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THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

HIS MEMOIRS, LETTERS, AND  
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

VOLUME I







*de la Cour*  
 Son Altesse Monseigneur  
 d'Ambr. et du S. Empire, Saurain de Fagnolles et  
 premier Classe, Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or,  
 Colonel propriétaire d'un Régiment d'Infanterie  
 Vaud à Bruxelles, Che



Le Prince de Ligne,  
 Comte inn. héréd. en Empire & Grand d'Espagne de la  
 1<sup>re</sup> Field Marshal Lieutenant Gouverneur de Monaco,  
 au Service de Sa Majesté L'Empereur et Roy & c. & c.  
 le Grand Rue de Paris

OLD FRENCH COURT MEMOIRS

*THE*

PRINCE DE LIGNE

HIS MEMOIRS, LETTERS, AND  
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

WITH INTRODUCTION AND PREFACE BY

C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE AND MADAME DE STAËL-HOLSTEIN

TRANSLATED BY KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS FROM THE ORIGINAL

Ligne, Charles J



VOLUME VI

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## INTRODUCTION

By C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE.<sup>1</sup>

MORE than once writers have drawn upon the Prince de Ligne's collection of his Works in thirty-four volumes, rather fantastically entitled by him "Mélanges militaires, littéraires, et sentimentaires" (1795-1808) in order to make extracts, either in two volumes or in five, under the title of "Selected Works" or "Memoirs and Miscellanies." Mme. de Staël, in the lifetime of the prince, made a volume of his "Letters and Thoughts." After reading one or other of these abridged collections we have in our minds a very vivid and lifelike Prince de Ligne. The more he is allowed to speak for himself the better that likeness is defined; moreover, it seems as if, in relation to him, all forms of brilliant eulogy have been exhausted. If his "Memoirs" should some day appear in full the whole will be said, or rather, said over again, for we shall then have a full-length portrait of him in all its freshness. Time can only add to the value of certain details which belong to the manners and morals of a vanished society. "I should not write thus if I were to be read at once," says the Prince de Ligne at the end of one of his narratives; "but a hundred years hence these little things, which now seem nothings, will give pleasure. I judge so by that which I derive from the 'Souvenirs of Mme. de Caylus,' the 'Memoirs' of the mother of the Regent, those of Saint-Simon [at the time when this was

<sup>1</sup> From the "Causeries du Lundi," June, 1853.

written the latter were known only by fragments], and fifty other writers of anecdotes of the Court of France of those times.”

Without pretending to forestall the final idea of him which he will leave after his Memoirs have been wholly published, I wish to say a few words here of the Prince de Ligne as of one who has written much, and, without precisely treating him as an author, to make use of what he has himself put in print, in order to offer a few remarks on the man and on his period.

Born in Belgium, May 12, 1735, of the illustrious family whom we all know, he does not like to tell his exact age; he says that his baptismal record has been lost. He would fain be, as he was in fact, the man “who is never more than twenty.” He diverts us with an account of his tutors, who are more or less incapable or vicious, and he speaks in a singular tone of his father. “My father never liked me; I do not know why, for we never knew each other. But it was not the fashion at that time to be a good father, or a good husband. My mother was very much afraid of him; she was brought to bed of me attired in a great farthingale.” In the days of this haughty and stern parent it was customary for fathers to be feared. But if manners had then an antiquated stiffness, by the time the prince wrote these flippant lines fashions had changed, the old manners had suddenly relaxed; from respect they had dropped to impertinence; all things were treated with a jest. Still, one could wish that the amiable prince were less ready to trifle with those sentiments of nature and family which he was so well fitted to feel. He gayly quotes a correspondence that he had with his father on the day he was appointed colonel of the regiment that bore the family name and of which his father was proprietary colonel: “Monseigneur, I

have the honour to inform your Highness that I have just been appointed colonel of your regiment. I am, with profound respect, etc." The answer was not long in coming: "Monsieur, after the misfortune of having you for a son, nothing could more keenly affect me than the misfortune of having you for colonel. Receive, etc."

But the lively scoffer who does the honours of his father thus, tells us elsewhere, in doing justice to his high qualities: "He had great elevation of soul; he was as proud within as he was without." On the last occasion when he saw his father, the latter, who was then ill, said, when charging him with certain matters: "After all, they concern you more than they do me, because —" That "because," he confesses, which expressed the certainty of an approaching end, made him burst into tears.

The Prince de Ligne had a son whom he loved tenderly, whose comrade and friend he was, leading him under fire the moment the occasion offered; the death of this son, in the first war of the Revolution, broke his heart. He had more natural feeling than he likes to admit. If, in the feudal and seigniorial rigidity of the preceding generation there still remained an excess of the ancient customs, it will be seen, by the way the prince speaks of them, that in him there was an opposite excess, an airy tone of the world and an affectation of unrestraint, which presupposes a certain manner and style.

This was, in fact, the defect of his early years. It was the first bend that he thought proper to give himself in order to please. As a young man he had no other religion than that of pleasing, and that (which ruled him above all) of glory and military honour. When he was only fifteen he wrote a little "Treatise on the Profession of Arms." This liking for arms was something more in the young Prince de

Ligne than the shining instinct of valour. Subsequently he wrote much on war, he studied and meditated all parts of the subject, he analyzed the actions and the merits of the great captains of former wars and the generals of his own time. I do not know what the men of his profession think of him, but the Duke of Wellington is said to have esteemed his military works. Independently of the special knowledge of which he gives proof, and of the actual ameliorations which he proposed in his day, I see in what he writes that which makes the soul of the noble profession of a soldier,—the alliance of abnegation with a glorious emulation. “We perform services,” he said, “we endure hardships, we receive praise.” He makes an apostrophe to “Beginners in war” which breathes the sacred fire. But while he gives those electrifying counsels, he speaks in a tone that is not less generous or less comforting to men who have failed to make their way although they deserved to do so; to those who are dissatisfied, who complain of the service and whom a slight affront might drive into renouncing it. It is the reverse of the medal, but on that side also he points to Honour.

“A wrong, an injustice, or too little justice and favour,” he says, “may sometimes make you regret that you have sacrificed your days to your country. Ah! never blame yourself for that. The respect of the Army consoles and avenges us for the foolish distribution of favours. Remember the caressing, yet respectful air of those you have led to victory; remind yourself of what you have heard them say of you in their tents, or in their bivouacs on the battle-field. In what other profession, despite its drawbacks and the caprices of fortune, can a man be more respected? An old sub-lieutenant commands more respect than a minister of State; his company trembles when he appears. No one

stands aside for a great lord, but the soldier who meets an officer in the street stops and salutes. Never, never quit the noblest of careers."

We have seen in Vauvenargues a most distinguished soldier and philosopher, who felt the glory of arms and renounced them with regret. The Prince de Ligne said of him: "Vauvenargues is too sad for a man of war; he sees things too gloomily." In this he supposes wilfulness on the part of Vauvenargues, whereas it was really melancholy, acting on a serious nature and constant ill-health. The prince himself carried to war a jaunty, animated air, that heightened his valour and gave it a species of grace.

We have his "Journal of the Seven Years' War," of which he made all the campaigns in the service of Austria; a journal, he says, "that was written more on horseback than otherwise." In this war he was, successively, captain, lieutenant-colonel, and then colonel in the Wallon regiment which bore his name and belonged to his father.<sup>1</sup> On the 17th of May, 1757, he saw an advanced post for the first time and heard the first balls whistle. "I was happy as a king," he writes. His impatience cannot away at any time with the methodical slowness of Maréchal Daun. After each success they chant *Te Deums*, which lose much time. They let the enemy retire in good order after gaining advantages. "It might have been difficult to damage them," he remarks, "but the truth is we were not damaging." In a first affair, where the object was to occupy the crest of a height, he arrives with his company at the same time as the enemy. "We had a moment of flux and reflux, like the pit at the opera." This image comes naturally to him, as though war

<sup>1</sup> Wallons (in English, Walloons): Belgians of Gallic origin, speaking French, and occupying the provinces of Hainault, Namur, Liège, Luxembourg, and southern Brabant. — TR.



were a fête. He makes his first prisoners, a captain and fifteen or sixteen men, who, finding their retreat cut off, surrender. "I sent them to the rear with boyish delight." The affair over, he has lost half his battalion, and the victorious fragments remain exposed to the fire of a battery. "It came into no one's head to order us under shelter, though all was over, and our artillery was scarcely answering that of the Prussians. But one does not like to give advice in such matters,"—meaning thereby that he preferred to remain exposed to danger, even uselessly. I only cite these passages to give an idea of the tone of the Prince de Ligne in speaking of things of war with rapidity and zest.

If we go deeper, without, however, pretending to technical knowledge, we find the characters of the various generals vividly sketched by means of their own actions: Maréchal Daun, prudent, circumspect, methodical, who on one occasion was seen to gallop for the first and only time in his life, and after the victory of Hochkirch began on the field to write to Maria Theresa,—that she might receive his account of it on Saint-Theresa's day,—instead of giving the proper orders for pursuit. He rested his sheet of paper on a stone. "It was our stone of stumbling," remarks the prince, who liked such play on words, especially if there was any imagination in it. In his opinion, the victory should have been completed before it was reported. Of Lacy and Loudon, who are the generals of his choice and his admiration, he is proud and self-glorifying to call himself from afar the pupil. As for the great Frederick, the Prince de Ligne makes us fully feel the spirit of his tactics during this weary war, in which he was satisfied, as a general thing, not to be crushed,—to be "neither victor nor vanquished, content with that state of uncertainty." Apropos of a situation advantageous to the Prussians, "the king,"



observes the Prince de Ligne, "occupied it perfectly; he enjoyed his usual pleasure, that of keeping us in suspense."

At the close of the campaign of 1759, the Prince de Ligne, being then twenty-four years old, was chosen to carry to the King of France at Versailles the news of the affair at Maxen [where the Prussian general Finck surrendered to the Austrians]. He relates his first appearance in that Athens, to which by nature he belonged, with piquancy and some little flourish. His fine Parisian moment, his dashing French hour, had not yet come.

Some years after peace was made he returned to Paris, and lived there for a time before he was sufficiently appreciated. Madame du Deffand, a severe but also a most clear-sighted judge, speaks of having just made his acquaintance in the summer of 1767; he was then thirty-two years old. "The Prince de Ligne," she says in a letter to Horace Walpole (August 3d), "is not the stepson of the Princesse de Ligne-Luxembourg, but her nephew. He is an acquaintance of mine and I see him sometimes; he is gentle, polished, a good fellow, and a trifle wild. He wishes, I fancy, to resemble the Chevalier de Boufflers, but he has not, by any means, so much wit; he is, in fact, his mimic." I am struck by the fact that Grimm about the same time says nearly the same thing in speaking of a letter addressed by the prince in 1770 to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, offering him an asylum against persecution at Belœil [his country-seat in Belgium], like M. de Girardin, who made Jean-Jacques accept one later at Ermenonville. "This letter," Grimm adds, "has had no success in Paris, because it is not thought sufficiently genuine; the pretension to intellect is a malady that people do not recover from in this country." Two points may be remarked on here: in the first place, persons who are already in possession of reputation

and credit, and who watch your start, make difficulties in admitting you; they compare you with others who have won a rank already; the places are all taken in their mind. the heights are occupied. To gain them, you must dislodge your predecessors, which cannot be done in a day, nor without some effort. Secondly, it is to be inferred that the Prince de Ligne at starting forced his manner. Saint-Lambert said of the dawning Boufflers, "He is Voisenou the Great." The Prince de Ligne was aiming to be Boufflers the Great. This was pretension. He has written somewhere: "I prefer a stanza of Anacreon to the Iliad, and the Chevalier de Boufflers to an Encyclopedia."

I have noted already (for I like to grasp the lofty or the serious sides of agreeable people) his worship of the military religion, which enraptured him as a child with the glory of such heroes as Prince Eugène and Maurice de Saxe. Possibly all that he lacked to take high rank in this direction was a command-in-chief, bestowed in time; for, without speaking of his intrepidity on the battle-field, he possessed the *coup-d'œil*, the glance that sees, of a true soldier. But together with this noble and strengthening ideal he had another, of a totally different kind, which came of an imagination that was somewhat affected and spoiled by the air of the century. "Who cares," he said, "that Bussy fought at the head of the light-horse of France at the battle of the Dunes? But they remember well enough the 'Amorous History of the Gauls' and the Song of the Hallelujah. When a man paints himself in his works, especially on the side of voluptuous pleasure, he interests every one, above all, young men; they long to have lived with the agreeable rakes of Anet and the Temple, and those gentlemen at Roissy." All of which carries us back to the little suppers with *roués*, the Du Barrys and others, and to a certain early affectation of license and fash-

ionable debauchery, of which the Prince de Ligne may have had, perhaps insensibly, to correct himself. He did correct himself of it, as he did of the desire to display his wit, of which he had plenty without assuming it. "But even in their errors there are persons whom everything becomes, because they have grace and tact." He himself was one of those persons from his youth up; and until his end he must always have had the desire to please. "None but boors are without it." But his great precept in such matters is, above all else, to *imitate no one*. "The method would surely be detected and all would be spoiled. The greatest art in pleasing is to have no art." This he must have practised himself, if not in his first period, certainly in his second.

He whom Madame du Deffand and Grimm found difficulty in admitting to be of the pure race of French wits, became one so naturally that, writing in 1807 from Töplitz to his compatriot Prince d'Areberg, Mirabeau's former friend, and speaking to him of M. de Talleyrand, who had just arrived, he says: "Fancy his pleasure in being received by me; for there are no Frenchmen left in the world but him and *you and me* — who are not Frenchmen." And in saying that he spoke the truth.

He made his first essay in Paris under Louis XV., but he succeeded completely under Louis XVI., in that young and frolicsome Court, among his true contemporaries. He has painted in a few airy pages, with inimitable touch, those matutinal and familiar cavalcades, those promenades, where Queen Marie Antoinette enraptured and thrilled all hearts, yet never ceased to deserve respect. He has shown us that lovable and calumniated queen in her true colours; as he does, later on, all the other illustrious sovereigns he has known, — the Empress Catherine, Frederick the Great, Joseph II., Gustavus III. On each of these historical personages

the Prince de Ligne is at once an accurate and rapid witness and the most animated, easy, and natural of painters. His judgments are of great value, and the sound sense that underlies his amiability is readily discerned.

In the interviews that he had with Frederick at the camp of Neustadt in 1770, the conversation having turned on religion, the king talked freely and with little decency, as he did with such men as La Mettrie and d'Argens. "I thought," says the Prince de Ligne, "that he set rather too high a value on his damnation and boasted too much of it. . . . At any rate, it was bad taste to exhibit himself in that way. I made no reply when he spoke to me thus." With Voltaire, another sovereign, to whom he made a visit at Ferney, and whose conversation, gestures, incongruities even, in all their dishabille and petulance, he gives us to the life, he had more than one serious discussion. "He was just then in love," he says, "with the English Constitution. I remember that I said to him: 'Monsieur de Voltaire, add to that its supporter, the ocean, without which it would not last a year.'" The man who seemed the more trivial of the two was not in this instance the least wise.

This serious and sensible side of his nature, which he never had any opportunity of developing to results in public affairs, turned in the Prince de Ligne to the profit of his character as *l'homme aimable*. But even in being only that, to the exclusion of other things, there is progress to be made if such a man would continue to deserve his reputation. He must nourish that charm, as he advances, with all sorts of accurate and solid ideas, without appearing to do so; the agreeable man of sixty, if only to seem always twenty, must not be agreeable as men are at twenty, when half their charm, in many cases, is a winning face and pretty manners. He must, though all the while preserving his desire to please,

add to that charm qualities which he did not have at twenty. While feeling himself ever in concert with youth, he must have experience that shall always accompany him, yet never be marked. But for that matter, the Prince de Ligne, who knows all about it far better than any one, shall develop the idea as it suits him, and recite to us the several degrees, or, so to speak, the successive seasons of the *homme aimable*.

“I know men,” he says, “who have only as much wit as they need to be fools. Listen to them, they talk well; read them, they write finely; at any rate it is said so. All men have intelligence now-a-days; but if there is not much in their ideas, distrust their phrases. Unless there is wit, novelty, piquancy, and originality, such men of intellect are in my opinion fools. Those who have this wit, novelty, and piquancy may still be only half agreeable; but if to that half they add imagination, charming details, perhaps even *happy* incongruities, things unexpected that flash like lightning, refinement, elegance, precision, a pretty turn of instruction, of reasoning that does not weary and is never in the least commonplace, a simple or distinguished bearing, a happy choice of expressions, gayety, aptness, grace, carelessness, a manner of their own in speaking or writing, you may then say that such men have really and truly minds and are agreeable.”

But now comes a second degree, the second season that makes a lasting maturity, without which the agreeable man, even though he be defined in the above manner, runs a risk of dying within himself, or of turning into fossilized youth.

“If,” says the prince, “adding to all this, he has a knowledge of the literature and the language of other nations, if he has philosophy, if he has seen much, compared well, judged soundly, met with adventures, played a part in the

world, and if he has loved, or been loved, he is still more agreeable.”

You think that this attains to the highest degree ; but the Prince de Ligne, who will not content himself at so small a cost, and who imports into this grace and social felicity something of the fire and vivifying poesy which he puts into his actions of war, completes his model and gives us, in so doing, his own portrait.

“If, adding still further to the above, he inspires the desire to meet him again, if he leads others to find in him a continual charm, if he is greatly concerned for others, and greatly detached from himself, with a strong desire to please, to oblige, to take part in the success of others, to make others shine, if he knows how to listen, if he possesses sensibility, elevation of mind, sincerity, probity, and excellence of heart, oh, then he brings happiness to the society in which he lives, and he is certain of universal success.”

You will observe that in order to complete and crown his picture he thinks it essential to add to his idea of the charming man a sentiment of humanity, of affection, of sincere self-detachment in the midst of success. The reason is, he well knows that the peril of what is commonly called amiability in social life and the use, exclusively, of mental gifts is *hardness* and *selfishness* ; the remedy must therefore be found in the qualities themselves, the contrary of their defects, in order that the full charm may be acquired, and that the charm may last.

Among the desultory writings which escaped the Prince de Ligne during the first half of his life and which best depict him at that date, I note particularly those that he has written about gardens in connection with his own at Belœil. This was the period when the Abbé Delille published his poem entitled “Gardens,” in which he said of  
 Mem. Ver. 6—A



Belœil, that beautiful place near Ath in Belgium, the property and partly the creation of the Prince de Ligne, "Belœil, magnificent, yet rural!" France was then in a vein of creation and remodelling of gardens; the English style was being introduced and breaking in upon the harmonies of Le Nôtre. It was who should study to diversify Nature, and profit by the study to embellish her. M. de Girardin created Ermenonville; M. de Laborde, Méréville; M. Boutin had Tivoli; M. Watelet, Moulin-Joli. Belœil was, and I am glad to think still is, a combination charmingly composed of French and English gardens,—something natural, yet regular; elegant, but majestic. All that was grand, formal, and in the style of Le Nôtre came from the prince's father; he himself was ever seeking to add the varied, the unexpected; time alone was lacking to him to complete his work, his poem. He is not exclusive; he would be very sorry to banish the straight line; he does not wish to substitute English monotony for French monotony, which was happening even then; but in gardens, as in love, it is his opinion that we should not show too much at first, because, the first moments of pleasure over, we yawn and are bored. He treats of buildings in their relation to the surrounding country. One building should be a palace, a royal residence, another a château, another a country-house, a hunting-box, a house in the fields or among the vineyards. But wherever it be, "I exclude," he says, "everything with a bourgeois façade, without movement in the roof and elevation, without centre, without projection on the wings; also all that is plaster with its vulgar air; and I advise either the noble or the simple, the magnificent or the pretty, but always the *appropriate*, the piquant, and the distinguished."

Why do we say English gardens rather than Chinese gardens, or natural gardens? According to the prince,  
Mem.

Horace has pictured to us an English garden; his *Qua pinus ingens* is the best, sweetest, and most smiling description of them. "That little brook that is fretting to escape," said the prince, "gave me even more pleasure to arrange than I take in reading."

In reading all that he has written about gardens we are repaid by charming passages, sketches of sites as if in water-colour, washed-in lightly but very vividly touched. Sometimes he exclaims against "templomania;" though he himself admits too many altars, statues, and allegories, according to the taste of his day. Still, in the designs among which he dallies there are plans and suggestions wholly natural and suited to all fortunes. "If you are not rich," he says, "you can still have all you need with a house of one story, simple, neat, the roof hidden, a coating of colour, a few casts of bas-reliefs or some rustic lattice-work; a broad and rapid brook escaping from real rocks, a trembling foot-bridge, like that of Aline, a few benches, perhaps a stone-table, a shepherd's hut, a movable salon rolling on four wheels; a few pines, proud without arrogance; a few Italian poplars, darting upward, not showy, but agile and friendly, one weeping willow, one Judas-tree, an acacia, a plane-tree; three flower-beds, cast hap-hazard on the grass, daisies in a corner of your lawn and a little field of poppies and of bluets."

I make no mention of the chapter on allegories, inscriptions, hieroglyphics, of which he desires that no abuse be made, though at the same time he grants their use as a tribute paid to the taste of the day.

"With all this," he adds, "and a ha-ha, unseen and sunken, letting us enjoy the slopes, the vales, the woods, the fields, the village, the ancient castle of the neighbourhood, I could surpass both Kent and Le Nôtre; and with twenty thousand francs for the whole work, and two hundred francs a year to



keep it up, I could bring travellers fifty miles off their route to see it."

It is thus that he constructs you a Tibur, according to the dream of a moderate competency; but if you are rich, he will propose to you columns, marbles, galleries with burnished domes and tiers of terraces. "I mean that these shall be far distant from each other, in a great space," he says, "blending with water and turf and the finest oaks."

By these quotations I am only trying to give the sentiment that circulates through all that the Prince de Ligne has written about gardens. He writes in a style most contrary to that of certain persons of our acquaintance,—in a joyous style, through which the sun-rays pass. He brings to his composition of gardens a strong recollection of society and a taste for attracting and bringing it thither. He thinks, with La Fontaine, that "gardens talk little." He loves Nature, but rarely to be alone with it. He takes the country on his return from camps, in the interval between two campaigns, as he himself says happily: "You whom the Court and Army relieve for a while of attendance, amuse yourselves in your gardens, uplift your souls in your forests." He is so sociable, even in his hours of retreat and solitude, that he would not be sorry if he could see a great capital from his rural home. "'There,' I should say, sitting at the foot of an ancient oak, 'there is the great assemblage of absurdities and vices,'" and he enumerates them; pushing to its conclusion the pretty theme, which parodies that of the sage of Lucretius enjoying the sight of a storm. But he wants all sorts of people about him, even animals, provided they are not stupid. This is truly that spirit of society which was mingled by the eighteenth century with its love for gardens. Since then we have made a stride in our worship of Nature; I do not say that we like to be alone more

than they did in former times, but we are less afraid of being so; and we have fewer garden amateurs who would say with the Prince de Ligne: "I have always so loved social life of every kind that I lately parted with a Salvator Rosa for almost nothing, because it was sheer desert, and deserted places have to me an air of annihilation; a picture without figures is like the end of the world."

In after years the Prince de Ligne, in his "Refuge" on the Leopoldberg, near Vienna, seems to have been brought to admire Nature more truly for herself. He has left some papers as to this which breathe a soul at last initiated; proving that he was well rewarded for his assiduous sylvan labours. The *habit* of this kind of beauty renewed his enjoyment instead of lessening it, which is the great test of all the things we love. "I perceive every day," he says, "and more and more, that we never weary of the noble spectacle of nature." His practical moral in this line is that we should "seek out, not make;" in other words, find and recognize the existing points of view, the natural lay of the land, and be content to give them all their value, not seeking to create nor to construct.

How often during the last few days, while reading this series of the prince's thoughts and excursions among gardens, have I wished that some man of taste and observation (not an indifferent and hasty editor) would make a diligent and discriminating selection which should give their true value to so many choice passages. A number of rapid glimpses, full of freshness and invention, could be found. There is one, for instance, upon the choice of seeds for the environs of a park. The prince supposes that the park is not inclosed by walls; that the view extends beyond it through well-managed vistas. He therefore chooses seeds that will give diversity of tone to the plains; he assorts "the tender green

of the flax, the honey-grass, the mottled buckwheat, the pale yellow of the wheat, the vivid green of the barley, and many other species, which," he says, "I do not yet know;" the whole together forming a distance to the picture and a pleasure to the eye. All this is said of a mere nothing, with careless, piquant lightness, mingled with an avowal of inexperience, as if by some Hamilton who had come to love sincerely rural scenes.

In the history of the picturesque in our literature the sketches and landscapes of the Prince de Ligne may serve as a date and a landmark. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had already discovered and revealed solitude and the sweetnesses and sublimities it enshrines; Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Chateaubriand were about, in their turn, to discover and describe the virgin forest, the savage and splendid beauties of another world; Obermann was soon to cast himself into the solitary contemplation and inmost expression of far-off, desolate scenes; but amateurs, who were men of the world, men of taste, and of noble taste, moved indeed by Nature, and yet not wishing to enjoy it apart from society, said (among other things) with the Prince de Ligne, and they could not say it better than he:—

"I love the copses and vistas of a wood, the fine paths better kept than those of a garden, the pretty fences, and above all, those glades of birches that look like marble columns standing forth against the tall, dark greenery of the wood. I love the garden air of the forests, and the forest air of the gardens; and it is thus that I mean always to work."

These sketches (with many others) of the Prince de Ligne seem to me to represent to us to-day the spirit of the actual transition which, profiting by the ideas and inspirations of the great writers and innovators of the picturesque, endeav-

oured to conciliate the latter with the traditions of our taste and the inclinations of our nature. I speak of the Prince de Ligne as being altogether a Frenchman at the time that he wrote on Belœil. It is what he then was, and never ceased to be.

“Away with the semi-amiable, the semi-learned men! We can get more from those who are not so at all. Let us have the natural man; above all, naturalness.” This was a maxim of the Prince de Ligne. Naturalness: he had it in his lifetime in his own person; to-day he does not seem always to have it in his style, which is written conversation, nor in his letters and the sayings that are quoted of him; and the reason is that he lives no longer. The mark of the times and the world in which he lived is stamped in the corner of what he writes; and though he says, “In all we do let us have what is called in painting the *broad manner*,” he shows the effects of Trianon. Eager, brilliant, sparkling with wit, he sought the best, but did not always keep to it; he had more imagination than decorum or taste. This man of lofty stature, of fine and noble countenance, with a martial and intelligent air, *wore ear-rings*. That being told, let us take him on his good points: his witty sayings, which often go far into truth and earnestness, his perfect knowledge of life, of the world, of men.

One of the episodes attached to his name, the memory of which his letters have consecrated, was the journey he made to the Crimea in 1787 with the Empress Catherine, her minister Potemkin, and the whole of the diplomatic corps, including M. de Ségur, who represented France. Poniatowski, King of Poland, appeared for a moment at one of the stopping-places on their route. The Emperor of Germany, Joseph II., was one of the party during the whole last half of the trip. The Prince de Ligne has written nine letters

on the subject to the Marquise de Coigny, — a bulletin of fairy-land, of enchantment, for the benefit of that world of Paris and of Versailles which the Assembly of Notables was already undermining. “Cleopatra’s fleet left Kiev as soon as a general cannonading assured us of the breaking up of the ice in the Borysthenes [Dnieper]. If any one had asked, on seeing us embark on our big and little vessels to the number of eighty sail, with three thousand men in their crews, ‘what the devil we were going to do in those galleys,’ we should have answered, ‘Amuse ourselves, and — *Vogue la galère!*’”

Amuse themselves, and something more — initiate a war. On arriving at the mouth of the Dnieper the flotilla of the empress came to the town and fortress of Oczakow, then belonging to the Turks, from which a dozen Turkish vessels sailed out and stationed themselves across the river. This angered Catherine: she took a map to study the country and flicked the spot with her finger-nail, smiling, — a presage of war! It is well to notice in the prince’s account with what heedlessness the affair was begun. One object of the trip was to drag in Joseph II., who was not inclined for war. The Prince de Ligne assisted; he confesses the whole manœuvre, — not in his letters to the Marquise de Coigny, which were written for the purpose of being shown, but in a narrative, written later, and after the event, which will be found in the twenty-fourth volume of his Works.

Singular thing! Catherine, who thought herself ready, was not so at all; she had a mind for war, and yet she hesitated. “Gazing at the portrait of Peter I., which she always carries in her pocket when she travels, she said to me several times, in a manner that dictated my answer: ‘What would he say? what would he do if he were here?’ It is easy to guess all that my desire to please and to make war inspired me to

reply." Here the Prince de Ligne makes his sincere *mêe culpâ*. He contributed, without reflection he says, to the harm that was done. Each time that the empress showed him that portrait of Peter the Great on her snuff-box, and repeated her "What would he say? what would he do?" he made the desired answer. This is the only time we detect him in saying a slighting word of the Empress Catherine and of the disadvantage of having women upon thrones. "They are overwhelmed with homage; they make no distinctions, but accept it all as sovereigns. Thus Ségur's gallantry, the piquant indifference of Fitz-Herbert [English ambassador],—which only makes his bit of praise the more subtle, because it has the air of escaping him unwillingly,—the flattery of some, the servility of others, intoxicate this princess." He sketches for us delightfully a few of these intoxicating scenes; especially one at the moment of their arrival in the Crimea. The *misc-en-scène* was due to the clever Prince Potemkin, but the *feuilletons* are those of the Prince de Ligne. I send the reader to them.

However, when the war broke out, when Turkey (for she could do so then) was the first to take offence, and the news came that the Russian ambassador was imprisoned in the Sept-Tours, Catherine, who by that time had returned to her capital, received these events with a less joyous air than that with which she had provoked them. She became once more what she really was, "a sovereign for history far more than for romance," who now thought only of procuring certain solid and feasible results with the least possible difficulty. They had all gone fast and far in anticipating schemes of partition among the sovereigns; they had even asked themselves amid the enchantments of the Crimea, "What the devil shall we do with Constantinople?" But now they were content to lay siege to Oczakow.



The Prince de Ligne, during this journey to the Dnieper and the Crimea, had been only the most agreeable of courtiers and knights of romance. One day, as the imperial galley passed close to the rock where tradition places the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and while the party were discussing that point of historical mythology, Catherine, who was walking the deck with majesty, grace, and slowness, stretched forth her hand, and said: "I give you, Prince de Ligne, that disputed territory." The story adds that the prince, seeing they were near the bank, sprang into the water as he was, in uniform, and immediately took possession of the rock; carving on one side, the visible side, the divine name of Catherine, and on the other (so he says) the wholly human name of the lady of his thoughts, the lady of the moment—for he changed often. He liked such lively frolicking.

But towards the end of the same year, 1787, he becomes, as far as he is able, a personage of history; he wanted war, and he was now among the first to enter it. As he did not think his own sovereign, Joseph II., was prepared to begin it quickly enough, he asked to be taken, provisionally, into the service of Russia. "After committing various follies in the course of my life," he says, "I have ended by committing a stupidity." We see him now without any definite part to play, a soldier, half diplomat, a general-officer, half counsellor, but a counsellor very little heeded, side by side with Prince Potemkin, who caresses him and fools him. "I am trustful," he says; "I always believe in those who like me." Oczakow is besieged; Potemkin is nothing of a soldier, but he wishes to appear one. The Prince de Ligne, out of delicacy, abstains from writing anything against him to the Court, but he eats his heart out at the petty rivalries and intrigues that take the place of battles. "What follies, whims, childishnesses, anti-military things of all kinds went

on during the space of five months that I remained before that beggarly place! I tried to ignore them; but I suffered, like a musician who listens to instruments that are out of tune."

From there he went to the Russian army in Moldavia, under command of Maréchal Romanzoff; there, indeed, was a soldier, but a man who was even more wily than Prince Potemkin, and who listened to the Prince de Ligne as little. The latter had his quarters at Jassy, and while fretting against his enforced inaction, he made acquaintance with the boyards and the wives of the boyards, the beautiful Moldavians, the indolent Phanariots, the half-Asiatic Greek women, whose grace and careless ease and dances he describes in his letters to the Comte de Ségur.

Shrewd political perceptions mingle with these pretty sketches; even the prince's literary tastes find food there, so that later, when he reads La Harpe's "Cours de Littérature" and makes annotations (often very keen and very just), he reproves the celebrated professor for his chapter on the Greeks. "If you had seen, Monsieur de La Harpe," he says, "and studied the Greeks of to-day as I have in treating with them on affairs of public policy, you would know that they resemble the ancients. Circumstances alone prevent them from showing it. Meantime, examine their minds, look in their beautiful eyes, remark the vivacity or the nobility of their present Greek language." He says elsewhere, in criticising our manner of translating the ancients and our habit of ignorantly judging them: "We must go to the fountain-head, to the original. I know that time may have corrupted it, but I have shown translations to Greeks of the regions about Pera and the Archipelago, and to the handsome, well-educated wives of the boyards of Jassy, persons who knew French well, and



spoke the modern Greek, but understood their ancient literature thoroughly from father to son, and they one and all assured me that the originals were totally different from the translations, and that it was most amusing to read of the discussions in France about the ancients, who, especially the poets, were not in the least understood there." This opinion (to me, who am as ignorant as the prince himself) seems at the present day to be strictly just.

At length, however, Joseph II. began his own war against the Turks, less fortunately than he had reason to expect. The Prince de Ligne has no longer any cause to be absent from the Austrian ranks. He asks for his recall, and serves under his former general, Loudon, at the siege of Belgrade (September and October. 1789); he helps him effectually by a series of well-manceuvred attacks, and towards the close by placing a battery at the point of an island, which does marvels. After Lacy, who was more completely a soldier, uniting both dash and coolness, he valued no one so highly as Loudon, a great warrior the moment he was in action. "I was all on fire myself for that Being who was more god than man in war." After the taking of Belgrade the Prince de Ligne, who had been for some time in a sort of semi-disgrace [owing to an unfounded suspicion of his sympathy with the Belgian revolution], obtained a distinction due to merit only; he was named Commander of the military Order of Maria Theresa. His health, injured by a succession of fevers, needed several months in which to recover itself. The revolution in the Low Countries had begun, that of France was beginning to flame. The Prince de Ligne is at the dawn of great events; he is fifty-five years of age; his robust constitution, recovered from the effects of Belgrade, is still well able to endure fatigue. He aspires to a command-in-chief; he is on the point, perhaps, of showing his full proportions;

for it is in war only, as he tells us himself, that he has ever dreamed of playing a grand part; in other directions he has been content to be a witness and a confidant. But the Emperor Joseph dies (February 20, 1790<sup>1</sup>), his adored Joseph II., as he calls him, and with him the fortunes of the Prince de Ligne come to an end; his career is broken, or, at any rate, closed. O sorrow! in vain has he fed on noble desires and generous ambitions; he will never be anything henceforth but the veteran of elegance, the last of the knights of old.

We, who in these days are searching everywhere for material on the history of manners and morals and the distinction of characters, should note well the point of separation of periods which the prince, better than any one, helps us to observe and define. In his letters to M. de Ségur, dated Oczakow, during that melancholy siege where, spite of slowness and intrigues, a few brilliant cannonadings and combats took place, the Prince de Ligne speaks of the Prince of Nassau, that brilliant paladin, a sort of knight-errant through many lands, in turn and at his fancy colonel of infantry, colonel of cavalry, and vice-admiral. He also speaks of a French volunteer, another *pretty phenomenon* of chivalry, Comte Roger de Damas, of whom he says: "François I., the Great Condé, and the Maréchal de Saxe would fain have had a son like him." These were the last bouquet, if I may so express it, of the flower of our old French knighthood, of those valiant and gallant courtiers, civilized and refined, whose swords were brave and brilliant, but sheathed in silken scabbards. The Prince de Ligne was of their race. At the moment of the taking of Belgrade he writes to M. de Ségur, combining with true art his various sensations: "I

<sup>1</sup> He writes to the Empress Catherine, on the death of Joseph II., a letter which deserves to become historical.

saw with great military pleasure and great philosophical pain the twelve thousand cannon-balls that I aimed at those poor infidels hurtling through the air." And after entering the town he says: "We smelt there, all at the same time, death, burning, and attar of rose; for it is extraordinary to what point the Turks unite their voluptuous tastes with barbarism." He himself likes to play with such antitheses.

But now a new era was about to open, imposing, stern. In the great democratic convulsion when the soil of France gave birth to armies, after the first inuring to war and its apprenticeship was over, there were heroes and knights also; but these Lannes, and Murats, and Neys were, each in his own way, a primitive Roland or Achilles, who knew nothing of the polished graces and refinements of the old reigns. M. de Narbonne alone, as if to honour that memory, presented a last specimen of them on the emperor's staff; all the rest were of the soil,—keeping their origin visible beneath their purple and gold; lions in courage, a generation made for the strife of giants.

The Prince de Ligne, in spite of his mental affiliations with the eighteenth century, did not hesitate a moment in his antipathy to the Revolution; but, for all that, he was one of the first to judge rightly of the great new movement, its bearings, and its consequences in the future. They are not predictions like those of a de Maistre that I expect of him, but sallies and outlooks full of acumen and accuracy. A piquant letter addressed to his old friend Ségur, who had given some adhesion to the first acts of the Revolution shows us the Prince de Ligne in 1790. In the tone of the letter much is true and much false, but the situation is keenly felt and vividly characterized. He exhorts Ségur to emigrate, which the latter has the right spirit not to do; but the prince advises it in noble terms: "Give your hand to

Louis XVI. to reascend his throne, instead of helping him to come down from it. Be, all of you, more royalist than he." The Prince de Ligne could speak at his ease, he whose country was in some sort *ad libitum*, and who defined himself as French in Austria, Austrian in France, and either in Russia.

But he is not long in becoming more circumspect, and less ready to prognosticate. The Allied Powers have not done what he wished; they have given France the time to train herself to war. The *émigrés*, in his opinion, have carried Honour (in the royalist sense) out of the country; the "rebels" have kept nothing of their nation but intelligence and courage. He forgets that the "rebels," who are nearly the whole nation, have kept intact the sentiment of patriotism. He is forced, however, to acknowledge that talent has taken the place of the guillotine: "From Athens France has been to Sparta, passing through the country of the Huns." In an essay on the new French army he does it, not indeed complete justice, but at least the beginning of justice. As for the republic, he no more forgives it than he did on its first day. In his opinion, contrary to that of Montesquieu, it is terror alone that makes republics. "God grant it may have virtue for six months, and it will be destroyed."

He believes from the start that the most distinct result of the French Revolution and of all that happened in '93 would be to strengthen the monarchical principle. The rule of '93 would have, he thought, the effect of the drunken Helot, and disgust the nations from copying it. "We shall sooner see," he says, "republics become kingdoms, than kingdoms become republics. They will mourn in Louis XVI. the best of men, in his wife the most beautiful and perfect of queens, with thousands of other victims, and they will serve

God the better for it and respect their sovereigns more." Here he turns to gravity of tone and thought. "It is difficult not to be serious at the bottom of our souls," says the prince in one of his "Scattered Thoughts," "if that bottom is not, as it is in some people, on the surface."

He was royalist, not from prejudice, but from reflection and principle. He thought that in all the great moments of history which last and fix themselves permanently "everything depends on a single man" or on a very small number of men. Reigns, even the most severe, seemed to him to offer more chances to talent and to distinguished men than anarchy. "The Scipios," he said, "were great aristocrats. Pericles was a species of king. Horace and Virgil would have had little success during a civil war. If Montaigne and that good La Fontaine had lived in our day, the one with his truths, the other with his absent mind and his naïveté, they would have been the first hanged." In all of which the Prince de Ligne does as others do in like cases; he twists history to his own side.

There is a letter from the prince to a very distinguished *émigré*, M. de Meilhan, a former government official, a man of letters and a man of intellect. It discusses the changes that the Revolution will bring into the public manners and taste. "After what has happened of late, all ideas must necessarily be re-made." He thinks, first, that the universality of the French language will suffer, that Paris will no longer be, as before, the recognized literary and intellectual capital of Europe. He makes a very keen remark on the *émigrés* and the spirit of aristocracy which has found its way into democracy itself: "Many persons flatter themselves they will be noblemen by emigrating; not one of them, however insignificant he may be, but thinks he is the equal of a Montmorency in serving throne and altar." The

result of the emigration will therefore be to vulgarize nobility. Unable to separate the idea of taste from that of the charming society in the midst of which he had lived, he concludes by saying: "They may restore the throne in France, but good taste never." The lustre, grace, and urbanity of manners in the most amiable of all nations have vanished before the presence of crime; in their place a sullen republic puts the spirit of discussion and false eloquence. Do not take the prince's words for more than the lively and piquant talk of a man who lies in bed in the morning and thinks aloud; you may then gather in on all sides witty sayings and whetted ones which will make you think and swear, and say yes and no in a breath—which is what the prince desires. And even when we agree and approve, his sayings are still conversation, to which we must supply at every moment the answers that are lacking.

Speaking to this very M. de Meilhan, who had an idea of writing a History of the Empress Catherine, the Prince de Ligne said, while encouraging him: "It needs a man of good society to write history."

But great things were doing at the war, and the Prince de Ligne was not of it. This inaction, to which his Court condemned him, was cruel. "Apparently," he says, "I am dead with Joseph II., resuscitated a moment to be invalided with Maréchal Loudon and die again with Maréchal Lacy." There came moments when he would fain have been appointed to the chief command in Italy, where he could have measured himself with the conqueror of Rivoli and Marengo. Such an ambition was honourable. There were several ways, no doubt, of being vanquished by Buona-parte; we can imagine some that were worthy of envy. The Prince de Ligne concealed his warrior-pain beneath the





*Belair*





smiles of a man of the world and the indifference of a philosopher. But the wound was there.

He spent his last insensibly declining years in Vienna, in his little house on the rampart, or at his "Refuge" on the Leopoldberg. He read, he wrote every morning without fail, he printed his Works, too muddled, too swamped and riddled with blunders by the printers, not to speak of his own. Disillusioned as to fame, enjoyed by every one, he charmed the society about him, and cheated Time as best he could. When La Harpe's "Cours de Littérature," or his "Correspondence" with the Grand Duke of Russia, or the Memoirs of Bezenval appeared the Prince de Ligne read them, pen in hand, adding curious and interesting comments to page after page, which careful editors of those works would do well in future to make use of. On Raynal, his tone and heaviness; on Beaumarchais, his mystifications and charlatanism; on Duclos, Saint-Lambert, Crébillon, and a hundred others, he gives strokes that are original and as if he had dined with them all. Of Mme. Geoffrin he says, in approving the picture that La Harpe makes of her: "The portrait is of the utmost truth, but he should have added her remarkable talent for definitions." We feel the value of such remarks from a man who has seen so much and so well, and who has no other pretension than to remember with accuracy.

There is one topic to which he often returns, *à propos* of either Bezenval or La Harpe; it is that of Queen Marie Antoinette; and each time, inspired by his heart, by a faithful and tender imagination, he shows her to us in her true light, with her innocent giddiness, her ingenuousness, and all the glow of a face "on which could be seen to develop, with blushes, her pretty regrets, her excuses, and often her kindnesses." It is when he thinks the least of

what he writes that he paints her best, and makes us see with one stroke her goodness and her grace. After vindicating her on all essential points, he ends, with a chivalrous sentiment that recalls that of Burke, by putting her memory under the protection of the young French soldiers, who had never seen her and, coming at a later day, were pure of all ingratitude towards her. "At least," he writes, about the date of Austerlitz and Jena, "those who have acquired such glory under the banners of their emperor must pity that unhappy princess whom they would have served so well." That is an alliance of ideas and feelings which does him honour. In making that appeal the Prince de Ligne touched true; he was not mistaken; Marie Antoinette has been vindicated by the new France against the old.

Old age came on, however, though the Prince de Ligne adorned it to the last with charm and elegance. He became aware one day that two beautiful women whom he often visited lived on an upper storey, to be reached by many stairs. He wrote them a lively little note, taking leave of them and saying: "Adieu; you are decidedly the last whom I have loved on a third floor." But this apparent gayety served only to conceal within him regrets and memories.

"Memories!" he cried in his moments of solitude. "They call them sweet and tender, but in whatever form they come to me I declare them hard and bitter. War, love, success of other days, places where we have had all that, you poison our present! 'What a difference!' we say, 'How time passes! I *was* victorious, loved, and young!' We feel so far, so far from those fine moments which went by so fast that a song heard then, or a tree beneath which we sat recalls them, and we burst into tears. 'I was there,' we say, 'the night of the famous battle.' — 'Here he pressed my hand.' — 'It was from there I started for those charming

winter quarters.' *Then* I thought well of men. Woman, the Court, the town, the men of business had not then deceived me. My soldiers (a society of honest men, purer, more delicate than men of the world) adored me, my peasants blessed me, my trees grew, that which I loved was still in the world, it existed for me. Oh, memory! memory! It returned sometimes to the Duke of Marlborough; playing in his second childhood with his pages one day, a portrait before which he passed restored it for a moment, and he watered with tears the hands with which he covered his face."

Eloquent words! accents escaping from the heart! the voice of nature! Why did the amiable prince so seldom use them?

When the Congress of Vienna opened in 1814 the Prince de Ligne was by his position, and quite naturally, the grand-master of the ceremonies of that brilliant reunion. The younger of the diplomatists delighted in gathering about him and listening to him, making him their introducer and guide and echoing his witticisms as he uttered them: "*Le Congrès ne marche pas, il danse. . . .* The web of policy is embroidered with fêtes." But amid the brilliancy that surrounds him we catch a glimpse of shadows. The Prince de Ligne suffered at times from being looked on as a curiosity, a mere social convenience in this great meeting of kings and ministers about to determine the destinies of the world. He had begun too early to seem a relic. All that he felt to be a failure in his military career came back to him, at certain moments, with bitterness. One morning when he had gone to Schönbrunn, where the young King of Rome was living, the child, who was fond of the old marshal, began to play at soldiering before him. The marshal joined the game and commanded the manœuvre, but as he watched the boy the

thought must have come to him that it was more than a score of years since he had commanded in earnest before the enemy.

On a certain day, when he had received one of those little affronts that even the most amiable old age cannot always avoid when it persists in wishing to seem ever young, a few words escaped him, kindly as he was, against youth. "My day is gone," he said; "my world is dead. But after all, what is the merit of the youth of to-day that all the world should shower it with favours?" That merit was simply smiling and being young in its turn. The Prince de Ligne, in spite of his habitual sweetness of temper and manners, cannot quite protect himself from an attack of misanthropy. He was vexed at infatuations and all the imitations of talent and wit which usurped the reputation of that which was truer and more original. "There is such brigandage of success in society," he said, "that it disgusts me." But it was more in the spirit of his own philosophy that he wrote the following thought, which is the summary of his last views of happiness:—

"Evening is the old age of the day; winter the old age of the year; insensibility the old age of the heart; reason the old age of the spirit; illness that of the body; decline the old age of life. Each instant brings with it a sense of decrease; all things move, but faster in ill than in good. We are not as gay at fifteen as we were at ten, at thirty as at twenty, and so on till death. What wounds, accidents, falls, griefs, and derangements of the stomach have we not felt by the time we are thirty! and we suffer their effects to the end of our lives. Employments, ribbons, glory,—do they, after all, give as much pleasure as the first doll, the first sailor's suit? The child eats four meals a day; the hero often goes without his supper. Happy he who by the value

he places upon little things and his enjoyment of them prolongs his childhood. The happiest days are those that have a long morning and a short evening."

The Prince de Ligne died in Vienna December 13, 1814, in his eightieth year, during the session of the Congress, to which he procured, between two balls, the spectacle of a magnificent funeral. A Protestant writer is severe to the point of injustice upon this end of the Prince de Ligne. But the latter, in spite of his failings and his maxims *à la* Hamilton and Aristippus, was far from being an unbeliever or an atheist. "All that is very pretty," he said of the boast of scepticism, "so long as the death-knell is not heard." No one has spoken better than he on the origin of irreligion in Voltaire: "that desire to be *new, piquant, and quoted*, to laugh and create a laugh, to be what was called in those days a bold writer," — things which, in his opinion, actuated Voltaire more than any positive conviction. It was the Prince de Ligne who gave utterance to this fine thought:

"Unbelief is so surely an assumed air that if any one sincerely had it I do not see why he should not kill himself at his first pain of body or mind. People do not sufficiently think what human life would be with a real irreligion; atheists live under the shade of religion."

In what I have now said I have not meant to make a biography, or even a portrait of the Prince de Ligne, but merely to present him, and to save, so to speak, from the wreckage of his Works a few fine or charming passages, and to recall him to attention as one of the most sensible of the arbiters of elegance, and the most truly amiable of the fortunate of the earth.



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

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“L'HOMME aimable,” the term by which Sainte-Beuve justly characterizes the Prince de Ligne, is not translatable into English. *L'homme aimable* is pre-eminently a man of society; but the words “amiable,” “agreeable,” “lovable,” “charming” do not singly represent him; he is all of these and something more. The genius of social life is not that of the Anglo-Saxon; and this may be the reason why his language so inadequately renders *l'homme aimable*. The prince's own definition, given by Sainte-Beuve, and his life in practice stand for that man.

His was a life lived for pleasure and to give pleasure, but it was not a selfish life. He believed that to be happy and to make others happy was a proper object of existence; he looked to good and not to evil. In these days of introspection, when the discovery and study of evils prevail, it is comfortable to meet with a nature like his. For one thing, he thought no evil; his interpretations were generous, even of those, happily few, who wronged him. Throughout his writings scarcely a harsh word can be found, certainly never a harsh, unqualified judgment, although he freely expresses disapproval, and is not weak in doing so. When thwarted and mortified by Prince Potemkin he makes an inimitable portrait of him, in which generosity, and a loving generosity, prevails. Married by his father at nineteen without even knowing his wife, and living, certainly at



times, the life of a bachelor who did not feel himself bound by his conventional marriage vows, he nevertheless says, quite incidentally: "I have known only one really united family, and that is my own."

His love for his eldest son, Charles (he had seven children), was passionate; and the death of that gallant son, in the first war of the Revolution, broke his inmost heart; he never mentioned him again without tears, although he still continued to be the same *homme aimable* of society until he died in his eightieth year.

His memory has suffered a little from the fragmentary manner in which his writings and the records of his life have been given to the public; he himself having set the example. The varied, not to say romantic incidents of his career, and his own versatility have led his editors and commentators to present him not as a whole but in parts, and these dressed-up a little to suit their own interpretation of what he was. Sainte-Beuve, always sincerely seeking to understand and make clear to others the person of whom he writes, and subordinating himself to that purpose, is an exception. His portrait of the Prince de Ligne makes itself felt to be the best we have; his great merit of sincerity is nowhere more visible.

The present volumes seek to do what has not been done before with the life of the Prince de Ligne. They take his Fragmentary Memoir and fill its gaps with facts, sketches, letters, and opinions found in his Works. Thus the only consecutive history of the prince is here given, and given in his own words. It seems to bring out certain of his qualities that were not so distinctively social; such, for instance, as his sense of duty in his profession, his warm appreciation of others, his love of reading and of Nature, and his happiness in solitude. His was not a life of achieve-



ment, and it is doubtful whether a certain volatility would not have counteracted the value of his military genius (for he had that genius and the soldier's eye) had he obtained the object of his ambition, namely, a command-in-chief. He was therefore a disappointed man, but never an embittered one; nor was he at any time self-seeking. All these are fine qualities which have hitherto been a little overshadowed by his great social reputation, and also by a sort of giddiness of high spirits, most amusing, and even lovable in his youth, but which lasted in a modified form all his life.

If the reader should find that the Memoir thus filled in and amplified with the prince's own words is still fragmentary and lacks co-ordination he must kindly believe that there were difficulties in the way, especially in the fact that the prince seldom, except in his campaign journals and some of his letters, gives the date of either time or place, and that more than half his volumes have no index.

To avoid what to many persons is the great annoyance of footnotes, dates and short elucidating remarks are put into the text between brackets; and a few of the chapters are headed (also between brackets) with short statements intended to assist the reader in following the Memoir understandingly.

The Prince de Ligne, who speaks of his lineage in a few airy sentences with his accustomed carelessness, came of a very ancient and distinguished family. "We were all brave from father to son," he says. In the Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon more facts are given about his ancestry than he himself takes the trouble to tell us. In a list of the Grandees of Spain Saint-Simon says of his great-grandfather: "The Prince de Ligne of Flanders, whose mother was a Lorraine-Chaligny, niece of Queen Louise, wife of King Henri III., was grandson of the first Prince de Ligne, created

1601 by the Emperor Rodolphe II. He had the Golden Fleece, as did his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, also his elder brother, who died without children in 1641. He was general of cavalry in the Low Countries, ambassador of Spain to England, viceroy of Sicily, governor-general of the Milanais, Grandee of Spain 1650, councillor of State, and died in Madrid, December, 1679. He married a Nassau-Dilembourg-Seigen, widow of his elder brother, by dispensation. The grandeeship has descended to his male posterity, who all served Philippe V., and returned to the service of the emperor when the Spanish Low Countries were again under Austrian dominion."

The Prince de Ligne with whom we are concerned was this man's great-grandson. He was a last product of the eighteenth century, stopping short of its ultimate conclusions, and marking, as Sainte-Beuve says, the parting of its ways, or, more truly, its transition. His nature, sagacious, witty, inquiring, fearless, shrewd, and argumentative, threw him into the philosophy of the latter half of that century with the spirit of a Frenchman; his traditional instincts, and more than that his convictions, held him back. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the French Revolution he was thought by the Austrian Court to be affected by its principles and to have fostered them in the Low Countries. The injustice of these suspicions was proved by circumstances.

To Sainte-Beuve's wise and discriminating perception of the Prince de Ligne it is superfluous to add anything. Of late it has become the fashion with some to say that Sainte-Beuve is out of date, "academic," and that the new blood and spirit of the day needs another form of criticism. But let us take a topic,—the Prince de Ligne, for instance,—study it ourselves, and then read Sainte-Beuve upon it. We shall see that he goes to the essential truth of things with

strong sincerity ; and if to this he adds the quality of being academic, so much the better. It is the union of these two gifts which has made him one of the greatest critics the world has had ; and such he will remain, for the periods of which he writes, so long as true literature lasts.

The bibliographical history of the Prince de Ligne and his Works is as follows : After the French occupation of Belgium, when his little principality and his " dear Belœil " with its splendid revenues were confiscated, he retired to Vienna, where he employed himself in writing and in arranging his papers, which he published at intervals from 1795 to 1811, in 34 volumes under the title of :—

MÉLANGES MILITAIRES, LITTÉRAIRES ET SENTIMENTAIRES.  
À mon Refuge sur le Leopoldberg, près de Vienne. Et se vend à Dresde chez les Frères Walther.

A list of the contents of these 34 volumes will be found in the Appendix to the present volume. Though many in number, the volumes are small. The average number of pages in each is 252 ; the longest page (without a paragraph) has only 184 words.

Subsequently, in 1812, the Prince de Ligne published a volume entitled :—

New Collection of Letters by Field Marshal the Prince de Ligne.

After his death appeared in Berlin, 1816 :—

Philosophy of Catholicism, by the Prince de Ligne, with answer by Mme. la Comtesse M. de B——.

In the catalogue of one bibliographer, Quérard, the following publication is mentioned :—

Posthumous Works of the Prince de Ligne. Dresden and Vienna, 1817, 6 vols. 18mo.

Of these six volumes no trace remains except in the one catalogue named above.

In Vol. XVII., of his *MÉLANGES*, printed in 1796, the prince inserts a notice that his "Posthumous Works" will be as follows:—

1. Journals of Three Campaigns in 1787, 1788, 1789.
2. Parthenizza; philosophical and historical work.
3. Fragments of the History of my Life.
4. Tales which are not tales; or, Confidences of my Friends.
5. My Posthumous Scattered Thoughts.
6. Interesting letters written to me; with a few answers from me, copied without my knowledge, for I never make rough drafts or copies.

By his will the Prince de Ligne bequeathed his "Posthumous Works" to his regiment of halberdiers, in compliance with an ancient custom which required that each commander should leave a present at his death to the force. To this bequest a condition was attached that the papers should not be published until all the persons named therein were dead. The first act of the legatees was to relinquish their possession, with the restriction upon it, to M. Cotta, publisher, at Stuttgard. Since then nothing definite is known of it.

A topic of discussion among the various editors and commentators of the Prince de Ligne is the question: What has become of the "Posthumous Works" bequeathed as above? and is there some unpublished Memoir now in existence? Several attempts have been made to clear this up, especially by MM. Lacroix and de Lescure, but without any definite results. If the present writer may be allowed to offer an opinion it is as follows,—on the understanding of course that this is only conjecture: The "Posthumous Works" in

six volumes, stated by the bibliographer Quérard to have been published in 1817, were the works (in six parts) named in the prince's will and described by him in Vol. XVII. of his published Works. These M. Cotta may have passed to other publishers; possibly to the Frères Walther of Dresden, who published the prince's other books from 1795 to 1811. Or, inasmuch as the prince states in the seventeenth volume that his "Posthumous Works" are then in the hands of the Frères Walther, there may have arisen between them and M. Cotta some question of prior rights. It is certain that the Cotta house, which was a much respected one, never made any statement as to what became of the papers they had purchased from the regiment.

