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*CHARLOTTE SOPHIE, COUNTESS BENTINCK*  
*HER LIFE AND TIMES, 1715-1800*

*Volume I*









*From the picture attributed to J. P. Weisbrod in the possession of Count Bentinck.*

*Charlotte Sophie Countess Bentinck.*



*Charlotte Sophie  
Countess Bentinck*  
*Her Life and Times, 1715-1800.*  
:: :: *By her descendant* :: ::  
*Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond*

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*With 72 Illustrations including  
Photogravure Frontispieces*

*Volume I*

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE writer of these letters, Charlotte Sophie, 1st Countess Bentinck, only daughter and heiress of Anthony II, Count of Aldenburg, Sovereign Lord of Kniphausen, Varel and Doorwerth, a descendant of William the Silent, was born on August 5th, 1715.

The letters of this wonderful old lady to her granddaughter, Sophia Henrietta Hawkins-Whitshed, were all written during the last ten years of her life, between 1790 and 1800, and I found them under the following circumstances.

In 1907 we went to live in Ireland, at my early home there, Killincarrick House, Greystones. Not far off is another old house of mine, which for several generations has been used as a farm-house. My grandfather, Sir St. Vincent Keene Hawkins-Whitshed, resided in Scotland, but stored various family belongings in this old house in County Wicklow. My father survived my grandfather barely a year, and had thus no time to examine things and put them in order. I was a child of ten at the

time and my long minority followed. On my marriage to Colonel Fred Burnaby, I left Ireland, only returning there for short visits. So until recently that old house remained unexplored.

But as soon as we were settled a mile or two away we sorted the whole of its contents, and every book, letter and scrap of paper was passed in review. In a dark loft was found a magnificent seventeenth-century brass-bound Dutch chest, doubtless the marriage-chest of my great-great-grandmother. The back of an old desk contained a quantity of correspondence, much being in the writing of William IV, Admiral Rodney, etc., and a neighbouring drawer revealed three red leather portfolios full of letters!

These letters, judging by the care with which they had been put away, had obviously been much valued. They lay one on the other according to their dates, and the sheets were tied together with ribbon.

They were in French, and being signed only with interlaced initials, at first I could neither understand by whom or to whom they were written. But from time to time, when I had an hour to spare, I passed it with these old portfolios, and as I dipped into their contents I was more and more struck by the general interest, the brilliance of the writing, and the sidelights on contemporary history the letters revealed.

They are singularly complete as a series, hang well together, and form a continuous narrative. Each is masterly in the way its special subject is dealt with. They are the letters of a highly cultivated, highly educated, widely read and brilliantly clever woman of the world, who was on friendly terms with many of the best-known people in Europe.

That the letters are in French is accounted for by the fact that it was the Court language all over the Empire. By the Empire I mean the so-called Holy Roman Empire with its seat of government at Vienna. Marie Thérèse had married Francis of Lorraine. Though Lorraine was then a portion of the Empire, Francis was in tastes and language a Frenchman. He never learnt to speak German correctly, and French was chiefly used at his Court. Even with her parents Countess Bentinck corresponded entirely in French. Nearly all the letters I have are to her granddaughter Sophia, who married her brother's great friend, Captain Hawkins, afterwards Whitshed. There are a certain number to him, and those which she wrote at his request, giving him political news while he was at sea during the war in 1799, are as well composed and in as clear and firm a hand as the earlier ones. She was then 84.

This old lady had so interesting a personality, and such a wide acquaintance with the makers



of contemporary history, that more than once the idea had been mooted of writing her Life. But it was not till our discovery of the letters that the suggestion took actual shape. To publish them without saying anything of the remarkable life of the writer would have deprived them of much interest. I consulted the Duke of Portland, whose relationship to her is the same as mine, and other members of the family, telling them of my wish to translate the letters and write a biographical notice of Countess Bentinck, utilizing such material as I already possessed with the addition of any they could supply. Without their full approval I would have published nothing. Without their active help I could have accomplished little. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Goulding, the Duke's librarian, for facilitating my search for interesting letters and MSS., helping me to copy them, suggesting where others might be looked for, and for reading through and revising part of my MS. I also wish to express my gratitude to Count Bentinck, whose archives have supplied much of my material, and to Counts Charles and Godard Bentinck, who have given me invaluable help. Others whom I have to thank are Herr and Frau Von Krosigk, who possess the 3rd Count Bentinck's archives and pictures, and freely gave me access to them; Dr. Sello, Keeper of the Grand Ducal Archives

at Oldenburg ; Professor Kühn, of the Library at the same place ; Pastor Gisselmann, of Varel ; Dr. H. Wäschke, Keeper of the Archives at Zerbst, and many more. Mr. Hagberg Wright, of the London Library, has been extremely kind in assisting me to look up references to persons and events referred to in these pages, and Mr. H. Aldenburg Bentinck lent me the whole of his valuable archives to work from at home. Every member of the family has permitted me to photograph such pictures and relics as I desired for the illustrations in this book.

I have included an interesting private account from a MS. at Welbeck of the Victory of the First of June. It was written on June 2nd by Captain, afterwards Rear-Admiral, William Bentinck (the "Cher Guillaume" of the letters), who had been all through the action, and was then on board the "Phaeton" sailing for England with dispatches.

Nearly all my material is from private sources, but I knew that the British Museum possessed some correspondence of the husband of Charlotte Sophie, so I went there to look it up. Taking my place in the Manuscript Room, after depositing my slip in the basket, I awaited the few letters I expected. At last they came—on a truck ! The attendant placed the first volume before me, remarked that the rest were at my back, and withdrew. For fully five minutes I

lacked courage even to open it. Then with a great mental effort I stood it up and turned to the first page.

In a few minutes I was engrossed in a quaint and picturesque account, written by Count Bentinck to his mother, the Countess of Portland, of his courtship and betrothal. I have included some of it in his wife's biography, and it has helped me to understand them both much better than I did before.

The pedigree shows Countess Bentinck's connection with various people to whom she refers, and will be found at the end of the book.

I have never undertaken a work of this sort before, and am very sensible of my want of experience. But I have put my whole heart into it, and have had such special opportunities for collecting material that I preferred to take the entire responsibility upon myself. Before finishing the book I travelled to all the places in Holland and Germany associated with Countess Bentinck, and I have copied every word from first to last with my own hand, saturating myself with my subject in a way impossible to one less personally interested. My greatest difficulty has been in deciding which letters to print and which to omit. Had I rejected everything not of strictly historical interest I should have omitted all that gives life, character, vividness. I may have erred in including too much.



But Countess Bentinck's remarks on subjects which at all times appeal to the whole human race are too witty, too original to be lost. The letters at the end of the book show such continuity that, like a novel, they present characters to the reader, awaken his interest in them, and re-create delightful people such as "Cher Guillaume," "the Philosopher," and her "chère petite chatte," who seem to me much more alive than many I meet with every day.

The letters lose greatly by translation, but as the book is intended for English readers, it seemed best to keep to that language all through. I hope it may prove interesting, and I think that the lifelong friend of the great Kaunitz, the Empress Marie Thérèse, Frederick the Great, Voltaire, Count Mercy d'Argenteuil, and many others should be welcome through her letters everywhere. It is more than a century since she passed away, so I have not thought it necessary to leave out any of the violent censure she has in some cases passed on public men and national policy. There are other matters referred to which have now passed into the domain of history, and it can no longer be considered an indiscretion to mention them. The mystery of "The Dunkelgraf" is one of these.

Before taking up Countess Bentinck's Life from the time she entered the family as a young bride, a quick glance at that Europe which she

helped to enliven seems desirable. Her active brain was ever busy with the political situation of neighbouring countries, and not only did she take quite a considerable part in their politics, but she exerted such influence at various Courts that we find Frederick the Great, who nearly precipitated a war on her account, writing, "Consider, Madame, that I have used the whole of my influence for you, even at the risk of embroiling myself openly with Denmark and offending France."

8 NEVILL PARK,  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

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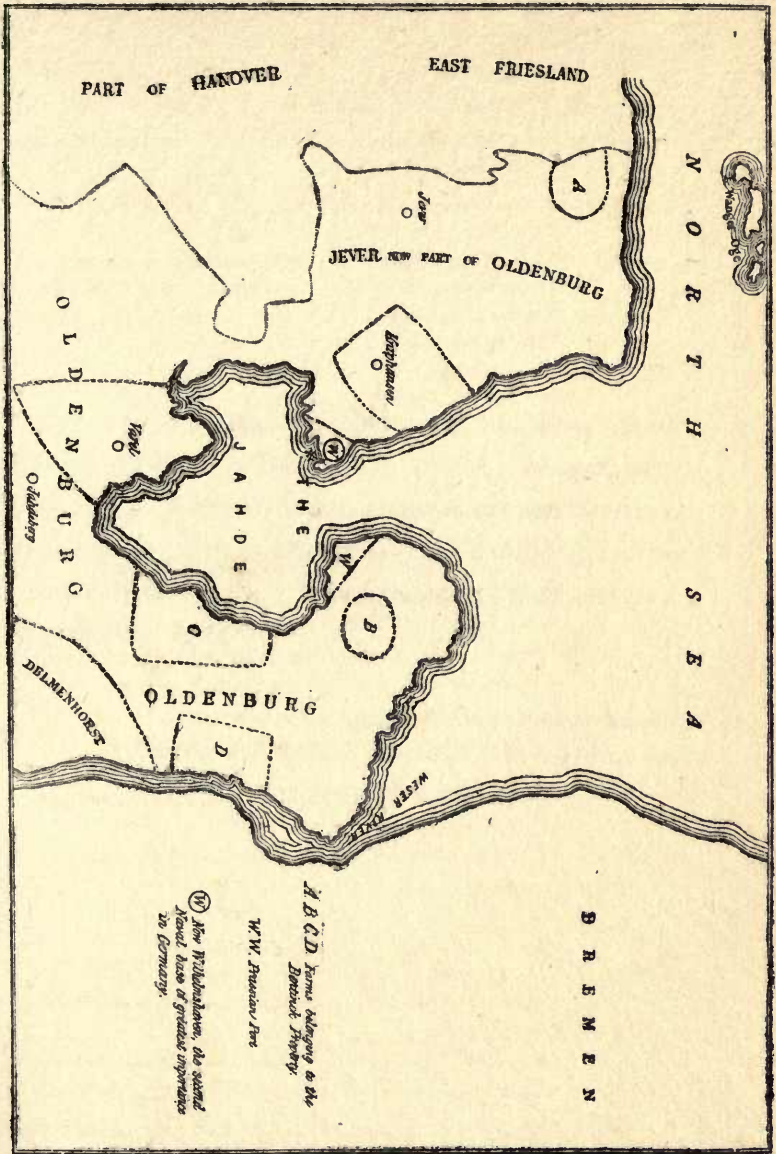
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## MAP

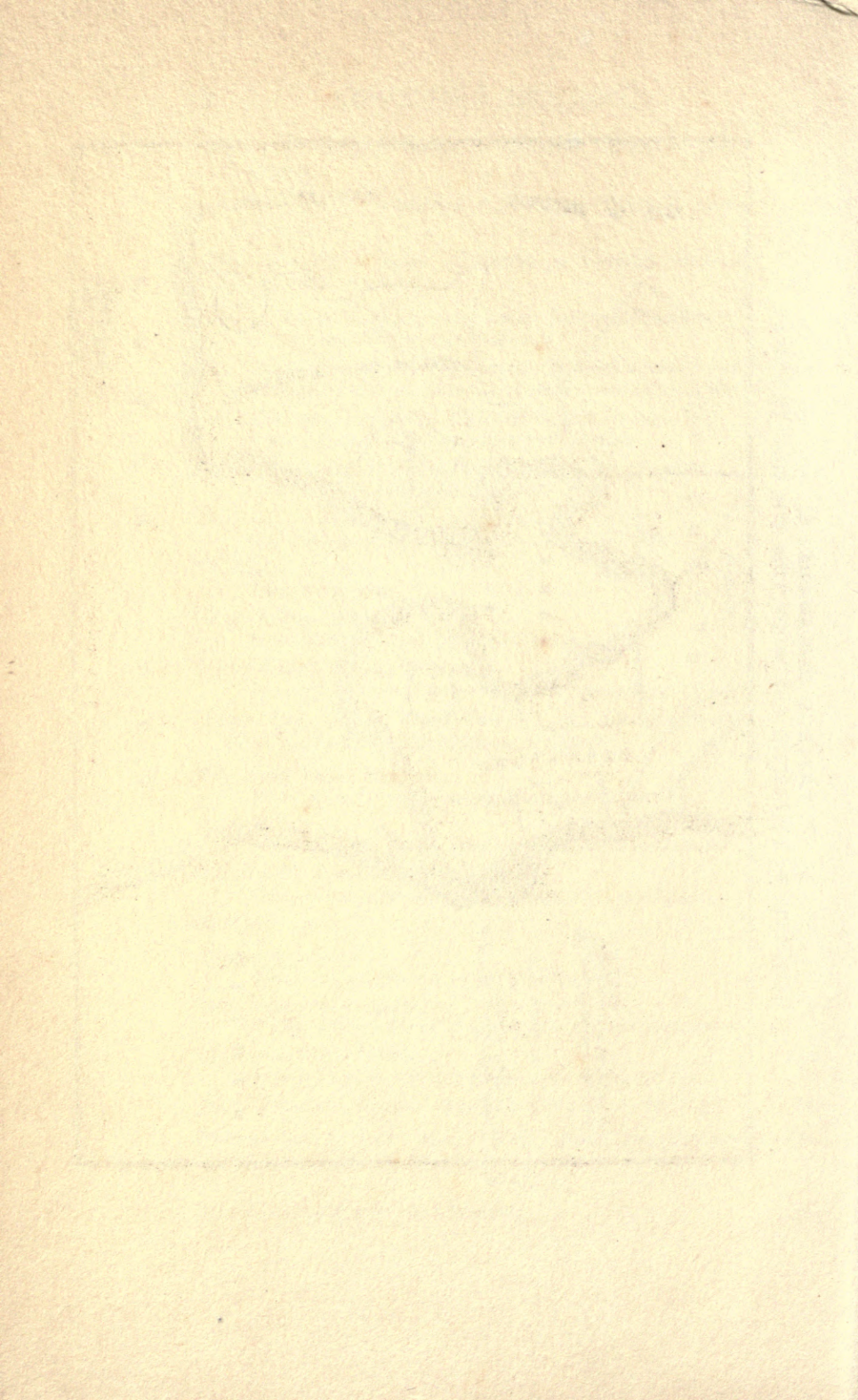
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A GLANCE AT THIS MAP WILL SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF OLDENBURG TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

A, B, C, D. Former belonging to the  
 Brechtel Property.  
 W.W. Prussian Fort  
 W. New Wilhelmshaven, the second  
 Naval base of greatest importance  
 in Germany.





“SOPHIE’s last article is charming, but it is above my head. Mons. le Bachelé, to whom I read it, says it is sublime, quite above eloquence as my son declares. Certainly the child is charming, she should preserve her remarks like gold. The children of her children may profit by them.”

Letter of October 24th, 1727, from Charlotte Amélie, Princess of Aldenburg, referring to her granddaughter, Charlotte Sophie, then twelve years old.





# CHARLOTTE SOPHIE COUNTESS BENTINCK

*Her Life and Times 1715-1800*

## CHAPTER I

CHARLOTTE SOPHIE, Countess Bentinck, *née* Countess of Aldenburg, Sovereign Lady of Varel, Kniphausen, etc. (to give her, once for all, her full title), lived in an extremely interesting period of European history. During the eighty-five years of her life—from 1715 to 1800—France passed from Louis XIV through the age of Voltaire and Rousseau to the Revolution, and when Charlotte Sophie died Napoleon held all Europe in his grip. The Empire, under Marie Thérèse, and Prussia, under Frederick the Great, entered on the long struggle of the Seven Years' War, and Russia was for many years in the hands of Catherine II. Of what transcendent interest passing events must have been to a woman who was personally acquainted with all the people involved

Varel and the private properties now belonging to the Bentinck family, were united under one head, Count Anthony Gunther, of Oldenburg. His *feudal inheritance* was *only the County of Oldenburg*; he afterwards succeeded to Delmenhorst on the death of the last of a collateral branch; Jever and Kniphausen were left to his father by the will of a female cousin; and Varel was an older acquisition." On his death these were again separated, part falling to his cousin the King of Denmark, and part to his sister the Princess of Anhalt, from whom Catherine II of Russia was descended. In consequence of arrangements with both, he established his claim to dispose of Kniphausen and Varel "*as independent territories holding directly under the Emperor*, in favour of his son," to whom he also bequeathed a great deal of private property and instituted an entail.

"This son was born under peculiar circumstances, which are related by the local histories of the times." The story is also told in a novel by Mathilde Raven, entitled *Elizabeth von Ungnad*, and published in 1875. Her statements are remarkably accurate, for she spared no pains in collecting her facts from reliable archives. The history of the Aldenburg, Bentinck, and de la Trémoille families is so romantic and so closely connected with the general history of Europe that it is no wonder it has

provided material for novelists. *A Lily of France*, *The Leaguer of Latham*, and, above all, *The Dunkelgraf*, are examples.

“The above-named Count Anthony Gunther, of Oldenburg, had in his early youth contracted a secret marriage” (a footnote states that a written engagement from a sovereign lord with a noble lady constituted a valid marriage) “with a lady of great beauty and accomplishments, Elizabeth Von Ungnad, Countess of Weissenwolf. She was of a well-known Hungarian family, and was brought up by his mother as if they were brother and sister. A son of this marriage would have succeeded to the whole of his father’s territories, as Count of Oldenburg, etc., for it was not a *mésalliance* prohibited by law. But the Count’s mother wished him to form a great alliance; the secret was discovered, and a courtier succeeded, by a well-feigned sympathy, in getting sight of the contract, which he seized and committed to the flames. The lady fled to her friend, the reigning Countess of East Friesland, and gave birth to a son. The Count married a princess of Holstein, and the injured lady was subsequently married to a nobleman of East Friesland, and was ever held in great respect and consideration, as the history of that day will avouch. Count Anthony in riper years repented of the injury done to his son . . . and had no rest until he



had made all the reparation in his power, and in this he was seconded by his heirs-at-law."

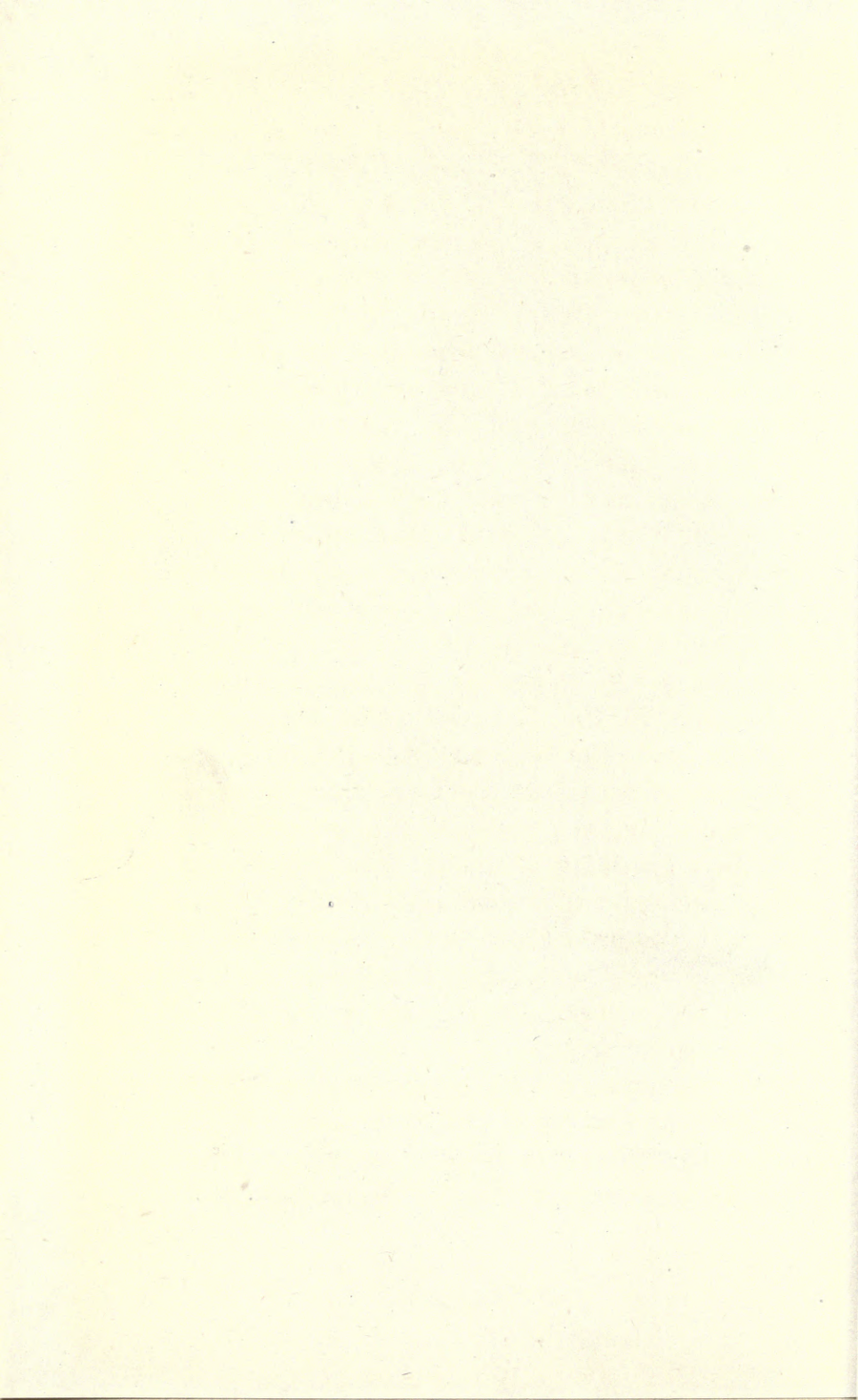
The result was that the Emperor, at Count Anthony's suit, not only restored his son to all his legitimate rights but raised him to his father's rank as a Count of Aldenburg (the old name of the Counts of Oldenburg) upon condition of his acquiring independent territory to qualify him for a seat and vote in the Imperial Diet at Ratisbon, which was the exclusive privilege of reigning houses and which was effected by Varel and Kniphausen as independent states. "So completely was the Count of Aldenburg restored to the rank of his father that six princes of the greatest houses in Germany, and among them one of the Grand Duke's house, Prince-Bishop of Eutin, afterwards King of Sweden, were suitors for the hand of the heiress of Aldenburg, who married Count Bentinck." In other words, of Charlotte Sophie, to whom this book relates.

In 1813 the then Duke of Oldenburg (uncle of the Emperor Alexander of Russia) acquired all the possessions of the former dynasty except the Bentinck property. This he was very anxious to secure, and took various means to obtain it. He was to a great extent unsuccessful, but huge sums were spent in litigation. In 1825 the Duke, who had seized Kniphausen, "was compelled to restore it by virtue of a



COUNT ANTON GÜNTHER

From the painting by Wilhelm Tischentlein, in the Grand Ducal Castle  
at Oldenburg



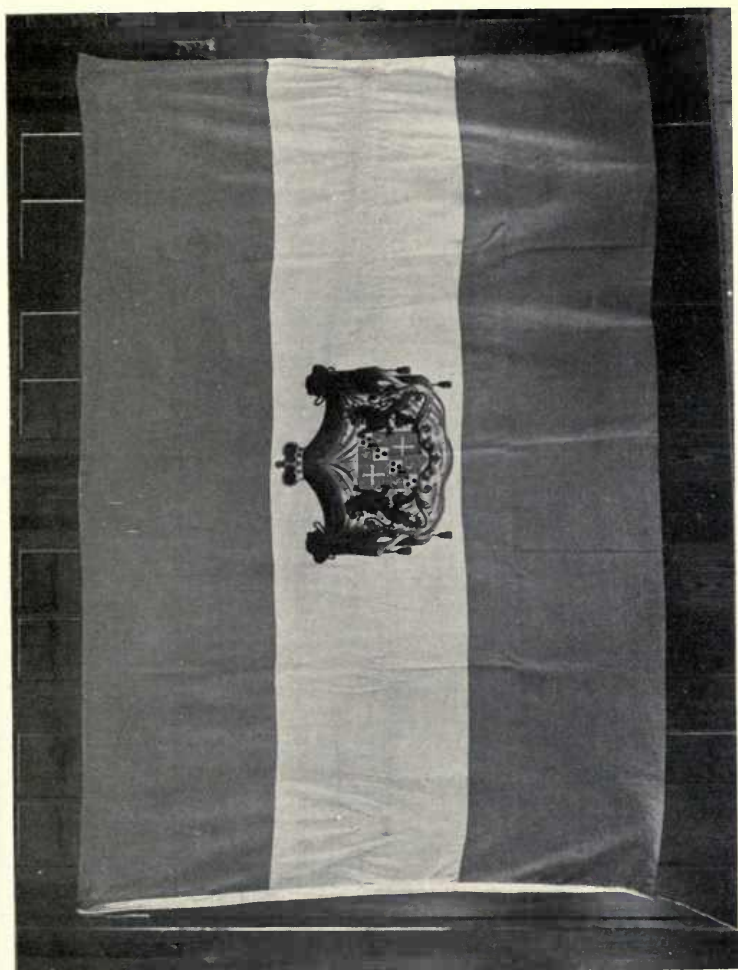


treaty concluded at Berlin under the mediation of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, which should have finally adjusted all differences between the house of Oldenburg and the Bentinck family and was guaranteed by the German Diet."

But further trouble arose, further litigation ensued, and at last a compromise was effected, an indemnity being granted in consideration of the seizure of the property. At one time the Bentinck family flew their own flag, coined their own money, and kept a small army. When the various German States were unified, in Napoleon's time, Kniphausen was totally forgotten, with the result that its flag was still that of a neutral power. Owners of ships soon found this out, and for a year or so nearly the whole commerce of Europe sailed under the flag of Kniphausen. But Napoleon had sharp eyes, and represented to Count Bentinck that he could no longer act as a privateer, so an end came to this very lucrative trade. The Kniphausen flag, which is still occasionally flown on Bentinck castles in Holland, is blue, white, blue, in equal stripes, with the Aldenburg-Bentinck arms, with cloak and coronet, in the centre of the white stripe.

An interesting descent is that which Charlotte Sophie traced through the de la Trémoilles to Charlotte, Princess of Bourbon, wife of William the Silent. Count William of Nassau, surnamed

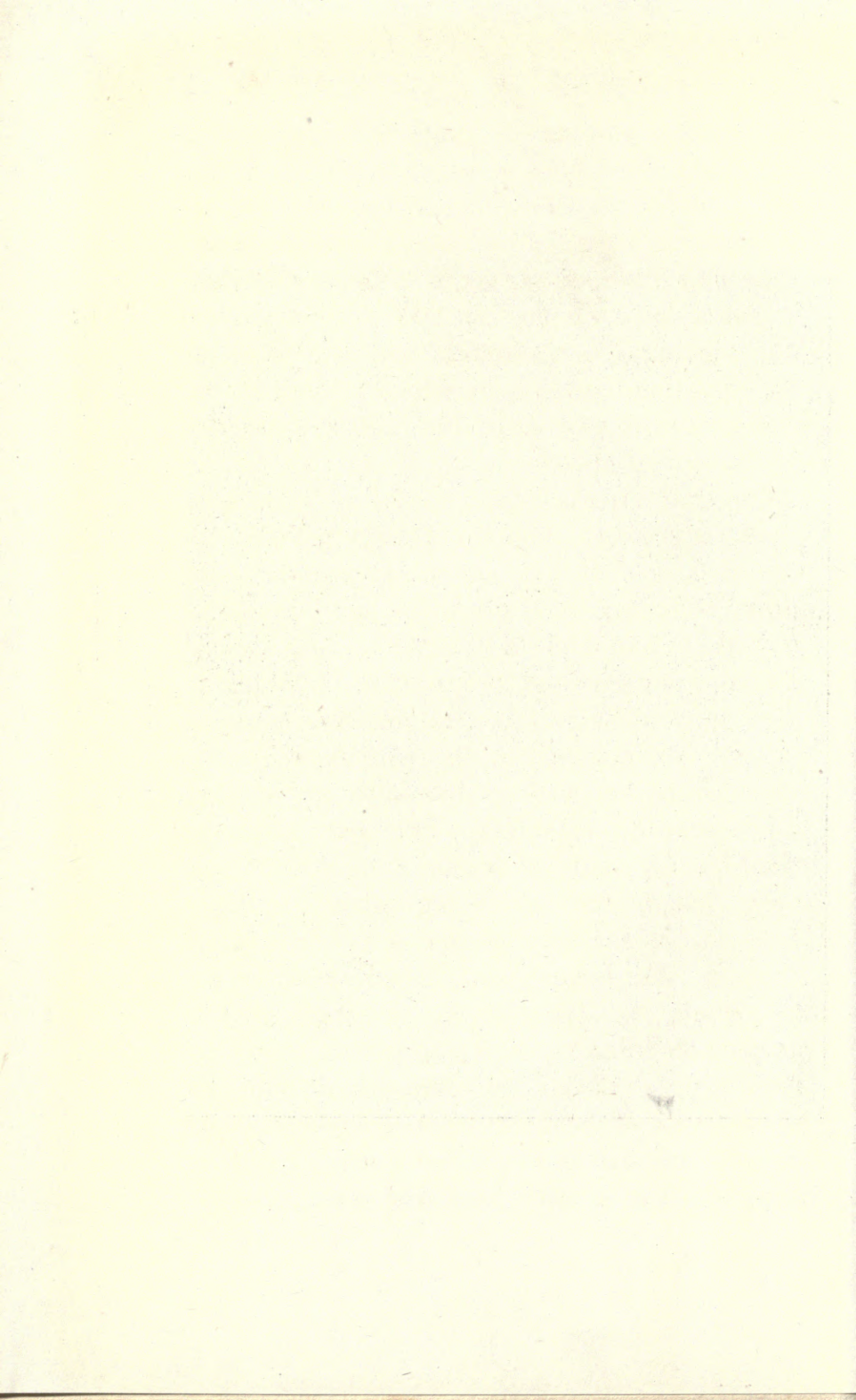
“The Silent,” was the son of Count William of Nassau, and of Countess Juliana of Stolberg. On the death of his first cousin René, of Nassau-Châlon, Prince of Orange, in 1544, he inherited the Principality of Orange, near Avignon, in France. René had inherited it from his maternal uncle, Philibert, of Châlon, in 1530. From that time he took the name of Prince of Orange. He was brought up as a Protestant, but later on he served Charles V as page and adopted the Roman Catholic religion. He was fully trusted by the Emperor, and when the abdication took place at Brussels it was on the shoulder of the Prince of Orange that Charles V leaned, thereby indicating that William was considered the strongest supporter of Spanish sovereignty in the Netherlands. Philip II continued the confidence his father had shown. But the Princess of Orange, daughter of the famous General Count Van Buren, gradually engaged her husband’s sympathy for her country-people, and at last he became heart and soul on their side. He was too wise, however, to give utterance to his sentiments. In 1559 the Prince was sent by the King of Spain on a political mission to Henry II of France, when the French King gave him full particulars of a plot to massacre all the Protestant subjects of Philip and himself. William listened in silence, and went home determined to drive the Spaniards



**THE KNIPHAUSEN FLAG**

Under which nearly the whole commerce of Europe sailed for a year, till Napoleon discovered this tiny neutral Sovereign state





out of the country. Amidst the utmost difficulties and dissensions he saved the Netherlands, and paid for his devotion with his life, being murdered in 1584 for the sake of a huge reward offered by Philip of Spain, who did not hesitate to put a price on the head of the Stadholder and treat him like a common criminal. William the Silent has been well described as "one of the greatest heroes and one of the noblest characters whom the world has seen."

Charlotte Amélie, Princess de la Trémoille, Charlotte Sophie's grandmother, was well known, and her life "écrite par sa propre main en forme d'instruction à son digne fils" appeared in French and German editions. She is frequently mentioned in the Letters of Madame de Sévigny. Charlotte Amélie had been brought up as a Protestant by her grandmother, on whose death she went to live with her cousin, the Queen of Denmark. She had not, apparently, any wish to marry, though she had many suitors for her hand, amongst others the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III of England. On being asked one day what future she would like, she jokingly replied that it was her ambition to be the widow of a Dutchman with a castle! A little time after an acquaintance of hers presented himself, and told her that he had a friend who was a Dutchman, who had a castle, and who was so deeply

in love with her that if she married him he would be sure to die of happiness in six months. He then disclosed himself as "the friend," and Charlotte Amélie married him. The marriage was an extremely happy one; but alas! the prophecy was but too true—in six months he was dead! He had been a widower, and the husband of his eldest daughter was his heir presumptive. The son-in-law therefore "removed" Count Aldenburg, and thereby counted on obtaining possession of Doorwerth, his father-in-law's beautiful property near Arnhem. But he counted on it too soon. Some months after Count Aldenburg's death Charlotte Amélie had a son. Beset by every kind of persecution, the poor woman took the child and went to Vienna to plead her cause. She arrived travel-stained and weary at the Court, and the ladies-in-waiting laughed at her unfashionable clothes and her poor appearance—for it was only by selling her service of plate that she managed to collect enough money to make the journey. But the Empress, seeing her, exclaimed, "That lady is the descendant of kings, and it is rather for me to do her homage than for her to seek me." The Emperor befriended her, and she returned home with the assurance of his protection. In order that her child—should she die while he was still young—might in riper years





ANTON II, COUNT OF ALDENBURG  
Father of Charlotte Sophie, Countess Bentinck  
From a painting in the possession of Count Bentinck



understand all that had happened, she wrote a fascinating life of herself. The MS. is now in the Grand Ducal library at Oldenburg, and I hope to bring out an English translation of it before very long. Charlotte Sophie's descent from William the Silent through the de la Trémoilles can be traced on the pedigree at the end of the book.

