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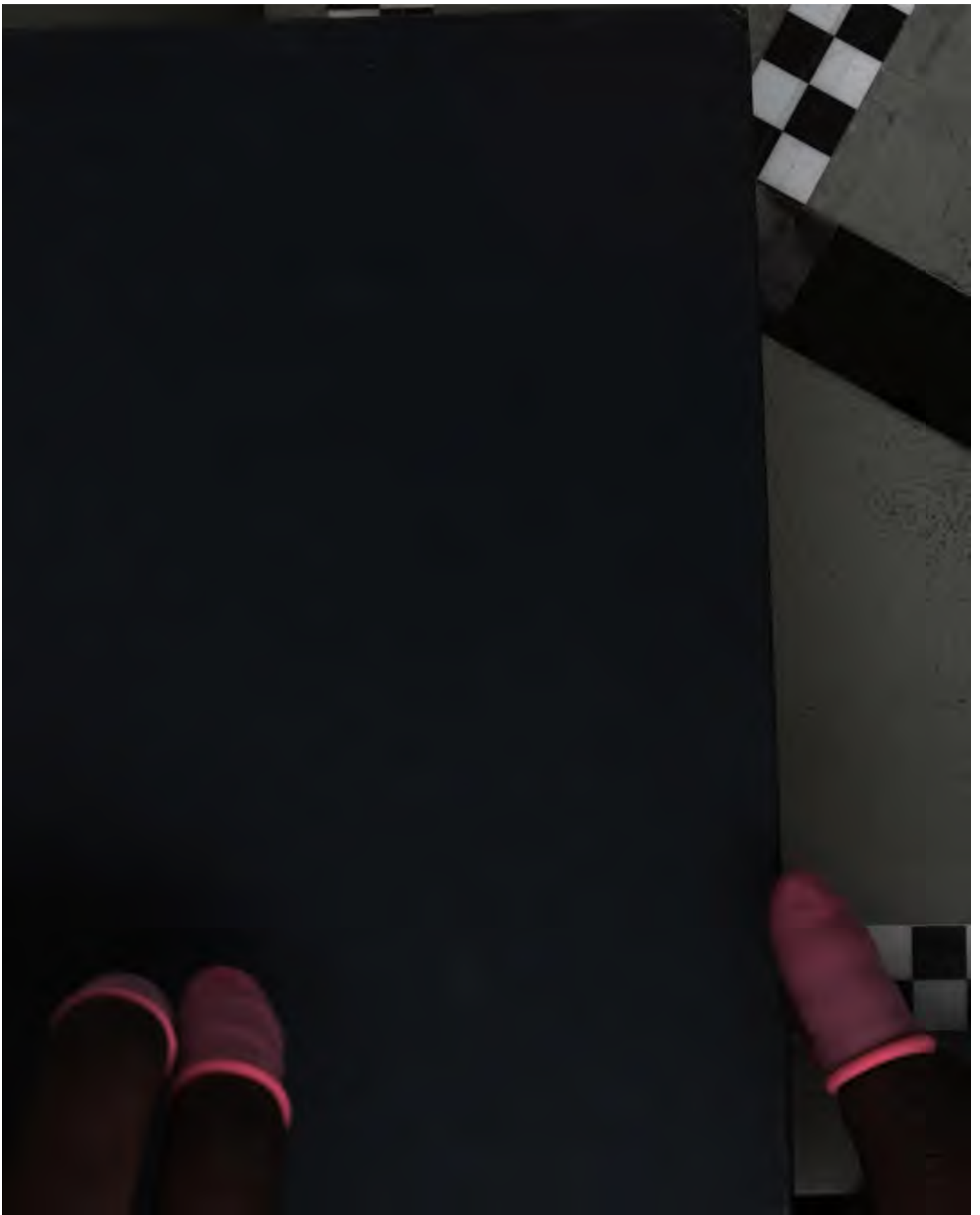
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**RECOLLECTIONS OF
BARON DE FRÉNILLY**

2





The Baron de Trénilly
Peer of France
(1700-1740)
Engraving by G. Kneller

COLLECTIONS OF
M. DE FURENCE
OF FRANCE
(1768-1828)

EDITED WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES

BY FREDERICK G. POINDEXTER

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY FREDERICK G. POINDEXTER

WITH A PORTRAIT

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM
1909

DC 146
F8A4

Printed in England

INTRODUCTION

I

FRANÇOIS AUGUSTE DE FRÉNILLY, the author of these Recollections, was born in Paris on November 14, 1768. He belonged to the class which was at the head of the money-market, and which, to use his own words, was in the eighteenth century equivalent to a State position and on a level with the upper magistrature and the high nobility of Paris. His father was Receiver-General for the appanage of the Count of Artois, Poitou and Angoumois. His mother, Mme. Chastelain, who came of a parliamentary family, had an uncle, M. de Saint-Waast, who was Administrator-General of crown-lands.

His tutors—and notably the Abbé Bréjole—ever allowed him great freedom. With Bréjole he lived at Rheims for three years—from 1785 to 1788, studying law and at the same time reading novels, and, during the holidays, making excursions into foreign countries. His mother's desire was that he should become a magistrate, and she held up before him as a model the brilliant Hérault de Séchelles, the spoiled child of Fame, the idol of the women of the day, the man to whom she aspired as a husband for her daughter. Frénilly sustained his thesis and successfully passed his examinations, and it was the good-looking, sprightly Séchelles who received him as an advocate in Parliament. He, also, wished to become a magistrate, a councillor, a master of requests, and finally an intendant. An intendency appeared to him to be the most honourable of posts for a man of spirit and intelligence. Was not an intendant the head of his province, and had not Turgot risen

from the intendency of Limoges to the position of Controller-General ?

But Frénilly's great-uncle, M. de Saint-Waast, intended that he should succeed him as Administrator-General of crown-lands. So Frénilly, although he had a supreme disdain for finance, had to study domanial science. He proceeded to Poitiers, which he calls his capital, since, on coming of age, he was to take over his father's post, that of Receiver-General of Poitou, and he there spent—between 1788 and 1790—two of the happiest years of his life, dining with the Intendant, the Bishop, and the financiers, who, notwithstanding their age, bowed down before this stripling, gladly attending the *soirées* of the elegant and amiable nobility, paying court to the charming Amaranthe d'Esparts, visiting those good, big châteaux which then made Poitou the most sociable province in France, and roving through the woods of Monts with the three Mesdemoiselles Turpin. He became the favourite both of Poitiers and Poitou. He gave luncheons ; he played brelan and shuttlecock as much as people liked ; he had a taste for music, singing and drawing ; he was a good dancer ; and, after taking lessons in Paris with the celebrated Petit, at twelve francs each, he possessed the art of entering a drawing-room gracefully, of making a slight bow to the assembled company, and of advancing towards his hostess without being encumbered by lace, hat, sword or muff.

He returned to Paris four days before the Federation of July 14, 1790, and saw Talleyrand celebrate the high mass, in the open air and amidst a pelting rain.

He detested the Revolution at its outset, not only because it deprived him of his positions and patrimony, but because he was instinctively an aristocrat. The aristocracy was with him, he tells us, "an indelible element, united with the very marrow of his bones," and at the first glance he perceived what was behind the veil of that Revolution which looked so promising. On seeing a bust of Lafayette in his mother's drawing-room his hair stood on end, and when Mme. de Frénilly remarked that the Revolution was a child which committed follies, but which would grow up to be a man, he replied, "Mother, it will become a monster." He

went thrice, in company with Sémonville, to the Jacobins club, and came away disgusted. At the news of the King's flight he was wild with delight. He looked upon the Legislative Assembly as consisting merely of low-class revolutionaries whose sole idea was the destruction of the throne, and styled June 20 a disgusting, noisy revel, organised by the Orleanists, who counted on "the King and the Dauphin rising to heaven, like Romulus, in the midst of the tumult."

Frénilly enlisted in the Filles Saint-Thomas battalion of the National Guard. He took a close part in the events of August 10, and was one of the company of Chasseurs which escorted the royal family to the doors of the Legislative Assembly.

After the September massacres, he left Paris with his mother and sister. For two years he lived at Loches, undisturbed, thanks to the influence of a Jacobin of the town. He made, however, a few journeys to Paris. He was in the Rue Saint-Honoré when the cart bearing Danton and Héroult de Séchelles to the scaffold passed, and he visited the imprisoned Farmers-General.

On hearing of the 9th of Thermidor, Frénilly was seized with convulsions of joy; for if the conquerors had still need of "retaining laws of iron and blood" the reaction was bound to come. He then went to reside at Chartres, but soon definitely returned to Paris, where he got himself put into requisition as a flower painter! The political situation had so changed that in 1795 he defended the very Convention which in 1793 he had called a band of base cowards, governed by despicable scoundrels and vile prostitutes. He was one of the National Guard which, on the 1st of Prairial, entered the assembly room by one door and expelled the fatigued, disconcerted and powerless populace by another. He formed part of the column which took possession of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. But he did not belong to Fréron's *jeunesse dorée*, and if he sang the "Réveil du peuple," it was in the form of a parody. Instead of saying to the Convention:

he said ·

Suivez le cours de votre gloire

Suivez le cours de la rivière.

Nevertheless, the fragments of good society were coming together. From 1796 to 1800, Frénilly was, as Mme. d'Esquelbecq called him, *la fleur des pois*. He composed light poetry and a vaudeville which was hissed by the public and even by its author; he cut a brilliant figure at balls, suppers and in society plays; he was welcomed and fêted everywhere—at the Vindés', the Lecouteux du Moleys', the Mérard de Saint-Justs', and at Mme. d'Houdetot's; and he formed friendships with Pasquier, Mathieu Molé, Christian de Lamoignon, and Baron de Staël—the last of whom, the most handsome man in Sweden, married for money, he says, the ugliest woman in France.

As it was necessary for him to settle down, he married, in May 1800, a young widow, Mme. de Chemilly, the sweetest, tenderest, and most devoted of women and mothers. She brought him as a dowry the large estate of Bourneville, in the Department of the Oise, near Marolles, and a league from Ferté-Milon. From 1800 to 1830 Frénilly exploited this domain. Gifted, according to his own testimony, with the bump of order and a passion for arranging and creating, he succeeded, by dint of incessant care, in making his kitchen-garden one of the finest in France, and a celebrated scientific agriculturist, the Marquis de Crèvecœur, declared that M. de Frénilly's plantations were the best managed of any he had ever seen.

Frénilly lived at Bourneville until the year 1830. But in 1807 he spent the winter in Paris, on the first floor of a house in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. There his wife held a *salon*, the frequenters of which were on the most intimate terms, composed, as they were, of the members of allied families, such as the Damas, the Lamoignons, the Rosambos, the Montbretons, and the Mézys.

He believed in the durability of the Empire; the birth of the King of Rome appeared to him to consolidate the new dynasty. When anxiously counting the cannon-shots on March 20, 1811, the twenty-second almost knocked him down. A son had been born to Napoleon, and that cannon-shot had killed the Bourbon race.

But was not Napoleon the scourge of Europe? Was he not turning France into what Italy was under Nero and Domitian

—a nation of conquerors abroad but of slaves at home? According to Frénilly, true patriots ought to aspire to the fall of Napoleon. The invasion of the allied armies would certainly be a calamity, but it would prevent a still greater disaster. Their triumph would deliver the country, and it was the duty of every one who loved France to wish that, cost what it might, she should shake off the yoke of this Corsican, this “foreign upstart,” and be handed to her legitimate sovereigns.

Therefore he enthusiastically welcomed the return of the Bourbons, in whose honour he composed an epic poem in two cantos, entitled “Fin du poème de la Révolution.” During the Hundred Days, he refused to remain in France and determined to reach Ghent by way of England.

After the Hundred Days, he threw himself into politics. He began by publishing an opuscle, called “*Considérations sur une année de l’histoire de France*,” which brought him the praise of Vitrolles and the favour of the Comte d’Artois, and followed it up with a work on Representative Assemblies. In 1816 and 1820 he tried to get elected deputy for the Oise. One of the most earnest of the *ultras*, he boasted of conspiring and of belonging to the fine flower of rebels. He joined the Society known as “*des bonnes études*”—later a nursery for magistrates and royalist administrators; diligently corresponded with the directors of French missions; and became an active collaborator on the *Conservateur*, which, on its ceasing to appear, he revived and continued for some time, with the aid of Bonald and Lammennais, under the title of the *Défenseur*.

At last, in 1821, he was elected deputy for the arrondissement of Savenay. On the faith of his writings, he tells us, Bretons and inhabitants of the Vendée offered to entrust him with their affairs. He joined the *piétistes* group, consisting of those members of parliament—La Bourdonnaye, Delalot, and several others—who met in the comfortable *salon* of Deputy Piet, and, in 1824, after his re-election, he was appointed Reporter to the Committee of the Budget. The Comte d’Artois liked him exceedingly, and once a week, from the winter of 1821, Frénilly called at the Pavillon de Marsan to pay court to Monsieur. In the month of August 1824 this friendship led to his appointment as a Councillor of State.

In November 1827 he was created a Peer, with seventy-five others. It was, he says, a foolish and colossal "batch," and the three ordinances which Villèle then issued—those creating Peers, dissolving the Chamber, and suppressing the censureship—presaged the fall of the monarchy.

It is at this stage of his life that Frénilly brings his Memoirs to a close. On the outbreak of the Revolution of 1830, he remained faithful to the White Flag and left the country. Selling his beloved Bourneville, he travelled in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and finally settled, first in Vienna and afterwards in Grätz, in the neighbourhood of the Duchesse de Berry and the royal family, which he continued to see until the end of his days. He died in Grätz on August 1, 1848.

II

Frénilly wrote his Recollections whilst in exile, between 1837 and 1848—not continuously but intermittently, at Rome, Bologna, Triest, Ischl, Innsbruck, and Grätz; he composed them in order to kill time and because, as he puts it, he preferred to talk nonsense rather than to vegetate. Written in this way by fits and starts, these souvenirs contain a few errors and inexactitudes. The author was describing a period long since passed, and, though he may have preserved his correspondence since 1807, he had no annals, he tells us, within his reach.

Moreover, he is not free from vanity; he exaggerates the part he played and would have us believe that he was one of the chief actors at the time of the Restoration. Hardly had he been elected a deputy than he asked to be appointed Minister of Public Instruction in order "to defend the throne and the Church against philosophism," and his colleague and friend Salaberry declares, in regard to this, that he had a *huppe* both on his head and mind.¹

Finally, he was a party man, and many of his judgments are dictated by prejudice. Let us accept his description of Talleyrand as an infamous wretch and of Fouché as a knave,

¹ Salaberry, *Souvenirs politiques*, 1900, vol. i. p. 14.

if you like! But he regards Voltaire as a deadly man who merited only scorn and aversion. He execrates that "Gilles César," Lafayette—Washington's clown, the most infatuated and pedantic of giddy-headed persons who brought from America the principles of Penn and Franklin, the silly hero whom France, to her shame, twice raised towards the throne. He condemns La Bédoyère as a criminal, Fabvier as a rogue, Manuel as a little monster, and Casimir-Perier as a lunatic. He considers Fiévée to be an insolent fop whose opinion was to be found in any one's purse. He styles General Foy—who, according to Pasquier, greatly honoured the tribune of the Chamber by his character and eloquence—a solemn clown and scoundrel, with the face of an assistant barber. He has only a feeling of disgust for Benjamin Constant, whose physiognomy, like his soul and his speeches, seemed to him to be "saturated with cruelty, impudence, hatred and envy." In the Duc de Richelieu he sees only a philosopher without talent—in Decazes a Narcissus with the shoulders of a lackey, a wretch who possessed but the bearing of a handsome coachman, a vulgar effrontery and a decisive mind.

The Orleans family inspired him with a feeling of horror. Why were they allowed to sojourn in France? he asks. Why were they not left in their "vipers' nest" at Twickenham? Was not their return, with the dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber and the famine, one of the three calamities which desolated France in 1816? And he insinuates that Louis Philippe did the same work as Philippe Egalité—paid the murderer of the Duc de Berry.

Frénilly liked neither Louis XVI. nor Louis XVIII.

He recalls the fact that the fashionables of Versailles nicknamed Louis XVI. "The Locksmith" or "The Big Pig," and reproaches him with having lacked spirit, judgment, taste and a sense of moderation.

As to Louis XVIII., he was his *bête noire*. On seeing this stout, sickly and fatigued man enter Paris in 1814—lolling in his calash and insensible to the people's joy—he experienced a painful impression, which soon turned to astonishment and sorrow. What!—he exclaims—Louis XVIII. neither makes nor unmakes anything! He neither resuscitates the provinces

and the parliaments nor re-establishes the masterships and the corporations! Four companies of musketeers is all that he accepts of the old *régime*! What! after the Hundred Days he employs Talleyrand and Fouché! He entrusts the ministry to the Duc de Richelieu, who has neither hatred nor love for the royal family—to Decazes, who becomes at one and the same time the child, friend and master of his king! Frénilly never ceases, in the last part of his Memoirs, to deplore the liberalism of Louis XVIII. and to declare, in a tone of sorrow and anger, that the king was assisting the Jacobins to destroy the monarchy. He cries that he would gladly have seen Louis XVIII. at Pondicherry, and seriously asks if it is possible to love one's native country without despising such a man! He reproaches him with the dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber, that dissolution which brought about "the king's dishonour and the loss of his cause." He reproaches him with having sanctioned the Loi Gouvion Saint Cyr. And he reproaches him with not having, after the assassination of the Duc de Berry, dissolved the Chamber and banished the Orleans. In his opinion, Louis had dragged France into a fatal rut; like the *émigrés*, he had neither learnt nor forgotten anything—he was but "an egoist and doctrinaire."

Louis XVIII. was aware of Frénilly's views. He ironically called him M. de Frénésie,¹ and spoke not a single word to him when on July 1, 1819, he signed the marriage contract of Claire de Frénilly and Camille de Pimodan.

Similarly, Frénilly had little liking for the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême. One lacked polished speech, the other polished manners. The Duke, with his narrow, flat head, was possessed by a craze for liberalism; the Duchess, heroic and saintly though she might be, was unable to save the imperilled monarchy. She sacrificed her conscience to her wifely duties and knew not how to gain people's hearts. In the midst of the joy of the Vendée she was stiff and embarrassed; on entering Paris with Louis XVIII. she seemed as though imprisoned in her new corset, and the sorry figure which she cut recalled the past and foreshadowed the future.

Frénilly's king, the king after his own heart, was Charles X.

¹ *Mémoires et Souvenirs d'un pair de France*, vol. iv. p. 342.

He would not let France drift! If less witty than Louis XVIII. he possessed lofty, noble sentiments, and his correspondence with the Bailiff of Crussol, which Frénilly had in his hands, displayed the soul and style of a Henry IV. He could recognise, moreover, Frénilly's devotion. At Claire's marriage with the Marquis de Pimodan he bestowed upon the baron "kindness and even praise."

Thus does Frénilly bring political passion into his judgments. But this very sincerity is what makes his "Recollections" of value. Under the Restoration he did not hesitate to sever relations with those of his friends who no longer shared his opinions. He was long connected with Norvins, Lacreteille, Pasquier, Barante, and Vindé; but as soon as they enrolled themselves under the banner of liberalism he ceased to see them. His appreciations, therefore, testify to a state of mind which it is necessary to know. He is, as he himself says in two passages, a fierce aristocrat, and after all, this rigidity and stubbornness of principles does him honour. Although it has been said that the absurd man is he who never changes, men who, like Frénilly, will neither depart from their ideas nor renounce their faith, ever inspire esteem and respect.

III

Baron de Frénilly's Souvenirs present a series of pictures of real interest.

He describes Paris as it was before the Revolution: fashionable Paris which thought of naught but pleasure, sentimental and sensible Paris, where in the corner of a drawing-room and surrounded by thirty people, mothers suckled their children, "the poor victims of Rousseau," or where young women of twenty declared they no longer danced because they had had a child. He passes in review the theatres, fairs, balls and fashions. He introduces us into those important financial families which were becoming a nobility, whilst the nobility transformed itself into the people, presenting to us, in addition to his uncle Saint-Waast, old Delahante, graceful and rather

given to bantering; Delahante's nephew, tall, bony, square-built, and, notwithstanding his hard, dry face, an excellent man; Luzines, cold in manner and imposing in bearing; and Lauzon, a stout jovial fellow with the commonest manners in the world. He takes us to the lectures at the Lycée—to those delivered by Garat, a pale, heavy and verbose *littérateur*—to those of La Harpe, ruddy of cheek and forehead, and finally to those of Deparcieux, the skilful physicist and lucid demonstrator. He knew intimately the ardent D'Esprêmesnil and those youthful members of the Chamber of Inquiries—foppish philosophers just out of college!—who imagined that they formed an Arcopagus or a senate. But were not most parliamentarians filled with the conceit and turbulent pride of the Enquêtes?

With the same rapid pencil, sometimes delicately, sometimes vigorously, he sketches the physiognomy of revolutionary Paris.

He shows how the Revolution spread in the capital. Were not the Deputies fashionable? They were received consequently with honour; and the Revolution having thus entered the *salons* “daily contact with errors and honeyed baseness, often even eloquent, imperceptibly caused modifications, inoculations and grafts.”

He relates some striking anecdotes of this epoch which paint human cowardice in the most vivid colours. Whilst travelling in the *diligence* to Loches, after the September massacres, the son of an Attorney-General of the Parliament of Nancy, seeing the Orleans prisoners pass, shouted at the top of his voice: “A la guillotine!” “At any rate keep your mouth closed,” protested Frénilly. “Ah!” replied his companion, “I shout because I'm afraid.”

The Paris of the Terror is revived in a few pages. Carriages there are none; the streets are silent; the men wear coarse *carmagnoles*, which the youth of the city still find a means of making elegant; there is a dearth of everything; long files of famished people stand at the bakers' and butchers' doors; friends assemble secretly to eat white bread; and Frénilly, one terrible frosty day, went as far as Charenton to fetch a hand-cart filled with wood, which he prudently dragged across the fields.

He calls up several curious scenes in Parisian life under the Directory. People vied with each other in misfortune and poverty, declaring, in order to be in the fashion, that they were ruined, and had either been persecuted or imprisoned, regretting almost that they had not been guillotined, but adding that they might have been on the day after, or two days after the 9th of Thermidor. At a luncheon attended by these victims, Frénilly submitted to the affront of being the only person present who had not been imprisoned.

The society of the Empire is not forgotten: we see it amusing itself, and every year, from the last Sunday in August to the second Sunday in September, with plays performed at Le Marais. Some people are irreconcilable and refuse to enter into a covenant with Bonaparte, the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien; others go to the Tuileries and—with the exception of Pasquier and Mathieu Molé—slander the Master.

Pretty and lively portraits are mingled with these descriptions. What a brilliant gallery is passed before us in the chapter devoted to the noble dames and damsels who reigned in the *salons* of Poitiers and the châteaux of Poitou!

Frénilly excels in describing women. They abound in his work. There is a portrait, for instance, of his cousin, the Marquise de Bon, so brisk and coquettish. Another of Mme. Grant, who became Princesse de Talleyrand. She loved Frénilly, and he speaks of her with a taste and delicacy which authors of memoirs do not always show. A third of Mme. d'Houdetot; a fourth of Joséphine, the Joséphine of the Directory; and a fifth of Hortense de Beauharnais, who danced so well, wrote such pretty songs, and so cordially detested her royal and disagreeable husband.

Men are portrayed in the same vivacious, witty, happy manner, and in a few exact and nervous strokes.

Literary portraits are as numerous as political ones in Frénilly's Memoirs. His maternal grandmother was an admirer of fine minds and she held a *salon*, the oracle of which was the Abbé de Mably. Twice or thrice a week his mother sent him with his tutor Bréjole to the exclusive gatherings of D'Alembert and Marmontel. In 1778, at the house of the Marquis de Villette, he saw the aged Voltaire, buried in an armchair and

wearing on his head a huge bearskin cap which covered him down to his eyes.

Let me add that Frénilly knows how to tell a story, and that his narratives are full of animation. The finest account in his recollections is that of the events of August 10. The scene he describes is unforgettable: the procession silently descending the Escalier de l'Horloge, lined with old Swiss soldiers in tears, the king being drawn into the Assembly, his escort remaining at the foot of the staircase and seeing pikes rise before them bearing the heads of victims, the cannonade suddenly bursting forth, and Louis XVI. ordering the firing to cease!

All that now remains for me to do, in concluding this too brief introduction, is to thank the heirs of that Baron de Frénilly, whose "Recollections" will, I hope, take a distinguished place in the already rich collection of French Memoirs.

ARTHUR CHUQUET,
Membre de l'Institut.

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1768—1780

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Begun in ROME, February 24, 1837.

FOR some years past, in my hours of repose, and which are the only ones that fatigue me, I have thought of relating my life to myself—a life which, since it is neither that of Alexander, nor that of Gil Blas, but merely that of a modest private person who has passed his days in a fairly middle position, between the eagle and the mole, History will not tell to others.

My story is, therefore, a secret, a disclosure made only to myself; it is a course of study to contribute to my education, which we never complete, and, as I am sixty-eight years of age, it is time to think about it.

Speaking seriously, the project is a puerile one, for I have neither the hope nor the determination to absorb the world with my *outré-tombe*, like Rousseau and M. de Chateaubriand. But

it is precisely because it is puerile that I am carrying it out. Since old age has really been creeping upon me and energy has begun to fail, my physical strength, which calls for repose, has been in perpetual conflict with my moral strength, which is ever at work. I must make peace between these two powers, pushing forward with one as long as it supports me, talking nonsense with the other when it abandons me, and keeping in reserve such trifles as will enable me to pass from a fatiguing work to one that is reposeful. That is why I am undertaking this puerile project of relating to myself the story of my life. My hours of weariness—my evil hours—will be devoted to it; so I begin to-day, February 24, 1837, at Rome, because it is raining, and because I have neither the strength to remain idle nor the courage to return for a day to that study of parliamentary history which calls for uninterrupted work and meditation.¹ Therefore, I begin my book this morning.

I was born in Paris on November 14, 1768,—I believe in the narrow Rue Saint-Pierre, near the Place des Victoires and the Palais Royal, for at that time, with the exception of the high nobility, which inhabited the Faubourg Saint Germain, and the magistracy, which was retrenching in the austere Marais quarter, all the best society of Paris, and especially those who were at the head of the money market, grouped together in the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal and the Tuileries. My family belonged to the last-named class, which, since the glory of Louis XIV. had ruined the nobility, since the Regent had thrown the public fortune into the hands of farmers of the revenue, and since large fortunes had melted at the same time as noble birth, had taken a sort of State position. Philosophy then completed the work of levelling, and it was not easy to find in the State many positions superior to those of a Farmer General and a member of the Academy.²

My father was a man of the world: handsome, smiling and agreeable, full of kindness and wit. He wrote very pretty

¹ Frénilly was engaged on a Parliamentary History of England, which he never completed.—A. C.

² To form an idea of what a Farmer-General then was, see the *Memoirs of Mme. d'Epinaï*.—F.

THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER 3

verses, was intimately acquainted with the wits of the day, loved luxury and expense, but—what was less common—loved his wife and children better than anything else.

My mother was the most remarkable woman I have ever known. During my fairly long life her memory has been a unique model for me. With a transcendent mind—I in no way exaggerate—great attainments, and talents of the first order in music and painting, she combined a modesty and simplicity which went as far as self-ignorance. She possessed grace, perfect manners, taste, and tact, and, if I myself have anything of that gloss, I owe it to the fact of having lived thirty years with her. Finally, and this is the most astonishing of her contrasts, to nobility of soul, to a mind full of strength and energy, she united tenderness of heart, charity, and inexhaustible indulgence. She was a long time severe towards me, whom she worshipped, and this was not her least sacrifice. Let me give an example of her justice. When six or seven, I used to scratch my sister, who was two years younger. One day when the offence was manifestly more serious than usual, my mother calmly took me between her knees, drew a black pin from her hair and made a gash of the finest red from one end of my hand to the other. I uttered not a sound. The retaliation was a trifle harsh, but there was an accumulation of offences and it appeared to me to be just. I can remember this execution as though it had happened yesterday: I can see my mother, her hair, her arm-chair between a writing-desk and a window, and that pin—a veritable Damocles' sword—suspended over my hand. I believe that since then I have scratched no one.

My mother's family was limited to two persons: her mother and uncle. My grandmother, Mme. Chastelain, a woman of great judgment but hardhearted, had brought up her daughter, and I have often heard my poor mother say to my sister, whom she, in her turn, was bringing up: "You will never be equal to me, because you have not been brought up as well as I was." Such as she was, this grandmother loved me as much as she was able, for she had placed her pride in me, a boy of some promise. She gave a *soirée* to clever people on Saturdays, a dinner on Sundays, and a supper on Wednesdays. I was early initiated into these mysteries, the hierophant of which

was the celebrated Abbé de Mably, and I did not appreciate their glory.

My mother's uncle, M. de Saint-Waast, Administrator-General of Crown Lands, who was exceedingly rich, and whose fortune she was to inherit, was an excellent man; simple, jovial, witty, and generous. He loved magnificence, but with taste and discernment. I have never seen in any palace greater or more elegant luxury than that shown in the *salon* of the house which he had built opposite the Tuileries. In his library was the celebrated *Frileuse*, which Houdon had made for him. His wife, a good and clever woman, but firmer and colder than he was, received a numerous company composed of men of wit, rank, and finance.¹

My mother, sister and I were the joy of this house. I lost my great-uncle a year after my grandmother. Hardly were his eyes closed than the Revolution, which was already destroying everything, suppressed his post and seized a donation which he had just made in favour of twelve annual marriages in his parish of Saint-Roch.

My father's family was young, joyous and amiable, and of my childhood I recall only games and pleasure. His brother, M. de Fauveau, and his sisters, Mmes. de Thésigny and de Chazet, who all lived near him and the Palais Royal, had fine houses, honourable luxury, and children of my own age. We were ten cousins-german.

M. de Fauveau was pre-eminently a man of honour and virtue; Mme. de Thésigny, a pale, cold, kind and careless beauty; Mme. de Chazet, a model of grace, goodness, petulance and piety.

¹ It was here that I made my *début*. A young man's entry into society necessitated deep study in those days and formed, after philosophy and the humanities, the last part of his education. It required no small skill to enter with assurance and grace into a drawing-room where thirty men and women were seated in a circle around the fire, to enter this circle with a slight circular bow, to advance to the hostess, and to retire with honour, whilst managing without awkwardness a dress-coat, lace, a head-dress of thirty-six powdered curls, a hat under the arm, a sword the point of which reached to the heels, and, finally, an enormous muff, the smallest of which was two feet and a half in length and about the same in circumference. I took a month's lessons with the celebrated Petit, at twelve francs each and never did actor tremble more than I did at my *début*.—F.

One of the women for whom I have had the most affection was one of M. de Fauveau's daughters, my cousin Flore—my dear Flore, as I always called her. Flore—so good, so blooming, and so pretty—was like a sister of my sister, and she remained so to me as long as she lived.

Mme. de Chazet had two charming daughters. The eldest, the Marquise de Bon, a pretty woman, in the full acceptation of the word, brilliant, coquettish, and a leader of fashion, died ruined and in isolation, after having lost her husband and all her children. The other, the Baronne de Mackau, was, after my mother, the most celestial creature I can remember.

These four intimately united families—Frénilly, Fauveau, Thésigny, and Chazet—had chosen the four Mondays of each month for their receptions, and the same company met alternately at their suppers. They often played the Proverbs of Carmontelle, who was then the soul and arbiter of all the pleasures of good taste in the fashionable world of Paris. He was a thin man, with a long and severe face, a sardonic laugh, an imperious and choleric disposition; but hidden under this rugged exterior were a very good heart and a singularly lofty soul. He began his career as tutor to the children of the Marquis d'Armentières. Then he became reader to the Duc d'Orléans. His ambition went no further. All the more proud as he became poorer, little sufficed for him. He dined everywhere, and nowhere was he regarded as a parasite. He amused everybody, and as a friend who confers an obligation. He possessed all the little talents suitable for the century, the little century in which he lived. With a few strokes of his brush or pencil, he drew poor portraits, but good likenesses, some of which I have preserved, including one of Mlle. Necker. He designed and planted gardens that were somewhat extraordinary, for they were not French, and he got angry if you called them English. He planted my father's garden at Saint-Ouen and the famous one of Mousseaux,¹ on the wall of which he had written: "This is not an English garden." People of the reign of Louis XIV. would as soon have dispensed with Le Nôtre as those of my day would have done without Carmontelle. And what else did he not do! His Proverbs

¹ Now Monceaux.—A.C.

were not over-good, but he succeeded in catching the tone, style and manners of different classes of society with great truth and sometimes piquancy. They had been performed at Villers-Cotterets, where they compensated for the weariness produced by Mme. de Montesson's plays. Thence they had passed into every *salon*; nothing else was played there; and thus Carmontelle became the Scribe of his epoch.¹

But I am wandering from my subject, so let me try to get back to it by relating an anecdote of my infancy. It relates to a phrase which, said quite innocently by a child of eight or nine, did more harm to three people than the most cutting satire. In the house which my father then inhabited, in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, there also lived a M. Pascal, an officer of the Cent Suisses, a bachelor of forty or fifty, and the member of an honourable family of Provence. Handsome, well-bred, rich, he could count as many friends as acquaintances and as many tables and boxes as friends. He was expected everywhere, and was scolded when he did not put in an appearance. Well, one day this excellent M. Pascal arrived at my father's a quarter of an hour before dinner. As soon as he appeared in the *salon* doorway, and before my parents had had time to thank him for his attention, their eight-year-old brat cried out: "Ah! here's M. Pascal who has come to beg for his dinner." Try to imagine anything more cutting for one person and more embarrassing for the two others! The phrase could not be mine. Had it been used by a servant? I do not recollect. By my parents? Impossible! I do not know whether I received one, two or three boxes on the ears; for my father was not sparing of them. But I was overwhelmed with taunts and for the next week was nicknamed "Monsieur le mendiant." I apologised, and on the following day again offered my excuses, but the wound remained.

This story shows that I had advanced beyond my years, a state of things to which my father had perhaps contributed. He took me everywhere, especially to his box at the Français, where I have seen Lekain and Mlle. de Mesnil act.

¹ Carmontelle (1717-1806), reader to the Duc d'Orléans and orderer of his *fêtes*, was the author of eight volumes of *Proverbes*, which had a great success. He was, says Sainte-Beuve, the great creator of this form of composition.—A. C

Lekain took the part of Orestes in a black wig à la Louis XIV., a maroon velvet dress-coat with gold frogs, a red satin waist-coat, stockings to match, and a three-cornered gallooned hat with a red feather. This costume astonished no one; it was according to tradition, and people would have been scandalised had they seen him wearing a toga and brodekins. Mlle. Clairon, of the Français, and Mme. Saint-Huberty, of the Opéra, were the first who dared, not without causing a great uproar, to be Greeks and Romans. The reform was long in taking hold. I have also seen Vestris père and Gardel dance the ballet of the Horatii and the Curiatii in the lower part of a Roman habit, a doublet, trunk hose, stockings, shoes, and white gloves and hat à la Henry IV. We know the story of Mlle. de Mesnil, who, when playing the part of Camilla and fleeing from Horace's poniard, got entangled in her hooped skirts and fell on the stage. Horace sheathed his dagger, put on his gloves, politely assisted her to rise, and killed her in the side scene. I can see her, too, playing Clytemnestra in a farthingale two ells long and *souliers à chappins*.

"Chappins" were a kind of very high and pointed heels, on which all women then balanced themselves. Consequently they walked very slowly and only in drawing-rooms or in the main alley at the Palais Royal. "Chappins," like hoop-petticoats, have, therefore, had some influence on social manners.

In addition to taking me to the theatre, my father taught me Latin, for he was a very good *littérateur*. But I also had a private tutor, named M. Thiriot, an honest and poor professor from I know not what college. He was a Don Quixote in wig, black coat, waistcoat and breeches; an ideal pedant, but the best man in the world. In summer he came to Saint-Ouen once or twice a week, in the morning; and, owing to the heat, used to take off his wig and substitute for it a square, white paper cap, which, at the beginning of the lesson, sent my sister and I into fits of joy.

At the same time M. Thiriot taught Latin to the celebrated Mme. de Lavoisier, wife of the chemist and Farmer-General, and since Comtesse de Rumford. She was intimately acquainted with my parents, and was twelve years older than myself, whom she called her college comrade. She was young but not pretty,

rather pedantic, in tone and manners beyond those of the Marais, and, moreover, singularly economical, to use no stronger term. At the time when the Lycée lectures, near the Palais Royal, were fashionable, she borrowed my father's carriage in the evening, attended two or three lectures on science, had herself driven to my uncle's, sent the carriage home, and, after having had supper, wearing her thick shoes, took her lackey's arm and walked from the Tuileries to the Arsenal. We know what a fortune she has just left.

To stimulate my emulation and sow in me the seeds of a great man, either of the Academy or of something else, nothing was spared. Emulation—that is, the desire to be above others—was the great epidemic of those days.

Our emulation, however, was not such as threatened social repose. Without leaving the family my parents had formed a little academy, the Académie de Saint-Ouen, of which they were the judges and we children the candidates. It met every Sunday morning at my father's. After breakfast and a kite-flying match in the garden, we received an historical text, which we had to develop, full liberty being given us to be either Livy, Sallust, or Tacitus, just as the fancy took us. Each of us had a separate study. In addition to my sister and myself, the competitors were my cousins Adèle and Félicité de Chazet and Mlle. Necker. The country house of M. Necker, who, I believe, was already Controller-General, adjoined my father's, so the two neighbours knew each other. Mlle. Necker was educated alone at Saint-Ouen by an excellent Mlle. Bernard, a Protestant of Geneva. Mme. Necker was delighted that her daughter, whom she did not intend should make a noise in the world, should find good examples and peaceful emulation in my father's house.

To return to the subject of our academic exercises. When each had finished his or her work, and whilst we were playing, the Areopagus delivered its judgment in writing. The prize was a wreath of roses, and the *accessit* a bouquet. Then we had dinner, followed by a walk, in the course of which it was no small glory for the victor to show his or her crowned brow to the respectful country people of Saint-Ouen. We were already following Cæsar's principles. Sometimes this brilliant

day was concluded by the performance of a play by the good Mlle. Bernard, who made it virtuous, pathetic and short.

Private theatricals were then in great vogue in society. My father, his brother Fauveau, his sister Mme. de Chazet, and especially my mother, all acted well. The craze had even descended a few rungs of the social ladder, for I remember a performance of *Athalie* given by the family of our Saint-Ouen gardener. His daughter, Mlle. Nanette, a pretty little person of fifteen who weeded the kitchen-garden in the morning and studied her part in the evening, represented the Queen of the Jews. The small people were then more reasonable than their elders. Their taste, since they called for Racine, had an upward tendency; whereas the big people played the Savoyards, and the Keeper of the Seals, M. de Miromesnil, the Crispins.

I must say still a few words—they will, alas! be of the nature of an adieu—about this dear Saint-Ouen house, which is identified in my memory with only happy days, and with people that were agreeable and cheerful. My father had had it elegantly furnished. He possessed a perfect cook, the illustrious Vacossin. Here we have proof of my orderly mind: I mention the cook before the guests. These were numerous. They came from Paris in the afternoon or evening, returning home after supper. I can still see in my mind's eye a fairly large *salon* with eight windows separated by fluted Corinthian pilasters, large mirrors at each end, and a piece of furniture upholstered in white flowered chintz. When this sort of gallery was well illuminated and filled with from twenty to forty people, the effect was most gay and agreeable.

Very few names return to me. I remember, however, the amiable, lively and good Mme. Le Sénéchal, who, after having had the face of a Hebe, was still beautiful; also her three charming daughters. Her husband, who was the most excellent man in the world and not lacking in wit, owned that beautiful Villemoisson estate, the *fêtes* of which were frequented by all the fashionable people of Paris. An intimate friend of my parents, Mme. Le Sénéchal remained mine also to the end of her days, which closed with misfortune but without her ceasing to be cheerful, naïve, and *spirituelle*.

I may also mention the Marquis de Bièvre, who was better

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than his puns, and Rulhière, who made that piquant epigram on Florian's *fauteuil* at the Academy :

Auteur actif et guerrier sage,
Il combat peu, mais il écrit :
Il dut la croix à son esprit
Et le fauteuil à son courage.

Rulhière was a man with the face and appearance of a fox, and a fondness for appearing to be simple, easy and absent-minded. Nevertheless, he was a superior writer and a charming teller of stories.

There was likewise the Chevalier de Cercey, a cavalry officer who had been left for dead at the Battle of Rosbach, whence he returned with a band of black velvet which half covered his forehead, extreme deafness, and an ear-trumpet which he handled so skilfully that he was able to take part in all the conversation. He was a model of urbanity, modesty and good manners. One day he related that a certain officer, a polite and obliging man, received an order to give no quarter. One of the enemy, taken prisoner in the *mêlée*, asked him to spare his life. "Ah ! monsieur," he replied, "ask me for anything else you like save that." He also told a story of an officer who, charged to superintend the burial of the dead after a battle, imagined he saw some of the bodies move and informed the gravediggers. "Let them be, sir," replied one of the men, "if we listened to them, not one of them would be dead."

Then there was Monticour, Sterne's friend and the hereditary friend of my family, a man full of wit and humour, a dry joker who was called the king of banterers. I saw him in his eightieth year take the part of Cupid at my grandmother's *fête*. He was dressed entirely in white, with wings and quiver on his back, and a bow in his hand ; and his head was as bald as a bladder of lard. He died shortly afterwards of apoplexy whilst walking with us in his Neuilly gardens.

Finally, I find amongst the cream of my father's friends the Chevalier, since the Marquis de Chastellux, a tall man with a pale, noble face, a man without emotion, but possessed of a

desire for intellect, glory and fortune. He had then acquired only the first of these. He sought glory in the American War, and fortune came to him through the death of his elder brother. He was my father's great friend and had replaced the good M. Pascal in an apartment of the Paris house. We saw him return from America with a quarto volume of memoirs which I have never read, and which D'Alembert called a catalogue of inns. This catalogue, combined with two volumes on *La félicité publique*, which Voltaire praised, as he praises every man of quality, opened the Academy's doors to him.¹ He then committed two pieces of stupidity: one by giving, like many others, a hundred louis for Mesmer's secret; the other by allowing himself to be drawn by Mme. de Genlis into a ridiculous *mariage de conscience*, at Spa, with Miss Plunkett. I will give only one example of his wit, which was ever dry and sometimes rather piquant. It refers to a time when Paris had a craze for *folles*. Everybody aspired to the production of a *folle*, that is, a short, sentimental story the heroine of which was a madwoman. Now, Mme. de Staël felt that she also must write one. One day when the Chevalier de Chastellux entered her drawing-room, she rushed towards him with the announcement: "Chevalier, I have produced a *folle*." "Oh!" he gravely replied, "I thought it was your mother."

I have mentioned Voltaire and his name brings me to the greatest adventure of my infancy. It happened in the summer of 1778, when he was eighty-three years of age and I barely ten. He had obtained permission to visit Paris, and everybody will remember the frenzied ovation which greeted him. His horses were unharnessed at the Porte du Carrousel, his carriage was drawn by the young poets of the day to the Français, where he was received amidst the convulsive applause of the whole house, and, finally, at the close of the worst of his tragedies, his bust was crowned by Clairon. His

¹ Chastellux wrote *Voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (1786, two vols. in 8vo), having previously published *De la félicité publique, ou considérations sur le sort des hommes dans les différentes époques de l'histoire* (1772-1776, two vols. in 8vo) which Voltaire did not hesitate to rank above *L'Esprit des lois*.—A.C.

friends feared that this triumph might be followed by ill-effects, so they would allow him to receive no one. But my mother, fascinated also and unable, to her great regret, to approach the idol, desired that at least her son should some day be able to say to his grandchildren: "I have seen Voltaire." The plan was nothing else than to get me into his sanctuary by hook or by crook. It was necessary, however, that I should be an accomplice, and here was a difficulty, for I pulled a terrible face on hearing of the proposal. But an appeal to honour and glory, backed up by a promise of coffee, at last made me consent to be an astonishing child. For the next week my poor mother filled my head with lines and poems by Voltaire appropriate for the occasion. Every question that the great man might put was foreseen and the answer docketed in my brain. The day arrived. They helped me on with my apple-green satin coat, lined with pink, green satin breeches, white silk stockings, and buckled shoes, completing my toilet with sword, hat, and a triple row of curls. Poor little monkeys that we were! It was thus that they dressed us! My mother gave me a letter for Voltaire, doubtless one of effusive admiration on the part of an unknown woman for a man of universal reputation. It was to serve me, if need be, as a passport, and if any one questioned me before introducing me I was instructed to say that it was from M. d'Arget, a friend of Voltaire and my father. Getting into our carriage, we reached the Pont Royal, some thirty yards from the Rue de Beaune, at the corner of which was the Marquis de Villette's house. I descended, and, leaving my mother to wait for me, found myself, in my apple-green satin coat, in the midst of the people on the Quai des Théatins. Though my legs rather trembled, I arrived at my destination without getting muddy, which appeared to me to be an important part of my mission. I passed through the carriage-entrance, unchallenged by doorkeeper, and then mounted on the right a small ground-floor staircase the plan of which I had in my head. "Where is Monsieur going?" asked a sort of *valet de chambre*. "I am going to M. de Voltaire's," I replied, rather proudly, I believe. Thereupon a little door was opened and I found myself face to face with a tall skeleton buried in a large armchair and wearing on his head a huge

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bearskin cap which covered him down to his eyes. It was Voltaire. . . . I had counted on passing through ante-rooms and *salons*, which would have given me time to prepare myself. I was dragged from my quandary by a cavernous voice saying: "Oh! what a pretty child! Come near, my little friend." "Monsieur, I have the honour . . ." I began. "And from whom is this letter?" asked the old man. "Monsieur, it is from M. d'Arget." (Oh! unhappy mother!) "And what is your name?" "Monsieur, my name is Frénilly." (Unhappy mother! I had ten lines of verse in reply to this question.) "And who is your father?" "Monsieur, he is Receiver-General." (Thrice unhappy mother! there were six lines in response to this.) I have forgotten the other questions, to which I doubtless replied with the same happy appropriateness, and which the great man frequently interlarded with: "Oh! what a pretty child!" There was brought in an enormous Savoy biscuit, the appearance of which has remained as deeply engraved on my memory as Voltaire's face. I was horribly greedy, and still am. But my honour was at stake and I was already aware that there are occasions when the appetite must give way before glory. I believe, too, that I was rather hurt at them for having offered a biscuit to a man who had just concluded so dangerous an enterprise. In short, I neither ate, drank, nor spoke. I bowed, backed out of the room, passed down the staircase, through the door on to the Quay, and jumped into my mother's carriage. "Well," she said, "have you seen Voltaire?" "Yes," replied I, proudly. "Did he speak to you?" "Yes." "Did you give the letter into his own hands?" "Yes." "And from whom did you say it was?" "From M. d'Arget!!!" I draw a veil over my mother's sorrow. Nevertheless, this adventure created a sensation; people spoke of nothing else; and two days later, the *Journal de Paris*, which was almost as truthful then as it is now, said that a charming child had escaped from its parents' house in order to pay homage to Voltaire. Who would have told me, in the midst of this general infatuation, that, on reaching early youth, I should have sufficient intelligence to draw from his own works the disdain and aversion with which this deadly man has ever inspired me?

But I have omitted from my chronicle the record of an event which is still fresh in my memory. I was only seven years old when Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, after the death of Louis XV., made their first entry into Paris. I was taken to see the magnificent procession. The king's face was not agreeable but very noble. The queen was fresh and radiant, and her face was animated by goodness and gaiety. Dressed in white, they sat in one of those magnificent carriages which were monuments of sculpture and chiselling, and which have since been imitated so meanly. I was struck by the pacific, elegant, almost gallant nature of the pomp. There was nothing military about it. Everything was civil: the officers of the various *maisons*, those of the stables, the company of the royal chases, and the falconers. Even the Cent Suisses with their ancient ruffles, and the bodyguards, in their handsome red and blue costumes, thickly covered with gold, awakened no warlike idea. The last thirty years have seen a great change in these ceremonies, which are now the occasion for the display of veritable armies. They have the air of laying siege to Notre-Dame in order to hear there a *Te Deum*.

It seems to me that shortly afterwards I witnessed a second entry of the king. He had just laid the first stone of the Revolution by dissolving the Maupeou Parliament and re-establishing the ancient one. The rabble of Paris rejoiced without knowing why. Everywhere they sang Collé's pretty song called *Revenants*, and also the following lines, to the air of *Sous le nom de l'amitié*:

Sur la route de Chatou
 Le peuple s'achemine
 Pour voir la triste mine
 Du chancelier Maupeou,
 Sur la rou . . .
 Sur la rou . . .
 Sur la route de Chatou.

A reform which was then more important to me than that of the Parliament was that attempted by the Marquis de Girardin. This gentleman, a neighbour of Rousseau and the father of three sons of my own age, dared to brave the talk of the town by a change in his children's dress. A number of us Parisian children, brought up, like me, with their parents, used

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to meet in the Tuileries to play, dressed in breeches, stockings and pumps, and with ruffles round our wrists and three-cornered hats on our heads. One afternoon we saw the three Girardins arrive in the dress of English sailors: round hat, waistcoat without skirt, and trousers.¹ There was at first a general hue and cry. Then we got accustomed to the costume, envied it and I more than any one else. One day when I was extolling the happiness of the Girardins in being free from curl-papers, curling-irons, powder, pomade, and especially the fear of being grumbled at for holes and stains, my father said: "Well, would you like to be like them?" "Ah!" I replied, "with all my heart!" And so my pigtail was suddenly cut; my club disappeared; and my hair became its natural colour, straight or curled, as it liked, to the great contentment of M. Favier, the *valet de chambre*.

I believe that I have now exhausted all my recollections up to the period which separated, in a way, my childhood and early youth. This period was that of the death of my father. When twelve years old I caught small-pox at Saint-Ouen. The whole household took it from me, with the exception of my mother, who had been the first person in France to be inoculated when the celebrated La Condamine, my grandmother's friend, brought the discovery from the New World. My attack was terrible, and the remedies still more so, for after my convalescence I had to be carried about for six months. Nevertheless, the disease made but one victim—my father. As soon as the first symptoms of my disease made their appearance, he had been exiled to Paris. He did not reappear at Saint-Ouen until all were cured and everything was purified. But even then he did not enter the house; he stood in the garden, and saw me held up at a window. He was impressed by my red face. The same evening he was seized with small-pox—and Dr. Bary did the rest. The celebrated and elegant Bary was a friend of the family, which is always a misfortune. It is permissible to have a doctor as a friend, but you ought never to have a friend as a doctor. Bary literally killed my father, who, in addition to

¹ See *La Revue d'hist. litt. de la France*, No. 1, 1906, p. 108, for the account of the architect Paris who saw the Girardins, father and sons, at Ermenonville, dressed in "blue English cloth."—A.C.

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possessing that pure blood which he transmitted to me, was full of health and strength. My grandmother, who was also his friend, was, a few years later, led to the brink of the grave by this same doctor. She had an iron constitution, which he extenuated for six months with ptisan and fasting, until my mother who, as may well be imagined, had retained little confidence in him, at last forced her to see Malouet. After feeling her pulse, Malouet said: "Madame, eat." She ate and a week later was quite well.

CHAPTER II

1780-1787

Mme. de Frénilly's grief—Transformation of the Palais Royal—Anger against the Duc de Chartres—Paris in 1780—Dinners and suppers—Suckling—Hostesses—Importance of the Forty—Obstructions to traffic—The theatres—The fairs—Other pleasures of people of quality—Longchamp—Balls—The ball at the Opéra—A tutor—Gutraudet—Bréjole—D'Alembert—Comte de Tressan—Condorcet—Maury—Delille—Marmontel—Morellet—*Le Mariage de Figaro*—The public mind—The newsmongers—The Cracow Tree—Métra—Patriotism—Louis XVI.'s nickname—Lafayette or Gilles César—Travels—Ermenonville—Sojourn at Rheims—Reading—Religion—An excursion in Germany—Amsterdam—Holland—London—The Woolwich review—Misfortunes of a notary—D'Orcy—Hérault de Séchelles—Parisian actresses.

My mother's grief was typical of what she was everywhere: tender to others, harsh to herself alone. Her heart seemed to crave for remorse. No longer wishing to return to Saint-Ouen, she sold her house and retired to the solitudes of the Bois de Boulogne, at Neuilly. She still had a mother, an uncle and two children. But my uncle's brilliant house offended her; she was no longer the woman who charmed all circles; she was but a mother impressed with a sense of her duties. We children profited by what society lost, and our education was the only thing which did not suffer from the loss of our father. Thus a year passed by, at the end of which time she changed her residence in the Rue des Petits-Champs, which had become a place of anguish to her, for one of those pretty houses which the Farmer-General of the Hague had just built on the Boulevard de la Madeleine. She devoted all her evenings to her mother, and, when my grandmother died, her uncle, who had become infirm, inherited this daily devotion.

Solidly educated and knowing well her Latin authors, my mother flattered herself with the idea of completing my education herself. But a few months of the work convinced her that it was necessary to place me in the hands of a man. A governor was got for me ; and this was a second widowhood for my mother.

Before speaking of this revolution in my education, I must say a few words on the subject of a social revolution which then took place and which precluded, by the upheaval of a quarter, the downfall of a kingdom. I refer to the destruction of the Palais Royal. The old Duc d'Orléans, who had retired with Mme. de Montesson to his fine house in the Chaussée d'Antin, had abandoned Cardinal de Richelieu's magnificent domain to his son, the Duc de Chartres. Its large garden, bordered on the west by the Palace, was lined on its three other sides by rows of houses which, owing to their position, were priceless. Straight alleys, pieces of water and flower beds divided it, whilst on the southern side was that fine alley of chestnut trees which was unrivalled in France for its antiquity, its breadth, and its superb vault, impenetrable to the sun. At its far end was the Orangery. This immense green nave formed, ever since the days of Anne of Austria, the common *salon* of the whole of the good society of Paris, without distinction of quarters. Evening was the time for promenading, and in summer—for people then lived in Paris all the year round—they never left the Opéra without coming to the Palais Royal.

It was *the* fashionable promenade, one where you saw nothing save feathers, diamonds, embroidered coats, and red-heeled shoes. A *chenille*, that is a dress-coat and a round hat, would not have dared to appear there. The Café de Foy and the Café du Caveau, which alone have outlived revolutions, made colossal fortunes. In short, the Palais Royal was the heart and soul of Parisian aristocracy. And that was what the Duc de Chartres undertook one day to destroy. He was doubtless ignorant of the reply made to James I. when he wished to build on St. James's Park and asked what it would cost him : "Only three crowns." I saw the axe applied to the foot of the first chestnut of the alley, and the fall of that tree

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provoked a universal cry of sorrow or rather fury. There was no crime of which such a Vandal was incapable. My ears still ring with the songs—most of them very stinging—composed around his name, and thus did public hatred transform a base, dull man into one wicked and guilty. The Palais Royal became what it is to-day; its verdant drawing-room was transformed into a bazaar, shops succeeded red-heeled shoes, the ell-stick replaced the sword, and the reign of democracy began in Paris.

Why should I not stop here for a few moments to describe some of the features of the Paris of those days?

People dined at two o'clock and supped at ten. Dinners were grand, formal affairs; suppers informal parties of pleasure. They supped after the theatre, which began between five and six and finished between eight and nine. After supper, they played cards, and a hostess required no small skill in assorting the partners. But a few women, a few wits, and some of the young people did not play, or if they did, played but a hasty game of *reversis*. Gaming, conversation and laughter often prolonged a gathering until two in the morning. Pleasure was people's only occupation. They rose late. I saw the inauguration of the fashion of not taking supper. Guests remained in the drawing-room, and the expression "I do not sup" was equivalent to saying "I dine late." It was a proof of good manners always to do the same things later than other people. I also saw another fashion started at these suppers, one peculiar to ladies; that of having their babies brought into the midst of thirty people and of suckling them in a corner of the *salon*—poor victims of Rousseau who, instead of suckling at the breast of a sturdy peasant, were made to take, in a *salle de fête*, the heated milk of their sensitive mothers. Then, if that was the triumph of Nature over common sense, I witnessed the starting of a third fashion which was the triumph of fashionable manners over Nature: young women no longer danced when they had had a child. With their twenty summers and rosy cheeks they used to say to you: "I am too old, I no longer dance." But after the Revolution these old women of twenty found their legs again and at thirty danced indefatigably.

Theatre-going was not, as in Italy and in part of Germany,

an obligatory evening occupation. There were many agreeable houses where hostesses received either constantly or on fixed days. And what superior talent they showed—talent all the greater as it was less apparent! To captivate their guests—to direct, prolong, resume, or abridge a conversation—to have a look and a word for every one, to introduce a third person into a familiar chat by means of a glance or a word, to put him or her into relations with others, to make them known without either the mention of names or an introduction—what a charming, delicate art! Above all you should have seen what importance was attached in these circles to one of the Forty of the Academy. The Abbé Maury was given the choice between a *fauteuil* and a bishopric, neither of which he merited; to the bishopric, which led to nothing, he preferred the *fauteuil*, which led to everything.

To return to the subject of theatres, they were better attended than they are to-day. The hours for performances were more convenient; every one had a box, and a row of boxes formed almost a *salon* for the converse of acquaintances; finally, each theatre had its fashionable days, when the best actors played and the best people came to hear them. At the Opéra, these were Monday, and especially Friday; at the Français, Wednesday and Saturday; and at the Italiens, Monday and Thursday. On other days, with the exception of Sunday, they were practically empty.

Apart from the desire to avoid doing each other harm, this division of the days of the week amongst the big theatres was intended to diminish an inconvenience which, in my childhood, was incessantly happening around the Palais Royal and in our street. It consisted in what is called *embarras*. At the hour for the theatres emptying, carriages coming from the four points of the compass collected in this street, and when it was filled, as I have twenty times seen it, from the Place des Victoires to the Place Vendôme, the tactics of the horse-patrols were useless. There you had to remain blocked for an hour, advancing inch by inch, sometimes receding, with a cry of "Look out behind!" which was equivalent to a *sauve qui peut*. Everything then was topsy-turvy: women screamed, coachmen swore, and shafts broke. It was like the day of a battle.

New plays were rare. The Opéra produced only Gluck or Piccini; the Français, Corneille, Racine, Crébillon, Molière, Regnard, and Destouches; the Italiens, Sedaine, Favard, Marsollier, and Gherardi adaptations, which lacked common sense but which Carlin knew how to make charming.

As to the popular theatres, there were two: Audinot de l'Ambigu-Comique and Nicolet, otherwise known as "les grands danseurs." They were side by side on the boulevard called the Beau Boulevard, then the Palais Royal of the Rues Saint-Martin and Saint-Denis. *Cafés*, shows, and other curiosities abounded there, forming a sort of very amusing fair. Only on Thursdays did fashionable people appear there *en gala*. Two rows of berlins—calashes would have been too plebeian and broughams were hardly yet to be seen—gravely made the tour at walking pace, each row displaying two wings of farthingales projecting from the carriage doors, whilst the men promenaded in the middle. These little theatres, much harmed by the big ones, but which good society sometimes deserted, had two privileges: one, that of keeping open a week longer than the others during the Easter holidays; and the second, that of being allowed to go on tour to the various Parisian fairs.

Other places of pleasure frequented by people of quality were Torrè's, the Colysée, the balls, Longchamp, and the sacred concerts.

Torrè, the king of illuminators, had a little public garden near the Beau Boulevard, where twice a week he showed marvellous taste in varying his decoration of coloured lanterns.

The Colysée was fine, but too large and too far away. It had been placed at the Rond-point des Champs-Élysées, on that Neuilly road which, only just then begun, terminated at a little wood called the Etoile, between Paris and the Porte Maillot.¹

Longchamp was still further off. The whole fashionable world of Paris met there in Lent, at a cold and rigorous time of the year; but people went to shine, not to amuse themselves. Vanity leads to greater extremes than pleasure. I have seen

¹ The present barrier was named after this wood, which was pierced *en étoile*. See the *Souvenirs* of Mme. Vigée Le Brun, vol. i. p. 24, in reference to the Colysée.—A. C.

Longchamp at the height of its splendour. Two rows of carriages set out from the front of the Place Louis XV., whilst two others descended the Avenue from the Bois de Boulogne. In the middle of the immense Avenue de Neuilly were men on horseback. The crowd filled the sidewalks. Not a cab was to be seen. A glass coach would have been hissed, and some disdain was shown in the case of carriages with four horses, for these revealed either the lower magistracy or the middle financial class, by reason of their vanity in having more than two and the impossibility of having six. The height of fashion was, in fact, to have two horses or six, and only on the Wednesday and the Friday. Everything, too, had to be new, if you wished to be looked at: horses, harness, carriages, liveries, and dresses. *Filles*, especially, had the privilege of appearing on each of the three days with new turnouts, because they had neither armorial bearings nor old liveries to preserve. I have seen Adeline, of the Italiens, the most celebrated *coquine* of Paris and the mistress of Farmer-General Vémeranges, appear three times at Longchamp with three carriages and three different teams of six horses, in addition to three new liveries.

Balls had become a sort of social obligation. Those who had children or grandchildren owed society a ball. Few people dispensed with them, and, if only you were a little known, you often had three or four invitations for the same day. It is impossible to judge of these balls from those of to-day; they were as different as night and day. Everything there was gay and enchanting: the illumination and decoration of the rooms; the women's dresses, beflowered and befeathered; the costumes of the men, all silk and embroidery; the richly furnished *buffets*; and the choiceness of the suppers, which were repeated three or four times during the night. These great balls acquired a special importance by being given at the commencement of Lent. This was the height of fashion. I saw the disappearance of the minuet, which in my childhood still held the first rank. The waltz had not yet been introduced. People sometimes danced the *allemande*, the most sprightly dance I have ever seen, and which was brought to France by Marie Antoinette. Two years before the Revolution a sinister sign foreshadowed a change in these balls. Our gala costumes disappeared, and

men no longer danced except in black dress-coats. The consequent mingling of crows and white-robed nymphs led to balls being nicknamed "magpie" gatherings.

A very different ball was that given at the Opéra. Its very name recalls the cream of the society of Paris at that brilliant period. Only the women were masked, and it was this which lent it piquancy and charm, for half of those present knew the others without being recognised themselves. Women had the pleasure of being bold and at the same time respected under cover of the mask, whilst the men had that of being given a puzzle to solve.

Well-bred women were in black dominoes and masks, rarely white and never coloured. Even their feet, and especially their hair, were disguised. They arrived in Sedan chairs but returned in a sort of bath-chair. To conceal their identity was an important matter, and sometimes with good reason. Many a domestic plot and many a Court or State intrigue originated there. The crafty Rulhière was one of the lions of this ball. On one occasion he offered his arm to Mme. Le Sénéchal, then in her first youth, and, seeing a vacant seat by the side of the Queen, whom he had recognised in spite of her mask, placed her there. He then began a conversation in which he passed in review all the ladies of the Court, and about whom he told such amusing anecdotes that Marie Antoinette, who gained much instruction at that *soirée*, was ready to die with laughter.

But I must return to the time when it was recognised that I had too hard a mouth for a feminine bridle. To find a tutor, or rather a governor for me, for I was much more in need of being governed than instructed, was no easy matter. The excellent Abbé Séguret, who was then tutor to my cousin De Thésigny, was consulted, and decided that the best educator would be a citizen of Alais or Anduze. Now, a M. Guiraudet, of the former town, formerly tutor to Prince Charles de Rohan-Rochefort, had a younger brother of twenty-two or twenty-three who, after having taught Prince Jules, the nephew and coadjutor of the famous Cardinal de Rohan, was running about the streets of Paris. This Alaisian *abbé* himself needed a tutor; yet he became mine. The good Abbé Séguret, who was Canon of Alais, allowed himself to be guided in his choice

by compatriotism; my mother had faith in him; and as my own opinion was favourable M. Guiraudet became my mentor-comrade for six years of my life.

He was third son of a poor Alais doctor; was short-statured, thin and singularly ugly; had little education, but much wit and originality. Complete ignorance of the world, combined with excessive pride, made him the most sensitive person one can imagine. There were two things which he could not bear: one, the fact that he was a priest; the other, that he was a tutor. The latter position appeared to him to be so humiliating that he concealed his address, and, some time afterwards, went as far as changing his name to that of Bréjole.

Such was the man who was my tutor for six years, but I must confess that I learnt nothing from him. Most of that time was spent in travel, or in prolonged visits to the provinces, where he allowed me almost complete liberty.

My studious disposition pleased my mother, who did not wish me to vegetate in the lazy opulence of a high financial post. Knowing D'Alembert and Marmontel, she introduced me to them, and so, accompanied by my *abbé*, I attended, two or three evenings a week, the private gatherings which D'Alembert, then permanent secretary to the Academy, held in his small apartment in the Louvre.

Among the *habitués* of these gatherings I dimly recollect the following:

The Comte de Tressan was an aged, crafty courtier and a rake to boot. From the light grace of the *Bibliothèque Bleue* he had fallen to a heavy and diffuse translation of Ariosto, which had been imposed upon him by the Academy, and which, I believe, he produced in six weeks. This is easily understood when we read it.

The Marquis de Condorcet was a tall, faded beau, ungraceful and sententious. He was a *doctrinaire*, academical in everything, and, besides being spiteful, jealous, and ambitious, was excessively proud. He had been sowing for twenty years past what he was to reap ten years later. When he raised the mask and entered that career which led his king to the scaffold and himself to suicide there was a general hue and cry among his friends, who closed their doors to him. Among them was

the Duchesse d'Anville, whom one cannot suspect of being lacking in philosophy.¹ Her servants removed a bust of Condorcet which she had in her drawing-room and solemnly buried it in a heap of manure.

Whilst Condorcet supremely displeased me, the Abbé Maury greatly amused me. He was aiming at the Academy. He had neither M. de Tressan's parsimony nor Condorcet's arrogance, but an exuberance of health, muscular strength and power of lung as tremendous as that which he has since displayed at the Constituent Assembly, and at the same time a manner of speaking that, though heavy, was rapid, bold, and original, in addition to it being sustained by a pronounced accent that placed him a little above the ordinary.

Near him was sometimes the Abbé Delille, his very opposite : slim, sickly, as light as a feather, all nerves and imagination. The colossal Maury easily cast him into the shade. Many years afterwards I met these two men again at M. Suard's, after they had returned from voluntary exile with the *émigrés*, and I found them exactly the same. The Abbé Maury talked incessantly ; the Abbé Delille did not open his mouth.

As to D'Alembert, who was already in the grip of the complaint which eventually killed him, his small body was buried in a large armchair, just as his keen eyes were buried in his peruked head. He spoke only in sallies of wit and humour, on subjects suggested by others ; rarely did he furnish matter for conversation. The only thing I clearly recollect as coming from him was an inscription which he proposed for Fénelon's tomb : " Passer-by, efface not this name with thy tears, so that I in turn may weep." Never was anything so ridiculously academic.

Marmontel's circle was of quite a different character ; it practically represented the reign of the dullest *bourgeoisie*. Marmontel no longer took the trouble to shine. He was a retired trifler who, having become old and heavy, lived on an income of thirty thousand *livres*, amassed by little moral tales, little comic operas, and little articles written for the *Mercure*. In other respects, he was an excellent literary man with

¹ The Duchess d'Anville (De la Rochefoucauld).—A. C.

delicacy of taste. His *Mémoires* prove it and his *Dictionnaire de littérature* is, in my opinion, infinitely preferable to the famous *Cours* of La Harpe. Finally, as his conduct during the Revolution showed, he was a virtuous, honourable man.

His friend, the Abbé Morellet, was a very different sort of man. A beneficed clergyman, an unbelieving priest pensioned by the Church in order to destroy it, a philosopher whom Voltaire called the Abbé *Mords-les* (Anglice: "Bite them"), and a past-master at Baron d'Holbach's dinner, he possessed a heavy but biting, dry yet pointed wit, a wide knowledge of the classics, and an unerring taste. I saw a good deal of him and particularly during his last years, when he expiated the wrongs, I might even say the scandal, of the early part of his career by a generous employment of his talents. When he died he bequeathed his niece, the good and amiable Mlle. Belz, a big room full of manuscripts, sincerely thinking that he was leaving her a dowry. But I do not believe she made a shilling out of them.

About the time of which I am writing, Paris was in a sort of convulsion. Notwithstanding the police, the Archbishop of Paris and the King, *Le Mariage de Figaro* had forced the doors of the Comédie-Française. Everybody proclaimed the work scandalous, dangerous and revolutionary. It was "the thing" to do. Everybody went to see the play. That also was fashionable. I recollect a meeting of the Academy at which M. Bailly—I believe it was he—made an eloquent onslaught on the piece. Every one applauded but looked at his watch, for it was getting time to go to the theatre. Beaumarchais was put in Saint-Lazare, which was a ridiculous thing to do, and people applauded. On coming out, the Prince de Conti went to see him, which was still more ridiculous, whereupon there was again applause. Paris was a sick child; its manners were of the past, its passions of the present. The symptoms were clear; the crisis was drawing near; Beaumarchais had a following.

Public opinion was changing its principles and direction. Every Frenchman then took a keen interest in public affairs. The artisan and the merchant, the middle-class citizen and the

noble lord inquired and thought about events, wars, and alliances. But their agitation was not that which is centred around public matters with the object of applying it to private ones; it was the very opposite.¹ Nobody troubled himself about that domestic happiness which had been deeply rooted for the past two centuries. France and her exterior vicissitudes alone were of interest. Consequently, it was then the age of newsmongers. One *coterie* wished to be better informed than another, and I can remember a certain Abbé Le Monnier, who owed his presence at my grandmother's august Saturday gatherings simply to his reputation for being an irrefutable dealer in news. Who has not known or at least seen the illustrious M. Métra? I can still see him sitting each morning under the famous Cracow tree in the Tuileries, with his three-cornered hat edged with gold, his scarlet frock-coat frogged with gold, and his still more scarlet triple nose, festooned with eight to ten subordinate noses which perfectly represented a large truffle of the finest red.² A respectful crowd surrounded him, religiously waiting to hear his communications. I must not omit, either, to mention the celebrated Abbé "Trente mille hommes," who made our generals, the Emperor, the Stadtholder and all the Powers of Europe march as he wished—always at the head of 30,000 men. I was fifteen years of age when the American War was concluded. There was then still a great national spirit in France. After hearing witnesses relate the enthusiasm provoked by the Battle of Fontenoy and the sorrow inspired by Louis XV.'s illness, I myself witnessed the stupor caused by the defeat of the Comte de Grasse. The sadness was universal and led spontaneously to a multitude of gifts and offerings, not only from the provinces and towns, but from the lowliest of citizens. This touching spectacle moved me to tears. What a superb germ the Revolution killed for ever! That was because Paris followed only its own impulses, and since the days of Louis XIV. had received none from the Court. Virtue, piety and goodness

¹ With reference to this patriotic feeling see a passage in Norvins' *Mémorial* (1896-1897), vol. i. pp. 19-20.—A. C.

² See the *Souvenirs et portraits* of the Duc de Lévis, p. 183, and Norvins' *Mémorial*, vol. I. p. 183. But Métra sat in the Luxembourg, not in the Tuileries.—A. C.

were doubtless on the throne, but strength, judgment, tact and even taste were absent. Under what circumstances was the signing of peace known in Paris? News was hourly expected. Every one at Versailles had a courier and saddled horses ready. Yet nothing transpired. Information came at the *petit coucher*. Now, there was a certain old and dirty song which had been sung in the streets at the time of the 1735 peace, and which many people still knew by heart. It consisted of the following dialogue between Louis XV. and the Emperor :

Louis dit à l'Empereur :
 Je t'ai fait ch. . . de peur,
 Tes chausses ne sont pas nettes,
 Turlurette,
 Turlurette,
 Lantanturlurette.

L'Empereur dit à Louis :
 Ne reviens plus dans mon pays,
 Baise mon c . . . , la paix est faite,
 Turlurette,
 Turlurette,
 Lantanturlurette! . . .

Louis XVI., who was in his nightshirt and about to get into bed, began to hum the last verse. Thus was peace made known. The fashionable men of Versailles called this good and worthy king "the big pig," and he richly merited the nickname for his manners.

This 1781 peace brought back to us a number of giddy-brained fellows of all ages, infatuated with the principles of Penn and Franklin. The most infatuated and pedantic, the Marquis de Lafayette, became the favourite of the Court, which had more appreciation for those who despised it than for those who flattered it. The Duc de Choiseul was the last who correctly valued this twenty-year-old-reformer. All the ladies of his *salon* having begged him to listen for a moment to the marvellous Lafayette, he did so for a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time he turned to his ladies with a "Why, he's Gilles César."¹

¹ Choiseul's nickname (*Gille* is French for clown) was, according to La Marck, fairly appropriate, for there was something foolish in Lafayette's face

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I now come to the relation of my travels. First of all I went to Havre to see the sea, then to Honfleur, Dieppe, Abbeville, Beauvais, and Chantilly. In the following year I saw Ermenonville, Soissons, Rheims, Laon, and the Saint-Gobain glass manufactory.

Ermenonville, Rousseau's last place of habitation, greatly impressed me on account of its Gothic Château, its extensive English garden and its magnificent avenue of ancient beeches. But I was displeased by a profusion of inscriptions in English, Italian and Latin—never in French—which at every tree and bench spoke to you of repose, virtue, meditation and sensibility. As to the tomb of the Man of Nature, I much admired the poplars; the monument itself made little impression upon me. It made still less, I imagined, on a person whom we met on the island, and who said, fairly loudly: "I would willingly buy those poplars for Stockholm, provided they didn't throw in the tomb with them." It was Gustave III., King of Sweden. Two or three days afterwards, at Rheims, I saw him again. He was on foot, in travelling dress, and accompanied by two or three members of his suite, and, in spite of the fact that he was incognito, the authorities, to do him honour, were having him escorted by horse-police. As he walked between two of them the rabble followed, shouting: "Hallo! here's some one they're going to flog and brand!"

This journey to Rheims was but a preparatory one, for, two months later, the Abbé and I took up our residence in the town. I was then sixteen; in some ways much in advance but in others far behind my age. My mother wished me to study law, not in Paris, but in the more serious and modest atmosphere of Rheims, and under the supervision of an old friend, Mgr. Bishop de Pouilly. She gave careful instructions that I was to see only the best society in the town and then only in moderation. This moderation was such that, with the exception of Mgr. de Pouilly, I saw no one, and, although I lived at Rheims for three years, I cannot recall the name of a single acquaintance.

and movements. Mirabeau was much amused by them and he gave Lafayette this name in his *Correspondance* with La Marck. Sometimes, also, he calls him "Gilles le Grand" or "General Jacquot."—A. C.

My books were my only society. They were of two classes. One class formed my official library: Domat, Ferrières, Potier, the Institutes of Justinian, and others—all honourably displayed on my desk; the other constituted my private library: novels hired from a *loueur de livres*, and which were in my drawers. I remember the difficulty I had with "Pamela," which, hidden behind my desk, occupied by Domat, had to return to its hiding-place whenever I heard an approaching step at the door. Thus did I read Voltaire, who aroused in me greater indignation than enthusiasm. His insolence with respect to Racine, and his perfidy towards Corneille, whom I would willingly have read on my knees, made him an object of special and instinctive animadversion.

What was my religion at this period? I should have great difficulty now in saying. Perhaps I should have had no less then, with this difference, that whereas I now require explanations, I had then no need of them. I was a Catholic because I was born a Catholic—without examination or doubt, and as one would be glad to be always. I carried out my religious duties faithfully, unreluctantly and even joyfully. As to possessing a rational conviction, it had never been either offered or asked for, and so I did not think about it.

My law studies passed off fairly well: I sustained my theses and successfully passed my examinations without learning anything by heart—then, I believe, a very rare thing.

This work, however, occupied only part of my time, and ordinarily our travels began as soon as my name was entered for the terms.

The first year—I believe in 1785—we made a tour in Germany. We saw Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Crevelt, returning by Guelderland and Liège. All that I remember of this journey were the German roads and the difficulty the post-chaise had in travelling twelve leagues a day through the seas of sand. The year following we went to Flanders, Holland, and England.

Amidst the forest of masts which covered the sea and made the port of Amsterdam into a second town, amidst the innumerable mills of Schardam, and amidst the painted trees and marble houses of Broek, there reappear before me the servants

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of the great banker Hope, dressed in their gold-gallooned livery and drawn up in a row along a white marble corridor, to receive, as we went out, the gold ducat which you paid for your dinner. Poor economical Bréjole acquitted the debt with inexpressible anguish of heart. It must be admitted that you are treated more politely in Italy, where the "family" at least allows you to digest your dinner, and only comes to ask for payment on the following day.

I also saw the Théâtre du Collège. The millionaires of Amsterdam, who prided themselves on being frenchified, who spoke only French, and who lived entirely *à la française*, had founded, under the name of "Collège," a pretty little theatre where, at great expense, they employed the best actors and actresses of France. I found there my old acquaintance of the Comédie-Française, the elder Mlle. Sainval, who by fits and starts was either detestable or sublime, and I saw there for the first time the celebrated Aufresne, of whom Brizard, famous though he was, was but a poor, weak copy.¹

On leaving Holland, we crossed the Moordyk, passed through Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges, reached Ostend, and the next day were on the shores of Albion. We had a sea passage of twenty-five leagues, amidst a small tempest and sea-sickness. I imagined we were almost at New York, but found the port was really Dover. On the following day we saw the altar on which Thomas à Becket perished, and the day afterwards I was deafened and bewildered by the noise and murmur of London, as has happened every time I have been there. Bréjole, who never lost sight of his principal object—economy—found sordid lodgings in a dark lane near Cheapside, the people's quarter, at the house of an old French notary, who, I believe, boarded us. We knew not a soul in London, where, however, my financial and social position would have allowed us to see something else than buildings and an old notary. But Bréjole was ill at ease in good society; in order to shine he had to be on his own level, and as he always sought it, it was always beneath mine.

¹ Aufresne (1729-1806) acted chiefly abroad. Frederick II. praised his acting as "noble, simple, and true"; whilst Goethe, who saw him at Strasburg, found that he possessed power of thought, strength and composure without frigidity.
—A. C.

The honour of having us as boarders almost cost the old French notary his life. A grand review and artillery practice had been announced to take place at Woolwich, so he proposed to take us. We set off in a vehicle with seats for twenty, and with the intention of returning by the Thames. Our worthy companion was as big as a tun, and in order to shine and do honour to his guests had tricked himself out in all his finery: a huge wig, a maroon velvet coat, a big watch-chain, rings on his fingers, and a gold snuff-box. The review and the firing passed off very well indeed, but when we reached the Thames to return home there was a crowd for the boats—and you know what a crowd is in England! You know also what those double-pointed cockle-shells on the Thames are, and which capsize like an Indian pirogue if ten pounds of ballast is badly placed. Elbowing and fighting his way through the people, the fat notary finally reached one of these boats, got into it, stumbled, and overturned men and boat into the river. The crowd pulled him out, gathered around him, looked for his wig, took off his coat, dried him and rubbed him. I admired the British nation, for never had I seen so many obliging folk. In brief, when our companion came to his senses he found himself alone with Bréjole and I, in his shirt-sleeves, on the river bank, without either wig, watch, rings, buckles, or snuff-box.

Home-sickness having crept over me, and the Abbé's purse being nearly empty, we made our way back to Dover and Calais, and thence to Paris before returning to Rheims; for it was necessary to show my mother, sister, grandmother, and the whole family the young Telemachus and the wise Mentor of twenty-eight who had just braved so many dangers and explored so large a part of the globe.

The following year witnessed a revolution in my society circle at Rheims. Up to then it had been composed of a single individual—myself; but in future there were to be two of us. My mother had an old acquaintance in the town named Mme. d'Orcey, the wife of a Receiver-General, who, deeply occupied with natural history, had handed over to her the education of their only son, a boy of my own age. He was chosen as a companion for me, and as he was a sterling good fellow we

quickly became friends. Our studies were the same, as our careers looked as though they were to be: he Receiver-General in succession to his father, I Administrator-General in succession to M. de Saint-Waast. But my mother, without openly running counter to the ideas of an uncle whose fortune she was to inherit, had at bottom different plans in view for me. All her letters directed me towards the magistrature. The customary text of all her lessons was the example of Hérault de Séchelles, whom she held up as a model for her son and intended as a husband for her daughter. I shared my mother's ideas. I felt a supreme disdain for finance, and dreamed of nothing but a gown, an advocate's cap, and the defence of widows and orphans.

With the spring of 1787 we were to conclude our terms. The rest of the year was intended to be devoted to a journey in Switzerland. We came back to Paris in May to prepare for it. I was in my nineteenth year, but hardly more than eighteen. My illusions and naïveté would have made the least inexperienced college graduate of to-day blush with shame. I had come from Rheims at full speed and without knowing how to ride. I was tired out and yet charmed, for it was the day when my grandmother had a box at the Opéra, and she was awaiting me there. I embraced my mother and sister, dressed, and, without losing time over dinner, hastened away. Now, the second performance of *Tarare* was being given, and I was unacquainted with the new theatre. I was delighted, and with reason. Few people still recollect how cool, cheerful, and brilliant it was. Add to that five rows of magnificently dressed women, Salieri's music, the splendour of the spectacle, and then place in their midst a youth who had hardly touched with his lips the cup of pleasure—"an innocent heart moulded by the universities."

At the same time two comic operas were in vogue at the Italiens, which had just left its smoky Jeu de Paume for the sumptuous green and gold house built in Choiseul's garden. These were *Nina* and *Richard Cœur de Lion*—one the triumph of Clairval, the other that of Mme. Dugazon. To complete the fortune of this theatre, people were applauding the *début* of the little Renauds, the elder of whom was a nightingale,

and the younger a graceful little maiden who, overflowing with wit and prettiness, was beginning seriously to turn my head, and who would perhaps have considerably advanced my education had not the post-horses very appropriately arrived to carry me away.

CHAPTER III

1787

Travels in Switzerland—Môtiers-Travers—The Principality of Neuchâtel—M. de Garville—Saint-Gallen—Rorschach—Altstetten—Gais—Zurich—Lavater—Gessner—Glaris—Linththal—Ascent of the Todi—Wesen—Coire—Bergün—The Engadine—St. Maurice—The Bernina Pass—Lago Bianco and Lago Nero—Tirano—Sondrio—The Lake of Como—Domaso and Gravedona—Chiavenna—Campodolcino—Reichenau—Andermatt—Realp—Obergestelen—The Grismel—The Reuse—Ponte del Diavolo—Altorf—The Rigi—Zug—Lucerne—Meiringen—Lauterbrunnen—Unterseen—The Valais—Chamonix—Vevey—Disagreement with Bréjole—Geneva—Coppet and Ferney—The Dauphiné—Return to Paris.

IN three days D'Orcy, Bréjole and I reached Besançon.

Two days later we explored, sometimes on our hands and knees, sometimes on our stomachs, a league of the Grotto of Môtiers-Travers. It was not worth the candles we burnt, but we were possessed with a mania for seeing everything, and had brought with us complete miners' outfits for such occasions.