But in whosoever hands they were when the edition of 1817 was announced—it can never have been published, for if it had, all trace of it could not have disappeared so completely that no one has been found who has seen a copy—the family, in all probability, bought it up, destroyed it (if it was ever really printed), and recovered the manuscript. At any rate, the manuscripts of No. 3, "Fragments of the History of my Life," and of No. 5, "My Posthumous Scattered Thoughts," were in the possession of the prince's grandson, who was Belgian ambassador to France in 1845, for he permitted their publication in "La Revue Nouvelle" of that year, and again in 1860 in book form (see following list of publications relating to Prince de Ligne).

The fragmentary Memoir thus published answers fully to the prince's description of it, and is in itself extremely characteristic of his heedless, inconsecutive way of throwing his thoughts and his writings together. In all probability there is little or nothing in possession of the family to add to it. If, as appears likely, some parts of the "Posthumous Works"

have been suppressed, they are probably Nos. 4 and 6, described by the prince as "Confidences of my friends" and "Interesting letters addressed to me," which the family may think it is not desirable or proper to give to the curiosity of the world.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO THE PRINCE DE LIGNE, IN  
THE ORDER OF THEIR PUBLICATION.

It is by the help of these Works that the following Memoir, which is, however, chiefly in the prince's own words, has been prepared.

1809. *Lettres et Pensées du Maréchal Prince de Ligne, précédées d'une Préface par Mme. la Baronne de Staël-Holstein.* 1 vol. 8vo. Paschoud: Genève et Paris. 1809.

[The preface is given in this edition; the selection is small and limited.]

1809. *Œuvres choisies du Maréchal Prince de Ligne, par M. de Propriac.* 1 vol. 8vo. Chaumerot: Paris. 1809.

1809. *Œuvres choisies du Prince de Ligne, précédées de quelques détails biographiques par un de ses amis (Malte-Brun).* 2 vols. 8vo. F. Buisson: Paris. Paschoud: Genève. 1809.

1812. *Nouveau recueil de lettres du Feld-Maréchal Prince de Ligne.* Deux parties. 8vo. Weimar. 1812.

1829. *Mémoires et Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires du Prince de Ligne.* A. Dupont. 5 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1829.

1840. *Fêtes et Souvenirs du Congrès de Vienne, par le Comte de La Garde.* Paris et Bruxelles. 1840.

[The parts relating to the Prince de Ligne form the eleventh chapter of Vol. II. of this edition.]

1845. *Notice sur le Prince de Ligne par M. de Reiffenberg. Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles, Vol. XIX.* 1845.

1845. *Fragments inédits des Mémoires du Prince de Ligne.* La Revue Nouvelle. Paris. 1845, 1846.

[The Prince de Ligne, his grandson, was then Belgian ambassador to France, and he gave these Fragments for publication.]

1848. *Esquisses Politiques et Littéraires, par le Comte Ouvaroff.* Paris: Gide et Cie. 1848.

[The parts relating to the Prince de Ligne are given in the tenth chapter of Vol. II. of this edition.]



1857. *Le Prince de Ligne, ou Écrivain grand seigneur à la fin du XVIIIème Siècle.* Par M. N. Peetermans. 1 vol. 8vo. Paris et Leipzig. 1857.
1860. *Œuvres du Prince de Ligne, précédées d'une Notice par Albert Lacroix.* 4 vols. Bruxelles. A Bohné: Paris. 1860.
1860. *Mémoires du Prince de Ligne, suivis de Pensées, et précédées d'une Introduction par Albert Lacroix.* 1 vol. 8vo. Bruxelles. A Bohné: Paris. 1860.

[These are the "Fragments inédits" of the *Revue Nouvelle*, published in book form by permission of the Prince de Ligne, then President of the Belgian Senate; and this book is the Fragmentary Memoir of the present translated edition; the gaps in which have been filled by facts, sketches, letters, and opinions taken, in the prince's own words, from his Works.]

1878. *Lettres inédites du Feld-Maréchal Prince de Ligne, avec une Introduction par J. Petit.* 1 vol. 8vo. Société des Bibliophiles. Bruxelles. 1878.
1886. *Souvenirs du feu Duc de Broglie.* 1 vol. 8vo. Calmann Lévy: Paris. 1886.

[The passages relating to the Prince de Ligne are given in the tenth chapter of Vol. II. of this edition.]

1887. *Histoire d'une Grande Dame au XVIIIe Siècle, Princesse Hélène de Ligne, Comtesse Potocka, par Lucien Perey.* 2 vols. 8vo. Calmann Lévy: Paris. 1887.

[Taken largely from manuscripts at Belœil by permission of the Prince de Ligne, and used and partly translated in the eighth chapter of Vol. II. of this edition.]

1890. *Lettres du Prince de Ligne à Mme. la Marquise de Coigny, avec une préface par M. de Lescure.* 1 vol. 8vo. Librairie des Bibliophiles. Paris. 1890.
1890. *Œuvres choisies du Prince de Ligne. Avec une notice par M. de Lescure.* 1 vol. 8vo. Librairie des Bibliophiles. Paris. 1890.
1895. *L'Impératrice Catherine et le Prince de Ligne, par Lucien Perey.* *Revue de Paris.* 1895.

[From these articles are taken the letters of the Empress Catherine contained in this edition.]





# P R E F A C E

By MME. DE STAËL-HOLSTEIN

TO "LETTERS AND THOUGHTS OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE,"  
SELECTED BY HER IN 1809.

WE always regret when we have not enjoyed an intercourse with the spirit of celebrated men through their spoken words; for what is quoted of them gives but a very imperfect idea of their conversation. Phrases, witty sayings, all that is retained and repeated, can never picture the grace of every movement, the nicety of expression, the elegance of manner which form the charm of personal intercourse. The Maréchal Prince de Ligne has been acknowledged by all Frenchmen to be one of the most agreeable men in France; and rarely do they accord that suffrage to one not born in their midst. Perhaps, indeed, the Prince de Ligne is the only foreigner who has become a model of French style, instead of being only an imitator. He has printed a number of useful and profound essays on history and on the military art. He has published both prose and verse, which the circumstances of his life have inspired. Wit and originality are in all that comes from him, but often his style is the spoken style, if I may so express myself. We who know him need to recall the expression of his fine countenance, the characteristic gayety of his narratives, the simplicity with which he abandoned himself to merriment, in order to like the very negligences of his manner of writing. But those who are not beneath the charm of his presence analyze as an author one to whom they ought to listen even while they

Mem. Ver. 6—D

read him; for the very defects of his style are the graces of his conversation. That which is not always very clear grammatically becomes so through the *à propos* of speech, the subtlety of the glance, the inflections of the voice; through all, in short, that gives to the art of speaking a thousand times more charm and more resource than that of writing.

It is therefore difficult to make known by what we must call dead letters a man whose intercourse the greatest living geniuses and the most illustrious sovereigns have sought as their choicest relaxation. Nevertheless, attempting to do so as much as possible, I have made a selection from his correspondence, and also from his detached thoughts. No form of writing can take the place of personal acquaintance. A book is always made on some system or another which places the author at a distance from the reader. We may of course divine the writer's character, but his very talent puts a species of fiction between him and us. The letters and thoughts which I publish to-day [1809] convey a picture of the meditation and also the ease of the Prince de Ligne's mind; it is to himself and to his friends that he speaks thus. There is never in him, as in La Rochefoucauld, an always consistent opinion, steadily pursued. Men and things and events have passed before his eyes; he judges them without a plan, without an object, never seeking to impose upon them the despotism of a system; they were such, at any rate they seemed to him such, as he relates on that particular day. If there is harmony and completeness in his ideas it is that which nature and truth put into everything.

We may notice in the account of the conversations which the Prince de Ligne held with Voltaire and Rousseau the profound respect he felt and showed for superiority of mind; it needed as much as he had himself to be neither a prince

nor a great seigneur with men of genius. He knew that it was nobler to admire than to patronize; he was flattered by the visit of Rousseau, and did not shrink from showing that feeling. It is one of the advantages of high rank and illustrious blood that they quiet ail that tends to vanity; for to judge truly of society and of nature we should, perhaps, be conscious of gratitude to the one and to the other.

Correspondence coming nearest to conversation, we may follow the Prince de Ligne through his letters into active life and discover there the unwearying youthfulness of his mind, the independence of his soul, the chivalrous gayety which perilous positions inspired in him. His letters are addressed to the King of Poland, giving him an account of two interviews with the great King of Prussia, to the Empress Catherine of Russia, to the Emperor Joseph II., to M. de Ségur, to Mme. de Coigny during the famous journey to the Crimea, and to several others. Thus the subject of the letters and the persons to whom they are addressed inspire a double interest. The Prince de Ligne knew Frederick the Great, and above all the Empress of Russia, in the familiarity of private life, and what he says of them makes us live in their society. The portrait of Prince Potemkin, which will be found in the letters to M. de Ségur, is truly a masterpiece. It is not worked up like those portraits that serve to make the painter known rather than his sitter. You see before you the man the Prince de Ligne describes; he gives life to the portrait because he has put no art into it. Those who know him know it is impossible to be more alien than he to all species of calculation. His actions always have the effect of spontaneous impulse; he comprehends both men and things by sudden inspiration, and lightning, rather than daylight, seems to guide him.

Adored by a charming family, cherished by his fellow-

citizens, who see in him an ornament to their city [Vienna], and who deck it with his presence to the eyes of foreigners as if with a gift of Nature, the Prince de Ligne has, nevertheless, lavished his life in camps, from taste and from allurements, far more than his military career demanded. He believes he is born lucky because he is ever kind; and he thinks that he pleases fate while he pleases friends. He enjoys life like Horace, but he exposes it as if he set no value on its enjoyment. His valour is of that brilliant nature which we are wont to attribute to French valour. It is, perhaps, suspected that during the last war the Prince de Ligne may have longed for an occasion to exercise his French valour against Frenchmen; that is the only blemish of ambition that we can perceive in a man whose philosophy we must praise — if philosophy there be in contenting one's self with pleasing and succeeding in all things.

He has lost a great fortune with admirable equanimity; and he has shown rare pride in doing nothing to repair the loss. The calmness of his soul has been troubled only once, by the death of his eldest son, killed when exposing himself in battle like his father. In vain did the Prince de Ligne call reason to his succour, and even the volatility of mind which not only serves to charm, but is sometimes able to distract the soul from grief. He was wounded to the heart; and his efforts to hide it made the tears that did escape him the more agonizing. This fear of appearing to feel when we have allowed ourselves sometimes to laugh at feeling, this pudicity of paternal tenderness in a man who had never shown ought to others but his gifts of pleasing and captivating, this contrast, this mixture of gravity and gayety, pleasantry and reason, levity and depth, make the Prince de Ligne a true phenomenon; for the spirit of society, in the eminent degree in which he possesses it,

rarely gives such graces permitting at the same time such high qualities to remain. One might say that civilization stopped in him at a point where nations never remain; namely, where all rude forms are softened without any change in the essence of things.

It is unnecessary to say that the Editor does not take the liberty to support or refute the opinions of the Prince de Ligne on various subjects as exhibited in this Selection. I have merely wished to gather together a few scattered flashes of a conversation always varied, always piquant, in which the play of words and ideas, the force and the playfulness, are always in their proper place and suited to the topic of each day, whatever may be said on the morrow. The privilege of grace seems to be to harmonize itself equally with all styles, all courses, all methods of seeing things. It touches nothing harshly enough to wound, or seriously enough to convince; and never does it roughly shake the life which it embellishes.

I could continue still longer this portrait of the Prince de Ligne; for one seeks a hundred different ways to picture that which is inexpressible — a *natural nature* full of charm. But after essaying many words, I should still be forced to say with Æschines: “If you are amazed by what I tell you of him, what would it be if you had listened to him?”



# MEMOIR

OF

## CHARLES-JOSEPH, PRINCE DE LIGNE.

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### I.

1735-1757.

#### BIRTH: EDUCATION: MARRIAGE.

THE year of my birth seems to me uncertain. Baptized without ceremony by the almoner of my father's regiment, I lost, in after years, a suit which depended on the production of my baptismal register, which could not be found. All I know is that I was born before the year 1740, and that I had scarcely heard of Prince Eugène (then lately dead) before I wanted, I said, small as I was, to take his place. That is the first thought that I can remember. The second is that a war was being fought; and it turned my head. I remember that they talked before me of the battle of Dettingen [1743], where the Ligne-Infantry and the Ligne-Dragoons did wonders.

A man in my chancellor's office, my German secretary, named Leygeb, thinks (and I, too, for that matter) that he has read on an old parchment that we are descended from a king of Bohemia. He also says that he has seen on a tomb, I do not know where, that we are descended from Charlemagne, through a certain Thierrî d'Enfer; he says that genealogists give us the same stock as the house of

Lorraine, and that others declare we are a branch of that of Baden. There must be something in all this, for my father was devilishly proud. And what makes me think there may be a touch of Charlemagne or of Wittikind in our blood is that we have had the Golden Fleece for the last four centuries, and are Princes of the Empire for the last two.

We have always been brave, from father to son; even the bastards, who gloried in being called so, and had the rank of nobles. I have seen a tomb with this inscription: "Bastard of Ligne, killed in Africa." Many of my ancestors have been killed in battle. My great-grandfather, a man of much merit, was imprisoned because of his bravery in Spain, where he was president of the council of war in Castile, viceroy of Sicily, governor-general of the Milanais, etc.; often beating, sometimes beaten, and captured at last after marvellous deeds. My great-grandmother — a Princess of Nassau, daughter-in-law of the Lorraine, niece of Henri III. — and my grandfather were killed hunting at Baudour [hunting-box near Belœil] in the woods, while waiting at their post for the boar.

My father did not like me; I do not know why, for we never knew each other. It was not the fashion in those days to be a good husband or a good father. My mother [Élisabeth-Alexandrine-Charlotte, Princesse de Salm] was very much afraid of him. She lay-in with me in a great farthingale, and died in the same a few weeks later; so much did he care for ceremonies and an air of dignity. I often received from him certain marks of attention in the way of abuse and prognostics that I should turn out detestably. Nevertheless, his death, which I will relate by and by, had a great effect upon me. He had turned me out of his house, and was living at the time of his death in the



country. I returned from the war, not having seen him more than two or three times between the two events ; but in death one remembers only the good and the great things. He had much loftiness of soul, and was as proud within as he was without. He thought himself a Louis XIV. ; and he almost was so in gardens and in magnificence, for which he substituted sometimes very comical little meannesses. For instance, he who spent millions in creating Belœil, and millions at Belœil in giving superb fêtes and in keeping up the state of a king, scolded his servants if they gave a glass of wine to the village *curé* or to the capuchin who came to preach in Lent, saying, aloud, that “beer was good enough for such people.” This was mere oddity, for he was really noble in his manners and actions. He had been distinguished for bravery in the War of the Succession and at the battle and siege of Belgrade. When a very young colonel, being compelled to capitulate in the citadel of Antwerp, he said to the commander-in-chief: “The enemy shall not have my flags, at any rate ;” and he carried them off on his shoulders and hid them.

Prince Ferdinand, my uncle, was a marshal like my father, and distinguished himself at Ramillies, Audenarde, Malplaquet, and elsewhere ; but he was over-pious and petty. He had some good qualities ; for instance, he contributed not a little to my love for war. He often talked to me about it, and sent me constantly to his dragoons, or made those who had greatly distinguished themselves and taken banners come to see me. He so inspired me with his hatred for the French that I abhorred them for a very long time. He was a poor Hamilcar, and I was a poor Hannibal. The Duc de Croy was the first soldier who came to us after the taking of Brussels in 1746, and I did not look at him with composure.

I had another uncle of whom I knew nothing. He was older than my father, handsome as the day, brave as Cæsar, amorous as a cat, and apparently faithful as a dog, for he wanted to marry the lady of his thoughts. She was a charming creature of some position, but not enough, I fancy, for his relations to approve. They opposed him; he was angry and left the service, in which he was distinguished. They were angry, and he left society. They disapproved of him still more, and he shut himself up in a convent. They were furious; on which he made over all his property to my father, reserving nothing for himself but the third floor of the small hôtel de Ligne, an almoner, a valet, and for all furniture a chair and a crucifix. During the siege of Brussels [in 1746] the great hôtel de Ligne was raked by a number of cannon-balls, and my father, marshal though he was, being surprised and shut up in the town, took his whole family and all his servants to the small hôtel de Ligne because it was less exposed. Nevertheless, three balls entered the door one day as I was standing at the window above it. I was about ten years old. I do not know what possessed me to be always wanting to run up to the corridor on which my uncle, quite unknown to me, lived. They stopped me again and again; on which I went to play elsewhere and thought no more about it. Some six or seven years later I said one morning as I woke, to my tutor, M. de la Porte, that I had dreamed my uncle was dead. But as I knew of only one uncle, the one named Prince Ferdinand, I said: "My uncle, Prince Ferdinand, died at five o'clock this morning." Two days later I heard, for the first time, of the existence and the death of the hermit. I asseverate that nothing can be truer than this.

My eldest sister was certainly no beauty, and my father said to her one day: "My son will be killed in the war, for

you have the face of an heiress." I have 'hardly ever seen her (or my other sister either, who was not less ugly); she is now the superior of the convent at Essen, and a good woman, so they say.

My father was more or less in love with the Princesse C——. Certain verses which my tutor, the Abbé Verdier, wrote for her, in which there were allegories that my father did not understand, made him jealous. He sent away the abbé; and before they could find another tutor, imagine the hands into which they put me,—those of my father's pages! They were two Barons de Hayden, who both died staff-officers. Knowing they could teach me nothing but the exercise, and being quartered with the regiment, they used to come over from Mons for that purpose only.

The Abbé Verdier's place was filled by another abbé, the only one of my tutors who believed in God. He was a true country vicar; said his breviary, sketched, went out shooting or snaring quail, and made me carry his powder and shot, and pick up the game. I fought for it with his little spaniel, which made me active, and I grew. It was thought my abbé taught me nothing except to fetch, so *he* was sent away.

M. Dutertre [the next] was accused to my father of trying to make learned persons and eclogues in the village, where he had found certain milkmaids to his fancy. So here I was again in other hands. A Chevalier des Essarts, a very limited gentleman, returning from the wars in Bohemia and Bavaria (which he never ceased recounting), undertook to give me the education that he lacked himself. He brought me back, however, to my military ardour. The siege of Prague, the sortie, the assault, turned my head. While *he* scarcely knew there was ever an Alexander or a Cæsar, I devoured Quintus Curtius and the Commentaries

(found in an old bookcase in the château de Baudour), and fancied myself becoming what they had been. He had but one book, the fables of Phædrus [Æsop's, translated by Phædrus], and he made me learn them by heart, while he himself went to ride on horseback. Once, when he tried to thrash me for not remembering them I flew at his face, and ran for my little sword to fight him. They parted me from my poor, ignorant, and angry Mentor. He was the one, next to the second abbé, whom I cared for least.

The Jesuits and the cavalry having so ill responded to my father's intention of making me a youthful prodigy, he threw himself upon a totally different line. A successor of the Arnaulds, the Pascals, as enlightened, as enthusiastic, as eloquent, as sublime as the best of Port-Royal, was chosen to put the last touch to my education—the last touch, they said; but how many more hands were put to it after that! He was named M. Renault de la Roche-Valain, was a great arguer, a profound theologian, and called the preacher of our village “a cawing crow in the Church of God.” The latter had much influence over my uncle, a narrow-minded little marshal; so the tutor was accused of being a Jansenist. I can still see two asses, laden with Saint Augustine and various other fathers of the Church and of the Bible, arriving, with the prior of the convent, to confound my tutor. He was right; and nothing more was needed to put him in the wrong. So the monastic cabal deprived me of a man who was full of ideas. I had been a Molinist (without knowing it) under my two Jesuits, who discoursed to me about Mme. Guyon, Fénelon, and quietism. I became a Jansenist with my ex-Oratorian, who talked to me of nothing but Bossuet, and made me learn the catechism of Montpellier, and read the Old Testament of Mézenguy and the “History of Variations,” etc. The Jesuits had

made me learned on Molina and Molinos; the abbé whom I mentioned as the one who believed in God gave me Marie d'Agréda and Marie Alacoque; but with all my ecclesiastical erudition I did not know one word of religion. They found this out by the time I was fourteen, when they talked about my making my first communion. I was sent to the village rector to learn everything, from the creation to the mysteries. He told me that he did not understand them any more than I did. I thought I believed in Christianity, of which no one had ever spoken to me, and for two weeks I was very devout.

I would like to know what are the principles of education. We deceive our children all the time. We teach them things that we do not believe ourselves, and what we know that, in the end, they will not believe either. We expect this change in their ideas, but we never prepare them for it. We say: "Flee from pleasure." On the contrary, give it to them, or at least let them take it early. They will not desire it so much. One would really think that a shrewd school of vice had trained the race of tutors to make it more enticing to their pupils. It is better for young men to have their fling and be blasé on pleasure early, for then they will seek it afresh in study, application, morality, duty. We exact all that at the age of the passions, and the youth is disgusted.

The father or the tutor never says to him: "You will fall in love; attach yourself to none but an honest woman, who will love you for yourself." His abbé says to him: "Monsieur, you will be damned if you fall in love." His father's man of business tells him: "Monsieur, keep away from women, or you will lose your reputation on entering the world." The youth will soon find out there is no truth in all that. They tell him: "Theatres are a school of vice and frivolity,"

and he sees the whole town rushing to them; "Never miss a mass," and he finds, unfortunately, that very many persons miss them; "Do not lie," and he goes to Court without having been shown the difference between lies and reservations. Talk to him of poisons, but give him the antidote. A young man from whom all knowledge of evil has been kept is elated on entering life; his brain whirls; he is startled, excited, and free as a young horse in the fields which cannot be caught; he confounds the virtue of the catechism with that of morality; he detests the first, and neglects the second. And because he was never taught to know the true value of things he is made a young scamp in spite of himself.

My father, fearing that all these controversial matters, jesuitical and other, would injure my mind, again had recourse to the French army to form my morals and my religion. Recollecting that the Chevalier des Essarts was a deist (and I too, in consequence), he asked a Chevalier de Saint-Maurice, a captain of the hussars of the Morlière, whether he was a deist also. On being assured that he was not, he took him as my tutor. The chevalier did not lie, for he was an atheist. So now we were two atheists; or rather, we did not think anything at all about the matter.

Instead of teaching children geography and so many other things they forget as soon as they cease to be children, why not teach them to form a judgment on the right and the wrong, the just and the unjust? Take a little boy of six years old about with you among the poor; let him see the obligation and the pleasure of easing their troubles; let him notice the hardness of a superior who scolds and humiliates, and the pain of a subordinate who is forced to endure it. Show him a miser, a malignant man, an ignorant one, a man who makes a bad argument, or does a bad action; also the



respect shown to those who do good ones, the pure joy of a pure conscience, the innocent pleasures of country life. If we took the little boy always with us and talked with him, instead of making him learn Roman history, we could make him good, obedient, compassionate, generous, reasonable, and happy all his life.

But no, a father thinks he has done all when he pays two hundred ducats to a tutor, whose chief concern is to maintain his own dignity in the household. He teaches what he calls Poetry, but not to understand it or to make verses, and Philosophy, or rather the terms of sciences included under that name, so ill-applied. Then in due time he informs the father that he can invite all the Family Relations to dinner and be present afterwards at what is called an examination. The youth appears, armed with answers to all the questions that will be put to him. A cousin says: "What a mind!" The aunts say: "What a memory!" The pedants smile. The mother says nothing and takes it all for granted; the father, himself as badly brought up, is lost in astonishment that he has forgotten all that. Everybody is pleased, and my young man is a fool. Where is the logic and the morality of such an education? Go on an embassy, young man, and you will soon find out that you know nothing, and that you ought to have been put upon the right track to know men. Be employed in your own country, or govern your own affairs, and you will see the injustices that you commit under the shadow of justice, you will learn the truths and the reasons that M. l'Abbé ought to have taught you by conversation, not by lessons. Where is the Professor and the University of the human heart?

But the Chevalier de Saint-Maurice proving no better than the rest, here I was again without a tutor. The studies I had followed under all of them had given me a liking for



none. That of history was the one continual object of my thoughts. I was mad for heroism. Charles XII. and Condé kept me from sleeping; I even fancied I could do better than they. I gasped over Polybius; I commentated the commentaries of Folard. I longed to be off to the wars. But what can one do at fifteen? I tried to stir the imagination of my family and my masters. I wrote a "Treatise on Arms," hoping to convince them that that was my vocation. It began:—

"No man was ever born who did not receive from Nature some dominant inclination which will lead him to success in one way or another. Unhappy he who allows it to escape him! He who was made, perhaps, to defend the Honour or the life of citizens is lost to the Country he was born to defend. He whom this noble duty suited dishonours the garment of a servant of the God of Israel, and shakes the foundations of the Church of which he would fain have been a powerful column. . . . The glory of arms sheds so dazzling a radiance that it conquers the soul at the first glance. And what is the source of that Light? This is something we take no pains to discover; often we enjoy the light of day and never think of the Sun which is its principle. Little content myself to consider superficially an object that concerns me so closely, I sound the depths; I find that glory to be that we *render services*, we *endure pains*, we *receive praise*. And what are the objects on which the Warrior's eye is fixed as he renders service? His Prince, his Country, Justice.

"It is impossible to utter that word 'Country' without remembering what the ancient Romans, filled with the most sublime Virtue, did for theirs. Decius, Curtius, and other Heroes who sacrificed themselves for her good have left, no doubt, a great example to be followed, but do we

need it? Is not love of Country innate within us? Does not the same bond that binds us one to another attach us, each and all, to the good of our common Mother? . . . The soldier is the eagle of Jupiter the Thunder-bearer. It is living twice to die as he dies. Great Heroes! conquerors over so many pains of body and of mind, I hold you in veneration. O Mars! guide my steps. Pardon me if I invoke you instead of the god of Eloquence. Had I done otherwise this would have been a Hymn, and not a Treatise. Speak, my soul! and may the enthusiasm which I have here restrained as much as possible find grace before you, O my Master!" (This passage was particularly addressed to the tutor who was then endeavouring to form my mind.) "My Soul will take care of herself; 't is She who from your hands will pass me soon to those of Victory."

I considered that I already belonged to the army, because the old dragoons of my uncle's brave regiment carried me on their muskets and told me tales of Clausen, Dettingen, and Bonaf. At nine or ten years of age I had already heard the guns of a battle [Fontenoy], I had been in a besieged town. A little later, and I was surrounded by military men. Old officers, retired after long service on their estates neighbouring those of my father, fed my passion. "Turenne," I said to myself, "slept on a gun-carriage when he was ten; Hannibal swore eternal hatred to the Romans when he was nine." I swore it in my heart to the French, whom I was taught to believe our inevitable enemies. I have since recovered from that idea very thoroughly.

War was beginning to be talked of. I made a certain M. de Chaponais, captain in Royal-Vaisseaux, promise to engage me in his company. I meant to have run away from my father's house under a feigned name; and already I was imagining the joy of not being recognized until after I had

done the most dazzling deeds. Instead of this fine project, a tutor, much wiser than the others, and who, unluckily, gave me no chance against him, arrived at this juncture to take me in hand. He seconded my liking for study; he divided my studies in a way to make them fruitful, and gave me by way of relaxation my military authors; among whom I then began, though very slightly, to take the place I now occupy. M. de la Porte (that was my tutor's name) was the third ex-Jesuit that I had over me. He brought to me from the College of Louis-le-Grand that fine flower of the humanities, of literature, of urbanity which has since made the charm of my existence, and in forming my soul at the same time as my mind, he won the more right to my gratitude, because I believe that if I have ever been worth anything it is to him I owe it.

But whoever was my tutor, no one could make me learn anything I did not like; and they discovered at last the impossibility of teaching me chemistry, mathematics (except what sufficed for fortifications), astronomy, or even arithmetic. This deficiency goes to such a point that I have never been able to learn a game of cards, or chess, or backgammon.

During the five or six summer months, which I always spent at Belcœil, I learned hunting and economy—the economy of my father—in a singular way. As he did not choose that I should waste his powder on sparrows, he made me buy my own and the shot too, and agreed to pay me four sous for every head of small game I brought home, half a crown for a fox or a deer, a whole crown for a boar or a wolf. I never had any other money than what I earned thus until the day of my marriage.

My father, who shared his opera-box with the Princesse de Horne, who was just married and as beautiful as she was

amiable, fearing that I should fall in love with her, would not let me go there. My tutor liked the theatre. "Very well," said my father, "then you must sit on the benches of the stage;"—they were placed about the stage in those days. There I saw the charming actresses more closely, and I lost nothing of much that was little instructive in the pretty vaudeville-operas. One evening I pretended to be obliged to go out, but I stopped in the coulisse, where I found a *danseuse*, a Demoiselle Grégoire, whose fine eyes, as I believed, being very vain in those days, were sometimes turned on me. I made her my declaration, and she laughed. Speechless at first, then mortified, I said to myself: "This scene in the coulisse shall serve for *something*." M. de Turenne's duel at nine years of age had turned my head. "I am thirteen," I thought, "and I have never fought yet." An officer about thirty years old was entering the house to take a seat on the benches. I trod on his toes. "The deuce! prince," he said, "you are very awkward." "No, monsieur," I replied, "I did it on purpose, for you looked at me with such an air." He began to laugh like Mlle. Grégoire; and there was I, in one quarter of an hour twice scarified as a child!

We went to Vienna and my father took me to Court. While he was with the empress the emperor sent for me, treated me very kindly, and took me into the antechamber, where my father soon arrived. Easily infuriated, the latter began to scold me for being where no one was allowed to enter but the chamberlains. "That is precisely what he is," said Francis I.; "I meant to surprise you."

We are all more or less silly at that age, and self-important, which naturally follows. I never made a drawing or wrote a letter without signing at the bottom: "Charles de Ligne, chamberlain." In fact, my joy was extreme. A man

of the Court at fifteen! "And then, too," I said to myself, "M. de la Porte" (though I loved him well) "can't be a chamberlain; I shall be at Court, at church, without him. What pleasure! What honour!" Alas! once back at Belœil my chamberlainship did not prevent my being treated as a child.

My father never talked with me. One day he made me get into the carriage with him and took me to Vienna and married me. We went to a house where there were a quantity of pretty faces, married or to be married, I did not know which. I was told to sit at table beside the youngest. My servants had told me that my marriage was arranged, but when we left the table and I thought over all that I had seen, I could not tell whether it was my mother-in-law or an aunt, or one of the little young girls who was destined for me. Eight days later I was married [1755]. I was nineteen years old, and my little wife [the Princesse Françoise-Xavière de Lichtenstein, daughter of Emmanuel, Prince de Lichtenstein, and Marie-Antoinette de Dietrichstein-Weichselstadt] was fifteen. We had never spoken to each other. It was thus that I did what is said to be the most serious act of one's life. I thought it a good joke for some weeks; after that I was indifferent.

My tutor, M. de la Porte, left me the day after my marriage. This caused me a grief I cannot express. He went away with my father, who left him in France and gave him a pension too small to satisfy me. I then incurred the first debt of my life; namely, twelve hundred ducats, to buy him a little property in the Agénois, his native region, where he died soon after.

At the marriage benediction in the Austrian (or Moravian) village church, where the litanies are said, it is the custom to appear in dressing-gowns. What was my astonishment

when my father made me put my arms into an old garment of his in which I had seen him go through fifty attacks of gout. It was made of flame-coloured satin, with parrots embroidered in gold perched on innumerable little trees embroidered in green; and this, too, in the heat of summer. My father himself looked more like the bridegroom, and wore a coat with gold lace on every seam. He had, I admit, rained silver about me on the day of the betrothal, and showers of gold on the wedding-day. In the evening there were fireworks. Some one had imagined the idea, — a novel image — of uniting two fiery hearts; but the groove on which they were to slide missed action. My wife's heart went off, but mine stayed behind. This alarmed my relations, who thought it a bad omen.

I do not remember whether it was a piece of affectation or from real love of the chase that I went out hunting at six o'clock in the morning after my wedding night. It is true that my mother-in-law came to wake us before daylight, "for fear," she said, "some evil-minded person might cast a spell upon us." I was not long in finding out that the family I had entered were no sorcerers.

My wife's great-aunt, the Princess of Saxe-Weissenfels, enchanted perhaps with her new great-nephew, said to me: "I will pay all your expenses in Dresden." I therefore invited all Saxony and Poland to dinner at the Hôtel de la Pologne. It cost the good princess not a little, but I left her charmed with a couple whose united ages were thirty-four, and continued my way to the Low Countries. My wife is an excellent woman, — full of delicacy, sensibility, and nobleness. She is not at all selfish. Her ill-humour soon passes off and her eyes are wet with tears for the merest trifle. There is no unpleasantness in her because she has an excellent heart. She grants her children all they ask, and is just



as complying to even me. If people are really amiable at home they can, with a trifle less success owing to locality, succeed elsewhere. I have no opinion of those who are not amiable in their families; not to speak of the bad heart that that implies, a man must be pretty poor to show himself so economical of wit and grace.

If I had won battles instead of merely helping to win them, I could never have been more pleased and proud than I was when I first went on guard, and that other day when I started for my first campaign in 1757. To beginners in war I say: Be you of the blood of heroes, be you of the race of demigods, if glory does not intoxicate you continually do not stand beneath her banners. Say not that you have a liking for your profession; if that cold word suffices you, embrace another. Be sure of this: you may perform your service without blame, you may know the principles of the art of war, but you are only artisans; you may even attain to a certain point, but you are not artists. Love the profession of arms before all else; love it with passion — yes, passion is the word. If you do not dream of soldiering, if you do not devour books and plans of war, if you do not kiss the footprints of old soldiers, if you do not weep at the recital of their combats, if you are not consumed with desire to see war, and with shame that you have never yet done so, tear off in haste the uniform you dishonour. If the exercise of a mere battalion does not excite you, if you do not feel the longing to be everywhere, if your mind is absent, if you do not dread lest rain should hinder your regiment from manœuvring, give your place to some young man such as I wish him to be, — a young man mad for the art of Maurice and Eugène; one who will ever be convinced that he must do his duty trebly to do it passably. Sorrow to the



lukewarm! Return them to the bosom of their families; let such degraded beings, the unfortunate mob who are constantly soliciting favours they do not deserve, let such men cease to hinder old soldiers from showing to the sovereign their honourable scars. True consideration belongs to the truly brave, and not to those who, pretending to serve, rob the real soldier of his recompense.

In short, to be a soldier, enthusiasm must go to our heads, honour must electrify our hearts, the fire of victory must shine in our eyes, our souls must be lifted up as we uplift the banner of glory. I ask pardon for this enthusiasm, which may be too great at the present moment, driving me, against my will, into a little declamation.

## II.

1757-1758.

### FIRST MILITARY SERVICE: SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

IN 1757 the Prussians, being resolved to open the campaign before we did, never a very difficult matter, entered Bohemia on five different sides, as everybody knows. The Ligne battalions were hurried out of cantonments with orders to go to Königingrätz. We arrived at Rothwesely at the same time as the Saxe Gotha contingent, whose blue jackets, seen from afar, misled our general into thinking they were the enemy; whereupon he halted us. We soon joined forces, and camped together, April 22, near the village of Nechanitz. Such was the singular beginning of a singular campaign, in which the regiments hunted for the generals and the generals for the regiments, and sometimes did not find each other at all.

That night we were ordered to strike tents at ten o'clock and march in the deepest silence to Königingrätz. I was ordered forward with forty of my men as an advanced guard, and, in spite of the precautions which I took to get the road well mended, a bridge broke down and delayed the march some hours on account of the supply waggons which they did not wish to leave behind. Never was there so dark a night; no one knew where he was going. We needed guides, but the country people were afraid of us. I did not reach the gates of Königingrätz till daylight. M. de Serbelloni, whom I informed that the rest of the corps would soon join him, had given us up. He sent me

the other side of the Adler to mark out the camp, and little by little the rest of the force arrived. We were under arms all day.

May 8 Maréchal Daun arrived from Vienna to take command of our army, and he must have formed a bad opinion of us. Impossible to be worse encamped. The regiments were one above another in a valley with their whole right flank exposed. I desire to do justice to the indefatigable care of Maréchal Daun, who visited the troops, talked to them, encouraged them, and issued an order saying that circumstances obliged him to make a few marches to meet his reinforcements, but that the moment they joined him he would march upon the enemy.

On the 17th we threw up a few redoubts, good and bad, and I had leisure for the first time to go off and see the outposts. I got there almost too late for a little skirmish which M. de Nauendorf carried off successfully; but he was still firing, and I did not care; I had heard the balls whistle for the first time in my life, and I was happy as a king.

On the 13th the army marched to Kolin. The marshal had conceived the fine idea of advancing to the eastward and turning the enemy's flank. Secrecy was necessary, and what chance of that with us? However, we almost succeeded; though a defile (which could have been foreseen) made us lose a whole day. The cavalry had to pass single file; it took us thirteen hours to do three leagues. But at last we came so close to the enemy that their pickets and ours were in the same wood. I was ordered there, and my patrols went almost up to theirs. Suddenly the unlucky discharge of a musket, fired accidentally, which was taken for a signal, set all our drums to beating. In spite of this, however, the enemy could have been surprised if we had

marched on at midnight instead of waiting for the next day, if the columns had debouched on the level of the plain, and if they had not formed in line of battle instead of advancing instantly on the Prussians, as they well could. And yet these very blunders brought us luck; for if, as was intended, we had surprised, fought, and captured the Prince de Bevern, there would have been no battle of Kolin on the 18th [June].

A singular thing happened at that battle. A fancy seized, no one ever knew why, the whole Ligne battalion to fire off a *feu de joie* of rejoicing, which came near having dangerous results. The regiments before us thought they were attacked in their rear. It cost the lives of several of our officers. In fact, I do not know why a great many more were not killed, for we were just behind the front and got their volley at close quarters. My lieutenant had his coat burned. It was only seven o'clock. Victory was not yet decided. But all our troops of different nations did marvels. The marshal, who rode in the heaviest fire, had all his orderlies killed around him. I fully expected to see the remains of the Prussian army driven into the Elbe, and I shall never understand why there was no pursuit. M. de Nadasdy, who ought to have charged with his hussars, received no orders, and issued none. I remember that I gave myself airs, and advised my own general. The king's right retired towards Böhmischbrod, his left to Nimburg. Our army passed the night on the field of battle, with all the joy that can be imagined in those who were not accustomed to it. On the 21st was a *Te Deum*, which made us lose still more time.

The Ligne Dragoons, who have done such honour, on so many different occasions, to our name, won this battle by a vigorous charge at the very moment the order of retreat

was given, the battle being considered lost; and they were the first to break the Prussian battalions. Some squadrons of Savoie and Würtemberg and the Saxon light-horse also did marvels. As for me, inasmuch as, thanks to my brigadier who was confused, we were not yet under fire, I was so tired of being out of it I fired a cannon into the midst of a lot of blue which I saw on a hill the other side of the high-road. They said afterwards that the king was there until the moment when he himself led his cavalry to the charge.

On the 26th we met the besieged army, which took advantage of our victory to come out of Prague. On the 30th, Maréchal Brown [Maximilian Ulysses] died in Prague, of his wounds and of the visit of his victorious rival, Maréchal Daun. I went to Prague myself to see if there was anything to be learned. I saw nothing but the remains of a quantity of ignorances committed on both sides, particularly in the works of the Prussians, for they know nothing of the engineering side of war. I saw how it was that the right wing of our army, beaten at Malleschitz, was taken in flank; and how the enemy had separated one half from the other half and had cut it off entirely, thanks to the ill-behaviour of our cavalry, which was seized with a panic terror at the same time as the Prussian cavalry, which fled in the other direction with just as little reason. I saw, in short, the most villanous beginning of a campaign, and one which cost us much to repair.

July 21 the enemy, having retreated as we advanced, threw himself into Zittau, and it seemed probable something interesting would happen. I started from camp without leave with several other young officers, who, like me, risked the provost and being shot to satisfy our curiosity. But the Prussian chasseurs gave us more than we wanted.

I afterwards accompanied the marshal to the suburbs of the town, whence he sent two colonels to propose terms to the garrison, which were rather severe. He would have done much better to invest the town, for the enemy were only trying to gain time, in order to send away their treasure and then escape themselves — which they did, to our shame.

Instead of being the first in the attack as I flattered myself, I was forced to rejoin my battalion, which, under orders of General Wied, was now brought up with the rest of the reserve corps. We arrived in time to witness the barbarity that was exercised on Zittau. What a scene! They reduced to ashes a splendid city, perfectly well built, the most commercial town in Saxony after Leipzig, and — most distressing of all — a number of the prettiest women in the world. This was discovered the next day, as soon as the terrible conflagration, lasting more than twenty-four hours, allowed us to visit the lugubrious remains of a brilliant city that existed no longer. It was dangerous to ride about on account of the still falling stones, and awful to look into the cellars where whole families were smothered, — children lying dead upon their mothers' breasts. I turn my thoughts away from this horrible event, fit to disgust one forever with war.

On the 25th we went into camp near Zittau, and there we spent the greater part of the summer, in the most injurious inaction for the army, because desertion, sickness, lack of supplies, marauding, and want of discipline made their appearance, and with evil results.

On the 6th of September Prince Charles of Lorraine, in order to attract the attention of the Prince de Bevern (to whom the King of Prussia had left the command of his army while he marched against the French), posted his

left at Jauernick and occupied the camp at Schönau. At midnight an order came to us to start in great silence, and leave our tents standing. We marched to glory. Nadasdy's companies of Hungarian and German grenadiers, joined to our Wallons, were ordered to climb the mountain, the Holzberg, and drive away the Prussian grenadiers, while the Croats, slipping round by the ravines were to take them in flank and join us at the battery. The dispositions were all excellent. The attack was to be supported by the battalions of the Fusileers, who were ordered to advance in two lines according as the grenadiers advanced themselves. But they, carried away by too much ardour for glory and booty, did not stop at the battery; some pursued the Prussians in great disorder, others entered the tents. The enemy returned in force, and matters went ill.

It was for us to repair them; I say *us*, and I mean our battalion, that of Saxe-Gotha and a few of the Arberg. It was the Wallon day! for our companies of the grenadiers were the first up. It was fine to see them mount without firing a shot until they were sure of the mountain. Mantefel and Treskow were the troops with whom we had to do. I have never seen anything finer or so brave. M. de Winterfeld was killed at their head marching against us like a madman. He mounted the hill on one side as our men mounted it on the other. Reaching the crest of the mountain at the same time, we had a moment of flux and reflux, as they do at the opera. I tried to stop it, and to fix and form a line with my battle-axe and the halberds of my sub-officers. It was rough to be between the hottest fire the enemy had made throughout the war and that of the Platz regiment, which, instead of keeping on our right as it should, was hurrying to fire off its cartridges from behind us, and so have a pretext for going away.



The first rank of the Prussians and ours were so close together that the muskets almost crossed each other. It was then that the affair became terrible; the barracks, kitchens, tents, etc., took fire and blazed up. The enemy used them as a parapet to shoot us at close quarters; the wounds were so large they looked as if made by cannon-balls. The smoke was dense; we did not know with whom we were. Several times I got beyond the Prussians, who, turning round upon us, gave and received bayonet thrusts; a number of my men were wounded in that way. There was such slaughter, my neighbours and the clumsy fellows in the rear ranks were killing so many, that it was absolutely necessary to stop their wild firing. My staff-officers could not be everywhere, my oldest comrades were all killed, nearly all our officers were wounded. I shouted: "Shoulder arms!" as hard as I could; but if I stopped ten or twelve, the thirteenth man, who did not hear me, fired, and all the others began again. I saw the moment coming when we should have to yield. More than ever I roared myself hoarse for the honour of the nation, and shouting, "Vive Maria Theresa! Bayonets and the Wallons!" I rushed on with a small following of Lignes and Saxe-Gothas; and well they served me! It was a race pell-mell with the enemy; each man picked and followed his own. Two soldiers got to the bottom of the mountain when I did, and each of them captured a flag. This helter-skelter rush was the thing that decided the enemy to retreat. We went at this pace to the village of Moys. There I rallied my troop with the one sub-lieutenant who had kept up with me. We ran the risk of being sabred by hussars if any had come up. That reflection decided me to bring my company back to the battalion, which I found, formed in good order, at the foot of the mountain. All the officers

were hors de combat except two, and they had cuts through their hats and coats, for everybody had something. While I was addressing my remains, a cannon-ball carried off four grenadiers between the Prince de Stolberg and me; another at the same instant covered me with earth, and a third knocked me over. I did not know what to look to. We were left there a long time exposed very improperly. It did not come into anybody's head to order us under shelter; the fight was over, and our artillery was replying very badly to that of the Prussians. But one does not like to give advice in such cases.

Two or three times [during this campaign] I had talks with the enemy. Prince Louis of Würtemberg and I went to the outposts one day and twirled our caps, which is a sign of good friendship. Some hussars came to us; this was near Breslau. We told them we should come back the next day at the same hour, to the same place, and they must tell Prince Frederick and his brother, a major-general in their service. The prince came, and brought with him Prince François of Brunswick, who was quite wrong to want a talk, for he could not say a word, he stuttered so. All the students at Breslau came out to look at us. Many of the Prussian general officers were walking about at no great distance, but they did not dare to join us. Such interviews were scarcely tolerated on their side, and strictly forbidden on ours. During the conversation I tried all I could to examine the lay of the land beyond the river and the redoubt.

November 25 the capitulation of Breslau was signed. The garrison was to leave with the honours of war. As the order forbidding officers to ride over there was very badly enforced, I went with the Princes of Saxony to witness the affair. It was the saddest sight in the world. I looked for

the garrison, but saw none. There was a troop in the market place, not drawn up in order, which diminished every minute, for a ducat was being given to each deserter. Scarcely any but the officers left the place, and they carried off their flags themselves, sadly enough. Seventeen thousand of our men were marched in under orders of M. de Sprecher.

November 27 we learned that the King of Prussia was advancing; that the fragments of his beaten army had rejoined him and that even the deserters were flocking back. If the resolution had then been taken instantly to post ourselves at Parchnitz, or to stay where we were and await the enemy, or to attack him at the passage of the Schweidnitz (if he attempted it), or to camp at Marehdorf, we should have kept Silesia; Liegnitz would have fallen. Our quarters might have been a little cramped, but the king would have had to turn back for want of supplies. As for us, we could have drawn ours from Poland and Bohemia. Of all those plans none were taken, and a worse was chosen; namely, a march, and the passage of the Schweidnitz. General Lucchesi, who gave this bad advice, was punished for it two days later by a cannon-ball which took off his head.

On the morning of December 5 our Saxon light-horse cavalry were utterly defeated [battle of Leuthen]; they were pushed too far forward, and the hussars were unable to support them against the Prussian cavalry. The king, by help of a ravine, covered the manœuvre. We ought not to have been deceived; it was plain that he meant to attack upon our left; which should have rested on the river, and not have been presented to the enemy as it was, for the flank was formed in front in a manner to give him the idea of overwhelming it. We ought at least to have put brave men on that flank, and to have taken one or other of the two positions in the rear of it which were offered by Nature her-



*Francis I  
Emperor of Germany*



self; we ought never to have listened to Lucchesi; we ought to have obliged him to attack the enemy on his left; we ought to have burned the houses in Leuthen, and we ought not to have engaged the whole army, and each regiment separately, after the ill-success of our left.

The few Württembergers who did not run away surrendered to the Prussians. The Bavarians departed a few moments later. Nadasdy's corps was then, necessarily, withdrawn. The thing was all over in half an hour. They shouted for the Reserve to come up as fast as possible. We made but one rush; my lieutenant-colonel was killed instantly. I lost, besides, the major, all my officers except three, and eleven or twelve cadets or volunteers. We passed to the left of the houses of Leuthen; but it was impossible to hold our ground. Besides an incredible cannonading and the musket-balls that rained upon the battalion which I was then commanding (for we had no colonel, and I called out: "Messieurs, awaiting the decision of a Council of War, I take this upon myself" — a good deal is forgiven to the son of a proprietary colonel), the third battalion of the King's Guards kept at us with their hottest fire. They were not eighty paces distant, drawn up and awaiting us as if on parade. My soldiers, jaded with their march and without cannon (for none could or perhaps would follow us), scattered, and fought no longer except from temper; it was for our honour rather than for the good of the thing that we did not go off the ground. An ensign of the Arberg battalion helped me for a time to make a line with his remains and mine. When he was killed, two officers of grenadiers brought me theirs. When I had, with these and the remains of my own brave battalion and a few Hungarians, about two hundred men I withdrew to the Moulin height (as the rest of the army ought to have done). From there I proposed to

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attack the village, and taking a flag in my hand, I advanced with my troop in good order, everybody fleeing to right and left of us. But, desperate at seeing no one imitate our example, and that two brigades, which were always marching about and doing nothing, would not support us, I now thought only of how to retire more honourably than the rest. It was high time; a few minutes later we should all have been made prisoners. I managed to lodge the few men left to me of my Ligne regiment in the first hovels I found on the other side of the river. Towards the end of the battle I had found my horse, on which I gave myself the airs of a staff-officer; it is true I was tired out, and could do no more; but he gave me a bad fall into a ditch in the course of the night.

About five in the morning the Duc d'AreMBERG passed the place where I was, and ordered me to go with him to Grabischen, where I saw the prince [Charles of Lorraine] and the maréchal [Daun], as sad as can well be imagined. One seemed to be saying, "I never could have believed it;" and the other, "I told you so."

December 24 we reached Jaromirz. The prince and the maréchal established their winter quarters at Königgrätz: and it was there, where I began, that I ended my first campaign.

The colonel of the Ligne regiment having been detached before the battle of Breslau, and the lieutenant-colonel and staff-officers and other captains having been killed at Leuthen, I found myself, as I have said, in command of the battalion. I was soon after promoted lieutenant-colonel and commanded the two battalions of my father's regiment of Wallons. We are ignorant of the origin of that name. No one has ever been able to tell how the word "Wallons" or "Vallons" came to us. Our region is that of what the Romans called the



Nervii, and the origin must be there. But as to the usage that history had since made of the name, it seems to have long been the custom to call all French-speaking inhabitants of the Austrian Low Countries Wallons, and the neighbours of the Nervii, such as the Eburones and the Tongris, were included. Hence the ancient Vallonne hordes, so famous in other days, and the Vallon Guards, regiments which have served with such honour in the Austrian armies. There are companies who still bear that name in the armies of France, Naples, and Holland. In the latter country they talk of the Vallon Church. In the regions where they speak Vallon, that is to say, bad French, the name is pronounced Ouallon, and spelt with a W.

[The following year, 1758] the army, fated to be commanded by Maréchal Daun, came out of its very bad winter quarters with all the more satisfaction because contagious diseases were rife and had carried off a good number of those whom the preceding campaign had spared. The King of Prussia, neither conqueror nor conquered, content with a state of indecision, did not think of attacking us; that was not his game; on the contrary, he was anxious not to come to a general engagement, which might cause him to lose Saxony. He therefore enjoyed his usual pleasure of keeping us in a state of suspense.

Meanwhile, however, the siege of Olmutz was progressing considerably. The enemy was said to be not more than sixty yards from the covered way. It was time to do something.

June 30 we suddenly received orders to strike tents and start instantly. This was shortening formalities mightily; but it is thus, by wasting no time, that the secrecy of an expedition is secured. We marched without really knowing where we were going, but, in the main, we felt sure it

must be to relieve the besieged town. We marched slowly Meantime wonders were being done by M. de Loudon with his Croats, who had long been on the watch for a favourable enterprise. He knew well how to distinguish good reports from bad ones ; rejecting those dictated by fear, he made the most of the others. Receiving news of a convoy near Domstättl, he sent forward his light troops, supported them with his dragoons, captured the convoy and escort, took quantities of prisoners, destroyed the enemy's supplies, succeeded in capturing every waggon, saved Olmutz, and covered himself with glory.

The heat was extreme ; but we stood it well and patiently because we knew we were advancing against the enemy. July 1, from the heights above Olmutz, we could see the besieged and the besiegers ; only a short march remained to be made. On the 2nd, we were amazed to find the trenches abandoned and the garrison employed in destroying them. Everybody was pleased : Maréchal Daun for having made a wise march ; somebody else for having advised it ; M. de Loudon for having fought and decided what might have hung on for some time longer ; and Comte de Marschall for having defended the place vigorously. But why was not M. de Bucknow, so useless hitherto, close at the king's heels ? We might have got his artillery and baggage. Ah ! if that enthusiasm which the king knew so well how to inspire in his army had only been in ours ! Some one was wanted to stir its imagination. But we had learned this year how to camp and how to march, and that was a good deal for us.

I spent the two days we were under the walls of Olmutz in visiting the fortifications. They had suffered very little from a six weeks' cannonading. They were already being repaired in two or three places. It seemed to me that the

breach made in the wall of the Corps de Place was sufficient for an assault as soon as the enemy were masters of the covered way. Olmutz might have been better attacked, but it could not have been better defended.

We entered Saxony August 31, by way of Königsbrück, with the intention of relieving Dresden by crossing the Elbe above the woods of Radeburg. It was here that the rumour of a battle with the Russians began to be bruited about [Frederick the Great had defeated the Russians at Dornsdorf, August 25]. Our march was greatly retarded by the confusion of two columns that crossed each other. September 3rd the project of relieving Dresden was abandoned; we had scarcely reached Radeburg before this retrograde resolution, which put it out of our power to undertake anything good, was formed. The army marched at once to Stolpen; the Prussian hussars attacked our baggage, and came near capturing the whole of it.

Prince Henry [of Prussia], who from the beginning of the campaign had no other object than to cover Saxony, was in camp at Dohna. The defeat of his corps would have brought about the taking of Dresden and the evacuation of Saxony. The day for it was fixed, but a parade and review in honour of the Comte de Haugwitz delayed the march; and so an army that ought only to have taken up arms to force the enemy to lay down theirs, took them up for a minister who was so near-sighted that he only pretended to see the troops. The march was therefore postponed till the following day. This was September 22. The grenadiers, under M. de Lacy, were ready to cross the river; the bridges were thrown over; the army had orders to leave its baggage, and was only waiting the word to march, when false information, fear of results, what shall I say? fatal irresolution, so destructive in war, upset the whole plan. The

grenadiers came back to camp, and the army returned to its tranquillity.

I saw a great deal during this time of the famous Comtesse de Cossel, who for forty-eight years had been shut up in the neighbouring castle of Stolpen for having tried to kill her august lover, Augustus [Elector of Saxony and King of Poland]. She took a great liking for me, and told me that, being able to go free on the death of her king [1733], that is, at the end of twenty-three years' imprisonment, she had remained in the castle twenty-five years longer, because she then knew no one and expected to die soon. She said that, having had time to study all religions, she had chosen the Jewish, and exhorted me to do the same. For which purpose she gave me, the last time I saw her, her Bible, with her notes in broad red pencil. This gift she announced to me in a way that made me suppose it was the largest of her diamonds she was going to present to me.

She gave me an account of the arrival of Charles XII. in Dresden, so well known to history. Augustus and herself were in the latter's arsenal, where he practised his feats of strength, especially with his wrists, in which his great power lay. Some one knocked at the door. Augustus said, "Come in!" and Charles entered and embraced him, saying, "Good-morning, my brother." Mme. de Cossel went up to the king to advise him to arrest this wandering royal brother. Charles perceiving her intention, or else disliking women, made a face, which induced Augustus to make a sign to Mme. de Cossel to withdraw. She did so, with a furious glance at the King of Sweden, miserable that the King of Poland should draw no benefit from a visit that amazed all Europe. She told me a hundred interesting things, and advised me not to drink and not to gamble, and to give up great adventures at Court, where no one could long be

happy, and also in the army after I had won the fame she predicted for me.

The last time I saw her she said, with great coolness and yet with much earnestness: "This is Friday, and it is nearly seven o'clock; my Sabbath is about to begin. You leave in a few days and I shall not see you again. In three years you will lose your best friend, who bids you farewell at this moment forever." I was much moved; she kissed me and I left her. She wrote me a letter some time after, scarcely legible, still less intelligible, full of mystical or magic meanings, which the devil alone could have deciphered. She kept her word and I never saw her again.

There had long been talk of a possible deficiency of provisions which sooner or later would force Maréchal Daun to leave Stolpen, but he seemed to be reluctant to do so. He had not known how to profit by the diversion of the Russians and the battle of Dornsdorf to establish himself, as he ought to have done, in Brandebourg. It was not until October 5 that we moved from Stolpen. We Wallons, who had been for some time past the Croats of the army, were to cover the retreat. The Duc d'Areberg commanded the rear guard of the reserve corps; Loudon that of the main army. We struck tents with a show of mystery and spent the night under arms between Neukirch and Tautwalden. My regiment marched four or five hours behind the others, but was not attacked.