Charlotte Amélie's son, who succeeded as Anthony II, married Princess Wilhelmina Marie of Hesse Homburg. Their only child, Charlotte Sophie, was born on August 5th, 1715.



## CHAPTER II

AS Charlotte Sophie was her father's sole heiress, many distinguished people sought her hand, including the Prince-Bishop of Eutin, who afterwards became King of Sweden. How strange it would have been if she had married him, and shared the guardianship of the future Czar, Peter, whose wife, afterwards the Empress Catherine II, was a connection of hers.

Eventually Charlotte Sophie was engaged to the Hon. William Bentinck, second son of the 1st Earl of Portland (the friend of William III of England) by his second wife, Jane, daughter of Sir John Temple, Bart., of East Sheen, ~~sister~~ of Henry, Viscount Palmerston, and widow of John, Lord Berkeley of Stratton. Lady Portland had been State governess to the three eldest daughters of George II in 1718, and had four daughters and two sons. She died in 1751, and much of her correspondence with her son (the husband of Charlotte Sophie) is in the British Museum. These manuscripts were purchased from Dr. Henry Egerton (afterwards Bishop of Worcester), who

\* Temple Lane, East Sheen; afterwards a famous private school. I was there from 1890 to '94.



COUNTESS CHARLOTTE SOPHIE VON ALDENBURG,  
AFTERWARDS COUNTESS BENTINCK

From a picture in the possession of Count Bentinck





married Lady Elizabeth Bentinck. The letters entitled "Bentinck Papers" amongst the Egerton MSS. at the British Museum came to her through her mother, the Countess of Portland. Lady Elizabeth Egerton was a sister of Count Bentinck, the husband of Charlotte Sophie. The following from a Bible in Count Bentinck's possession is, I think, sufficiently interesting to be printed in full. The notes are by Count Charles Bentinck.

Extract out of a Bible which belonged to my late mother Jane Martha Temple Dowager Countess of Portland and which after her death came to me with her other books.

Married to the Earl of Portland on a Sunday morning at Chiswick by Mr. Jones minister of Mortlake May 12th, 1700.

Sophia was born at Whitehall Fry. afternoon at 3 o'clock, April 4, 1701. Sister Berkeley, Mme. Nyenhuis<sup>1</sup> and my Father Gossups.

Miscarried of a dead son March 9, 1701-2.

Betty born at Whitehall Sunday morning at 1 o'clock, June 27th, 1703. My mother, Mme. Sandenburg<sup>2</sup> and my Lord Berkeley Gossups.

William born at Whitehall Monday morning at

<sup>1</sup> *Mme. Nyenhuis*.—Eleanor Bentinck, Baroness Ittersum of Nyenhuis, sister of the 1st Earl of Portland, died without children and left her estate of Nyenhuis to her nephew the Honble. Charles John Bentinck.

<sup>2</sup> *Mme. Sandenburg*.—Wife of Baron Borre d'Amerongen of Sandenburg.

8 o'clock Nov. 6, 1704. My aunt Gifford, my brother Temple, and Mr. de Rosendaal<sup>1</sup> were Gossups.

Harriet born at Whitehall Wednesday afternoon about 5 o'clock Dec. 12, 1705. Sister Dixwell, Mademoiselle Bentinck<sup>2</sup> and Lord Scarborough were Gossups.

Charles John born at Bolstrode Wednesday night at 8 o'clock June 2nd, 1708. Brother John Temple, Lady Cullum and Mr. Schoonheeten<sup>3</sup> were Gossups.

Bab born at Bolstrode Thursday night at 9 o'clock Oct. 20, 1709. Christened Nov. 5. Lady Longueville, Sister Lucy Temple and Sir Basil Dixwell were Gossups.

I do hereby certify that the original from which the Extract here above is faithfully copied is written in the own handwriting of my late mother Jane Martha Temple Countess of Portland having often seen her write. Witness my hand and seal.

Hague, May 31, 1775.

C. J. BENTINCK.

We thus see that William Bentinck was born in 1704, and was eleven years older than Charlotte Sophie. He had been brought up in England, and his letters to his mother are all in English, a language his wife, who always spoke and wrote in French, never learnt.

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. de Rosendaal*.—Baron Torck de Rosendael.

<sup>2</sup> *Mademoiselle Bentinck*.—Agnes, born 1654–1722, sister of the 1st Earl of Portland.

<sup>3</sup> *Mr. Schoonheeten*.—Baron Bentinck of Schoonheeten, brother of 1st Earl of Portland. From him is descended the Dutch or baronial line of the family.



WILLIAM, FIRST EARL OF PORTLAND

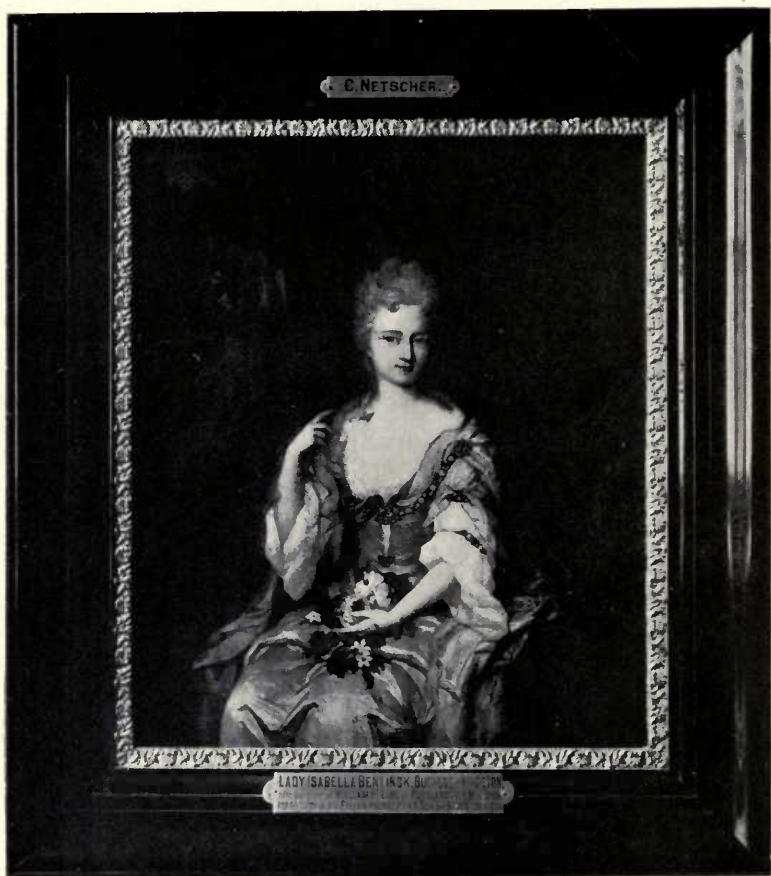
From a sketch in the Louvre, by Rigaud

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LADY ISABELLA BENTINCK, DUCHESS OF KINGSTON  
From a painting by C. Netscher in the possession of Count Bentinck



The young girl lived at that time at her parents' castle at Varel, not far from Oldenburg, in North Germany, a beautiful estate which I visited only the other day, and found that the ancestral home had been utterly swept away and the ground occupied by modern buildings, though the magnificent forest remained as the public property of the town. She had made her future husband's acquaintance, but nothing was definitely settled at the beginning of 1732—she was then sixteen—though on January 4th of that year Mr. J. Berkeley wrote:—

I conclude you have before this an account from Holland of the forwardness of Mr. Bentinck's match, of which I perceive I raised your expectations very high by the terms I used, but a landed estate of at least nine thousand pounds sterling a year after the death of the parents and the alliance of a princess of the Empire by the mother's side may justly be called one of the greatest party's<sup>1</sup> in Europe. It must be an infinite satisfaction to my aunt Portland to see her son so well established, and as you see by the papers if those accounts are true what havoc the worms have made of the Piles<sup>2</sup> in Holland and the dangers they

<sup>1</sup> I reproduce the spelling exactly as I copied it from the original letters.

<sup>2</sup> "At present 1,500 miles of sea-dykes, a distance more than twice as great as that which separates Land's End from John o' Groats, defend Holland against her most dangerous, her ever-threatening, and her most implacable enemy. . . . Not only have the Dutch succeeded in defending their country against the sea and rivers which threatened to overwhelm the land and to drown the inhabitants,

are threatened with, Mr. Bentinck has very prudently secured a retreat. I hope the lady's good qualities will prove her worthy of her fortune, as she is much commended, otherwise no greatness can make amends for want of goodness.<sup>1</sup>

In July of this same year William Bentinck went on a visit to Charlotte Sophie's parents at Varel. He writes to his mother from there :—

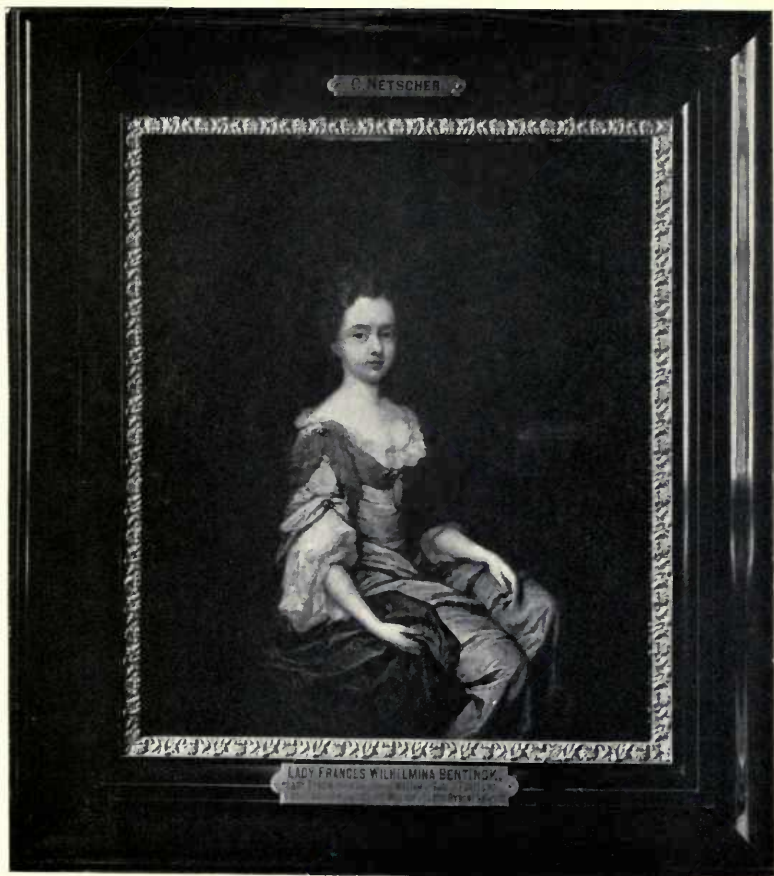
. . . They dine at half an hour past twelve, after dinner, which lasts an hour retire till five when they all meet for tea ; after which they either sit at work, or walk till supper which is at eight. After supper they play at quadrille<sup>2</sup> which I had taken a lesson of at Twickel,<sup>3</sup> and play away now like one that has played all his life. At half an hour past ten, everybody is in their own apartments. The Ladys see nobody in the morning which is employed in hunting or shooting twice or thrice a week or in one's own room. Here reigns an air of liberty which makes the place very agreeable, with a great deal of politeness and attention. After a description of

but they have also succeeded in defending their territory against an almost equally dangerous enemy, the destructive pile-worm, which was introduced into Holland by the use of exotic timber. The ravages of the pile-worm have caused more than one panic in the Netherlands, and have cost the country more than would a large war." *The Rise and Decline of the Netherlands*, by J. Ellis Barker. 1906.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is preserved at Welbeck Abbey. It is not known to whom it was written.

<sup>2</sup> A game of cards still played by the lower classes near Twickel.

<sup>3</sup> Count Wassenaer's estate in Overijssel on the road from The Hague to Varel.



LADY FRANCES WILHELMINA BENTINCK

From a painting by C. Netscher, in the possession of Count Bentinck

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the way of living here, you might expect to hear something of what interests us more than that, but I can give you a very little account but only in general that things are upon a good foot. *We* are better acquainted than we first were, and the *embarras* of Doorwert is quite over, and the more I see the more reason I think I have to approve of my choice. . . . It will be time enough if I can tell you something positive before your return from Aix, the turn of genius here is such that I am afraid pressing much at present would have a contrary effect. This is a very good lesson for me, not only for patience but likewise for *constraint*. Madame de Stockem is to be here to-day. . . . I intend to make my court prodigiously to her. . . . I am, dear Madam, your most obedient humble servant and dutiful son

W. BENTINCK.

A little later he writes :—

. . . As for my affairs here you must not expect I should in some weeks give you any particulars of the advancing of 'em only that the P<sup>ss</sup><sup>1</sup> does begin to be more *familiaris e* to our notions than she was.

And again on August 24th :—

. . . I have to-day had a conversation with the Princess who talked very plainly and gives her consent entirely, under the conditions you know of.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Sophie's mother.

<sup>2</sup> He had just been created a Count of the Holy Roman Empire. This was a necessity, as otherwise Charlotte Sophie, in marrying him, would have forfeited her Sovereign rights. What we know as the

A month later the affair had advanced, for he says :—

As to his daughter, I told him exactly what I thought of her as to her good and bad qualities and that I was entirely determined, and had taken my resolution.

By December 5th the engagement was practically arranged, for Count Bentinck writes :—

C<sup>t</sup> A. and his wife both write into Den.<sup>1</sup> to-day, he to the K<sup>g</sup>, she to the Q<sup>n</sup>, as soon as the answer comes, the promise in form will be given . . . you may be sure I will not neglect what will be for my advantage when I can do it handsomely and without dishonour. Besides that Count A. has already told me that he would fain regulate things that I can never be a loser by this match. . . . He told me too he would give me a set of coach horses. . . . Count A. does not know any servant like what you ask for and says it is the hardest thing in the world to find. . . .

I have taken a great many resolutions of amendment which I don't know whether I shall have

Austrian Empire was then the nucleus of the Holy Roman Empire. The Empire included the Kingdoms of Rome and Bohemia, the two latter hereditary, the Empire itself nominally elective, though it became practically hereditary in the Hapsburg family. The French Revolution proved fatal to the Empire, and in 1806 Francis II formally resigned the title, contenting himself with the unhistorical designation of Emperor of Austria.

<sup>1</sup> Denmark, the King being a relation and the Aldenburg title being a Danish one.





LADY MARY BENTINCK, COUNTESS OF ESSEX  
From a painting by C. Netscher, in the possession of Count Bentinck



LETTER TO THE KING OF DENMARK 19

strength enough to keep, but will try. One among others is of not putting off things that are to be done to the last extremity. . . . I see the young lady's head is turned to housekeeping, as making sweetmeats, cooking, etc., but have no very great opinion of her economy and management which one seldom learns otherwise than by feeling how silly one looks when one is without money. . . . I saw to-day in the newspapers that there was a yacht sent over to fetch you back which I hope is not true.

The letter from the Count of Aldenburg to the King of Denmark sets out the reasons for the marriage from the parents' point of view. It is dated Varel, December 6, 1732 :—

The priceless favours of your Majesty, of which I feel the worth, make me hope that He will permit me to venture to ask his most gracious consent to the engagement of my daughter.

It is very natural, Sir, that as God has given or left us only one child my wife and I have it much at heart to satisfactorily establish her. We have more than once prayed to God to direct the hearts and events and show us which would please Him.

After much serious reflexion we have decided to approve the proposals of the Count de Bentinck, eldest son by his second marriage of the Earl of Portland. Will your Majesty permit me to tell you my reasons ?

He is a man of 27 or 28 years, who has passed the fire of youth. He is tolerably good looking, not



wanting in intellect or in acquaintances. But what we particularly value in him are the sentiments of his heart. They are upright, generous, and full of piety and good sense.

He is one of the seven of the Corps des Nobles of the Province of Holland. Count de Wassenaer who placed him there took pleasure in bringing him up under his own eye and training him in virtue. He has enough money to live honourably at The Hague and support my daughter, so that during my lifetime I am not obliged to impoverish myself. The Countess of Portland, his mother, is a lady of distinguished piety and merit. This is universally admitted, even by the three Princesses of England whom she brought up and who do so much honour to her care.

This family of Portland, allied with the Duke of Kent, with the Earl of Essex and with the most distinguished families of England and Holland, is connected with so many persons of merit that my wife and I believe we could not establish our only child better than by giving her to a sensible man such as he, and placing her in a family whose members are united and live in harmony, where she will see none but good examples, and receive advice which will contribute to her happiness during Time and Eternity.

These, Sire, are some of the reasons which made us decide on Count de Bentinck. The very gracious approval of your Majesty, which my wife and I venture to ask for with respectful submission, is what we most ardently desire.



COUNTESS BENTINCK'S PARENTS

From paintings on wood in the possession of Mr. H. Aldenburg Bentinck





William Bentinck wished his mother to come for the wedding, but she feared the journey. Count Aldenburg said he would arrange for her to travel in three days from Utrecht without once sleeping at an inn.

By December 19th the business aspect of the match was being fully discussed :—

I gave C<sup>t</sup> A. an opportunity of speaking about settlements by reading him that part of your letter when you speak of the way of living in Holland, which you wish I should always conform myself to. He was mightily pleased with it, and said you spoke like a woman of extraordinary sense and a good and kind mother ; that it was entirely his opinion and he was sensible what effect making a great figure has in Holland, which is only creating envy, without any honour.

On December 22nd the royal assent arrived from the King and Queen of Denmark, and in his letter of December 26th Count Bentinck tells his mother about his formal betrothal :—

Last Wensday morning C<sup>t</sup> A. came into my room and bid me be at eleven in his wife's apartments, where I found him, his wife and daughter, and after a pretty long discourse, in which he recapitulated all that he had said to each of us alone, and in which he spoke in a very moving manner, he asked his daughter and me if we were determined and had taken our resolution, and upon both saying yes, he made her

give me her hand ; so that now nothing but Death can part us. I will give you at the Hague an exact account of this scene which considering Count A's character and behaviour in all this is the most tender and moving that one can imagine.

But Charlotte Sophie was by no means fancy free at this time, for only a week before her marriage to Count Bentinck she was urged by Count de la Lippe to run away with him ! A copy, in her own writing, of his letter is preserved at Indio. It is dated May 23rd, 1733, and is extremely long—far too long to give *in extenso*. Count de la Lippe says that he and Charlotte Sophie had known each other from childhood, were practically engaged to each other, and in age, means, family and religion were in every way suited. He cannot imagine, he writes, why she has thrown him over for a man she detests, and he begs her to allow him to send a carriage and horses to Varel, by means of which she can escape to his mother, while he, having left her there, will go back and implore forgiveness from her parents. He points out that in marrying a man she positively hates she is betraying herself, himself, her parents (whose only wish is for her happiness), as well as Count Bentinck. “Even Mr. Bentinck himself will admit the force of my reasoning. He has merit, they say. Perhaps he will envy my

happiness, and I shall but esteem him the more; for it will be truly enviable, and you will see that in time all these storms will cease. What a difference, my dear Countess, in marrying a man to whom you have given every mark of affection or one whom you marry while having shown him the greatest antipathy and who you are convinced only wants you for vile mercenary motives.”

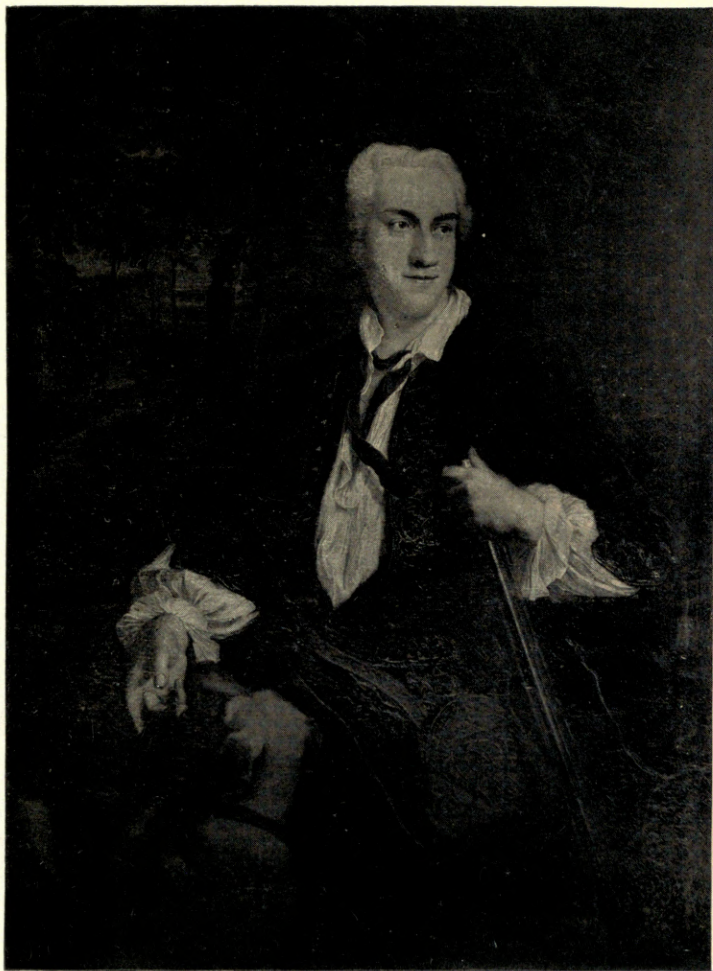
From the fact that a copy of this letter was carefully kept and handed over to William Bentinck by the agent Windt at Doorwerth in November, 1800 (as a note on it in his writing records), there was probably more to be said on Charlotte Sophie's behalf than this broken-hearted and almost threatening letter would lead one to suppose.



### CHAPTER III

**A**FTER their marriage, Count and Countess Bentinck lived at the Hague, and Count Bentinck continued to interest himself in politics. This is not the place to give more than the briefest reference to his life and work, but historians consider that he was a great statesman and an abler man than his father, the Earl of Portland. He held various important offices, and it was through his exertions that the Stadholdership became hereditary in the family of Orange. The fact that he was equally at home at the Dutch, English and German Courts and in closest touch with the leading statesmen of these three countries made him able to negotiate matters of diplomacy which to any one less cosmopolitan would have presented insuperable difficulties.

The amount of material available which concerns certain portions of Charlotte Sophie's life is so enormous that I can only use a comparatively small portion, and selection has been difficult. The difficulty has been much increased by the fact that her correspondence is preserved in so many different places. England, Holland,



THE FIRST COUNT BENTINCK, AS A YOUNG MAN

From a picture by A. Meytens, in the possession of Mr. H. Aldenburg Bentinck





North Germany, South Germany, Austria, and probably the royal archives of nearly every capital in Europe contain letters from her. That even as a girl she must have been a prolific writer is witnessed to by her father, who, in a letter soon after her marriage, remarks: "I admire the fertility of your genius, and the indefatigable energy of your pen."

In 1736 Charlotte Sophie had smallpox while at Spa, and, according to Larrey,<sup>1</sup> was badly marked by it.

From her earliest youth Charlotte Sophie seems to have proved herself a person of exceptional vigour of mind and body. Her wide education, assured position and large circle of friends and relations must have further tended to give her a certain independence of outlook, and therefore one is not surprised to learn that after a time friction arose between husband and wife, and these two strong, brilliant people found it difficult to agree.

Her father was much troubled by his daughter's behaviour, and also by her unorthodox religious opinions. On the latter subject many long letters passed between them, though nearly all those preserved are from her father. They are written with the greatest tenderness, restraint and moderation.

<sup>1</sup> Count Bentinck's agent.

With regard to her husband, Charlotte Sophie replies :—

“My high spirits carry me away. . . . I am afraid I shall have a great deal of difficulty in correcting myself but I will do all I possibly can.” Her father entreats her to set herself to carry out her duty to her husband, “who,” he adds, “loves you,” and he assures her she stands on the brink of a precipice. “If your husband seeks consolation elsewhere, you have only yourself to thank. Think, my very dear child, what a happy and brilliant future opens out before you, and remember that unless you carry out God’s will and do what is right you are preparing a terrible existence for yourself.”

That Charlotte Sophie was ready to be on, at least, friendly terms with her husband at even a later period is evident from her letters to him in 1736. He was in England at the time, staying with his mother, the Countess of Portland, and his wife was most anxious to join him there. Her mother-in-law had invited her, and she straightway interviewed Mr. Walpole, then at The Hague, and asked him to arrange her journey for her. But Count Bentinck refused to allow her to come, and obliged her to remain alone at Rhoon.

A moment’s digression must be made to explain that Rhoon was a property the Earl of Portland had acquired at the request of William III

of England, who, it will be recollected, was also ruler of Holland. Rhoon gave a vote in the Assembly of the States General, so it was to William's advantage that his friend should possess it. When the Earl of Portland died he left Rhoon and the Norfolk property near Terrington to his second son, Count (or the Hon. William) Bentinck, and the rest of his English property to his eldest son, afterwards Duke of Portland.

So as long as Rhoon remained in the family the reigning Count was called Bentinck Rhoon, and later on in this book we shall constantly find Charlotte Sophie's grandson, the eldest son of her elder son, familiarly referred to as Rhoon.

From Rhoon Charlotte Sophie consoles herself by writing letters to her husband packed with items of local news and commissions to be executed in London. She begins with no preamble, ends equally abruptly, and always calls him "Vous."

Here is a specimen of one of her letters.

Listen attentively to me, for I have only a few things to say, but they deserve to be listened to.

1. Charles has arrived safe and sound.
2. I am going to Sorgvliet to dine with the Devil.

Now for my commissions. Bring me (*pour mon bel argent*) a dozen *boules d'acies* to put in a corset.

A pair of shoe buckles, gilt, large, I cannot bear small ones, not gold but gilt.



Two dozen white gloves of best quality, a little larger than the black ones you sent me.

A black and white fan, for half mourning.

I will do my best to find time to write to your mother and to Mr. Egerton. *Bonjour.* C. S.

Apparently the expenses of her household were excessive, and as both Charlotte Sophie and her husband seem to have had no idea of the purchasing limits of money, they were soon heavily in debt. A name we shall frequently meet with is that of Weisbrod, and at this time—1736—he appears to have been her house-steward. He was the father of the “Philosopher” so often spoken of in her later correspondence. The poor man was evidently in despair, for Larrey, whose letters form so large a bulk of the Egerton MSS. and who was Count Aldenburg’s agent, writes to him the same year, saying, “The expenses are fearful. Weisbrod has obliged me to try and appease some of the creditors.” Inside this letter I found a characteristic note from Charlotte Sophie herself, quite ignoring all questions of finance and merely saying :—

I am well. Anthony also. My father and mother leave on Monday. I am very angry about it. The Princess of Gotha is just going to arrive. I must go and see her at my sister-in-law’s [probably the Duchess of Kent] and I am furious. C. S.

Charlotte Sophie's mother, who must have been a charming woman and who lived to a great age, kept a diary, portions of which are at Middachten. Referring to Larrey, who later on was to be so hostile to Charlotte Sophie and developed into a sort of spy of her husband's, she says: "In 1716 Monsieur de Larrey entered our service and in 1738—on the death of my dear husband—I took him to look after my household and do the honours for me, but I lived very quietly and required little of him as I did not wish him to neglect his chief duties. My daughter begged me to continue the administration of affairs for some years and wished Larrey to assist me. I agreed with reluctance and kept him until my daughter wanted him herself. When he left our service he entered that of the Prince of East Friesland, who made him his Marshal. He died soon after, and two years later Larrey entered into the service of the Prince of Orange."

The Princess of Aldenburg remained at Varel till her death in 1770, at the age of 92.

Charlotte Sophie's first child, Christian Frederick Anthony, was born in 1734, and the second (from whom I descend), John Albert, in 1737. The couple drifted further and further apart, and nothing that Charlotte Sophie's mother could do to try and establish a happier state of things was of any avail.

## CHAPTER IV

IT ended in Charlotte Sophie leaving her husband. She went to reside with her mother at Varel, and from there she evidently issued her ultimatum to Count Bentinck. A copy of the following reply from him is amongst the papers at Indio. Indio is the residence of Mr. H. Aldenburg Bentinck, the grandson of Vice-Admiral William Bentinck, to whom Charlotte Sophie left all she possessed.

*Sorgvliet, Sep. 20, 1739.*

Knowing as you do the sentiments I have always expressed towards you, and my tender attachment to your late father and all belonging to him, you can form some idea, though only a feeble one, of the position you have placed me in by the unexpected arrival of Mr. de Larrey with your message. I cannot in conscience say that I approve of the line you intend taking, subject as it is to the greatest inconveniences, both to your health and on account of the opinion people will form of you when they hear that you have, as one might say, abandoned your family and all that should be dearest to you in the world, to retire with your delicate health to a place where you will be deprived of all comforts. My attachment



to you and the sincere interest I take in all that concerns you prevent me from contemplating all this with serenity. If ever I have had a real sorrow, it is that which I now feel.

On the other hand, as I see from your letter and from all that Mr. de Larrey tells me that your mind is made up, you may rest assured that I shall always try to save appearances as far as possible in the eyes of the public, whose opinion I value. It is with the greatest regret that I see myself obliged to consent to the decision you have come to. I had always hoped that time would bring reflexion, and I still hope so.

The position you have placed yourself in awakens a compassion I cannot express, especially as I can do nothing to prevent it. All I could say would be far less than I feel.

It only remains for me to commend you to God's protection and to assure you that I shall never openly blame you, and that as I cannot make you happy I shall search for opportunities to be useful to you in a practical way, in giving you from time to time my ideas as to what you should do, and happy if you will accept them.

I do not feel able at present to write more or to enter into the details of the arrangements Mr. de Larrey proposes on your behalf. I accept the greater part of them, because order is preferable to disorder, which brings ruin, and ruin wrecks both reputation and honour, without considering what we both owe to our children and certain other considerations which are as well known to you as to me.

You may feel assured that no one desires your happiness more ardently than I do, and that no one could feel more compassion for the life on which, with sorrow, I see you about to enter.

*Je suis de cœur et d'ame tout à vous.*

W. BENTINCK.

The following notes, in Vice-Admiral Bentinck's writing, were found amongst his papers. He made them during a visit to Charlotte Sophie in 1789, and I think it is better to keep his *resumé* intact and insert it here than to split it up and distribute it in chronological sequence.

“My grandmother lived some time after she left her husband's house at The Hague, at Varel and Kniphausen, but by Court intrigues the King of Denmark ordered her to quit that country. Upon this she went to the late King of Prussia and opened her situation and case to him. Before this lawsuits had commenced between my grandfather and grandmother.”

The cases were tried both at Brussels and at Vienna under Francis I, Count Bentinck's great friend, with whom he had studied at Lausanne. “It must be observed that Francis 1st and Marie Thérèse were never well together, because he was jealous of her power.” . . . “In both Courts the Verdict was given for my grandmother, by which she was to be replaced in the possession of Varel and Kniphausen, and

the Cour Aulique had given orders to the King of Prussia as an Elector, to see the sentence executed.”

In order to prevent this another intrigue was set on foot by means of the French Minister. The King of Prussia was told that Charlotte Sophie was only playing a game and would never spend a shilling in his dominions, but would retire to her property and laugh at him. The King swallowed this and offered her a château near Berlin. She, not suspecting the real fact, and not at all desirous of moving, refused. Her refusal was brought up as a sign of their foresight. “The King then sent her word that he wished very much to settle her affairs, and that he proposed to her, by his authority, to appoint a Court which would entirely annul her marriage with my grandfather, and that he wished her to marry his first minister.

“She again refused; again the French Minister came into play, and the King considerably altered his behaviour to my grandmother, who he had held on terms of intimacy with him and Voltaire. But another trial was to take place. The Margrave Henry<sup>1</sup> (the King’s brother) was just then parted from his wife, and the King then sent my grandmother

<sup>1</sup> I reprint it as given in the MS. He is usually known as Prince Henry of Prussia.



word that as his minister was not good enough for her, he proposed his brother. She again refused. The French Minister had now open game, and the King sent her one morning a declaration to sign by which she made over all her property to my grandfather. She objected to signing, but was told she must do it or things would not go well. She sent for eleven Notaries who all refused making her protest to this declaration, being afraid of the King. At last the Imp. Ambassador wrote one for her, but not an official one. Upon this she left Berlin and went to Vienna.