Another article of clothing which was still more necessary in Switzerland was that in waxed taffetas, which hermetically covered the body, head and arms included.

There is another point to mention in regard to our travelling impedimenta. I have already said that M. d'Orcy had a magnificent collection of natural history specimens. Its finest part was that devoted to entomology. We took an interest, therefore, in this branch of science, for D'Orcy followed his father's example, and I followed D'Orcy's. This study of insects led us to that of flowers. I was wild over botany, so we took with us "Linnæus," "Tournefort," and other works. Nor was this all; we were exceedingly fond of mineralogy, consequently hammers, chisels, chemicals, and other things necessary for

interrogating the rocks, crypts and mines found on our route had to be included with our other scientific apparatus.

From Môtiers-Travers we journeyed to Neuchâtel, whence we made a tour of the little Principality, which then appeared to me to be an enchanted country. I saw it again two years ago, but found it wild and wearisome.

After admiring the Saut du Doubs, which is much finer and much less known than that of the Rhine, and the Ile de Saint-Pierre, formerly inhabited by that Rousseau who filled the world, but could nowhere find a resting-place, we went to see, near Morat, D'Orcy's uncle, M. de Garville, who was then building, not far from the lake, the agreeable Château de Greng. M. de Garville, who was well known in Paris,¹ was a tall, handsome man, intelligent, capable and rich, but hard, egoistical and ambitious. Quite near the château was the first ossuary of the Burgundians: a mass of bones almost reduced to powder, contained in a huge square stone basin, above which they rose in the form of a pyramid, which was covered by a chapel roof. This monument to the defeat of Charles the Bold has been destroyed and replaced by a very fine obelisk with inscriptions. But the ossuary was a fact, whilst the column is but a souvenir.

From Greng we went to Berne, and *viâ* Soleure, to Bâle. There we stopped at the famous Hôtel des Trois Rois, on the Rhine, where at one and the same time you can see Switzerland, Swabia and France. Leaving Bâle we passed through the four forest towns of the Black Forest to Schaffhausen, and thence to the Fall of Laufen. Other people would have hired a carriage and a guide, but Bréjole would have had to disburse six francs, so we left on foot, alone, directing ourselves by the noise of the cataract. From Schaffhausen we reached Constance, where we visited the two charming Iles de Mainau and Reichenau. On the first, a Teutonic commander with whom we lodged had employed much art and money in hiding, by means of a very big bower, the importunate view of the lake and the Appenzell Alps. On the second we were shown the fine treasure of the Benedictines, a decayed tooth of the Emperor Charles the Fat, his slippers, and an emerald given by Charlemagne.

On leaving Constance our way led continually through

¹ See the first two volumes of Norvins' *Mémorial*.—A. C.

orchards to Saint-Gallen, the ancient and celebrated abbey of which was surrounded by a Protestant town, surrounded, in turn, by the monks' Catholic vassals. To-day there are neither monks nor vassals, but a canton which, like its neighbour Appenzell, lives by trading in muslins. The Appenzell Alps, which we had seen drawing nearer for the past three days, irresistibly tempted us to leave the plains, so, leaving our carriage at Saint-Gall, we set off on three hacks, preceded or rather followed by a guide, for he was fat, lazy, and a native of Lorraine, to visit the navy of the Lord and Abbé of Rorschach, at the eastern end of Lake Constance. It consisted, I believe, of five boats, now replaced by a steamer. We slept at the foot of Appenzell, at the bottom of the superb valley of Rhinthal. From Alstetten we climbed for two or three hours along a winding ravine and at last reached Appenzell, a green little country covered with flowers. Whilst Bréjole and the guide drank milk in one of its hospitable huts, D'Orcy and I had a fine hunt after insects. We dined at Gais and slept in a fairly good house there. I have not yet forgotten my awakening at five o'clock in the morning. On opening our little window I found that we were situated in the middle of a gently sloping meadow. Every weed had a flower and every flower a drop of dew which sparkled in the sunlight. To right and left were two forests of tall pines and enormous beeches, which, as the rays of the rising sun streamed through them, cast their shadows. Deep silence reigned, and from everything arose a delicious coolness and an exquisite perfume.

That day we climbed the Sentis, the highest mountain of the Canton of Appenzell.

Returning to Saint-Gallen for our carriage, we slept the next day at Zurich, which it is impossible to mention without speaking of Lavater and Gessner. Pastor Lavater was a tall and rather thin man, with a long face full of sweetness and serenity, a large forehead, black, curly hair, a large and slightly arched nose, small but sparkling eyes, a tight-shut mouth and thin lips. All his portraits resemble him. His person, voice and conversation breathed simplicity, candour, and truth. Moreover, he believed in his fables. I say fables, not because there is not some truth in his system, but because a thousand

truths which are theoretically true become errors when applied by that instrument of error, the hand of man. Like many others, Lavater thought that there were secret relations between physical and immaterial forms, and that observation of the one might throw light on the mystery of the others. But he alone thought that visiting cards or addresses on envelopes, of which his cupboards were full, revealed the private character of all the visitors and writers of Europe; he alone believed that a microscope could reveal the character of a mite, or that the physiognomy of a swallow, a mouse or a carp, could reveal theirs. He had a very fine collection of pictures of birds, fish, quadrupeds, reptiles and insects, whose soul, intelligence and inclinations he knew thoroughly. If this worthy man had stuck to the truth his name would never have been mentioned.

Gessner's face was the antipodes of that of Lavater. He had a large round head slightly bald, without any striking feature except the eyes, which were small and fiery but starting from his head, and the mouth which, instead of having narrow, compressed lips, had beautiful rosy lips slightly open. This gave him a general expression of gaiety, vivacity and good nature. Nothing revealed the poet, and as regards this his face told the truth. For he owed his reputation merely to the insipid infatuation people had in Germany, and during some time in France, for the sentimental silliness which the dull and frivolous Florian had copied from the heavy and fastidious Racan. I saw Gessner at his home, a small country house three leagues from Zurich, near the lake, in the midst of the woods, and on the banks of the torrent of the Seil, which was crossed by means of a plank. He was seated near a window painting his idylls, surrounded by his family. His straight, fresh-looking daughters—his tall, strong sons—his plump, curly-headed little ones—the embroidery frames, books, pencils, and flowers scattered around also formed an idyll, an idyll by Gessner and doubtless his best. I must, however, do him the justice of saying that he was quite astonished at being a great man.

I shall hastily pass over the baths of Baden, Rapperswyl and its bridge of shaky, nailless planks, and Einsiedeln with its famous Abbey of Notre Dame des Ermites. Redescending to

the shores of the Lake of Zurich, we hired at Lachen a small calash and two small horses to take us to Glaris. It was a Sunday at the end of June, and the weather was superb. The beautiful valley of Glaris, with its green meadows, tall trees, fertile mountains and pretty villages, was magnificent. But if you opened your eyes it was necessary to hold your nose, since it was the season for making the celebrated *schabzieger* cheese. Had millions of Spanish flies been let loose over the country their odour would not have equalled the stench of that detestable green stuff. From the village of Linththal, which is at the end of the valley, we set out on foot at four o'clock in the morning, accompanied by a sturdy fellow of Glaris, to see the glaciers of the Todi. We at once took a goat's path, crossed the Pantenbrücke, and entered a desolate solitude with an almost perpendicular cliff formed of rocks which had rolled down the mountains. Whilst silently moralising over the scene, we arrived at a chalet, where we refreshed ourselves with milk, *seré* and cheese. Then, in the midst of a thick fog which had just covered the sides of the mountain, we began the ascent of the Todi. Traversing dense clouds, with the temperature low and the wind rising, we climbed through a forest of enormous pines, passing upwards from stump to stump. This exercise lasted an hour, at the end of which time we gradually began to see daylight, then the sun, then a blue sky, and, in front of us, the accumulated ice of the Todi rising like crystal rocks between two screens of pines. Such was the sky and the earth above and around us. But below we saw only a sea of clouds. The winds, which we had left in the middle region of the atmosphere, furiously drove these clouds along, heaped them up again, and discharged one against the other with a crash. This was thunder; the storm had broken; it was at our very feet! Fortunately the spectacle did not last long, for, sublime though it was, we should have had to remain without food on the mountain had it lasted.

Three hours later we had recrossed the beautiful valley of Glaris and were dining in an inn at the little town of Wesen, facing that lovely Lake of Walenstadt which Daguerre, twenty-five years later, transported near the Faubourg du Temple.¹

¹ The Diorama invented by Daguerre and Bouton.—A. C.

A boat awaited us, and its three hours' voyage brought us to Sargans to sleep. We were in the Grisons.

We had decided to make a tour of this canton, so, after reaching Coire, we set off early in the morning with three horses and a pedestrian guide. Almost immediately we began to ascend, and when evening came we were still ascending, to arrive in pitch darkness at the large village of Bergün. On the following day we resumed our ascent, and so much, indeed, did we ascend, that by noon we were in the midst of snow on the shores of the little Lake of Weissenstein, where epicurean travellers halt six times a week to catch trout, which they fry themselves for their luncheon. There our ascent ended. Towards the other end of the lake was a descent strewn with rocks and covered with large pine woods, and in two hours we were entering the beautiful plains of the Engadine.

We slept at the baths of St. Maurice. On the following morning we set off for the Valtellina, not by way of Chiavenna, the only practical road and therefore unworthy of us, but by the Bernina. At the snowclad summit we skirted Lago Bianco and Lago Nero. I was there seized with the most terrible cold I have ever experienced: I was so benumbed and frozen that I could neither keep in my saddle nor put a foot to the ground. I fell like a stone, as white as the snow with which my companions rubbed my hands and face, and I do not know how long it was before I was able to resume the journey. In the evening we slept at Tirano, our windows open, suffocated by the heat and devoured by millions of mosquitoes. But a compensation was in store for us next day. M. de Salis-Marschlins, Governor of the Valtellina, who jovially ate his part of this poor province, received us at his pretty country house near Sondrio. He gave us a supper which in no way smacked of the poverty of his people.

Then we skirted the Lake of Como. Sending our guide and horses to Chiavenna, we took a boat at Ripa and sailed on those beautiful waters as far as Domaso and Gravedona. We had decided to return from Ripa to Chiavenna on foot and by moonlight, but the moon failed us and, before we had hardly stepped out of our boat, we received one of those storms which, in the Alps, gather and burst within a quarter of an hour.

A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE 41

The night was exceedingly dark, the rain fell in torrents, we were without either guide or cloaks, and not a house was in sight. It was with great delight that we found one of those huts which are used by harvesters as a refuge. Not until seven o'clock in the morning, in a common eating-house at Chiavenna, did we break our fast.

Nor were our adventures over. We wished to cross the Splügen. But sun and moon failed us, and we found ourselves between Isola and Campodolcino floundering in pitch darkness on a ledge only five or six feet broad, above a river which, judging by its far-away sound, was at a distance of five to six hundred feet. We dismounted. Our guide then led the caravan, feeling the way with his stick and leading the first horse by the bridle; whilst each of us bravely got hold of his steed's tail, to save himself should he fall, or to let go should the animal fall over the precipice. It was in this manner that the procession arrived at eleven o'clock at night at the inn of Campodolcino.

By way of the hideous and lonely summits of the Splügen, we reached the next day the banks of the Upper Rhine. On arriving at Reichenau we reascended the valley of the Inter-Rhein with fresh horses and a new guide which had been sent to us from Coire. We had a desire to see the sources of the Rhine and the peaks of the St. Gotthard. The next day—still ascending—we were sinking in marshy meadows, fording twenty streams and jumping a score of others. These were the sources of the Lower Rhine. Then, after a four hours' ascent, we reached the last peak of the Badus.

In a very short time, thanks to snowy slopes and our canvas trousers, we slid down to the shores of a little lake, whence we reached Andermatt, where our horses had been sent to await us. Then we crossed Zumdorf and, reascending the course of the Reuse, slept at the other end of the valley at the little Hospiz of Realp, at the foot of Mount Furka.

The next day we came to the first village of the Valais, Obergestelen; climbed the Grimsel, the most desolate of the Alps, and passed the night at its Hospice. Early in the morning we returned by another road to Furka and Realp; then, recrossing the little valley of Urseren, descended to Altorf by

the Ponte del Diavolo and the terrible valley of Schöllenen into which the Reuse falls with a terrible noise.

Wishing to ascend the Rigi, we crossed the pretty village of Schwyz, skirted the Lowerzen See, and arrived at Arth, a village on the shores of the Lake of Zug, at the foot of the mountain. It was late but still light, so we left our carriage and set out on foot to climb the grassy, shaded paths of that famed Alp. Nightfall found us in a little village filled with pilgrims, who had come to worship a saint, and some travellers who had come to see the rising of the sun. We supped, but we neither slept nor went to bed; the weather was warm and fine, with moonlight, and at four in the morning we were to be at the summit of the mountain. At last, an hour before sunrise, we arrived there: on a pretty little grassplot, protected on the north and west by barriers, for whoever, on either of these sides, had stepped over would have tumbled into the Lake of Lucerne, five thousand feet below.

After waiting at Lucerne for three days for our carriage to arrive from Zurich, we sent it on to Berne and pushed on still further into the Alps. In a boat we skirted Mount Pilatus, and in two or three hours found our horses again at the little port of Stamsstad, whence we went to the large village of Sarnen to sleep. To skirt the pretty Lake of Sarnen and the charming little Lake of Lungern, to cross the Brünig and redescend into the valley of Oberhasli, to see the Falls of the Reichenbach and to return to sleep at the village of Meiringen took up the next day.

From the Grindelwald basin we went to Lauterbrunnen, where we slept at the presbytery, at the feet of the Staubbach. A two hours' descent from Lauterbrunnen brought us into the plain extending between the Lake of Brienz and the Lake of Thun.

On leaving Unterseen we skirted the southern shore of the Lake of Thun in order to reach the Valais, the entrance only of which we had seen at Obergestelen. We then entered, on the left, the little valleys which lead to the Gemmi. On arriving at the highest point of the Kandersteg Pass a wild little basin opened out far under our feet—the baths of Leuk, of which I clearly recollect only a barn-like roof above a wooden tank in which men from Geneva, women from Fribourg

and monks from Lucerne were paddling pell-mell in bathing costumes.

We next passed through Sion, the little capital of the Valais, and, on reaching the large village of Martigny, took the road which ascends to Mont Blanc. It was barely a mule-path. Our horses trotted along very slowly; Bréjole on one of them, the guide leading the others, D'Orcy and I on foot. D'Orcy feeling confident and I bold, we decided, instead of going with Bréjole to sleep at the house of the Curé of Argentière, to pass the night without supper under a large pine-tree. Now we wandered about in the woods until we were lost. Fortunately the weather was fine. At dawn we discovered some smoke, coming from a charcoal burner's, and the man led us to the Col de Balme. There, for the first time, we saw Mont Blanc and the valley of Chamonix. We entered the good curé's house at ten o'clock to find Bréjole philosophically breakfasting on honey and new laid eggs.

We slept at Chamonix, where there was only one inn. The *table d'hôte* supper charmed me: the company was a mixed one of men and women from every country in Europe, including a certain M. Bourrit, who surpassed them all.¹ He was, I believe, Precentor of St. Peter's at Geneva, and had published two large books on Switzerland. A man of volcanic imagination, he gave us at dessert a description of a sunrise. Dr. Paccard had just made the first ascent of Mont Blanc. Everybody was excited, I included, and I believe that I listened to Bourrit for half an hour without falling asleep. But at last fatigue got the better of me, and I know not if he succeeded in getting the sun to rise.

We returned to Martigny by way of the picturesque valley of the Tête Noire. Then we passed the Pissevache, crossed St. Maurice, and, traversing the Rhône, wandered in the only part of Switzerland that is comparable to Interlaken—Vevey.

As a dénouement for our travels I remember only that connected with our relations with Bréjole. Our bonds had never been very close, and for some time past they had been getting looser. The poor Abbé, with his twenty-nine years, thought that he could govern two young men of nineteen (who were

¹ Bourrit published two works on the Alps (1783 and 1803).—A. C.

daily gaining experience through travel) as though they were children. A few rather angry scenes had already occurred. We had ceased to speak to him and to take him with us on excursions. One day he came up to us and sharply declared that at the next folly he would send us to sleep in prison. "D'Orcy," said I, turning white with rage, "what shall we do with this wretch? There is only one of two things: leave him or thrash him unmercifully." But D'Orcy intervened, so the Abbé was neither left nor thrashed. At Lausanne, however, after a supper at which peace by no means reigned, he informed us that he was leaving at six o'clock the next morning. The spirit of this decree did not trouble us, but we were hurt by its letter. Consequently, we took no notice of it and tranquilly slept on the next morning. At eight o'clock, when the sun streamed through our curtains, we rose and went downstairs,—to find that "the gentleman" had left, taking with him carriage and luggage! We were at first rather astonished to find ourselves alone in the world, without either effects or money. Now, had we been malicious enough to have taken a few days' excursion to some place or other, without saying where we were going, our companion would have been in a very difficult position as regards our two families. But this idea of vengeance did not occur to us. Our only thought was to follow the fugitive to the end of the world, or at least to the end of the Lake; for we felt certain that he would be at Geneva. We did, as a matter of fact, unearth him there, and rendered him the service of relieving his mind of anguish, for he submitted to all our reproaches without saying a word. The lesson which he thought he would give us was a lesson to him; and from that day forward his manners became more conciliatory.

But I must bring this eternal journey to an end. I shall say hardly anything about either Geneva, Coppet or Ferney. Coppet had only its old castle and ancient straight alleys to show. M. Necker was Comptroller-General and Mme. de Staël at the height of her first success. Ferney appeared to me to be a small, fourth-rate country seat. I shall likewise say nothing of the Dauphiné, where, in order to complete the summer, we spent a month catching butterflies, botanising and searching for minerals. But can I traverse, without a word, the good town

of Grenoble, all the windows of which were then made of paper? Shall I silently pass over that admirable valley of Grésivaudan, the fine fort of Baraux, that eagle's nest called Briançon where the inhabitants play, sup and dance in their stables, Gap, Embrun, the Gardette mine, the ancient and majestic ruin of Lesdiguières, and the venerable house of St. Bruno which, so near the lightning which was to strike it, still reposed amidst silence at the foot of its enormous column of bare rocks and within the shadow of its dark forest of ancestral pines?

Shortly afterwards we returned to Paris by way of Lyons, Mâcon, and Dijon. This was, I believe, about the middle of October 1787. The separation of the Abbé and I followed not much later. My law studies were completed.

CHAPTER IV

1787-1791

Entry into society—Unhealthy pride—Awkwardness and embarrassment—Paris in 1787—Fashions and dresses—Breteuil—Mme. de Saint-Waast's Salon—Some Farmers-General—Delahante, Luzines, and Lauzon—Lorry, Bishop of Angers—The Valorys—D'Esprémesnil—The Queen—The Polignacs—Louis XVI.—Cardinal de Rohan—Cagliostro—D'Ormesson—Calonne—Brienne—The Lycée—Garat—La Harpe—Mme. Récamier—Journey in the Midi—Mme. de Bon—Arles—M. de Bellefaye—The Beaucaire Fair—A nocturnal conversation—Bréjole at Alais—The Cevennes—Mme. de Bon's Flight—Montpellier—Narbonne—Toulouse—Bordeaux—Two years' sojourn at Poitiers—The National Mind—The Nobility of Poitou—Intendant Nanteuil—Bishop Beaupoil de Sainte-Aulaire—The Beauregard Family—The Nieuils—The Marsillacs—The Marconnays—Presidents Chassenon and Bazoges—The Vigiers—The Moisins—The D'Asnières—The Chastelgners—The D'Aloigny de Rocheforts—The Margarets—Mlle. d'Esparts and Mlle. de Pradel—The Château de Monts—The La Chastres—The three Turpin ladies—The Montalemberts—The Revolution—The Great Fear—Departure for Paris—The Federation of July 14, 1790—Talleyrand—Paris and Versailles—The Club—Political conversations—Death of M. de Saint-Waast—The Hôtel de Jonzac—Necker—Bailly—D'Orcy—Norvins—D'Alency—De Lessart—Mme. L'Empereur—Mme. Le Sénéchal—Arnault—Florian—Desfaucherets—The Parsevals—Flore becomes Mme. de Romeuf—The Romeufs—Apparent peace—Journey in Touraine—Beaugency—Bois Bonnard—Poitiers—The cook Sichère—Monts and Rigny—Oiron—Flight of the King—The Emigration—The district of Luçon—La Voulte in the Ardèche—Lafayette at Clermont and Chavaniac.

HARDLY had I entered society¹ than I found my contemporaries—companions of my childhood who had never left it—established there. They were all in their element, with their

¹ The author was at this time living with his mother, who had left her house in the Rue Basse de la Ville l'Evêque and taken a first-floor apartment in the Rue Vivienne.—A. C.

habits, acquaintances and friends. They did not feel that they lacked anything. Free, self-satisfied, and with plenty of elbow-room, they delivered judgments, dogmatized, spoke and laughed quite at their ease. Their pride was in a marvellously healthy state. Several were blockheads, the majority were fops, but all were the happiest people in the world and the most welcome in society. As far as I myself was concerned, I could not get over a feeling of extreme diffidence, my whole capital seeming to me to consist of a sort of *caput mortuum*. I was even inclined to think that the capital was much less than it really was. Surrounded by the wealth of others I felt that I was poor; consequently my only thought was to lock up what I had and what I knew. My unhealthy pride spared me none of its torments. When at a house where I knew no one intimately I made no attempt to make friends, for fear of being importunate or of having the air of one who begs for a welcome. This unhealthy state of mind clung to me even in family circles. I can still remember the figure that I cut at Mme. de Saint-Waast's *soirées*. When I had walked round three or four rooms, looked on at a dozen games, and replied to the complimentary "Do you play this game?" my only refuge was the mantelpiece, where I used to stand in solitude.

Such was the young man who made his bow to society. But of this society I was, as a matter of fact, able to obtain only a superficial knowledge; for some eight to nine months later I set off on another journey. Then I lived for two years in the provinces, and when I returned to Paris it was no longer the same place: the Revolution had transformed it. Before it disappears I must, therefore, stop a few moments to sketch it.

In 1780, the time about which I have briefly spoken above, everything in Paris was already ruined. Even the foundations were undermined. But its outward appearance remained and—as walls of painted cardboard would defend a city if the enemy were to take them for stone ramparts—still protected it. Women endured their *chappins*, hooped petticoats and trains; men, their swords and hats carried under the arm; magistrates, their black coats and well-powdered streaming hair; and *abbés*, their bands, flat hats and small cloaks. But in 1787 the farce, as it has been called, was over—the curtain

had fallen—and people were beginning to see behind the scenes. Except on solemn occasions, *abbés* and prelates appeared in brown or violet short coats; presidents in dress-coats, and with clubbed hair. The wig and its different forms, characteristic of the magistrate, the financier, the doctor, the procurator, or the big merchant, insensibly gave place to powdered hair. Women wore flat shoes, tight-fitting skirts, and a *pierrrot*. The last-named was a sort of upturned bird's tail attached to the bottom of the corset, and it proclaimed an open revolt against trains and hoops. Though a *révolution de linon*, it was none the less a revolution which had its importance. In a hooped skirt the most frivolous coquette had the air of a matron; in a *pierrrot* the severest matron had the air of a linnet. I well recollect the general outcry which arose against *pierrrots*. On the other hand, men had taken to waistcoats, which, when first worn, created a still greater uproar, and had more difficulty in forcing their way into drawing-rooms. Wiseacres declared that all was over: men were going about naked; their shape was no longer hidden. It is almost needless to say that at the same time an auxiliary army of tight-fitting yellow kerseymere breeches, round hats, and dress-coats swarmed like Huns to the heart of the Empire. To be fashionable these breeches had to be so tight that you needed assistance to put them on. Art and prudence, too, had to be observed when walking, and still more when dancing; whilst talent was a *sine quâ non* when sitting down or stooping, for the least thoughtless movement rendered them liable to some catastrophe or other. However, our abjuration was not complete; we still used white silk stockings, buckled shoes and powder. The first head à la *Titus* that dared to appear (it was, I believe, that of M. de Valence, the son-in-law of Mme. de Genlis) provoked a general scandal. Our dress-coats, too, retained a trace of finery: they were made of very beautiful striped silk, trimmed with very bright and dear buttons. A set in steel was not magnificent when it cost twenty-five louis. Steel was then all the rage, the treaty of commerce with England having inundated us with it. It replaced gold and precious stones, and was used for everything: swords, buckles, loops, buttons, and watch-chains. There was no salvation without steel.

But complete undress was gradually coming to the front. When top-boots crossed the threshold of a *salon* the victory was won. I myself have committed the folly of riding in the Bois de Boulogne after dinner in nankin breeches, silk stockings and pumps, and of returning home to put on small yellow top-boots before supping in town. This was the height of impertinence and the quintessence of good manners. To complete this picture of the invasion of frivolities, cabriolets, then called *wiskys*, must be added. They were still in their first form, and must not be confused with the heavy and rare cabriolets which Louis XV. said he would have forbidden had he been Lieutenant of Police; they were birds that skimmed along the ground.¹

On the other hand, *Figaro*, his family and his school had replaced Corneille and Racine at the Comédie-Française. At the Opéra, Quinault and Gluck had made room for Caravane and Panurge. Women had borrowed from the last the idea of lantern hats; from Montgolfier's invention, balloon hats; from *Werther*, which then shared with the *Sentimental Journey* the affection of the tender-hearted, Charlottes; and from the Dauphine's nurse, *chapeaux à la Marlborough*² of prodigious size. So as to owe nothing to our tight waistcoats and breeches, they had carried undress to the point of making it a sort of dressing-gown, then called an *Aristote*,—why, I know not. This fashion, which was invented by our poor Queen—who was getting stout—and the famous Mlle. Bertin, hid the waist perfectly.

Such, then, was the new external appearance of the people of Paris. "But," says some one to me (I really write as

¹ One of my father's nephews, a rich young man, possessed a cabriolet. He also had a large number of waistcoats and other articles of finery. I cannot help but smile when I remember the outcry which was raised against him in my family, and especially by my mother, who feared that I might copy his example. The poor fellow, who was merely joyously throwing his income out of the window, appeared in my mother's imagination, and consequently in mine, to be one of the beasts of the Apocalypse—an example of human degeneration.—F.

² Mme. Poitrine, the Dauphine's nurse, rocked her royal nursling to the song of *Marlborough*, which, as one knows, gained great popularity. Everything became Marlborough—that is, red and white—and never had a fashion a longer or more glorious reign.—F.

though I were to be read), "is this all that you promised us? waistcoats, *pierrots*, and *wiskys*? What about manners and doctrines?" But these are exactly what I have just described, as you will see if you take the trouble to raise the covering. If these people had worn waistcoats and top-boots from their birth, they might in that costume have been Solons, Socrates and Catos. Epaminondas went about naked. But they were born with swords by their sides and cloaks on their backs, and a time came when they found themselves wearing dress-coats and top-boots. The hereditary dress of a nation has no effect on its character; but if, one fine day, it changes from white to black, evidently some mental change has taken place. To describe the one is to describe the other. Consequently, with this revolution in dress came a revolution in good manners. Henceforth there was a lack of respect towards men and of gallantry towards women; etiquette was dead; and the taste for a comfortable, selfish life led to the formation of clubs, the increase of restaurants and *cafés*, which robbed family life of its meal times. This separation of the sexes began to make a great void in society, a great pity, for the worst company for men are men, and for women, women. The only really good, moral and social company is that made by Nature, that in which women learn to respect each other and men to respect women, whom they treat as females when they are amongst themselves and as goddesses when they are in their presence. It was about this time that Baron de Breteuil, who, after being Ambassador in Vienna, had become Minister of the King's household, decided—much less through a delicate feeling for social propriety than because of a fairly accurate appreciation of the political danger—to close the clubs.¹ He was hissed by the men, without being applauded by the women, for there was already a disposition among the public to find everything bad. Moreover, he was personally disliked. He was the very opposite of his good and amiable son, who since then has become my friend and colleague. Severe, haughty and brusque, as was necessary if he had been supported, jests and songs

¹ For further details regarding the clubs of those days see Rocquain's *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la Révolution*, 1878, p. 415, and Droz's *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI.*, vol. 1. p. 326.—A. C.

were heaped upon him, whilst his portrait—a very good likeness without name—was sold everywhere. Underneath were two lines of music: the beginning of an arietta in the opera, *Le Magnifique*, which everybody then knew by heart. All that people had to do was to add the words as follows:

Ah! c'est un superbe cheval!
On ne connut jamais de plus fier animal!

Bologna, July 24, 1837.

I was in Rome and it was at the end of March when I made this break, and since then I have not been idle five minutes. Thanks to heaven, I have at last fallen ill in an inn at Bologna: the best position in the world to be in if you would muse without remorse. If suffering does not trouble me unduly, I shall employ this little holiday by returning to the Paris of some fifty years ago.

A few of the *salons* of Paris had closed their doors to innovations, but I do not think the most celebrated. These, alas! were only too infatuated with novelties. No, those to which I refer were the *salons* of the old magistrature and even some of those of the *haute finance*, which was becoming a nobility whilst the nobility transformed itself into the people. Among them was the drawing-room of my august aunt, Mme. de Saint-Waast, which was beginning to occupy an important position, and where the new airs and apparel would certainly not have been welcomed. In speaking of this circle I reproach myself with having forgotten to mention some of its members. The first and foremost was old M. Delahante, the Farmer-General, a friend and guest of the house where, in the morning, he occupied the second floor, and in the evening an armchair facing that of M. de Saint-Waast on the opposite side of the fireplace. He was the vice-president of the coterie and played his part with calmness, but gracefully, amiably, wittily, and with a spice of banter. He was a model of good manners and politeness.¹ He had a son, one of the most

¹ Readers who wish to know more of the Delahante family are advised to consult M. Adrien Delahante's book, *Une Famille de finance au XVIIIe. siècle*,

handsome and amiable young men of Paris, and whom he had the sorrow to survive; also a nephew of the same name, likewise a farmer-general, a tall, bony, square-shouldered man, with a dry, hard, vulgar face. He smelt of money a mile off. On becoming a millionaire through the death of his cousin, he married the good Adèle de Parseval, who was as admirable a woman as he, at bottom, was an excellent man. After him I recollect another farmer-general, remarkable for his imposing face, tall stature, noble bearing, and cold, superb air. He was the very image of an old duke or peer; the only thing lacking to make the likeness complete was a little modesty. This was M. de Luzines. He spoke little, and I think that he was right in doing so. He was a horseman and possessed exquisite taste as regards furniture and jewellery. He also had a nephew in tow, named Lauzon, a farmer-general in embryo, big and good-natured, but the commonest fellow in the world. The handing on of financial positions from father to son seemed to be on the decline; it was the great grandsons who carried on the tradition. After M. de Luzines I remember M. de Lorry, Bishop of Angers, a big, stout, handsome and good man, exceedingly worldly, and burdened with livings and debts.¹ Especially do I recall the peerless Valory family. It began with the Chevalier, who bent his eighty-year-old head, curled and re-curved, over a little crutch bearing an opera-glass. Then came his niece, Mlle. de Valory, a little hunchback, full of goodness, wit and originality. She was my aunt's inseparable friend, and occupied the third floor of the house. Her niece, the Comtesse Marthe de Valory, comes next. She was an emaciated canoness with an aquiline nose, a bold and lively woman whom I regarded with terror, and who ended by marrying her surgeon. Finally, there should be mentioned the Marquis and Marquise de Valory; the former a tall, hand-

in which they will find some curious details concerning Jacques Delahante, his son Antoine Jacques, who, like Frénilly, travelled in Switzerland and the South of France, and his nephew Étienne Marie (1743-1829), whom Mme. de Saint-Waast married to Adèle de Parseval.—A. C.

¹ Michel François Couet du Vivier de Lorry, born at Metz in 1728, Bishop of Vence (1764), then of Tarbes (1769), and finally of Angers (1782). In September 1792 he took refuge at the hamlet of St. Germain (Marmontel's *Memoires*, Tourneux edition, vol. iii. p. 319).—A. C.

some, simple and excellent man; the latter the daughter of the celebrated Duplex. She had been brought up in her father's palace in India, had been treated there as a royal personage, and still showed signs of it. But she was a woman of virtue and merit, and clearly recognised the Red and the Black that was behind the veil of that Revolution which announced itself so joyfully.

It must, however, be admitted that the small number of people who saw and spoke like the Marquise de Valory met with the fate of Cassandra. Everybody else rushed headlong down the avenues of that roseate Revolution. They allowed things to slide, either laughingly or with a shrug of the shoulders. Even the majority of the most prominent aristocrats—those who a year later supported the throne with the keenest ardour—were then parliamentarians, and, without foreseeing the Constituent Assembly, called for the States-General. I recollect the day when D'Esprémesnil enraptured the Chamber of Inquiries, subjugated the Upper Chamber, and made Parliament pass that memorable resolution in which he repudiated his encroachments, refuted his privileges, and proclaimed his incompetence regarding taxation—speaking the truth for the first time—and abdicating, in order to harm the Crown, the rights he had usurped. He was to dine that day at M. de Saint-Waast's. He arrived late, exhausted and beside himself, holding in his hand a scrap of paper—the resolution, which he at once read aloud. A general cry of admiration greeted him, and before thinking of dining everybody copied the document, twenty copies of which were circulating in Paris that same evening—twenty copies that on the following day multiplied to ten thousand. D'Esprémesnil dared not show himself; altars would have been raised in his honour; he would have dragged Parisians at his heels. Four years later the same people stoned him, for he had repented.

What particularly lent a serious and prophetic character to this mad enthusiasm was the outbreak of aversion towards the Queen. The class of society which had thrown off the cowl hated her because she did not care for etiquette; wild over the most extravagant modes, it hated her because she loved fashion, and never was the perverting minister of a king, never

was Cardinal Dubois more cursed than was Mlle. Bertin when she recommended trimmings to her. Passionately fond of good music (France owed Gluck to her), she had accorded a pension to three charming musicians who sang at her concerts : Azevedo, Louet and Garat, and on this account was publicly declared to be the State vampire. But Paris had nobler food to feed its hatred of the Queen. Who does not remember the Polignacs, a poor but good Auvergne family, whose charming daughters had gained her affection? The modest favours which this friendship brought their family were not a hundredth part of those which our kings have heaped on the least of their favourites. Well, you should have seen the bitter hatred aroused in Paris by the name of the Polignacs and all that resulted from it in the case of their protectress. I do not refer to one or two intrigues attributed to her by women who had had twenty. They were neither proved nor probable, and the remainder of her life sufficiently showed what honour and virtue she possessed. No matter; the name of Messalina hardly sufficed to characterise her. With what tenderness, too, they sympathised with her husband, that poor Louis' XVI. for whom, as regards everything else, they had a superb disdain, and whom they nicknamed "The Locksmith" or "The Big Pig"! Whatever did these people want? They cared only for the *bourgeoisie* and their king was *bourgeois*; they abhorred etiquette and their queen liked it no better than they did. What did they want? What a spoilt child needs: a severe master, inflexible rules, something to counteract their weaknesses and fancies; a cold, stiff and devout queen; a hard and imperious king. It is said that the French character requires seriousness in a Sovereign. They would perhaps have hated their masters, but they would not have jostled them. Alas! the King was the last sort of man to succeed Louis XV. He was a good man and a good husband—pious, chaste, virtuous, just and humane; but he lacked intelligence, character, will-power and experience. He was an inert and badly-shaped mass, stout and heavy in gait, brusque, coarse, common in his manner of speaking and vulgar in his manners. To do him justice it was necessary to close one's eyes and reflect. Speaking of the Marquis de Saint-Géran,

Mme. de Sévigné once said: "Big Saint-Géran needs to be killed to be really esteemed." In the case of Louis XVI. this has been only too true.

I must not, however, omit to mention the most serious grievance which people had against the Queen. There lived in France a man who was universally despised for his vices, scandalous conduct, and debts. He was Grand Almoner of France, Abbé of Saint-Waast, Marmoutiers, Chaise-Dieu, and other places, Bishop-Prince of Strasburg, and the possessor of an income of 180,000 *livres* from livings—in short, Cardinal de Rohan, a handsome, lordly-mannered man, amiable and witty. His embassy in Vienna had resulted in Louis XVI.'s marriage. When Maria Theresa led him into the apartment of the four young archduchesses with the words: "Make your choice," he chose Marie Antoinette. But I have forgotten one of this Cardinal's characteristics, the most striking though the most pitiful of all: his superstition and belief in everything, except, perhaps, in God. His reputation and fortune had become the plaything of every charlatan. We know what an influence was exercised over him by the self-styled Comte Cagliostro, who once made him believe that he was having supper between Aspasia and Jesus Christ, and what a position this knave and his wife occupied at the Cardinal's château at Saverne. Here is a true anecdote about this Figaro, who sparkled with wit, animation and originality.

At the Cardinal's table at Saverne his manner was ostentatious, whilst his dovelike wife, who sat a few seats away, played the duchess. On one occasion there sat next to her the Marquis de Noailles, who was on his way, I believe, to his embassy at Vienna. Now, through I know not what piece of clumsiness, he upset the contents of a sauce-boat on to the lady. She jumped to her feet with loud cries, and the Marquis humbly apologised, whereupon Cagliostro, in a mixture of French and Italian, addressed his wife as follows: "*C'est votre faute, Signora; perche vous avez voulu vous asseoir à côté d'oun impertinente!*" At the word *impertinente*, the Marquis, who was washing and wiping the lady's dress as best he could, turned to Cagliostro and said: "Sir, let us retire; you shall answer on the spot for this insult." "Yes, yes, let us go out," shouted

Cagliostro ; “ it’s a matter of life or death—*bisogna qu’oun de nous deux y reste*. Monsieur le Marquis, choose your weapon.” “ Parbleu, the sword,” replied De Noailles. “ Good ! ” ejaculated Cagliostro, “ and I will choose mine.” “ And what is that ? ” asked the Marquis. “ Parbleu, an emetic. You shall pass your sword through my chest, and I will pass my emetic down your throat. After that, let him live who can ! ” Although the Marquis was purple with rage, he was forced to laugh, for everybody was laughing—and there the matter ended. I did not witness this scene myself, but it was related to me by one who did—Bréjole, then tutor to Prince Jules, and who, being a very passable buffoon himself, imitated Cagliostro’s buffooneries exceedingly well.

We are all familiar with the story of the diamond necklace. Every one knows that certain mischievous women got the Cardinal to buy this magnificent *collier*, which they then got into their possession, he thinking that he was giving it to the Queen, and that, instead of placing the Queen of France and the Great Almonry in an impenetrable sanctuary, instead of seizing the diamonds in England, sending the thieves to the Repenties and exiling the Cardinal to his smallest abbey, the imprudent and short-sighted Louis XVI., the good philosophical king, the friend of justice and the enemy of *lettres de cachet*, sent Louis de Rohan to the Bastille, and the case to the Parliament of Paris. It was throwing a match into a barrel of gunpowder, and the barrel exploded with a terrible crash. The powerful Rohan family rose like one man and entrusted Target with the Cardinal’s defence. A thousand shafts during this defence struck the Queen and, though the advocate blunted them, the public replaced the barbs. At last judgment was delivered, condemning the subordinates and absolving the Cardinal. He was sent to Marmoutiers, a thing that ought to have been done in the beginning, and so well were matters managed that the despised man was commiserated whilst the Queen was suspected and hated.¹

Thus was everything toppling over ; there was nothing but

¹ At the outbreak of the Revolution, the Cardinal withdrew to his Principality of Kehl, on the other side of the Rhine, and became the generous supporter of the *émigrés*. He was a true Rohan !—F.

a succession of false steps and falls. Comptrollers-General fell one after the other. The bad financial situation and the perpetual lack of money made them masters of the State, but no sooner did they take office than they were hissed, ridiculed in songs, and exhausted. M. de Calonne had an advantage over the others in having already undergone this treatment, owing to his bad reputation. Moreover, he was a man of intelligence, and as courtly as he was amiable. You know the reply he made to one of the Queen's requests: "Madame, if the thing is possible, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be accomplished." The burden that had made all the others withdraw he took up lightly, but he found neither confidence nor credit. His Assembly of Notables would have been a good idea if we had been living in the days of the States of Tours. It resulted in nothing because we had reached a period of doubt and general anxiety, when the dominating thought was to look after oneself and get out of the scrape. It was neutralised by the Parliamentary party, which clamoured for reforms, and by the Orleans party, which thought of nothing but revolutions. It produced naught save evil, for a remedy, that has been extolled and announced as certain, leaves us in a worse state than before if it fails. The uproar increased, there was a call for the States-General, and M. de Calonne departed with his Notables. As compensation a virtuous man was chosen, M. d'Ormesson, an honoured name in the magistrature whom they much wished to conciliate. But "virtue without money is only a useless ornament," and so his career was short. I believe—for I am trusting entirely to my memory—that his successor was M. de Brienne,¹ that illustrious Archbishop of Toulouse who had issued charges and administered his diocese, which was then a rare thing. Nobody seemed worthier to look after the affairs of State. He took office, paid the *rentes* in paper money, and fell in the midst of a greater uproar than before. At last came the turn of M. de Lamoignon,² a Parliamentary deserter whom they wished to make into a second Maupeou; a man without con-

¹ Frénilly's memory deceives him. D'Ormesson preceded Calonne. See Rocquain's *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la Révolution*, pp. 406-407.—A. C.

² In reference to Lamoignon, see M. Marcel Marion's *Lamoignon et la Réforme Militaire de 1783*.—A. C.

sideration, morals or principles—a bold meddler involved in debts which he has since paid by committing suicide. This was the last step, the point at which the Revolution broke out in earnest.

At this time—in 1788—steps were taken to obtain for me the succession to the post of Administrator-General. People clearly saw that the State was threatened with a grave derangement, but who would have imagined that the Administrators-General would be suppressed? My excellent uncle, who considered that there was nothing so important as this high financial position, desired that I should make myself worthy of it by a deep study of the domanial science. I had, therefore, to resign myself to passing six mornings a week in the office of M. M———, a Director of Domaines, who, full of zeal and respect for the future administrator, loaded my table with the most appetising *dossiers* and left me to slumber in peace. But three times a week, at noon, I woke up. My pretty cousin De Bon called upon me and we went off together to the Lycée.

Next to politics, the Lycée was then the rage of Paris.¹ It was a fine, spacious building near the Palais Royal, standing on the site where the Opéra had been burnt down. It contained pretty drawing-rooms, a valuable library, and a large hall in which, from nine in the morning until ten at night, lectures on all sorts of subjects followed one on the other: physics, chemistry, anatomy, botany, astronomy, and literature, in addition to history and languages. Garat—the pale, academic and heavy Garat, the uncle of the inimitable singer, who is only remembered because he had the terrible honour of having got into the King's carriage to take him to the guillotine, Garat delivered to us a flat, diffuse, and yet fashionable lecture on history. The bombastic, ruddy-cheeked, and conceited La Harpe—promoted to the position of a great man since Voltaire, Buffon, Montesquieu, and Rousseau had disappeared from the

¹ See Charles Dejob's study *De l'Établissement connu sous le nom de Lycée et d'Athénée et de quelques établissements analogues* in the *Revue internationale de l'enseignement* for July 15, 1889. It was on January 8, 1786, that Garat and La Harpe respectively inaugurated at the Lycée instruction in literary history and history proper. They represented the new spirit, Boissy d'Anglas says that La Harpe "combated Montesquieu's errors regarding the monarchy, whilst Garat formed minds full of republican energy,"—A. C.

scene, leaving only Condorcet, La Harpe delivered that famous *Cours de Littérature*, which has since found a place in all libraries—save mine. What fatuity this little great man did show! At the close of his lectures he used to walk about the *salons*, with his crimson forehead and shiny cheeks, receiving with superb benignity the compliments of his audience. Five years later, I saw him—red cap on head—in that same hall of the Lycée, roaring like a madman a barbarous ode, of which I remember only these concluding lines :

Le fer, amis, le fer, il presse le carnage ;
Le fer, il boit le sang : le sang donne la rage,
Et la rage donne la mort !

Alas ! this poor little Archilochus knew no other madness than fear, and he was terribly frightened that the Tarquins of those days would mow down the prince of literature. Once more, three years later, I met him there again, his hair white with powder, and on this occasion, amidst the transports of joy of all Paris, he delivered an aristocratic discourse on *tu* and *vous*. He was then under the tutelage of Mme. de Clermont-Tonnerre [since our good and singular Mme. de Talaru], who converted him to Catholicism without making him a Christian, for he was as intolerant a Catholic as he had been intolerant a poet. Above all was he the greediest of Academicians. Here is a fact which was related to me by my old friend Mme. de Damas. One evening he was dining with her at Livry seated by her side. It was a Friday, and La Harpe ate not a bite. At the second course his gluttony got the better of him. "How is it, Madame," he said, "that at the house of a Christian lady like you fish is not served on a Friday?" "No fish!" exclaimed Mme. de Damas; "why here are soles before you." "Ah!" replied La Harpe, slightly confused, "I thought they were dabs."

To La Harpe and Garat must be added that best of men, most skilful of physicians and most lucid of demonstrators, the modest Parcieux; the arrogant Fourcroy, as bad a citizen as he was poor a chemist, who delivered his incomprehensible academico-chemical bombast at full speed; and Sue, a faded beau who, in the course of his anatomical lectures, was gallant

to the ladies.¹ I conscientiously attended all these lectures, and was foolish enough to analyse them in the evening, so frightened was I of forgetting something. Since then I have done with my copy-books what the majority of the professors should have done with theirs—made them into a bonfire. But what am I thinking about! I would leave the Lycée for ever without saying a word about Mme. Récamier's *vehoule*?² Mme. Récamier has become too celebrated to conceal from posterity the source of her glory. Every day, morning and evening, in the midst of the fashionable audience of the Lycée, in the midst of all sorts of finery and the huge hats which had replaced hoop petticoats, there was to be seen a young woman of bewitching beauty and perfect figure, dressed in white and wearing on her head the white knotted handkerchief which Creoles call a *vehoule*. It was Mme. Récamier. At balls, theatres, and during her walks she appeared in this *vehoule* and a white dress. She was modest and simple—I was almost saying rather silly—and all this suited her admirably. The *vehoule* was a great success, and Mme. Récamier having likewise attained celebrity and purchased M. Necker's fine house in the Chaussée d'Antin, she found herself the goddess of a charming place, the hostess of a good table, and the Aspasia of a group of men of rank and wit. Common interests bound her to Mme. de Staël. Mme. de Staël had pretensions to everything; Mme. Récamier to nothing, or at least she appeared to be unpretending. Their union, therefore, was prompt and intimate. One contributed devotion and praise; the other, the rank of a wit and reputation. The white *vehoule* brought all this about. Without it Mme. Récamier would have remained the beautiful but ineffectual wife of a big banker. Since, her husband ruined himself, sold his house

¹ La Harpe and Garat are sufficiently well known. Parcieux, or rather Deparcieux (1753-1799), received a recompense of 3000 francs from the Convention. Fourcroy (1755-1809) sat at the Convention and was made a count by Napoleon. Sue, the father of the novelist, was surgeon at the Hôpital de la Charité and Professor of Anatomy at the School of Painting and Sculpture.—A. C.

² What Frénilly says here relates to a later period, since Juliette Barnard, who became Mme. Récamier in 1793, was only twelve years old in 1789. See Herriot's *Madame Récamier et ses amis*. 1904.—A. C.

and, I believe, died. Mme. Récamier, who retired to the Abbaye au Bois, remained a *bel esprit*, the centre and idol of the great men of the day, and I have no doubt that she still wears her *vehoule*.

We had reached the beginning of July. Mme. de Bón, as guardian of her two sons, possessed a very fine estate between Nîmes and Arles. And the time for the Beaucaire Fair was approaching. It was a splendid opportunity for a pretty young widow to see the world and show herself, whilst visiting, like a wise mother, her children's property. But to travel four hundred leagues there and a like distance back, alone, was a dull occupation. So she proposed that I should accompany her. A vision of open skies appearing before me, I put the matter to my mother, who at once spoke to Mme. de Chazet. The lady made rather a long face, as much as to say: "They are very young." But the little widow did exactly what she liked, and on speaking of the solitude and danger of the journey obtained her mother's consent. She was twenty-five years of age; I close on twenty. Could anything be more proper? My excellent mother undertook to prove to my uncle that there could be no better preparation for a financial career than the Beaucaire Fair, and they decided that after this study I should complete my domanical education at the capital of my States, Poitiers; for, after my father, I had the title to the office of Receiver-General of the domaines of Poitou and Angoumois. So everything was agreed upon. With my mother's thirty louis in my pocket, off we went. Our equipage had a grand air. It consisted of a berlin, six post-horses and two mounted lackeys. At the back of the berlin sat my beautiful cousin and I; in front, her little boy and a *femme de chambre*. The weather was admirable. The roads were as they were before the Revolution. We tore along, on pleasure bent. What more could a young man of twenty desire? Nothing save love for his companion. She was wholly charming and yet I did not love her—quite young, too, yet I feared her. There was something decided in her character, something peremptory in her tone—in short, I knew that she did not love me. But I was young, fresh, fairly good-looking, and ridiculously simple, and I ought to have known that a young

widow can like these things without actually loving the owner. In spite of all my efforts, however, I could not succeed in falling in love. We entered Lyons, saw *Nina* played by Mme. Dugazon, and supped with the Intendant, M. de Tholozan. The next day we passed Pont Saint Esprit, crossed Nîmes, and then the fine estate of Fourques, the object of our journey. At last we reached Arles, where a rather fine house had been retained for us. Everybody there was a relation, a friend or an acquaintance of the beautiful widow. I do not know whether I have explained that her father-in-law, the Marquis de Bon, lived in the district, and had been first president of the Montpellier Court of Accounts. Our *salon* was never empty. Adorers abounded. I was as jealous as a Turk, and to be jealous without being in love is the height of the ridiculous. At this she laughed in her sleeve, looked out of the corner of her eye, and seemed to say to me: "I see very well of whom you are jealous, but I should like to know of what." In short, I was stupid. I possessed wit, grace, good manners, and an elegant figure; I wrote pretty verses; and a hundred proofs were now given me that I was loved and desired. Yet I did not believe them!

In July, Arles was like a suburb of Beaucaire, and, awaiting the opening of the great market, people from the four quarters of the globe assembled there. M. de Bellefaye¹ held his court there. Son of the rich Farmer-General de Laâge and son-in-law of the equally wealthy banker Duruet, he had that year been sent to the provinces to squander one hundred thousand francs as Farmer-General. He had just made a tour among his tributaries of Aix, Toulon, and Marseilles, and had been welcomed everywhere by deputations, speeches and salvoes of artillery. He was a tall, fair young man, with a rather sheepish face and a habit, as though he were king of Arles, of holding his head in the air and throwing out his chest. He paid me a visit. We had known each other in Paris, and in the course

¹ Clément François Philippe de Laâge Bellefaye. With two other assistant farmers-general, Sanlot and Delahante, he had the good luck to escape being included amongst those who were executed on the 19th of Floréal, that "batch" consisting of twenty-eight farmers-general, including his own father, Clément de Laâge. See Delahante's *Une Famille de finance au XVIIIe. siècle*, vol. ii, p. 453, and Wallon's *Histoire du Tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris*, vol. iii, pp. 398-399.—A. C.

of our conversation we came to the conclusion that an honest man could not live without at least eight carriages. Six would have satisfied me, but he insisted, and I did not care to submit to the affront of being less needy than he. As a matter of fact I did not then possess even a cabriolet. He had a band of his own which played every afternoon on the Place d'Arles, and every evening at the ball in his palace. During the morning we rode in the suburbs, played tennis or paid visits. Then we dined at Bellefaye's or at some other house, but never at home. In the evening we promenaded on the bridge of boats, to watch the barges of the whole world ascend the Rhône, and to eat ices, after which we returned to the King of Arles to sup and dance until five in the morning. Such were our first studies, and by the time the Fair began I had already greatly profited. A very pretty and charmingly furnished house, with a garden, had been got ready for us at Beaucaire.

Beaucaire was then a replica of the St. Germain Fair, with this difference, that its boundaries were larger, its streets narrower, its site less uniform, and its spectators one hundred thousand instead of a few thousands. Its multitude of little intersecting streets were covered, on a level with the third floor of the houses, with large awnings, so that the whole town was under a sort of huge parasol. Below, two rows of shops, illuminated during part of the night, offered for sale goods from all parts of the world. The Persian could purchase there Wedgwood cups and the Englishman Shiraz wine in goatskin bottles. Between the town and the Rhône, at the foot of that steep hill which has been made illustrious by the fable of Aucassin and Nicolette, stretched an immense field called the Champ des Aulx, because whilst the Fair was held the whole stock of garlic to be consumed during the year by the Midi was displayed there. That extensive plain covered with garlic to a depth of two feet, divided into compartments by the merchants and into streets for the convenience of customers, was a wonderful sight.¹ A little further to the south, on the opposite bank of the Rhône, was Tarascon with its wooden bridge and

¹ See Stendhal's description of the Beaucaire Fair in *Mémoires d'un Touriste*, vol. ii. pp. 90-99, and A. Chuquet's *Stendhal-Beyle*, p. 346.—A. C.

famous Tarasque, the procession of which—usually held at the time of the Beaucaire Fair—did not take place that year.

During the day, everybody who was not either a buyer or a seller scattered over the beautiful country on foot, on horseback or in carriages. The meadows were covered with tents and tables; everywhere people were singing and dancing; and at nightfall they returned to the town to dance again—the populace on the public places, the middle classes in the dancing gardens, and the fashionable world at the Farmer-General's. At M. de Bellefaye's there was every day a dinner of one hundred and fifty covers, followed by a ball attended by seven to eight hundred people. I dined there two or three times. I danced there every night, so as to neglect nothing of my domianial education. Yet I do not remember a single detail of that confused crowd of people of all countries,—not a name occurs to me, unless, perhaps, it is that of the little Marquise d'Aramon, who shared with my beautiful cousin the admiring looks and homage of the assembly. One was a little provincial violet—white, fresh, simple and timid, with the most lovely blue eyes in the world; the other dark, transparent, proud, and passably coquettish, a Parisian of studied elegance and lively beauty.

Thus passed an enchanting week, at the end of which everybody left. M. de Bellefaye returned to Paris; Mme. de Bon proceeded to Arles, to look after her Fourques estate, and there, before leaving for Provence, I spent three more days in her company. I say three days, for I have nothing to say of the nights. The last, however, is fresh in my memory, and still rises before me full of reproaches. Everybody had retired and I was in my room packing. Half an hour later my door silently opened and Adélaïde, without a light, and in a charming *négligé*, entered on tip-toe. I ran towards her with a cry. "Above all things, no noise," she said, putting her hand over my mouth; "for that will cause a scandal. Everybody is not as discreet as you are and people are already chattering too much." "Who are they?" I asked, furiously, "and about what are they talking?" "Calm yourself!" she replied. "You ask who? Why, everybody. And about what? You know well enough. Don't they dare to say that I am your

mistress? And that is why I am letting you go. But let us sit down." And it was on my bed that we sat! "Auguste," she continued, "you are very young, whereas I am old, although still passable. What say you to that? I know the world a little, but you not at all, and you are going out into it alone. Therefore, I have come to give you some advice. Draw the curtains, for there are windows opposite and people might think that I am here for something else." "What!" I exclaimed. "That I abuse your confidence? That . . . that . . ." "Say not a word!" interjected Adélaïde. "You act the honest man; but everybody does not believe you are as good as you say, and have not I myself seen? . . . Do I not clearly perceive?" "Seen what? Perceived what?" I asked. "Oh! nothing," she responded. Whereupon I excitedly burst out into protests and justifications. I was moved to the bottom of my heart at the confiding and maternal step she had taken. I would have stabbed whoever suspected her; I would have stabbed myself rather than touch her with the end of my finger. Never had I felt more chivalrous. Poor Adélaïde! She gave me some very good advice. "You are amiable, sensitive and without experience," she said. "People will take possession of you. You will find coquettes in your path, and women will say 'I love you.' But do not listen to them, listen only to the woman who will love you without telling you. *Mon Dieu!* you will find such women. And if you choose a mistress—you need one at your age, well. . . . But, Auguste, am I not mad to speak to you in this way? One would think that I was your mother, and yet . . ." "Oh! that does not matter," responded I. "Continue and I swear to you. . . ." "Swear not!" exclaimed Adélaïde, who was frightened of my oath. Thus did two hours pass. Gradually her tone changed; first dryness and then sourness intervening. The more I expressed my gratitude the more vinegary she became. We parted at two in the morning: I, edified and impressed; she respected and out of patience.

The next day I was on the Salon road—alone and for the first time using my own wings. After passing through Provence, I visited Avignon, the delicious Plain of Comtat and the sad Fountain of Vaucluse, which does not merit its

reputation. Finally, recrossing the Rhône, I entered the Cevennes, crossed Uzès, then the Pont du Gard, to which Rome can show nothing comparable, and arrived for the night in Bréjole's native town, Alais.

He called upon me at the inn, and in the twinkling of an eye we were the best friends in the world. He installed me in his family, and I spent a week with them. The Abbé and I, mounted on hacks, made a tour in the Cevennes. On reaching the little town of Durfort late at night we found the place lit up, the people dancing, wine flowing, and a bonfire consuming an image of M. de Lamoignon. The cause of their joy was the news of his disgrace and the recall of M. Necker.¹ The Revolution had begun.

I left my companion at Vigan, and whilst he was returning to Alais I pushed on to Nîmes, whence, after spending two days in seeing the antiquities, I reached Montpellier.

After this I proposed to go to Arles and rejoin Adélaïde, little thinking that I was on ill terms with her, for this is one of the things that a woman never explains to a man who has had the impertinence to respect her—and I was much too stupid to suspect it. I must explain that, at the time we were friendly, it had been agreed that we should see her father-in-law at Narbonne, then visit Toulouse and Bordeaux, and finally reach Poitiers, where we were to part. She was, therefore, to await me at Arles, to begin this second tour. But before leaving Montpellier I learnt that she had already left for Narbonne. "Good," said I to myself, "it's my own fault. I've protracted my journey too long. She'll be waiting for me at Narbonne." Immediately ordering horses and a chaise, I set off. As I was changing horses ten hours from Montpellier, who should arrive at full gallop but two couriers—Adélaïde's couriers! "Where is your mistress?" I asked. "Monsieur, she will be here in ten minutes. We are returning to Montpellier." My ideas became confused. Leaving my chaise at the posting-house, I went to meet her. Soon I saw a cloud of dust, six horses and a berlin. I motioned to the

¹ Necker was recalled on August 26, 1788, but the Keeper of the Seals, Lamoignon, who was replaced by Barentin, did not retire until three weeks later, on September 14.—A. C.

postillions; the carriage drew up; and I opened the door. "Good day, cousin, are you going to Poitiers?" said Adélaïde; "I'm going to the camp of Metz." "But what about Bordeaux?" I asked. "It will be for another time . . ." was the reply. "I've changed my mind. *Bon voyage*, and close the coach-door well." And with these words she was off, leaving me standing in the middle of the road, utterly nonplussed. It was absolutely necessary, however, to follow her, for, in addition to wanting an explanation, my clothes were in her trunks. So I returned to the posting-house as fast as my legs would carry me. She had gone. I jumped into my chaise and set off in pursuit, but only to find at each fresh stage, that she had left half an hour before. Not until Montpellier was reached did I overtake her. It was then late; our conversation was short; my clothes were unpacked; and at five o'clock the next morning the *belle* bid me farewell, with recommendations to be always very good and to make a close study of the customary of Poitou.

So there I was, alone, at Montpellier, where I did not know a soul, with a heap of clothes and other things, very little money, and a journey of two hundred leagues in front of me. True, my mother had given me an extra twenty-five louis since my departure, making in all seventy-five—a very decent sum, and more than sufficient for some people to make their tour of France. But I had travelled a good deal and in a noble style, throwing away my money like a presumptive Administrator-General and emulator of M. de Bellefaye. In short, I found that by being extremely parsimonious I should be able to reach Poitiers without a *sou* in my pocket.

I decided to ride post and to set out for my capital at full speed. I purchased a small valise to hold necessaries and a trunk for my past fineries. Then, having filled the latter, I addressed it to Poitiers. At last, after passing from fifteen to eighteen stages, I reached Narbonne. There I dined, made my toilet, and hastened to call on the Marquis de Bon and his sister the Marquise de Durban, who had the best house in the town. They received me as though I were a son and kept me for two days.

On entering Toulouse, sore with riding, I held council with

my purse. My knightly manner of travelling was no longer possible: it was necessary to seek for a more ordinary one. I found it on a boat which was descending the Garonne to Bordeaux. With the exception of a corner of the poop, where there was a tent and a divan of trusses of hay for the convenience of passengers, it was entirely filled with bales of merchandise. I was falling lower and lower. But the weather was admirable, the banks of the Garonne charming, the trusses softened the wooden seats, and I had good company: an exceedingly gay little woman who was returning to Paris, a young jew of Bordeaux, amiable and prepossessing, and a little Englishman of my own age for whom I came to have—and he for me—a very tender friendship that lasted nearly a week. I have forgotten his name.

It was in this procession that the man who could not live without eight carriages entered the superb city of Bordeaux—Bordeaux, one of the world's marvels and the dearest of all. I wanted to visit and see everything; consequently, after four days, there was nothing else to do, in order to finish my journey with honour, but to engage a waggoner to take me to Poitiers, payment, including all expenses, to be made on arrival.

Of the nine francs which I had in my pocket there remained but twelve *sous* when I entered my metropolis. But I took possession of it as Scipio did the coast of Africa. I hastened to my Receiver Des Minières, made his acquaintance and also that of his cash-box, and came away with a roll of louis. My trunk had arrived, and so, an hour later, I was paying visits—my hair well-dressed and powdered, a dress coat on my back, my hat under my arm, and a sword by my side.

I must now come down a peg lower. I have no longer to paint a picture of Paris, with its fashions, politics and follies, but to return, if I can, to that little provincial capital where I was required to stay a few months and where I willingly passed two of the happiest years of my life.

Of all third-rate towns Poitiers was then the most crooked, the hilliest, the narrowest, the dirtiest and the worst built. This town of 30,000 inhabitants had not even yet got street-lamps, now to be found in the smallest villages, and on setting

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out for home after a supper or the theatre every one had a lantern. The theatre was an old tennis-court, and the only remarkable features of the town were a fairly fine public promenade, called, I believe, *Les Groix*, a public drive which on holy days was the Longchamp of the town, and where as many as thirty or forty carriages could be counted, the Place Royale, and, finally, outside the suburbs, the *pierre levée*, a druidical altar which, on account of the tradition that Saint Radegonde had brought the table in her apron, had become sacred in the district.

Nor did the suburbs compensate for the town's hideousness. They consisted of a large plain with fields of wheat and rye, and woods, placed haphazard, in addition to the worst little roads in the world. But these little roads led to a multitude of good big *châteaux*, some of them rather fine, which in summer made this sad country one of the most sociable and animated in the whole of France. I visited them a good deal.

At this time, people of name and fortune did not consider themselves in exile in their little capitals, and ambition did not prompt them to leave the centres where they held a foremost place to come to Paris to seek equals or superiors. Each had territorial interests, vassals, rank, offices, duties and pleasures, family, friends, and fortune. They lived and died there. Thus was formed the provincial spirit, and out of all the provincial spirits, the national mind, in which each retained its own characteristics. People were not French in the gross; they were French in the quality of Poitevin, Breton, Burgundian, or Picardian, and as the spirit of patriotism increases in proportion as its circle is confined, there was much more of it to be found in the provinces, each of which had its customs, interests, government, glories, and private history, than in Paris, whose interests were scattered all over France. And what I say of Poitiers, which was the seat of but a poor seneschalship, was true with still more reason of parliament towns such as Rennes, Dijon, and Toulouse, where political power was concentrated, and with even still greater reason of state provinces such as Brittany, Burgundy, Languedoc, and Provence, where that power was great and weighed in the balance of the kingdom.

At Poitiers and in Poitou, life therefore was pleasant. No

province in France, with the exception, perhaps, of Brittany, possessed a larger number of members of the good old nobility, faithful to the traditions of patriarchal hospitality. The majority of these noblemen were only moderately rich and some were even poor, but all, in proportion to their fortunes, lived nobly in their *châteaux*. The most important had town houses in addition. The La Trémouilles, the La Rochefoucaulds, and the Richelieus were at Court, but the Chasteigners, the Marconnays, the Pradels, the D'Aloignys, the Nieuils and many others—lieutenants-general and majors of cavalry, rich and esteemed—led an exceedingly honourable life at Poitiers, the manners and customs of which were consequently not those of a provincial town. Moreover, the nobility of Poitiers, through its names and fortunes, alliances and friendships, had relations with Paris, visiting it frequently and sometimes making prolonged stays there; and hence it possessed that facility in living, that ease in tone and manners which made it identical with Parisian society and perfectly agreeable. As in Paris, its principal gathering was at supper-time; and a person must have been very little known not to have the daily choice between two or three gatherings of twenty-five to thirty guests—solid and refined suppers of an hour's duration, followed by conversation and games. There was no question of returning home with cold hearts, empty minds and hollow stomachs. For forty years suppers were, in France, the heart and soul of the social spirit, and when they came to an end society ended also.

The Intendant of Poitou was M. de Nanteuil, councillor to the Parliament of Paris and, like every intendant, Master of Requests.¹ This was the first step in a career which consisted in rising from a small intendency to one more important, with the brevet of a Councillor of State to crown it. Provided a man wished to be honest and act in good faith—and few had that desire—there was then nothing nobler and more honourable than an intendant's life and position. He was the head man in his province—the king's man and the country's man at one and the same time. He set the fashion; administered everything, governed everything; and possessed the power of doing

¹ Antoine François Alexandre Boula de Nanteuil, Intendant of Poitiers from 1784 to 1790.—A. C.

infinite good or infinite evil. He was the prefect of three prefectures, with a stability and importance in family, fortune and rank, which are no longer found nowadays. An intendant's career was the finest that a man who felt he had an aptitude for work and a love for the public good could choose. With these two qualities—then exceedingly rare—he was no longer shelved in the Council of State; he had wings and could rise to anything. Did not M. Turgot, the small but excellent Intendant of Limoges, become Comptroller-General? I need hardly say that, in the course of my dreams of the magistrature, I aspired to an intendency, and had it not been for the Revolution this wish of mine would, thanks to friends and fortune, have been easily realised. I think I may add, too, without being accused of pride, that, with my sense of honour and administrative faculty, I should have made a very good intendant. M. de Nanteuil was the very opposite of this. He was the son-in-law of the famous M. Le Noir, Lieutenant of Police of Paris, a shamefully disreputable man who was never able to attain any other reputation than that of a third-rate Dubois. This alliance at once brought the son-in-law an intendency, and Poitiers was chosen as a victim. M. de Nanteuil was the dullest and at the same time one of the vilest of men I have known. Placing his duties in the hands of sub-delegates, he gave himself wholly up to pleasure. To such an extent was he a gambler that he had hardly any other furniture than backgammon-tables or other guests than gamesters, to such an extent a rake that his feminine companions were composed exclusively of loose women, and to such an extent imbued with futility of mind that he despised the opinions and braved the contempt of others. Yet I was not his enemy. I was invited to his suppers and introduced into the houses of his shady friends; for I was a good recruit. But this class of venal society soon disgusted me, so, without absolutely breaking with it, I held aloof, and retained with M. de Nanteuil only ordinary intercourse: the paying of polite visits, games at backgammon, and dinners which it would have been wrong to renounce, for the only man of real merit at the Intendant's house was, the cook.

The Bishop's palace was quite the opposite of the Intendant's,

as, indeed, was very natural—which however could not be said of all the bishops' palaces in France.

M. de Beaupoil de Sainte-Aulaire, a man of high quality and of the stuff of which bishops were made, was a little aged person with cold, dry manners, who kept a somewhat majestic *salon* where strict etiquette was observed, and gave severe dinners with covers for forty guests. That is all I am able to say, for these dinners were about the only link existing between the old Bishop and the twenty-year-old Parisian. The society in which I mixed was quite different.¹

Mme. de Saint-Waast came of an honest, well-to-do, good old family of Poitiers. Whilst inhabiting the town, M. de Saint-Waast married her there and then brought her to Paris, where, later, his wealth, luxuriousness, and his post of Administrator-General raised him to that pinnacle of the financial world which was then on an equality with the higher magistrature and the old nobility of Paris.

Therefore, noblemen of Poitou who visited Paris gladly claimed Mme. de Saint-Waast—the mistress of a fine *salon*, a large house, and a large fortune, who received them all as old friends—as an equal and a fellow citizen. On the other hand, when my father became Receiver-General and appeared for a month on the social horizon of Poitiers, he had been overwhelmed with dinners and attentions, and had left behind him the reputation of being a brilliant, amiable, witty man—as, indeed, he really was in the highest degree. This naturally opened to me all the doors in Poitiers. But my good uncle M. de Fauveau, the administrator of my post until I came of age—a loyal, virtuous, practical man who cared little for society splendour and intellectual pleasures—had insisted on my being kept tight in hand. So my *début* was made in a financial society—necessarily second-rate, since it was of the provinces, and which, consequently, possessed by no means the good taste and good manners of the *haute finance* of Paris. Its members overwhelmed me with politeness, indigestion, and *ennui*, as though I were a person of the first rank, destined to rise stil

¹ Martial Louis Beaupoil de Sainte-Aulaire was sent as a deputy to the States-General by the clergy of the Seneschal's Court of Poitiers.—A. C.

higher. To see men of fifty years of age pose as inferiors before a stripling of twenty disgusted me.

In this class of society, in which the higher they strove to place me the lower I felt I was descending, there was, however, a simple, modest unambitious family which had remained a model of honour and of the ancient nobility. The Beauregard family consisted of an aged widow mother—simple, perfect in tone and manners, and as good as she was amiable—and three sons. The eldest, an ordinary sub-delegate, was, though rather brusque, the personification of probity, honour and frankness; the second, amiable and devoted to my family, was a *Directeur des Fermes* in Paris; and the third, an excellent ecclesiastic, became a long time afterwards Bishop of Orleans. The eldest of the Beauregards had been entrusted with my introduction into the society of Poitiers, and with selecting my place of residence, lackey, *valet de chambre*, tradesmen, &c. He found me a place in the Rue Neuve, opposite the fine house and large garden of Mme. de Saint-Waast's sister, a little devout old lady, and next door to a certain M. d'Arlus, the *Receveur des Tabacs*, the most delicate epicure and oldest dangler in Poitiers, the friend and emulator of M. de Nanteuil and perhaps his procurer. It was he whom the honest and pure Beauregard had asked to keep an eye on my youth. But I avoided his suppers and went to eat the wing of a chicken at good Mme. Beauregard's. Her excellent son then began to introduce me into society. He began with the *Intendant*, and I have already stated with what success; continued with the financiers, with the result mentioned; and finished up with the nobility, in whose company I at once began to feel at home.

I should be ungrateful if I did not try to recall, after a lapse of forty-eight years, some of the names and characteristics of these society people of Poitiers to whom I owed two very happy years.

The first face which rises before me is that of the Marquise de Nieuil, the wife of the Commodore.¹ She had two sons

¹ Poute, Marquis de Nieuil (1730-1806), who was Commodore and Inspector of the Royal Corps of gunners, and, on January 1, 1792, Rear-Admiral, married Augustine Jeanne des Francs.—A. C.

and three daughters. The eldest was the son-in-law of M. de la Luzerne, then Minister of Marine. One of her daughters was the Marquise de Venneville, whom I never knew; the second, Mlle. de Vignolles, a good, sweet girl who wished to take the veil, because Comtesse de Brouilhac; and the last, Agathe, terribly ugly and thin but sparkling with wit and originality, married Comte de Milon. Mme. de Nieuil had herself a great deal of ready wit, but was full of caprices which she called nervousness, besides being stone deaf, though she would not admit it. She guessed your replies by the movement of your lips, and if she missed them put another question.

Mme. de Marsillac was a Maupoix, a fine tall woman of thirty, not pretty but the possessor of two large black eyes full of expression. Her husband, Comte de Marsillac, was a small, slender and elegant man, full of grace and urbanity. Forty years later I met him again in Paris—a widower, old, ruined by the emigration, and he took as much pleasure in spending his evenings at my house as I had formerly done at his.

The Marconnay family was infinite. At its head was an aged mother, who, squandering her little fortune over suppers and card-games, received the best society of Poitiers in a most wretched house. Then came her three sons. The eldest, a tall, handsome man with haughty manners, married Mlle. Titon, the daughter of the most clearly proved knave of the Grand-Chambre. Poor Mme. de Marconnay! I can still see her: young, slender, beautiful, fresh, though a little too dark, with her large black eyes and her slight moustache; as naïve as a child, taking an interest in everything, loving everything, and smiling at all things. This little planet did not lack satellites, and, judging by the husband's cold awkwardness and the lady's moustache, it is to be feared she did not lack consolars. It is said that she has since found them in London, where, owing to the emigration, every one has had to find a profession.

Stout President de Chassenon was Honorary President of the Nantes Court of Accounts, a man exceedingly rich and miserly, who would have made an excellent model for

Molière. He used to transform his daughter's old skirts into dressing gowns by fixing the waistbands round his neck.

Irland de Bazôges, the President of Poitiers, was a very good fellow of some thirty-five years of age; a good husband, tall and well made. I do not say that he was elegant, because as a matter of fact he was exceedingly awkward and inclined to stand on his provincial dignity. His little wife was ugly, but possessed such an open look, such frank gaiety, so equable and sweet a temper, that she pleased me better than all the other women of Poitiers.

Mme. de Vigier was a hideous stout old woman, dressed like a fifth-rate cook. But her house was admirable, and she herself, in spite of all her drawbacks, the best, politest, kindest and most reverential person in the world. She was noted for her truffled turkeys and gaming-tables. Of her two daughters, the elder—ugly, though tall and well made—was supportable, but the younger was the image of her mother and the terror of guests. The best person of the household and the one least in evidence was the father, a man of wit and intelligence—a financier and the only one, I believe, who assembled at his house the whole of the fashionable world of Poitiers.

Next to this family comes the handsome Comtesse de Moisin, the most beautiful of beautiful women, but not one of those whom I should have worshipped. She was a Minerva of twenty-five who had fallen from Olympus into the possession of a short, stout, awkward husband, who was ever laughing and complaining that his wife adored him.

Then there was the rather insignificant Marquise d'Asnières, with her still more insignificant husband, a son of twenty who was even more insignificant than they were, and a daughter of eighteen who signified a good deal. I observed that when I played cards at their house I invariably lost. It was then the fashion to wear huge plain well-polished buttons and mine, which were certainly not the smallest, reflected my cards. They were considered, therefore, to be in very good taste. One day I changed them for others covered with stuff, but this new fashion did not have such a success.

In a very fine and elegant house which they had just

purchased lived the good Marquise de Chasteigner and her fifty-year-old husband, the best and simplest of men, decorated with the red ribbon of the order of Saint Louis and venerated by the people of Poitiers. They possessed a good name, a pretty house and a large fortune. Six years later the Revolution dragged the widow to the scaffold.

The Marquise d'Aloigny de Rochefort—there is another of the distinguished names which were so plentiful at Poitiers! She was a little hunchback, but not after the fashion of Mme. de Montbrun; she was much less deformed and not anything like as pretty. But she had a bold and lively wit. Her husband was a big healthy fellow without ability. She was the intimate friend of the old Comtesse de Sommières, whom I have a thousand reasons for not wishing to forget, but principally because she had a great affection for me and because I faithfully put into practice in her case that excellent precept sent to me by my mother: "Fall in love with all the old women."

M. de Margeret's family was not a wealthy one. It occupied, however, a rather fine house with a large garden, and everything was on an honourable footing. It received many visits, paid few, and gave no great suppers. The husband was an old soldier who had been wounded, somewhat a humourist, but polite, very graceful, and with the manners of the fashionable world. His wife, who was some fifty years of age, was tall, frail and delicate; a model of sweetness and goodness. She reminded me of some of my mother's characteristics, and was indeed, a mother to me. In fact, I could easily have fallen in love had she not had near her a counter-attraction: her niece, Mlle. Amaranthe d'Esparts, a little flower of seventeen, fresher, whiter and pinker than all a poet's flowers. There was, however, a still more brilliant star than the charming Amaranthe—her inseparable friend Mlle. de Pradel, whose beauty was more regular, figure more perfect, and elegance purer. The former was a Correggio; the latter a Raphael.

But shall I conclude this long review of the society of Poitiers without mentioning what occupied, amused, and interested me the most? Ten leagues from the capital, near the little town of Couhé-Vérac was a vast Gothic *château*, with

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three large courtyards, flanked by towers and turrets and suspended, with its terrace, on the escarpment of a ravine. This feudal Château de Monts had belonged to the Vicomtesse de La Chastre, whose enormous husband created rather a sensation at the Constituent Assembly.¹ At her death the *château* passed to her son. Whoever has read the old story of Beauty and the Beast can form but an imperfect idea of this son's physiognomy. He had fallen in his childhood from the top of a staircase, and this had made him the most hideous monster it is possible to imagine. Yet he was Vicomte de La Chastre, aged twenty-five, exceedingly rich and, at bottom, the best fellow in the world. So they sought a wife for him and—stranger still—found one: a charming girl belonging to one of the best provincial families but possessing nothing save two sisters, canonesse, as poor and as charming as herself. When I made the acquaintance of these three Mlles. de Turpin—Louise, Aglaé, and Antoinette—they were in the flower of their youth and beauty. It was the eldest who, in order not to die a canonesse, and so as to provide a home and husbands for her sisters, married poor La Chastre. But when there arose the question of anything else than seeing him once or twice a day, the poor girl cried treason and declared that she had not got married for that. The unfortunate viscount was deeply in love, vigorous, pure, and discontented at the fact; his little wife was also virginal and quite ashamed at the thought that people suspected she had ceased to be so for his sake. This state of things lasted for some time, until, at last, owing to the counsels of some good dame or for some other reason, she really became Mme. de La Chastre, and transmitted that name to a child who escaped his father's face but not his mother's stature.

¹ Claude, Vicomte de La Chastre (1745-1824), Major General (1788) and Governor of Chatillon-sur-Indre, was sent to the States-General by the nobility of the Sénéchaussée of Poitiers. He signed the protestations of September 12 and 15, 1791, writing below his signature these words: "Love God and die for the King." He emigrated and commanded the Royal-Emigrant regiment, was employed by Louis XVIII. as a confidential agent to the Court of George III. (1807), became the king's Minister-Plenipotentiary and Lieutenant-General (1814), peer and duke (1815), first Gentleman of the king's bedchamber, Minister of State, and member of the Privy Council (1816).—A. C.

Such was the society that charmed me when the viscount had gone out with his gun. I watched for those moments and seized upon them, and thus passed many happy days and beautiful moonlight evenings with the charming trio, either by their piano, or on the fine terrace, or in the woods of Monts.

Thus did I spend two years in Poitiers. My good uncle De Saint-Waast marvelled at the taste I had acquired for the domanial science and predicted that I should occupy high administrative posts; M. de Fauveau sometimes grumbled at my expenditure; and my mother was very glad to see me the first in the provinces, and in the best society, instead of being the hundredth in Paris and goodness knows in what circle, for the dawning Revolution had already produced a strange confusion of ideas, ranks, and feelings. I arrived in Poitiers at the beginning of 1788, and therefore passed the terrible winter of 1789 there, but of which I recollect only balls and *fêtes*. In the spring came the elections, and of these, also, I remember only the dinners and their president, the Duc de Luxembourg. After the elections came the States-General, and then the taking of the Bastille, which cost me a louis, for there seemed to me to be as much likelihood of the moon being captured as that fortress. I began by denying the possibility of the thing, then backed up my opinion by a wager, and in losing learnt at an early period not to be astonished at any stupidity on the part of the Government. In consequence, I became a stronger aristocrat, which I have already said I was by nature, and this state of mind had by no means been weakened by my sojourn in the neighbourhood of the Vendée. The capture of the Bastille was followed by that astounding panic—an infernal invention, worthy of Laclous and other members of the Orleans council—which hovered over the country for a whole week. There was not a town, village, or house that did not await in terror an army which was to devastate the provinces, and in seven days this great fear succeeded in disarming all the *châteaux*, emptying all the arsenals, and arming all the national guards. In a week, and free of charge, the Revolution had armed a million men. It was not less skilful in disbanding that of the King than in raising its own. The October days soon proved it. Thus things pro-

gressed until the spring of 1790, when the whole of France was moved by the famous Champ de Mars Federation. This novel and prodigious sight at last tempted me to leave the pleasing idleness of Poitou. The good Marquis de Vitré gallantly lent me, without promissory note, two rolls of fifty louis; I paid a few small debts—the only ones I had made in two years; and, whilst my coachman, Ralph, took on my horses by short stages, set off to ride post in my elegant *wiskey*, with my *valet de chambre* as a courier. I left four days before July 14, 1790, without having had time to write and sure that I should arrive before a letter. But though I travelled night and day I thought that I should never reach my destination. Horses were scarce at each stage, and the roads were crowded with national guards; it was necessary to go slowly, and every now and then to give some exhausted fellow or other a lift. At last, on the eve of the famous day, I reached Paris—rather embarrassed, to tell the truth, for I feared my mother as much as I loved her, and I had arrived without either leave or a passport. I called, therefore, on Bréjole, who I knew had returned to Paris some time before, and sent him to my mother as an ambassador. An hour later I was in her arms and in those of my sister. It was two years to the day since I had left them, and during that time great changes had taken place. My grandmother was dead, my mother had changed her residence, and my uncle's *salon* had inherited her *soirées*. M. de Saint-Waast was then more than eighty years old, and had become sad, phlegmatic and gouty. He saw that his post was in danger, and no longer had any hope of my filling it; indeed, he hardly expected to die an administrator—a bitter thought to him. My mother's sweetness and my sister's brilliant gaiety had become his only consolation.

I was present at the Federation—a ceremony that has been so often described that everybody is familiar with it. Two everlasting witnesses of it still remain: one, that circle of embankments raised in a week by the frenzied population of Paris; the other, the imperishable Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, revolutionary, *émigré*, beggar, millionaire, minister of the Directory, minister of Bonaparte, plenipotentiary of Louis XVIII., chamberlain of Charles X., and minister of

Louis Philippe—steadfast during the whole of that long career which he began with infamy and which he will terminate with infamy. This little bishop, a dissolute and lame atheist, and gambler, was the only person that could be found to say that famous high mass in the open air, and which the heavens seemed to take a pleasure in drowning every five minutes by torrents of rain. Never before or since have I seen such a succession of downpours. So heavy were they that in a couple of minutes all the embankments were deserted. Ten minutes later the sun reappeared, the spectators mounted to their places again, but only to scamper away once more ten minutes afterwards. It was thus during the whole day, and the little bishop lost not a drop. Every opera-glass was pointed towards him, and his predicament proved a universal consolation, for he already enjoyed that fortune which has never deserted him—of being as much despised by his friends as by his enemies.