On the 7th our position was secure, and the heights of Hochkirch were occupied by six hundred of our cavalry. On the 10th a few pistol-shots, heard on the Hochkirch at day-break, announced the intention of the enemy to carry it. The commanders of our cavalry might perhaps [have held their ground some time without being supported; but the fact is it was the King of Prussia himself, with his whole

army, advancing to occupy the heights. I can render no better account of the glorious day of October 14 than by copying the orders of the commander-in-chief and showing in what they were followed and in what they were not followed.<sup>1</sup> . . .

My two battalions were drawn, by special distinction of the marshal, from the rear of the right, to be the first of all to attack on the left, after a march of twelve hours through woods and stony ravines, where we saw neither sky nor earth. We had our instructions to dislodge from the underbrush round the enemy's camp all the sharpshooters that we believed to be there; and for this light and rapid movement we were ordered to leave our flags behind us. This last order alarmed the sensibilities of my regiment, and I had difficulty in making them understand it was doing us great honour to treat us as grenadiers without a flag, so that we could take those of the enemy. Brown's regiment [son of Maréchal Brown, killed at Prague] had orders to march behind mine with as much order as was needed to second our eagerness, which was greater than ever. . . .

It was five o'clock in the morning when General Brown drew up the two battalions of his father's regiment and the two of the Ligne in a little thicket, close to a pond, at the extremity of the camp of the Prussian hussars. While I, with Fabris, was reconnoitring the underbrush in front of us, Brown ordered his father's regiment to advance. Returning a moment later I found it already started and firing, and I marched my own men along very fast. On the way I met Brown, looking for his horse; he told me to

<sup>1</sup> The battle of Hochkirch, Oct. 14, 1758, in which Frederick the Great was defeated by Maréchal Daun. The particulars of this and of all the other campaigns of the Seven Years' War are given by the Prince de Ligne in his *Mélanges Militaires*, etc., vols. xiv., xv., xvi. The chief events only are told in this Memoir. — TR.



go straight before me, for he was dangerously wounded (they were firing at us from the underbrush on all sides); and after that I was my own general for the rest of the battle.

I went as fast as I could, spreading my front as wide as possible. My battalion on the right entered the camp of the Prussian grenadiers, and they, half clothed, retired to form, and then returned to defend themselves. We killed a great number during that time in the darkness; mine being the first line of infantry in the advance, having formed in a little plain beyond the wood. Hearing M. de Stainville coming up at the full trot with the Löwenstein regiments, I took him for the enemy, and what resistance could I make then? Nevertheless, I ordered, "Ruhig!" [Be still!] to my whole battalion, who were nothing but recruits, and I was amazed at the self-command and obedience they showed; not a shot was fired. I went a few steps forward by myself and recognized Stainville, who told me that if I would go up a little hill about two hundred paces distant he would support me with his regiments. During the time I was marching there, down came the gendarmes of the king at full gallop to pounce on my battalions, and they would certainly have crushed them if the Löwenstein regiments had not charged vigorously.

I occupied the height and requested a battalion of Croats, which I found abandoned to itself, to take my right and fill up the gap between my battalions and that of Arberg, separated from me by the darkness. It was just then that I encountered M. de Loudon, who approved of all that I had done. He ordered our three battalions forward to a little wood to the left of the village of Hochkirch. I rallied about two hundred grenadiers of the Arberg, which I put on my right, Loudon having ordered Mérode and the



Croats to my left. He told me to put my whole force into the quarries from which they took stone. Thus intrenched by nature, I feared nothing either for myself or for the grenadiers, whom I posted in the thick underbrush. The enemy turned us, but they could not break us; and when I saw that after the fusillade of my men and the Croats on the hussars in front of me, the latter were trying to take me from behind, I swung a half-circle to the right with the grenadiers only, and so was able to make front and fire on two sides at a time. The only danger was from our own artillery, which was not able to advance as far as I; a cannon-ball all but killed me and M. de Loudon at one shot.

It was now half-past eight; and it was then that the Prussian infantry, farther to my right, rallied miraculously, and, regaining its lost ground around the village, was about to regain the lost battle. The *maréchal* saw this and feared the result. M. de Lacy, who had made himself responsible for everything up to this moment, did so again at this crisis. It was he who had made the fine arrangements I have quoted; it was he who had planned the attack; it was he who had decided the battle so far; and it was he who now won the victory! He charged at the head of six companies of horse-grenadiers and carbineers, dashed through the village of Hoehkirch, surmounted almost insurmountable obstacles, took quantities of flags, and bore down everything before him.

But why did our cavalry on the right do nothing, and our cavalry on the left so little? Why did they not pursue the beaten army along the road from Löbau to Budissin? Why were the infantry intrusted to Loudon withdrawn during the battle? Or rather, why not have ordered so many regiments, that had so far done nothing at all, to

pursue? The artillery should have been led from height to height, the troopers sent forward at full speed as far at least as Budissin, the victory completed, and not written about. That miserable stone on which I saw the *maréchal* writing a letter in haste, that the empress might receive the news before she left her room on Saint Theresa's day, was our stone of stumbling, as I remember saying at the time.

In the cemetery of Hochkirch I recognized *Maréchal Keith* (James Keith, a Scotchman, in the Prussian service) by his majestic mien and his wounds. He did prodigies of valour till he received the ball that pierced his heart. I saw him, the Hero, lying among his soldiers and ours; his noble presence still awing those who saw it. 'T was the death of the righteous. His body was all covered with old wounds, his scarred face unchanged by the change that took him to the home of souls like his own — for doubtless there is one for those that leave the bodies of such brave soldiers; they must after death receive the reward of all their virtues.

There were many dead in the same place, among them Prince François of Brunswick. The Prince of Anhalt was dangerously wounded and taken prisoner under the idea that he was the king himself. We took one hundred cannon and many flags. I repeat: they might have taken the whole army, but they were too surprised at having surprised it. The king returned to Bautzen, and on the 29th marched with his whole army into Silesia, escorted by Loudon, who never lost sight of him, but followed him steadily to Schönberg.

As for us, we were reserved for greater exploits; we had to pass the time until we went into winter quarters; and so we marched into Saxony. Our column crossed the Elbe

near Pillnitz, on twenty-eight pontoons; that of the Supplies and Equipments on other pontoons at Pirna. I examined carefully the ground where we ought to have made our attack on Prince Henry's left. We should only have had a short distance to climb; and even if we had not succeeded in attracting the enemy's attention in that direction we should have facilitated his defeat by our reserve corps.

General Itzenplitz, to whom Prince Henry had left the command of his corps, was the king's reliance for the preservation of Dresden, where the garrison, of only three thousand men, could easily have been reinforced from his troops. But whether he was ignorant of our advance or whether he foresaw what actually happened, he remained quietly in the position he occupied. If we, instead of stopping a day and a half at Lockwitz, had stationed ourselves on the evening of the 7th between Itzenplitz and Dresden we should have had Dresden and Leipzig, etc. The king was in Silesia; Dohna could do us no harm; and Itzenplitz was cut off.

November 9, one hour after mid-day our army was under arms and advancing upon Dresden. Charles Lorraine, Hildburgshausen, my regiment and that of Gaisruch, had orders to carry the Great Garden, which is separated from the faubourg by only a little esplanade of about eighty yards at the most, and surrounded by a good wall. We reached the gates at half-past two. My sappers battered them in, and I entered with a detachment of four hundred men, which served as the advanced guard. I had a number of men wounded by the Prussian chasseurs who, after a gallant defence, retired behind the ruined walls of the Garden and fired at us from there. It was only by cannon that I was able to drive them into the faubourg and so get rid of them.

Emeric Esterhazy having himself reconnoitred with his hussars a redoubt in which fifty grenadiers were stationed to cover the faubourg of Pirna, I offered myself and my two battalions to carry it and then post ourselves as close as could be to the gates of the town. But in vain I entreated, besought, represented; the orders of the *maréchal* were, they said, to undertake nothing further. And thus a thing so easy, which would have secured to us the possession of Dresden on the following day, if the rest of the army had done as it should have done, was treated as a piece of nonsense on my part and utterly neglected.

Nothing could have been worse than what happened the next day; and it would not have happened had I carried the redoubt; because we could then have extinguished the conflagration, and made ourselves responsible against pillage. And if we think we are sheltered from blame because it was not we who set fire to the faubourgs, nor had we suffered any one to enter the town, we are mightily mistaken. We had done too much not to do more; having undertaken a great affair we did too little.

On the 10th we saw the frightful spectacle of all those beautiful houses about Dresden in flames. I could warm myself by them in my tent. Days went by in making plans; and as if we seriously thought of investing Dresden, there was talk of bringing up the siege guns. But it was soon discovered that the king was returning; Dohna was advancing against us; and so, in order not to give a second edition of Leuthen, the armies all retired, each in its own direction: the Prince de Deux-Ponts gave up his enterprise at Leipzig; Haddick that of Torgau; Daun that of Dresden; Loudon that of Cossel; and as if this wisdom of operations extended everywhere, even the Russians left Colberg; and

all at the same moment, as though the word had been passed round.

The cold now becoming severe, the total lack of wood to warm the right wing of the army, and the desire to have the troops in a good state for the campaign of 1759, led to our returning to Bohemia by the Geyersberg and the savage chain of mountains which that route required us to cross. They might have spared our doing it in one march; it took some regiments eighteen hours to get across, and certainly there was nothing to hurry us. Every one got into winter quarters as best he could. As for me, I reached mine at Töplitz November 25, 1758, where I found myself under the orders of General Siskowitz.

We lived in the utmost tranquillity the whole of that winter; there was not even so much as a false alarm. Twice a week we reconnoitred the roads about us, and kept them in good order; also the bridges, employing for that purpose the peasants of the neighbouring villages. Once I played orderly corporal during the night, and left invitations for everybody to dine with the generals, who never dined at home. The company arrived and waited, expecting their hosts to return. General Lacy was the only one who dined in his own quarters; he expected about a dozen, and sixty came. He imagined it was the fault of his aides-de-camp, who had each invited guests inconveniently. They, on the other hand, said afterwards they could not imagine what the general was thinking of to invite so many persons. Every one was ill at ease, ill-fed, ill-served, and in very bad humour; the officers all left the generals' tents at four o'clock, declaring they were villains and very impertinent.

"Let us do justice," I said one day to my young officers of twenty or so (for all the rest had been killed), "and throw

those flags where they ought to be" [apparently the flags of some regiment that had misconducted itself]. We seized the sentinel, and blindfolded him in front of the regiment's quarters, so that he might have nothing to blame himself for, and I gave him five ducats for his fright. The flags went where I had said. The uproar this made can be imagined. I went to see the proprietor of the regiment as if nothing had happened. It was O'Kelly, who liked me much. I found him in tears. "Ah! my friend," he said, "if you only knew what has happened to me! But don't speak of it to any one, for pity's sake; it is better to smother the affair." "Yes," I said, "smother it by all means; be as mum as you can."

I remember that just as the battle of Hochkirch was beginning, M. de Mérode, a captain of my regiment, thinking that I had no religion and wanting to try me, asked if I thought there was a God, hoping to send me to the devil, where I sent him as I answered, "I never doubted it." As if the word had been passed round to damn me, another young officer, of whom I was very fond, and who may have heard me talk lightly on such subjects, and whose Mahomet I was in another matter, asked me nearly the same question. On his part it was sincerely a desire to know, and not from mischief. Cursèd human deference! and to whom?—a young sub-lieutenant of eighteen! I answered feebly as to my belief; but see the contradictions of the mind: the balls were whistling round me, and I made the sign of the cross in perfect good faith, like Henri IV. in the trenches of Montalban.

Fabris, a brave officer of the headquarters staff, and I had been talking at Adelsbach about a poem on the Art of War. He remembered it on this occasion, and during a deluge of water and fire, for there came up a great shower

in the midst of the rain of balls and bullets, he repeated a quotation I had made to him of two pretty poor lines: —

“These weapons, these horses, these soldiers, these cannons,  
Can't sustain of themselves the honour of nations.”

I paid him instantly in his own coin, and pointing to my own regiment and Betschein's, I capped him with: —

“But see the Hungarians, there are the Wallons!”





*The Prince de Ligne*



### III.

1758-1762.

#### THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR: FIRST VISIT TO PARIS.

THE colonel of my father's regiment would have been made general if he had not been taken prisoner; and as he was certain to be as soon as he was ransomed I was made colonel-commander during the winter of 1758-59; and for this promotion, as well as all others, I owed nothing to favour. I was always indifferent to many things. With a little pains I might have had the regiment of Ligne Dragoons after the battle of Kolin, for my uncle had just died. But even then I detested intrigue; I thought that to write to the empress and send to Vienna would be intriguing. Otherwise I should have been a marshal at thirty. As it was, I was one year captain, one year lieutenant-colonel, four years colonel, then major-general.

[At the opening of the campaign of 1759] I was brigaded with a Hungarian regiment, an Italian regiment, and a German regiment. This assemblage of four nations was often exercised together by M. de Siskowitz, who commanded the brigade, in their four different languages, which he spoke perfectly. When it was our turn to appear before the marshal, who made the whole army manœuvre before him successively, he seemed very pleased with all of us; but I shall make bold to say that for quickness and precision in wheeling, and for marching in general, the Wallons carried the day

August 12, the day that Loudon won the battle of Franckfort [Kunersdorf], I was at our outposts by daylight. The enemy came out to insult them as usual, and then attacked them in regular form by several squadrons at the same moment, so that Esterhazy's Grand' Gardes were roughly handled. It was a little my fault, because I advised Captain Nitsky to go out and meet them as they came on; and before long we were surrounded on all sides; the Prussians coming out of the houses of the village of Thiemendorf and the underbrush all the time and pouncing on us. My lieutenant-colonel (who had hurried up at the noise) and I, after staying there longer than we ought, had to ride back at a furious pace to escape them. We were between our own hussars and those of Prince Henry, who were after us; but the horses of the latter went so fast they could not control them in time to capture us. Luckily we came upon the picket of an officer of Warasdins, who fired just at the right time on our pursuers (and a little on us). As usual, the Prussian cavalry was supported by their infantry. This little combat, which was more amusing than murderous, lasted nearly four hours, and served only to get me scolded. The enemy returned to their outposts, and we to ours. It was here that I heard of the birth of my son. "Ah!" I cried joyfully, "how I shall love him! I wish I could write it to him now. If I return alive from this war I shall say to him: 'You are welcome, and I am going to love you with all my heart.'"

[Prince Henry of Prussia, then in command of the army of his brother, Frederick the Great, in Saxony, was in camp at Torgau; the king being engaged with Loudon near Franckfort.]

On the 20th of October, General Lacy, while reconnoitring

as closely as he could the camp at Torgau, which was hidden by the brushwood on all sides, was shot in the arm by a chasseur. There is never so much marching to and fro as when you don't want to fight. You are always thinking that by keeping on the flank of the enemy you can force him to decamp, and often you are wrong. All our stratagems and efforts proved useless on this occasion. Prince Henry eluded them until the end of his authority; and that is a justice I ought to do him.

On the 22nd the Duc d'Aremberg was detached to Strehlin by the marshal, with a corps of twenty thousand men. That of Brentano was added to ours. I say *ours*, because it was now plain that no detachment could leave the army without my regiment being part of it. I found this in all the campaigns, and it gave me a great deal of pleasure. Brentano camped in front of us. The marshal came over to inspect our position, which would have been good for a larger force, if the heights above the chapel had been occupied.

On the 26th a Prussian corps was seen advancing, which was rightly supposed to be thirty squadrons of horse and ten battalions of infantry detached from Torgau, under command of General Finck, who at first showed signs of attacking Brentano, but withdrew to Dommitsch. . . . Brentano, finding himself cut off from us, was not uneasy; he fought his little fight and retired to Düben, which was his only resource, where we were charmed to rejoin him the following day. He had not suffered much. During the action his Croats had abandoned two cannon. M. de Beaudéans, captain of the Wallon dragoons, dismounted his squadron and chased Finck's infantry. His lieutenant, M. de Pfortzheim, recaptured the guns, harnessed the dragoon horses to them, and brought them safely in. Such deeds as these deserve

to go down to posterity with the names of those who did them.

By November 6 the king had returned with rapid marches and joined his brother Henry, having quite recovered from his losses before Franckfort. Brentano was put on his left to watch him. On the 14th of November the whole army was ordered to make a retrograde movement in the deepest secrecy. Our column marched by Meissen, and there, after my regiment had passed through the town, an obstruction of waggon-trains and artillery lasted so long that the Prussian hussars came up and pillaged the baggage; which gave us time to save the cannon, although they were quite in the enemy's power. I lost my provision-waggons and other supplies; also my tents and bullocks, with their guards, who defended them as long as they could. On the 17th the army halted before Dresden, and Brentano had orders to go to Maxen; he was the rear-guard, with the cavalry. Finck and Wunsch arrived at Maxen at almost the same time. The king, who was at Lommatsch, believed that nothing but his presence was now lacking to crown the campaign.

We wanted to attack, but we did not know where. The Prussian general, Rebentisch, had started for Maxen to join Finck and Wunsch; and the question was, should we attack those three generals? Fabris had found two roads through the woods by which to debouch two columns and attack on our side; Brentano was ready on his; and the imperial army was at Dohna. But difficulties were talked of. Lacy smoothed them all, gave his word of honour, wagered his head. Almost all the generals opposed him; but at last he convinced Maréchal Dauu that he would lose his artillery and baggage, and, worse still, be forced to retreat into Bohemia, if he did not fight and capture the Prussian army of nearly twenty thousand men at Maxen. The marshal

agreed, and Lacy drew up as good a plan of operations as he had done for Hochkirch.<sup>1</sup>

At eight in the morning of November 20, in horrible weather, and after waiting three hours with our feet in the snow, the march began. Every one had his instructions, which were clear and precise. Maréchal Daun drove over from his own army in a carriage, and, mounting his horse, put himself at the head of ours. He was no longer irresolute after the thing had once begun; he saw clearer under fire than he did in his cabinet. He himself formed the grenadiers on the first height beyond the woods, under a heavy cannonading. If the enemy had posted twenty cannon on that height they could have prevented our debouching. But, in point of fact, they advanced towards us in a manner that facilitated our project of surrounding them.

The grenadiers of the Ligne were the first in the village and castle of Maxen, where all who defended them threw down their arms. The Wallon dragoons also defeated the Finck cavalry, in spite of its superiority. During the greater part of the time the marshal was in front of my front, only leaving it now and then to expose himself still more in leading and animating the different troops. The whole affair lasted barely three hours, and the enemy could have made better use of the lay of the land and the severely cold weather.

Towards evening I took my stand at the great battery, where I gathered together the prisoners and deserters, whom the grenadiers were bringing in at every moment. They told me that the three Prussian generals lost their heads. Maxen was set on fire, and there was some pillage. I put a guard in the castle. A quantity of young ladies, in tears, begged me to

<sup>1</sup> This account of the battle of Maxen is much abridged in the translation. — Tr.



lodge there. The marshal came, and I gave him, also the volunteer princes and generals, a good supper. M. de Lacy, who had well earned it, said to me, laughing: "At what o'clock to-morrow will you take for your reward the birds that we have caught to put in the cage? We have them all." The marshal said to him, "Do you think that is really so?" Lacy assured him it was so. I gave another supper to the officers whom we had taken prisoners.

The next day I received a summons from General O'Donnell, to go to him. He told me of the favour I had obtained in being chosen to carry to the King of France the news of the battle of Maxen and the capture of nine generals and eighteen thousand men. O'Donnell sent me to the maréchal's headquarters in Dresden to receive my instructions. Though it was a frost like that on the day of the action, during which (I forgot to say) I almost broke my neck by my horse falling with me, I galloped to Dresden in an hour and a half, at the risk of twenty other falls. I was beside myself with joy. The maréchal sent me off that very day. I never was so happy in my life.

The nation which knew the most about glory would be forgotten at the present day, like so many others, were it not for the noble public works it has left to posterity. It foresaw that the fame of its arms needed that support. There were deeds as brilliant no doubt in the history of all the Peoples that are now buried in eternal oblivion; but 'tis only those who cultivate the arts who can perpetuate themselves. It is against Time, that destroyer of Nature, that they should arm. The Romans knew how to conquer it. In seeing the amphitheatres, the columns, the roads, the aqueducts that still remain to us, we are made to feel that they had their Virgils, Horaces, and Ovids because Genius

drives her chariot with all the sciences abreast. France alone can aspire to the many-sided fame of Rome. But she has no ambitions incompatible with pleasing; that delightful nation knows how to enjoy. Let her enjoy; for she unites in herself the heritage of Rome and Athens.

Nevertheless the climate, the gloom, the deserted spaces, the remoteness of Versailles are distasteful to everyone. The queen of that country is Gayety. She who reigns there at the present moment is therefore doubly a queen. The beauty of her soul is pictured in her face, grace directs her every movement; she wears a look of happiness, she inspires it, and thus contributes to that of her kingdom. If her subjects could see and admire her daily they would be the better for it. For this reason Paris and the Louvre should once more be made the residence of the king and Court. But when I was sent to France, in 1759–60, to carry the news of the victory and capture of eighteen thousand Prussians to Louis XV., the Court was buried at Versailles. The king received me at his *lever* and asked a score of silly questions, as he did to others who were present. For instance, he asked the rector of Saint-Germains if there had been many deaths during the winter. “Bad year, bad year,” he repeated a dozen times, addressing that phrase to every one who was present at the *lever*. He asked our ambassador, Stahrenberg, what weather it was in Vienna, and whether there were many old men; he asked the nuncio how the pope’s pages were dressed; and me whether Maréchal Daun wore a wig.

What was my astonishment when, after the round of ceremonious bows which I was taken to make on all the individuals of the royal family, I was conducted to a species of second queen — she had more the air of a queen than the first, who was a dowdy old woman. Madame de Pompadour

(it was she) talked a quantity of politico-ministerial and politico-military nonsense. She made me three or four plans of campaign, and said with emphasis: "You know, monsieur, what we are doing for you; are you not satisfied?" "I assure you, madame," I said, "that I know nothing about it." She replied: "We are selling our gold and silver plate to support your war." And then she actually took it into her head to say: "I am much dissatisfied with your women of Prague." "So am I," I replied, "I have often been so." "They are very ill brought-up," she added. "Why do they not pay better court to the sisters of Madame la Dauphine?" There was no answer to make to such a piece of ignorance, so I retired.

I wish to deny here the letters and anecdotes which report that the Empress Maria Theresa wrote to Mme. de Pompadour calling her "my pretty little cousin," and that the latter replied, "my dear little queen." The empress addressed her through our ambassador as she would a minister, which, in fact, she was. That is how I myself was presented. She put to me on several occasions most ridiculous questions, but not more so, after all, than those of the other ministers. One day she was trying to find Saxony on a great atlas spread out before her, and when the king asked me if we had completely surrounded the Prussians, she said, rather sensibly: "You can see, Sire, it was not necessary, because here is the river Elbe to shut them in on this side."

It is singular that even without a war being in progress France has always felt ill-will to the house of Austria. I have never felt it to the house of Bourbon; on the contrary, I adored the heads of that house, such of them as I knew, and they deserved a general interest. But if, in after years, their throne had been restored to them, through the interest

they inspired or for the sake of other thrones, we ought to have said firmly: "Be careful that your infernal, or lazy, or frivolous, or ignorant, or intriguing, or haughty minister leaves us in peace and stirs up neither our subjects nor our neighbours against us, and does not meddle again with Flanders, Hungary, the Empire, and Holland." Did not M. d'Aiguillon refuse us the help of men and money to prevent that first partition of Poland? Did not M. de Vergennes sound the tocsin against our claims in Bavaria and our rights to the freedom of the Scheldt? I myself experienced the result of French antipathy on this visit of mine to Versailles. "You are very late in winning your victories," Maréchal Belleisle, then minister of war, said to me. "In last year's campaign Hochkirch only came in October, and this year your Maxen is put off till November." "I think, monsieur," I replied, with more temper than he had dared to show to me, "that it is better to beat in the autumn, and even in the winter, than to be beaten in summer." The French had been totally beaten in August of this year, at Minden.

The people I met could not get over their surprise that I knew French so well and did not know Hungarian. After making many acquaintances, many observations, follies, and debts, after the most charming winter I ever passed in my life, in the midst of all sorts of pleasures, I returned to the army, which I found near Dresden, about where it was when I left it. Louis XV., among other presents, gave me a superb ring, which I put in pawn the next day, so ready was I to make light of everything in those days. I wanted money; I was in haste to live, and finding how lively the war was, I was afraid of not getting pleasure enough before I was killed. On returning to Vienna I sold to the empress a snuff-box the king had also given me. It had his portrait surrounded with diamonds. I let the empress have the box

and the diamonds but I kept the portrait. This made her angry, and I made her more so by sending her word (the negotiation lasted a year) that I was all the more determined to keep it, as it was a memorial of the last victory her arms had won — we had just been defeated at Torgau. Stupidity suits none but men of genius like La Fontaine. I have done several things in the style of “Whose purse is this?” in Molière’s *Étourdi*. For instance, I once read the first lines of a letter sent me from the empress, in which I was told that she had given the command I had asked her for to another general. I wrote at once and told him of it and congratulated him. He immediately sent his thanks to the Court and to me. Afterwards I read at the bottom of the letter: “Say nothing about this; the appointment is just changed, and I think you will have it.” The other general’s thanks arrived in Vienna the day my appointment was about to be sent to me, and to punish me for my obliging precipitation and my indiscretion I was deprived of it.

When I returned from Paris I found the two armies, as I have said, pretty much where I left them, the snow having put an end to all enterprises for the winter. The campaign which followed, that of 1760, was enough to immortalize a man, as it did General Lacy. It will be good to read of in my Posthumous Works. Meantime I shall only say here that the corps of Comte de Lacy, to which I belonged, continually exposed to being captured, or at least beaten, always neglected by its neighbours and almost sacrificed, retired from Silesia to Saxony without discomfiture; never ten minutes too soon or too late before the king’s forces, and having always the advantage over them, even with our rear-guard; so that we came in time to save the imperial army at Dresden, and by arriving at Listvorwerk at five o’clock in the morning, two hours before the time agreed upon, we could

have saved Loudon at Liegnitz on the 15th of August, and did save, November 5, Maréchal Daun, who, having his three bridges close to one another, would have been flung into the Elbe if we had not driven off the corps of General Ziethen. After that we covered the retreat of the whole army to the camp at Plauen. We slept upon our fields of battle and were never beaten. We returned to Brandebourg, and with the enemy sometimes on our flank and always at our rear, we marched in seventeen days from Charlottenburg to Berlin.

This expedition, this splendid taking of Frederick's capital, was so precisely calculated by General Lacy that if it had not been for Todleben, the Russian general, we should have captured the whole Prussian corps camped before the Halle gate; and after having thus fulfilled and executed the object of this diversion, we should, so far from being driven back, have compelled the Prince de Deux-Ponts to surrender Wittenberg.

My Journal will explain all this in detail, with a truth that will do still greater honour to the Comte de Lacy. Let it be studied whenever it is published. It will be found one of the finest of lessons for war.<sup>1</sup>

We entered Berlin [as said above] on the 9th of October by three gates. My regiment held that of Halle, and thought only of getting back the trophies carried off in so many battles won by the king against our troops. It recovered them all and fifteen bronze cannon to boot, and willingly abandoned to Todleben and his Russians the tributes and pillage. The arsenal and the enormous magazines had previously been surrendered by negotiation.

<sup>1</sup> *Mélanges Militaires*, etc., of Field-Marshal the Prince de Ligne, vols. xiv., xv., xvi., "My Journal of the Seven Years' War," published in Vienna and Dresden, 1796. — Tr.



The people of Berlin were satisfied with my grenadiers, who did no harm to the houses where they were lodged. They hung their pouches and their sabres on the bronzes, the chandeliers, and the picture-frames, and they gave themselves airs, but they took nothing and they spoilt nothing. I myself ordered my guard to shoot down the Cossacks who tried to force their way in by the Halle gate, and they killed, I believe, two or three of them. I wanted to procure some clothing for my regiment at the cost of the King of Prussia, who had an enormous equipment warehouse in Berlin for his armies. For this I stole in person breeches, cloaks, and blankets, in spite of those who tried to prevent me. They got angry and I got angry, and I elbowed and punched them all; on which they flung themselves on my chaplain and me. I narrowly escaped a bayonet thrust, which my orderly got in my place. Pappenheim came to my assistance and separated us.

Lacy sent Emeric Esterhazy with the Imperial regiment to take possession of Potsdam. He posted guards everywhere, saved Sans Souci, taxed the town sixty thousand crowns, which were divided among the corps, took a picture for himself, an inkstand for Lacy, a flute for O'Donnell, and a pen for me. He kept the best order in the world. If the Retreat of the philosopher of Sans Souci was thus saved to him by the kind care of Austrians, his beautiful house at Charlottenburg was not so fortunate. The Cossacks got there first and ruined everything. Our hussars would not be left out, and they afterwards did some damage. They waded knee-deep in broken glass and china; the splendid picture-gallery of Cardinal de Polignae, the consolation of a king who was fond of art and a treasure that might have found grace in the eyes of the Goths, was ruined in an instant.



I admit that while every one was in the way of taking, I felt a frantic desire within me to do the same. As there had been some talk of not sparing Sans Souci, I had asked to be allowed to conduct the affair, at least so far as related to the king's cabinet, where I had my plan all laid. His books, his own works, his military maps, his Reflections on the Campaigns, which had not then appeared, his Palladium (the very place of which I knew in his desk) would have fallen to my share; and I should have made it a festal joy to send them to the king with all the respect that an author, and so illustrious a foe deserved. Mon Bijou escaped, I scarcely know how, for there were many things of value there,—the most beautiful porcelains in the world and some fine lacquer. I did not give the concierge any money for his trouble in showing me about, but I gave him advice that was worth gold to him: I told him not to open the door to any one.

The three days that we passed before Berlin I spent in comforting the afflicted and in visiting the establishments of the king.

After the battle of Torgau [November 3] the empress sent General de Lacy the patent of marshal, which he returned to her, because he would not do a wrong to O'Donnell, his superior in rank and his friend. The army went into winter-quarters in camp at Plauen, and O'Donnell sent me to Vienna with important despatches to the emperor.

The campaign of 1761 was the most wearisome and insignificant that was ever carried on. All General de Lacy's plans were opposed. Maréchal Daun was reduced to the most melancholy inaction in Saxony *vis-à-vis* to Prince Henry. If M. de Lacy had been listened to we should have conquered Silesia this summer. Therefore it would have been conquered if he had commanded the

army ; therefore the Empress Maria Theresa was right to make him marshal ; therefore he was very wrong to refuse that rank, and show a scruple of delicacy for which his comrades never thanked him, and which the world in general has never known, owing to his bad habits of modesty and silent discretion.

Maurice Petrowitz, Comte de Lacy, was born in Petersburg, Oct. 10, 1725. He was the son of Comte Pierre de Lacy, the Russian marshal, who was born at Ballingarry, county Limerick, Ireland, and quitted Limerick after its capitulation in 1691, with his uncle James de Lacy, quartermaster-general, brigadier, and colonel of the Prince of Wales' regiment, in which he, Pierre, was an ensign. He entered the French army as lieutenant in the Athlone regiment of Irishmen at Nantes in 1692, and served under Catinat. After the peace of Ryswick that regiment was disbanded, and he quitted the French army, intending to take service under the emperor against the Turks ; but when he reached Hungary peace was proclaimed ; on which he offered his services to the King of Poland, and the following year, 1700, received a command in the Russian army under Peter the Great. His wife, the mother of Maurice, followed her husband, as the Empress Catherine followed Peter the Great, to the unfortunate camp at Pruth, where, sitting in her carriage, she received a ball through her hood from the Turks. When Maurice was of age to serve, Russia was at peace ; otherwise his father would surely have made him his aide-de-camp, and the Russian Court would have gained a great general. He was permitted to come to us in search of cannon-balls, as the War of the Succession of Charles VI. was then beginning.

That was a campaign about which Lacy never dared to speak, because of all the extraordinary and foolhardy things

that the impetuosity of his nature led him to do with his troop of light-horse. He was more with the enemy than he was with his friends, for he harried them ceaselessly, even going into the rear of their camps and making prisoners, pillaging the Spanish waggon-trains, attacking and driving-in the outposts. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that that campaign was the best school the marshal could have had, and that he learned from these little expeditions, in which he was his own general, how to carry on those we have seen him make so brilliantly on a larger scale. From the little enlightenment I was able to drag out of him, it was plain that he had been very useful to the Comte de Brown, whose pupil, relation, friend, and aide-de-camp he was.

But Maréchal Lacy has never been able to correct himself of one fault; and it was that with which he seemed to reproach himself in his first campaign. It was certainly not bravado; but in every rank which he has held in the army he has always been too much engrossed with the object in hand to think of dangers. Personally he does not run as great risks as others, because, besides his presence of mind, he has incredible agility and strength, and there never was a better or bolder horseman. In moments of danger his soul is alive to friendship. In 1760, at an attack on a cavalry post which obstructed him near Radeburg in Saxony, the fight began, in spite of his wishes, before daylight, and there was such confusion that he and his aides-de-camp, and I who followed him, got between the pistol-shots of the enemy and those of our own men. He turned round to me and said: "All this will clear up as soon as the light dawns. My horse being white you can easily see it; don't lose sight of me for an instant. If you do, I shall be anxious; you might be captured. We shall get out of this presently."

In 1788 he saved the life of my son Charles, by killing a Wallachian who was about to sabre him.

The talents of General Lacy had so impressed the Court, the city, and the army that in 1757 there was but one cry to make him a lieutenant-general and quartermaster-general. As lieutenant-general he taught the army two things that it did not know, namely: how to put itself in motion, and how to march. Also he taught the generals how to camp. If Maréchal Daun, who esteemed him, but did not know him enough to love him, had been entirely without talent he would have been easier to lead. But, soldier and man of war, Daun feared to compromise his Kolin laurels and his credit with the empress. Brave and clear-sighted under fire, he was not so in his cabinet; and it was necessary to carry him off his feet and make him a hero in spite of himself. It is only necessary to read through my twelve campaigns (which will be published after my death) to understand the Comte de Lacy; this is but a sketch of him.

These few words about the two de Lacys lead me to a recollection very bitter to my mind, but tender to my heart: to that of Lacy's nephew, Comte George de Brown, whom we still mourn, and who was worthy of the lasting regret of those who love honour, virtue, intellect, talents, and all the lovable and essential qualities. General Brown was agreeable, as well as trusty and attached to his friends. His repartees, his way of seizing everything rapidly, seeing and apprehending at once, were qualities sufficiently apparent in social life to show that he would certainly have the same sort of promptitude in war. He had a taste for the fine arts, a cultivated mind, as well as natural wit and a turn for humour. He laughed with all his heart at the merest trifle, but he was also an observer; nothing escaped



*Maria Theresa,  
Empress of Austria and Germany*





him. His only defect was that he did not sufficiently show what there was in him that was lovable and profound. He had astonishing application, and great knowledge of all kinds, — especially of military theories and erudition. He knew by heart Cæsar, Horace, Ovid, Tacitus, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, and disdained no source of instruction in any direction.

But I perceive that I have not said a word of his virtues. He possessed true generosity, to which he added benevolence; one was the need of his mind, the other of his heart. By one he loved to give, to refuse nothing, to spend (for which he had more desire than opportunity). By the other he loved to assist. The one made him give to his regiment for its embellishment and recruiting his pay as its proprietor; the other made him help and succour its widows and children. The one induced him to do good to artists, men of letters and of talents; the other led him to seek out the unfortunate. He was drawn to men of integrity, and he scoffed at those who had little, — without, however, giving himself the trouble to hate them. He feared nothing in this world but bores; his taste was exquisite, and his tact as sure as it was delicate. Throughout the Seven Years' War he was a model for the infantry (in which he served), as much for his conduct as for his talents and the punctilious discharge of his duty. He comprehended discipline, and was feared before he was loved; but when the troops under his orders, the grenadiers for instance, had time to know him they loved him even more than they respected him. They noticed the trouble he would give himself that they might want for nothing, and be spared all useless fatigue, — two things which win the heart of every soldier. "There's a man," said Maréchal Loudon to me after the siege of Belgrade [in 1789], "who ought



to be put as soon as possible at the head of armies." The thing that completely won the marshal's heart was the manner in which Brown tossed his overcoat on a fence as he leaped over, so that he might lead the attack brilliantly in his general's uniform, as if at a review.

During the campaign of 1762 General Lacy, although commanding one wing of the army, was practically quarter-master-general of the forces, and did great service in that line. He saved O'Kelly's corps on the 22nd of July; and by placing me and four other regiments on the Eulenberg [Owl's Crag] the name of which shows that the devil alone could have clambered there, he covered Glatz, which ended the war. We had orders to hold the Eulenberg until the enemy abandoned their own heights. There I stayed two months, and there I finished, under Loudon, who had taken the command of our corps, this last campaign in Silesia. The war continued to be feebly carried on for a while in Saxony. Our corps, chilled to the marrow with snow, ice, and fog, was pitiable to see. Ten days after the taking of Schweidnitz it was put into cantonments, being relieved on the Eulenberg by detachments from all the other regiments, which to the number of four hundred men and forty Croats occupied my dreadful mountain.

Peace was now talked about; and I went off as fast as I could to Vienna. It was concluded, as everybody knows, at Hubertsburg [Feb. 15, 1763]. We remained conquerors, inasmuch as, thanks to Loudon, we retained possession of the province of Glatz; which was afterwards returned, I don't know why, to Frederick II., who well deserved the name of Frederick the Great.

## IV.

1763-1767.

### LIFE IN VIENNA.

CAN any one be freer than a soldier who is known to be a good fellow? He has the confidence of his chiefs, the regard of his equals, and the respect of his younger comrades. Nobody asks him what he has done; they only wish him to amuse himself and prosper if he can. I always wanted as a young man to do better and more than what I saw others do. I drank, and I managed it so that no one ever succeeded in making me drunk. But at cards I felt myself hampered by a sort of self-respect. However, coming home one night from hunting, very tired and half asleep, I won thirty thousand ducats; I could not wake myself up until an old woman pulled me by the arm to pay her six francs out of which she was cheating me. Led by this success into taking great risks at play, I soon lost the double of what I had won; but after playing a stake of eight thousand ducats and ending the evening by losing seven thousand, I abandoned for ever the silliest of pleasures. I won four or five hundred ducats from a General Wbra, a Comte Desoffi, and three other officers the night before the battle of Breslau, and I lost a thousand to Rodeni, Tomasoli, and Blankenstein. The next evening I asked how they all were. Those who owed me had been killed; the others were quite well.

I never was drunk but once, and that was at the theatre one night when I played Hortensins. After keeping the whole town waiting, I appeared half laughing, half asleep,

leaning at times against the wings. As they did not know much in Vienna about French plays or this particular piece, which was called "The Overcoming of Love," they thought it was all in my part, and complimented me on playing it so naturally. 'T was more the overcoming of wine than of love. I was, however, a little drunk one other time, at Karlsbad, where I drank a dozen bottles of wine with Lord Riversdale to drown my vexation at finding that a husband had carried off, the very day I arrived, his pretty wife whom I admired. But it is an abominable thing to disturb a marriage of love. We may be envious of the external prosperities of a man and think his luck unfair; but the happiness that comes within the soul is always deserved.

I have made emperors and empresses wait for me, but never a soldier; in fact, I had rather wait for my troops than arrive myself too late. One day, when I was loitering too long on the steps of the courtyard of the palace with a pretty woman, the Empress Maria Theresa waited a whole hour for me. She was angry, and sent me word to come every day to her antechamber and send in my name by the chamberlain on service, who would not admit me until I had learned that it was *I* whose place it was to wait. I took pens and paper and wrote in her antechamber every morning so as not to waste my time; and each day the chamberlain would tell me to come back the next day. At last, after two weeks of this public punishment, and when I thought my hair must be combed enough, the empress sent for me and said, with the pleasantest look in the world: "Do you know that I have made you a colonel during our little quarrel? I don't regard my own interests; you killed me a whole company in the campaign of 1757, and now, I suppose, you will kill me a regiment. Spare my service and yourself, for my sake."

M. Nény told me one day that the empress had complained to him that I never went to mass. I begged him to represent to her that if my forefathers had not been so faithful to hers two centuries back we should now be excused from going at all. [The Princes of the house of Ligne refused, during the religious revolution of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century, to abandon the Catholic cause and the Austrian dynasty.] That did not satisfy her. So the first time I happened to go to her to ask for some trifling favour, she reproached me for having so little religion. I could not help telling her that the little I had was sound, for no one could find fault with me for being a hypocrite, and that I was a better Christian than those who said I was none. I happened to face the window and the sunlight hurt my eyes. The empress thought I wept, and I did not have the honesty to undeceive her. So she said: "You have a good heart, and I still hope for your conversion. Stay in my cabinet; I do not wish you to be seen to leave my room looking unhappy." That time I really did come near weeping from gratitude; but it did not prevent me from laughing when I got out, and telling the whole story. The empress heard of it; but she forgave me for it, as she did for a hundred other follies of all kinds.

I always did things with my whole heart. Being obliged to take the communion with the empress, I could not find, as late as ten o'clock of the night before, a confessor who spoke French, for I would not confess my sins in coarse German. Some one told me of a Father Aubri, or Aubré, and pointed out his house. I rushed there at eleven o'clock and woke up the whole establishment. I mistook the staircase and appeared in the antechamber of a pretty woman, where I was taken for a lover and chased. I opened a door, it closed after me, and I found myself in a garret; the

people below heard me and ran up and caught me for a thief. I got away, cursing myself for such mistakes, and, at last, I found the staircase of my reverend father. Being determined to do the thing sincerely, I said to him: "Monsieur, you are a Jesuit, and indulgent, no doubt. Don't rise, I will kneel here." I began my prayer and confession. He must have thought it was a hoax, and, frightened by my impious insolence or else by the multiplicity of my little crimes, he jumped up and turned me out of his room.

If I seem sometimes to swerve from Christianity or Catholicism, I wish to be warned of it. It is not my intention. If I give myself, perhaps without perceiving it, a Pyrrhonian little air, it is to clear up doubts, which I have not myself, but which I see in others; if I make risky propositions it is only for those who are out of the pale of the Church; for those who are in it there is nothing risky. Another thing I ought to say: When I talk of loving, it is often legitimately. When I say *having*, I mean the heart, and not the person. When I speak of love, gallantry, marriage, infidelity, I am not saying that things ought to be so; it is as if I said, "Inasmuch as such things are so."

I was so indiscreet, so imprudent, so conceited, when I was young (and am even now), and so fond of fun, though never malicious or dangerous, that I don't know why I did not have a score of duels on my hands. I was very near it several times, but always with persons who ended by making excuses, or by saying, what is usually said by those who do not want to fight: "It is true, monsieur, is it not, that you had no fixed intention of insulting me?" Once, however, I challenged Jean Palfy, to avenge myself for a slander he had circulated about me. He was a general and I was only a colonel at the time. He had the air and manner of a

great seigneur, and was very brave and handsome. Joseph Colloredo, who was present, disturbed at seeing me involved in an adventure which might have serious results, wrote to Maréchal Lacy in these words: "I have the honour to inform his Excellency that Ligne's heedlessness has involved him in a quarrel." The marshal took that *him* to mean himself; and, supposing that I had thoughtlessly stirred up trouble for him, he passed a very bad night. He sent for Colloredo to come and explain what the matter was. Reassured about himself he wanted to be so about me, and he went at once to Jean Palffy to see if there was no way to stop his wrath. He might have succeeded, but I happened to arrive at the same moment, with my second, the Prince of Nassau-Usingen. I supposed the marshal was there by accident, so I waited. Palffy was booted and spurred and wore gloves like Crispin. "The devil!" I thought to myself, "is he so sure of killing me? I wonder if he has a horse all ready for escape." After a moment's silence, M. de Lacy said: "If that is your last word, M. le Comte, I will push the bolt. Begin." I stared in astonishment at such a second, who, out of kindness to me, was risking disgrace at Court if the affair should become known. However, I laughed and took my sword and broke Palffy's into I don't know how many bits, for I thrust like the devil, and held him pressed against the wall. He parried in the same way and sabred, which, for fear I should be scarred in the face, made me so angry that I did not see when he was disarmed and slightly scratched, and I should have nailed him to his own wall but for the marshal's cane which struck down my sword. "I'll take another, and begin again," said Palffy. "And I," said the marshal, drawing his, "will take mine to prevent it. Come, monsieur, let us make haste." But I opposed that. The marshal really desired nothing better



than to be the belligerent instead of the auxiliary. Seeing that I exacted my rights, he insisted on our ending the matter there and then.

A coward never calculates well. The uncertainty of a sword-thrust or a cannon-ball should be weighed against the certainty of dishonour and the probability of a score of horrid affairs he will have to meet because he did not face the first properly. Cowards always end by being killed.

I happened one day to be driving to the Montecuculi gardens (now called Razumowsky) and I passed very rapidly before a little chapel without observing that its little saint was just then expecting a procession that turned into the street at the same moment. One of the devout, very angry, seized my leaders and almost flung them over; another threw himself on the postilion; a third, more pious still, began to beat him. I called out to him, "Fahrt zu zum Teufel!" (words which appeared in the complaint, and came near getting me broke). My postilion whipped up, but they stopped the four horses; the angry devout ones held the wheels, intending perhaps to thrash me too. I jumped out, and as, unluckily, I did not have a cane, I dispersed the procession with my sword. The priest was left all by himself in his little chapel, and I pursued my way.

Two days later the devil was after me, clergy, bourgeoisie, police, lawyers, thirty quires of paper! Maréchal Neipperg summoned me to go to him. "What have you done?" he said. "It was all very well in the olden time. Charles VI., stern as he was, would have laughed at Prince Eugène or Vaudemont in the hands of the police, but now! a procession! the empress! You are lost. Go and see M. de Scrottenbach." "I shall do nothing of the kind," I said. "If I meet him perhaps I may speak to him. Much obliged,



Monsieur le maréchal; your habitual kindness and your interest at this moment have my tenderest gratitude."

But matters went from bad to worse. I was more afraid of a lecture from the empress than of being broke. I saw the fat chief of police entering his opera box, and I followed him and told him of the insult offered to my livery and person; and the damage done to my horses and postilion; and the fresh injury they were now trying to do me. His Excellency said they were quite right, and that they might, and perhaps had better, have killed my man. I was angry; his Excellency asked me for further particulars; I gave them; his Excellency replied that he did not know if they were true; I was furious, and said to him, with the precipitancy and delicacy of my years: "Believe what I tell you at once, or—" and I made a motion to throw him over into the pit. On which his Excellency made believe to believe me, and the whole affair quieted down.

My father, who never gave himself the trouble to make my acquaintance, did so little for me that I usually spent in a month what he gave me for a year. He foresaw, of course, that I should make debts. It was natural that I should do so, as he left me without a penny. Three Jews, Henzelkne, Schimmelkne, and a Levi, whose daughter was beautiful as the day, had pity upon me and lent me money at six per cent at the risk of losing all if I were killed. I only owed them about 200,000 florins at the time of my father's death.

During our youth, our wars, and our loves, neither of us having anything, Prince Louis of Würtemberg was constantly saying to me: "Ah! my friend, if my brother dies before your father all my duchy is yours." Generosity of money is easy enough; we only need to be rich to be generous. It is the generosity that does not cost a penny—

that of the soul — that I value. 'Tis a fine thing, a man truly generous; there is no real grandeur upon earth but in the sacrifice of self.

I should like to know how many men it would take to make a perfect man. One of the noblest souls I have ever known and one which I would select for this collection, a soul that smiled on Good, lively, gentle, gay, and quick to feel, was that of Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother of our good Emperor Francis, who was very near perfection. The frankness of that soul was painted on his forehead, a kindly and communicative gayety was in his smile, which years never changed, nor the wars, nor the small-pox, which had carried off his beauty. That first smile of his was ever ready to be replaced by a laugh of such heartiness that that of others followed blindly, sometimes about a mere nothing. His bursts of laughter were so merrily noisy or so comically smothered that the public, whom he was wont to disturb in this way at the theatre, surprised at first into a smile ended in a peal of laughter like his own. There was neither look nor gesture of Harlequin or Crispin about it, — it was always spontaneous. He was the most frankly gay man I have ever known; you could not see him once without loving him always. It was droll to see him at a Court ceremony or presentation when assailed by a spirit of mischief or some childish nonsense, — for he had the innocence and the fun of childhood; his arrested gayety would be visibly curbed, at the same time the dignity and gentle majesty of his figure and rank accorded with the kindness of his manner and speech. I speak of his spirit, painted here like a study such as we make of the leg or arm of the Apollo Belvidere, — with this difference, that I do not propose it for imitation, because we can neither teach nor learn that which comes naturally. But I present it to give an idea of

something fine. It is plain that as there was never in that soul the slightest shadow of maliciousness, the outcome was generosity, amiable disorder in his finances, indulgence, and kindness, which his grace of manner and his amusing spirit, so easily amusable, made more charming still. He was so kind that it showed in his angers, if by chance he had any. I remember in after years, when hunting in the forest of Belœil, where he played the important man as an old huntsman, that, being very angry with a crowd of spectators who filled the alleys and hindered the chase, he called out: "Go to the devil!—gentlemen, if you please," he added, raising his hat to them.

Therefore his figure and his soul must form part of the ideal perfection that I am seeking. I even turn to him for valour, and for several military qualities. But for others that I would rather call military talents, vastness, firmness, knowledge, and the art of making himself feared and obeyed, I find them in another style of mind, that of the Great Frederick; so I take him for those, adding also his love for letters and philosophy, theoretical and practical.

For the virtues, for love of duty joined to firmness under fire, and the strictest honesty and logic, I join to the two others the Prince of Anhalt, a hero in history. And lastly, here comes the element of romance. With the courage of the others, which made him amorous of danger, the chivalrous bearing of my fourth gives brilliancy to all. This one has something of the Moor and the Saracen in their best days. He has gallantry and magnificence. He is a poet in war and in society, without writing verses, except in his own Lusitanian language. There, indeed, he is another Camoëns—he is also a Camoëns in all that he says and does: I speak of the Duke of Bragança. I do not mean that these four men have not each the noble qualities of

the others; but those that I have pointed out in each are the ones that they have carried to the highest degree in their own personality; and by uniting them all in a single individual I pretend to do what they say was done for the Venus de' Medici, who was composed of twenty different beauties taken from twenty different women; and I think I have succeeded in making the portrait of a perfect man out of these detached features of four individuals.

In the days when I shared the good graces of the prettiest woman in the world and the greatest lady in Vienna with the emperor of those days, the good, excellent, safe, amiable, even handsome, the clean, gay, honest Francis I., the empress still went sometimes to the theatre; and on such occasions the emperor dared not leave her box. But one night, as Maria Theresa seemed preoccupied, he slipped away to the one where I was sitting with his dear friend. We were rather alarmed at his apparition, but we knew he loved us both. He asked me what was the name of the afterpiece. It chanced to be "Crispin, the Rival of his Master." I did not know how to tell him. He asked again, and I told him, half embarrassed and half choking with laughter at having to say what described our mutual position. After which I got away as fast as I could, leaving the pretty and charming lady to find in her brilliant imagination some natural excuse for my departure.

That kind sovereign, Francis I., loved *fêtes* without ceremony, and women, and young people. One day he dressed me up as a Court lady, and tried to make a bridegroom believe that I was the woman he had asked in marriage. I committed all sorts of folly, and kissed everybody. The bridegroom, much displeased, wanted to carry me off, and as he was grand master of the kitchen, he marched at the head of fifty scullions, making music on their saucepans. They took us in flank, on the road to Etzendorff, where we were

going to sup. The grand equerry, with a reserve corps of fifty grooms, fell upon the scullions. I was defended and the sham fight concluded by the real bride arriving very decently with her Frau Hoffmeisterinn, and asking what it all meant, and scolding her lover for ever supposing she was such a trollop as I.

Do you like miniatures? I know one that is precious, — the prettiest features. the prettiest little countenance, the prettiest little waist, the prettiest motions in the world, and the sweetest eyes. Grace descends from the crown of her head to the soles of her little feet, passing on its way, apparently, to all the little hidden charms of her person. After you have watched her walk, dance, jump, run, talk eagerly with animation, and animating others, go and listen to her. You will then admire the grace of her mind, which resembles, feature for feature, that of her manners. Hear how prettily she expresses herself; and if there is occasion after some anecdote or pleasantry has been related, or if some obligation is upon her to speak, feel, or show her sensibility, see how her pretty eyes and her whole person express it so well that we are sure that her soul is in unison with her face and her manner. She thinks of everything and for everybody. All who leave her are pleased with her and with themselves, for she knows how to bring the best out of all. Her virtue is not perhaps what I like the most; but see what it is: she is not a daughter of religion or prudery. If she were she would have a touch of sham austerity or the sternness of rigid vanity. Her virtue never made any one frown. On the contrary it gives her a kinder look than others. Her virtue lets every one live. Between ourselves I think that this may be the effect of a slight calculation of selfishness, of which she is incapable in other things; for egotism in her is something that does not exist. She knows

she is winning, and pretty, and gay, and perhaps she may say to herself: "I shall be courted; to save myself the trouble of defence, I will make for myself at once the reputation of coldness, which will give me more freedom in society and not alarm the other women." Besides, just as she likes to stand well with the world, she is not, I think, averse to standing well with God. It is amusing to see her take the part of an absent person, or of one of her friends and acquaintance. Her industry is great; it is wonderful how much she can do in a day. But no work was ever better done than the making of her. You will see her and hear of her everywhere, so that I need not name her; all Vienna knows her and society follows her lead. Women certainly make our manners and ways. Even though we sometimes find fault with them it is none the less true that men who avoid their company cease to be amiable and can never again become so.

After the accession of Joseph II. to the crown of Germany in 1765 he held many peace camps in various parts of the country. I [then a general] was on my way to one with two colonels, Schorlemer and Clerfayt, when we found ourselves detained at Augsburg by the want of post-horses. Bored by waiting we went to a tavern, which turned out to be the usual rendezvous of Prussian recruiters. I noticed that I was observed; my height, which is five feet ten, attracted attention. Finally they proposed to me to enlist for fifty ducats. I agreed, on condition that they would take my friends as well. They consented to take Schorlemer, who was fine-looking, but they would not have Clerfayt, whom they thought puny and ugly, which was true. I laughed, but it was no laughing matter with them; and they were for marching me off, when my name, already given at the post-house, luckily saved me.



Another time I was at Liège and passed myself off for a cardinal sent by the pope to admonish the prince-bishop on the irregularity of his morals. He nearly died of terror and of the scandal, for all the public papers made mention of it. When he found me out he wrote against me to Prince Charles of Lorraine. But that was addressing the wrong person, for the prince laughed like a maniac over the adventure when he questioned me about it.

[During the winters between 1763 and 1767, the date of his father's death, the prince spent much of his time in Paris, but not at the Court.]

In Paris I was intoxicated with pleasures, — fêtes, wonders, and enchantments of all kinds. It can be imagined, therefore, what I felt when I had to leave that fairy-land to see my father at Baudour. I found him in a vast, ill-lighted hall, in wintry weather, with the gout and two blackbirds for supper. He told me that when he was in Paris in the olden time he always sat in the balcony of the opera, as that was the most noble place. "So do I," I said, "beside the Neapolitan ambassador." "That is very right," he said, "I know the place." Instead of doing any such thing, there was no sort of extravagant nonsense I did not commit with Letorière and other young fellows of my age at the three theatres where we put ourselves on exhibition; for in those days there were seats upon the stage.

Young, extravagant, ostentatious, and full of fancies of every kind, I had made a quantity of bills of exchange in Paris, not knowing what they were but wanting the money. They reached my father almost as soon as I did, and I left in a hurry for my regiment. However, I really had not time to stay longer. He had received me very badly, as usual, and asked me if I had not been surprised at his liberality in sending me fifty louis. "Certainly," I replied, "and they



were almost enough to pay for my posting here." It is true that I had added three or four thousand more to them, which I had spent on all sorts of folly. While at Baudour I kept out of sight as well as I could my two outriders in my pink liveries with gold lace on all the seams, and my hussars and negroes, but my father always happened to meet one or other of them on the road.

In spite of the enormous change which my father's death produced in my situation, when it happened it affected me greatly. What touched me most of all and cost me tears was that one day he charged me to attend to a certain matter, and spoke to me (almost for the first time in my life) saying that this affair would concern me more than it did him, because — That *because* made me burst into tears.

