

**THE JOURNAL OF COUNTESS
FRANCOISE KRASINSKA,
GREAT GRANDMOTHER OF
VICTOR EMMANUEL**

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The Journal of Countess Françoise Krasinska, Great Grandmother of Victor Emmanuel by
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EMMANUEL

TRANSLATED FROM THE POLISH
BY
KASIMIR DZIEKONSKA

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THE JOURNAL
OF
COUNTESS FRANÇOISE KRASINSKA
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN THE CASTLE OF MALESZOW,
Monday, January 1, 1759.

ONE week ago — it was Christmas day — my honored Father ordered to be brought to him a huge book, in which for many years he has written with his own hand all the important things which have happened in our country; also copies of the notable pamphlets, speeches, manifestoes, public and private letters, occasional poems, etc., and having placed everything in the order of its date, he showed us this precious collection and read to us some extracts. I was much pleased with his idea of recording interesting facts and circumstances; and as I know how to write pretty well in

Polish and in French, and have heard that in France some women have written their memoirs, I thought, "Why should not I try to do something of the kind?"

So I have made a big copy-book by fastening together many sheets of paper, and I shall note down, as accurately as I am able, everything which may happen to me and to my family, and I shall also mention public affairs as they happen, as far as I may be acquainted with them.

To-day is New Year's Day and Monday, a very proper season to begin something new. I am at leisure; the morning Service is finished, I am dressed and my hair is curled; ten is just striking on the castle clock, so I have two hours till dinner time. Well, I begin.

I was born in 1742, so I am just past my sixteenth birthday. I received at the christening the name of Françoise. I have heard more than once that I am pretty, and sometimes looking in the mirror, I think so myself. "One has to thank God, and not to boast," says my gracious

Mother ; " it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves." I have black hair and eyes, a fair complexion and rosy cheeks. I should like to be a little taller, but they frighten me by saying I shall not grow any more. I am descended from the not only noble, but very old and illustrious family of Korwin Krasinski. God forbid I should ever tarnish the glorious name I am fortunate enough to bear ! on the contrary I should like much to add to its fame, and I am often sorry I am not a man, as I should then have more opportunities.

The Count, my honored Father, and the Countess, are so sensible of the grandeur of the Korwin Krasinski family, and they so often speak of it, — not only they, but our courtiers and our guests as well, — and it is thought by all to be such a great reproach not to know precisely about our ancestors, that we all have our heads full of that kind of information. I can recite the genealogy of the Krasinskis and the history of each of them as perfectly as my morning prayer, and I think that I should have more diffi-

culty in telling the names of our Polish kings in chronological order than in telling those of my ancestors. The pictures of the most illustrious are in our hall,¹ but it would take too long to write about each of them. The first of whom we know anything was Warcislaus Korwin, from the old Roman family of Corvinus, who, in the eleventh century, came from Hungary to Poland and was appointed the Hetman (General-in-chief) of the army of King Boleslaus II.

Having espoused a noble lady of the name of Pobog, Korwin united his crest — a raven holding a ring — to that of the Pobogs — a hand grasping a sabre — and such is still our cognizance. His grandson was the first to take the name Krasinski, that is, *of Krasin*, from an estate bestowed upon him by the King as a reward for his bravery; and from that time forward many hetmans, castellans, woivodes,² bishops, etc.,

¹ They are still in Count Adam Krasinski's palace in Warsaw.

² Governors of provinces.

made the Krasinski name famous in Polish history.

One of them, Alexander, in this very same Maleszow Castle where I am now quietly writing, resisted so bravely a great Tartar army, in one of its plundering excursions from Asia, that the chief was obliged to retreat ; but before leaving, he sent to the valorous castellan, as a token of his admiration, the most precious thing he possessed, — namely, a clock, of very simple construction, it is true, but a great wonder at that time. This curious relic, this gift from an enemy, — and he a Tartar, more accustomed to take than to give, — is still preserved with great care in our family ; I have seen it but twice in my life, my honored Father keeping it so carefully, and I am sure he would not exchange it for ten Paris clocks with all their chimes.

This valiant ancestor of mine was killed in a war with Russia, and left no son. His nephew John built in Warsaw a magnificent palace in the Italian style, which is said to be more beautiful than the King's Castle ;