A few days afterwards I went to see M. Guiraudet, Bréjole's brother, and he said to me: "Well, you've witnessed a failure. The Revolution has had a set back. The King has gained more than it has. It was a mistake. We shall have our work cut out." The poor man had been promoted to the rank of one of Mirabeau's assistants; he was busy making proselytes, and was bursting with self-importance. To me, who knew nothing of Paris, his profound words were unintelligible.

Paris, in fact, was the only city in France where a man of good family could rub shoulders with the Revolution and find it in a *salon* by his side. In provincial capitals, and especially at Poitiers, there were but two classes: the nobility and the people. The latter lived on the former and walked in its footsteps. If Jacobins existed, they were obscure and timid, and could not have made themselves heard in the *salons*, where a horror of the Revolution and a transcendent aristocracy reigned supreme. Such was the topmost grade of society; consequently, such was also the second rank, for self-esteem and pride rule everything, and the Receveur Particulier, the Director of Domains, and the Judge of the Seneschal's Court would have thought they were degrading themselves and descending to the level of their shoemakers had they not spoken and thought like the Nieuils, the D'Aloignys, or the

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Chasteigners. One may be quite certain that if the States-General had met in a provincial town, the Revolution—that is to say, the tempest which completed it—would not have occurred.

But Paris was the antipodes of what I have just described. Paris saw Versailles at too short a distance not to belittle it, and among those who frequented the Court—and they belonged to the highest ranks—were discontents, ungrateful persons and the ambitious, who were censurers and even enemies of Versailles.

Thus, then, were the seeds of the Revolution already sown in the *salons*. The Parliament, which thrust itself into fashionable circles, brought with it the conceit, clamour and turbulent pride of the Enquêtes—and there was the second sowing! Finally, the elections had gathered from the provinces men who were eager for agitation and noise—all of them, moreover, men of name or fortune, bold and witty; and these were welcomed and fêted everywhere as the masters and arbiters of France. It sufficed to be a deputy to be surrounded, listened to and believed—to be quite *à la mode*. And where was this Pandora's box burst open? In that city which I have shown was so deeply cankered—in that biting, mischief-making and ballad-making city which was the enemy of its masters, the vassal of the French Academy, and which required two years of butchery to purify it of Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau. You can easily imagine, therefore, that the Revolution was fully at its ease in the *salons*; strong in some, weak in others, but everywhere honourably received, because, instead of entering in *sabots*, as it would have done in the provinces, it wore dancing-shoes, its hair was curled, and it bore names which opened all doors. You may imagine, too, that even in the case of people of the strongest principles this daily intercourse with error or fair-faced baseness, often even eloquent, insensibly produced modifications, inoculations, and grafts, so that by the end of the year people were not what they were at the beginning. There were many shades of opinion—much pure white that had become pearl grey, much rose colour that was insensibly turning crimson; and already it was becoming rare to find in Paris those clear,

primitive colours which isolation had preserved unsullied in the provinces.

Such was the phenomenon that astonished, even dismayed me. I must say, however, that my own family had remained faithful to the aristocratic spirit. Too far above the common herd to acquire new ideas and too far from the great to be affected by political hatred, it saw a danger of losing important posts. I remember but one exception, that of poor Baron de Mackau. His charming wife was beloved by Mme. Elizabeth, his venerable mother was under-governess to the children of the King of France, and *he* professed a Jacobinism adorned with Court airs! Our neighbour Sémonville¹ got hold of me and took me to the famous progagandist club. I went to hear the speeches three times, but came away disgusted and never returned. Let me tell everything: I had even to stand a few fights with my mother and sister. My adorable mother felt for the dawn of the Revolution that indulgence which she had for everything and everybody. "It is a child," she said, "that is committing many follies. But it will grow up to be a man." "Mother," I replied, "it will grow into a monster." She did not like my gloomy prognostications, for her tender, lively imagination ever sought to see things in the best light. Since the American War she had had a weakness for M. de Choiseul's "Gilles César"—M. de Lafayette, the foolish, ostentatious hero whom France, to her shame, twice raised towards the throne, the man who in a manner mitigated the horror of the Revolution by making the ridiculous predominate. She laughed with all her heart at seeing my hair stand on end when I perceived his bust in our *salon*. This bust, this name, this man formed a little subject over which to quarrel, but in such a manner as merely to give vivacity to the conversation. I recollect that my mother had had given her a very fine large dog which apparently had not been christened, since she was thinking of what to call it. She wondered whether she ought to name it Brutus, in order to make friends among the rabble of the quarter which she much feared, or Motier.² She gave

¹ Charles Louis Huguet, Baron de Sémonville (1759-1839), Councillor to Parliament, Senator in 1805, and peer in 1814.—A. C.

² Motier, the name of the Auvergne family from which the Lords of Lafayette descended.—A. C.

dinners to certain old friends—all of them, I must do them the justice of saying, excellent, pure-minded men, and for that very reason susceptible to brilliant and virtuous illusions ; men with the most honest hearts and most erroneous minds I have ever known. The most ardent of these purblind guests was Melon—excellent Melon, the warmest, purest, sincerest-hearted of men—the most devoted friend that ever loved the Revolution, who regretted it and killed himself when blood began to flow.

Five weeks after my return, an attack of apoplexy spared M. de Saint-Waast the sorrow of seeing his post suppressed and his endowments confiscated.¹ His large fortune was divided between his widow and niece. My mother's share consisted of the capital of the post of Administrator-General, amounting to 1,500,000 or 1,600,000 francs, an income of 30,000 francs from the Paris Hôtel de Ville, and the Hôtel de Jonzac, for which she was then offered 500,000 francs. This, added to money owing, made a total of about 3,000,000.

I must say a few words of explanation in regard to the Hôtel de Jonzac. Paris then possessed but four houses which, in addition to large gardens, had an extensive and magnificent view of the Tuileries, the Seine and the quays. The first was the Hôtel de Boulogne, the second M. de Saint-Waast's house, the third the Hôtel de Jonzac, and the fourth the Hôtel de Noailles. The last named was an immense place ; that of M. de Saint-Waast, exceedingly beautiful but high and narrow ; and I preferred the Hôtel de Jonzac to the Hôtel de Boulogne. I regarded it, indeed, as the most agreeable house in Paris. It was composed of a large and small house, two courtyards, stables for twelve horses, and everything else in keeping ; and this in the centre of Paris, only a few steps from the Palais Royal. It had been occupied by President Hénault ; and M. de Saint-Waast, whose walls adjoined, had since bought it from the Marquis de Jonzac. I was passionately fond of it, yet I strongly urged my mother to accept the enormous price offered to her. A hundred thousand *écus* were sufficient to enable one to choose a new house from amongst the most

¹ According to Delahante (vol. ii. p. 215) he died in August 1790.—A. C.

beautiful in Paris. But sentiment intervened, so my good mother decided that we should inhabit it. A few repairs being necessary, the most honest architect in Paris, M. Dumont, who had built Mme. de Saint-Waast's house, was given *carte blanche* to carry them out. Every week he presented his account, which my mother immediately paid. Weeks dragged into months and months into years, and this inexhaustible spring was still flowing when August 10, 1792, overthrew house, plans and fortune. Up to that time the Hôtel de Jonzac had cost a little more than 200,000 francs, for, since the more one has the more one wants, and the more one repairs the more repairs there are to do, the small hôtel had been entirely rebuilt, whilst all the vaults and ceilings of the larger had been underpinned.

On returning to Paris I found that I was in almost the same position as when I left: I knew hardly anybody outside my own family. The distinguished *rôle* that I had played in the provinces for two years had strengthened my legs, taken the stiffness out of my arms and broadened my chest. But I found society little disposed to credit me with successes on that score. There were but two means of shining: one by attacking the throne, the other by defending it. But I had neither a rostrum, nor sufficient experience or talent to enable me to take my stand in the breach. As to the gazettes, I already felt towards them that radical hatred which I still retain. My sole political work was a letter to M. Necker, who, recalled in the summer of 1788, had found, on the one hand, a hostile but humiliated court; and, on the other, a nation which in its enthusiasm opened its heart and purse to him. Never had more glory descended on a swelled head. During this triumph he showed a patronising attachment for the King, a presumptuous zeal for the public good, and superb self-confidence. He opened a loan, and from the drained kingdom flowed rivers of gold; a semblance of prosperity returned; and the debt increased. He stretched his hand over politics and the question of the double representation of the third estate resulted in a triumph for him. Three committees, composed of the most notable men in France and presided over by Monsieur, the Comte d'Artois, and the

Prince de Condé, considered the question. The last two were almost unanimously in favour of maintaining the old constitution of the States-General, with equal representation for each order and deliberation by chamber. The first, however, allowed itself to be influenced by the philosophism of Monsieur—that vain, false and superficial prince who made himself popular through self-love; it voted, therefore, for the double representation of the commonalty: and on this minority M. Necker succeeded in basing a law. In July 1789 he was again disgraced. Twenty-four hours afterwards the whole of Paris wore green ribbons, the colour of his livery, and three days later the people, finding that this was also the Comte d'Artois' colour, trampled it under foot and adopted the tricoloured cockade. A week afterwards, Necker, yielding to the King's supplications, re-entered in triumph on the ruins of the Bastille. But this was the last glory of his reign. The *aura popularis* passed to the States-General, and the heroes of the day were Lafayette, Mirabeau and Bailly.

M. Necker, once more a well-lodged and well-paid cashier, wanted to govern again, but no longer found instruments with which to do it. He gave advice to the Assembly and had it received with polite *ennui*; he tried to give it lessons and had them received with haughty impatience; he threatened to resign and was left to do so; he handed in his resignation and was allowed to leave; nobody noticed that he had gone. This was the period to which I referred above. This banker—as repentant as a self-conceited person, a Genevese and a Calvinist can be—had tried to arrest the torrent which he had let loose; and honest people who had blamed him began to regret it. I was among them, and so I wrote my letter. It produced rather a sensation and brought me the thanks of the superb Necker couple, a few jokes from their daughter who was already beginning to use her wings, and the approbation of my mother who ever kept a place in her heart, between her hero M. de Lafayette and her saint M. Bailly, for M. Necker.

Since I have just mentioned the name of M. Bailly, let me say a few words about him. Everybody is acquainted with his characteristic nose and his long, noble face, A Member of the

Academy of Sciences, and rightly so, for he was a *savant* of the first order—a Member of the French Academy, and again with justice, for he was a writer of great talent, he veiled this double honour with a gentle, serene modesty, an absolutely unaffected simplicity. When in a drawing-room he was merely a man of affectionate good manners, unpretentious, never disputatious, full of pure sentiments and noble inspirations—a splendid model of virtue, honour and true philosophy. He had neither enviers nor enemies. When the States-General came, this man who asked for nothing was overwhelmed with votes, and when it was necessary to appoint a Mayor of Paris he again received them. That day of triumph, however, was his ruin. His modesty capitulated, he thought himself a great man, and he became ridiculous. *Dignus imperii si non imperasset.* Heaven had granted him a wife who was exactly proportioned to his little *entre-sol* in the Louvre: a good housekeeper and nurse who adored him, a talkative, common, ignorant, stupid woman, but tender and devoted, as is necessary, in fact, for an Academician. Behold her, through a stroke of the wand, seated in an immense gilded *salon* thronged with citizens and courtiers, and you may imagine what a powerful auxiliary she was to the sarcasms which were already showering on her poor husband.

I met again in Paris three companions of my childhood who had remained friends of my youth. One was D'Orcy, of whom I have often spoken, and with whom I had remained in correspondence. He had grown up to be a man of merit, without any other passion than that of study and a taste for collecting beetles. He was worth a hundred of us, but was terribly wearisome—a quality which had led to him being placed on my sister's list of rejected suitors. Alas! the poor fellow died a year later, wifeless and through the fault of a mistress.

The second friend, and the only one of the three still living, was the youngest of the four Montbreton brothers, Norvins, who had twenty times more intellect than his three brothers put together, and ten times less judgment than a linnet. His little, squinting, deep-set eyes gave him a sinister countenance; but he was the best companion, the most constantly and most originally gay being you can imagine, the life of society and

the soul of conversation. Poor Norvins! What talent and money he has wasted! What friends he has made and lost! What kindness has been showered upon him, and what trouble he has taken to dishonour himself! But when one is determined, one succeeds, and only in that respect has he shown perseverance.¹

My third friend was D'Alency—that poor D'Alency who died so young, and whom I mourned so long; a warm, frank, sincere friend. He was a grandson of that old M. d'Aucour, who, after being a mediocre author, became a Farmer-General and Receiver-General, thanks to having married a cousin of Mme. de Pompadour.² The whole family lived in the Rue Vivienne opposite my mother's house, and as that street was then but a beautiful, solitary blind alley we could converse with each other from the windows.

On the first floor of a house that was also opposite ours lived Mme. de Lessart, whose son, a man of justly recognised merit, unfortunately became a minister and was massacred at Versailles two years later. He was seldom seen at his mother's. On the other hand, you saw a good deal of the famous Mme. Grant, then his mistress—a celestial beauty and long after recognised as such. She was at that time in the radiance of youth, with incomparable teeth, a transparent whiteness, and a mass of fair hair such as was to be seen nowhere. She was, however, stupid to the point of silliness, and, so as to win over Mme. de Lessart and not lose her son, pretended to be prudish. I recollect that this vestal found me too young to venture on conversation. Two years later she found me sufficiently old to pay me a visit at my lake-side cottage. She had a delightful apartment in the Rue d'Artois, a charming carriage, but no horses. As I owned some very pretty white ones, we put everything together—and away we went. She was a good woman at bottom—*la belle et la bête* at one and the same time. When she became, a long time afterwards, Princesse de Talleyrand, she was still both one and the other, but I avoided seeing her again,

¹ Cf. his *Mémorial*, published by Lanzac de Laborie in three volumes (1896-1897).—A. C.

² D'Aucour is especially mentioned in eighteenth century memoirs on account of his licentious poetry.—A. C.

owing to disgust for the husband prevailing over recollections of the lady.¹

The floor above Mme. de Lessart was occupied by a lady whom it would be ungrateful not to mention, for I sincerely loved her and she returned my love. And here I write without malice, or modesty, or reticence. My love was of the nature of a tender friendship. Perhaps she had a deeper feeling for me, but I took no advantage of it. To possess a woman who is the mother of three children, who is happy and esteemed in her household—to profit by a slight weakness and seduce her, destroying the peace of her home, and introducing a bastard into her family, that is the work of a rake. Had I been in love I could not, perhaps, have answered for myself, but I was not, and I was an honest man. I may have caused her regret but not remorse. The lady was Mme. L'Empereur. She was not exactly pretty, but blooming, white, and fair, with an amiable, lively face. Her mind was in keeping with her face, and what particularly charmed me was her childish naïveté, her inexhaustible gaiety and sweetness. I recollect that Mme. de Bon—jealous, not of me, but of those whom she suspected I loved—came to see my mother, looked through her quizzing-glass at this second-floor apartment, and led me, conversing the while, to an open window. There she entered on a comedy of pretty tricks, little graces, almost caresses. “How cross you are becoming! You no longer love me, then? What! you do not even kiss me.” And the traitress, who would willingly, perhaps, have strangled me, made me kiss her, in the hope that in the evening I should have a quarrel.

Among my small circle of friends there was also good Mme. Le Sénéchal, whose house in the Rue du Temple, though outside the boundaries of society, was nevertheless brilliant.² It was frequented by Arnault, Florian, and Desfaucherets. The first, who has since become Arnault the Tragic, a little superior

¹ Catherine Noël Worlhée (1762–1835), born in India, at Tranquebar, then a Danish colony, divorced from Georges François Grant, and married to Talleyrand, September 10, 1802. See the *Mémoires* of Mme. de Rémusat, vol. ii. p. 183, those of Mme. de Chastenay, vol. ii. p. 52, and Remacle's *Agents de Louis XVIII.*, p. 103.—A. C.

² For further particulars concerning this family see Lacretelle's *Les Dix années d'épreuves*, 1842, p. 112.—A. C.

to Campistron, was then but a very good fellow, cheerful and lively, agreeable in feature and figure; a patriot, too, full of good, honest feelings, but one of those who were beginning to forbear. In the case of Florian, you may well imagine he had never touched politics. Reader to the Duc de Penthièvre, and the oracle of his master's little court, which treated him almost as a friend; full of little successes which had penetrated from the Hôtel de Penthièvre into society, forced the doors of the *salons*, and taken the Academy by storm; burdened with laurels and receipts from *Estelle*, *Numa*, *Gonzalve*, and *Galathée*; and, finally, the spoilt child of the most brilliant circles, he was too much a man of sense to trouble himself over patriotic rubbish. His best writings were some little harlequinades, a few short stories, and several pretty fables. Desfaucherets was a tall, handsome man, cold, and rather imposing in appearance; the tyrant of the pleasures of Mme. Le Sénéchal's circle, with pride oozing from every pore. He had just produced his very pretty comedy, *Le Mariage Secret*, a badly-written but well-carried-out play, with a good dialogue, and which owed twenty performances to its merit, and sixty to that of Molé and Mlle. Contat. Since then he has written several plays which were all hissed. This disgrace and that of not being able to make himself liked closed the doors of the Academy to him. He wished to be other than Nature had made him; born heavy and solid, he aspired to be a butterfly; born with a cold, dry temperament, he desired to be a boon companion, a man of joy and pleasure. I knew him well. He professed friendship for me, and I have never had reason to do anything else than praise him.¹

Around my family there revolved a less transcendent sphere of society which had nothing to do with either the Academy or the young Titans who then rushed forward from all sides, especially from the bar, to outstrip, as sharpshooters, the progress of the Constituent Assembly. This society was the good and loyal financial aristocracy, still piously walled-in by

¹ Desfaucherets (1742-1808), member of the Directory of the department of Paris, administrator of hospitals, and censor at the Ministry of Police, wrote numerous plays, the best of which is *Le Mariage Secret*, which was performed at the Théâtre Français in 1786 and long remained on the repertory.—A. C.

its ancient manners. In the forefront of this aristocracy were the members of the Parseval family. The father, mother, three sons, and three daughters, all remained, in the midst of the general disorder, constant examples of loyalty, honour, and patriarchal simplicity. The father, who was the personification of Christian virtue, had the good fortune to die before the Revolution. Two of his sons, Parseval and Frileuse, and two of his sons-in-law, Vernan and Delahante, were Farmers-General. Five years later the first three died on the scaffold, and after that widowhood, poverty, and misfortune scattered the family.¹

My dear cousin Flore, daughter of M. de Fauveau, was fortunately less difficult to please as regards the choice of a husband than my sister. It is true that her excellent father, whilst giving me very wise lectures on my expenditure in Poitou, had less prudently controlled his own, so that when M. de Romeuf put in an appearance his fortune was rather impaired. M. de Romeuf was an Auvergnat and the eldest son of a charming father, a large landowner, who remained all his life in the little town of La Voulte, the father and king of his mountains. This numerous Romeuf family was remarkable for its beauty. Without mentioning the daughters, M. de Romeuf, who was himself a very agreeable and intelligent man, had three brothers, two of whom were models of manhood. A certain celebrity is attached to their name owing to their misfortune in having had M. de Lafayette, the owner of the estate of Chavaniac, as a neighbour. The hero of the two worlds stirred the imagination of these two good young men, and, on becoming Commander of the National Guard of Paris, he appointed them as his *aides-de-camp*. Both were men of virtue and honour, in no sense revolutionaries, as was proved by their rejecting the principle of the equality of division and preserving all the rights of their elder brother. Their success in Paris and at Court was brilliant. Lafayette dishonoured the elder, Louis, by sending him in pursuit of the fugitive king. He dare not refuse to obey. Under Bonaparte he became an excellent soldier, and died a colonel at the Battle

¹ Further details concerning the Parsevals will be found in Adrien Delahante's *Une famille de finance au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. ii. chap. v-vii.—A. C.

of Moskva. The younger brother, Alexandre, ended an honourable career in 1830, when, in order not to serve the cause of the usurper, he retired with the rank of lieutenant-general. Such was the family into which our dear Flore, then in the flower of her beauty, entered in the winter of 1791. In the following spring she left Paris, glad to exchange dress and balls for the simple life of a little town in the mountains of Auvergne.

Here we are, then, in the spring of 1791. At that time it was curious and instructive to observe the state of Paris and France. A sort of halt or truce appeared to have taken place in the Revolution. It was hardly to be recognised by any other sign than the tricoloured cockade, and even then fashion or the aristocracy had modified it in a hundred ways, and a host of hats no longer wore it. Certainly no one yet dreamed of the reign of savages. The republican institution, which was beginning to ferment in certain over-excited brains, was but an indefinite theory, without echo. The transmission of the crown to the Orleans branch was the only substantial point in the revolutionary programme, the only reality that one could grasp in the midst of the chaos; and this reality, enveloped in mystery, was even then only visible to the trained eye. It needed trouble but also calm, to ripen and burst forth. Everything was apparently peaceful; universal destruction was being carried out legally; and disorder, without encountering any resistance, was being organised in an orderly manner. The public debt had been absorbed by assignats, which though they abounded, had yet depreciated little and made business extraordinarily brisk. Commercial prosperity was at its height, and the mass of citizens said: "All's well! The Revolution is over; let us enjoy ourselves and rest." On the other hand, the Constituent, left behind by the leaders of the Jacobins, began to regret some of its acts and slacken its pace. The mass of the population was inactive; agitation existed only in the silence of the Palais Royal, and amidst the uproar of the clubs. A foreigner might have thought that France was the most peaceable country in Europe, and perhaps he would not have been wrong had it been possible for Henry IV. or Louis XIV. to awaken in the bed of Louis XVI.; for I have ever had little

faith in the power of events, and a good deal in that of the man who directed them.

I profited by this period of calm to make a journey, not merely on pleasure but on business. As it was I who now looked after my mother's fortune, I went to visit our property in Touraine and elsewhere, in order to see with my own eyes what it brought in. And at the same time I seized the opportunity of calling upon our old friends at Poitiers.

But let me attempt to recall the principal episodes of my journey. On reaching Beaugency in my phaeton, drawn by two dapple-grey horses, driven by my faithful Ralph, I found that the place was in arms, with flags flying, drums beating, and the National Guards in full uniform. This was to celebrate the pastoral visit of that rascal the Abbé Grégoire, one of the firebrands of the Constituent, who from being Curé of Emberménil had become Bishop of Blois.

On the seventh day I reached the Château de Bois-Bonnard, between Tours and Les Ormes, a property that Mme. de Saint-Waast had just bought and where she had spent part of the summer. But of this big *château* and its ancient park *à la française* I recollect only the prunes, the *sebecs* and M. Barreau. The prunes were those of Tours, then made with those beautiful golden yellow plums, oval and pointed like a little pear, known as Sainte-Catherine plums, and which were grown at the village of that name, near the *château*, to which each vassal still brought a basketful. The *sebecs* were huge mushrooms of incomparable delicacy. As to M. Barreau, he could not be indifferent to me, and for this reason. A lawyer in the little town of Sainte-Maure-en-Touraine, he had settled down at Loches, where my mother had inherited a large, old house. Consulted on the subject of a lawsuit, he gradually became our titular man of business. He had a certain reputation and during the Terror used it to protect us.

I spent three months in Poitou, passing from *château* to *château*. At Poitiers, Comte de Lambertye lent me a rather pretty one-storied house. It was much too big for me, and I had little use for the offices and kitchens. My luncheon and dinner were sent me by the illustrious Sichère. Ungrateful man that I am! I forgot to mention his name in the account

of my first sojourn at Poitiers. M. Sichère was at once a very honest man, a great aristocrat and a perfect cook. He was dear to me because of those three qualities—dear in one sense only, for you have no idea how little it cost in Poitiers to surfeit yourself on Perigord truffles, green oysters and red-legged partridges. These were the basis of his cooking, to which he added all the varieties and novelties of his inexhaustible imagination. Wishing one day to give a big dinner, I had only three words to say to Sichère: "Twenty-five people, excellent," and everything was perfect: silver, glass, linen, first service, second service, dessert, wines of all sorts, ices, coffee and liqueurs. Sichère acted as steward, hat under arm; my two servants sufficed for the rest.

Agathe de Nieuil had just married Comte de Milon. I spent a few days with them at their fine Jaulnay estate.

I ought to have spoken first of all of Monts, its ogre and its three fairies, and it seems to me that it must have been my first pilgrimage, but I have no very clear recollections about either this place, where I had spent so many happy days, or the three months I passed in Poitou. Perhaps I had grown indifferent towards Monts. Yet I had brought from Paris four beautiful enamelled rings with a secret spring—the kind then called "dog-collars," owing to their large size. On the outside was to be seen a tress of four different shades of hair; inside, on a false bottom, could be read the names Louise, Aglaé, Antoinette, and Auguste. There was nothing embarrassing in this triple marriage, for it is much easier to marry three women than one of them. But the charming Antoinette wanted a marriage all to herself, and I was not quite of her opinion.

I recollect my sojourn at Rigny more distinctly. There were several interesting things in the neighbourhood. The first was the royal Château de Thouars, with its guard-room and orangery, both worthy of Versailles. It belonged to the great La Trémoille family, as old and illustrious as the monarchy. On the other side of Thouars and nearer Rigny was the Château de Oiron. It had belonged to Mme. de Montesau and everything there still savoured of the *grand siècle*. The little Marquise de Montbrun took me there to

dinner. I was impressed first of all by three immense avenues, formed by four rows of gigantic elms, which converged towards a huge half moon in front of the courtyards of the *château*. Then there were the magnificent gates, spacious courtyards, large out-houses, a fine *château* in the architecture of the Louis XIII. period overlooking large gardens, abundant waterworks, beautiful woods, and an immense stretch of country. The interior was hardly less imposing. As the occasion was a grand dinner, we found the master and mistress of the *château* in full dress and surrounded with a proper display of etiquette in their solemn and prodigiously high *salons*. As to the repast, there was a succession of thirty or forty courses and a profusion of superb fruit of all kinds. Such fruit I have seen nowhere except at my own place at Bourneville, and I write this in Bologna, where it is impossible to obtain fruit of any kind. Ah! France is indeed the promised land of fruit!

I do not remember having seen at Oiron the son and heir of the noble pair who received us there. He was, I believe, with his regiment, and I did not get to know him until nine or ten years later, at the time when he was still living in his quality as a dead man, with a properly drawn up death certificate in his pocket. Captured at Quiberon as an *émigré*, shot and left for dead on the Champ d'Auray, where he was saved by some honest Bretons, he had returned under a false name to his Oiron estate, which the peasants had bought to give back to him. Awaiting the happier days when he could come to life again and possess his property, this dead man, at the time I knew him, was living at the Château de Fontpertuis, the property of Mme. de Bonvoust, near the Loire and Beaugency. He was a big, jovial, trivial fellow, full of substance and appetite, and with nothing about him resembling the hero of a novel.

It was at the Château de Rigny that I heard of the King's flight. I was writing in my room, in the morning, when the Marquis de Montbrun opened the door and shouted: "The King has gone!" I jumped to my feet. "Gone? . . . How?" "Escaped from France!" We fell into each other's arms; I was stifled with sobs; I almost fainted in a delirium

of joy. Poor folk that we were! What would have resulted from success? What was not to result from the disgrace! But we foresaw nothing. We triumphed noisily and publicly; and the Jacobins went about hanging their heads. Three days later the rôles were reversed and the Revolution, which progressed only by fits and starts, owed to that imprudent journey one of its most important paroxysms. The event restored tone to the revolutionary party, importance to the Jacobins, and ascendancy to the Orléans committee. The object was to depose the King and confer on the Duc d'Orléans a regency, which, without difficulty, would have become a royalty. The moment was well chosen. The crown was not sufficiently weakened to be annihilated, but the King was sufficiently weak to lose it; the Republic was not yet ripe but the time for usurpation was. Among the revolutionaries, however, some wished to keep honest Louis XVI. humiliated, restored by them, a docile instrument in their hands; whilst others were already jumping over the royalty straight to the Republic. The Orleanist party failed, therefore, in this attempt, which would probably have been successful had its hero been sufficiently atrocious to know, like Richard III., how to retain public esteem. The enterprise having failed, it was too late for anybody else, and the party henceforth proceeded from error to error. The Constituent—worn out, repentant and almost retrograde—was then succeeded by the young Legislative Assembly, ardent and ungovernable. Every day it became easier to overthrow Louis, and more difficult to do so without overthrowing the crown.

This abortive flight of the King was one of the main causes of the emigration. A few hot-headed people, a few ambitious intriguers, a few presumptuous fools exploited the honour, devotion, and bravery of the French nobility; and, in the summer of 1791 we saw, in the course of two months, a thing that was perhaps unprecedented since the Crusades; we saw that hydra, that most efficacious of allies of the Jacobins, grow and flourish.

I saw this deplorable epidemic break out in the province of France that was the most thickly populated with nobles. It was not a sudden and general enthusiasm: a case of "*Dieu le*

veut—"God ordains it." Alas! it was a plague, an affliction, resignation to an inevitable scourge. I am unaware—and doubtless others, too—as to who were the first to start the movement in the province. Certainly they were people without fortune, as they were without headpiece. Won over by the promises of the principal leaders, they whispered their hopes and certainties to all around; correspondence, orders, threats, enticements, and sarcasms from Coblenz were added to them; and as soon as a few prominent noblemen had resigned themselves to crossing the frontier, as soon as the word "honour" was applied to those who left, the word "egoism" or "fear" to those who remained, the entire flock followed. They did not hasten towards glory; they fled before dishonour. These noblemen, already despoiled of their names, titles, and feudal fortunes, and who had nothing more to preserve than their fields, *châteaux*, and families, left in despair families, *châteaux*, and estates, in order to save them and their children from a stigma of shame. Such I saw them; the loyal and unfortunate victims of ambitious intrigues. They arrived at Coblenz and received a cold reception; they found there a number of little coteries and a ridiculous etiquette; they offered their military services; became stubborn, devoted themselves to the cause, and ruined themselves. Such was the emigration: a painful sacrifice followed by a loyal dupery. It alone, and not decrees, destroyed the nobility.

This almost sudden defection of nearly everybody I knew at Poitiers, and the sad business and family combinations that preceded it, saddened the end of my sojourn. As a diversion, I made a little journey in Lower Poitou, visiting properties that I had heard much praised. They were magnificent farms, situated a short distance from the sea, near Luçon, in the midst of splendidly fertile plains; where, in large enclosures, were raised the fine oxen of Lower Poitou and that race of black cobs which thence passed into Normandy to be crossed with a Norman breed and afterwards used as carriage horses in Paris. I slept at the house of a *curé* of the district; and, as there was no coach-house, my carriage, a Poitiers cabriolet, had to be left in the street for the night. Now, anything with two wheels that was not a cart was such a curiosity in that part of the country that when I woke in the morning I found my

vehicle covered with all the children of the village, and being eagerly examined by a circle of parents.

On returning to Poitiers I made ready for departure. It was no longer a question of travelling by easy stages; the season was advancing and I was going to leave the plains. So the obliging Chevalier de Tryon, who, to his mother's great despair, had not yet emigrated, arranged with his brother to exchange my phaeton for a brougham suitable for riding post. Behold me, then, on the road from Angoulême to Limoges; afterwards on that from Limoges to Clermont. I visited the Aubusson manufactories, and admired the summit of Puy-de-Dôme, whose peaceful crater is skirted by the main road. Stopping at Clermont I met the Chevalier de Cuilhac, whom I had known at Poitiers, and during the next two days he took me on excursions in the district. On the third, early in the morning, I set off for La Voulte.

My dear Flore, her husband, and brothers-in-law, who did not expect me until some days later, had gone to see some salmon-fishing a few leagues away. However, I received a most homely welcome at their hospitable house. The next day I went to meet them. I saw them descend the mountains on the backs of donkeys, and had the pleasure of embracing my second sister. She was *enceinte* with her first child. Her brother had come from Paris to spend the summer with her and I was to take him back.

My two months' stay at La Voulte has remained the ideal of my life. What a charm there is in living free from all care and anxiety, surrounded by a family that loves you, and which you find ever the same—at meal-times, on excursions, and in company! Those are the conditions under which I should like to end my life, under which I should have liked to have passed it!

At this time the hero of the two worlds, who was coming to end his days amidst the noble tranquillity of Chavaniac, was expected in Auvergne. Everybody in Clermont was on the move; cooks, gun-smiths, furbishers, restorators, and tailors, in addition to the club poets and the municipal orators, had all been hard at work for the past week. Now, having gone to Clermont to meet my cousin De Fauveau's eldest sister, who was

to spend the winter at La Voulte, and not knowing what to do whilst awaiting her arrival, I decided to set off for Riom and bring back some of its famous pies. So I ordered post-horses, and left early in the morning. When passing through Montferrand, a league from Clermont, I saw a huge crowd, and on asking for information found that the great man was expected to arrive that very day. In order not to meet him I doubled my pace, reached Riom in half an hour, and set off back to Clermont. Everything went well as far as Montferrand, but on descending towards Clermont I found the road from one town to the other lined with troops and people. However, I continued to advance. But before I had gone more than a few yards I heard voices saying: "It's he! it's he!" Away I went like the wind. But the shouts outstripped me, and in a few minutes I was proceeding in the midst of a universal cry of "Long live Lafayette!" On travelling a third of the way there were salvos of artillery; the troops beat the general; flags saluted; and the municipality advanced on one side whilst the staff presented itself on the other. It was then absolutely necessary to stop. Lowering the carriage window, I asked the mayor what he desired. "Illustrious general," he replied. "Monsieur," I interjected, "I am not a general. For whom do you take me, and what do you desire?" "We take you for whom you are—the illustrious general Lafayette." "Sir, I am not Lafayette." Whereupon a grenadier shouted: "No, he isn't!" "Who is he then?" bellowed the people. "An emigrant, a spy, a traitor, an aristocrat? Hang him! hang him!" A volley of stones struck the carriage. My postillion did not wait for a second discharge; he was off like an arrow, and in ten minutes I was at the gates of Clermont. To do them justice, I must add that the mayor brought me in the evening the apologies of the good people who had stoned me as a punishment for not being Lafayette. As a matter of fact, they were not altogether wrong—and in those good old times I saw honest men swing for less—for, at the first turn of my wheels along that triumphal route, I had found it an amusing joke to pull up the carriage windows, bury myself at the back of the vehicle, and cover my eyes with a handkerchief, like a modest hero who desired to

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avoid an ovation. The great man arrived the next day, and a week later I saw him at Chavaniac.¹ The arms of the old Marquise de Chavaniac, on the door, had been replaced by a huge cap of liberty painted in red. I found Washington's Merry-andrew in a study strewn with seals and envelopes, and surrounded by ten secretaries, to whom he was dictating messages to the whole of Europe. He consented to descend from this empyrean, greeted us, and even said a few words with majestic kindness. Alas! his time was over. Two years had sufficed to wear him out, and two years later, had it not been for the Olmütz prison, he would have followed Bailly to the scaffold, in the midst of the maledictions of those who had carried him in triumph.

¹ Lafayette arrived there on October 18, 1791.—A. C.

CHAPTER V

1792-1798

The Hôtel de Jonzac—The Manège—The Declaration of War—First defeats—The 20th of June—The 10th of August—Beginning of the Terror—Loches—Alligny—Cosne—Chenonceaux—Mme. Dupin—Journey to Paris—Executions—The 9th of Thermidor—The La Goye—Sojourn at Chartres—Ivry—Return to Paris—Poverty—Defeat of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine—The Prulays—The Marcols—The 13th of Vendémiaire—The Directory—M. de Vindé and his family—The Académie des Chansons—The Lecouteux du Moleys—Népomucène Lemercier—Baron de Staël—Mme. de Brégé—Mme. d'Esquelbecq—The Dillons and the Mallets—M. de Nervo—Play hissed at the Vaudeville—Pauline de Noailles—The Babeuf trial—The Vignys—Magnanville—Talleyrand—Laborie—Mme. Tallien—Mme. de Beauharnais—The tailor Dasse—Retirement—Death of the author's mother.

I REACHED Paris in the course of January 1792. For a long time past the winter had never been so brilliant. One might have thought that people were accumulating joy to last them all the time they were about to sorrow. There was something prophetic in this surfeit of pleasures. We had the air of amusing ourselves out of foresight, like people who lay in a supply of food against famine. My mother even gave balls, for my sister was over twenty years of age. Both regretted: the one that she had given so much liberty, the other that she had so proudly used it. My mother was beginning to reproach herself with having lived so long in solitude and thus made her children too unfamiliar with society. She was right: a large fortune, great merit, beauty, wit, and talent are not in themselves sufficient to smooth one's way; this capital must be invested if it is to bring anything in; that is to say, it must be placed at its proper height to be seen, appreciated, and desired.

In the spring I went to live at the Hôtel de Jonzac, not in order to enjoy my little palace, which was no more finished than the rest, but to hasten the completion of the work, my mother having decided to take possession of the house in the course of the summer. I bivouacked in a room on the second floor. But what a bivouac it was ; since, on opening my eyes in the morning, I saw from my bed for the first time that admirable view of the Tuileries gardens, the palace, the river and its magnificent quays ! What a fairy-land ! Alas ! it was a case of the land of Canaan and Moses over again. This pleasure was granted to me for only three months. At five o'clock in the morning I was standing in my dressing-gown opposite this Poussin-like landscape ; at six I was inspecting the workmen ; and at seven my pianoforte-master arrived. For at Poitiers I had had a violin-master, followed by a teacher of the clarionet ; and in Paris I had a pianoforte-master and a professor of singing. The last-named was the illustrious Soignet. When lessons were over and I had inspected the workmen, I descended into the garden, which was the only part of the *hôtel* completed. I had my writing-case under one arm, books and papers under the other, and the key of my cottage in my pocket ; and when I had taken possession of that crypt, my luncheon alone had the right to interrupt my reveries. I received, however, other calls, and among them that of Mme. Du Boccage has remained fixed in my memory. I was lazily stretched on the moss, writing verses (I wrote a terrible lot then, some good, others bad, but all burnt now), when, at the other side of the lake, I saw a little door slowly open, a white figure close it and advance across the bridge towards my cottage. At nine o'clock at night this visitor would have been regarded as a ghost ; at nine o'clock in the morning she was a sylph ; and, in fact, she was both—my illustrious neighbour, Mme. du Boccage, the authoress of the poem *La Colombiade*, then in the eighty-second year of her glory. She owned a pretty little house between the Hôtel de Jonzac and the Hôtel de Noailles, and half a century before had obtained from President Hénault the use of a little door to go to the Tuileries by way of his garden, for we had a subterranean passage that communicated with the palace grounds. This permission had been confirmed

by my mother. This Egeria entered my grove, mirrored herself in my lake, and sat down in my cottage; she praised my verses, face, and manners—for I appropriately recollected my mother's advice; and then, with the swiftness of a stag, disappeared down the grotto leading to the Tuileries.¹

A hundred yards or so from this peaceful spot, amidst the howling of the revolutionary tempest, the mines that were soon to destroy everything were being laid. Opposite the Hôtel de Jonzac, on the other side of the Rue Saint Honoré, was the Couvent des Jacobins, the large garden of which covered the entire space stretching between the Rues des Petits Champs and Saint Honore, from Saint Roch to the Place Vendôme. The convent and church, which had become the club's meeting-place, were in the centre. On the other side, between our garden and the Tuileries, was a sort of street, called the Cour du Manége, because at the end stood the Manége, or riding-school, of the palace of the Tuileries. This Manége—a place of tragic memory, where the Constituent had sat and where has since been enacted all the dramas and farces of the Revolution—had on the other side an exit on to a long, narrow path, called the Passage des Feuillants, which led at one end into the Tuileries gardens, and at the other to the Place Vendôme. But the Cour du Manége was the only public means of communication with the Assembly, so that from noon until five o'clock, owing to vehicles, deputations, riots, and tumult, my place of solitude became uninhabitable.

With the new Assembly, the Manége had assumed, for some months past, an entirely new character. Low-class revolutionaries had arrived—hot-headed, still unemployed, discontented to find the farce over, the curtain down, and only the work of their predecessors to support. The only great thing left for them to do was to destroy the throne, and to this task, as though it were the only one that could bring them a name, they applied themselves with heart and soul. A few members, however, entered the breach, with great energy and splendid devotion, to defend what principles still remained. These were Vaublanc, a loyal, strong-souled man, more than

¹ Mme. Fiquet du Boccage, née Marie Anne Lepage (1710–1802), published *La Colombiade*, a poem in ten cantos, in 1756.—A. C.

wise and moderate; Becquey, good, generous, modest, coolly courageous and devoted without exaggeration; and Pastoret, who was ever the faithful though cold defender of the good cause, without energy, or passion, or error, but with his foot firmly placed on the path of duty. These three men afterwards became my friends and I hope still continue to be so.¹

I am trying in vain to unravel and classify in my memory the events of that stormy period from January to August 10. The things I saw are swallowed up in the explosion that dispersed everything. I can remember neither dates nor faces. I need records to assist my memory, but have none within reach.

As far as I remember, it was at the beginning of spring that Louis XVI. went in solemn procession to the Manège to announce that he declared war on the Emperor of Germany.² From the windows of the Hôtel de Jonzac, which overlooked the Rue Saint Honoré, we saw him pass. His train of attendants had become exceedingly modest. It seems to me that his coach had only six horses, and that instead of being accompanied by the captain of the Guards and the first gentleman on duty, he alone occupied it. There were none of his old bodyguards, who had long since been discharged; no Cent Suisses, who had suffered the same fate; no French Guards, for they had all been incorporated in other regiments; and no Swiss Guards, whom they dared neither disband nor show. All that remained then was the Constitutional Guard, composed of excellent and wholly devoted men who, for the most part, had entered the service out of a sense of duty, but whom the Assembly, a few days later, discharged. The weak and good Louis XVI. acted on this occasion as he did on all others, as he did in accepting the Constitution and in sanctioning the spoliation of the clergy, that is, against his understanding and his conscience, and out of timid condescension for the wild beasts

¹ Vincent Marie Viénot, Comte de Vaublanc (1756-1845), Deputy in 1791 and 1795, Prefect under the Empire, Minister of the Interior under the Restoration, and one of the leaders of the "ultras," has left *Mémoires*. Pierre François Becquey (1760-1849), a Deputy in 1791 and from 1815 to 1830, was a Counsellor of State and Director of the Road-surveying department. Claude Emmanuel Joseph Pierre, Marquis de Pastoret (1755-1840), was Deputy in 1791, Peer in 1814, and Chancellor in 1829.—A. C.

² Or rather on the King of Hungary, Francis II., who was not crowned Emperor of Germany until later. Louis declared war on April 20.—A. C.

who, since Varennes and the emigration, had made themselves hoarse with shouting: "Austrian committee, plots with the Emperor, perfidious Court!"

War, then, was declared and three armies were improvised. The one on the Rhine was commanded by Luckner, formerly a rather valued commander of light troops; that on the Scheldt, by Rochambeau; and the third, on the frontiers of Champagne, by Lafayette, who, like Cincinnatus, had sacrificed his plough. But it was thirty years since a soldier had been under fire; it would soon be three years since the regiments had shown their fidelity to the nation by betraying the King; it was about the same time since the majority of the old officers had, by fair means or foul, abandoned their troops, and since then duty, obedience, and discipline were unknown in the army. It observed military laws, as the Calvinists do the religious law, but on the condition of understanding, examining, and discussing.

Such armies were doomed to fall back in confusion before the first volley of artillery; they were a danger only to themselves. This was promptly proved by the massacre of Théobald Dillon at Lille, and by the shameful flight of his troops before a shot had been fired. The Jacobins did not miss the opportunity of crying that the King was forming armies in order to see them destroyed.

This text was amplified by members of the club from one end of France to the other; it was roared from the legislative tribune, and commented upon by the newspapers; it represented France as lost, her armies doomed to butchery, and the Austrians at the gates of Paris. It was on the basis of this text that the Jacobins and the Orleanists organised the disgusting bacchanalia of June 20, when we witnessed all the vilest, most drunken, dirtiest and most ragged people of the filthiest streets of Paris, file like conquerors, under the eyes of the King, wearing a red cap, through the apartments of the Tuileries, then turn back, without a shot being fired or a door closed to stop that torrent of mud. That day the Orleanists were deceived; they counted on an armed defence in the interior of the palace, and imagined that the King and the Dauphin, like Romulus, would rise to heaven. The royal family's pusillanimous resignation, not devoid of majesty, forestalled that misfortune. It had at its

disposal but a few gentlemen of the chamber (the remainder were at Coblenz) and a small number of National Guards who made their way through the crowd to group themselves around the King. The menials were hidden in the cellars; the disbanded Royal Guard was at the Military School; whilst the Suisses—still tolerated—were at Rueil and Courbevoie, in barracks far from the capital. Louis XVI. took great care to be without defence; he was studying, day and night, the life of Charles I., in order to follow just the reverse of that monarch's example. This abortive violence produced a reaction in Paris and throughout France. The addresses of the time witness to it, and had a strong-minded man been on the throne, the Revolution could have been crushed. On the following day the Revolutionaries made up for their discomfiture by praising the honour and probity of the good people of Paris; for these low blackguards pretended that they made revolutions free of charge, murdered without interest, and plundered out of high-mindedness. They were the most honourable rabble in the world. However, their leaders began to mistrust them, so sent to Brittany and Marseilles for those picked brigands which have since succeeded in overthrowing the throne. The only victory gained by the Orleanists on June 20 was the completion of the disgrace of Lafayette, who, utterly ridiculous and burlesque though he was, had acted the great man for three years past without once being hissed. On this occasion the poor hero wrote to the Assembly to threaten it, and to the King to offer him his army—not a soldier of which would have followed him. For him all was over, and a week later the Jacobins were shouting in Paris: "Down with Lafayette!" without anybody contradicting them.

No Federation had been seen since July 14, 1790, and the King had gained more ground than the Revolution. In 1792 the state of affairs was quite changed. It is true that France had lost her revolutionary enthusiasm, and had she gone to the Champ de Mars, free and in a mass like two years before, the Jacobins would have sustained a great defeat. But during these two years the intriguers had made great progress in the art of leading the masses, who had reached that period of fatigue and repose when any revolution will inevitably fall into

the hands of a despot and be made to bear an oligarchical despotism instead of a monarchical one. France's dreams of liberty and equality also necessitated that, instead of feeling the spur of a conqueror, she should receive a thrashing from her valets, and, consequently, she who had so proudly revolted against the Bourbon yoke bore that of the Jacobins without complaining. You should have seen, as I saw in 1793 and 1794, how the entire town and country population—good and simple peasants, shopkeepers, artisans and landowners—trembled before the arrogance of a few advocates who had formed themselves into a Popular Society. Never did vassals submit more humbly to vexations; never did barons impose them with more haughtiness. This power exercised by a small number of clever and well-organised rascals was then the only real one. And one can easily conceive that when it wished to repair the blunders of June 20 it had but to make a general appeal to the most notorious scoundrels in each province. Brittany and Provence were preferred, the former furnishing the boldest men, the latter the most hot-headed. This idea of collecting in Paris a small army of scoundrels who would lead on the people, and serve as a forlorn hope, made the leaders determined to attempt a new Federation. A host of good citizens wrote from the provinces: "Take care, the main roads are infested with ruffians." But what could one do? Send back these warnings to the local authorities, entirely composed of their brothers and friends, who would reply, "They are the most honest men in France"?

Thus events progressed, and the horizon at last became so black that almost all the young men of family in Paris had spontaneously enrolled themselves in three or four battalions of the National Guard, the only ones on which the King could count. The best known—the one in which I served—was that of the Filles de Saint Thomas, commanded by poor Vernan, the Farmer-General;¹ and our house in the Rue Vivienne, a few paces from headquarters, was, in case of alarm, the pre-arranged meeting-place for several young men who

¹ He married Victoire de Parseval, and died on the scaffold with two of his brothers-in-law. Delahante's *Une famille de finance*, vol. ii., pp. 357-360.—A. C.

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there kept their uniforms and arms. When all these preparations were made, we danced, took part in private theatricals, and enjoyed ourselves riotously in the country. Never, indeed, had we been more busy amusing ourselves. And do not mistake me; this time it was neither a case of ignorance nor thoughtlessness on our part; we saw clearly enough, were on our guard, and prepared for every eventuality. But the feeling that filled us all was one of entire confidence, an extreme impatience to deal the rabble a decisive blow, an eager desire that it would provoke it, and complete faith in victory. Many a time since have I meditated on this state of our minds and never have I come to the conclusion that we were exhibiting merely the temerity of youth. It was firmly based on calculation. The King had at his disposal a sufficient number of troops to triumph without difficulty on that second 20th of June. There were six thousand Swiss around Paris, his so-called disbanded guard at the Military School, and five to six thousand men of the National Guard. At the beating of a drum he would, in an hour, have had near him twelve thousand devoted men against a thousand ruffians from the provinces, followed by the cowardly and stupid rabble of Paris. The remainder of the capital and the kingdom was neutral. That is what Providence had given the King. We knew, however, that he would do nothing unless violence forced him, and we awaited that violence as his salvation and our own. Alas! we did not remember that, notwithstanding ourselves, the Swiss, France and Providence, he alone sufficed to bring about his downfall. And this was what our enemies had calculated better than we.

However, we continued to dance, as they do in camp on the eve of a battle; and Paris gave herself up to games and pleasures. I had just put the finishing touches to a charming box-coat, designed by myself, and which for three months had occupied me hardly less than Leibnitz, Hobbes, Pascal and Grotius; my grey horses went marvellously well with it—triumphed in the Bois de Boulogne, which was much frequented that year. We drove a good deal in the Ranelagh neighbourhood, near La Muette, and, in its large avenue, admired, among other beauties, the three charming daughters of Hall, a rather

good miniature painter.¹ They were aerial, picturesque, quite celestial creatures. The eldest, however, was a little less so than her sisters. She had just married a young man whom we all loved—Suleau, a man full of intelligence and courage, who dared to publish a monarchical journal that cost him dear. One evening, that of August 9, I had taken Adélaïde, my beautiful cousin De Bon, to the Bois de Boulogne, and as we were to have supper at her house I had accompanied her home. She occupied the second floor of her mother's house. When at table, laughing merrily, we suddenly heard the beating of the general. This signal, which we had been expecting daily, was greeted with a cry of joy. We seized our hats, rushed home to dress ourselves, and half an hour later the whole battalion was in arms on the Boulevard des Italiens. We marched noiselessly through the Rue de Grammont, Rue Saint Anne, Rue des Frondeurs, Rue de l'Echelle and the courtyard of the Château stables, where part of the Rue de Rivoli is now situated, and entered the grand terrace of the Tuileries by the Pavillon de Marsan gate. Three other faithful battalions, including that of the Petits-Pères, were there before us.

The gates were closed. Nothing was then easier than to defend the Tuileries against a sudden attack. On the Manège side, as on that of the river, there stretched for the entire length of the garden a wall whose only entrances were two small gates near the Château. As to the two narrow Passage des Feuillants and Passage de l'Orangerie, they could have been adequately protected by a gabion and four men. On the Place Louis XV. side there was a deep moat, a veritable fortification that could only be crossed by the Pont Tournant, which did duty as a drawbridge. On the opposite side there was not, as now, the immense and empty Carrousel. From the wing which served for the flight of Henry III. to that of the Rue de Rivoli, this square, then infinitely smaller and more irregular, was separated from the Château by three courtyards, accompanied by out-buildings. The access was narrow and winding, whilst the walls of the three courtyards still further increased the difficulty

¹ Pierre Adolphe Hall (1739-1794), a Swede, was, on coming to France, appointed painter to the royal family. He was known as the Vandyke of miniature-painting.—A. C.

of approach. Finally, after closing the Pont Royal, the Guichet de Marigny, much narrower than it is to-day, and the Passage Dauphin Gate, the only way of approaching the Château was by the narrow Rue Saint Nicaise or by the circuitous Rue de l'Échelle. What treason on the one hand and stupidity on the other were necessary to lose that day!

I believe that it was about midnight when the four battalions were in battle array on the Château terrace. The night was long and silent. The waiting for a great event is ever accompanied by silence. The only thing I remember was the presence of Pétion, whom I had not yet seen. This wretched advocate, who had but recently obtained the mayoralty of Paris by baseness, came to inspect the police of his city, or rather to reconnoitre the place occupied by the royal army and choose a spot for his own. He was a tall, fair man of insipid beauty, and with an air that was affectedly mild, cowardly, and knavish.¹ When the Court, after June 20, closed the Tuileries, and the insolent Assembly authoritatively re-opened the gate of the Feuillants terrace, on the pretext that this terrace was a dependency of the Manège, he it was who, to give a derisive satisfaction to the Queen, imagined the anacreontic joke of stretching a tricoloured ribbon from the Grille de Marsan to the Passage des Feuillants, as a barrier which the *sans-culottes* in their magnanimity would not deign to pass. What made the leaders of those days so particularly odious to us was the fact that not a single one of them was either a Marius or a Cromwell; all were vulgar pedants and cowards—nonentities who have remained such. This particular one, who had come on to the terrace as a conqueror, bought his triumph dearly, for, in spite of himself, he was made to pass four hours there in mortal anguish. As he was regarded merely as a spy with an official scarf, a dozen of our grenadiers surrounded him and honourably promenaded him about until daybreak, without giving him time to rest or see anything. Their company probably

¹ Pétion was, in fact, what one would call a handsome man, and a pamphleteer of 1793 recognises that "he has nothing to regret as regards physique," and that "his stature, face, mildness and urbanity prevail in his favour."—A. C.

saved his life, for whilst they were walking up and down we were deliberating as to how to get rid of him, and I saw a score of guns, which would assuredly have been fired but for his escort, pointed in his direction.

At dawn fresh battalions of the National Guard arrived on the quays and were distributed in more distant parts of the garden. This was as far as the foresight of the Court went. These troops ought to have been excluded from the *enceinte* as enemies, but they were admitted as defenders. Each battalion—like ourselves—had two pieces of cannon, and I recollect that one, in bravado, pointed them at us and the Château.

At six o'clock in the morning, Louis XVI. came to pass us in review. What a discouraging review it was for men who merely asked for a master and a guide! I can still see the unfortunate prince passing in front of us; silent and careworn as he slouched along, and seeming to say: "All is lost!" Well might the little group that surrounded him cry: "Gentlemen, long live the King!" We had been ordered to observe silence when under arms and we obeyed when we ought to have disobeyed. As to the rebel battalions, the only cry they knew was that of "Long live the nation!" Every one, then, was silent—the King and the army. Louis thought that he could see his condemnation in our silence, whilst we read his ruin in his.

However, as the day progressed the uproar increased. All the *tocsins* of Paris were ringing, the people having taken possession of the steeples. A small body of Swiss arrived, but there ought to have been the whole six thousand, and when this became apparent an order to march was sent to them. Half way on their journey, however, they received a counter-order. The small body of Swiss then occupied the Cour de Marsan, whilst we were moved from the terrace to defend the two other courtyards. It was the Carrousel that ought to have been occupied, the small streets and the Guichet de Marigny that ought to have been blocked. But nothing of this was done. We remained—Swiss and French—imprisoned in our courtyards, and the Château was left open to all comers.

About ten o'clock in the morning there appeared that

hideous column which, after gathering at its ease in the Faubourgs Saint Antoine and Saint Marceau, had come, partly by way of the boulevards, partly by the quays, to assemble in the Rue Saint Honoré, whence it rolled slowly forward like those torrents of lava that hardly seem to move but which sow destruction in their path. These wretches, armed with poor sabres and rusty swords, imagined, most of them, that they were going to take part in a second 20th of June. But their leaders had another *fête* in store for them. This ragged army was allowed, therefore, to debouch freely by the Rue Saint Nicaise, to cover the bottom part and sides of the Carrousel, and to place its cannon in the centre of the square.

Behold, then, thanks to treason and stupidity, two armies ranged in battle under the windows of the Tuileries and the throne ready to be the stake of a game at odd or even. For, if we were the braver, the people were the more numerous; if we were held in and imprisoned by our commanders, they were pushed forward by theirs; and these leaders, Bretons and inhabitants of Marseilles, would not hesitate to sacrifice two thousand men for every one who reached the Château. So we had read to us the martial law and the municipal order, certainly not to attack but to oppose force by force. On hearing this tardy order, our gunners abandoned their pieces, declaring that they would not fire on the people. A terrible tumult then ensued. I know not whether they were sabred or driven away, but our guns remained abandoned until the Swiss gunners came to serve them. Well, even at that apparently critical time, a king of spirit and intelligence, a king who for a moment would have believed in himself, instead of eternally believing in others, could still have been the master of that terrible day. He should have jumped on horseback, dashed along our ranks, electrified us by exhortations, thrown open the gates, and, instead of keeping us under lock and key to await the cannon shots, precipitated us with fixed bayonets on that disgusting army. A distance of less than seventy yards separated us. In two minutes our bayonets would have been in their breasts—in five they would have been dispersed. This is neither an exaggeration nor a boast; for when, an hour later, the Swiss fired their first cannon shots, the people's terror was

such that the Carrousel was empty in the twinkling of an eye. They had all fled into the small streets adjoining, and if they returned it was because their leaders, who knew the extent of their courage, had posted at the ends of those thoroughfares small bodies of cavalry, which vigorously charged the fugitives and drove them back to the battle-field. If only the populace had been vanquished, France would have been reconquered. Two companies could have closed the Jacobins' club; the King could have entered the Assembly as master; the Municipality and the Sections could have been renewed; the ringleaders arrested, and the National Guard disbanded. Twenty-four hours would have sufficed for these preliminary steps, and, by giving confidence to the masses, which only asked for a stronger man than themselves, would have allowed time for other measures to be taken.

Instead of that, this is what happened. We trembled with rage behind our walls, which prevented us from even seeing the enemy, which, on the other hand, was encouraged by not seeing us! Meanwhile, Roederer arrived at the Château—Roederer of sinister and hideous recollection, bringing with him that too famous advice to leave the Tuileries, in order to avoid a fresh 20th of June, and to go to the Assembly. Louis XVI. hesitated, but recollected Charles I. Charles had fought, but Louis gave way. Roederer's advice was followed, and so, in order not to have to fight a flock of sheep, we threw ourselves into the lion's den. We know that Roederer, unable to deny having given this advice, has always denied its intention.¹ Louis XVI. left, then, for the Assembly, accompanied by a company of Swiss and by the light infantry of my regiment, which he held in particular affection.

The Swiss, who were advancing by forced marches, were ordered to go back. The poor King had such a terrible fear of being unconstitutional that, on that day when his throne and life were at stake, he had not even summoned from the Military School the eighteen hundred men of his faithful guard who had

¹ Roederer was, as he has said, sincerely convinced that resistance was useless and would lead to much bloodshed, that the defenders of the Château were not sufficiently numerous, and that "their feelings were not well disposed."—A. C

been unconstitutionally disbanded by the Assembly. So the sorrowful procession set off, silently descending the grand Escalier de l'Horloge, lined with Swiss troops whose old moustaches streamed with tears. The King and the Queen walked first. Madame Elizabeth followed between the two children. This was all that remained of that numerous family, and all, save one, were to perish! Then came fifty attendants. Our two companies surrounded the group. Half way up the garden, twenty-four deputies advanced, as etiquette required, towards the King, who, as far as I can recollect, said to them: "I proceed to the Assembly in order to spare my people a crime." Alas! he had just smoothed the way for them! He entered the Assembly by the Passage des Feuillants door. We remained at the bottom of the steps that descended from the terrace. We had not been there more than a quarter of an hour before we saw, advancing along the terrace, some *sans-culottes* armed with pikes, surmounted by what looked like red and black helmets. As they approached we discovered that the objects were five heads, which these savages had just cut off in the Cour des Feuillants. I recognised two of them. One was the head of M. de Vigier de Mirabel, a lifeguardsman whom I had known at Poitiers; the other, that of the unfortunate Suleau.¹ Members of a secret police that worked in the King's interest (and unknown to him), they had been surprised, at night, in the Champs-Élysées and imprisoned in the Feuillants guard-house, whence the savage band had dragged them. In writing these words I still feel the inexpressible feeling of horror that then penetrated me. The monsters roared with laughter, and lowered their execrable trophies towards us from the top of the terrace. Hardly had they passed than the first cannon-shots were heard from the direction of the Château—volleys which were followed by an interval of silence. This was the moment when the terrified populace evacuated the Carrousel. Shortly afterwards the cannonade recommenced, accompanied by a smart fire of muskets. This was the moment when the rabble, driven back by charges of cavalry, returned to the square from which it had fled, and whence it was fleeing

¹ Cf. Thiébauld's *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 303, and the De Goncourts' *La Société française pendant la Révolution*, p. 265.—A. C.

once more! But the defenders of the Château, with the exception of the Swiss, were in confusion in the courtyards, hindered by walls and doors, and did not know how or were unable to profit by their assailants' flight and capture their cannon. These guns had a great advantage over ours. They could be fired at random against the entire front of the Château, the first floor of which, crowded with the King's friends and servants, was riddled with bullets; whereas ours had to be pointed through the narrow openings of doors. However, in spite of the little effect they could have, all our shots reached their mark, whilst theirs merely damaged the Château stones and windows; and it is more than probable that if the fight had lasted victory would have been ours. But the unfortunate King had to complete his ruin. A hostage in the Assembly, he did what, alas! he would have done just the same had he been free—sent an order to his troops to cease firing and retreat. . . . Great God, retreat! Where? Into the Château to be massacred one by one, as so many others were? Into the garden which ten minutes later was being ploughed up by the conquerors' cannon? The Feuillants terrace station being no longer tenable, we entered the Passage, so as not to be too far from the Royal Family, and remained there for three mortal hours, in the midst of the roar of artillery and the shouts of the Assembly which was voting the King's suspension. At last the order came to return to our homes. Everything was over—for us, for the King, and for France! We dispersed; for it would have been fatal to have let the intoxicated populace see a company or arms. Our coats saved us. Every redcoat was massacred. Wearing my blue coat and carrying my musket under my arm, I slowly made my way through the crowds of savage men, who ran hither and thither inciting to pillage and murder. I reached my mother's at six o'clock in the evening, worn out with sorrow and indignation. She had heard, seen, and knew nothing; the monarchy had fallen without the Rue Vivienne being any the wiser. "Mother," said I, "we must leave Paris, which is about to become a place of carnage and persecution." Yielding to my entreaties, she consented to go to Loches, where I counted on Barreau's influence and skill.

In twenty-four hours the aspect of Paris had changed. Not a carriage was to be seen. If the noise of wheels were heard in the distance, you might be sure that it was a cab. Nobody dared to show himself to be rich, or to be superior to any one else. The city gates were closed. At night the red-capped members of the Sections made domiciliary visits—not here or there, but everywhere—in order to discover an *émigré*, a defender of the King, or one of the escaped Swiss, for their massacre continued wherever they were found. Even the most honest artisans were seized with this incomprehensible frenzy for murder. There was a certain young and honest engraver who every month used to bring me parts of new works from the gallery of the Palais Royal—a man with the candour and timidity of a girl. I saw him a few days after August 10 and found him beaming with joy. “What is the matter?” I asked. “Ah! sir,” he replied, “Providence has smiled upon me: I have killed three Swiss.” In the meantime the prisons became crowded. The suspected and the convicted were thrown in pell-mell. Whoever had grumbled at his wig-maker or left his shoe-maker was not certain of sleeping in his bed. Spies and denunciators swarmed among the servants, and thus were accumulated the victims who were sacrificed during the days of September. Terror was universal: some underwent it, others practised it; and these latter were the unfortunate people who, driven by fear to pursue others, trembled lest they should be found less fanatic than the two or three howlers of their Section (for the Sections had become clubs), and who strove to see who could play the part of *sans-culotte* the best—they who would have shouted “Long live the King!” so heartily if only Louis had made up his mind to be the conqueror. Never did despotism possess the tenth part of the power that was exercised by that small and filthy oligarchy. It had eyes and arms everywhere.

To leave Paris under such circumstances as these was no easy thing, and especially when it was a question of the departure of an entire family—mother, children and servants. It was a good thing that my mother had a dog named Brutus, that she was liked by everybody, that she had always bought provisions in the neighbourhood, and above all that she had plenty of

money. I could not tell you how many purchases she made in the course of a month in order to gain the suffrages of her quarter, but at last she succeeded. Passports were granted her by a majority of votes at the Church of the Filles Saint Thomas. Only, prudence was to be shown in dividing them. There was one for herself, another for her daughter, a third for a *femme de chambre*, styled *bonne*, and, I believe, even a fourth for a man-servant; such was the consideration shown her! The cook and his wife, an assistant cook, the butler, my sister's *femme de chambre*, and my two servants had special passports—one for one reason, another for another. Everybody wanted to follow us, so much did the fear of remaining on the streets inspire fidelity! The only ones to remain in Paris were the door-keeper Bazin and his wife, who had been my sister's nurse—excellent Jacobins, who had been with us for twenty years, and loved us better than anything else in the world, after “*La Liberté, l'Égalité, ou la Mort.*” My mother kept these brothers and friends as a safeguard for her house. They were even let into the secret of several precious boxes that had been taken into the attic and walled up. However, as nothing less than a marshal was necessary for such a colony, my passport was dated a fortnight before those of my family; and it was thus that I set out alone on Sunday, September 2, in a small hired cabriolet to catch the Orleans *diligence* I know not where. Unfortunately, I had taken with me a very pretty silver-mounted dressing-case, which went with me everywhere, and was ignorant of a municipal order forbidding that gold or silver be allowed to leave the city. At the Ivry gate I found, therefore, that I was not allowed to pass; at that of Enfer I was driven back, and at that of Maine maltreated. Sent from Section to Section, and proposing everywhere to leave the guilty dressing-case behind, I at last began to be looked upon as a suspicious person. It was then that I took the wise step of returning home. Sunday was the day on which my mother had people to supper. I found everybody silent and dismayed; for on that day, as I was then unaware, the massacres had begun, and there was not an honest person in Paris who had not relatives, friends or acquaintances in the prisons. On seeing me my mother gave a cry of sorrow.

But it is not my intention to write history. I still recollect the manifesto—a deplorable piece of boasting—which brought public exasperation to its height; Luckner's retreat, the march of the King of Prussia in Champagne, and the treason of the Duc de Brunswick, who sacrificed, for the eleven millions that were thrown to him, Louis' salvation, his word, and the honour of the King of Prussia, who, but for his perfidy, would have entered the Tuileries a week later.¹ The news of his first successes was the signal for a second massacre more horrible than the first, which lasted three days without a single company being ordered to stop it. Those horrible days have often been described. Here, however, is an extraordinary fact that did great honour to M. de Chazet. He had the face of a sheep-dog, and was sordidly avaricious; yet he saved the Baronne de Mackau, his second daughter's mother-in-law and assistant governess to the children of the King of France. She had been one of the first to be imprisoned at the Force. M. de Chazet scattered money broadcast to win over a few honest plebeians of that quarter, and, having been informed of the day when the horrible popular tribunal was to sit at the door of the prison, went there early in the morning, disguised as a *sans-culotte*. When the baroness's turn came to appear before those hellish judges, M. de Chazet began to defend her in the language of the Markets; and so well did he play his part, supported by his accomplices, that he obtained her acquittal. An act so admirable as this makes up for many eccentricities. This curious and disagreeable man must really have had some other intrinsic merit than courage, intelligence, and an income of three hundred thousand francs, for he was tenderly loved by his excellent wife and by the charming Félicité de Mackau.

This bloodshed and the news of the retreat of the Prussians brought, a few days later, a semblance of calm. Until then there had been everywhere nought but incessant uproar, disguised joy, fear rushing to arms, and rage finding vent in imprecations. On every square and *carrefour* were tricoloured stages where, to the sound of martial music, beplumed crimps enrolled volunteers. The insufficiency of these means quickly

¹ It is now known that Brunswick always acted loyally.—A. C.

showed the extent of public patriotism, and produced the first requisition or enforced enrolment law, the first fruit of liberty. My age (then barely twenty-four) brought me within it, and for six years I suffered many vexations.

At last, with head on high, I set off by the Orleans stage coach. In it was a stout, short, rotund and florid little gentleman, a native of Lorraine, son of a M. de Marcol, attorney-general or president of the Nancy parliament, an incessant chatterer, a side-splitting joker, a thorough provincial, and who, fearing envious people, was desirous of hiding the brilliancy of so much merit in the solitary *château* of Fontpertuis, near Beaugency. Before we had travelled more than a hundred yards, M. de Marcol de Manoncourt—he whispered this feudal addition into my ear and confided it only to intimates—became my sworn friend. A few leagues from Etampes, as we were walking ahead of the *diligence*, which was changing horses, we met a mournful procession of three carriages containing the Orleans prisoners—Brissac, Lessart, and many others—the last honest men who had sat on Louis XVI.'s council. They had but one more day to live. Whilst this sight was making my hair stand on end, my companion began to shout at the top of his voice, "A la guillotine!" "Wretched man," said I, pulling him by his coat, "at any rate keep your tongue still!" "Ah!" he replied, "I shout because I'm frightened." There you have the history of the whole of France.¹ At Beaugency this young hero left me, with an invitation to attend his wedding, for he was going to try to marry at Fontpertuis Mme. de Bonvoust's second daughter; and the amusing part of it is that, three or four years later, I was present at that wedding.

We settled down at Loches as well as we could, deciding to live there until better times, and had a most peaceful, retired existence. However, I determined to risk a few excursions, if only for the purpose of casting an eye on our possessions.

¹ The fifty-three Orleans prisoners, including the Duc de Cossé-Brissac, ex-ministers Lessart and d'Abancourt, the *juge de paix* Larivière, officers and private individuals of Perpignan, all accused of surrendering the citadel, were massacred at Versailles on September 9. On the 6th and the 7th they stopped at Etampes, so Frénilly met them on the 8th.—A. C.

In the Nivernais I owned an estate called Alligny, which, although it was the first barony of the province, was very small. Its revenue did not amount to more than eight or ten thousand francs. It possessed, however, a big, old square castle, exceedingly feudal in aspect and flanked by four huge towers. The *curé* of the parish was an ex-grenadier of the French guards, the most handsome man and the biggest scamp you ever set eyes on. He had got himself appointed mayor, and when a decree was issued ordering that all signs of feudality should be destroyed, he decided that my towers were an emblem, summoned the neighbouring parishes, and in twenty-four hours treated them like the Bastille. After this, he sent me in a bill for the work of demolition. The matter was rather serious and merited personal inspection. But to get to Alligny was not then easy. It was winter, the Terror was at its height, passports were lacking, there was a guard-house every half-league and a popular society in each town. To travel in a cabriolet was to parade a revolting aristocracy, whilst to wear a queue and powder, as I did still, was to show counter-revolutionary opinions. So I had to cut off my pig-tail, wash my hair, let my moustache grow, and, in order to have the diploma of a *sans-culotte* which would break down all barriers, affiliate myself with the Jacobins of Loches. In a fortnight I was ready. Barreau and I then mounted our cobs, and in four or five days arrived without accident at Cosne-sur-Loire, the nearest town to Alligny. We had some money with us, but were advised to get rid of it as a suspicious thing, because a commissary of the Convention had just been round laying his hand on all the precious metal he could find, even the peasant's ear-rings.

Cosne was making great preparations for the Feast of Reason, which was to be celebrated two days later. We put up at the best inn in the town. Our hostess, a good wife and mother, and strong aristocrat, was, to her misfortune, the handsomest woman in Cosne; and when a deputation from the popular society summoned her to represent the Goddess Reason she had to consent. As to ourselves, who, immediately on arrival, had patriotically given two barrels of wine, owed me by a tenant, towards the *fête*, another deputation

came to invite us to the civic banquet, a supper which was given in the large vaulted windowless room of an ancient convent. Only men were present. All the journeymen cutlers, anchor makers and other artisans of Cosne stood upright—and I with them—in front of planks which served as tables, without table-cloths, napkins, knives, spoons or forks. Everything was eaten with the fingers. My neighbour imprudently drew a clasp knife from his pocket, whereupon there was a general cry of protest. There were neither decanters, nor bottles, nor glasses, but pitchers of wine which passed from mouth to mouth, and with such frequency that half the guests were under the tables at the end of an hour. In the middle of the room was a tribune, from which, after the speeches, songs were sung, five or six hundred voices joining in the refrain. Then came the resolutions, including one to the effect that the *fête* should be concluded by requisitioning all the prostitutes in Cosne.

Such was the welcome I received in the capital of my barony. As to Alligny, you may well imagine that I heartily approved of my dear peasants' patriotic act and congratulated my honest *curé* on having so dexterously turned my *château* into a cripple. I then ordered that the four remaining broken walls be walled up, and left the district, which was getting a little too warm. A fortnight later an alleged conspiracy was discovered, and nineteen fathers of families were dragged from their homes to be sent to Paris to die on the scaffold.¹

This journey brings to my mind another that was shorter and less dangerous. One could not travel a league in those days without some event occurring. Not far from Loches stood the Château de Chenonceaux that had been built on the Cher by a treasurer of Francis I., augmented by a bridge constructed by Diane de Poitiers and by a gallery on the bridge due to Henri II. It had been inhabited by Catherine de Médicis and at the time to which I refer it was owned by Mme. Dupin. A desire coming over me to sketch it, I set off alone on my cob. I crossed the Cher by a ferry boat opposite the beautiful and picturesque building, left my horse at a

¹ The author doubtless refers to the trial of eleven inhabitants of Cosne, eight of whom were executed on June 10, 1794.—A. C.

village tavern, and began to wander about in search of the best point of view. At last, after recrossing the river, I drew out my album, sharpened my pencils, and sat down on the bank opposite Diana's bridge. But I had forgotten the Vendée, which was throwing the whole district into commotion. Before I had sketched three arches I felt a hand laid on my collar, and, on turning round, found myself surrounded by a score of young fellows, the pick of the village, with rifles on their shoulders. Having watched my marches and counter-marches, and seeing them end in a sketch, they took me for a spy who had come to draw up a plan of the *château*. This was very politely explained to me by the *curé* of Chenonceaux who accompanied them, probably with the object of preventing them committing a piece of stupidity. My answer was to give my name and show them the pages of my album, containing heads, flowers, trees, and verses. This inventory amused the villagers, and the good *curé*, who was also Mme. Dupin's steward, politely begged me to be his mistress's prisoner. It was then that I made the acquaintance of Chenonceaux, which I have since seen so often. I was received by the aged Mme. Dupin in the manner in which ladies of ninety-four receive young men of good manners and fine figure. Women of forty do not care for youth, because it reminds them that they no longer possess it; but those of ninety do, because it reminds them of their own early days. Mme. Dupin was dressed to suit her age, was exceedingly white, and very little wrinkled; and her delicate features still showed how great her beauty must have been at the time that the Marquise de Noailles took her to see her aunt de Maintenon in her retirement at Saint Cyr. Her memory was as clear as that of a person of twenty. I have heard her in the morning read a letter by Voltaire and repeat it to us in the evening without forgetting a word. I say us, because she had with her for company two grand-nephews, René and Auguste de Villeneuve, who were still almost children. The remainder of her household was reduced to her *curé*, a lady's companion and her *perruches*, which were not parrakeets but little peasant girls of fifteen to twenty years, whom she kept around her in order to receive their thousand little attentions and gaze on their youth. Her daily life was very singular.

She had no fixed hours either for eating or sleeping. Each servant did a little of everything, save his or her own work. She had turned an excellent cook, obtained from the Prince de Condé, into a worthless one. At the dinner-hour he was to be found in the park reading Voltaire, whose writings he used to lend his mistress. More than once did we young people descend to the kitchens, in the abutments of the bridge, to prepare our own luncheon. Mme. Dupin's huge bedroom served as drawing-room, dining-room, and everything else. When the dinner-hour was decided upon, we assembled there. She sat at the middle of the table, ate a few bites out of politeness, and then served what was in front of her—everything, including even an omelette—with her small fingers; for such was the custom among the belles of the Regency, who were thus considered to add to the food's excellence. But if she did not eat at table, she marked what had to be kept for her, and these dishes were placed on shelves in a large adjoining room, where she ate when the fancy took her. I several times went in and always found enough to provide a meal for ten people. Above her bedroom was an equally large room, the bed-chamber of Diane de Poitiers, whose name and portrait it retained. It was a square room, lit by a large window, from which one could see the whole course of the Cher, and in one corner was a small wardrobe that would not have held four people. There was nothing more, not even a back-staircase, and everything had to pass through the bedroom.

Mme. Dupin had kindly granted to everybody in the district a right of way through the beautiful gallery constructed on the bridge. With its double row of windows, from which the Cher was visible both up and down stream, it was an admirable piece of architecture. It was decorated with a number of poor portraits of the greatest people of several centuries. At its far end, on the other side of the Cher, you descended into a second park. For this beautiful building was incomplete. The plan to build on the opposite bank a wing similar to the one already constructed had never been carried out, and Francis' treasurer thus well justified his motto, which he placed on every door: "S'il vient à point, il m'en souviendra." In the second park was the Allée de Sylvie celebrated by Rousseau. Reminiscences

of Jean Jacques were to be encountered at every step at Chenonceaux, but nowhere more so than in what was called the *petit château*, a long building in the form of a gallery, which on one side skirted the courtyard and on the other Catherine de Médicis' still magnificent parterre. This gallery, which Rousseau occupied with his pupils, Mme. Dupin's two sons, MM. de Francueil and de Chenonceaux, was divided into eight or ten rooms, that had been fitted up by the friend of nature, at great cost to Farmer-General Dupin, with a collection of instruments for the study of experimental physics, a chemical laboratory, a museum of natural history, a library, a drawing and sculpture room, &c. Everything was still complete and thickly covered with cobwebs when I saw them. We know what brilliant pupils were turned out there. That recollection was the only one which Mme. Dupin persisted in driving from her memory. I once tried to get her to talk about Rousseau, but could obtain nothing more than the words: "He was a mischievous rascal." Since then I have also spoken to Mme. d'Houdetot about him, and, though less bitter, she was still more silent. This man left misfortune behind him wherever he went.¹

It was necessary to drag myself from the delights of Chenonceaux in order to return to Loches, and then, much against my will, throw myself into the abyss of Paris, where all sorts of business summoned me. My mother had been able to employ only part of the capital of the post of Administrator-General. The Hôtel de Jonzac was no longer costing anything, but it was bringing nothing in; *rentes* were paid in assignats, which were rapidly depreciating; she was forced to receive reimbursements, which no law then prevented; and, finally, illegitimate children had begun to contest her right to the inheritance from M. de Saint-Waast. I returned, therefore, to Paris, at the worst period of the Terror. The Cordeliers had succumbed; the wolves had ceded the battlefield to tigers and hyenas. I wanted to see, once and for all, one of the daily sacrifices. It was in the Rue Saint Honoré. Three carts,

¹ Rousseau spent the autumn of 1747 at Chenonceaux, and composed there the mediocre play *L'Engagement téméraire* and his best poem, *L'Allée de Sylvie*, in which he sings of "la douce et charmante rêverie."—A. C.

painted red, harnessed to two horses and escorted by five or six *gendarmes*, slowly made their way through an immense and silent crowd, which showed no joy and did not dare to express its horror. In each vehicle were five or six condemned men. I recollect distinctly only the first, because of two faces that struck me with surprise and horror. One was that of Danton, Robespierre's Pompey, the great victim of the day. His enormous round head was proudly turned towards the stupid multitude, with impudence on his forehead and an expression of rage and indignation on his lips. The other was that of—shall I say? Hérault de Séchelles, dejected and with despair on his brow, which he bent towards his knees. His black hair was short and stood on end, his collar was loose, and he was half-dressed in a wretched brown dressing-gown. Suddenly he appeared to me as I saw him in Parliament when he received me as an advocate: handsome, young and elegant, his whole toilet carried out with the greatest refinement. Philosophy had thrown him into the Revolution, pride had kept him there, and fear had enchained him; and above and beyond what the others had, he had the misfortune to be contemptible. Such was the situation of the man who had been the object of my mother's predilections and hopes, her wished-for son-in-law, and the model she had held up to her son.¹

A few days afterwards the entire Grand' Chambre of the Parliament passed along that mournful route. I did not see that terrible procession, for the first had been enough for me. When it passed I was at a colour-dealer's in the Rue du Coq. On hearing the rumbling of the tumbrils everybody rushed to the windows, but I kept as far away as possible.²

The Farmers-General still awaited their turn. For the past year they had been imprisoned in their former Hôtel des Fermes in the Rue de Grenelle Saint Honoré, under the pretext that they had to work at their accounts, for in 1793 the revolutionaries had still shame enough to look for excuses. Among them I had relatives and friends, so several times went to see

¹ April 5, 1794. Cf. Wallon's *Histoire du tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris*, vol. iii. 1881, pp. 188-192. According to Des Essarts, Hérault "carried his head on high, without any affectation," and "nothing in his manner indicated the slightest mental agitation."—A. C.

² April 20, 1794.—A. C.

them, to find, to my great astonishment, that almost all were in security. M. de Laperrière,¹ who possessed as much common sense as virtue, was the only one who said to me: "We shall not see each other again."

Among the prisoners who then crowded the prisons, convents, houses, and every place that could be converted into a jail, I must not omit to mention the actors of the Comédie-Française. The Comédie-Française was the aristocracy of the stage and its incarceration became a title of nobility. It kept its rank in the Revolution, and all its members, with the exception of Dugazon and Molé, made a point of honour of keeping up their dignity, preferring to be prisoners like dukes and peers than free as comedians. After the Terror, they reappeared in the midst of an *éclat* and favour that almost amounted to gratitude.

Not a single carriage was then to be seen in Paris. The whole of people's lives was centred in their homes, where they spoke little, in a low voice, and with the doors securely closed. Nobody was sure of what the next day would bring forth. Women did not go out at all, men rarely, and those you met in the streets were in *carmagnole* costume, that is, with jacket and trousers of grey-brown cloth, coloured necktie, straight short hair, cap, hob-nailed shoes, and a cudgel. Such was the recognised style of dress; and as the agreeable and the ridiculous is ever mingled with everything in France, the youth of Paris still found a means of giving a touch of elegance to this costume. On every wall, in large letters, were the words: "Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité ou la Mort." At every house-door was a placard bearing the names and ages of the occupants. Stage masterpieces were excluded from the theatres, or, if they were still produced, had undergone a revolutionary revision which removed all titles and allusions to the nobility. The word "Loi" replaced "Roi," and in Sedaine's *Déserteur* they sang: "La Loi passait et le tambour battait aux champs." At the exit to the Opéra you could hear the "Luxembourgs" shout: "Citoyenne So-and-So's *carriole*." To have the use of this light covered-cart was then a great luxury, and you had to

¹ Jacques Joseph Brac de Laperrière, sixty-eight years of age, was executed on May 8, 1794, with twenty-seven other Farmers-General.—A. C.

have friends in order to enjoy it. In the middle of the Place du Carrousel was a small funereal sacellum—Marat's monument, at which the *sans-culottes* offered up *neuvaines*. At the Convention, which then sat at the Tuileries, were hung two portraits by David, as revolting as their originals and their painter—portraits of Marat and Le Peletier. But I did not see them until later. I should have felt too much horror in entering that charnel-house, where the vilest cowards in France obeyed her vilest rascals and prostitutes, for we can still remember that huge hall in which that female rabble, more ferocious than the male section—Robespierre's *tricoteuses*—assembled, ate, drank, applauded or hissed. My doorkeeper, who knew how to respect herself, appeared there only from time to time and out of politeness. Sans-culottism observed, indeed, a sort of etiquette and propriety. One day this woman and her husband apologised for leaving the house empty in order to go to the Place de la Révolution, and on the ground that some friends of theirs were to be guillotined.