When I was made colonel of his regiment, I wrote him as follows: "Monseigneur, I have the honour to inform your Highness that I have just been appointed colonel of your regiment. I am, with profound respect, etc." This is what he answered: "Monsieur, after the misfortune of having you for a son, nothing could more keenly affect me than the misfortune of having you for colonel. Receive, etc." I replied, in a respectful letter: "Monseigneur, neither the one nor the other is my fault. It is to the emperor that your Highness should complain for the second misfortune." He exacted that I should write to him, as other colonels did, about the regiment and its services; but never did he give me a kind word, or write to tell me that he was satisfied with the honour I had done to his name and that of his regiment. He took no notice of my having the small-pox [communicated to him by Prince Auguste d'Areberg, who had the disease and whom he insisted on kissing to see if it were contagious], and he drove me out of his house twice when I tried to see him just before the coronation of Joseph II. at



*Mme. Geoffrin*



Franckfort in 1765, where I attended the emperor. After that I travelled in Russia, England, and Italy until his death in 1767.

And yet, I forgot all his harshness at the solemn moment when we remember only the kind things that we have either seen or heard of. I remembered how brave he had been in war, and with what an air of *grand seigneur* he bore himself, and how tenderly I would have loved him had he been willing. Maria Theresa used to amuse herself with the terror I had of him; and one day when I was laughing and making the ladies of the Court laugh, she came behind me and said: "Here he comes!"

Being very much out of temper at not receiving at my father's death his regiment and his Golden Fleece, I wrote to M. Neny, whom the empress used to call in fun my minister at her Court, as follows: "Born in a land where there are no slaves, I shall carry elsewhere my small merits and my fortunes." She read the letter and, furious at that sentence in it, she sent for her son, Maréchal Lacy, and Prince Venzl Lichtenstein, my uncle, to hold a council of war upon me. The emperor, sterner then than he was later, and who made himself stern on a system, proposed to dismiss me. "For," he said, "we are dismissed ourselves if we allow this." My uncle, to play the Roman at my expense, proposed to shut me up in a citadel, to teach me to make bargains with my sovereigns. "And you, Monsieur le maréchal?" said the empress. "I shall be more severe," he answered, "than the emperor and the prince; neither of their punishments is enough for his crime. Ligne will arrive here soon; your Majesty must turn your head away when he kisses your hand, and not say one word to him during the three months he expects to stay in Vienna." This is what she did, and with such an affectation of severity, that I am certain I saw her

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once on the point of laughing out herself. I consented to be employed (which I did not much like in times of peace), and when, at the risk of her turning on her heel and not looking at me, I thanked her for giving me a brigade and a garrison, behold, instead of the thundering mien or the sharp reply I was told to expect if she deigned to speak to me, she said: "It is for me to thank you for sacrificing your liberty during peace, after being so ready to sacrifice your life to me during war."

I had been invited during one of my little quarrels with the Court of Vienna to accept the command of a German regiment in France, with the promise of the *cordons bleu*, and the rank of lieutenant-general. M. de Choiseul said to me: "I will give you all that, but you will commit a folly if you accept it. Believe me, stay at home; you are more bored at your Court than you are angry with it." He was right; I made up the quarrel, and things went as well as ever. This reminds me of another proposal of the same kind. It was impossible for me to accept what Prince Henry made the late King of Prussia promise me when his uncle died. Could I have done so I should have been lieutenant-general and governor of Stettin, etc. These propositions were made to the two Courts without my knowledge. It has always been the fashion to treat me well everywhere, and I have experienced pleasant things in many lands. In fact, I have at the present moment of writing, six or seven countries: Empire, Flanders, France, Austria, Poland, Russia, and almost Hungary, where they are obliged to naturalize all those who fight against the Turks.

Paris, in truth, has been another home to me. How often when there I used to wish that the Louvre might once more become the residence of the kings. For a long time past the look of ruin in the old building and the garden

of the *infanta* has given an air of melancholy to the quay. They ought to make a fine open plaza between the Tuileries and the old Louvre. It would be a very simple thing to do, and should be done. The whole Carrousel, those miserable buildings, and the rue Saint-Nicaise dishonour Paris, for the unworthy reason of making money out of everything. But the spending of gold brings gold, and magnificence is the true support of monarchy. Can any one tell me why in the countries where there are no rivers three-masted ships are seen unloading the riches of the Western world at the very doors of the merchants, while in Paris there is nothing on the Seine but a barge to Saint-Cloud and the ferry-boat to the Invalides? It is true that the water is low at certain seasons of the year; but it might be deepened in places, especially among the islands where the labour would be less. The course of the Seine to the sea is not so long that it could not be kept in order. They are not ships of war that I want to bring to Paris, but I would like to see the river from the Pont Royal to Chaillot covered with merchant vessels of 500 tons each, or more if they liked. A vessel of 110 tons draws only ten feet of water, and they ought to calculate on that basis.<sup>1</sup> They should build up the Place Louis XV. on the side towards the quay and also on that towards the Champs Élysées in the same style as the two buildings on either side of the rue Royale. There is enough open space in the gardens of the Tuileries; and the bank of the river should be built upon as far up as opposite to the École Militaire, where I think Paris ought to end.

I often took to drive in a great *berline*, around the environs of Paris, a woman distinguished for her many adventures and her witty sayings,—Mme. du Deffand; also the Maréchale de Mirepoix. The latter had a sweet

<sup>1</sup> Is this a misprint, or a blunder of the prince? — Tr.



and siren spirit, which enabled her to please every one without insipidity, without compliments, and yet with a nameless way of putting everybody at their best and attaching them to her. You would have sworn she had thought of you only all her life. What a society! where shall we find its like again? There was a Comtesse de Boufflers, a little paradoxical perhaps, but in her frame of simplicity making you forgive her sophisms and her claims to eloquence; always kind and protecting in society and easy to live with. I greatly regretted Mme. du Deffand [after her death in 1780]. She used to sit in a great arm-chair which looked like a barrel and reminded me of that of Diogenes; and there she would keep me, sitting up with her, *tête-à-tête*, sometimes till six in the morning. She could guess the figures and almost the features of every one by fingering them, which she did sometimes, because, as she said, she wanted to know with whom she had to do. A sort of rivalry existed between her and Mme. Geoffrin, but in place of the solid good sense of the latter the conversation of Mme. du Deffand was full of wit, with epigram and couplet well in hand.

The portrait given by La Harpe of Mme. Geoffrin is absolutely true, but he ought to have mentioned her great talent for definitions. If I had not known her previously, on the occasion of her passing through Vienna, I should never have made her acquaintance in Paris. I supposed her to be a tribunal of wit and intellect, whereas she was far more that of sense and reason. The witty people who went to see her did not make wit when there; on the contrary, they became almost kind-hearted. Mme. Geoffrin's line was that of a guardian of taste, just as the Maréchal de Luxembourg was the guardian of the tone and traditions of the great world. I often saw Mlle. de l'Espinasse at



Mme. du Deffand's, but I never noticed anything that was striking about her. Mme. Geoffrin died of apoplexy in 1777; and while she was in the unconscious state preceding death, a valet, who was despatched to make inquiries about her, brought back a message that Madame was very grateful for the inquiries and sent Monsieur word, with her compliments, that she had lost the use of speech.

Of all the clever men with whom I used to sup in those days, there was scarcely one except the Abbé Arnault who was really witty, possessing the gift of the *à propos* and the spice of epigram. The abbé's bugbear and butt was Marmontel. Laplace was an excellent man, but very heavy, especially when he tried to be lively; Saint-Laurent was silent. Those who supped with Mlle. Sophie Arnoult and Mlle. Julie, whose houses were for some time very charming and the resort of good company, were the most agreeable, such as the Chevalier de Beauvau, a man of the world and the most so I ever knew, the Chevalier de Luxembourg, the Comte de Coigny, Louis de Narbonne, M. de Ségur, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Conflans even, the Duc d'Orléans, and the Prince de Conti.

Apropos of the Prince de Conti he asked me one day to do him the favour to have Beaumarchais picked up in a hackney-coach at the corner of the rue Colbert near an extinguished street lamp, driven to Bourget, and sent thence in one of my carriages to Ghent, and have him consigned there to an agent of mine with orders to contrive a way to send him over to England. That singular man assured me that otherwise he should certainly be arrested. Within a week he was in the cabinet of Louis XV., who had sent him on a secret errand, and he took this means to cover up his traces and throw us off the scent.

It was thought very flattering to belong to the Prince de

Conti's society and be invited to his "teas" and his battues at Bertichères and other hunting-boxes. Wishing to make my acknowledgments by a present which, to my thinking, would be interesting in France for its singularity and choiceness, I sent him from Brussels in a carriage mounted in his own style, a very handsome young cook, twenty-five years of age, with the face and colour of a Rubens, carrying with her specimens of everything the Low Countries produced in the way of dainties and luxuries. This excellent cook was literally buried under good things to eat. She arrived at l'Île-Adam. The prince and his company were talking and playing cards; the arrival was announced. "Ah! that dear Ligne, how is he?" cried the prince. "How I love him! Is he there? Well, ask how soon he is coming, and put the things he sends anywhere you choose." I will bet that all that, with the journey, had cost me more than five hundred ducats.

My aversion to business and all sorts of thrift and calculation, sometimes caused by the dread of giving pain, often led me to make gifts to some and allow myself to be robbed by others. One day I counted fourteen barbers, or servants of my servants, who called them messengers. They were all on the alert to be taken into my service, or rather to take me into theirs. They succeeded; but I was never the better served in consequence. I have always been punished by the sin itself whenever I have yielded to the vanity of extravagance. Once I gave up a hundred thousand crowns in a transaction I had with a species of country cousin. I did it at the prayers and entreaties of the Duc de Bouillon, also his relation, who thought what I did very pretty. People talked about my disinterestedness for three days. I supposed the talk would last, and that all Paris would say: "There's the man who would not

ruin that poor little young man by forcing him to sell his estate of Saint-Félix." They soon forgot it, and he first of all. Sensible people who foresaw this blamed me, and after that nothing more was said about it.

I do not know why I did not profit by the friendship Mme. du Barry had for me before it turned into love. From delicacy, I refused to ask her assistance to gain a lawsuit of some consequence to me. One day at her toilet I told her, when she asked me before the king for a memorandum about it, that I would give it to Laeroix, the hair-dresser, for her curl-papers, for that was the only means I knew of getting business into her head. She laughed, and the king too, and he repeated it twenty times running, for he was a kind of automaton that seemed to be wound up to go by springs. I brought ill-luck, I think, to that poor Louis XV., whom I had never seen till the last year of his life since the time I was sent to him from our army after Maxen. On account of friends of my friends the Choiseuls, for whom however I did not care much, I did not continue to visit Mme. du Barry, and scarcely saw her again until within a few months of the king's death. But I did have a duel on her behalf with that queen of intriguers, Mme. de N—k—rek—, who wanted to marry the king, and took to religion for that purpose. In a letter of explanation which I wrote to her I said, "Your grace, madame, the king's graces, and the grace of God give you a right to everything; nevertheless, etc."

## V.

1767-1769.

### LIFE IN PARIS: JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

[THE chronology of the Prince de Ligne is often difficult to follow. In the absence of dates we are obliged to trace him by the help of contemporaneous events and publications. His father died in 1767, and he became the ruler of his little principality,—living part of the year at Belœil, his beautiful ancestral estate near Ath, on the river Dender, in Belgium; dividing the rest of his time between Paris and Vienna, with trips to other countries and military inspections of camps and garrisons. Before his father's death we have seen him in France, and Mme. du Deffand speaks of him in a letter to Horace Walpole (August 3, 1767) as among her acquaintance. When Rousseau returned to France after his stay in England with David Hume, in 1768-69, being then infirm and very poor, he went to Paris and lived in the semi-concealment of a wretched lodging in the rue de la Platière, now the rue J.-J. Rousseau. There the Prince de Ligne made an excuse, as he tells us with something of his old boyishness, to go and see him. At that time Rousseau was again threatened by clergy and parliament with persecution, and it was then that the Prince de Ligne offered him a home at Belœil. This act, which is rather sneered at by Baron Friedrich Grimm, the French critic, may be reckoned among his first kindly deeds after coming into possession of his property.

About the same time, or a little earlier, he stayed a week at Ferney with Voltaire. Here again he puts no date, but the visit must have been before a meeting that he had with Frederick the Great at a peace camp held by the Emperor Joseph II. at Neustadt in 1770; which meeting the prince relates at length in a letter addressed to Stanislas Poniatowski, king of Poland, which was afterwards published by him in vol. vi. of his Works.

During these first years in Paris he lived, as he tells us, among persons of note, men of rank, authors, and wits, but he did not go to Court. It was not until 1774, the first year of the reign of Louis XVI., that he went to Versailles and became the intimate friend and companion of Marie Antoinette (whom he had known from childhood at her mother's Court), and the adopted son of French society.]

I lived a great deal with Dorat, Bernard (Gentil Bernard), Pezai, Ducis, Beaumarchais, Boufflers, Ségur, Laplace, Crébillon fils, Voisenon, Favart, Hume, Metastasio, Calzabizzi, Castellini, and, in a more serious way, with Meilhan and Père Griffet. I also knew Lavater, Geisner, and Gall; and I twice saw Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I cannot now recall the whole of what passed between him and me, but here is a part of it which I am able to remember.

He had scarcely returned after his misfortunes (some of which were real, some imaginary) to seek liberty in a land which he asserted, so improperly, to be a land of despotism, he had scarcely quitted a land which he called, with equal inaccuracy, that of freedom, when I went to stir him up in his garret in the rue de la Platière. I did not know, as I mounted the staircase, how I should approach him; but being accustomed to follow my instinct, which has always served me better than reflection, I went in and pretended

to have made a mistake. "What do you want?" said Jean-Jacques. "Monsieur, pardon me, I am looking for M. Rousseau of Toulouse." "I am only Rousseau of Geneva," he replied. "Oh!" I said, "that great plant-collector? — yes, I see. Good God! what quantities of plants in those big books; they must be worth more than the printed ones." Rousseau almost smiled, and showed me what may have been his dear periwinkle, which I have not the honour of knowing; also certain plants between the leaves of a folio that lay before him. I made believe to admire this collection, which was very common and uninteresting. He continued his important work, with his nose and his spectacles upon it, without looking further at me.

I begged his pardon for my heedlessness, and asked to be directed to the lodging of M. Rousseau of Toulouse, and then, for fear he should do so, I said: "Is it true that you are so very clever at copying music?" On that he went and fetched some little books, quite long in shape, and began to talk about the difficulty of the work and his ability for it, precisely as Sganarelle talks about his faggots. The respect with which a man such as he inspired me, which had made me, in fact, feel a sort of trembling as I opened his door, prevented me from going on with a conversation which would have seemed to be a species of hoax had it gone any farther. I only meant it to serve as a passport, or ticket of entrance. So I told him that I believed he had only taken up these two trivial occupations to extinguish the fire of his brilliant imagination.

"Alas! yes," he said; "the real occupations on which I spend myself in order to learn and to teach others do me too much injury." And then, not wishing to play a comedy I thought unworthy of us both, I spoke openly of the only thing in his books about which I truly agreed with him, and



said that I believed with him in the danger of Knowledge, especially that of Letters.

On this he instantly quitted his do, re, mi, fa, his periwinkle and his spectacles, and entering into details, superior perhaps to anything he ever wrote, he defined that thought of his, running over the gradations of it with the accuracy that his genius gave him, but which his mind lessens and even perverts in solitude, by dint of meditating and writing. He cried out several times: "Men! men!" I had sufficient hold upon him by this time to dare to contradict him. So I said: "Those who complain of men are men themselves, and may be mistaken on the score of others." That made him reflect a moment. I said there was another point on which I agreed with him: the manner of giving and receiving benefits, and the burden of gratitude to those whom we neither esteem nor wish to like. That seemed to please him. Then I fell back on the other extreme to be dreaded, the fear of ingratitude. On that he went off like a flash, and made me one of the finest manifestoes in the world, with a few little sophistical maxims, which I drew upon myself by saying, "If M. Hume had been really sincere —" He asked me if I knew him. I replied that I had had a very sharp conversation with Hume about him, Rousseau; and I added that the fear of being unjust almost always stopped me in forming a judgment.

His villanous wife, or servant-woman, interrupted us now and then by stupid questions that she asked him about his linen or his soup. He answered her with gentleness, and would have ennobled a bit of cheese had he talked about it. I could not see that he distrusted me the least in the world. But, in truth, I had never let him get his breath since I entered the room, lest I should give him time to reflect upon my visit. I now put an end to it in spite of my



wishes, and after a silence of veneration, all the while looking the author of the "Nouvelle Héloïse" straight in the eye, I quitted that garret, the abode of rats, but the sanctuary of virtue and of genius. He rose, conducted me to the door with a sort of interest, and never asked my name.

He would certainly not have remembered it (for he cared for none but those of Tacitus, Sallust, Pliny, and the like), if I had not chanced, in the privacy of the Prince de Conti's house, where I was dining with the Archbishop of Toulouse, Président Aligre, and other prelates and parliamentarians, to hear from those two distinguished classes of corrupt men that they meant to harass the man who was least so. I then wrote to Jean-Jacques a letter, which he rather improperly gave to some one to read or to copy; so that in the end it found its way, I do not know how, into all the gazettes. It can be read in the collected edition of Rousseau's Works, and in his Dialogue with himself, which is also in his Works. In that, he has the kindness to think, after his usual fashion, that the offer of an asylum which I made him was a trap that his enemies had induced me to set for him; so much had that form of suspicious insanity attacked the brain of this unhappy great man, who was equally fascinating and provoking.

But his first impulse was good; for the day after he received my letter, in which he recognized an outburst of enthusiastic sensibility, he came to express his feelings. "Monsieur Rousseau" was announced to me, and I could scarcely believe my ears. The door opened, and I did not believe my eyes. Louis XIV. could not have experienced a greater feeling of vanity in receiving the ambassador of Siam. It was then that I became fully convinced of the lies he has told in his "Confessions." The description he gave me of his misfortunes, the picture he drew of his imaginary ene-

mies, of the conspiracy of all Europe against him, would have grieved me had the tale not been related with the full chorus of his eloquence. I tried to drag him away from it, and to talk of fields and herbs. I asked him how it was that he who loved the country could come and lodge in the heart of Paris. On which he made me several of his charming paradoxes : on the advantages of writing about liberty when you were shut up ; on the delight of describing the spring-tide when it snowed. I took him to Switzerland, and proved to him, without seeming to do so, that I knew Julie and Saint-Preux by heart. I did this, not by direct quotation, but by adopting the same terms as he. He seemed surprised and flattered. But he saw quite plainly that the "Nouvelle Héloïse" was the only one of his works that suited me ; and also that, even if I could be profound, I would not give myself the trouble to be so.

Never have I shown so much intellect (it was, I fear, for the first and last time in my life) as I did during the eight hours I passed with Jean-Jacques in these two conversations. When at last he told me definitely that he should await in Paris the attacks and decrees of imprisonment that priests and parliament threatened against him, I told him certain rather severe truths on his method of regarding celebrity. I remember that I said : "Monsieur Rousseau, the more you keep in hiding, the more you put yourself *en évidence*. The more you live in this furtive way, the more you become a public character, whom Europe will try to unearth."

His eyes were like two stars. Genius flashed its radiations in his looks and electrified me. I remember that I ended by saying two or three times, with tears in my eyes : "Be happy, monsieur, be happy in spite of yourself. If you will not inhabit the temple that I would build to Virtue in the little sovereignty over which I rule, where I have neither

parliament, nor clergy, but the best sheep in the world, stay in France (if they leave you in peace) but sell your books and buy a little country house near Paris, or build yourself one on an island in the Seine. Open your doors to your admirers, and soon there will be no further talk of disturbing you."

I think that that was not what he wanted. He would not even have stayed long at Ermenonville [the beautiful estate of the Marquis de Girardin, where Rousseau went to live] if death had not suddenly overtaken him there. However, satisfied with the effect he had produced upon my feelings and enthusiasm, he showed me more interest and gratitude than he usually showed to others, no matter who they were; and when he left me I was conscious of the same void that we feel after waking from a beautiful dream. What was my amazement when I read in his own words that I was the accomplice of his enemies, who were setting a trap for him by means of my offer of a home at Belœil! I have already mentioned why I wrote to him, and how he imprudently printed my imprudent letter. He must have had the devil in him to think I meant him any harm. What interest could I, or others, have had in deceiving him? However, the affair might have proved one of the follies of my life, for if he had accepted the offer he would doubtless have brought discord into my sovereignty, if not among my subjects at least among my sheep, whom he would certainly have asserted to be wolves. Besides, he would have written against the Germanic Empire, its members, its laws of hospitality, which I was exercising upon him. He would doubtless have accused me of being, or being able to be, a tyrant; he would have known no more of the province of Westphalia, where I wanted him to live and be happy, than he did of Poland and Corsica, about which he wrote; he

would never have seen that our abnormal government — abnormal from the singularity of its construction — was good in practice, however defective in theory; he would never have admitted that the Head, the Aulic Council, the Diet and Wetzlar, were able to stop all abuses of authority.

He took a prejudice against every one who did him service, and suspected them of meanness. A man can be properly grateful without being attached to those who do not deserve his attachment. It was his weakness to believe that twenty women were in love with him, and that he might have had them all had he willed it; but the height of his self-love was reached in the idea that he was persecuted, and in seeking to be so rather than be ignored. The crown of sorrow to him was to end ignored, without being tormented during the last dozen years of his life. Let us forgive him, admire him sometimes, and read him without believing him; we can always reverence in his works the mightiness of genius and of eloquence, simple without familiarity, noble without arrogance.

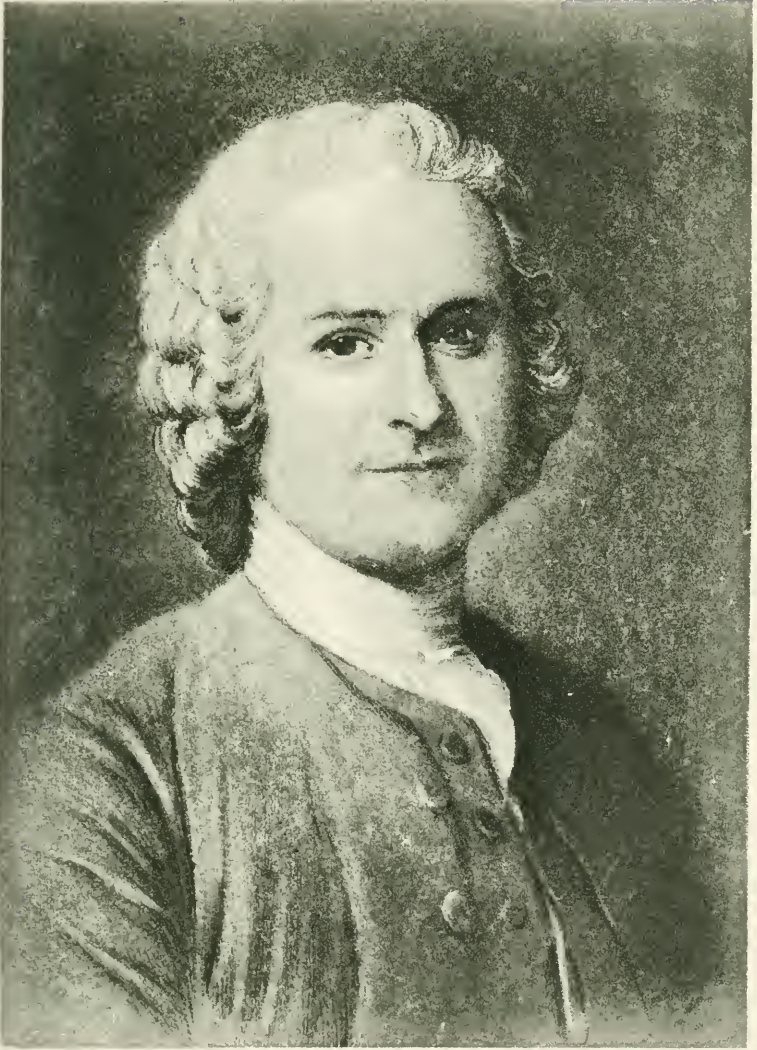
I am very sure that Rousseau never committed the villainies he avows in his "Confessions." Pleasure and singularity were the two things that carried the day with him, and they cost him his honour. There was no baseness of sentiment, tone, or style in Jean-Jacques; there was only pride and a grain of madness. To understand him we should look at the splendid frame with which he has surrounded his foolish nonsense, his minute and petty details, his injustices, his little lies, and his contemptible tales. But if we all gave an account of every thought and action of our lives as Rousseau assumes to have had the courage to do, I am inclined to think we might feel more indulgent to him.

The conditions of the human mind are so narrowed down

that if we step aside ever so little from the small ideas that the weakness of our organization allows they become at once out of order, and genius is almost the stepping-stone to insanity. This may be why, after taking his flight so near to sublimity, the unhappy Jean-Jacques has suffered so terribly through his imagination. He has changed his worship two or three times, and twenty times his belief. The "Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar" comes in about the middle of these changes. Men of genius know no more than others on those subjects.

Jean-Jacques wrote on heroism; but there, too, he is not consistent with himself. He says first that heroism is the most essential quality of the soul of those who seek to govern well; and then, at the end of his treatise, he complains that heroes are seldom just, prudent, or reasonable. He dwells particularly on their want of prudence. I should have thought that nothing was more needful for those who are placed over others; and if to govern well means the possession of heroism, prudence would surely be its controlling virtue. I am afraid his talk is only a dispute of words, like most disputes. It is an affair of definition. If Jean-Jacques was not blind himself, he has blinded a good many people in the course of his life; all those, for instance, down on their knees before him, who fancy they see clearly into all the things he has said. They persist in believing a man to be steadily consistent with himself who never sought to be so. They imagine that his manifest contradictions can all be harmonized, and so, with perfect honesty, they become dishonest. No doubt when a principle was set up, Jean-Jacques was always right on that principle; but they do not examine the principle, they are carried away by that prophetic, inspired, authoritative air, and by an eloquence the like of which no one has ever had before him; which





*Jean Jacques Rousseau*





he did not seek, for it came to him by nature. Admire him always, but only half believe him; he does not wholly believe in himself. Distrust his definitions, for he changes all received conventions to suit himself, but do not distrust his soul. That is pure, that is real; the soul of each of us would be racked like his if we had the uneasy, restless mind that governed him. Only a hypochondriac of the mind, if I may use that expression, is thus affected.

A moment before he expired he summoned strength to open the window and contemplate nature, fixing his eyes upon the sun — dying as the eagles live. Alas! he might have been one, with a little more reason and less incompatibility.

I do not know why people should discuss so gravely the style of the Chevalier de Boufflers, when his style is to have none. He has never made verses merely to make them, but only as he catches the flash, the sparkle, the wit, the piquancy, and the amusing side of the society in which he is a god. His poems have a charming negligence; gayety is in every line, with witty nonsense, always in good taste; even if the style be bad it is never felt to be so. He has a manner, entirely his own, of saying things and of not saying them, precisely as he wishes. I know nothing more charming than the letters he wrote to me, which are worth more than those that are given in his Works.

M. de Boufflers has been successively abbé, soldier, writer, administrator, deputy, and philosopher; in all of which conditions he has been out of place only in the first. He has thought much; but unfortunately, always, as it were, upon the run. His perpetual motion has robbed us somewhat of his intellect. One would like to gather up all the ideas he has scattered, together with time and money, on the high-roads. Perhaps he had too much mind to be able to fix it

when the fire of his youth gave it so much impetus. That mind must have mastered its master; it shone at first with the caprice of a will o' the wisp; age alone has given it the steadiness of a beacon. Unerring sagacity, profound shrewdness, volatility that is never frivolous, the art of sharpening ideas by the contact of words,—these are the distinctive marks of his talent, to which nothing is alien. Happily, he does not know everything; but he has plucked the flower of knowledge, and surprises by his learning those who know him to be volatile, and by his volatility those who have discovered how profound he is.

The basis of his nature is unstudied kindness; he cannot endure the thought of a suffering human being, and would give what he needs himself to relieve others. He would go without food to feed a wicked man, especially an enemy. "That poor man!" he says. At one time he had a servant-woman whom everybody told him was a thief; in spite of which he kept her, and when they asked him why, replied, "But who would take her?"

Childhood is in his laugh, awkwardness in all his movements; he carries his head a little bent; he twirls his thumbs before him like Harlequin, or keeps his hands behind his back as if he were warming them. His eyes are small, but agreeable, and always smiling; there is something *good* in the expression of his countenance,—simple, gay, and naïve in his grace, though heaviness is apparent in his figure, and his person is ill cared for. Sometimes he has the vacant air they say La Fontaine wore; you would say he was thinking of nothing when he thinks the most. He never voluntarily puts himself forward, which makes him the more piquant when he is drawn forth. Kindliness of nature is the essence of his manners; no malice escapes him, except sometimes in his smile and in his eyes; he is so

much on his guard against his talent for epigram that in writing he too often leans the other way. He has a way of overdoing praise, merely to prevent his satire from peeping out, and this excess does sometimes serve to make his praise suspicious. It is impossible to be a better man or a wittier, but in him the two qualities have little communication, and if his wit is not always kind his kindness occasionally lacks wit.

M. de Boufflers will end his career as he began it, by being the happiest, as he is the most amiable, of men. Why should he not be? He is too superior to have pretensions. He is not on the line or in the way of any one in the world. Justice is done without hesitation to his talent — which is unique in a certain kind of verse; his couplets, for instance, in which each word has its point. He is admirable above all when we think him most negligent. M. de Boufflers pleases us, we scarcely know how; but it is by grace, good taste, and a certain easy abandonment which makes him unlike any one but himself. In after years [Stanislas de Boufflers died in 1815; he was one year older than the Prince de Ligne], filled with the natural disappointment of a superior mind and a heart that loves the good, he busied himself with agriculture and metaphysics, — an honourable refuge, where, though he may still meet with disappointments, it will not be through men.

There never was any one less *gentil* than my friend Gentil Bernard, who often dined with me in company with Dorat [Claude-Joseph, poet]. He was very amiable, just as simple in society as he was the reverse in his books, and kind and modest. The “gentil” was a fat man, who looked more like a German poet than a French one, and ate his dinner without saying a word. He had neither figure, nor manner, nor even intellect. In his verses there is more wit and

taste than there is *gentillesse*, which presupposes the gayety and artlessness of childhood. I should not have remarked him, or remarked upon him here, were it not for the name of Gentil, which always makes me laugh. He was fond of eating, and read his "Art of Loving" wonderfully well.

I should like to see a universal academy for all Europe which would form the taste of the nations. Intercommunication of ideas would ensure growth. But minds must be shorn of prejudice. French literature would benefit by the riches of foreign literatures which in turn would acquire its tone, its criticism, its wit. We should have no more superficial men in France, no more pedants in Germany, no more ghostly mental puzzlers in England, no more charlatans in Italy. It is a good thing that German literature is coming into vogue. The only fear is that we may find there many things that we are tired of already: commonplace descriptions, rivulets meandering over flowery enamels always of the same colouring and design. It has certainly not the rockets of Italian poetry, the sublimity and the exaggeration of the English, nor the grace and good taste of the French. But without pretending to superiority in any line, it has of late developed a philosophy, which will soon destroy old prejudices and make the Germans a people of thinkers, not visionary as they are in England, or frivolous as they are in France.

Since the above words were written a number of still more superior works have appeared. Besides what they call in German *witz*, there is more force, energy, and greatness in them than in the modern works of other languages. But let that country beware of images, and not sacrifice the light of truth to false sublimity.

I am often surprised that so little has been said of the superiority of the epigrams of Robé to those of Rousseau,

Boileau, and others ; for his verses, though hard, are marvelously well-constructed and full of pith. We ought not to require that a trumpet should have the same harmonious tone as a flute. The subjects of which he treated are not susceptible of the grace of "A bouquet to Iris." I often supped with him at Mme. du Barry's before her presentation to the king. She amused herself greatly with his vanity in thinking he had the smallest foot in France. At that time he was becoming devout, and had burned all his songs as too libertine. "But come into this little cabinet," he said to me one day, "and I'll recite them to you ; I know them by heart." I remember one piece he recited, beginning : "Beauty ! almighty mediator between men and women."

Should a portrait be flattered ? "Gentle spirit," says Saint-Laurent (in his poem on the Seasons) of the Maréchale de Luxembourg, whose bitterness was only redeemed by the piquancy of her sayings, her severe but accepted taste, her manner of defining and judging ; a woman who took pleasure in embarrassing others by a singular manner of putting questions ; who dictated, without appeal, the laws of good breeding, the traditions of which would otherwise have been lost in France ; a woman who excused nothing, not an expression, not a trifling familiarity, who discomfited those she did not like with a word ; the example and the preceptor of the great world, whatever else she may have been in her earlier days, — the days of her first husband, when the following quatrain was made upon her : —

"When Boufflers dawned upon the sky,  
'T is Cupid's mother !' was the cry ;  
Each did his best in turn to win her,  
And all possessed the pretty sinner."

Suspecting the Comte de Tressan of being the author, she said to him : "Do you know that song ? It is so well done

that if I knew who wrote it I would not only forgive him, but kiss him." "Well," said Tressan, lured by the scent like the fox and the crow, "'T was I, Mme. la Maréchale." Whereupon she boxed him on both ears.

The Abbé de Bernis, with whom I was intimate in Vienna, was never, as M. de La Harpe states, minister at that Court. If I dared to relate an adventure that he had with a nun in Venice, and quote the best verses that he ever made in his life, which he left one day on my table, the story would be more piquant than anything that has been said about him. But why do not people add to his many portraits that although he was a churchman, a wit, a man of the world, and of letters, and a courtier, he was never malicious or vindictive. The caprice of two women, Mme. de Pompadour and Mme. Lafortane caused his rise; the same capriciousness caused his fall. After it he retained his dignity, philosophy, and friends.

I had met a few years earlier, while travelling with some young Poles, M. de Caraccioli [Francesco, hung in 1794], a rather commonplace man, I thought, who bored me a good deal. At first he seemed to me to have not even the merit that belongs to the soil of his country, neither wit, repartee, nor humour. By playing devotion, laughing at it possibly in his sleeve (for I don't know that he had any really), he won the favour of Maria Theresa, who believed him in those respects. I had slightly recommended him to Mlle. Baretta, one of her ladies-in-waiting. He was, however, kind, sensible, and grateful, and I liked him much after he came to Paris as ambassador. Scores of his speeches are quoted, among them two to the king. One day at his *lever* the king said to him, speaking of his appointment as viceroy of Sicily, "They tell me it is a fine post." "Yes, Sire, but I prefer that of Louis XV." "M. l'Ambassadeur," said the



king on another occasion, "are you making love in Paris?" "No, Sire," he replied, "I buy it ready-made." He told me in London, where I met him, that he could not live in a country where they bet about everything, — "for example," he said, "on my life. My horse ran away with me. 'He will be killed!' 'He will not be killed!' cried two Englishmen. 'Fifty guineas?' 'Done.' I came to a turnpike gate, and hoped the keeper would open it. Not he. 'It is a wager,' they shouted. My hat fell one side of the gate, my wig the other and I too, and I never knew which side won the bet."

England would be the land of eclogues, idylls, pastorals, were it not so damp. I was tempted to search for Tityrus, that scamp of Melibœus, and Menalcas; methought I heard in the meadows their defiance of Knowledge and of Love. I listened for the shepherds' flutes, which I heard not; 't was on those verdant carpets of English turf that I thought to hear the swains singing to their milkmaids' charms and their faithful dogs. In England, however, the shepherds are not so gentle as their sheep, and the dulcet tones of the reedy pipe are little suited to those insularies. But the scenes that produced the sublime, gigantic works of Shakespeare, and the grotesque Hudibras will be ever felt; they have put us eternally under the deepest obligations to England.

There is scarcely an adventurer, a *chevalier d'industrie*, a liar, or a fool among the English. They are too proud to be assuming; for my part I prefer the man who scorns to the man who magnifies his value. This is not saying that they have not the faults of other nations when a great self-interest comes along. An English minister, for example, will lie like any other, but he will not lie as an Englishman, only as a minister. His rudeness in society would be in-



tolerable incivility in a man of any other nation ; but an Englishman will seldom say anything vulgar. His generosity is not humiliating ; he seems to say, " I give this money because I have too much and do not care for it."

Why, with the love of freedom that Englishmen assert in all things, have they, until the middle of this century, shut themselves in behind walls and lofty hedges ? How is it, learned as they profess to be in promenades, plantations, lawns, and rivulets, how is it that they have never seen with their eyes that which Milton, who had lost his, describes so perfectly ? They had only to reduce the scale of his terrestrial paradise. Yet Milton, before he was blind, saw but two gardens, and those pitiable, at Nonesuch and Theobald. How is it, I say again, after reading the enchanting lines of their King of Poets, that Sir William Temple could describe Moor Park as the finest garden in the world ? But of late Bridgman is pulling down the walls and hedges, and Kent is vaulting over them. Eyre had tried to do so, but his courage failed him. Kent has made the revolution, helped perhaps by the principles and the example of Pope.

Voltaire says of Milton, in his stanzas on Epics, that he " sang for madmen, angels, and devils." When Englishmen rise to great heights it is with a sort of delirium ; foreigners call that visionary, sublime, and poetic ; such soaring thoughts are like their dreams if written down. Milton dreamed always, but on a single subject. Pope, who never dreamed, does not pass in England for a great poet ; but he certainly is the Englishman who in taste and reasoning approaches the nearest to Frenchmen, without losing the energy and depths which are the attributes of his nation. Lord Mansfield, who had lived much with him, made me love him.

[A portrait.] Look at Lizy, listen to her, and I will wager that you will immediately write of her exactly as I do. Her manner of holding herself, of dressing herself, of behaving, talking, and walking, in short, everything about her is extremely careless; it is only in her method of thinking that there is no carelessness at all. In that she has strength, force, and accuracy, expressed less in words than in acts. What she says is concise, prompt, gay, piquant, good, sensible, and thoroughly felt. She understands quickly and can make herself quickly understood. With her, theory came after practice. Candour and mischief, rather surprised to find each other together, have fixed themselves singularly in her eyes. Her freshness bespeaks a good conscience. Oh! I advise her to have it and keep it, for she lets you know very plainly what there is against her. Shyness, which is often hypocrisy, or else the child of vanity, is not of her acquaintance; but in place of it she puts so much discretion that she is neither embarrassed nor embarrassing. She never says a word, or takes a step to please; but the air with which she does both secures to her general success. I think other women are not alarmed by this; for I have heard some who know her well judge her as I do. She is gowned and her hair is dressed in a manner all her own, which is not like that of any one else. There is always something missing about her; she has forgotten her little dog, or her gloves, or her fan. She has fine chestnut hair, very long, beautiful teeth, especially beautiful for their evenness, with lips precisely what they ought to be for the use that should be made of them.

Her face is more interesting when seen in front than in profile, where it is not pretty except for its droll shape; her full face might inspire a great sentiment in a fool who would imagine that she loved him. But for fear that a

man who is no fool should imagine the same thing and annoy her, there issues from her lips at the same moment something unexpected, perhaps jocose, which disconcerts the rising passion. Lizy would have no defect at all if she were not a woman. She is never malicious, for example, except in that one quality, and then only two or three times a year for a quarter of an hour each time. She is never out of temper; she has more firmness than a man, and is more superior to circumstances. Lizy apparently attaches no value to any virtue, for she sets none on those she has. If you say to her, for example, that she has delicacy, she will ask: "What have I done? You are a Frenchman, therefore I know you are flattering me." If some one says to her: "You have singular moderation, and surprising self-abnegation; you have great elevation of mind without exaggeration," she will repeat those four words ending in *on*, in English and French, and then say: "What does all that mean? You are worse than a Frenchman, if that be possible. I am an Englishwoman, and I do not need compliments." She is not complimentary herself; she has very amusing franknesses. Lizy has no agreeable talent; she does only useful and difficult things; she says and listens willingly to the most serious matters. She loves the country, gardens, sheep, animals, and Nature, of which she is the petted child, but not the spoilt child. No, assuredly she is not that. But, smiling at fate and at philosophy, without exactly knowing what it is, she will be happy. Oh! yes, she will be happy. I have a presentiment of it; and I am happy in thinking that she will be so.

## VI.

1768-1770.

### LIFE IN PARIS: VOLTAIRE.

I REMEMBER that at twelve years of age, having had the joy of getting hold of a *Voltaire*, I read it at night; and the pleasure and longing for glory which I derived from the little poem called the "Battle of Fontenoy" are indescribable. I was in ecstasy, and would willingly have consented to perish in my first battle for the fate of being named in verse. I had heard the cannon and the musketry of Fontenoy while still a little fellow; I had been upon the field itself. I imagined the battle; Fontenoy was mine! All this roused my enthusiasm for the poem; on which M. de *Voltaire* himself set no value, although it awakened and inflamed the courage of even the petty court seigneurs and sent them to immortality.

[In 1768 or 1769] I was eight days with M. de *Voltaire* at Ferney, and I wish I could remember the sublime, simple, gay, and interesting things that came incessantly from him. But, in truth, it is impossible. They were not conversations that I had with him, for the best thing that I could do was to have none. I talked only to make him talk; I laughed, or I wondered and admired; I was intoxicated. Even to his wrong sentiments, his false knowledge, his infatuations, his want of taste for the Fine Arts, his caprices, his pretensions to be a statesman, or profound and learned almost to the point of being dull and a bore (which he never could be), all was charming, novel, piquant, and un-

expected. At that time he was in love with the English constitution. I remember that I said to him, "M. de Voltaire, add to that the ocean for its support; without which it would not last a year." "The ocean!" he exclaimed, "you will force me to make many reflections on that subject."

He was in a fury against the King of Prussia. "They say I rave against criticism; here, have you seen this? I don't know how that devil of a man [Frederick], who can't spell, and forces a poem as he would a camp, ever contrived to make four such good lines upon me as these beginning: *Candide est un petit vaurien*. He never was capable of gratitude, that man. Monsieur, he never felt gratitude except to his horse, on which he ran away at the battle of Molwitz. The chasseur who went after him to tell him the battle was won is a chasseur still — he had a pension already."

"You seem to be on bad terms with him at the present moment," I said; "it is a German quarrel and a lover's quarrel both." This bit of nonsense made him laugh; he talked nonsense himself and liked to hear it. A man from Geneva was announced. "Quick! quick!" he cried, "give him Tronchin" — his doctor's name; meaning, "Tell him I am ill." The Genevese departed.

"What do you think of Geneva?" he asked me one day, knowing that I had been there in the morning. "Hideous town," I replied (which was not true, but I knew that just then he detested Geneva); "its porticos and arcades are in the gallows style of architecture." "And its citizens ought to hang there, i' faith," he said. In fact, there really were scaffoldings everywhere about the town, perhaps preparing for better things; and each of them looked like a gallows.

An amusing thing occurred one day with his niece, Mme.

Denis. I told her, in presence of her uncle, of a circumstance that had happened to herself, though at this time I thought it was to *Mme. de Graffigny*. The *Marquis di Ximenes* defied her to make him a quotation of which he could not instantly tell her the author. He did not miss one. Then *Mme. Denis*, who had very little mind of her own, managed, by dint of rubbing against that of her uncle, to make four lines on the spot, in order to catch him. "Well, *M. le Marquis*, whose are they?" she asked. "Those of a *Groper* after *Wit*, madame," he replied. "Ha! ha! bravo! bravo!" cried *M. de Voltaire*. "Pardi! how foolish she must have felt! Why don't you laugh, niece?"

As I must tell all that I heard from this celebrated man, I shall own that after walking about his garden one beautiful night, I climbed a large rock, whence I could look into his bedroom and see him in bed, writing, with the window open. At that instant he gave a loud hiccough, more like that of a mason than a poet, and I rushed away at full speed lest he should hear me laughing. He was then occupied in tearing to rags and paraphrasing that tiresome "History of the Church" by the *Abbé Fleury*. "It is not a history," he said to me, speaking of it, "it is a *rigmarole*. There are none but *Bossuet* and *Fléchier* whom I admit to be sound Christians in history." "Ah! *M. de Voltaire*," I said, "and also a few reverend Fathers, whose sons brought you up pretty well." He always spoke well of them. I might have added that history is under the deepest obligations to the Jesuits, and, especially as to China, we have no idea what we owe to them.

"You have just come from Venice; did you happen to see there the *Procuratore Pococurante*?" "No," I replied, "I do not remember him." "Then you have not read '*Candide*,'" he said angrily; for there was always a time



when he was more attached to one of his works than to the rest. "Pardon me, M. de Voltaire, my thoughts were wandering; I was thinking how surprised I was to hear the Venetian gondoliers singing Tasso's *Aminta*." "What? Explain that to me if you please." "The gondoliers practise the voices and the memory of their comrades, like Melibœus and Menalcas of other days. On the Canal Grande of a beautiful summer's night, one of them will begin with a recitative, and another answers and continues. I don't think the hackney-coachmen of Paris know the '*Henriade*' by heart; and if they did, they would intone it very badly with their coarse voices, their hard, ignoble accent, and the brandy tones of their throats." "That is because the Goths are barbarians, enemies to harmony, men who will cut your throat, monsieur. That is what the People are. But our men of intellect [*esprit*] have so much of it that they put it even into the titles of their books: '*Livre d'Esprit*,' frolicsome intellect, that one. '*Esprit des Lois*,' intellect put into laws; I have not the honour to understand it. But I do understand the '*Lettres Persanes*;' good book that."

"There are several other men of letters of whom you seem to think well." — "Yes, truly, one must. D'Alembert, for instance, who for want of imagination calls himself a geometrician; Diderot, who, in order to make you sure he has a mind, is bombastic and declamatory; and Marmontel, whose poetism, between you and me, is unintelligible. Those men would say that I am jealous. Well, let them say it. Have n't they shrieked everywhere that I was envious of Rousseau? I have drunk champagne with the first, in company with your father at your cousin the Duc d'Arenberg's, and he went to sleep at that charming supper; but I don't choose to go on all fours after the last and crop



grass. What is that impertinent ‘Profession of Faith by a Savoyard Vicar,’ for example? Who knows when that man is really sincere? At Court they call me a flatterer and a *frondeur* both; in Paris too much of a philosopher; at the Academy a foe to philosophy; contraband at Rome for a few little jokes about their actresses and gayeties of an oriental kind; Parchmont says I’m a teacher of despotism; I’m a bad Frenchman for speaking well of the English; a thief, and a benefactor of libraries; a libertine on account of Jeanne, whom my enemies choose to call guilty; an imitator and flatterer of men of genius; and an intolerant man because I preach tolerance.”

He bore a grudge against Jean-Jacques for having, by means of his stern partisans, forced him to give up his theatre and his delightful retreat at “Mes Délices.” But one day, at the very moment when he was calling him a monster and saying that such a man should not be exiled, he should be banished, they came to tell him that Rousseau was just entering his courtyard. “Where is he, unfortunate man?” he called out. “Let him come to me; my arms are open to him. Perhaps they have driven him from Neufchâtel. Find him, bring him to me; all that I have is his.”

M. Constant asked him in my presence for his “History of Russia.” “You are crazy,” he said. “If you want to know about Russia take La Combe’s History; he never got any medals or decorations, that man.” He seemed at times to be having squabbles with the living and also with the dead. His variability made him like them sometimes more, sometimes less. When I was with him Fénelon, La Fontaine, and Molière were in the greatest favour.

“Niece, let us give him some Molière,” he said to Mme. Denis. “Come into the salon and we will do ‘Les Femmes

Savantes' without preparation." On which he did Trissotin very badly indeed; substituting Fréron for Trissotin and amusing himself immensely with the change. He was just then much out of humour with parliament, and when he met his donkey at the garden gate he stepped aside and said: "Pass on, I beg of you, M. le Président." He mistook the tuner of his niece's piano for the shoemaker, and when, after a quantity of blunders, the matter was cleared up, he said: "Ah! monsieur, man of souls; I was putting you at my feet, when I ought to be at yours."

A gentleman, in gray hat and shoes, suddenly entered the salon. M. de Voltaire, who disliked visits so much that he owned to me he had taken medicine to escape mine, fearing it would bore him, fled towards his cabinet. The gentleman stopped him, saying: "Monsieur, monsieur, I am the son of a lady on whom you made verses." — "I can believe it; I have made so many and for so many women. Good-day to you." — "But it was Mme. Fontaine-Martel." — "Ah, monsieur, she was very beautiful. Your servant, sir." (He was almost in his cabinet.) "But, monsieur, where did you acquire such taste? This salon, for example, is charming. Is it really your own doing?" (He was just going through the door.) "Yes, yes, it is mine; I gave the designs; look at that entrance, and the staircase, hey?" "Monsieur, the thing that chiefly brought me to Switzerland was the desire to see M. de Haller." (M. de Voltaire retreats into his cabinet.) "Monsieur, monsieur, how much this must have cost you! what a charming garden!" (M. de Voltaire comes out.) "Oh! as for that, my gardener is a fool; I have done it all myself." "So I see. M. de Haller is a great man." (M. de Voltaire retires.) "How much time would it take, monsieur, to build a château as beautiful as this?" (M. de Voltaire re-enters the salon.) Without in-



*Voltaire*



tending it, they have played me the funniest little scene in the world ; and M. de Voltaire gave me many another, more comic still, from his vivacities, his tempers, his repentances, his stamp of the man of Letters joined to his air of a seigneur of the Court of Louis XIV. and a frequenter of the best company.<sup>1</sup>

He was comical when he played the village lord. He talked to the peasants as if they were ambassadors of the Romans, or princes of the Trojan war. He ennobled everything. Wishing to ask why they never gave him jugged hare for dinner, he said to an old game-keeper: "My friend, has the emigration of animals from my estate of Tourmé to my estate of Ferney ceased?"

He would come in the morning and sit on my bed, and talk with the simplest grace and gayety, saying and liking conversational nonsense. It was thus that I said to him: "Your Mlle. Corneille takes after a rook [*corneille*] much more than she does after Corneille." She was *nigra*, but not *formosa*. But his sister-in-law, Mlle. du Puys, pleased me exceedingly, and made me sometimes inattentive when the great man was talking to me. He did not like that. I remember that one day his handsome Swiss maids, waiting at table with their shoulders bare on account of the heat, passed between him and me in handing me the cream; he caught them, angrily, with both hands round their necks, exclaiming: "Bosoms here and bosoms there; go to the devil!"

<sup>1</sup> From the tenor of this remark is it to be inferred that the prince knew, or did not know, that Arouet was the son of a notary — that of the Duc de Saint-Simon and his father? He took the name of Voltaire to conceal his identity. Carlyle says that name is the anagram of Arouet l. j. (*le jeune*). At the present date, December, 1897, the bodies of Voltaire and Rousseau have just been exhumed at the Panthéon in Paris. That of Voltaire was so well preserved that its likeness to Houdon's statue was very noticeable. Of Rousseau's body only the skeleton remained. — Tr.

He always wore gray shoes, iron-gray turned-over stockings, a great dinity jacket coming down to his knees, a large and very long wig, and a black velvet cap. On Sunday he put on a handsome, spangled coat of one colour only, waistcoat and breeches of the same; but the waistcoat had great flaps, edged with gold lace *à la* Bourgogne in scallops, with broad lace cuffs coming down to the tips of his fingers, "because," he said, "with *this*, one has an air of nobility." M. de Voltaire was kind with all his neighbours, and made them laugh. He embellished what he said and what he heard. He put some questions to an officer of my regiment, and thought him sublime in his answers. "Of what religion are you, monsieur?" — "My parents brought me up in the Catholic religion." "A grand answer," remarked M. de Voltaire; "observe, he does not say that *he* is of it."

All this seems rather frivolous to relate, and as if I intended to ridicule him; but he ought to be seen in the light of his brilliant and beautiful imagination, distributing and scattering its witty sallies all around him; attributing his own wit to others; always seeing and believing in the good and the beautiful; abounding in this sense and making others abound, unconsciously to themselves; giving succour to the unfortunate, building houses for poor families, and being in his own home the good man he was in his village, — good man and great man both; a union without which neither the one nor the other is complete; for genius gives a wider sphere to goodness, and goodness more of nature to genius.

If I had thought of it when I was at Ferney I would have said to M. de Voltaire, "Come and walk with me in the village of which you are the creator and the happiness. Look at that peasant who has just lost his calf. He hopes to find it because he has had a mass said to Saint Anthony of Padua. Would you have the barbarity to take that hope



from him?" "No," he would have answered in his thundering voice, "I would sooner burn my books against religion." And he would have done so assuredly, if I had proved to him that one of his peasants, chancing to read a book of his, had yielded to despair about his rheumatism, after throwing away, in consequence of what he read, a relic which a Franciscan friar had given him to relieve it. If he had been the leader of a sect, other than that of the Philosophers (and there is no harm done in sending the souls of a hundred or two of them to the devil), he would have preached irreligion in his village, and that he never did.

[In 1777], unable to believe that M. de Voltaire would commit the folly of going to Paris, or the pope the folly of going to Vienna, I, most unfortunately, left both cities just before the arrival of each. Too well, or too ill received, the former went to Paris to die. The bustle, the bad air of that city, the pitiable conduct of the Court (which he ought to have expected), the detestable behaviour of the clergy, — all this, together with the excitements of joy and anger in place of the sweet and salutary life of his smiling valley, could only result in terminating his days.

M. de Voltaire was no more conclusive in his opinions than other people. In reading him, I think I have him when (for instance), out of the apparent abandonment of his heart, he talks with Uranie. Not at all; he escapes me; the palinode is over; and I see it was not in good faith. But when is he in good faith on those points? I am convinced that if he could have seen the foolish unbelievers of our present day, he would never have permitted himself those jests, which have done more harm than he suspected. He might also have excused himself from laughing at the ancient Jews, to whose history he is constantly harking back, — a history which would certainly be ridiculous were it



not a sacred and extra-ordinary history ; and also if all things were not possible to God. The only thing he says in favour of the modern Jews, of whom he is no more tolerant than he is of Christianity, and specially of Catholicism, is (while preaching tolerance) that he would not burn them. He declaims so much against Jesus Christ chiefly because he was born among a nation he abhors. He is its Fréron ; and that is the real sin of M. de Voltaire. If, at his death, his vicar had had the wit to leave his room with a satisfied air, and, by a pious lie, had said he was converted and had fulfilled his Catholic duties, he would have converted back the pretended free-thinkers whom M. de Voltaire had misled. When he repeated twice over the name of Jesus Christ, it was not to deny him, as people said, adding the words, "In the name of God do not talk to me of that man." It should not be concluded that when a dying man, no longer in his senses, pushes away his vicar with his fleshless, feeble fingers he wishes to end his life without religion. Not knowing more than others about eternity, M. de Voltaire would never have run that risk. He was not what is called a "free-thinker," like Alembert and Diderot ; he never upheld the principles of atheism, or anything like it. Rousseau, who changed his opinion two or three times, and attacked religion many more times, grievously and seriously, was far more dangerous.

M. de Voltaire died as a saint might die. That is what ought to have been told at Versailles. Maréchal Brown and Maréchal Daun, his friends, who were both there, ought to have had the courage to say it. But Louis XVI. with his weak speech, the enmity of the clergy, the opposition of the gazettes, and other pitiable things in connection with his burial, have caused an ineffaceable scandal and done great harm to religion. It is not enough to be religious, men should also have common-sense.

If any one had said to M. de Voltaire: "Everything depends on you; what do you wish to put in the place of God?" "Nothing," he would have said in a voice of thunder. "Adore Him instead of the pope, and make the latter stay in Rome." It should be remembered of him that he has extinguished the spirit of party; he has made Huguenots, Catholics, and Jews eling together. He laughed at them and made them laugh at themselves. Moreover, in preaching a taste for the arts, and in extending it to literature, he has softened manners and customs, and removed much that formerly disturbed governments and the tranquillity that Europe now enjoys.

The foregoing paragraph, written some years ago, proves that I am no wizard. Could I have imagined then that the names of Voltaire and of Rousseau would be profanely used to overthrow altars, thrones, palaces, castles, laws? Let no one say that philosophy produced the monsters who destroyed the peace of the world. The ambition of a few wretches it was that, heaping crime on crime, have dragged us back to barbarism.

A few years before this time there appeared upon the horizon of Paris a phenomenon, which had nothing alarming about it. It was not a comet, for instead of a tail it had a queue, rather ill-made, a chignon, a catagon that was often falling apart. It was not an *aurora borealis*, for it lighted the day as well as the night. It was not an *ignis fatuus*, for it was much too wise to lead or to be led astray. It was not a planet, for it did not revolve around any one; nor was it a star, because, happily for the nations of Europe, it was not fixed to its own spot. This phenomenon talks, but not enough; thinks, but far too much; walks, but only to sit down, crookedly, in a chair and cross its little legs, and then uncross them to make a little bow to a man who has

been waiting half an hour. It holds its head on its left shoulder and begins to listen to what a second man is not saying, and does not hear a word that a third man says. Its name, I think, is Elzéar [Comte Louis-Philippe de Ségur]. He has a touch of genius and looks like a sylph, for he is almost transparent; he is a salamander when he writes, for then he is all in flames. He has very little human nature, no desires, no passions, and, I fear, few pleasures, though he suffers pain. His sensibility, for instance, procures him something else than enjoyment. The depth of his reflections turns to sorrow rather than to joy. He neglects the charms of the present to think about the troubles of the future. He is sometimes too young, and sometimes too old. Look at him, walking along in his overcoat with its small collar, head down, body forward, with a big book under his left arm and a little one in his right hand, in which is also a little cane with a red knob, which he never puts upon the ground. He will plunge into the wood, or climb a mountain. Nature hides nothing from him; physics and astronomy open their treasures to him, and mechanism her workshop.