“I must now return a little. When it was known at The Hague that the Verdicts were given for my grandmother, my grandfather went directly to Vienna, and being very intimate with the Emperor, got the case tried in the Court Aulique, where it was also given for my grandmother.”

In spite of his Coronation Oath not to interfere with decisions of this Court, especially between his Protestant subjects, “when the Emperor heard the case was given in favour of my grandmother, he of his own authority annulled it, though the Court Aulique protested, and three of the Judges immediately gave in their resignation. Whereupon the Emperor revoked his verdict and gave it in favour of my grandmother.

“My grandmother soon became a favourite of the Empress Marie Thérèse, who espoused her cause, and of whom my grandmother speaks in terms of high admiration, both as an Empress and as a friend.”

Kaunitz (a great friend of Count Bentinck) at first refused to discuss the affair. But later, on a change of administration, he got into the Brabant Department where her affairs were tabulated, and on examining the papers came to the conclusion that she was in the right, and wrote to Count Bentinck to tell him so, saying he “would very much like to be mediator.” Count Bentinck refused, adding that he supposed he had lost Count Kaunitz’s friendship, from the tone of his letter.

At the Empress’ desire Charlotte Sophie wrote to her eldest son on his coming of age proposing fair terms. The Empress sent the letter to her Ambassador at The Hague, with orders to deliver it personally. It was delivered and its receipt acknowledged to the Empress, but no answer was sent. [There is a copy of this letter at Indio. It is a touching appeal to the young man to come to Vienna and discuss matters with his mother, who expresses herself as most anxious to meet his wishes in every possible way.]

“At the time the King of Denmark made the exchange of Oldenburg with the Court of

Russia (by which Russia would be possessed of Oldenburg and Denmark of Holstein)" Charlotte Sophie wrote to The Hague urging her husband to enforce (with the help of the Courts of Berlin, Vienna and Petersburg) payment from Denmark of debts due to the family from Oldenburg, before it passed out of her possession.

Monsieur de Tuyll ("my mother's father") replied on his behalf that perhaps these advantages might be obtained, but that he did not choose to owe anything to his wife.

On Count Bentinck's death his sons seized Doorwerth, and their mother only recovered it after a lawsuit.

"After my grandfather's death, she had a plan for coming over to England and, through Monsieur Dreyer, the Imperial Minister, to get into company with my father" (her second son, John Albert, father of the *petite chatte*). "She intended after some acquaintance to have brought on her affairs, and by so doing to have convinced my father she was by no means so dangerous a woman as he had been taught from his cradle to believe her. My father's sudden death prevented this."

So we see that Charlotte Sophie, obliged by Court influence—no doubt stimulated by that of her husband—had to leave the shelter of her mother's home.

At first, as we have learnt, she resided at her



little Sovereign State of Kniphausen, about twenty miles away, and not far from Jever, which had formerly been a family possession, but had passed by marriage to her cousin, the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, father of Catherine II of Russia. Charlotte Sophie, on the recommendation of the Princess of Zerbst (as far as I can gather), took as her Hof Marshal a certain Donop from Jever, whose wife became her attendant and whose infant son Charles she showered kindness upon. He ill repaid it after her death, as we shall see, and in one or two letters from Frau Gottsched, which I shall give extracts from later on, we can realize what a pity it was that Charlotte Sophie's kind heart ran away with her in this instance. At this period Charlotte Sophie was a mother to all her dependents (as we read in one of the Princess of Aldenburg's letters).

A certain Trembley, writing to Larrey in 1742, says: "I rather hope that Madame will make such provisions for little Donop and her servants in her will, that by their absurdity they will annul it." He goes on to hope for "some folly that may be useful for the good cause."

So Count Bentinck, in spite of all the protestations in his letter, was only waiting for a slip on his wife's part to seize the opportunity for annexing her property. That he had his children's interests to consider is no excuse for the methods he employed. Charlotte Sophie would

gladly have made proper provision for her sons if he had allowed her to meet them in later years and discuss the matter. He writes to Larrey—“I count on you to watch all, and gain time, during which she is certain to commit some new act of folly.”

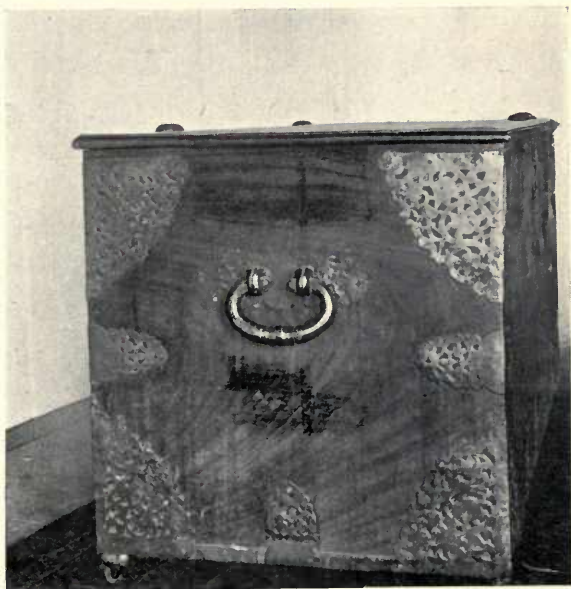
The following is not a pleasant letter for a man to write about his wife, on whatever terms they may be. It is dated 1744, and is as usual to Larrey: “I assure you that it amused me very much and her letters really merit publication, I find them so full of charming sentiments and noble ideas. But her behaviour is incomprehensible and reveals a very detestable character. . . . Is it not sad and regrettable that in a body which one can consider as all mind and intellect, there dwells so vile a soul.”

That Count Bentinck, expressing this opinion of his wife, and with his spies always watching and noting her conduct, should nevertheless have failed to shake her position, is eloquent testimony on her behalf.

Yet in public life he was a straight man, and if one excludes his relations with his wife there is much that one can admire. A Life of him would make an interesting book, and I hope some one may undertake the writing of it.



INSIDE LID OF THE PORCELAIN CASKET  
Given by Frederick the Great to Countess Bentinck



#### DUTCH MARRIAGE CHEST

Perhaps brought from Holland by Mrs. John Albert, Bentinck (*née* Renira de Tuyl). Found, in 1907, at the old farm-house, Killincarrick, where various family belongings, including Charlotte Sophie's letters, had been stored for generations. Measurements of woodwork,  $65\frac{1}{2} \times 29 \times 29\frac{1}{2}$





## CHAPTER V

**A**MONGST the most interesting features in Charlotte Sophie's life were her intimate friendships with those great rulers, Frederick the Second of Prussia and Marie Thérèse of Austria.

I have not been able to find out when she first met Frederick, but I think it was before he came to the throne, as he was already at that time a friend of her cousin, the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, and his sister, the Margravine of Bareith, is mentioned in Charlotte Sophie's correspondence. She was obviously greatly interested at the prospect of his accession, and there is a letter (unsigned) to her, at Middachten, giving an account of the death of Frederick's stern father in 1740, and the events immediately following it, which seems to me so vivid and true that I do not hesitate to translate the greater part. The picture of the dying King being wheeled about all night over the Palace is very striking.

The writer begins :—

Madame, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that it is in no way my fault that I did not

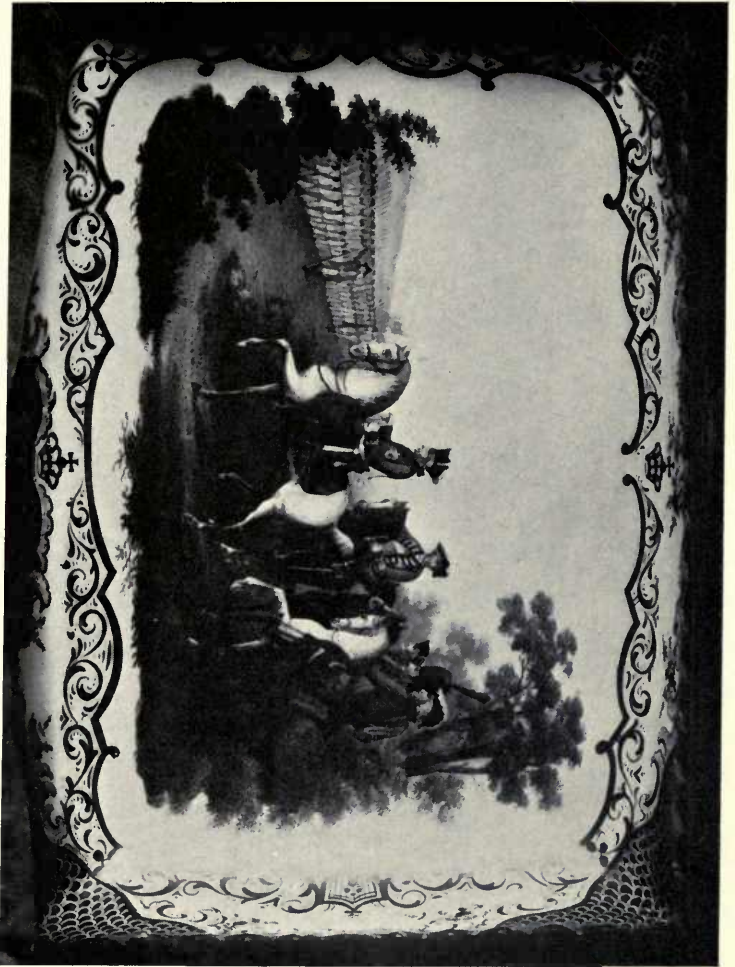
write last Tuesday, for the death of His Majesty Frederick William was the reason, every post having been closed for all, great and small. His death occurred on Tuesday, May 31st, at one o'clock in the afternoon. He awaited and desired it, partly in the spirit of a worldly hero, partly in that of a brave Christian, with great firmness, of which your Highness will judge by the details I am about to give.

The Saturday before his death he felt very ill. The Crown Prince came from Ruppin where he always remained while the King was at Potsdam, though twice the King sent him orders to come, but wise people—very wise people—advised him to do nothing, so he excused himself by saying that he had to look after a great many sick men in his regiment.

When he arrived the King received him with tenderness ; they thought he would not last out that day, he suffered extremely, but attended to many worldly things, and had himself drawn about on a little carriage night and day, for it was long since he had been in bed. On Sunday he still continued to sign a great many things. They had sent for the Prince of Tessau nine days before the King's death, but he only arrived on Monday, the day before his death. He sent for his coachman and ordered him to give a horse, which he named, to the Prince of Tessau, and said to him, "This is the last present I shall give you." He spoke to every one that day and always very tenderly to the Prince Royal.

At ten o'clock he told the Queen to go to bed, and also the Prince Royal, saying he felt pretty well.





OUTSIDE LID OF THE CASKET

Presented to Charlotte Sophie by Frederick the Great



When they had retired he became so restless that he had himself drawn into various rooms and about midnight into that of the Queen who was asleep. She started up in alarm, and asked him how he felt. "I suffer greatly," he said. She wished to get up. "No," said he, "I give you trouble enough, it will pass off."

In returning from the Queen's room he went to the ante-chamber of the Prince Royal, and asked the sentinel if he was asleep. He said "yes," and that his people had given orders that there was to be no noise. The King said this should be observed. In the morning he was so bad they thought him dying. They awakened the princes (that is to say the eldest and the second, for the third was ill with scarlet fever and the fourth also from scarlet fever and from the fury of the father). The Prince Royal came softly to the Queen's bedside and told her that things were going badly and begged her to come. The Queen got up very quickly, without a maid, and found him in a state of collapse that lasted some hours. He recovered fairly well and regained full consciousness and begged the Queen to return to bed.

She retired, and he asked the doctors if they thought he would suffer for a long time. They replied that he could not live more than that day. "You are an honest man," he said to Ellert, "to tell me the truth. God be praised, I shall be with my Saviour." He had had new livery made for his pages and *chasseurs*. He ordered that they should put them on. After having seen them he said, "That is enough of



the vanities of this world." He had all the saddles and horse collars brought him and chose the finest to be given to the Prince of Anhalt-Tessau with the horse. He suffered cruelly, they prayed by him, the Queen returned, he embraced the Prince Royal who, though in great grief, supported and consoled him with all the tenderness and submission that a good father could require.

At one o'clock after dinner he lost the power of speech, but while he retained consciousness, which was not for long, he threw kisses to the Prince Royal with that same hand which had so often beaten those who approached him. It was the right, the left having been extremely inflamed for some months past. He remained unconscious till 4 o'clock. The doctors, seeing the end approach, begged the Queen to retire. Her two sons prayed her to do so also, and took her to her room when she fainted. When the princes returned they found the King had expired.

Our dear King then sent a messenger to his wife.

The letter continues to relate how Frederick, going to Berlin, was unable to obtain bread with his soup owing to a strike of the German bakers, who were annoyed because the French had a good deal of this business in their hands. Then follows a long description of the taking of the oath of allegiance, etc. A few days later Charlotte Sophie's correspondent again takes up his pen. He writes :—

The King will dine here and return in the evening. The youngest Princess has scarlet fever. It is a great delight for these princes when they see the King, your Excellency can judge by the pleasures they have had. The eldest, who is 18, was enchanted on mounting a horse, which was caparisoned with violet velvet, and the two youngest were so charmed by the sight of their mourning coats lined with white satin that they feared to put them on in case they spoilt them. By these small things your Excellency can judge of their astonishment at all they see, and all that is given them every day.

## CHAPTER VI

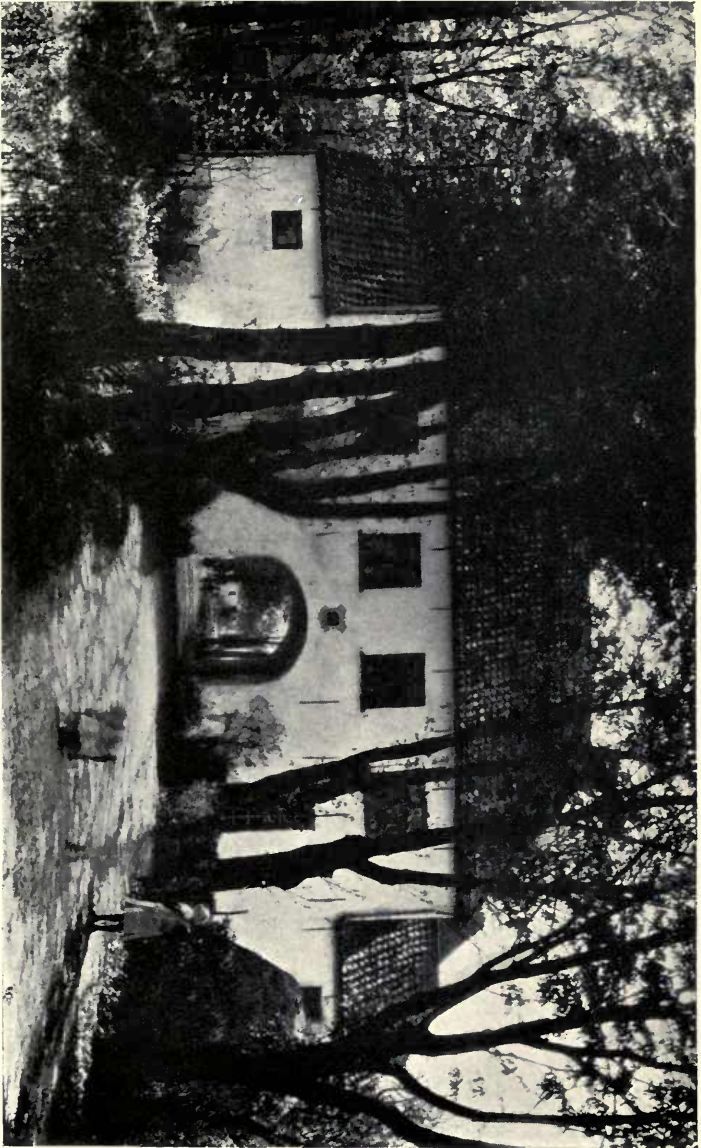
SOME years after Frederick's accession, when Charlotte Sophie was living at Kniphausen, he wrote to her in very friendly terms, and later he discussed the possibility of paying her a visit there. "I shall not hesitate to accept your kind offer if I travel in East Friesland," he wrote, and went on to say that he was sure he would find nowhere else in that part of the world such "attentions" as she was prepared to show him. He ended his letter with the assurance that he was her "bien affectioné, Frederick."

Partly from friendship, and partly perhaps from policy, he interested himself very keenly in her affairs when her lawsuits with her husband were in progress.

In his published political correspondence there is much concerning her. A letter from his Minister at The Hague was written after she moved to Berlin, and is dated October 9th, 1750. It runs as follows:—

There is a rumour that Countess Bentinck, having implored your Majesty's protection against the decrees obtained by her husband to her disadvantage during





THE OLD GATEWAY, KNIPHAUSEN

Photographed by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond in 1911



his stay at Vienna, your Majesty has sent a detachment of Grenadiers to the Seigneurie of Kniphausen, as forming part of the principality of East Friesland and not of the Empire. They add that this lady, to punish her husband, has made your Majesty her sole heir. These two subjects just now are the chief topics of conversation.

Trouble soon arose with the Court of Denmark, which saw through Frederick's ambition with regard to Kniphausen and Varel. The following from his Minister at Copenhagen contains the gist of the whole matter.

Feb. 1751. The Court of Denmark will be difficult to approach . . . but one need not fear that she will throw herself on the opposite side because it is of no less importance to Denmark than it is to your Majesty and to France—as they seem to be convinced here—that Sweden shall not fall into dependance on Russia.

A few weeks later Frederick wrote concerning the agreements the various Courts were willing to make with Charlotte Sophie, and remarked : “The great difficulty will be to make the Countess agree, convinced as she is of the validity of her rights, and embittered as she is against her husband.”

But Frederick did not despair of turning the situation to his advantage, though on April 9th of the same year he wrote to Tyrconnel, the



French Minister at Berlin, saying that he has no authority over Charlotte Sophie, who merely came to his Court to ask his protection against her oppressors. He added: "Would it therefore be seemly for me to have the conditions drawn up by my Ministers which the Countess in their opinion should accept, and then force her to sign them? It appears to me that this would be too hard and odious a proceeding on my part."

Yet it was precisely the proceeding he adopted in the end!

However, the pressure was applied by degrees, and a week later he assures her that he will not oblige her to accept the proposed terms, but would point out that if she refuses them he can no longer act as mediator.

Even with the great Frederick, Charlotte Sophie made her personality felt, for he writes to Copenhagen on May 8th: "As to Countess Bentinck, you must understand that she is not a woman of whom one can dispose as one will, for she is proud and capricious beyond the bounds of what you can conceive."

By this time, Frederick's relations with various European Courts were decidedly strained on account of his championship of Charlotte Sophie. Joined to certain instructions to his Maréchal we find the following: "On the top of these has come the affair of Madame de Bentinck, and the sequestration which the Imperial Court has laid

on that of Denmark to my prejudice, which obliged me to send troops to Kniphausen. The Court of Denmark appeared annoyed. At present, by the aid of France, they are trying to arrange this matter.”

Bernstorff, the Danish statesman, of whom Charlotte Sophie speaks so bitterly in her later letters, was even then obviously disliked and mistrusted by her. He objected to clauses in the settlement, lost his temper, and further complicated matters. Frederick was warned by his Minister at Copenhagen that the affair was making him unpopular, and a little later this same Minister wrote very urgently saying that it has now become a question whether the King's interests or those of Countess Bentinck are to come first. The letter is a long one, and from this time Frederick seems gradually to have ceased advocating her cause at the various European Courts.

I have already referred (in Vice-Admiral William Bentinck's notes) to the project Frederick conceived of annulling Charlotte Sophie's marriage and marrying her to his brother Henry. She would not agree, as we know, and later on fresh trouble arose between the King and his very self-willed and active-minded friend. This time Voltaire's quarrels seem to have caused unpleasantness, and from a letter written to her by Frederick in 1753 one imagines that she found

it impossible to live at Berlin without taking a hand in the stirring game of politics which was being played so energetically just then.

Frederick writes :—

Without entering into any particulars of certain matters which could not fail to displease me extremely, I beg you to regulate your conduct better in the future, and not again to meddle with matters which cannot be indifferent to me, and which do not concern you in any way whatever. It is not the affair with Voltaire, and your private relations with him which awakened my displeasure ; it is a question of something totally different, which I do not care to discuss, and you would be wiser to drop that unfortunate correspondence entirely and follow instead the good advice I give you so that I can once more restore to you my confidence and my friendship. . . . You can think and write of me what you choose, Madame, that you wish me good or evil will not furnish me with any grievance against you, but there are things about which I am less indifferent, and which will oblige me to “eclater” if you do not promptly order your behaviour differently.

And finally :—

It remains only for me to tell you that you will always be allowed to live here at your ease and will never be inconvenienced in any way so long as you do not meddle at all in affairs in the remotest way connected with me, my household or foreign countries, which I cannot permit to any one, whoever he may be.



Madame. J'ai vu la lettre que vous venez de me faire le  
15<sup>e</sup> de ce mois, mais sans vouloir entrer dans aucun détail des  
choses que n'ont pu que me dire de plaines en plaines, de vous prie  
de vouloir mieux observer votre conduite à l'avenir et ne plus  
vous mêler d'affaires qui ne sont point de votre compétence et  
qui ne vous regardent en aucune façon. Ce n'est point l'usage  
de l'Allemagne et de la Prusse particulières avec lesq<sup>u</sup>els qui a causé  
bien involontairement, et s'agit de toute autres choses sur les  
quelles je n'aime pas d'entrer en répétition et vous ne sauriez  
mieux faire, que de laisser tomber entièrement cette correspondance  
ce je prie et encore d'ailleurs le bon conseil que de vous donner  
afin que de puisse vous rendre la vieillesse et tranquille  
sur ce je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde  
à Berlin le 20<sup>e</sup> Avril 1780.

Il vous est permis de puerer de parler et d'écrire  
de moy ce qu'il vous plait Madame, que vous me  
vouliez du bien ou du Mal, cela ne me fera rien  
peut être de vous dire que vous, mais il y a des choses  
sur les quelles je suis moins indifférent et qui m'obligent  
d'écrire si vous m'en mettez ordre promptement

Fr.

À la Comtesse de Bentheim  
née d'Altenburg.



## CHAPTER VII

**N**O doubt it was at Berlin that Charlotte Sophie first met Voltaire. A certain number of his letters to her were published in the *Revue de Paris* (September, 1898), and a large quantity are preserved both at Indio and Middachten.

They continued close friends till his death, and her name when it appears in his correspondence is always accompanied by a eulogy. Writing to M. Roque, in 1753, Voltaire tells him that twice she induced La Beaumelle to burn a satire in which he attacked him.

Referring to Voltaire's famous quarrel with Frederick the Great, Charlotte Sophie wrote: "When he had the misfortune to displease the King I saw him in so violent and unusual a state that I feared he might do something desperate which would irritate and still further annoy the King. It is true that I had succeeded a couple of times in checking him and calming him, but I could not spend my life with Mr. de Voltaire."

Not only did Charlotte Sophie soothe her friend. She also told him some home truths. A letter of hers, dated 1763, runs as follows: "I shall



always be attached to Mr. de Voltaire by admiration, taste and habit. . . . I am wise enough to write to him from Jever less frequently than I did from a certain capital. . . . I have not kept one line of the epistles [she always copied her letters] which I wrote him formerly, not to say flattering things of which I am incapable, but to tell him what I believe to be the truth, which few people trouble to tell."

But in spite of Charlotte Sophie's assertion that she had destroyed the copies of her letters from "a [certain capital," in which she tried to calm Voltaire and gave him sincere, if unpalatable, advice, the following transcript of one of the letters in question has come to light at Indio. Following on her disclaimer it is particularly interesting and is quite in her best style. It is dated May 26th, 1753, and is from Berlin. It covers six and a half closely written large pages, and after a few unimportant opening words she goes on to say :—

I like odd projects quite as much as does Maupe-  
tuis, and I have formed one which is as difficult as  
it is unprecedented. I aspire, Monsieur, to persuade  
you, to calm you, to control you if I can. Yes!  
You laugh! But this and nothing less, is my aim!  
I, who could not influence you in the slightest degree  
even when I had the pleasure of seeing you daily,  
who could not even persuade you to listen to your  
own heart, now that you are forty leagues from

Germany I recover my *sang-froid* and try to conquer your obstinacy, and that at the very moment when doubtless there is but the Duchess of Gotha in the whole world for you, who unites to her personal merit the attractions of her position and all those attributes of wit and genius which your gratitude and poetical imagination knows how to appreciate so generously in the objects of your esteem.

In God's name listen to me with a little calmness. This is all I ask. You speak to me of your position with regard to the King in the touching way which I expect from you and which you owe to your own character. This is the same prince to whom I have seen you attached to the verge of enthusiasm, whom for fifteen years you positively adored, who was the first to seek you out, to ask for your friendship, in spite of the prejudice of his nation, of his family and of his education ; who received you at his Court as his friend and his equal, who has done for you what he never did for the kings, who loved you, who perhaps regrets you. It is this prince, unique amongst sovereigns who, without question, will be still more illustrious in centuries to come ! He is a monarch on whom the eyes of Europe are at this moment fixed. He it is on whom, as you admitted to me, you counted for the whole happiness of your life, and it is on his behalf that I ask of you an effort which you ought to make for any honest man and any ordinary friend.

Have you not done enough to prove your firmness and obstinacy ? You have defied him in his own

capital, you have tried to provoke him, yet have not tired out his patience, you quitted him with words of bitterness and reproach on your lips! What other king, what other living being, whether he were in the right or in the wrong, and having the power to assert himself would have endured what he has endured? There can never be any question of arguing with kings. Their code is different from that of private individuals, and God alone is the judge of their actions. The Elector Palatine wants you, and the Margrave of Bareith awaits you. All that is very flattering and pleasant, but it is precisely what would lend value to your conduct with regard to the King. It would have far less merit if necessity dragged you back to his feet, while nothing but your heart should bring you there.

For make no mistake—this public esteem, this great name for which you have so untiringly worked, depend in a large measure on your present behaviour to this prince. Your genius will be always admired. You will always be the author of the century. But is that the whole of your ambition? Will you be nothing more than a clever man?

The friendship of the King of Prussia, given to you after those public storms and continued till the end of your days, will alone render your character the equal of your talents and assure to you lasting fame. Personal honour, worthy sentiments, proved virtues, all will be your prize and the guide of the return of your Heros.

I do not even know if the glory of your genius is



not involved in your present conduct. The public may acclaim but will hardly admire for long a character without truth and without justice. Yet you must recollect that the praises of the King are sown broadcast in all your Works. It is you, Monsieur, who have described him as humane, generous, and just. If he had not these virtues, why did you write a panegyric of him, and if he has these admirable qualities, which for long past Europe has recognised, how will you justify your change of opinion, and your rupture with him ?

Believe me, Monsieur, that for you there is but one course to take if you aspire to immortality, and now that you are calm I call on your own judgment to follow it. But there is more in the matter than this. If you are not absolutely master of yourself, you will inevitably lose all, for you will act ungraciously.

Do not think I ask a base action of you : I am incapable of it, and I would rather see my friends unhappy than contemptible. But there is nothing base in submitting to a man born to command, and whom one loves.

It would be absurd and indecent for the King to humiliate himself to you even if he were somewhat in the wrong. It is right and proper for you to submit to him even were all the right on your side. This is so clear a fact and so completely in accord with common sense that an exceptionally violent act could alone cast a doubt on it. Your genius is too profound and your mind too just for you to evolve

fantastic schemes for the overturning of Society and of established order.

Ask your own heart for a moment while you silence hatred and contempt. Is it not true that you still love the King? And how could it be otherwise? You know him. You have lived on familiar terms with him. Do you not feel all the terrible bitterness of your footing with him? Does it not poison every moment of your life? Providence created Voltaire in the happy century of Frederick! Malignity, intrigue, Maupertuis, La Beaumelle, were they created to disturb the wise order which made the great King and the great man shine together and for each other?

Let us sound the depths of another error. You tell me that Maupertuis has covered himself with ridicule and contempt in the eyes of all literary Europe. But you yourself do not believe it. If you really despise him, believe me that you no longer hate him, and that this hatred will have no further effect on your character and happiness. Forget him, Monsieur. Do a good action and thus you will dishonour him!

Do not hope that I will give you any peace till I have persuaded you to take the only step which will justify my sentiment for you. Everyone agrees with me when I admire you. I ask you to help me to oblige everyone to agree with me when I vow you an eternal friendship.

It is not only in time of war that one must profit by the opportunity of the moment. The present time is unique. You are outside the King's States,

you have reflected long enough to allow your feelings to triumph. Your stumbling-block is no longer here, the Elector Palatine holds out his arms to you, they await you and desire you at Bareith, the Duchess of Gotha overwhelms you with favour! This is the moment to make a sacrifice, without boastings or reproaches. What have you to fear, and what holds you back? Do you no longer know the King? Has your hatred of Maupertuis effaced from your mind all recollection of the King's humanity, and that virtue so rare in princes, the ability to forget a fault and be ignorant of any thought of revenge? Even his enemies admit this truth, and I have to tell you that I have just had so striking a proof of his great character that I am able to swear to you by all I hold most sacred that you need only take half a step towards him in order for him to generously walk all the rest of the way with you, as the most obscure private individual might alone permit himself to do. Therefore try but once to take this first step. But do it nobly. Use no trickery, above all make neither reproaches nor recriminations, nor conditions. Forget, for the love of God, just for one year, that there exists a Maupertuis, a König, a Leibnitz and a *minimum*. All that, upon my honour, is not worth one friendly look from the most lovable of men, for all that needs wit, and the King asks only for your heart.

Draw nearer to his country. Do not go to Leipsig, where they are perhaps jealous because they were not born under his laws. Go, therefore, to some frontier



town. Write from there to our enchanter. Tell him you love him, that you want to see him, that the past exists no more, and that you are sure he will be too busy trying to do good in the future to recollect it. That you want to give back to him that which is his, your heart.

If ever you repent of this step I consent, Monsieur, to be dishonoured in your mind.

The letter continues for nearly a page more, and ends :—

Adieu, Monsieur. If any friendship remains in you for me, I need but this one proof of it to supply me with the happy opportunity of giving you my everlasting esteem. C. S.

The following letter from Voltaire, though written a year later, is of interest from its reference to the subject of the foregoing. It is the only letter amongst the large quantity by Voltaire preserved at Indio which is not in his own writing. Most likely Charlotte Sophie sent the original to the King (who did not return it) after having it copied.

*At Colmar. March 3 (1754).*

Amidst the maladies which for so long have tormented me and make me surprised that I am still alive, all I desire before I die is that his Majesty, the King of Prussia, should know that I have kept for him till my last moment the respectful sentiments

1001

mon Meur Oncle a été touché de la situation  
et nous la avons prise, elle a 18 ans, elle est  
gentille, sans être belle; son caractère est aimable,  
et nous sommes fort contents de notre belle  
action, faites en une Madame en me pardonnant  
mes fautes, je les mérite par le respectueux  
attachement avec lequel j'aurais l'honneur  
de vous écrire mes vives

Madame, Votre très humble et  
très obéissant serviteur  
Denis

Meur Oncle mériterait bien que je ne vous dis  
rien pour lui, mais je l'aime trop pour me  
venger si cruellement, si vous a nuse de son  
espèce, nous souhaitons à main armée toutes  
les prospérités, elles nous sont d'autant plus chères  
quelles nous valent Madame des lettres charmantes  
de vous.

MADAME DENIS (VOLTAIRE'S NIECE, WHO KEPT HOUSE FOR HIM)  
TO CHARLOTTE SOPHIE





which attached me to him when he conferred on me so many benefits.

The cruel enemy who ruined me in his eyes cannot take from me my way of thinking. Directly he got to Paris they printed a miserable piece of writing in which they enter into detail concerning the King's cuisine, and speak of the royal family with the most contemptible and punishable indecency.

This impertinent piece of writing was circulated already in the middle of 1752. At least twenty persons can bear witness to it, and the Marquis de Valoris, formerly *envoyé* at the Court of the King of Prussia, is ready to testify that he saw this infamous writing in 1752.

Nevertheless my enemy, who wishes to ruin me, accuses me of having done it in revenge for what happened to my niece and me at Frankfort,<sup>1</sup> and he is the only person in the Empire who pretends to believe this calumny.

It is known, however, that when going to France by Cassel he stayed there four days under the name of Morel, that he had a libel printed at the Librarie Etienne, and that he sent it to Monseigneur, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha in order to prevent his continuing his protection to me. I flatter myself that his Majesty, convinced of my innocence, will at least do justice to the feelings of my heart.

I am quite certain that neither their Majesties, the Queens, nor their Royal Highnesses, the Princes,

<sup>1</sup> The arrest under violent circumstances and imprisonment of himself and Madame Denis by order of Frederick,

will impute so abominable and ridiculous a work to me.