Thus, you saw nothing but silent streets and barricaded doors. I could find no other acquaintances than my neighbours D'Aucour and Saint-Just,¹ the *littérateur*, with whom I passed my evenings. Everybody else was in prison, or living far away on their estates, or had already become victims of the revolutionary axe. Mme. de Saint-Waast was dead ;² Mme. Delahante had died before her ;³ and Mme. de Chazet was with her dying daughter in the country near Paris. It was there that I found that angel whom two years before I had left so brilliant and gay ; she already had one foot in the grave, and I never saw her again.

At last came the 9th of Thermidor. I well remember the state of our minds, when, on opening the newspapers and as usual casting a first glance at the lists of condemned, we saw, instead of the names of friends or relatives, those of Robespierre, Couthon, and the majority of their compeers. My first step

¹ Simon Pierre MÉRARD de Saint-Just (1749-1812), the author of numerous works of small value. His wife, Anne Jeanne Félicité d'OrmoY, published a few novels.—A. C.

² June 9, 1793 (Delahante's *Une Famille de finance*, vol. ii. p. 231).—A. C.

³ Mme. Jacques Delahante, née Renauld de Beauregard and niece of Mme. de Saint-Waast, died on May 21, 1766.—A. C.

was to shut all the doors. After that, we embraced each other with convulsive joy and read the account of those terrible days when the Talliens, certain of being sent to the guillotine, did what the Dantons had unsuccessfully attempted. France turned from one crime to another, and that a second-rate one; we fell from the hands of rascals into those of ruffians. These, in order to reign, had need to rid themselves of complicity and pose as victims, not as assassins, as saviours of France, and not as cowards who merely wished to save their own lives. Yet it was necessary for them to retain the existing severe laws, in order to frighten the reactionaries and make up for their own weakness. The conquerors' names immediately revealed the situation, and we promised each other that we would observe absolute silence in the presence of the servants and an impassible countenance when with strangers until the outlook was better. And, in fact, the Terrorist party tried for a long time to spread the idea that nothing was changed, that the scaffold would always be the dominator of France, so frightened were they that there would be an awakening, and that they themselves would be handed over to the executioner. This was what was called *la queue de Robespierre*—Robespierre's tail.

However, the reaction occurred. Prison doors were opened. My mother, who saw my sister growing older without finding a husband, wished to return to Paris. This plan was promptly nipped in the bud by a decree forbidding former nobles to approach within more than twenty leagues of the capital. But we possessed at Chartres two excellent friends, the Marquis and Marquise de La Goy, natives of Provence, friends of Mme. de Bon, who had introduced them to my mother four years before. The Marquise was charming, natural and full of grace, and my sister's intimate friend; her husband was agreeable, and a first-class musician and draughtsman. I wrote to him on the subject of settling down at Chartres. A reply came by return of post: the house was found, the district was quiet, living was cheap, and their arms were open to receive us. My mother having made up her mind, I set off to make arrangements for her arrival, and a few days later was embracing the good La Goy's and their children. I inspected and took for a year a very pretty house, partly furnished. There I settled down, as I had

formerly done at the Hôtel de Jonzac, so that my mother would not have even a nail to knock in or anything to desire. I spent the evenings with the La Goys, for we had a century of events to relate to each other.

Awaiting the moment when the new house would be in a state to receive my mother, I made a little journey to Paris. My crime in being a *ci-devant* forbade it, but there was then a current of moderation among the governors, and subordinates were inclined to be mild. So I set off on my inseparable cob, without a permit or passport, and by indirect ways reached Ivry and the Saint-Justs', where I found an asylum. Leaving my horse with them, and with a stick in my hand, I set off on foot for Paris, passed freely through the city gate, and arrived at night at friend Bréjole's, who then lived in the Lycée house, quite near the Palais Royal. He received me with good grace and harboured me. I then began to knock at the doors of all my old friends, and, thanks to the friendship of my amiable neighbour Mme. L'Empereur, assisted by the influence of a few third-rate Jacobins, succeeded in getting myself requisitioned. This had nothing to do with the military requisition to which I unfortunately belonged. The Government had tempered the law that banished nobles twenty leagues from Paris by decreeing that all those whose talents or knowledge were useful to the country could be requisitioned to stop. Goodness knows what a host of people with talent and scientific knowledge immediately came forth. As to myself, who had received lessons from the skilful Vanpal, I proudly presented to the jury at the Museum a little picture of some flowers. It was a detestable piece of work, but its testimony admitted me as a young follower of Vanhuysum whom it was essential to call to Paris. Thus did I pocket my requisition card and again become a citizen of Paris. Certain nobles then intrigued more to prove their plebeian state than they had formerly done to authenticate their nobility. After a few days, I returned to Ivry to get my cob and again take the road to Chartres, where my mother's household arrived the week following. She herself, at the beginning of Brumaire, Year III (October 1794), followed soon afterwards, not in a cab but in her old coach, and even riding post, so much had the times

changed already! On the roads the beggars addressed you as "Monsieur!"

It was not long, however, before I was once more on the way to Paris, not certainly on pleasure bent but on business. My mother had retained only the second floor of her house in the Rue Vivienne, and there I spent that winter of 1794, the excessive cold of which still further increased the misery of the famine.

The war had drained France of practically all the money she had. Not a single halfpenny was to be seen, and, ruin following on ruin, they had reached the point of fabricating assignats of thirty *sols* which were not worth two. Provisions had risen to an enormous price, although less in proportion to that of money, for everything was in such a disorder that buyers and sellers no longer calculated. The value of paper money changed from day to day, so that those who concluded transactions with payment a week ahead often received a third less than the sum agreed upon.

In Paris, where the people live by their work and no longer found any to do, where the middle-class citizen lives on his *rentes*, which were paid him in paper, and where the landlords received their rents from farms and houses in the same currency, there was general consternation. It was under these circumstances that the Convention invented the *Loi du Maximum*, which crowned the universal misfortune. Up to then, by ruining oneself, one could exist; one could get a coat for the amount of a month's revenue, and so on. But after the publication of the *Maximum* all merchandise disappeared as though by magic. Nothing was either sold or bought except in secret; every purchase was a conspiracy; and there suddenly occurred—and this in the city of Paris alone—an absolute dearth not only of bread and fuel but of all the necessaries of life, whilst the country places were overflowing with the fruits of a splendid harvest. You should have seen those times, when it was indiscreet, an unheard-of impoliteness, to go to dinner at a friend's without taking your own bread, when you had to meet in secret to eat the white bread that a few suspected pastrycooks risked making; when the bakers baked by order, using only pea and chestnut flour which the Government

distributed to them ; and when every baker's door, from dawn, if not from night-time, was besieged by long famished *queues* of purchasers who, in order to receive a morsel of black, viscid bread, lost a third of their day. And in these tails you had either to figure or be represented, otherwise you were suspected of having bread concealed at home, and this was a crime that the Government punished by a fine, or the people by pillage. Many a time when this pseudo bread was brought to me have I thrown it against the wall, where it remained sticking, and not even my dog would approach it. Fortunately there was in Paris a very devoted woman who had been in my employ at Rheims, and whom I had assisted in starting a small business ; she made me excellent rolls and brought them at dusk. Every week I received from Chartres a very fine *pâté*. My cellar was stocked with good wine, and thus did Bréjole and I—for my mother had allowed him to live in the apartment she had retained—live. The same dearth extended to everything. You had to stand *en queue* for candles, soap, meat and wood ; all of which things were received at the maximum price, with a card provided by the Section, at dealers' with which the Government had relations. The population of Paris was to be seen proceeding to the roads outside the city to put up by auction the provisions which they dare not bring into Paris for fear of the Maximum, and I recollect having gone myself as far as Charenton, one terribly frosty night, to stop a small handcartful of wood, which I brought home across the fields to avoid having it taken from me. It was at this period that the Convention cut down the Bois de Boulogne.

This universal disorder explains the craze for speculation that seized Paris. There were mountains of assignats remaining idle, and it was a question as to who would employ them, for no matter what: sugar, soap, oil, or fat. After a month's time, when everything had increased in price, everything was sold again, and people thought they were doing splendid business. They did not see that it was the assignats that had depreciated. I myself, like everybody else, gave way to this mania, and I can still see the stores of sugar that I amassed but which gradually dwindled to nothing, for, if I always sold at a higher price than that I had given, I invariably bought

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again at a higher rate than that at which I had sold. This example of my commercial genius cost my mother twenty thousand francs. It is true that they were in assignats, but the sad part of it was that to place this sum at my disposal she was obliged to borrow. To borrow and in order to get so little, she who had never owed a penny, she who possessed such large estates! This was the first indication of the decomposition of her splendid fortune.

If there was one thing calculated to cause astonishment it was the fact that an entire population suffered all the horrors of cold and hunger during six months without rising. This phenomenon is explained by the terrible servitude it had undergone, by the fear that the Committee of Public Salvation and the revolutionary tribunal had inspired. People were still bending under the recollection of the past. But this servitude was gradually disappearing, and for a long time past the Terrorist party had been trying to awaken the sleeping population. In the spring the first disorders of the Faubourg Saint Antoine broke out.

Here is all that I remember of that great uprising of the Faubourg Saint Antoine. The populace had made an irruption as far as that palace of the Tuileries which it knew so well; it had massacred the deputy Féraud, and filed through the assembly hall of the Convention. We know what courage Boissy d'Anglas then showed. He was worth much more than the authority he saved. But France was in such a state of subversion that it was the Convention which we defended at that time. The party in favour of order, justice and the re-establishment of the throne was daily increasing in influence, and it was our duty to make it our ally, the only centre around which we could rally and unite in order to fight the Jacobins. Things had reached such a pitch that, when that terrible struggle was over and several of the firebrands of the Mountain had been sent to the Château de Ham, we aristocrats, who had watched over the King, now watched over the Convention, and conducted the prisoners to the city gates with loud cries of "Long live the Convention!" I still laugh over the recollection and blush at it! But let me return to that rabble which Boissy d'Anglas held in check until he was certain that the Tuileries were

surrounded by companies of the National Guard. The signal was then given and with fixed bayonets we entered a door, slowly pushing towards another the tired and disconcerted populace, which no longer showed any resistance. This occasion was the only one that I ever had of seeing the redoubtable assembly hall and David's two pictures, hung on each side of the presidential chair. It was the next day that we entered on a campaign against the Faubourg Saint Antoine. It would be very difficult for me to say what the army numbered, and perhaps it would be considerably diminishing it to estimate it at one hundred thousand men, for, without counting the columns that marched by way of the Rue Saint Antoine, the quays and other streets, that to which I had the honour to belong occupied the entire length of the boulevard from the Chaussée d'Antin to the Bastille. The army no longer consisted merely of the twelve battalions of the National Guard—these formed but the skeleton; it consisted of everybody in Paris who had a wife, children, a shop, a position or a life to defend—it was Paris against the *faubourg*. The Porte Saint Antoine, which I saw in my infancy, no longer existed. On reaching the Bastille, our immense column divided, the larger portion blocking the entrance to the *faubourg* and the Rue de Charonne, the smaller proceeding to the river bank, skirting the rear of the *faubourg*, and descending the Rue de Reuilly, without finding either inhabitants or barricades. It appears that the inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint Antoine had not foreseen this clever manœuvre. We were thus at the heart of the *faubourg* and took in the rear those who defended it on the side of the Bastille. Capitulation was prompt and without it being necessary for us to fire a shot. The principal corps then entered, and before night-time our whole army was established in the huge *faubourg*, from the Bastille to the Barrière du Trône.

To conquer was not enough—we had to live. For three days some thirty or forty thousand men bivouacked there in order to make arrests that could have been made without difficulty by a squadron of horse-police. For two nights—fortunately without cold or rain—we slept on the ground. I slumbered as though I had been in my bed. We had no other

food than green stuff, butter and vinegar, so made salads with spinach and butter. The Convention then recognised our zeal by sending us to our homes. It was quite right in doing so, for we were not fighting for it.

This expedition was the tomb of the popular revolution and marked the dawn of royalist hopes. The reaction was then so perceptible that the subordinate ruffians who had jumped from their small shops to the tribune of their Sections locked up scarves and red caps; like oppressed aristocrats, they said "vous" in a whisper and "Monsieur" in a corner; and asked us for certificates of moderation and humanity. We all gave these attestations, in order to justify M——'s remark that there was not a royalist who had not a Jacobin riding behind him. At the theatres there was enthusiastically sung—and the public echoed it—the song "Le Réveil du peuple." It was a flat and ridiculous apotheosis of the Convention, but the antidote of the "Marseillaise," and this was sufficient to warrant it being received with enthusiasm. I recollect the four first lines of the last couplet, addressed to the deputies:

Suivez le cours de votre gloire ;
Vos noms, chers à l'humanité,
Volent au temple de Mémoire,
Au sein de l'immortalité !¹

But, whilst the pit sang them in chorus, headstrong royalists like myself, for I never belonged to the "jeunesse de Fréron,"—"Fréron's golden youth"—chanted in a less sonorous voice the following:

Suivez le cours de la rivière,
Allez aux filets de Saint Cloud,
Et vous aurez purgé la terre
Et de brigands et de filous.

It was then that the nobles at last obtained permission to return to Paris. So I began to look for a residence for my mother and sister. The apartment in the Rue de Vivienne and the Hôtel de Jonzac had been let; one, moreover, was too small, and the other too sumptuous. At the entrance to the

¹ See Dauban's *Paris en 1794 et 1795*, pp. 359-361, for further particulars as to this song and the days of Prairial.—A. C.

Faubourg Poissonnière, to the left, between the boulevard and the Rue Bergère, I found a very fine house that had formerly been occupied by President Le Boullanger.¹ I took the first floor composed of three apartments. But when I sent the plan of the house to my mother, she took a fancy to a pretty little *entresol* and immediately chose it for herself. Her idea was to reserve the first floor for my married sister. This modest fancy had to be satisfied. The house had to be entirely furnished and we were still living on the basis of an income of 180,000 francs. My mother entered into possession in July 1795. At that period I received for her a reimbursement of 140,000 francs in assignats, half of which paid for the supply of wood for the year.

Thus did we order our new life. The La Goys, who had returned from Chartres, had taken a very pretty little house in the Rue de Caumartin. Adélaïde de Bon lived in the same street with a big son of eighteen, an exceedingly stupid fellow who was ruining his health by riotous living. In order to live, she was mortgaging her fine Fourques estate. Her father and mother were living under the same straitened circumstances. M. de Chazet's income of 300,000 francs had vanished. Poor Félicité de Mackau had been dead a year; two of her children were dead also, the two remaining ones being with Mme. de Chazet. Mme. de Thésigny, a widow, lived on her estate at Fey and her two sons in the galleries of the Palais Royal. M. de Fauveau was almost ruined. His eldest daughter lived with him. Flore, the only happy one of the family, had just become a mother for the second time in Auvergne.

A household of which I was very fond lived in our quarter—that of M. and Mme. de Prulay—whom I had met in the company of Mme. d'Aucour during the winters of 1791 and 1792. The husband was a good fellow at bottom and not without intelligence, but full of ridiculous characteristics. He had a long thin body, surmounted by a head to match, and in the middle of his face was a nose compared to which that of

¹ This surname had been given by the City of Paris to one of his ancestors, who had fed the inhabitants of his quarter at a time of famine, and had become a family name.—F.

poor d'Argout¹ would have appeared flat. This marvellous nose² had been reserved for the kisses of a little eighteen-year-old face; round, white, transparent, and fresher than roses—a face with black velvety eyes, covered by long modest eyelashes—the most amiable, cheerful, *naïve* and sweet face in the world, a true portrait of the character of a woman adored by everybody and who adored but her husband, as her son's nose still proves. Poor little Mme. de Prulay! This household was intimately acquainted with Mme. de Bon, the La Goys, and especially with the Chevalier family, and wished me to marry that muse, that Anne Chevalier, who so far I had seen shine but as a flash of lightning. But what concerned me most was my sister's marriage. She was more than twenty-four—much too late, whilst I was twenty-seven—much too soon, to think of marriage. But men were rare. How many of them had been killed or ruined by the Revolution, exiled by the emigration, or requisitioned for the army!

One day at the beginning of the autumn of 1795, who should call upon me but the little gentleman whom, three years before, I had left on the road to Beaugency when on his way to negotiate his marriage at Fontpertuis with Mlle. de Bonvoust. This good young man, whose very name I had forgotten, had in no way forgotten me; he had looked for me, found me, and come to say that I was ever dear to him, that my company was indispensable to his happiness, that he was expecting his father, President de Marcol, from Nancy, that he was looking for a carriage for him, so that the chief of a parliament of Lorraine should not have to suffer the affront of arriving at his daughter-in-law's *château* in a *coucou*, or passenger van, that carriages had become very rare in Paris, and many other things which he retailed in the same phrase. I persuaded my mother to lend me her old coach, which was getting mouldy in the coach-house, for this expedition, and

¹ D'Argout, often minister during the reign of Louis Philippe, had, in fact, a very big nose; and Thiers said that when he was hunting and issued from an alley all the huntsmen used to fire, under the impression that his proboscis was a stag's antler (A. Chuquet's *Stendhal*, p. 170).—A. C.

² I believe that it was he who, on one occasion, was obliged to blow his nose at the entrance to the court ball-room, the officer on duty having said to him "Sir, take off your nose; masks are not allowed."—F.

when the First President—a tall and very stout man—had arrived, we set off in it, riding post, and reached the Château de Fontpertuis the same evening. Whilst crossing the Loire by the Beaugency bridge, President de Marcol asked me the name of the stream and into what river it flowed!

It was during this short absence that the deplorable affair of the 13th of Vendémiaire occurred. So long as the Convention had had nothing to do save closing the Jacobins club, purging the Terrorist authorities, and taking a Parisian *faubourg* by assault, all had gone well. But it decreed, as a complement to its Constitution of the Year III., which formed a pentarchy and two councils, those of the Anciens and the Cinq Cents, that two-thirds of the members of these two chambers should be chosen from its midst. This measure aroused general indignation, for nobody, apart from its accomplices, wished that it should possess either power or impunity. The Constitution had been accepted only on the condition that it should be treated like the testaments of kings. The Parisian Sections waged battle, and the royalist 10th of August burst forth on the 13th of Vendémiaire, Year IV (October 5, 1795). Bonaparte saved the Convention. It appointed the two-thirds of its members, France only one-third, entirely royalist, and in the two Assemblies was to be seen the strange amalgam of two furious republicans and one pure monarchist. Five regicides—Reffibell, Larévellière-Lépeaux, Barras, Carnot, and Le Tourneur de la Manche—went and held their court at the Luxembourg under the name of the Directory.

It was under the Directory that the scattered remains of good society began to return home. They looked for each other, called to each other, and found each other, but without beat of drum or sound of trumpet; for spies had succeeded to executioners. Neither horses nor carriages were used, so as not to insult the sovereign on foot; silver plate was invisible, so as to appear to have given it all to the Mint. When in public we even made a rather amusing pretence of poverty, eating, for instance, out of *culs noirs*, as though china were too costly. It was the height of good manners to be ruined, to have been suspected, persecuted, and above all, imprisoned.

Without the last qualification, there was neither salvation nor consideration for you in society. People greatly regretted that they had not been guillotined, but said they were to have been the day after or two days after the 9th of Thermidor. There were disputes over the question as to who had been the most unfortunate, that were enough to make one die with laughter, and I recollect the shame I felt at a victims' luncheon given by Madame Le Sénéchal at her Montrouge house on having to bear the affront of being the only one present who had not been in prison !

Thanks to this resurrection of good society, I began to extend my circle of acquaintances a little. The first two I formed were the Vindé and Moley families.

M. de Vindé, who was five or six years my senior, was a small, thin, slender man, with a face that was all profile and a nose that held a middle position between d'Argout and Prulay. Quick, impatient and vehement, his limbs, like his mind, were ever in action. He had a passion for painting, music, poetry, prose, the arts and the sciences. In addition to this, he was romantic in his friendships, feelings, plans and hopes ; a philosopher to his finger-tips, an atheist with a zeal for proselytism, who had snatched religion from his wife and refused it to his children ; a perfect madman of the eighteenth century. To crown all, he had been a Conseiller des Enquêtes, and in the early days of the Revolution the ardent and noisy guide and *concionateur* of his colleagues. He had calmed down since then, but he possessed only two reasonable characteristics : one, that of wholly adoring a woman worthy of his worship and of that of all those who knew her ; the other, that of having a genius for business and for looking after his already considerable fortune with a sagacity which, during times which destroyed that of others, never ceased to increase it. He had inherited from a M. Paignon d'Ijonval, an old counsellor of the Grand' Chambre, his grandfather or great-uncle, in addition to an income of sixty thousand *livres* from the Hôtel de Ville, which he had employed on his magnificent Magnanville estate, some collections of great value : books, pictures, original drawings, caricatures dating from the days of the League, arms, costumes and utensils of all the savage races. The last collec-

tion encumbered his house, so he sold it, and at such a price that he was able to purchase the Hôtel de Montesson, or Petit Hôtel d'Orléans, with its extensive garden. He then disposed of it at a high figure to speculators who wished to build on the Rue Taitbout and Rue de Provence, using the proceeds to buy the fine Hôtel de Grammont, at the corner of the Rue Grange-Batelière, on the boulevards. Under the terrace of this house he built a gallery of shops and in the courtyard a house, and the value of the property was already considerable when the assassination of the Duc de Berry resulted in the Opéra being built at the end of his garden. Part of his garden then became a double gallery of shops leading from the boulevard to the new theatre. Behold what a collection of native arms had produced! M. de Vindé was, moreover, honest, kind, charitable, a warm friend, an excellent husband and father, very repentant for his political errors, and sincerely attached to the monarchy. I saw him the constant enemy of the Convention, the Directory, and Bonaparte, and enthusiastic over the Restoration.¹

Mme. de Vindé was the daughter of old M. Choppin d'Arnouville, the hunchback and inveterate gambler, a man given to fits of anger, which however were soon over. She was not pretty, but exceedingly white with light blue eyes. Her round face was full of frankness, gaiety, calmness and goodness; the true portrait of her soul but not of her character, which was quick-tempered. To her great anguish, she had transmitted her father's physical imperfections to her two daughters, her only children. The second was a sort of monster who happily died in childhood. The eldest remained small but graceful, with an agreeable head that recalled her mother's. She might then have been fourteen, and was already a fine musician. Four years later I thought of her and her parents thought of me, but the ascendancy of the magistrature carried the day. These

¹ Charles Gilbert Morel, Vicomte de Vindé (1759-1842), counsellor to the third Chambre des Enquêtes (1778), president of the tribunal for the Tuileries quarter (1791), devoted to agricultural work and his collections during the Revolution and the Empire, peer of France (1815), and member of the rural economy section of the Academy of Sciences (1824), published a *Morale de l'enfance* (1790) and numerous papers on domesticated animals and agriculture.—A. C.

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old parliamentary families stuck together like Jews. She married Hippolyte Terray, one of my best friends, nephew of the famous Abbé Terray, son of the Intendant of Lyons, a young man of great merit and very worthy of being preferred to me, but exceedingly pious. Mme. Terray died from consumption, leaving three children. Vindé, who detested his son-in-law, declared that he had killed his daughter, morally and physically, and it is true, for Terray was both a saint and a bull.¹

It was in the Vindé circle that that little Académie des Chansons, which had such a great success in Paris, where the dearth of wit equalled other dearths, and the horror of recollections added charm to trifling things, was formed. There were eight to ten of us: Desfaucherets, who could turn a couplet better than a five-act play; the amiable Despréaux,² the soul of all pleasures, a genius for minutiae, and whose only fault was that of having buried some charming songs in two octavo volumes; d'Epinay, Anson, Bourgoing, and Vindé.

Desfaucheret's songs were original; those of Despréaux, gay and philosophical. After them came d'Epinay, the Farmer-General and son of the celebrated Mme. d'Epinay, who wrote the facile, lively songs of the good old times. Anson, the former Receiver-General, turned couplets that were cold and satirical, like himself. Those by Bourgoing, formerly ambassador in Spain, were roughly done, and contained more originality than sense. Vindé polished his, as one does an epic poem. As to myself, whom I modestly mention last of all, I think—if I am to believe public rumour—that my position was elsewhere in our hierarchy.

We dined at Vindé's twice a week. After dinner we formed ourselves into a group, each reading or singing, or having his song sung, the motto for which had been given a fortnight

¹ Norvins knew Terray at college and during the emigration, and says that he was "full of knowledge and in many respects remarkable. He had one defect, or very rare merit—he was timid" (*Mémorial*, vol. ii. p. 86).—A. C.

² Despréaux (1748–1820), dancer and ballet master at the Opéra, stage manager in 1792 and director of public fêtes in 1799, inspector-general of court entertainments in 1815, professor at the Conservatoire, and inventor of the musical chronometer. *Of. Mémoires de Mme. de Chastenay*, vol. i. pp. 337–338, and vol. ii. p. 170.—A. C.

before. Then we selected and drew lots for the mottoes for the following fortnight.

Opposite the Vindés, who occupied the magnificent house of Farmer-General de Laâge, at the corner of the boulevard and the Rue Grange-Batelière, stood, at the corner of the Rue de Richelieu, the house or palace of Le Couteulx du Moley, who, since the Sainte-Jameses and the La Bordes had disappeared from the scene, had remained the king of French bankers. It would have been better, perhaps, to have said the Agamemnon, for this family was that of the Atridæ—Laurent Le Couteulx, Le Couteulx de la Noraye, Le Couteulx de Canteleu, not to mention others, all men of great influence, accustomed to great luxury, with fine houses, and pillars of the financial world.

M. du Moley, who was fortunately seldom seen in his temple, was a tall, stout, badly-built man, with head deep set between his shoulders—a man as common in manners as in tone—coarse, brutal and debauched to the point of ruining himself, which, indeed, he did shortly afterwards. He kept in great luxury Mme. Dugazon, the most charming actress of the day, and at the same time the most perfect hussy, if she had not had Adeline as a companion. The effrontery of this *liaison* was carried to such a pitch that the actress despotically governed Mme. du Moley's house, whilst her brother acted as the husband's private secretary. Such was this foremost Parisian banker.

His wife was the very opposite. A lady of studied elegance, with considerable wit, tact and grace, years and the Revolution had rid her of a lofty air and a brilliant impertinence, leaving her with merely a slight affectation of politeness and a pronounced taste for cultured men and things. Some people made out that she had not been abandoned and outraged by her unworthy husband with impunity, and that in her very real misfortune she had found consolers; but I regarded this as ancient history. When I knew her, she had two big children, whom she adored; she had lost every vestige of youth, and was no longer looked upon as anything else than an amiable wife and an excellent mother.¹

¹ Cf. in regard to Jacques Jean Le Couteulx du Moley, the *Memoires* of Dufort de Cheverny, 1886, vol. ii. p. 20, and in reference to Mme. du Moley, the

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Her son Félix was a good and handsome boy of seventeen—simple, modest and of great promise, which, however, was not fulfilled, for, when Prefect of Dijon, he succumbed to an epidemic which he had faced with great courage.

Her daughter Pauline, who was about eighteen, was not exactly pretty, but had an amiable, sweet, cheerful face and an agreeable figure. I speak of her as a man who has examined her as his own property, for I was very near marrying her. A Mme. de la Pierre had the generosity to offer to negotiate the union, and the proposal was sufficiently well received by the mother to warrant my own making a formal demand. But we had counted without M. du Moley—perhaps without Mme. Dugazon. The Agamemnon of the banking world had other ideas; he remembered that his predecessor La Borde had married his daughter to a Noailles, and so he wanted a Noailles, no matter how. And he found one: poor Alfred de Noailles, the eldest son of the brilliant marquis, former ambassador in Vienna, and grandson of the Duc d'Ayen, governor of Saint Germain.

It was, I believe, about the end of this year 1796 that Népomucène Lemerrier's *Le Lévite de Ephraïm* was produced at the Français. It was not without merit and obtained a remarkable success. We were all very fond of Lemerrier—we who formed Mme. de Saint-Just's circle, and when all its members came to have supper with me after the performance the draft of a parody of the *Lévite* was drawn up on the spot by Lemerrier, Longchamps, the author of a charming opera, and myself. A fortnight later we produced it in Mme. de Saint-Just's *salon*. Lemerrier was the best and most modest fellow in the world—a man of infinite wit and inexhaustible gaiety—in short, the most agreeable society man I have ever known. Glowing with the success of the *Lévite*, he planned an *Agamemnon*, which was wildly applauded, and rightly so. This was the end of Lemerrier. Fame turned his head, and he would no longer take anybody's advice. From *Agamemnon* he descended to *Ophis*; from *Ophis* he fell to *Isule et Orovèse*; and with *Clovis* he came a cropper. In the end he was hissed, and henceforth

Souvenirs of Mme. Vigée Le Brun, vol. i, p. 116, and Masson's *Joséphine impératrice*, pp. 303-306.—A. C.

disdained the public and his friends. Nevertheless, everything bad that he has written contains here and there the sparks of a great talent.¹

Baron de Staël, who had inherited his wife's attachment for my mother, often passed his evenings in her little *entresol*. This excellent man has been ill-judged. His only fault was that of having married for money (he, the handsomest man in Sweden and of the house of Holstein) the ugliest girl in France, a descendant of the Necker family of Geneva. But he paid dearly for his mistake, for, whereas he provided his wife with that pedestal without which her glory would not have spread over Europe, he received from her the reputation of being a blockhead. This reputation had grown in inverse ratio to that of his Corinna; it was the shade in the picture of which she was the light, and everything that increased the brilliancy of the one increased the obscurity of the other. It needed a certain amount of courage, therefore, to dare to say in society what he really was: a man of very good sense, very good manners, very good heart, well educated, a lover of literature, magnificent without exaggeration, and possessed of a very noble ambassador-like face. I remember that in December 1796, he courteously gave a ball in my sister's honour, and invited only those people she herself had selected. Where was his wife at that time? In some place of exile or other, for she had too much wit not to make enemies everywhere.²

I recollect that at this time my mother also gave a ball in the large apartment which she did not inhabit. Paris was visibly reviving, and the first sign of life was that it took part in pleasures. Mme. de Vindé, Mme. du Moley, Mme. de Brégé, Mme. d'Esquelbecq, Mme. Dillon, Mme. Mallet, and others, also gave balls to the best society of Paris. Finally, we had just started those charming Bonneuil balls that lasted all the winter of 1797. Old President de Bonneuil lent his delightful house in the Chaussée d'Antin for them, and once a

¹ Népomucène Lemercier (1771-1840).—A. C.

² There seems to be no doubt that Baron de Staël was then at Coppet. At the summons of the Duke Regent of Sweden, he must have left Paris in the summer of 1796.—A. C.

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week the former *beau monde*, enchanted to find that everything seemed rejuvenated by ten years, assembled there.¹

But I perceive that my pen has set down the names of a few people whom I have mentioned for the first time, and before going any further I must speak of them.

Mme. de Brégé was the sister of that celebrated Mme. de Montullé who was extolled during the last century for her wit, wealth and grace, and whose portfolio overflowed with academic homages. When I met this Aurora and Diana she was but a sickly, shrivelled mortal, who from her divinity had saved but an exquisite tone and a great knowledge of the world. Mme. de Brégé, on the contrary, was tall and majestic, yet exceedingly simple and a very good woman. They occupied together, in the Champs-Élysées, a very fine house, the garden of which adjoined that of the Hôtel de Beaujon, and where the Corsican Sébastiani has since strutted about. The only members of her family that Mme. de Brégé had with her were her two grandchildren, a boy and a girl of eighteen to twenty. She joyfully fulfilled her obligation as a grandmother to give balls and suppers. Her gatherings were charming. On days when there was no dancing the grown-up people played in the grand *salon*, whilst the young ones assembled in the other. This was one of the epochs of my glory, the fertility of my genius having resulted in my being proclaimed the director of the company. Mézy possessed some merit, and we owed him the discovery of the *Lièvre égaré*, but he paled in my presence.

Mme. d'Esquelbecq, my oldest friend, had been a Mlle. de Brion. She had two brothers: one, a very bad fellow, called the Comte de Marolles, died young; the other, whose daughter married M. de Sinety, was the most loyal and fatiguing Aristides I have known. Separated from her husband, the most stupid and coarsest gentleman of Flanders, the Marquise d'Esquelbecq had a passionate but noble and orderly fondness for society, adornment, movement and pleasure. She had made her house, then at the corner of the Rue d'Artois and the Rue de Provence, the meeting-place of all the fashionable people who had remained in or returned to Paris. Her

¹ Cf. Jules and Edmond de Goncourt's *Histoire de la Société française pendant le Directoire*, p. 141.—A. C.

suppers, for those days, were exaggerated in their refinement, her balls charming, and it was at her house that the waltz dared to penetrate Paris. She heard me spoken of, probably well, for she desired my company and asked Tourolle to bring me to her.¹

Comtesse Dillon had been Mme. de Mongé, daughter-in-law of old Geoffroy de Mongé, Administrator-General of Crown Lands, and sister-in-law of my excellent friend De Charnois. She had been considered the prettiest woman in Paris, and she herself still thought so without meeting either supporters or contradictors. Handsome Robert Dillon, who, though one-armed, had, like his brothers, a perfect physique, loved her passionately; and, jealous as a tiger, was not cured of his malady until he had married her. Drawing-room gossip had coupled her name with that of the Duc de Fitz-James, the most scandalous *roué* of the Court. Hérault de Séchelles was paying her attentions at the same time; and Robert said to his future wife, "I should infinitely have preferred your sleeping with Séchelles rather than have Fitz-James touch your little finger."

Robert Dillon naturally leads me to speak of Mme. Mallet. Why? For two reasons. The first is that his household lived on the most intimate terms with that of the banker Mallet, their country neighbour, Mallet having a charming house at Clichy, on the heights of Livry, and Robert having bought, above, the famous Abbaye de Coulanges. The second, which I cannot recall without smiling, was that we thought of fighting over one of the Mallet ladies, of whom I was not thinking in the least, and who, moreover, had not the slightest reason for pretending that she should be thought about. But Robert, with the coldest air, was always in love with eleven thousand virgins—whether they were really so or not. Mmes. Mallet, sisters-in-law who lived together, were the wives of the two bankers Mallet, men highly respected and worthy of being so: the elder simple and polite, the younger a jovial good fellow, semi-fashionable, and of fair ability. The wife of the elder, who kept house, not very pretty and slightly marked by

¹ In reference to Mme. d'Esquelbecq see also the *Mémoires* of Mme. de Chastenay, vol. i. p. 337.—A. C.

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small-pox, but exceedingly fair-skinned, very well made and naturally elegant, possessed wit and grace, and was one of the most amiable women in Paris. Her sister-in-law was a very good little woman of the second order, and it was precisely for her that poor Robert burned and wished to burn me, whereas I had been surprised at her sister's knees—literally surprised in her boudoir, with locked doors, by the brilliant Mme. de Fontanges, who possessed the sharpest tongue in Paris. As a matter of fact, we were rehearsing the scene of a play for the Clichy theatre, but this was such a worn-out excuse. Poor Mme. Mallet swore that in future she would speak to me only in the drawing-room.

In February 1797 my sister's marriage was celebrated. She married Baron de Nervo, son of a former President of the Grand Council of Lyons. He was an exceedingly capable naval officer who had retired from the service since August 10, 1792, a man of thirty, much esteemed, of good character and appearance, and with a remarkably handsome face. He possessed, however, a certain amount of severity, acquired in his profession, a little of his mother's parsimony, and habits and manners which were not always up to the standard of those of the most fashionable world. In short, people said that my sister had made but a mediocre marriage. I lived on very good terms with this brother-in-law, even after his widowhood, even after his second marriage, but without being able to care for him. He also cared little for me. Who was to blame? Perhaps both of us.

This same winter of 1797 was for me the period of another event which was useful to me for the rest of my life and at the same time very amusing. I was not living for nothing in an almost literary class of society. I had written a play that had been received at the Français, another one which my mother thought pretty, the third of a parody, songs that were much thought of, and a translation of the three first cantos of Ariosto. It was time to think seriously of immortality. So I wrote a charming vaudeville entitled *Les Trois Tantes*, in which a young man marries a niece whilst all the time paying attentions to three aunts. I read the work to the council of the Vaudeville Theatre; and unfortunately I read very well, sang better, and

had as judges amiable little hussies who wished for nothing better than to laugh. The play was received unanimously, a thing unprecedented at the Vaudeville, and it was prophesied that there would be fifty performances. The parts were copied out and I jumped over ten plays that preceded me. Everything was learnt and ready before Easter. However, such was my modesty, I had retained the strictest incognito. But everything came out; a few days before, at Longchamps, which was beginning to revive, several people complimented me, I defended myself badly, and on the day of the performance all my friends were in the secret, all were at the theatre. Never before had I seen a better company, nor one more disposed to applaud everything. Nevertheless, my heart beat furiously and I was in great perplexity. But as soon as the curtain rose my uncertainty ceased,—I was perfectly reassured. Before half of the first scene had been played I said to myself: "Oh! but this is execrable!" The public was of the same opinion and, whilst my friends kept applauding, hissed with all its strength. I ended by heartily hissing myself, for the further the play progressed the more convinced I was that the people were right. On leaving the theatre, a friend who was not in the secret said to me: "What a piece of extravagance, what a wretched farce!" "Detestable," I replied, and whatever he said I went one better. "It is said to be by Comte de Ségur," he continued. "No," rejoined I, "it was written by me." The poor man was fixed in amazement. I was to take supper at Mme de Vindé's, where some wreaths, I believe, were awaiting me. I entered proudly and, holding my sides with laughter, related the adventure to an assembly of forty guests. All the laughers were on my side. There is nothing like laughing at oneself the first.

I do not recollect much more that happened during the remainder of 1797. Mme. du Moley, with her newly married daughter, went to spend the spring at Meung in her magnificent country house, bought in 1790. I spent a few days there. A celebrated proscrip, who had formerly, it was said, been the faithful friend of the lady of the place, had found an asylum there. This was Comte Olavidès, a tall, stout, square-shouldered man with a very handsome face, between fifty and sixty years of age. Constantly working on his justification, he read us

some of its passages, which displayed philanthropy in every line. He since obtained permission to return to Spain, and, I believe, the restitution of his confiscated property.¹

Young Pauline de Noailles and I—sometimes even with her vine-prop of a husband—used to take long rides on horseback. Often they were veritable journeys lasting the whole day. We lunched or dined in neighbouring *châteaux*. She wore a riding-habit and turned me into a centaur. I would willingly have been something else had she wished, for I regarded her as stolen property; but she was still on her honeymoon, and it was a little too soon. On one occasion we went to dine at Fontpertuis. Whilst on the way a terrible downpour of rain overtook us, and the poor little woman, who wore only a nankeen riding-habit, was so drenched that she had to stop at a village inn, the keeper of which, a tall, stout fellow, mayor of his commune, was called Ombredâne. The name made her laugh so much that it has remained fixed in my memory. Thence I galloped to the *château* to fetch chemise, stockings, dress, and other articles of feminine clothing. Everything was found, and even a *femme de chambre*, with whom I could very well have dispensed.

From Meung I went with a landowner of the neighbourhood to Vendôme to attend the trial of Babeuf and his companions. We arrived at the very moment judgment was being delivered, and on mounting the tribunal staircase thought we should have been knocked down by the terror-stricken people who were descending. With great difficulty we entered the room where that wretch, on hearing that he was sentenced to death, had just stabbed himself, and we saw only the atrocious faces of his accomplices, condemned like himself. On leaving the court we met some of the most distinguished young ladies of Vendôme begging in the streets for the widows of those who would have cut their fathers' throats.²

I made a few excursions to Chenonceaux, where I once

¹ *Cf.*, in reference to Olavidès, the *Mémoires* of Comte Dufort de Cheverny, vol. i. p. 205.—A. C.

² Babeuf and Darthé, sentenced on May 26, 1797, by the national high court, assembled at Vendôme, to death, stabbed themselves on hearing the judgment. The next day they were carried in a dying condition to the scaffold.—A. C.

more met Mme. Dupin—younger than ever in spite of being four years older—and René de Villeneuve, who was married and a father. We made excursions all over the district; his charming wife and I sketching whilst he recited Racine's poetry.

I also visited the Vignys at Loches. The wife had a great talent for painting, aspired to be a woman of wit, and effected Mme. de Sévigné's style in writing. I have some letters of hers that prove it. But Mme. de Sévigné imitated nobody. The husband, emaciated and bent double since the Seven Years War, was a very excellent man, possessing wit, acuteness, and some pretension to originality. Their son was a little boy and as yet revealed no signs of the great man he was to become.¹

Let me at last speak of Magnanville, where I went to conclude my *villégiatures*. About eighty years ago, it was a modest *château* admirably situated on the heights above Mantes, on the left bank of the Seine. M. de Lavalette bought it and wished to restore it, but his architect did his work so well that the building finished by collapsing. It was necessary to build another, and by degrees it grew in extent, magnificence, and interior decoration, into a royal manor-house. Superb French gardens sprang up around, whilst an avenue a league in length led from the gates of Mantes to those of the *château*. Three or four million francs were expended on it. At last, M. de Lavalette found that this estate, increased by several neighbouring properties, was eating up his fortune, so sold it to M. de Boullongne, the Farmer-General, who displayed a luxury there worthy of the habitation. Magnanville became the meeting-place of the court and the town. The number of apartments and the friends who occupied them was so great that M. de Boullongne had had made a sort of cardboard model of the interior of the *château*, showing the doors of all the apartments on the first and second floors with their numbers. Every morning his steward affixed the names of the guests above these doors, so that the

¹ Alfred de Vigny, the son of Léon Pierre de Vigny, captain in the infantry and knight of Saint-Louis, and Amélie de Baraudin, was born on March 27, 1797, and was eighteen months old when he left Loches for Paris.—A. C.

master on rising could see at a glance what visits he had to pay. The apartments were so complete that, on the second floor, I had a large bedroom with two alcoved windows, two wardrobes, a servant's room, and a very pretty study. The theatre was on the second floor under a little dome in the centre of the *château*, and, so that nothing should be lacking in this place, M. de Boullongne had got together a collection of every imaginable costume. He in turn ruined himself, and M. de Vindé, in exchange for an income of sixty thousand *livres* on the Hôtel de Ville, purchased the domain in 1790. From that time the new owner's magisterial austerity, his wise economy, and especially the Revolution permitted magnificence only in the stones of the *château*, the furniture and recollections. M. de Vindé found that his predecessor had left the beautiful French garden in a terrible state and that an English garden was barely planted; and in this disorder the park was allowed to remain. Life at Magnanville became patriarchal, but accompanied by elegance, good company and good living. There is no denying the effect of solitude produced by its huge rooms on the fifteen to twenty friends assembled there, for people who seek each other's society prefer walls that bring them into a small compass. With this exception, life there was charming. The mornings were spent in complete liberty. Between luncheon and dinner we hunted or rode on horseback with M. de Vindé, who was enthusiastic over this form of exercise. In the evening, after the ladies' promenade, we played society games, and improvised charades or proverbs. The entire stock of costumes was at our disposal. Despréaux was incomparable in these little plays; Desfaucherets, good; whilst I held an honourable position. Especially was I a great decorator. On one occasion when Mme. de Vindé's birthday was approaching, we had counted on having the fine portrait that Gérard had just painted of herself and daughter. Unfortunately, it was still in the artist's studio. M. de Vindé was in despair. "Leave that to me," I said to him. "We'll have it by to-morrow evening." I had seen the portrait once, and my visual memory and facility of fingers for this sort of work was great. Mounting to the lumber-room, we chose a picture of about the same size, but so black that you could see nothing

on it, carried it to M. de Vindé's private room, and bolted the door; and whilst he was grinding the colours, I, with white chalk, sketched in Gérard's picture. Then with pinks I painted the heads and hands, with brown—the hair, with white the girl's dress, with yellow that of the mother, and with a piece of red paper represented a little scarlet shoe that was one of the characteristics of the picture. Eyes, noses, mouths, shadows, even a piano and a curtain falling upon it—nothing was forgotten. By daylight it was a terrible daub, but when, on the following evening, at the far end of a large well-lit *salon*, we were concluding a proverb composed around the subject of the picture's arrival from Paris, the illusion, on the rising of the curtain, was so complete that the good Mme. de Vindé cried out in astonishment.

Magnanville has been razed and Mme. de Vindé has sold the materials. Fifteen years later, when passing through Mantes, I looked towards the heights and no longer saw that noble building where I had spent so many happy days.¹

My sister's *accouchement* brought me back to Paris at the end of November 1797. It was exceedingly laborious, the famous and brutal Baudelocque finding it necessary to sacrifice the child to save the mother. As a result, she whom I had ever seen full of gaiety became sad and melancholy; she whose health had been so flourishing remained sickly. Having no child to suckle, she fell into the hands of Alphonse Le Roy, who did not believe in milk ailments; he treated her—the ass and charlatan that he was—in such a manner that in three years the woman with the strongest constitution that I have known was led to the grave.

I am speaking as little as possible about public events. It is necessary, however, to retrace my steps a little in order to say a few words in reference to the 18th of Fructidor (September 4, 1797), which again threw France into disorder. It would soon be two years since four worn-out hacks and a trace-horse had been harnessed to the pole of the coach of State.

¹ Vindé, in despair at his daughter's death, went to live at the Château de la Celle Saint-Cloud, where he died in 1843. Of Magnanville there remained only the outbuildings, now owned by the Comte de Gramont (*Intermédiaire* for April 30, 1906, p. 635).—A. C.

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They had passed from blood to mire, and from a demagogy to an oligarchy; from the *carmagnole* and *sabots* they had jumped to embroidery, feathers, and lace; for, by force of experience, they had come to recognise this great principle, that superior persons are necessary in society. As these were no longer to be found, they had set about making them. Ten-century aristocrats were lacking, so they had made some whose pedigrees dated back twenty-four hours. It is true that these were slight, but their owners' dirty top-boots were embellished with so much gold and velvet that there could be no doubt of the deep respect the people would have when they saw those five ostentatious men march past, followed by their five or six ministers—the Crispins of the comedy—in similar dress. I have actually seen them thus marching around the Champ de Mars, and without a smile on their faces. What made us laugh, on the other hand, was the sight of Talleyrand limping after lame Larévellière-Lépeaux. They had been provided with a guard, decorations, a furnished palace—and there you had an established Government! What is perhaps the most astounding thing of all is that the performance of this disgusting farce lasted five years.

The wind then changed, and we had what was called the “little Terror,” which for some time spread discouragement and disquietude in Paris. However, few well-known people were persecuted; first of all, because the most important, like Barthélemy and others, were already in another hemisphere; and secondly, because good society was at that time almost entirely unconcerned with affairs. Its existence and fortune were being played for in its presence; it looked on at the game but did not touch the dice.

To return to the subject of the Directory, two of that pentarchy (one of whose members was renewed annually)—Carnot and Barthélemy, the latter the only honest man of the band, were driven out by the 18th of Fructidor. The three conquerors were Barras, a good Provençal nobleman, a *roué*, who was given charge of the department of gaming, wine, and women; Rewbell, a sort of wild youth from the office of an Alsatian *procureur*; and that poor little Angevine Larévellière-Lépeaux. I recollect the last-named only on account of his

famous theurgy of the "théophilanthropes," whom the people called *les flous en troupe*. The Convention had recognised the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. The Directory made a gigantic stride by authorising a cult. Poor Saint-Roch was chosen for the trial. It was not long since the actor Monvel had been seen there mounting the pulpit and shouting to God: "No; thou art not God. If thou art, prove it; thunder and crush me." God had not thundered, consequently he did not exist; the conclusion was perfectly clear. Circumstances had now entirely changed. We saw at Saint-Roch a procession of young men and girls wearing blue and white serge cloaks; the former paid twenty-four *sous* a day, the latter fifteen, and who carried paper garlands and baskets of wheatears or fruit to offer them to Larévillière's God, whilst singing little songs to the accompaniment of the organ. I saw this comedy once or twice, but as only the actors were paid the church was empty.¹

Nevertheless, I narrowly escaped serving this detested Directory. In those days, when things seemed to be veering towards an aristocracy, Terray and I, who were of the same age and opinions, thought of escaping from the lazy life that oppressed us, and had we been offered some honourable post in the diplomatic service, we should probably not have refused it. I confess this wretched thought and Terray has done as much, as he has since refused positions under Bonaparte. I remember that at a dinner given at M. de Staël's, Bourgoing, who knew my thoughts, proposed that I should accompany him to his German embassy. Fortunately I considered this *début* too insignificant and declined. Goodness knows where such a preliminary step would have led me!

At that dinner I met two men whom I saw for the first time, at least in a drawing-room, and who merit mention. One was Talleyrand, the defunct Bishop of Autun, on whom I had not set eyes since July 14, 1790, the day of his drowned mass. This revolutionary of the Constituent Assembly had fled before the revolutionaries of the Convention; and, after trailing his leg on the banks of the Scioto for four years, had returned to

¹ Cf. in regard to the *Théophilanthropes*, M. A. Mathiez's excellent book, 1904.—A. C.

France to seek his fortune, with a frock-coat on his back and fifteen louis in his purse, as he proudly used to say. Mme. de Staël, who had friends as well as enemies everywhere, took pity on him and made Barras see that the Directory could not find a baser or more famished rascal of quality, a more shameless and crafty Figaro. In short, she succeeded in making him a Minister of Foreign Affairs, and on the following day, awaiting the arrival of the good Mme. Grant to rid himself, in the eyes of his new masters, of his episcopal stain, he appointed as ministerial agents three of the boldest and most dishonoured men in France: M. de Jarente, the ex-Bishop of Orleans, which is saying everything; M. de Sainte-Foy, ex-treasurer of Comte d'Artois, a fraudulent bankrupt that had escaped hanging; and Comte de Montrond.¹

The other was M. Laborie, a little unfrocked Oratorian, former tutor to Frédéric d'Houdetot and Caroline de La Briche, a man slender enough to slip anywhere, supple enough to bend himself to anything, and bold enough to attain anything; moreover, a good fellow, with a good heart, good feelings and considerable wit, but as though bitten by a tarantula and tormented by a desire for perpetual movement, which made him throw himself headlong into other people's business. He had amassed a small sum of money with which he shortly afterwards purchased a share in the *Journal des Débats*, which has since brought him in sixty thousand francs a year. But I must not anticipate, for I shall more than once come across him.²

Baron de Mackau was still unemployed, or rather laid by.³

¹ Jarente, Bishop of Orleans in 1788, is called by Dufort de Cheverny a lunatic and a villain (*Mémoires*, vol. ii. pp. 111 and 139). La Marek calls Sainte-Foy a faithless man—"un homme sans foi," ready to sell himself for the highest price (*Corres.* with Mirabeau, vol. ii. p. 51). As to Montrond (1768-1843), a keen study by Welschinger may be consulted (*Revue de Paris*, February 1, 1895).—A. C.

² An excellent judgment, which is confirmed by Sainte-Beuve's: "Laborie, whom I knew well, ever on the beg, ever whispering, ever writing little illegible letters, the agent of everybody, trotting from Talleyrand or Beugnot to Daunou, mixed up and meddling with newspapers, not a bad man and even obliging, but too much a party agent not to be disquieting and sometimes harmful." Cf. Norvins' *Mémorial*, vol. ii. pp. 267-270.—A. C.

³ He was not, in fact, re-employed, in spite of his efforts at the time of the Peace of Basle and under the Consulate.—A. C.

Though he strove his hardest to make the Directory see how useful a man of the old *régime* would be to it,—a noble lord who consented to be a fool, a republican and its very humble servant, he wasted both his time and his music, for he gave little political concerts at which diplomatists abounded. There was always a good assembly of men, but ladies were very rare, and those you met were of doubtful reputation. Among them was the beautiful Mme. Tallien, who, dishonoured against her will, succeeded in getting herself pardoned. It was ten years since I had seen this star for the first time at a ball at Mme. d'Aucour's. She was fifteen years of age and her mother thirty. Six months later this rose was prostituted to a young rake named M. de Fontenay, whom I saw shortly afterwards when on his way with her to Madrid to see his father-in-law, M. de Cabarrus. He was provided with an album containing the addresses of all the *filles de joie* to be found on the road. This infamous fellow degenerated the morals and principles of a child who, separated from him by force, remained a good and adorable woman,—a woman without a rudder, with a fragile heart and a Spanish temperament.¹

After her I distinctly remember Mme. Rewbell, a stout German who mangled the French language rather badly, but the wife of a director of affairs and before whom the baron displayed his liberalism. Her companion was one of those women who for fifteen years remain at the age of thirty: very thin, drawn in, and made up,—in technical language *fort sucée*, much exhausted, through her life of privations; but nevertheless a very good and polite woman, though, like all Creoles, without ability. For this was Mlle. de la Pagerie, wife of the fine dancer Beauharnais whom a cross caper had led to the Constituent and thence to the scaffold. Mme. de Beauharnais and her two children had remained without bread, and through hunger and her temperament became Barras' official mistress. We know the remainder of the story. Tired of her, Barras got rid of her by giving her the Italian army as a dowry. The little general of the 13th of Vendémiaire accepted the dowry and the mistress, whom he later made an Empress, and the

¹ On the subject of Devin de Fontenay, cf. Charles Nauroy's pages in *Le Curieux*, vol. i. pp. 289-293.—A. C.

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marriage was such a poverty-stricken one that old General de Nucé, a friend of the lady and since my country neighbour, told me, a long time afterwards, that he had provided the money to dress little Hortense, since Queen of Holland, and little Eugène, since Viceroy of Italy, for the wedding.

At the beginning of 1798 the state of the finances had almost reached its lowest point. A gold *louis* sold for nearly 24,000 francs. An assignat of three hundred *livres* was given for the running of an errand, one of five hundred for a cab ride,—and this was bad payment! Shopkeepers went down on their knees to obtain a crown piece for what they would formerly have sold at double the price. A large number refused to sell or would only sell for hard cash. But this had passed into the country places or into the pockets of usurers. People lived on from day to day and by contracting ruinous loans, saying: "A little longer; this is going to end." I have known my mother borrow at 4 per cent. per month; it was for a month only, but the time dragged out to a year, and yet she received merely a *louis* as the rental of the Hôtel de Jonzac and two or three *louis* as her *rentes*. In these extremities, she refused to dispose of any part of her capital to pay off debts and avoid fresh ones. Perhaps she was right. On the other hand, however, she would not diminish the expenses of her household. "I spend nothing on myself," she once said, showing me her little flat cap and white dressing-gown. "But my children must retain their position in society, it is necessary that you should find a wife and that my old servants should live. Let us make one more effort; this is going to end." Poor mother! She died before the storm was over. Every Saturday she gave a dinner to certain old and ruined friends, including Carmontelle, and as each guest ate to satisfy himself for the next few days she called it her "*jour d'ogres*"—"the ogres' day," which good Linger, the cook, turned into "*jour de dogues*"—"the bulldogs' day."

I myself was in somewhat embarrassed circumstances. Not that my private expenditure was not well ordered, but when liabilities once exceed assets order merely serves to show that you are ruining yourself. In truth, I had as yet but one creditor. This was my tailor, a lieutenant of Monsieur's

guards, the owner of the Hôtel de Lastic, in Paris, a fine estate in the provinces, and three million francs' worth of property, Dasse by name, who had come from Béarn in *sabots*, who at fifty could neither read nor write, who had a difficulty in even signing his name, but who possessed a genius for fashion and the cutting of coats. He had become three or four times a millionaire by using his scissors, which he never relinquished in the beautiful gilded and bemirrored *salon* of his Hôtel de Lastic, except when he put on his ceremonial black coat and set off, with a little *chapeau claqué* under his arm and his bald head quite bare, to pay his respects to customers; for he was exceedingly respectful and much more aristocratic than many courtiers, who by emigrating had caused him to lose large sums. I liked him, therefore, for being an aristocrat, a good tailor, and an honest man; for such he was, and more, as was later proved to me. Dasse had several bills against me, dating back some years; but as he gave thirty years' credit to all the court he did not trouble me about them. But he knew that in my embarrassment I had contracted one or two debts at 8 or 10 per cent. Now, what did this fine fellow do? During one of my absences he withdrew my promissory notes, and on my return settled the whole with me at the rate of 5 per cent. Tell me how many society men would have been capable of such an action!

Nobody will be astonished at my decision to advance no further along a path that apparently had no ending. According to my customary methods, I took energetic measures and made a vow that until the end of the crisis I would spend not a penny more. So, at the beginning of January 1798, on leaving Mme. Mallet's ball—the finest of the winter—at four o'clock in the morning, I stepped into the *diligence* with Belin and Crispin, after giving orders to sell both my horse and cabriolet, and fled to Loches! There I was the happiest man on earth—free and self-satisfied. I had a good supply of books; Chevalier de Vigny's library was at my disposal. I had a pretty residence, a roaring fire, good health, good cooking, and peace of mind. Thus, between my dog and my my steward, did I pass four months in a studious retreat. I was dragged from it by my mother's illness. She was rapidly

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advancing towards the end of her life, and increasing financial embarrassments made her cast a sorrowful glance on her children's future. I was unmarried and my sister was childless. Everything disquieted her. She began to eat less, and could no longer digest her food. Finally, she saw the condition she was in, and from that moment exclusively occupied herself over the finding of a country house for my sister, so that she could leave the spot where she was to lose her mother. This, she said, was a sick woman's fancy; country air would re-establish her. So our days were spent in looking for a place that might please her. At last we found what was suitable at Auteuil, and in three days the house was habitable. On hearing this—and she would hear all details—she experienced her last moments of joy. "I will go there next week," she said to me. But two days later, on July 12, 1798, she died. Two hours afterwards my sister was taken to Auteuil, whilst I remained to fulfil my sorrowful duties.

This country residence at Auteuil was a very simple but becoming little house with a small garden, adjoining Boileau's house—then occupied by the painter Robert—and the Bois de Boulogne. When the seals were broken, we sold what furniture we no longer required. Money was beginning to reappear, and to give you an idea of how articles of luxury had depreciated in value, it will suffice to say that a superb and absolutely new carpet made for the large drawing-room at the Hôtel de Jonzac was sold for thirty francs! After these transactions had been carried out, we sub-let the Faubourg Poissonnière house and dismissed the servants. All of them, under my mother's will, received pensions; and it is only three years since I paid off the last. The only servitor we kept was Linger, afterwards my sister's cook—a good fellow, rather stupid, and a poor one at his profession, but very honest and devoted.

CHAPTER VI

1798-1799

Poverty—Norvins—Lacretelle the Younger—Mme. de La Briche—Caroline Molé—Mathieu—Mmes. de Fezensac and de Vintimille—Mme. d'Houdetot, Saint-Lambert and M. d'Houdetot—Mme. de Rohan-Chabot—The Fashions—The Theatres—Lectures—*Villégiatures*—Le Raincy—Groslay—L'Ermitage—Grétry—Saint-Germain—Le Marais—The Comtesse de Damas and the Comtesse de Chastellux—Mme. Pastoret—Adrien de Mun—M. de Vaines—Pasquier—Alexandre de La Borde—Chateaubriand and Mme. de Beaumont—Mme de Lubersac—Champlatreux—Sannois—Franconville—Mmes. de Rémusat and de Nansouty—Méry—Christian de Lamoignon.

My life was now quite changed. I spent my leisure hours at Auteuil in drawing up a long and painful balance-sheet showing the state of our fortune. Fortunately we had a notary of the old school, a man whose probity equalled his prudence—good little Rameau who became famous and lame through his adventure at the Pont au Change, where he resided. One morning, his office, which was suspended over the Seine, collapsed, and the poor fellow fell eighty feet on to the water. Every morning I set out from Auteuil, worked with him, and returned home to dine with my sister. The season had scattered all my friends, and deep mourning excused me going to seek them at a distance.

To complete the chapter of my troubles, a letter from Aubépin informed me that by a private deed, signed by my mother, the Alligny estate had been transferred to Barreau, who, audacious knave that he was, had obtained his mistress's signature by undue means. Aubépin—a petty clerk who trembled in his master's presence—had never dared to say a word about it. But after my mother's death, his wife, a little

less stupid than he was, put him into such a terrible fright at the thought of a criminal trial in which he would figure as an accomplice that he decided to reveal everything. We immediately summoned the little man to Paris, obtained his confession in the presence of witnesses, and, after severely reprimanding him, sent him back with the order to keep our secret as he had kept that of his rascally master. I then wrote to Barreau to the effect that my mother, just before dying, had confided in us that she had made a fictitious sale of Alligny in order to save the estate for her children in case of confiscation, that he had done quite right in keeping silence, but that, as all occasion for fear had now gone by, the time had come to annul the deed. The scoundrel knew that there was not a word of truth in all this; but the matter was a serious one, involving as it did the obtaining of a signature by fraud, theft committed by a servant, and abuse of confidence. He would have got hard labour for life with a certainty, for hanging was abolished. I opened a back door through which he could escape, furnished him with a plausible excuse for backing out of his situation, and with an opportunity of showing his honour and innocence. He took fright, and adopting the honest means placed at his disposal, sent me the deed. Since then I have had no further news of this scamp.

We then sold this Alligny estate to the farmer who rented it, and very advantageously—viz., on a basis of 10 per cent. net. This was neither our last nor our greatest sacrifice. We had to sell the beautiful Hôtel de Jonzac and its charming garden, reserving merely the little hôtel built by my mother during the last eight years. The larger house was given away for one hundred and forty thousand francs. In short, everything was liquidated and paid.

However, seated—like Marius—in the midst of the ruins of our Carthage, I said to myself: "Some day you will have an income of one hundred thousand francs." It was an extravagant prophecy, yet it came true. If I were a believer in presentiments, I might recall the fact that, seventeen years later, during the Hundred Days, when I was saving even pence in London, whilst writing my *Considérations sur une année de l'histoire de France*, I drew up the indubitable plan of my

career. I must become a deputy, said I, a Councillor of State, and a peer of France. And I have attained all these positions!

The autumn of 1798 brought our sad retreat at Auteuil to an end. My sister's health declined daily. We returned to Paris. She took an apartment in the Rue du Helder, near the boulevards; I, one in the Rue Buffault, at the corner of the Rue Montmartre. Mine was on the first floor, and consisted of an ante-chamber, a very pretty oval drawing-room with three windows, a study, a bedroom, and another large room, in addition to a *cabinet de toilette*, wardrobe, servants' bedrooms, kitchen, stable and coach-house—the whole, new and complete, for a thousand francs. Two horses, a cabriolet and a groom completed my retinue. Belin's wife looked after the household.

It was about this time that Norvins and Lacretelle the younger were imprisoned at the Force—an event that created a sensation in our class of society, where they were much loved. Norvins, the youngest of the four Montbreton brothers, about my own age and as old a friend as Tourolle, was the last man in the world to be put into prison; for he was incessantly in action, inexhaustible as regards spirits and humour, and so naturally original that when he was in society one had to laugh willy nilly, even though you might have to say, like that nobleman who wept at a Capucine's sermon, "he knows not what he says!" That is what often happened in Norvins' case. He was incapable of planning the smallest conspiracy. He had an exceedingly giddy head and his conduct was anything but edifying. He possessed many women without caring for any one of them. Poor d'E——, whom he had also captured, once said to him, after a tender interlude: "Ah! Norvins, you do not love me." "Of course I don't love you," he replied. "But I've got you, and what more do you want?" His thoughtlessness ruined him, made him commit a hundred stupidities, squander his money, and miss a score of positions, for under the Empire he applied for all of them. He was attached to the San Domingo expedition and returned in a dying condition. He was police commissary at Rome¹ and

¹ More correctly, Director-General of Police for the Departments of the Tiber and Trasimeno. Cf. his *Mémorial*, vol. iii. p. 307.—A. C.

returned with many pictures and maledictions. He was bedecked with white at the Restoration of 1814, obtained nothing, and so adopted the tricolour at that of 1815. He was finally faithful to this last colour, none other wishing to have anything to do with him. He has married, produced books and children, and enjoys his friends' forgetfulness and the world's disdain. On my return from England I went to see his brother Urtubise, accompanied by my twelve-year-old son. We met Norvins on the staircase, whereupon he threw himself on my neck. Pulling my coat-tail, Olivier whispered: "What! you allow yourself to be embraced by that man?" It was Norvins who wrote that the Bourbons would return with the baggage of the Allies.

Lacretelle the younger hid under a cold, indifferent, calm and singularly careless exterior¹ an impetuous, passionate, and even fiery soul. I am wrong in using the word "hid," for he concealed nothing. This characteristic led to my calling him "a decanter of boiling orgeat," and the description stuck. When very young he had come from Lorraine, and Mme. Le Sénéchal, who liked to bring out young men of talent, had introduced him into the best society. Although following an academic career, although his dull and wearisome brother was far advanced in philosophism, the Revolution had not led him astray, and he professed wise opinions which brought him many friends. I had then the honour to be among them, and I believe that he repaid me by a true friendship. Later he was reproached with having exercised the Press censorship under Fouché, but he rid himself of this stain by the joy with which he lost his position under the Restoration. Since then he has written several estimable works that have only two faults: a slight affectation in their style and an exaggerated impartiality. He was elected to the Academy, became a friend of the Minister Villèle, experienced some disappointments, and turned Liberal. We then ceased to see each other.

Lacretelle and Norvins were, therefore, companions in misfortune. But they were well lodged, had good food, and

¹ Lacretelle the younger (1765-1855), journalist, professor at the Faculty of Paris, member of the French Academy in 1813, author of a *Précis Historique de la Révolution* (1801-1806, 6 vols.), and *Dis années d'épreuves*.—A. C.

received all their friends. This prison of Cocagne, which looked on to the street, recalled the ancient Bastille, where people used to have themselves imprisoned for pleasure and out of vanity. They occupied their leisure time for the benefit of posterity by collaborating in a tragedy, entitled *Aristomène*, which they read to us scene by scene, and which Norvins again read to us at Bourneville some years later.

In the winter of 1799 I took advantage of my agreeable apartment to give a few *soirées*. My sister did the honours. I have already mentioned some of the acquaintances whom I had formed; I will now speak of the others.

Order and the heart require that I should start with the name of Mme. de La Briche, whose friendship was the pivot of my society. She had been a Mlle. Prévost, of an honest and not very rich middle-class family of Nancy, and was the niece of a M. Le Maistre, who had made a large fortune in the linen trade—a curious man, who, having bought the estate of Marais, twelve leagues from Paris, pulled down the *château*, and, bit by bit, broke up the materials, so that everything might be new in the one he wished to build. When it was finished he kept it, as it were, under a glass shade, putting on list-slippers to walk over the parquetry and gloves to show and touch the candlesticks. The heiress of this fortune and fine domain married M. de la Live de La Briche, Introducer of Ambassadors, brother of Live de Jully, Live d'Epinay, and Mme. d'Houdetot, and early became a widow. Everybody has known her heart and her star. Under—on first meeting her—a cold and icy exterior that offended and intimidated even those gentlemen, and especially those ladies, who compared her welcome with the brilliancy of her house and society, she was the simplest of persons, the most candid of souls. She showed a sweet and intimate familiarity, an unchangeable equality of temper, boundless indulgence, and not a sign of affectation; and I defy anybody to have conversed with her twice without perceiving that she was the person in Paris who best rid you of timidity and put you the most promptly at your ease. Her star was constant. Ever rich, ever surrounded by an amiable family, numerous friends and the most brilliant people in France, loving society and its pleasures, her life followed one

path from beginning to end—in the same house, in the same company, and in the midst of the same tastes and habits. Kingdoms crumbled into ruins without affecting her.¹ Her daughter Caroline, the sweet Mme Molé, possessed all her mother's simplicity, and, like her, that first icy indifference, or, if you like, dryness, under which were hidden kindness, gaiety, and naturalness. In brief, she was a slightly effaced copy of her mother. As to Mathieu—I give him this name because for many years he did not wish that I should call him by any other—what shall I say about him? What no one knows: the sort of man he was then. He was the son of President de Champlatreux, one of the victims of the guillotine. His grandfather built, near Luzarches, the magnificent Château de Champlatreux, which the Revolution turned into a hospital. The family's fortune came from Samuel Bernard, whose famous diamond I have seen in Mathieu's hands. He had inherited something more than this, for his long, oval handsome face, with the most beautiful black eyes in the world, was very Jewish.² However, it bore a resemblance to that of First President Molé, as represented in Vien's portrait, which had been given to the family by Louis XVI. At the pillaging of Champlatreux this picture was respected on the ground that it depicted "the triumph of the *sans-culottes*"! As regards wealth, Mathieu had inherited less. His mother, in retirement at Vannes, was still living. His sister—not yet Mme. de Lamoignon—divided with him, and I have heard them say that their financial burdens were so heavy that they had not more than an income of six thousand francs to expend. He was then barely nineteen, of pleasing access, cheerful and open in character, keen-minded, and with a taste for profound thinking; he was a simple, good fellow, as yet without ambition. We long corresponded with each other, and up to the time when he began to hate me, he loved me as much as he was able.³

¹ Cf. as regards Adélaïde Edmée Prévost or Mme. de La Briche, Norvins' *Mémorial*, vol. i. pp. 38–43, and Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 231.—A. C.

² Samuel Bernard, son of the engraver of the same name, was not a Jew, but a Protestant, like his father, who was baptized at the Charenton Temple in 1651. He was converted to Catholicism, again like his father, in 1685.—A. C.

³ Mathieu Louis Molé (1781–1855), prefect of the Côte d'Or in 1807, Comte

After Mme. de La Briche and her children, let me speak of her amiable nieces. They were also the nieces of the celebrated banker to the Court, La Borde,¹ a man prodigiously rich and prodigiously sad, and who had lost all relish for enjoyment, apart from music. His good and amiable wife, a Mlle. de Nettines of Brussels, was the sister of the good and amiable Mme. de La Live de Jully, Mme. de La Briche's sister-in-law, and the latter had two charming daughters whom I wish to mention. When I knew them they were women of wit and character. The elder had married the Marquis de Montesquiou-Fezensac, a great lord if ever there were one, but a sort of feudal bear who, after his wife had presented him with two sons, whom he left her to dispose of in Paris, lived in the Pyrenees. He was brother of the celebrated Abbé. One of these two boys died three or four years afterwards when still a child; the elder, Aimery, is now Duc de Fezensac and a grandfather. Mme. de Fezensac was sweet, lively, ever occupied over others, and a model of grace and obligingness. Her only defect was that of being a bad-tempered gambler. Her sister,

and Director-General of the Road-surveying Department, minister under all régimes, and peer in 1815. About 1808 he married Alexise Charlotte Marie Joséphe de la Live de La Briche. His sister, Louise Marie Augustine Félicité Molé (1781-1852), married in 1798 Anne Pierre Christian Vicomte de Lamoignon (1770-1828), who was made a peer of France in 1815.—A. C.

¹ M. de La Borde had an income of eighteen hundred thousand *livres*, of which he made very noble use. "Your Highness," he once said to the Prince de Conti, "has the wisdom to live like a private gentleman, whilst I have the stupidity to live like a prince." When travelling from Paris to his Château de Méréville, near Étampes, he had three relays of five horses. Going there one day in company with his nephew the Vicomte de Vintimille, the latter said, "Uncle, when you want to sell the first pair, you'll give me the preference, won't you?" The very same evening the horses were in his stable, and the viscount's wife asked her uncle the price. "The pleasure of kissing you," he replied, "if you do not find that too dear." At his table each guest found on his plate a list of valuable wines and marked with a pencil those he desired. I heard M. de Bougainville, his intimate friend, say that, on his inventory being made out, there were found twenty-four thousand bottles of West Indian liqueur. When Philippe-Egalité sold the Palais Royal gallery, it was he who bought it. This millionaire was the most unhappy, saddest, and most bored of men, and his misfortune survived him. He lost two sons, fellow travellers with La Pérouse, in a wreck. His eldest daughter, the Marquise de Cars, died young of consumption; the second, the beautiful Mme. de Noailles, died insane; he himself perished on the scaffold; and of his two other sons the only one to live was Alexandre de La Borde, a good and amiable fool.—F.

the Vicomtesse de Vintimille, with whom I was more particularly connected, was quite different ; she was spirited to the point of impetuosity, lively both as regards character and face, clever to the point of originality, and an ardent lover of pleasure, wit and adornment. She was, in reality, a very good woman, although rather egotistical. And how could she help not being that ? She never had had either children or a husband, the former not having been born, and the latter never having known how to produce them. Quite young, charming and newly married, without having yet learnt anything, she used to inform everybody in the most simple manner : " I believe I am *enceinte* " ; whilst her big, thin husband made a sign behind her back to the contrary. With the exception of this deficiency, which alone concerned the household, this poor viscount was a good piece of society furniture. Immediately on becoming acquainted with the family, Mme. de Vintimille took possession of me ; for a long time showed me marks of honour ; and for some years corresponded.¹

I will now speak of the second pillar of the Faubourg Saint Honoré colony—the good, amiable, and eternally young Vicomtesse d'Houdetot,² who made my acquaintance when I was in my cabriolet at the Marais and came uninvited to my first supper. She was then as when she appeared for the first time at Rousseau's Ermitage³ : a laugher at etiquette, cheerful vivacious, witty, prolific in ingenious thoughts and happy phrases, passionately fond of pleasures, invariably indulgent—a woman who had never spoken ill of anybody or anything, who had retained from her youth the habit and need of loving, and, in addition to that, an ignoble ugliness, one of those voices which the people call *rogomme* (*Anglice* : spirits), and a treacherous eye which was looking sideways when it seemed to be looking you in the face. Poor Mme. d'Houdetot ! Her faculty of loving was then terribly exercised ; on the one hand,

¹ On the subject of the Fezensac and Vintimille families, see Norvins' *Mémorial*, vol. i. p. 58 ; and for further particulars about the Lives, consult Mme. d'Épinay's *Mémoires*, as well as the works of Perey and Maugras on the *Jeunesse* and *Les dernières années de Mme. d'Épinay*.—A. C.

² Cf. Mme. de Rémusat's *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 217.—A. C.

³ *Confessions*, vol. ii. p. 9. Her coach stuck in the mud, so she arrived on foot, in boots, piercing the air with peals of laughter.—A. C.

between her old husband and her aged lover; on the other, between her son and the numerous brood which he had brought her back from America.

Saint-Lambert—to begin with the keystone—lived at her house with all the propriety of a respectable *liaison*. For thirty years he had been the arbiter and master of the lady and the house. An Academician of the good old times, living on the glory of his *Saisons*, a dandy and a gourmand, he snubbed the poor viscountess, whom he called “the stewardess of his privations,” though, with angelic patience, she ceaselessly looked after him. In the case of everybody else, Saint-Lambert was amiable and conciliatory.

The second member of the household was the big, stout Vicomte d’Houdetot; affectionate and polite, like a man who is not in his own house. His wife, whom he treated almost gallantly, was unfaithful to him with Saint-Lambert, who laughed over it; yet these two men, lodging and sleeping next door to each other, lived together in the most perfect friendship.

The poor viscountess found less happiness in her children. I will make an exception of her grandson, the amiable Frédéric d’Houdetot, the only child of a charming and ever-regretted daughter-in-law, a simple, good, cheerful, natural man, full of wit and good-nature, and who looked after his grandmother with the most tender devotion. But who has not heard of the follies of his father the Vicomte d’Houdetot, who in his youth was likewise amiable and witty, the image of his son, apart from common sense? His career was shattered by a piece of sarcasm that made one half of the Court laugh and revolted the other. Finding in the ballroom at Versailles a love-letter written by a great lady in her own blood; he wrote these words at the end: “To be continued in our next,” and threw it on the floor. Disgraced and having squandered everything he had received from his parents, he emigrated to the West Indies. It was hoped that he would never be seen again, but one morning he reappeared in his mother’s study, escorted by a big Creole wife and ten to twelve children. Mme. d’Houdetot, whose goodness was inexhaustible, unhesitatingly and without a murmur adopted this improvised family, which thus snatched from her the ease and repose of her old age.

Every week Mme. d'Houdetot gave a dinner to a number of great men—nothing less, for I was amongst them, and a family supper, at which I was also a guest, for I was a great dancing and singing man, and very sociable. This supper was on a Thursday, and I was recruited for it by a lady who was without doubt my oldest acquaintance, since I saw her for the first time at the age of six. Mlle. Le Clerq was reader to the Queen, a great musician, a painter of superior talent, and endowed with a thousand graces. She married M. de La Borde, a very distinguished Farmer-General, the author of a book on Switzerland, and a first-rate amateur musician and painter. He was one of my father's friends, and on that claim I was taken to see this young marvel, who then lived in one of the square pavilions of the Carrousel. The Terror came. M. de La Borde perished on the scaffold, and his widow—ever pretty and graceful—became the Duchesse de Rohan-Chabot. By her first husband, this poor little duchess had a son, the worst subject in France. She was always boasting that she was dying of hunger, and when she died, four years ago, six hundred thousand francs in bank-notes were found sewn up in her pockets.

At these grand suppers ten or twelve politicians conversed around the fire, whilst everybody else played *quinze*, then the fashionable game. It owed its vogue to Laborie, who played wildly, throwing gold about in handfuls, and thus, to his cost, causing it to circulate most amusingly. Wise Tourolle lost as much as he was willing to lose and then left off, won as much as he wanted and remained at the tables, but to play only ten or fifteen louis stakes, and leave off when he began to lose.

Paris was exceedingly brilliant during the winter of 1799. Fashions were beginning to undergo a revolution. For some time past men had changed their long, pointed, tight-waisted coats for a sort of sack called an *Incroyable* with a waist a foot broad, and their powdered hair for black, brown or light-coloured wigs with innumerable curls. We were bordering on the height of the ridiculous. Women, on the contrary, welcomed the Greek costume by degrees. Its first appearance had raised a general outcry, and it had long been left to actresses, *filles de joie* and crazy persons who put up their

charms by auction in drawing-rooms of average reputation, on public promenades and at the theatre. The aim of these ladies and the *nec plus ultra* of art was to show themselves as nude as possible without being absolutely naked. Thanks to this fashion, as Despréaux said in one of our songs :

Grâce à la mode
On n'a rien d'caché
On n'a rien d'caché, c'est plus commode.
On n'a rien d'caché,
J'en suis fâché.

Corsets had disappeared, then under petticoats, and afterwards sleeves. Many little girls appeared in flesh-coloured pantaloons. Women went about displaying either extravagantly ample or scraggy bosoms, and either fat red arms or thin, dark-skinned ones with bony elbows. They wore either a wig *à la Titus* or a Grecian head-dress. The number of these Athenians who, in a few years, died of phthisis because they had danced in Paris in January in a costume suitable for the month of August on the banks of the Eurotas cannot be counted. This shamelessness, which had to be allowed to run its course, explains why it was such a long time before the charming Grecian style of dressing the hair was adopted by people of good society.

As to the theatres, the Opéra, more unchangeable than the monarchy, had merely been removed from the Porte Saint Martin playhouse, which, they said, was falling into ruins, and yet which still exists, to that of La Montansier, opposite the King's Library. But it was no longer a gala theatre. People came to the *foyer* in boots and the gilded boxes were surmounted by a row of round caps. The Français had passed to the little Théâtre de Louvois, where Picard played his first pieces, thence to the Théâtre Feydeau, and finally from that wretched smoky place to the fine playhouse that Philippe Egalité had built for the company at the Palais Royal. The old company had come together : we had still Molé, Fleury, Monvel, Grandménil, Contat, Raucourt, Dazincourt, Dugazon, Mme. Petit, who had become excellent, Mlle. Mars at the height of her genius and charms, and Talma,—without counting Saint-Phal and Damas, who were of second-rate merit, and in addition to Mlle. de

Garcins, a monotonous weeper, a modern Gaussin who made all Paris shed tears but whom I was never able to bear. The Italiens had at last lost their name by replacing the Français at the Théâtre Feydeau. They no longer had Mme. Dugazon, but they had Mme. Saint-Aubin, a past-mistress in naturalness and grace, little Gavaudan, full of wit and prettinesses, and Mme. Gonthier, whom no one equalled or will equal. They also possessed Juliet, an actor who was both original and comic; Martin, a bad-mannered comedian, a poor singer, and yet the public idol; the brilliant Elleviou, ever unnatural, but with a grace and a *verve* that found supporters and perverted authors and actors, for in our day Gonthier and others played no one else than Elleviou, and Scribe did no more than imitate him. As authors they then had Du Paty and Saint-Just, as composers Cherubini, Boieldieu and Lamaria, that charming melodist who died too young.

People of good society also attended two small theatres: the Vaudeville, which has never changed either the class of play it produced or its position, and the Théâtre de Beaujolais, since called the Variétés.

In addition to what we had, the people had its old theatres on the boulevards and two or three new ones the names of which I have forgotten.

Such was Paris in the winter of 1799, and I can recollect nothing so agreeable as the private *soirées* at Mme. de Vindés, who then occupied her beautiful Hôtel de Grammont. I finished almost all my evenings at her house.

Early in the spring Terray and I made up our minds to attend Desfontaines' lectures on botany.¹ The enterprise was a perilous one, for the lectures started at seven o'clock in the morning, at the Jardin des Plantes, and daily. It was a fine thing to attempt, a finer one to achieve, and we achieved it. Poor Terray, who was the laziest of men, reached my house from the Place Vendôme at six o'clock, and we set off together, generally on foot, so as the better to enjoy the fine mornings.

¹ René Desfontaines (1752-1833), member of the Academy of Sciences in 1783, and the author of numerous works, including *La Flore atlantique* (1798), *Catalogue des plantes du Jardin du roi* (1801), *L'Histoire des arbres et arbrisseaux qui peuvent être cultivés en pleine terre sur le sol de la France* (1809), and *Expériences sur la fécondation artificielle des plantes* (1831).—A. C.

On the very first day, however, he thought of deserting. For, on entering the hall, the first person he saw was Mme. de Noailles, still beautiful enough to soften the heart of a stone, and who had come to reside near the Jardin in order to follow the lectures. This Alcine had loved him, loaded him with favours, and then betrayed him, as she had done so many others. He had taken the matter seriously. On seeing her, he turned all sorts of colours, but she, smiling at him amiably, remained pink and white.

At the same time I attended at the Lycée the lectures of young Brongniart, who probably knew much less than Desfontaines, but could impart his knowledge much better.¹ In the morning I listened to La Harpe's lectures at the Hôtel de Bonneuil.

My sister—ever getting worse—left Paris at this time to spend the fine weather at Loches. Poor sister! I have kept her last correspondence written in that year; it was still cheerful and piquant.

From the beginning of June to the end of November the year with me passed uneventfully, sometimes in my study with Ariosto, the eighteenth century and my books, sometimes with my friends in the country.

First of all I remember the Mallets' pretty country house at Clichy, on the heights of Livry, and backing on to the Bois de Montfermeil.