Are you afraid of this phenomenon, though I warned you in the beginning that it was not alarming? Fear nothing; he does marvels without being marvellous. Do not be uneasy about his humour, or his sombre meditations, for this elderly young man can laugh like an idiot and never stop himself; or if he does, a mere nothing will start him again. He is kind, simple, *naïf*, indifferent about himself, and has no silly pride of modesty, for he does not know his own value. He puts forward his little paradox sometimes, as if he meant to sustain it rigidly; others deny it, he takes no notice; they laugh, he does not care; they attack it, he does not defend it. The accuracy of his mind is often worsted by the exaltation of his soul. His soul! that

word would give me much to do if I tried to say all that I have remarked about it. When it is in company with his mind it serves him well; hence extreme sensibility, freshness, choice of expressions, a tinge of sweet and tender melancholy with which his works and talk are impregnated. When his soul goes alone it also does well. It is then he writes his couplets and talks to Christine.

Elzéar is white and pink; sweetness and charm are in his face, and grace, because he has none at all; he is always natural and piquant. The originality of his manners is like that of his mind. He says things differently from other people, and better; he makes his own definitions, which are very subtle, and he gives to each a distinguishing tone. He pleases every one when he likes, and he might like it a little more; meantime it is certain that all who know him *à fond* will say, as I do, that Ségur is a phenomenon. More than twenty of his songs are masterpieces, and his plays, though made for laughter only, are sparkles of pretty wit. His reports as minister to Russia and all his despatches are superior in politics, diplomacy, and even in literature, and should serve as history. He is the first Frenchman who has understood Russia. The Vicomte de Ségur is less correct, more negligent, less witty; there is, however, an agreeable piquancy in his work. They both deserve their success in society.

The Comte de Ségur was always amiable, even sword in hand at two duels, in which I saw him show grace, pleasantry, coolness, and courage. He and I were coming out one very rainy night, after supping with Mme. de Polignac in the rue de Bourbon. No coach to be seen and no person there to fetch one. "Let us pretend to fight," I said to him, "and that will bring the watch; they'll arrest us, and we'll make them get a carriage to take us to the commissary." On

which we took sword in hand with a fearful scuffle and cries of "Oh! ah! are you dead? are you wounded?" The watch passed and repassed quite near us on the Pont-Royal, but, apparently frightened, they did not arrest us, and we, half dead with laughter and the fatigue of the battle, had to go home on foot in the rain after all.

I am surprised that La Harpe in his "Cours de Littérature" does not speak of the stupidity of the French Academy in compelling Montesquieu to retract the very book for which they gave him his admission. After that, let him say no more about his Academy, composed of grand seigneurs who could neither read nor write nor spell, like Maréchals Richelieu and Duras, Cardinal de Rohan, etc., and of certain mere translators and compilers. How happens it that a Swiss and a Savoyard are the two men who have fixed the French language by writing it with the greatest purity, — Vaugelas, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau? I advise that in order to know that language well and to admire its justness and precision we should analyze and define each word that seems synonymous with another. For instance, those very two words: I mean by "analyze" to trace up a word, or a thought, to its source; to go back to its etymology, see it under all its different aspects and relations, because analysis seems to me for mental use what anatomy is for physical. By "definition" I mean the result of analysis, and the word or thought fixed by that result.

The "Encyclopedia" was an impossible work, especially in France, where, excepting literature, they know nothing. The English, the Italians, even the Germans would have been more capable of it, except in matters of taste. The military part is pitiable; without vanity I think I could have done that pretty well myself; and the philosophers' heads were much too poor to undertake a crusade against M. Luther

and kings. What I saw of d'Alembert I liked and admired, without knowing him very well, and it makes his memory dear to me. I don't know whether in England or Germany he would have passed for as much of a geometrician as he did in France, where they are too amiable for that science. But he, Buffon, and La Harpe are the three last great authors. D'Alembert was gay, without appearing to be so, and he mimicked every one to perfection. In spite of the great defects and sins of Diderot, he would perhaps have been the greatest writer of prose if Rousseau had not eclipsed him. He had fire and true enthusiasm, with a great gift of eloquence, or rather declamation, which made him an atheist. It is a great pity that nothing remains of his which will ever be useful.

The Abbé Raynal (who in after years was the first to unfrock himself, even before it became the fashion) wrote his "Philosophical history of the commerce of European nations with the Indies," without ever having been in England, or even in Holland, the two chief commercial countries of Europe. He might have got instruction had he done so, especially as to the Indies; but the French never doubt themselves. A certain M. de Sainte-Palaye thought, and so did all France, that he had written a History of Chivalry; but in it he only told, what everybody knew, of his own country; though of course, with such a title, English, German, Spanish, and other knights expected to find themselves included. It is a general defect in the French nation to think itself the only one in the world; but this comes more, as I think, from ignorance and levity than from arrogance. Laplace translated English plays, and Linguet Spanish ones, without either of them knowing a word of those languages.

But what a heavy man was Raynal!—although he was a Gascon, whose very accent is burlesque! He always related



his anecdotes twice over, though all were well-known; and between the first and second narrations he would rap with his fingers on a table and say: "That is capital! I don't know if other people feel the full force of it." I used to breakfast with him in Paris, but there was more amusement in dining with him at Spa, with the Emperor Joseph and Prince Henry of Prussia, than at his dreary Paris breakfasts, which bored me. 'When he saw that effect beginning he would try to efface himself in order not to be thought the cause of it. What he said of the King of Prussia, in connection with the war which the emperor had just ended with him, did not prevent the king from treating him well; "the old lion shaking his mane" did not cause him either pain or terror.

It was Raynal and Marmontel who made the critical and humorous reputation of Fréron, through the latter's comments upon them in his "Letters on the Writings of the Time." My tutor, M. de la Porte, who was a great friend of Fréron [father of the inventor of the *jeunesse dorée*] because they had been Jesuits together, found Marmontel, on one occasion, sword in hand, about to attack Fréron on coming out from Aristomanes, but the idlers about the Café de Procope easily parted them.

I have always been sorry that the Abbé de la Porte never continued his Journal, which I knew well. He was as good on details as Fréron; he had all his good qualities without his ill-humour, malice, and insincerity.

The bequest in M. de Voltaire's will of a velvet coat and brocaded waistcoat to his secretary Vagnières made me laugh when the latter told me about it. The philosopher expected to wear them on the occasion of receiving the emperor if the latter, disobeying his mother, had come to see him; which indeed he really might have done. I could understand this



by the gold-brocaded coat, and waistcoat of the same with flaps *à la Bourgogne*, which he donned for me. However, he was quite as undecided on this occasion as M. Jourdain; and did not feel sure that he might not appear to greater advantage in a dressing-gown of some rich stuff. "Dress yourself rather well," he said to Vagnières; "you had better put on that suit of Hydaspes" (captain of the guards of Darius) "which I had made for you to act in the tragedy." A true philosopher, a geometrician, without being as full of his subject as Archimedes was at the siege of Syracuse, would never have run again and again to the street door to see if Joseph II. were coming. "I think," he kept saying, "I think I see him coming." But a poet, a lord of the manor, the courtier, friend and correspondent of kings, did have the weakness to set a value on that visit.

It was about this time that a thing happened which distressed me very much. M. de La Harpé relates it in a letter to the Grand-duke Paul, calling the person concerned a Capitaine Valton. He was really a Wallon captain, the Chevalier de la Touche, captain of grenadiers in my father's regiment, whom a piece of insubordination towards my major condemned to death. The excuse of a little too much wine would have saved him; but he thought that his honour required him not to offer it. I loved him tenderly. A fault something like the present had obliged him to leave France and the Normandy regiment in which he was a captain. Living constantly in my father's house he had asked for my pardon a score of times when at ten or twelve years of age I deserved to be punished. And now I could not ask for his! Maria Theresa (for I was in Vienna at the time, and not with the regiment) said to me: "Maréchal Daun, who esteems your captain highly, is as sad as I am that we cannot get him out of this; he is condemned." I returned to the regi-

ment; and the next morning I heard in my tent the three shots that ended the life of that brave and obstinate man. I turned sick; my state is not to be described. He had himself loaded the muskets of the men detailed for his execution, "because," he said, "I do not want to be missed. Fire straight; I have taught you to do that as well as I could; and tell my colonel that I regret nothing in life but leaving him; and I want him to pardon the trouble I have often caused him by my wilful temper." He would not let them bandage his eyes. He had dressed himself and arranged his hair as if for parade. Then, kneeling down he fell dead instantly, as he had desired.

It is a wonder to me that preachers do not learn Massillon and Bourdaloue by heart and preach them instead of their own wretched sermons. We could then say, "Let us go and hear Bourdaloue," just as we say, "Let us go and hear Corneille at the Théâtre Français." I knew a preacher, a little abbé of whom nobody thought much, who did this in the provinces. He was admired, and everybody cried out "Miracle!" His last sermon in Lent was on Restitution; and after having again delighted and amazed his hearers, he ended by saying that he intended to set the example himself by restoring to every man what he had taken from him. He then informed his auditors of all that he had taken from other Christian orators, who were apparently not much known in those parts.

I was dining one day at Saint-Germain when an abbé very much esteemed in society kept us waiting for dinner. When the hostess said to him, "What have you been doing, abbé, to make you so late?" "Ladies!" he replied, "the very best thing in the world, — turning *Télémaque* into verse." I knew a lady who committed the same absurdity with that immortal letter of *Héloïse* beginning, "Let us die, sweet friend,"

## VII.

1770-1773.

### FREDERICK THE GREAT.

[THIS account of Frederick II. was originally given in a letter to the King of Poland, Stanislas Poniatowski, beginning as follows in the first paragraph below, but the prince published it in vol. vi. of his Works without the inscription to the king and with various additions to the text, which are here given.]

#### TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF POLAND :

You have ordered me, Sire, to give you an account of one of the greatest men of this age. You admire him, although his proximity has done you harm ; by placing yourself at the distance of History all that belongs to that extraordinary genius inspires you with a noble curiosity. I shall render you an exact account of every word that I myself have heard from the great Frederick. Nothing is without interest in such a report, because everything will serve to paint his character. The man of whom I speak and the one whom I address will both give interest to what I here relate. I do not know, Sire, if any of the great phenomena of nature will mourn the day when you will cease to reign, but it is already a phenomenon in the world that a king who governs a republic should have made himself obeyed and respected for himself as well as by his rights.

It is not in speaking of one's self that the fatal egotism, which is the general vice of our time, consists ; it is in referring everything to one's own self. Nevertheless, I dislike to speak of myself. "I" is odious to me, as it is in others

when I hear them use it. If I say it often in what follows, it is that I am obliged to do so in relating what the King of Prussia said to me. Another person might not relate all these various details; but I think that the least little word of a man like him should be recorded.

In 1770, by a singular chance, and in consequence of a personal admiration which our emperor [Joseph II., who had succeeded his father Francis I. as Emperor of Germany, his mother, Maria Theresa, still being Empress of the Holy Roman Empire] had conceived for the King of Prussia, these two great sovereigns were on such terms that they paid each other visits. The emperor allowed me to take part in one he was about to receive from the king at the camp at Neustadt in Moravia. I cannot remember whether I really had, or whether I assumed, an embarrassed air; but what I do remember very well is that the emperor, who perceived it, said to the king, speaking of me and leading him away: "He looks shy, which I never knew him to be before; he will be worth more presently." He said this with much grace and gayety, and they left headquarters to go, I think, to the theatre. The king, on the way, turned back to me to ask if my letter to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which had been printed in the public papers, were really mine. I replied: "Sire, I am not sufficiently famous to have my name stolen by others." He saw what I meant. Horace Walpole had taken the king's name in writing the celebrated letter to Rousseau, which contributed more than anything to turn the head of that eloquent and irrational man of genius.

As we left the theatre, the emperor said to the king: "Here is Noverre, the famous composer of ballets; he has, I think, been to Berlin." Noverre made a fine dancing-master's bow. "Ah! I know him," said the king; "we had him in Berlin; he was very droll, mimicked everybody,

and our *danseuses* nearly died of laughing." Noverre, little pleased with this slighting manner of recalling him, made another fine bow, and bided his time, hoping that the king would give him a chance for vengeance. "Your ballets are good," said the king, "your *danseuses* have grace, but it is stiff grace. I think you make them raise their shoulders and arms too much; for, M. Noverre, if you remember, our leading *danseuse* of Berlin never does that." "That is why she is there, Sire," replied Noverre.

I was invited every night to sup with the king; and he addressed his conversation only too often to me. In spite of my attachment to the emperor, whose general I like to be, but not his Argens, I kept a little backward and put my stomach to work rather than my mind. When I was absolutely questioned I had to answer and continue the conversation; into which the emperor put a great deal of fire and was more at his ease than the king was with him. They discussed one day what a man should most desire to be, and asked my opinion. I said: "I would like to be a pretty woman till I was thirty; a commanding-general with success and ability till sixty," and then, not knowing what to say, but thinking I must add something, no matter what, I said, "a cardinal till eighty." The king, who is fond of laughing at the Sacred College, made merry over that. The emperor let him have Rome and all its myrmidons on easy terms. That supper was one of the gayest and pleasantest I ever enjoyed. Both emperor and king were without assumption or reserve, which did not happen every day; and the friendliness of two such superior men, a little surprised to find each other together, was a very agreeable thing, as can well be imagined. The king told me to go and see him the first time that he or I had three or four hours to ourselves.

A storm, such as there was never the like of, a deluge beside which that of Deucalion was merely a summer shower, covered the mountains with torrents and nearly drowned our army, which was manœuvring. The next day, except for that, was a day of rest. I went to the king at nine in the morning and stayed with him till one o'clock alone. He talked of our generals, and I let him say for himself the good that I thought of Maréchals Lacy and Loudon, but I told him that, as for the others, he had better talk of the dead than the living, for no one could judge properly, unless they had done great deeds like the other two. He spoke of Maréchal Daun. I said I thought he might have been a great general against the French, but that against him he had not shown all he might be, because he always saw him, thunderbolt in hand, ready to pulverize his army. He seemed to like that, and expressed much esteem for Maréchal Daun; he also spoke highly of General Brentano. I asked the reason of certain things I knew he had said about General Beck. "Well, I thought him a man of merit." — "I don't think so, for he never did you any harm." — "He captured some of my magazines." — "And let your generals escape." — "I never beat him." — "He never came near enough for that, and I have always believed that your Majesty only pretended to think him of importance, so that confidence might be put in him and strong corps given to him, to play into your Majesty's hands." — "Do you know who taught me the little I know? Your old Maréchal Traun; ah! there was a man, indeed! You spoke just now of the French; are they making any progress?" — "They are capable of anything in times of war, Sire, but in times of peace they are not satisfied with what they are; they want to be what they are not." — "What is that? Disciplined? They were disciplined in the days of M. de Turenne." — "Oh! that is not it; they





*Frederick the Great*





were not disciplined in the days of Vendôme, but they won battles. The thing is, they are now your imitators and ours, and that is not suited to them." — "That is what I think, and what I have said to their trainers; they want to sing before they know music." — "Yes, that is very true; but they ought to be left in their natural tones; for my part, I like rural music. For example, they ought to make the most of their valour, their volatility, and even their defects; I think their confusion might be made to spread to the enemy." — "Why, yes, no doubt, if they were well supported." — "By the Swiss and the Germans, Sire." — "They are a brave and amiable nation; it is impossible not to like them; but, good God! what have they done with their men of letters? what a difference of tone among them! Voltaire was excellent; d'Alembert, whom I esteem in some respects, is too forth-putting; he wants to make too much effect in society. Were these the men of letters who gave such grace to the Court of Louis XIV., and received it in return? *There* was the patriarch of kings, that one! People said rather too much good of him during his lifetime, but a great deal too much evil of him after he was dead." — "A King of France, Sire, is always the patriarch of men of talent." — "They are a bad lot; it would take the devil and all to govern them. Better be the patriarch of the Greeks, like my sister, the Empress of Russia. That brings her in something, and will bring her more. There's a religion indeed, which includes so many different countries and nations. As for our poor Lutherans, there are so few of them it is not worth while to be their patriarch."

"And yet, Sire, if the Calvinists were collected, and all the little bastard sects, it would make a pretty good post." The king appeared to take fire at that, and his eyes blazed up. It did not last, however, when I added: "If the emperor were

the patriarch of the Catholics that would not be a bad place either." "Well done," he said, laughing. "Here's Europe divided up into three patriarchates. I was wrong to begin this subject; just see where it leads. I think our dreams are not those of good men, as the regent used to say. If Louis XIV. were living now he would not thank us."

All these patriarchal ideas, possible and impossible, made him thoughtful for a moment and almost ill-humoured; but he presently resumed:—

"Louis XIV., having more judgment than mind, was always seeking the one more than the other. They were men of genius whom he wanted and whom he found. You can't say that Corneille, Bossuet, Racine, and Condé were men of talent." — "I have heard, Sire, that your Majesty said, 'If any one wanted to make a fine dream —'" — "Yes, that is true, to be King of France." — "If François I. and Henri IV. had come into the world after your Majesty, they would have said, 'to be the King of Prussia.'" — "Tell me, if you please, whether there is no one in these days fit to quote." I laughed, and the king asked why. I told him he made me think of the "Russian in Paris," those pretty verses of M. de Voltaire; on which we both quoted charming passages, laughing heartily.

He said: "I have heard of the Prince de Conti; what sort of a man is he?" "He is a composition," I answered, "of twenty or thirty. He is proud and affable, ambitious and philosophical, grumbler and gourmand, lazy, noble, debauched, the idol and example of good society; liking evil from lasciviousness of head only, but putting his self-love into it; generous, eloquent, very handsome, the most majestic of men, with a manner and style that is all his own; a good friend, frank, amiable, well-informed, liking Montaigne and Rabelais, and having something of their language; re-

sembling in some respects M. de Vendôme and the great Condé; wishing to play a *rôle*, but without the steadiness of mind to do so; wishing to be feared, yet only being loved; believing that he leads parliament, and is another Duc de Beaufort for the people, yet little considered by one and little known by the other; fit for all, but capable of nothing. This is so true," I added, "that his mother one day said of him: 'My son has intellect, oh, yes, he has a great deal, and it seems to cover a wide extent; but he is like an obelisk; the higher he goes the smaller he gets, and he ends in a point like a steeple.'"

The portrait amused the king. It was necessary to hold his attention by some rather piquant detail, otherwise he escaped you or did not give you time to speak. But even the first words of an ordinary conversation he found means to make interesting; if it was only about the rain or the fine weather, he put something lofty into it, and never did one hear from him the slightest thing that was commonplace. He ennobled all, and would bring examples from Greeks and Romans and modern generals to illustrate something that in others might seem trivial. "Did you ever see a rain like that of yesterday? The good Catholics on your side said: 'That is what it is to have a man without any religion among us; what shall we do with that damned king, Lutheran, if he is anything?' For I really do think I have brought you ill-luck. Your soldiers have been saying: 'Peace is made, and yet here's that devil of a man annoying us still.'" — "If your Majesty is really the cause it is very wrong, because it is only permitted to Jupiter, who has good reasons for all he does." — "I am sure I beg your pardon for having so often tormented you in those Seven Years. I am sorry for humanity in general, but a fine war of apprenticeship that was! I made faults enough to teach

you all, you young men, to do better than I. Good God! how I love your grenadiers! How they have defiled before me! If the god Mars should want to raise a guard for his own person, I advise him to take those fellows without choosing further. Do you know, I was much pleased with your emperor at supper last night. Did you hear what he said to me about the liberty of the press and the restraints upon conscience? There's a good deal of difference between him and his worthy ancestors." "I am convinced," I said, "that he will show no bigotry in anything and that your Majesty is to him a great book of instruction." — "Yesterday he disapproved very much, but delicately, and without saying so, of that ridiculous Vienna Censure, and his mother's too great attachment to certain things which only make hypocrites, but he did not name her. But *à propos* of this, she ought to hate you, that empress." — "Why, no, not at all; she scolds me sometimes for my misguided conduct, but very maternally; she pities me and thinks I shall return to the fold, and not long ago she said: 'I don't know how you manage it, but you are the intimate friend of Père Griffet, and the Bishop of Neustadt is always saying good of you to me, — the Archbishop of Malines, too; and the cardinal is fond of you.'"

Why can I not remember the scores of luminous things that flashed from him in this conversation, which lasted until the trumpet at headquarters announced to us that dinner was served? The king went to the table, and it was this day, I think, that, some one having asked why M. de Loudon was late in coming, he said: "It is not his habit; he usually arrived before me: be so kind as to let him have this place near me; I prefer to have him at my side rather than opposite."

Another day, the manœuvres having ended early, there

was a concert at the emperor's quarters. In spite of the king's love for music he came and sat down by me and enchanted me with the magic of his conversation and the gay and bold and brilliant flashes that characterized it. He asked me to name to him the officers present, and to tell him those who had served under Maréchal Traun; "for," he said, "as I told you before, he was my master, he corrected all the blunders that I made." — "Your Majesty was very ungrateful, and did not pay for your lessons; you ought at least to have let him beat you, and I do not remember that that happened." — "He never beat me, because I never fought him." — "That is how the greatest generals have often made war; one has only to look at the two campaigns of 1674-75 of M. de Montecuculi and M. de Turenne to see that." — "There is no difference between the first of those generals and Traun, but between the other and me, good God! it is great indeed."

I don't know how the conversation changed, but it presently became so free that seeing some one approach as if to share it, the king warned him to take care, that there was risk in talking to a man condemned to eternal flames by the theologians. I thought the king set too much value on his damnation, and boasted of it a trifle too much. Apart from the insincerity of free-thinkers, who often fear the devil with all their hearts, it is bad taste to want to show off their opinions. But it was from the men of bad taste whom he had had about him, like Jordans, d'Argens, Maupertuis, la Beaumelle, la Mettrie, the Abbé de Pradt, and several other dull-witted scoffers in his Academy, that he had learned to speak ill of religion and to talk dogma, Spinozism, Court of Rome, etc. I did not answer when he talked in this way; and I seized a moment when he blew his nose to speak of something else. After that he went on to ask me the names



of those present. I pointed out to him a number of young princes who had entered the service, several of whom gave hopes of excellence. "Maybe," he said, "but I think it is well to cross the races of empire. I like the children of love; look at Maréchal de Saxe, and my own Anhalt,— though I am very much afraid since that fall upon his head that he will never be as good as he was before. I should be sorry for him and myself too; he is a man full of talent."

I am glad to record this because I have often heard his silly detractors, who accused him of want of feeling, say that he was not touched by this accident to the man whom he seemed to love best. Fortunate would he have been had they said no worse of him. They supposed him jealous of the talents of Schwerin and Keith, and to be glad to have killed them. It is thus that common men endeavour to pull down great ones in order to diminish the vast space between them.

The king, out of courtesy, wore a white uniform, and so did each of his suite, in order not to spread before our eyes the blue we had seen so much of during the war. He seemed to belong to our army and to be in the suite of the emperor. There was, I think, a little personal feeling, some distrust,— perhaps a slight beginning of bitterness in this, which always happens, says Philippe de Commines, at the meeting of sovereigns. The king took a great deal of snuff, and as he brushed it from his coat as best he could, he said to me: "I am not clean enough for you gentlemen; I am not worthy to wear your colours." The air with which he said that made me think that he would soil his coat again with gunpowder when occasion offered.

I forgot to mention a little opportunity which I had to make the two monarchs feel pleasantly toward each other,

The king said to me: "I was much pleased to-day with the dressing of your columns and the way in which they deployed" — "And I, Sire, was pleased with the emperor's *coup d'œil*; he was there himself and was not mistaken by a foot on the ground or the distances." The emperor came up at this moment and asked the king what I was saying. "I am certain," replied the king, "that he will not dare to repeat it to your Majesty, and I myself have hardly the courage to do so. We were both of the same opinion about the movement you made the hussars do this morning, which protected the deployment; your Majesty placed them so exactly at the right point that each division came into line abreast." Later, the king spoiled this little madrigal which I had thus procured; and his epigram of entrance into Bohemia some years after was more in his line.

The king was sometimes too ceremonious. This annoyed the emperor. For instance, I do not know whether it was to play the part of a submissive elector, but when the emperor put foot in his stirrup, the king took his horse by the bridle; when the emperor threw his leg over to mount the saddle the king set foot in his stirrup, and so on. The emperor had an air of great sincerity from the first in rendering him attentions, like those of a young prince to an old king, a young soldier to the greatest of generals. On one confidential day they talked politics together. "Every one can't have the same," said the king. "It all depends on the situation, circumstances, and power of States. What suits me would not suit your Majesty. For instance, I sometimes risk a political lie." "What is that?" asked the emperor, laughing. "Well, for example," said the king, gayly, "I imagine a piece of news, which I know will be seen to be false at the end of twenty-four hours. No matter; before the truth is known, my news has done its work."

Sometimes there was an appearance of real cordiality between them. It was plain that Frederick II. liked Joseph II., but the preponderance of empire over monarch and the nearness of Silesia to Bohemia arrested the feeling. Their letters on the subject of Bavaria will be remembered, their compliments, the explanation of their intentions made with so much politeness, and how, from courtesy to courtesy, the king marched into Bohemia.

Before leaving the camp, he made me promise to go to Berlin. I hastened to do so after the little war which he called his lawsuit, saying he had come as a sheriff to put in an execution, came to an end [the war of the Bavarian Succession, lasting seven months, to put Charles Theodore, elector palatine, on his throne; opposed by Frederick without success]. The result to the king is well-known: great cost of men, horses, and money; a certain appearance of good faith and disinterestedness; little honour in war, some honesty in policy, and much bitterness towards us. After it was ended the king began, without knowing why, to forbid all Austrian officers from setting foot in his dominions without an express permission, signed by his hand; in return, the same order from our Court relating to Prussian officers; hence awkwardness on both sides, without profit or reason. I am naturally confident, and I believed, and still believe, I needed no permission; but a strong desire to get a letter from the great *Féderic* (that was how he signed himself), rather than the fear of not being well received, made me write to him. My letter was glowing with enthusiasm and admiration and with the warmth of my sentiments for this extraordinary and mighty Being, and it brought me three charming answers. He gave me in detail what I had given him in bulk; and what he could not return to me in admiration, for I cannot remember having

ever won a battle, he made up for in friendship. For fear of missing me he wrote three letters from Potsdam, to Vienna, Dresden, and Berlin.

While awaiting the hour to be presented to him with my son Charles and M. de Lille, whom I had taken with me, I saw the parade; after which I was instantly surrounded and escorted to the château by Austrian deserters, especially from my regiment, who almost kissed me, and with the utmost freedom (which was fully allowed them) they begged my pardon for having left me.

The hour of presentation came [this was in 1780; ten years after the former interview]. The king received me in a charming manner. The military stiffness of headquarters was changed into a gentle and kindly welcome. He said, "I did not know you had so tall a son."—"And he is married, Sire, within a year."—"May I venture to ask to whom?" (He often used this expression; also, "if you will permit me to have the honour of saying to you.") "To a Polish lady, a Massalska."—"What! a Massalska? Do you know what her grandmother did?" "No, Sire," said Charles. "She fired a cannon at the siege of Dantzic; she fired herself, and ordered the firing when her side lost their heads and wanted to surrender." "Women are unaccountable," I said; "strong and weak by turns, indiscreet and dissimulating, they are capable of everything." "No doubt of that," said M. de Lille, annoyed at nothing having been said to him, and speaking with a familiarity that gained him nothing. "Just see—" he was beginning, but the king interrupted him. I cited a few instances, like that of the wife of Huchet at the siege of Amiens. The king made a tour to Sparta and Rome; he liked such little excursions. Then, after a moment's silence, in order to give pleasure to de Lille, I said to the king that M. de Voltaire had died in his

arms. That obliged the king to ask him some questions, to which he replied at too great length, and went away, while Charles and I remained to dinner.

It was then, during five hours of every day, that his encyclopedical conversation completely charmed me. Fine arts, war, medicine, literature, religion, philosophy, morals, history, and legislation passed, one after another, in review. The grand ages of Augustus and Louis XIV. ; the good company of the Romans, Greeks, and Franks ; the chivalry of François I. ; the frankness and valour of Henri IV. ; the renascence of Letters and their revolutions from the times of Leo X. ; anecdotes of men of learning of other days and their objectionable points ; Voltaire's flightiness, Maupertuis' susceptible temper, the agreeable qualities of Algarotti, the wit of Coffé and Jordans, the hypochondria of the Marquis d'Argens, whom the king delighted in sending to bed for twenty-four hours, by simply telling him he did not look well,— in short, everything that was most amusing, varied, and piquant came from his mouth in the sweetest tone of voice, rather low and as charming as the movement of his lips, in which there was a graciousness quite inexpressible. It was this that prevented one, I think, from perceiving that, like the heroes of Homer, he was rather garrulous, though sublime. He caused me to make reflections about loquacious persons, whose voices, perhaps the mere noise of them, and their gestures win them the reputation of garrulity. Certainly it would be impossible to find a greater talker than the king, but all men were charmed that he was so. Accustomed to talk only with the Marquis de Lucchesini, or four or five generals who knew no French, he now took his compensation for his hours of work, of reading, meditation, and solitude in his little garden, where, directly opposite to his door, was the young and beautiful and easy Antinous.

“Still,” I thought to myself, “I really must put in a word.” He had just named Virgil. “What a great poet,” I said, “but what a bad gardener!” “You need not tell me that,” said the king. “Have I not planted and sown and toiled and dug, Georgics in hand? ‘But, monsieur,’ says my gardener, ‘you are stupid, and your book too; that is not the way to work.’ Good God! what a climate! Would you believe that God, or the sun, would refuse me everything? Look at my poor olive-trees, my oranges, my lemons; they are all dying of starvation.” “Nothing but laurels appear to live here, Sire,” I said. The king gave me a charming glance, and I added hastily, to turn off an insipidity by a stupidity, “and then, Sire, there are too many pomegranates — *grenadiers* — they kill everything.” The king laughed, for there is nothing like nonsense to raise a laugh.

One day I turned a plate to see what porcelain it was. “Where did you think it came from?” he asked. “I thought it was Dresden, Sire, but instead of the two swords there is but one.” — “That is a sceptre.” — “I beg your Majesty’s pardon, but it is so like a sword that I easily mistook the one for the other;” which was obviously true in more ways than one. A sceptre is the mark, as every body knows, of the Berlin porcelain. But as the king sometimes chose to play the king and thought himself very magnificent when he carried a cane and a snuffbox with villanous little diamonds, I don’t know that my small allegory pleased him much.

One morning he came to meet me as I went to him, and said: “I tremble in giving you bad news. They have just written me that Prince Charles de Lorraine is dying.” He looked at me to see what effect his words would have, and observing the tears that filled my eyes, he changed the conversation by gentle gradations and talked of war and



then of Maréchal de Lacy. He asked me for news of him, and said: "He is a man of the highest merit. Mercy of yours in the older time and Puysegur among the French had some idea of marching and camping, and so had the Greeks, as you may see in Hyginus's 'Art of Camping;' but your marshal surpasses the ancients and the moderns and all the most famous men who had to do with those arts. Therefore the whole time that he was your quartermaster-general, if you will permit me to make the remark, I never got the least advantage of you. Do you remember the two campaigns of 1758 and 1759, during which you were successful in every way? 'Shall I never be rid of that man?' I used to say to myself. Well, they had to reward him; so they made him master of ordnance and gave him the command of a corps that was too strong to harry me and too weak to resist me. And yet, for all that, he got away from me, and over all possible obstacles in that able campaign of 1760. Then another man took his place. 'Not bad for me,' I said to myself; 'some occasion may turn up.' I looked about for it, and I got it at Torgau." He never made a finer panegyric; for he showed cause, in thus allowing that it was M. de Lacy who cleared him out of Moravia, Bohemia, Lusatia, and Saxony. I am certain that the king did not know that I was attached to Lacy, as I am; and besides, there is no flattery when you tell facts.

The next day the king came to me as soon as he saw me and said, with a most grieved air: "Since you must be told of the death of one who loved you well and was an honour to humanity, it is better it should be by one who feels as deeply about it as I do. Poor Prince Charles is gone. Others, perhaps, may be fitted to replace him in your heart, but few princes can take his place in beauty of soul and virtue." In saying this his feelings overcame him.

I said: "Your Majesty's regrets are a consolation; and you did not wait until his death to say good of him. There are some fine verses about him in your 'Art of War.'" I broke down for a moment in spite of myself, but after that I repeated them.

The Man of Letters seemed to be grateful to me for knowing them by heart. "His passage of the Rhine was a very fine thing," said the king, "but the poor prince was forced to depend on so many persons; whereas I have depended on nothing but my own head — too much for my own good, sometimes. But he was always ill served, and little obeyed. I avoided the first and made sure of the second. Your General Nadasdy seemed to me a great general for cavalry." As I did not think so, I contented myself with saying he was very brilliant, and could lead his hussars to hell, he inspired them so. "What has become of a brave colonel who fought like the devil at Rosbach? Ah! stay, I think it was the Marquis de Voghera — yes, I remember, that is his name, for I asked it after the battle." — "He is general of cavalry." — "*Pardi!* you must have wanted desperately to fight that day, to charge with your two regiments of cuirassiers, and I think the hussars too, for the battle was lost before it was begun." — "Apropos of M. de Voghera, Sire, I don't know if your Majesty knew what he did just before the charge. He is a fiery man, uneasy, always in a hurry, with something of the old chivalry about him; finding that his regiment did not advance quickly enough, he rushed forward, and getting close to the commander of the Prussian cavalry he made him a bow as if on parade, the other returned it, and then they attacked each other like madmen." — "That was good style; I'd like to know my man and thank him. When I think of those devilish camps in Saxony it is a wonder I attacked them.

If M. de Lacy had still been quartermaster-general at Torgau I should never have attempted to attack you ; but I saw at once that the camp was ill placed." — "The bad reputation of a camp often creates the desire to attack it," I said. "For example, begging your Majesty's pardon, I always thought you would end, if the war lasted, in attacking that of Plauen." — "Oh no! certainly not ; there was no way to do it." — "Does not your Majesty think that with a good battery on the Dölschen height which commanded us, a few battalions, one behind another in the ravine, attacking us before daylight, assaulting, as it were, our camp between Coschutz and Guttersee, where I noticed a score of times that there was room for a front of three battalions — doesn't your Majesty, I say, think you might have carried that battery which was almost invincible, the boulevard, our *pis aller*, and our shelter?" — "How about your Windberg battery, which would have raked my battalions in the ravine you talk about?" — "But, Sire, the night." — "Oh! that would not have saved us ; that long ravine from Bourg and Potschappel would have been a ditch for us. You see I am not so brave as you think me."

The emperor was on his way to pay a visit to the Empress of Russia, which did not please the king ; and in order to undo the good it might have done us, he sent off the prince royal in haste, and very clumsily, to Petersburg. He was afraid the Court of Russia might escape him. I feared from that his kindness to me would come to an end, but he seemed to forget I was an Austrian. "Strange," I said to myself ; "not an epigram upon us, nor upon our master! What a change!"

That scatter-witted Pinto said to his neighbour one day at the dinner-table that the Emperor Joseph was a great traveller, and that no monarch had ever been as far as he. "I beg

your pardon, monsieur," said the king; "Charles V. went to Africa, for he won the battle of Oran." Then turning to me he said, without my being able to divine whether his meaning was malicious or merely historical: "The emperor is more fortunate than Charles XII.; he entered Russia like him at Mohilev, but I think he will get to Moscow." The same Pinto said to the king one day when he remarked that he was puzzled whom to send as minister into foreign countries: "Why not send M. de Lucchesini? — he is a man of intelligence." "That is why I want to keep him," replied the king; "I would send you rather than him, or a bore like M. —;" and he appointed the latter on the spot, but I forget the name.

M. de Lucchesini, who had a touch of Sallust, Tasso, Tacitus, Horace, and Pliny in him, brought out the best of the king's talk through the charm of his own conversation. He knew in which direction it was agreeable to have it fall; and also he knew how to listen, which is not so easy as people think, and which a fool never knows at all. He was just as agreeable to others as he was to the king by his attractive manners and graceful wit. Pinto, who had nothing to lose in that direction, allowed himself everything. "Sire," he said, "ask that Austrian general to tell you what he saw me do when I was in their service." "Willingly, my dear Pinto," I said, "you let off the fireworks on the occasion of my marriage." "Do me the honour," said the king, "of telling me whether he did that well." — "No, Sire; and he frightened my friends and relations, who took the failure for a bad portent. He had imagined and prepared the joining of two flaming hearts, the very novel image of a bridal couple. The slide by which they were to come together missed; the heart of my wife started, but mine lagged behind." — "There, you see, Pinto, you were not worth any

more to them than you are to me." "Oh, Sire!" I said, "since then your Majesty owes him a great deal for the sabre cuts he has had on his head." "I have paid him too much," said the king. "Pinto, did n't I send you yesterday a pot of my good Prussian honey?" "Yes," replied Pinto, "but that was to only get it known; if your Majesty could succeed in making a traffic of it, you would be the richest king on earth, for your kingdom is all honey, and nothing else."

"Did you know," said the king one day, "that I was once in your service? I first took up arms for the house of Austria. My God! how time passes!" He had a way of putting his hands together when he said "My God!" which gave him a most worthy look and a very gentle one. "Did you know I saw the last rays of genius gleaming from Prince Eugène?" — "Perhaps your Majesty lighted your own from them." — "Ha! my God! who could equal Prince Eugène?" — "He who is worth more, who has won a dozen battles." He put on his modest air; I have always said it is easy to be modest when there is a foundation underneath. He made believe not to understand me, and said that when the cabal which, for forty years, existed against Prince Eugène in his own armies wanted to injure him, they profited by the afternoon hours, when his mind, which worked clearly in the mornings, was tired or relaxed by the fatigues of the day; it was thus that they induced him to undertake his bad march to Mayence.

"Sire," I said, "you do not tell me anything about yourself. I know all your Majesty has done, and even what you have said; I can relate your journeys to Strasburg and Holland, and all that passed on that boat. And *à propos* of that campaign on the Rhine, one of our old generals, whom I often set talking as one reads an old manuscript, related to me how surprised he was one day to hear a young Prussian

officer, whom he did not know, say to a general of the late king, who was sending an order not to go out on forage: 'I, monsieur, order it done; the cavalry needs it; in a word, I command it.' "Oh! you see me in too fine a light," said the king. "Ask those gentlemen over there about my tempers and caprices. They will tell you a pretty story to my account. He must have been very lovable, Prince Eugène."—"And beloved too, Sire. The discovery your Majesty made of his letters in the Palatinate proves that he was very strong and rather handsome, and so called Madame Chimone."—"What! do you know all my badnesses? I ought never to have told what I found out; because a great man—" he said, smiling. "—has always," I continued, "not only the upper hand of his enemies, but—" "Yes," completed the king, "such as Cæsar, Alexander, Vendôme, and Catinat." I spoke only as a connoisseur, he as an amateur.

On this he began to talk of anecdotes found in very few published works, and I told him how amused I had been by certain books, true or false, written by Huguenot refugees, which were not even known of in France, books in the style of the "Amours of Père de La Chaise" and others of that kind. "Where did you find all those fine things?" asked the king; "they would amuse me much more in the evenings than the conversation of a Doctor of the Sorbonne whom I have here now, and whom I am trying to convert." "In a library in Bohemia," I replied, "which helped to divert my mind through two long winters."—"Two winters in Bohemia! what the devil were you doing there? Was it long ago?" "No, Sire, only a year or two ago; I retired there to read at my ease." He smiled, and seemed to thank me for not naming the little war of 1778, of which, it appeared to me, he did not like to speak; and seeing that this



happened during the time that I was in winter quarters he was glad of my reticence on the subject; as he was, another day in Berlin, when showing me some of the improvements he had made to that city. But being an old wizard whose insight was the keenest that ever was, he knew perfectly well that I did not choose to tell him I saw changes since the time I was there. I was careful not to remind him that I was among those who captured the city in 1760 under the orders of M. de Lacy.

Apropos of that doctor of the Sorbonne, with whom he argued every day,—“Help me to get a bishopric for him,” said he one morning. “I don’t think,” I replied, “that my recommendation or that of your Majesty would do him much good among us.” “Oh! no,” said the king; “I’ll write to the Empress of Russia for the poor devil, who is beginning to bore me. He fancies he is a Jansenist. My God! what fools the Jansenists of the present day are; the nursery of their genius ought never to have been destroyed. That Port-Royal, exaggerated as it may have been, only proves that nothing should ever be destroyed. And why have they put an end to those guardians of the graces of Rome and Athens, those excellent professors of the Humanities, and perhaps of humanity itself?—I mean the *ci-devant* Reverends. [He referred to the suppression of the Jesuits by Louis XV., in 1764.] Education will suffer from it; but as my brethren, the kings Catholic, very Christian, very Faithful and Apostolical, have driven them out, I, very Heretic, have gathered in as many as I could of them, and perhaps in time they will court me to get them back. I preserve the race. I was saying to mine the other day: ‘I could sell a rector, like you, father, for three thousand crowns, and you, reverend prior, for six hundred, and the rest in proportion: when one is n’t rich, one has to speculate.’”

For want of memory, and the opportunity to see often and for a longer time the greatest man that ever existed, I am obliged to stop here. There is not one word in what I have written that is not his; and all those who have seen him will recognize his manner. What I want is to make him known to those who never had the good fortune to see him. His eyes, too hard in his portraits, but worn with toil in his cabinet and the weariness of war, softened as he listened to or related some trait of elevation of soul or of feeling. Until his death, in fact only shortly before it, in spite of certain little remarks which he knew I had allowed myself to make in speaking or writing about him (assuredly attributed by him to my duty, which was opposed to his interests), he deigned to honour me with tokens of his remembrance, and he often charged his ministers at Paris and Vienna to assure me of it.

I no longer believe in the earthquakes and the eclipses said to have taken place at the death of Cæsar, since none occurred on the death of Frederick the Great.

Had fate placed him on the throne of France he would have been chivalrous like François I., wily like Louis XI., just as Louis XII., a good administrator like Louis IX. (without, however, starting off as a paladin), a good fellow like Henri IV., and as magnificent as Louis XIV. He would have made better verses than he did, as good perhaps as those of Charles IX., but he would not have made the Saint-Bartholomew. He would have followed his taste for letters and music, and corrected his taste for the fine arts; for it must be owned he could better deploy his columns in war than place them in his buildings. He would not have liked those pictures of his by Pater and Watteau, nor all that pink and green and silver furniture; and he would certainly have forbidden his cook to use musk, cinnamon, ambergris, and ginger.

Time, and the contents of his letters as prince royal reveal to me, independently of what I myself remarked in him, that the man who could not be the first and best of kings had resolved to make himself the best of generals and soldiers. When he came to his little Northern throne of sand he thought he saw a way to give it a better base; he offered the support of his active genius and a good army to Maria Theresa, to defend a part of her States. The offer was rejected with disdain! He took what he asked, and more too, to revenge himself. Peace, and the Holy Trinity, of which, as he supposed, the other sovereigns thought more than he did, secured to him what he had taken.

But Prince Kaunitz wanted revenge for Frederick's ridicule of his toilet; Mme. de Pompadour, for his treating with her through his ministers, and for certain remarks upon her health; the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, for comments on her behaviour; the Comte de Brühl, for sneers at his wardrobe; the Empire, for sneers at the poverty of its means; Sweden, for sneers at its nullity, and its failure to produce another Charles XII. So that, finally, all Europe put 700,000 men under arms against him, in 1757, to recover Silesia, which he prevented.

After each victory he offered peace. In his letter to the Marquis d'Argens after the battle of Liegnitz, in 1760, we see the same sentiments felt by him as when he was prince royal in 1738. Always victorious, after wearying Europe and himself too with his triumphs, he ended by asking nothing more than he had before the war.

He saw an empire rising daily around him and making ready to swallow him up. He proposed to it to enlarge itself, and at the same time to enlarge him, — with this difference, that his acquisition would so bind his States together that, from being a secondary power, he would pass into the

first rank; a scheme that rendered all three Courts equally guilty of an immoral partition, and an impolitic one for the two great empresses, one of whom, moreover, spent her days before the altar.

But integrity came with opportunity. He was able at last to give himself up to his natural leaning to virtue, and to spend, some years later, twenty-five millions of money and twenty-five thousand men in preventing Austria from seizing upon the whole of Bavaria.

That is the history of his three wars. They proposed to him a fourth in 1785, about the freedom of the Scheldt; but he only made jokes on M. de Vergennes and the Dutch republic, and busied himself the more in building villages and giving seeds and tools to those who cleared the land. It was not his fault if he was ill aided and ill understood on certain points as to farms, taxes, tobacco, and legislation. And yet all that was truly his sole study and care. He had friends, and was gentle in private life. He gave away much, and did it judiciously: and in spite of his outlays, by means of the strictest economy he left behind him hundreds of tons of ducats. He answered every letter with his own hand, and listened to all who came to him; he never condemned any one to death; he adored the great eras and the great men of France,—the language of that country being the only one that he knew well, and he therefore considered its literature and its genius above those of all the other nations.

He did wrong, no doubt, in allowing himself certain lively flings at religion; but he declared himself its supporter for the sake of his own interests, and the close connection it had with the principles of government. He did still greater wrong in doubting his own soul; but he put into practice at his death what was theory only in his philosophers; and by ending, as he did, with perfect indifference, he placed

them on the same line of contempt as the priests and the doctors. He often talked to me of his friends, the atheists d'Argens, de Pradt, Toussaint, La Mettrie; he despised them all; but he never tired of talking religion with Voltaire. They wrote to each other on the subject in order that others might admire their strong-mindedness, but they were not dupes enough to believe all they said. While admiring, as I do, both Voltaire and the King of Prussia, I must say that their correspondence, both in prose and verse, was never anything but letter-making.

If Frederick II. had had a little more mind [*esprit*] he might have committed follies; but his line of demarcation was that of genius and good sense. He had impulse, and then reflection. Sometimes the first had the upper hand, and that is how it was he lost three battles. But it cannot be said that he had the forceful and vivid mind of Cæsar and Condé. His did not start so quick. In conversation Joseph II. was quick at repartee, but he did not like it if others were so too. Frederick the Great did like it, and would put himself, though slowly, in tune with his company, and then show, in his conversations, as he did in his campaigns, an inexhaustible fund of useful information, leading to profound results. He had more gayety in things than in words; the latter required a lightness that was not in him.

Frederick the Great's father was a man of the utmost brutality, as the following anecdote will prove; and it will also show what presence of mind can do. He was passing the afternoon on a little island near Berlin, smoking and drinking beer with his generals and ministers. The Austrian ambassador, M. de Seckendorf, was there, seated between the king and the prime minister. His Majesty was displeased at one of his remarks, and not being as ready with his repartees as he was with his fists, he gave M. de Seckendorf a blow.

Permit me, you who are reading these words, to ask you what you would have done in the ambassador's place. Having agreed, as you will with me, that you do not know, I will finish the story. M. de Seckendorf gave the blow to the prime minister, and said, "Pass it on."



## VIII.

1774-1778.

LIFE IN PARIS: QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE.

LOUIS XV. has been ill used by public opinion. I had not seen him from the time I took him the news of the battle of Maxen until 1774, a period of fourteen years, after which I saw him daily at Mme. du Barry's until his death. It is surprising that those who did exactly what he did should have thought his deeds so evil. The vile courtiers of Mme. de Pompadour, a little bourgeoisie who eloped from her husband, cried out upon the corruption of morals when the king took another mistress, although the latter had a far better heart than the former, and did not meddle in either war or politics.

When Louis XV. was dying the courtiers of Mme. du Barry abandoned her, as is customary. I, who had neglected her until recently for five or six years, was now with her constantly. I said to her famous brother-in-law, the *roué* du Barry, "The farce is played out, and you can go." "Why should I go?" he said, in his droll provincial accent. "If they affront me I'll turn the kingdom into a republic." That sounded at the time like the impossible boast of a braggart, but the future realized it through men who were more rascally but less able than he. Some time later the young king heard that I had given a letter from Mme. du Barry to the queen, asking her Majesty to smooth her pecuniary affairs, which her unconcern and perfect disinter-

estedness had allowed to be very bad at the death of the late king. "That is a pretty embassy you have taken upon yourself," Louis XVI. said to me. I replied that I took it because I was quite certain no one but me would dare to do so. On my way to Versailles I used to go round by Luciennes. Mme. du Barry was always a most excellent person, and as late as seven years ago very handsome to see, and very good to know.

In 1774 chance brought the Comte d'Artois to a garrison in the neighbourhood of a camp where I happened to be inspecting troops. I rode over with thirty of my Austrian officers, well turned-out. He saw us, called to me, and beginning with an air of brother to the king he ended as if he were my brother. We drank and laughed and played cards. Free for the first time in his life, he did not know how to make enough of his liberty. This first gush of gayety and the petulance of youth charmed me, and his good heart, which I saw in everything, allured me. He wanted me to go and see him at Versailles. I said no, I would see him in Paris. He insisted, spoke to me of the queen [Marie Antoinette], who not long after ordered me to go to Court. The charms of her face and of her soul, the one as white and beautiful as the other, and the attraction of that society made me henceforth spend five months of every year in her suite, without absenting myself for a single day.

If I dared, I could make many portraits of this period, but the fear of giving pain to the living of that Court deters me. I may say that I have played on many a stage, or at least I have sat in the box that was nearest to it. I never liked great parts, except in war; at Court a few intimates and the right *entrées* were all I wanted. At twenty years of age I was already laughing at the toil the actors

gave themselves. Life is so short, and the audience so ill composed that any such trouble is not worth while.

The paternal kindness of that good and worthy Emperor Francis I., the maternal kindness of the great Maria Theresa, the sometimes almost fraternal affection of our noble Joseph II., the entire confidence of Maréchal de Lacy, the intimate society of the adorable Queen of France, the friendship of Catherine the Great, my access to her at all hours, the distinguished kindness of the Great Frederick — would make my memoirs very interesting. But I dare only admire those persons, adore them, mourn them; their privacy is sacred to me, and I refuse to let myself speak in detail of six Courts of which I have been enabled to judge, as well as of their sovereigns, whose memories are so dear to me that I can only bless them. I have seen those sovereigns calumniated, and I have cursed their unjust and ungrateful slanderers.

The title "Private Life" always throws me into a rage; especially when I think of the unfortunate and adorable Queen of France, and her friend (whom I dare to call my friend), who was indeed perfection. Among the few and trifling wrongs of heedlessness which the queen committed, I one day blamed her for not stopping the libels and songs against her, which she showed me half-weeping, half-laughing. It was a damnable "Private life of the Duc d'Orléans" [Philippe Égalité] which, by painting him as a monster before he became so, made him one.

None but knaves could have said evil of Louis XVI., his brothers, or the queen adored by all who really knew her; but fools believed them. The disaffected and foreigners read those horrors; and (as if I had had a presentiment) I said to the Empress Catherine with some temper, in her carriage during the famous journey in Taurica, one day when, without exactly believing it, she quoted one of those tales:

“The porters of the sedan-chairs at Versailles wrote that; it is just as if one of the *istvoschiks* in Petersburg wrote a history of your Majesty.” The infamy of the three charges laid to her account justified the prediction.

As for the queen, the radiance of her presence harmed her. The jealousy of the women whom she crushed by the beauty of her complexion and the carriage of her head, ever seeking to harm her as a woman, harmed her also as a queen. *Frédégonde* and *Brunehaut*, *Catherine* and *Marie de' Medici*, *Anne* and *Theresa* of Austria never laughed; *Marie Antoinette* when she was fifteen laughed much; therefore she was declared “satirical.”

She defended herself against the intrigues of two parties, each of whom wanted to give her a lover; on which they declared her “inimical to Frenchmen;” and all the more because she was friendly with foreigners, from whom she had neither traps nor importunity to fear.

An unfortunate dispute about a visit between her brother the Elector of Cologne and the princes of the blood, of which she was wholly ignorant, offended the etiquette of the Court, which then called her “proud.”

She dines with one friend, and sometimes goes to see another friend, after supper, and they say she is “familiar.” That is not what the few persons who lived in her familiarity would say. Her delicate, sure sense of the becoming awed them as much as her majesty. It was as impossible to forget it as it was to forget one's self.

She is sensible of the friendship of certain persons who are the most devoted to her; then she is declared to be “amorous” of them. Sometimes she requires too much for their families; then she is “unreasonable.”

She gives little fêtes, and works herself at her *Trianon*: that is called “bourgeoise.” She buys *Saint-Cloud* for the

health of her children and to take them from the malaria of Versailles: they pronounce her "extravagant." Her promenades in the evening on the terrace, or on horseback in the Bois de Boulogne, or sometimes on foot round the music in the Orangery "seem suspicious." Her most innocent pleasures are thought criminal; her general loving-kindness is "coquettish." She fears to win at cards, at which she is compelled to play, and they say she "wastes the money of the State."

She laughed and sang and danced until she was twenty-five years old: they declared her "frivolous." The affairs of the kingdom became embroiled, the spirit of party arose and divided society; she would take no side, and they called her "ungrateful."

She no longer amused herself; she foresaw misfortunes: they declared her "intriguing." She dropped certain little requests or recommendations she had made to the king or the ministers as soon as she feared they were troublesome, and then she was "fickle."

With so many crimes to her charge, and all so well-proved, did she not deserve her misfortunes? But I see I have forgotten the greatest. The queen, who was almost a prisoner of State in her château of Versailles, took the liberty sometimes to go on foot, followed by a servant, through one of the galleries, to the apartments of Mme. de Lamballe or Mme. de Polignac. How shocking a scandal! The late queen was always carried in a sedan-chair to see her cousin, Mme. de Talmont, where she found a rather bad company of Polish relations, who claimed to be Leczinskis.

The queen, beautiful as the day, and almost always in her own hair, — except on occasions of ceremony, when her toilet, about which she never cared, was regulated for her, — was naturally talked about; for everybody wanted to please

her. The late Leczinska, old before her time and rather ugly, in a large cap called, I think, "butterfly," would sometimes command certain questionable plays at the theatre; but no one found fault with her for that. Devout ladies like scandals. When, in our time, they gave us a play of that sort we used to call it the queen's repertory, and Marie Antoinette would scold us, laughing, and say we might at least make known it was the queen before her. No one ever dared to risk too free a speech in her presence, nor too gay a tale, nor a coarse insinuation. She had taste and judgment; and as for the three Graces, she united them all in herself alone.

Oh! what reason I had, when she said to me one day that they deprived her of all her little pleasures, to call the French her charming, vile subjects. But those who have acquired such glory under the banners of their Emperor Napoleon, *they*, at least, will pity the unhappy princess whom they would have served so well, being themselves guiltless of the ingratitude of those to whom she did, or tried to do, good.

Who could see her, day after day, without adoring her? I did not feel it fully until she said to me: "My mother thinks it wrong that you should be so long at Versailles. Go and spend a little time with your command, and write letters to Vienna to let them know you are there, and then come back here." That kindness, that delicacy, but more than all the thought that I must spend two weeks away from her, brought the tears to my eyes, which her pretty heedlessness of those early days, keeping her a hundred leagues away from gallantry, prevented her from seeing. As I never have believed in passions that are not reciprocal, two weeks cured me of what I here avow to myself for the first time, and would never avow to others in my lifetime for fear of being laughed at.



But consider how this sentiment, which gave place to the warmest friendship, would have detected a passion in that charming queen, had she felt one for any man ; and with what horror I saw her given in Paris, and thence, thanks to their vile libels, all over Europe, to the Duc de Coigny, to M. le Comte d'Artois, M. de Lamberti, M. de Fersen, Mr. Conway, Lord Stratheven, and other Englishmen as silly as himself, and two or three stupid Germans. Did I ever see aught in her society that did not bear the stamp of grace, kindness, and good taste ? She scented an intriguer at a league's distance ; she detested pretensions of all kinds. It was for this reason that the whole family of Polignac and their friends, such as Valentin Esterhazy, Baron Bezenval, and Vaudreuil, also Ségur and I, were so agreeable to her. She often laughed with me at the struggle for favour among the courtiers, and even wept over some who were disappointed. The death of Louis XV., at which I was present, is accurately described by the Baron de Bezenval in his Memoirs ; it was then that the struggle began, and standing well with both parties, I was a witness of all that took place. The baron thinks that the queen paid great attention to what was said to her for the nomination of this minister or that. She might have been interested in any of them when they were dismissed ; but they never were dismissed through her ; she has often told me that the fear of depriving the king of a man who might perhaps serve him in some way that she was not in a position to judge of, kept her from ever interfering.