(This has "Voltaire" written at the end. He himself always signed his letters to Charlotte Sophie simply *V.*)

## CHAPTER VIII

**M**ANY of Voltaire's letters to Charlotte Sophie are not dated, but one can generally guess by their contents the year when they were written.

It must have been in the days of his greatest popularity with Frederick that Voltaire wrote:—

At Sans Souci there are nothing but happy thoughts. It is a fairy palace when the master is absent, a temple of the gods when he is there. . . .

I am with a great king, a great man, in a delightful place, with my entire liberty, yet I am unhappy. Much is wanting to me, for I am far from you, and ill.

Sometimes he entrusts his MSS. to Charlotte Sophie, requesting her to have them printed for him at Amsterdam. "I count on you," he writes, "to let no one ever know that I have had the honour of sending you this. If you have the *Pensées Funestes* will you kindly lend it to me."

Later on he writes from Potsdam:—

The stories of the Court of Berlin are shameful if amusing. One's nature cannot easily accommodate itself to much that one sees in this world. I have



burnt your letter ; do the same kindness by mine.  
 . . . I should like to spend my life with you.

In the summer of 1758 Charlotte Sophie paid a visit to Voltaire on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. He could not be there when she arrived, but on July 4th, 1758, he wrote saying he supposes that by now she is at Les Delices and her servants at Mont Rion. As she travelled about with quite a little Court, the accommodation of the party must have been rather a problem. In the same letter Voltaire advises her as to a college at Lausanne for her "trois jeunes gens." We shall hear of these "jeunes gens," Donop, Pairs and Weisbrod, later, and the misconception her boundless kindness and charity laid her open to.

From Soleure he writes again on August 27th, 1758 :—

Mon Dieu, Madame, what things I have to tell you ! How strange our romance is ! We will take up the thread of our adventures since 1753 ! There should be enough to fill a volume of *Cassandra* or *Cyrus*.

It is true that, for a heroine, you are none too well lodged at Mont Rion with your *écuyers*, but you know that princesses and knights-errant had sometimes to put up with very bad quarters. Adieu, Madame, adieu, Statira. I have not the honour of being your *écuyer*, but I am attached to you with all the respectful sentiment of a knight of the olden times.

Many of Voltaire's letters to Charlotte Sophie are about her lawsuit, in which he displayed the keenest interest. "Mr. de Triangle" was no doubt her lawyer. On August 2nd, 1759, Voltaire wrote: "I should die happy if I had helped to win your case for you," and in July of the following year, "I am occupied unceasingly with Mr. de Triangle and the *chicaneur*. This *chicaneur* [no doubt Count Bentinck] sent me some of his pleadings which I have put into good hands, and which have not benefited his cause. I hope he will lose his unjust suit, and that Mr. de Triangle, who knows some of his abominable manœuvres, will make him pay the whole cost of so unjust a business."

A few days later he adds: "Your enemy, and the personal enemy of Mr. de Triangle is, between ourselves, the worst man I know, the blackest soul and in truth the basest."

And on September 10th, 1762, he says: "Come to Tournay; you were created for a free country and you shall be Sovereign there."

The last of his letters to her is dated November 6th, 1777. He died in May of the following year.

Charlotte Sophie's residence at Vienna during the Seven Years' War was very useful to Voltaire, for she kept him informed of all that was going on. Writing to Count Mercy d'Argenteuil, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, he says: "Directly

the Austrians have an advantage the Count de Kaunitz [the great Minister of Marie Thérèse] says to Madame de Bentinck, *go and write that at once to our friend.*"

When the Count de Choiseul was appointed French Ambassador to Austria, Voltaire wrote to Count Mercy: "Do not let him forget Countess Bentinck at Vienna if he wishes to be amused."

We shall have noticed Voltaire's allusions to Count Bentinck's attempt to win him over to his cause. He tried very hard in 1749 to predispose the Court of Vienna also in his favour. We must recollect that marriage disputes of the nobility were decided at the Imperial Court, and the Archives at Vienna bear witness to the amount of litigation Charlotte Sophie's affairs imposed on the *Cour Aulique*.

In 1749 Count Bentinck became on very friendly terms with both the Emperor and Empress. He arrived at Vienna charged with a mission on behalf of the Prince of Orange, in connection with the Treaties of the Barrier States, and other matters, including the question of the coronation of the Crown Prince as King of Rome. Count Bentinck, with his close ties in England, Germany and Holland, was particularly well fitted to carry out such negotiations, and he met with a very cordial reception from the Emperor and Empress and made many friends at their Court. His journal is preserved



amongst the Archives of the Royal Palace at The Hague. It is in French, and has been published, together with a short history of Austria from the year 1749 to 1755.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Count Bentinck had established friendly relations with Vienna made his wife's position particularly difficult when her case came up before the Cour Aulique a few years later, and accounts for the excessive nervousness she felt when she visited that capital and had her first audience with the Empress Marie Thérèse. One gains an excellent idea of what passed from a large number of letters she received during the first year or so of her stay at Vienna. Letters from her are rare of this date, and it was not till the last fifteen years of her life that I have been able to find them in considerable quantities. No doubt many still exist in private archives in France and Germany, and perhaps this book may gain access for me to much interesting material concerning Charlotte Sophie. But it was only in 1790 that she began her regular and voluminous correspondence with her grandchildren. Except with her mother and the Princess of Zerbst, she kept up no correspondence with any of her relations till she was an old woman.

Of her residence at Vienna we learn most

<sup>1</sup> "*Aufzeichnungen des Grafen William Bentick über Maria Theresia, mit einer einleitung : über die Österreichische politik in den jahren 1749-1755.*" By Adolf Beer (Wien, 1871).

from the Gottsched letters. Johann Christoph Gottsched and his wife Luise Adelgunde Victoria, youngest daughter of the "High born and High learned" Dr. Johann George Kulmus, were her most intimate friends. With her "little court" (as Frau Gottsched described it) she had spent the year previous to her arrival at Vienna—1754—at Leipsig, and when she left she settled most of her people there under the guardianship of the Gottscheds.

Her household remaining at Leipsig included old Weisbrod,<sup>1</sup> his son and little daughter, young Charles Donop and little William Pairs. She took with her to Vienna Weisbrod's wife and Donop's sister. Donop's father had died at Jever in 1752, and his son, writing in a child's hand, says :—

Pardon me, Madame, for not notifying your Excellency sooner of the death of my father. . . . As for me, this is a fresh reason for thanking God who by His Supreme Will having terminated the days of my dear father, inspired your Excellency in your great goodness to take upon yourself the care and the expense of my education.

Writing only a few months before, the Princess of Zerbst says, "I embrace the amiable Donop, her husband, all the little family."

Thus we see that these Donops, belonging to

<sup>1</sup> Johann Philip Weisbrod, Court Painter. See *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*.

her husband's principality of Jever, had for years past been befriended by the Princess of Zerbst. There was some mystery connected with Charles Donop, but what it was I do not know. I am certain, however, from many evidences I have become acquainted with, and from his voluminous correspondence with Charlotte Sophie, which I have seen, that he had no right after her death to claim an allowance on the ground of relationship.

The Princess of Zerbst knew all about him, and there are many letters from and concerning him in the archives at Zerbst, chiefly relating to appointments he wished in after years obtained for him. That he was on intimate terms with the family of the Duke and Duchess of Zerbst is proved by a letter of his written in 1768 to Charlotte Sophie, in which he tells her that he thinks of asking Catherine II to be god-mother to one of his children. He was for some time at Vienna while Charlotte Sophie was pleading her cause with the Empress. She was surrounded by her husband's spies, only too anxious to discover the slightest thing to her discredit, and it would have been madness for her to have associated herself at such a time with any one whose presence could have led to adverse comment. That Donop, and Weisbrod and Pairs were all three adopted and cared for out of sheer kindness by this large-hearted,



extravagant, lonely woman is a conviction forced on me more and more with every additional beam of light that is thrown on my subject.

These "jeunes gens," as Voltaire calls them, had a tutor whose life seems to have been far from enviable. They lived in a house rented by Charlotte Sophie, and Frau Gottsched superintended their expenses and looked after them.

## CHAPTER IX

**T**HE Princess (or Dowager Duchess) of Anhalt-Zerbst, mother of Catherine II of Russia, was Charlotte Sophie's cousin and lifelong friend. I visited Zerbst recently and looked for letters from her in the Archives. But only a few, written to the Princess' son some years earlier, when his mother was ill, were forthcoming. The whole of Charlotte Sophie's correspondence with the Princess passed through Frau Gottsched's hands, in order to ensure it against spies. The Princess' letters to Charlotte Sophie at this period—some hundreds—are at Middachten.

Charlotte Sophie's description of her first interview with Marie Thérèse is commented on in a brilliant letter from Herr Gottsched, dated January 13, 1755 :—

Well, did I not tell your Excellency so? Was it not worth while to go to Vienna, even in the middle of winter, to adore the Divinity of the Austrians? The fine prelude at Prague, is it not justified by what has followed, when you see the gracious hand which delights to work miracles for the good of her subjects? . . .

. . . Has not your Excellency herself written to Madame Gottsched saying I was right? Thank God! For once I was right in my life! I, poor mortal, who so often was wrong, in my taste regarding the greater number of antiquities, in my love for Germany, in my detestation of the admiration of everything new and strange and in many other things! I am right then in this important fact that Marie Thérèse deserves the first throne in the world for her splendid character, her angelic and absolutely divine heart, that she eclipses all the divinities of a certain great palace,<sup>1</sup> more truthful perhaps than Vienna, but far worse in a thousand other respects. And what if there is more wit there than in the capital of the Empire? Lucifer was far cleverer than any poor human being, and one does not look in a Divinity for traits of wit and sarcasm which delight in making others unhappy. . . .

. . . The unanimous male voice of Europe is confirmed by the immense weight of a clever, cultivated, and impartial feminine opinion. Nothing has given me greater pleasure, since the day that I made the personal acquaintance of your Excellency and admired your great talents and infinite merit, than this admirable account of your audience. It was a *chef d'œuvre* of word painting, a complete model of poetry and eloquence and the faithful portrait of all that passed in a sensitive heart, torn by anxiety, embarrassed by the fear of an unfortunate result from an important lawsuit, annoyed at being reduced to such chances,

<sup>1</sup> At Berlin.



and to seek the protection of a Court where so many influences had been used against her, only expecting a stiff audience, devoid of consolation and even perhaps exposed to a rebuff. Contrary to all this, however, your Excellency was struck with the vision of an apparition totally different, dazzled by a charming Princess, by an angel on earth, reassured by a gracious reception, enchanted by a divine smile, delighted with the resemblance to an object<sup>1</sup> beloved for many years, and till then regarded as the one estimable and lovable person in the world. I wept, man though I am, and a man from whom his own misfortunes have never drawn a tear, I wept when the passage from your Excellency's letter was read, so touched was I by the vivid feelings of your joy, your amazement, all the sensations you experienced.

On the same day Frau Gottsched wrote:—

I sent to your rooms to enquire for your orphans and especially for the poor invalid.<sup>2</sup> The good old man wept when he saw my servant, and replied in a voice suffocated with emotion that his leg pains him a great deal. He spoke much about Barisien, the tutor, who makes him believe just what he chooses, and is his second self.

A few days later, however, Frau Gottsched writes that she is extremely annoyed with old Weisbrod who is furious because Charlotte

<sup>1</sup> Marie Thérèse closely resembled the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst.

<sup>2</sup> Old Weisbrod.

Sophie has appointed her paymaster instead of himself, and had told her servant so.

Frau Gottsched continues:—

I refused to send him two gold Louis, which he wanted to lend to Mr. Kelly.<sup>1</sup> If Mr. Kelly had only told me or my husband we would have given it out of our own pockets, but he addressed himself to the Lieutenant, who sent me the chevalier's note open, by the house-boy, with a message requesting me to send two Louis. I replied that I would do no such thing, and that I was not the owner of a *sol* of the money your Excellency entrusted me with, except by her orders.

I hear all over the town, I hear through his nephew, I hear from his own son (oh! the amiable youth!) that the story of his foot grows daily worse. I tell you about it, Madame, believing it to be my duty (and still more because I am anxious to retain for you a faithful old servant). You ordered me to send for the doctor, for the surgeon. I did so, and now all is fire and flame! The surgeon foams with rage, the patient does the same. I dismiss the surgeon next day, and the doctor sends me a message in good German by my maid, that I have no business to interfere with his affairs. You see, Madame, that I do not send him your letters by a servant, as I wish him to realize that I act on your orders, and I will not again send him extracts from them as I wrote twice to him (for love of you) and had no answer except through the house-boy!

<sup>1</sup> Count Kelly-Pagani.

I have notified him that I have received some money for his son, which I have not given and shall not give without authority from the person who sent it. Without that, I would not give up to the Grand Turk a letter addressed to one of his slaves.

I sent to tell him to-day that your Excellency did not wish him to write one word of all the trouble we took for his convalescence, that I had acted on your Excellency's orders, and that if she had told me to send ten doctors I would have done so whether he liked it or not. He made a frightful scene in his room. He beat the drum on the table in the presence of my manservant, while exclaiming that he must go and tell me it was not for me to lay down laws for him, that he will most certainly write *everything* to his wife, that she shall know all, and that neither . . . nor . . . had anything to teach him as to matrimony. My manservant, who has not at all the reputation of being timid, seeing such frightful passion in an old man, to whom I have always told him to be very polite, made for the door and fled from the room. He came to tell me all about it with a face still quite pale, and I laughed heartily, as you will do also, I hope. But be assured, at least, Madame, that I am punished for all my sins! I have sent several times to ask for little Mimi.<sup>1</sup> Not at all! Sometimes she has a cold, sometimes she coughs, sometimes she is going to the Duchess<sup>2</sup> (where for very excellent reasons I should be glad if she did not go too often), sometimes the weather is too cold, sometimes the

<sup>1</sup> Weisbrod's little daughter.

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess of Courland.



servant cannot be spared, sometimes . . . what can I tell? I think the Pope wants to marry her!

All this between ourselves, divine Countess! I beg you laugh, but say nothing! I shall manage to put all straight with the Lieutenant, I who would not swallow an impertinence to my servants from the Field-Marshal of all the Field-Marshals in the world!

The Duchess of Courland and the Abbé Victor have advised and almost entreated Kelly to leave here, as they do not consider he is safe.

On January 13th Frau Gottsched writes:—

Your Berlin heart, so prejudiced against the Austrian Court and against the most worthy person it has perhaps ever produced, seems to have received a violent shock. . . . I laughed like a mad woman at the picture you drew of your amazement and delight . . . all was exactly as one would have desired, your emotion, your trembling, your forgetfulness of your own affairs! It is just as I would have disposed of the circumstances had I been in your place. It was far better than all that torrent of eloquence which you have at your command, and which could only have shown the Empress the superiority of your intellect over her own, instead of which she imagined she was superior to you.

And next day she continues:—

The Lieutenant has been here. He walks with a little difficulty, but he walks, and is fat and strong.

Envoiy extraordinaire, et le General de Breilach de cette de Bienté  
voilà nos nouvelles de détail avec la poste d'aujourd'hui, par lettre!  
Le Sr Lieutenent ne s'est pas levé à la fin, s'il continue d'être  
sans aller à grand nuit comme il est. Je vous en dirai plus l'ordinaire  
prochain, mais en attendant Dieu m'assisté!

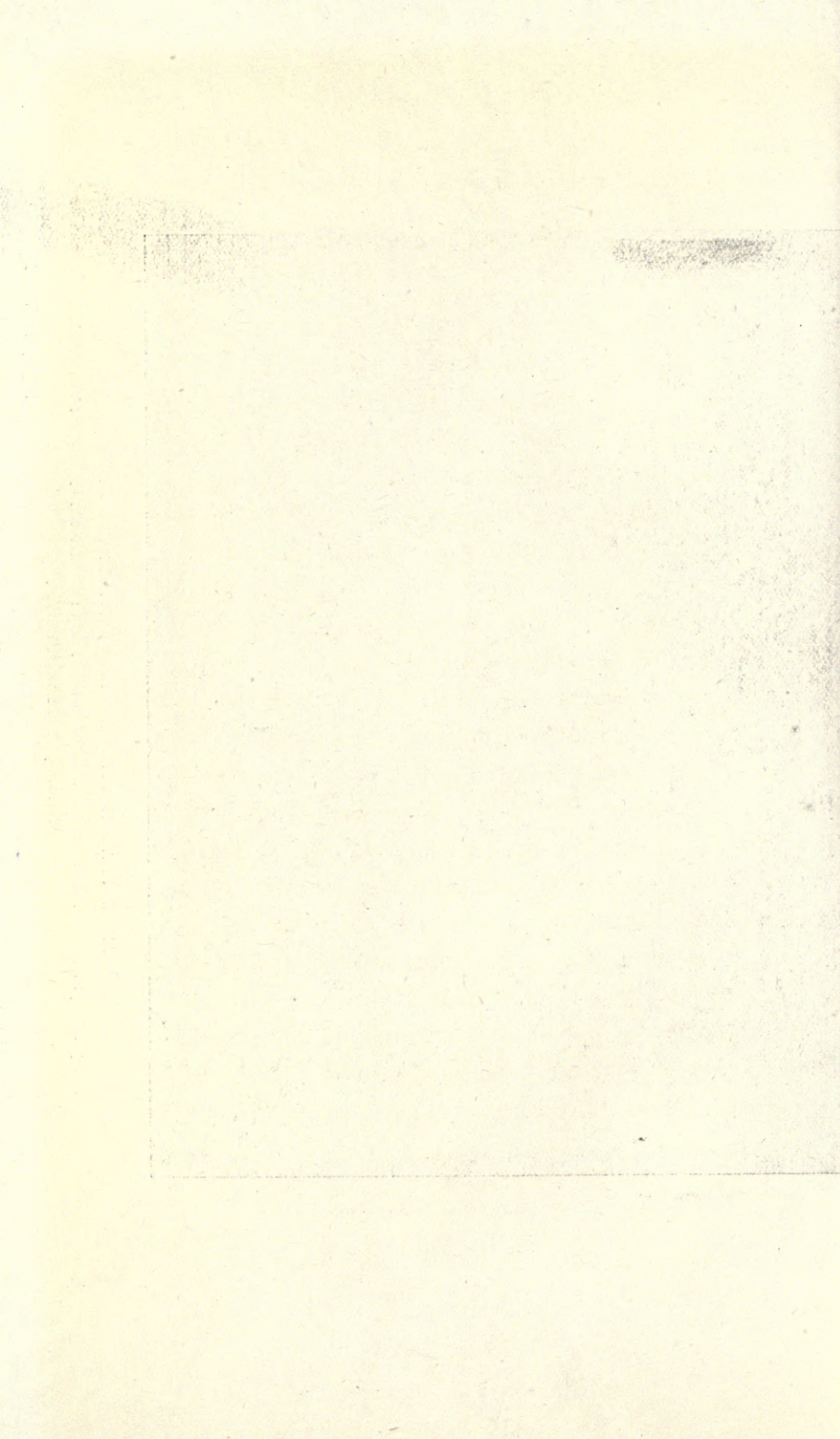
Adieu Divine fontevre, je ne puis qu'être à vous, tant que  
j'existerai.

L'Hyg.

P. S. Surtout M<sup>rs</sup> Gottsched qui me demande expressément de vous en  
mon paquet, et j'en l'avois déjà fermé, pour vous assurer, Madame, de ses  
profondes obligations, et de ses vœux les plus sincères pour la réussite de  
vos affaires. Je vous en prie de retourner au moins.

FROM FRAU GOTTSCHED TO COUNTESS BENTINCK

The postscript refers to a coolness on Professor Gottsched's part on account of Countess Bentinck's cordiality to one of his enemies





A man who has married his fourth wife does not die of absence<sup>1</sup> and sadness. Your orphans are all well.

Again, on January 21st, concerning the famous interview :—

Ah, Madame, why cannot I transform myself into a Princess, just for the time I need to write this letter, for I have the best will in the world to give you a scolding. Shall I say to you that Countess Bentinck, with her elevated mind and superior intellect, always above the blows of ill-fortune and the dazzling brilliance of the world, has been so weak as to let herself be imposed upon by a beautiful face!<sup>2</sup> Since when has Marie Thérèse inspired so much confidence and respect? Since when has her goodness and humanity made one of the foremost persons of our century tremble, before whom many people, and perhaps she herself, would tremble if she knew her well? Since when are mere bodily attractions ranked as the highest qualities of a great woman, and merit an extreme homage and an excessive fear from a heart so angelic, so noble as yours? Yes, a homage, almost an idolatry from one whose character and beauty of soul and mind would suffice for half a dozen individuals, any one of whom would equal Marie Thérèse. Respect yourself, Madame! Do not, by your timidity, insult the choice your

<sup>1</sup> His wife was with Charlotte Sophie.

<sup>2</sup> There is a fine life-sized portrait of Marie Thérèse at Indio, which was one of her many gifts to Charlotte Sophie. Mr. Bentinck also possesses a wonderful coloured wax bust of the Empress which belonged to Charlotte Sophie.

august friend at Zerbst made of your heart, by allowing the charm of a face to have an effect upon you it should never exercise on a mind too noble not to be consistent. Be brave with this Princess, who after all is only a very beautiful woman, which is not her doing. She is Empress, Queen, which also she owes to chance, but deserves by a thousand excellent qualities, and these are her real and only true merit. To recognize her worth, you must observe her at much closer quarters than you have as yet. Profit by Carnival time, which will give you innumerable opportunities of seeing her familiarly, of speaking to her with confidence! Do not act so that the terrible journey you have taken, all the fatigue you have undergone, all the anxiety which your position causes to that divine Princess of Zerbst, and finally all your outlay (a matter that minds as noble as yours think of least of all) shall have been in vain. Call to your help all your Berlin prejudices, that arrogance of the House of Austria, all the weaknesses of Marie Thérèse for her husband, all the oppression of the Protestants during her reign, and finally arm yourself with all the horror you experience for her irremediable sin—her fourteen children! In a word, call to mind, Madame, that real beauty is in the mind and heart. . . . On those grounds you will always be Empress *vis-à-vis* of Marie Thérèse, too happy if she is Countess *vis-à-vis* of you.

## CHAPTER X

**I**N some of the following letters from Frau Gottsched it will be seen how devoted was the friendship between the Princess of Zerbst and Charlotte Sophie.

From the Princess' letters at Middachten and from those of Frau Gottsched I should judge her to have been a charming and excellent woman. Her daughter's reference to her in her Memoirs one must discount as one would the testimony of any daughter against any mother. The Princess does not, however, bear a very high character in history, but the references to her are infrequent. I think that if the hundreds of letters from her in Count Bentinck's possession were carefully edited, and the more important portions published, an interesting and perhaps instructive volume would result which might throw much light on her character.

Sometimes Charlotte Sophie told her adored Jeanne Elizabeth some home truths. The latter writes to her on one occasion :—

It is true I was born only a Princess, and a little German Princess. It is a refrain that for long has been my consolation for the time I awaited. It seems



now to have come. I am greatly mortified but no less, Madame, your sincere friend  
J. E.

On January 31st, 1756, Frau Gottsched remarks to Charlotte Sophie :—

I do not know what Your Excellence wrote to our Idol, but obviously, Madame, you must have given rather a lively description of the Empress, for she is furiously jealous.

The following, dated February 21st, has a certain interest for readers, as “the Philosopher” of the letters at the end of these volumes now first appears :—

Little Weisbrod has been with me. To try him, I suggested his reminding your Excellence about the watch you promised him—William Pairs had told me about it. He lowered his eyes, and said it would be quite impossible ever to mention it, that he had done nothing to deserve it that day, and that he could not ask for anything from a person who had overwhelmed him and all his family with favours. I could hardly help embracing this charming little lump of wax which a tutor is fortunate to have the moulding of. Now for a secret quite in your ear which shows you why I did not give that money to the Lieutenant. I found he was contracting small debts in all directions. I assure you I hesitate to entrust him with any money unless it actually belongs to him.

In one of her extremely flattering letters, speaking to and of Charlotte Sophie, Madame

Gottsched writes: "That divine woman, who was born to render the human race happy, but not to render it numerous."

For the first time, Madame Gottsched has seen the Princess of Zerbst.

She asks :—

Do you know whom the august Elizabeth, seen from the back, resembles? It is Your Excellency! Far or near, seeing just her back and shoulders, one would take you for the same person. This resemblance struck me greatly when I first saw it. The Princess was seated at my bureau, finishing her letter to you. She was in that chair where you have been seated a hundred times, and after I had taken a candle from the servant to seal her letter, I walked about softly behind the chair of the divine one. I looked at her from the side, observing the great resemblance, and could hardly prevent myself from throwing myself at her feet and crying, "Divine Countess, have I really the happiness of seeing you again?" Speaking of the resemblance to Marie Thérèse, she has much, much, especially when she smiles, but not enough to mistake one for the other.

Herr Gottsched wrote Charlotte Sophie an account of his interview with Frederick the Great in November. The whole of it is worth translating. These letters are all in French, at Charlotte Sophie's special request, for she complained that German tried her eyes.

Madame,

I am the happiest and proudest of mortals, but in spite of my pride I abase myself before Your Excellency, to inform you of my happiness and the sources of my vanity. Even if one were in heaven, one would be in despair on returning from the tenth sphere, to find no one to whom one could give an account of all one had seen and heard.

I have seen the Solomon of the North, Madame, I have seen the Prince his eldest brother, I have seen the God of Taste. Your Excellency can now judge of my feelings. And, what is more, all three divinities graciously remembered Countess Bentinck! May I dilate a little on this triple happiness, which distinguished me in the eyes of the whole town, amidst all our public calamities?

About a fortnight ago, when the Prince of Prussia arrived, the rector of the University sent deputies to him to congratulate him. After the formalities were over, the Prince deigned to inquire about your humble servants, Madame Gottsched and me. What a distinction! They notified me. Though confused by this compliment I thought it proper to present myself to the Prince and thank him for his gracious recollection of me. I had the opportunity almost at once of approaching him, and he deigned to talk to me for quarter of an hour and, amongst other things, spoke of Your Excellency and her stay here. Guess, Madame, if I was proud to be numbered amongst your admirers! The same day the Prince sent for the works of my wife.



But let us pass on. A greater than he was destined for me by my horoscope. On the 15th of this month the Monarch arrived here, at half-past eleven. The University paid him its respects by its deputies, amongst whom was Professor Böhm. The King spoke very graciously to them and once again, with Sapho,<sup>1</sup> I was the subject of conversation, of whom he added, that she had translated Bayle. They told us all about it. We were still at table when a servant came from the King with an order to me to present myself to His Majesty at three o'clock. At half-past two another valet came to ask for me a second time. I obeyed. They admitted me. The King was alone, standing with his back to the fireplace, his hat under his arm. I approached him and kissed the edge of his travelling cloak. He began in German, saying he heard that my wife had translated Bayle.<sup>2</sup> I politely denied it. I answered all his questions as well as I could, but to show that I understood French a little I replied in it, which did not displease His Majesty. He continued to ask me a thousand questions in that language, about my wife's writings, about my own, about German Tragedy and Comedy, about Voltaire, about Your Excellency, and the acquaintances you had made here, about Mr. Mascou, about Count de Bunau the historian, about Baron Friese and his library, about that

<sup>1</sup> Frau Gottsched was known as "Sapho" to her friends, and the Princess of Zerbst addressed her thus in her letters. They called Charlotte Sophie "Minerva," probably in allusion to her lawsuit.

<sup>2</sup> Bayle's Dictionary, the standard work of reference of that period, was translated by pupils of Herr Gottsched.

of Count de Brühl, etc. Finally he told me to go and fetch the "Chant du Lutrin," and the "Iphigenia" of Racine, which I had translated into German, because the King did not believe, he said, that our tongue was capable of rendering such tender and witty pieces.

I flew to fetch them, and came back at four o'clock. Till then the King had been on foot, walking about the room. On my return I found him seated at his table, with his Boileau, his Racine, and his Rousseau in front of him, ready to examine my translations. Just then the Abbé des Prades arrived and he told him the subject of our conversation. Picture, Madame, a monarch who, under the circumstances in which he found himself, could detach his mind from all else and criticise pieces of poetry with a shy *savant* or rather *pedant*, history, philosophy, literature, Des-Cartes, Malbranche, Locke, Leibnitz, Wolf, Reinbeer, several *savants* of the University dead and alive, while praising some, criticising others, and referring to their pleasant and lively traits, even those of a village *curé* near Erford where he recently lodged in Thuringia ; a King, I say, who mixes philosophy, mathematics, Horace and Rousseau, criticising some pieces by one, praising some by another and even quoting a tender verse of Rousseau's translated by himself to show the possibilities of our language. Finally, he was gracious enough to read me a translation of the Ode of Horace, which he quoted in Latin and which I knew by heart and recognised by the appearance of the book, magnificently printed, amongst the works of the Philosopher of Sans Souci. If Your Excellency will

read the last verse, which the King read me twice, you will see what he thinks at this juncture.

However, it had struck six, and the hall was full of Deputies from the town, Magistrates and Merchants, none of whom had been even announced. At half-past six they brought candles and he was given a packet from the Privy Councillor Eichel, which was my signal for retreat. I observed as I took leave that I should boast in the future that I had learnt the laws of poetry from the great Legislator of the nations.

The same evening, having sent the King my translation of the verse of Rousseau, half an hour later I had a reply in verse from the sacred hand of the Monarch. Here it is, copied word for word. You can fancy, Madame, what a sensation this has made in the town.

A day or two later Herr Gottsched writes again :—

The King left us the day before yesterday for Torgau. Prince Henry whom I saw on Saturday, and congratulated on the glorious mark of heroism he bears, the wound on his right shoulder, remains here till it is cured. He had nearly all the glory of the battle as he commanded the left wing which almost alone was engaged. I saw at H.R.H's. Prince Maurice and Prince Frederick of Brunswick, etc. Everyone inquired for Your Excellency.

Dare I confess a liberty I took, Madame, but one which completely succeeded? Considering your letter too beautiful, and too justly reasoned to remain in



my hands alone, I thought I ought to show it to H.R.H. the Prince of Prussia who alone is capable, in his present situation, of appreciating it properly. I did so to-day, at seven o'clock, before wishing him a pleasant journey, and he read it with so gracious an expression and so pleasant a smile that I had his thanks for what I had done. The great interest he takes in Your Excellency's affairs which he expressed every time I saw him was my excuse. He said at the same time that he feared Your Excellency's property would suffer from the present troubles, and that in a tone of voice which showed that he meant it. I esteem him doubly on this account.

To this letter Charlotte Sophie replied, expressing her devotion to the King and the Princes, and her great desire that Frederick and Marie Thérèse should know each other and abandon their mutual dislike. She also wished the King could know "an illustrious man, whom perhaps he abhors but cannot fail to esteem, and who admires him more than the whole of Europe has ever done. I wish the King would render that justice to the Minister, which the Minister daily renders to the King." No doubt the person in question was Kaunitz.

With reference to Prince Henry, Charlotte Sophie kept up a correspondence with him as long as they both lived, and in a letter from Doorwerth, dated Sept. 2, 1784, she remarks:—

If you saw beneath the cards you would shrug your shoulders and say as I do that you understand nothing at all about it. No one under the sun can comprehend conduct without a shadow of common sense, which consists in steadily retreating from the object it most desires to reach.

In a letter about the same time from the Prince he writes: "I should like to place myself amongst your antiquities, so that I might have the happiness of being near you," and ends, "Votre très devoué Ami, Henri."

## CHAPTER XI

**T**HE following extract from a letter from Frau Gottsched to Charlotte Sophie emphasises the absurdity of the claim Charles Donop made at her death. I merely refer to it here, because the assertion was made quite openly and received a certain amount of credence. In several of his own letters to her he thanks her for her goodness to one who had no claim whatever upon her bounty. There is a letter from him written in 1796 in which he says he is very hard up, so the reason for his assertion four years later is obvious.

Referring to Charles Donop, Frau Gottsched writes :—

The tutor and I have treated him with all imaginable kindness and civility, and this is what spoils him. I swear to you, Madame, as before God, that I did not treat Prince Lerbomirsky, brother of Countess Esterhazy, who was under my care in much the same way as D., so gently. However, Madame, have it as you will, and ruin him by kindness and excess of goodness. You will make a miserable man of him for the rest of his life. He believes, and he declares it openly to every one, that it is physically and



morally impossible for Your Excellency to disgrace him even if he behaved a hundred times worse. Consider, in God's name, Madame, what suspicions this might create in those who do not know you intimately and your too great goodness. He laughs at us all, he carries out none of our orders—in fact since your last letter he is worse than ever. God help his tutor, whose patience I admire. As for me, I will interfere in the matter no more, and perhaps I shall not see him till the day he leaves.<sup>1</sup> As for the mystery concerning him, I have hardly any need to be told it openly. I guessed it already in the garden of Bose, by two scenes which occurred there. However, I sent the piece of your letter to your Idol, and entreated her on my knees to tell me nothing, as I saw that it would wound her delicacy of feeling too much to do so. Thank God, she refused point-blank.