Below Clichy lived the Comtesse Dillon at her Abbaye de Coulanges, with innumerable souvenirs of Mme. de Sévigné. One could still walk along her canal, in the avenue where she awaited the Provence coach, and in those woods of Le Raincy where she saw hunted the "almoners" of M. de Senlis.

In passing in review these excursions in all directions, I miss Ivry which I loved so much, not on account of its very monotonous country, but because of M. and Mme. de Saint-Just, friends of my youth. Neither do I find Clayes, near Versailles, the house of the good and sweet Mme. L'Empereur. But I recollect very distinctly Groslay, between Deuil and Mont-

¹ Alexandre Brongniart (1770-1847), who published an *Essai d'une classification naturelle des reptiles* (1805), delivered lectures on zoology at the Lycée.—A. C.

morency. Good Mme. d'Esquelbecq had a country house at the far end of Groslay, and I sometimes took a pleasure, at the conclusion of the play at the Opéra at half-past eight, of galloping there, on fine summer evenings, and arriving at half-past nine or ten for supper. It was at these *soirées* that I made the acquaintance of Vigée, a very mediocre poet, but a handsome and, at bottom, good fellow, although as pretentious as his sister, the celebrated Mme. Le Brun, was simple.¹

A quarter of a league from Groslay stood Rousseau's Ermitage, then occupied by Grétry. We made a pilgrimage there, and it must be admitted that never did a bear choose a better den. I do not refer to the little house, but to the solitude of the place, with its impenetrable forests of century-old chestnut trees, each spreading sixty feet, and to that terrace of limes where you could still see Rousseau's table and the tall glass vases by the light of which, on summer nights, he composed *Emile*, copied out *Julie* for Mme. d'Houdetot, and wrote the *Contrat social*. Grétry's attitude was very curious. He was astonished that people should come to the Ermitage to worship a divinity other than Grétry. He tried to discover whether pilgrims came to honour the great man who was dead or the one who was living, and would gladly have given orders that only his own admirers should be allowed to enter. The worthy man, who was ever as self-conceited as he is in his *Memoirs*, gave us rather a cold reception. But the fault was his. Why had he gone to live at the Ermitage?

I also spent, that summer, some pleasant days at Malmaison, in the *château* of M. du Moley, whom we fortunately never saw there. Although very far from rivalling Magnanville, Marais, and Champlatreux, it was a fine private residence. Bonaparte enriched it, without increasing its size. The ground floor consisted of a long suite of rooms very tastefully decorated. At one end, that nearest Mont Valérien, was the dining-room, and at the opposite one, Mme. du Moley's apartment, separated from the main road to Saint Germain by a terraced garden.

¹ Vigée died insane. He lived at Mme. Le Sénéchal's. He had appointed himself steward of her house, and early in the morning, in his nightcap and shirt, used to go and sit at the carriage entrance to verify everything that came in or went out.—F.

It contained a beautiful and charming library in solid mahogany, a room redolent of the memory of the Abbé Delille, who, as Mme. du Moley's poet and friend, had been the divinity of that temple.

Whilst on the way to Magnanville, where I believe I passed part of the summer, I made a little sojourn at Saint Germain, to which my aunt De Chazet had retired in order to be near what remained of her adorable Félicité. It was with some anguish of heart that I compared her modest residence on the Grande Place du Château with the luxury with which I had seen her surrounded in Paris. We went to a *soirée d'exercices* at Mme. Campan's educational establishment. This was a girls' ball, and young Hortense de Beauharnais, thanks to her grace and her father-in-law's reputation, shone considerably. As to Annette de Chazet, she was still a child of nine or ten.

Continuing my zigzag route, I went from Saint Germain to visit another aunt, Mme. de Thésigny, who was vegetating two leagues away at the Château du Fay. There also I felt some anguish on finding that this spot, formerly so full of laughter, so animated by the younger members of our family, had become the castle of the Sleeping Beauty.

At last I once more reached the Mantes road and arrived at Magnanville. Terray's marriage had then been arranged, and it seems to me that it took place in the following winter. He was married at Saint Roch (which had ceased to be a "theophilanthropic" parish) by the good Abbé Séguret, who was shortly afterwards to perform the same ceremony for me.

From Magnanville I went to Le Marais.¹ Let me here pause awhile and give a full description of that fairy palace, its gardens, its guests, its occupants, and its charming daily life. In the midst of a pretty valley that descends from Dourdan to Arpajon winds a little river which forms in front of the *château*

¹ Cf. the memoirs of the period, particularly those of Barante and Norvins; also the Correspondence of Mme. de Rémusat. The Chevalier d'Almeida "could not get over the astonishment which the magnificence of Le Marais had caused him" (Comte Fleury's *Dernières années des Bombelles*, p. 22). See also Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 231, in which he expresses surprise that a *château* so calculated to have aroused the appetite of the people, owing to its elegance and luxury and the extent of its grounds, should have been respected at the time of the Terror.—A. C.

courtyards an extensive oblong lake framed by tall Italian poplars. It is called the "Miroir," and it was to the far end that every guest at Le Marais was led at the outset of his or her visit. The newcomer's eyes were blindfolded, after which he or she was guided to a seat and told to "Behold!" Woe to the dullard who did not utter a cry of astonishment! This was the first test, and in my day Mme. de Vintimille had the exclusive privilege of applying it. From the "Mirror" the river passed under a two-storied glass bridge that connected the *château* with the outbuildings. Thence it flowed through the gardens, passing by way of a huge canal, followed by a large basin, and escaped into the open country. At the time of which I am speaking the gardens were still *à la Française*, and on the southern hillside was a fine wooded park with large straight avenues. Shall I describe the *château*? The centre was occupied by an immense drawing-room that was really too royal in its magnificence. On each side was a smaller *salon* with two windows. Small gatherings were held in the first of these, that between the dining-room and Mme. de La Briche's apartment. Concerts took place in the second, adjoining the billiard-room. The large *salon* was used for crowded assemblies. Moreover, at all times you could be where you liked and do what you liked. There was perfect liberty, and you could have lived there like a hermit if you had preferred a cell to the best society in France.

The Marais was still full of souvenirs of Florian, La Harpe, Marmontel, Ducis, the Abbé Delille, and of everybody who had made a stir for good or for evil during the last quarter of a century. But its gatherings had become more tranquil, its *soirées* were no longer published in the *Almanach des muses*, and it had considerably gained by losing professional wits. The company was much more amiable, without being any the less wise. Who were our fellow guests?

First of all there were the two sisters De Vintimille and De Fezensac. One learnt Latin by beginning with Virgil, the other embroidered like a fairy. Then came the tall Viscount, with his sardonic good-nature and amusing indifference; and afterwards the Comtesse Charles de Damas and her daughter Zéphyrine, later the Comtesse de Vogüé, and later still the

Comtesse de Chastellux. Mme. de La Briche and Mme. de Damas, inseparable friends from their earliest years, had remained united by reason of their contrasting characters.

After mentioning these two ladies, I should like to recollect some stupid and ugly vixen to vary and add shade to the picture, but the name of Mme. Pastoret springs to my memory. I hardly knew her, having only occasionally seen her at Mme. Suard's, Mme. de Staël's, and other grand assemblies, where she impressed me by her reputation and kept me aloof, truth to tell, by the recollection of the brilliant house that she had had at the beginning of the Revolution, and where there congregated the Condorcets, the Sieyès, and all the others whom I most hated and despised.¹

In addition to M. d'Houdetot and M. de Saint-Lambert, who were then at Le Marais, I remember but one more household—that of Adrien de Mun, a grandson of Helvétius, like his cousin Mme. de Rosambo. His mother was a very extraordinary, not to say crazy, woman. She it was who, when still a child, had been so well nourished on her father's philosophy that she sometimes told her governess that she intended to kill herself. The honest woman, after repeatedly lecturing her, at last became thoroughly alarmed and told the father. Calmly taking a pistol from his desk, Helvétius handed it to her, with the words: "Madame, the next time that my daughter talks of suicide, give her this." That cured her.

Other men who visited at Le Marais during my sojourn were M. de Vaines, M. Pasquier, Alexandre de La Borde, and Chateaubriand.

Before the Revolution M. de Vaines had been head assistant in the finance department, then an important post. Since, his energies had been directed into another channel. He had become the spoilt child of duchesses, whom he treated very cavalierly, the arbiter and counsellor to great families, such as that of Mme. de La Briche, and all of whom, with the exception of Mathieu, swore by him. But one thing betrayed him: his detestable manners. He was a perfect story-teller, but could not say three words without inserting that "said he"

¹ Adélaïde Anne Louise Piscatory (1765-1843). Cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 204.—A. C.

which belongs to the language of the lowest classes. When Bonaparte formed a Council of State, M. de Vaines was, on his reputation, the first to be appointed. Six months afterwards Bonaparte said of him: "To me M. de Vaines is but a red-velvet chair." Nevertheless, this man, who was so silent at the meetings of the Council and so trivial in society, left some manuscripts that are masterpieces.¹

M. Pasquier was the son of that severe Pasquier of the Parliament, Voltaire's *bête noire*, who one day said to his colleagues: "Gentlemen, we are wasting our time in burning books; we ought to begin by burning a few of the authors." According to custom, the son at twenty was a Conseiller des Enquêtes. Tall, thin, and as straight as an arrow, with long arms and big feet, his flexibility from top to toe was such that he bent in and out as he walked. I afterwards nicknamed him the "perpendicular serpent."

Alexandre de La Borde was the very opposite of Pasquier: a good fellow, natural to the point of childishness, elegant in his manners, full of wit, and enthusiastically fond of the arts. He would have been less agreeable had he had a capable head. This was exactly what Providence had refused him, and he succeeded in squandering the remains of his father's huge fortune by means of his *Voyage pittoresque et historique en Espagne*. He was famous for his absent-mindedness. One day when sitting in front of the fire, listening to a lecture that his father was giving him on this subject, he saw his father's hat lying on the floor between his legs. Taking up the tongs, he picked up this three-cornered brand and carefully placed it on the fire. He ended by marrying a woman who would have been a model of beauty, as she was of grace and simplicity, had not her beautiful arms been disfigured by red hands that were like shoulders of mutton; such hands as would have made M. de Livry² fall from his seat.

¹ Jean de Vaines (1733-1803), Director of Crown Lands at Limoges, then Receiver-General of Finance and a Member of the Institute, was, says Norvins, a man of ready wit and much sought after for his conversation. Pasquier calls him one of the survivors of the Duc de Choiseul's circle at Chanteloup. Cf. the paper read by Frédéric Masson, on October 25, 1906, at the public annual meeting of the five Academies.—A. C.

² Amongst other peculiarities, this brother of Mme. de Polignac and of the

I place Chateaubriand last. Certainly my conscience is not burdened with being mixed up in the general conspiracy which, by force of eulogiums, was then formed against his good sense. Falseness has ever repelled me, and I infinitely prefer simple vices to double virtues. Now, I have never seen Chateaubriand except in beadle's dress. On the one hand, he was a good fellow, naïve, cheerful, taking an interest in everything, laughing and playing over trifles; on the other, a great man, puffed out with self-importance and filled with insatiable pride. I do not believe that anybody could accuse him of being either devout, or pious, or a Christian, and I do not see in his *Génie du Christianisme* any reason for thinking so. But he had the intelligence or the good luck (it is said that, like Rousseau, he found a Diderot who made him change his plan from black to white) to seize the spirit of the times, which is the most important point in every work. He wrote for a frivolous public. Impiety was unfashionable; so he presented Christianity in a series of pictures *à la Van Spaendonk* or *à la Breughel*, and had a tremendous but consistent success. He originated a style and a *genre*, full of talent, but false, proudly ambitious, like himself, and ruined the contemporary school of writers, who took everything from him except his genius. Apart from that, every time that his pride was not in question he was exceedingly amiable, engaging, amusing, and well-bred. He related to us that he had returned from America with a cargo of verses, and that on showing them to his uncle Malesherbes he had been advised to throw them into the fire. Everybody concluded that they had been burnt, but twenty years later he printed them. But I shall meet him more than once in the course of his changes, for I have seen him really constant only as regards two things: his vogue as a great man and his handwriting—that *écriture de grand homme* which he seems to have invented in order to give trouble to Lavater. He came to Le Marais with his mistress, little Mme. de Beaumont, who was the wife,

famous gambler who married Clotilde of the Opéra, possessed that of judging people merely by their hands. It was the only merit he looked for in his friends and required in the case of his servants. One day when a new butler was bringing on a dish he showed that he had a very flat thumb. "Oh! what a thumb!" cried M. de Livry, jumping up in his chair. He could not eat his dinner, and the poor butler was dismissed.—F.

it is true, of the worst man in Paris.¹ By her husband she was a niece of the proud Christophe de Beaumont, the last Archbishop but one. She had been a Mlle. de Montmorin, the daughter of a minister, and was lively, witty, fairly original, and very philosophical. Though almost a consumptive, she used to walk on dewy evenings round the "Miroir," dressed merely in cambric muslin and with her bare head clipped *à la Titus*. On people saying to her: "You are playing at killing yourself," she used to reply: "What does it matter?" She died in Rome, where Chateaubriand had taken her. I have seen the tomb which he raised to her memory in the church of Saint Louis des Français. Apart from the beautiful inscription "Quia non sunt," which is more happy than true, it is a wretched little bas-relief, without feeling or dignity. Mentioning this lady reminds me that I have not said a word about the great man's Breton spouse. They had quarrelled and separated. Nobody then knew her, and certainly she was hardly worth the trouble of knowing, for she had the same character and head as her husband. He had found his counterpart, and probably there was not a second in the world.²

Life at Le Marais was calm, familiar, brilliant and noisy. We talked and conversed; we discussed; we disputed in pairs, in fours, often in a chorus. We amicably seized each other by the hair, then laughed. There were a hundred contrasts, but not a feeling of antipathy. One day I spoke enthusiastically about Mme. de Sévigné. Mme. d'Houdetot accepted the challenge by saying: "I am acquainted with letters that are very superior to hers." "Unpublished ones," retorted I, bounding from my chair. "Voltaire's correspondence unpublished?" she replied. Whereupon I entered into a passion, for, frankly, I knew nothing less epistolary than his letters, and unfortunately I had read them all. We disputed the point closely, and M. de Damas pulled me by the coat-tails, whispering: "For goodness' sake hold your tongue. Such things have never been said to Mme. d'Houdetot!" But we were none

¹ Cf. *Les Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, Biré's edition, vol. ii. p. 255; and Agénor Bardoux's *La Comtesse Pauline de Beaumont*, 1885.—A. C.

² Céleste Buisson de la Vigne, born at Lorient in 1774. Chateaubriand married her on March 19, 1792, at Saint Malo. Cf. *Mém. d'Outre-Tombe*, Biré's edition, vol. ii. pp. 4-9 and 549-552.—A. C.

the worse friends for that. The funny thing about it is that this lady who possessed so much wit wrote like a cook. A still stranger contrast was that Mme. de Damas, who was always theatrical in society, was natural, piquant, and playful in her correspondence.

But let me return to my subject. We fed splendidly, apart from the *vin d'ordinaire*, which was detestable. After dinner, waggonettes were brought out and we went on excursions to Bâville, Roinville, Soucy, Courson, Bandeville and other places, including the little Château de Saint-Maurice, which stood on an eminence half a league from Le Marais, and whence a charming view was obtainable. That was its only merit. Its owner, the old Comtesse de Lubersac, who did her own cooking and allowed her husband twenty-four *sous* on Sundays to go and play *bouillotte*, was not the person to be on visiting terms with the *châtelaine* of Le Marais.

After the season at Le Marais, which always finished on October 1, we went to Champlatreux; from Champlatreux to Mme. d'Houdetot's at Sannois; and from Sannois to Christian de Lamoignon's at Méry. For the society in which I mixed was like a flock of pigeons which, more or less numerous, always came together again.

To go from Champlatreux to Sannois was like passing from a palace to a cottage. For Sannois was nothing more nor less than a fairly good house on the Rouen road, from which it was separated by a little terraced garden. This little terrace developed into a broad alley of lime-trees bordering a partly English, partly French garden some *arpents* in extent. Good Mme. d'Houdetot, who had the inappreciable happiness of finding everything good and beautiful at her home, had, like Mme. de La Briche, her "Mirror." This was a little narrow opening which the painter Robert had conceived and himself cut in the little wood in the garden, and through which, from the *salon*, one could see the turning sails of the windmills of Sannois on the summit of the mountain opposite. Facing this drawing-room spread a lawn, terminated some thirty yards away, by a very fine bed of artichokes. I dared to propose to Mme. d'Houdetot that she should turn these into grass plot. "What!" she replied, "don't you think that

this variety makes a good effect?" In a little coppice called "the park" was a profusion of little inscriptions and monuments. Voltaire's bust in plaster was there, perched on a Parnassus of millstone. But I do not remember seeing that of Rousseau. In short, there was nothing really pretty except a small flower-garden, enclosed by four walls—a very small garden, but the flowers of which, growing on different levels around a fountain basin, hid the walls and formed a most charming sight. Seated there, it was as though you were in the centre of a bouquet.

As to the company at Sannois, to the family and three or four men, such as Laborie, M. de Vaines and myself, must be added a very good neighbour, alone sufficient to ornament a *château*. This was the Vergennes family, which, ruined and in very straitened circumstances, then occupied a small country house at Franconville. Everybody knew Mme. de Vergennes, her very large nose, and her wit, which—more pointed than that organ—was full of roguishness but quite devoid of spite. She was the daughter-in-law of Vergennes, the celebrated minister, and his son's widow. With her appeared her two daughters, who certainly did not form the shadow in the picture. The elder had married M. de Rémusat, a good young man of Marseilles who in lieu of a great name had the air of possessing a small fortune. The younger, Alix—very deformed and rather ugly—was still Mlle. de Vergennes, a girl sparkling with wit and originality. She it was who became Mme. de Nansouty when the horn of abundance turned towards this family, and the two sisters became such great ladies through and for Bonaparte.¹

Life at Sannois was an exact copy of that at Le Marais. The only difference was in the excursions. We visited every part of the beautiful valley of Montmorency, where *châteaux*

¹ Cf. Norvins' *Mémorial*, published by Lanzaac de Laborie (vol. i. pp. 292–295). Frénilly is in error in making Mme. de Vergennes the minister's daughter-in-law. Elisabeth Adélaïde Françoise de Bastard (1760–1808) was the wife of the nephew of M. de Vergennes, ex-Intendant of Auch, who was guillotined on the 6th of Thermidor. Her two daughters are well known. The younger, Jeanne Françoise Adélaïde (1781–1849), married General de Nansouty; the elder, Claire Elisabeth Jeanne (1780–1821), a lady of Joséphine's palace, was the author of *Letters* and *Mémoires*.—A. C.

were so numerous that they almost touched each other. All were in ruins or deserted, but still standing. It was not until the return of the Bourbons that they began to fall—not until then that hope received the *coup de grâce!* We visited Epinay, which later became so dear to Mme. d'Houdetot, the lake of Montmorency, Enghien, Margency, Saint-Leu, and Cernay, quite near to Sannois, the place of residence of that Mme. Boutin for whom, ten years before, I had had such a cordial aversion. She had quite changed in opinions and appearance, and Sannois being full it was at her house that I had to take up my quarters. As she was no longer a Jacobin and as I—in the words of Mme. d'Esquelbecq—had become a society favourite, she gave me a welcome that instantly effaced all disagreeable recollections.

At the beginning of November, Mme. d'Houdetot permitted us to spend a few days with Christian de Lamoignon at Méry. I made this journey and little sojourn with Mme. de La Briche, her daughter and son-in-law. We were going from bad to worse, for Méry was the gloomiest of *châteaux*. You entered, as in the case of a Paris house, by a carriage-entrance, which opened on to a square courtyard flanked on three sides by the ancient manor-house and its wings, and closed on the fourth by the church. Only the cemetery was wanting. The interior was no better. But once you got outside there was a change. A fine park led to the banks of the Oise and joined on to its magnificent valley.

As to Christian, I can find nothing but what is good to say of him. He was, without a doubt, the best of those eight children whom Lamoignon, the Keeper of the Seals, called his quadrille. His brother Auguste—in rather bad repute—lived outside the pale of society with a mistress. Mme. Molé, Mathieu's mother, seized with religious fervour, had followed her spiritual director, the Abbé de Pancemont, to Vannes. Mme. de Caumont did just the opposite and Mme. de Brou lived on an estate. Christian was what is called a handsome man—a perfect man of society with a gentle, fair and prepossessing face; ever well groomed, informally polite, reasonably cheerful, affable and good-mannered, without having much wit, which he loved to see, however, in others. He

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had retained from the unfortunate Quiberon expedition an injury to his leg which made walking painful, and which later became more serious.¹ His wife, a Mlle. Molé, was his niece, then quite young and still timid, though this has since worn off.

It was during this little sojourn at Méry that the Revolution of the 18th of Brumaire occurred. Bonaparte had fled from Egypt, ~~as he fled from Russia and from Waterloo.~~ A general does not flee—he retreats. But Bonaparte was ever the general of Fortune, and every time that she abandoned him he fled like a soldier, leaving the others to get out of the difficulty as best they could. This man, then, crept out of Egypt by night, glided between the English frigates and entered Paris. There he had but to stoop and take what he wanted. France—after passing, during eight years, from the anarchy of revolutionaries to the anarchy of political comedians—was eager for the despotism of a single man. Bonaparte came and took her, or rather received her, for on the 18th of Brumaire he lost his head, and had it not been for his brother Lucien, the day on which he mounted to a throne might have seen him mounting a scaffold. The Directory no longer existed. Joy was general and hopes were boundless. This man wished to reign; therefore he would walk in monarchical paths; he would give Peru to his accomplices, a yoke to the rabble, honour and peace to France, and to us forgetfulness and liberty. We could not desire more. But let me leave the history of France and the world and content myself with my own. For it is now time to speak of my marriage.

¹ In reference to these Lamoignons (who were seven, not eight), Mme. d'Aguisseau, Mme. de Brou, Mme. de Champlatreux, Mme. de Chaumont-la-Force, "so long the prettiest woman in Paris," and Christian, who was "endowed with the most perfect sociability and the most equable urbanity of manners" see Norvins' *Mémorial*, vol. i. p. 137.—A. C.

CHAPTER VII

1800-1806

Death of the Author's sister—His marriage—M. and Mme. de Mony—Rameau and Cavaignac—Bourneville—Bad years—*Châteaux* and lords of the manor—The Thurys—Ferté-Milon—Villers-Cotterets—Crépy—The Wolves—Louis—The Peasants—Parisian *Salons*—M. de Sommarriva—Mme. de Rumford—Birth of Claire—Aignan—Work at Bourneville—Birth of Olivier—Journey in Poitou—Napoleon's Coronation—Return to Paris.

At the beginning of the summer Rameau, my little notary, had said to me: "Sir, you must think of marrying. I have a match to propose to you—a widow." I made a grimace. "Young," he added. I smiled. "And who possesses a very fine estate near Paris." I listened. Fortunately the little man knew nothing about the condition of that fine estate and its burdens, otherwise he would never have made his proposal. Fortunately, he acted inconsiderately. Had he shown prudence it would have cost me my life's happiness. I must now explain from whom this overture came, and in doing so I shall be obliged to go back to the beginning of all things. My uncle, Saint-Waast, had been a very gallant man and was not short of bastards, whose fortune he had made. The eldest and the only one who was born before his marriage was a M. de Mony, who was treated almost as a son by his wife, and provided by him with a good position. He was a tall, stout man, florid and jovial, by no means lacking in wit and greatly recalling his father. He had met in Champagne two Mlles. de Grandpré, the last descendants of the illustrious house of Joyeuse, who, having reached their majority and being not over rich, lived alone near the Château de Grandpré, an ancient family inheritance, and since the property of M. de Sémonville. The

younger—a lively, rather romantic, and very philosophical girl—took a fancy to M. de Mony, married him, and came to live with him in Paris, where she kept a good house. But never would she approach that of M. de Saint-Waast, through a feeling of delicacy, in the case of a person of her birth, rather than pride. So M. de Mony frequented his father's house alone and in the *rôle* of a bachelor. He frequently met my father and mother there, and was received by them with all the friendship and cordiality of a relative. This delicate attention had made a deep impression upon him, and he had remained devotedly, almost gratefully, attached to my mother.

With the Revolution came the law that enabled natural sons to succeed to their fathers' property, a law which, as it was retroactive in its effect, despoiled legitimate heirs of inheritances to which they had already succeeded. Under these circumstances M. de Mony had but to step forward to spoliates my mother of M. de Saint-Waast's entire fortune. But he did not do so. He was an aristocrat, an honest man, not very anxious to declare himself a bastard, and in addition his wife had Joyeuse blood in her veins. But his brothers seemed disposed to seize the fortune which he refused. In the case of his refusal the law allowed them to accept, so they pressed him either to act or to renounce. We were regarding ourselves as ruined when M. de Mony wrote to my mother from Grandpré to say that the only means he had of saving her was to declare his birth and come into his rights, which he would then hand over to her. God forbid that I should go any further into this business, which cost us a year's time, great expense and infinite trouble, but which at last ended to the satisfaction of M. de Mony and the great disappointment of his brothers. And that is what a noble heart, an amiable welcome, and a gracious smile brought my mother. A haughty, unpleasant woman would have lost three millions.

Now, M. de Mony was in society relations with a M. de Fortier, who wished to marry a niece, a young widow, owner of a fine estate near Paris; likewise a great friend of a M. Boyer, owner of a small estate neighbouring the other. He made inquiries, formed his plan, and, as he was, with all his merits, the most fastidious and one of the most curious

man I have ever known, placed this overture in the hands of my notary, instead of communicating with me direct.

This marriage proposal—vaguely entered upon at the commencement of the summer—dragged on for two or three months for three reasons: first, my bachelor life was very agreeable and I was no longer in a hurry to marry; secondly, I wished for my sister's return in order to consult her; and thirdly, they wished to show me this fine estate, as in the case of Armide's gardens, in order that they might enchant me should Armide herself fail to do so. Now this visit, so as not to have the air of that of a bargaining purchaser, had to be arranged as though it were a neighbourly one. M. Boyer's estate at Vernelle was a suitable place from which to pay it, but the Monys were not to be there until the autumn. My life, therefore, went on just the same, except that I cultivated their acquaintance a little more closely and learnt to know that Mme. de Mony who had ever been invisible to my family. Noble pride was the base of her character. She had a loving heart, a generous soul, a gay, open disposition, a piquant and original mind, but not enough prejudices for a woman. Her tone was not exactly up to the standard of the society in which I moved, but she was nevertheless a *grande dame*.

It was not, therefore, until the end of September that, in company with M. and Mme. de Mony, I was at M. and Mme. Boyer's little castle of Vernelle. The latter, whom I did not know from Adam and Eve, were from fifty to sixty years of age, well-to-do, hospitable, possessors of a well-kept house, common and yet the most obliging people in the world. After two days spent over billiards and whist, M. Boyer ordered his *carriages* and we set off to take a general look at my future possession. But we found the place closed. "Good," said I *in myself*, "they are evidently well guarded." After ringing, knocking, and calling for a quarter of an hour, one of Armide's *waiters* came in her *sabots* to introduce us into an immense *enclosure* planted with trees and provided with stables, cow-stalls, sheep-pens, poultry-houses, &c. But not a sound could we hear of horses, cows, sheep, or poultry. All was solitude and silence, with here and there heaps of manure, stones, tiles, and scattered beams and laths. I have not yet forgotten this

first inauspicious impression. The wind, which never ceases to blow in this fine district, was very cold. "Let us walk round the park to warm ourselves," said my companion. On one side of the *château* and as far as the main road was a large tract of uncultivated land, without either grass or trees, partly tilled and well covered with stones; on the other an esplanade of yellow sand, dug out in various parts; alleys, some overgrown with grass and others encumbered with stones; and here and there superb clumps of trees, arranged without order or plan. Half of the park was without walls, whilst doors, ice-houses, and walls were either in ruins or only partly built. At every step one could see traces of an anglo-maniac, a lunatic who had dreamed of making a Blenheim but had only succeeded in producing a quarry, who had died at his task, leaving, after six weeks of marriage, a widow whose fortune he had not had the time to squander. His name was Praudeau de Chemilly, and he had formerly been a Treasurer-General of Maréchaussées. It was to this crack-brained fellow of fifty, who was hopelessly ruined, as a glance at the first mortgage register would have shown, that my future father-in-law¹ had given his daughter of twenty-six, and with her the prospect of a very fine fortune, in return for very fine properties on which innumerable creditors had claims.

We finished our walk at the *château*, which on one side looked on to the sand-pit, on the other on to treeless meadows and marshes traversed by the Ourcq Canal, and beyond which was a succession of plains and woods. Only the *château* had a promising air and held forth consolations. But when, after ringing and re-ringing at the kitchen gate, that good fellow Mounier (since my *conciergerie*) arrived, he informed us that we could not enter, not even to warm ourselves in the kitchen.²

Such was the result of my first expedition to Bourneville.

¹ Pierre René Mullan de Saint-Preux, Lord of Saint-Martin, who was born at Grande-Terre, Guadeloupe, November 29, 1751, and who married Alexandrine Marthe Fortier, had been a gendarme in the King's ordinary guard (1763-1775), a muster-master-general at the close of 1780, and an *employé* at Angers in 1786. He was placed on half-pay in 1788, and died in Paris on October 11, 1822.—A. C.

² Bourneville, which will be mentioned so often in these *Memoirs*, is a league from La Ferté-Milon, and forms part of the commune of Marolles (Oise, arrondissement of Senlis, canton of Betz).—A. C.

We returned to Vernelle dejected and with chilled imaginations. However, I was not discouraged, I knew that the estate was a fine one, and its bareness and ruins troubled me little. All my life I have had a passion for arranging and creating.

I returned to Paris with the good Monys, who had gone to Vernelle solely on my account. My notary was then placed in charge of the business part of the affair and Mme. de Mony of the sentimental. Women make rapid progress in these matters. A few days later Mme. de Mony arranged with the young widow to go to the theatre, and by handing me a box ticket enabled me at last to see my Armide. She did not impress me. Not that she made the same impression as her gardens had done; she simply did not please me. She was ugly, with chinese-like eyes, tall and well-made, but so thin that, after my good aunt De Chazet had seen her, she said to me, with tears in her eyes: "Child, that poor bony little thing won't live a year."¹ I took walks with her, conversed with her, found that there was something stiff about her, that she was embarrassed and hid her best characteristic—naturalness. I ought to have remembered that this had exactly been my own position and perhaps was still. Others in my place would not have carried the matter further. But, as I wrote to my sister: "What attracts me towards her is the very fact that she does not please me." Poor sister! What a pity she did not live to witness my happiness, to see those desolate gardens become charming and mentioned as so, those marshes covered by a forest of fine trees, that debt-burdened estate reach the value of fifteen hundred thousand francs, without a penny being owing to anybody, what a pity she did not live to see that poor bony little thing with chinese-like eyes become plump and blooming, that stiff-mannered person, simple, full of taste, natural and witty, that timid woman become in tone, dress, and manners the equal of her best models, beloved and sought after by the most distinguished people of Paris, and, finally, that apparently dry and severe woman become the sweetest, tenderest, most devoted of wives and mothers.

Thus, then, was I introduced to her. I went to see her

¹ Mme. de Frénilly lived until the age of ninety!—A. C.

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often, finally every day, for every day I saw the ice melting and my first impressions disappear.

Such were my occupations when, about the end of October, my sister arrived. Alas! in what a state she was! Her letters were those of a sick person, but her face was that of one dying. Her strong constitution had held out three years. All was over, she had but a very short time to live: and yet she still went about, superintended the affairs of her household, received company, and, to please her husband and myself, accepted illusions that I believe she did not share.

Next to my own marriage, which, as she attached great importance to it, she hastened on more than myself, the matter that occupied her thoughts the most was another union which she had negotiated between her cousin De Fauveau and Mlle. Hippolyte de Lapierre, a tall, beautiful girl against whom there was nothing to be said except that her nose resembled a little too much that of the handsome M. Le Couteux de Canteleu. The wedding was celebrated at the beginning of December at a pretty country house which Mme. de Lapierre owned near Rouen, where her husband was Director-General of Customs. I was present and spent three days there in company with the cream of the customs' officials of Normandy.

On returning from Rouen, I paid my official visit to Bourneville—not like a thief, as on the first occasion, but as a guest and awaited by my young widow. She was alone with her father, and out of respect for propriety good M. Boyer was urged to accompany me. As it was freezing hard, I entered on my romance with numb fingers. But this time Mounier opened the door, there was a good fire, and I at last saw the *château*, which, indeed, although entirely bare, was charming. They had been able to sell neither its fine proportions, nor its frescoes, nor its exquisite sculpture, nor its marbles, nor its profusion of mirrors and mahogany. We spent three days there. My companion wished to leave me, and I would willingly have stayed on had not my hostess, with very good taste, driven me away.

However, things were so far advanced between us that we promised to write to each other and give a full and truthful description of ourselves. She was to remain in the country for

some time and the state of my sister's health would not permit matters to be hastened. My poor sister, through hearing me speak of my young widow every evening, had gradually grown very fond of her. It was a great grief to her not to see her; she sought to look into the future and see me happy with her for her physical weakness had made her less cold towards me. "I have not known you sufficiently well," she once said to me; "I have not loved you enough." She was exceedingly anxious to make a wedding-present to my wife, and this present, alas! ended in becoming a legacy. This gift was a very fine necklace, of which she was very fond, and which she always wore. "Do you think," she said to me, "that she would accept it?" Her husband was present. "Mon ami," she said to him, "what do you think?" He did not reply, but his silence said: "This necklace will be my property in a fortnight's time."

I lost my sister about three weeks after my return from Bourneville—January 16, 1800. Consciousness and even her voice remained with her until the last gasp. She died full of life, except as regards her lungs, which had been destroyed by the corrosiveness (*sic*) of her milk and no longer enabled her to breathe. I passed the last night by her bedside. Her husband was asleep. She pointed this out to me with a sad smile. She was eager to speak, to converse with me, to continue to live with me. For the first time she asked me to kiss her. I begged her to rest and not to fatigue herself. Unworthy and barbarous stupidity! I was refusing to grant her last consolation. "Is it on account of to-morrow that you wish me to rest?" she replied. "Well, let us talk to-night and to-morrow I will rest." And rest, indeed, she did—for ever!

When my first grief was over, I returned to my marriage project. Whilst I had been lightly skimming along the surface, little Rameau had been hard at work. "Monsieur," said he, "proceed cautiously. Conclude nothing before this inheritance is definitely settled, otherwise you will wed yourself to lawsuits." He was right; worldly wisdom enjoined me to wait. But had I been wise, I should have had to wait for ten, nay, fifteen years; and what would then have become of my life.

Wisdom from on high decided that I should act unwisely. I had become attached to my young widow and she to me. I felt that it would be unworthy to withdraw. So Rameau was praised, approved and dismissed, whilst Alexandrine was asked in marriage. Those were fine days for poverty, for everybody was poor and nobody troubled their heads about it. Mme. de Vintimille, Mme. de Fezensac and other beautiful ladies of that brilliant society which I have described, arrived quite well by the Arpajon *diligence* at the palace they had formerly entered with a coach and six horses. Luxurious living did not really make its reappearance until Paris had a Court. It is true we did not go there. But gradually we begun to half open our doors to women who did—then to open them wide, and in this way people came to have a desire to be as well dressed and as well provided with carriages as they were. In 1800, however, no such troublesome comparisons were made, or at any rate they did not as yet ruin any one. A bride was not condemned to show in public her stockings and chemises, so mine kept her trousseau to herself. A future bridegroom was not bound to spend a whole year's income on *chiffons* and precious stones. I submitted, therefore, and with fairly good grace, when she insisted on my restricting myself to resetting her very modest diamonds. The etiquette formerly observed during the time of the engagement and the marriage contract *rout* no longer existed, and people were condemned to be happy without either a noise or a crowd. Half my days were spent at her house in the Rue de la Ville l'Evêque, conversing, reading, making plans, or taking walks together. She had not kept up relations with her first husband's family. Only once did I see at her house Mme. d'Avignon, M. de Chemilly's sister, and his niece, Mlle. de la Blache, who afterwards became Mme. d'Haussonville.

Alexandrine was not defenceless. There was a man, a stranger who saved her, and I should be very ungrateful if I were not to mention him. He was an attorney named Cavaignac, a man of resource and intelligence. After he had protected her from preliminary attacks by obtaining for her the administration of the inheritance, he said: "Madame, they have robbed you of Bourneville. You must buy it back." The poor woman started back in astonishment, exclaiming, "But, sir, I

have no money!’ “You are not asked for any,” replied Cavaignac. “First of all, estates are still sold for a mere nothing”—and, indeed, she got it for two hundred thousand francs—“secondly, the price will be due to a hundred creditors; a part will be due in rents, and the remainder won’t come until they have finished devouring each other.” So she resigned herself to this plan, and when I married her not a penny of the money had yet been paid. That was why good little Rameau had heaved so many sighs, which fortunately had made no impression upon me. But to return to Cavaignac; he made me pay dearly for his immense services, for he was the most indefatigable and tedious babbler I have ever known, passing from digression to digression, and leaving the subject of your business to talk about politics, sport, or painting. I did not dare say to him, “Advocate, return to your subject”; for he was devoted, brusque, hot-headed, and, whilst improving his client’s affairs, conducted them in a masterly manner. One evening we had a consultation at the house of the celebrated Poirier. It was entirely taken up by a discussion on how to grow melons, and this cost me four louis!

We signed our marriage contract on June 6, 1800. My witnesses were M. de Mony and Norvins, who had promised to make the future bride laugh during the whole time it was being read, and who kept his word. As to those of my wife, I can remember only her uncle M. de Fortier, whose pale face and dull mind and character do not prompt me to say a word. At the head of the family was a grandmother of eighty-five, a very extraordinary woman who lived in retirement in a country house at Neuilly—a wealthy, ill-natured, capricious and witty old creature, whose avarice was as strange as herself.¹ On the occasion of my marriage, and at the birth of my first child, whose godmother she was, we did not receive a franc piece; but when my son was born she wrote to say that she had two houses at Meaux and that I was to choose one of them. I went to see them; after which I begged her to make the choice herself. Her reply was: “Take them both.”

A few days after the signing of the contract we left for

¹ Perette Leroy, first cousin of Julien David Leroy, member of the Academy of Belles-lettres in 1773.—A. C.

Bourneville, where I believe that the guests, in addition to my wife's father and her pale-faced uncle, were the Monys, the good Abbé Séguret, who was to marry us, Bréjole, Norvins and his elder brother. The spring, our happiness and hope, had changed the desert into a place of gladness. It had become a bouquet of flowers, and its forest of acacias perfumed the country for half a league around. Faithful Belin, who had brought my horses from Paris, said to me: "Monsieur, I began to smell how good this place is a league from here." He was beside himself with joy at being able to witness the end of my romance, and asked to be allowed to embrace me, a request I accorded with all my heart. He was as attached to me as my dog Crispin. Not long before, one summer evening, the servants had taken advantage of the fine weather to lay their supper in an alley of the garden on the banks of the river; and whilst walking about my sister and I happened to approach them under favour of the night. They were talking of their masters, and I had the pleasure of hearing Belin say: "As to Monsieur, I admit he's not always easy to get on with. You've got to be clean, punctual, and not answer back. But, on the other hand, he's as good as bread, and both just and generous." My sister pressed my arm, and whispered, "Happy man!" Belin died in my service, and I have pensioned his widow.

We were married on May 30, 1800, in the little drawing-room at Bourneville transformed into a chapel. Nineteen years afterwards, my daughter's wedding recalled this modest private marriage. Apart from the rooms that had been hastily got ready for our few guests who were very badly put up, the *château* was not yet inhabitable. The place was full of workmen. There was a tremendous amount of work to be done and very little money with which to do it. But I had chosen; I was young and happy, full of love and loved. I had entered into a compact with the future.

Here, since so many novels end with marriage, my romance ought to be brought to a conclusion. What shall I say if I continue it? But what shall I do if I remain silent? What pastime shall I find in a Trieste inn on this 5th of January, 1838? Is it not better to twaddle than to vegetate; I shall

see. The night gives time for consideration and from *ennui* sometimes springs courage.

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Once more I have taken up my pen. Our Bourneville household was exceedingly simple, but such as it was it would have exceeded our means had we not promptly come to the resolution to leave Paris after my wife's confinement, which was due in the following winter, and stay in the country until we were able to live in the capital in a fitting and agreeable manner. Our means were very small. After deducting our heavy expenses and the interest on the price of Bourneville, there remained a net income of ten to twelve thousand francs. Moreover, there was then at Bourneville but one thing of very great value—its flock of merino sheep, the first that had been brought from Spain at the time of M. Trudaine's stewardship, long before that of Rambouillet. On its arrival in France, this flock numbered three hundred animals, which were divided into three equal lots. The first was given to Comte de Barbançois, in Berry; the second to M. Daubenton, at Montbard; and the third to M. de Chemilly. Considerably increased, very celebrated and very productive, the Bourneville flock was sold by auction, like the rest of things, and my father-in-law was able to save but half, which went at very much under value.

What was to be done with so small a revenue? I did everything I could to economise, and my wife spent but six hundred francs on her toilette, yet was well dressed. But it was impossible for me, during those early years, to make any improvements at Bourneville, though my fingers were itching to undertake them. This was my greatest annoyance. Then there was the retinue of servants! Gardeners and keepers were indispensable if the estate were to be saved from ruin. Besides, there was not one of them who was not a creditor, and we could not have dismissed them unpaid without being cruel. Our staff, therefore, consisted of seven servants. First of all, there was my father-in-law's old servant and his wife who did the cooking—both of them Bretons, the excellent Belguises, who could look back to the time of my wife's birth. There were also three other women: the daughter of the

Belguises, a *femme de chambre*, and a kitchen-maid. Then two men: Belin, my coachman, and Mounier, who was *concierge*, floor-polisher, lackey, and if need be coachman. This was a good deal for so small a fortune to support. But we deprived ourselves without much trouble. I had a genius for order and my wife was without a desire. We economised, therefore, by doing without useless things and even those that some call necessaries, and I should have been quite happy in my solitude, I should have had but delicious recollections of those years had it not been for the terrible mountain of business which again fell on my shoulders.

Although my wife had been M. de Chemilly's first victim, it was on this name which she had borne that all the maledictions of the district fell. She had been reduced to repurchasing this estate—her own property, yet was reproached with possessing it, possessing this place the excessive expenses of which had produced so many debts and made so many unhappy people. The lower classes do not reason over these things. They are like the man who broke the windows on the first floor of a house because he could not reach the second storey, where his enemy lived. The heavy slowness of Cavaignac, who played but the *rôle* of a cunctator perfectly, increased the difficulties—nourished a tribe of little attorneys appointed by the creditors, multiplied their complaints, and protracted the administration of an affair that I should have liked to have terminated at all cost. Finally, the very ownership of Bourneville was then in dispute. What had poor Rameau said? The sale effected by the heirs had to be according to judicial formalities, and every creditor had the right to bid higher. One of them had dared to do so, although the sale had produced everything it could at that time. This creditor was Baron de Wrentz, at bottom the best man in the world and very witty, but whimsical, very quick-tempered, and annoyed that forty thousand francs of his money should be involved in the disaster. I recollect that in the autumn of that year he came from Strasburg to Bourneville to talk over the affair with us. I had the stupidity to mistrust my ability to discuss so thorny an affair with an unknown man, and sent for Cavaignac. He came, and in three days floundered about

so much and perorated at such length that the Baron, fatigued and deafened, left without any arrangement being come to. As both he and I were frank and quick-tempered, we should have concluded everything had it not been for my unfortunate act of prudence.

The Monys left Bourneville shortly after our marriage, and did not return until the autumn, so that the only person left was Bréjole, who had been relieved by the Revolution of his clerical domino. He spent part of the day playing with his thick fingers on a piano which I had imprudently brought from Paris, hobbling along the corridors, escaping from the seductions of the maidens of the district, who were all smitten by his charms, and scribbling on reams of paper. I came across a copybook which he had made in order to write out the draft of a letter to one of his female cousins. It contained twenty-six beginnings, no ending, and the letter had not been sent off. Finally, he went back to Paris, and I did not give him the opportunity of returning to Bourneville. At the time of writing, it is three months since he died, aged seventy-nine. During the seven years that I have been absent from France the only sign of recollection that he showed were the receipts for a pension I allowed him.

Our days passed calmly and uniformly. Early in the morning I was in my study, granting audiences, looking into our affairs, and writing letters. When my wife was ready we went to look at the park, to trace alleys, to plant trees, and to build; or else we occupied ourselves over the furnishing and arranging of our interior. During the remainder of the morning Alexandrine learnt drawing, Latin, and literature with me. For my part, I read a large number of agricultural works or wrote verses. We concluded our evenings with a game at piquet and a concert, for Alexandrine, without being a virtuoso, sang well and played agreeably on the harp. Her father was a very good violinist. We had very few neighbours with whom to amuse ourselves. Indeed, they could hardly as yet be called neighbours, and for this I thanked heaven, for I do not care for chance friends—those unexpected friends whose departure Mme. de Sévigné used to witness with so much joy.

The district, however, was thickly covered with *châteaux*.

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But some had been destroyed by the Revolution. The huge Château de Gesvres was but an abandoned quarry; the Château de Betz was beginning to fall into ruins, whilst its beautiful gardens, which still existed, were not long before they also disappeared; and Villers-Cotterets, the scene of so many *fêtes*, was about to become a poor-house. The La Myre family was living in retirement at its little Château du Gué-à-Tresmes, as we were doing at Bourneville. The same may be said of Maucreux. Boursonne, belonging to the Comtes de Boursonne; Ivors, the property of the Nicolaïs; and Antilly, the *château* of the Brochant family, were abandoned. The only place in the neighbourhood that was inhabited was the small *maison de chasse* of Corcy, buried in the Forest of Villers-Cotterets, three leagues from Bourneville, and in which my old friend Montbreton and his excellent but strange wife lived from time to time. A little further away was Villers-Hélon, a small *château* belonging to an *émigré* and occupied by a M. Collard, a tall, handsome and robust contractor, who had turned gentleman by marrying one of Mme. de Genlis' illegitimate children. Near Villers-Hélon was a pretty *château*, inhabited by Henry de Montesquiou and his charming cousin Mme. de Mornay; and among other houses in the forest was the Château de Montgobert, which has since been occupied by General Leclerc and the beautiful Pauline Bonaparte. But the nearest of all the neighbouring *châteaux*, though the one we visited the least because of the horrible cross-roads that had to be taken, was the Château de Thury, a sorry little place with a small and wretched garden, surrounded by a large and repellent plain. Its occupant, however, was one of the most amiable old men I have known, M. de Thury, whose wife was a sister of M. Ferrand, the author of *L'Esprit de l'histoire*.¹

Half a league from Bourneville stood our capital, the horrible little town of Ferté-Milon, whose only glories were the unfinished *château* of Philippe de Valois and the house, or rather the houses of Racine. The latter, however, did not arouse such a dispute as that between the seven cities of Greece over

¹ Comte Ferrand (1751-1825), Councillor to the Parliament, *émigre*, Postmaster-General under the Restoration, peer of France, and member of the French Academy, left *Mémoires* that were published in 1897.—A. C.

Homer's birthplace. For the knowledge of Ferté-Milon did not advance beyond the arts of reading, writing, and counting; and when Louis XVIII. presented its honest corn and wool dealers with a statue of Racine in marble,¹ they might well have said that the smallest ducatoon would have suited them better. Most of them, indeed, then heard for the first time that a person named Racine, who wrote very pretty verses, had formerly been born in their town; but this glory did not console them for either present embarrassments or the expenses of the inauguration. Therefore, the only person worth knowing in Ferté-Milon was an ex-magistrate, M. Tribert, an excellent, well-educated man, who, possessed of only a modest fortune, was bringing up a large family. I have since had the pleasure of having him appointed President of the Tribunal of Château-Thierry.

A league further away was another small town, Villers-Cotterets, in the centre of the magnificent forest, undoubtedly the finest in France, and provided with a thousand admirable roads that made excursions delightful. Nowhere else have I seen such superb ancestral beeches, separated the one from the other by forty to sixty feet, and under whose shade a coach and six could have been driven with ease.

A third small town, Crépy, two leagues still further away, sometimes attracted me because of one of the old members of M. de Saint-Waast's circle, M. Delahante and his excellent wife Adèle de Parseval. They were still wealthy, had three children, and did much good in this little town, of which M. Delahante was mayor.²

Wolves swarmed in the forest. Under favour of the Revolution, they had prospered in the country places, like the tigers in the towns. The aristocratic deer, which is eaten, had been destroyed; but wolves—revolutionary game which eat others—had been allowed to multiply in peace. In the abandoned forest they had found a peaceful retreat, where neither hunting-

¹ This statue, which stands in front of the Mairie, is by David d'Angers.—A. C.

² Cf., Adrien Delahante's *Une famille de finance au dix-huitième siècle*, vol. ii. pp. 491–557. After being Mayor of Crépy and President of the General Council of the Oise during the whole of the Empire, Etienne Marie Delahante, who died in 1829, refused, from 1815, to hold any public office.—A. C.

horn nor dog ever disturbed them. At night time they promenaded about at their ease in my interior park, which had then many gates but very few walls. We could hear them under our windows, and in the morning see the impression of their big paws on the sand. Shepherds dare not fold their sheep without having good dogs, one or two loaded guns, and torches that burned all night and the smell of which kept off the wolves. It required several years, the revival of order, incessant hunts, and the reign of Bonaparte to reduce these packs of wolves to the small number preserved by the wolf-hunters for purposes of sport.

It was at one of these first wolf-hunts that I made the acquaintance of a new keeper, who well merits that his name should here be mentioned. He lived twenty-seven years with me, died in my employment, and his modest monument stands in our parish cemetery at Marolles to testify to his virtues and our regret. Louis L'Echaugnette was then quite young. He had the manners and voice of a rustic, but was the personification of honour and uprightness. Faithful, ready and able to do anything, a good shot, and an indefatigable walker, he became, after being a keeper for twenty years, my steward, and in this capacity managed my estate and kept his accounts admirably.

As to the peasants, and even our workmen and tradespeople of the neighbouring town, they were generally decent folk, and although so near Paris had not been spoilt by the Revolution. This was the case all over France. These people of the lowest order had been oppressed by a new class that had formerly been on about their own level. Every village had had its Jacobin tyrant, its Terror in little, and each had shaken off the yoke after learning, to its cost, that equality with its lord was being preached in order to make it the slave of its mason or schoolmaster. These people, therefore, had come out of the Revolution cured, better than they were beforehand.

In the course of the month of February 1801 we returned to Paris. Our establishment was a very modest one. We slept in a small bachelor's bedroom; a *femme de chambre* and good Mme. Belguise in a large room at the back; a lackey and Belin in a little room on the third floor; and the coachman I

know not where. For it was necessary that my wife should have carriage exercise. She had a *coupé* that had been made in London, a charming vehicle, apart from the fact that it was out-of-date and wanted repainting. But I preferred to pay the *accoucheur* rather than the coach-builder. With the exception of the Monys, the Montbretons, and a few other close friends, I avoided giving her the trouble of seeing all my acquaintances. We saw hardly anybody save Mme. de Vindé, whose husband was still exceedingly fond of me, good Mme. d'Esquelbecq, Mme. de La Briche and her nieces De Vintimille and De Fezensac, Mme. d'Houdetot, and a few men.

Mme. de La Briche's Sundays had not yet become those brilliant gatherings which everybody wished to attend. She received only relatives and friends. At supper the ladies sat down to table, which was no longer possible when all Paris attended. In fact, her gatherings and the habits of the guests were the same as they were before the Revolution.

Mme. d'Houdetot also gave her ordinary *soirées*, but less frequently. Her Wednesdays revived the famous gatherings of Mme. du Deffand and Mme. Geoffrin. But she did not invite women. They were little academic dinner-parties, made up of men who were more or less great, but exceedingly human, and who, thanks to their hostess's simplicity and naturalness, gave themselves neither pretentious nor important airs. Their simplicity was all the more striking because, on the whole, they were men of mediocre talent, who are generally far from being simple in tone and manners. The thermometer of genius had fallen from Bossuet and Racine to Montesquieu and La Harpe, and from these to zero or almost zero. No matter, they dined like eagles, some even like vultures, and the colossal Abbé Morellet, seated at the middle of the table, opposite Mme. d'Houdetot, undertook to carve the most important joints, at the same time taking care, with marvellous dexterity, to let the best morsels negligently fall into a corner of the dish, where he found them when everybody had been served. The other guests were M. de Pastoret, M. Suard, M. de Saint-Lambert, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Alexandre de Humboldt—the most brilliant man of the company, quite German in his frankness, who never spoke when allowed to remain silent, but who talked

incessantly when encouraged to speak—Laborie, ever cheerful, animated, and sometimes more piquant than the others, M. Malé and Alexandre de La Borde. Such were the *habitués*, and when any distinguished foreigner was passing through Paris we rarely missed having him among us. It was on that ground that, a long time afterwards, we saw the Marquis de Sommariva spring up there. I may say “spring up” because he did really seem to arise out of the earth. He was a little advocate of Milan, whom the Italian Revolution had provided with an immense fortune; a title, and everything that follows; and who, as a man of wit, was looking for a country where he would find neither relatives nor companions, nor recollections.¹ Having a country house at Epinay, quite near to Sannois, he made the acquaintance of Mme. d’Houdetot, to whom he began to pay gallant and assiduous attentions. The poor widow—for she had then lost her two husbands—still retained her desire for love and came to have such a tenderness for him that he became the sole object of her thoughts. She thought that she loved him as a mother does a son, but it was really as a lover, and her grey hairs allowed her to display her affection without creating a scandal. People laughed, but not in her presence, for love was the only thing that she had ever taken seriously. Moreover, this wealthy marquis was a very good fellow, inflated neither by his wealth nor his good fortune; an exceedingly handsome, prepossessing man, who sought to get into the best Parisian society and succeeded in doing so without difficulty through Mme. d’Houdetot’s welcome, his great wealth, and his excellent dinners. In addition, he possessed a quality that was no longer found among the rich of Paris, an enlightened taste for the arts and a noble manner in supporting them. At his beautiful house in the Rue Basse-du-Rempart

¹ Jean Baptiste Sommariva, who was born at Sant’ Angelo Lodigiano in 1762, was an advocate at Lodi, a partisan of the French in 1796, a member of the Milan Municipality and of the General Administration of Lombardy in May, President of the Municipality in August, and General Secretary of the Executive Directory of the Cisalpine Republic (June 1797–April 1798). A refugee in France in the year 1799, he returned after Marengo, became a member of the Government Commission (June 21, 1800), President of the Triumviral Committee (September 24, 1800–February 14, 1802), and tried in vain to overthrow Melzi. He became a Mécenas, thanks to his thefts, which got him the nickname of *sublime ladro*. He died in Milan in 1826.—A. C.

there was a small collection of masterpieces of the Italian School, including *La Madeleine*, the most admirable of the works of Canova, who worked for him a good deal. M. de Sommariva had had a little *sacellum* expressly made for it at the end of his apartment; it was partly a chapel, partly a boudoir, furnished in violet, and lit solely by an alabaster lamp hanging from the dome, beneath which crouched the dying Magdalen. On the death of the marquis, a few years later, his fortune, pictures and sculpture passed to his son, a sort of savage who hid himself. Only three years ago, in 1834, it was proved to me that he continued—at any rate financially—his father's protection of the arts. As regards taste and discernment, that is another matter. We were concluding a tour of the Lake of Como by a dinner at the inn at Cadenabbia, and whilst the meal was being prepared went to visit the neighbouring Villa Sommariva. After ringing at the gate for a very long time, a gardener came to tell us that strangers could visit the house only on one day of the week. Now, I had no desire either to return or to remain for three days at Cadenabbia, so I immediately decided on three lines of action in order to open the doors. I adopted the French tone, that manner which is not my own, but before which everything bows in Italy; I slipped a *thaler* into the man's hands; and I declared that I was a friend of the late M. Sommariva who had come to visit his son. Whereupon the gate opened. I believe that the second argument would have sufficed. We then crossed a pretty terraced garden rising from the lake to the villa. On entering the vestibule I was recognised by the late marquis' *valet de chambre*, and from that moment everything was open to our inspection, with the exception of a study to which the owner of the house had retired with his family to escape from us. This was neither polite nor hospitable, but I who had so often done the same at Bourneville could not complain. So my friend the valet led us from room to room. In an immense room there was arranged as a frieze the *Triumph of Alexander* by Thorvaldsen, that dry, hard and cold successor of the amiable Canova. Thence we passed into a drawing-room decorated by two large freshly-painted pictures that had come from Paris; anonymous works, and very worthy of remaining so. Adjoining was a

much smaller *salon*, probably used by the lady of the house. This was a charming room, but in the middle, on a pedestal, was Canova's gigantic, nude *Palamède*, which, since it had been made for one of the galleries of the Vatican, simply overwhelmed the poor little *salon*. On the other side of the large hall there had just been unpacked another of Canova's works, the group *Amour et Psyché*, which we admired. But, two years later, at Rome, the sculptor Tadolini, Canova's best pupil, told me that the original of this group was in London, and that Sommariva had only a copy which he, Tadolini, had made. I have said enough, however, about the Sommarivas, whom I now leave for ever.

I must not forget to mention the epopee of the winter of 1801. The heroine was my old "comrade" Mme. de Lavoisier, and the subject the civil war of the house of Rumford. Mme. de Lavoisier wanted a second husband. It was necessary that he should be illustrious, so that there would be no loss of rank, and philosophical, so that harmony would reign in the household. Since I had lost sight of her she had taken her flight in more than one respect. From the big shoes which she formerly wore when walking from the Tuileries to the Arsenal she had risen to a cabriolet. Now, M. de Rumford, a chemist and philanthropist from Pennsylvania, had just appeared—after building chimneys in London, organising kitchens at Munich, and filling Europe with economical soups—on the Parisian horizon, crowned with that halo of glory which comes only from afar. He was a tall, well-shaped man of about fifty, dry and stiff like an American, as proud and superb as a Republican, the bearer of a title and a Bavarian ribbon, but apart from these distinctions, his stoves and his soups, without a fortune. Mme. de Lavoisier saw the Count, and said to herself: "There's my man." Unfortunately for her, however, the Count did not say: "There's the woman for me." He allowed himself to be attracted and adored, and then went back to Germany. I should have done the same. But for Rumford to scorn such a fortune because the heroine was ugly, old and enormously stout, was too fantastic for the belief of Parisians. His Ariane thought likewise, so, instead of amusing herself by dying on a rock, followed the Count to Munich, with

the offer of her hand, heart and fortune. How the rest of the story proceeded I cannot say, but it concluded by the Count being touched by so much love or so many donations, and marrying her, at the same time consenting to her retaining the glory of both her names by calling herself Lavoisier, Comtesse de Rumford. This *femme à deux maris* then settled down in a charming house, surrounded by an English garden, in the Rue d'Anjou. You entered from the street through a large gate and reached the house and a very fine greenhouse by way of a broad, winding alley. It was a real country house in the finest quarter of Paris. How long the honeymoon lasted in this delightful spot I cannot tell you, but this I know for certain, that philosophy, which was to introduce harmony into the household, very quickly produced an exactly opposite effect. When the American Count had finished exercising his authority over the stoves and ranges of the house, he wished to exercise it over his wife, who, having had forty-five years' independence, expected to govern rather than be governed. Rumford went with his complaints to everybody, greatly to the amusement of Parisians, for, with the Civil Code in one hand and the Decalogue in the other, he took the marriage laws most seriously. He was the tyrant of a tragi-comedy; the poor Countess, the innocent, unfortunate and persecuted wife. At last the valets were dismissed, the gate was hermetically closed, and a vigilant person placed on guard. Madame had still permission to receive her friends at the gate and converse with them through the bars. But this favour did not last long. An incident occurred. One morning the contents of the greenhouse were found greatly damaged. Next to smoke, plants were M. Rumford's greatest passion. Questioned, Madame blamed the household cat. A pane of glass being broken, the husband seized the cat and measured it; and on finding that the animal could not get through the hole, locked Mme. de Rumford in her room. We were not told if she were put on bread and water; but a few days later it was rumoured—and people were talking of nothing else just then—that she had left her room and was living in the cellar. This was on a Sunday. Tourolle, who, as a relative, was still allowed entrance, went to pay a visit. He gave his name, entered, and searched the place from

top to bottom without finding a soul. He was beginning to be frightened when, at the end of a corridor, a tall figure in a white dressing-gown appeared before him. "What, sir, do you want here?" shouted the tyrant—for it was he. "Monsieur," replied Tourolle, moving backwards, "I have come to pay my respects to my——" "To your cousin," interjected Rumford. "Well then, let me tell you, sir, that she is being punished and receives no one." Tourolle, who was still receding backwards, then found that he had reached the staircase, which he descended four steps at a time, to arrive at Mme. de La Briche's somewhat pale. As he entered there was a general cry of: "Well? What about Mme. de Rumford? What is she doing? Where is she?" "In the cellar," replied Tourolle. Whereupon there was an universal uproar. Some were excited to pity, but the majority laughed. This poor woman, with her philosophy, liberalism, moustache and cabriolet, interested no one. The Vicomte de Vintimille cried in an affected manner: "She is in the cellar! Does the barbarian intend to put her *en pièces*?"¹ At last the long comedy which had amused all Paris for two or three months ended. M. de Rumford listened to reason when it was backed up by money. The price was discussed and the less he was offered the more padlocks he put on his prisoner's door. In short, Madame finished by paying heavily and the tyrant left. He has not been seen since. And thus did she become a widow with a husband still living, an additional name, and three to four hundred thousand francs to the bad.²

TRIEST, September 25, 1838.

Where have I got to? And where, after a break of seven months, occupied by travelling and business, shall I take up the thread of my story? I have been back here three weeks, and shall be off again in three days. Ought I, with so short a time at my disposal, to go back thirty-eight years? Before my memory has collected materials those three days will be

¹ "Mettre en pièces" means both "put into barrels" and "tear to pieces."—Translator.

² On the subject of this stormy union, see a passage in Guillois' *Le Salon de Mme. Helvétius*, pp. 240-243; and on the last days of Mme. de Rumford, M. Adrien Delahante's *Une Famille de finance au dix-huitième siècle*, pp. 543-549.—A. C.

over, and I shall be travelling towards Grätz. But what shall I do on these three days? I must kill time. Very well then, let me continue my story-telling.

On March 15, 1801, my wife gave birth to my dear Claire, who was born with beautiful auburn hair. She was suckled by her mother, as her brother has been since; and certainly Rousseau would have done nothing but good had he spoken merely to such mothers. A healthy woman of twenty-seven, living a simple, regular life, makes the best of nurses; a delicate woman of eighteen, lively and infatuated with society, necessarily the worst. The child was vaccinated when six weeks old, and after this we said a long farewell to Paris.

GRÄTZ, *September 27, 1839*, on returning from the Ischl baths.

It soon became necessary to leave my young wife and child and go to Senlis for the hearing of the lawsuit which we had brought against Baron de Wrentz. Bourneville hung in the balance. Cavaignac had sent me from Paris a young honest and clever advocate—eloquent, too, and cheap. Thanks to the Revolution we then knew neither Dupin, nor Mauguin, nor their conceit, nor their charges, which I have since come to know too well. I won my case. The Baron appealed and it was on this appeal that we came to terms.

On May 31, 1801, we fêted the first anniversary of our marriage, modestly and alone, for there was yet only one grove that could be illuminated and only one guest, my brother-in-law, with whom I set off on the following day to divide our Nivernais, Touraine and Berry estates, the usufruct of half of which belonged to him. My horses took us as far as Fontainebleau, where we slept; stage-waggon the remainder of our journey to Cosne, which is quite near to Alligny. We had to put up at my tenant's. All that I remember of this little sojourn is that the wife of one of my *métayers* was confined, and that, whilst her husband came to ask me to be godfather and made many excuses to my brother-in-law for not having a godchild to offer him also, his wife got him out of the difficulty by giving birth to a second child. After this, in stage-waggon after stage-waggon, we went to Bourges to sleep. The next morning a public vehicle took us to Issoudun in company with

a M. Aignan,¹ an innocent young poet whom I had met at M. du Moleys, at Meung, and who, with a bouquet of orange blossoms in one hand and a Homer in the other, was on his way to fête the birth of a child of the wife of the Sub-Prefect of Issoudun. This good young man has since made his way in the world; he has published a poor translation of the *Illiad* and sat in one of the forty *fauteuils*. He was a good fellow, courteous and mediocre—in short, the stuff of which Academicians are made.

We made our division and got rid of a little steward who had thrown everything into terrible disorder. Then, early in July, I returned to Bourneville unexpectedly, receiving Alexandrine and Claire in my arms before anybody else knew of my arrival.

I had brought some money back with me and should very much have liked to have put it on one side. But everything around me called for its expenditure. My Icarian predecessor had everywhere started on gigantic undertakings of the nature of the terrible colonnades with which Le Doux had surrounded Paris, and it was necessary to demolish, fill up, and clear away everything in order to arrange things on a more reasonable scale. A huge excavation in the kitchen-garden became a large, fine vaulted greenhouse with two staircases. An enormous hole in the walls became a gateway. The kitchen garden became very fine, one of the finest, if not *the* finest I have seen in France. Arranged *à la Montreuil*, its espaliers had every advantage of situation as regards sun, shelter, &c. I am in no way exaggerating when I say that we have counted a little more than eight hundred peaches on a single one of those fine trees. Their variety and profusion was such that, each morning, after having placed the finest fruit for our personal use in a large flat basket lined with wadded taffetas and gathered a supply for the servants, we amused ourselves by distributing the remainder to the finest sheep, without counting what was consumed by the friends and assistants of my learned gardener, the illustrious Chaton.

Possessing extensive meadows, marshes, and other barren

¹ Etienne Aignan, born at Beaugency in 1773, died November 25, 1824 member of the Academy in 1814, author of tragedies.—A. C.

tracts, I saw them in imagination shaded by sixty thousand magnificent trees. Twenty years later they were, indeed, so covered. My first efforts in that direction happily cost me very little. I began by establishing three large nurseries proportionate to the number of projected plantations and the sorts of trees intended for each soil, for my land was infinite in its variety, ranging as it did from peat to heathy soil, and from sand to the soil of the Beauce. Awaiting the time, however, when the product of these nurseries would enable me to begin regular plantations, some hundreds of Swiss poplars scattered over my fields furnished me for three years with my first trees. The men climbed to the topmost branches and cut a selection of the youngest and straightest shoots, which only required to be planted in the damp meadows a little before the rising of the sap. A few years later, a celebrated agriculturist, the Marquis de Crèveœur, was dining with me at Mme. d'Houde-tot's. He did not know me. In the course of conversation he related that whilst travelling from Meaux to Villers-Cotterets he had got out of his carriage and stopped two hours to visit the finest and best arranged plantations he had ever seen in his life. These were my saplings. At the end of twenty-five years a large number of them were six to nine feet in circumference, and from sixty to eighty feet in height. I sold the finest for as much as three *louis* each.

I also transformed several *arpents* of land into orchards and planted a number of alleys with fruit trees. There were, amongst others, twenty-three species of cherries and every good species of pear and plum.

This was but the beginning. A few years later I undertook the exploitation of the farm nearest to the *château*, applying the rotation system to its four hundred *arpents*, increasing, ameliorating, and splitting up the flock of merino sheep.

And what about the education of my children? I held in horror public education as made by the Revolution. We did not wish to bring up subjects for the executioner of the Duc d'Enghien, the oppressor of France and the scourge of Europe, yet, on the other hand, no tutor or governess could inspire the confidence that we felt in ourselves. So I found it necessary to divest my work of everything that was superfluous, and Ariosto,

whom I was translating into verse, received for many years but the crumbs from the children's table, after Latin, English, Grammar, History and Geography had been served upon it.

Let me return for a moment to the gardens of Bourneville. Never shall I see again its fine park, and it pains me to shorten my walk. It was in the early years that I planted it—that is to say united and arranged its ancient scattered plantations and formed a complete interior park of fifty large *arpents* enclosed by walls. My exterior park consisted of one hundred large *arpents*, surrounded by hedges, and extended as far as the Forest of Villers-Cotterets.

Here I ought to pass over a period of five years, for five years of uniform happiness leave a great blank in the memory, and domestic peace is like peace among nations—it is a lean time for history. But as yet I have given only a bare sketch of the neighbourhood of Bourneville.

Towards the north of the Forest and about three leagues from Bourneville stood the big Château de Montgobert, a modern building, heavy and in bad taste, formerly the property of Mme. L'Empereur's father, and, I believe, built by him. It had a short time before passed into the hands of General Leclerc, the husband of Pauline Bonaparte, who really had nothing human about her but coquetry and caprice. All the rest of her belonged to Venus—I mean Canova's *Venus*.¹ As for me, whom she ravished at the first glance and deigned to try to fascinate, I was unable to judge of anything save her head and feet. But men of art placed her above the charming statue that Canova made of her, where she preferred glory to her chemise—that statue in speaking of which people said to her: "What! you posed like that?" and to whom she replied: "Oh! but there was a stove."

I have already spoken, I believe, of Thury. As to the Château of Villers-Cotterets I have not said that this habitation of Henry IV. and the brother of Louis XIV. had been turned by the Revolution into a workhouse and let for four

¹ She became Princess Borghèse, and said of her sisters, one the Queen of Naples, the other the Grand Duchess of Tuscany: "One of those *canailles* married the son of an innkeeper, the other a tennis-scorer. I am the only one of the family that has made a decent marriage."—F.

thousand francs a year to the Municipality of Paris. Now, after the Restoration, Philippe Egalité's son, cleverer than all the *émigrés*, got together all his properties and even his appanages, including Villers-Cotterets. Rights over the Ourcq, which ran through my estate, formed part. I had lived at peace with the nation, but with Louis Philippe it was necessary to plead. As right was entirely on my side, we compromised, and I thought it my duty, on the occasion of this settlement, to go to Neuilly and pay him a polite visit, much though it displeased me. After being honoured by his cringes—for his bows, which were infinite in number, could be called by no other name—and fêted as though I were a conspirator, I made bold to remind him of the *château* of his ancestors and our kings, now a mutilated building and occupied by the vilest rabble. "Ah!" he replied, "do not mention it. It is my cross, and I must bear it for four years longer, for the lease does not expire until then." It occurred to me that in the case of a Duc d'Orléans and the Municipality of Paris it could easily have been cancelled. But let that pass. When the lease expired four years later Louis Philippe renewed it and the beggars are still at Villers-Cotterets. It is true that he increased the rent by a thousand francs.

On March 15, 1802, Claire's first birthday was celebrated by a ball which I opened with her. She had just been weaned. A tree, which grew less rapidly than she did, was planted; many guns were fired; verses by the Curé were sung; and a *fête* was given to the whole of the village. But the anniversary of May 31 of this year was much more brilliant than that of the previous year, for it was becoming possible to walk around the *château*. Two years later, on January 4, 1804, we had a third anniversary, on the occasion of the birth, at Bourneville, of my son Olivier.

In the following year—if it were not this very year 1804—I was obliged to undertake the longest journey that I had made since my marriage. I believe that I have already explained that I had inherited from my uncle the post of Administrator-General of Crown Lands and from my father the position of Receiver-General for Comte d'Artois' appanage, Poitou and Angoumois. On the one hand, the nation had robbed me of

all that my mother had not been able to use of the sixteen hundred thousand francs which the first post represented, and, on the other, of two-thirds of the revenue of the second. Nevertheless, after thirteen or fourteen years, the Court of Accounts applied to me for very minute accounts of the latter post, which I had never managed. My men of business were vainly struggling with the difficulty and old Des Minières, a hardened aristocrat, declared that he owed accounts only to me and H.R.H. the Comte d'Artois. As it was absolutely necessary to get out of this labyrinth I set off alone in search of my documents. Taking the Poitou *diligence*, I arrived three days later at the Hôtel de la Bourdonnais, at Poitiers, after an absence of fourteen years. In every house of the town I had left a male or female friend, or at least an acquaintance. But fourteen years had passed! There had been the emigration and the Terror! I felt that I should find but shadows or invalids. However, on arriving at nine o'clock at night, I hastened where a tender habit had so often led me in former days—to the house of the Margarets. The aunt and uncle were dead, and Amaranthe, who had two or three children, had married Lauzon, an excellent fellow and the best of husbands. All that, I knew already. On entering the house, I met in the antechamber two of the old servants, and forbade them to announce my name. The doors of a room were opened and I entered a brilliantly illuminated drawing-room where five or six groups of people were at play. I recognised no one and nobody recognised me. Open-mouthed, each stared at my travelling costume. At last, one of the players scrutinised my face, threw down his dice-box, pushed the table from him and threw his arms round my neck. It was Lauzon. He announced my name and immediately I had twenty-five friends there. Leaving the backgammon tables, they one by one embraced me. "What! you do not recognise me; I'm such and such a person: Vittré, Irland de Bazôges, Tryon, etc.," they cried. At last I recognised everybody and especially the ladies, who would not have been pleased at the thought that they had changed. Amaranthe was still charming and that *soirée de résurrection* was very agreeable to me. I devoted a week to these friends of my youth—time that was by no means lost from a business point of view, for, thanks to good

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Lauzon and his little wife, I won the heart of a young Directrice des Domaines and indirectly that of her husband, who accredited me all over Poitou by giving me an order to his sub-directors and others to lay their registers before me and deliver the documents I needed. Thus, with head on high and my pockets full of conquests, I returned to Paris, and shortly afterwards received my discharge.

Meanwhile Bonaparte was making a very different sort of conquest; he was exchanging his Consul's hat for the crown of France. Active preparations were being made in Paris for the coronation. I felt no interest whatever in this ill-omened ceremony, which produced more banterers than dupes; but Mme. de La Briche, who missed seeing none of the sights, begged me to accompany her. As far as I recollect, it was in the course of December—for there had been a heavy fall of snow, it was exceedingly cold, and the sun was shining splendidly—that I went to her Paris house and even slept there, so that she could be more certain of me. Now, in the Rue Saint Honoré, on the route to be followed by the procession, a M. Martin, my silk dealer, had a house with a balcony. Having given him notice of our intended visit, I set off in the snow, at seven o'clock on the morning of the comedy, from the Place de la Ville l'Evêque, with Mme. de La Briche on one arm and Mme. Molé on the other. Carriages were forbidden, so we had to elbow our way to M. Martin's balcony. But of the endless pomp of that day—for though the people shouted "Begin! Begin!" nothing started until ten or eleven o'clock, on account, it was said, of the future Empress's toilette—of all that pomp there remains in my memory naught save the sad and mortified face of the Pope, sitting alone in his carriage, drawn by eight white horses and preceded, as it was necessary to recognise him as a sovereign, by four heralds at arms. I also recollect his cross-bearer, an *abbé* with a three-cornered hat mounted on a little dark-bay mule. The crowd laughed at the mule and then knelt before the Pope, for devotion was becoming very fashionable again. It was one way of disowning the Revolution.

One hour after the Pope's *cortège* had passed, Bonaparte's appeared, with a grand display of troops and horses. Plumes

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waved and bran-new galloons sparkled in the sun ; but there was not a well-known face, not a well-known name, except in the small towns where one had taken off his apron and another had put aside his awl in order to disguise themselves as noble lords.

From that handsome buffoon, Murat, who had risen from his father's inn to the Government of Paris, and whence he was to rise to a throne ; from the three imperial sisters who had left the washing of their chemises at Marseilles to come to Paris, beplumed and covered with diamonds, to carry the train of Barras' former mistress ; from those menial grand officers, the Montmorencys, the Cossés, the La Trémoilles, and others who had been installed but a fortnight ; from all these to the little old soldier of the 13th of Vendémiaire, who figured in his coronation carriage in a dalmatica and white cloak, the procession was but a masquerade in which every one had put on his or her costume for trial, and for which no one had yet studied his or her *rôle*. This saturnalia was the subject for either laughter or tears, according to individual taste and character. Bonaparte set off by way of the Rue Saint Honoré as First Consul, and returned as an Emperor by the boulevards, the alleys of which were very prettily illuminated. After giving my two companions a dinner at a restaurant we went to Mme. de Vindés, at the corner of the boulevard and the Rue Grange-Batelière, to witness his return from the terrace of the Hôtel de Grammont.

In the winter of 1805 our good grandmother Fortier died, at the age, I believe, of eighty-five or eighty-six. She had shone during the brilliant years of the eighteenth century in a society of lawyers and men of wit. Latterly she had become a little shrivelled old woman, living in confinement in a small house at Neuilly. She owned a charming residence in the Palais Royal, which, thanks to Philippe Egalité, was now nothing more than a bazaar. I built there, from the Rue de Richelieu to the Palais Royal, a very fine passage containing many shops ; and the property, which had formerly brought me only ten to twelve thousand francs, produced a revenue of twenty-two thousand. This was the first instalment of my hundred thousand francs income.

The same year my dear aunt De Chazet, pious and resigned, died at St. Germain, thus ending in sorrow and ill-fortune a life begun in pleasure and luxury. The Marquise de Bon had just died far from her in Languedoc, after being overwhelmed by misfortune and losing her two sons.

In the spring of 1806 poor Belin died in the small third-floor apartment which I had retained in the Rue de Buffault for his family and myself. I sincerely regretted his loss, for, although he was only mediocre as a servant, he was faithful, exceedingly devoted, and had been seventeen years in my service.

In the same year I also lost my sister's tenderest friend, the Marquise de La Goy. As to her husband, he died some eleven years ago on his estate in Provence.

The last loss of that year was that of little Mme. Terray, *née* Claire de Vindé, who, exhausted by the birth of four strong children, ended her days at Bagnères de Luchon.

In the autumn of 1806 we decided to return from our six years' exile—years that, taking one thing with another, had perhaps been the happiest in our lives. We were far from being rich, but henceforth our fortune was sufficiently large to enable us to spend four months of the winter in Paris without descending below the standard of the society to which we had been accustomed. It is true that our budget would not have sufficed for every one, but my household was run on economical lines, and upon it, as in other things, we always spent a third less than other people and made quite as good a show. Add to this that my children as yet cost hardly anything, that luxury in Paris was only just beginning to make its appearance, and that living cost only half of what it does to-day. As an example, I need only mention the price of an apartment which I then rented. It was on the first floor of a fine house at the corner of the Faubourg Saint Honoré and the little Rue Verte, in the finest quarter of Paris. Large and well decorated, and with its stables and coach-house, it cost me, during the nine years that I occupied it, only two thousand seven hundred francs per annum.

CHAPTER VIII

1807

Parisian Society—Urtubise—Mme. de Montbreton—La Comtesse d’Affry—The Marquis de Lâge—The Mortefontaines—Lullin de Châteaueux—Voght—Julien—The Marais Theatre—Dazincourt—Death of M. de Vogüé—Molé Prefect of the Côte-d’Or.

January 22, 1840.

It was on January 10, 1807, that we returned to Paris. This precision with regard to the date is due to a task which I imposed upon myself after returning from Ischl, and which occupied me six weeks. I have been through all my wife’s letters and my own, which she has had the goodness to preserve, in addition to those of my children and friends—a heap of dusty records dating from 1807 until the present day.

I possessed many good friends. My good, simple, cheerful and witty wife had a *salon* noted for its good tone, charming grace and good taste. We at once became intimate with everybody whom we wished to know. There were no introductions; I detested them; no ice to be broken, or melted. I am still touched when I recollect seeing Christian de Lamoignon bringing us his young wife, whom mine had not yet seen, and before she had even had the time to leave a card upon her.

What was this society of which we took possession, or which took possession of us in so friendly a manner? First of all—and this was no small advantage—it was almost entirely at our door. Then, the families composing it were related to each other, and to be friends with one was to be friends with all. It was the dovecote of the Faubourg Saint Honoré, with all the nests touching, and certainly at that time the most

agreeable place of residence imaginable. I have now but to name all the persons whom, here and there, I have already described. There was Mme. de La Briche, and under the same roof, at the fine Hôtel de Saint Florentin, Mathieu Molé and his wife. Vicomtesse d'Houdetot, her two husbands, two of her grandchildren, and the amiable Frédéric d'Houdetot lived almost opposite to us, in an old house that was on a par with her Sannois *cabaret*. The Comtesse de Damas and the young Vogüés lived a few yards from us in a small modern house that was fairly magnificent but very gloomy and exceedingly damp, and which M. de Castellane has since turned into a theatre.

A little further away, on the Place Beauvau, were the excellent Rosambos and their young family; then the Duc de Rohan-Chabot and his little duchess, formerly Mme. de La Borde.

If we went as far as the Rue d'Anjou, we found there, under the same roof, Mme. de la Live and her two daughters, Mmes. de Vintimille and De Fezensac; then Pasquier, his wife and his sister,—that virtuous and antique Mlle. Pasquier, who had all her sister-in-law's merits and graces, in addition to that honeyed crabbedness which is the ordinary attribute of old maids; and, finally, Christian de Lamoignon's household, which was not yet occupying the royal Hôtel Molé in the Rue Saint Dominique.

The Lamoignons were then residing opposite the famous Marquis d'Aligre, the grandson of the chancellors, a poor man burdened with millions, more fortunate in his business affairs than in his magnificence, but who lived in an invariable *sibi constet*, as singular in the one as in the other.¹

Opposite M. d'Aligre's and next door to the Lamoignons skulked his brother-in-law Boissy, who was no more diverted by luxury and the opinion of others from the passion of hoarding than his wife. I have seen him from Christian's windows collecting sticks in his garden for the kitchen.

But Providence had retained for the avaricious Boissy a son-in-law in the person of M. de Preaulx. The millionaire nephew of my old friend Comte de Preaulx d'Ecueillé, he lived most

¹ The Marquis d'Aligre founded with a very large part of his fortune immense charitable institutions that still exist, and was the victim of an unjustified legend.—A. C.

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poorly with his little wife in a small and wretched house at Chaillot, in order to dispense with entertaining. On ball nights he walked with her to the Hôtel de Boissy. There, after putting on a dress, she stepped into her father's carriage, nicely painted, but not picked out with other colours, by his painter and glazier. When the ball was over, she left the carriage and dress at home and returned to Chaillot on foot. Little Mme. Lamoignon, who, as a neighbour, knew many secrets connected with these households, used thus to differentiate between d'Aligre's haughtiness and his brother-in-law's modesty: "At the time when alms are being solicited for the poor," she said, "M. de Boissy's porter replies, 'Monsieur does not give,' and the majestic doorkeeper at the Hôtel d'Aligre, 'Monsieur has his own poor.'"