The queen was too light-hearted and careless about the libels against her, and I often blamed her ; but she never neglected the dinners in public, the tiresome, formal receptions of Sundays and Wednesdays, the Tuesdays of the ambassadors and foreigners, the presentations, which were called

*les révérences*, the morning Courts (called the toilet of the queen), which took place before the procession through the gallery to daily mass, nor yet the Thursdays with the great and wearisome nobles and prudes in grand apparel; she herself appearing always with decorum and magnificence at the festivals, and with dignity and elegance at her carnival balls and at her suppers every night with the family in Monsieur's apartments.

In the early days of the friendship between the queen and the Comtesse Jules, I was playing with them, one against the two at billiards, when they began to dispute and wrestle to know which of the two was the stronger. The queen insisted that it was she. "Because you play the queen," said her friend. "Quarrel about it," I said; "quarrel." "Well, if we do quarrel," said the queen to the countess, "what would you do?" "Oh!" said the other, "I should weep — weep — weep; but I should console myself, because you are a queen." Her conduct proved this in later and more serious years. She detested the Court, and only remained there from attachment and gratitude. There never were any people more virtuous or more disinterested than the Jules [de Polignac]. The Comtesse Diane was the person who put the most piquancy into that Court life. 'T was a pity there was not more of it; but fear of making talk and giving rise to gossip produced too much monotony.

At Fontainebleau a storm arose suddenly one day about the queen's intimacy with Mme. de Polignac. The Chevalier de Luxembourg produced it to serve his project of driving away the countess, whose good little head and excellent heart he feared, wanting himself to govern the queen. Mme. de Polignac went to her and said: "We do not yet love each other enough to be unhappy if we part; but I see it coming; soon I shall not be able to leave you. Forestall that time.

Send me from Fontainebleau; I am not made for the Court; everybody here knows too much for me." Her horses were already harnessed to go. The queen embraced her, took both her hands, conjured her, entreated her, and flung herself upon her neck. The door was partly open; the Comte d'Artois saw the little scene as he entered. He laughed and went away saying, "Don't disturb yourselves," and told every one how he had found the two friends.

The king, in whom I hoped at times for something of merit, whom I protected if I may say so, endeavouring often to lift his soul to some interesting conversation instead of his foolish talk or his hunting stories, was very fond of rough play. His attacks usually fell on Conflans and the Coignys, those friends of the Jules (by "the Jules" I mean the Polignacs, whom I call so in spite of their duchy, for which they did not care). The queen succeeded in correcting him of this. It was at his *couchers* that his Majesty chiefly pleased himself in tormenting us. He had, however, a sort of tact in the midst of his vulgar play. One day, when he threatened us with his *cordons bleus*, trying to throw it at our noses in such a way as to hook those who wore ear-rings, as I did, the Duc de Laval went away. The king called after him: "Don't be afraid, monsieur; it does n't concern you." Another day he almost strangled me with his rough gayety; I was angry and said: "The king has touched me; may God cure me!" This only lasted a year or two. Often in public he showed consideration for those who deserved it. I have known him once or twice to rebuke persons roughly for taking precedence of me.

Créqui, a great censorer, said to me one day: "Do you want to know what those three brothers are? — a fat locksmith, the wit of a provincial café, and a boulevard strutter." The last two descriptions were caricatures of Monsieur, who had



*Marie Antoinette*



much memory, much information, and was famous and quick at quotations, and of the Comte d'Artois, who made the most of his figure certainly, and played the pretty French prince sometimes; but it became him, for he had as much grace as he had kindness, and he was very trustworthy in his relations to others.

I had the pleasure of being obstinate occasionally with sovereigns, who are often despots in merry-making. M. le Comte d'Artois wanted me to hunt the wild-boar with him. "To-morrow, at seven o'clock." — "No, monseigneur; in the first place, it is too early, and then the queen wishes me to ride on horseback with her as far as the Cross of Toulouse." — "I don't wish it." — "It will be done, for all that." — "You will come with me." — "No, monseigneur." — "I give you my word that you shall." — "And I mine that I shall not."

The next morning at six o'clock, great racket at my door; the young prince attacked, and I defended. He called our common friends, and I barricaded myself in. He burst the door, dragged me out of bed, shouting victory, put on my clothes himself, and forced me along almost lifting me on the horse he had in waiting for me. Just as he was mounting his, after putting my foot in the stirrup, I escaped. He flung himself off and pursued me. I hid, and he passed me. I did not know where I was going, but I rushed through the king's kitchens; twenty scullions and as many saucepans gave chase, taking me perhaps for a poisoner of his Majesty. I ran through a crowd of porters, who took me for an assassin, and were after me with their long chair-poles.

The young prince was off the scent and I had time to look about me. I went up to the theatre and hid behind a lot of scenes that were piled on the ground. I was betrayed by some workmen, who went down, and up came the prince and discovered my feet and tried to pull me out by



them. I got them free and sprang the other way, but in trying to clear the scenes I met with a devil of a nail, which tore my whole right cheek and covered me with blood. The prince was in great distress, and consoled me and kissed me and went off to his hunt and his wild-boars alone. I put plenty of salt in my wound and bathed it with brandy, and took my handkerchief; the queen was waiting for me, and I mounted my horse and rode off with her. That was how, though I suffered much, for the cold was severe, I kept my word of honour to the prince.

It was during such rides as those, all alone with the queen, though followed by the royal cortège, that she told me many interesting anecdotes which concerned her, and about the many traps that were laid to give her lovers. The Duchesse de Duras, when it was her week for attendance, went with us, but we left her with the equeries, and this was one of the queen's most heedless acts and greatest crimes; for she never did anything worse than rid herself of bores, both male and female; but such are always implacable.

All these rides in the Bois de Boulogne and to Verrières, not to speak of the hunts, were too charming not to be envied. In the same way they spoilt our pleasant and innocent nights on the terrace of Versailles, which reminded me of a ball at the Opera. We listened to the conversations; we mystified some, and were hoaxed ourselves; I gave my arm to the queen and her gayety was delightful. Sometimes we had music in the bosquets of the Orangery, where, in a niche and very high up, is a bust of Louis XIV. The Comte d'Artois used to say to him sometimes, "Good evening, grandpapa!" One night I arranged with the queen to put myself behind the bust and answer him; but a fear that they would not leave the ladder to enable me to get

down made me abandon that project. But sometimes there was in all this more Court malice than kindness. The Duc de Guignes had much of the former; he gave his arm sometimes to Madame, and to Mme. la Comtesse d'Artois. Many reasons and some malignity made us drop this pastime, for apparently it is written above that you must not amuse yourself at a Court.

After that we had balls at the Saint-Martin in the theatre at Versailles, where none but the royal family and the troupe of Mlle. de Montansier were present. The company was found to be too good and too bad, though we had with us all the households of the king and princes. A mask addressed verses to the queen, and gossip was made out of nothing. So there was another enjoyment given up.

I wanted myself to have a little prologue of Beaumarchais acted in presence of the queen before the performance of the "Noce de Figaro," for it would have amused her very much. I had had it read before the gentlemen of the Bedchamber, but the comedians opposed its being acted. The parts were given to those who were to act in the play, but they had to appear in their every-day clothes and under their own names, and talk together about the beauties and defects of the piece, and—I must own—laugh a little at the public. It was full, as might be supposed, of personalities, that were very ingenious.

The queen was charming to hoax, and there used to be much pleasure in laying traps to embarrass her. If we interpreted any of her remarks wrongly or maliciously she would be angry, and then laugh and be more amiable than ever. The grace she put into repairing her little inadvertences, which often occurred through a sort of ingenuousness, became her well; it pictured the goodness and sensibility of her beautiful soul and added to the charm

of her face, on which one could see, developing with blushes, her pretty regrets and excuses, and sometimes her wish to benefit. How many times have I not watched these emotions succeeding one another, when, to amuse myself, I had laid traps for her. Would that no others had ever been laid to her injury! And yet there was not as much gained from the latter as the world supposed. The unfortunate princess proved, again and again, on her way to death, her too great delicacy in never venturing to take upon herself to oppose either the king or his ministers. The only serious affair in which I saw her take part was the prevention, as a Frenchwoman and also an Austrian, of a war which, without her, would have broken out upon the Scheldt. The ten millions which she induced the king to lend to the Dutch Republic to pay the costs and appease her brother the emperor, gave rise to the most stupid of calumnies, namely: that she sent him money from the treasury. We had no need of money; the house of Austria was better off than the house of Bourbon.

The blame cast upon her luxury was just as ill-founded. There was never a lady-in-waiting, a king's mistress, or a minister's wife, who did not have more than she. She thought so little of her toilet that for a long time she let her hair be dressed extremely ill by a man named Larceneur, who was among those who went to fetch her from Vienna, because she feared to give him pain by dismissing him. It is true that, as soon as she was out of his hands, she would put her own hands to her hair and arrange it to suit her face. As for the slander about her gambling, I never saw her lose more than two thousand louis, and that was in games of etiquette, where she was always afraid of winning from those who were obliged to take part in them. I remember that one day I went into the antechamber and

begged from her footmen twenty-five louis, which she wanted to give to a woman in need.

Her so-called gallantry was never anything but a deep, and perhaps distinguishing friendship for one or two persons, and the general coquetry of a woman and a queen who seeks to please everybody. Even in those earliest days, when her youth and inexperience might have encouraged some to be too much at their ease with her, there was not one of us who had the happiness of daily intercourse with her who would have dared to abuse it by even the most trifling impropriety; she made herself the queen, without being aware of it, and we adored her, but did not dream of loving her. Her father, Francis I., received at his table the principal officers of the crown, and allowed them the utmost liberty. Maria Theresa admitted to her intimacy most of the Court ladies, and even stayed with some during the summer in their country-houses. She might there be seen walking up and down and knitting in the gardens, or reading in a grotto, without a single lady-of-honour in attendance. It was thus that Marie Antoinette, from her very childhood, had habits of innocent freedom and familiarity which, when she brought them to France, were judged severely.

In the matter of her finances, I remember that one day she amused herself very much when I laughed at her strong-box, in which I knew there was not a single louis, being taken to Fontainebleau at full gallop, surrounded by guards, according to a ridiculous Court custom, like numerous others, — such, for instance, as paying sixty thousand francs a year for twine to tie up parcels. The queen laughed herself at abuses she dared not reform; and especially about her chicken which cost a hundred louis a year. I forget whether it was the late queen, or Marie Thérèse, or Anne, who asked for a chicken after dinner, for either herself or

her dogs. There was none to be had ; and every year since then provision had been made at the same hour, which became in the end a regular Court charge and perquisite.

Will it be believed, *à propos* of this, that Louis XV., wounded on the Epiphany of 1767, was obliged to go without his broth because of a dispute between the kitchen department and the one most contrary to it, namely, that of the apothecary? The latter declared that the former had nothing to do with the king's victuals except when his Majesty was in perfect health.

After a while the queen, being no longer so young, thought that she might enjoy the Opera-balls as quietly and safely as the most ordinary woman of her kingdom. She was not more fortunate in this than in other matters. In fact I could prove that, beginning with the death of five or six hundred persons on the day of her marriage with the best, but not the most tempting man in the kingdom, I have never known her enjoy a perfectly happy day. The Opera-balls were the signal for a fresh persecution. The queen, not to be recognized, as she was certain of being by us, and even by Frenchmen who knew her but slightly, spoke only to puzzle foreigners. Hence a thousand stories and a thousand lovers, English, Russians, Swedes, and Poles. I never liked that she should go to those balls, partly for this very reason, and partly because she was very tiresome the next day, having so many things to tell about the masks, and what she had said, and what they had said to her, till it was quite intolerable. If we had been willing to do the same it would have been more piquant than her pretended adventures.

I should not write all this if I were to be read at present. But a hundred years later these little things, which now seem nothing, will give pleasure. I judge by that which I have received from the "Souvenirs of Madame de Caylus,"

the "Memoirs of the Mother of the Regent," those of Saint-Simon,<sup>1</sup> and other writers of anecdotes of the Court of France of that period. There are hundreds of other anecdotes that I have now forgotten that are worth perhaps more than these.

After a charming trip to Spa and Rocroy, which I made with M. le Comte d'Artois, he became very ill at Belœil, where I probably saved his life by deciding to have him bled. People thought much good of me because I had prepared *fêtes* in his honour, which cost me 50,000 or 60,000 francs, and said nothing to him about them as he could not enjoy them. There was to have been a military display in the camp of a splendid company of my regiment, which I had ordered to Belœil as his guard, with music, songs, and scenes of all kinds in different parts of the garden. Nothing, however, took place except the illumination of my temples, islands, bosquets, corbeils, and the trees of the park, in the style of the Champs-Élysées at the Opera, with plenty to eat and drink for several thousands of spectators. All the rest could not take place. I myself could not enjoy that beautiful night scene, which seemed like a silvery day, for not a single lamp was visible. I did not leave the prince, and as soon as he was able to be put into a carriage I took him from Belœil to Versailles in sixteen hours.

As *fêtes* of convalescence are usually as tiresome as the illness itself, the Comtesse Diane determined to give one to provoke him. The queen, who was partly in the secret, brought the Comte d'Artois with her. He trembled when he arrived. Polignac and Esterhazy, masked as Loves, darted upon him, and held him almost throttled in his

<sup>1</sup> The prince must have seen Saint-Simon's Memoirs in manuscript, as Mme. du Deffand saw them, for they were not published, unless in fragments, during his lifetime. — Tr.



chair, beneath his own portrait, diabolically painted, under which was the legend, "Vive Monseigneur, Comte Artois." The Duc de Guiche, as Genius, held his head. The Duc de Coigny preceded me, singing: "V'la le Plaisir! v'la le Plaisir!" I had a coat and two huge wings exactly like those of the cherubim in the parish church. The queen, Mmes. de Polignac, de Guiche, and de Polastron were dressed as shepherdesses; de Lille as a shepherd, with a sheep. We sang couplets as silly as the prince upon his throne, where he behaved like a maniac. Mine were full of insipid flattery about his face and other points, made expressly to infuriate him. I never saw anything in better taste than this piece of bad taste, which outdid all other convalescent fêtes; nothing could be gayer than the homage of respect and love we paid to the prince, who, by his grimaces, was sending us to the devil, not knowing at first whether we were in fun or in earnest.

Apropos of that trip to Rocroy: suddenly, between there and Spa, we met at daylight some fifty armed peasants. I thought they were deserters. The Comte d'Artois had no arms, nor I either. Just as we were regretting that mischance, the *vivats* reassured us. They turned out to be a band of my faithful subjects, with bad faces but good hearts, who were awaiting me on the frontier of my little sovereignty, which I did not know lay on our way. They led me up a steep place, where the wheels of the carriage had to be blocked while I received the homage of clergy and magistrates, after which we continued our way.

The Chevalier de Luxembourg had given me a taste for sorcery. I made myself a sorcerer's apprentice for over a year; but in spite of my desire to behold something marvellous, and all they did to show it to me, I left the business without succeeding. In vain I passed whole nights

at the house of an old Comtesse de Silly in the faubourg Saint-Marceau, where she saw spirits, or said she did, in my presence; in vain a certain Chavigny worked over me; and a man named Beuregard, on the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday, performed the most horrible conjurations and tricks around me and the Ducs d'Orléans and Fitz-James. The latter in signing his name upset the inkstand over our compact with the devil, who, apparently furious at this lack of attention, refused to appear. An Abbé Beudet, who gave me dancing lessons, said one day: "I cannot come to-morrow; no, it is impossible" (counting on his fingers); "but the day after I will come; we have an assemblage of spirits in Philadelphia, and I must have time to get there and back."

I cannot conceive how, with the face, clothes, accent, and queue of a quack-doctor, Cagliostro ever made dupes. He was mine. I took a false patient to him. He gave him his worthless yellow liquid, and after telling me how it had cured the whole harem of the Emperor of Morocco, he said that when he was not sure of his remedy in some desperate case he raised his eyes to heaven (which he then did) and said, "Great God, so blasphemed by Rousseau and Voltaire, you have a servant in the Comte de Cagliostro; do not abandon the Comte de Cagliostro!" And God did not abandon him, for he had a hundred persons in his antechamber that day. This was at Strasburg.

Mesmer acknowledged to me himself that if he could succeed in directing the effects of magnetism he should be an able man; but until that, and also the steering of balloons were discovered they would always be two useless, and sometimes dangerous things. But the world has ever risen up and will continue to rise up against useful novelties, instead of testing them and proving them. If a sovereign

would once say, "I will it," these things would be examined to their depths. As it is, the councils, the little committees, the examining commissioners, with that air of superiority that comes from ignorance, pronounce them all mere nothings. How long did it take for inoculation and lightning-rods to get a hearing? They refused telegraphs. They opposed therino-lamps, — in which there may, perhaps, be certain improvements to discover. In our coal-fields in Belgium we have numbers of Swiss peasants in whose hands I have frequently seen the hazel-wand turn. As it marks the position of the vein but does not show whether it is considerable enough to justify the outlay on machinery to work it, that experiment once cost me fifty thousand florins uselessly.

In the matter of balloons, the most celebrated experience of that kind is one that made me tremble. My son Charles, who proves only too well his love for danger, was one of the eight who went up in the celebrated Montgolfier machine at Lyons. When I lost him from sight in the clouds, where the Rhone and the Saône looked to him like little white threads, I was in a terrible state. Happily, I saw them descend, without injury, though the shock was violent, about a league from the town; after which I enjoyed the applause given to him that evening at the theatre, where we went.

I have always regretted that I paid too little attention to the predictions of the great Etteilla. When that sorcerer arrived in Paris, I took the Duc d'Orléans to see him, on the fourth floor of a house in the rue Fromenteau. He knew neither of us. He talked to the duke of thrones, revolutions, Versailles, the royal family, and many surprising matters, to which my want of confidence prevented me from attaching value. I only remember those things confusedly, but I am persuaded that they turned the duke's head.

Fatal result of my imprudence, if that were so! Etteilla was not a mere vulgar fortune-teller, nor the deluder of credulous women; on the contrary, the most intelligent persons consulted him. He depicted before the eyes of Mme. de Mérode a state bed on which lay the body of her husband, who was then in perfect health, in a room and surrounded by persons unknown to Etteilla; all of which came true in a fortnight. He announced to me that I should die seven days after hearing a great noise. I am still expecting it; but as I have, in the meantime, heard the noise of two sieges and the explosion of two magazines, I think that he must have been mistaken.

The society of the Duc d'Orléans was, until a year before the Revolution, composed of all that was best among men. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Damnable spirit of vengeance, incalculable in results if yielded to! Who could be purer in this world than the Chevalier de Durfort? yet he, MM. de Pons, Thiars, Coigny, Ségur, father and son, Lauzun, Chabot, Fitz-James, with several others and myself, loved the Duc d'Orléans. Had there been any appearance of his becoming a monster, should we not have seen it? We saw him risk his life to save that of a servant; we saw him renounce shooting and weep because his huntsman, rising suddenly from a ditch, received a few shot in the neck from his gun. Miserly he may have been in little things, but he was generous in great ones. His orgies were fables. He was always of correct behaviour himself, even in the midst of bad company; polite, with a certain haughtiness towards men, attentive and almost respectful to women; gay himself, with good taste in his jokes; he had more wit than conversation. Under other circumstances he would have resembled the regent [his great-grandfather]; he had the same class of mind. He was well-formed, well-made,

with handsome eyes. It must have been his infamous revolutionary intrigues that made his visage red and bloated and hideous, for what passes in the soul is painted outwardly. When one has been his friend (a word of which he knew the value) one must weep before detesting him, and forget the pleasant man in order to loathe the wretch who voted the death of his king.

## IX.

1778-1780.

### THE BAVARIAN WAR: A TRIP TO SPA.

[THIS political war, called by Frederick the Great his little lawsuit, was caused by Austria endeavouring to make good her pretensions to part of Bavaria while upholding Charles-Theodore, elector palatine, the rightful claimant of the throne.]

January 1, 1778, the Emperor Joseph marched his troops into Bavaria. This alarmed all foreign courts, and still more his own, which foresaw that, little ready as we were for war, without a fortress or the necessary levies to complete the army, we should be long in getting to work. From the Black Sea to the Ocean, from the Adriatic and the Lake of Como to the Rhine, all the troops of Austria were put in motion. Those in Bohemia were collected around Prague on the 10th of April, but they were far from considerable. The king of Prussia on the same day made his headquarters at Frankenstein, around which place his troops assembled at the same time as ours around Prague.

The emperor arrived at Prague. Many couriers went and came between there and Vienna and Berlin. Both sides wrote irritating letters, and embittered each other. The king of Prussia, it is true, answered one letter, in which he was told that we should be very glad to take lessons of so great a captain, by saying that if he thought himself capable of being that he should remember the sad fate of Mithridates.

However, he published a few manifestoes, and mounted



his horse. They gave me the command of the left wing of the army. I commanded in Prague till the 1st of May, and when they divided the army in two I received the command of all the grenadiers of the half that was under the orders of Maréchal Loudon. The emperor put himself at the head of the other half, and took up a fine position behind the Elbe, which secured the Bavarian monarchy and did great honour to Maréchal Lacy. The confidence of the emperor in him, and the quickness with which he seized upon all the advantages of that perfect trust do him also great honour.

My brother-in-law Lichtenstein had a corps at Leitmeritz. Prince Henry having brought his whole army and camped on the left bank of the Elbe, Lichtenstein expected to be attacked, and M. de Loudon sent me to support him. The march was long, and enabled me to make acquaintance with the brave fellows I had under my orders. I don't know but what I contributed a little to excite them, but their own spirit was so good that if I had been given an enterprise, no matter how dangerous, to carry out with them, that day would have been the finest of my life. I rested them at Ploschkowitz, a little short of Leitmeritz, and sent word to Lichtenstein that if he wanted me I was close by him. He did not expect me to come at that pace. But the next day M. de Loudon made me march as fast as I could to Pleiswedel, whence, he said, he had news that the enemy was advancing.

It is hard to feel you are doing a useless thing. I was very certain it was a false alarm, and that M. de Loudon was too hasty in marching his whole army. The night was dark, the weather dreadful, the defiles so dangerous that the men dropped in the ranks with twisted ankles, and when we arrived it proved to be a flock of sheep that report had turned into the enemy's column.

I increased my share of the discomfort of this miserable march by going myself to mark out the camp. The violence of the wind and rain continuing, I got my corps into Pleiswedel pell-mell as it arrived. The poor fellows slept standing, there being no space under shelter to lie down; and within an hour orders came to return to Leitmeritz. In vain I represented to M. de Loudon, who came past himself just at that time, that my men were too tired to march at once, and also that my brother-in-law was not pressed (for I had made a little reconnoissance of his position). I had to return, full of respect and admiration for the good stuff of my men, — who would actually have been gay had they had the strength, — to my first camp, where I had preserved my straw, so sure was I that the enemy was not before us, though I never thought of the sheep. In my opinion that scout ought to have been punished.

Lichtenstein showed me his arrangements, which were all the stronger because the devil himself could not have made him let go of any one of his defensive points. I defy an army to have a braver and more determined commander; and with it all, he was active, confident, and able to inspire his own qualities into his troops. I think he was rather too much in love with his *tête de pont*; which was made, I admit, with the utmost care, but the taking of which might have been easier than he thought, because of a ravine in which the enemy could have hidden and rushed to the attack. But perhaps more agile troops than the Prussians were needed for that sort of thing. 'T was work for my Wallons and the Hungarians, who succeed in that line better than troops of all the other nations.

We were persecuted by the elements at the opening of this campaign, and had to endure one storm the like of which was never before seen. Many of the men came near being

drowned in camp, which in ten minutes was a deep lake. The baggage, the bread, and all the munitions were spoilt, for there was not a moment in which to save them. The affair happened at three o'clock in the morning; I rushed to the camp to share the trouble and do the best I could for the men, whom I cantoned in the neighbouring villages; but they went without bread for a day, which was very annoying. To console me, I was told that the emperor's army went without it for five. The marshal wanted to hang some two or three persons who he thought were the cause of the trouble. Nobody was hung, but it cost me two or three hundred ducats to feed my men, for I bought up all the loaves of bread and the *kochjes* from the surrounding and even the distant villages, and I gave out brandy and beer till I could get the loaves brought in.

But Destiny does sometimes send us evil for our good. In order to dry the cartridges we were obliged to undo them, and I then discovered what was either a rascality or a very dangerous piece of negligence. There was not in any of them as much as half the necessary powder. I reported this to the marshal, who was for hanging somebody else. But where could we find him? The matter was put right; and that tempest did us great service, and taught us a good lesson at the beginning of a war.

July 29 I received orders to start in all haste for Mickenhan. It was a rough march, but I reached there at eleven o'clock, and at five o'clock orders came from M. de Loudon, who is always in a hurry, as I have often had occasion to know, to march on quickly to Nimes, without the slightest information or caution accompanying the order, which was brought by a simple cavalry-man. God knows the sort of camping-place I had for that night. I was frightened when I saw it in the dawn. My staff-officers were sent about everywhere



*"Philippe Egalite"*



for information, my son Charles among them, although I was afraid he might be captured. I found myself on the bank of the Poltzen, a little river until then unknown on military maps, and I burned three bridges to protect myself.

An officer, whom I have never met since, rode up to me with a pursued air and said aloud that I should be attacked in a few minutes, for the enemy were mounting a height which commanded my position. What a foolish, bad, and dangerous thing to tell me this in a loud voice in front of my corps, part of whom heard it and would surely communicate it to the rest! He might have perceived that we were caught in a trap. "How fortunate!" I cried; "just what I wanted! We will head them off, or receive them well;" and I ordered, "Forward, march!" to one division.

I had no choice. I brought my artillery to the front, intending to rush on with my Hungarians, sabre in hand, and capture the guns the Prussians had no doubt established on that height, and so put a bold face on the matter to prevent the enemy from discovering what a bad position I held. I put pickets in the two woods to my left, a battalion in the open space, and sent patrols along my right, who had not much to fear there. My grenadiers, on the first appearance that there was any work to be done, swore to me that I could safely count upon them, in a way that made me believe it; their good-will and their friendship for me has often touched my heart. Then I went myself to reconnoitre the approaching enemy. There proved to be no infantry at all; nothing more than a squadron of red hussars drawn up before Bartzdorf. What proves that I am not rash and disposed to risk things and expose my men, as some people have said of me, is that I did not dare to attack them, feeling sure they were well supported, and fearing they were placed there expressly to draw me on and then surround me. But



it seemed hard to pass by them, at the beginning of a war, with a fairly considerable force; when one has never before served as a commanding-general, one does want to do something distinguished. Every time I saw my generals or their adjutants coming after me to talk to me of the orders to march I galloped the other way to gain time, hoping at least to get my cannon on them before I should have to go. But in vain did I try to cheat friends and enemies; the day was failing, and the distance to Nimes was still great.

On the road orders met me to go on to Hirschberg, and the moment I arrived there I received other orders to stay at Nimes, M. de Loudon informing me that he meant to attack the next day. I replied that I was glad of it, and would be back in three hours, if he desired it. He returned word to stay where I was; that he had changed his plans, and would join me at Hirschberg before daylight. He wanted news of General Devins.

M. de Loudon, whose activity is equalled only by his courage, arrived the next day, August 2, in frightful weather, at three in the morning. His temper matched the weather. . . . There was talk of evacuating Prague, and going to Kolin. . . . M. de Loudon was furious, and wanted to quit the command. I represented to him that we were lost if he did so, "for," I said to him, "your reputation is our security." In the old war bugbears were not made out of everything, as they seemed to be in this.

The emperor arrived at our camp, not choosing to stay with his own army and be harassed by the negotiations for peace that were going on between the empress and King of Prussia, at the rear of the latter's army. He seemed to desire that something should be done. The marshal, who was in despair at all the conflicting orders he received, and the little satisfaction given to him in general, promised to do

all that was wished provided he received positive orders, especially orders to fight, which was what he wanted; but he declared that he required a plan that was not so vague as that which was being made and unmade at every moment.

My Wallons arrived one day while the emperor was with us. He was much pleased with them, and told me that in all his armies there were no troops, except the Lycanians, who were so well trained as my regiment; and he added that it was so handsome, gay, and agile that he had never seen anything finer, — it was a true guard-battalion. I was busy the day the regiment arrived, with a reconnoissance, and could not go to see it till the day after. I shall never forget how I was received, — the clapping of hands, the *vivats*, the shouts that were heard a league off, the touching things they said, their jovial greeting as they surrounded me and ran after me; it is indescribable; it filled me for all my life with gratitude.

His Imperial Majesty was also touched by the reception (half curiosity, half enthusiasm) which my Wallons gave to him. They had never before seen him. His face, his attaching manner, his friendship for soldiers, his way of talking with them won their hearts; a little more and they would have followed him all the way to headquarters. In fact, there was difficulty in stopping the French-speaking ones, who have much of the character of that nation; those who speak German, coming from Limbourg and Luxembourg, resemble the Germans, while those who speak Flemish are like the Dutch. The latter, when they first join, are less good than the other two; but they soon get the *esprit de corps*; at the end of three months they are one and all gay, sensible, brave Wallons, soldiers to the core.

Here is a song that I made for them, to the air of "The

Grenadiers' March;" I taught them to march to it in the last war. No one would believe of what use such songs can be on the day of an action; they are really enough sometimes to win a battle. As for the verses, I know they are not the Hymns of the Ancients, but then, we have neither Greeks nor Romans in these days. My soldiers are gayer, jollier, and quite as brave, but they do not understand fine poetry as well.

Follow me, Grenadiers!  
 Crownèd with laurel!  
 Lay low  
 And overthrow  
 Our proud and haughty foe;  
 Well the Walloons they know,  
 Deadly in quarrel.

Honour's voice calls to us!  
 Charge now or never!  
 See, they fly!  
 Fast they fly!  
 Seize their flags! is the cry;  
 Ours now the victory;  
 Onward forever!

And when the day is won,  
 Bards, sing the story!  
 Hail the great Emperor!  
 Hail this one victory more!  
 Honour his mighty name!  
 Honour our Walloon fame,  
 Leading to glory!

M. de Loudon, finding that I never gave him the alarm, would sometimes give it to me. He would send me word that I should be attacked the next day, and I would send back word that I should not be attacked. But I was none the less alert, and was always on horseback two hours before day, and sometimes all night if a musket went off. On the

heights above our position was the convent of Pösig, where there were but forty-two men, who spent their time during the day in watching what was going on in our camps. This perpetual annoyance of being gazed at through a spy-glass irritated M. de Loudon, and he spoke to me about it several times. I told him I would like to attack the heights; but it would be hard to hold the place, as it was nearer to Prince Henry than to him. He said it could be done, and I had better try to take them if I could.

I was glad of the permission, never doubting that M. de Moltendorf and M. de Belling would support me. But the Prussian hussars, who were lurking very close to me in the woods, captured all the aides-de-camp whom I sent to those generals, and to the commanders of my small detached corps. Consequently, no one came. The attack on the convent failed; the garrison was warned. My brave Lycanians began the attack before daylight, just as I was forming below on the plain. Fifty were detailed for the assault; all of them wanted to be chosen, but we had only five ladders, and had I sent for more the news would have spread about the country. The besiegers were received with a hail of stones; Colonel d'Aspremont could not hold them in; their worthy and respectable first-lieutenant, Wolf, was first to mount the wall and was shot through the arm. Suddenly a cry was raised that the door was burst in and all rushed to it. A sergeant and five men were killed on the spot, and twenty-five men were wounded.

Nothing has ever given me such pain as to see those handsome, excellent Lycanians stretched side by side, and saying to me and to their lieutenant such touching things. At other times when I have caused the death of men (which I might sometimes have avoided) I was with them, sharing their dangers, so that the sight of their wounds did not

have the same effect upon me. But these poor fellows I had sent to their work. Not being able to be everywhere, and knowing, moreover, that it was more important to be where I was and do what I was doing, I began to perceive how hard it was to be a general officer, because he is obliged to expose others to be killed while he himself is not.

A fool of a chaplain of one of my regiments was always preaching to the men of Transubstantiation, Transfiguration, and the like. "Father," I said to him, "that is not what you ought to tell those brave fellows, who can't understand such things any more than you do. Talk to them in a language that will help them to happiness. Raise their souls, instead of depressing them. Give them true ideas, instead of muddling their minds. I will write you a sermon. Learn it by heart, and preach it to them next Sunday."

Nothing interesting happened with me until September 9, when M. de Loudon came to my camp, and with that precious gift of the *coup d'œil* which he has, especially under fire, when one would really think the balls electrified him, he put (without, as I believe, having thought of it till that moment) my whole corps on the march toward Gezoway. As I was used to him by this time, I did not always obey him implicitly, and where he told me to put a battalion I put a division, because I fully believed he would want more men and more cannon farther on.

We had scarcely reached Gezoway before the musketry began, and he let me see an abridgment of the conqueror of Franckfort. With his staff officers and mine, twenty hussars, and twenty riflemen, we drove off all the Prussian hussars and drove in all the outposts that we came to. The marshal, thinking apparently that it was too small a skirmish for him to be engaged in, never rested till he had drawn upon us a vol-

ley from the infantry behind the abattis. That was the first time and the last time that he smiled throughout the whole campaign. My Charles is so brave it is a joy to see him. I held his little hand as we galloped along, saying to him: "It would be a pleasure, — wouldn't it, my boy? — if you and I were wounded by the same ball." After that he carried the marshal's order to an officer, who was shot as he received it. Charles was in all the enchantment of firing his pistol for the first time, and that of being fired upon [he was just nineteen years old].

On the 20th the Prince of Mecklenbourg was sent to me, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with the emperor's light-horse cavalry and orders from the marshal to march at once, watch the march of the enemy, and make all the prisoners I could. In order to do that, inasmuch as it is forest all the way from Nimes to Hünerwasser, I was necessarily obliged to go beyond those places. . . . M. de Loudon thought me lost, cut off, or deserted. I reported to him that in my position, which the enemy thought stronger than it was, I expected to drive them from Neuschloss or even to capture them. I never doubted that M. de Loudon would be enchanted to hear of me there, and would let me continue to be the advanced guard of the army, which would follow me at once into Lusatia. Instead of that, M. de Loudon sent me an order to return. I did so with my own regiment and Deux-Ponts'. My Croats were sent to M. de Riese; and my corps, which might have done such service at that moment, was dispersed among the different commands, because an order had come to march to Prague, in spite of all that I could say to assure them that the enemy gave no sign of moving in that direction.

When I saw the marshal, he asked me immediately who had given me the order to attack and follow the enemy and



make prisoners. I told him it was the Prince of Mecklenbourg. He replied: "He is a prince, he is a general, but I'll tell him before you that he lied." I asked why he had sent him to me with a strong reinforcement if he intended me to do nothing; and I told him that if he had guarded my rear, I would at least have taken all the enemy's cannon and baggage, which was much retarded owing to the heavy rains of the last week.

Maréchal de Loudon, who is a god in offensive warfare, is a man, and even an ill-tempered man, on the defensive; he distrusts both friends and foes alike. He had promised Maria Theresa not to give battle, and was afraid of being forced into it if he allowed me to do as I wished. I had good reason to wish it, for Prince Henry afterwards did me the honour to tell me that, knowing me, he expected to lose his rear-guard, disposed as it was, near the defile of Lockow. The prince had no reason to blame himself for the risk he ran; it was the king, his brother, who exposed him to it. M. de Loudon was sorry afterwards for having vexed me, and thanked me for my activity and readiness, but said they were just as useless as his own, "in this dog of a political war" [*chiennne de guerre politique*]. Those were his words. He added that he would keep no more corps in the advance; but that if the emperor ever let him fight he would give me the hardest work there was to do.

The first moment when I received M. de Loudon's letter recalling me was perhaps the saddest of all my life. My brain, excited by its visions of pursuit, capture, advantage, and success, had hard work to recover itself. I think there is nothing so sad in the world as to be called back from the command of an advanced guard to a command in the line; but this was just what had happened to me. I hardly knew the names of the regiments I now had under

me. There were none of my old men except my battalions of grenadiers, whom I was charmed to see again.

During the advance I had not been willing to balk my Charles' ardour, and I let him go on one occasion with the first troop of light-horse, who, from too much eagerness and too little order, were obliged to retreat with a loss of sixty men killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. Charles called out to "make front, and keep together!" but they were forced to retire at a gallop through a boggy country. Charles showed great valour and coolness in the midst of danger.

I went into winter quarters at Nischberg much out of temper, and so were others: Maria Theresa, because enough had not been done in the war on which to make peace; the emperor, because the empress and King of Prussia were trying to make it without his knowledge; Maréchal Lacy, because they had upset all his good plans, which, if followed, would have given us the upper hand; Maréchal Loudon, for having been kept as it were a mere observer; the King of Prussia, for having wasted twenty-five millions of crowns and twenty-five thousand men without having done what he wanted; and Prince Henry, for being so continually thwarted by his brother.

All the armies were exercised through the winter, and they even began a sort of campaign in 1779. Marches were made on both sides, and a species of enterprise was undertaken in Moravia. Frederick paid dear for the title of a just and disinterested man; Maria Theresa bought, with much disquietude of soul and mind, a few small bailiwicks in Bavaria, and the elector was amply compensated by the Order of the Golden Fleece. [The war closed with the treaty of Teschen, which recognized the succession of Charles Theodore, elector palatine, to the throne of Bavaria, and the Palatinate of the Rhine was united with that kingdom.]

I went, to recover from a slight wound, to the baths of Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa, where all the world of all the countries of Europe congregate, sent by the ignorance of doctors, who find it much easier to say, "Cure yourself" than to say, "I will cure you." I was intending also to cultivate the lighter and more frivolous tastes of society, social intimacies, gardening, literature, etc. I wanted to let my eyes, my desires, my actions, rather than my heart, rove as it were.

I arrived at Spa and entered a great hall, where I saw one-armed persons getting new arms, lame people making fine legs, people with names, titles and faces that were all ridiculous; I saw amphibious animals of Church and the world, careering or strutting around; a line of English, hypochondriacal milords, walking mournfully about; Parisian prostitutes entering with peals of laughter, to have it thought they were amiable and at their ease, and hoping to become so by that device; I saw young men of all countries making believe to be English, talking with closed teeth and dressed like grooms, their hair cut round, black and greasy, and two Jew whiskers inclosing dirty ears; I saw French bishops with their nieces; an *accoucheur* with the Order of Saint-Michel; a dentist with that of the Golden Spur; dancing-masters and singing-masters, all in Russian uniform; Italians in that of colonels in the Polish service; Dutchmen searching the gazettes for rates of exchange; I saw thirty self-styled Knights of Malta; cordons of all colours, worn to left and right and in the buttonhole; stars of all shapes and sizes, worn also on both sides; fifty Chevaliers of Saint-Louis; old duchesses coming in from their walk with great sticks *à la Vendôme* and three layers of white and rouge over their wrinkles; a few countesses playing double stakes; cruel, suspicious faces in the midst of a mountain of ducats, engulfing, as it were, those that were laid, trem-

bling, on the great green table; one or two electors dressed as huntsmen, with hunting-knives and slim gold cords; a few princes incognito, who would have made no stir at all under their own names; certain old generals and officers retired for wounds they never had; certain Russian princesses with their physicians; also princesses, Palatine and Castilian, with their chaplains; Americans; burgomasters from neighbouring States; outlaws from all the prisons of Europe; charlatans of every species; adventurers of every kind; abbés of all lands; a few poor Irish priests, tutors to the sons of Liège; English archbishops with their wives; a score of patients dancing like lost souls for their health; forty lovers who were, or made believe to be, ardent and agitated; sixty waltzing ladies with more or less beauty, innocence, cleverness, coquetry, modesty, and voluptuousness.

All this was called a *déjeuner dansant*. The bustle, the hum of conversation, the dizzying monotony of the waltz, the passing and repassing of aimless idlers, the cursing of the gamblers, the sobs of the gambling women, and an utter weariness of this magic-lantern scene drove me from the room. The next instant I am knocked down on a wretched pavement by an English race. I pick myself up and barely avoid being thrown again by a score of little scamps, lordlings great and small, who gallop by on little horses which they call "ponies."

I sit down. I notice several drinkers of water counting religiously their glasses and their steps, and congratulating each other, though rather dismally, on the progress of their stomachs. I listen. "Do the waters pass you, madame?" inquires an old president. — "Yes, monsieur, since yesterday." "Does your Excellency begin to digest?" asks another of the minister of an ecclesiastical Court. "I have the honour to inform your Excellency," replies the minister, "that I perspire in the

evening from eight to ten o'clock, and from ten to midnight I sweat thoroughly; in fact, if I had not so much to do for Monseigneur, I should now have completed my cure." "Your cure!" exclaims a Frenchman, wishing to say the civil thing, but mistaking the word; "I thought you at least a vicar-general." "Goddam your Geronstères and Pouhons," remarked a lord. "Poumons!" cried a deaf man; "lungs are not treated here." "I did not say they were," replied the honourable member. "I have left the bills of my country that I may hear no more about our infernal and mercantile policy; instead of these waters, I drink punch like the devil. Why don't you at least drink claret as I do? We were ten or a dozen Englishmen very drunk last night, but we are all well to-day."

If I had come to Spa from curiosity, I should already have had enough of it, for in half an hour I had seen and heard all Europe and part of America. There is no better observatory than a watering-place. But as observations will not cure sabre-cuts, I cut short my visit, and, to rest my eyes and ears, I took my way to the mountains.

## X.

1780-1786.

### LIFE AT BELCÆIL.

THE life that I led at my dear Belcœil, though wars, travels, and other pleasures prevented my being there as much as I wished, was very happy. I used to go, half-dressed, and read on Flora's isle, where, with my little skiff drawn up on shore, I was safe from importunate visitors; or else I went to watch my workmen. After that, I returned to bathe in the pretty bath beside my chamber, and then to bed again to sleep, or else, more frequently, to write till half-past three o'clock, when a dozen of the officers of my regiment came to dinner.

How happy one is in being alone! But where shall we go for that? We can't inhabit a forest. Though it happens, at times, that I love silence for myself, I like noise for others. It seems to me as though I were supercilious when I do not share their amusements, and when I make myself pleasures that are for myself only. I think this sometimes in winter when I hear the carriages in the street and know that the whole world is hurrying after that which I have procured for myself tranquilly by my fireside. I am going to say something that will seem very childish. But I am sure of it. It is this: sing in the morning to be gay all day. We get a habit of being dull if we let ourselves go on saying nothing, walking about our rooms, and fancying we are unhappy or ill. Make a habit of being gay. If you are not so naturally, at least you can drive away melancholy. Shake



yourself. Sing some lively air; rouse your organs vehemently with a ringing song. Wind up your fibres as you do an instrument; your mind will soon give out a pleasant sound.

I remember giving a *fête* to the Princesse de Bouillon (whom I fancied I loved, but only admired), on the canal between Brussels and Antwerp. It was one of the most beautiful *fêtes* I ever saw. The water seemed molten fire, so many illuminated barges were there for my party, my servants, the musicians, and the curious spectators who came by thousands, with my yacht in the middle of all. More than ten thousand persons accompanied us along the banks to Marli, where I gave a terrestrial *fête*, and thence on our return to Brussels. The same year all classes, from what are called in Brussels "capons" [porters] up to H. R. H. the Comte d'Artois, were received and treated with balls, illuminations, refreshments, and a *gogaille*, or *gogaie* (I don't know how that is pronounced, still less how it is spelt), a grand merry-making on the occasion of the inauguration of the statue of our good prince, Charles de Lorraine. I had an ox roasted whole, with chickens, etc., inside of him,—in short, all that could make the good populace love me, before the bad populace made the Revolution. While the people were worth the trouble of pleasing I used to take pains to make them love me; among other means, by balls in my gardens.

I was always amused myself in amusing the public. Once I gave the Tower of Babel in masquerade. Was that profane, and how came it to be forgiven me? The scene was exactly as it is described in the Bible; the number and variety of the clothing of the workmen cost me immensely. The first *coup d'œil* enchanted the two thousand spectators,—for the affair took place in the large theatre of Brussels.

The music, expressing first the confusion of tongues, and then the confusion of our dance which began as soon as we descended from the tower, had a charming effect. I loved, I was loved, and I knew it; without which neither *fêtes* nor merriment. At another time I had a masquerade of Spanish guerillas, whose costume, music, and dances, as they depicted scenes of war and hunting on the mountain, were marked with good taste, gayety, and even glory. I chose the airs and made all the programmes myself.

What a delightful existence was mine! In twenty-four hours I could be in Paris, London, the Hague, Spa. I went to Paris once merely to spend one hour at Versailles on the occasion of the queen's last (I think it was her last) confinement. I saw her on the fourth day. Another time I drove a whole party that was staying with me from Belœil to the Opera, in my coach. I often laughed to myself in thinking that within the same twenty-four hours I was in the society of the Queen of France and that of Mme. Gauthier, a Belœil peasant-woman, most faithful to the Wallon accent.

It suited me, for my pleasure and the good of the Low Countries, to belong to all the Brotherhoods. I succeeded famously at the suppers of those two or three hundred worthy bourgeois, stout drinkers, choice feeders, and honest folk in those days. Some of them shot with bows and arrows, some with muskets, and that of Saint-Anthony of Ghent with cannon. "God preserve me," I said to myself, "from winning the prize; it would cost like the devil." Accordingly, I aimed that cannon at least two feet to left of the white, and there was the ball in the middle of it! I was applauded, in spite of myself, and carried on the shoulders of my dear fellow-marksmen, who flung their hats in the air and rasped my ears with their *vivats!* — Flemish, and therefore not harmonious. I expressed surprise that I had shot

so well, and was told that a corps of artillery had given the cannon to our Brotherhood because it was spoilt and had the defect of carrying two feet to right of the mark. Victor against my will, I was none the less pleased, in spite of all the suppers I had to give and the toasts to drink. They presented me with the ribbon and medal of our Order, bearing two cannon in saltire; and there never was more good, hearty gayety than prevailed for the next week in the town of Ghent — it was almost graceful.

There was not a single town that did not give me marks of attachment. Beside my Brotherhood of Mercy at Ath, where I wore a monk's dress, like the black penitents of Henri III., I belonged to those of Saint Dorothea, queen or goddess of flowers, at Brussels, Saint Sebastian at Ghent, and another, but I forget its name, at Antwerp. Namur gave me, equipped at its own cost in my uniform of pink, yellow, and silver, a company of chasseurs, who, together with all the peasantry on my estates, remained royalists during the Revolution, as did Luxembourg, which had taken the oath under me.

But from all these amusements how happy I was to return to my Flora's island, that isle of verdure and of flowers, where grace abounds, with my books for company. I have often noticed that there are times more favourable than others for classes of reading; we ought to fit our reading in quantity and quality to the situations in which we find ourselves. In the agitating times of great adventures, in war, at Court, in love, we want works that touch the mind but lightly, — memoirs, and a mixture of philosophy, literature, and poesy. The history of battles, the intrigues of policy or of gallantry are better to contemplate; in our inaction we can judge of the activity of others; this rests, refreshes, calms both body and mind.

I own that my dislike for novels, which when they do not bore me fade at once out of my memory, often prevents me from attempting to read them. Some of Scarron's have made me laugh, but the comic novel has never given me any pleasure. I own, moreover, that the Arabian fairy tales with their thousands of days and nights tire me with weariness of the names, customs, and riot of imagination. But long live the writer of the Life of Chevalier de Grammont, and long live de Grammont himself; 'tis Apelles and Alexander over again; I don't know which is the more famous of the two. For all this, however, I did risk reading "Cecilia" and I was enchanted. The talent shown in the details, portraits, and scenes pleased me all the more because I happened this very year to meet with a number of the originals, painted unconsciously; so trained is the English eye in that faculty.

By way of criticising the books of the present day, people are in the habit of saying: "You will not find that in Racine, or Molière, or Fléchier, or Boileau." I have sometimes justified our poor moderns at the expense of those saints of literature, whom I, more than any one, revere, though they do sometimes use superfluous words, and give us figures and expressions that are not accurate. But in their day people were, happily, less hypercritical; they did not always have at their tongue's end that silly phrase, "What bad taste!" There is no such thing where genius is. Also there are subjects which are far above that condemned bad taste. The least good things in Molière, those that they call his farces, are sublime in their own way from their simplicity and their truth; the most insignificant of some of his plays, even those that were written to command, are masterpieces. The grave Louis laughed as heartily as the sweepers in the Gallery of Versailles. We

admire, we adore the "Misanthrope;" and so we should; I cannot conceive of a criticism upon it, except one, which has never been made. No one has yet thought of considering the title false. No man can be a misanthrope who lives as he did in the great world; he liked it if only to gird against it, and to have the privilege of grumbling against his mistress, his friend, customs, Court, and the law. A man like Alceste could never have endured solitude. Call him a boor, an over-sincere man, an honest man hyperbolized, but not a misanthrope. Jean-Jacques, who was the latter and was not in the least the former, was unable to perceive the real meaning of Molière in Alceste. A man like him, without happiness, without gayety, without knowledge of men, cannot conceive that we should laugh at one whom we admire. But the crotchets of a great man, even the oddities of his clothes, his tic, his haste, his slowness, the gold lace *à la* Bourgogne on M. de Voltaire's waistcoat, the timid shyness of M. de Loudon (the bravest man in the world) have often made me laugh, but I am not mocking at them for all that. On the contrary, I am feeling their good qualities the more. Loving the noble character of Alceste, enchanted with the original turn he gives to everything he says, I should certainly have followed him about in Paris to witness his outbursts, and relate them afterwards, much as I loved him.

I do not take Célimène to be a coquette of good society. Always alone, a backbiter, surrounded by men, to whom she makes all the advances without choice or discernment, she is an excellent figure for the stage, where types must be more marked, and in a way that would be offensive in society. Men would have pointed the finger at her there; they would have sought to win her and leave her within twenty-four hours. That is precisely the nature that Molière

gives her, and with it he gets more effect for his purpose than he could have done from a woman of good society.

I have heard persons say that the "Bourgeois Gentleman" and "Georges Dandin" were not masterpieces, because they were written under contract and for the people. Well, I am one of the people too, and so are all persons of good taste who delight in true pictures of nature of all kinds. Those delightful trifles, the grains of salt in the egg, the pacings about of that imaginary sick man, the proverbs that turn up,—"There are faggots and faggots;" "What the devil was he doing in that galley?" "We have changed all that,"—and a hundred other sayings, so good because so simple, have alone become immortal.

I know it is the fashion to blame Molière for his *dénouements*, but I shall justify even those of the "Avare," the "École des Femmes," and the "Misanthrope" by asking those who do so to imagine others less defective. But as for that of "Tartuffe," I consider it the finest and the most probable that I know upon the stage. Molière was a good man, simple because colossal, who studied each condition and its effects, and drew out of those effects their consequent results as a painter and a philosopher. It might be that a sovereign or an enlightened minister could decree a college that in fifty years would make us a race of splendid writers, but Molière and La Fontaine can never be created.

Molière, Destouches, Boissi, Boileau, Reynaud understood perfectly the art of saying evil of others. We recognize the originals of their portraits everywhere. But the talent is lost. Manners and customs have changed. There are no authors now to take the place of those I have just named. Reynaud follows on the heels of Molière; but he amuses without correcting. Molière is a moralist; Reynaud only a satirist.



We overlook the desultoriness of Montaigne because everything becomes him. His soul is a chatterer, not his mind, which is, however, the servant of the other. That is how it is he flits about in so charming a manner. An idea sweeps him off, but it leads to another. He says to us: "Apropos of that, I'll tell you—" He never suspected his depth, nor the subtlety of his observations. I feel to him as Condé did to Turenne. "What would I not give," said the great Condé, "for half an hour's talk with him!" Montaigne was, except for pride, the whole galaxy of Athens in himself. We see in everything he says the good man, the good heart, the sound head. He divined the world. He saw the past, the present, and the future, without ever believing himself a great wizard.

I have tried to laugh, because I have been promised that I should do so, over the "Lettres Provinciales." Then I tried to admire them, and that I could not do either. As for Pascal's "Pensées," I have not been able to understand many of them. I am the only man who dares to say this; but not perhaps the only one in that condition. Let us be sincere: though I truly respect Port-Royal des Champs, and agree with the great Frederick it should never have been destroyed.

It has been said that Voltaire was against that immortal, wise, sweet, and most profound work "Télémaque," because he wrote two jesting couplets upon it. All that he says of Tolerance ought to silence the saints of to-day, if they understand it. What a man would Fénelon have been had fate allowed him to be prime minister! and what a reign that of the Duc de Bourgogne, had he possessed but half the regent's intellect! The peace of Europe and that of consciences would have been secured; virtue would have gone hand in hand with happiness; religion would have had grace, the State sound finances, the laws more clearness and less se-

verity, the Court real enjoyments, and society a better tone. I know but one man under Louis XVI. who was fitted to make the kingdom go in that way : M. de Sully Maurepas, generalissimo of the armies, as well as minister of war. His rank, his example, his economy, his sternness, his apprenticeship in camp would have made him king almost in spite of himself. I have known in my day but two ministers who could be truly said to have intellect : M. de Maurepas and M. de Cobenzl, father of the ambassador. Both had grand views, though the former was too careless to realize them.

My excellent friend Laplace was fond of making epitaphs on me, and made at least a score of them ; here is one : *Ci gît Nenni, mais qui gira.* [Here lies Nothing, but he gyrates still.] In return, I made verses on him beginning : “ Pierre et Picard, le pesant Laplace,” with four or five *p*'s. in every line ; that one refers to his constantly saying, “ My name is Pierre, and I come from Picardy.” La Harpe in his “ Cours de Littérature ” gives him the credit of knowing English. He may have understood it once upon a time with the help of a dictionary, but he could not speak a single word of it. He was an excellent man, without taste, and without other knowledge than that of a compiler, a ransacker, and sometimes an unearther of precious things. His tragedy of “ Jane Gray ” is better than his two others, though they have merit. All that, of course, constitutes an author, a man of letters, but not a man of genius, nor the first of versifiers, nor even a good prose-writer. He had the laugh of a discontented pig, and was fond of telling anecdotes without any point ; he tells some of me in his Works, which have not even common-sense. [Laplace did not publish his “ Mécanique Céleste ” till 1799 ; the prince appears to judge him solely on his literary merits, and as if he knew of no others.]

Marmontel was a man I never liked; I thought him coarse, disdainful, and presuming; but he had eloquence and the tragic instinct. His style, without being harmonious, is not incorrect; though it is that of an artisan rather than an artist. Happily no one ever believes or follows his poetism, his judgments, his examples, or literary paradoxes. He has been too much praised and too much criticised for his "Moral Tales." The Chevalier d'Eon, then censor, ex-demoiselle, and ex-captain of dragoons, had the malice to give his sanction in these words: "I have read, by order of Monseigneur the chancellor, the 'Moral Tales' of M. de Marmontel, and I have found nothing, by dint of forgetting, which forbids their publication."

How little justice or knowledge has been shown about Ossian! His heroes are purer and braver than those of Homer. Barbarians are like that, and they sing just in this way the actions of their leader. Many a time, without understanding them, unless by chance a word here and there, I have admired my Croats, glorifying in the Illyrian language their King Kralowitz Marco. What a fine representation they used to give of waking the sleeping enemy and daring him to the combat. Frederick the Great would have liked us to warn his hussars in that way on the morning of the battle of Hochkirch.

But always I return, in these sylvan shades where the pigeons coo and the woods resound with voices not of man but of Nature, to the simple and sublime La Fontaine. Except for some half a dozen quite insignificant fables, in which he loses himself among arguments about atoms and souls and so forth, and a few that are merely epistles, what a code of policy and morals he gives us! The morality is the policy of each of us; the policy is the morality of the State, instructive to sovereigns and ministers. The one serves for

self-government, the other for the government of all. The latter is more profound in La Fontaine than in Montesquieu, the former more profound than in Epictetus, that manual of all philosophy, and even in Montaigne — which is saying much.

You, and I, and all men, what are we? Kings of Nature? Read the “Marseillais and the Lion,” laugh or meditate with Voltaire, and away with such pride! Are you gay (for that is what you had best be)? the monkey is gayer. Are you provident? the ant is more so. Are you a legislator? look at the laws of the bees and be confounded. Are you a mason, architect, carpenter, joiner, roofer? go and watch the beavers. Are you a manufacturer or a milliner? see the coquettish manner in which the little fishes are adorned in speckles of silver and crimson and gold, and striped stuffs. Are you a painter? try to match the colours of the butterfly, the transparency and magnificence of shells. Are you brave? yes, but the lion is more so. Are you vigorous? the ass, what say you to him? and think of his sturdy sense, his sobriety, his humour, a trifle heavy perhaps, but excellent. Are you strong? there’s the elephant, the camel. Are you clean? the rabbit was that before you. Do you swim? go and look at the pigs. Can you jump? no, not like a kid. Are you agile? see those chamois clinging to a rock that Virgil tells of. Do you run? the stag will outspeed you. Are you brawny? the wild boar is brawnier. Are you bold in your own defence? look at the bear and all his resources. Are you clever? the fox is cleverer, and his countenance shows it. Are you faithful? never so completely as that vigilant dog; and examine those storks standing sentinel. Tactician are you? see the *cuneus* of the ancients in that flight of wild geese. Traveller? do you choose your seasons with the wisdom of the birds of passage? Brilliant? no, never as the glow-

worm. Coaxing? caressing? melodious? amusing? what a difference between you and the smallest little denizen of that coppice! Is your memory good? as good as that of the canary? Shrewd, are you? the squirrel is beyond you there. Graceful? that is the kitten's peculiar distinction; all its movements are that. Obedient? useful? was ever a man like the horse or the ox? Clear-sighted? as far as a lynx? Free? why, all the animals are that — *is man?* Do animals have doctors, lawyers, masters, mistresses? do they murder? do they slander? They don't laugh, it is true, but neither do they weep. They pay court to no one. If they are scolded, they bite; they are not humiliated. Perhaps there are not many among them who are very amiable, but there is not one that is ever bored, and none are damned.