The correspondence with Frau Gottsched, and Charlotte Sophie's still more bulky series of letters from the Princess of Zerbst, were continued till 1758, when the "Idol" was at Hamburg, on her way to Paris, and the "jeunes gens" had left Leipsig. It is interesting to note that the *Memoirs of Catherine II* by herself abruptly end the following year.

The Princess had certainly ample material for her letters. She very unwisely gave hospitality,

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Sophie had thought of sending the young people to school at Lausanne.

in 1757, to the Marquis de Fraigne, a French spy, and thereby aroused the anger of Frederick the Great. We must recollect that the Seven Years' War which broke out in 1756 between Prussia and the combined powers of Russia, Austria, Poland and Sweden was now in full blast, and while the Princess of Zerbst's sympathies were Russian and French, she lived in Germany, and her position became a very delicate one.

Charlotte Sophie, too, must have found it difficult to steer a safe course amidst all these contending interests. She owned property in Friesland (then belonging to Denmark) and in Holland. She was allied by blood with Catherine II of Russia. Frederick the Great had been an old and intimate friend of hers, and still referred to her with admiration and regard. The King of Sweden was a former suitor for her hand, her friend Stanislaus was to be the future King of Poland, and above all, Marie Thérèse was all-powerful in the suit Charlotte Sophie was carrying on against her husband Count Bentinck.

So she had much to think and write of, and Jeanne Elizabeth had her hands only too full, at the same time. Her son, who was then the reigning Duke, and of whom she writes most affectionately to Frau Gottsched, was a poor creature who eventually left his country and

never attempted to return, so she stood quite alone amidst her responsibilities.

In 1758 the French spy, unwilling to compromise the house of Zerbst any longer, left for Magdeburg, where he was arrested and kept in prison till 1762.

The Princess of Zerbst had already been made to understand that it would be better if she left, and directly de Fraigne was taken she started for Hamburg.

She died in Paris in 1760, aged 48. I have seen her coffin in the family vault at the Schloss of Zerbst. It is like a skin-covered, old-fashioned travelling-trunk, and in a square box of similar make beneath the trestles on which the coffin stands, is her heart. This poor, plain coffin looks sad and strange amidst the elaborately decorated receptacles of her predecessors.

The coffin of Magdalene, Anthony Gunther's sister, is in the vault furthest from the entrance. She is described on it as a Princess of Oldenburg.

The vault is immediately below the chapel, which has a very unusual appearance, as it is painted white throughout.

I inquired if there was a portrait of Jeanne Elizabeth (as she signs her letters to Charlotte Sophie), and was shown two which it was thought might be of her. On the ground of the date at which they were probably painted, when she must have been a young woman—



though she appears in these as about 60, and died at 48—and for other reasons, I do not think they are of her. There is a reference to one in the Gottsched letters which was sent to Charlotte Sophie.

In “The Gottsched Letters,” to be published later, it will be possible to say more about the Princess of Zerbst than I have space for here, but the following note from her to Charlotte Sophie is interesting:—

I write you two lines. . . . I can see almost with anxiety your first sympathetic transports of joy. I cannot refrain from letting you know at once that yesterday evening before I went to bed I received an *estafette* with the news that my daughter was very well, and that at midnight on the 19th she felt the first pains. She gave birth to a son on the <sup>20 Sep.</sup><sub>30 Oct.</sub> at ten o'clock in the morning, who, with the mother, is as well as he possibly can be. The child will be called the Grand Duke Paul ; he had not yet been baptised when the post left. The Emperor and the Empress of the Romans are godparents, the Empress of Russia will hold the child for her at the font. Here is the news. As they tell me they will send an announcement in form you must await it before mentioning the event, which it would be indiscreet to refer to sooner.

Amongst Charlotte Sophie's papers was found a letter from Catherine II to Baroness de Breleke.

Handwritten signature and text at the top of the page.

Main body of handwritten text in French, appearing to be a letter or a report. The text is dense and somewhat difficult to read due to the cursive style and some fading.

THE PRINCESS OF ZERBST (MOTHER OF CATHERINE THE GREAT OF RUSSIA) TO CHARLOTTE SOPHIE

Above protrudes another letter with varied signature (inverted). The lower is the more usual





I will conclude this chapter with a translation of it. It will be recollected that Catherine was very ill for a short time after being inoculated by Dr. Dimsdale, and as she believed she was going to die, she hastily made all arrangements for the doctor in that case to leave St. Petersburg in safety, lest there might be an attempt to lynch him by the populace. She also requested the King of England to permit him to use the rank of a Russian Baron, which she conferred upon him, a title his descendants still bear.

Madame,—In spite of what they told you about Mr. Dimsdale, who is neither a charlatan nor a Quaker, he inoculated me on the 12th of October, and in less than three weeks here I am recovered from it, thank God, and safe for ever from all fear of that horrible malady. A great many people followed my example, amongst others the *Grand Maître d'Artillerie*, Count Orloff, and the Marshal Count Rosoumosski. All Petersburg wishes to be inoculated, and all who underwent it are well. My doctor is a prudent, wise, disinterested, straight man. His people were Quakers and he also, but he has left them and only retains their excellent morals. I shall be eternally grateful to this man. No one but charlatans, whose interest it is, could disparage one of such merit. Knowing, Madame, the sincere interest you take in all that concerns me, I wished to relieve the anxiety which the newspapers may have caused you. I remain in town to-day, and to-morrow

they will sing the Te Deum. I am greatly obliged to the Duchess of Wirtemberg for thinking of me.

Be assured, Madame, of the continuation of my friendship.

CATERINE.

At Czarskoe Selo  
this 1 November 1768.

## CHAPTER XII

**A**S we know, Charlotte Sophie won her case at Vienna, and in 1758 she travelled in Italy before going to Mont Rion. The year after she was back at Vienna again, with her great friend Princess Trautson, who was State governess to the Royal children. In Charlotte Sophie's letters to her granddaughter, written many years later, she gives us glimpses of her life in the capital at that time, and describes Princess Trautson's niece, Countess Thérèse Tierheim, then an enchanting child of about nine or ten, who eventually became her lifelong friend. One of her notes, dated November 1760, is interesting :—

During the evening I spoke to Count Kaunitz. He seemed to me overwhelmed, but determined to control himself and appear at ease. At first he was extremely reserved, but this did not last, and finally he told me enough to let me see that he preferred a bad peace to a badly conducted war. I have seen him more upset but never so disgusted. He seems much displeased with the Marshal in spite of the battle he won. . . .

The Empress has the greatest esteem for Mr. De Braum, any woman would have the same. His



appearance has been the most brilliant I know. He has the carriage and appearance of a hero, and of an amicable hero. . . . He had but to appear to captivate the Marquis of Brandenburg.

Charlotte Sophie had never been allowed to see her two children from the time she left her husband, and it was not till 1789—just before the letters which begin on page 146 of this volume—that she made the acquaintance of her grandchildren.

In 1760 Charlotte Sophie's eldest son Christian Anthony was married to Countess Marie de Tuyll de Seroskerken, and three years later her second son, John Albert, married the sister, Renira. The third sister married Lord Athlone.

Renira was a charming woman (though *The Dunkelgraf* would hardly lead one to suppose so), and there are beautiful portraits of her by Hoppner at Welbeck Abbey and by Romney in Mr. Henry Aldenburg Bentinck's possession.

Of the father of Renira de Tuyll the following amusing anecdote is related. His second wife was a lover of old china, like many Dutch ladies, and on one occasion she fell into such a paroxysm of grief when a valued cup was broken at a "Small Tea Party" that the Baron at length exclaimed in tenderest tones, "My Love, I cannot bear to see you so miserable; it must not happen again"; and therewith emptied the tray, with the rest of the set, into the street!



ANTHONY, COUNT BENTINCK

The elder son of Charlotte Sophie, Countess Bentinck

From a picture in the possession of Count Bentinck





The year after—1761—Charlotte Sophie went to Holland, and made an attempt to see her sons, believing that Count Bentinck was absent at the time. They were then at Sorgvliet, close to the present Peace Palace, the site of which was formerly part of the property.

She travelled to The Hague incognito, as Madame de Herzberg, and taking two people, her secretary and maid, who had never before been in Holland, with her, set out on foot for her husband's house.

They entered the grounds, and after speaking to a gardener whom they met, they saw Count Bentinck approaching! He took off his hat, and his wife bent before him in the most profound reverence she had ever made in her life! Then she gazed fixedly at him, and came to the conclusion that he had "gagné meilleur grace." After this unlooked-for *rencontre* the gardener took them round the orangery and gardens, and they left.

In the evening a notary arrived from Count Bentinck to inform her that her presence was not in accordance with the articles of her separation. It was soon known all over The Hague, at Varel and at Oldenburg, that she had been there.

Charlotte Sophie's mother first learnt of it from an outsider, and was much pained that her daughter had not informed her herself. Calumny added to the story, and Count Bentinck wrote

to his "favori" at Varel, saying that Charlotte Sophie had left The Hague for Brussels and Paris "in disgrace," by order of "Their Imperial Majesties," that she had changed her religion, and that the Pope had paid the cost of her journey! The poor Princess of Aldenburg was in despair, until she learnt through a friend that all this was quite untrue, and that her daughter had left by water for Hamburg, her carriage having actually been landed at Varel! Count de Linar had sent horses there to her assistance, and she hoped to surprise her mother by going to Jever.

The Princess wrote to Charlotte Sophie on January 20th, 1762, from Jever. I retain the characteristic style, with its long sentences.

My dear daughter,

In spite of our mutual tenderness, the real marks of your obedience and anxiety to see me which you have given me, the great danger to your life of such a journey [it was during the war] . . . and having shown yourself to be a person who carries out her duties to God and her mother, I nevertheless misjudged you and interpreted your actions quite wrongly owing to certain misconceptions due to your incognito, and having no French passport which obliged you to stop at The Hague to avoid the rebellion in East Friesland.

The account which I shall give you, my very dear daughter, of the simple facts of your journey, will



COUNT JOHN ALBERT BENTINCK, CAPT. R.N.

From a picture by Mason Chamberlin, in the possession of Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond

The sketch for this picture is at Indio





serve, my dear child, by its simple truth to destroy the calumnies they have spread about you, which are already partly destroyed to the shame of those who started them.

The Princess goes on to relate how she tried to persuade General de Tuyll (father of Anthony's wife) to consult with Charlotte Sophie and arrange about the property on amicable terms, as she wished, but Count Bentinck refused all compromise, and declared he would have justice only.

Writing to a friend a week or two later the Princess tells her that cruel rumours are afloat to the effect that her daughter intends trying to take possession of Kniphausen, and speaking of Count Bentinck she says :—

He took all precautions for the defence of the place and even asked the King for troops, no doubt by means of a thousand untruths, in order to create a bad opinion of my daughter. . . . He gave orders that none of his subjects were to have the audacity to go and see or speak to the Countess, and that they should be on their guard if people from Jever from my daughter perhaps came, when they should tell Brunnings and make them enter by a special door. Those poor subjects who loved my daughter so tenderly and whom she treated like her own children ! Now that they are under Mr. Warenburg they find a great difference !

The Princess' diary contains the following note :—

My dear daughter arrived on October 28th, 1761, at Jever.

Directly the Princess heard of her arrival she could not restrain her delight and impatience to see her. "I had expected never again in my life to be absent for a night from Varel," she wrote, "but everything became easy to me to join you."

Warenburg, Count Bentinck's agent, had a "terrible crainte" of Charlotte Sophie's arrival, as he had done his best to blacken her character.

It was eleven years since Charlotte Sophie had last seen her mother, and nearly all that time she had been involved in lawsuits with her husband.

She resigned her sovereign rights to her eldest son when he came of age in 1754.

In spite of all the efforts Charlotte Sophie made to come into touch with her sons, she never saw either, the elder, who was in 1758 *Deichhauptmann* of Reinland, and, in 1763, Governor of the fortress of Woerden, in South Holland, died in 1768, the younger in 1775. The latter, when a mere boy, had entered the British Navy, and his short career was a distinguished one. He had a considerable knowledge of mechanics and invented the chain-pump, which was used for many years afterwards on



English battleships. He was an extremely good-looking man, as may be seen by the beautiful portrait of him and his eldest son in the cabin of a man-of-war, by Chamberlin, at Indio. It was to his eldest daughter that the letters at the end of this book were written. His family was left extremely badly off at his death, and Charlotte Sophie often lamented the injustice which gave practically the whole of her possessions to her eldest son. He was succeeded by his eldest son, the "Rhoon" so often to be referred to, who tried to take from her the little that remained.

In 1770 Charlotte Sophie's mother died at the great age of ninety-two. There are letters from her written only a year or two before her death. In one, when she was eighty-eight, she implores her grandson, John Albert, to see and be reconciled with his mother.

About this time there is a series of letters from Charles Weisbrod from Paris. Already, in 1761, Charles Donop (who was evidently the head of the "little school"), wrote to Charlotte Sophie, "Little Weisbrod is writing to you today to entreat you to allow him to learn to paint. I think it is the only thing he has a bent for." His kind guardian evidently agreed to this, and Weisbrod eventually became a distinguished engraver. There is an interesting letter from him in 1773, in which, after saying that

he owes everything to her, for “a young artist, living by his profession, is at first very poor,” he goes on, referring to Marie Antoinette :—

Madame la Dauphine, whom you know, is a Princess whose kindness makes her adored by every one. She knows how to help and reward and in a word she is a “*femme accomplie*”; I am proud, for she is a German.

Count Bentinck, Charlotte Sophie’s husband, died in 1774. The announcement was conveyed to her by her daughter-in-law, Madame de Varel, who in expressing her personal regret remarks that he had “supported my children in their just claims and been their protector.”

Charlotte Sophie’s reply, written on black-edged paper, is a masterpiece of tact, and I really cannot detract from it by translating it, so I give it verbatim :—

Madame,—La triste nouvelle que vous avez eu l’attention de me donner est si frapente pour moy mesme et le depart de la poste si prochain qu’il ne me reste aujourd’huy que la possibilité de vous assurer de la juste sensibilite de mon cœur, et du tendre interest qu’il prendra toujours a ce qui vous touche, vous Madame, et vos chers enfans.

Jay l’honneur d’estre avec le devouement le plus distingué, Madame, votre très humble et très obeissante servante,

CHARLOTTE SOPHIE, Ctesse de Bentinck,  
née Ctesse d’Aldenbourg.



WILLIAM, FIRST COUNT BENTINCK, SECOND SON OF  
FIRST EARL OF PORTLAND

From a portrait in pastel, by Liotard, in the possession of Count Bentinck





This sketch of Charlotte Sophie's life up to the time when the Journals and Letters take up the thread is necessarily extremely incomplete. The mass of correspondence still needing arrangement is so enormous that it would take years to examine it in detail, and if embodied in a book would extend over many volumes. Amongst her papers were found a number of letters of Queen Mary, wife of William III, King of England, to her sister Anne. They were issued in a charming edition by the late Countess Bentinck, but it is extremely scarce, and an English version, which it is hoped to publish before very long, will no doubt be acceptable. They give a very much more attractive idea of Queen Mary than the reader of most historical works carries away, and they testify to the accuracy of Marjorie Bowen's view, as given in *God and the King*, of the very affectionate terms William and Mary were on.

For the last thirty-three years of her life, Charlotte Sophie resided at Hamburg. Her house there was No. 3, Jungfern-Steig, and I believe it still bears a plate recording the fact. It is described with much detail in the *Dunkelgraf*.

Shortly before her death, Charlotte Sophie wrote a long letter to Baron von Buhl, Imperial Minister at The Hague, telling him her intentions as expressed in her Will, and after pointing out

to him her right as a Countess of the Empire to claim his protection, requested him at her death to put his seal on everything at her house at Hamburg and hand all over to her grandson, William Bentinck.

She goes on to say that no seals must be put on the "jardin d'Emsbüttel," which belongs to Mr. Weisbrod, "where all those papers which they base their claims on concerning the property in Germany were *never* deposited, but are in the depths of the Empire, from where they can return to Count Rhoon after he has paid the paternal debts, and other sums which he still owes, on the liquidation of which there has been a commission at Vienna for the last thirty years, but concerning which Emsbüttel has no concern. All that will be found there at my death belongs exclusively to the owner, Mr. Weisbrod, who inherited it from his deceased mother."

This letter is important, for from it we learn that the family title-deeds—and no doubt many other papers—were sent away to a town in Germany to be kept till her grandson Rhoon had paid all the charges he owed on the property. The strange result of this arrangement was that when the father of the reigning Count Bentinck began his lawsuit for the recovery of his property in Oldenburg, he had not a single document proving his title to it! He therefore searched



through Germany for the missing archives, and at last found them.

But the end of the matter has yet to be seen, for there must be many more papers of the greatest interest still undiscovered, including the whole of the correspondence used for the *Dunkelgraf*.

In the preface to Dr. Mosen's German translation of the Life of the Princess de la Trémoille, first Countess of Aldenburg, he tells us that he only obtained the MS. from which he worked by a lucky chance. One day, when puzzling over the problem of where the MS. of this most interesting Life of the Princess, written by her own hand and formerly in Charlotte Sophie's possession, could be, he came across a copy of the *Dunkelgraf*, and in it he read that Charlotte Sophie had given this precious heritage to her grandson, "Count Ludwig of Varel" ("The Dunkelgraf"). Another happy chance—the coincidence that he had been at college at Jena with Dr. Reinhard Bechstein, the son of the author of the book in question—led to a correspondence between them, and shortly after he received the MS., which, Dr. Bechstein wrote, had come "from Hildburghausen."

One gathers from the *Dunkelgraf* that when "Ludwig" was driven out of Varel by Rhoon, Charlotte Sophie gave him not only this precious book but also her own Journal. This seems the

more likely, as I have been lent a set of her diaries, which only begin on January 1st, 1795, and "Ludwig's" parting interview with her was in 1794.

To find this Journal will now be one of my most cherished ambitions, for the whole subject is wrapped in such mystery that it fascinates one and compels one to try to discover and join up all the missing links in the chain.

That "Ludwig," the "Dunkelgraf" of Bechstein's book, was Charlotte Sophie's grandson, I am more and more inclined to believe, and a recent stay at Hildburghausen and an examination of certain papers which seem to have been overlooked till now, strengthen my belief. But the whole story of this extraordinary man's secluded life, with his beautiful ward (a French Princess of royal blood), is as remarkable as that of the Man with the Iron Mask and far more romantic. I have had the book translated from the German and am issuing it soon after this, for in it appear the very characters I am now writing of—Charlotte Sophie, her grandchildren, and the mysterious person and his "life companion," whom learned men are making a close study of in Germany, and by whose graves I stood quite recently. With unexampled boldness the author designated each of the characters by name, and that only a few years after their death! The book throws much

light on obscure points in family history and, as a mere story, is of engrossing interest. It can be no indiscretion to publish a translation so many years after the events described.<sup>1</sup>

Bechstein was Keeper of the Archives at Meiningen, and a writer of considerable renown, who stood high in the favour of the reigning Duke.

May one not suppose that the "Dunkelgraf" handed over his Bentinck papers to the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, in order that, should he (the "Dunkelgraf") die, his identity would not be discovered by these papers being found in his possession, and that Bechstein (who lived only a few miles from Hildburghausen both before and after the death of the "Dunkelgraf" in 1845) had access to these papers?

So far only one allusion to the "Dunkelgraf" has been found in the Bentinck archives. J. C. Bentinck (a grandson of Charlotte Sophie), writing to her about 1791, refers to "your posterity here at Varel, *the adopted grandson included* [the italics are mine], who since his arrival longs to hear from you, as a proof that you are better."

<sup>1</sup> The book is a fine historical novel, but I think the notes and introduction will add to its interest. The mystery and charm of the unhappy princess—whose identity Bechstein either did not suspect or was too discreet to disclose—has led me to study the subject in some detail, while the character of the "Dunkelgraf," judging it from historical documents, is one of the finest I ever heard of.

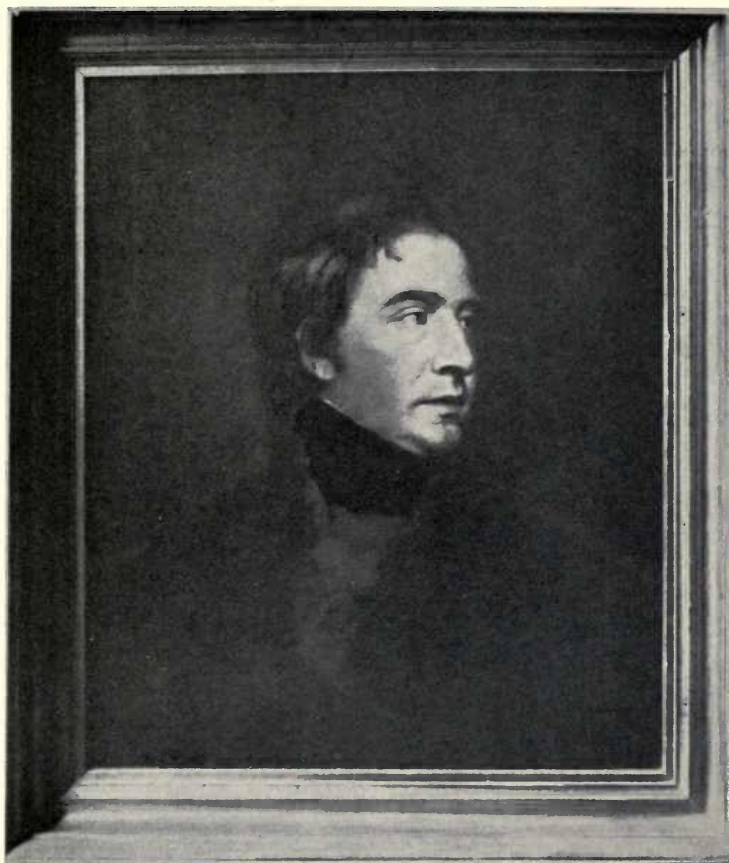


## CHAPTER XIII

**T**HE Journal of my great-grandfather, Admiral Sir James Hawkins-Whitshed (at that time Captain Hawkins), and one by his great friend Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) William Bentinck, whose sister he married in 1791, are very helpful in bridging over the period till Charlotte Sophie began her series of letters to her granddaughter. At this time the old lady, who was then 75, had never seen any of her English grandchildren, and one can easily imagine her delight when these two handsome, attractive young men turned up at her house in Germany. She instantly fell in love with them both, and to the end of her life was absolutely devoted to them. The Journal records their first visit to her, which took place only a few months before the letters, which follow later, begin.

The year 1789 was indeed a stirring time for a tour on the Continent. The French Revolution began on May 5th of this year and on July 14th the Bastille fell.

In Germany, Joseph II annulled the Joyeuse Entrée, or Constitution, granted to Hainault and



ADMIRAL SIR JAMES HAWKINS-WHITSHED, BART.

As a young man

From a portrait in the possession of Count Bentinck, at Middachten

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Brabant, and thereby produced a revolution in Brabant, where he was defeated at Turnhout, Ghent, Brussels and Mons. At the same time he was at war with Turkey.

Russia was not more peaceful, for Catherine (who succeeded her son Paul, assassinated in 1762) was at war with Turkey and Sweden.

In Sweden, Gustavus III (the son of Charlotte Sophie's former suitor) was King, and his Estates disapproved of the war with Russia. They revolted (1788), were subdued, and the war continued.

Denmark had a King, Charles VII, who, from mental incapacity, remained only a figure-head till his death in 1808. His Minister for Foreign Affairs was Andreas Bernstorff, who during the French Revolution insisted on Denmark remaining neutral. Charlotte Sophie commented frequently in her letters on the disastrous results of this so-called neutrality, which winked at the export of food and arms to France.

It was during this period that the two young men, Hawkins and Bentinck, set off on their travels.

I extract the passages most interesting to the general reader. They describe a cruise by the writer, Captain Hawkins, with his great friend Captain William Bentinck, eldest son of Charlotte Sophie's younger son, from July 17th, 1789, to January, 1790. Their boat, the "Terring-

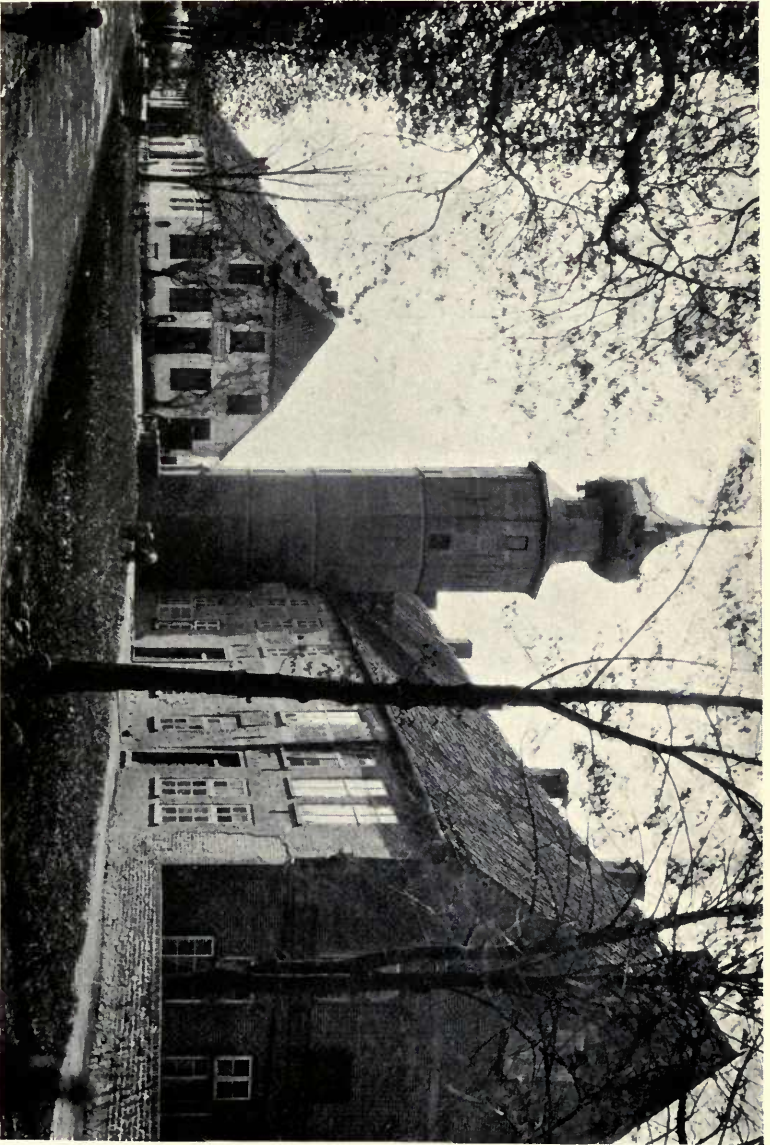
ton," was a small schooner, and they were accompanied by two seamen "at £4 per month and find themselves in everything."

They arrived by land at Helder, made the acquaintance of the Prince of Orange there, had supper with him, and met "Bentinck's cousin, Monsieur de Rhoon." This was Charlotte Sophie's eldest grandson. He had a very adventurous career, and details of it will be found in the history of the time, where he is called simply Bentinck. He agreed to continue with them in the boat to his estate "at Varel, in the Dutchy of Oldenburg." This meant coasting along past the islands of the North Sea. One of these, Borkum, will be familiar to English readers.

In due course they approached their destination and reached the Dollart, the large basin immediately south of Borkum.

The Dollart is a large bay with water enough for three deep ships and the properest place for the Dutch fleet to lay in that we have seen or heard of. But Rhoon told us that because of provincial disputes and Amsterdam jealousies and fears, this obviously advantageous situation was lost to the States. At 2 p.m. arrived at Embden and were stopped by a Prussian sentinel, obliged to deliver our names; arrived at a miserable inn where as usual we were taken for Blackguards. At 6 drank tea. Rhoon and Bentinck took it into their heads to smoke a pipe and not content

<sup>1</sup> So called after William Bentinck's home in Norfolk.



KNIPHAUSEN

The old tower and stables, all that remains of the castle

Photographed in 1911 by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond





with smoking in the house they must walk to the pier head with a pipe in their mouths, and because I would not do the same they supposed I was quite shocked. In the evening Rhoon got 100 people round the door and played tricks with them.

They continued their journey.

Rhoon cooked us some excellent pancakes and fried some ham, on which with a warmed Fricadel (my favourite dish) we dined. We were sometimes towed, and sometimes we sailed. Very often we grounded. Went in a wagon with Rhoon to the Castle of Kniphausen, about 7 miles from Hook Zyl, an old castle with a ditch and drawbridges, soldiers and all the forms of a garrison.

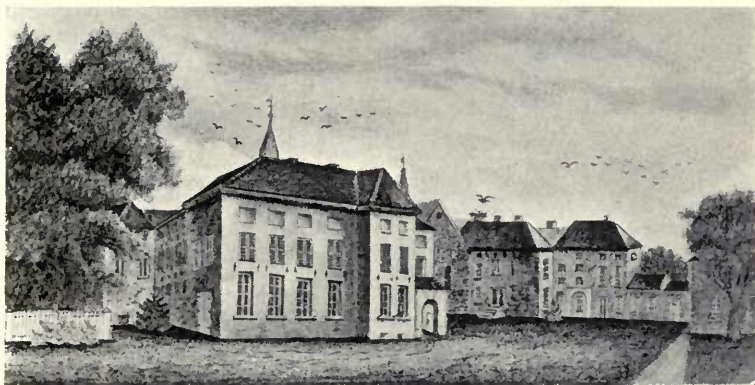
I visited Kniphausen quite recently. Little remains of the old Castle except the tower and stables.

I give the account of their sail through what is now the harbour of Wilhelmshaven without abridgment, as the place has become of such importance in recent years. Bismarck saw what a magnificent naval base it would make, and acquired it from the Grand Duke of Oldenburg in exchange for the Bentinck property !

Next day we set out with a pilot on board for Varel and a cloudy sky with fresh breezes ; pilot completely bothered—up at the masthead two or three times, mistook the channel though low water,

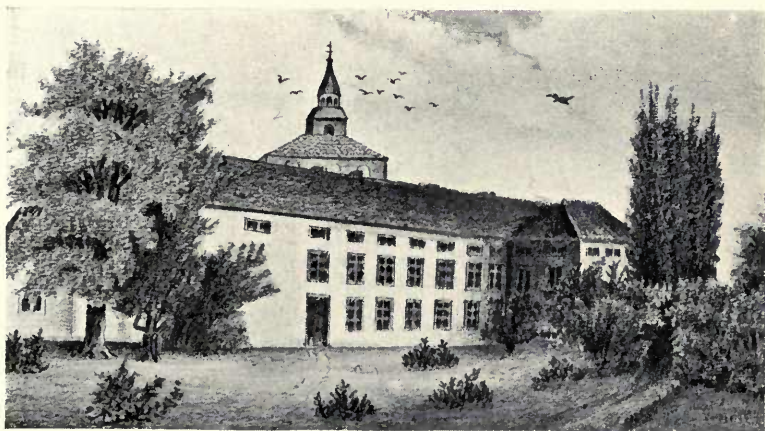
and plumped us aground, kept rubbing along the sand. Varel Zyl with the flood. Fired pistols and hoisted the Jack at the foretop masthead. At last came to an anchor and dined. Rhoon then fell fast asleep, fired a pistol close to his ear, still slept, fired another, slept on, fired two together close to his head. Moved like a bear with a sore head, grumbling but hardly roused. His fit of swearing being succeeded by a hearty laugh, and the water flowing cast up anchor and stood in for Varel Zyl. Saw a boat coming out, fired 18 pistols running in platoons, I having made three essays with mine before they would go off. N.B.—They were Irish pistols. Got a pilot on board who came to the helm and in two minutes ran us ashore. Rhoon swore in the space of one minute in English, Dutch, French and German. Finding it impossible to trust to the knowledge of the pilots, set all sails against their opinion and having heeled her gunwall to, forced her through the mud into the Harbour, which they had declared positively to be impossible. After running on shore two or three times when in the Harbour, got up at last to the Sluice. Landed and went up in Rhoon's carriage to Varel, where we found Madame de Bentinck (or Varel), Rhoon's mother, Mitje, Charles and Henry, his brothers and sister. Madame de Varel appeared rather displeas'd that Rhoon should have come round all the way from Groningen in so small a boat. Cleaned ourselves and came to tea, supped and went to bed. Up at 9, found myself very awkward amongst a set of young people with whom I could not join in conversation, for want





THE CASTLE AT VAREL

From an old print



THE CASTLE AT VAREL, VIEW FROM THE PARK

From an old print

The spire of the present church is seen behind

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of knowledge in the French language, and they in return thought me very stupid of course.