Mentioning these characters has taken me from the subject of our amiable society of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, where you ran hardly any risk of meeting them. Mme. Pastoret, who lived under the colonnade of the Place Louis XV., was its mainstay. At her house I met her good and pleasant uncle, M. de l'Etang, one of my father's old friends, full of urbanity, grace, tenderness and sagacity; a type of amiable old man that has now disappeared. But, without going so far, I meet again in the Rue d'Anjou and at that very Hôtel d'Aligre, the old Abbé Morellet, fallen from his philosophical elevation, honoured for his courage during the Revolution, and become, if not a Christian, at least tolerant and a royalist. He had two nieces who once a week did the honours of his modest house. One was the good and affectionate Mme. Belz, his favourite, and to whom he later left his whole fortune—a room full of manuscripts; the other, the austere and garrulous Mme. Chéron, at the bottom a good person, who, without having any more wit than her sister (who had a good deal), made it sparkle much more. Her husband was that good Chéron who, under a heavy and vulgar exterior, possessed a pleasing wit, and who died Prefect of Poitiers at the outset of his career.¹

Further on, in the same Rue d'Anjou, I also find my old

¹ Chéron (1758-1807), deputy to the Legislative Assembly, Prefect of the Vienne in 1805, had two plays performed: *Caton d'Utique* and *Le Tartufe de mœurs*.—A. C.

friend Urtubise, one of the four Montbretons, and far and away the best of them. He and his wife, who had just changed the name of Loménie de Brienne for that of Mme. Auguste de Montbreton, occupied a modest *entresol* in his father's superb house. He was neither a well-shaped nor a graceful man, and had neither the manners of the *grand monde* nor what is called wit, but he was preeminently a man of good sense and honour. When quite young, at the dawn of the Revolution, he had, through the recall of the Duc de La Vauguyon, carried on alone, under difficult circumstances, the duties of Spanish Ambassador,¹ thereby acquiring a universal reputation which would have led him to any post had his honour not constantly prompted him to refuse everything, even under the Empire. For a long time he was the friend and, I believe, the lover of the Comtesse de Loménie, whom the Terror had made a young and childless widow. He had just, at last, married her, and was to live but a short time after the marriage. She had been merely a Mlle. de Merville, the daughter of a very wealthy Bordeaux merchant or financier. After associating with her, we came to like her, and she ended by becoming our intimate friend.

The Countesse d'Affry, daughter of M. de Garville, and first cousin of my old friend D'Orcey, found us again and sought our society. She was partly ruined, very much isolated, although she saw everybody—a fawning, flattering, insinuating, though rather witty woman, in addition to being exceedingly romantic and prodigiously sentimental.

Another widow with whom we were later intimately connected was the Marquise de Lâge (Mlle. d'Amblimont de Périgord) who, after her long migrations, was then resting in her agreeable retreat in the Rue des Saussayes. Charming at the Court of Versailles, she had become coarsely ugly. But she was remarkable on account of her inexhaustible, original, piquant, frank and occasionally cynical wit, and because of her brilliant conversation, nourished by a passionate, impetuous character, and by a life of travel and misfortune. The friend

¹ Cf. in regard to the diplomatic rôle of Urtubise—"a calm and serious man"—M. Geoffroy de Grandmaison's *L'ambassade française en Espagne pendant la Révolution*.—A. C.

of the Comte d'Artois, after being that of the Comtesse de Polastron, she was obliging and devoted, although curious. The best trait in her character was that she had kept many assiduous friends around her, and lived solely for an elder daughter (Mme. Sumter) who, through the misfortunes of the times, had married in South Carolina.¹

Let me conclude my account of this beloved *faubourg* by speaking of the Mortefontaine family. Mme. de Mortefontaine was the daughter of the regicide Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, the most shamefully dissolute man of his day, and niece of that charming scamp De Saint-Fargeau who, after being driven from Coblenz, took refuge in revolutionary depravity. Married by her adopted mother to a Dutchman, M. de Witt, she found herself from early youth excluded by the good society of France. It was unfortunate but just; for on the day when there is no more honour or dishonour for those whose ancestors have acted well or ill society will have ceased to exist. Scoffed at everywhere, she could be seen furtively attending some entertainment or subscription ball, where her beauty and the fatal romance of her life caused her to be noticed as Mme. Tallien and a few others were noticed. On being left a widow, childless and still divinely beautiful, she became the friend of her cousin Le Peletier de Mortefontaine, and it was through this *liaison* that Providence (if she troubles herself about such things) allowed the glimmer of a new life to penetrate to her. Le Peletier de Mortefontaine was a tall, handsome man, melancholy and austere, pure in his morals, and possessed of principles that, staunchly aristocratic, appeared to be trying to atone for the errors of his family. His taciturnity was really extraordinary, and the impress of this has since appeared on the Hôtel de Charost, which he bought in the Champs-Élysées. This house, which was resplendent with light and cheerfulness,

¹ Cf. *Les Souvenirs d'émigration de Mme. la Marquise de Lâge de Volude* (1869). Béatrix Etienne Renart de Fuchsamberg d'Amblimont (1764-1842), wife of Comte de Lâge de Volude (1782), emigrated with Mme. de Lamballe the day after June 20, 1792, returned to France in the following July, left for America in 1793 on a vessel which was captured by a privateer and taken to Spain, where she resided from 1794 to 1800. Her daughter Natalie, who set out before her, reached America and remained there until 1802, when she returned to France to marry Mr. Sumter, a Chargé d'affaires of the United States.—A. C.

he so completely varnished with Egyptian earth and ornamented with sphynx, Egyptian terminals and Pæstum columns that it became a tomb in the sun. This honest man transformed his young wife, who, after loving him as a lover, revered him as though he were a father. Everybody knows how many times she wept in despair, and how ardently she supplicated him, before he would consent to share his name with her. On becoming Mme. de Mortefontaine she turned, like her husband, thoroughly religious, aristocratic and royalist, and began by circumspectly slipping into a few families of the old magistrature. I saw her for the first time at Mme. de Vindé's. Then she soared towards the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and at the period of which I am writing began to be seen there under the protection of Mme. de La Briche. People noticed the new face, asked to whom it belonged, and expressed surprise. But little by little their astonishment disappeared. She kept a good but modest house; for society would have been shocked by brilliancy. People went to see her and she went to see them. She was seen to be beautiful, good, and on a level with our society. Every word, every step, every act of hers effaced a recollection. Her husband lived but a short time after this period; but she remained a Mortefontaine, grafted upon him, regenerated, rebaptized, and sought after by the best Parisian society. Her career once more proves—but this is especially rare in the case of a woman—that there is no position, however desperate, from which one cannot extricate oneself by a wise conduct. She had two infant daughters, Marguerite and Suzanne, the first of whom became Mme. de Boisgelin, the other Mme. de Talleyrand.¹

Such were the people who formed the basis of the society of our *faubourg*. The others consisted of a few bachelors or men who took their place, such as Tourolle, Terray, Alexandre de La Borde, Biencourt, Laborie, Piscatory, Mme. Pastoret's very witty brother, Bonneuil, already the widower, I believe, of his charming wife, Norvins, Villemoyenne, Lacretelle, Châteauvieux, Baron de Voght, and Julien. Let me say a few words more about the last three.

¹ Cf. Charles Nauroy's *Révolutionnaires*, pp. 236-242, and *Le Curieux* vol. ii. pp. 225-230.—A. C.

Lullin de Châteauevieux was a Genevese, and I do not know whether his father had not been colonel of the regiment bearing his name. He was a little man who moderated a certain Genevan stiffness by much French obligingness, lively and witty, with eyes that told you so in advance and a solid education as a basis. We had common interests in agriculture and for some years corresponded on the subject. About that time he wrote a little *Voyage d'Italie*, in which, by insisting on statistical and agricultural reports, he managed, with undoubted merit, to say something new.¹

Stout Baron de Voght was an exceedingly wealthy citizen of Hamburg—universal as regards everything that was mediocre, and saturated with that overflowing Germanic enthusiasm in comparison with which the Italian is coolness itself. He had a passion for music and painting, for poetry and prose, for big as well as little things, for the beauties of Nature and—as he was a cosmopolitan—for the world. A mistress of Auguste de Lamoignon (the one whose hair was died blue) said of him: “I am passionately fond of Baron de Voght. He’s a universal man. Il a de la galanterie, il a de la chevalerie, il a de la vacherie . . .” Agriculture, in fact, was not the least of his passions, and on his Flottbeck estate, near Hamburg, he possessed the finest nurseries in Europe, which I had promised to go and see. I also had a place in the catalogue of his passions, for he was rather fond of me and we were some years in correspondence. He had founded and directed the Hamburg poor relief system, and it was he who electrified and guided our little Parisian ladies in the establishment of a *magasin de charité* at which all the goods given or made by them were sold in aid of the poor, who received the money to enable them to work in their turn and replenish, in proportion to the sales, the shop that nourished them.²

As to Julien, the younger and very wealthy brother of old Mme. Rillet and great-uncle of the young D’Orvilliers, his

¹ He is better known by his *Manuscrit de Sainte-Hélène*, which Napoleon took the trouble to refute.—A. C.

² As regards Baron de Voght, cf. A. Chuquet’s *Etudes d’histoire*, 2nd series, pp. 111-112; Herriot’s *Mme. Récamier et ses amis*, vol. i. p. 203; Gautier’s *Mme. de Staël et Napoléon*, pp. 235 and 282 and Mme. de Chastenay’s *Mémoires* vol. ii. p. 90.—A. C.

English dress, celibacy, elegant bachelor's home, and a certain natural originality retained for him in society the attitude of a young man. Somewhat odd, tolerably egoistical, but a very good man at bottom, he cultivated our society to a certain extent and liked us fairly well. But ten or twelve years later he completely fell out with me, without my ever being able to find out why, unless the reason was that he was inseparable from Pasquier and glossed his political antipathies less than the latter.¹

Outside the Faubourg Saint Honoré, the only people with whom we were on intimate terms were the Vindés, who were quite out of touch with that *coterie* and avoided it; the De Charnois, so good and so friendly, but unknown to all our acquaintances and confined to the upper part of the Faubourg Poissonnière; the D'Orvilliers, who, in the Rue Basse-du-Rempart, were much closer neighbours; good Mme. Le Sénéchal; and the beautiful Mme. de Saint-Just.

A few people had regular evenings. It was not yet the fashion to eat ices standing up and whilst walking on people's toes. But, as twenty years before, you could move about, sit down, converse and sup. We are already acquainted with Mme. de La Briche's Sundays and Mme. d'Houdetot's Tuesdays. Mme. Pastoret's gatherings were on Saturdays; the Duchesse de Rohan's on Fridays; and Mme. d'Orglandes' on Thursdays. I believe that the Abbé Morellet had his on Mondays, whilst our own *soirées* were on Wednesdays. In addition, I gave a little dinner every week to six of the most intimate and intelligent of the men whom I have named. At other people's houses there were suppers and dinners, but on no fixed days. I who care little for dining out was faithful only to Mme. d'Houdetot's immovable Tuesdays and the Vindés' Mondays.

I had, moreover, an excellent cook, Mlle. Victoire, who had been brought up in my house, and, thanks to a carrier of Ferté-Milon, who brought us game, poultry, turkeys, ducks, pigeons, and vegetables from Bourneville every week, leaving only bread and butcher's meat to be bought, we kept a very good table. As to fruit, wood, hay and oats, this come to us by the Ourcq

¹ Doubtless the friend of Chateaubriand and Mme. de Beaumont (*Mémoire d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. ii. p. 273).—A. C.

at the beginning of the winter, and I believe that no one could have lived so well and so economically as we did. My staff of servants consisted of a *femme de chambre*, a children's nurse, a cook and her assistant, a coachman and two lackeys—quite a modest establishment, but equal to the best that then existed. One of these lackeys was a German who, on account of his activity and handiness, was worth three ordinary ones; but I was unable to keep him because of his mistakes in speaking and his incorrigible aversion for the *articles* in people's names which he democratically suppressed in every case. He announced, instead of Mme. de La Briche, Mme. Briche, instead of M. de Lamoignon, M. Moignon, and instead of Mme. de La Borde, Mme. Le Borgne!

Such was our *coterie* and home in Paris. Two things occupied my leisure hours that winter: the publication of my volume of poems and the performance of my opera *Alfred*, for which Gaveaux had written the music. But *Alfred* dealt with the country of Pitt, and in the following month of September, when the play had been announced and on the very eve of the *première*, Bonaparte forbade it. This was his only victory over the English. As to my poems, Laborie carried them off promising me glory, and I ended by paying for the edition. To this day I am ignorant as to whether it was exhausted. But I printed on it neither the author's name, nor a preface, nor an advertisement; and I took no steps whatever to draw attention to it.¹

As my wife was still unacquainted with my Touraine and Berry properties, we decided to spend a few months of the fine season there. So, on May 2, I went to Bourneville to make the necessary preparations for a long absence. I returned to Paris on the 24th, fully convinced that I should be able to take all my family away with me early in June. But my son caught the whooping-cough and his sister took it from him, so that my wife was unable to leave Paris. I spent three months passing backwards and forwards on horseback or in the *diligence* between my babes and my sheep, between deserted Paris and solitary Bourneville.

¹ This volume—almost mysterious—had, however, a great success in society without reaching the real reading public.—A. C.

During this time a more rapid traveller was crossing Europe in seven-league boots, pursuing the Russians into Poland, winning the bloody battle of Friedland, and signing, on the extreme limits of Poland, the Peace of Tilsit. It was there that the poor King of Prussia, who was dining with him, took his glass in hand and said: "To the health of the hero who gives me back my States," whereupon Bonaparte stopped him with the words: "Do not drink it all." A pretty phrase this in the mouth of the man who called the terrible battlefield of Eylau "a great consumption of men" and conscripts "food for cannon"!

Another affair of State began to occupy the attention of the good society of Paris. This was nothing less than the "Grands Jours" at Le Marais, the plays which were invariably performed between the last Sunday in August and the second Sunday in September. Owing to the abandonment of our Touraine journey, several rôles had been conferred upon me, including that of Lucas in *L'Épreuve villageoise* and that of Henry IV. in *La Partie de chasse*. On August 24 I arrived from Bourneville in the mail-coach, embraced my wife and children, dined our Crispin, Vandœuvre, an excellent actor, who was later to play Jacobin comedies in Parliament,¹ set off with him for Le Marais in his cabriolet, and in the evening was in the midst of thirty friends.

Good little Mme. Molé, who was a more than mediocre actress but an indefatigable *impresaria*, had that year enrolled the celebrated Dazincourt, one of the most amiable of the remaining members of our Comédie-Française. He was an accomplished and mordant author, pure as regards his taste and always comical; and he had retained from the society of former days the best of manners and the most perfect decorum. He accepted only two small parts, as much as to say: "I'm not a member of your society, but here only to assist you." He spoke little, but when you wanted him to, and then in a manner that amused everybody. He was indefatigable at our rehearsals, at which he arranged charming scenes, and ever

¹ Baron de Vandœuvre, auditor to the Council of State under the Empire, master of requests under the Restoration, deputy and peer of France, was, as Norvins says also, a very good actor.—A. C.

acted the part of a professor, never that of a colleague. We were exceedingly fond of him, and he supported his boredom with the best grace in the world.

We gave two performances of each play, one on the Saturday, called the "dress rehearsal," for the middle-class crowd of Dourdan, Arpajon, and neighbouring villages; the other on the following day for the aristocracy of neighbouring *châteaux*, who came to converse or eat ices in the drawing-rooms after the performance, and who filled the courtyards with a multitude of carriages worthy of the most brilliant days at the Opéra. Through this arrangement we had the trouble and Mme. Mole the pleasure of playing six times instead of three. These three weeks of fairy scenes were crowned by a solemn game of prisoner's base in the only alley of the park that was both straight and flat. In the evening impromptu proverbs were played in the drawing-room. Dazincourt and Vandœuvre were charming.

After a flying visit to Bourneville, where I intentionally arrived unexpectedly in order to make my employees think that I was always behind the door, I descended upon Champatreux. There, between two large screens, forming a boudoir in the large *salon*, was grouped a selection of the brilliant Marais crowd. In addition to the Vintimilles, the Fezensacs, and the D'Houdetots, there was Chateaubriand and a person whom no one, I believe, had yet seen with him—his wife. I should have preferred to say "his female," for, as I have already said, she had certainly come out of the same nest, if not from the same egg as he; and this perfect assortment of two of the most ill-matched characters I have ever known easily enables one to see how it was they wildly rushed into marriage, left each other impetuously, and came together again thoughtlessly.

Two days after my return to Paris on October 8 poor Vogüé fractured his skull by falling from his horse on to the grass on the Champ de Mars. This appeared to be unbelievable until the surgeon found that his skull was hardly thicker than an egg-shell, and that it was miraculous he had lived so long as he had.

It was not, therefore, until about October 15 that we returned to Bourneville. Shortly afterwards, in November,

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Mathieu Molé, who was yet but a Master of Requests in the new career into which Laborie's intrigues, and especially his ambition, had thrown him, was appointed Prefect of the Côte d'Or. At the end of December he settled down in Dijon with his wife and mother-in-law. It was a sorrow for Paris, and caused a great void in our poor *faubourg*.

CHAPTER IX

1808-1810

Illness—Pieyre—Orléans—The Joan of Arc Fête—The Comtesse d'Affry again—Death of Mme. de Mony—Despréaux's "petites jambes"—Napoleon's Divorce—The Royalists at the Tuilleries—The King of Rome—Terray's Second Marriage—Césarine d'Houdetot and Barante—Annette de Mackau and Watier de Saint-Alphonse.

OUR winter in Paris was the same as the preceding one. There was the same company, the same reception day at my own house as at the houses of others. Nothing was lacking save the house of Mme. de La Briche, whose guests did not return—and then only on a holiday—until the end of March. The proverbs that had been produced during the "Grands Jours" at Le Marais were played again at my house and were found much gayer, because the audience was neither mentally nor physically fatigued. The actors were Rosambo, Vandœuvre, Mézy, and our new friend Dazincourt. There was a large number of guests, including some very well-known people.

The success of my poems had intoxicated me. A good patriot and still hostile to Voltaire, I decided to compose an epic poem on the subject of Joan of Arc. I divided it into twelve cantos, and had written the early ones in prose when an incident occurred that somewhat interfered with my work. At that time there was a prevalence of those pernicious cerebral or ataxic fevers which appear in the form of a tertian fever but carry off their victim at the third or fourth attack. We had had a very recent example in the case of one of my farm labourers. On the day following his first attack he worked as usual, had a second attack the next day, worked a little less

hard, and then died in the course of the third attack, to the great astonishment of the whole district. This was exactly what happened to me, except that I did not die. My exhausted brain was first of all seized with a slight attack of fever. The next day I attended to my duties as usual. On the following day there was a second attack, accompanied by horrible pains in my head. Finally, two days later, in the morning, the third attack arrived and with it unconsciousness up to the moment when I found they were wheeling me about my bedroom with my head covered with ice and my feet in mustard. Then I indistinctly began to hear little Dr. Jouard saying to my wife: "If he recovers consciousness he is saved." He was acquainted with this treacherous fever, and knew there was only one thing to be done: fight against it whilst the attack was on and conquer it. No one, I believe, had done this up to then. He tried his treatment and succeeded, and thereby gained a great reputation.

After this adventure my wife and friends were not on good terms with Joan of Arc, but, owing to the trouble they took to separate us, she became all the dearer to me. Ours was a secret intrigue and I no longer saw her except by chance. However, I took care to make our departure fit in with the time at which her *fête* was to be celebrated at Orléans. I wished to study that town in its fifteenth-century setting, and to consult some manuscripts there. An old literary acquaintance, Pleyre,¹ the esteemed author of the play, *L'Ecole des pères*, was of great assistance to me in this respect. The excellent man had an elder brother who was Prefect of Orléans; they lived together, and it was through them that I gained access to their town. We arrived there on the evening of May 6, and I spent three days over my investigations.

What struck me most at this Joan of Arc *fête* was the indifference or rather the mocking cynicism of the public. A long procession, escorted by all the counterjumpers of the town, Bonaparte's guards of honour, in red gallooned coats, was followed in the Cathedral by a panegyric—very wearisome, I admit, but which these amiable youths enlivened by

¹ Pleyre (Pierre Alexandre), born on April 30, 1752, at Nîmes, died on June 20, 1830.—A. C.

quotations from Voltaire's *Pucelle*, whispered from one to the other.

In the autumn of 1808 Paris had to go without the pleasures of Le Marais. Frédéric d'Houdetot had just been appointed Prefect of Ghent,¹ and the death of Mme. de la Live de Jully, which occurred in May, still kept her daughters, Mmes. de Fezensac and de Vintimille, in mourning. Mme. de La Briche had followed the Molés to Dijon. I recollect that Mathieu still wrote to me fairly often. He pretended to be dying of ennui in his exile and that he could find nothing to do. It was then that I began to appreciate not his heart but his mind and character. I who in my youth had looked upon an intendancy as the finest post that a man of heart and intelligence could desire, what could I think of a man who, at thirty years of age, found that his prefecture left him too much leisure? This narrow-minded man thought that by reading reports, attending council meetings, and signing documents, he was carrying out the duties of a Prefect, and he wrote to me: "Everything is completely finished by noon, leaving me nothing more to do." The fact of the matter is he did not know how to do anything more.

As for me, the work connected with my agricultural enterprises at Bourneville and in Touraine carried me so far into the autumn that it was not until December 3 that we set off back to Paris by way of Tours. It was the time of the great piece of juggling over the crown of Spain, and the roads along which we passed were crowded with splendid troops who were on their way to find a grave in the Peninsula. We were unable to reach Paris until December 7. Three days later I left my wife and children to return to Bourneville. I found everything in good order. On the 27th I was back in Paris, to find my house enriched, as though by enchantment, by a complete set of silver plate, lustres, carpets, &c. Whence had they come? My incomparable wife had sold several pieces of jewellery in order to give me this pleasant surprise! But of

¹ In reference to Frédéric d'Houdetot as Prefect of Ghent, see Lanzac de Laborie's *La domination française en Belgique*, vol. ii. p. 20. Born in 1778, Sub-prefect of Château-Salins, Prefect of the Scheldt in 1808, of Dyle in 1812, and of Calvados in 1849 and in 1852, and Member of the Institute, he died in Paris in 1859.—A. C.

our life in Paris during that winter of 1809 I can recollect nothing either new or distinctive, except that we became a little more intimate with the Damas family and had a new guest in the person of the Vicomtesse d'Affry.

She was the only daughter of Receiver-General Gigot de Garville of whom I have spoken in the account of my travels in Switzerland. I then saw her at the Château de Greng, in company with my poor friend D'Orcy, who was her first cousin. That was twenty-two years ago. She was now living in Paris, a childless widow and almost ruined, partly through the Revolution, partly because of her father's speculations, and partly owing to herself. When we met her in society I was ignorant as to her very existence. Hearing that my house was not without its charms, she was seized with a fond recollection of me, became ardently fond of my wife, and an assiduous visitor. The year afterwards she came to Bourneville. She was of a fawning, flattering, insinuating, melancholy, romantic, splanetic, capricious disposition—and burdened with debts. She borrowed money from me and promised to return it in Paris in a week's time. Six months later I again asked her to repay me and we then quarrelled. I have since learnt that she was an old offender. Little by little she disappeared from society.

In the course of this winter we sustained a very great loss through the death of our friend Mme. de Mony, who had been responsible for my marriage and given her name to my son. She died slowly from a female ailment which the brutal skill of the famous Dubois either accelerated or rendered fatal.

INNSBRUCK, September 5, 1840.

According to custom, which entirely regulated our life, we returned to Paris in December. Our winter there was also the same as usual. The only fresh thing that I can recollect were Despréaux's "petites jambes." Despréaux, a charming songwriter, excellent table-companion, and formerly a mediocre supernumerary in the ballets at the Opéra, had married the celebrated *danseuse* Guimard. He was very skilful at cutting out images in paper, and could even compose pictures in that way, with their various planes, shadows, &c.; he knew how to make a person's likeness out of a card which he tore with his

hands behind his back ; and, finally, to all his talents he added that of being able—bad dancer though he was—to show others how to dance, to hold themselves, to enter and leave a room, &c., better than my old masters Vestris and Petit. His services were in request everywhere. The Empress Beauharnais, who possessed but the grace of Martinique, took lessons in deportment from him. He showed her august husband how to sit on his throne and dance the Monaco. He was the director of public *fêtes*, and the Carmontelle of the Empire. He deigned to descend from this Empyrean to train my children's little feet—not as a paid professor (I should not have dared to have offered him money) but as a friend and a comrade of fortune. The Revolution had deprived him of his cross-capers as it had robbed me of my posts and patrimony ; we had since made songs together and he had retained a certain attachment for me. . . . But what about his “*petites jambes* ?” I am coming to that. When the Opéra of the Porte Saint Martin, which still exists, was built in three months and for three years, there was made for the King's amusement a model of that beautiful and charming theatre. All the boxes were filled with little figures of ladies in full dress. There was the curtain, the stage, the scenery, and everything. This miniature theatre had escaped the Revolution and come—how I know not—into Despréaux's possession. Now, he possessed the art of imitating to perfection the dancing of all the famous dancers of his time. But he did this not with his feet but with his fingers. When the first and third fingers of each hand were dressed in beautiful little white silk stockings and tiny shoes, the rest of the hands being covered up, he could make them execute *pas de deux* to perfection. This illusion was produced in the following manner. The Lilliputian Opéra was placed in the middle of a drawing-room ; the orchestra, in a corner of the room, struck up a ballet tune ; and Gardel, the former director of ballets, cried out “*Raise the curtain.*” The curtain rose but stopped at the height of Despréaux's fingers, that is to say at the height of the dancers' knees. Whereupon there was a quarrel between the manager and the stage decorator. It was found, however, that the curtain would not go up any higher, so, for once, the audience was requested to be content with things as they were, and the ballet opened. Such,

then were Despréaux's "petites jambes," which the spectators recognised as imitating the "Diou" of the ballet, her son, Mlle. Guimard, Mlle. Herel, Gardel, Nivelon, Mlle. Allard, Mmes. Pérignon, Clotilde, Miller and Duport. It was difficult to obtain this performance, which greatly fatigued poor Despréaux, and it required all the friendship which I inspired in him to get him to consent to give it in my *salon* to a small company of intimate friends.

It was about this time that Bonaparte grew angry with his brother Louis, whom he had made King of Holland, and who instead of making himself the Emperor's humble instrument, took it into his head to defend his subjects against the extortions of Saint Cloud. Driven from his throne, this scrupulous simpleton went into Switzerland to write poetry and prose, after which he vegetated in Florence, where he still lives, the widower of that amiable Hortense Beauharnais who danced so well, wrote such pretty songs, and so cordially detested her royal and sullen husband. Everybody except her gave their first sons to Bonaparte, who did not refrain from committing adultery with his wife's daughter and his brother's wife.¹

Another big affair had just been brought to a conclusion: the divorce of Bonaparte and Josephine. But it was not an annulled marriage. The marriage had not been celebrated by the Church,² so could not be dissolved. They invented a new sort of divorce, and hardly had Josephine, the exiled legitimate wife, retired to Malmaison when Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, an eighteen-year-old concubine whom the good Emperor Francis had sacrificed for fear of seeing Bonaparte at Schönbrunn for a third time—entered, at Fontainebleau, the bed of a married man. Everybody in France sympathised with her; we looked upon her from afar as a victim who had been sacrificed to the repose of Germany; and had she been unhappy she would have been adored. But the goose began to

¹ Frédéric Masson has refuted these calumnies. *Cf. Napoléon et sa famille*, vol. ii. pp. 157-162.—A. C.

² It is now known, as M. Masson has shown, that there was a scene from *Le Mariage forcé*. The Pope could not crown Napoleon and Josephine unless they were married religiously, so on the eve of the coronation, in a room at the Tuileries, the religious marriage was celebrated by Fesch, secretly and without witnesses.—A. C.

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dance and to laugh and especially to love her Gengiskan; so henceforth we regarded her as his accomplice.

But society, taken as a whole, began to change its face. Many people, whose virtue could stand the strain no longer, became reconciled with the Court at the Tuileries. Married to a great-niece of Marie Antoinette, Bonaparte called Louis XVI. his uncle with such a good grace that one's fidelity had to be terribly stubborn to resist this pseudo-legitimacy. Moreover, he who had shot down the royalists of Toulon and Paris had become their warmest partisan, their most openly avowed master. Sincerely and also because it was to his own interest, he was the enemy of their most detested enemy—Jacobinism. He reigned in a strong and magnificent manner, paid and recompensed like a king, bestowed endowments, titles and kingdoms. Kings came to pay him homage. . . . To have expected little dukes and marquesses whom the Revolution had impoverished to act the part of a Diogenes before such an Alexander was to ask too much of humanity.

Part of the society in which we mixed—that is, the best society of Paris, had then allowed itself to be allured to the Tuileries. These deserters were none the worse received by us, provided they left off their embroidered court dress before entering our drawing-rooms, appeared to be proud to wear a dress coat again, and rivalled each other in slandering the master whom they had just been flattering. Mathieu and Pasquier—artful, sagacious, dissembling, and with a future before them—did not give way to this weakness; they let people talk and said not a word. I was still on intimate terms with the latter and a great friend of the former, who had just been promoted to the then superb position of Director-General of the road-surveying department, and who carried out his duties in those delicious boudoirs called the Petit Bourbon, which the Prince de Condé had built for quite another purpose.

The birth of the King of Rome, by opening up the prospect of a dynasty, finally turned the heads of all these people. It was announced by a hundred cannon shots. There would have been only twenty-one had the child been a girl. We refractory aristocrats counted them anxiously. The twenty-second shot

stunned us ; for it seemed to us to kill the Bourbon race. On the contrary, by removing all bounds to the father's ambition and extravagant enterprises, it brought it back to France. After his fall and when the child was taken by his mother to Vienna, his grandfather the Emperor Francis showed him great friendship. But his life was a burden on the royalists. "Little man," said Queen Caroline of Naples, Marie Antoinette's sister and the flower of the aristocracy, to him, "when you are grown up recollect that there is only one career that is suitable for you—that of a Capuchin."

In May, my friend Terray, still full of vigour and piety, was forced to marry again in order to add a few more children to the four he had already had by his poor little wife. He married a Mlle. de Mareuil, of a parliamentary family—a person neither young nor pretty, delicate and thin, gentle and meritorious, while everything about her seemed to say: "I have received a good education at the Place Royale." Mme. de Vindé could not conceive that any one could get over the loss of her daughter, and her despair amounted to anger.

Two other marriages were celebrated that autumn. On November 20, Césarine, the youngest of the five D'Houdetot females who had fallen from San Domingo into their grandmother's arms, was married by Mme. de La Briche, who had adopted her, to young Barante, son of the Prefect of Geneva, a young fellow of considerable merit, intelligence and even talent, and who had acquired an honourable position in society by a literary history of the eighteenth century. We have since seen Barante loaded with favours by the Bourbons and ambassador for Louis Philippe in Russia. Césarine brought him a small dowry, given by Mme. de La Briche, and the Prefecture of Bourbon-Vendée, where he wrote the fine chapter describing the Bocage in Mme. de la Rochejacquelein's *Mémoires*.¹ I was very fond of him. But when Decazes made him a peer he became a fanatical supporter of that rascal, whom I despised as much then as I do now, and all was over between us.²

¹ He even drew up the whole of the Marquise's *Mémoires*.—A. C.

² Barante (1782–1866) was appointed Prefect of the Vendée on February 12, 1809, and created a baron in the same year. He became Prefect of the Loire Inférieure on March 12, 1813, and a peer of France on March 5, 1819.—A. C.

The other marriage, which took place in December, was that of my pretty niece—*à la mode de Bretagne*—Annette de Mackau and General Comte Watier de Saint-Alphonse, imperial equerry, whom the Revolution and the Empire had endowed with an income of one hundred thousand francs. Yet he came of a good family, and was also a good and honest man, full of noble feelings, which he showed at the Restoration and at the usurpation of Louis Philippe.¹

¹ In regard to Watier, see Thiébauld's *Mémoires, passim*, and especially vol. iv. p. 527, and vol. v. p. 331.—A. C.

CHAPTER X

1811-1814

Esménard—Comte Germain—Marriage of the d'Houdetot tribe—Napoleon and La Bouillerie—Tchernitscheff—Napoleon and Poland—M. and Mme. de Crisenoy—Death of Mme. d'Houdetot—The Abbé Delille—Disasters—The Allies in France—Their conduct—Flight to Beauvais and Mesnil—A Day at Dreux—Return to Paris—The Abbé de Montesquiou—A Russian Colonel—Monsieur's entry into Paris—Louis XVIII. at Compiègne—The Saint Ouen Declaration—The King in Paris—The Ministers.

It was in the summer of this year that there died, from a terrible fall in Italy,¹ the dull and correct author of that long poem, entitled *La Navigation*—Esménard, who, a weak counterpart of the Abbé Delille, turned out his imaginative works as a shoemaker turns out shoes. He was succeeded at the Institute by Chateaubriand.

That is all I recollect of the annals of the *salons*. As to those of history, the northern horizon was black with clouds. Since Austria had become a humble ally, Prussia a humiliated vassal, and the Germanic body a confederation obedient to the orders of its new protector, there was no longer any barrier between the two inseparable friends, Alexander and Bonaparte; and we know what friends are in politics, when there is nothing but a frontier to separate them.

The Continental blockade of England was certainly a genial idea, a fine and gigantic conception. Its only weak point was the impossibility of accomplishing it; for to have succeeded it would have been necessary to have called in the aid of too many willing forces or to have subjected too many unwilling ones.

Russia, whilst carrying out the conditions of the last treaty,

¹ June 25, 1811.—A. C.

felt heavily the burden of an embargo that caused its people to rise and ruined them more than England. Alexander gradually swerved from the prohibition. But Bonaparte was inflexible on this point; he would have conquered the world to have closed the country to Birmingham steel and Cornish tin. Everything, then, pointed to a coming struggle between the two giants.

Our life that winter was modelled exactly on that of previous years; there were the same friends, the same diners and the same people to supper. Mme. de La Briche was the only one missing. The excellent woman, ever courageous and ever booted, had gone to spend the winter at Bourbon-Vendée to see to the ministerial education of the prefect's young wife. Meanwhile, Constance d'Houdetot, the second of the five, married a M. Germain, son of the famous goldsmith and Bonaparte's chamberlain. The Prefecture of Mâcon and, I believe, the title of count (for there was not a d'Houdetot that did not profit by Mme. de La Briche's star) turned this young chamberlain into a petty fop of fine stature and handsome face who, with his back to his aunt's chimney-piece, used to hold forth in a high tone and with great volubility, much to the astonishment of the members of the two noble *faubourgs*. "When a person has no pride," I said of him, "he is impertinent."¹

I will here seize the opportunity of mentioning the strange marriages of the other members of this tribe. The eldest, Elisa, her grandmother's inseparable companion, a good and gentle girl who would have been beautiful but for the pimples that covered her face, married a M. de Bazancourt, a Picardian nobleman who had been one of the judges of the Duc d'Enghien. She did not know this until after she was married, but her brother and Mathieu knew on the eve of the ceremony. One was Prefect of Ghent, the other Director-General of the road-surveying department. To have spoken would have caused a rupture, and a rupture with the master himself, so, preferring to sacrifice the poor girl rather than their positions, they kept silent. However, Bazancourt behaved himself very well. Every door was closed to him. Fouché sought to obtain secret accusa-

¹ Auguste Jean, Comte Germain (1786-1821) married Constance Jeanne d'Houdetot on February 24, 1812.—A. C.

tions from him ; but he would say nothing, except that he was satisfied with everybody.

The fourth, Céline, a charming little doll, was married to a M. Langlois d'Amilly, who was celebrated for having the finest legs in France. Nothing more is recorded about him.

Finally, the last, Ernestine, who, though not pretty, was a girl of good sense and merit, despite her father and mother, married a Swiss, a great lover of music and a handsome man, who, by a previous marriage in England, had inherited a splendid fortune and the name of Fleming.

GRÄTZ, October 28, 1840.

The time for war with Russia was ripe. Bonaparte, who was almost always ill in time of peace, unbuttoned his coat and said : " I must make war." He had four hundred millions in little gold barrels in his cellars, under the care of the excellent La Bouillerie, the most faithful of treasurers and one of the most upright, simple, loyal and wise men I have known. One day when the Emperor was reckoning up his treasures with him, Napoleon said to him : " You see all these barrels. Well, at the end of the campaign, not one of them will remain." " Sire," replied the good treasurer, " there is a means by which you can keep them." " And what is that ?" asked Bonaparte. " By not making war," said La Bouillerie. " You are a good fellow," exclaimed the Emperor, slapping him on the shoulder.

Before leaving Paris the Russian envoy, Tschernitscheff, had paid a clerk in the war-office a very high price for a copy of Bonaparte's plan of campaign. But hardly had he left when the plot was discovered. The clerk was decapitated. But though message after message was sent by telegraph, the Russians crossed the frontier before the order to stop them arrived. Everything had to be recommenced. Perhaps it would have been more skilful to have left things as they were.¹

On June 23, Bonaparte had four hundred thousand Frenchmen on the banks of the Niemen—certainly the most brilliant army that had ever been seen, and of which he might have said, alas ! what he said to La Bouillerie when speaking of his four hundred

¹ As regards this episode, see Vandal's *Napoléon et Alexandre Ier*, vol. iii, pp 306-321.—A. C.

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millions. To it he added the contingents of Italy, Prussia, Austria, and the Germanic Confederation. This man, like a torrent, rolled the whole universe before him. Before leaving Paris he had forcibly enrolled one hundred and fifty of the highest titled young men in France by sending them officers' commissions. These were the hostages of the Faubourg Saint Germain. This flower of the nobility set off, like the conscripts, furious and in despair, but returned after six months intoxicated with glory, eager for the fray, and enthusiastic over the Empire. Excellent, but horrible policy!

Bonaparte crossed the Niemen, occupied Vilna and Lithuania, and entered Smolensk. He had thus accomplished the most important conquest of modern times, driven Russia back to her former boundaries, acquired the right to reconstitute behind his innumerable army that Poland which was then mad with joy and devotion, to make this natural and necessary ally of France an advance fortress which would have served as a rampart against Russia and as a guarantee against the Germanic empire. There can be no doubt that this idea entered Bonaparte's head; the Abbé de Pradt's mission to Warsaw sufficiently proves it. But there can also be no doubt that the sole object of the errand of this intriguing buffoon was to stir up in Poland a rising favourable to the French armies, and that the project of remodelling the country was postponed. Bonaparte dropped his prey for the sake of a shadow, and thus from the most glorious of campaigns, from the sure germ of a long peace and magnificent European restoration, there came the most terrible catastrophe that France had yet undergone. His gigantic expedition became similar to that of Cambyses in Egypt. Whilst this glorious madman was thinking that because he was in Moscow he was dominating Russia, whilst he was signing there notarial appointments and theatre-decrees, and whilst he was having *vaudevilles* performed, Alexander was amusing his ambassador Lauriston, and Rostopchine was burning the city. It was easy to count those who returned; impossible to count those who remained; and it was not until two years later that the number of soldiers who saved their lives by entering into slavery was known. In the midst of disasters unheard of in the history of France, the fatal man quietly abandoned his disbanded army,

to arrive unexpectedly and incognito at the Tuileries, from which the Malet conspiracy so nearly drove him. Had it succeeded, he would have fallen from his Empyrean on to some barren tract in Poland; he would have ended as he began; he would have perished as he was born. Heaven refused us this act of justice.

Every family was in mourning, and the last stage of consolation was to hope that one's sons were in Siberia. Louis de Romeuf had been killed at the battle of Moskva; Aimery de Fezensac was a prisoner in Poland¹; young Villeblanche had had his head blown off near Vilna. An old *valet de chambre* of Mme. Pastoret, wishing to follow her son to answer for him, set off and was never heard of again. My memory could furnish me with other similar examples without leaving my own narrow circle. Judge of the tale that the whole of France could have told!

The winter in Paris was sad and mournful. We spent part of it in the country, much disquieted by thoughts of the future, which looked all the more gloomy as Bonaparte redoubled his ardour for war and rejected all overtures of peace. The devastation of the country places was completed by the conscription. Men of all ages and stature, children, and even dwarfs left the harrow or the plough to take part in the spring butcheries, and the coming campaign promised to be but a throw of the dice with the destiny of France as the stake.

The world, however, wagged on, and people married as usual. In January 1812 my old friend Tourole married his amiable daughter Caroline to his stout cousin, good Charles de Crisenoy, an excellent fellow, full of devotion, good sense and honour.

In February we lost Mme. d'Houdetot. She died as she had lived, the possessor of an ever-lively soul, a frivolous disposition, an impressionable heart, a ready wit, a gentle, sincere, and superstitious character. Before getting into bed she never missed stamping three times with her heel and throwing three pins over her shoulder. Such as she was, she merited friends. She had

¹ Fezensac, who was then twenty-six years of age, was not made prisoner. He was colonel of the fourth regiment of the line, and fought so bravely that Ney looked upon him as an old colonel. Cf. his *Journal de la campagne de Russie* and his *Souvenirs militaires de 1804 à 1814*, the second book of which includes this *Journal*.—A. C.

many and lost none, for never did a woman know better how to cultivate friendship. With her disappeared the last of those enchanting circles which formed, through their wit and urbanity, the capital of Paris and made Paris into the capital of Europe.

Society also lost, in April, two of its former flowers: one, the Marquise d'Andlau; the other, Helvétius' second daughter,¹ mother of our friend Henriette de Rosambo, of her sister D'Orglandes, and of her two brothers Félix and Gustave.

Finally, to complete this list of deaths, France lost in May the last of her celebrated poets, the Abbé Delille, who composed his verses whilst walking about, declaiming and gesticulating, a man who, apart from his talent and unswerving attachment to old duties and doctrines, was in everything puerile and frivolous. He was the last of our classical writers. He read his verses with inimitable perfection. On publishing his poem entitled *Jardins*, he came to my father's country house, glorying over the fact that he had received one hundred louis for it—ten times more than he thought it was worth.

As regards the living, Bonaparte, before leaving for Germany, made many promotions among my acquaintances. Barante was appointed Prefect of Nantes, Frédéric d'Houdetot Prefect of Brussels, and Pasquier Prefect of Versailles. Mathieu Molé was given the portfolio of the Interior, to which was added two months later (in June) that of Justice *ad interim*. He was definitely appointed Minister of Justice in October, when he resigned the Interior. Knowing thoroughly his ideas and his ability as regards the work of an administration, I was delighted that he had left a ministry which is concerned with so many things and in which the administrative part so largely predominates over the speculative. I was sufficiently well acquainted with his capacity—about which he himself knew so very little—to be certain that, of a L'Hopital and a Molé, he would have only a grave and magisterial face, that he would retain under his robes both male and female intriguers—Laborie, Mme. Boni de Castellane, and others—and that there would issue from his

¹ In reference to her, her children and Helvétius' descendants, see Charles Nauroy's *Révolutionnaires*, pp. 253-267, and the same author's *Le Curieux*, vol. ii. pp. 106-110.—A. C.

ministry neither a Blois nor a Moulins decree. However, he had ardently coveted this post. His whole family rejoiced, and, liking him as I did then, I too should have rejoiced had I not seen that the very foundations of France were giving way.

The La Briche family was not so perspicacious. At the Hôtel de la Chancellerie, on the Place Vendôme, it imagined itself so firmly established that, at the beginning of the following winter, Mme. Molé, when complacently showing us the quite new arrangement of a low *entresol* where she lived, beneath the reception rooms, added, with a sigh: "There is only one inconvenience, I shall have no room for my daughter when she marries." Clotilde was then two years old! Only sixteen years had to elapse before reaching that embarrassing moment! And yet the Allies were already on the Rhine. The Battle of Leipzig had decided the fate of Bonaparte and of France. On January 1, 1814, the Austrians, Russians and Prussians crossed the Rhine!

We had returned to Paris in December. There were neither suppers, nor balls, nor society gatherings whatsoever. We met in small parties, whispering to each other the news that was flying about, for newspapers, letters, conversations—all were silent. There was only one sort of news and it spread with frightful rapidity, because the Government took marvellous care to propagate, exaggerate, or invent it—news of devastations and massacres committed by the allied troops.

Authorities say that this winter campaign was the most skilful that Bonaparte had conducted. That may be so, since it is the only one on which he had not the advantage of numbers, season, the enthusiasm of his troops and the fear of the enemy. However that may be, the result could not be doubted. Every true friend of the country ardently hoped that, at any cost and by no matter whose hand, he would see the downfall of the Corsican who, during thirteen years, had made France into what Italy was under Nero or under Domitian—a nation that was mistress abroad but a slave at home. I must add, however, that this patriotism accepted the triumph of the Allies only as a great calamity sent by God to annihilate a still greater disaster. In the victory of the Coalition it saw only the liberation and not the enslavement of the country. Nothing could equal the

humiliations that France had endured, and the true patriot was he who desired that the country—whatever it might cost and at the price of his own ruin—should be re-established on its old foundations, torn from the bloody yoke of a foreign upstart, and handed back to the Bourbons and its legitimate sovereign.

Meanwhile the allied forces slowly advanced. They occupied Champagne. The Château de Brienne, the residence of our friend Mme. Auguste de Montbreton, had received a visit from them and paid somewhat dearly for it. Not that they had either pillaged, burnt or killed. The accounts that she herself gave me proved that the versions given by the police were gross exaggerations. A few months later, Boissy d'Anglas, whose country house near Luciennes had been occupied by an Austrian detachment, bitterly remarked to his son, who had gone through the Russian campaign: "They've drunk my wine, eaten my fruit, and burnt my wood." "Is that all?" replied his son. "Well, be content, for evidently these fellows don't know their business. We did as much in their country, but in addition we violated the women, cut down the trees, and burnt the houses." A colonel of the Russian Guards who lived with me in Paris in the following spring related to us that his steward, being unable to satisfy a French requisition, was crucified by our soldiers on the *château* door, that they then assembled all the young women of the district in a church, violated them, and finally set fire to the building. One more little incident and I have finished. When, some time afterwards, the allied troops made a movement that brought them into the neighbourhood of Bourneville they stopped for two days at the little Château du Gué-à-Tresmes. Dislodged by a French corps, our soldiers found the *château* well-furnished and in perfect order. Even a stock of wood, with the exception of a few logs, had been left intact. So our troops set to work to *dévastate* the *château* and warm themselves with the furniture.

As for myself, it never occurred to me to take any precaution whatever against a visit that I hoped would be avoided. It was Comte Charles de Damas who pointed out to me that when soldiers were in bodies of ten or twenty thousand they were hungry, thirsty, and cold, and might even be seized with fancies; and that, though they might be veritable hermits in their dispo-

sition, they were surrounded when on the march by a swarm of Cossacks, who were the best fellows in the world, but whose only pay was what they were able to take. I believed what he said, so, on January 20, I set off for Bourneville with faithful Belguise, the only man in the world to whom I would have confided my secret and my fortune. Having sent the *concierger* on a distant errand, we constructed on the following night a hidden recess in the attic; the next night we dug a hole in the cellars, which had been abandoned for twenty years; and on the third we made another hole under a clump of trees. In the last was hidden a box of silver plate; in the cellars were concealed choice wines, china, crystal ware, &c., and, enclosed in metal boxes, the most important of my private documents; whilst in the attic we placed the most precious pieces of furniture.

In no way did the *château* look unfurnished, and I had no wish that it should have that air, for the houses that were the most badly treated were just those that had been left bare and had an aspect of hostility. I had still left only too many things, including pictures and books, that I was never to see again.

Soon there came the news of the arrival of the Austrians at Château-Thierry. Advising the *concierger* and the steward to be prudent and polite, the servants to show obedience, and the inhabitants to be resigned, we left the *château*, apart from its hiding-places, in the state of a house that has been inhabited up to the last moment, and ready to receive its owner's guests. The next day we were at the Hôtel du Cygne, on the town square at Beauvais. Here my wife wished to stop, but the town was so full that no inn wanted to keep us. It was necessary, therefore, to look for lodgings, which we found in a black little street near the Cathedral. And there we lived, much cramped, with our feet in the air and the horses saddled. The only person who still had a house was the Prefect, but I cared very little for the nephew of M. Régnier, Duc de Massa, the former Minister of Justice. We saw no one apart from our friends the Abbés Clauzel and our neighbour, Mme. de Corcy, who had come from Paris with her children to take refuge with her mother, Mme. Wallon. Her fowls were a great aid to us, for every morning they brought us the news of Paris, not like carrier-pigeons do, but lying in a basket with letters in their

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stomachs, for at that time the post-office received hardly any correspondence and delivered still less.

We had been camping in this way for about a fortnight, when one morning my wife espied a train of artillery on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. It had arrived from Doullens, which had just been evacuated. Suddenly the idea occurred to her that Beauvais was going to be defended. A little M. de Corberon, a faithful Bonapartist and crazy blockhead, informed her that the Legislative Body had decreed that the French army was invincible, that the brave town of Beauvais would defend itself like a lion, bury itself under its ruins, and so on. As my wife had no wish to be defended, this display of bravery made her all the more eager to leave. Behold us, then, on the Rouen road! After reaching Magny we took a cross-road in the direction of Mantes. A league from there we discovered, in a hollow to the right, a fine large old *château*, flanked by a pretty lake and a superb forest. It was Mesnil, the domain of our dear Rosambos. As they were there, what could we do but embrace them in passing? We descended. Their children were sledging on the frozen lake, so my own took two sledges and joined in the game. We had luncheon and conversed, were pressed to remain, and accepted. The next day, finding ourselves very comfortable and our company being found agreeable, we agreed to divide the expenses of the household; and there we were, once more housed.

It is with infinite pleasure that I recall the six weeks of quiet happiness which, in the midst of the overthrow of France, we spent in that oasis, and which sealed our friendship with that excellent family for ever. I continued my son's education there, and my own work, as in Paris and at Bourneville. It was there that we received the news of the devastation of our estate. Mme. de Vindé, who had a farm in the neighbourhood, sent us a letter in which, with friendly circumspection but with all the imagination that her farmer had put into his account, she described this capture of Carthage. My flock of Merino sheep had been spitted, the park destroyed, and I do not know whether the house was not in cinders! Here is what had really happened. The Allies were moving towards Paris by way of Villers-Cotterets. They came across a fine *château*; the staff

sition, they were surrounded when on the march by a swarm of Cossacks, who were the best fellows in the world, but whose only pay was what they were able to take. I believed what he said, so, on January 20, I set off for Bourneville with faithful Belguise, the only man in the world to whom I would have confided my secret and my fortune. Having sent the *concierge* on a distant errand, we constructed on the following night a hidden recess in the attic; the next night we dug a hole in the cellars, which had been abandoned for twenty years; and on the third we made another hole under a clump of trees. In the last was hidden a box of silver plate; in the cellars were concealed choice wines, china, crystal ware, &c., and, enclosed in metal boxes, the most important of my private documents; whilst in the attic we placed the most precious pieces of furniture.

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In short, they were the greatest thieves in the world. Every wainscot where they suspected a hiding-place was torn down; every cupboard, chest of drawers, desk, and drawer was broken open. But this would not have been done had the keys been left. We had not sufficiently esteemed these Cossacks. Finding a number of metal boxes that contained some title-deeds that I had neglected to bury, they imagined they must be full of gold and silver, so emptied them, littering the whole of the ground-floor with papers, but neither burning nor tearing one of them. And, marvellous to relate, I lost not a single document. Nevertheless, my linen-room provided them with shirts; the new hangings in my *petit salon* were converted into waistcoats, and my bolsters were transformed into trousers. In the case of the bolsters, they shook the feathers out of them, passed one leg into one, the other into another, fastened the whole together with pins, and there they were. As to the cattle, horses, and utensils of all sorts that they could not carry off, they established a fair on the two esplanades near the *château*. There it was that the real thieves—the army of Jews who followed these corps—came to perfect the pillaging (which would have been ten times less but for them) by buying a saucepan for two *sous*, a cow for twenty-four, and other things in proportion. It is true that among these northern Israelites were some of the Valois whom I afterwards forced to disgorge. Some of my cattle and almost the whole of my flock of sheep were thus recovered.

I have since acquired the proof that a few connoisseurs fraternised with these barbarians. My books and pictures were examined by men of taste, who carried off what they fancied, and among other things a magnificent French flora and charming picture of Danae by my mother, which I greatly prized.

However, the *dénouement* was rapidly approaching. On March 30 Paris capitulated, and its deputation heard these fine words come from the mouth of the man who had sacrificed Moscow to save his Empire: “On ne reçoit à capitulation qu’une ville prise et non une ville délivrée.” On the following day an innumerable army slowly, peaceably, passed along the boulevards, bordered by a crowd waving white flags and shouting—for the first time for twenty-two years—“Long live the King! Long live the Bourbons!” Old

Sacken pointed out his cavalry to the ladies and laughingly said to them: "Sacken's poor remains!" In some such words had his division been described by the Government. Young Russian officers saluted them with the words: "Behold, Mesdames, the barbarians of the North." Never had Paris looked more *en fête*. The reason was that it had not been conquered but relieved. The Revolution, the Terror, the Directory, tyranny, and twenty-five years of torture seemed to pass away with the dawn of a fresh hope.

The neighbourhood of Mantes began to lose its tranquillity. The *débris* of Bonaparte's army were retreating in confusion; the roads and country-places were covered with a swarm of deserters; the Allies were encamped around Paris. So, in company with our hosts, we left Mesnil and took the road to Dreux, leaving friends as well as enemies further behind. But there was no longer any means of avoiding the latter. We found that small town in a state of horrible confusion. Men, horses, vehicles, baggage, crowded the streets pellmell. Whilst strolling about in search of news which could no longer be found anywhere, we were informed on the quiet that a certain refractory club had just received a newspaper. Who would believe nowadays that a newspaper was once a rarity in France? Off we rushed, to be received at the club on the strength of our rebel countenances and to listen to the public reading of the gazette. We learnt of the entry of the Allies into Paris, of the royalist movement in the capital, of the declaration of the Powers, of Comte d'Artois' arrival at Nancy, and of the charming words of that prince who has said so many: "Nothing is changed in France, except that I see one more Frenchman here."¹

Rosambo and I immediately left for Paris. What struck me whilst on the way was to see the roads covered with deserters. "Good," said I, "Bonaparte's army is off. Let it go and we will then form that of the King." This was, I believe, fairly good reasoning, for the only enemy to be then conquered in France was Bonaparte, or the Jacobin influence that had become imperial. But the five men who had just been provisionally appointed to look after the affairs of France did not think as I

¹ The words, as we know, were Beugnot's. Cf. his *Mémoires*, pp. 456-457.—
A. C.

did.¹ On reaching the capital I called upon Mme. de Damas, and the first person I met there was the Abbé de Montesquiou, one of the five temporary kings; a man with a philosophical, systematic, speculative, and above all inconsistent mind, and who would have made, apart from religion, an excellent arguer in a church council. Full of what I had just seen and inferred, I congratulated him on our good fortune in seeing our enemies scatter of their own accord. "Monsieur," he replied, "it is a great misfortune. Would you have France appear disarmed before the Powers who occupy her?" "Monsieur," I responded, "it matters very little to France's honour, which is intact, since she has taken Vienna, Berlin and Moscow, if she has fifty thousand guns against the Allies who have four hundred thousand, but it matters a good deal to her salvation if those fifty thousand rifles are not pointed against her King." I need hardly say that I wasted my breath. Orders were despatched in all directions to send the deserters back to their regiments, and thus did Bonaparte, on landing at Elba, receive the good news that his army was being kept together for his future use.

The Emperor of Russia lived at the Elysée, for such delicacy did the kings whose palaces Bonaparte had occupied show, that not one of them would enter the Tuileries. Being but thirty to forty yards from the Elysée, we entertained a colonel of His Majesty's guard, Count Tschoubert, the politest man I have ever met. With mingled humour and urbanity, he refused to share my apartment, table and fodder, and, do what I could, perched himself in two rooms which I furnished for him on the third floor. He would accept only one stable for his horses and a coach-house, with a few trusses of straw for the Cossacks of the Guard—splendid men of Herculean stature, as gentle as children, and who became great favourites with my servants. As to sharing my table and allowing me to feed his men and horses, he would not hear of it. He took tea with us in the evening, and brought his own caravan tea; and he accepted one invitation to dinner. But we had the greatest difficulty to get him to

¹ The five members of the Provisional Government were Talleyrand, the Duc de Dalberg, Beurnonville, Jaucourt and the Abbé de Montesquiou.—A. C.

bring with him one or two of those young Russian officers who possess such good, modest, and elegant manners.

Meanwhile, Monsieur, invested with the Lieutenancy-general of the kingdom, slowly advanced from Nancy to Paris. The formation of a royal guard greatly occupied the capital. Such devotion was shown that it was improvised in a week. In seven days seven hundred men belonging to the best families in France were accepted, equipped, clothed, and furnished with horses, all at their own expense, and were in fairly good exercise. The handsome Duc de Mouchy sought after the command—to what do you not aspire when you are a Noailles? But Comte Charles de Damas was preferred to him.¹ As regards myself, military glory simply consisted in putting on again that coat of a national guardsman which I had taken off on August 10, 1792. It was on Easter Sunday, April 10, that Monsieur entered Paris. He came by way of the Rue Saint Denis, escorted by his new guard. The number of windows and roofs were insufficient to hold the enthusiastic crowd that was shouting itself hoarse. Everything was adorned with flags and flowers, and every handkerchief was waving. It was a touching spectacle, and one full of hope for the future had people only wished. I went with the crowd to see it at the Porte Saint Denis, where the prince stopped and saluted the figure of his ancestor. This act of homage was loudly applauded. As the procession turned on to the boulevards, I ran at full speed to Mme. de Vindé's to get a place on her terrace, where I could once more see it at my ease. Everybody there was of one heart and voice.

Monsieur's administration was fortunately of short duration. He had been through no apprenticeship as a ruler, and consequently fell into a sea of intrigues between the Bonapartists who had restored the Monarchy, the Jacobins who had saved France, the generals who had won a hundred battles for her, the Municipal Counsellors who had issued a proclamation, the Senators who were ready to do anything, and others. There was no longer a man in France who did not merit rewards; not one who deserved hanging. And what greatly increased the difficulties was the conduct of the Powers. They too easily forgot that the real enemy to be combated in France was not Bonaparte but

¹ Cf. Mme. de Chastenay's *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 331.—A. C.

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his father and creator, the revolutionary spirit and Jacobinism, without which he would never have reigned, without which he would never have conquered Vienna, Berlin, or Moscow—that Jacobinism which only a long and firm absolutism could enchain until time, religion and education had neutralised its terrible germs. Had the Allies known this, they would have imposed but one condition on the new throne—despotism. They imagined that they had delivered Europe from Bonaparte's tyranny, but they had merely let the tiger loose. They were about to hand over France, safe and in good condition, to kings who would carefully feed this tiger until it was of a sufficient growth to devour her afresh.

In the midst of this pickle, the King had left Hartwell. There then took place from Paris a sort of steeplechase to see who would be the first to pay him French homage on English soil. I believe that the winner was our new friend the Marquis de la Maisonfort, who, on seeing the Minister of the Interior's sister-in-law¹ in our *salon* every Wednesday, suddenly began to adore us, and who has since been made Ambassador to Florence for this chivalrous prank.

From Calais, the Court of Hartwell proceeded to Compiègne. Thus, on arriving in Paris, the King came not from exile but from the *château* of his ancestors. Moreover, it was necessary for the courtiers to rejuvenate themselves there, to Frenchify themselves, to cast off their English exterior. The Britannic fashion prevailed with the ladies, who landed in little tight-fitting hats and short skimpy dresses, just at the very time that the puffs, toques and feathers of our *Parisiennes* extended almost to the heavens.

For three days the toilet of the Duchesse d'Angoulême and her ladies was, therefore, an affair of State. Mlle. Minette, Mlle. Guérin, and two of our most elegant *Parisiennes* (I have forgotten their names, which were then mentioned with envy) posted off from Paris to Compiègne. Everybody was rushing there, full of the sincerest fidelity and most ardent enthusiasm—every one who held rank at the old or new Court, every one who wore stars, crosses or gallooned coats, every one who possessed titles or senatorships, every one who, during the past twenty

¹ Mme. de Fezensac, the Abbé de Montesquiou's sister-in-law.—A. C.

years, had bled Europe in the service of the Convention, the Directory and the Empire. Surrounded by these embroidered devotees, the least of whom would have shot him two years before, Louis XVIII., whose well-known legs supported a prominent stomach, said: "Gentlemen, I am happy to find myself in your midst. Happy and proud," he continued, "and if France were threatened you would again see me at your head." The contrast between the orator and his words provoked a smile, and this impromptu marriage with the Revolution made many people shrug their shoulders. But what more could he do? It was necessary to lie. And perhaps he did not lie after all. We have had time to learn to our cost that he bore no rancour towards that Revolution which had given him a throne. His words were pretty but studied, and in this they differed from those of his brother, who had less wit but more sincerity. The whole affection of France was centred in the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and more than one regretted the Salic Law. The King knew this well. "If my crown were of roses," he said, "I would hand it to her, but it is of thorns, so I keep it."

He left Compiègne on May 2, not for Paris but for Saint Ouen, for it was desired that there should be a grand entry into the capital on the following day. He dined and slept at the *château* of the Duc de Gesvres.

People slept little that night at Saint Ouen. It was necessary in that short space of time to give birth to a Charter. The King had been persuaded that he owed his subjects a Charter, that he could not reign without giving such a pledge, without reassuring France against the return of the old *régime*. Wearers of epaulettes, holders of senatorships, and purchasers of national property, were reassured against the very thing that the whole of France was awaiting. On the following morning, when passing through Paris, I found the streets strewn with this Saint Ouen declaration, a compendium of the new Charter. Farewell my Rennes Parliament, my Pays d'Etat, and the old French Constitution!

From the very beginning Louis XVIII. signed the dethronement of Charles X. Two hours after this abdication he triumphantly entered Paris by the Faubourg Saint Denis. We had taken some windows from which to see him pass. The procession

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was a long one, because it had been thought proper to add to the seven hundred mounted men of his provisional guard detachments of the few who remained of the various corps of the late imperial army. These platoons were distinguished both for their handsome appearance and their bad temper; their frowning faces said as plain as words that they would rather have followed an emperor on horseback through the streets of Vienna than trailed along the streets of Paris with a gouty king. Louis first appearance made, in the midst of my joy, a painful impression upon me. In a calash drawn by eight horses lolled, with a fatigued and sickly air, a stout man wearing a blue overcoat with gold epaulettes and an enormous three-cornered hat, and apparently insensible to the shouts of joy that filled the air as he passed. Compared to the King, the Duchesse d'Angoulême was much more the object of public enthusiasm; but she looked stiff and unnatural in a new corset, and her naturally sad face recalled either the past or predicted the future. The Duc d'Angoulême and the Duc de Berry were still absent. Monsieur was on horseback. The *cortège* proceeded straight to Notre-Dame and thence to the Tuileries by way of the Pont Neuf, where a masterpiece of decoration had been improvised—the equestrian statue of Henri IV., with Lally-Tollendal's inscription: *Ludovico reduce Henricus redivivus*.¹ I ran from the Faubourg Saint Denis to the terrace of the Tuileries. I was insatiable and indefatigable. I mingled with the people who, with a joy that was noisy and of good omen, crowded under the King's windows. Louis XVIII. appeared several times at the window and once led forward his niece, on whose head, which had never borne anything save a martyr's crown, he placed a wreath of flowers. Probably no one but myself was displeased by this little piece of acting. The illuminations in the evening were widespread, exceedingly brilliant and spontaneous. Nobody received orders to rejoice. Many were the transparencies, decorations, inscriptions and emblems. One of our neighbours in the Rue des Saussayes arranged the portraits of Louis XIV., Henri IV., and the King in a medallion, with the inscription, "XIV. et IV. font XVIII." It was at this time that I composed a little epic poem in two

¹ Lally attributed it to himself, but Bengnot (*Mémoires*, p. 473) rightly claims it. "It is mine," he says, "mine alone."—A. C.

governed, pretended not to be influenced by women. Perhaps, too, he recollected our meeting at Mme. de Damas'.

The Ministry of War was given to the Duc de Feltre. An old worthy sailor, the Vicomte du Bouchage, belonging to the old nobility of the Dauphiné, got the Ministry of Marine.¹ Beugnot was made Prefect of Police.² Why? Was it because he had followed all parties with equal zeal and left them with equal timeliness? He, was, however, endowed with great acuteness and considerable wit. He alone had a good general idea of the King's position and what was necessary. Several years later, in a corner of Villèle's *salon*, he said to me: "I am not a devout person, and yet, had they but believed me, Louis XVIII. would have been reigning to-day like Louis XIV. All that was necessary, in accepting Bonaparte's inheritance, was to add to it the Lazarites and the Jesuits." He was not allowed to retain his post for long. He had made a few attempts in favour of religion or rather religious decorum. One of them was the Sunday closing of shops. People obeyed, for everybody obeyed then. But the innovation was made the subject of songs and caricatures. As the decree authorised chemists to open, one caricature represented two hungry foreigners who, finding all the shops closed and mistaking a chemist's for a *café*, asked for refreshments and were brought a clyster.

Talleyrand became Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had dictated Bonaparte's wishes to the Powers and haggled with them over his ruin; he had entertained them at his Hôtel de l'Infantado. In short, he had been Talleyrand, the Harlequin, who, on climbing from the street to the *entresol*, jumped to the first-floor when the ladder had been removed from under him.

Another inevitable minister, but one who was only beginning to be so, was Pasquier. Under Bonaparte he had displayed great skill in keeping on friendly terms with good society. He

¹ François Joseph de Gratet, Vicomte du Bouchage (1749-1821), peer in 1817.—A. C.

² Jacques Claude, Comte Beugnot (1761-1835), one of the best officials and wittiest men of his day, and the author of some very interesting *Mémoires* which were published in 1866. Let me point out, however, that in 1814 he was placed in charge, on April 2, of the Ministry of the Interior, on May 13, of the general management of the police, and on December 3, of the Ministry of Marine.—A. C.

was entrusted with the general management of the road-surveying department, one of four small ministries. His good friend Molé got nothing. He loved Bonaparte, whereas Pasquier loved nothing—a great advantage to him.

Fontanes remained Grand Master of the University.¹ He was another of those men who bound upwards when they fall.

Other important posts were given to fustian royalists—they were generally of that material!—or to rascals who shouted “Long live the King” louder than we did.

Before separating from the allied kings, Louis XVIII. obtained the unconditional liberation of the innumerable prisoners whom Bonaparte had surrendered to them. They were his old soldiers, for the Beresina and Leipzig had swallowed up all the young ones. They were asked for too soon, and too soon returned. But—*quos vult pedere Jupiter dementat*. Was not the imperial army being increased? I was clear-sighted and here is proof of it. When I went to Bourneville to make an inventory of my losses and put things in order, I opened none of my hiding-places and decided to postpone repairs until some future time.

¹ The writer is mistaken. Fontanes did not retain his post, owing to its suppression. But he was given the title of Marquis, and was made a member of the House of Peers and Privy Council.—A. C.

CHAPTER XI

1815

Journey in Touraine—Napoleon's return—Departure of Louis XVIII.—The Ségurs—Nantes and General Foy—Rennes—Saint-Servan—Arrest—Release—Embarkation—A storm—Jersey—London—The "émigrés"—Stoddart and Jerningham—Waterloo—Louis XVIII., Talleyrand and Fouché—The Duc de Richelieu—Barbé-Marbois—Vaublanc—The "undiscoverable" Chamber—"Considérations sur une année de l'histoire de France"—Return to Bourneville and reforms.

WHEN I had concluded my business at Bourneville, it was necessary to think seriously of my affairs in Touraine, whence came neither letters nor money, though the first payments were already overdue.¹ Nobody there possessed or merited my confidence. There was nothing else to be done, therefore, but to set off, and to see and act for myself. I started on December 9, slept at Amboise on the 10th, at Tours on the 11th, and on the 14th arrived at Loches, at the hotel of a M. Nicolin, the former cook to an archbishop, and who provided strangers that happened to pass that way with an excellent table.

I had the good fortune to find in Loches, which was the town *par excellence* for rogues, advocates and attorneys, an honest man named Michellet, the conservator of mortgages. He allowed me to consult all his registers, and, thanks to him and in spite of the subterfuges of those with whom I had to deal, I succeeded in my operations. After three months' work, I found that I was the owner of property in Touraine and Berry to the value of about 250,000 francs, and that about 100,000 francs was to fall due.

¹ Towards the end of the Empire, Fréailly had sold a portion of his Touraine properties.—A. C.

One evening in March, when, having completed everything, I was thinking of returning home, the honest Michellet entered my room. He came to inform me that Bonaparte had landed in the Gulf of Juan. Then I heard of La Bédoyère's treachery and of the arrival of the "man of destiny" at Grenoble. From that time I decided he was at the Tuileries, so I fastened my trunks and set off for Paris the same evening—March 15—at full speed. My object was to place my family in safety and to follow the King's lead. Now, whilst I was hastening on my journey, Bonaparte was entering Lyons, and on the 14th my wife had set off in her berlin, with the two children, a *femme de chambre*, and a servant, for Loches, *viâ* Orléans. On the evening of the next day she reached Cormery, five leagues from Tours and Loches. There she was told that no horses were to be had. "Madame," explained the postmaster, "a landowner of the district took the last." "What is his name?" asked my wife. "M. de Frénilly." "And where was he going?" "To Paris." She had missed me at Tours by half an hour. At last, by force of money and entreaties, she found horses, once more reached Tours, made certain that I had taken the road to Chartres, and by dawn was at Vendôme. Fortunately I had rested a few hours there. Just as I was leaving and passing over the bridge, a postillion overtook me at full gallop, with shouts of "Stop! Stop!" I thought that Bonaparte was on my heels. "Monsieur," said the man, "there's a lady asking for you at the post-house." "A lady?" "Yes, sir, a lady in a berlin with two children." "Heavens!" I exclaimed, "it must be my wife." And so I returned to embrace my family, partly delighted and partly angry, but above all much embarrassed, for my wife would not for the world return either to Paris or to Bourneville. The only place that promised her security was Loches. Behold us, then, once more *en route*, berlin, calash, courier, and eight post-horses cutting a dash much against our will. On arriving at Tours we stopped a couple of days to see from which way the wind was blowing. This agreeable town was full of ardour for the Bourbons, and on receiving the news of Bonaparte's landing the fury of the people had been general.

We re-entered Loches on March 20. On the same day Louis XVIII. left France. What did he do in the midst of

the general consternation of Paris? He acted. A great crowd saw him in the morning proceeding in pomp with Monsieur to the Chamber of Deputies; he was seen to enter and throw himself into his brother's arms, with the solemn promise to remain in Paris and be buried under the ruins of the monarchy; and on the following day the population learnt that he had fled in the night by the road to Flanders! Henry IV. would have preferred that to the Vendée and would probably have found himself better off there.

We know what disorder accompanied this flight across a country that was staunchly royalist but covered with garrisons, and where the tricolour flag floated already; by what treachery Mortier drove the King from Lille, which was arming for him; and how the honest Duc d'Orléans handed to that rebel a million francs which were to constitute the King's only resources when in exile. This million in gold and silver travelled by short stages in a huge waggon under the protection of M. Hue, who hit upon the idea, so as to guarantee it against attack, of covering it with a black mantle, on the ground that it contained the ashes of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette which the King was taking away in order to preserve them from profanation.

At dusk on March 21 a small post-chaise noiselessly entered Paris and stopped in front of the steps of the Pavillon de l'Horloge. It was Bonaparte, entering like a thief in the night, in the same way as he had returned from the Beresina, in the same manner as he was to return from Waterloo three months later. All the "violets" of France awaited him, for his return had been predicted for the season of violets. For a long time past *violette* had been the password among his friends. Awaiting the natural flowers, artificial ones were worn, these and the use of violet scent being equivalent to saying: "I conspire," and most fashionable in the Chaussée d'Antin. When this was mentioned at the Court people laughed; whilst at police headquarters they shrugged their shoulders. There was dancing and acting on the Isle of Elba. "You mean to tell me," people said, "that they are conspiring? Nonsense!" There was neither a frigate to sink them *en route*, nor a company of gendarmes to shoot them on landing. Predestined family! "La petite Violette" returned then to the Tuileries at seven o'clock

in the evening and found all the ladies of his Court on the steps. It must be said, however, that those who were born for the Court of Versailles, although some of them had since shone at that of Marie Louise, were absent. Marie Louise, who had been their excuse, was in Vienna. Only one, I believe, was mentioned as being present—the Comtesse de Ségur, daughter-in-law of a Marshal of France and of a Minister of War of Louis XIV., and wife of Bonaparte's ambassador in St. Petersburg and Berlin. This exception made everybody laugh, but astonished only those who did not know this family, which had been saved by Bonaparte from the deepest poverty.

The first thing that Bonaparte did, after proscribing the royal family and even its ministers, ungrateful fellow that he was! was first of all to proclaim himself a friend of the universe, desirous of living quietly in his little kingdom, and then to redemand, diplomatically, his wife and the King of Rome. But his wife had by that time found consolation.

As to the friends to whom he stretched out so caressing a hand, they were at the Congress of Vienna with Talleyrand, who preferred serving France and Europe to being shot by Bonaparte. We know with what unanimity it was decided to undertake a universal war, well paid by Pitt.

We remained but four days at Loches. My wife having relatives at Nantes and a good old friend of her father, Mme. de La Hussaudière, at Angers, and these towns being surrounded by the noble Vendée, towards which we were so sympathetic, I decided to leave my family there. As for myself, I determined to cross Brittany and reach Flanders by way of England.

We set out early in the morning of March 25. On reaching Tours I left my calash, sent the driver and my servant to Bourneville, and the *femme de chambre* to Paris. The same evening we arrived at Angers. Good Mme. de La Hussaudière consenting to take in my wife and daughter, I obtained a passport bearing the name of Fauveau, merchant. Everything was already beginning to change in Angers. Tocqueville was packing up his traps.¹ The departmental guard, which had been enrolled for the King's service, was hanging up its rifles and

¹ Father of the author of *L'Ancien régime et la Révolution*.—A. C.

uniforms, and a company of "federates" was being formed for the service of Bonaparte.

Leaving half my money with my wife, and getting her to sew the other half into a belt, my son and I, at dawn on March 27, set off in a hired cabriolet for Nantes. When half-way there we met Barante. The windows of his Prefecture had been broken on the previous day, and he was on his way with his wife to his little Auvergne estate, where he intended to remain snug and quiet and see which way the wind was blowing. His friend Pasquier, to escape from Bonaparte's first favours, was off to the waters of Mont-Dore to reestablish his health.¹

Nantes was under the command of a little major-general named Foy, a man with the face of a barber's assistant and the bearing of a stage hero, absolutely unknown under the Empire, but a zealous Jacobin and expressly chosen to command one of the most important places in France. This little scoundrel, unable to render himself illustrious by arms, had just distinguished himself by an act of treachery. On March 25, accompanied by handsome Barante, he had handed the departmental guard of Nantes a flag adorned with fleurs-de-lis, but on the 26th had slipped his Cross of Saint Louis and his oath into his pocket and made the garrison take back its tricolour flag and eagles. On arriving at the Hôtel de France I was given a room next to that occupied by this wretched man, whom I did not then know, but whom I have since known too well.

The theatre was only a few yards from the Hôtel de France, and the performance was not yet over, so we went to see it. An impromptu play, celebrating the Corsican's return, was being produced. The boxes were empty, but the pit was full of soldiers and intriguers, who shouted, "Long live the Emperor!" until they were hoarse.

On the following day we called upon good Bernier de Maligny and his charming wife Victorine, my wife's first cousin. Then, leaving my son with their children, we went off to find

¹ Pasquier was ordered by Napoleon to move away from Paris to a distance of forty leagues (*Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 168). He first of all went to the Château de Coulans, in the Maine, where his brother was living; then, on May 2, returned to Paris. He intended to go to Mont-Dore, but Fouché advised him to remain. He was at the Château du Marais, where he had met Barante and Molé, when he heard of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.—A. C.

paper on London and friends at Saint-Malo, where I began to fear that it would be difficult to embark.

Monneron, another of my wife's cousins, and whom I have since made a Director of Customs, served me more intrepidly than Maligny. Through him I got to know that honest madcap De Bruc, father of the pretty Duchesse de Brissac, who declared his royalism to everybody and gave me letters to people in Saint-Malo, notably to my future colleague Du Fougeray,¹ whose name was soon to be the cause of much travelling on my part. I also saw, in regard to money matters, Receiver-General Lauriston, brother of a marshal of the Empire, and since an excellent friend of mine.

Eager to leave Nantes, we got into the Saint-Malo *diligence* on the 29th. We slept at Rennes, which impressed me as being a noble old town. This severity of aspect was apparent in all the small towns which we passed between Nantes and Saint-Malo.

On arriving at Saint-Pierre, a few leagues from Saint-Malo, we left the stage-coach. In my pocket was a map of the route to Du Fougeray's country house, and whilst on our journey I had learnt that embarkation would not be easy. Hiring a cabriolet, we came to our destination, but only to find that Du Fougeray was not at home. In his place was his brother-in-law, who, strongly suspected himself, I believe, saw with little pleasure the arrival of two strangers who came to him across country with a tale about fishing-boats and a nocturnal embarkment. Either because he suspected us of being spies of Bonaparte's already installed Sub-Prefect, or because he took us for former Chouans who were fleeing the country, he hastened to get rid of us by passing us on to his brother-in-law, then in Saint-Malo, and who, he said, would assist us in every possible way. We returned, therefore, to Saint-Pierre for the night, and the next morning, March 31, drove in the same cabriolet to the best inn in Saint-Servan.

Now, what Bonaparte then feared more than all Europe was the Vendée, and what his agents desired most ardently was to be the first to prove their zeal. On stepping out of the carriage,

¹ Jean Baptiste Laurent Garnier du Fougeray (1768-1843), a great friend of Corbière, was deputy for the Ille-et-Vilaine from 1815 to 1828.—A. C.

two *gendarmes* asked me for my passport. I handed it to them and waited two hours for its return. At the end of that time it was ceremoniously brought back to me by twelve *gendarmes* and a non-commissioned officer, who politely informed me that I was too well turned out a man to be a merchant, that my passport had been issued at Angers, a suspected town, and that I was hiding my high rank and illustrious birth in vain. Very politely also they examined my luggage, pockets and pocket-book. Naturally they found De Bruc's letter to Du Fougeray, recommending him to assist me in obtaining supplies of sugar and coffee. "Sugar!" exclaimed the *gendarme*. "It's as clear as day. That stands for 'men.' Coffee! That, too, we know. It means 'rifles.'" There is no denying that the man was in the right. The words were clumsy stupidities and when written by such a madcap as De Bruc to such a Breton as Du Fougeray, both of whom were known to everybody except myself and described in even the smallest villages of Brittany, greatly open to suspicion. I know nothing in the world so bad as being in a false position. "*Parbleu*, gentlemen," said I to the *gendarmes*, "there's no need to go any further. I'm no more a merchant or a Chouan than you are. I've never sold either sugar or men, and I'm crossing Brittany for the first time in my life, on my way to London on business. They forced me to call myself a merchant under the impression that my embarkation would be facilitated. There you have the whole truth, which you may believe or not, as you think fit."

In brief, we took a boat and under my guard of honour I was brought before the Sub-Prefect, a sort of trooper with the manners and graces of an ex-corporal of the guards. The examination was not a long one. There was no disputing over my quality, but regarding my name, which might have been a rather bad recommendation, I kept to that of the passport. The outcome was that he ordered me to be sent back to Nantes to be imprisoned, or shot, or provided with a new passport, as circumstances dictated. Behold us, then, travelling by short stages, with the non-commissioned officer seated by my side and two *gendarmes* at each side of the carriage doors. During the journey my companion tried by all sorts of jesuitical means to

make me confess my high position. He also conversed with Olivier, and on one occasion whispered to me: "Monsieur, this boy of yours is a very virtuous child!" And, as a matter of fact, my eleven-year-old son never once lost his presence of mind.

On reaching Rennes, we found a new Prefect in office—that rascal Méchin who, under Bonaparte, had fallen from Aix-la-Chapelle to Laon on account of his proved dissipation, who then, under the Abbé de Montesquiou, became Prefect of Caen, and who was now at Rennes thanks to his old master.¹ After a conversation, he relieved me of two-thirds of my escort and made the non-commissioned officer take off his uniform. We then took the post-chaise and on the following day were once more in Nantes. There I found a new Prefect, I believe an unfrocked monk, who was frightened of everybody, and from whom my friends obtained without difficulty a proper passport for London. Embracing my honest *gendarme*, who had shown us the most cordial attention, we set off back to Rennes, where I again saw Méchin, who commissioned me to carry to Saint-Malo the happy news that Marseilles had surrendered to Bonaparte.

Fortunately I had changed my letters of recommendation on this second visit to Saint-Malo and on arriving there went straight to the house of a very honest and witty man the Abbé du Fossey, an ex-canon who occupied a pretty little house at Saint-Servan, and who, aided by his sister and nieces, did everything he could to receive me well. He was acquainted with the whole of Jersey, which I desired merely to cross, but where recommendations might be useful to me. I remained with him until the time for the departure of the packet, the only vessel exempt from an embargo.

On April 7 we embarked, in a fairly high wind, on a wretched little vessel commanded by a still more wretched captain. This foreshadowed adventures, which, as time proved, were not lacking. Next to the approaches of Jersey, which are perhaps the most dangerous in the world, the most difficult are undoubtedly those of Saint-Malo, bristling as they are with

¹ Alexandre Edme, Baron Méchin (1772-1849), deputy for the Aisne from 1819 to 1831.—A. C.

pointed rocks half under water. In order to reach the open sea more quickly, our captain determined to pass between the big Rocher de Cézembre and a smaller rock, which are separated merely by a narrow channel. Unfavourable though the wind was to this manœuvre, he persisted in undertaking it—until the moment when, having missed the channel, we were about to be dashed on the Cézembre. When not more than ten yards away a turn of the helm made us skirt the rock, in the midst of furious breakers and rocks that were just covered by water. In less than a minute we touched three times. I thought that all was over. The women fainted; the men undressed themselves; and the whole crew began to shout “À nous! À nous!” at the top of their voices to some distant fishing-boats. But the wind that had refused to allow us to pass through the channel saved us by keeping us away from the terrible rock. There now remained but one question: what was the extent of our damages and were we going to sink or not? All hands were got to the pumps, which, happily, were found to draw more water than entered. Although the wiser plan would have been to return to port, we continued our journey. The wind now became higher and higher and more contrary. Towards evening we perceived through the fog the famous Minquiers, a chain of rocks much venerated by the seamen of those parts and which had to be doubled in order to reach Jersey. But our captain, who was somewhat put out by the morning’s mishap, dared not undertake it. So we had to lie to all night, and that night I recollect as though it were yesterday, so long and fatiguing was it. My son and I spent it on deck, clinging to the bulwark netting, buffeted by the wind, drenched to the skin by rain and waves, but at any rate escaping from seasickness in an infected cabin. Our ship was more ill-favoured; the wind carried away her bowsprit and a small portion of her prow. The uproar was terrible, we were in pitch darkness, and every one recommenced his *Nunc dimittis*. But nothing more happened. When it was morning the Minquiers were no longer visible, for we had dragged our anchors three to four leagues astern. The rain then stopped but was replaced by a fog so thick that you could not see twenty feet in front of the vessel. We fired many pistol-shots, to the great regret of the captain,

who preferred to run his ship into danger rather than bear the expense of a coast pilot. At last some boats arrived and, half an hour afterwards, we had the pleasure of climbing on all fours on to the rocks of Fort Elizabeth. A quarter of an hour's walk brought us to the best inn in Saint Heliers. After a wash, I rushed to the post-office, to find there were no letters; to the *messengeries*, to find my luggage had not yet arrived; and then to the houses of friends, for, thanks to the Abbé du Fossey, I possessed two whom I yet knew only by name. One was a M. Giffard, the principal banker, merchant and smuggler of Jersey, an honest, pious, austere Presbyterian who had brought up his children in the fear of God and with a horror of custom-house officers. He occupied a very pretty house that was quite English, for Jersey belongs to England and the general cleanliness there formed a curious contrast with the immemorial filthiness of Brittany. Behind the house was a beautiful large garden with a greenhouse full of vines. But M. Giffard's best possession was a son of twenty-five, an excellent young man who was a perfect blessing to me during the long stay I was obliged to make in Saint Heliers. My other friend was a M. Poingdextre who overwhelmed me with engaging attentions. He and his stout little wife spoke the purest dialect of Lower Normandy.