I was feeling bored one day, and boring others, so I thought I would go out and be bored all alone. I have a very fine forest. I went there towards evening, thinking to shoot a rabbit. 'T was the hour when all the wild animals are about. Quantities of young rabbits went by me and disappeared, scratching their noses and making great leaps and twirls, but always so fast I had no time to sight my gun. An elderly rabbit, with a gray coat, and a sedate manner, suddenly appeared at the edge of his burrow. Having made his toilet quite at his ease ("clean as a rabbit" comes from that), he noticed that I held him at the end of my gun. "Fire!" he said; "what are you waiting for?" Oh! — I confess I was seized with astonishment. I had never (except in war) fired upon animals that spoke. "I shall not do so," I said; "you are a witch, and I should die of it." "I? not at all," he replied, "I am La Fontaine's old rabbit." Oh! that time I came down my full length; I knelt at his little feet; I asked his pardon; I reproached him for the risk he had run. "But," I said, "why do you want to die? what makes you so tired

of living?" — "All that I see." — "Bless me! but you have the same twigs and the same thyme, have n't you?" — "Yes, but the folks are not the same; if you only knew the kind I have to pass my life with, — little finical rabbits, who want to live on roses instead of our good old cabbages, geometrical rabbits, political, philosophical, and I don't know what all; some talk only German, others only French, a new sort of French that I can't understand. If I come out of my hole and go to see a neighbour, it is just the same; I don't understand anybody. The animals of to-day have too much mind. But, to tell you the truth, by dint of having so much they have got so little that our old ass had more than these young scamps."

I begged him not to be so cross, and I told him I would always take care of him, and his comrades if there were any like him. He promised in return to tell me all that he had said to La Fontaine, and to take me to see the latter's old friends; and so he did. The frog, who was not quite dead, though he said he was, behaved with the utmost modesty, compared with the conduct of those which we see about us every day; the toads and the cranes were singing like nightingales; the wolves were nicer than my sheep. "Good bye, little rabbit," I said, "I'll come back to my woods and my fields and my orchards, and I'll raise a statue to La Fontaine and spend my life with the animals of that good man."

We need twin hearts, if I may so express it, to perfectly agree. But where are they? I have never known but one united family, and that is mine. All the individual members suffer equally at the absence of one; that is because the six united form but one. I do not mean exactly the Family bond; it is something more inexplicable. If sympathy acts as I believe it does, may we not find in the analysis of blood magnetic particles? If we could put away from us our



proud, undisciplined self-love, if the circulation of our blood did not in some way stir the hypochondriacal particles within us, we should be more capable of friendship. I will even grant to ourselves the honour of being capable of great sacrifices, great privations.

I think I have said somewhere already, that we ought to be the father of our friends to be sure of them. We should marry young enough to have grown children, with whom we can be comrades from the time they are twenty. But the fatal scythe must make no mistake. I lost a son named Albert between four and five years of age. The nurses did so much for his figure they deformed him, and the doctors did so much for his health they killed him with experiments. I lost another son named François, who would have been as pretty as my Louis is now, but the doctors were as mistaken about him as they were about Albert. My son Charles is just about to marry a pretty little Polish girl, a Massalska, whose family pay her *dot* in paper, that is in claims against the Court of Russia.

I said the other day, "If I were king"—my three daughters, who are far too well brought-up to know the rest of the quotation, said: "Then you would do a great many foolish things." "Not at all," I replied. "I am your father only through metempsychosis; I, such as you see me, have been a king. Here is the anagram of my two names, and the history of my reign:"—

#### THE REIGN OF THE GREAT SELRAHCENGIL.

He ascended the throne at the age of eighteen. Wishing to make War then, in order to make none later, and also to see if he had Courage and could justly respect himself, he declared hostilities against a neighbour, who had captured a Province from his father; he won three Battles, seized the

enemy's States, made him prisoner, and then returned him everything on condition that he would defend him against the other neighbours if they wanted to quarrel with him.

"I shall not need an Army now," said this great Prince. "My Soldiers shall be labourers and artisans. I will keep about my person a guard of ten thousand well-equipped, handsome men, whom my subjects shall relieve yearly, that none may lose the military spirit. I shall employ them in ballets, tragedies, masquerades at Court, excursions upon the water, and battues of foxes, hares, rabbits, pheasants, and partridges."

Thus spake Selrahcengil. Here is what he did for the manners, morals, and customs of his Kingdom. He ordained that the young people of both sexes should have the greatest liberty to know each other, and by that means escape deception in marriage.

Nevertheless (as the ardour of passion may conquer reason), should the first blindfolding of illusion be torn away he permitted all persons to be married three times, — it not being likely they would deceive themselves oftener than that; permission being also given to return to first or second, provided all parties were agreed. The children will thus be handsome and amiable, because they are children of love. No quarrels in the households. All, even the valets (having no ill-tempered masters), are happy and good.

The sons whose faces give least promise become Vicars, Doctors, Judges.

There are no Lawyers, therefore no lawsuits. The Books of the three professions are interdicted. The Vicars preach and paraphrase the Gospel. The Doctors gather simples, and write down the facts of each malady in order to draw useful conclusions. The Judge, who is only an umpire, reconciles all who seem likely to quarrel.

Selrahcengil has but three great Officers at Court: Grand Vicar, Grand Doctor, Grand Judge. They travel incessantly through his Dominions, to watch that no trouble comes in the consciences, the health, or the business of his subjects. Once a week he shuts himself up alone with each of them to receive their reports. This is all the work he does.

The Prince has neither cabinet, nor council, nor secretary. Here is how he manages the Finances. In order that those employed in receiving the revenues of the State shall not eat up the greater part of them, he has ordained that in each Parish a great iron coffer shall be kept, in which every man shall deposit his poll-tax. Each subject is taxed one ducat per head a year; but the richer pay for the poorer. He who earns but fifty florins pays twenty-five kreutzers only. This partition of assessment burdens none. Those who have less pay nothing, but, by that very means, they earn enough to obtain a revenue that comes under taxation. The Receiver-general goes round with a mule, takes the money from the iron coffers, and conveys it to the coffers of His Majesty.

The manufactures of the Kingdom are for the needs and luxuries of its people. Nothing is received from abroad. No money enters the kingdom, but also none goes out of it.

Foreigners are not welcomed. They must be very great Personages, or persons distinguished for much Merit; more is required than a mere certificate of good conduct; a great Reputation is necessary.

His Majesty sends no ministers to foreign courts; and receives none. He reads the Gazettes from time to time, to see if any great Conqueror has appeared; and he and his Court often laugh at the graces and disgraces of other Courts.

His Majesty issues no orders, that he may not be deceived

or disobeyed ; but he lets it be known what he wishes. For instance, he has expressed himself on the pleasure it would give him if all his great Nobles and Gentlemen would live on their estates for four or five months in the year, in order to spend a part of their revenues upon them ; and also to make sure that the Vicar, the Doctor, and the Judge were doing their duty.

All persons can present to His Majesty petitions, and even complaints, provided they sign their names to them. He guarantees secrecy, and to make it impenetrable, each person is directed to put his statement into the great Mouth of Truth which is under the peristyle of the splendid colonnade of his magnificent palace. His Majesty takes these statements out himself at night just before he goes to bed, and reads them all before he rises in the morning.

The worthy poor are assisted ; there are no others. Each seigneur sees to this by works of improvement in each village, which give employment to all, and by establishing Homes for those who are not in a condition to do any work.

His Majesty has twenty-five millions of subjects ; consequently twenty-five millions of ducats ; without having other costs than the salaries of the Vicars, the Doctors, the Judges, the Receiver-general, and the keep of the latter's mule. He would have some difficulty in spending his revenue, were it not for his taste for Art and Pleasure.

He loves Architecture and Gardens ; his whole Kingdom has become a garden, through the canals he has built to fertilize it, bordered with four rows of beech, linden, and chestnut trees. These canals flow through meadows abounding with cattle, and horses galloping free from field to field. This tranquil scene is very picturesque, and forms a Vista from the gardens of the Nobles, whose châteaux stand on beautiful lawns, neither too much nor too little diversified. These

residences are all of one storey, for the Prince has forbidden staircases throughout his Dominions. There is no uniformity in these châteaux, but much elegance.

Each Peasant has his little enclosure within a quickset hedge, of garden, field, and vineyard. The houses of the village are separate, to prevent conflagration, and painted white; the street, or road, is planted with fruit-trees, and a rivulet runs through, or round, each village.

There are no ruins, real or fictitious, anywhere, nor bridges, except where necessary. The Church in each village stands, smiling, on high ground, and is of Greek design; the music in all of them is fine.

There are scarcely any laws, for there are no crimes; every one is at his ease, liking pleasure and easy duty. There is, however, a *lex talionis*, in case, by chance, a criminal should appear.

The Sovereign takes care of the roads and the Public Works; but a great deal remains in his iron coffer, because he has neither Generals, nor Soldiers, nor Ministers, nor Presidents, nor Financiers to pay.

Now that is the state of the Kingdom of the Great Selrah-cengil.

As for his Court, His Majesty comes out of his private apartments at three o'clock and is sure to find a large assemblage in his vast salons. There are no Court days, nor *apartements*, nor State balls, nor *fêtes*; but every day there is something agreeable, which the company can choose for themselves. The Prince appears, or does not appear, as he pleases. No one rises more than once a day to receive him; and besides, he is the first of his class who likes to sit down. To prevent a circle being formed, or a formal line anywhere, the sofas and chairs have rollers, on which they are pushed about.

As for the Officers of the Guard, all young fellows and the handsomest men in the Empire, they are always about the salons, waltzing, or planning pleasure-parties in the glorious Gardens, where tables and balls and music and suppers can be transported if they like.

A part of those Gardens are kept for the public, and that part contains everything that can possibly amuse it: games, singers, concert-halls, and *guinguettes*. There are smaller gardens also, intended for Societies, who obtain the key and spend the day there. Besides a lake of considerable extent, there is a river, with barges and gondolas and music, for those who are fond of navigation and moonlight.

All these people growing old together have not perceived it; they do not see one another's wrinkles; they think themselves always young, even while they change their tastes. There are pleasures for all ages; tranquillity in a salon or a bosquet, side by side with the noisier joys of youth. No one is unkind, all are happy, and the reign of this Great Prince has lasted sixty-eight years.

Any person conscious of Eloquence, or gifted with a talent for Poesy, that nurse of Urbanity, can mount a species of pulpit and speak, or read aloud whatever may contribute to Happiness, Morality, and the extension of the Fine Arts or Literature — on condition that he bores nobody. A gentle mockery is usually sufficient to stop him.

Among so many other pleasures there is a tennis-court, a splendid Library, several reading-rooms, always a good breakfast for every one, and a Picture-Gallery, in which are fine copies of famous paintings, that could not otherwise be had; also choice models in relief of noted public buildings.

In short, up to the death of this good Prince, who was buried at the age of eighty, in a species of Elysian Fields he had prepared for all his subjects, — there never were any



people so happy as his, and never any Sovereign who, while amusing and ruling them well, had a reign more fortunate.

[A portrait.] I know very well that in naming Héloïse, whose portrait I am about to paint, I seem to undervalue two others, who are superior to her in one respect, which she has not the happiness to understand. Their names are Louise, and they both have the wisdom to love me a little, — a wisdom which she will never learn.

Héloïse will never have a master; she does more, and does it better than any man who might try to be so. She has pretty talents, little inductions, theories, and, unfortunately, enough reason to be master of every one, mistress of herself, and the mistress of none. It is for time to decide whether or not she is in the wrong for never being wrong. I would rather have to do with a good, mystical Catholic who, having wept through the holy sacrifice of the mass, would be capable of a passion, and after succumbing to it, would seek for pardon from the priest and the altar. This third Nouvelle Héloïse is of a dry and stern religion, mingled with some moral preservative, that rests upon duty which is pushed to extremes; and unless a person of that religion has a soul that is keenly alive, and keeps everything on its feet, that person is likely to remain within the limits of the principles of administration and the circle of conventional virtues.

Héloïse has a face that was made for feeling. She is too perfect not to have received that good gift from Nature added to all the rest. But she spends all her gifts in retail (in order not to spend them in bulk), in the small change of friendship, in attentions, in gratitude. Her strength of mind does battle against her heart, and if she finds an inclination to struggle against it, it carries the day.

Never did I see a more perfect figure. It has that well-



*La Fontaine*



proportioned shape susceptible of all the graces, and its ease has passed into her manners. All that she says and does is natural. Art could not serve her as nature does; yet it is nature embellished by taste. Extreme gentleness pervading her whole being allures, touches, subjugates, without our being aware of it, by the least alarming and yet the most rapid approaches. Everything about her contributes to this: the tones of her voice, her little attentions to right and left, her way of listening, her fascinating glance, which is taken as a favour, though, in truth, she cannot help using the sweetest eyes in the world. All this attracts both men and women; the first do not perceive the ascendancy she is about to acquire over them, and the second do not perceive her superiority over themselves.

She is always busy, without having anything to do. She has to talk to others in order to keep them pleased with her, and yet, with that general desire of pleasing, she has not the slightest coquetry. She changes her place; she begins a score of things at once; she is very eager, though she does not seem so because her ways are all gentle, and her movements never hasty.

Héloïse is twenty years old to those of her own age, and fifty to those who are fifty. She adapts herself to all with amiable good-nature. Her tact in society is very sure; she speaks well, observes everything, is never duped; her tone is excellent, always graceful and in good taste. She is fresh, with the prettiest blond hair I have ever seen. She is ravishing on horseback, and dances well; I guessed from her countenance her delicate style of drawing and her dainty handwriting. She has delicacy and refinement in her mind as in her countenance.

Héloïse has her little deceitfulnesses like any other. It is not possible she is wholly sincere when she says so much

good of other women. "Madame so and so does not seem to me very amiable," some one says to her. "That is because you do not know her," she answers. "Madame de — is very ugly." "Without being disagreeable," she adds; "and then she has so much wit." — "You must admit that that other woman has very little, and no charm at all." — "She has the finest features I ever saw; she has beauty." — "That one over there is very stiff in figure." — "Heavens! not at all; you might say that of me; I wish I were made like her." People look at each other, and look at her, and laugh; but it does not disconcert her.

Héloïse has the good sense to like French literature and English gardens. Another quality that she has, happily for me, is a love for the country and a delight in adorning it with her delicate taste. As soon as I noticed that I said she had a fine soul, — and I was not long in discovering how compassionate and generous she is, and what strength of mind she can show on occasion. She is equable, without moods, without caprices, and as amiable in the evening as she was in the morning. But, after all, how was it? We have been enchanted with her all day; yet, if we recapitulate at night what has happened we are not content with her, nor with ourselves. She has declined an interesting conversation by substituting some insignificant topic for what might have been a revelation of her heart. We had a thousand things to say to her; she managed to evade them all, and we scarcely know how she did it. She escapes us at every moment, especially that in which we expect it least.

I have spoken of her grace, which is not that of any other woman; she resembles herself alone. Impossible to say to what country or what epoch she belongs. French grace is so well known, so easily foreseen, so little varied, that all the women of that country are like one another; they

come from a convent, they have the same hair-dresser, same milliner, same dancing-master. Polish women have sometimes too much *laissez-aller*, English women too little; and the graces of other countries oblige us to quarrel with them. But naturalness, appropriateness, and charm are always in the demeanour, the motions, the face, the conversation of Héloïse.

I spoke of her gentleness: it is far indeed from insipidity; her manner of expressing herself is piquant, clever, gay, amusing, and never commonplace. But when she has said something worthy of remark and said it well, she drops her voice, as if asking pardon for it. When her beautiful eyes do not serve her purpose in looking at a thing or person she half closes them, and then from beautiful they become pretty and very amusing to watch; but let another woman do the same thing and she makes a frightful face. Great and striking beauties must not come and sit beside her, for her beauty is only touching. Their portraits should be painted for a great salon, or gallery, but the portrait of Héloïse we put in our cabinet, where there shall be none but our Albanos, Correggios, Titians, and Raffaelles.

“Why do you love her so much?” may be said to me. — “I don’t know why.” — “What do you hope?” — “Nothing; but I feel that I shall be tenderly attached to her all my life.” How much it costs me to say that, when I think that I may pass my life without again seeing that most perfect and distinguished being, who unites all charms to my eyes.



## XI.

1767-1794.

BELCÆIL.

A COUP-D'ŒIL on Belcœil. In the first place, it is not known exactly what that means. Belcœil is an old name, an old village, called so by my forefathers; and as this writing of mine is a sort of work which resembles nothing in particular, and I am doing it solely for the sake of Belcœil, which I love more and more daily, that title will do as well as another. I write as it happens; sometimes a description of my gardens and my country-house, sometimes remarks, with reasons given, on the gardens of other nations; occasionally all is practical, at other times romantic, even rural; but in early days I liked the pastoral better in books than in love. There is some imagination in it; I let myself be carried away by my subject; fable bears me along, the gardener forgets himself. Possibly there is some philosophy and reason; but also things without common-sense. In short, this that I write is just what Martial says of himself: *bona et mala*.

Would that I could rouse the whole universe to my taste for gardens! It seems to me that it is impossible for a bad man to have it. He is not susceptible of it. However much, for the same reason, I esteem the solitary herbalist, the airy, skipping capturer of butterflies, the scrutinizing investigator of shells, the gloomy lover of minerals, the glacial geometrician, the three daft spirits of music, painting,

and poesy, the musing author, the absent-minded thinker, the cautious chemist, there are no virtues that I do not attribute to him who loves to talk of and to make gardens. Absorbed by this passion, which is the only one that augments with age, men lose daily all those other passions that shake the calmness of the soul and disturb social order. When a man has crossed the drawbridge of a city (that refuge of both moral and physical corruption), to go and work or delight in his country-place, his heart feels the same sensation that his lungs derive from the breeze that refreshes them, and it smiles at nature.

Fathers of families! inspire *gardenmania* in your children. They will become the better for it. Let the other arts be cultivated to embellish the one I preach. When our thoughts are full of shading a dell, or clearing the course of a brook, we have too much to do to be dangerous citizens, scheming generals, caballing courtiers. How could we write against the laws, upset our superiors, or plot against the Court while our heads are full of our groves of Judas-trees, our banks of flowers, our labyrinths of platanes to lay out? Scarcely have we time to profit by the smiles of a woman ere we leave her in haste to expiate in the meadows the most charming of sins.

It is to my father that the glory of my Belœil is due; he wins thereby as much honour as if he had made an epic poem. All that is grand, dignified, noble, majestic belongs to him. After the great ideas there was nothing left for me to produce but those that are pleasing and interesting. After all, grandeur and greatness grow wearisome, usually. I prefer a song of Anacreon to the Iliad; the Chevalier de Boufflers to a cyclopedia. I console myself easily for not knowing how to make an Æneid; a little couplet or a little coppice pleases me better.

A sojourn in the country is never more agreeable than when we see the woods, the meadows, the streams taking new aspects beneath our hand. Satisfied with the harmony of the grand proportions that I found in my garden I have been careful not to break it; I have sought to earn my merit in a different way. I began by making a second courtyard and pulling down a portion of the main building that did not please me; I narrowed the moat, filled in part of a pond, and by new plantations and vistas through the old ones with diversities of tone, I began a new approach which hundreds of workmen carried out in a manner that proved I was right.

Everywhere there are pieces of water; one is surrounded by a marble balustrade; another with slender bars of iron, partly gilded. Hedges of the yoke-elm, fresh and stately, but not monotonous or closely trimmed, I have left as frames, with which to inclose, in some, secluded gardens, Italian arbours, bosquets, magic bowers; in others of grander and nobler proportions, a charming cloister around a piece of water, salons of turf, corbeils of flowers, a little forest of roses in quincunx. On all sides flow the loveliest streams in the world, pure, limpid, sparkling, each communicating with the rest. All my paths are green and lead into the forest beyond my garden. I have dared to venture upon turf on all sides; my sheep are my gardeners; they make me a lawn, or rather, I should say, a green velvet carpet. Two hundred acres are the extent of this French garden territory. A piece of water, of twenty acres, divides it into two equal portions, which are flanked by canals, their arms disguised as rivers being visible in the forest and the surrounding enclosures, which contain preserves of stags, wild-boar, and deer, the overplus of which are turned out into my woods, that are fifteen miles long and six miles wide.

It is at the end of the large central piece of water, after crossing the drawbridge over one of the encircling canals, that many roads diverge from one point into the forest; the one in the centre being one hundred and twenty feet wide. I need not speak of the glades, the openings, the broad spaces, the groups of noble oaks and beeches to be met with here and there, and all designed to give a view of stag and hounds.

I return to my garden. In the varied designs of the two parts of it which the great lake separates, there are, as I have said, many bosquets. They are all unlike one another, and each has its own destination. One is dedicated to those I love best; another to my soldiers; another to my peasants; a fourth to my workmen, and so on. All are designated by attributes and different styles of decoration and inscription. Others, of another nature, are still to be completed; these are: the bosquet of the soul's peace; that of sensuous delight; that of idleness; that of coquetry, indifference, jealousy. All of which will be treated mythically as they should be; but the latter, unhappily, may be too often occupied. There will be a little promenade, very shady, where those who issue from these bosquets can meet together. The melancholy dreamers will be full of their own little griefs, — which often give them pleasure and to which they yield without resistance, — for who has not known vexations, obstacles, parents, bores, misunderstandings, and envy? The happy dreamers, they will think of being peace-makers, of hope, of joy — ah! what know I? — of change, perhaps. One bosquet is to Virgil, one to Ovid, another to Horace, another to my friends. May that last be sometimes frequented! but alas, I dare not make it too large. There is also to be a house to Socrates.

Beyond the plantations to the east are twenty acres of

vegetables, herbs, and fruit-trees, surrounded by a wall covered with the finest espaliers. Here are four basins with jets of water. In the centre is the temple of Pomona, where we go to eat fruit. The hot-houses, a garden of melons, another of figs deserve, they tell me, a great deal of praise. All that is done. This is what I am about to do the coming year: In the greenhouse building, the structure of which is very charming, five little pavilions are to be raised to break the uniformity, which is seven hundred feet long, and under each will be a marble basin and a fountain to refresh the eye; and here will grow the earliest and most prolific fruits.

A winter room at the end of this building has an ante-chamber and a cabinet of glass, which serve as an asylum for the choicest flowers until the sun and the springtide come to fetch them out and present them to all nature. Standing at right angles to this little building is the gardener's house, treated in the Dutch manner (for he comes from Holland). I shall make him a garden, to amuse him, in the style of his own country, with grotesque china images, gilt men, glass fountains, which will serve to show him what bad taste is. It will be a sort of object lesson, and the burlesque of it rather funny. The rest of this part of the garden beyond the greenhouse is a nursery; it will be covered with a fine wire netting, and contain a great quantity of birds, which I shall not make unhappy. They shall have their own house opposite to that of the gardener, and a comfortable winter salon, where these deceived little musicians shall sing their loves to the goddess of the spring and to the spring itself: Flora's music! and to her shall be raised and consecrated an altar in the centre of the little garden in the nursery-ground, where the rarest flowers are raised and kept until they are needed for the corbeils, the

English beds, the sacred wood, the garden of the Hesperides, and my islands. Near-by is a triumphal arch where the garden ends by the eastern canal. Beneath it there shall be a little port for two gondolas, four seats, a bower, and circumjacent water with every means for splashing gloomy persons tempted to yield themselves to grave reflections.

Already I am beginning to have a navy. I sail on my great lake, which communicates with all the canals, the pieces of water, and the river. My galleys are decked with pennants and manned by youthful mariners, dressed in my livery. As it would be too finical, too regular, or irregular, to have an island in my lake, I have a fancy to build a frigate there, a frigate of thirty guns. No one would be able to understand how she got there. She will look as if at anchor; but she will really be fastened to the bottom of the lake. We shall go out there in little boats (of which I have a number) and sup on the fine summer evenings; indeed, as it is, our sails on the lake with music and fair moonlight are most agreeable.

Now comes the part on which I have been last engaged; it is just finished and is, to my thinking, the most interesting of all, because it is more or less rural (occupying more than forty acres), lies nearest to my apartments, and is wholly my own creation. Behind the walls of the greenhouse and the vegetable garden I have built, towards the east, a Tartar village. I say Tartar because the huts for the shepherds and the sheep are outlandish in style, with projections of tree-trunks that form a veranda. There is also a dairy in the form of a mosque, its minarets serving as pigeon-houses. These minarets, as every one knows, are species of columns or spires from which the criers of the Mussulmans call to prayer.

The twenty-four acres of greensward on which my village



is built are level, except where they slope insensibly to the brink of the river that waters them. My inhabitants go during the daytime to live in the woods and fields; they depart and return to the sound of their own music. In number they are between seven and eight hundred individuals,—partly sheep, with other animals of all sorts; for instance, I am now expecting the fattest cows of Switzerland, who will present at night what Cybele had in abundance to the shepherds and their mistresses or their wives. I am having the latter taught to sing and to play on various rustic instruments; their voices are rustic too, and I wish to encourage clear, gay tones. It is to rest those voices, strained by the village songs, that I mean to have bagpipes, horns, hautboys, and great flutes, like the Tyrolese. These shepherds and milkmaids are to wear a uniform worthy of the beauty and the simplicity of nature, of which they are now the high-priests. The bulls have a threatening air; but the children of my Tartar farm play happily together on the banks of the river.

There are vistas through the plantations eastward, and openings in the espaliered walls, so that I see from my French garden beyond the village to the plain, which makes my Tartar park seem larger than it is. Now, as I want ever to see life, I must fill the void left by my flocks when they roam all day; and this is how I shall do it: I love animals as much as I hate fools; I shall fill my plain with fallow-deer, Barbary sheep, gazelles, foreign animals of all kinds, even wild ones that have been tamed among us, sheep with pendent fleeces, horses such as I have seen in the north of Europe with their white manes sweeping the ground. One species, discredited by most of us very unadvisedly, shall be of this colony. Its name is not in vogue, and seems ignoble. I speak of the ass. I love his

style of mind, his maliciousness, his reasoning, his obstinacy I shall have several, if I can find any sufficiently philosophical to live with me without ambition, and if, sacrificing honours and favour, they are content to repose on my turf — instead of being seated in an arm-chair before a desk. All this will be accomplished in two years.

At one end of the village and Tartar farm rises by imperceptible degrees a hill, very natural, very real, commanding my gardens of all nations, upon which will stand the column of Marathon. But instead of the names of the ten thousand Greeks it will bear upon it those of Hannibal, Alexander, Epaminondas, Xenophon, Cæsar, Scipio, Maurice, Frederick-Henry of Nassau, the great devil Lamoral de Ligne, Farnese, Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Catinat, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., Montecuculi, Louis of Baden, Eugène, Lacy, Frederick the Great, Loudon.

It is here, at this point, that begins the tableau of human life, which has been finished for some years. Come ye, and walk here, proud philosophers who know everything — except yourselves. I despise<sup>d</sup> your ostentatious march; mine is meeker, truer, and will bring me to the end more pleasantly. Come, ye grasping, ye ambitious beings, foolish preceptors of the human race, stern moralists to others, presumptuous men of letters, and sham legislators, courtiers, and men of fashion, come into my groves.

First, here is an arbour, it is that of childhood; a little barrier parts it from adolescence, where begins a pathway, bordered with roses and lilies, carpeted with moss, charming in its freshness, that leads to steps on which to kneel around the statue of Love in white marble. Here is the altar, the sacrifice, the oblation, all at the same time, and whenever you will. A little road, bordered with grapevines, brings us to old Silenus, crowned with tendrils, and

holding a cup which he gayly offers. Here we may linger, I think, a moment without leading to consequences. Thence the same path, rejoining that of Love, leads to a dusky thicket; in this are the Laughs and the Games, also in white marble. One there is in black marble and more serious; that one points to the only road that pierces deeper into the thicket, and leads to a ruin placed in a semicircle. It is of twelve marble columns in three storeys, and gives the idea of those baths of antiquity.

Other Games, more pleasing, point the way to the cabinet of Philosophy. This is a verdant salon, with a rivulet that winds its way through the flowery mead, o'er golden sands and silvery pebbles. Across it are one or two tiny marble bridges which come into use in times of siege. Here stands the statue of M. de Voltaire in a bower of winter roses. Yes, 't is here, 't is to you, divine Voltaire, that I made this offering. Though you love no sheep that are not of your fold, mine come and browse upon the flowers I have planted at your feet. My vassals and I bless him who gave intelligence to some and bread to others. 'T is to the author of the Epistles from the Lake of Geneva and on Agriculture, to the apostle of tolerance and beneficence, to the lord of the village, the maker of Ferney, that I here sacrifice. If it were to the author of the *Henriade* and other master-pieces of all kinds, my wealth would not suffice to raise the temple, which should be of gold and azure.

Farther on, at the end of an alley that has no regularity, the good La Fontaine listens, attentive, to the various animals of my numerous family, and catches their *zoo-wits* in the act. I invoke his own to brighten mine; I say to him: "Make me talk like thy menagerie, thy pigeon-cote, thine aviary. Console me, inspire me, protect me, sublime and simple La Fontaine."

Molière, in a corner, is laughing at all and making me laugh. I think of that great saying: "You are a jeweller, M. Josse?" It was that which won him the small distinction of my placing him here.

But before entering this dwelling of the three greatest of all philosophers, we passed, on the left, the statue of one who was none at all—the unhappy, the eloquent, the stupendous Jean-Jacques. He is in bronze, because of the blackness of his spirit; there are thorns and some stones on the path that leads to him through yonder rather wild piece of woods. It is because of his paradoxes and his ill-temper that I have put him there for punishment, outside the door of the salon of philosophy.

From this salon of philosophy we go by flowery paths to the chamber of Death environed with cypress, myrtle, and laurel. In it is a sepulchre of white marble, for which, before constructing it, I took my measure, that I might lie at ease in case, perchance, I end my days at Belœil. For, being as lazy after death as I have been in life, I shall wish to be left wheresoever I close my eyes to the light. Meantime this last retreat is a long parallelogram filled, summer and winter, with roses, heartsease, and immortelles.

Returning to the ruined Temple, the thicket on the left (that on the right leads to the garden of the philosophers) encloses the mausoleum of Adonis, standing amid an island of anemone, the choice of which conveys the idea that they are still stained with his blood. From there we pass to another scene, the Temple of Gnoссия [Ariadne] in white marble, near to the river Cephissus, which, as we know, compels the nymph to bestow the kiss that she has promised. Then another space, close by, yet wholly separated, contains the Temple of Morpheus, surrounded by poppies. This is a covered salon, painted within as if open to the sky. In the

centre is a fine statue of the god of the lazy, or rather of pleasure-seekers tired by pleasure. Vast divans are all around it, where scores of weary beings can lose the last remnants of their vigour in sluggish idleness.

I have a qualm about the Temple of Gnossia. It stands in so small a space, to which its eight columns are duly proportioned, that I fear 't is more the bathroom of the goddess than her temple. Had I a greater space to devote to the goddess of Tenderness, I would outdo Cyprus, Cythera, Paphos, and Amathus; Paros and Carrara should exhaust their treasures in her service. Ruined in peristyles and bas-reliefs, I should be so denuded as to be unable to leave this temple, where, as everybody knows, the worship of the goddess must be carried on naked. Cupid would be angry; he likes no rival worship to that of his mother. "Little god," I should say to him, "there's a worship for you that is better than this; it is in my heart. 'T is a temple less costly, but more divine."

An upper canal, which surrounds my riding-school, is fed, near two great trees as old as the country, by a little cascade, issuing from a spring, which rises also in the first of the three courtyards and supplies the water of the whole château, the bathrooms, kitchens, and stable. Stone balustrades with iron railings separate these courtyards, around which rise the main buildings of the château, which has forty-six complete suites of rooms, twelve of which are rather magnificent, and are made extremely gay and convenient by twelve salons in the four towers of the château.

I had under my eyes from the windows of the three chief salons, the stiffest, coldest part of the grounds,—a patch of water without effects, a patch of flowers without grass, hedges like the frame of a mirror defining the limits of the whole garden. This is what I did:

Just before starting for the war in Bavaria, I made with my own hands a plan in relief, out of clay and little branches, on a table that was twenty-five feet in length. After being away three years without seeing Belœil, I came back to find this melancholy part of my garden (that to the west) metamorphosed into the loveliest of meadows, with banks of flowers here and there, and a river, flowing through a smiling valley. I had given the lay of the land by my eye, not by my legs; for I am not fond of fatiguing myself, or, to tell the truth, of fatiguing others.

But in order to get this very considerable flow of water, I was obliged, necessarily, to narrow the ground; and in this I succeeded perfectly, by making a gentle ravine which, before the water falls to the level of the river below, is rich with a wealth of the rarest shrubs and, on one side, with a forest of orange-trees, buried in their tubs. Above the fall of water I have built a temple to I don't know what god, — dedicate it to whom you will, — a superb ruin, all in marble, the columns of which, though well-preserved, instead of presenting the repellent aspect of most of the ruins that I know, fill the mind with rich ideas. In the apse are four pilasters of Genoese marble carved in arabesques; the seats are pieces of marble, which I suppose to have fallen from some pediment. This hall, rather vast and paved with marble, is crossed by a small canal or conduit, which carries the water of the river above, between the columns of the portico and down three falls of twenty feet, with great rapidity, into the river below.

There is scarcely a morsel of these marbles that I have not changed from year to year a dozen times to be sure that each shall have its due effect, and people say I have succeeded. Following the river, which in flowing onward makes an isle of roses, we find on the left bank an obelisk, dedicated



by friendship to Valour. It is not my blame if Charles is the object of it; it is not my deed if Charles has distinguished himself in war; it is not my fault if I gave life to a being so perfect; the father is nought; the man exists; the hero is celebrated. Accuse me not, therefore, of partiality. Of pride, if you will; I can conceive that that may be.<sup>1</sup>

This obelisk, also in marble, which we approach through a sacred wood by a marble path across a beautiful lawn, is forty feet high. On one side, in letters of gold, are the words: *To my dear Charles, for Subacz and Ismaïl*. On the second side: *Nec te, juvenis memorande, silebo* (from Virgil). On the third: *Sein Ruhm macht meinen Stolz, seine Freundschaft mein Glück*.

I have carried this lawn very nearly across the moat of the château close up to the towers on two peninsulas; also on an island of swans, another of ducks, a third of geese, which latter have a little throne of four tiny columns of marble on a grassy mound. There is also a floating island, a Chinese island, and still another island, on which there is a very singular building, the lower floor of which belongs to bees; the next is an aviary; the third a pigeon-cote; the fourth is the home of storks. I thus break up a mass of water which was too considerable, and I bring my natural garden, my meadow, as I call it modestly, beneath the very windows of my three grand salons.

The spirit of detraction is, as I have said elsewhere, the sign manual of mediocrity. Many of these details will be thought too petty. To play at genius we must call things trivial. It is this point of view alone that applies that term to garden works, which, if done appropriately, will point to

<sup>1</sup> Great God! how have I been punished for it! I have no strength to change what I have written above. It will be seen elsewhere what I have added.



*Belair*



objects most interesting to the soul. Must we be poor and insignificant to have the pleasure of being natural? It is allowable in me, more perhaps than in any other man, to say: "I do not decide between the French and English garden, between Kent and Le Nôtre." And to prove that my mind is of neither side (though my heart is for that of the irregular) I will admit that visitors to Belœil are struck with the French manner and do not willingly turn from admiring the superb developments of my father's work to come and dream in mine. The reason is, one cannot force men to think, and the greater number prefer to look than to feel.

What I have written, and it is written without wishing or being able to lessen the merit of my French gardens, will, I trust, win a merit for mine with all true worshippers of the god of taste — be they amused or instructed, interested, made to think, or ravished. May Belœil give back to posterity the happiness and the sweetness I have enjoyed here! Let those who are not like me amend their ways, or die with envy that there is one man upon this earth who is perfectly happy; and let those who do resemble me share, when I am no longer here, the felicity of the maker and possessor of these tranquil gardens.

You who do not own a garden ready-made, and who desire to make one in treacherous climes, meditate, calculate effects, exaggerate nothing; if you cannot have genius and taste, be logical — if you can be no better. But what observations to make! what essays! I know well you cannot wipe out bosquets as you can a tree ill-placed on your paper design; but, nevertheless, stand off, turn about, look on all sides at your effects, in order to change your plantations. Correct nature, instead of employing art to make nature. There are few brooks, for instance, that flow as we want them: you must give them an easier course; inclose them with some

particular scene and fringe their borders suitably. Barriers are annoying to meet with and never good to see, except from a height that dwarfs them ; vineyards have a most disagreeable effect for eight months of the year, fields for six, flowers for ten, if not renewed.

The sheen of flowers, the tones of a varied verdure and of fruits may give to one garden great superiority over others ; but, after much experience, I find that we ought to make masses ; if not, there is too much twinkling of colour ; let there be masses of roses, of pinks, or tulips ; and let them be renewed, by buried pots if necessary. But never any stands of flowers in gradation, as if for the *fête* of a parish saint or a chapel of the Virgin. And so with shrubs ; a score together, all gray in tone, or purple, or rose, or white, or yellow, or flesh-coloured like the magnolia. I know that all this must be subordinate to the rays of the sun and the hours of the day ; but it is a necessary work ; be not discouraged ; it is for the sun to protect that which we do only for him to put the final touches.

Drive all trades from gardens ; no frame-work, no trellises, no painting, no hoops to the beds ; let the branches twine together at their own sweet will. Occupy yourselves in your garden. Bring with you and amuse the charming sex ; let the paths be well beaten that they may not wet their pretty feet. Through winding arbours, narrow and fragrant with roses, jasmine, violets, and honeysuckle, lead them to the baths, or to their sofas ; give them their embroidery-frames, their knitting, their netting, but, above all, their writing-desks, in which the sand, or something else, is always missing — though secrets, ignored by husbands and lovers, are always there. Resting on their knees, those desks will serve them to tell sweet lies with crow-quills.

I detest rough sketches of great things ; if they be touched



at all they must not be failures. No ruins of Palmyra in the style of those of General Conway; their whiteness, their polished columns set a bad example; crumbling arches too well kept become ridiculous. Ruins should convey the idea of places of dignity passed away with the celebrated persons who inhabited them. But when one sees the *Greekery* of certain Englishmen, and the Gothic of Mr. Walpole, one is tempted to believe that the delirium of a bad dream contrived the work. I much prefer his "Castle of Otranto" to that on the Thames, which is quite as distraught, and not nearly so gay.

Temples ought either to inspire sensuous pleasure or to recall that secret awe that was felt on entering them in days of old; but what can we feel on beholding *templomania*, such as my Lord Temple was led into by his name?

I should think much of the place of a Lord Botetourt, near Bristol, but it has no water save that which comes down from heaven. In vain has he built certain Chinese bridges over hollows, making believe that water flows beneath. No one is long the dupe of that; and what I saw at my Lord Mansfield's from the windows of his house is only one instance of an unfortunate lack in many of the finest gardens in England. The celebrated Mlle. Sophie Arnould, when some one was trying to make her admire an English garden, remarked, pointing to a trickling ditch over which a bridge had been thrown, "It is as like a river as two drops of water."

The English might diminish this difficulty if it were not for a mania with them to get away from the Thames; they have not known how to profit by that advantage. The Duke of Marlborough has supplied the want by turning a river through his park, where it becomes both broad and rapid, and flows with a roar. I cannot forgive my Lord Pembroke for letting his run sluggishly, like a canal. They love grot-



tos in England, it seems to me ; that of my Lord Tilney has cost him much more than the pleasure it gives ; and I only like that at Twickenham because I pictured to myself Pope sitting there, engaged upon *Man*. He worked almost as well in gardens ; for his, though small, is very pleasing. It now belongs to Mrs. Stanhope.

I never like semi-foreign things. The Duke of Devonshire has brought back from his travels beauties that do not go well with his landscape ; the little French and Italian that he has at Chiswick did not please me at all. But what can be more beautiful than King's-Western, and the view from the river Mersey and the whole of Wales ? Is anything more superb than Windsor ? What a forest ! what majesty ! In other days the ancient oaks of the forest of Dodona gave forth oracles. I was tempted to inquire of these. They inspired the awe with which our souls are penetrated by the approach of divinity.

Blenheim and Kew are all that are best for flower-beds and rarest shrubs. Wilton next, for the sake of its bridge, its mill, and its busts, though the latter, which are too numerous, are in the house, and I would rather see them in the gardens. Lastly, the lodges of the Duke of Cumberland. These are what gave me the greatest pleasure in England. I do not speak here of the architecture of the country. The heaviness of Sir John Vanburgh is well known, as well as his epitaph, which is an excellent joke. Inigo Jones, noble and simple in his work, is the last who has done honour to England in this style. He has imitated the antique rather too closely in his narrow doors and windows. Greenwich would have done him more credit, it seems to me, if he had joined the two wings in the wood, at the lower end, by a superb temple and mausoleum, filled with urns, to receive the ashes of the brave sailors who make the hon-

our and wealth of the kingdom, and are the admiration of foreigners.

I have said nothing of Sion House, formerly a Catholic convent, then the residence of Cardinal Wolsey, now the property of the Duchess of Northumberland. It stands on the bank of the Thames, with a splendid view of Richmond and the little house of my Lady Harrington.

Those who can call to mind the sublime and stupendous scenes of Shakespeare, and the grotesque ones of the author of "Hudibras," will have a sense of them here in these gardens of England, as well as in her morals, medicine, and philosophy. We owe to the English great obligations. Even their defects are of benefit to others. I defy any one to work really well with Nature who has not been in England, if only to learn neatness. For instance: go into the finest palace precincts of France or the residences of the Empire; I think more of the small country-place of a London shop-keeper, where the furniture is kept like a snuff-box, the turf like a billiard-table, and the shrubs cared for like the hair of a pretty woman. It is neatness that I commend the most. Without it a man should quit the meadows, which he is not worthy to inhabit, and contribute to increase the filth of great cities, where his soul will acquire the same and lose its purity.

The taste for gardens has departed from Italy; behold what they are doing there! No more turf; no longer a Sabine valley, as in the days of Horace; the charming Tibur is no more! What has become of that spot which he paints so well as a natural garden? —

Quà pinus ingens, albaque populus  
 Umbram hospitem consociare amant  
 Ramis, et obliquo laborat  
 Lympha fugax trepidare rivo.

Perhaps it was this ode that gave to the English the idea of their gardens, for they all have Horace in their heads as well as Homer and Virgil.

It seems as though the Italian climate must have changed; at any rate, the love of gardens has passed from the south of Europe to the north. On arrival, it had an audience with the Empress of Russia. They understood each other on the spot. It became her Bostangy-Pacha; or rather, the conqueress of the Turks is herself the gardeneress of Czarsko-zelo. The legislatrix of the greatest of empires sows her own lawns. Czarsko-zelo, which contains what the empress calls her fancies, presents on all sides the most charming pictures. These fancies, so-called, are water and optical effects, well imagined and well varied, such as a bridge of Siberian marble of an architecture in the style of Palladio, baths, a Turkish pavilion, groups of islands, iron gates, a ruin, monuments to the victories of Romanoff and Orloff, a superb rostral column in the middle of the lake to commemorate Czesma; on the bank a charming building; agreeable contours everywhere, quantities of flowers and exotic shrubs, lawns as well kept and as fine as those of England, temples, colonnades, and, above all, the grand staircase of Hercules on the garden side,—all of which makes this garden one of the most interesting in the world. It is here that the great princess, letting fall for a moment the reins of government, takes up a pencil, a rake, a pruning-hook; which implements, however, she does not handle as she would a sword if destiny had not made her, for the honour of her sex, a woman.

Peterhoff is two leagues distant from Czarsko-zelo. It is the most imperial dwelling of all the summer residences of the Court, consequently the least gay. The petty Dutch style in which Peter the Great began it is visible; also the

enlargement of his ideas from what he had seen during his travels. It was in the first manner that he built himself on the seacoast a house that he called *Monplaisir*, where, in harbours ill-designed, ill-planted, there are traps, clocks, harpsichords, chimes, organs, musicians, ducks, hounds, deer, all set in motion by water-wheels.

In the advice that I distribute, without being asked for it (for the worst little author, or maker of gardens thinks that he at least has no need of any), I always say : "It is by doing, reflecting, walking about, and noting down that you will see what persons with fitful notions cannot see. Let your eyes never weary of wandering over the beauties of Nature, and you will learn from her how to combine them." I have looked long at the open fields, and I have learned that the red of the poppies, the blue of the corn-flowers, the yellow of the turnips make the best of palettes ; unite them with the tender green of the flax, the honey-grass, the mottled buckwheat, the pale yellow of the wheat, the vivid green of the barley, and many other species that I do not yet know, and you will have an enchanting effect. To me, who do not like walls, and to whom the hedges and the canals suffice, this picture which lies in the distance beyond the gardens and plantations is a joy the more in my country home.

Let us do good, good to others ; let us make others live ; let us increase, for example, the populations of the air, the earth, the waters. As it was said of old, "Let there be light," and there was light, so I would fain that men should say, "Let there be birds, fishes, above all, swans." I seek a Jupiter, but I see no Leda ; perhaps some god might still renew the jest — but, ah ! there is no gallantry in heaven now. However, the margin of my fountains resounds with the cries of increase among my creatures ; the waters bubble

with the leap of carps, the ducks are making nests, even the geese are busy; the pigeons, hunted in other places, are flocking to the cotes. Methinks I am increasing the wealth of Nature by thus increasing the number of her children. Many peacocks, above all, are here; though I detest the proud. Let us meet comrades everywhere, no matter of what species they may be. Hey! good God! there are many on four feet that might serve as an example to those on two. The more we see and the more, unfortunately, we know of men, the more unconsciously we detach ourselves from them (keeping in our hearts indulgence for all, but devotion to few), and the more we attach ourselves to animals. Besides the many favourites that I have, such as a certain doe, which follows me when I ride on horseback, or swims beside my boat on the lake, I have an innumerable quantity of other creatures which come to me when I call them, in Turkish fashion, by clapping my hands,—two hundred geese, for instance, swans, ducks, birds; all of which are contentedly propagating in the castle moat.

I think much of statues; but those of marble are soon stained, those of stone become split, those of plaster make a wretched appearance. We should be mediocre in nothing, but especially not in such things. Unless you can put in a garden of a hundred acres one hundred thousand crowns' worth of statues, it is better to say you do not like them. That is what I say myself, but I fib. They ennoble and give life. It is well, too, to place a few busts in retired places, without pretension; still, they must seem to be a fancy or an act of friendship; if of love, so much the better. A statue dear to one's heart is better than the chariots of the Sun, or the horses of Victory; but remember, it must be placed only in a temple of mystery, filled with the spirit of the beauty we adore. Invoke that spirit in your gardens;

after satisfying your heart it will inspire you with taste; for we must love and be loved in order to create the beautiful. All the works of Love are perfect. Poems and gardens that breathe it cannot fail to charm. But is it to frighten children that white colossal figures are placed symmetrically, ranged like a regiment? Rather let each divinity stand relieved against dark masses of trees; and in place of those Roman emperors and Greek philosophers (with whose heads I long to play at ball) let us place in branchy bowers a Venus amid myrtle, a Mars inclosed in laurels and pomegranates, and even a Vulcan protecting a forge if we are fortunate enough to be able to combine the agreeable with the useful.

Let us ennoble all necessary work. Let the ditches for drainage recall the aqueducts of the masters of three-fourths of the then known world. Do not, however, push your draining too far; there are many trees which, if you leave them thirsty, will punish you. If you clear your brooks and rivulets it is good to see them flowing through the grass which should slope to their brinks by a verdant glacis, gentle and imperceptible; never a revetment of stone, above all, not of brick, always grass. I preach grass; and on the grass I shall preach love. No compasses, either; none were used for the lines of the Graces, and the cestus of Venus was never symmetrically put on.

But return we now to the sweet and tender thoughts inspired by the love of gardens. It is in rural life that you will best find means to practise human kindness. You will see what it is near by. You will learn to comfort the needs of humanity, to unite them with your tastes; the one will help the other, and heaven will bless the work. Do not hurry what you do; take time; choose the season that follows harvest. The great heats have passed; the



fields are deserted; no longer is the pretty picture seen of the rustic lover courting the wayward maid by doing half her work. It is now, when the labourers of the fields have nothing more to do, that you should dig and sow and plant. Renew your flowers; graft them, protect them; consider and consult the seasons and the climate. Banish from your garden the mournful image of the effects of poverty; let your inspectors concern themselves about the health of your workmen; restrain their zeal in the heat of the day, compel them to rest in the shade of the trees, and give them milk and bread. Their bodies blistered by the burning sun are painful to see. Exhausted with heat and fatigue, these poor unfortunates trouble the peace of those who make them toil by the knowledge of all that their poverty forces them to suffer. In the springtime and autumn we are consoled for the labour they bestow; we do not fear for their health because, the day's work done, they refresh themselves in the river, whither they coax the village girls who have brought them their frugal suppers and helped them, perhaps, to fill their baskets. The sex, though feeble in comparison with ours, is excellent for use in gardens. The gardening implements suit well those arms that the tanning of the sun has only mellowed. All that is not too hard to do may well be trusted to the village maidens, who, singing at their work, can earn enough to help a mother,—a scolding mother perhaps, but who at heart is a tender parent to her family.

Remember too the children; if they are seven years old they can gather up each morning the leaves that fall at night, or pull the weeds the dainty sheep refuse upon the lawns. The luxury of neatness, which I have so commended, will employ a score of little ones; and five or six hundred ducats a year thus spent will ensure to you the

beauty and neatness of your garden, and be a proper tribute paid by wealth to poverty. Employ all ages; but without fatiguing the old soldiers, whom wounds and age have banished to their cottages. They can do something; they can keep the little ones from playing, the girls from chattering, the labourers from lingering too long about their dinners; they could even wheel a barrow with slow steps, and fill the ruts that deface the roads beyond the park. On Sundays they can watch the visitors and see they do not gather flowers or break the shrubs, and that their lively lads do not disturb the brooding mothers on their nests.

It ought to enter into the policy of a wise government to protect the art of gardens and those who cultivate them, and to induce the seigneurs of a village to live upon their property, at least for six months of the year. But no, the government sends them to their regiments, never to their estates, where they might be far more useful. They could, for example, redress wrongs, reconcile the vicar and the baillie who have quarrelled about the former's niece; they could check the zeal of the young practitioner who is experimenting on the luckless villagers, preparatory to becoming a city physician; they could say to the apothecary (receiver of the refuse of city chemists): "Do not give those dangerous mixtures of American barks and juices; come into my garden and gather for yourself the indigenous and wholesome herbs." Above all, they could entreat the vicar to read fewer books on theology and more of the Gospel; to explain and paraphrase it, not interpreting it according to his own notions, but (finding there a mystery too great for him to solve) preaching from its pages obedience to the sovereign, to fathers and mothers, the seigneur, the parson, the accomplishment of duty, and concord with all.

Through physical advance into mental calmness and

from that to physical calmness, I advise others, from my own experience, to love gardens to the point of dreaming of them. May heaven preserve you from thinking as you go to rest of women, war, the Court, of evil-doers, fools, or fortune; but if some plan of a bower, an orchard, a brook goes to bed with you, you will surely have an excellent night. Your ideas will be lulled by the undulating water, by the waving gold of Ceres, by flowers, softly trembling to the breath of a gentle zephyr. Happy I — who have so often written that men should make a code, and even a régime of happiness — happy I, if I have now held out a branch to be seized by some about to drown in the ocean of the great world. Happy indeed is it to guard from storms, to offer a hospitable shade to those who are flung into the valley of tears, to teach them to plant with flowers the little distance which separates, as I have shown in my garden of allegory, the cradle of infancy from the sanctuary of death.

Yes, happy, if I have succeeded; if, in embellishing Nature, or, rather, in bringing her closer — let me say better still — in making her felt, I have imparted a taste for her. From our gardens she will lead us elsewhere; our spirits will have recourse to her power in all things; our purer hearts will be the temple, the most precious temple we can dedicate to her. Our souls will glow with her beauties; truth will return to live among us, justice will quit the skies; and, happier a thousand-fold than on Olympus, the gods will pray mankind to let them live on earth.

What I have written above (of which two editions are exhausted) has lost and at the same time gained in merit. I do not know if the gardens that I saw twenty years ago in England, eight years ago in France, seven years ago in

the North are still what they were ; neither do I know if my own gardens are such as I left them a year ago. I described them as they were before our armies abandoned my estates, my government, my regiment [in 1794 to the armies of the French Republic]. I wrote in happy days ; when the earth was not soiled with crime ; when our blood and our tears did not flow. Then I wrote names that I have no longer the strength to utter. All things have taken another aspect. But that does not change the intention of my work, which was simply to give counsel and example to others. These are not the tales of a traveller, they are only the precepts of a gardener.



*Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ,  
Sit modus lasso maris, et viarum  
Militiæque !*

HOR. *Odes, Book II., Ode to Septimius.*

## XII.

1780-1786.

### PARIS, BELCÆIL, AND TRAVELS.

I HAVE just given myself the trouble of counting in the journal of my secretary, M. Leygeb, the number of journeys I made up to this period of my life. I find thirty-four from Brussels to Vienna, always passing through Paris; twelve from the Army to Vienna during three wars; and eighteen from Belcœil to Paris up to the year 1786, after which the Turkish war and the Revolutions fixed me in Vienna for the next thirteen years. I have travelled twice through Russia, Poland, and Italy, once in Moravia, England, the Crimea, and through Provence. I will wager that I have spent three years of my life in carriages, and more than 150,000 florins in post-horses alone. As much more in cards, I fancy. My campaigns cost me more than 500,000 florins, and I gave over 200,000 to my regiment and other troops that I had under my command. I must have spent 500,000 more in gardens and buildings at Belcœil, which is not so very much; and the same for fêtes, reviews, camps for drill and exercise, public entries, inaugurations, etc. The ordinary expenses of my household in the Low Countries was 60,000 florins, without counting my ambulating residences [*maison ambulante*], which cost me 30,000 or 40,000 more. So in all, I think, I have spent some six or seven millions of our Viennese florins, or twenty millions of French francs, since I came into the world.

In 1780 I started, I do not now remember what day in the month of May or June, for Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, Petersburg, Warsaw, Cracovia, where I had business, Moghilani, which almost belongs to me, Léopol and Brunn, where I thought I was in love. I am forgetting to say that I started from Paris, No. 2 rue de Bourbon, the house of the Duchesse de Polignac, who had just been confined, where I had dined with the queen. I promised them to return at the same hour six months later; and I ordered the hired coach and my hired valet to be ready at that time. I found them at the very spot at the right hour, though many events had occurred in the meantime, among others the death of the Empress Maria Theresa.

It was on my return that I displeased the queen very innocently. As she mourned the death of her mother so deeply, I did not expect to see her first in public. But one of those officious persons who are always seeing and hearing things crookedly, found me with the Comtesse Diane during the hour for the public dinner of the queen. "She knows you have arrived," he said, "and she takes it very ill of you not to go to her at once." I was foolish enough to believe him and went. When she saw me the queen began to weep before all the Court, who were present, as usual, at the Sunday dinner, and she said to me on leaving the table: "You might have spared my feelings this public scene; you are not Austrian enough to disregard the customs of this country." I explained to her the cause of my indiscretion, and the storm, like so many others when we live in a zone of tempests, went by.

At Versailles, where I stayed only to amuse myself, they had the absurdity to suppose I was there with political intentions, and they said the same thing a little later when I went to Russia. "It is not natural," people said, "but very



clever of him to be so continually in the intimate society of the queen."