We remained at Varel till the 21st, having certain improvements carried out on the boat. Varel is an old and very large chateau, formerly belonging to the Counts of Oldenburg, but by marriage with a daughter of the last Count it, with a considerable property round it, came into the possession of this family. Its situation is pretty enough, and might be made very much so if any attention was paid to it, but from various reasons, one bad roads and its great distance from Holland, it is suffered to run almost to ruin. There is a most noble wood, through which there are charming walks or rides, but this like the chateau is taken little care of, and I saw many, many fine old oaks, mouldering away with decay, that had they been timely cut down, would have been of service to the neighbouring trees, besides the great profit from their sale. In short, it appears that by good judicious management this estate might be made much more lucrative, but one of the misfortunes attending the custom of this country is the number of people which it is thought a man of fortune must have to direct his estate—everybody knows that where there are many people there are many different opinions, not to mention *interests*. Thus it is in what is called the Council Chamber of a man of fortune here, to whose consideration almost everything concerning it is submitted.

We determined to go to Cuxhaven (on the Elbe) by land, and sent the boat round by water. At Cux-



haven we went down to look at the Harbour, found there were some vessels of war in the Road, but could not find out of what nation till we met some English seamen, who told us they were Russians, commanded by Englishmen, were much surprised to find that the English commander was Lieut. Samuel Marshal, who had lately got a commission as captain of the second rank in the Empress's service.

This Captain Marshall was in the battle between the Swedes and the Russians on June 3rd and 4th of the following year (1790). I take the account from a letter from Mr. George Thesiger to his brother, and as it records the most gallant piece of fighting I ever heard of, the whole of it is given here. It is copied into Captain Bentinck's Journal.

Marshall commanded a frigate, and behaved like a hero of the first magnitude. He found his ship sinking, wrote a letter to Dennison to acquaint him of this situation and that he would remain the last on board. Whilst she was sinking he kept up a fire upon the enemy with a few faithful fellows who stood by him, and at last he was obliged to send them out of the ship—shot a sailor that attempted to haul down his colours, jumped overboard and his ship instantly sank with flying colours. He swam on board. Found Dennison dying, fought his ship for him till she was sinking. The Swedes boarded her, Marshall jumped overboard, and swore he'd not be taken alive. Dennison's ship sank and Marshall

reached the shore and a letter is received that he is safe at Frederickshaven. He adds, I shall write a long account to Bentinck. He is interested, I am certain, concerning me.

It is sad to have to record that this brave young man "was drowned in the galley action with the Swedes—behaved most gallantly," writes Captain Bentinck on August 25th in his Journal.

Captains Bentinck and Hawkins eventually arrived at Embsbüttel, the summer residence of Countess Bentinck. It was on August 26th that Captain Hawkins was presented to her and that she first met her grandson. She was then "in her seventy-fifth year, but in most perfect health and spirits." Thus began, between this young English naval officer of 27 and the grandmother of his friend Captain Bentinck, perhaps the closest tie of affection and esteem she had formed during the whole of her long life, and which death alone brought to a close. It is evident from several letters in my possession, which are of too intimate a nature for publication, that in spite of her devotion to her "cher Guillaume" (Captain Bentinck), and in spite of her occasional assertions that he was the dearest object in the world to her, she undoubtedly idolized my great-grandfather even more, and that his marriage to her granddaughter (Captain

Bentinck's sister Sophie) was the most joyful event of her life. This first meeting with the two young men is often referred to in the following letters. It was indeed a red-letter day to her.

On this occasion they stayed at a hotel, paying Countess Bentinck a visit later, on their return from St. Petersburg. They dined at two p.m. on their last day at Embsbüttel, "and after dinner came into Hamburg with Madame de Bentinck, and went to our inn to dress, as she was to have a great assembly, this being one of the two days in the week on which (all the year round) she has company, At 6, came to her and were presented to many persons. Ceremony being over, played at whist. At 9 supped, the Countess Linage (Madame de Bentinck's niece) supped with us."

As the season was getting late (August 28th), and wind and stream against them in the Elbe, they gave up the idea of going to Lübeck by water, and after a day's journey returned to Hamburg and sent the boat back to Varel, having taken all they wanted off her, including two blankets, "as we understood they were unusual comforts in the Baltic, and most parts of Russia." Captain Diemar (of the 60th Regiment Foot, a German by birth) accompanied them to Lübeck overland, to assist in their search for a vessel to take them to St. Petersburg or Revel. "At half-



past eleven got to Steinhorst. Here we saw the only truly fine girl we had seen among the lower order since we came to the Continent."

From Lübeck they rode out into the country to a house "belonging to Mr. Kulhman's brother-in-law, where there was a large party of men and women, who do not deserve the appellation of ladies and gentlemen, though they passed for such in this country." They spent the night there, and next day "dined at 2, and between the courses, each of which consists of one dish, we were amused by manual wit, such as throwing lumps of bread, forcemeat balls and live crayfish across the table, and occasionally putting a piece of fish into the beer or wine glasses. At 4 p.m. set out, company and all, for Lübeck."

A long description of a visit to Baltish Port follows, but with much else that is interesting I am obliged to omit it for want of space. They thoroughly explored the harbour, dined with the commanding officer, Colonel Robert, and returned to Revel.

Determined to look out for a carriage and go to Petersburg by land. October 7th. Looked at carriages, but found none that would do. The Governor told us the Russians had, under the command of Prince Kepnin, defeated the Turks that came to the relief of Binder, and that in all likelihood that town would soon fall into the hands of the Empress. There was also a report that Trevanen

had completely destroyed the galleys he had driven into shoal water, when he took the two forts some days since on the coast of Finland. After breakfast (Oct. 8th) went to see some carriages. After looking at many sad things found one tolerable decent chaise for 325 silver roubles (about 49 pounds sterling); having purchased it we settled our different bills.

October 10th. Up at 5, got our baggage on the carriage, and after breakfast set off with six horses. Andrew on the box. We got an order for all post masters to hurry us on as fast as possible, but that we found was insufficient, and we were told that the true way of travelling with expedition is to have a soldier go along with you, who at each stage hurries the people with effect—for he sometimes beats them.

October 10th. Fine clear weather, travelling towards Petersburg—finding the box extremely uneasy, got a Kibitka and 2 horses for Andrew and the large trunk, the fixed price for post horses is 2 kopecks a verst (two-thirds of an English mile) for each horse. A kopeck is about a halfpenny. At 3 dined at a very poor Post House on some cold meat we brought along with us; set out and continued all night travelling on. October 11th. Getting on as fast as possible, and to do them justice once they do set off they get on wonderfully fast with their little rats of horses.

Travelled all this day (Oct. 12th) and night, and at 6 a.m. arrived at Damonts,<sup>1</sup> but finding the house

<sup>1</sup> They had obviously arrived at St. Petersburg, as is proved by what follows.

much too dirty went to Fawels, an English hotel on the English lines. After a great deal of trouble and making a great noise, got some of the people up and breakfasted. At 9 sent our names to Mr. Whitworth, the English Minister, and having cleaned ourselves went to call upon him. Met him in the street, found him a very pleasant, agreeable man, and most exceedingly kind and civil to us. Mr. Fraser<sup>1</sup> is his secretary, but waiting for the arrival of Mr. Lindsey, when he goes in the situation of *Chargé d'Affaires* to the Court of Madrid. All 11 called upon Lord Wycombe and Captain Markham, who had come from England through Sweden and seen the Swedish Fleet at Carlsrona. Left some of our letters, those for Count Woronzow and Count Chernicher. Found the latter, who received us very kindly, and told Bentinck he had still his father's machine for pulling up trees, which it seems he had given him when he was in England.<sup>2</sup> At 5 Lord Wycombe and Markham called upon us to go to the Opera with Whitworth. At half-past eight returned to our lodgings, very much fatigued with our journey.

The next day we explored the sights of St. Petersburg. Went into the Academy of Arts and Sciences of which we had got but a partial view and

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the same Mr. Fraser who was afterwards English Minister at Hamburg, and who is so often mentioned in the letters.

<sup>2</sup> Quite recently (1911) I saw an advertisement in a gardening paper of such a machine. It would be interesting to know if that invented by Count J. A. Bentinck resembled it.



were going away when the Vice-President arrived to show it to Monsieur Navishkin's company ; we had a letter from Sinevin for Mr. Navishkin, who had married Sinevin's sister, and is son to the Grand Ecuyer—gave him the letter and went all over the Academy.

At 3 dined with Baron Sutherland, the Empress' banker. In the evening went to the French play and after it to the Grand Ecuyer, Navishkin's, and were presented to him, his wife and daughters, la Comtesse de Lalagupe and Mlle. Marie, etc. This house is quite in the Russian style, and the license in the manners quite astonishing to Englishmen ; Mlle. Marie is a pretty girl enough—not beautiful, but a singular countenance and manner. At 11 returned home and went to bed.

October 15th. At one went to see Prince Potemkin's house, which in grandeur and magnificence surpasses anything (we fancy) in Europe. There is one room for instance about eighty-two yards long, on one side of which is an immense greenhouse, which in the winter when the snow is on the ground must have a most beautiful effect ; on each side of this large room there are a double row of pillars, between which lamps are hung. At 3 went to dine with the Chevalier Galvez, the Spanish Minister. After dinner went to the Russian Opera. The music and dancing very tolerable.

Next day, amongst other things, at 5 p.m. went with Whitworth to Count Osterman's (Vice-Chancellor) to whom we were presented and then with him

to the Hermitage (where we had been invited in the morning) to be presented to the Empress ;<sup>1</sup> before she came Whitworth presented us to a vast number of people, whose names we forget. We were shown by Prince Baratinski some of the interior rooms of the Hermitage, which are most beautiful and surpass all our ideas of it, but this will be described in another place. At half-past six the Empress came in, kissed her hand, and after some conversation she went to the theatre where *La Coquette Fixée* was acted. The *favourite* sat immediately below the Empress and conversed with her during the whole piece. The only men near her besides were Le Grand Ecuyer and the Imperial Ambassador, Count Cobenzel.

A long account of sight-seeing and visits during the next day or two follows. They call on Madame Soltikoff, Chernicker, etc.

On October 19th went with Whitworth to Court ; at half-past the Empress came to the Drawingroom, when we all kissed hands (that is to say the foreigners), an operation performed each time a stranger goes to Court ; she hardly ever speaks to anybody, but the Ministers, at the Drawingroom. After staying a few minutes she then went to her own apartments.

October 21st. In the morning Wycombe, Markham, Navishkin and Rosenstein (the Swedish commodore taken by Prince Nassau) and us went to see the Hermitage which took us four hours. Mr. Walker, the Empress' Engraver, walked round all the

<sup>1</sup> Catherine the Great.



rooms with us. We also visited the Dock Yard which is in very indifferent order. We saw some plans of Peter the Great's own drawing. On the stocks there is a 3 deck ship ready for launching which makes the 8th the Russians have of that class—she is a fine looking ship, constructed by an Englishman and run up in a twelve month; next to her there is a 74 building, and next to her another 74 (upon Lord Howe's plan) just laid down. There are seven slips for building ships on in this yard. Their pump chains all come from England, where most of their builders have served their time."

I trust I am not giving too ample quotations concerning naval matters, but naval questions loom large in the Journals and Letters, and therefore I may hope that naval men will take an interest in these pages. It is on their account that I skip many comments on sights on land and give longer extracts on seafaring subjects. The Cathedral was next visited, where they saw "the Tomb of Peter and those of some of the other rulers of Russia, where the colours taken from the Swedes and Turks in this war are hung up. Among others the Pacha's flag taken at Tchesme in the last war, was lying at the foot of Peter's Tomb. This was brought to Petersburg and the Empress went in solemn procession to this cathedral, when she walked up to the tomb and making a low bow to it, threw it down at his feet, where it has remained ever since. At half-past one dined with Count Bruce, the Governor



of the town and who has an only daughter, an heiress it is said of £14,000 per annum—she is neither handsome nor accomplished.

It is to be observed that the profusion of plate is in no country so great as in Russia and indeed almost all kinds of foolish expenses seem to be the mania of the Russians. Without occupation or freedom they only turn their thoughts to dissipation and show, and when ruined and in debt are not liable to be taken up. In Petersburg, therefore, you find the most costly sets of plate and the most extravagant dinners, and not knowing what to do of a morning they dine between noon and half-past one—after dinner they go to a play, then meet to cards and at 10 sup and go to bed, repeating this incessant labour the whole year round.

The administration of affairs being in a very few hands, these persons are jealous of each other and of all about, and under them, who pay the most fulsome service, while they are secretly endeavouring to form stronger connections with a murderer or a favourite. It is therefore true enough that there is very little personal attachments in men or families and that in general the Russians are proud to the humble and humble to the proud—and I think a strong proof of this may be found between the Russian Nobility and the Peasantry. In travelling, as I observed before, it is necessary to have a soldier who very soon brings you a relay of horses, and without him they would be half an hour; but the soldier stands on no kind of ceremony, he beats all round him till they are ready, and these poor creatures do not make any resistance,

but directly after sing their native wild ditty and forget their usage.

Went to Whitworth's and with him to Court, where we heard Te Deum sung for the taking of Belgrade and Akerman, which happened within three or four days of each other, the first by the Imperial, the latter by the Russian troops. It is worthy of notice that these two towns in their respective languages mean the White Town.

At one p.m. the Empress came out of the chapel and into the Drawingroom, and we were again presented by Count Osterman, kissed hands and took leave. At six went to the Ball at Court, it being the Grand Duchess's birthday, she and the Grand Duke were in the country. At 7 the little Grand Duke and his brother came in and paid their compliments to the Foreign Ministers, etc.—at half-past came and did the same thing, and then the ball commenced by Polish dances and then English country dances. At 9 the ball concluded. Whitworth presented us to the Prince of Nassau. At 10 went to sup with Prince Shugaloff, Grand Chamberlain. At 1 a.m. returned.

Next morning they went to the top of the unfinished church of St. Isaac's.

The church looks immediately into Navischkin's windows, and because the girls happened to be looking at us when we were on the ridge, Bentinck took it into his head to walk along it from one end to the other for no one reason that could possibly be given, for he did not better his view in the least

by it, and the way was much worse than that we had come up. If he had slipped his foot in the least nothing could have prevented his fall to the ground, which from the ridge of the roof is as near as I can guess near two hundred feet. When I attributed to vanity his having performed this exploit, he was quite angry.

After dinner next day we went to see a Russian Bath, which I fancy has not its equal in Europe. A room is heated by means of the vapour of water thrown on red hot stones in an oven, to such a degree that we could not remain in it but for a very few seconds—there were benches from the floor all the way up to the ceiling, by which means the bather is enabled to regulate his heat to his own liking. In this place we saw upwards of 300 men and as many women coming in and going out in constant succession. On coming out of these baths they come immediately into the open air, where in summer they throw water and in winter roll themselves in the snow. All the accounts we had read and heard of this scene would but have given a very slight idea indeed of what certainly almost passes all description.

On October 30th they drove to the Empress's summer residence, and "breakfasted with Mr. Cameron, the architect, an Englishman who married a Miss Bush, daughter to the late gardener to the Palace." A long description, which I omit, of the Palace follows, and also of the gardens, which were laid out by Le Blond, a pupil of Le Notre.



Dressed and went to dine with Prince Nassau. He married a Polish lady and with them lived Mlle. Sophia, his daughter by a Frenchwoman, he has no other children. He gave Bentinck a plan of the action with the Swedish galley Fleet, and Rosenstein confirmed the accuracy of it all. The Prince is a middle sized, well made man and has the appearance of great activity, indeed from the unanimous opinion of all he certainly is so.

Next day with Mr. Jameson (Aide de Camp to Count Anhalt, and of English extraction) to see the Marble Palace. We had been told that the Empress would not allow any one to see it because some foreigners had found great fault with the plan which is entirely her own, and was built for Prince Orloff, who lived in it for some years; on his death she bought it with all his other effects. Mr. Jameson is going as Governor of a town in Siberia, he has travelled with Count Anhalt in Russia about 30,000 versts, and his description of the interior parts is certainly exciting to curiosity. He told us that when he was at Astracan there were thirteen different religions performing in one day, one of which adored the *Evil Spirit*. He told us that travelling was most excellent and that the hospitality was beyond belief.

Dined with Count Strogonoff, one of the richest nobles in Russia, and an Amateur of the Beaux Arts. He has a famous "Cupid" done by Falconet, which struck us as the most beautiful piece of sculpture we had ever seen. At dinner we met Monsieur M.

Pouskin, who has been Minister in England and who recollects Bentinck as a boy.

We got our passports and our things packed up next day. Before any person leaves Petersburg (or I fancy any part of Russia) he is obliged to have his name advertised in three successive newspapers, and then he can get his passport; ours were of course regularly advertised. Dined at 3 with Wycombe and Markham; Fraser, Whitworth and Navischkin dined with them. Drank a great deal too much wine, and then went to pass our last evening with the Navischkins, who were so very kind and hospitable to us. 'Tis but right to describe this family, the father, mother, son (who married Sinevin's sister), another son, who is in the Army, whom we did not see, and four daughters, La Comtesse Lala-gupe, Mlle. Anna, Mlle. Marie, and a fourth whose name I have forgot. The father's name (who is the only man we saw here with a true character) is Leon Alexandrovitch, i.e. Leon the son of Alexander. The son's name is Alexander Leonvitch, i.e. Alexander the son of Leon. In the course of the evening two people, a man and a boy, danced the true Russian dance, performed something like a minuet, but in a manner not to be described in English, though it is publicly danced in Russia. It rather made me feel awkward at first, but finding that the Russian ladies did not mind it we by degrees got rid of our *mauvaise honte* and enjoyed it very much, and it certainly is worth being seen. The music is of a wild nature.

They started next day on their homeward journey.

At Copenhagen they went with Mr. Elliot to call on the famous Count Bernstorff.

He is a man of between 50 and 60, and was extremely civil; had been much acquainted with Bentinck's uncle Anthony.

As our stay was to be for a day or two he told us we might probably have a private audience of the Prince Royal, but if we stayed till Monday there would be a Court. Asked us to dine with him next day. From him we went to Count Arnim, the Prussian Minister, a very young man of about 22 years, who asked us to dine with him that day. Introduced (at the English Club, which, by the way, is entirely composed of foreigners) to the Prince of Wurtemberg, brother-in-law to the Grand Duchess, or Princess Royal.

Next day we dined with Count Bernstorff, where we were introduced to his lady and his son in the Huzzars, and to his daughter Charlotte, Comtesse de Van der Natte; Bentinck says a very strong resemblance in face and person to his sister Milnes, to La Comtesse Knuht, and her two daughters, two very pretty girls, to Admiral Count Moltke, etc. etc. After dinner went with Elliot to see Prince Charles of Hesse, who married the King's sister, and is Viceroy of Norway,<sup>1</sup> and Commander-in-Chief of all the forces.

<sup>1</sup> Norway belonged to Denmark at that time.



He seems to be very averse to the K. . . . of Sweden. He is a middle sized, awkward man ; we were with him about a quarter of an hour, and from thence we went to a Comtesse Frise, an old lady who gives assemblies, where we met our dinner friends and Count Sprengporten, Ambassador to Sweden, with whom I had a good deal of conversation about Russia and about Rosenstein.<sup>1</sup> Played at Commerce with Bentinck's sister (as he called her) and the young Knuhts. La Comtesse Van der Natte is really a charming woman and perfectly free from all coquetry and nonsense, but what appears very extraordinary, not at all liked by the men here, who prefer the *joli cœur* of French manners *avec toutes les graces*. From thence we went to sup with Count Breuner ; his wife is also a pleasant little woman, and with Madame Van der Goes, the pleasantest woman we knew here.

The following day, after arranging to sail to Kiel next morning, they dined at three with Monsieur Van der Goes ; all the Corps Diplomatique were there.

After dinner at 6 o'clock went to L'Appartement, or Court, where we were presented first to the King, who did not speak, but merely bowed and went on ; then the Royal Family sat down to cards, except the Princess Royal Emily (Matilda's daughter), who played at a separate table. Elliot presented us to her ; she amongst the people here (and particularly

<sup>1</sup> The Swedish prisoner at St. Petersburg, who was so often with them there.

the Court) appears handsome, her manners are good and pleasing. After the ceremony she sat down to cards and played at Commerce with Madame Van der Natte, whose manners are certainly very pleasing ; she knew Seymour Finch when he brought over the yacht for the Prince Royal.

After the Royal party had finished their game we were presented to the Queen, and then to the Prince Royal. By the etiquette of the Court no person under the rank of Colonel can sup with the King. We drew for our places, which is, I suppose, to avoid disputes about rank ; when supper was ready these numbers were called over, and each lady had a like number, who was handed in by the gentleman to the number on the table, where you stand until the arrival of the Royal Family.

'Twas my misfortune to sit directly opposite the King, who from his gestures and manners had almost made me burst out into a loud laugh. I sat between Madame Haxthausen, wife to Lord North's friend (Bentinck's grandmother is his aunt), and another lady whose name I forget. The supper lasted for upwards of two hours, and was, of course, very tiresome. I observed not one of the Royal Family touched a drop of wine. At 10 they rose from table, when we had some more conversation with the Princess Royal and with the Prince of Wurtemberg, her husband, and the French Minister, Baron de la Houze, who was well acquainted with Bentinck's grandmother. The history of this Court is too notorious to need our giving any description of it ;

suffice it to say that the country has hardly any advantageous trade, less money, and the subjects are to a man discontented with the Government—in short, everything denotes a speedy adoption of the example France has set Europe.

They travelled partly by land and partly by sea, in cold, stormy weather, on wretched boats, till they got to Hamburg.

At half-past one, having cleaned ourselves at the Stad Londres, went to Madame de Bentinck's, where we were to remain during our stay here. In the evening a great deal of company at Madame de Bentinck's. In Hamburg noblemen are not allowed the property of a house, nor do they pay any taxes whatever, and their privileges are very great, for if one of their family should commit an outrage the town cannot take up the offender, but if it should choose to prosecute it must be done by application to Vienna. The English enjoy also great advantages in Hamburg. The town is obliged to keep a house at its own expense for the residence of the Imperial Minister. Hamburg is said to be considerably in debt. Great company at dinner, among others Prince Hessenstein, natural son of the King of Sweden. He has a large fortune, £12,000 per year, but most assuredly penurious; very much disliked by all the people. Introduced to Baron Behr (born in Courland, and who with many of the nobility is very ill with the Duke of Courland), an agreeable, pleasant man.



The letters which follow often refer to Charlotte Sophie's collection of medals. They devoted a rainy day to seeing them. "She gave us each a catalogue in 3 Volumes, in which are also the engravings by Weisbrod of the medals not commonly known, which are well done; however, he says it is not so well finished as it ought to be." There is a copy of this catalogue in the library at Welbeck Abbey. It was printed in 1787 at Amsterdam, and in the preface Mr. Weisbrod is referred to as "Un des plus habiles graveurs de Paris." He is mentioned in Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*. This is the same Weisbrod who was one of Charlotte Sophie's "jeunes gens" at Leipsig. They left Hamburg the end of December and joined Captain Bentinck's cousin, Count Rhoon, at Amsterdam. There is a long and interesting description of the dockyards and shipping there, but I omit it for lack of space.

At Leyden we were shown a stone. I never heard of before, its name *Asbest*, and from which, strange as it may appear, is made a kind of linen which the fire has no kind of effect upon.

Went with Rhoon to wait upon the Hereditary Prince of Orange, to whom we were presented, he is a tolerable well looking young man about seventeen, and I think has less of those manners, that in general so strongly mark Princes than I have found in any we have seen. We set off for The Hague, where we



LADY JEMIMA BENTINCK

Known as "Jaqueline"

From a miniature in the possession of Count  
Bentinck

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arrived at 8 at the house of Madame de Bentinck (Rhoon's mother) where we were very kindly received—found there<sup>1</sup> Mademoiselle Mitje, Madame Jaqueline Bentinck, John's wife, who is Aghrim's<sup>2</sup> sister and Bentinck's cousin (of whom more presently), and Henry and John Bentinck. I know not whether when I mentioned Mademoiselle Mitje before I described her, suffice it now to say that she is a very charming, pleasant, unaffected, sensible girl, but then she has a sister-in-law, Jaqueline, that is without exception the most pleasing creature I ever saw—to say that her face is the exact form of beauty could not be true, but then it is something that vastly in my opinion exceeds it, and is interesting to the greatest degree, in short were I to follow my inclination, I should continue this description to a most inaccountable length. Lord Aghrim, son to Lord Athlone and cousin to Rhoon, came to see Bentinck.

Jaqueline (she always spelt her name thus herself) was daughter of the 5th Earl of Athlone, and in England was known after her marriage as Lady Jemima Bentinck. It will be recollected that the Athlones were originally Dutch, the first Earl of Athlone having been William III's General Ginkle who fought at the Battle of the Boyne. Lady Jemima was an absolutely delightful person. It is pleasant to be able

<sup>1</sup> I give all this in full, as we shall often meet these people in the letters.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Aghrim was the eldest son of the Earl of Athlone.

to record the romantic fact that one of her sons, Henry (afterwards General Sir Henry Bentinck, who commanded the Brigade of Guards in the Crimea and is mentioned in *The Letters of Queen Victoria*), married a daughter of Captain Hawkins, who writes so enthusiastically here about the mother. This daughter, my great-aunt Renira, was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and lived to a great age, retaining her soft brown hair, her slight, tall, upright figure, and her clear intellect till the end. As a child, I perfectly remember my great-uncle (Jaqueline's son), whom my Aunt Renira long survived. Her house in Upper Grosvenor Street was a meeting-place for all the family. She left me a beautiful portrait on ivory, by Cruikshank,<sup>1</sup> of her father (my great-grandfather), the writer of this Journal, afterwards Admiral Sir James Hawkins-Whitshed, and a pearl necklace that had belonged to her mother, the "petite chatte" of the letters.

Jaqueline, in after years, became State Governess to the daughter of the King (William I) and Queen of Holland, at their urgent entreaty. But the child proved quite unmanageable. On one occasion Jaqueline found her laughing and

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Robert Cruikshank, caricaturist and miniature painter, 1789-1856. His early life was spent at sea. There is a large portrait by him of my great-grandfather, a replica of that in my possession, and similar except in size to the miniature, at Greenwich Hospital.

talking in a manner she disapproved of with some of those about the Court, and reproved her. Whereupon the Princess complained to her mother, who took her part and informed Jaqueline that it was not for her to decide with whom the child should associate. On this, very naturally, Jaqueline resigned the post. In *Ein Bild aus. d. Zeit. v. 1789 bis 1835*, by Countess Elise von Bernstorff, we read: "Das einzige, etwas verzogene Töchterchen, die dreizehnjährige Prinzess Marianne, war auch in Berlin vor allem glücklich. Sie tanzte und hüpfte auf den Hörbällen mit ungebundener Fröhlichkeit umher und liest sich durchaus nichts von ihrer Gouvernante, der Lady Bentinck sagen." When an elderly woman the Princess, whose life was far from happy, told a member of the Bentinck family that she had always retained her respect and affection for Jaqueline, and deeply regretted that she had not followed her guidance, which might have entirely changed her future.

Up at 8 a.m., still more struck with Jaqueline from her having her children (a very fine girl and boy) playing about her. After breakfast went to the parade, where the Prince of Orange came, to whom Rhoon presented us, who merely asked us if we were still on our route. The Life Guards are certainly a fine body of men. At 11 went to wait upon Mr. Fitzherbert who was at Church. Waited for a little time when he came to us; he appeared



to be a pleasing little man—he asked us to dine with him next day. Went out in carriages to see Sorgvliet, a country house of Rhoon's, about a mile from the Hague.

Went to dinner at Lady Aghrim's, thought her a pretty looking but not interesting woman with whom he got or will have a good fortune. Found Madame de Bentinck improve wonderfully upon acquaintance, she appeared at first reserved and is really so, but then her manners are very pleasing. In short this family strikes me as the happiest and most amiable I have ever seen, living in a way amongst each other that in England we have no idea of. At 8 p.m. our dear Jaqueline was to set off for Utrecht, the place of her husband's residence. At length the hour came and with a grace certainly peculiar to herself, she took leave of the whole family; as for myself I do own that although having seen her for one day (I may say) I felt infinitely her departure.

At half-past three next day went to dine with Fitzherbert, he talked to me a good deal about Parnell<sup>1</sup> and Ireland—a very pleasant dinner.

Called on the Chevalier Revel, Fred North's friend, and on Monsieur Fagel<sup>2</sup> and his grandson.

They left for England the following day, and on January 14th, 1790, reached Helvoet, from

<sup>1</sup> This must have been Sir John Parnell (an ancestor of Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell), who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Grattan's Parliament.

<sup>2</sup> It will be recollected that an ancestor of Mr. Fagel succeeded the famous Cornelius De Witt as Grand Pensionnaire.

which place and on which date Captain Bentinck's Journal takes up the record of their travels, till it ends on October 24th, 1791. The letters overlap, for they begin on October 18th, 1790, but there is a gap of nine months which I shall bridge over with the help of Captain Bentinck's journal, and as soon as October is reached the letters are so frequent that they will best tell their own story, with the addition of an occasional extract from the diary when it bears on the subject and is of special interest.

## CHAPTER XIV

**A** BRIEF summary of the state of affairs in Europe during 1790 may be of interest.

In England the Reform Bill was rejected, and Burke published his *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

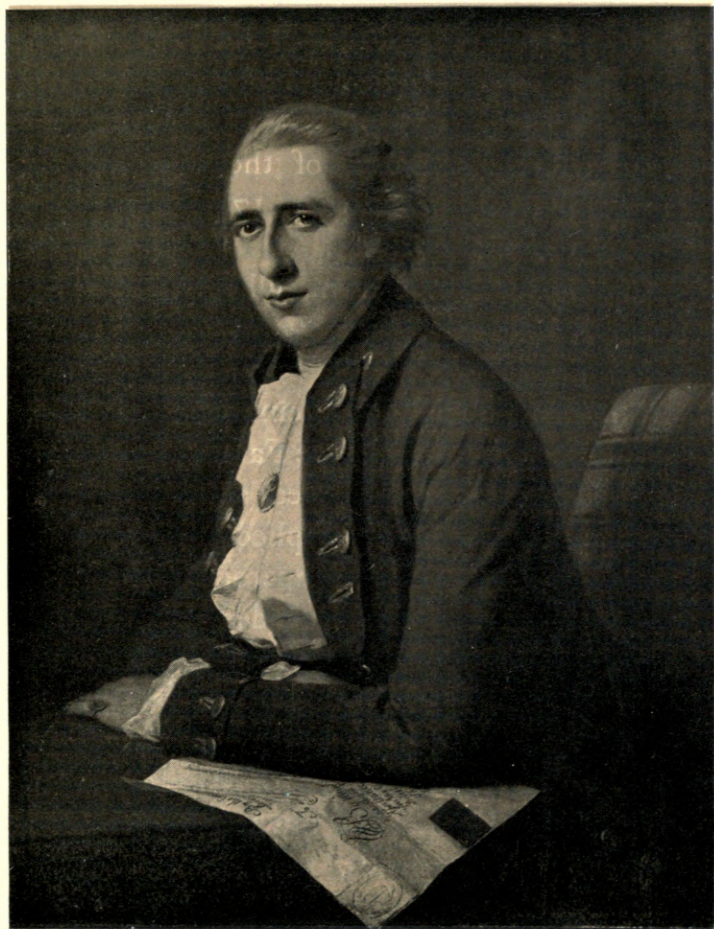
The first judicially condemned victim of the Revolution (the Marquis de Favras) was executed in France. Necker resigned, and Calonne took his place. Louis XVI applied for help to his brother kings. The Emperor of Germany, Joseph, died, and was succeeded by his brother Leopold. He was crowned Emperor as Leopold II, and chosen King of the Romans. He demanded from France the restoration of the rights of German princes in Alsace, Lorraine and Franche-Comte, but was refused.

In the Netherlands, the United States of Belgium declared their independence, but maintained it only for a year.

The Swedes fought the battle of Viborg, and made peace with Russia.

To return now to the two young men, who, on their return to England, went for a time





VICE-ADMIRAL WILLIAM BENTINCK

From a painting by Mason Chamberlin, 1783, in the possession of  
the Duke of Portland



their several ways. Captain Bentinck joined his mother and sisters at Bath, and "Rode with my mother," "Rode with Sophy," are frequent entries.

At the beginning of March he was again in Holland, first with "John and Jaqueline at Utrecht," then at Lord Athlone's house at The Hague, and on the 29th at Schaus on the Elbe, where "my carriage and dog Spruce Beer safely arrived." On April 1st he reached his grandmother's house at Hamburg, and stayed with her till the 19th, when he received his mother's summons to England. This seems to have been on account of the alarm of war, for he writes on May 6th :—

Geo. Eyre came. The accounts of the Spanish armament and our preparation for war made us determine to go to town immediately. 8th : Got to town. Wrote to Lord Chatham and was appointed to see him next day.

Then :

Saw Lord Chatham and asked him for the "Leda," a 36. Very civil, but could promise nothing definite. Glad to recommend if war breaks out. Told him that if war breaks out in the Baltic my local knowledge of it might be serviceable.