At last, on May 20, our trunks arrived, and on May 23 we embarked on the packet for Southampton. My wife, from whom I had received but two letters since my emigration, had in the meantime made a stay with her relatives at Nantes, and from there, believing that I was in Jersey, had come on to Saint-Malo, so as to be nearer to me. On the very day that I was sailing for England she was arriving under the hospitable roof of the Abbé du Fossey, with whom she and our daughter, to their great satisfaction, boarded for two months and a half.

I landed at Southampton on May 23 and on the 24th reached London, without any other resources, in hand or to come, than my belt of gold and bills to the amount of thirty thousand francs. I say "in hand or to come" because, in the uncertainty as to what God, Bonaparte, Pitt and the Allies would do with France, I had thoroughly made up my mind to live until further orders in London, Ghent, or elsewhere on a

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capital of forty thousand francs, that is on an income of two thousand francs, with a wife and two children. Thus, with what exemplary and sordid economy did we set about living! After a few days, a lengthy conversation which I had with the stout Marquis de La Chastre, Louis XVIII.'s Ambassador in London, completely dissipated my zeal and devotion. I saw that the only thanks the Breton noblemen who were about to offer their services to the King would receive would be a cold reception.

The heaviest part of my new budget was that relating to our apartment, for my eyes have ever cost me dearer than my stomach. For a guinea a week I found a pretty ground floor apartment of two rooms, very comfortably furnished, in a house in the fine but out-of-the-way High Street, opposite Northumberland Street and in the district of Manchester Square. This included attendance, furnished by my good and gentle hostess Mrs. Manseel. We had luncheon in our little drawing-room looking on to the street. It was provided by a neighbouring pork butcher, a milkman, and a baker, assisted by Mrs. Manseel's tea-kettle. A neighbouring French low-class restaurant-keeper, who for many years had been the *Véry* of the *émigrés* of Manchester Square, furnished us with a dinner *à la carte* in the midst of a very noble, very numerous and very poor company. For a large number of *émigrés* had remained in London on seeing the turn that events took in 1814 and many others had returned on seeing those of 1815. In the afternoon—the morning was devoted to Olivier's lessons and my own work—we took our dessert in the form of a visit to those magnificent fruit-shops with which London abounds. "Let us go and see some pictures by Van Spaendonck," I used to say to him. We returned home with satisfied imaginations and empty stomachs, but provided with a substantial foundation of patience. The remainder of the day was devoted to visiting all the sights of London.

On arriving in London I knew no one, but it was not long before I had more acquaintances than I wanted. The old district of the *émigrés* where I had taken up my quarters swarmed with people who were eager to make or renew friendships. The first person I met was the old and amiable Duc de

Sérent, the friend of the Comte d'Artois and tutor to his two sons. He had preserved the Comte d'Artois' early correspondence with his bosom friend the Bailli de Crussol. I have had it in my hands. It was worthy of the soul and style of Henry IV., and showed the noble character of Charles X. in a more favourable light than one could ever have believed. The duke had followed the royal family to Memel and England; he had returned to Paris with it; but during the Hundred Days, instead of going to Ghent with Louis XVIII., who hated him, and whose heart and new friends he himself did not esteem, he had retired to London with his second daughter, the amiable and piquant Duchesse de Narbonne, whilst the eldest, the Duchesse Etienne de Damas acted at Bordeaux as lady of honour to the Duchesse d'Angoulême.¹

Another personage whom I quickly came across and found unchanged, unless he was a little more steeped in sophistry, was the Abbé de Montesquiou under whom France had perished. He reproached himself with only one mistake during his year of office: that of not having given greater power to the Jacobins, who, as the only real force in France, ought, he contended, to have been enrolled in the service of the throne. "The minister who will be indispensable to Louis XVIII. when he is restored to the throne," he said to me, "is Talleyrand." I do not know if he did not go as far as including Fouché, and heaven only knows if his advice has been well followed.

Every evening there was a select gathering of *émigrés* at the house of Mme. d'Outremont, who lived near me, and whom I had known in her youth at M. de Saint-Waast's. I there met the modest and excellent Bishop of Carcassonne, Malcors, brother of our amiable Vicomtesse de Vintimille, and a M. Desbassyns, accompanied by his wife and daughter, whom I mention because he was the brother-in-law of Villèle and a Mlle. de Mourgues, a little goddess whom formerly they had wished me to marry.

I made two or three other chance acquaintances. One was

¹ The Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême were at Bordeaux when Napoleon returned from Elba. Whilst the duke, who shortly afterwards surrendered at La Palud, was on his way to Nîmes, the duchess, who had remained behind, armed the National Guards and the volunteers. But the soldiers whom she went to see in the barracks received her with shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" so she embarked at Pauillac on an English vessel.—A. C.

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that of a Comte d'Orfeuille, a nobleman of Poitiers, whom I had met twenty-five years before at his estate near Epanvilliers; another was that of a Bourneville neighbour whom I had never seen before, the Marquis de Thuisy. I met the latter in company with his brother, Commander de Thuisy, and dined with them at their Richmond home.

We left Bonaparte pulling off his boots at the Tuileries and sending ambassadors with olive branches to all the Cabinets of Europe. On April 22 he had issued his famous addition to the Charter, and on the 30th had reconvened a Legislative Body to which his friends, his enemies, and the enemies of the Bourbons crowded pellmell. But when the novelty had worn off, many of his old servants began to lament, and many of those who served him, on seeing France sad and silent and Europe in full progress, used the words of Cambronne: "Nous sommes f——." Our cousin, General Saint-Alphonse, believed his little wife, Annette de Mackau, and withdrew to his estates. But there was a bolder man than he, Mathieu Molé. He was tired of being in disgrace. So Bonaparte placed him on the list of members for his Council of State. Molé's family went down on its knees to get him to refuse the appointment and leave immediately for Ghent. Mme. de Mortefontaine, who deserves honour for the act, brought him on the following day twenty thousand francs and a passport. But he hesitated, remained, and appeared on Bonaparte's Council. As he had numerous enemies all over the world, this affair made a great noise. The *Times* published an angry article against him. I read it. Now, had it been merely unpleasant I should have said nothing; but it was harsh, partly erroneous and partly unjust. So I wrote a cold and impartial refutation. Thus arose my friendship with two English gentlemen, Stoddart and Edward Jerningham. The former was the manager of the *Times*; the latter wrote for that journal, and I had met his uncle, Sir — Jerningham, at Mme. de La Briche's. The Jerninghams belonged to a family of Catholic peers, who were excluded from the House of Lords because of their refusal to comply with the Test Act. They continued the traditions of the Toryism of the old school, had a slight hereditary sympathy for the Stuarts, and a marked predilection for the cause of the French Crown. George, the elder of the Knight's nephews, lived

on his estates ; the younger, Edward, was a London lawyer living with his mother, the good and amiable Lady Jerningham. It was to Edward that I addressed myself, and by telling him of my recollection of his uncle. He came to see me ; my refutation appeared in the *Times* ; the *Journal des Débats* translated it in Paris, and, what is the best of it, M. Molé never for a moment dreamed that this defence which enraptured him was the work of a twenty-year-old friend with whose heart and pen he was well acquainted ; the only friend, certainly, that he then possessed in England. This circumstance made me intimate with the Jerninghams and consequently with Stoddart, a true Englishman, very awkward in appearance, stiff and haughty, but with much ready wit and good sense, and a Tory to the finger-tips.¹

In the midst of all this came the great news of the Battle of Waterloo, which enabled us to see for ourselves what the wild enthusiasm of the English people is like when satisfied hatred accompanies victorious pride. The spontaneous illuminations lasted three days, and were of unprecedented profusion and magnificence. Wellington's name, arms, and portrait appeared in fire on every wall. A fortnight later there were exhibited all the spoils that the victors had been able to collect, and this shilling show made the fortune of its organiser.

Whilst London was ablaze with glory, Bonaparte returned to the Elysée. In twenty-four hours a battle had destroyed his three-months-old crown.. Having made his last cast of the dice, he abdicated. A Government commission was appointed, with the boldest, most artful, and most defamed rascal of France—Fouché—at its head. Its first act was to order Bonaparte to leave France immediately. He asked for nothing better, for he had no desire to wait at Malmaison for the arrival of English or German agents. But two difficulties remained : one to cross his empire without being massacred, the other, to find a place of retreat.

¹ Sir John Stoddart (1773-1856), educated at Oxford, barrister, manager of the *Times* (1812-1816), then of the *New Times* (1817-1826), first president of the Court of the Vice-Admiralty of Malta (1816-1840). Sir — Jerningham, the uncle of George and Edward, was doubtless the poet and dramatist, Edward Jerningham (1727-1812), who was educated at Douai and Paris.—A. C.

He left Malmaison incognito on June 29, and on July 3, still without being known, reached Rochefort. He counted on finding there an American ship to take him to New York, and, had he succeeded, Heaven alone knows what an explosion of joy his name would have aroused in the United States, that country of foolish enthusiasm where Senates have since assembled to deify Fanny Essler and make a hero of Lafayette. He would have become a Quaker, as he had become a Mussulman, until the day came when his followers in France had formed a conspiracy, and he had found a boat to take him across the ocean. It was at this time that Mme. de Staël said: "I had a desire to write the Life of Napoleon, but now I shall write the Adventures of Bonaparte"; and for once she spoke the truth, she who had so many times craved for a glance from him.

The tragedy was over; the after-piece had begun; the Sbriganis, the Tartuffes, the Crispins, and the Kings of Cocagne were to appear on the stage of history.

Paris capitulated for a second time, and a deputation of legislative buffoons patriotically went down on their knees to the Powers to beg for a king after their own stamp, of their own blood—any monarch save one with the inglorious blood of Henri IV. and Louis XIV. The Allies entered the capital. Lafayette and a few other burlesque heroes of the Parliament of the Hundred Days played a Roman farce on the steps of their doubly-locked Capitol and were unable to die in their curule chairs.

What was Louis XVIII. doing in the meanwhile?

Let me say as little as possible about his sad reign at Ghent, which began disgracefully, was basely exploited, and ended deplorably. We should only learn about councils directed by Chateaubriands, Lacretelles, and even such men as Guizot, and see all these political puppets worked by the strings of the regicide Fouché.

But to reascend, under the auspices of a Fouché, a throne that had been handed back by all the Kings of Europe was not enough. On entering Cambrai the king had issued a proclamation that held out some hope to decent people, but the same evening there arrived from the Vienna Congress the Mephistophiles of Europe—Talleyrand, and on the following day appeared

the Cateau-Cambrésis proclamation, a shameful recantation in which the King no longer pardoned but asked for pardon, in which he no longer punished traitors, and disgraced his enemies, but called them to high posts of State, thus realising the extravagant dreams that the Abbé de Montesquiou had unfolded before me.

From that moment my mind was made up. Unpacking my trunk, which was ready for departure, I decided, in a fit of indignation and scorn, to remain in London.

The King was at Arnouville. Fouché was presented to him. He appeared—this ex-monk, this former cutter-off of heads—not as a penitent but as a bold “kingmaker,” chosen by the Duke of Wellington, and proclaimed as indispensable by unanimous Paris—for such was then the extravagant desire of Parisians. Then Louis negotiated and haggled with the Allies, who were fascinated by his Prime Minister. The conferences were held at Neuilly, and Vitrolles, a sort of Provençal Talleyrand, was the negotiator.

Finally, Fouché’s first attempt at being dictator was to close Paris to the King for two days, on the ground that the people, who were impatient to see him, were in revolt, and to let him in by the back entrance—the Clichy gate. As a matter of form, the new ministry ordered a few officials to be dismissed and even exiled. It was then that Carnot wrote to Fouché: “Monster, where do you want me to go?” and that Fouché replied: “Idiot, where you like.”¹ A few peerages were bestowed and a few posts given to royalists. Rosambo was made a peer, but at the same time as Molé, who, disgraced in 1814 for having forgotten his name, was honoured in 1815 for having prostituted it. Terray was given Blois; Bouthillier, Strasburg; Mézy, Lille; and Tocqueville, Beauvais.

Confidence existed nowhere. But everywhere there was a display of party spirit, a desire to fight and conquer. The elections soon proved it, despite the intrigues of Fouché, Talleyrand, and others. The “undiscoverable” Chamber was the outcome—a thunderbolt for the ministerial band. Had they

¹ Cf. in Madelin’s *Fouché* (vol. ii. pp. 402-488), the chapters entitled: “La commission de gouvernement” and “Le ministre du roi très chrétien.”—A. C.

waited for this Chamber to meet, it would have formed a new ministry. This was in accord with English law and its own, and the monarchy would then have fallen, for the first time since Louis XIV., into monarchical hands. Louis XVIII. saw the danger; the monarchy might have thwarted the monarch. Freed by the unanimous voice of France from Fouché's yoke, the King hastened to sacrifice this scapegoat, who, instead of being sent to the Place de la Grève, went to Dresden as his ambassador—Duc d'Otrante, millionaire, and adored husband of the beautiful but crazy Mlle. de Castellane.¹ A new ministry was formed, exempt from crimes, so that the future Chamber would tolerate it, and without either honour or energy, so that this king and Anglomaniac could reign as he liked. The handsome Duc de Richelieu, a great lord who had been nourished on the false principles of the eighteenth century, became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pasquier was given the Seals—the price of the vigorous royalism which had made him drink the Mont-Dore waters during the Hundred Days.² Decazes was put at the head of the Police. An unknown temporiser in 1814, he suddenly threw himself in 1815 into the royalist movement. Introduced at Arnouville, he pleased the King, and behold him now a minister. Let him pass; we shall meet him but too often on our path. I no longer remember what Barbé-Marbois became.³ The Duc de Feltre and Du Bouchage were respectively made Ministers of War and Marine. I have kept Vaublanc's name until the last—Vaublanc, the upright man of the ministry, and on whom there was soon concentrated the hatred or rather the fury of every one who had served the Revolution, the Directory, or the

¹ The wretch stopped there but a short time. The Court of Saxony would not receive him and hardly an inn would take him in. On his becoming Prime Minister, some of my London friends took the trouble to extract his life from the *Moniteur*. They sent this colossal and authentic record of shameful actions to me in Paris, and I had it printed. A person whose name I have never been able to discover bought two hundred and fifty copies and sent them to Dresden. The unfrocked monk, regicide and king-maker, disappeared before being stoned. I believe that he died at Triest.—F.

² See note p. 259. Pasquier wished to, although he did not, drink the Mont-Dore waters during the Hundred Days.—A. C.

³ Barbé-Marbois was appointed Minister of Justice in the place of Pasquier, who held that portfolio in the preceding cabinet, but refused to retain it.—A. C.

Empire. Vaublanc, a Deputy to the Legislative Assembly in 1791, had defended the throne, honour and good sense, with such energy that only a lengthy emigration had saved him from the scaffold. On returning home, with no other belongings than an honourable reputation, he had become Prefect of Metz, and had acquired a name for being a skilful and honest administrator. This led to his appointment as Minister of the Interior, and in this position this fine man had the simplicity to display his opinions of 1791, his sincere royalism, his hatred of revolutionaries, and to practise that which others merely preached. But Louis XVIII. soon tired of his integrity, which went further than he wished.¹

Such was this ministry, which did more harm than good, and which carried with it the opinions and above all the inclinations of its master.

The Chamber, resembling the one of 1660, that of the restoration of Charles II., was determined to raise the old monarchy from its ruins. Charles had had the good sense to see the advantage of this situation, but Louis XVIII. saw in the members of the new Chamber merely men who wished to do more and better than himself. Whereas Charles II. showed prudent abnegation, Louis XVIII. displayed foolish resistance, and he was only too powerfully seconded, on the one hand by the opinions and interests of the ministry he had chosen, and on the other by the respect of a Chamber which was too devoted to the Crown to dare, whatever the cost might be, to be *plus royaliste que le roi*.

I was still in London, cooling down my anger at having seen Talleyrand at Cambrai and Fouché at the head of the ministry, and I should probably have died of *ennui* or indignation in this exile had I not had my son's education and my literary work to continue. I had then completed an opuscle entitled *Considérations sur une année de l'histoire de France*—perhaps the best work I have written. It made sufficient noise to prevent my election to the French Academy, whose doors had been opened to me by the death of Ducis. Lacretelle *ainé*, Parseval-Grandmaison, Andrieux and others who had agreed to give me their

¹ See, in reference to this, what Vaublanc says at the conclusion of chapter xxviii. of his *Mémoires*.—A. C.

votes turned their backs on me. De Sèze was appointed in my place. However, if this pamphlet prevented me from sleeping in one of the forty *fauteuils*, it was, on the other hand, the beginning of my political career.

On September 29, after an absence of two months, I turned my face towards Paris and arrived on October 28. My wife had returned since September 9. My father-in-law had remained there all along. After two years of invasion and ruin, it was necessary to look to our affairs. We soon made up our minds. To bury ourselves alive at Bourneville was now out of the question. We had the education of our two children to complete, and many friends or acquaintances who must not be allowed to forget us. We limited ourselves to our customary visits to Paris, living economically, and to our usual sojourns in the country, but without receiving many people; and at the same time determined to do without the luxuries of life in order to devote the whole of our attention to the restoration of our fortune.

The lease of my residence in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré was drawing to an end. Instead of renewing it, we transferred it to the Rosambos, and, without leaving our beloved quarter, rented for 1000 francs, a charming apartment in the Champ-Élysées, in a fine house whose ground-floor was occupied by Mézy. We were in occupation by October 15—a little high up in the air, perhaps, but with an incomparable view. On October 8 I had left for Bourneville with Olivier.

During my absence a spirit of revolt had arisen. My prime minister, De France, was a rascal, a coward and a blunderer. My head-gardener, who was rather a quarrelsome fellow, had come to see me in Paris to spy out the state of my fortune, and had spread the alarm by relating that he had had to mount three stories instead of one. The *concierge* was neutral. The head-keeper was fairly faithful, but a bit of a rascal and rather stupid. The chief conspirator, however, was Gobert, my head shepherd, who was greatly looked up to in the district on account of his medal and brother, an ex-general of the Empire. Louis, my honest second keeper, was the sole member of my staff who was staunchly faithful, so he was the only one whom I took into consultation. It was necessary to make an example. The day following my

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arrival, Gobert, after reigning for thirty-five years over my sheep, was paid and sent about his business. The district was stupefied by this *coup d'état*; everybody became dumb when they saw me with my purse in one hand and dismissals in the other. Nobody wanted any money. I had to demand their accounts. Everything was settled, and three days after my arrival, silence and my reputation for solvency reigned at Bourneville.

But though order was reestablished outside, it was far from reigning inside, and my poor *châteaux*, which had been inhabited by the Cossacks, would have borne a terrible resemblance to Carthage had not the mirrors, woodwork and marbles fortunately escaped in the midst of the general pillage.

CHAPTER XII

1816

Blacas — Decazes — The Amnesty Bill — The Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême — The Comte d'Artois — Bruges and Vitrolles — Maxime de Choiseul — Norvins' Conversion — Despinoy — Lainé — The Duc de Narbonne — Marriage of the Duc de Berry — Jerningham and Stoddart once more — Dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber — The new Chamber — Famine — The Société des Bonnes Études.

AT last, on February 24, after two months and a half hard work, I returned to Paris, leaving all my hiding-places at Bourneville intact, such was my confidence in the future of France.

Decazes had made rapid progress in Louis XVIII.'s heart—if, indeed, he had one. Like James II., this king had a mania for bringing up his favourites and showing them great platonic friendship. It is not permissible to doubt that it was purely platonic, since all passion with him took that form, and that that old and unblushing sorceress, formerly a young and seductive fairy, Mme. de Baldi, would have been condemned by him to virtue if thirty others had not consoled her.¹ But if the honour of his favourites was saved, they were not spared the fatigue and *ennui* of their semi-romantic, semi-commonplace intimacy with a mind that was barren, at once weak and imperious, minute and academic—a mind that was in error regarding great things and scholastic in the case of small ones. D'Avaray had died at his task.² He was succeeded by the handsome Comte de Blacas, whom Louis XVIII., on being recalled to the throne, made a duke

¹ In regard to Mme. de Baldi, see Castellane's *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 389, and Charles Nauroy's *Les Derniers Bourbons*, 1883, pp. 140-149.—A. C.

² D'Avaray (1759-1811) was the Decazes of Louis XVIII.'s youth. See the first two volumes of Forneron's *Histoire générale des émigrés*, 1884, particularly vol. i. pp. 234 and 276, and vol. ii. p. 72.—A. C.

and minister. A victim of the public clamour, he fell from the ministry to the Embassy at Rome, where he became, as it were, the ambassador of Louis XIV., the Duc de Créquy in person. He was the same at the Naples Embassy. The rôle suited him perfectly and in filling it his lofty personality had greatly enhanced the prestige of the Crown of France.¹

From the noble intimacy of the Provençal Duke, Louis XVIII. fell, then, to the vulgar intimacy of the Gascon usher. The Duc de Blacas, had, in truth, been a little too noble; whereas Decazes stood in exactly the same relation to Louis XVIII. as the Duc de Lauzun did to Louis XIV. Before the Restoration, I had sometimes met this upstart at the Vindés', where he was kindly received, and his vulgar, peremptory effrontery had greatly displeased me. His manner succeeded better with the King, who made him in quick succession his courtier, creature, child, friend and master. This "Duc de Garonne" had a confederate in the person of a rather nice little sister, named Mme. Prince-teau,² wife of an individual of his district. She got to Court by a back staircase, with the best and most honourable intentions, of course, for she was a good and honest little woman. And yet? Louis XIV. was no more coquettish with Mme. de La Vallière than Louis XVIII. was with this young lady of Libourne. She had some little ones whom he looked after like a grandfather, employing his royal leisure in making up packets of sweets for them. He had thus installed in a corner of the Tuileries a little farmyard family that was not one of the smallest cares of his Empire.

This Empire began, then, to be unreservedly governed by Decazes, a middle-class, Liberal despot who was confronted by a free, noble and monarchical Chamber. Judge of the union that reigned between them, and of the colours in which this "undiscoverable" Chamber, which they would rather not have found, was painted at the Château. The truest and most useful servants of the King, having become the object of the favourite's jealousy or hatred, were one by one repelled by the master's gradually

¹ Pierre Louis Jean Casimir, Duc de Blacas d'Aulps (1771-1839).—A. C.

² Chateaubriand (*Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, vol. iv. p. 142) also considers her "an agreeable, modest, and excellent person." Cf. Charles Nauroy's *Les Derniers Bourbons*, pp. 149-152.—A. C.

increasing coldness. The name "ultra" was invented, and they cried out to us: "Do not be more royalist than the King!"

As soon as you had passed through the Carrousel gate, to be a royalist was to think as the King thought, to do and say what he wished. One day, the Duc d'Estissac,¹ the commanding officer at Beauvais, said to me: "Monsieur, if the King wrote to me to burn Beauvais, I should burn it. That is what I call being a royalist." We simple people who were royalists without making such subtle distinctions as this, for a long time imagined that we had only the King's manner and words against us, that he was paying this tribute to circumstances, but that his heart and conscience were secretly on our side. At last, however, we were forced to recognise that he was an out and out Liberal and an open enemy of the aristocracy. What an apple of discord this was in Paris and all over France! Our amiable and intimate society, formerly so united, broke up. Harmony was replaced by party-spirit, and all who had reigned under Bonaparte considered themselves the incontestable masters of France.

The brand that lit the fire was the shameful Amnesty Bill, which, instead of pardoning the revolutionaries and the authors of the terrible catastrophe of the Hundred Days, restored to them favour and ascendancy. Trembling with indignation, the Chamber passed it, for the King's wishes were still obeyed.

The Duc d'Angoulême's incapacity, aided by his religious respect for the King, naturally placed him under the influence of this policy. His wife, the daughter of Louis XVI., who had made us almost hate the Salic Law, sacrificed her conscience to her duties as a wife, and hid her affections by piety. The Duc de Berry, who had a more elevated mind and greater energy than his brother, apparently humbled himself out of respect for the throne. The Comte d'Artois was the only one of the family who allowed the royalists to penetrate to the bottom of his mind, and who dared to combine with his veneration for his brother the King a contempt for those who held the reins of government.

¹ François de La Rochefoucauld, Duc d'Estissac (1765-1848). Cf. the *Mémoires* of General Comte de Saint-Chamans, p. 337.—A. C.

Two men predominated at his Court. One was the Chevalier de Bruges,¹ a tall and rather handsome man, unaffable in appearance, but whose loyalty and devotion were never doubted. The other, the Marquis de Vitrolles,² was in every sense of the word an intriguer. Incessantly active, enterprising, amiable and witty, he had in 1814 won the prince's affection by travelling from Provence to Nancy, in the midst of a thousand real or imaginary perils, which he related very agreeably, to offer him his services. Through Monsieur's influence he had become secretary to the Council, and in the first year he almost succeeded in restoring this position to what it had been in the hands of Maret. He was the Council's dragoman, its universal reporter, its indispensable interpreter when communicating with the King, who had also taken a liking to him. But he did not long remain in favour; for this Provençal was a Gascon, and as proud as any upstart of his rapid rise in the world. Rosambo, who had been his college companion, asked me to go and see him in connection with Monsieur's affairs. The manner in which the invitation was held out was somewhat informal, but Monsieur's name excused anything. So I went to see Vitrolles and found the man whom I have described. He was enthusiastic over my *Considérations* and declared that I was indispensable to his master. It was proposed to establish a periodical for the defence of monarchical interests, and my political opinions, aided by my frank, mordant and glowing style, had appeared to be exactly suited for the enterprise. As the born enemy of newspapers and the liberty of the press, I had little fancy for fighting for the good cause with the weapon of destruction. The idea pleased me still less when it was proposed that I should have as a collaborator the man who was then extolled the most but whom I esteemed the least—Fievée, Bonaparte's correspondent, later Blacas', and at the time of which I am writing the favourite of society and the lion of the legitimist party. Vitrolles invited me to dine with this man, La Bourdonnaye and a few other

¹ The Comte d'Artois made him a lieutenant-general and his aide-de-camp.—A. C.

² Vitrolles (1774-1854), the author of *Mémoires*, is fairly well known. He was deputy for the Basses-Alpes from 1815 to 1816, minister and member of the Privy Council in 1815, major-general in 1828, and peer in 1830. Cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 378.—A. C.

deputies whose names were coming to the front; but I quietly eluded the proposed collaboration.

During my stay at Bourneville, society lost one of the best and most amiable men it still had left—the Duc de Rohan-Chabot, a model of elegance and politeness, who had remained in the midst of the wild desert into which France had been transformed by the Revolution and the Empire.¹

It was in this same winter of 1816 that the authentic will of Marie Antoinette was found at the house of the banished regicide Courtois, the former member of the Convention. Too noble a document for M. Decazes to have it read in public, they contented themselves with having it lithographed, and every one could obtain a copy.

About this time Tocqueville left the Prefecture of Beauvais for that of Metz, and was succeeded, I believe, by Maxime de Choiseul, a young man of excellent morals and opinions, and the author of a valuable work.²

But I was about to forget Norvins' conversion. He had been sent to Strasburg under the supervision and tutelage of our excellent friend Bouthillier. In his *ennui* and despair he became extremely religious. People spoke of nothing else but his call, and came to the conclusion that he was going to become a Carthusian monk. Fancy Norvins taking a vow never to speak another word! But cloisters had become rare, and whilst he was looking for one, Carbonarism had gradually revived under the protection of the Decazes Ministry. Whether it was that his call was a mistaken one or that he decided the farce had gone far enough, I cannot say, but, at any rate, the Carthusian returned to Paris, preferred the order of the Jacobins to that of St. Bruno, made the acquaintance of Thiébault, a former general of Bonaparte, married his daughter³ and became what he has remained.

¹ Alexandre Louis Auguste, Duc de Rohan-Chabot (1761–1816), colonel before the Revolution, major-general (1795), lieutenant-general (1815), married in 1785 Anne Louise Madeleine Elisabeth de Montmorency, who died in 1828.—A. C.

² Maxime de Choiseul d'Aillecourt (1782–1854), member of the Academy of Inscriptions (1817) and author of a work published in 1809 entitled *De l'influence des Croisades sur l'état des peuples de l'Europe*.—A. C.

³ Laure, born in 1800 of Thiébault's first marriage, that with Miss Hamilton. She died in December 1877.—A. C.

General Despinoy, who had the command of Paris, was impatiently supported by the ministry. Taking the Restoration seriously, he unmercifully began to purge the capital and the troops of his division of all the remaining fanatics of the Republic and the Empire. For this he was called a tiger and sent into the provinces.¹

A more triumphant operation of the camarilla was the dismissal of Vaublanc. This other monster, who was also a genuine supporter of the monarchy, was replaced by Lainé, that Bordeaux advocate who, when a member of the second Chamber in 1813, suddenly became illustrious through having the audacity to utter a few words of peace.² This excess of liberty aroused Bonaparte's anger, and it was then that it was rumoured, though I never believed the story, that Molé had advised the Emperor to have Lainé shot. So the new Chamber thought it could do nothing better than make the Bordeaux deputy its president. He presided exceedingly well, spoke little, but when the opportunity offered gave a few proofs of true eloquence. He was, however, by birth and in taste a sort of Spartan, a severe and imperious *doctrinaire*, who saw despotism wherever there was a sceptre and courtiers wherever there were royalists. Such was the man who obtained the Ministry of the Interior, then the most important administration because of the elections. This was the first step towards the dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber, which he already cordially hated.

If my memory serves me well, it was about this time that Decazes replaced the Duc de Blacas at Naples by the Duc de Narbonne, that is, the handsomest, most stately, and most royalist of Frenchmen, a true ambassador if ever there were one, by the most weasel-faced and timidest little man in the world.

The marriage of the Duc de Berry caused a temporary cessation of hostilities in the political world. The elder branch of the Bourbons, like the Valois family, threatened to die out. Monsieur, bound by pious promises and tender recollections, refused to remarry; the Angoulême couple had never given

¹ Cf. A. Chuquet's *La Jeunesse de Napoléon*, vol. iii. p. 240.—A. C.

² Joseph Louis Joachim, Vicomte Lainé (1767-1835), deputy for the Gironde (1818-1822), peer of France in 1822, member of the French Academy.—A. C.

promise of issue : so that the whole future of the family depended upon the Duc de Berry, who had amply proved that he would not disappoint it. A Russian princess was offered—beautiful, young, and, being tall, capable of compensating for the dwarfish generation that two little Savoyards had presented to France. But she was of the Greek religion, and France, which no longer had a religion, was politically Catholic. It was necessary, therefore, to choose an Italian dwarf for the French one, at the risk of a diminutive progeny ; and in May the poor little Duchesse de Berry arrived at Fontainebleau, where the Court was waiting to receive her. On the afternoon of June 16, the King, with the young couple by his side, triumphantly entered Paris by the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which since the second Restoration had been rechristened the “Faubourg Royal.” From the house of my old friend Montbreton, on the Place Vendôme, I saw them pass. The show was a poor one, but the enthusiasm was great. On the following day the marriage was celebrated in a fairly magnificent style at Notre-Dame. In the two processions there was nothing either elegant, or rich, or gallant, nothing indicating peace, nothing characteristic of old France and its ancient royalty ; merely uniforms, bayonets and sabres. Bonaparte had made these the symbol of the monarchy, and, unable to imitate him, they contented themselves with a parody.

After two years of stress and exile, we at last, although rather tardily, returned to the beloved routine of former days by making our entry, on June 22—but without either uniforms or bayonets—into Bourneville, which had also great need of a master, and which fortunately found one who was firmer than he who reigned over France. We were much liked there, as indeed, to a certain extent, we deserved to be, and our return was the signal for general rejoicing. But in three weeks' time I had to go back to Paris for ten days. Edward Jerningham had announced his arrival from London, and I wished to return the hospitality I had received in England. So I showed him Paris, and as he wished to meet well-known people introduced him to Bonald, Molé, and Vitrolles.¹ At the end of a week he left, without desiring to visit Bourneville. Alas ! I was never to see him again.

¹ Chateaubriand was absent from Paris.—F.

He was soon replaced by my other English friend, Stoddart, who, although rather cold and stiff, belonged to that race which, after a month's acquaintanceship, calls you "my dearest friend." I had not been back at Bourneville a month before I received a letter from him, dated Beauvais, where he was staying with one of his "dearest friends," young Comte de Saint-Mauris, a lieutenant in the lifeguards. He announced his intention of coming to Bourneville and arrived on August 19, the object of his visit being nothing less than the repose of Europe. Since my departure from London, he had matured a plan for the publication of a monthly Franco-British magazine, intended to bring about the fusion of the interests, tastes, and principles of France and England. He had obtained the support of several illustrious people in England, and had come to France hoping to do the same. This enterprise—the forerunner of the *Conservateur*—was, by reason of the, until then, unusual collaboration of the best writers of each nation, new and piquant. At the same time it was rather well contrived, for Stoddart, having at his disposal the *Times*, the most highly accredited and strongest Tory organ in London, was certain to obtain great publicity for the periodical, which was to be printed simultaneously in English and French. I willingly agreed to participate. My first flight had been fairly high, and I was not displeased that my name, trumpeted in the *Times*, should maintain the same height in England in company with the names of Bonald, Chateaubriand, and others. We drew up together the order and subjects of the principal articles of the *Correspondant*. I myself undertook to write several of them; I believe that even the introduction was from my pen. But at the end of all this work I believe that this great peacemaker between France and England was unable to live more than two or three years. On leaving Stoddart on August 23, I promised to dine on September 1 with his French collaborators, who were to assemble at the Hôtel de Saint-Mauris, in the Rue de Seine, which his "dearest friend" of Beauvais had lent him. Who should I find there but the Duc Mathieu de Montmorency, the Duc Etienne de Damas and the Duc de Fitz-James, in addition to Humbert de Sesmaisons, the two Rougés, Bertier de Sauvigny, and others! He knew, entertained, and had already enrolled the

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whole of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. I should not like to swear that these people formed the stuff out of which a good article could be made, but they bore fine names, and at any rate were excellent to begin with.

Four days after this dinner the throne took the first step towards the abyss to which it was to descend during fourteen years. The foolish and ungrateful decree of September 5, dissolving the "undiscoverable" Chamber, appeared. Vengeance on the part of Decazes and foolishness on that of Richelieu, to the dishonour of the King and the loss of his cause! Chateaubriand was then printing his *Monarchie selon la Charte*, which would have been better entitled *La Charte selon la monarchie*, a mediocre and often erroneous work that has lived on its author's reputation. On hearing of the *coup d'état*, he added to his book an angry post-scriptum, for, his opinions having passed through as many phases as his life, he was then an aristocrat. This addition cost him his positions as minister of State and Ambassador to Sweden. He had spent the proceeds of his *Génie du christianisme* and his *Martyrs*, and was overwhelmed in debt. The step he took would have been heroic had he but upheld it.

As for myself, this dissolution, which mowed down an embryo France, also destroyed the work on *Assemblées représentatives*, which I had just finished and was keeping for publication at the opening of the winter session. Everything that it contained became not only useless but unseasonable. It appeared, however, and remained unknown. It was under these inauspicious conditions that I put up for parliament. I had many friends and not a few partisans, and everything then was ruled by party spirit, nothing was done in a lukewarm manner. I was brought forward at Beauvais, Dijon, Blois, Tours, and Nantes. My correspondence shows what efforts were made on my behalf, especially by the Damases.

Parliament assembled on November 3, after a furious struggle between the monarchists and the ministry, a struggle in which the King, who continued to do what harm he could to the monarchy, took part. I have had in my possession a four-page autograph letter which he wrote to Comte de Damas, who presided over the Dijon elections, for the purpose of preventing the

nomination of Brenet, a doctor of that town who had signalised himself in the "undiscoverable" Chamber by his monarchical zeal and his hatred of the Republic and Bonapartism.

The new Chamber ought to have consisted of two hundred and fifty-seven members, but only two hundred and thirty-four were present, because, owing to party ruptures similar to the one at Beauvais, twenty-one elections were undecided and two Corsican deputies had not yet arrived. I estimated that there were one hundred monarchists, including eighty-six who had belonged to the previous Chamber, one hundred and twelve ministerialists, and twenty-four neutrals. Through the efforts of the ministry we had lost fifty seats, thus giving it a sort of majority, but such a small one that in England it would have been the signal for resignation.

Canning was then in Paris, and Vitrolles, who swore only by me, invited me to dine with him. The guests included Bonald, Chateaubriand, the Duc Mathieu de Montmorency, Prince Louis de La Trémoille, Talaru, Sesmaisons, and La Bourdonnaye, the fine flower of rebeldom. Canning, who was a man of rather high stature, awkward and heavy, with a round bald head, open manner and intelligent eyes, was not, nor wished to be on our level. He could not see, he said, that France possessed a royalist party. But this was simply because he thought he was in England, where such a party would have burst forth, and did not realise he was in France, where we were royalists precisely because we did not take up an uncompromising attitude, and because the majority of us, still fettered by an old monarchical faith and our recent enthusiasm for the King, sacrificed the display of our principles out of respect or love for the man who was consummating their ruin.

But the dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber had caused a terrible noise in Europe. There was a general outcry, and we had as allies—England, where Toryism was at its zenith; Spain, roused against recollections of the Revolution and Bonaparte; Prussia, Austria, and a large party in Russia, which saw with the same eye as we did the *decaxist* intrigues and perfidies of its ambassador Pozzo di Borgo. We then conceived the idea of putting on paper a clear statement of the opinion of the Powers in regard to the true state of the kingdom. This was to

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be at once a justification of the resignation with which we were everywhere reproached, and an appeal of the monarchy against the judgment which the decree of September 5 had given against it. The work was discussed in committee at Vitrolles', and I was entrusted with its preparation. The "secret note," about which there was so much talk, was the result. After it had been read and adopted, on November 12, I confided it to the care of Vitrolles who, without saying a word, substituted his own text for mine. So it was his work, and not mine as people then thought, that was scattered over Europe, and over which Decazes and company made such a great noise. However, I was not displeased at this little act of treason by which my tender Provençal friend had got me out of a scrape.¹

This fatal year 1816 was completed by the recall of the Orleans family, which since 1814 had remained in its vipers' nest at Twickenham. The King who detested and feared them, had constantly refused to allow them to return. But Decazes could not refuse anything to the stock of Philippe Egalité, nor the King, Decazes' requests, so Louis Philippe returned from England as his father had done and with the same object in view.

Thus closed the year 1816. All my friends—conspirators always have plenty—pressed me to spend the winter in Paris. Had I been a deputy I should have done so. But I replied to them after the manner of a resigned husband who sacrifices his wishes to his wife's judgment, and on November 20 escaped from the political storm that had surrounded me for two months and a half, to return to my sheep and my son. To the two scourges which afflicted France—the dissolution and the return of the Orleans family—Heaven had added a third, famine. It was horrible and widespread. The roads were crowded with beggars, who had left their desolated provinces, and my wife, as much for the sake of prudence as charity, was instructed to refuse none of them.

It was also in this year that there was formed the Société des Bonnes Études, an excellent institution to which every one in

¹ Regarding this "secret note," which represented France as a revolutionary volcano that threatened to set all Europe ablaze, see Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. iv. p. 251.—A.C.

Paris who had money or honourable feelings contributed. I took two shares of one thousand francs each. This society exercised a sort of guardianship over all French boys from fifteen to twenty years of age whose education was placed in its hands. For a small annual sum it found them lodgings with honest people; watched over them and later protected them. Lessons and lectures were given in a large house, where the pupils could also obtain amusement and, I believe, meals at a low price. The work of the society was carried out with a religious and monarchical object. How fortunate it would have been had every town in France had a similar institution! How fortunate it would have been if everywhere there had been done for pupils of five to fifteen years what we did in Paris for those of fifteen to twenty! But the Government tolerated good and did evil. When we at last succeeded in getting a royalist ministry, the *Société des Bonnes Études* became a nursery for magistrates and administrators.¹

¹ As regards the *Société des Bonnes Études*, consult G. de Grandmaison's *La Congrégation*, pp. 215-219, and 368-370.—A.C.

CHAPTER XIII

1817

Robert le Diable—Athalie—Cousin Thésigny—Moreau de la Sarthe—
Insurrectional movement at Lyons—Death of Mme. de Staël—Molé
—The Abbé de Bombelles, Bishop of Amiens—Mme. d'Esquelbecq
and her children.

IN May our friend the Comtesse Charles de Damas had a long and dangerous illness. Her doctors ordered her to take rest and country air. In her uneasy state of mind the first was impossible and the second equally so, for her Bourgogne estate was too far away, and as to that of Livry, which had been sanctified by Monsieur's sojourn in 1814, she had sold it. Under these difficult circumstances, a *château* that was situated in a healthy district, fifteen leagues from Paris, and owned by devoted friends was exactly what she wanted. As soon as Mme. de Chastellux had explained this, we cordially offered Bourneville and our invitation was accepted. Their arrival was timed for the beginning of July.

Our good little prefect Maxime de Choiseul had just been transferred from Beauvais to Orleans, and Decazes had replaced him by one of his own friends, M. de Germiny, a mischief-making chatterbox who wrote such pleasant letters that I have preserved some of them.¹ On the occasion of a little journey which I made to Beauvais on account of a lawsuit that had been pending for ten years before the Council of State between myself and the most celebrated thief of my district, a man named Robert, of the little town of Lizy, he overwhelmed me with engaging attentions.

¹ Henri Charles Le Bègue, Comte de Germiny (1778-1843), member of the "undiscoverable" Chamber, Prefect of the Lot in 1816 and of the Oise in 1817, and peer in 1819.—A. C.

Robert was a former accomplice of Billaud-Varenne, through whom, it was said, he had had the Duc de Gesvres guillotined, after buying his property for an annuity. He was also by common repute charged with a few other little offences, such as that of having drowned his mistress and their three children, and these exploits had gained for him in the district the name of Robert le Diable or Robert, Chief of the Brigands. As far as I was concerned, he had robbed me of a very fine mill, the Moulin de Mareuil, which the Revolution had presented to him free of charge, and of a hundred *arpents* of land that Bonaparte's Council of State was about to hand over to him when I had the prudence to suspend my suit and he the imprudence to dispense with a judgment. Since the Restoration I had revived the case, luck turned in my favour and I ended by winning.

This little journey on business caused me to miss a great pleasure. I had taken a box for the performance of *Athalie*, with the choruses, and played by Talma for the first time. It was to be a solemn spectacle, a true national *fête*, the consecration of the rights of the legitimate princes. My family awaited my return. But, though I hastened back as fast as possible, I arrived two hours too late. I heard but the echoes of the performance, which had been worthy of Racine and of our cause. The ministry took umbrage, I believe, at the public enthusiasm. When shouted by more than ten people, "Long live the King!" began to be regarded as a seditious cry, and Louis XVIII. had promised in his speech before Parliament that the errors of inconsiderate zeal should be repressed.

As a compensation, the day after my return a fortune was offered to me, and under the following circumstances. My cousin De Thésigny, companion of my childhood and youth, a good and very handsome fellow, but at fifty years of age still a bachelor and, in consequence of a stormy youth, an infirm, miserly hermit, lived in a small place on the third floor of a house in the Rue Vivienne, with an old housekeeper and a servant, although he owned an estate at Fay, six leagues from Paris, and from 600,000 to 700,000 francs, which he generally carried about with him. Although his door was open to no one save the good Abbé Séguret, his old tutor, he had retained his ancient friendship for me. As to his other cousins, Mme. de

Mackau and Mme. de Bon were dead; Chazet had stolen his mistress and Fauveau his money. On his father's side, there remained only a M. de Silvy, a Jansenist crank who only lived to rebuild Port Royal, and who, in order to carry out this pious work, had, according to Thésigny, wished to get him declared incapable of managing his own affairs. Feeling exceedingly ill, Thésigny determined to transfer all his property to me during his lifetime, retaining the usufruct. The good Abbé placed this proposal before me. After twenty-four hours' reflection, I did not think that I was bound to plead my cousins' cause to the disadvantage of myself, and to refuse a fortune that, rather than allow them to touch a penny of it, he would have left to the Hôtel-Dieu. So I accepted and went to see him. He was, in fact, on the point of dying. He pressed me to have the deed drawn up. Our notaries were sent for. But whilst they were at their work the dying man improved and began to shuffle out of his bargain; finally got better and retracted. Had it not been for my Beauvais journey, which retarded the business for several days, it is probable that this fortune would have become mine.

It was at this time, after hesitating for three years, that I decided to dispense with the services of my doctor Jouard. He had saved my life in 1808, and this had made me much attached to him and patient with his eccentricities. But he had become so self-important and neglectful of my children's health that we replaced him by Dr. Moreau de la Sarthe, a professor at the School of Medicine, an excellent, gentle and assiduous physician. Our new doctor was the husband—although not in name—of Talma's divorced wife, the celebrated and charming actress, Mme. Petit, widow of my old dancing-master. When Talma, who had also remarried, died, a servant brought the news to his first wife with the words: "Mme. Talma—Mme. Talma sends me to tell you that your husband is dead!"

Meanwhile France was restless. An insurrection almost broke out at Lyons. It was repressed after Bonaparte's fashion. Blood was spilt, scaffolds were raised, and there was a royalist reaction. Marmont was sent as a pacificator but only succeeded in making things worse. The regiments which the Duc de Feltre had taught to shout "Long live the King!" he silenced,

on the ground that the cry was seditious. So the revolt was, in fact, one against Marmont. A rascal in his service, named Fabvier,¹ published, to the great scandal of honest people, an apology for the revolt, accusing the authorities and insulting the royalists. This affair and its consequences long excited Paris and considerably increased the gulf between ourselves and the ministry.

At the beginning of July, literature suffered a loss through the death of Baronne de Staël, the first friend of my childhood but unfaithful to me for the remainder of her life. She had a brilliant yet heedless mind; was a good-natured yet dangerous woman. When already of a mature age, she had married handsome M. de Rocca, who barely survived her. She had loved him after the manner of Corinne and Delphine, and had then married him in spite of his father, a common-sense native of Languedoc who did not want anything to do with her. A result of this clandestine marriage was that, wholly unexpectedly, she became *enceinte*, which she called in Geneva by the name of dropsy. It was then that Capelle, the prefect of the town, dedicated to her the following quatrain :

Par ses talents, par son génie,
Elle va droit à l'immortalité,
Et jusqu'à son hydropisie,
Rien n'est perdu pour la postérité.²

After a month's stay with her mother, Mme. de Chastellux, at the beginning of August, left with Mme. Just de Noailles for Aix-les-Bains, whence she did not return to us until the end of September. Mme. de Damas remained. Quite reestablished, and relieved in our homely interior of the burden of keeping up society conversations, she was constantly amiable, natural and even cheerful.

On October 1, Rosambo, his wife and their four children came

¹ Fabvier was then chief of Marmont's staff. In regard to this incident, cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. iv. pp. 183-186, and Debidour's work *Le Général Fabvier*, 1904, pp. 126-151.—A. C.

² Mme. de Staël died on July 14. Was Capelle the author of this epigram? He sent it, with another, to the Minister of General Police, accompanied by a letter dated April 30, 1817 (reproduced in Charles Nauroy's *Le Curieux*, vol. i. pp. 68-69), and Baron Mounier (*Souvenirs intimes et notes*, p. 391) expressly attributes it to him.—A. C.

to return, during ten days, the long visit we had paid them at the Château de Mesnil three years before. Ludovic was sixteen years of age; Marie, seventeen; Pauline, twelve; and Madeleine, four. Of this progeny there remain, alas! but the first and the last.

On October 10 I left with the Rosambos to pass ten more days in Paris, where I had to see to our removal to a new residence. Our two years of penitence and economy had expired, and our means now allowed us to leave our third-floor apartment in the Champs-Élysées, the delightful position of which I long regretted. We took a house in the Rue du Marché d'Aguesseau.¹

To the great scandal of the royalist party, Mathieu Molé had for the past three weeks been at the Ministry of Marine. So far he had only had charge of the Road Surveying department, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice, and certainly he knew as much about ships as roads. But he represented a vote on the Council and at that time his was not without value. Brought up by Bonaparte and possessing a veneer of Liberal ideas, he was Decazes' counterpart, with the additional advantages of figure, birth, and antecedents. His somewhat pedantic stiffness did not make one fear that he would become a favourite with Louis XVIII., who had detested and disgraced him in 1814. This good prince's hatred was relentless only in the case of his friends!

During my short stay in Paris the Abbé de Bombelles was appointed Bishop of Amiens. Formerly ambassador in Lisbon and in Venice, Comte de Bombelles had married Mlle. de Mackau, the most beautiful of beautiful women and the friend rather than the lady of honour of the saintly Princesse Elisabeth. He thus became related to my family. Having emigrated from Venice to Russia and afterwards to Germany, where, sometimes at Munich and sometimes at Vienna, he looked after the political interests of the royal family, he found himself, at the death of his wife, the father of a daughter and four infant sons. These children were brought up by the Emperor Francis II. As regards himself, disconsolate over

¹ The Rue d'Aguesseau, in the Rue Saint-Honoré. This house had a garden and was a rather fine residence.—A. C.

his loss, he took orders and devoted himself to the lowest duties of his profession. I believe that he was still a simple *curé* near Breslau, in Prussian Silesia, when the Restoration brought him back to France, accompanied by his daughter Caroline, who had been educated at the Visitation in Vienna, and his youngest son, who, like his father, had taken orders, and who died but a short time afterwards. The Abbé de Bombelles then became Chief Almoner to the Duchesse de Berry, and from that post rose, as I have said, to be Bishop of Amiens. Whilst being the most pious of ecclesiastics, he was the most amiable of society men, the most indulgent of old people, and, apart from his little fault of being inexhaustible, the most amusing of story-tellers. He had seen and done much, and I have heard from his son Charles that his family preserves eighty volumes of his notes. In his first sermon from the pulpit of Amiens Cathedral he spoke of his *début* and recent appointment, both of which the town had witnessed. He had, in fact, made his start there under the uniform of a lieutenant of hussars.¹

I returned on October 21 to Bourneville, which Mme. de Damas and Mme. de Chastellux left a week later. We felt our solitude very much after those four months of friendly communion.

In December my old friend Mme. d'Esquelbecq lost her charming daughter the Marquise de Rochedragon, who was an angel both in face and in character. She died at the austere castle of her father-in-law, that miser of the Berry who cut off his servants' supply of candles when it was moonlight. The interest we showed in her poor mother renewed my old friendship with her. The poor woman, who was the weakest I have known, had no one else left but her daughter Mathilde de Béthisy, lady of honour to the Duchesse de Berry, a good woman at bottom, but brilliant, fashionable and with no great affection for her, and her son, a bad fellow who was the torment of her life.

¹ Regarding the Bombelles family, cf. Mme. du Montet's *Souvenirs*, pp. 292-298, and especially Comte Fleury's recent works, *Angélique de Mackau et la cour de Madame Elisabeth* and *Les Derniers années du marquis et de la marquise de Bombelles*.—A. C.

CHAPTER XIV

1818

Dinners and Suppers—Mme. de Damas and Mme. de la Trémoille—Armand de Mackau—The Statue of Henri IV.—The *Conservateur*—Elections—Lafayette, Manuel, and Grégoire—Gouvion Saint-Cyr—Villèle and Corbière—Vindé—The Missions—Richelieu.

ON January 16, 1818, after an eclipse of twenty-seven months, our star reappeared on the horizon in the latitude of the Rue du Marché d'Aguesseau, a somewhat poor but rather cheerful quarter, surrounded by gardens, and very fashionable owing to its position in the centre of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, which for the past eleven years had been our home. My dinners and suppers were resumed; but they had lost their social importance and at the same time not a few of the old guests. During the last four years many changes had taken place among things and men; there were friends who had become acquaintances, and acquaintances, strangers.

Our dinners were given on Mondays. The guests were Rosambo, Tourolle, Vitrolles, the Abbé de Bombelles, Mathieu de Montmorency, Fitz-James, Humbert de Sesmaisons, Vaublanc, Michaud, Bonald, Chateaubriand, the Rougés, and, later, Villèle, Corbière, Charles de Damas, and a few others.

Our suppers were on Saturdays. They were attended by our former guests, with the exception of the Vintimilles and Fezensacs, who came but rarely, little Mme. de Lamoignon, who lived in retirement, Pasquier, Molé, Julien and a few others who had become ministerialists or ministers. Mme. de La Briche and her daughter remained faithful to us, and the gaps were filled up by the D'Orvilliers, the D'Orglandes, the Mortefontaines, the D'Esquelbecqs, the De Lages, the Nansoutys, and others. As a whole

they compensated for the losses and became more and more numerous, because I was known and was evolving into a party-man. At Vitrolles', one evening, Humbert de Sesmaisons, whom I had never known but slightly, came up to me and said: "I have just wagered that if I called upon you, you would not close your door to me. You are too gallant a man to make me lose my bet." "I desire, however," replied I, "to give you the right to force my door by forcing yours to-morrow." On another evening, also at Vitrolles', whose house had become very brilliant (Decazes had made him lose his position as Secretary to the Council, including the residence that went with it, and Vitrolles, rising instead of descending, had taken the fine Hôtel d'Imecourt, in the Rue Boudreau), Prince de La Trémoille came on behalf of his wife to reproach me for having abandoned her, and pressed me to come on the very next day to renew the friendship. The abandonment was, in truth, a flagrant one and difficult to excuse, for it dated back some eighteen years; but having become the intimate friend of her sister, Mme. de Damas, our relations had to change. Everybody knew of the incompatibility that existed between these two women, both so excellent—each in her own way.

We gave, that winter, two modest little balls for the purpose of introducing Claire to society. Balls constitute a sort of bazaar for the display of marriageable daughters.

One Monday in April, the new Bishop of Amiens, who had dined at my house, introduced us to his nephew Armand de Mackau, whom I had lost sight of for many years. Under the Empire he had entered the navy, and had distinguished himself by a brilliant feat of arms. But the navy, which had constantly met with misfortune under Bonaparte, was almost non-existent under Louis XVIII. Armand, who was a man of brilliant courage though timid in character, lamented over this check in his career. A mission to Goree was in preparation, and, in truth, the desire to be entrusted with it was a much stronger motive for him coming to my house than the desire to renew acquaintance with an uncle who was little of a Bonapartist and an uncompromising aristocrat. I spoke of the subject to Molé, whose self-esteem still prompted him to call himself my friend, and who, at my very first word, gave him the command of the

corvette. Armand set off, carried out his mission, and returned to read his reports to Louis XVIII. The Duchesse d'Angoulême welcomed and, as the son of her former assistant-governess, protected him. I had helped him into the saddle and he set off from that moment at a gallop. We were very fond of him and treated him as though he had been our son; and this lasted twelve years, that is, as long as he himself desired.¹

At the beginning of May we returned to Bourneville. Great was the activity there, for masons, painters and upholsterers were at work on the *château*, and navvies were busy in the park.

On August 16, during a stay which I made in Paris from the 12th to the 26th, the bronze equestrian statue of Henri IV., copied from the old one, was placed on its ancient pedestal. It had been cast at Lemot's founderies at the top of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, whence, on the 14th, it set off for the Pont-Neuf, by way of the Allée de Marigny. Twenty pairs of oxen were unable to drag the enormous mass along, so that from eight in the morning until six o'clock at night the hero remained immobile. We then beheld a touching sight. The people unyoked the oxen; all the ropes of the quarter were called into requisition; and a thousand men dragged the statue along the Champs-Élysées, the Place Louis XV., and the Quai des Tuileries. They rested under the windows of the Pavillon de Flore, where all the descendants of the good king had assembled to witness this amusing sight. The great king was obliged to stop all night opposite the Pont des Arts. The next morning the statue was taken to its site, and on the 16th was raised on to its pedestal, amidst the cheers of the crowd on the Pont-Neuf and quays. The royal family witnessed the inauguration from a platform and endured a long homily composed by Barbé-Marbois, and delivered by him with gestures after the manner of Talma.

It appears to me that this was also the time of the famous *bord de l'eau* conspiracy, so called because it was hatched in the

¹ Armand de Mackau (1788-1855) was second-lieutenant and in temporary command of the *Abeille* when, whilst returning from Corsica to Leghorn, on March 26, 1811, he captured the English brig *Alacrity*, after three-quarters of an hour's fight. Promoted to the rank of lieutenant, he carried out, in 1819, the mission to the Senegal to which Frénilly refers and for which he was made a captain.—A. C.

sun on the grand terrace of the Tuileries. Decazes, its inventor or amplifier, would have liked to have profited by it, had it been but to the extent of a few dozen royalist dismissals, but the Parisian public treated the affair in so gay a manner that he had to desist. Here, however, is the story of a real and substantial conspiracy of which Decazes knew nothing and of which nobody has spoken. It was contrived in my study. I had met in Paris the crazy but excellent De Bruc who had been the cause of my arrest at Saint-Malo, and from time to time we saw each other. His Breton brain was boiling over with indignation and he was continually forming plans. He had undertaken—he alone—to save the country, and he asked me to fix a day for the communication of his plan. Only one other person was to be present,—Raineville *père*, an honest maniac who was always full of projects. Now, the plan that De Bruc laid before us was simply one to abduct the King. Nothing was easier in the world. Whilst he was on one of those drives of twelve to fifteen leagues on which he daily tired out his guard and horses, a band of armed men would stop the carriage, change its route, and, relays of horses having been prepared, take it at full speed to . . ., where Louis would be made to sign a proclamation and dismiss his ministers. The plan was superb, simple and infallible; the only thing lacking was money, and this was the subject of the interview. Raineville and I would gladly have seen Louis XVIII. at Pondicherry had it pleased Heaven to so order it, but neither of us was disposed to take the risks and bear the expense of such a journey. So we politely declined the Breton's proposal, whereupon he broke with us, declaring that he would do without our assistance and that we had lost the two ministries he had reserved for us.

About this time I suffered a painful loss—that of my oldest friend, the Marquise d'Audiffret, whose death followed closely on that of her mother, Mme. Le Sénéchal, who had been my father's oldest friend. Each, in turn, had been pre-eminent in wit, grace, elegance and beauty.

It was in October of this year that the *Conservateur*, which was to meet with such an immediate success, was started. The idea of such a periodical dated back to the winter of 1816 when Vitrolles wanted me to collaborate with Fiévée, but owing

to my refusal and perhaps that of others it came to nothing. It was revived in the following summer in the *Correspondant*, but this *mariage de circonstance* between two nations that had a great hatred for each other was already threatening to end in a divorce through incompatibility of temper. Moreover, though the signboard bore some fine names, there was very little in the shop. One morning in the spring of that year, Vitrolles came to see me to propose the *Conservateur* enterprise. Not being of an impulsive nature, I studied the proposal; and at the beginning of the autumn, after Vitrolles had carried out other negotiations, an association, to which I gladly promised to belong, was formed. Chateaubriand joined it, preceded by his usual flourish of trumpets. At the beginning he played the part of architect and treated Bonald, Lamennais, Fiévée, Castelbajac, d'Herbouville and myself as his assistants. The sequel promptly showed that if the birth of this periodical was due to him, it was to others that it owed its fortune. My first article, in three instalments, on the past, present and future of public affairs had a tremendous success, and soon made my name known. But I am forgetting to say that at the outset we fortunately broke with Fiévée, an insolent yet witty fop whose opinion was to be found in any one's purse. He took his articles to the *Minerve*, a Jacobin organ that had been started in opposition to ours and for which they were much better suited.¹

Meanwhile the ministerial bark sailed along under full canvas. The autumn elections² brought a noteworthy reinforcement to the left side of the Chamber. Lafayette was elected for the arrondissement of Meaux, whereupon the King fell into a little fit of anger and removed from the town one of the regiments of his guard. Another of the new members was Manuel, a little Marseilles advocate whom that rascal Laffitte made eligible by means of a fictitious sale. He was a tiger with the face of a cat and concealed the soul of a hyena under his wheedling look, but was precious to his party because he talked

¹ Joseph Fiévée (1767-1839), author of *La Dot de Suzette* (1798), one of Bonaparte's agents, manager of the *Journal de l'Empire*, master of requests (1807), Prefect of the Nièvre (1813), &c.—A. C.

² The autumn of 1819 and not that, as the author says, of 1818. The elections were held on September 14.—A. C.

as long as it wanted. The most glorious of these elections, however, was that of the regicide Grégoire. But it was annulled, owing to the scandal.

Shortly afterwards the camarilla gained a less costly victory through the death of the Duc de Feltre, Minister of War, who had had the courage to remain an honest man and a royalist, and who during three years had been forming for the King a good and faithful army.¹ Now, however disorganised a Government may be, nothing is lost so long as the *ultima ratio regum* remains and an appeal can be made to bayonets. It was important that this should be looked to and that a liberal education should be given to that army which Marmont, at Lyons, had found seditiously faithful. Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr, who succeeded the Duc de Feltre, occupied himself with this work. To him was due the most decisive step that had been taken towards the fall of the throne since the dissolution of the "undiscoverable" Chamber—I refer to his famous military decree which, on the one hand, deprived the Crown of the choice of half the officers and, on the other, organised the appointment of non-commissioned officers in such a way that they became the real masters of the soldiers, the control of the army thus gradually passing from men whose rank, birth, principles, education and fortune were sure guarantees to the State into the hands of proletarians whom it was easy to lead astray or corrupt. And to think that a king could be found to sign such a decree! . . . Such was the capacity and judgment of the translator of Horace. He sowed the seeds of the revolution that was to overthrow his brother. Was it possible to love one's native country without despising such a man?

On the occasion of a short visit which I made to Paris in November, Alexis de Rougé, with whom I was on rather intimate terms, made me acquainted with Villèle by inviting me to lunch with him. Villèle, who had been a member of the Chamber of Deputies for the past three years, had come to the front gradually and not through great ability as a speaker. But he was extremely lucid, ready, cautious and consistent, and, in addition to extreme justness of mind, possessed a perseverance

¹ Clarke, Duc de Feltre, a peer since 1815, and Minister of War from March 12, 1815, to September 13, 1817, died on October 23, 1818.—A. C.

that went as far as stubbornness. Moreover, he was a good and sincere friend.

Villèle had attracted little attention in the "undiscoverable" Chamber, because its big majority was in accord and without opposition. But when the dissolution strengthened the left side and the ground began to be disputed, tactics, discipline and leaders became necessary. The first of these leaders was Villèle, and his followers were beginning to march under his flag in a compact body. The second was Corbière, an advocate of Rennes, whose fierce and patriotic royalism compensated for the disadvantage of his calling, though without hiding it.¹

Whilst the throne and France were thus drifting, theatrical performances were being merrily given at Mme. de Mortefontaine's, at Verneuil, after having been merrily given at Le Marais. For the past two years I had refused to go to Le Marais as an actor, and my name had been struck off the list. It was with some pain that I felt I had become a stranger to the people with whom, as a whole, I had but lately been so intimate. They had now become bitter, malevolent and exclusive, and to them was due the invention of the name "ultra."

Of my old friends, the one who pardoned me the least for my opinions—perhaps because he had liked me the most—was Vindé, who had become an ardent friend and enthusiastic admirer of Decazes.

I was at this time rather busily engaged on a work on the French Missions, from the principal directors and rectors of which I received reports. Though I may have seen from these documents that there were a few hypocritical or ambitious men, such as the Abbé Fayet, the Abbé Feutrier, or the Abbé Genoude, I also perceived that, among the women as well as the men, there were pure and noble souls worthy of the early days of the Church and inspired like Saint Vincent de Paul. Unfortunately, after amassing a large number of papers and making many notes, my undertaking resulted in nothing more

¹ In reference to Villèle (1773-1854) and Corbière (1766-1853), see the histories of the Restoration and especially the judgment that Pasquier has delivered "without bitterness" in his *Mémoires*, vol. v. pp. 275-279.—A. C.

than making me acquainted with a multitude of good people, notably the saintly Abbé Frayssinous.¹

There was a mission of another kind at the end of the year 1818—that of the Duc de Richelieu to the Aix-la-Chapelle Congress, to which he successfully applied for the withdrawal of the foreign garrison that for three years, in order to be answerable to Europe and ourselves for our good conduct, had occupied our frontiers. With this treaty the Duc de Richelieu ought to have brought his ministry to a close, for he daily saw it being drawn into the Decazes whirlpool. He did not leave it until three years later and died shortly afterwards, adored by two women whom he could not bear. One was his wife and the other that of Bernadotte, then Queen of Sweden, who, brought to bay by his coldness and in despair at not being able to obtain even his portrait, succeeded, as everybody then heard, in procuring one of a sort. She got a painter to conceal himself in a wardrobe with a glass-door adjoining the Duc de Richelieu's study, and after a few sittings had brought to her a very striking portrait of the minister's secretary!²

¹ Regarding the Société des Missions de France, see Geoffroy de Grandmaison's *La Congrégation*, pp. 238-240.—A. C.

² The Duc de Richelieu, who was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the Council on September 26, 1815, was succeeded, on December 30, 1818, by Dessolle, after having signed, on October 9, the Aix-la-Chapelle Convention. He returned to power on February 20, 1820, after the death of the Duc de Berry, and retired on December 12, 1821. In regard to his wife, see Mme. du Montet's *Souvenirs*, p. 244, and as regards the Queen of Sweden's affection, Hochschild's *Désirée, reine de Suède*, p. 60, and the Comtesse d'Armaillé's *Désirée Clary*, pp. 246-249.—A. C.

CHAPTER XV

1819

Hervé de Nantes and Lauriston—Bausset—The Talarus—Marriage of Claire and Camille de Pimodan—Marriage of Decazes and Mlle. de Sainte-Aulaire.

HUMBERT DE SESMAISONS¹ introduced me to two of Brittany's choicest gentlemen. One was Hervé de Nantes, who combined the purest of minds and the most generous courage with the finest of physiques and the sweetest and frankest of faces. He was one of those men whom Cardinal de Retz would have said were to be found only in Plutarch. The other was Lauriston, Law de Lauriston, then Receiver-General for the Loire-Inférieure, a firm monarchist, as every man who had served under the Empire without being a Jacobin then was.

I believe that I have said nothing about two other new acquaintances which date from that winter or the preceding one. One was Cardinal de Bausset, Bishop of Alais, who valued my writings a little and whose works I held in great esteem.² The other, whom I found in the same house in the Rue de Grenelle, was the Marquise de Talaru. Formerly married to M. de Clermont-Tonnerre, who was assassinated on the Pont-Royal on August 10, 1792,³ and then steeped in mysticism, she ended,

¹ Louis Humbert, Comte de Sesmaisons (1777-1836), deputy for the Loire-Inférieure (1815-1816 and 1820-1827), peer in 1827. With Coetlosquet, Verdère and Courtemanche, he was one of the four historical corpulent men of the day, and, notwithstanding his size and weight, strong, alert, and in addition, witty. See Bonneval's *Mémoires*, pp. 177-180.—A. C.

² Bausset (1724-1848), member of the Chamber of Peers in 1815 and of the French Academy in 1816, is chiefly known for his *Histoire de Fénelon* (1808-1809) and his *Histoire de Bossuet* (1814).—A. C.

³ On August 10, this former member of the Constituent Assembly, when

after converting La Harpe, by reappearing in society with the name of that good Justin de Talaru, who had entered her house in the quality of a son-in-law and remained in that of a husband.¹

We began in the winter of this year to occupy ourselves more over Claire, who was nearly eighteen, and whose worldly pleasures were as yet limited to drawing, and playing the piano. Several matches were offered to us. Finally, good Mme. d'Esquelbecq came to us with a pretender whom she had in vain desired for her niece De Brion. Young Camille de Pimodan—such was his name—had met my daughter in society and she had greatly pleased him. He was a captain of cavalry, handsome and well-shaped, a good fellow, and the son of Comte de Pimodan,² formerly gentleman-of-honour to Monsieur, and of Mlle. de Pons, lady-of-honour to Madame. This family, excellent in itself, was connected on both sides with the best blood in France, the Brissacs, Choiseuls, &c., and its only son would some day possess a very respectable fortune. Everything seemed to be suitable. Comte de Pimodan called upon me and frankly stated his fortune; equally frankly, I stated my own; and in half an hour the marriage was agreed to, on the condition that the young people should be given time to know each other better.

The marriage was fixed for the early days of July, and, after the winter had been spent in paying compliments and in preparing the trousseau and wedding presents, we signed the contract and, in May, returned to the country.

Numerous were the visits that we received in June, for happiness is a loadstone. In addition to Camille and his father, we entertained Mme. de Damas, Mme. de Chastellux, Comtesse Charles de Damas, Comtesse César de Chastellux, Tourolle, his

walking along the street, was, in fact, pointed out to the fury of the crowd and, in spite of the efforts of the Croix-Rouge Section, massacred.—A. C.

¹ Louis Justin Marie, Marquis de Talaru (1769-1850), major-general, peer of France, and ambassador to Madrid.—A. C.

² Charles Louis Honoré de Rarécourt de La Vallée de Pimodan, gentleman cadet (1778), major in the Barrois regiment (1788), grand bailli d'épée of Toul (1789), aide-de-camp to the Comte de Provence (1792), major-general (August 30, 1814), lieutenant-general (May 23, 1825), son of Charles Jean de Rarécourt de La Vallée, Marquis de Pimodan, brigadier-general of the King's armies, lieutenant-general of the districts of Toul, &c., and of Charlotte Sidonie Rose de Gouffier.—A. C.

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son-in-law and his daughter, whom he had just brought back from Nice in better health.

On June 26, Camille and I left this fashionable society to go and get our contract signed by the royal family. This ceremony took place on July 1. The King spoke not a word, either to his former gentleman-of-honour or to me, with whose works and fierce principles he was acquainted.¹ The whole of his royal allocution, delivered in a silvery voice and with his eyes in the air, consisted of the usual phrase: "When is the wedding?" Nor did the Duc or Duchesse d'Angoulême say anything; in his case because he lacked the faculty of speaking in a polished manner, in her case because she lacked polished manners. But on the part of Monsieur there was grace, kindness, and even praise.

The marriage was celebrated on July 6 at the Church of the Assumption.

I feared that the bridegroom's family would want it celebrated by at least a bishop, but it gladly contented itself with my good Abbé Séguret, whose benediction I counted as better than that of all the dignitaries of the Church.

My daughter's witnesses were Comte Charles de Damas and my old friend the Marquis de Biencourt; those of Camille, his cousin Timoléon, Duc de Brissac, and Comte de Glandevès, Governor of the Tuileries. As we wished to dine at Bourneville, everything was done post-haste; mass at nine o'clock, wedding-breakfast at my house at half-past nine, departure at eleven, and arrival at Bourneville at six o'clock with the Comte and Comtesse de Pimodan.

We found the whole place in a state of joy. Notwithstanding the Revolution, the peasantry is still so content to have a lord that one is forced into the belief that feudalism had its good features. Moreover, we reigned paternally and half of the people around us had been born under our empire.

In December a singular political transaction took place.²

¹ Louis XVIII. had observed, however, the honours of the Louvre in the case of Mme. de Pimodan, *née* Pons, as the former chief lady-of-honour to Madame, who, after the death of Louis XVII., was treated as a queen; and he would willingly have overwhelmed M. de Pimodan with favours had not the count lived in retirement and abstained from asking for anything.—A. C.

² In December 1820, and not, as the author says, in 1819. Cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. v. pp. 61-66.—A. C.

Villèle and Corbière were appointed ministers without portfolios. It is too long ago for me to remember by what transitions the King was led and Decazes forced to accept a concession so averse to their ideas. The appalling progress made by the Jacobins and the necessity of counterbalancing it was the probable cause. Many friends advised them to refuse to accept this sham combination, but they accepted. Corbière did not increase his importance by one iota. Villèle took up his residence in Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély's house in the Rue de Provence, and his *salon* was much frequented.

Little Mme. Princeteau still held a foremost place in the good graces of the King, who was daily becoming more impotent. There was then in circulation a caricature, said to have come from London, representing the monarch and the fair lady in a tender situation. "My constitution will not permit of it," the former was saying, whereupon the latter cried: "Long live the King in any case!"

His Majesty was at this time much occupied in arranging a good marriage for his child of Libourne. The affair was a cabinet intrigue and his diplomacy excelled therein. He cast his eyes on the daughter of Sainte-Aulaire. One knows that Sainte-Aulaire, then a deputy, and who, during the Hundred Days, had been Prefect of Toulouse, unblushingly belonged, despite his name, to the left side of the Chamber. One also knows—at any rate people of my age know—that he had married, some twenty years before, a certain little Mlle. de Soyecour, shaped like a "Z," peevish and capricious, but exceedingly rich, whom he had carried off from his friend poor Gontaut Saint-Geniez on the eve of the wedding. By this Carabosse he had had a daughter who was said to be endowed with the same graces as her mother, and who, in addition to a solid million, claimed certain rights, representing an income of three or four hundred thousand livres, on the forests of Denmark. Such was the wench whom the King intended for his favourite. It must be explained that a Montmorency (Raoul) had previously haggled over her marriage and withdrawn from the negotiations because the father, who had nibbled at the dowry, refused to account for a sum of one hundred thousand francs. In the present case, however, there were no

accounts to be rendered. There was the honour of his alliance with a Libourne bailiff, the prospect of honours and positions, on the condition that he veered towards the centre, and, finally, the support of the King of France in favour of his Denmark claims. To make the negotiations more honourable, it was the assassin of the Duc d'Enghien,¹ Savary, Duc de Rovigo, who was the agent between Decazes and Sainte-Aulaire. On the King sending for the latter, Sainte-Aulaire insisted on a year's delay and assured Louis of his gratitude. "Whatever are you saying, Monsieur de Sainte-Aulaire," exclaimed the good prince. "It is I who owe you gratitude. This is a question of my son's happiness, and when your daughter is united to him, she will immediately become mine. But you speak of a year! We must make haste; I am old, and I like to see myself born again in my children!" Thus spoke this great king. Sainte-Aulaire, who, Jacobin though he is, is lacking neither in decorum, nor in tact, nor in dignity, was probably laughing in his sleeve.²

¹ A harsh epithet! Savary merely carried out orders. As colonel of the *gendarmérie d'élite* and the First Consul's aide-de-camp, he carried a sealed letter from Bonaparte to Murat, Governor of Paris, and Murat ordered him to bring the gendarmery and a brigade of infantry to Vincennes. But he did wrong in one respect. When Colonel Barrois, before the meeting of the court-martial, pointed out that the Duc d'Enghien begged for an interview with the first Consul, and proposed that judgment be suspended, so that the matter could be referred to Bonaparte, Savary declared that such a step was inopportune.—A. C.

² Louis Clair de Beaupoil, Comte de Sainte-Aulaire (1778-1854), pupil of the Polytechnic School, chamberlain and prefect of Napoleon, deputy for the Meuse, then for the Gard, peer in 1829 on the death of his father, ambassador to Rome, Vienna and London, under the Government of July, member of the French Academy in 1841, and author of a *Histoire de la Fronde*, published in 1827 in three volumes.—A. C.

CHAPTER XVI

1820

Assassination of the Duc de Berry—Death of the *Conservateur*—
Return of parliamentary ambition.

THE success of the *Conservateur* had been so pronounced that it brought in a great deal of money and a good deal of glory. The latter part of the profits was ours—by which I mean Bonald, myself and company, who were very well contented with it. At the beginning of the winter, our friends the founders, Mathieu de Montmorency, Fitz-James, Talaru, Vitrolles, Chateaubriand, and others, came to the conclusion that it was only fair to share the money with us. Each of them received at least twenty thousand francs net per annum. Mathieu de Montmorency undertook to share with Lamennais, Talaru with Bonald, Vitrolles with me, and so on, in the case of the others. This division was faithfully carried out by everybody except one person, Vitrolles. He contrived, with a Gascon effrontery that made me begin to see a little more clearly into his character, to keep both his own share and mine. I believe that the poor baron was daily getting deeper and deeper into debt, whilst his hopes grew less and less.

On February 13, Shrove Sunday, after being at a *bal masqué* at Mme. de La Briche's, we went to a *raout* which the Comtesse de Pimodan was giving in honour of her daughter-in-law, and whilst there heard the rumour that the Duc de Berry had just been assassinated at the Opéra. Seizing Helye de Pons' arm, we ran off to the Opéra, to find, on arriving there, that the unfortunate prince, who had been stabbed by the execrable Louvel as he was stepping into his carriage, had been carried into an *entresol* of the theatre. The narrow staircase leading

to it was already crowded. The vestibule and even the street were filled by all the most important people of Paris, anxiously waiting for news. A terrible silence reigned over the crowd, and the adjoining streets were guarded to prevent the passage of vehicles. At the expenditure of great industry and patience, we succeeded in reaching the door of the room where the prince was lying, to learn the horrible truth that all hope was over. The poor prince had only one daughter,¹ and he alone promised to provide heirs to the Crown. His life being the only obstacle to the Orléans family, there had been no time to lose. The blow, therefore, was well thought out, well struck, and doubtless well paid for. At two o'clock in the morning we brought the sad news to the Comtesse de Pimodan's, where everybody was waiting to hear it. Meanwhile, all Paris had left the Shrove Sunday festivities to go to the Elysée, hoping to see the Duc de Berry brought back at any moment. Men and women were stationed pellmell on the grand staircase, overcome with fatigue and anguish. Thus passed the whole of the night. At six o'clock in the morning, the Duchesse de Berry, who was *enceinte*, returned alone. Her husband was dead. I must not forget to mention the courage of Mathilde de Béthisy, who, dashing from the carriage in which the Duchesse was already seated, supported the prince, drew the dagger from the wound, and, though covered with his blood, continued to attend to him; nor the devotion of the Duc de Maillé, first gentleman of the chamber to Monsieur, who, seeing his carriage full when it set off for the Tuileries, mounted behind with the lackeys, so as not to lose sight of his master; nor the Christian compassion of the poor prince who, up to the end, asked pardon for his murderer; nor the conversion of the celebrated Dupuytren, who witnessed this heartrending scene for seven hours, and who, in the presence of such sorrow, virtue, charity and Christianity, became an ardent and sincere royalist. Since then, in 1830, when Charles X. had left France, we have seen him offer his fortune to the King.

¹ Nauroy's researches have since revealed the fact that the Duc de Berry had two sons by Virginie Oreille, a son by Marie Delaroche, and two daughters by Amy Brown.—A. C.

A universal cry of horror arose from the country. The public demanded a victim. After a week had passed, Decazes, whom Clausel de Coussergues, the day after the crime, had proposed should be placed on trial as an accomplice, was disgraced. This was one of those periods of salvation which Providence offers to nations that are in a state of decadence. It is for them to seize the opportunity. A royalist king would have done so by dissolving the Chamber, driving the Orléans family out of the country, and appointing a royalist ministry. The cabinet was, indeed, reconstituted, but instead of royalists we were given such men as Pasquier and Mounier.¹ The outcry of the public was regarded as a tumult that must be suppressed, the assassination as an accident, and the expression "isolated crime" became the *mot d'ordre* which they attempted to bring into vogue. I still recollect meeting Bastard, M. de Vergennes' grand-nephew, a good magistrate and intelligent man, and who had been Decazes' college comrade, at the Duc de Berry's funeral at Saint-Denis, and being singularly surprised to hear him say to me: "The most extraordinary thing about this crime is that they have not yet been able to discover the accomplices. Would it not be strange if such a crime were the work of a solitary criminal?" "I consider that to be impossible," I replied. Such was the *nuance* they employed with me; with others they were more outspoken. In short, the agent that had committed the crime perished as a solitary malefactor, but the arm that had guided him remained hidden in darkness, and, apart from Decazes, everything continued in the same track. The victim's blood had been spilt in vain!

On March 30 the *Conservateur* ceased to appear. Chateaubriand, who had made a parade of its establishment, did the same at the time of its death, as though, when a Louis XVIII. was still on the throne and a Pasquier was in the ministry, when half the Chamber was revolutionary and disorder was spreading over France, the dismissal of a Decazes constituted a victory for the monarchy, religion and honest men. Never had there been a greater need for the *Conservateur*. I pleaded its cause to Chateaubriand, but met with only egoism and vanity. He had

¹ Pasquier retained the seals and Mounier, with Siméon as minister, became Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior.—A. C.

won over the founders to his way of thinking, so the *Conservateur* was no longer published, and we could not obtain even the right to preserve its name. Bonald, Lamennais and I continued it for some time under the name of the *Défenseur*.

René, the eldest of my grandsons, was born in Paris on April 11.¹

We returned to Bourneville in May. The Duchesse de Berry's condition was then known to the public, and Louvel's accomplices endeavoured, some to make out that she was only supposed to be *enceinte*, others to cause her to have a miscarriage by infernal machine explosions.

In September I was seized with a most serious attack of political ambition. The quinquennial renewal of deputies for my department of the Oise was to take place in October. I was beginning to have a large number of friends in various parts of France, but more at Beauvais than elsewhere, and a certain M. de Germiny had given up the Prefecture to Brochet de Vérigny, a loyal and excellent man whom I held in great esteem.² Two deputies were to be elected for the grand college. Monsieur, through the agency of the Duc de Fitz-James, openly favoured Kergorlay and I. The King excluded us both, but with this difference, that if one of us were to be suffered I should be given the preference, on the very good ground that a probable evil was to be preferred to a certain one. On the other hand, as the election was to take place at the chief town of the department, where the aristocracy dominated, and the King having very little influence there, the two elections admitted of hardly any doubt. Kergorlay's return was certain; as to mine, it could only be prevented by my good neighbour Héricart de Thury.³ His reputation as a *savant*, repeated by newspaper after newspaper, and the fastidious prudence of his royalism, assured him

¹ René de Rarécourt de La Vallée de Pimodan, who died young and unmarried.—A. C.

² Brochet de Vérigny, master of requests and counsellor to Monsieur, Deputy for the Calvados and later Prefect of the Loire-Inférieure.—A. C.