On another occasion I found myself suddenly out of favour with the queen, without suspecting it, because of some trifling gayety I had permitted myself (so she told me afterwards) about the Emperor and the Queen of Naples. While she was playing cards in the apartments of the Princesse de Lamballe, I placed myself behind her chair with my usual confidence, which never supposes that people are displeas'd with me. She did not speak to me, but I thought that was only because I was so much with her. I spoke to her and she answered curtly; still I suspected nothing. Mme. de Lamballe reminded me of it after the game and seem'd quite frightened; and being as good and kind as she is pretty, she promised to find out the reason. She told me the next day. As there was a masked ball in Paris that night, I hoped for an opportunity to have an explanation with the queen. She noticed that I was extremely sad all day, and she told Mme. de Simiane to make me believe that she was the queen, telling her a part of our quarrel, and assuring her that I should be a very good subject to mystify. I fell into the trap. Mme. de Simiane showed me her beautiful hands, which were not however as beautiful as those of the queen, but she made them her letters of credit. I was agitated; I believe I wept, and I justified myself with excessive warmth. She promised that we should continue on the same good terms as before. I represented to her that one never could trust to kings and queens, and I was afraid she would not be as kind to me the next day; therefore, to reassure me, I begged her to pinch the tip of her right ear every time that I pinched mine during the play the next evening at Versailles, where I always stood just below her box. In vain did I almost

tear my ear off; the queen did not touch hers. I had an opportunity of speaking to her about it as we came out. She thought me crazy, and it made her laugh so much she forgot her anger; which, after all, was not great, and there is but a step from laughter to forgiveness: people who laugh are always ready to pardon; and all the more if they are charming young queens.

The queen had the kindness to permit me to always stand beneath her box [at the theatre] where I could talk with her. The day when the Notables had been convoked I could not help looking at her when Cassandra said, in the *Tableau Parlant*, "The notables of these regions are now to assemble." The queen made terrible eyes at me to warn me to hold my tongue in case I should want to say a word about it; but she had some difficulty in repressing a laugh. The more she had been opposed to that cursèd invention, the less she wanted to show it, holding it as a principle of her conduct never to seem to condemn what the king did; but nothing could be more amusing than the air of prudence she assumed at such times.

It was those cursèd grumblers at Louis XV. who really flung poor Louis XVI. into his grave. It was the fashion to gird at everything. People watched for M. de Choiseul at his first relay on his way to exile. They rushed to Chanteloup; they cried out against the parliament of Maupeou. The latter, who knew his countrymen well, made Mme. du Barry (she told me this herself) buy a portrait of Charles I., that the king might daily behold before his eyes the results of weakness. M. de Voltaire also wrote to him with the same meaning, as I may have said elsewhere. It was the higher nobility who were most ungrateful, — they who had been loaded with Court favours, who, royalists and *émigrés* later, were scouting then at royalty. If there are, indeed,

Elysian Fields hereafter, that beautiful and most unfortunate queen will tell me she remembers how, on her relating to me some outrage those people had done her, I called them her "vile, charming subjects," seeing, even then, the harm done by levity and ingratitude, but far, indeed, from foreseeing that those subjects would cease to be charming and become what they have been from 1789 to 1797. Noble, sublime, beautiful, adorable, and hapless daughter and sister of my masters, look down from where you are amid the recompense of your virtues, and see the eternal regrets of those who, like myself, were the witnesses of your goodness, and are ever filled with the tenderest admiration and unceasing sorrow.

The king said one day, among his brutal, stinging sallies: "I always think of hunting dogs when I hear the names of Du Lot, Déssaulx, Turgot, Baudeau, Mirabeau, and the rest of those Economists." The Abbé Baudeau talked as badly as a man could about the art he professed [political economy], which only proves that it is not an art, but a trade. As he was one of my Council [in the Low Countries], though I never asked him for any advice, I took him one day into the country. After talking to me all the Economies, political and rural, I proved to him, by the latter, that he did not understand the former. I set him arguing with my farmers, mechanics, workmen, labourers, and the peasants of several villages; and I admired anew the good sense of that merchant of Smyrna, when a plough made by a learned man was in question. It was Mirabeau's father, by the way, who, in order not to compromise himself, used to pray: "My God, if there be one, I commend to you my soul, if I have one." That is all very pretty, as long as the death-knell does not sound.

The quarrel caused by the too clever friends and the too

wide-awake enemies of M. de Calonne and the Baron de Breteuil, was a chief cause of the misfortunes of France, consequently of Europe. I besought them a score of times to reconcile the excellent head of the one with the penetrating (though perhaps rather volatile) intelligence of the other; for the union was necessary and would have made an excellent administration.

M. de Pezai was one of M. Necker's last hopes, and became, in consequence, completely spoiled and puffed up. Necker employed him to write anonymous letters to the king, saying good of himself, Necker, and giving the king advice. Louis XVI. read the letters with pleasure. Necker, wishing to know their effect, made Pezai write that he should send no more unless the king should express a desire for them by looking in a certain direction as he came through the glass door of his cabinet into the gallery, and by making a sign. The king did so. Pezai continued writing. He happened to mention M. de Sartine as among his acquaintance, was seen to talk with him, and was guessed when the king asked that minister who he supposed was the author of the letters. Sartine expected to play a rôle, and Necker was then playing that which ruined France. Pezai afterwards pleased M. de Maurepas, made a fool of himself, was scolded, and died of the mortification. In his letters to the king he went so far as to prompt the king as to what he ought to say and do. "You cannot reign with grace, Sire," he wrote; "nature has denied you that; make yourself imposing, therefore, by great severity of principles. Your Majesty will soon attend a horse-race. You will there see a notary who will be writing down the bets of M. le Comte d'Artois and M. le Duc d'Orléans. You should say, Sire, on seeing him: 'What is that man doing here? should there be writings between gentlemen? their word suffices.'" All

this took place; I was there and saw and heard it. Every one cried out: "How true! how right! what a grand, kingly saying!—but that is the king's way."

Horses and cabriolets in the morning are the ruin of the young men in Paris. Englishmen do more harm to Frenchmen by their manners and customs, which Frenchmen adopt, than by their navy. The latter now waste their morning going about; they dine with men; they sup with courtesans, because they are in frock-coats and it is too late to dress and go into good company. And the "clubs" are putting a last touch to this state of things. Farewell politeness, respect, gallantry, the desire to please. They talk Parliament, House of Commons; they read the *Courier de l'Europe*; they talk horses; they bet, they play at *crebs*; they drink a melancholy "clairnet" wine, instead of the good champagne that enlivened their charming forebears and inspired their songs. Amiable Gauls! I entreat you to give the tone, and not to take it.

If Frenchmen cease to be children I will not answer for them. If races, newspapers, English clubs, frock-coats, boots, little cords in their leather breeches, theatres, and dreadful dramas cause them to lose their natural graces,—if they cease to be singing, dancing, and gallanting, the French will become furious madmen. The fashions and monstrosities that are leading them to this should be smothered. Never were any people so made for a Court. They were not created to think, but to obey, and to amuse themselves, without being responsible or intrusted with anything. O Frenchmen of to-day, who are losing the friendship of Europe without having acquired its esteem, you are rushing to perdition. This is no child's play. You are changed; and blood will have to flow to bring you back to common-sense. [Note by the prince in 1795: It was thus that I foresaw the evils of to-day. I can prove

that these words were written during the Assembly of the Notables. It is sometimes easy to be a prophet.]

What are called men of letters in the present day, discontented because men of the world are as well informed as themselves, show a great deal of haughtiness; they are sulky because they are not consulted by kings and ministers. They have read in the classics that philosophers were at Court in those days; but in the first place those were not philosophers, and in the second these gentlemen are not philosophers either, much as they talk philosophy. The ancients taught it without having it; it was their business, and it did neither harm nor good. But those of the present day are dangerous. A bone should be given them to gnaw. It is clear that those who have the most capacity will overthrow those who have least; it is also clear that those who are nothing are seeking to be something. They are saying (as if it were possible) that nobility should not be hereditary, and they aver that they speak in the name of the people — the People! who, if it were not for them, would be drinking in their cafés and singing without a desire to kill or to govern any one. In order to bring themselves nearer to the nobles (whom I don't like myself, unless they have merit, any better than the authors), why don't they write in favour of misalliances, marriages that Love, who was never a gentleman, ought to arrange with Hymen?

It would be much better if all the governments of Europe regarded these philosophers as in England they regard the party of the Opposition, where they make use of it in politics and in administration when they want to make changes by calling it the majority. The writer, the lawyer, the little curate would soon write for the Court, and against those it formerly sided with. To complete the matter, the first bourgeois author who wrote against the nobility should be



made a baron. That would catch him, and the man of intellect would be the proudest of barons.

M. de la Blache challenged Beaumarchais, on one occasion, to fight a duel with him, but Beaumarchais replied, apropos of the Duc de Chaulnes, who had also sent him a challenge, "I can't, for I have refused a better." The assassination of Beaumarchais was a very singular hoax. I saw him when he arrived in Vienna with the air of a murdered man, for that excellent mimic could make himself any face that he chose. "Look at my hand," he said, "there is the cut of the knife. Here upon this box of imitation gold the poignard struck. The king gave it to me, I owe my life to him. Had I not hung it round my neck to preserve this order, written by his own hand (which you may read), I was a dead man." Sure enough, the paper said: "The Sieur Beaumarchais will execute the orders that I have given him, and his punctual obedience will be the measure of my gratitude. LOUIS." He was always chasing after the so-called libels against the queen, which, as I think, he sometimes invented in order to get a royal commission to investigate them. "A Jew," he went on to say, "who was hawking an infamous book about the queen, tracked me. I got out of my travelling-carriage the other side of Nuremberg because I had to get out. I stepped aside; I went into a wood. Eight or ten soldiers in uniform, recruiters or deserters, attacked me. Without arms! what a position! I tried to slip behind a tree; in an instant all their poignards were raised and—see the wound!" "But, my dear Beaumarchais," I said, "soldiers don't carry poignards; you must mean bayonets." Poignards, however, sounded better. Here is what the postilion, who brought him the last stage before Nuremberg, related: "M. Beaumarchais made me stop. He went into a wood; he was gone so long that I got impatient, and went in myself to see what he

was doing. I saw him put his penknife into his pocket, having just cut his hand with it." Beaumarchais took the needful time to play the wounded man, and then he went to his audience with Maria Theresa. He thought proper to ask for a chair to sit in her presence. "The excess of my admiration," he said, "the surprise — the emotion — my convalescence — ah! Madame, I can no more!" The farce was discovered a few days later. The police arrived. "Take care!" said Beaumarchais, "there are pistols on my table. I am capable of anything." The officer laughed, arrested him and carried him off to the nearest post.

I encountered Beaumarchais one evening at M. de Vergennes', then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and said to him in a low voice, "What brings you here? is it Figaro?" "No," he said, "public business; look at all these papers; see what I am doing." And he showed me a portfolio stuffed full of letters, projects, manifestoes, etc. So the dullest of all ministers that France ever had was employing a jester to do his business, and that, too, with the knowledge of the most serious and austere moral of kings. But this same droll jester, who amused himself with friends and enemies alike, had a marvellous style. He knew well how to dazzle with his singular ideas, the construction of his sentences, and the sparkling wit that makes itself remembered. Where is the author who is quoted as he is? There is not a day that one does not hear, "As Figaro says;" he is known everywhere. I love him much; there is real philosophy in the Barbier, and philosophism in that detestable and wearisome Tarare. As for the "Noce" it will not do to say it is a witty play, it is all wit. What fineness, and sometimes what delicacy!

I have often had occasion to observe that men of talent are queer people. Some of them have cost me dear. I re-

member Le Kain, for instance [celebrated tragic actor], whom I had at Belœil to play Mahomet before Prince Henry of Prussia. Though he had a proper coat, he asked me for another, and ordered it to be covered with gold and silver. "That ought not to be so," said the tailor. "Very well," he replied; "then make it as it ought to be, but use the costliest furs and line it with the finest Brussels camlet." On another occasion Albanese told me that he suffered with cold; so I ordered a superb cloak made for him. The next day he said to me: "And the breeches, monseigneur, — could n't I have breeches to match the cloak?" I had employed, protected, and known so many actors in province and in garrison, that I was often able to help them out of their troubles and repair their follies, although not always. I do not know how it happened, but the Italian comedians who played "The Reduction of Paris" wore *cordons bleus* around their necks (they were worn round the neck in those days because they made less show). I frightened Louis XVI. one day, when we were playing at billiards, by asking him for a *cordons bleu*. "It can't be for yourself," he said, "because you are a Grandee of Spain; besides your Orders prevent you from wearing mine. I will wager it is for some of your devilish protégés." "No, Sire," I said, "it is only for Molé; he wants to wear the star of the Saint-Esprit in playing the 'Malheureux Imaginaire;'" whereupon he sent me marching, and would not let the piece be played at all. I busied myself also about the illumination of the theatre for the fête that was given to the Grand-Duke Paul of Russia at Versailles. The king was astonished that the Grand-Duke was so little astonished by the *coup d'œil* when the doors were thrown open, for nothing could have been added in the way of lights and decoration. "One would really think," the king said to me, "that that gentleman

[*ce monsieur*] sees such things every day." I answered: "Not precisely every day, Sire; but it is true that he is *blasé* on magnificence."

It is singular that there should be so much thick pronunciation at the Théâtre-Français. Prévillè and Grandval (whose last years I saw, and they did not give me the idea of great actors), Clairval, M. and Mme. Larouette, and Mme. Trial all said *chamais* for *jamais*, and *p* instead of *b*, as if they were Germans, Swedes, or Spaniards.

To return to the men of letters, I escaped their demands upon me with praises against their praises and as many verses to them as they made upon me.

The Marquis d'Adhémar had the credit of not being the author of his own songs, some of which I had seen him make. A great deal of harm was said of him and quite unfairly, for without being perfectly well-bred he was very amiable. His indiscreet friends procured him enemies by his appointment as ambassador to England. The queen, one evening, brought us, laughing, a quantity of songs against her and her society. We were beginning to sing one against M. d'Adhémar to the tune of the "Bourbonnaise" which began: "Marquis by accident, Chevalier d'industrie, Colin of comedy, Major of infantry," when in he came. To save him from playing a poor part and to put the laugh on his side, I called out, "Adhémar can sing that better than any of us. Sing it, Adhémar, it is your affair;" which he did gayly and with good taste, saying to the queen: "Major of infantry proves that I serve the king, Colin of comedy proves that I serve your Majesty."

If La Bruyère had drunk, if La Rochefoucauld had hunted, if Champfort had travelled, if Lassay had known foreign languages, if Vauvenargues had been in love, if Weisse had been at Court, if Theophrastus had lived in Paris, they

would all have written better than they did. Some of the above, and others also, are like delayed fireworks, with great spaces of obscurity between whiles. In the "Pensées" of my friend M. du Meilhan there are flashes of fire which light up everything continuously, with rockets that go so high their sound is not heard, and the whole winds up in a final display. That is because he is a statesman and a man of the world. Open his "Considerations on Mind and Morals" and you will see how he has closed the door of the illustrious French writers and taken the key. Men of letters are making themselves, for the sorrow of the century, statesmen. Meilhan, a statesman, has made himself a man of letters. He had never before been remarked upon except in his ministry and for his good administrations. His last work, perfect in style and thought, has induced people to reread his first, the work of his leisure in the midst of his important avocations.

Every one has his favourite author. Voltaire made the fortune of the Arabian Nights; Rousseau that of Robinson Crusoe. If I were as great as Voltaire and Rousseau, I should make that of Amelot de la Houssaye. His work ought to be the breviary of Sovereigns. He was a pedant. So much the better; we can find in him without trouble what he spent his life in digging out of others whom we should never have the time or the courage to read. There is nothing in his political Notes that is not profoundly thought out and applicable to these times. If persons are afraid of undertaking to read the ten volumes of his Tacitus, let them take him hap-hazard and open his books where they please. I repeat, and I maintain, that he is sublime and admirable. Apparently no one has read him, for no one is of my opinion.

The Comte de Ségur is rightfully a man of letters, and the

only one in the highest good society of France. The Comte de Vaudreuil might be if he desired it; the Comte de Coigny also. M. de Chastellux, de Bissy, and Montesquieu do desire it, and cannot be. Dorat is so in his class, as much for the quality as for the quantity of his writings. The Chevalier de Boufflers is more and also less than a man of letters. Just as the grace, originality, and gayety of his charming little verses are superior to those of others on the same ground, so his lack of serious work and his amiable indolence deny him the title of author. He might have had it, and also that of one of the first men of letters in France.

Nature, so prodigal to Frenchmen in graces of every other kind, has refused them the two gifts of music and painting. When I think of the admiration I have heard bestowed on the shepherdesses of Watteau, the insipid voluptuousness of Boucher, the spinach-green, the cream-like water, the scaffold architecture of Robert, the pretty daintinesses of Greuze, the deformities, flippancies, mannerisms, and flat gray tones of the rest, I wonder they exhibit their pictures at all in France. It is the study of flesh in the Italian masters and colouring from the Flemish which in my opinion has made Mme. Vigée Le Brun superior to her countrymen in the magic and the boldness of the colour she employs in her draperies, where she dares all, while none conflict. On the contrary, a rare harmony, the liquid light of the eyes, the transparency of the skin, conceal the very trifling defects with which she may be charged, — such as making her beauties too young, her backgrounds insignificant, and an occasional want of drawing. The accusation, made perhaps once in a dozen cases, of a lack of resemblance, is an injustice. Look at her Hamilton, her Sibyl, and fall at her feet. How beautiful that picture of the queen all in white! what art in express-



ing so perfectly the various tones of it, from the slippers, the stockings, the gown, the chemise, to the dazzling skin of that beautiful princess!

And in music, how far behind other nations are the French! They have not the divine gift; they have not the composers, nor the apprehension in their nature from which the composer is born. We should restore to Music her ancient virtue. That duet, *Liebst du mich?* has often made me weep. A woman of my acquaintance assures me that whenever they play "Orpheus" she is in a state of which she can give no account to herself. This might be a charming means to move an inhuman heart.

It was interesting to watch Gluck as I did in Vienna, at the rehearsals of his opera of "Iphigenia;" the devil was in him (as Voltaire said he ought to be in tragic actors), with compliments and insults to the singers and musicians spluttering from his mouth. He was the first man who exacted the keeping of time in actors and orchestra; and that was a good thing done, as Piccini found on arrival. Gluck was born in a village belonging to my brother-in-law, Waldstein, in Bohemia; and I was told there that when he was a child he used to sing airs with dramatic effect, and teach that effect to his little companions. A French company came to Vienna, and a meddlesome censor, named Gautier, prevented, by order of the empress who was rather too chaste, the production of some very good plays, considered by him to be indecent. M. Durazzo, the minister for theatrical matters, engaged Gluck, who by that time was known by certain songs and instrumental pieces performed in concerts for a coming genius, to recompose "The Siege of Cythera," "The World Upset," "The Pilgrims of Mecca," and "The Duped Cadi." Gluck knew scarcely any French, and he made a detestable business of it. In that air, "'T is thus that all

like us are found," he knew so little of stage work that he put a word of three syllables to one note ; wishing to represent, so he told me, the gabble of a woman. I admired and encouraged his music, half warlike, rural, animated, flowing, gliding, sometimes almost French in moments of sentiment and repose, and more German than Italian. He studied French and began to read Racine, whose beauties he divined. When he did not understand them I helped him, and he finally adored him. After a conversation at dinner with Prince Kaunitz and M. du Roulet at my house, they made choice of Iphigenia for his subject. But how was he to keep to those fine Alexandrines ? He used to ask me this continually. He would fain have left nothing out, but that was impossible. However, he preserved the ideas as much as he could.

When Maréchal de Lacy was in Paris there was much talk about Gluck and Piccini ; discussions ran high as to their respective merits. M. de Voyer, minister of war, asked me to bring the marshal to dinner at his house, for he wanted to listen to him and judge of him. At the same dinner there happened to be an ardent admirer of Gluck. M. de Voyer broached the Seven Years' War and Military Constitution, and was on the point of making the marshal talk when the musical enthusiast broke in with : " M. le maréchal, did Gluck sup with you in Vienna ? What a man, M. le maréchal ! And that Piccini, how paltry beside him ! Compare, M. le maréchal, those duets in Iphigenia and Roland," — and he came near singing them on the spot. The marshal looked at me and smiled ; he was charmed to escape his other inquisitor. M. de Voyer was furious at missing his object ; and all the more because, when questioning me about the marshal, he had said, in reply to the portrait I drew of him : " Either he *is* a great man, or you,

knowing what that is, are making him one. I shall find out the truth for myself to-morrow."

Never can the enthusiasm of a place so little given to enthusiasm as Vienna be forgotten as it listened to the *Fiat Lux* of Haydn's symphony in his truly sublime work "The Creation." Haydn heard, and he wished to make heard, the roaring, bellowing, lowing, bleating, almost the croaking and the cawing, the flight of birds, the creeping of insects. I exaggerate somewhat. But all, as in the Four Seasons, glows with colour and delightful freshness. There are ravishing duets between Adam and Eve. The chase, the vintage, the rising of the sun, all are given with the same vigour. The whole, the Angels and the Choir, did infinite honour to the composer and to Vienna. What with the clever Salieri, a worthy pupil and almost a rival of Gluck, and Mozart, who was just beginning to succeed him, Vienna at this time swarmed with musicians.

The Emperor Joseph II. was a passionate lover of good music, and having heard "Don Giovanni" at Prague, on the occasion of his brother Leopold's marriage to the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, he urged Mozart to bring the opera to Vienna; which he did. It was coldly received at first, and the emperor was greatly annoyed with the audience. "It is a divine work," he said to Mozart, whom he summoned to his box, "but it is not a morsel for my Viennese." "They need time to taste it," replied Mozart, modestly. "It certainly suited the Prague public better; but I only wrote it for myself and my friends." A number of those present had gone after the performance to sup with Mme. de Thun, where they were discussing the new opera eagerly when Haydn entered. All were giving their opinions right and left, and while agreeing that the music bore the stamp of genius, they said it was obscure and incomprehensible in

certain places, and they called upon Haydn to be the judge. "I am not competent," he said with malicious humility, "to decide this learned dispute. All I know is that Mozart is the greatest musician in existence."

The souvenirs of the Baron de Besenval I might have written myself (so fully are the same incidents known to me), though never in a style so brilliant, — as brilliant as their author, and that is saying all. No one was ever more so than he in war and at Court, where his fine social qualities brought him into the favourite society of the queen. We were all surprised that he sought to be in that of the king also; that is to say, among the latter's hunting companions, for he had no others. At sixty years of age Besenval had the appearance of a young man on his promotion, wearing the gray coat of a beginner while awaiting the blue. He had made himself a few noble quarterings, of which he had no need, for nobility was in his soul. But there he was in the king's carriages and among the king's huntsmen and consequently supping in the cabinets. A Swiss lieutenant-general with a gray head, who was present at the death of Berwick [1734], might have dispensed with being in at the death of the stag forty years later. It is plain that he wished to be concerned with many things; but at bottom he was like all the rest of the world at Court, where good and evil were said of the ministers alternately.

The baron makes himself out more intriguing than he really was. He was always rather morose in spirit, and apt to grumble in his own home to his servants and his women-kind; but he was one of the gayest and most amiable men in society that I have ever seen. People would say to him when he gave them occasion by his gruff manner to the Swiss guards: "Baron, what bad taste! you are dreadful." His frank, handsome countenance allowed him to risk such

insolences ; which, after all, became him. He had, as one might say, an excellent tone in his bad tone. His familiarities had an air of confidence ; he related things pleasantly, with gay good-humour, in a style and manner that was all his own.

Besenal quotes me once ; he might have done so a hundred times. I was everywhere in the midst of those storms, in which I took no part, although I often warded them from the heads of men whom I did not even know. I am sorry that his editor has suppressed so many names, and so many of the baron's adventures, of which, handsome, insolent, and charming as I represent him, he had many. I know of a dozen at this moment ; and he has told me a score of others which I do not now remember. If I dared, I would tell facts as he does ; but I fear to give pain to the living. If the anecdotes of a past time afford pleasure it can be imagined how much I should find in relating those I know of noted persons with whom I have passed my life in many lands. All that the baron says in praise of the Polignac family, and all that ever could be said of them, is below their merits.





*Louis XVI*





### XIII.

1780-1787.

#### RUSSIA : THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

[IN 1780 the Prince de Ligne paid, as he has already mentioned, his first visit to Russia. He went to obtain the dowry of the wife of his son Charles, Princess H  l  ne Massalska, subsequently married, on the death of her first husband, to Comte Potocki, and the original of the well-known charming portrait by Mme. Vig  e LeBrun. The young lady's dowry consisted of Moghilani, an estate with ch  teau and country-houses, two palaces in Cracovia, and one palace in Warsaw. Prince Radziwill owed the Massalski family eight hundred thousand Polish florins (one million francs), the inheritance of H  l  ne's mother, who was a Radziwill; half of this property belonged to H  l  ne, half to her brother, they being orphans. Prince Radziwill's property, as will appear later, was under sequestration to the Russian Court, in consequence of the part he had taken in a Polish revolution. H  l  ne was niece and ward to the Prince-Bishop of Wilna, who was tortured and hung before the cathedral he had himself built in Warsaw, by the followers, though not by the orders, of John Sobieski. He settled upon H  l  ne Massalska, on her marriage with Prince Charles of Ligne, a revenue of sixty thousand francs a year. The Prince de Ligne, on his side, engaged to give his son a revenue of thirty thousand francs, and a home at Brussels, Bel  il, and Vienna in one of his palaces or ch  teaus; and if, at the end of four years, the couple had children, to double the revenue.

The marriage had taken place in July, 1779, and the Prince de Ligne went to Petersburg in 1780 to endeavour to obtain the sequestrated property. It is rather characteristic of him that when he found how warmly he was received, he was reluctant to press the claim, and did not then do so.

The Emperor Joseph II. had just paid a visit to the Empress Catherine, and his friendship for the Prince de Ligne caused the latter to be received with great cordiality at the Russian Court; from that time, until her death in 1796, the empress was in more or less frequent correspondence with him. In 1786 she proposed to him to join her on her famous journey to her newly acquired territory, the Crimea, or Taurica, as she and the Prince de Ligne preferred, classically, to call it. This journey, which took place in the following year, 1787, is fully described in the letters of the prince to the Marquise de Coigny, which will be found, unabridged, in Chapters I. and II. of Vol. II.]

Who has not felt, on arriving in Petersburg, as if he were entering a temple? Everything breathes of divinity, a divinity that seems divided between the palaces and the marble churches. All that is not marble is of precious stones. The granite of the splendid quays on the finest of rivers, the columns, the walls, are dazzling in the sunlight, like the sun itself. London surprised me even more than Venice. I could imagine a city in the midst of the sea; one has only to think of a flood through the streets, and one has an idea, at the least, of Venice. But wide and convenient sidewalks, convenient shops, inconceivable cleanliness everywhere, lighted promenades, where there are concerts and games and no police, delightful gardens, a river which adds to all this a hundred varied scenes; in short, whatever can be imagined for the best-planned fête is found daily in four or five differ-

ent quarters of London. Indifference, an air of freedom and magnificence, elegant phaetons, the whole town on the trot, fine houses, charming women, and excellent fruit. Paris, on the other hand, disgusts a newly arrived stranger with its dirt; also the appearance of the populace and their villanous manner of dressing; the savage air of the fishwives and the rag-pickers; the narrowness and mud of the streets; the clatter of the hundreds of carts one meets everywhere, and that vile wicket, through which all Paris is forced to pass daily. But Petersburg I found another thing, always stately and majestic, like its empress.

That empress is a mixture of soul and good sense, of loftiness and vigour. Those are the four columns that support the great colossus that she governs. Her perceptions are not quick; one must never be too subtle in jest or wit, for she is liable to suppose it the reverse of what is meant; what we say to her must be as simple as she herself. Her Majesty is a little susceptible. If her imperial self-love takes umbrage as to her wars or her finances, or even as to the Russian climate, she is no longer at her ease. But far from revenging herself, even for a real offence, she merely withdraws her familiarity, and it is difficult to obtain it again. She has so amazing a kindness that even after heavy labours, which may have related to treaties of alliance, or partitions of Europe and Asia, she is ready to concern herself with the interests of her friends; persuading one of them, for instance, as I knew her to do, to cease making debts.

In proof of what I said above as to her manner of sometimes taking things askew, I give the following incident, which amused me very much, though I greatly love M. de Ségur [French ambassador at the Court of Petersburg]. It is a Russian custom to chant the *Te Deum* all over the empire after a victory; and in Petersburg a minister of State

reads in a loud voice an account of the battle, with a list of the killed and wounded, and of all those who have specially distinguished themselves. On one occasion when this was done, the empress, on her return from the ceremony to give audience to M. de Ségur, said to him, "I beg your pardon for having kept you waiting." To which, as a flatterer of charming good taste, he replied, "Madame, I am resigned; though I foresee it will soon be intolerable, for we shall have these ceremonies every day." Referring to this bit of flattery, which meant, of course, that he expected her to be always victorious, the empress said to me: "Did you notice how ill-humoured the Comte de Ségur was? These Frenchmen never can get accustomed to my successes." In vain I endeavoured to set her right. With an air of the utmost attention she did not listen to me, or even understand that I was explaining the matter. Ségur was not happy in his compliments. One day, when Peter the Great was mentioned before her, I said, without wit, but with much truth, that she was worth more than he. Ségur told her the same thing, but with far more delicacy, to which she answered, "You are right, M. le Comte, in saying that we cannot be compared." He gave himself to all the devils; and as for me, I could not speak for laughing.

Among the many occasions when I have seen and appreciated her lofty good sense, here is one that I remember at this moment. When [before the war with Turkey in 1788] I was charged by Joseph II. with the duty of making, with her, a plan for the concerted operations of her armies and ours, she said to me: "Write to your emperor that this is the way in which allies always end by quarrelling. It is impossible to fix precisely, especially at such a distance, an exact arrangement; each side will complain of the other. Now we both have the same object. Let us each go for it

in our own way. Whatever one does for his own interest will serve the interest of the other. I am sure of his friendship; he is sure of mine. That is the whole of my plan."

By principle, whether because she did not want to be led away in conversation, or because she wished to avoid being bored (a thing she hated), the empress never allowed any one to speak to her of public affairs. All things had to go through her ministers, who were only the canals of her ocean of wisdom; her own head was her cabinet. Catherine was never so great as under some reverse. She would have given her whole wealth, the last inch of her vast dominions, and life itself sooner than do, I will not say a meanness, but any action that was not honourable. In her could be seen and noted all the points of difference between exalted and exaggerated sentiment.

When I found myself obliged by her great kindness to spend my days, from five o'clock till ten, in her private society with five or six other persons, I brought her to trial in my own mind, and judged her living, as the Kings of Egypt in ancient times were tried and judged at their deaths, in order to feel wholly at my ease. M. de la Rulhières, in his history of "Anarchy in Poland," has collected all sorts of lies and false tales of every kind. Before speaking of the death of Peter III. he ought to have questioned, as I did, the old servants at Oranienbaum, where the emperor was murdered. Nothing could better prove the total ignorance of the great Catherine about a death she never ordered, than the perfect liberty those old servants of the emperor have to tell what happened. Apparently she is ignorant that the crime was imputed to her. I learned, incidentally, from those who did not like her, that she was seized with an involuntary convulsion when she heard of



the death at the house of Comte Panin, where she happened to be with the grand-chamberlain Schuvaloff. Probably the fear of being thought an accomplice produced that effect. She did not dethrone her husband until she knew positively that on the following day he would incarcerate her in a convent, for the sole crime of being loved by the empire as much as he was detested by it.

Jesting with us one day when the grand-equerry, Narischkin, pretended to be the Grand Turk, "Let us strangle him," she said. Would she ever have uttered that word if she had stained her hands with a death of that kind? To this first accusation her detractors have added crime upon crime, — the poisoning of Ivan, that of the first Grand-Duchess, and lastly of Potemkin. The lies of lacqueys, or of souls as base, have endeavoured to tarnish the lustre of that immortal reign. So much the worse for the fools who invented them, and the malignant souls who believe them!

It was for love of truth, and in order that nothing might trouble the pleasure I should have in being with her, that I investigated these facts. But one only needed to see the empress, to hear her, to know the history of her life, in order to be certain of her goodness, her justice, and her unalterable kindness.

Whether from malice in those who do not like me, or foolishness in those who do, a hundred stories are told of me that have not even common-sense. They are repeated to me constantly, and yet I am too lazy to prove they are not true. I am told that I have made answers that are thought to be charming and are not worth a deuce, jests and repartees which make people (or so they say) die with laughter. I have played most piquant tricks; I have rapped generals over the knuckles when I was young, and sovereigns when I grew older; in short, I have said and done so many clever

things that there are none but a few persons of taste who know better.

One of my sayings did, however, serve to baffle Prince Frederick of Prussia [afterwards Frederick William III.] and pleased Joseph II., who feared the prince might have a success in Petersburg after his own visit. The day Prince Frederick caused himself, quite inappropriately, to be received by the Academy of Sciences where it was very hot, he fainted. I told the empress, who asked me how the reception had gone off, that "the prince found himself without sense [*sans connaissance*] in the midst of the Academy." I saw at once how that devil of a speech was running, and I ran after it, and told it to the prince himself, transposing the words to his "finding himself in the midst of the *Academy without sense*." On this, each side laughed at the other; all were content, and so was I; still more the empress, to whom I confided my innocent little perfidy, who thought it was true of her Academy and also of the prince, by whom she was considerably bored. It is my opinion, however, that it is best to be discreet and reserved with crowned heads. I have always been convinced that we cannot do them a greater service than to make them talk and put them at their ease, taking the precaution not to seem so ourselves.

On my return from Petersburg, a fool of a bishop, uncle of my daughter-in-law [the Prince-Bishop of Wilna], imagining that I was on the very best terms with the empress because she had treated me so kindly, persuaded himself that I should certainly be King of Poland if I were naturalized. "What a change," he cried, "in the face of the affairs of Europe! What joy, what happiness for the Lignes and the Massalskis!" I laughed at him; but the desire took possession of me to please the nation which was then assembling at Warsaw for a Diet. The nation

applauded me. Out of twenty-five candidates desired and proposed by Poland for naturalization, I was the only one who obtained it. Three presented themselves, and came near being sabred. The hand that a nuncio put upon his sabre, with loud menace, came near dissolving the Diet, and possibly cutting off the head of my too zealous partisan. I went to my opponents, and succeeded in overcoming their prejudice; so much so, in fact, that with much grace to me, and an eloquence worthy of their country, they said that in favour of an election they now thought honourable they solicited the votes of their friends. The first candidate was an Austrian minister, the second a Prussian minister, the last a Russian colonel; and against all usage I sprang into the hall and embraced the moustache of the three orators. It electrified me, for I became an orator myself and said to the assembly in Latin: "I have not so direct a claim as these gentlemen, for I am of many countries, but I want to belong to yours." I took them by the hand, I cajoled them. *Sgoda!* general, which shook the very hall three times and came near bringing down the building by the roar of such applause. This was one of the finest moments of my life.

Who does not love Poland, the Poles, and, above all, the Polish women, for the intelligence and courage of the men, the beauty and grace of the women, who have, even the least amiable, a *laissez-aller*, an eloquence, a piquancy, a charm superior to the women of all other countries? Who would not prefer a life in Warsaw, where the choicest French tone reigns, mingled with an Eastern allurements, the charm of Europe and of Asia both, the urbanity of the most civilized of lands joined to the natural hospitality of those who are not urbane at all? Who does not admire a nation of noble yet pleasant faces, gentle, yet simple

manners, manners that are polite, or frankly sincere and courteous in the capital, but jovially kind-hearted in the country? a nation ready of comprehension, easy and gay in conversation, of good education; possessing the gift of languages and of all the talents, even those for bodily exercise, especially on horses; fine voices, eloquence, splendour of appearance; a taste for the fine arts, luxury, gallantry, fêtes, social exhibitions, national dances; a little barbaric in costume and singular in customs perhaps, but easy to live with, full of kindness, good feeling, and gratitude?

As for mine to Poland, it is unlimited. The honour that she did me, my admittance to that noble and superb nation, the applause that the unanimous consent in giving me that illustrious naturalization procured for me, will never be effaced from my heart.

But for that very reason I ventured to submit to that nation of heroes a few reflections. If, I said, instead of three empires and one kingdom you were surrounded by seas you would be tranquil on their bosom and safe in your laws, many of which are more reasonable than those of that famous isle said to be the abode of wisdom. Your Constitution is a species of miracle, but beware lest it end. The slightest leaning towards any one of your neighbours will give the others a pretext to drive you from the face of the earth. No doubt from time immemorial Russia, through her strength, language, and geography, has sheltered you with the wings of her double eagle, — a protector if you treat her wisely, a destroyer if you affront her. At present she wishes you well. Rejoice in this period of moderation, which should have come sooner, but do not abuse it.

I can answer to you for our emperor, and I am authorized by him to tell you so. Lately, when Stanislas-Augustus, encouraged by Joseph II., said to him: "Can I rely that I shall

not be made to die of grief by the seizure of more of my unhappy country?" the emperor replied: "I promise it; I answer for myself. *Not a tree.*" Those were his very words, for they each repeated them to me. "Give me your hand," said the king, moved to tears by the frankness of the other monarch. "There it is," said Joseph II., "but more than that, I give you the word of a gentleman." The King of Prussia, in whose loyalty I believe, would promise you, I think, as much, if you asked him to explain himself clearly, and would keep his word, unless you lay traps to mislead him.

But the moral of all this is: do not look outside of your own country, either to Vienna, Berlin, or Petersburg; BE POLES; *that* is what I ask of you. Do not mourn the old partition, but avoid a new one. No more secret machinations, especially with Russia; no more incoherence in your principles; let your great families cease to quarrel among themselves; let honest men no longer be tricked and fooled by those who are not honest. Cease to accuse one another, saying, "He is Prussian," or "That man is Russian." Forget your private animosities; drive away from you those subaltern intriguers who foster your petty jealousies and then laugh at you; beg your women to think of giving pleasure, and not of politics. Make yourselves a nation, and begin by making a king, for Stanislas-Augustus, always thwarted, always insulted, is not one. This is no time for shams. . . .

In a letter that I wrote to that most excellent and most unfortunate king, who is, of a truth, without a kingdom, I said: "Sire, do you not see the storm that is gathering about your head?" "Yes," he replied, in a letter full of intelligence, good sense, humanity, and feeling (like all else that comes from him), "but I shall try to place a lightning-rod, and draw the thunderbolt elsewhere." That will be

difficult to do. The surest way is to disperse the clouds while yet there is time. I repeat to you: Be still, be still. If you stir, Poland is dead.

[The rest of this address, made to certain Polish nobles, is published in Vol. IX. of the Works. The prince is said by all who have written about him to have taken little interest and no part in politics. It is difficult to believe, when reading of his intimate intercourse with the Empress Catherine and Joseph II., that he was not confidentially informed, and perhaps employed, by them politically. If he was, he shows the same self-restraint and discretion in speaking of it that he does about the private life of their Courts.

The Radziwills were among the oldest and noblest families of Poland; they had always defended the ancient Polish republic, and were hostile to Russia and the election of Stanislas-Augustus Poniatowski. The mother of the young Princesse Charles de Ligne was a Radziwill, and her brother Charles-Stanislas, who had a revenue of ten millions and maintained a regular army of 20,000 men in his towns and châteaux, fought against Russia to prevent the first partition of Poland in 1772. It was then that the family estates were sequestrated. Among the Radziwill treasures and heirlooms were statues of the twelve apostles in gold, each of them one foot and a half high. When Prince Charles-Stanislas saw that the war was going against him, he sent these statues to Munich, and he lived for several years on the melting up of this golden treasure, the proceeds of which enabled him to give a most generous hospitality to his exiled countrymen. The following are little vignettes of his daughters.]

Héroïse [Princess Louise Radziwill] is thus called, so they tell me, because of a dozen heroes who have borne the name



of her family, among them two demigods. What is singular is that she has between the eyes, starting from the root of the nose, a faint line which shows me that she could have been one of the prettiest of heroes herself had she belonged to that profession. That line tells me (I speak now to subtle physiognomists only) of a style of nobleness that becomes in a woman the sign of much firmness and great character. I do not mean that she is a heroine of virtue, for virtue costs her nothing, loving as she does to realize ideal perfection. She surrounds all who belong to her with such cordial tenderness that all who are not hers would fain be so.

Héroïse is a receipt against Jacobinism near thrones, dominations, and powers. That heroic blood, mingled with the blood of the Jagellons, promises to reproduce on earth the virtues that do it most honour. Meantime her style of beauty, her facility in living, her grace, her *bonhomie*, if I may so express myself, win the suffrages and the homage of all hearts.

Angela [Princess Angélique Radziwill] can only be painted by Michel Angelo and Raffaele, who understand angels; though at one time the latter requested Albano and Correggio to attempt them. The first two undertook the grace, the dignity of their emanation from the Divine; the others the profane graces we admire in those who accompany Cupid's mother. If the first attributes keep us at a certain distance apart from Angela, the second bring us back to her; and she herself is the only person who is unconscious of it. This is not stupidity, for she cannot look, or move, or seem to reflect without our perceiving as much intelligence as she has taste and tact in everything. Her mind rings true, like her voice; there is nothing prettier than her speech; she has a delightful pronounciation, even in singing; and her quick, agreeable way of throwing out her words adds piquancy to what is

already agreeable and distinguished. Her laugh is amusing ; it is short and precipitate, but only a little louder than a sort of murmur of gayety. She is beautiful, yet pretty in doing and saying nothing ; but whatever she says or does, whether she dances, sings, or plays, she is handsomer and prettier still. If the devil has cast his eyes upon her to make havoc in hearts, the angels reclaim her, because of her name, and say, seeing how she makes, and is, the happiness of all around her : “ Angela is our angelic work.”

[The Prince de Ligne’s correspondence with the Empress Catherine began on his return to Vienna, with the following letter.]

*To H. I. Majesty Catherine II.*

October, 1780.

MADAME,— I feel as though I had just awakened from the most beautiful dream in the world. I went to Petersburg for two weeks only, merely to admire your Majesty, and tell my children’s children that I had had the happiness of seeing the noble object of so much worship and celebrity. You deigned to allow me to pass beyond that circle of admiration, in order to convince me how much is gained by a nearer view of superiority of all kinds, such as that of your Majesty.

As you know all things, you will remember how Simeon says in his canticle : “ You have sent away your servant in peace, for he has seen your Divinity.” I trust he will see it again. Meantime I leave you, filled with a sense of your goodness and of the kindness that permits me to give to your Majesty this assurance of my gratitude. Prince Potemkin allows me to hope that you will accept it, and he offers to present it to your Majesty himself. He has just added to the other marks of friendship with which he has honoured

me that of showing me the finest regiment of cavalry, and the best manœuvred that I have ever seen.

May I soon again have another such dream, and waken from it to the sound of cannon announcing the glory of the two empires [this allusion is to his hope of a war against Turkey by Russia and Austria]. The last thing that I remember saying to your Imperial Majesty, murmuring it between my teeth, was the thought that I should be at the summit of happiness could I risk my life in your service. It is also the last thing that I take the liberty of writing to you.

I have the honour to be, with the utmost attachment, etc.

*From the Empress Catherine.*

December, 1780.

MONSIEUR LE PRINCE DE LIGNE, — You must know that the farce of a political conference which you played in my presence at Czarsko-zelo with the grand equerry [a pretended conference between all the existing sovereigns of Europe and Asia, out of which, after much prating, nothing came] struck me so forcibly as to give me a decided taste for general dissertation. All laconic communications, even the game of macao, have, since then, been discredited with me. The letter I have just received from you gives me an agreeable occasion to tell you of a dissertation of my own on the letters I receive and those I write. It would be herewith enclosed if I knew of any one who could translate it into ordinary Chinese. Meantime, all that I can tell you of its contents is that the letters I receive are classified; that yours are among the very few that are as good to read as they are to receive. Each class has many letters to illustrate it, each letter is ticketed, as, for example, yours: "Good to know; easy to live with; enlightened mind; sensibility; gayety,

etc.," — all of which are things that I, neighbour of the Tartars, hold in great honour, because they are becoming very rare in the present world.

You, who speak to me of Saint Simeon, and quote him in a manner so flattering to me, you, who have Holy Writ, as you have so many other things, at your fingers' ends, cannot be ignorant that it is written, "Compel them to come in," but nowhere, "Compel them to depart." Now the cannon of the two empires which you mention to me may very well some day be compelled to depart.

Believe me, *mon prince*, etc.

[During the prince's stay in Petersburg he became very intimate with the grand equerry, Narischkin, who concealed under an innocent and childlike air an able mind and the art of telling home truths. He amused the empress, who was fond of him and very kind to him. His vice was extravagance, and she took various amusing ways to correct it. The Prince de Ligne wrote to him on his return to Vienna; the letter, which has not been preserved, appears to have turned on a joke between them about a journey which they professed to have made together to China. As Prince Narischkin did not write French with ease he asked the empress to write the answer for him. The following letter is in her handwriting.]

*The Grand Equerry to the Prince de Ligne.*

PETERSBURG, December, 1780.

MON PRINCE, — I have just received a letter without date of time or place, and without signature. I have devoured it, and having nothing more pressing to do I have shown it to everybody, because it has given me infinite pleasure. I am only sorry that the letter has been strangely

crumpled and soiled. I wish to preserve it, for every word it contains recalls to my mind one who gave additional wings to my natural faculties and whose memory is ever dear to me. Those Chinese expressions overcome me with joy. Yes, yes, there are none but you and I, dear prince, who really understand the Chinese language in Europe. Always devoted to the Court of Peking, though far away from it, I have lately composed the following lyric:—

Le Roi de la Chi, i, i, i, i, i, ne  
 Quand il a bien bu, u, u, u, u, u, u,  
 Fait la plus facheuse mi, i, i, i, i, ne  
 Qu'on ait jamais vu, u, u, u, u, u.

Is it not pathetic? While I was busy with these lines people were urging me to answer your letter. I myself had the strongest desire to do so; but, as all the world knows, every one has his own head, and mine goes often quite the contrary of the wishes within it. So, to cut the matter short, I said to a person whom I shall not name: "If you would write that answer for me you would do me the greatest pleasure." All present exclaimed about the rarity of that invention and the necessity of executing it.

The secretary understands the Chinese language almost as well as I do. I cannot precisely say that he is a pretty lad, but he is gay, easy to live with, and, above all, he costs me nothing; a matter that is not without its convenience especially for one who keeps his pockets empty by buying things he does not want. But whatever his pockets may be, his heart is not like them: that is always full of friendship and gratitude for the kindness that you have shown to me, *mon prince*. If it gives you pleasure to remember your stay here the game is even; all whom I know remember you with the utmost interest, and if you do not believe me I shall quote to you Annette's song: "Come here, and you shall see."

The empress, to whom I showed the passage in your letter which concerns her, desires me to say that she continues to regard in a quite particular manner the Prince de Ligne. Prince Potemkin and the two Princes Bariatinski salute you. Prince Basile Dolgorouki has gone to Moscow and Prince Wolkonski has not yet returned from Italy. I conclude by offering you the assurance of my most profound attachment in all the languages of the known world.

*The Empress Catherine to the Prince de Ligne.*

PETERSBURG, March 7, 1781.

MONSIEUR LE PRINCE DE LIGNE, — I do not know which writer of China, or other lands, has said that the best method of avoiding temptation was to yield to it. According to that fine rule — which may not, however, be to the taste of everybody — I choose that whenever you desire to write to me you shall employ your two hands, not in holding yourself back, as you say, but, the right, if you please, in seizing a pen, the left in taking a sheet of paper, on which you will write whatever may seem good to you; and be assured that this will give me as much pleasure as the letter which you addressed to me on the 15th of February.

Thrones, and those who are upon them, are usually very fine to look at in perspective; but, without wronging my honoured brethren, I suppose that all of us, such as we are, must be intolerable personages in society. I know it by experience. When I enter my salon I create the effect of Medusa's head. Every one is petrified, and takes root on the spot where he stuck. It is very flattering to me that you say the contrary; but experience shows me daily that I am like all the rest; there are not more than ten or a dozen persons who can endure me without constraint or uneasiness.



I have pitied you for being a spectator of the sad event that awaited you in Vienna [the death of Maria Theresa]. The regrets of all Europe accompany that great princess to the grave. That, I think, is the noblest eulogy that can be made upon her. For myself, I take so sincere a part in this grief that I could not refrain from expressing my feelings immediately to her august son. You know my sentiments for him.

Have the kindness to remember sometimes, *mon prince*, that you have left here the hope of seeing you again; and be assured that on the list of those who will see you with pleasure you will find the name of

CATHERINE.

*The Prince de Ligne to H. I. M. the Empress Catherine.*

VIENNA, February 12, 1782.

MADAME, — Nothing but the fear of taking too much liberty prevents me from recalling myself more frequently to the memory of your Imperial Majesty. I did not need to see your distinguished subjects in this city to glow with the sentiments that are always in me. While whoever is nearest to your august person, or indeed, whatever comes from your vast and superb empire is precious to me, I find myself always the same in mind when I think of what I saw there.

When weary of thinking of what I admired, I think of the things that interested me; that is a species of repose for the soul. Thence I pass to recollections of gayety; still sweeter to rest in. Sometimes I remember the *tinteret* [game of cards], sometimes I think of Czarsko-zelo, or else of the prince without sense; and often of the pains that SHE who knows all, does all, plans all, gives Herself to prevent us from believing it; and then I laugh out loud.

Methinks I have seen the Divinity Herself laugh. Divinities in the olden time never so much as smiled. I should have been terribly bored on Olyinpus, and my yawns, compelling all those gentlemen to yawn too, would have cost me a perilous flying leap across the firmament. I am quite content on earth, and shall be more so when I can return to that part of it of which your Majesty is the joy and ornament. You can believe the truth of what is said in prose, provided the writer is not a subject, an encyclopedist, or an economist.

If your Majesty were a little nearer to this city I would ask you to complain of the little care that M. le Comte de Falkenstein [the name Joseph II. took in visiting her] takes of his health and his eyes; but they will both be better, I hope, before the arrival of this letter. Fatigue, and his continual but useful work have done great injury to his eyes. However, they are still good, for they see your Majesty exactly as you are. I am witness of that, not as *oculist*, as a friend of mine said, but as *oculaire* [eyeglass].

Will Her Majesty have the time to read me? Perhaps some of Her neighbours, the Emperor of Byzantium or of Pekin, for instance, are at this moment writing to her to make submissions. Those two foreign courtiers deserve the preference; they are no more to be feared than I am, but they hold a higher rank in the Almanach. I retire, therefore, and close up my rear-guard with the assurance of the most respectful attachment that ever existed. Can I say more than that? Its first enthusiasm was no choice of mine; I felt it first because I could not do otherwise; but it is in cool blood that we delight in sentiments which we feel are in us to the end of life.

I have the honour to be, with those sentiments and a most profound veneration, Madame, etc.

*The Empress Catherine to the Prince de Ligne.*

CZARSKO-ZELO, July 11, 1782.

I have just received at Czarsko-zelo, on this 11th of July, the letter that you wrote to me, *mon prince*, under date of February 12. I trust that this answer will reach you before the total revolution of the year. Inasmuch as you like to remember us, it is not useless to tell you that all who surround me are not only not indifferent to your recollection, but, a rare thing! not one is ungrateful for it. In a word, we all like to remember your stay in this country; but you no longer know the map of it: *reversi* has succeeded *tinteret*, Czarsko-zelo has acquired apartments, and kiosks that look like snuff-boxes.

Voltaire used to say that all sorts were good except the tiresome sort. If ennui reigns on Olympus it is not surprising that so few people want to go there. Go there yourself as late as possible; I shall do the same; but if no one laughs there, you and I will be very much out of place; and that poor grand equerry, what will he do? When you return here we must all three take measures together not to be so caught.

I do not like that trouble in the eyes of M. de Falkenstein; I fear the gifts of miracle of Saint Paul. Neither my dear friend, the Emperor of Byzantium, nor my good neighbour, he of China, can prevent me from reading your letters, which are infinitely more agreeable to me than theirs, in spite of their high rank in the Almanach.

No deployment of the rear-guard was ever more satisfactory to me than that with which you finish your letter. Preserve to me the sentiments that you express, and be assured, *mon prince*, that it is with a most distinguished esteem for you that I end my letter.

CATHERINE.

# APPENDIX.

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## WORKS OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE.

IN THIRTY-FOUR VOLUMES, PUBLISHED FROM 1794 to 1811 AND ENTITLED  
MÉLANGES MILITAIRES, LITTÉRAIRES ET SENTIMENTAIRES,

CONTAINING

Vol. I. *Préjugés Militaires* (Military Judgments). *Topics*: Changes. Exclusives. Cavalry. Horses. Infantry. Tactics. Formation. Drill. Marching. Fires. Deployment. Masses. On the Superiority of the Enemy. Promotions. Discipline. Severity. Excellence of our Army. Of our Constitution. Medicine. Hospitals. Terms. Semestres. Marriages. Conscription. Magazines. Quarters. Successors. Recruiting and Recruits. Baggage. Cattle. Distribution of Orders. On more or less Contempt of Life. Feeling in Soldiers. Honour. Religion. To those dissatisfied with the Service.

Vol. II. *Fantaisies Militaires* (Military notions). *Topics*: To Beginners. On Armament. Camping. My Orders of Battle. War. Plans of Campaign. Peace. The Battle. Pursuit. Retreats. The Marshal or General commanding. Generals. Soldiers. Aides-de-Camp. Volunteers. On Disorder. Guards. Fortifications. Artillery. On Regiments in Garrison. On the Corps of Artillery, Engineers and General Staff. On Villages. The Danube. Schools. Young Men. On the Different Species of Troops. Detached Thoughts. To the Military Chiefs of Provinces. To Criticisers.

Vols. III., IV. *Memoirs of the Campaigns of Prince Louis of Baden.*

Vol. V. *Memoirs of the Campaigns of Comte de Bussy-Rabutin.*

Vol. VI. *Memoirs of the Turkish War from 1736 to 1739. On the two Maréchaux de Lacy. On Frederick II., King of Prussia.*

Vol. VII. *Secret Instructions of Frederick II., King of Prussia, in 1778. Translated from the German, with notes. Letters on the Turkish War of 1787-1789.*

Vols. VIII., IX. *Coup d'œil on Belœil and a part of the Gardens of Europe.*

Vol. X. Discourse on the Profession of Arms. Dialogue of Dead Men. Funeral oration. Sermon for a Wallon regiment. Letters to M. de La Harpe on Cæsar. Letters to M. Schöpflin on Cæsar. Of Myself during the Day. Of Myself during the Night. Letter to two Brothers, friends of mine. Memorial for my Accused Heart. Prophecies. Notes on Vienna. Notes on Paris. My Conversations with M. de Voltaire. My Conversations with Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Letter and Portrait in monosyllables.

Vol. XI. Letters to Eulalie. On the Stage.

Vols. XII., XIII. *Mes Écarts* (My Scatterings) or my Head at liberty. Mixture, very careless, of several styles of Poetry and Thoughts.

Vols. XIV., XV., XVI. Journal of the Seven Years' War.

Vol. XVII. Journal of the Seven Months' War in Bavaria.

Vol. XVIII. Plays. The Queen of Majorca. The Samnite Marriage, comic opera in 3 acts. Diana and Endymion. The Disenchantment of the Companions of Ulysses. The Wedding Interrupted, comedy in 3 acts. Alcibiades, comedy in 1 act. The Sultan of the Congo.

Vol. XIX. Memorial of Great Generals.

Vol. XX. *Mes Écarts*. Supplement and Portraits. Portrait of H. I. M. Catherine II.

Vol. XXI. Letters from the Crimea to the Marquise de Coigny. Short Essays and Poems. Dialogue between a Sceptic and a Capuchin. Notes on the Jews. On the Gipsies. On the Greeks. On Poland. Notes on the old French army. On the new French army.

Vol. XXII. Poems. Discourse to the Belgian Nation. Letters to the Empress of Russia. The Abduction, comedy in 3 acts.

Vol. XXIII. Reign of the Great Selrahcengil. Thoughts and Poems. Immoral Tales; conversations with Belial or the Good Devil.

Vol. XXIV. Relation of Campaigns against the Turks in 1788-1789. Letters to H. I. Majesty Joseph II. Letters to Maréchal de Lacy, Prince Kaunitz, and others.

Vol. XXV. Poems. Portraits. Letters. Thoughts. The Foundling, comedy in 3 acts.

Vol. XXVI. Memoirs of the Comte de Bonneval, Achmet-Pacha. Poems, Proverbs, Thoughts, and Portraits. The Perfect Egoist.

Vol. XXVII. Notes on the Literary Correspondence of M. de La Harpe with the Grand-Duke Paul of Russia. Notes on the Cours de Littérature of M. de La Harpe. Principles of Health. Poems.

Vol. XXVIII. Detailed Catalogue, with notes, of the Military Library of His Highness the Prince de Ligne.

Vol. XXIX. The Cours de Littérature of M. de La Harpe. Fragment upon Casanova. Mes Écart. Poems, etc. Notes on the Memoirs of the Baron de Besenval.

Vol. XXX. Notes on the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Order of Maria Theresa.

Vol. XXXI. The Art of Travelling, poem in 3 cantos. Reflections on the two Condés. Écart. and Poems. Delights of Vienna, or the Four Seasons, poem.

Vol. XXXII. Plays. Don Carlos, tragedy in 5 acts. Saul, tragedy in 5 acts. The Fortunate Bad Advice, comedy in 2 acts in verse.

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