

Felix Theodor von Bernhardi an August Wilhelm von Schlegel
Berlin, 20.04.1834

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[1] Sir

It is a long time that I have not directly addressed you either by word or writ; many years have passed over our heads since I last saw you, and considering the many important events, the total change in the political system of Europe that have taken place within that period, these years appear doubly long; history will reckon them an age. – However I have not lived all this time altogether without hearing of you at least, if not **from** you, and though my name has perhaps never once been mentioned to you, friends who had seen you, have frequently told me, that neither the vigour of your health, nor the lively, spirited interest you are wont to take in every progress of art and science, have at all abated. – But now that my uncle has communicated to me the very kind letter you had lately written him and wherein you mention my first litterary essay with such indulgence, it would be worse than ingratitude in me, not to renew an intercourse which I ever found so advantageous as well as honourable to me.

Having once had occasion to speak of that **esquisse** of mine, I must beg leave to tell you at once all I have to say on that score. It was certainly very flattering to [2] me to see the work approved of by you; so much the more as I really stood in need of some consolation. I have been already violently attacked on account of that very book, and in such terms too, with such arms, as a gentleman would hardly think proper to employ. Now I must expect that a great-many Criticks will treat my poor **essay** and it's unfortunate author in a mercyleless manner, and it is but natural that I should wish to be supported by those who are known both as competent judges and as men of honour. It would have been quite the contrary of discretion to request you publickly to express your opinion of the work before I knew whether that opinion was really favourable – but now I really wish the interest you have ever been kind enough to take in my fate, may prove sufficiently powerful to counterbalance the claims which science has upon your time, and to induce you to turn for one moment from your more serious occupations to the litterary debates of the day – and a litterary gazette. Begging you will do me the honour of writing yourself a few lines in behalf of my work, I cannot but add that I am fully sensible of the many obligations I owe you already, and thank you for what you have so kindly done to make the esquisse known in France. – You advise me to dispatch some copies of it to Paris, and to send them for that purpose under the Duke **de Broglie's** direction, to the french embassy. I would have gladly followed your advice, had [3] it not been for several difficulties. In the first instance Mr. Bresson the french Minister, and Mr. de Ribeaupierre have long lived on very bad terms, and ever since there has been very little intercourse between the french embassy, and the Russians that are living in this place, including me. Besides the Duke himself has been obliged by a very illjudged opposition to withdraw from the administration. – I really wish therefore that some other means may offer, of having the book conveyed to Paris.

But enough – too much perhaps of that. I dare not enquire about your own occupations, for fear whatever you could say about them would be thrown-away on a profane being. India, it's litterature and history are things which I not only know very little about, but the study of which I have always been rather afraid of entering into at all, because I knew it to be very enticing and almost immeasurably extensive.

I see by your letter that a widowed niece is living with you; this Lady I suppose to be Mme de Butlar, to whom I had the honour of being introduced at your house. Should I be right in this guess of mine, I beg you will kindly remember me to her. – Mr. Lassen I used to know well at Heydelberg; I once had

the misfortune of wounding him at the **salle d'armes** - though he was by far the fetter swordsman of the two - but I hope he has forgiven and forgot it.

[4] My own projects as well as prospects are as yet very uncertain; possibly I may go to St. Petersburg within a few weeks; I am this moment expecting the directions of my friends. But whatever may happen, I still hope some favourable chance may bring me again to the banks of the Rhine - and in that case I should not fail to intrude upon your hospitality. In the mean time I beg you will believe that I ever am with the highest possible regard, most devotedly

Your's

Th.[eodor] Knorring.

Berlin 20th April. 1834.

Namen

Bresson, Charles

Broglie, Achille-Léon-Victor de

Buttlar, Augusta von

Lassen, Christian

Ribeaupierre, Alexandre

Tieck, Christian Friedrich

Orte

Berlin

Heidelberg

Paris

Sankt Petersburg

Werke

Bernhardi, Felix Theodor von: La Russie et la Pologne. Esquisse historique