M. Pyliaeff, member of the “Novoie Vremia,” author of “Old Petersburg.”

13. Curiositäten, op. cit., pp. 287, 289, 293. 294.