He now, in default of any other active work for the moment, became parliamentary candidate



for Dover, Trevanion being his opponent.<sup>1</sup> With "Willis, Lamb, Lone, Rev. Mr. Turney, Blake and Saunders" he camped on the rope-walk and began to canvass. On June 16th he was presented with the Freedom of Dover by the Mayor and Corporation.

The polling began next day, and a board was carried round the town with the following very non-inflammatory inscription on it :—

Trevanion and Education.

Bentinck and True Blue (*the party colour*).

Polling was continued for five days, and on the 23rd, at 3.30, the result was declared, Captain Bentinck being bottom with 308 votes.

This remarkably friendly contest over, they "went to church to thank the electors." For several days following entries in the Journal continue to record that they were still "thanking the electors" !

On June 28th the "Dutch Squadron called and reported that Russians had had an action with the Swedes." This must have been the action of June 3rd and 4th (1790), when Captain Marshall (as related a little further back) behaved so gallantly.

"Dined with Mr. Keene and Hawkins at Richmond." This was Captain Hawkins' uncle,

<sup>1</sup> Captain Bentinck's father had represented Rye from 1761 till the dissolution in 1768.

“Father of the House of Commons.” He is occasionally mentioned in the letters.

“Sophy and I set out for Spa, to leave her there with Charlotte.” Charlotte was her sister, Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Milnes, so well known to-day through Romney’s beautiful portraits of her. One of these now belongs to Lord Crewe, and another to Mr. H. Aldenburg Bentinck.

Before leaving London they “dined at 5 at the Duke’s” (Portland) “with Sophy, Rhoon and Charles.”

The next day’s entry contains the tragic announcement that “Sophy’s Taylor did not send home her things.”

They had a rough crossing to Calais, “Sophy most extremely sick.” The passage from Dover, “with a fine breeze,” took  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. “Sir Geo. Cholmondeley from Jamaica here (the Silver Lion Du Croques) with his family. Very civil to Sophy. Went to the play. The piece acted was in commemoration of the Revolution—a dull composition, but being full of *liberté* it went off very well. I bought a German wagon that held four within and a very good box in very good repair, and gave 20 guineas for it. Paid for the passage boat 5 guineas.”

On the 20th: “At St. Omers. Met a Gen. Murray (father of Lady Findlater). Is a great Imperialist, and advised us not to go by Brussels and Liege.” They set out for Brussels. “Very

particular about passport entering Imperial territory. At every 9 or 10 miles a small detachment of patriots. At Tournay very violent patriots. Pushed on for Brussels; 400 patriot troops passed through from Brussels. They were saluted by the town. Got to Brussels at 11½, having sent a courier to desire the gates might be kept open for us."

The situation of Brabant is most shocking, the troops of Prince Leopold threatening the destruction of the country. Divisions in their own Councils. Milnes and John Milnes were prisoners at large in Brussels for four days. [There was trouble about passports.] The Austrians and Brabantons neither give nor take quarter, so that their skirmishes are bloody in the extreme. Should the war be prosecuted, the beautiful country will be laid waste by the double scourge of Public Foes and Civil Dissentions. The face of the country between Brussels and Ghent is in my opinion the finest I ever saw in any country.

It was agreed I should not go on to Spa but return to England with John Milnes. After dinner Milnes and Sophy set out for Spa and J. M. and myself for Ostend.

They arrived in England and dined with the Duke. The following day they went to the Drawing Room, "it being the Prince of Wales' birthday. The Queen [the wife of George III, Charlotte Sophie of Mecklenburg-Strelitz] would



de commencer la carrière de ma vie par des  
discussions avec vous Madame, dont par les liens du  
sang je suis si proche apparenté, me pèse infiniment.

Dans l'incertitude où je suis Madame, de quelle  
façon vous recevrez cette demande, je dois me tenir  
à vous adresser du profond respect avec lequel

O'ac l'honneur d'être,

Madame et très honorée Grand Mère

vosre très obéissant serviteur et  
petit fils

W. G. B. Bentinck

La Haye ce 27 Nov. 1784.

WILLIAM GUSTAVUS FREDERICK, COUNT RHOON-BENTINCK, TO  
COUNTESS BENTINCK, HIS GRANDMOTHER, ON HIS COMING  
OF AGE

He wishes to come to terms with her concerning Doorwerth and other matters



not speak to Fox. Dined at the Duke's with Charles Bentinck just returned to London."

Rhoun wrote to Charles that if he would be over the first week in Sep. he would go with him to Hamburg. I am very glad he is going, and sorry I shall not be able to go with them.

Lord Hood is extremely civil to Hawkins. A fleet ordered to assemble in the Downs under Lord Hood and Ad. Elliot, for the North Sea. I supposed for the Baltic. Much too late for that expedition. The Downs fleet under Lord Hood no person could comprehend.

He was allowed a month's holiday by Lord Chatham while ships were fitting, and went to Spa, where he "found Milnes, Charlotte and Sophy at Petit Trianon, a very good house. Charlotte entirely recovered and Sophy much better for the waters. Lord and Lady Stourton offered to take Sophy to England."

We went to a huge party at Chaud Fontaine and found an immense dinner prepared, and the Prince Bishop of Rohan, just elected Regent des Pays de Liege, etc., etc., friends and partisans of the Bishop. . . . The secret history of this dinner was that Scufft wanted to give the Prince de Rohan a public dinner, and asked all those at Spa. The King of Prussia, it is said, declared that if the Prince was not chosen Regent within three days after the arrival of his letter he would withdraw his protection. Liege



will be to Prussia what it was to France some years since. This Prince de Rohan is brother to the French Rohan, so well known by the affair of the necklace.

“The whole of this part of the country is filled with Austrian troops.” The Brabacons are said to get in “by means of money—upon which Leopold desired his troops might also enter the Principality of Liege, which could not well be refused.” They were thus enclosed on every side. He added that there were in the neighbourhood “3000 volunteer patriots—perfectly well armed with muskets from Birmingham.”

The camp at Neuville was under the command of Major L’Etange—one of those who was obliged to quit Antwerp upon the first of the Revolution. He was most completely cut up in different parts of his body—his arm shot through in two places above the elbow (of which he was just recovering), his shoulder laid open by the cut of a sabre, his left hand scarred all over, his face cut across in two places above and below his mouth—and the middle finger of his right hand entirely useless, which he told us the surgeons assured him would recover. “Mais (added he) je n’en crois rien car vous voyez (shaking it) qu’il ne parle plus.” Major l’Etange was extremely civil to us and gave us papers for the rest of the camps. He is a sensible, active man, but I should think wanting in education—an admirable partizan and if

anything too daring to be trusted with the command.

They started on a tour of the camps. "Col. Tinne very shy. I afterwards found he had taken a part in the Dutch Revolution of 1787 against the Prince. . . . My name<sup>1</sup> and family must have been rather unpleasant, and he seemed more struck than any man I ever saw."

The scenery between Hüg and Namur he thought "much in the style of Wicklow about the Glen of the Downs, with the addition of a noble river."

An action having recently taken place, they risked capture by the enemy, but just avoided the Austrian troops.

A long account of the action follows, but it is too full of technical detail for these pages. He goes on to say: "Hochler is more beloved than any man I ever saw, and seems one of the first military men in the world—a fine tall man with strong expression in his countenance, bred from his cradle in a garrison and his military education finished under Elliott at Gibraltar. Always the first in danger and as cool in battle as at his table."

There were great complaints of the Volunteers. Regulars had to guard the bridges to prevent

<sup>1</sup> Count Bentinck de Rhoon was a warm adherent of the Prince in his resistance to the revolution of 1787.

them going home. "—— looks ill for the cause of independence! Now the Volunteers are more than half inclined to the Austrians, for fear of their own troops!"

Captain Bentinck and his sister Sophie set out on September 27th to visit Countess Thérèse Tierheim at Nivelles. This lady is often mentioned in the letters. On October 3rd Captain Bentinck was back in London. He "met Hawkins at Portsmouth" on the 21st, and both saw a good deal of Lord Howe who was on the "Queen Charlotte." Lord Howe offered him the "Director," and wrote to Lord Chatham on Captain Bentinck saying he would like to sail under his orders. He started for London with the letter. "Left Hawkins on board the 'Lion.' Travelled all night. Waited on Lord Chatham at 12. He said I could certainly have the 'Director' if her captain did not turn up." On the 29th he "received order to command the 'Director,' and went off to Portsmouth. Dined with Lord Howe."

On November 4th he writes that they had received news of the Convention, and considered himself in high luck to be clear the very day of the Peace.

It will not, I feel sure, be thought inappropriate if I bring his Journal to a close by quoting an estimate of Captain Bentinck by his cousin, Count Bentinck de Rhoon. It was given to



me by Mr. Henry Aldenburg Bentinck, Captain Bentinck's grandson :—

D'un mobile sans fin voila l'exacte image  
Toujours allant, venant, sans cesse faisant tapage  
Tel qu'un torrent rapide entrainant dans son cours,  
Amis, parens, voisins, et tous ses alentours  
En aucun endroit ne fixant sa demeure  
Doit sur les grands chemins passer sa dernière heure.

There is a note to this by Mr. Bentinck's father as follows: "Effectivement mon père mourut dans un appartement loué at St. Petersburg."

## CHAPTER XV

**W**E now come to the letters which formed the inspiration for this work.

They still lie in their three red leather portfolios, and I have put them in a fire-proof safe in my home, from which they occasionally issue forth that interested friends may turn them over. It has been most difficult to decide which letters to include, which to omit, and which to make extracts from. By omitting all family references, I should have left out all human interest, and the political comments and facts must have been strung together like a dried-up, withered garland. Until I found these letters, my interest had not been awakened in my family history, and perhaps this has enabled me to bring a fresher mind to bear on it than would have been the case had I grown up and lived for years with a knowledge of it. I am encouraged in my opinion of the great interest and value of these letters written in Charlotte Sophie's extreme old age by a contemporary one I came across recently at Welbeck Abbey, in which "the pleasure that very extraordinary woman takes in writing at her advanced time of life, and the

facility and cleverness with which she writes," are described as "really surprising."

The first letter was written before she had seen the grandchild (my great-grandmother) with whom she so soon became on the closest and most affectionate terms. Sophie, as we have seen, was staying at Spa with her sister, Charlotte Milnes, and her brother, William Bentinck, and had sent her grandmother a box, or sloping desk of wood, which she seems to have painted, judging from a drawing of something of the sort in her brother's Journal, and a remark to the effect that it was made "for Sophy to paint."

When referring in the footnotes of the letters to the people mentioned I have thought it easiest, both for my readers and myself, to allude to them as Charlotte Sophie does herself. Indeed, I found it almost impossible after reading a certain number of the letters even to *think* of Captain Bentinck otherwise than as "Cher Guillaume," of my great-grandfather except as "Hawkings," and of Mr. Weisbrod (that dear man who came to England after Countess Bentinck's death and inaugurated his first visit to Sophie by sitting on her very tame canary) as anything but "the Philosopher."

So I shall use these names freely in the following pages, for I feel sure that to my readers all these people whom Charlotte Sophie has made so real and alive to me cannot fail under



the spell of her pen to live again for them also.

I have placed in the Appendix a short sketch of my great-grandfather's career, and have added to it portions of certain letters from Lord Rodney in which he is mentioned. The original letters are in my possession, and have never before seen the light. This is the case with practically the whole of my material.

The first of Charlotte Sophie's letters is addressed to Sophie Bentinck at Spa, and like several of the earlier ones, I give it in full, for though trivial, it helps to introduce to the reader the various people of whom we often read later on.

Embsbittel<sup>1</sup> the 8th October, 1790.

I cannot resist the temptation of writing to you, *ma chère et aimable Sophie*, to assure you of the great pleasure I felt on the arrival of the pretty box you were so good as to send me. Your gift has shown me qualities in you which, in addition to those I know already through your brother and cousin, make me feel proud of such a granddaughter! Your exactitude, your skill, your patience, your taste, all are proclaimed in this specimen of your work. It will ever be precious to me. But this letter is not concerned only with the tender gratitude I owe you. It

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Sophie's country house just outside Hamburg. She always spells it thus, though on modern maps I notice it is printed *Emsbittel*.

is written not only to thank you for the charming work of your hands, but quite as warmly for your most kind visit to my friend, Comtesse de Tierheim.<sup>1</sup> This good woman (niece, and beloved pupil of one to whom more than all others I am bound by inclination, esteem and admiration for the purest virtue, even more than by gratitude) has shown herself worthy of her education in that sublime school. She is as true as she is amiable. Her father merits the greatest respect. Judge therefore, *ma chère fille*, what extreme pleasure you have given me, in undertaking this journey to make her acquaintance, an acquaintance with which my dear Comtesse Thérèse seems enchanted, and which I hope will lead to a bond of friendship between all those persons most dear to me. He who will ever occupy the first place in my heart ; that beloved brother of yours, who is the consolation (and during his absence, by reason of his fearlessness and the dangers he encounters, the torment) of my life, accompanied you in your mission, so gratifying to me. Thus my best friends have become the friends of my dear children ! What a vast field of

<sup>1</sup> "Sophie and I set out for Aix-la-Chapelle to see La Comtesse de Tierheim, Chanoinesse de Nivelles, and a great friend of my grandmother's. Arr. at 6. Mad. de Tierheim at home. Her father a fine old man of 81 with her. She is about 40. Her brother's wife there. Her brother at his estate in the Pais de Luxembourg, close to the Austrian ports between Huy and Namur. Supped with Mad. de T. We were in the same hotel. *Sep. 28.* Went with Mad. T. to a country house 2 miles out where Lord Heathfield died and then there was a sale of his furniture. *29.* Took leave of Mad. T."—*Captain W. Bentinck's Journal.*

Countess Thérèse Tierheim was a niece of Princess Trautson.

delight, were it not for my 75 years which alas! ruins all.

Perhaps you think you approach the end of my idle talk? That is where you are mistaken, Mademoiselle! There remains a favour and a very interesting one, that I shall ask of you. It is news of your poor dear sister,<sup>1</sup> about whom I am extremely anxious. I want to know that her autumn campaign has been happily begun, continued and completed. It is in you, *ma chère fille*, and a little in Mr. Milnes, that I hope (but these dear gentlemen cannot understand feminine love of detail in such matters). There is perhaps no one in the world except my *cher grand*<sup>2</sup> *Guillaume*, who is an exception to this rule. How strange that Nature, often in so serious a mood, should have placed two such meteors in the same family! Well, *ma charmante Sophie*, it is in you only that I put my trust. In charity, give me news of your precious sister. But this is not all. You must tell me that you, and she and her fortunate husband, and the pretty babies, the event over, will accede to my tenderest, most urgent entreaties, and give up to me the six months between the two cures at Spa, instead of returning to England. I think I have some right to expect this, and I have begged your mother, your brother, and even your cousin de Rhoon to vote for me. I would indeed wear myself out

<sup>1</sup> Then Mrs. Milnes, wife of Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Shore Milnes, one of the most beautiful women of her day.

<sup>2</sup> "Sophie's" brother, William, then Captain, afterwards Vice-Admiral Bentinck.



in pleading before the whole world, if every one had a voice in conclave! So come, *aimable Sophie*, come and see if an old grandmother of 75 can live again to love you! When one travels one goes to see the strange animals of the country, and I am worth at least one of these! I end without compliments. The feelings with which you inspire me absolutely forbid them.

Charlotte Sophie always alludes to her married grandchild by her surname, as was the custom in those days. "The best of mothers" referred to is the widow of her second son, *née Renira de Tuyll*.

Hamburg: the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1790.

I waited, *ma chère fille*, till I thought you were in England, to express to you the extreme joy, the keen delight that your pleasant letter from Brussels gave me! Since that letter, it seems to me that I have lived for years with you! The charming candour and frankness which permeate it takes hold of my heart and is irresistible. How I regret that you did not come here with Mrs. Milnes! It would have made me almost too happy! But this happiness would have been at the expense of the best of mothers, and at that price I should consider even Paradise too dearly bought. I must wait and hope for another opportunity before I die, when without taking you away from your excellent mother I can have the pleasure of seeing my amiable Sophie, so

that my departure from this world may be made a little more difficult.

Let us rather talk of your dear sister. She has been travelling since the 14th November (alas! four weeks and three days after her confinement;<sup>1</sup> the idea makes me shudder!), and she has not rested for even one day at Aix-la-Chapelle, as I begged her to. Poor Tierheim, who will never forget you, saw them only in passing and is in despair. They arrived late on the evening of the 14th, slept at the same house where she was staying and started again the next afternoon in spite of her entreaties. Mrs. Milnes was well, however, and as brave as Artaban.<sup>2</sup> She prayed them, with joined hands, to listen less to their courage than to the voice of prudence, and she thinks they will now plan out their days so that each shall be very short. They will thus only be at Münster to-day or yesterday, where they told me to write, which I have done. I have also taken every possible precaution to facilitate their passage of the Elbe (which is not dangerous, except the risk of getting cold owing to the long time it takes), so as to shorten it as much as possible and make it more comfortable. I hope that in about a week I shall be able to tell you that this interesting quartette is with me.

Let us now turn for a moment to another who is

<sup>1</sup> "Charlotte had a third son on the 18th [of October] at Spa. Perfectly well. Sophy to leave on the 19th for home."—*Journal of Captain William Bentinck.*

<sup>2</sup> Artaban was the hero of a romance by La Calprenède, entitled *Cléopâtre*, and his proud character led to the proverb "as proud as Artaban."



MRS. JOHN ALBERT BENTINCK

*née* Renira de Tuyll de Serooskerken, the mother of "Sophie," of Lady Milnes, and of  
Vice-Admiral William Bentinck

From a portrait by Hoppner, in the possession of the Duke of Portland

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equally dear to you. Our best *grand Guillaume!* Are you not as transported as I am with joy at all that has happened to him?<sup>1</sup> That brilliant and flattering distinction from Lord Howe, at the head of his fleet, and in the face of all England! That proof of esteem, which speaks louder than the spirit of party and even of favour! And hardly has this excellent man so discreetly tickled our vanity than God Himself intervenes and gives us peace!

I am certain that while your mother and you and I are singing hymns of joy the personage himself, in his fury at our exclamations, wishes every woman in creation banished to the ends of the earth, looking upon them as so many cackling fowls, and tearing his hair because he cannot tear that of the Spaniards!

Let him make all these reflexions, while we in our secret hearts thank God who has preserved to us a being that He would have difficulty in replacing from the whole of His creation since it began.

One word more, *chère Sophie*, for I am now quite at ease with you, after your letter from Brussels. Shall you soon be in London? If so, please show a little friendship for our relation, Comtesse de Wedel Jarelsberg, who is worthy of it. She is good and clever and not happy. It is her husband who is our relation.

<sup>1</sup> "Oct. 29th. Received order to command 'Director.' Went off to Portsmouth. Nov. 4th. News of Convention. In high luck to be clear the very day of the Peace. 5th. Lord Howe all kindness to me. Dined with him. Lord Howe is more misconceived than any man I ever saw, his manner is cold but he is one of the kindest friends I ever met with and I feel myself most truly obliged to him."—*Captain Bentinck's Journal.*

She is Norwegian and was forced to marry him. He is unworthy of her, for his conduct towards her is not what it should be. Wherever she has lived she has made herself loved and esteemed. Friends such as your mother and you would soothe many of her troubles. For what is not friendship a consolation ! It seems to me you carry a heart made to feel this truth !

Say a thousand true and agreeable things from me to your respected mother, and cultivate for me the friendship of your sister.<sup>1</sup> On my part I will give you news of the pretty little mother and babies from Spa !

*Adieu, ma chère enfant.*

<sup>1</sup> Harriet, then unmarried. She married, in 1804, Admiral Sir George Martin, and died in 1806. An account of her husband's long and glorious career will be found in O'Byrne's *Naval Biography*. Charlotte Sophie never saw her, but kept up a regular and affectionate correspondence with her from this time forward.



## CHAPTER XVI

**T**HERE is a gap in the letters here till March 29th. Captain W. Bentinck's Journal bridges it. He records that "on Dec. 23rd Charlotte and Milnes arrived at Hamburg to stay with my grandmother. Very pleased." This was the first time Charlotte Sophie had seen them, and she was ever after devotedly attached to them both. Captain Bentinck was at home in England during the winter, and mentions some interesting conversations he had with Sir Joseph Banks, a great friend of his family.

Sir Joseph Banks was known as "The father of Australia." His ancestors were of Swedish extraction, and he was an old and intimate friend of my great-grandfather's. Banks was with Cook on his first voyage—that of the "Endeavour"—when New South Wales was discovered. He was a man of independent means, and the passion of his life was the study of botany. He was President of the Royal Society for many years, and is said to have introduced more plants into this country than any one else. All are familiar with his name through the popular *Banksia*

rose. He was created a baronet in 1781. Napoleon admired him greatly, and his popularity in France was such that any one nominated by him would have been welcomed throughout that country. On the death of Banks a eulogy was pronounced by Cuvier before the Academie Royale des Sciences. He referred in it to Banks' generous intervention on behalf of foreign naturalists. When the collections made by Labillardière during D'Entrecasteaux's expedition fell into British hands, Banks hastened to send them to France without even glancing at them, saying that he would not steal a single botanic idea from those who had searched for them at the peril of their lives. Ten times parcels addressed to Paris were captured in transit by British warships.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Bentinck made some prophetic remarks in his journal on January 10th, 1791 :—

Was introduced by Sir Joseph Banks to Mr. King of the Navy, who was governor of Norfolk Island, a well informed man, but with everybody employed under Gov. complains of the sad want of encouragement given to officers and to colonies. It is surprising but worthy of notice that although the settlement at Botany Bay has been now established four years, from the want of small vessels they have never been able to take any survey of the coasts of Newfoundland N. and S. of the Settlement by which

<sup>1</sup> *Sir Joseph Banks*, by J. H. Maiden (1909). Printed in Australia.

means the knowledge of harbours and eligible situations is quite unknown.

Should this Settlement prosper and the continent of New Holland like that of America increase and spread to form nations for future ages from the scum of our dregs, it will be a very curious circumstance that the English language should spread from our little Island and be the mother tongue of two continents—a man in his private journal may venture the calculations, which he would not in public, but I should be glad to know what are the probabilities with respect to Empire, in the Southern Hemisphere, when New Holland shall be peopled and have its Cities, Ports, Harbours, Docks, Armies, Commerce, public and private interests, in all likelihood its independence and Power? Will the Dutch Colonies be able to exist with such near neighbours—will the European trade be suffered to pass the Cape of Good Hope unmolested by that Empire of the South—will it not become the great carrier to Europe of Asiatic commodities, and bid defiance to our attacks from their distance and power?

Later he went with Captain Montagu to Portsmouth to see his friend J. Johnston, master of the “Chatham,” brig, going round the world with Captain Vancouver. Lord Hood asked him many questions about the Baltic, and the cruises he and Captain Hawkins had made there in their small boat supplied information that was found useful during the war soon to be declared.



“Hawkins saw Lord Chatham, who told him he should have one of the large frigates as no more line of battle ships were to be commissioned; with a promise of the first line of battle ship that fell vacant. Hawkins’ bill for changing his name and other things relative to the Irish estates received the King’s assent; he therefore is now James Hawkins-Whitshed.” He took the name of his cousin who left him his estates. Family tradition relates that this cousin had visited the Bishop of Raphoe, then a country parson with a numerous family, and having ordered a parade of all the children he selected little James as his protégé and heir.

As the months passed on Charlotte Sophie grew more and more engrossed in the fearful drama, as it was unfolded, of the French Revolution. She wrote from Hamburg, on March 29th, 1791:—

That dear, that excellent *grand Guillaume* has the goodness and humanity to find means, by his choice of a secretary, to render bearable the absence of his letters. Yes, *mon aimable et chère Sophie*, my heart beats so warmly for you that I could renounce without the suspicion of a regret the letters of the whole world (that delightful brother alone excepted) provided I received yours! Those which you tell me you wrote on your return to England, in which you referred to politics, have not reached me. The last which I had the pleasure of receiving



CHARLOTTE FRANCES, LADY MILNES

From a portrait by Romney, in the possession of Mr. Henry Aldenburg Bentinck





was written on the way from Brussels. Try to find out what has become of a letter so interesting to me and tell me to what address you sent it, for there is not one line from your hand which is not precious to me.

Your charming sister (who reigns here far more despotically than Louis XVI or any of our sovereigns of to-day) has so faithfully enabled me to make your acquaintance and has rendered me so familiar with your attractive character that already I love you as the apple of my eye, I who on account of my age, the troubles of my life and my disposition, have much difficulty in attaching myself even to those I know ; and my whole ambition (long dead in me, but revived by you) is to see before my death this gentle enchantress whomeven Milnes himself declares to be irresistible. But this is folly in my case, for I am near the end of the term of my life, and if I knew you, and attached myself to you, you would render death, which till now I have tried to accustom myself to see approach without fear, terribly bitter and difficult.

Dear Henriette puzzles and alarms me. I trembled with fear when I opened your last letter, and I thank God that she is at least a little relieved. I hope that Spa will succeed in giving health to this precious girl.

I will now, since you put up with my idle talk, tell you the news of all that can interest you here. The amiable couple<sup>1</sup> who are under my roof, *ma chère fille*, fall willing in with everything, excepting our horrible

<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Milnes.

climate which even the natives can barely tolerate. They sleep late in the morning, and afterwards they trot about like starved cats to counteract the weather.

Your brother-in-law,<sup>1</sup> as a son of the house, takes upon himself to do the honours in German style, and like everything else he tries, he succeeds admirably, though sometimes it is amusing to see him begin a German salutation which he fails to carry through from impatience at the operation, finishing it off with a natural and graceful movement of his own.

His pretty wife makes a German courtesy with her own innate dignity and enchants us all. She only had to turn her beautiful eyes twice the other day to conquer a certain old bastard prince<sup>2</sup> that your brother knew very well and who used to come and see him in his room in night-cap and slippers from the other end of the town. This aged and eccentric prince, who has but three passions on earth (after his love of himself), namely, money, pretty women and dogs, thought your sister so entrancing the first time he saw her that he came to me exclaiming, "Bon Dieu, qu'elle est belle!"

She has attached another old Paladin to her chariot with whom she plays chess, a game he is very skilful at. But a glance which she casts without even noticing that he is there, checkmates him far more surely than her knights and castles. The audacious Milnes is tranquil in the confidence of his own worth, amidst all these conquests. In the afternoon, if there are

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Milnes.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Hessenstein, natural son of the King of Sweden.

guests, we talk. If we are alone Milnes, while roasting his back by the fire, amuses himself, helped by a friend of the house (of whom I am jealous because he prefers him to everyone else here), amuses himself greatly, I repeat, by enraging his old grandmother through a legion of jokes which his ally, who knows me but too well, treacherously supplies material for. William<sup>1</sup> then comes to enliven the scene, with the vivacity of his nature. I begin to grow accustomed to these *tours de force* which at first made me shiver. Little Henry is a beautiful creature, very like your father at his age. He is gay and affectionate, and takes after your family in every way. The honour they did me in asking me to be godmother gives me a double reason for loving him. Your sister usually looks well, though occasionally she feels faint or has a headache, but thank God these are rare and do not last twenty-four hours. We both impatiently long to move to my little country place, which is really only a garden in miniature surrounded by walks, of which their sound limbs will not be afraid. We have had the pleasure of a visit (but only for six days) from your cousin Henry, whom we thought more like your branch of the family than his own, and who bears evidence to his great advantage, of the five years of education which he enjoyed under your excellent mother. He does her honour, and this young man promises well and will fulfil expectation.

Will you swallow a mouthful of politics now, *ma*

<sup>1</sup> William was one of the Milnes' children.



*chère fille ?* Tell me then as soon as you can, if you really intend to send thirty ships of the Line to the Baltic, of which the proud King of Denmark hastens to shut the door in your face ? Are you also sending to the Mediterranean ? I should be very glad, provided that my *cher Guillaume* is not chosen to bring either the Russians, the Danes or the Corsairs to reason ! I cannot live, I cannot exist, without him, and none of these races deserve a preceptor like himself ! *Au nom de Dieu*, let them give him back to me, or he will find me dead and buried ! Nothing but a sight of him can prolong my sad and useless life !

I must now tell you that which will free poor Tierheim from blame in your eyes. An irreparable loss has overtaken her. Death has snatched from her her greatest and most intimate friend, the companion of her childhood and of the cloister, with whom alone she could support absence from her native land and the society of foreigners ; envious, difficult busy-bodies. This friend implored her on her death-bed to come and see her for the last time. She started for her convent of Nivelles, her aged father rousing himself to hasten her journey in every possible way, as a tribute to this true friendship. She arrived, and ten hours later this tender friend of hers expired in her arms ! She is in a deplorable state, and this is her excuse, and one unhappily only too good ! You made an extraordinary impression on her, and if you find yourself in the same country you alone can perhaps give back to her what she has lost. I wrote

to her just now telling her how much you felt her silence, not knowing its cause. When the poor thing has recovered a little you can be sure that she will turn to you once more ! A very sweet sympathy attaches you to one another, and her heart will always be at the disposal of those in whom she has found sufficient worth to give it. From an early age her character was formed and she has continued to feel the influence of the education of the most superior woman that I have known in my life. . . . You have encouraged me to gossip ! You have wished it, *mon aimable Sophie !* Take all the blame if I have exceeded your wishes ! Embrace your dear sister and lend me your influence that your stay in Germany may not be without benefit to me. Alas ! I feel all the difficulties, but it is only the climate that alarms me for the delicate health of that dear Henriette, which could not stand a winter here. Why does it not depend on me to save you three quarters of the journey ! I would go to the end of the world ! Only I should have to be buried at the end of ten leagues. What a tantalising position !

But your mother enjoys good health, and was born and bred in worse air than ours. However, even if that is impossible, if she cannot make this effort for me, that adorable big brother (born to be the delight of my last years) is in the habit of guiding his intrepid sister. She has braved with him the French insurrections and those of Brabant and Liege, the seas of Ireland and the Gulfs. Is a bleak northern climate more to be feared than all these ? You see how

cleverly a little egoism finds sound arguments, so pardon my indiscretion !

Adieu.

Another long gap occurs here, but Captain Bentinck, still in England, has some interesting pages in his Journal written during this time. Amongst various friends he mentions Lord Guildford, Lord Garlies (a naval comrade), and Mr. Burke. Of the last-named he saw a good deal, and wrote a pamphlet in connection with Mr. Burke's famous one. The following conversation seems worth printing in full. I copy it exactly as it stands, without any attempt at editing. It took place on May 21st, 1791.

After dinner went to Mr. Burke's, where I met Lord Inchiquin and Mons. La Tour du Pin, cousin to the late French Minister. Burke and I went into his room, when he explained to me the whole progress of his difference with Fox, and his situation at this moment. The conversation was much too long to detail ; the heads were that he had all along opposed the different meetings and societies held in London and other parts of England with a direct plan of disseminating any conversation with Fox, by him, and that Sheridan thought himself rather out of favour for his opinion, when to his great astonishment he understood Fox reprobated his (Burke's) work and his opinions, and in the House made a speech on the Glory of the French Revolution, which called Burke up, who by his friends was prevented



from speaking. After this, Fox and Burke had a long conversation, Burke having declared to Mr. Pitt and to Fox in the House of Commons that in the Committee on the Quebec Bill, he should speak about the French Revolution—That he explained to Fox the situation of this country very quiet and safe, the King loved, the Ministry strong.

But suppose an accession to the throne and change of Ministers, what might be the consequence with a King unpopular by his expenses and habits of life, with a great demand on the public, with the dissenters (who hate Fox though they use him) asking more than any Ministry can give and amounting to 700,000, having various meetings in different parts of England—obliged to make a new batch of peers—to lay on new taxes, and unpopular in the country, with the minds of men the views of the dissenters in England and since the year 1789, of the democrats of France, conceiving those views to be highly dangerous to the quiet of this country. That he had been in correspondence with Mr. Payne<sup>1</sup> who was then (in 1790) living at Paris, with the American Minister Jefferson, Fayette and the Jacobins, and that in one letter he stated how much good the propagation of the French opinions throughout Europe and England by . . . or Burke would advance the cause of Freedom—On this idea Burke broke off all intercourse with Payne—That Sheridan supported the French Revolution, on which Burke published his famous book before November 4th,

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Paine.

by way of checking the ardour of the expected meetings on that day—which it certainly did do—and on a debate in the House in which Sheridan made a very elegant panegyric on the French Revolution he (Burke) explained his meaning and separated with Sheridan, dreading the effects of such opinions, supported by so much eloquence and ability. That he was induced to believe his work well esteemed by the Heads of the Opposition such as D. of P., Lord Fitzwilliam, and not having been heated by democratic doctrines and with the (French) army praised for not obeying their officers—In all probability a Revolution here would be the consequence.

Therefore, added Burke, as I found Fox was not to be checked by any friendly advice or by any reason, I thought it best to separate from the party as it was impossible for me to join on such terms. Here they parted and have not met since, nor are they likely till one of them changes opinion, which in all likelihood will not happen soon. I told Burke if at any time he could make any use of me I was ready to do whatever I could to re-unite him and my friends.