³ Vicomte Louis Etienne François Héricart de Thury (1776-1854), deputy for the Oise from 1815 to 1816 and from 1820 to 1827, and member of the Academy of Sciences, directed, as chief engineer, the works of the Paris Catacombs, and wrote, in addition to a *Description des catacombes*, a number of papers on public works, geology and agriculture.—A. C.

some of the votes of the opposition. If he could set me aside, he was certain, therefore, to be elected. With this object in view, he set to work with the caution of a mole. He began by telling all the electors he knew that Bourneville, though it is situated on a main road and on the banks of a navigable water-course, was in a distant, deserted and inaccessible region. My honourable opponent then informed his uncle Ferrand, an ex-minister who had remained a Minister of State and on very friendly terms with the King, that, not wishing to expose myself to certain defeat, I had decided to withdraw from the contest. Ferrand ran with the news to the King, who immediately told it to Monsieur, who then repeated it to Fitz-James. Whereupon they abandoned me. My clever neighbour was given the presidency of the college that had been intended for me. Hastening to Paris, I saw Ferrand, enlightened the King, and undeceived Monsieur. But, innocent though I was, I was swamped. It was poor consolation to hear people say to me: "Your opponent is a rascal." The elections were in five days.

I reached Beauvais in an exceedingly irritated state of mind. The first step I took was to have printed and widely circulated a rectification of the erroneous statement made in respect to me. This changed the aspect of things, and at that time there is no doubt that, if I had had the sort of conscience my neighbour possessed, I could have swamped Kergorlay and been returned with Thury. But the idea never entered my head. In the evening I went to V^érigny's. My opponent was there, but he slipped off. Fitz-James then arrived, and, remaining with him and the Prefect, they held forth at such length on the danger of our disunion resulting in the return of a Jacobin that, after twenty-four hours' consideration I publicly withdrew from the contest, and asked that my supporters' votes be given to M. de Thury. This little Roman act, which consoled me for everything, won for me good V^érigny's sincere friendship, the esteem of the Tuileries, Monsieur's favour, Kergorlay's confession that he owed his appointment to me, and a little ovation in Beauvais, where all the votes were promised me for the next election.

We returned to Paris at the end of December.

CHAPTER XVII

1821

Official introduction to Monsieur—Death of Mme. de Crisenoy—The author's election as Deputy for Savenay—The Piet Group—Two Speeches—Martignac.

OUR household being the same as usual, I have only two things to note concerning the winter of 1821.

The first is that, at the beginning of January, I was introduced to Monsieur. His two first gentlemen, M. de Maillé and M. de Fitz-James, acted in a truly friendly manner and obtained for me a charming reception. Possessing no official position whatsoever, I wore an ordinary dress-coat, which was as ridiculous then at the Tuileries as a uniform would formerly have been at Versailles. Shortly afterwards, Monsieur granted me permission to pay my court in the evening in his study, alone. I took advantage of this about once a week and had some noble and touching conversations with him.

The other event was the death of charming Caroline de Crisenoy, who succumbed in March at the time of her daughter's birth. The poor little woman, who was constitutionally frail, but full of grace and vivacity, had remained crushed under the weight of a husband who, though pious and honest, was as heavy in manners and mind as in figure. Two journeys to Nice had momentarily revived her. What she required was a calm and happy life under an Italian sun—far from the religious bull who, by forcing her to undergo the fatigues of motherhood, killed her.

In May, we returned to Bourneville, accompanied by an excellent little mathematician, M. Defauconpret, whom I had engaged to coach Olivier for the autumn Saint-Cyr examinations.

We had certainly no desire to make a soldier of him ; but, as he was averse to study, had a taste for pleasure, and was already impatient under the parental yoke, we required not a convent where the pupils were brought up in cotton wool, like that of Mme. de Sévigné, but a convent where the rule was of iron, in order to subdue him. Saint-Cyr, which was then well constituted and perfectly governed, was the only honourable and useful prison where one could place a boy of his age.

June brought us the visit of the Duc de Brissac and two of his daughters, poor young persons who have since died. On August 1 there arrived the Comte de Pimodan and his wife, Mme. de Nansouty, her son Stéphen, Olivier's companion, Mmes. de Damas and de Chastellux, Léonce and Charles, inseparable friends of my son, and, finally, their tutor, M. Bradier, whom the good Abbé Séguret had found for them. Unfortunately, Olivier had gone to his grandfather's in Paris at the end of July to complete, under Defauconpret, the preparation for his examinations. I joined him on August 4. He passed his examinations, was admitted to Saint-Cyr, and on the 9th I took him back to Bourneville and his three comrades ! How they amused themselves ! Among other things they held a tournament with donkeys in my riding-school.

In September we had a long visit from Mme. d'Esquelbecq.

Now, whilst I was resting on my oars after the semi-fiasco at Beauvais, having put aside ambition for two or three years, it chanced that I was being thought about on the banks of the Loire. Some Bretons and inhabitants of the Vendée decided, on the strength of my writings, to place their interests in my hands. On September 13 I received a letter from my good friend Hervé, of Nantes, inquiring as to my means and asking if, in case I were nominated for Savenay, an arrondissement of the Loire-Inférieure, I would accept. I replied : " I have an income of sixty thousand francs and I would accept." Then I left Fortune to turn the wheel. But whilst it was turning splendidly in the neighbourhood of Nantes, some one in Paris was impeding its progress as much as possible. I had gradually become the *bête noire* of my old friend Pasquier. He heartily hated me, which was very hard on poor me, who merely despised him.

Among the many ways in which he could do me harm, the best means was to give the presidency of the Savenay electoral college to Bourmont. Bourmont was a native of the district, a valued general, the bearer of a celebrated name, and, in spite of some censures, had retained many friends. His mission was to overthrow the hydra with which the Loire-Inférieure was threatening the throne, and to get himself elected in its place. My friend De Brosse, then Prefect of Nantes, was inundated with unfavourable memoranda concerning me. Both he and Beaumont were in a very embarrassed position, but both conducted themselves like men of honour. On October 28, a letter from Dufeugray, Sub-Prefect of Savenay, informed me that I had just been elected for Savenay by 76 votes out of 116, in succession to the Marquis de Coislin, the retiring member.¹ The other 40 votes went to Beaumont, who very gracefully resigned himself and was the first to congratulate me. Poor De Brosse did the same.

The meeting of the Chambers took place on November 5. For the first time in my life and at the age of fifty-three I was present as an actor.

Recent events had given the royalists the majority, and after six years of the Charter, dupery and disgrace their education had advanced considerably. This new majority, well acquainted with English customs, took the Charter seriously and determined to open the session by overthrowing the ministry if it did not anticipate its dismissal.

There was then in Paris a certain deputy for Mans, named Piet, an advocate by profession, a warm royalist, who had become the head of a club of royalist deputies, whose meetings and dinners were held at his house in the Rue Thérèse, at the corner of the Rue Ventadour. One sent him a roe, another a boar's head, and a third a truffled turkey. An anonymous purse provided for everything else, so that twice a week the honest fellow had the pleasure of inviting twenty of his colleagues to a very good dinner, at the close of which, under his presidency and in his *salon*, well provided with benches, they formed them-

¹ Pierre Louis du Cambout, Marquis de Coislin (1769-1837), major-general and deputy for the Loire-Inférieure, was made a peer of France on December 23, 1823.—A.C.

selves into a miniature Chamber.¹ We discussed in advance the various questions that were to come before Parliament, drew up the orders of the day, voted, and distributed the *rôles* we were respectively to play. The decisions to which we came formed the *mot d'ordre* for the whole of the party.

On November 11 I took Olivier to Saint-Cyr. The military school had just sustained a heavy blow, its chief, General d'Albignac, a man of talent and character, having been replaced by General Obert, who, though a good fellow, was too weak for such a position.

The Chamber began serious work on November 21. Shortly afterwards I was appointed a member of the Commission entrusted with the drawing up of the Censorship Bill—the most important one of that time. My opinions on the subject of the liberty of the Press were known. Pasquier, who thought that I was capable of obstructing the bill out of a spirit of opposition to himself, got Mézy, who was a member of my committee, to sound me on the matter. “Tell Pasquier,” I replied, “that I hate the liberty of the Press so much that I would subject even him to the censorship.”

During this session I made two well-received speeches on the Press. The Chamber accorded me its favour. I was something new, and in France this is always welcomed; I was already known when I arrived and was awaited; I possessed a rather handsome fortune and a good house, where I gave dinners and suppers; I had many friends and—a very rare thing among deputies—a good social position in Paris; and, finally, since I myself must say it, I combined with recognised talents a lively wit, an engaging character and an open heart.

The Censorship Commission reminds me of an episode which is worthy of being recorded. Among the new deputies was a

¹ Piet-Tardiveau (Jean Pierre), born in 1763, died in 1848, deputy for the Sarthe from 1815 to 1819 and from 1820 to 1827. Sainte-Beuve judged him as follows (*Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. iv. p. 254): “A certain Piet, a wretched advocate, when tamely proposing that the death penalty replace that of deportation, naively observed that the difference between the two was, after all, very little; a remark which put the Assembly into a good humour and did not prevent the poor wretch from shortly afterwards becoming, thanks to his commodious *salon*, the acknowledged centre and host of all right-minded men.” Cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. iv. p. 12.—A. C.

young King's attorney of Limoges, good-looking and graceful, who had won the hearts and votes of his compatriots by a touching speech on the subject of the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux. His name was Martignac. He was more voluble than eloquent, a light-hearted man of pleasure, accommodating in everything, taking things easily, and seeing the best side of all things. These qualifications had obtained for him a seat on the Commission to which La Bourdonnaye,¹ Bonald and myself belonged. Our work called for researches in various archives. Martignac came forward and carried out the task very well. When the time came to appoint a reporter, and La Bourdonnaye being out of the running, Bonald drew me aside and said: "Only you or I, as you are aware, have any chance of this position. But we don't need these little successes. Now, here's a zealous young man; let us show our appreciation of him by giving him our votes." This we did. Martignac was appointed, and we thus laid the foundations of his fortune.²

¹ François Régis, Comte de la Bourdonnaye (1767-1839), deputy for the Maine-et-Loire, Minister of the Interior in 1829, peer in 1830. He was ever, says Pasquier, the most advanced and violent member of his party.—A. C.

² Jean Baptiste Sylvère Gaye, Vicomte de Martignac (1776-1834), deputy for the department of the Lot-et-Garonne, and Minister of the Interior from January 1828 to July 1829. Frénilly, like Charles X. and the frequenters of the Tuileries, regards him as a man of rather poor ability, and the King, as we know, said that Martignac was merely a pretty little singing-bird.—A. C.

CHAPTER XVIII

1822

The Deputies of the Loire-Inférieure—Mme. du Cayla—The Villèle Ministry—Death of Fontanes—The La Rochejacqueleins—Chateaubriand at Verona—Journey in the Loire-Inférieure—Fêtes and Banquets—Illness of the Author—Death of M. Mullon de Saint-Preux.

My family returned to Paris about the end of September. Our society was increased by a few of my colleagues. Every Saturday morning the Deputies of the Loire-Inférieure—Humbert de Sesmaisons, the Marquis de Juigné, Revelière, and the Vicomte de Foucault—met in my study to discuss the general affairs of our department. We also admitted to these meetings a certain M. de Formont, a Breton, a Master of Requests and very experienced in such matters. He was a splendid man, still young, lively, hot-headed, and high-minded. The possessor of 600,000 francs in the West Indies, he had devoted them to the King's service during the Hundred Days. These meetings rendered great service and were worthy of imitation. Of the members of this little committee, only Humbert and Revelière deserve mention. The former, an amiable and excellent man, was cheerful, frank, witty, chivalrous, and, in spite of his exceeding stoutness, both light-footed and graceful. The latter, less favoured as regards rank and fortune, was a thin man with a pale face, which testified, as he jokingly said, that he had been dead for twenty-eight years, that is from the time when, captured in the Vendée and sentenced to death, he had been declared decapitated, in an official report of which he had an authentic copy.¹

¹ Louis Revelière (1775-1866) was a member of the Centre and several times attacked the speakers on the Left of the Chamber. Cf. Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. v. pp. 103-105.—A. C.

In the depths of the Marais quarter there lived a certain Demoiselle Talon, great grand-daughter of the celebrated Advocate-General Omer Talon, and the very unhappy wife of a sailor, Comte du Cayla, an uncouth bear who neither came out nor allowed her to leave his den. I saw her once or twice, however, at Mme. de La Briche's Sundays, looking young, beautiful, modest and embarrassed. Why her bear of a husband should one day want to take away her little ones I cannot say. But, at any rate, maternal love prompted her to take the bold step of throwing them into the King's arms. She brought them to the Tuileries. The King received them, hid them, and allowed her to see them in secret. She often saw them and the King saw her. He had lost his Narcissus with the face and shoulders of a lackey, and although nature had exempted him from passion he felt the necessity of little attachments *in partibus*. Thus did he and Mme. du Cayla gradually become on the most tender terms. She had wit, a taste for intrigue and decidedly aristocratic opinions. She gained an ascendancy to which no one can attribute ill.¹

On December 15, 1821, the ministry was dismissed. Villèle received the portfolio of Finance, and Corbière that of the Interior. Mathieu de Montmorency was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs; Marshal de Bellune, Minister of War; the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre, Minister of Marine; Peyronnet, Minister of Justice; and the Duc de Doudeauville, head of the King's household.

The little ministry (such was the name given to the large departments formerly called Intendancies-General) was also renewed. Becquey and Bouthillier, both deputies, my friends, "ultras," and of the same leaven as myself, received the Road-surveying and Postal Departments; Saint-Cricq retained the Customs until Castelbajac replaced him; and Benoit, an old servant of every *régime* and now devoted to ours, replaced Barante at the Excise office.²

An epidemic broke out at Saint-Cyr in March. I hastened

¹ Regarding Mme. du Cayla, see Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. v. pp. 373-375, those of Castellane, vol. i. pp. 413, 457-460, and Nauroy's *Les Derniers Bourbons*, pp. 152-158.—A. C.

² Pierre Vincent, Comte Benoit (1758-1834), deputy for the Maine-et-Loire from 1815 to 1827.—A. C.

to the school, but was unable to obtain possession of my son. In the evening, in the name of all fathers, I wrote to Marshal de Bellune, and on the following day the excellent man had the whole school transferred to Versailles. The outbreak then ceased.

Instead of resting at Bourneville, I had, on May 17, to go to Paris, for Villèle, already Prime Minister *de facto*, had decided on a summer session, in order to put the finances of the country, which had been much impaired since the copious bleedings of 1815, on a sound basis. This *début* was one of his wisest operations. It was necessary to be in Paris to settle on this great change in advance, so on May 28 he gave a ministerial dinner to the most prominent deputies, among whom I had the honour to be included. Since the days of Necker and my twenty-first year, it was the first time that I had set foot in that magnificent Hôtel du Contrôle Général, in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, opposite the Rue des Moulins, with its extensive courtyard, noble staircase, high ceilings, solemn and sumptuous apartments, and its fine garden between the Rue Sainte-Anne and the Rue de Gaillon, under whose ancient trees we walked and discussed the coming session like the contemporaries of Colbert. Five years later I was to see these beauties changed into a vile gallery of shops, and the Hôtel des Finances become a row of rooms looking on to the Rue de Rivoli. Villèle wished it so and the King gave his approval. Bonaparte would have refused it. France no longer possessed any grandeur.

Two days later I was at Bourneville, for which I had an ardent longing. I was beginning to learn the refrain of public men, or who imagine themselves such, who cry *ô rus*, and who would shout it very much louder if they were always kept in the country.

It was at this period (May 17) that the Duc de Richelieu died, in a few hours, of brain fever. I have nothing more to say about this sorry descendant of the great cardinal, except that he left no children, and that his title passed to the son of his youngest sister, Mme. de Jumilhac, that crooked doll who could not keep her coachmen because she insisted on appearing in an open carriage.¹ She has just died in Rome.

¹ It is related that one of Mme. de Jumilhac's coachmen, a man with whom

Fontanes died a short time before, on March 17. Apart from his translation of Pope's *Essay on Man*, he was only a little above the mediocre. His clear and spiritless verses were modelled on those of the Abbé Delille—mechanical verses such as were made in any quantity at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century.¹ His prose was much better.

It was also at this time that poor De Brosses was removed from the Prefecture of Nantes. A small and badly repressed insurrection had broken out in the town, and Lieutenant-General Despinoy, who did not like him, had turned it to his disadvantage. Corbière acted on an angry impulse, but repented the year following, and appointed De Brosses first to Besançon and then to Lyons. He was succeeded at Nantes by my friend Vérigny, who was more upright and franker in his opinions.

At the beginning of June I sustained a heavy loss through the death of Edward Jerningham and his charming wife, who succumbed in London, almost simultaneously, to an infectious malady.

The opening of the Chambers took place on June 4 and the new ministry, at our invitation and without opposition, frankly took its seat on the right.

I was put on the Address Committee in company with Bonald, Vaublanc, Delalot, Bouville, and Clausel de Coussergues.

This summer session was a terrible trial to me. Paris was deserted. I was alone there, without horses, and the heat was terrible. As I detest cabs, I had to cross and recross on foot, and with the burning African sun at its height, the extensive and scorching Place Louis XV. It was not long before my health began to suffer.

Whilst in this exile, I had the sorrow to lose, one after the other, the good and amiable Abbé Séguret, who died on July 4 at the age of eighty, the amiable wife of President d'Outremont,

she was very well satisfied, had left her with the explanation: "No, Madame la Marquise, I can no longer bear to hear my colleagues say to me: 'There you are again, taking your monkey out for a drive!'"—A. C.

¹ His translation of Pope appeared in 1783. But Frénilly is too severe on Fontanes, some of whose verses, according to Sainte-Beuve, "sustain the traditions of French poetry."—A. C.

who had overwhelmed me with kindness when I was in London, and our venerable friend the Bishop of Amiens. I was also grieved to see the first signs of the attack of dropsy which a few months later carried my father-in-law to his grave. Finally, Mme. de Crisenoy, who, however, interested me very little, although she was one of the first companions of my childhood, died on August 3 from apoplexy.

This unpleasant summer—one of the most disagreeable that I can remember—brought joy to some people. In July, Mme. de Courtebonne, my son-in-law's aunt, married the elder of her two charming daughters, Idalie, to the young and wealthy Comte de Bourbon-Busset.

But a more interesting marriage was that of the eldest of the La Rochejacquelein girls, celebrated on June 13. There were three of them, none of them either pretty or rich. But their name was a dowry. Their excellent mother, who describes herself in her *Memoirs* as so frail, so delicate and so stiff when she married M. de Lescure, had become, in the midst of her misfortunes and the terrible campaigns of the Vendée, as broad as she was long, frank, cheerful, lively, natural, and, with her large goggle-eyes, almost blind. Her three growing and penniless daughters, and a son who had as yet shown only his father's impetuosity, which gave promise of his becoming either a hero or a fool, were rather a burden to her. It was to this son, then still a child, that the King of Prussia, enamoured of the glory of La Rochejacquelein's name, sent two candelabra and a sword, and which were solemnly presented by his ambassador. This was quite enough to turn a young man's head, and as there was no Vendée to make him into a hero, he remained a fool. To return, however, to the subject of his sister, the son of President d'Albertas, owner of the fine estate of Gémenos, between Marseilles and Toulon,¹ was seized with such a passion for the glorious name of La Rochejacquelein that he declared, before he had seen any of the girls, he would marry nobody save one of them. He came, he saw, he pleased, and he kept his word. The King provided a dowry of fifty thousand *écus*.

¹ Jean Baptiste Suzanne d'Albertas, born in 1747, died in 1829, was a marquis and First President of the Court of Accounts of Provence. He was Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1814 and became a peer in 1815.—A. C.

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As the only object of our vexatious summer session was to present the annual budget and vote it in advance of the coming financial year, the discussion presented no great interest. Melancholy and ill, I did not speak, and, after the address and the presentation of the budget, my nonentity allowed me to go and rest at Bourneville from June 17 to July 2.

Let me now say a few words on a matter of international interest. The revolution in Spain had outlived its offspring in Piedmont and Naples, crushed as they were from the very outset by the arms of Austria. Isolated in the Peninsula, this revolution, inaccessible to all Powers with the exception of France, which remained neutral, and to England, the natural accomplice of all foreign discord, was ablaze in Madrid and spreading to the towns, thanks to Jacobinism having been grafted on to the Spanish people and legitimised by that vile Ferdinand VII., who had accepted and afterwards resigned the crown usurped by his father, and who, after imprisonment at Valençay, had asked Bonaparte for a wife of his blood. Austria, Prussia and Russia cried to France: "It is your family and blood and power that are in question. *De te, rex, agitur!* It is your own cause which is under examination; it is beyond the Pyrenees that you must destroy the French carbonari"—those carbonari whom the Powers had not wished to destroy in France. The Congress of Verona met to decide this important question. As we know, France was represented by Mathieu de Montmorency, Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied, at Villèle's instigation, by Caraman, La Ferronnays, and Chateaubriand. The last-named was Ambassador in London. He was there when the Congress was decided upon and assuredly no one had ever thought of him in connection with it. His volcanic and changeable mind was so unsuitable for the transaction of State affairs that at the time when, like conspirators, we were consulting over the division of important posts among royalists, he was always forgotten, and the general refrain of his friends was: "But what is to be done for Chateaubriand? Will he be made a minister! That is impossible!" The painter of Christianity thought otherwise, and all his despatches were filled with complaints. He wanted to go to Verona, and complained to so many people that his

partisans formed a chorus. So, as scrupulous Villèle was accustomed to say :

“Ne nous brouillons jamais avec les grands brailards,”

instead of saying to the complainer : “Remain where you are !” and to his friends “Hold your tongues !” he sent Chateaubriand to Verona to take the part of fifth wheel to the coach.

Chateaubriand fell on Verona like a bomb. He was received with as much pleasure and was about as useful ; in other words, he did nothing. A useless and superfluous figure, but noisy and indiscreet, he met everywhere with literary praise and diplomatic distrust. The meetings were either secret or, when he was present, vague ; resolutions were passed without him ; he simply signed protocols, and his mission resulted in nothing else than the casting of ridicule on French diplomacy. This is what Mathieu de Montmorency told me. After this, read Chateaubriand's book ; read that short story or that poem entitled, *Le Congrès de Vérone*, without shrugging your shoulders, and then try to believe that it was the author who brought about the intervention of Spain. That, however, is the twaddle which posterity will believe !

On August 16, at the close of the summer session, I returned to Bourneville, where I rested and recruited until September 4. Meanwhile, my wife went to Paris to nurse her father.

In the previous year I had sworn by the Styx to visit in 1822 my electors of the Loire-Inférieure. The session being over, the time had arrived. The only obstacle was my health, and I took care not to make this excuse to my electors. Moreover, I hoped that the journey and diversions would complete my convalescence, and in this I was not deceived. On September 6, in perfect weather, I set off in a calash with a little groom named Jean. The first evening I slept at Chartres and the second at Mans, where I received a visit from the Prefect, M. du Nugent. The third night I dined at Angers with good Mme. de La Hussaudière, and on the 9th at Nantes with Vérigny. As to my inn, I had called upon my colleague Revelière, but found him away from home, so Lauriston, my friend and his neighbour, prepared a very pretty lodging for me at his house, the finest in Nantes.

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Revelière returned on the following day, which was spent in completing my acquaintanceship with the notabilities of Nantes, in seeing Monneron, my wife's cousin, his cousin Bernier de Maligny, the excellent Hervé de la Bauche, and the amiable Vicomte Walsh, a descendant of those who had followed James II. into exile and sacrificed their fortune for him. This exceedingly handsome man had preserved the English type of face in an astonishing manner. He was witty, cheerful, original, frank and open, bringing life and amusement wherever he went. He was the friend and comrade of Humbert, Hervé and Lauriston.¹

On September 11, Revelière gave me a grand luncheon, in company with Vèrigny, Hervé, Humbert, Walsh, and a man whom I had a great desire to know—the celebrated Abbé of La Trappe, Père Antoine, the most amiable of guests and most rigid of Trappists.²

Hardly had we left the table when Humbert de Sesmaisons declared that he had come merely with the object of carrying me off with him. He then occupied a country house called the Dainerie, two leagues from Nantes, on the banks of the Erdre, where he had left very good company. His waggonette was at the door, so, after arranging that I should begin the tour of my constituency on the 15th, accompanied by him, Walsh and Revelière, we set off.

After spending a night at the Dainerie, Humbert and I returned to dine on the 12th with thirty Bretons at Vèrigny's. On the 13th there was a grand luncheon at the Castel de la Rivaudière, the château of my son-in-law's uncle, the very good and original Baron de Pimodan, a major-general.³

But this charming spot was three leagues from Nantes, and hardly had we exchanged compliments, seen the gardens and

¹ Joseph Alexis, Vicomte Walsh (1782-1860), postmaster at Nantes under the Restoration, journalist at the time of the July monarchy, and the author of a number of works on Brittany and the Vendée.—A. C.

² See G. Lenôtre's interesting paper on Baron de Gèramb in *Vieilles maisons vieux papiers*, second series, pp. 75-98, translated into English under the title *Romances of the French Revolution* (William Heinemann: London).—TRANSLATOR.

³ Armand Charles de Rarécourt de La Vallée, Baron de Pimodan, married, at Nantes, in 1801, Jeanne de Goyon. This marriage caused him to take up his permanent residence in Brittany, where his descendants are still to be found.—A. C.

lunched when it was necessary to return post haste for a gala dinner at General Despinoy's.

The morning of the 14th was given up to Monneron, the evening to Walsh, and the remainder of the day to returning some of the hundred visits that I had received. On the following day we at last began our tour. Humbert and I travelled in the waggonette; Walsh and Revelière in my calash. We entered the chief town of my constituency at noon. . . . Alas! must I own to it? Apart from the rumbling of our carriage wheels all was silence! This showed me that Savenay must have given few votes at the time of my election, that, like many small towns in Brittany, it had remained faithful to the Revolution, and that I made my entry there rather as a conqueror than as its legitimate prince. Fortunately my staff and I were expected at the house of the Sub-Prefect, good little Dufeugray, a Norman grafted on to a Breton and a royalist of the purest water. He gave us a magnificent luncheon.

We were awaited at Guérande, the Faubourg Saint-Germain of my constituency and where there was not a house that was not aristocratic. On entering we found the streets adorned with white flags and the crowd full of indescribable enthusiasm.

I began to see that every eminent man ought, like the horse, to have four stomachs. But I was by no means at the end of the banqueting and had still much indigestion to bear. At Croisic, where we were received in the same manner as at Guérande, we had to pretend to lunch, in the midst of the salterns, at Yviquel's, a salt-maker of the Sesmaisons family, an elector, and the chief man of the canton.

After this we had to pass incognito and as rapidly as possible under the walls of Guérande *en route* for Donatien de Sesmaison's, at the Château de Lesnerac, where Walsh, his friend and, in his absence, master of the house, had given orders for the preparation of dinner and beds worthy of us.

I was back again in Nantes on September 23. Before returning home I had a desire to visit the Trappe de la Meilleraye and the famous Bocage that Barante, when he was a royalist and Prefect of the Vendée, had described so well in Mme. de La Rochejacquelein's *Memoirs*. But my health ordered otherwise. For three weeks I had been tracked by fever, but without it

overtaking me, such was the speed at which I had travelled. However, after a grand dinner at the Marquis de Monty's, a luncheon in the country at Lauriston's, in the midst of torrents of rain, and the delivery of speeches to the common herd, it gained a complete victory in three days. An excellent doctor named Blin, an amiable, witty aristocrat who was the friend of all of us, came to see me four times a day and declared that I had got marsh fever. The whole town, if not in my bedroom, was in attendance at my residence, and I still feel grateful for the touching marks of affection that were then bestowed upon me. Lauriston, accompanied by his sweet and charming wife, returned from the country; Revelière and his wife, Humbert, Walsh, Hervé, and Monneron looked after me as though I had been a brother; whilst Véricigny wanted to take me to his house to be nursed by his daughters. Never was a sick man happier than I was. In spite of my happiness, however, I could not write for four days—I who regularly wrote a letter every day; and the first that I produced was so short and scrawled in such a manner that, after a silence of four days, it was calculated to stir a less lively imagination than that of my poor wife, then at the bedside of her sick father. I, in turn, remained for three days without receiving a reply. On the morning of the fourth, when I was sitting up, convalescent, in my study, Humbert, who was standing at the window, said: "Halloo! here's a berlin crossing the square at full gallop." "A green one?" I asked. "Yes." "Then it is my wife!" And she it was sure enough. I felt so happy that I had not the heart to scold her. That would, indeed, have been a good time to die. For I should have been buried in the midst of the affection of my family and of the public—buried, after the accomplishment of useful work, in the midst of glory.

It was during my gentle recovery that my wife received the news of her father's death. I regretted that she had not been there to close his eyes, but she had followed the commandment of the Gospel and had nothing with which to reproach herself.

We left Nantes as soon as I was able to bear the fatigue of travel. This was on October 15—too soon, I think, for the slightest jolt of the carriage caused me to have intolerable headaches. We had then to stop, and thus we travelled by very

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short stages. It was not until the 21st that we reached Paris, where, on the following day, I had to submit to a consultation between Moreau and Dupuytren. A month's rest at Bourneville completed my recovery. My family returned to Paris at the end of December.

CHAPTER XIX

1823

Villèle—Expedition into Spain—The Duc d'Angoulême and Martignac
—The Andujar Decree—Baron de Damas—Olivier leaves Saint-Cyr
—The Septennial Chamber.

ON December 25, 1822, Mathieu de Montmorency had resigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, to the amazement of the public, in spite of the King's hatred, and as proof of Villèle's respect for the power of the Press, was succeeded by Chateaubriand. Let me, therefore, say a few words on foreign affairs, after writing at such length on my own.

The Spanish Revolution, modelled on that of France, made gigantic progress. Ever since a royalist ministry had come into power, a year ago, Europe and France had awaited powerful intervention in favour of the Spanish royalty. But nothing had been done, and the public became daily more and more discontented to see the Government persist in adopting a neutral and almost hostile attitude towards the Crown of Spain. Matters had progressed as far even as the seizure by the customs authorities on the frontier of arms intended for Biscay, where there was a counter-movement to the revolution. A cry of rage went up against Saint-Cricq, who, after all, had merely carried out Villèle's orders. Villèle, who possessed neither the qualities nor even the ideas of a statesman, was without doubt the best financier that France had had since Colbert. He performed wonders in this respect, but deserved to be credited with no other merits than those of order, financial exactitude, and economy. A man of fastidious character and mathematical mind, he concentrated all his attention on the State money-chest, on our recent financial disasters, and on the necessity for

repairing them by order and economy. He felt, therefore, an insurmountable repugnance for war, and in this respect he admirably carried out his duty as public treasurer. But he was President of the Council, a universal minister, and he ought to have risen to the occasion by sacrificing financial calculations to considerations of a higher order. This is what he did not and never would understand. And so, when intervention came, it was a victory gained over him by the public, by Monsieur's influence, and by a royalist majority at the 1822 elections. Nevertheless, Villèle did not give way until the last moment, and the hasty measures that were taken caused, later, all the difficulties and scandals of that war.

The speech from the throne seemed, in compensation for past torpor, to wish to surpass public enthusiasm. People still remember the storm of applause and cries of "Vive le Roi!" which burst forth in the two Chambers when the King, in a martial voice, announced that an army of one hundred thousand men was about to enter Spain under the leadership of the Duc d'Angoulême.

The duke left on March 15. We know how he progressed at first—how many mines were sprung against him by the carbonari in conjunction with the *exaltados* of Madrid, how stores that had been declared full were found empty, how everywhere roguery was united with malevolence, and both went unpunished; and we know also of the Duc de Bellune's hurried journey, his disagreement with the Duc d'Angoulême, his return, and his resignation. Nothing had ever equalled the disorder of this *début*. The Duc d'Angoulême was not the man that was wanted. He knew how to march at the head of a column of grenadiers, but that was all; and although he possessed a brave heart he had the mentality of a linnet, and, what was worse both for Spain and France, that of a philosophical linnet. As he was necessarily obliged to play a political *rôle* in Spain, they felt themselves bound to give him a strong-minded man as adviser. Whom did they choose? *Risum teneatis!* Martignac! the pretty little Martignac whom Bonald had helped into the saddle.

This same month of March, Comte Armand de Durfort¹ suc-

¹ Armand Céleste de Durfort, major-general since September 14, 1814.—A. C.

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ceeded the good but weak General Obert as commander of Saint-Cyr.

I had reached my second session (the summer one I did not count) and had no desire to be included in the Chamber among those universal geniuses who, in order to save themselves the trouble of learning something thoroughly, speak on every subject under the sun. I recognised that it was necessary to be a practical man, so, as I had been born with a faculty for administration, I followed my vocation by devoting myself particularly to finance, a subject that was at once practical and boundless, since everything was related to the budget. In the course of the winter I made two good speeches, which brought me, in the following year, the position of Reporter to the Budget.

In May we returned to Bourneville, and in August we received there a visit from Lauriston, accompanied by a Mr. Blunt, an English Catholic and friend of Père Antoine, whom he had assisted in founding the Trappist monastery in England.

César de Chastellux, Léonce and Ludovic de Rosambo were in Catalonia, with the corps commanded by Baron de Damas. Affairs in Spain were drawing to a close. The only resistance that the French army had encountered was that of a few hundred French carbonari, who had the impudence to dispute the passage of the Bidasoa. A cannon-shot had sufficed to scatter this rabble, and from there to Cadiz the march of the army, which was everywhere fêted, had been a triumphal one. When driven out of Madrid by our troops, the Cortes had taken Ferdinand to Cadiz. We followed him there, as far as Leon Island, which the Trocadero fight had delivered into our hands. He was then handed over to us.

It was at this time that the infamous Andujar Decree¹ was issued in the name of the Duc d'Angoulême. Thus the French, who had crossed the Pyrenees to re-establish the Spanish monarchy, found that in doing so they had strengthened its enemies, that they had rendered the Peninsula the baleful service which they themselves had formerly received from the

¹ This decree, dated August 8, authorised the French commanders to release all unduly arrested persons and to take the offenders into custody.
—A. C.

divorce between myself and that Breton constituency which had so joyfully elected me, and to which I was united by so many sympathies. However, I was certain of election at Beauvais, where the entire college had promised me its votes. I set off, therefore, for Paris, to come to an arrangement about Beauvais with Villèle and Corbière, and accepted the presidency of Clermont, seeing that that of the chief town had to be given to Kergorlay.

Such was the state of affairs. I had received a hundred farewell letters from my dear Bretons and a hundred invitations and promises from my dear friends at Beauvais, and was on the point of leaving Bourneville for my presidency in the Oise, when the *Moniteur*, containing the list of nominations for the presidencies, arrived. Judge of my astonishment at seeing my name opposite the arrondissement of Savenay! Was it an error or a treacherous blow? Was their object to insult me by sending me to preside in Brittany at the election of Coislin? Twenty thoughts flashed through my mind, and I was about to send in my refusal to Corbière when, glancing at the end of the ordinance, I saw the creation of twenty-seven peers, including the Marquis de Coislin. All was well, therefore. He became a peer and I again became a Breton.

I had then been working for a month on my book on septennial duration, and it was published on the day on which the new Chamber met.

CHAPTER XX

1824

The Chamber—Casimir Perier—Benjamin Constant—Bourrienne—
The Report on the Budget—Conversion of the Rentes—Dismissal of
Chateaubriand—Reconstruction of the Ministry—The author
appointed a Counsellor of State—Death of Louis XVIII.—The
funeral—Charles X.—Death of Mme. de Pimodan.

THE elections had been so universally favourable to the royalists that only nineteen Liberals were returned, among them being Stanislas de Girardin, Casimir Perier, Foy, Méchin, Benjamin Constant and Sébastiani. Lafayette was defeated at Meaux, and poor Vitrolles, whom no party liked and who was Villèle's *bête noire*, could not succeed in getting himself elected in Provence.

The new Chamber met on March 23. Ravez was once more elected president. The benches on the Left were so deserted and those on the Right and in the Centre so terribly crowded that some of us were obliged to occupy the seats usually filled by the opposition. I was one of the first of these, and took my seat on the lowest bench, next to Casimir Perier, who sat there alone, as solitary as an antique column in a desert. He was a good fellow, but possessed a head like a volcano, which smoked incessantly and sometimes threw out sparks. I rather liked him because he was sincere in his folly, and at the same time witty, without being spiteful, and because, when he was not boiling over, he listened to reason and even spoke accordingly. If Louis XVIII. had taken it into his head to make him a minister, he would have worked faithfully for the monarchy and perhaps better than another. I put up very well, therefore, with his proximity. But, as a balance to this good fortune, I had

arose a cry of: "The Deputies have betrayed the people; our only hope is in the House of Peers!" The Upper Chamber was glad to get an opportunity of making itself popular and of affronting the insolent Commons whose Acts it annually merely countersigned. So ministers, directors and counsellors shouted themselves hoarse in vain. Only Chateaubriand's sly silence made an impression. On the eve of the ballot, the disappointed Villèle thought that he could save his Bill by making that exception in the case of small stockholders which two months before would have made him an object of extreme regard. But it was then too late; the Peers threw out the Bill. Such was Villèle's first defeat—a great one, since it brought him many enemies, discouraged his friends, and showed that he could be attacked and conquered.

Soon afterwards came another event that was again an example of stupid justice—a much more regrettable thing than skilful injustice. Chateaubriand had become rather popular. To his duties as Minister of Foreign Affairs he had added those of looking after the private affairs of Mme. Boni de Castellane, of whom he was the by no means secret admirer. When this lady sold her Saint-Pierre de Moustier estate for 1,800,000 francs, he could think of nothing better than to advise her to invest the money in the Spanish Cortes loan. Afterwards, when Ferdinand, replaced on the throne by Louis XVIII., very wisely refused to recognise this revolutionary loan, Chateaubriand, seeing his friend ruined, could again think of nothing better than to instruct Talaru to put his foot down and force the Spanish monarch to do what was wanted. Talaru carried out his commission so faithfully that the King, perplexed and irritated, wrote secretly to Louis XVIII. to ask if it were really he—he who had set him on the throne again and annulled the Andujar Decree—who had given orders that he should ruin himself and his subjects in order to enrich the revolutionaries of Spain, and help forward future revolutions. I have not seen this letter, but I know from a person who has read it that it was as touching as it was noble and judicious. Both the King and Villèle were irritated; and Chateaubriand's perfidious silence in the Rentes affair was the last straw.¹

¹ The anecdote is also told by Marmont (*Mémoires*, vol. vii. book xxii.).—A. C.

The poor man—I refer to Chateaubriand—had, as usual, thrown himself into a hole and now did all he could to get out of it. On June 5 he closeted me in his *salon* in order to say: “Villèle bears me a grudge for not having supported him. He gives me the cold shoulder, but he’s wrong in doing so. I was so hoarse that I could not speak. My only desire is to do what he wishes, and I have never done anything else.” On the following day he went to the meeting of the Council and found the order to give up his portfolio. He was dismissed. Had he lived in former days he would have been exiled and not a word would have been said. But the cry went up: “A minister dismissed! A great man like Chateaubriand shown to the door! And why? For not supporting a Bill that would have ruined the poor people!” The fact is that the King made a mistake by acting in anger, and that under the *régime* of his Charter and the newspapers the rule should have been to break gently rather than suddenly.

This dismissal was enlivened by a somewhat amusing episode. I was on fairly good terms with Chateaubriand, who thought that I was a great friend of Villèle, so, on the following day, I went to see him at his house in the Rue de l’Université. I found him with Frisell, a frenchified Englishman, the author of an excellent pamphlet on the English Constitution, a man of heavy intellect, a curious, eccentric fellow who fancied he was ill, and who was enough of an intriguer to have got a slight reputation in Paris for *espionnage*, which led to him being little sought after. He was constantly with Chateaubriand, who rather gladly domineered over a company of men of his kidney.¹ I arrived with words of consolation. The ex-minister was pretending to be neither a Roman nor a Spartan; he was exceedingly downcast. The money question troubled him so much that, after bitterly complaining of man’s ingratitude, he said to me: “It’s all over; you will see that they will not leave me even my salary as a minister of State.” This was twenty thousand francs.

On hearing him say this I exclaimed that the thing was impossible—that they would never be so sordidly harsh. “You don’t know them,” he replied. “They will undoubtedly take it

¹ In regard to the Scotchman John Fraser Frisell, see an article by J. Fraser in *Le Correspondant* for September 25, 1897.—A. C.

away from me." And with these words the matter was dropped and I thought no more about it. But, on the following day, I received a visit from Frisell, who, as though I had been Villèle in person, came to sound me on the subject of this wretched salary. I again expressed my opinion, but he would not leave me until he had extracted a promise that I would see Villèle and ward off the blow. The step was distasteful to me, but as Chateaubriand was in a state of mortal anxiety I went to see the President of the Council and told him everything. As I expected, he laughed in my face and said: "Do you really believe that the King is capable of such a mean action?" Quite satisfied, I returned home and wrote a rapid note announcing the success of my mission. Whilst carrying it out, however, other negotiations had been entered into between Chateaubriand and Ladvoat, the publisher. He had signed a contract, sold his pen, and received thirty or forty thousand francs on account; and two days afterwards we read in the papers a noble and proud declaration in which the ex-minister refused his salary!

This first change in the Ministry was followed somewhat rapidly by several others. Baron de Damas left the Ministry of War for that of Foreign Affairs; the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre left the Ministry of Marine for that of War, and Chabrol the Customs Department—where he was replaced by little Martignac—for the Ministry of Marine. As to other departments, Vaulchier drove Mézy from the Post Office, Bouthillier obtained the Woods and Forests, and Becquey, the Road-surveying Department. All honest men were placed in the most favourable position for carrying out their education, for not one of them was acquainted with his duties. The permanent *chefs de bureau* governed; the ministers and directors were their pupils. Only two exceptions must be made: Franchet and Lavau, the former Director-General of the French Police, the latter Prefect of Police for Paris, both of them saints who reigned over devils and carried out their administrative work admirably.¹

¹ Franchet d'Esperey (1778-1853), imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie under the Empire (1811-1814), secretary at the Vienna Congress, chief of the staff at the Ministry of Posts (1816), and Director of the Police (1821). Guy de Lavau (1788-1874), Counsellor to the Court (1814) and Prefect of Police (November 20, 1821). Both were proposed by Mathieu de Montmorency and

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The session closed on August 4 and we returned to Bourneville. The same month I was appointed a Counsellor of State. My progress had certainly been rapid: at the first step I had attained the highest rank dreamed of in my youth. It is true that I could echo the words of M——, who, showing his bald head to Louis XIV., said: "Sire, the matter is urgent." I was fifty-six years of age. This seat on the State Council was in accord with my character, with the *ensemble* of my life and conduct, with my position in society, with my fortune, and, finally, with the somewhat exaggerated consideration which the public then accorded me. But my articles in the *Conservateur*, two or three good speeches, my financial report, and Villèle's friendship had done more than anything else. People approved, I believe, of the appointment, and so did I. But we were both wrong, for, contrary to my expectations, I made a very poor Counsellor of State.

The King died on September 16. For three days before his end, he had daily been wheeled from his study to his carriage, which then took him at full speed, thanks to forty horses divided into four or five relays, over a distance of fifteen to twenty leagues. He retained his faculties until the last. When it was proposed that he should receive the sacrament, he replied, "No, on Wednesday; I shall not die until Thursday." On the royal family leaving the room, after his eyes had been closed, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who, as a King's daughter, had always had precedence over her husband, stepped aside at the door and said to him: "Pass, Monsieur le Dauphin."

Louis XVIII's body was immediately opened and covered with chloride of lime, the continual renewal of which barely allowed the removal of the intestines and the embalmment, which, it is said, was rather badly done.

Thus ended the life of a King who had been received by his people with joy, and who had been sent by God in his anger. This royal comedian, ever in costume and ever acting, had nothing genuine about him but his cold and sceptical egoism; under his dogmatic exterior, he possessed a narrow and insincere

were "most ardent members of the Congregation." (Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. v. p. 420). See also G. de Grandmaison's *La Congrégation*, pp. 152-159 and 343-347.—A. C.

mind, an immeasurable pride, and a veneration for the wise man who deigned to wear the crown. He was born to be a wit of average ability, a writer of little verses after the manner of Horace, and of second-rate prose after the manner of Sterne, a leader in manners and fashion, a philosophical duke or marquis of the eighteenth century, enthroned as one of the Forty. Fate (for Providence must be exonerated from blame), Fate, in one of those moments of abstraction to which Beaumarchais refers when he says :

. . . L'erreur d'un moment
Peut rendre un siècle misérable,

ordained that he should be born in the midst of grandeur, on the dawn of revolutions, and on the second step of a tottering throne. Contemporaries recollect the contempt and hatred which was heaped upon him as a vainglorious fugitive of the monarchy. He thus foreshadowed his future reign, and on coming to the throne after twenty-four years of exile it could be said of him much more justly than of the *émigrés* that he had neither learnt nor forgotten anything. To a nation that had been crushed by the Convention and Bonaparte to the lowest degree of servitude and which merely asked, in its joy, to recover, as England did after the time of Cromwell, its ancient institutions rid of a few abuses, he threw an English Charter—the plaything of his *amour-propre* and of a few intriguing visionaries. Heaven appeared to wish to save him from himself by giving him, as in the case of Charles II., a wholly monarchical parliament; but, whereas Charles II., a weak and frivolous egoist, saved himself by placing the government in the hands of a parliament that was working only for him, Louis XVIII., a conceited egoist and *doctrinaire*, ruined himself by destroying a parliament whose sole object was to re-establish the throne. At the instigation of a piqueur for one of Bonaparte's ruffians and his mother's valet,¹ he shattered in a day the instrument of his salvation, buried the monarchy under his Charter, and undermined the reign of his successor.

The King's death had been expected so soon that, on leaving

¹ Decazes was a private secretary in the household of Napoleon's mother.—A. C.

Paris (it was then, I believe, holiday time), I had arranged with Castelbajac for a courier to be sent to Bourneville as soon as the event had taken place. At one o'clock in the morning of September 17, my first sleep was broken into by lights and my servant, who shouted through the door: "Monsieur, there's nothing the matter; it is only the King who is dead." To order horses, dress, and set off was the work of but half an hour. I reached the Rue du Marché d'Aguesseau at nine o'clock; at ten I was in my deputy's dress, and at eleven I reached Saint-Cloud, where the new King—the King of my heart—had withdrawn.

I made a mistake in not preferring the dress of the Council of State, which was an integral part of the royal household and always admitted the first. I should have seen Charles X. an hour sooner than I did. The new King, who was dressed in violet from head to foot, looked exceedingly handsome and extremely sad, and, as usual, was easy, simple and gracious. His first act had been to maintain all his brother's ministers, who, as a matter of fact, were his; for, since Mme. du Cayla, the majority in the Chamber and his infirmities had forced Louis XVIII. to stoop, but too late, towards his disgraced friends, Monsieur had become almost the master of the situation.

This excellent man—the opposite of his brother in everything—began his reign with a blunder. Villèle, who had lost his popularity through the abortive Bill for the Conversion of the Rentes, thought that he could regain it by suppressing the censorship, and, in spite of the opposition of Corbière, who showed that he had common sense and courage, Charles X. approved of the idea. Henceforth the Press was free.

The *chapelle ardente* fitted up at the Tuileries was extremely magnificent but very transitory. I saw the removal of the body to Saint-Denis. The inordinate length of the *cortège*, in which everybody, apart from the Church, figured, without either order or dignity, wearied the Parisians without arousing either their admiration or respect. Thus was this philosophical King laid to rest with his ancestors without the Church—to the great scandal of the capital—taking the slightest part in it.¹

¹ A discussion over prerogative and canon law had arisen between the Grand Almoner and the Archbishop.—A. C.

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The funeral took place on October 25. The ceremony in the ancient royal abbey of Saint-Denis was as magnificent as the *chapelle ardente* and much more decent than the removal of the body. The catafalque, illuminations, music, the pomp of the service, and the black and silver draperies reaching to the vaulted roof of the immense basilica composed a scene of admirable solemnity, whilst the revival of the old etiquette of the monarchy carried one back to the days of Philippe Augustus or Saint Louis.

Mme. de Mézy died on November 4. Four days later another death occurred that affected us much more, that of the Comtesse de Pimodan.

At this time all Paris was rushing to Sainte-Geneviève to see the cupola to which the painter Gros had just put the finishing touches. To reach the dome was an exceedingly long ascent, and on getting to the top a little door led you into a circular, vaulted room, lit by the lantern of the dome. The floor was a scaffolding which suspended the spectators two hundred feet above the pavement of the church. The paintings on the circular walls represented, on a gigantic scale, an epitome of the history of France, with Clovis, Philippe Augustus, Saint Louis, Henri IV., and Louis XIV. as the dominant figures. In an Ossianic sky were the aerial figures of Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, Mme. Elisabeth and the Dauphin, who, placed in a row, had rather too much the appearance of resting on a balcony of clouds to see their ancestors pass. Everything else was very good. This work brought Gros, who was but a rough painter of battle pieces, the title of Baron, an excess of pride, and a fever of ambition, which, after he had strutted about in all the ministers' *salons*, shortly carried him off.

CHAPTER XXI

1825

Coronation of Charles X.—Deaths—General Foy.

ON December 22, 1824, Charles X. presided for the first time at the opening of the Chambers. There was great and sincere enthusiasm, for people were so tired of his brother and so perfectly in accord with him.

As the time for the coronation drew near, the Chambers prorogued, and on the last day of the session, May 21, the deputation that was to be sent by the Lower House to Rheims was appointed by the drawing of lots. I was one of the members.

A little misfortune that I had foreseen happened to me at this period. The King sent me the cross of the Legion of Honour. I felt inexpressible repugnance for an order founded by Bonaparte, but had to resign myself and take the oath, and since then I have never left off the red ribbon, which was sanctified in my eyes by the person from whose hand I received it and the oath that I took.

The coronation was fixed for May 29, so on the 15th we returned to Bourneville, which is half way between Paris and Rheims. For the past month, Parisian ladies had been moving heaven and earth to obtain seats in the Cathedral and beds in the town. But Grand Master Brézé asked for so many reasons for eligibility in the case of the former and the people of Rheims so much money in the case of the latter that when the day came the Cathedral was by no means full and rooms were being offered in the town at a reduction. In despair, my daughter accepted hospitality at the Château de Sillery and much

regretted it afterwards. My wife wished to remain at Bourneville. As to Olivier, he was then at Saumur. The King was to occupy the Archbishop's palace, the ruins of which were changed as though by magic into a beautiful habitation. Each minister was provided with a fine *hôtel* and above all one containing a spacious dining-room, for everybody was to keep open house. The Archbishop, the chief *maitre d'hôtel*, the mayor of the town, and my friend and colleague Brimont, not to mention others, each kept one. The illustrious Véry and the celebrated Tortoni dared to come with their *suprêmes* and their *sorbets*. Whether they prospered or not I cannot say, but this I know, that we had enough to do to defend ourselves against bills of fare and indigestion. As to accommodation, Peers, Deputies, Counsellors of State, and the members of the King's household had each his own retained in advance. The troops camped outside the town. It would have been better taste to have had none at all.

My son-in-law, daughter and myself left Bourneville on May 25, they to sleep at Sillery and I at Rheims. The posting-houses were well organised. My excellent friend Vaulchier, the Director General, had collected all the horses and postillions within a radius of twenty-five leagues. It was a curious sight to see them at each posting-house standing in pairs along the side of the road, like remounts of cavalry horses ready to pass in review. Although the main road rather resembled the Rue Saint-Honoré, nobody had to wait even five minutes. My quarters were in the Rue Cérés, at the house of an honest citizen, a vine-grower, a bit of a patriot, I suspect, but withal the best fellow in the world, full of attention for me and of a new-born devotion for the royal family. We had an interval of two days in which to visit and receive our Parisian friends. . . . In my case, particularly, it was a great pleasure to be once more in the noble old town which I had not seen since the years when I studied Justinian and *Pamela*. Everything was familiar to me; I had a feeling of tenderness for each alley, each house, and even for each of the shops, some of which had formerly been very dear to me.

The King entered Rheims on May 28. The fine, long and broad Rue de Vesle lent itself very well to magnificence. The

troops in grand array, the sanded streets, the draped houses, all Paris at the windows and all Rheims on the housetops formed an exceedingly beautiful scene. The *cortège* alone was open to criticism; there were more sabres than plumes, and the King had too much the air of coming to his coronation by right of conquest. Bonaparte, who had no other title than that of a conqueror, caused France to lose her traditional joyous and gallant *fêtes*. People who had seen nothing of former days considered the coronation carriage very fine; but it was, in reality, a wretched concern, when compared to those sculptured vehicles which had been handed down to us from the time of the *fêtes* of Louis XIV. The best artists in Paris had exhausted their knowledge in producing what was after all but a mean gilded thing.

On the eve of the King's entry an incident occurred that very nearly threw it into tragic confusion. When leaving Fismes the salute fired by a battery of guns so frightened his horses that they set off at full gallop. With great difficulty the postillions kept them to the road, but those of a carriage, some hundred and fifty yards ahead, made so sudden a movement to one side, in order to avoid a collision, that they and the vehicle rolled down an embankment. The occupants were rather seriously injured. The Duc Etienne de Damas and General Curial were taken to Fismes, where we visited them on our return. But poor Arthur de Cossé, the chief *maître d'hôtel* and a very important person at the coronation, who had his jaw badly damaged, continued on his journey and performed his duties wearing a black taffetas chin-bandage.

In the case of the coronation you will perhaps picture to yourself a scene in which the Peers, Deputies, Counsellors of State and Magistrates each advanced in procession, preceded by their *huissiers* and guards to the church doors, where they were received by the masters of the ceremonies and conducted to their seats. That was the custom in former days. But now it had all changed. Imagine the little house of a canon, separated from a small side door of the Cathedral by a narrow street. Such was the general meeting-place; such was the green-room from which the actors—more or less bespattered with mud, for it was raining heavily—made their entrance. Carriages were

prohibited out of consideration for the good people of Rheims who crowded everywhere. There you have the stately antechamber whence all the great people of the empire of Charlemagne, after being packed there, pellmell, for an hour, poured out in confusion at a given signal, to slip in through the aforesaid cat-hole in the Cathedral. However, when the curtain rose, the spectacle was very fine. But only one thing is firmly fixed in my memory: the King's face and his quick, easy, noble and gracious carriage, recalling—as his mind and character did—the figure of Henry IV. Nor have I forgotten those outbursts of “Vive le Roi!” which, rolling like thunder in the streets, reached the nave and filled the whole church.

On the following morning there was a grand reception at the Archbishop's Palace. We attended it. The King, who had sometimes chaffed me for being so difficult to please in many things, said, on my bowing to him: “Well, Frénilly, was it all right? Are you satisfied?” “Sire,” I rather happily replied, “I trust that Your Majesty made me weep yesterday for the last time in my life.”

The same day the King invested twenty-one Knights with the Order of the Holy Ghost. In expiation of the pleasures of the previous day, I attended this long, wearisome and not very honourable ceremony, at which the Holy Ghost was brought down on to many breasts that had hardly merited it, and on to many others whose hearts had beaten and were still beating for other than the descendants of St. Louis. In the former category I place Villèle, Corbière, Ravez, the President of the Chamber, and Brézé; in the latter, Soult, Mortier, and others. No one criticised Maillé, Fitz-James, Polignac, and La Suze.

The *fêtes* continued for two days. That at the camp was charming. The soldiers had made gardens in front of their tents. Here and there were dancing and banqueting halls; everywhere festoons of verdure and garlands of flowers; finally, a great many military bands, the emptying of many barrels, and the display of much joy, noise and enthusiasm.

Another *fête* was held on the promenade at Rheims. Its *cirque* was transformed into a fair, the shops of which contained all the treasures of Champagne. But what treasures! Ginger-

bread, Rousselet pears, brawn, *petits pâtés*, rolls, all the famous specialities of Rheims were displayed there. The industrial school of Châlons-sur-Marne had filled the remainder of the shops with specimens of its work in the cabinet-maker's and locksmith's arts, which proved better than everything that was either said or written at the time of its establishment, that the only effect of such an institution was to vitiate taste and spread mediocrity.

The King re-entered Paris on June 6. The ceremony was, like that at Rheims, a mean, military one, the joy of the public moderate, the illuminations poor, and the fireworks passable. Each minister gave a *fête*, and the City had its own, and all of them were very magnificent, according to what I was told, for, since I was now invited everywhere, I no longer went anywhere.

The same month I lost my cousin Germain de Thésigny, who died in the garret already mentioned with 1,200,000 francs in his pocket. The god that watches over the blind had, by a special miracle, sent him two trustworthy servants, so that nothing was lost except what had to be given to Mlle. Desmares, a charming actress whom he had formerly married and who produced an alleged son. This honest person made us pay one hundred thousand *écus* for her silence. The rest of the money was divided. Half went to M. Silvy. My share was one hundred thousand francs.

The Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre, who, after being Minister of Marine, had become Minister of War, and who, though the best of men, knew as much about one as the other, did me the favour at this time, and unknown to me, of placing my son, in company with some of the best people in France, in a regiment of carabiniers that the King had just formed with the object of making it the flower of the army.

In September Olivier left Saumur for Pont-à-Mousson to receive his new uniform. Whilst on his way he spent a fortnight at Bourneville with his inseparable friend Stéphen de Nansouty.

Two public men died that autumn: one the most virtuous and the other the most brazen-faced rascal that ever dishonoured the world. The former was the Duc Mathieu de Montmorency, tutor to the Duc de Bordeaux. The latter, whom I have almost named, was General Foy. A little bully

under Bonaparte, who did not like the species, a general, a Knight of Saint Louis, a holder of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, a traitor at Nantes, a conspirator in Paris, and on all occasions a dissembler, the only thing he did not get was a peerage. He possessed a good deal of wit—who does not possess it?—a little talent, and impudence. The republic of conspirators raised a temple to him at Père-Lachaise, published an edition of his works by public subscription, and gave him a magnificent popular funeral at which the livery of the Orléans family was conspicuous.

We returned to Paris on November 18. My country seat, whose rental was 8000 francs, was for sale and had become very agreeable.

CHAPTER XXII

1826

Vaublanc—The Marquis de Rivière—Reduction of Taxation—Settlement of the San Domingo Indemnity—The Jubilee of Sainte-Geneviève—The Jesuits.

THE session opened on January 31. I was appointed a member of the Address Committee. Though shaky, I was still on my feet. The preparation of the Address, which was usually the work of the whole committee, was this time placed entirely in the hands of Vaublanc and myself. Vaublanc had another misfortune in common with me: that of being a poet. He read me his *Chute de Constantinople*,¹ and I had to summon up all the affection I bore him in order to forgive him.

The Marquis de Rivière, another man of the same stamp, replaced the Duc de Montmorency as tutor to the Duc de Bordeaux. As in the case of his predecessor, the choice met with approbation.² He died too soon after his appointment and under suspicious circumstances. When Ambassador in Constantinople, he had seen the Greeks, whose cause created a great noise, near at hand. In Paris, they were hated or beloved, according to whether you were Royalist or Jacobin. As for himself, he cordially detested them, and I recollect that on his return, when I was dining with him at Mme. de La Trémoille's,

¹ Or rather *Le Dernier des Césars ou la Chute de l'empire romain*, a poem in twelve cantos which Vaublanc published in 1836.—A. C.

² In regard to this choice, see an interesting passage in the *Mémoires* of the Duchesse de Gontaut, pp. 271-272. Charles François de Rivière was born in 1763 and died in Paris on April 21, 1828. He was a lieutenant-general, a peer in 1815, was created a duke on May 30, 1825, and appointed as tutor to the Duc de Bordeaux on April 10, 1826. Mme. Vigée Le Brun (*Souvenirs*, vol. ii. pp. 323-328) has devoted one of her "pen pictures" to him.—A. C.

and was showing some pity for the patriarch whom Mahmud had had strangled, he said to me : " Yes, he was hanged and rightly so, for . . . "

It was during this session that Villele, who had just given the *émigrés* a thousand millions, reduced the land-tax by seventy-two millions. In former days, a reduction in taxation of half this amount would have led to statues being raised to Colbert or altars to Necker. But this one passed almost unobserved, so indifferent had the nation become either towards good or evil, so dead was all generous inspiration, and so skilfully had the Jacobins and the newspapers infected everything.

I believe that I have anticipated events a little, for at the beginning of March an important State question came before the Chamber : the Bill for the settlement of the indemnity imposed on San Domingo. It was a purely financial matter, necessitating no lengthy discussion. But the " Pointe " ¹ had periodically raised so many quibbles that it had grown into a State affair of the first importance. The King had recognised San Domingo, which, on becoming an independent Republic, consented to pay one hundred and fifty millions to the colonists, who had been dispossessed of their property for thirty-five years past, and to reduce its duties on French goods by one-half. The surrender of the territory was the bone of contention. To adopt the law would be equivalent to recognising this right of the Crown ; to throw it out would be denying it. The " Pointe " rushed for this imprudently opened door. La Bourdonnaye took his stand as an ignorant and vulgar demagogue ; his followers supported him ; the Right gave way and the Left, divided between its feelings, which were in favour of the enfranchisement of the negroes, and its policy which kicked against Crown privileges, remained neutral. When my turn came to speak on the subject, it had already been discussed for three days. The hour was late ; the Chamber full, but fatigued ; and the dinner hour was on the point of striking. To realise how detestable these inconveniences make the life of a deputy and how great is the probability that Cicero, under similar circum-

¹ A political group that sat at the extreme Right, towards the entrance to the Chamber. It became the instrument and sometimes the ally of the Left, whose object was the overthrow of the Ministry and the Crown.—TRANSLATOR.

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stances, would have put his hearers to sleep or to flight, one must have been a member of the Chamber. I did my best to get the discussion postponed, but it was decided that I should speak, and I did so, feeling furious. I had simply the consolation of seeing that, at my first words, the various groups thronged under the tribune. After speaking for five minutes, hunger had gone, the hour was forgotten, attention was awakened, and in ten minutes I felt that what I was saying was meeting with general approbation. On concluding my speech, half of the Chamber and the whole of the Ministers, with the exception of two, surrounded the tribune to congratulate me. I heard even the deputies of the Left shout: "Good, very good! Those are true principles!" Good people! I was speaking against them, but they were negro and everything they saw was black. They would have given the King the right to transfer Paris in order to have the pleasure of making a Republic. The fact is, that, being rather well acquainted with the subject, I had made a solid and convincing speech. People called it "the speech of the session," and in the evening, at the Tuileries, the King said to me: "It is you who have got the Bill through."

It had, however, yet to be passed. The list of speakers was far from being exhausted, and the session dragged on until March 20, when I brought it to an end by replying to all that had been said during the past week.

I forget the exact date of the jubilee which was held in this year, but I clearly recollect that the weather was horribly cold, and that I walked from Notre Dame to Sainte-Genève with the procession of the King, who, dressed like a young man of twenty, chaffed me for having put on an overcoat. When passing in front of the Law Schools, opposite Sainte-Genève, some of the students shouted: "No Jesuits for us!" The Jesuits were then the favourite subject of discussion with the Jacobins, who thus reasoned very correctly, for in delaying their destruction they were running a danger. Charles X. was doing what his philosophical brother should have done ten years sooner—multiplying schools for the bringing up of a monarchical and religious generation. Do we not to-day still recognise the educational work of the Jesuits whenever we see dutiful children, respectful sons, and young men who still deign to love

God, their duty, and the monarchy? But in Paris even, this question was an apple of discord cast into our ranks by the Liberals, and it caused division among the best Royalists. The people were assured that the King had become a priest, and there had been put into circulation five-franc pieces on which his effigy was crowned with a Jesuit's cap.

Though apparently healthy, the State was beginning to break up. The "Pointe" was gaining ground.

France possessed but one imperishable institution—the theatrical performances at Le Marais. This year, however, they had undergone one of those changes of which old institutions should always fight shy; they were held in July instead of September. I believe that of the old company the only ones left were Mme. Molé, Tourolle, and Mme. de Chastellux.

The death of Talma created somewhat of a sensation in Paris. His illness dragged out so long that the conquest of his soul became the subject of a lengthy controversy between religious people and the Liberals. The Archbishop of Paris, with a valour which disclosed more desire, perhaps, to gain a Christian victory than charity, was the first to take up arms.

The close of this year was rather animated by an insolent and ridiculous speech in which Canning, a plebeian forerunner of little Thiers, assumed the attitude of a radical Æolus, ready to let loose his revolutionary winds on nations who would dare to defend their rights, institutions, honour, or patrimony against England.¹ This impudent and insane outburst raised such an outcry, even in his own country, that he was forced to explain and modify it. In Paris, good Lally-Tollendal, the warm and ingenuous friend of everybody, printed a justification which showed the candour of his soul more than the acuteness of his judgment. We returned to Paris on December 12. The Chambers opened on the 15th.

¹ See, in regard to this episode, Pasquier's *Mémoires*, vol. vi. p. 70.—A. C.

CHAPTER XXIII

1827

Death of the Duchesse de Damas—Review and Disbandment of the National Guard—Olivier's Follies—The Osages—Application for a Peerage—The new batch of Peers—Fall of Navarin—Villèle—The Martignac Ministry—The new Peers at the Luxembourg—Closing words.

IN this climacteric year we shall see the Government descend the revolutionary declivity with greater and greater rapidity.

For us it began with a bad omen: the death of my thirty-year-old friend the Duchesse Charles de Damas, who succumbed to a mucous fever on January 24. She left a great void in society.

This winter no change took place in our household arrangements, except that our Saturday gatherings grew larger and larger, and that, with a rather happy result, we began to have small gatherings of twelve to fifteen intimate friends on Thursday evenings. As to my weekly dinners, the size of my dining-room fortunately prevented me from entertaining more than seven or eight friends. But, if the number of guests was small, they were all men of conspicuous ability, such as Damas, Fitz-James, Bonald, Villèle and Corbière.

It was said in society that my table served the purpose of bringing about a fusion between the Ministry and the "Pointe." There was not a word of truth in this. Indeed, I was so far from believing in the possibility of union that this session I definitely threw away my chances of appearing on any more committees by boldly raising my flag. I spoke exclusively against the Press, which was daily becoming more and more violent, and completed this daring attack by framing a Censor-

ship Bill with Peyronnet. When the session was over the censorship was reestablished, and the "Pointe" held me responsible. A committee for the supervision of the Press was organised, and nine tyrants, of whom I was one (the others were Bonald, D'Herbouville, Breteuil, Maquillé, Ollivier de la Seine, Cuvier, Broë, and Guilhermy), met once a week at the Chancellor's office to receive the reports of the censors, who were to be found wherever a newspaper was published. Though the Ministry had not the courage to maintain this committee more than four months, it must be confessed that in this short time it produced a surprising calm in the hurricane of public rumours. It brought down upon us an angry pamphlet by Chateaubriand, who had formerly demanded capital punishment against the liberty of the Press and said: "The granting of its liberty would make me prefer that of Constantinople."

On April 30, and whilst the parliamentary session was in full swing, the National Guard of Paris was disbanded. This was—and rightly so—a State affair. Let me explain its causes and results. On the 29th the King held a general review on the Champ de Mars of the twelve battalions of the Guard. Silence reigned in the ranks, for the minds of the middle classes of Paris were daily being poisoned. Then the sound of an insolent voice (which it would have been wiser not to have heard) reached the King's ears. "Arrest that rascal!" he cried. "I have come here to receive respect, not lessons!" But, either through indifference or resistance, the order was not carried out. The soldier having been guilty of insolence, and his companions of disobedience, the company, and even the battalion if it had dared to support it, should have been dismissed and disarmed. But nothing of this was done. The next day a royal decree declared the National Guard disbanded. Now, to suppress the Guard would have been an excellent thing if a signature had been able to bury its twelve thousand men. Talking with Villèle, I spoke of the Government's lack of strength. "Lack of strength!" he exclaimed, drawing himself up. "What about the disbanding of the National Guard?" "Is it disarmed?" I retorted. And even when it was, there were placards at the corners of the streets bearing the words: "Habits à vendre, armes à garder!" The uproar was enormous, and over this question royalists

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and even ministers were divided, to the advantage of the "Pointe."

To my ordinary troubles there was added at this time the worries caused by my son. On July 21 I received the news that he was imprisoned in the citadel at Metz. The matter threatened to be serious, for there was a risk of him being cashiered. The offence he had committed consisted of an act of impertinence in the riding-school, and in the case of any one else three days' imprisonment would have ended the matter. But on entering the fortress poor Olivier could think of nothing better to do than to send a fine and eloquent letter of appeal to General Villatte, the Commander-in-Chief at Metz. In reply, the General¹ gave him a fortnight more, and wrote to the Ministry of War to ask for his transfer to another regiment. Any one else but Olivier would have been lost, and you should see the volumes which the little sage wrote to me from his cell to prove that everybody save himself was in the wrong. After infinite negotiations I succeeded in saving him. My friendship with the Minister, the excellent but weak Clermont-Tonnerre, stood me in good stead; my position, duties, and the personal consideration in which I was held were also useful. So, in spite of either colonel or general, my son remained in the regiment; and when the inspection came, Prosper de Crillon, who conducted it, served me so well that he retained his chance for the first lieutenancy, which he ought to have lost. He obtained it in the following October. I must confess that my conscience was pricked by this abuse of influence; but show me the man who, being able to do it, could have resisted the temptation.

On August 24 Baron de Damas, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave us a grand dinner at which there were present a number of Osages, ambassadors from I know not what North American tribe, who had come to ask the King of France for an army. There were displayed before us on a divan four stout, tall rogues and their two little wives, all naked to the waist, but so well tattooed and painted that they seemed to be wearing richly ornamented jerkins. When at table, where these savages

¹ Comte Eugène Casimir Villatte, Brigadier-General since August 29, 1803, General of Division since February 25, 1807, was then in command of the third military division at Metz.—A. C.

used their knives and forks with great dexterity, the chief of the band rose and addressed to the Minister a long speech, which an interpreter finished by making a little more unintelligible. On returning to the drawing-room they were asked to sing, whereupon they broke into such a terribly loud chorus that the baron's children fled in fear. As a matter of fact, I believe that this embassy was a little business enterprise of the so-called interpreter, who had collected these curious people on the banks of the Missouri, and who, awaiting the time when he would take them from fair to fair, was taking them from court to court. Indeed, a few months later they could be seen for twenty-four *sous*.

People in society were beginning to speak of a new creation of peers. They were already only too numerous, and, had it been possible, it would have been better to have decreased than increased their number. But the chimeras of the "Pointe" had spread to the Upper Chamber, vainglorious over the popularity it had gained by rejecting the Bill for the Conversion of the Rentes. It contained some important enemies of the Ministry, such as Fitz-James and Kergorlay, new and fervent "pointus," Broglie, Molé, and Chateaubriand, who was still smarting bitterly over his fall. There were also ordinary adversaries, such as all the peers created by Decazes; and Villèle began to fear that his majority would be compromised.

Rights, ranks, fortunes, things and people had so declined in France since the days of Charlemagne that in the nineteenth century I was admirably suited for the Peerage. However, unimportant though it had become, it was still of social and material value. People were in the habit of saying that the heirship of a peerage was equivalent to a dowry of a million; and my son would soon be twenty-four years of age. I myself was fifty-nine and had the gout; and, as the possessor of property to the value of two millions, in addition to a name, I began to think that the time had come for dignified leisure rather than for the continuation of hard work, with Brittany on my back, in a Chamber where I was daily losing my illusions. After deep reflection, I went to see Villèle, placed my situation before him, and asked him, if the King created new peers, to include me among them. His reply was simple: "If

he makes any, you will be included." This and the position of a Counsellor of State were the only things that I should ever have asked for; and I ought to say, in justice both to the Minister as well as to myself, that I had to intrigue for neither the one nor the other.

On November 6 there appeared in the *Moniteur* Villèle's three last pieces of stupidity: first, the decree dissolving the Chamber; second, that creating seventy-six peers; and third, that suppressing the censorship. Alas! children break their tools instead of using them! These three ordinances presaged the fall of the monarchy.¹

It is true that among these seventy-six new peers was to be found, apart from four or five names, the flower of France, as regards birth and fortune, intelligence, and sound opinions. But this did not excuse them from the crime of being seventy-six. When, much to my regret, my name appeared in this honourable crowd, I wrote a farewell letter to my Savenay electors like a man who regrets a sure re-election; though, as a matter of fact, knowing the mines that were being laid there more than elsewhere, I was far from being certain of it.

I have forgotten to say a few words about the famous Battle of Navarin, which was fought on October 20 of this year. The French and the English, in league with the Russians, for the benefit of Russia and to their own disadvantage, beat the Turks, in order to profit the Liberals of Europe by making the little boy of a little King of Germany, a little King of Athens. France lent or gave—it is all one—sixty millions to put this fourteen-year-old Theseus on the throne and mutilate its natural ally, which had become infirm, though rich and productive. Never was there a more inglorious victory than this one of three Powers over the shadow of a nation whom they had entrapped without declaring war. The Russian admiral merited a stout bowstring; the English and French admirals deserved hanging; and the question was raised in the English Parliament. In Paris, everything ended in compliments, for action had been taken merely in response to the more and more exacting influence of the Liberals and the "Pointe."

Before December was over Villèle was made a Peer, and

¹ Cf. Pasquier's reflections, *Mémoires*, vol. vi. p. 95.—A. C.

handed his portfolio to Roy.¹ Corbière, another peer created on the spur of the moment, made room for little Martignac. The new minister was an ardent royalist. He had so often told us so! He was a fawning royalist. He had pleased the Dauphin and made the Andujar Decree. He was handsome, compliant, and affectionate to every one. What other qualifications could be wanted to direct the Ministry of Ministries—that of the Interior? Peyronnet, a third Peer, gave up the seals to Portalis, an intimate friend of Pasquier, and the son of that Aix advocate who was Minister of Religion under Bonaparte.²

Behold the skilful and zealous ministry entrusted with the Crown of Saint Louis—a ministry accepted and even advised by the one that had made room for it, though not without suspicion, at least on the part of Villèle, that it had created a child which was incapable of living.

Castelbajac lived next door to me. The day for the invasion of the Luxembourg by the seventy-six new peers having been fixed, our ermines, velvets, embroideries, plumes and lace being ready—this comedy cost from eight to ten thousand francs—we set off together for the House of Peers, wearing, of course, our ordinary uniforms, for the above-mentioned fineries were to be brought out but three or four times a year. I recollect that my companion was rather anxious as to the manner in which we should be received. “If they receive us very badly,” I replied, “they won’t be to blame. However, since the King has condemned seventy-six of us to enter instead of two, our duty is to enter; and if they receive us we will enter sword in scabbard, but if they refuse us entrance, sword in hand.” But there was no need for us to make any such warlike demonstration, and our new colleagues’ ill-humour was confined to keeping us

¹ Antoine, Comte Roy (1764–1847), Deputy for the Seine, peer in 1821 and Minister of Finance in the Martignac Cabinet. He belonged to the Right Centre, was considered a great financier, and had the confidence of men of business.—A. C.

² Joseph Marie, Comte Portalis (1778–1858), first of all an *employé* in the diplomatic service, then Master of Requests (1806), Counsellor of State (1808), Peer (1819), Minister (1828–1829), First President of the Court of Cassation (1829–1851), and Vice-President of the Senate under the Second Empire.—A. C.

waiting a little too long. When the doors were opened we were introduced pellmell, as though we were entering a conquered town, and without any of those formalities that accompany the introduction of a new peer to the English House of Lords. Our friends were, on the one hand, almost all the peers of old standing, who felt they were dishonoured by the "Decazistes," and, on the other, all those newly created peers who were royalists in our sense of the word—Bonald, Frayssinous, and others. These two groups had lost the majority which we were bringing back to them, consequently they received us well. But on the part of the "Decazistes" there was only embarrassed politeness. Molé, formerly my inseparable friend, was politely constrained. Pasquier's recognition was but a bow. The timid Vice-President, although he was one of my friends and held our opinions, was bending under the ascendancy of the new Ministry, and for a long time none of the new peers were placed by him on any committee whatsoever. I had to be patient and extricate myself from the crowd by degrees. Time and talent overcome everything; but the first was not given to me and the second ill accorded with my aversion for the tribune.

April 3, 1848.

It will soon be sixty years since I started writing. Has not the time come for silence? Never have I felt a greater desire to throw down my pen and forget the remainder of my life! Only two years of anxiety and thirteen years of mourning remain, and who knows whether, whilst I write about them, Heaven

Malgré ma fièvre lente et ses redoublements,
Ma fluxion, mon rhume et mes apoplexies,
Mon crachement de sang et mes trois pleurésies,
Ma goutte, ma gravelle et mon prochain convoi,

will not still prolong my life and my story by two or three years?



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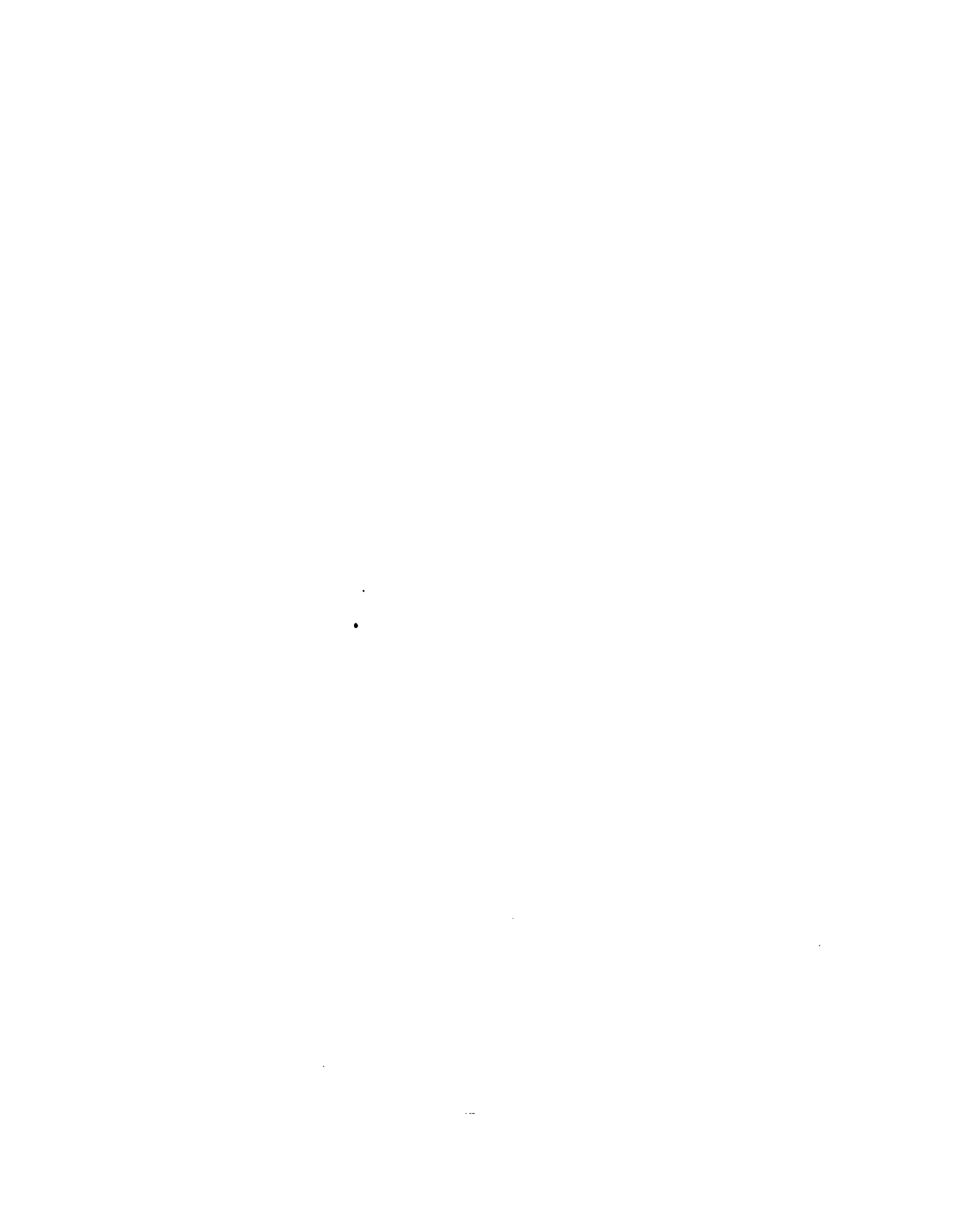
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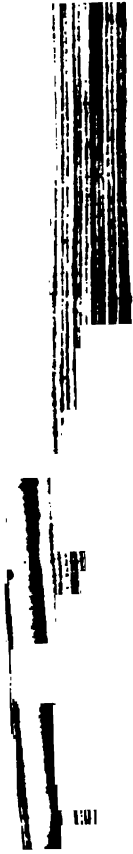
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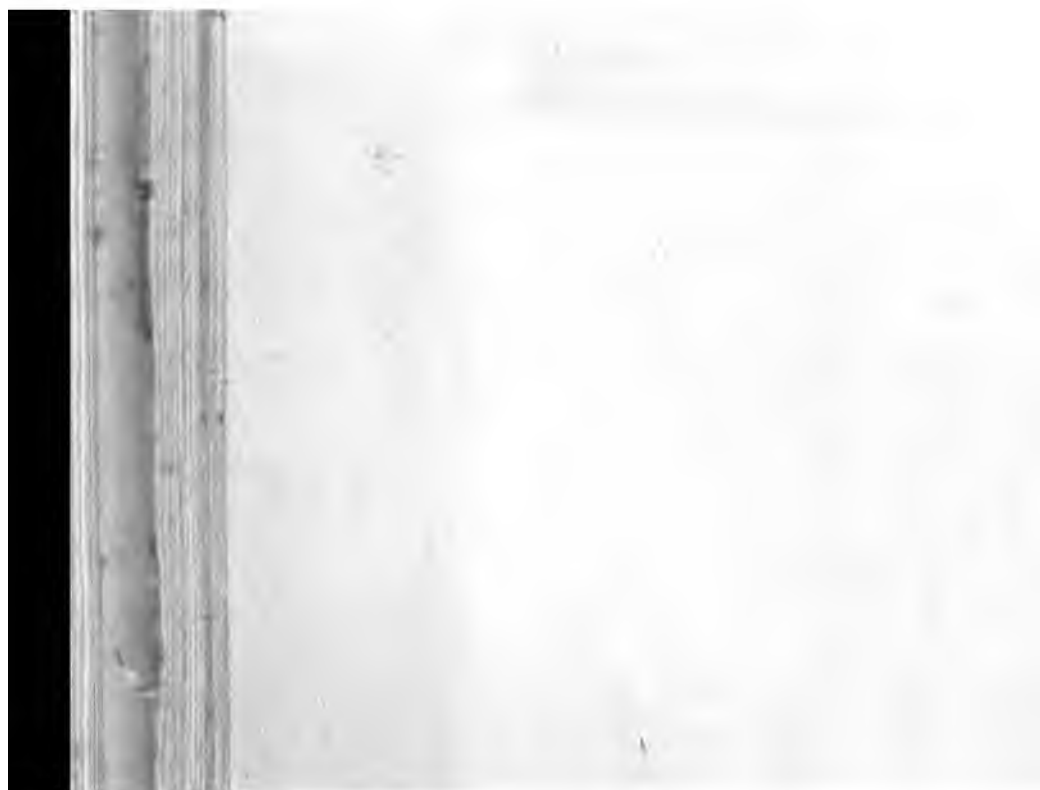
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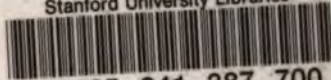








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