The conversation lasted three hours, and of course there was much anecdote, which I do not choose to commit to writing.

Next night I dined with Whitshed at Sir J. Banks and Mr. Rion, late of the Guardian, etc. The conversation then led to a son of the late Captain Gore, who was with Rion, about 16 or 17 and by his account one of the finest young men in the world. He recommended him in tears to Sir Joseph, and

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I don't believe there was a dry eye at table so feelingly did Rion describe and feel the situation of this young lad. Rion said he was the only friend he had at the Cape—slow but sure—to use Rion's expression. *A perfect hour hand.* Rion wept like a child and seems low spirited.

Went to Brookes. Met the Duke of Clarence and had a long political conversation with him on Burke's system, which he highly approved of and blamed the Prince of Wales for falling into the principles of the democrats of the day and quite tasted the spirit of caution so justly recommended by Burke. I told him the story which he related to-day at Sir Joseph's—That about four weeks ago an anonymous letter came to Lord Buckinghamshire to say that if such and such things were not done and others altered and certain changes made on his estate they would destroy his Barley Ricks, and that finding no notice taken of this two or three days ago two of his Ricks 150 yards from each other, a proof it was done purposely, were burnt to the ground. One of their arguments, I ought to have said, which was used in their letter, is that the French, having opened their minds, they were determined to bear such and such things no longer and then made the threat which they have now executed. Coke intends procuring from the Secretary of State the King's pardon, and hopes to be able to bring the offenders to condign punishment. I trust this trifle will stop democratic declarations in the House of Commons. I was glad to find the Duke of Clarence on Burke's side.



Hop-pickers in Kent threaten revolutionary means if the Church continues to require payment of tithes in hops.

Two years ago I should have been a democrat, but now, of the two, I should certainly support the aristocratic side, but not to any excess.

Writing on June 25th, he says :—

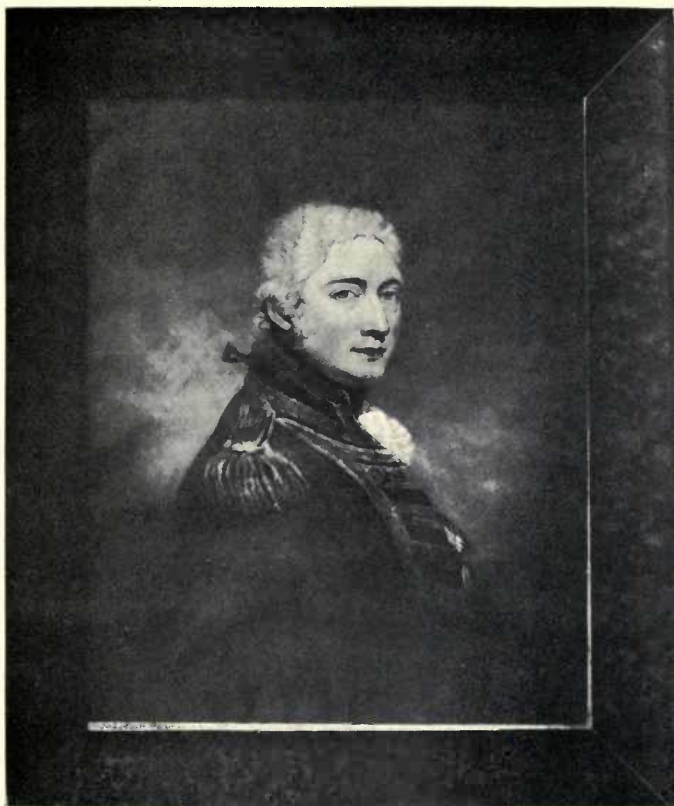
This day the news of the King of France's escape from Paris arrived and was received by most people with great satisfaction.

Later on I find the following entry :—

Received a letter from my grandmother enclosing one from my mother who arrived at Hamburg with Sophy and John the 20th. Sent my grandmother six dozen of excellent porter.

Captain Bentinck shortly after set sail in a boat, the "Whim," specially built under his directions. His Journal contains long descriptions of her. She was of 27 tons, 31 ft. keel, 13·6 beam, 36 aloft. Sir Harry Parker was to sail as far as Margate with him. On their way over they explored the east coast of England and were complimented in the papers on their seamanship. Captain Bentinck reached his grandmother's at Embsbüttel on the 6th, and his Journal contains the following entry on that day :—

Hawkins wrote to my mother and me about his



ADMIRAL SIR JAMES HAWKINS-WHITSHED, BART., K.C.B.

From a painting by James Northcote in the possession of Major Pollard

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intentions with regard to Sophy which we had seen before and gave us great satisfaction. He wrote to the Bishop of Raphoe his father, and also to his uncle Mr. Keene. My mother wrote to the Duke on the 9th about Hawkins and Sophy.

The following is to Mrs. John Albert Bentinck, Sophie's mother.

*A ma chère belle fille.*

How I pitied you from the depths of my heart, Madame! As you were not born on the happy banks of Lethe (I ought to say, of the Thames) you must, without taking from the national honour, have been sharply and painfully affected, and I hope that you remembered to take the palsy-drops and to give some to Sophie after this horrible spectacle.

But as the terrible moment has passed let us try to blot it out; these impressions are too trying to be retained.

*Pour la petite chatte.*

While my heart is torn for you, while I positively gasp from compassion for the cruel situation in which I picture my poor child, the little minx has the impertinence to write me a tale just as shocking as those with which those *aigre fins*, her honoured brother and future husband, have tormented me! What must I do with my natural sorrow, with my just compassion, with my anxieties for those who are more difficult to understand than the characters in the Apocalypse? How can one jest about an accident which it makes

me shudder to think of? If you say to me that it is not fitting for English people to think and feel like vulgar human beings, I shall reply with Camille

*“ Si pour etre Romain, il faut cesser d’etre homme,  
Je renonce au beau nom de citoyen de Rome ! ”*

Know then, Mademoiselle, that I will have nothing to do with such heroic sentiments, and if you fall back on them, if you have not the goodness to place yourself by my side on the ground floor of common sense and common feeling, you will be as surely chastised as I am your grandmother.

The accident referred to was a broken leg, from which Captain Hawkins-Whitshed made an excellent recovery.

*Un petit mot pour*

*Notre cher Roué.*

This was one of several names for Captain Hawkins-Whitshed.

One must recollect that in Charlotte Sophie’s youth the term *roué* meant little more than criminal—he that has done so bad an action that he deserves to be broken on the wheel. Might she not, therefore, in applying it to her dear “Hawkings,” connect it playfully with the passing of the carriage wheel over his leg, which broke it? The first person who appears to have used the word in a bad sense was the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France in the interval between the reigns of Louis XIV and

Louis XV. He collected around him companions as wicked as himself, and called them his *roués*, inasmuch as there was not one of them that did not deserve, as he was wont to boast, to be broken on the wheel.

If I disobeyed your strict order, *mon cher fils*, it was because what you asked of me was not in my power, and that the feeling you forbade me was stronger than I. May I venture in my turn, to give an order on the strength of my friendship? It is, not to hurry your cure, not to influence the surgeon to emancipate you, and not to walk or travel until you can do so without risk! Grant this for the sake of those who so willingly share your pain, your impatience, your *ennui*, and of the old woman on the banks of the Elbe who has so sincere an affection for you.

Charlotte Sophie always alludes to Captain Hawkins-Whitshed (as he then was) as "Hawkings," probably because he had only added the name of Whitshed the year before, and she was therefore accustomed to hear *cher Guillaume* call him Hawkins. Her spelling of names is most erratic, and her letters to Sophie were always addressed "Mrs. Hawkins Wiethaedt."

For the *chère petite chatte*.

Embsbuttel the 3 October, 1791.

*Ma chère Sophie*, if I had felt any doubt as to my friendship for you your terrible adventure would



have proved it to me at the expense of my deepest feelings.

These dreadful moments have passed, I hope, and you can at least enjoy the consolation of bestowing the tenderest care on the worthy object of your affection. How keenly I participate in all that passes in your heart! You know how I loved that good, that honest Hawkings before I learnt of the privilege, so delightful for me, of being able to call him, in reality, my son. While you do your needlework beside his sofa, tell him sometimes, I beg of you, what my feelings were when he said to me that he too had a mother! I now require him to believe what is actually the fact, namely that he has three! And that the third defies both the others to esteem or care for him more than she does! Mr. Weisbrod wishes me to tell you that he says nothing but feels keenly, and that that says everything!

Mr. Weisbrod and his wife lived at Hamburg with Countess Bentinck. He left Paris in 1780, and soon after began his illustrations for Charlotte Sophie's Catalogue of Medals.

*A Circular letter to the Family.*

Embsbuttel, the 11th October, 1791.

My descendants are warned that there has suddenly fallen, like a bolt from a blue sky, upon their mother-in-law and grandmother, a Princess, who is a Duchess of an ancient family, with all her

suite ! That, thanks be to God, she is not dead ; but she is quite exhausted, having heroically borne the weight for twice twenty-four hours—visits, dinners, bouquets of flowers, assemblies, etc., etc., nothing has been wanting, so that it has really cost her quarter as much as an Irish leg under a German coach !

For these reasons, and because of her expenditure in animal spirits, nervous vitality and politeness, in pretty nothings, in hollow compliments, in fleeting allusions, in morals, politics, gossip, corporal movements and mental flights, etc., etc., which has been enormous, and than which she finds no better excuse that English readers would accept, she asks for a respite to repair her moral and physical condition. But in spite of her desperate state she embraces them all and begs them to drink on Thursday next, the 20th, a good glass of porter to the health of de Rhoon, who is to be married on that day, and whom she has earnestly enjoined not to go hunting under a coach on the eve of his wedding ! She is determined for her part to drink to the verge of inebriation on that day to every one's health, bridegrooms with sound legs and with broken ones, and she entreats one and all to try and love her a little if it does not fatigue them too much. Dixi.

Count Rhoon Bentinck married Countess Ottoline de Reede-Lynden in 1791, as the pedigree at the end of these volumes shows.

*Circular letter.*

For all good people who have or have not broken their arms and legs at Bousset and Spa.

As your mother-in-law, grandmother, and great grandmother, *Messieurs et Mesdames*, does not wish to collapse beneath her inkstand, in writing to you, young, fresh and gay, eight or ten deep, she has wisely determined to march against you all in one army corps after the manner of a Macedonian phalanx. Her medals have taught her the tactics of ancient times, and she is now ready to tear you to pieces. She warns you that at first she intends fighting hand to hand, with each, and attacking alternatively all of her numerous posterity as she finds something to say, and just as often as any folly enters her head! You will reply in the way and manner that best suits you, for you are all free to say what you wish, while we good Germans, without boasting of our liberty, perhaps have even more of it than you!

I now enter the field, and my heart naturally turns first to my

*Cher Grand Guillaume.*

You are adorable with your kindly exactitude, *mon cher fils*, and God can but bless you for your goodness to your old grandmother, in delivering her not only as quickly as possible from the anguish you knew she must feel, but in placing on her wounds the most healing and infallible balm, the hope of seeing you soon, after having made her a present of another grandson, who was the choice of her heart. May the



future smile on your pleasant and kindly intentions, I feel them with the tenderest gratitude; but alas! my enemy, time, is evilly disposed towards me after three quarters of a century, and you are still at Bousset! And it is the 7th October! There should be no question of *hastening* the cure of your dear friend and brother. Rather should you try to retard it, for if one injures the leg again I tremble to think of the result! Irish bones have no advantage whatsoever over other bones of Christendom, and if this delicate limb, just at the moment of its recovery, is forced, if one is so unlucky as to make the slightest false movement, or knock against anything, the cure is arrested and becomes a hundredfold more difficult than after the first fracture, and one can then hardly dare to hope that the leg will be perfectly straight. Thus the remainder of one's life is poisoned because one has not had strength of mind and enough common sense to control one's impatience for two or three weeks longer!

Thus it is on your firmness, on your true friendship that I count; it is well known that a broken leg *cannot* be thoroughly cured in less than forty days, and after that one hardly dare walk except with the utmost precaution, which must be doubled in cold and frosty weather when the bones are more brittle. Reassure me therefore, *mon cher fils*. You have never deceived me for one moment or disturbed my perfect confidence in you, and I sleep peacefully in my faith in your character which is the same now as always.

I omit the others of this date.

*To Grand Guillaume.*

Good morning, my dear Wandering Christian (for you are really too good-looking to be taken for a Jew!), so you have been running about the world a little?

Our winter society begins to reassemble. Monsieur de Lynden and Baron de Behr have again returned. We fear that Prince Hessenstein, having completely rid himself of his Swedish belongings, will come and live here both in summer and winter, a fire having, they say, consumed his house on his estate in Holstein. You have probably heard about this from the Milneses.

I do not allow myself to count more than I can help on the delightful hope which you have given me of your early return here. I desire it most ardently, but all I suffered this summer while expecting you has put me on such bad terms with your dear friend, the Sea, that I cannot say whether I hope or fear the most, and I find some very sharp thorns indeed on the beautiful rose you have given me. In God's name, however, no more *small* boats for crossing the *wide* Sea! Apart from that, all your friends here would be transported with joy if you joined them, but they will regret the absence of that wise Hawkings whom that wicked little girl has extinguished as one blows out a match! Stroutsbaer has been engrossed in meditation, in fasting and in prayer since the departure of Jean, the friend of his heart!

Jean was *cher Guillaume's* youngest brother. He again visited Countess Bentinck in 1793. Stroutsbaer (or "Spruce Beer") was *Guillaume's* dog.

*For the petite chatte.*

I am deeply sorry that my good Tierheim is not at Aix-la-Chapelle this year. She would have been a great help to you in your quarantine. The *Tête Blanche* loves music and she has a superb voice, and knows Glück's music which every one so greatly admires. You would have played her accompaniments, and I should have had some one with you to keep you in good order, for there is no one about you so faithful and so out of reach of your witchery as to chastise you when you deserve it!

The Doctor<sup>1</sup> humbly kisses your paw, on condition that it is of velvet!

Hamburg, the 3 *November*, 1791.

Your agreeable and cordial letter, *ma chère Sophie*, affected and touched me to the very bottom of my heart! Yes, *ma pauvre chère enfant*, I scolded, and well scolded those who wrote lightly and jokingly to me, but that was simply because I was seized, penetrated, petrified by your frightful situation! I pictured so vividly the scene of horror, I was so upset that all idea of gaiety at that moment appeared to me monstrous. It was because of my keen interest in you that I blamed you all. We have not your

<sup>1</sup> The Philosopher, Mr. Weisbrod.



system of Philosophy in Germany, a system said to simplify feeling. We do not understand an excess of it. Alas! The tendency is rather in the contrary direction in this century, the reign of egoism being more despotic than that of sensibility! And after all, one must admit that the one is far more dangerous than the other, though it would be best of all to observe reasonable moderation. However, thank God, all has ended happily at the price of a great risk, but I perfectly realize that it might have been a hundred times worse. I never see a misfortune that *might* have been fatal, under a laughable aspect, and I defy any one to show me such an event in any aspect that is not terrifying and repulsive.

Oh how every one pitied that *pauvre petite chatte*! Good Countess de Linage<sup>1</sup> very quietly dropped tears, while we read the particulars of that detestable adventure! The hair of every one in the house, of our whole society, stood up in horror! And then you ask me to laugh!

Oh English! Sublime Nation! How noble you are in great things, but how you need to reflect before you act, and to bend down a little from your elevation to those details, essential for the perfection of the whole!

Forgive my boldness, *ma chère petite chatte*. I await most impatiently the news of the first time that the foot of my good *Tête Blanche* (whom I have christened *Tête Sage* for his charming and sensible

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Sophie's niece.



BENTINCK MONEY

(See page 6)





conduct) touches the ground. The example of the late King of Denmark who, having broken his leg, smashed it again directly he walked on it, makes Danes particularly careful of the first attempt, for you can easily imagine that in so despotic a State no one dares to believe that his bones are stronger and better than those of his Sovereign!

Our winter circle will not be complete till about Christmas. I have substituted the room the amiable Mr. Milnes occupied for my *salon* of Voltaire. I talk with Cæsar and Alexander, to try and console myself because I cannot talk to my dear children. I hide myself away for most of the day, until the evening, when a rubber of whist takes very imperfectly the place of a game of piquet at Embsbuttell with our Doctor, where I was sometimes scolded and sometimes beaten but always amused and instructed.

I am anxious about Guillaume. I have a letter from Ostend from that dear, *grand garçon*, of the 24th. Your mother tells me he is at Dunkirk, and still, alas, on that horrid little boat on which I should like to see the National Assembly and La Fayette<sup>1</sup> and Bailly<sup>2</sup> and that vile Duke of Orleans<sup>3</sup> and all

<sup>1</sup> General La Fayette's name occurs in Charlotte Sophie's address book. (Born 1757. Died 1834.)

<sup>2</sup> Jean Sylvain Bailly was born in Paris in 1736. He was a distinguished writer and astronomer, and was Mayor of Paris after the fall of the Bastille. He soon after lost his popularity, and was executed in 1793. An incident that took place before his death is often referred to. He was kept waiting a very long time in the wet and cold just before the end, and his frozen limbs trembled. "You tremble, Bailly?" remarked one of the executioners. "Yes, my friend," he answered simply, "but only from the cold."

<sup>3</sup> Known as Philippe-Egalité. He joined the Revolutionaries at an

evil doers and worthless people. But not the *meilleur enfant* in the world and the most interesting of men!

Since you put your pretty velvet paw on his friend Hawkings I fear more than ever *cher Guillaume's* boldness in exposing himself to danger. Though I know it to be essential, necessary, indispensable to his career that he shall travel and widen the field of his experience, I am afraid of some irretrievable rashness before he has fairly entered on it, and I almost wish he would marry, solely that he may neither drown himself nor break his neck. His wife should be wise enough to let him make some expeditions alone at first, so that later on he may be the more ready to stay at home. But I know that the wife I would wish would be very difficult to find. She must have beauty, grace, fortune and much common sense! That is what I ask! Nothing more!

But above all I absolutely must see this *cher enfant gâté* as happy as is Mrs. Milnes, as you will be, *ma chère Sophie!* You have found for me, you and your sister, grandsons after my own heart. May this *bien aimé* traveller find me a granddaughter who resembles his sisters, and I shall die as gaily as you others break your legs!

*Cher Guillaume* married in 1802 the only daughter of the first Earl Manvers, Lady Frances Pierrepont. It was not a very happy marriage.

early period, and voted at the Convention for the death of his cousin, Louis XVI. He perished himself on the scaffold in 1793. Louis Philippe, then supposed to be his son, though now widely believed to have been a changeling, became King of France in 1830.

## CHAPTER XVII

Hamburg, the 9th December, 1791.

**S**TILL *Mademoiselle* here, at the moment I write, *Madame*, over there, when you receive my letter, and *ma chère petite chatte* in the four corners of the earth, accept my blessing, and my tenderest hopes for your mutual happiness! You have found a treasure, better than the Philosopher's Stone, and one that I thought it quite as impossible to discover, as good a husband as your sister's. You make me the delightful gift of a grandson who will, I am sure, prove himself to be the worthy counterpart of my estimable Milnes! You have laid your pretty velvet paw on him whom my heart would have chosen for you, even before you knew it yourself, and in whom I can find no defects except to be dumb,<sup>1</sup> and occasionally to break his legs without any reason! The day after to-morrow we shall turn the house out of windows on this happy occasion, I shall give all my people too much to drink, I shall dance a cotillon with the Philosopher Weisbrod; every one shall be at the *fête*, Nini, Stroutsbeer, Papien, the birds—— I wish all to feel the reflection

<sup>1</sup> At this time Captain H. Whitshed could speak hardly any French.



of our happiness. Friend Fraser<sup>1</sup> will uncork a bottle of champagne, great Kurtzrock will feast on oysters, the good little Countess will make us give a low mass and will chaff Dr. Weisbrod. Kind Monsieur de Binder will pay you a pretty compliment with a reverence in his most finished style, and in all sincerity. Luttichau will rejoice with you at Fionie, and every one will be as gay as if it was his own wedding. You will forgive the absence of speeches and poems, but as at my age, and in view of the ceremony at the church it is necessary to be more serious than the others, especially as I am your grandmother, I think that nothing will become me so well as to sing a verse from the psalms of David and your mother I am sure will join me in it. So listen !

Ecoute, oh fille et femme sans pareille !  
 Entends la voix du Ciel qui te conseille  
 Mère et patrie, il faut tout oublier  
 Et d'autres nœuds plus étroits te lier  
 Hawkings, touché de tes graces divines  
 Pour son épouse unique te destine  
 Et comme il est plus pour toi que son Roi  
 Ton cœur lui doit son respect et sa foi !

Yes, yes, true obedience, *ma chère Sophie* ! Those gentlemen who made the laws do not give matrimony cheaper than that ! And one is happy only in paying the debt, so easy, so sweet even, when one loves and esteems.

Here are my songs, in verse and in prose. Now comes a whole sackfull of compliments from every one

<sup>1</sup> The British representative at Hamburg.

who knows you here, and which you will put on one side!

I am curious to receive a few lines from Madame Tête Blanche, and I ask permission from her dear lord and husband, to continue calling her *ma petite chatte*. I give up to him, in return, the difficult post of lady's maid and I beg her to be kinder to him in that capacity than you were to your grandmother, otherwise severe chastisement is strongly to be recommended, which I should have administered myself without the slightest hesitation had I been the stronger of the two! But I am at the end of my sheet of paper without having yet tried to tell my children how dearly I love them and how heartily I pray that God may give them three-quarters of a century of happiness, in return for which I would absolve Him from blame for all that He has refused to me.

*Adieu, jolie petite femme.*

Hamburg, the 30th December, 1791.

Your charming letter, *Madame* (note that this is my first tribute to your marriage and of respect to you as a wife), has done me more good than all the drugs from Monsieur Reimarus' pharmacy! I have been greatly indisposed and had even to stay in bed for seven or eight days, with a painful throat. I can as yet hardly crawl except in my room, but since the arrival of your letter I have felt so happy through your happiness that I have forgotten anything is the matter with me!

May God bless your excellent husband for the permission he gives me to continue calling you *ma petite chatte*. I shall use with delight this sweet privilege, especially if he allows me to call him *mon chaton* (for how can I otherwise amalgamate a proud naval Captain with a *petite chatte*, whose paws are not always of velvet, but sometimes ready to scratch her lord and master, while he, armed in the same fashion, will be still more formidable, so that Dame Hawkings-Whitshed will prudently draw in her claws, and all will be well!).

So this important point is settled, *mon aimable Sophie*. You must have a charming aspect, gravely married, and the proverb that it suits you "like a ring a cat" must be very true in your case.

But a truce to this babbling! Let us turn to another spectacle! *Ma petite chatte* meditates going to Court!<sup>1</sup> I nearly died of laughter! That will seem even more comical in connection with her than a husband! But it is not that which first of all has to be thought of, but your knees. I advise you not to appoint Hawkings as my successor in the function of tirewoman. The poor man would be too badly used (according to my sad experience), but I beg you to make him your dancing master! He could then smartly chastise you with his cane if your knees refused to bend down enough or your back to bow.

<sup>1</sup> I imagine it was for this occasion that her husband gave her a pearl necklace with opal and diamond pendant and clasp. It has descended to me, and its red leather case bears the inscription in his writing: "Sophie Henriette Bentinck, Bruxelles. December 1791."



Throw back those shoulders, accustomed to go where they wish! Hold up that pretty head, lower hypocritically those bold eyes which absolutely must not be fixed (a liberty they would probably take!) on the daughter of the Cæsars and of Marie Thérèse!

When my dear *Chaton* has thus placed the eyes, the head, the back and the shoulders of his better half, he will proceed to make her bend her knees. This will be the hardest part of all, for I fear that the joints are little used to it and it is essential that it be properly done. After repeating the lesson sufficiently often to enable Dame Whitshed to appear at a German<sup>1</sup> Court, her *Chaton* will boldly launch her, warning her against any distraction that might seize upon her in the midst of the Court (except the customary pinch on the arm from the lady introducing her). You must, if you please, *ma belle petite chatte*, when you are at Court, forget for an hour pains and pleasures alike, and even your happiness, because, with a nature such as yours you are quite capable of first staring hard at the Archduchess, and then throwing your arms round her neck and exclaiming, "Oh, Madame, how happy I am, and what an excellent husband I have in Hawkings!"

This part of the programme properly arranged, let us now discuss the place you are staying at. I used to know Brussels and its etiquette extremely well in former days, when the Court was modelled on

<sup>1</sup> That of Brussels, Belgium at that time forming part of the Empire, and the Court being presided over by a daughter of the Empress Marie Thérèse.

that of Vienna. I do not know how it is managed now, since the Princes of Lorraine have been there. I cannot tell if one is announced by the chief lady-in-waiting, as before (nor do I even know who holds this post, or if it is still the Comtesse Staremborg, née Breuer, who was the best woman in the world). If this lady is from Brabant I know no one there except the Duchess d'Areberg (proud as Artaban) or the Princess de Ligne, née Lichtenstein (not very pleasing), or the Marquise de Los Rios, née Palffy (who was very pretty thirty years ago). If it is one of these three, which I doubt, you could introduce yourself by referring to your grandmother, though it would not help you much as I did not care for any of them. Comtesse Staremborg alone is amiable and polite, and showed me in former days a certain civility though nothing more. If on the other hand it is the Grand Master, or the Ambassador of the country you belong to, who presents the ladies, you must find out exactly what is done and follow it literally, for etiquette is the religion of Courts, and whoever transgresses it is not punished at the moment, but directly her back is turned she is pitilessly hooted at. It is therefore wise carefully to enquire, "What is done here?" and do accordingly, even though one considers it, and rightly, tiresome and absurd. One is thus approved of and considered, and one leaves behind a reputation for conduct that has obtained general suffrage by the proof given of one's desire to oblige and anxiety to please, and this is doubly admired when one is English!

Ignorant as I am of the present etiquette of the Court of Brussels I can only deal in generalities, and it is absolutely necessary for you to have some one on the spot to advise you. No one could do it better than Countess Tierheim. As a Canoness she ranks as a married woman and can present people, if the usage is still as at Vienna. If, however, she cannot do this, she can at least advise you in everything and introduce you to some one else, and tell you how to ask for a public or private audience of the reigning Archduchess, either through her principal lady-in-waiting or otherwise. She can also tell you how it is usual to be dressed, either in Court dress, or in indoor dress or visiting dress. She can recommend you a tailor or dressmaker, and a hair-dresser, who can arm you for the fray; in fact I know no one else so well able to help you, and I counsel you, unless you have already made other arrangements, to send a messenger to her with a friendly note (if you cannot go yourself, for it is quite close to Brussels). I do not know if she is popular at Court (which you will hear in all sincerity from herself), but she will certainly advise you for the best as she really cares for you and has excellent judgment. I am sure that Hawkings will like her and she will find him the true counterpart of your brother and of Milnes. I am sure also that that dear Hawkings will try for my sake to like my dear Thérèse (god-daughter of the Empress, and worthy pupil and niece of my dear, my respected, my unique friend, Princess Trautson). She will teach



you better than any one else how to appear most favourably at that Court.

There is one more piece of advice which I think it necessary to add, so that you may have as full a knowledge of certain facts as I have. On account of certain intrigues which I will explain to you another time, the Archduchess may not care to be reminded (especially in the presence of her husband) of former talks with me, when her future promised to be different. Occurrences that may have seemed alien to her interests have perhaps estranged her, so that you must not put her in the dilemma of making an explanation, either graciously or coldly, on the subject. Tierheim can tell you all about this, and whether you had better mention me or not. In the first case, you will present my respectful homage and can bear witness how much and with what deep feeling I am, though standing on the edge of the grave, tenderly and humbly attached to that divine Marie Thérèse, and her august family (if you can say all that without scorching your little English lips!). But if *not*, then nothing, not a word of me.

Count Mercy d'Argenteuil, who was a very old friend of Charlotte Sophie's, was the pupil in diplomacy of the great Austrian statesman, Kaunitz, the latter being Marie Thérèse's adviser throughout her reign and the very embodiment of Austrian rule. So widespread was his influence that he was known as "le cocher de l'Europe." Count Mercy succeeded Kaunitz as

Austrian Ambassador to France in May, 1766, and remained at his post till the revolution of 1789. He dictated the fatal Austrian policy of Marie Antoinette, and was the mouthpiece to her of her mother and brother, and it was to him that she handed the plans she had obtained from Dumouriez for the defence of France, this betrayal of her country costing her her life. At this period (1791) he was at Brussels.

Prince Kaunitz, it will be recollected, was one of Charlotte Sophie's greatest friends. The following description of him was written about this time: "Went to see Kaunitz, a very extraordinary man, who affects to be more extraordinary still; his wig was two inches from his eyebrows on all sides, red coat, black breeches, top boots, for his sole mania is to ride daily in the riding-school. As he entered he distributed nods to all present, who seemed very eager to receive them. He is very deaf, but he assumes no one perceives it. He dislikes perfumes; never takes the fresh air. . . . Madame de Clary, a little widow and his relation, does the honours of his house."<sup>1</sup> A grandson of Prince Kaunitz (he was raised to this rank in 1764) married a Countess Ungnad Von Weissenwolf (see Aldenburg pedigree), and with his death in Paris in 1848 the family became extinct.

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Count Fersen.*

Here is a lesson for you. If Comte Mercy is still at Brussels, Hawkings has only to tell this worthy and respected minister (thirty-five years of absence and even his forgetfulness have not changed my opinion of his virtues, his wit and his friendship) that I am still his admirer, the *client* of his friend Prince Kaunitz (who is as good to me as ever), and that I commend to him my children, with that confidence he has always inspired in me. Copy that out for Hawkings and make him read it. Discretion alone forbids me to say it myself, but I should die more happily if he would send me one word of his old friendship, and I entreat him to direct the etiquette of your presentation at Court, if you cannot have Tierheim, so in that case ask him to find you another lady. This is the only proper doorway to Court. Finally, if none of this comes off, there remains the Baron Hop, a clever man, formerly in great favour with the princess in question, but not the most sincere and reliable person in the world. He is, however, always delighted to be mixed up in anything, and to appear to influence the welcome of those who are received. He tried to persuade me that the Archduchess had entrusted him with the most gracious messages for me, but I have not much faith in him and I advise you not to have either, nor to believe blindly all he may say. But if you absolutely require him, give him my compliments and beg him to help you with his advice and directions.

I have said all I wanted to, *chère petite chatte*, and I can write no more! There was no time to lose and



I had to tell you everything! That good *Tête Blanche* embraces me, and I return it to suffocation! Take upon yourself this commission, it could not be in better hands. You owe me at least three-quarters of the preamble that the *cher chaton* destined for me, and I assure you, *petite gaupe*, that I will not lose a word! Do not leave me without your address when you go away.

Stroutsbeer has swallowed, with gratitude, your piece of beef. Nitien confesses to the kiss. There is only Papjen who declares that he easily recognizes, from the peck of her nose, *Madame chatte*, and that those pretty little ones do not deserve what they found this morning.

The Philosopher, poor creature, has been ill. He is not yet quite himself, but what tickles his imagination and rejoices his heart is that your union will be as durable and your respective qualities of the same nature, as his own. He hopes that your husband will lecture you at as great length as he does his wife, and will teach you to give your paw as graciously, but he adds, may your posterity equal in number the stars of the Milky Way! Amen, Amen, Halleluja!

## CHAPTER XVIII

Hamburg, the 9th January, 1792.

*Ma chère petite chatte,*

I AM impatient to hear how your audiences went off, and if you were satisfied with them. Brussels just now is a very interesting place to me! Your poor mother, who has to cross the sea at this season on very disagreeable business, makes me intensely sorry for her! She feels deeply the loss of all your care for her, and I do not know what would happen to Henriette if she were exposed to such a journey in winter. All that grieves me! Poor Milnes makes me very anxious! He has lost a mother whom he tenderly loved and who entirely deserved it! We know the goodness of his heart and its sensibility, so I am much alarmed for his health, which was hardly re-established. We women, with our pliable nerves, are constructed for sorrow and pain. They are our vocation and our element, and a wise Providence has made us able to suffer greatly, while those proud individuals, whose physical strength gives them their title of sovereignty, cannot endure anything that grieves them; not knowing how to give way and bend they succumb where we escape, and this is especially the case when their affections are engaged or when

they are worried ; they are prostrated immediately ! It is for this reason that if a man is ill or unhappy, he is much more so than a woman would be under the same conditions. There is no rule without an exception, and I myself have seen (though rarely) women who died from sorrow, and men who were able to resist it, but the contrary is nearly always the case, namely, that men succumb under trouble and women endure it with far greater ease !

I hope they will take Milnes to a good climate in Switzerland. The air there is rough, and the mountains of Vaud cause the temperature to be very disagreeable at times. Bern, I think, is the least bad, but for a delicate chest like that of Milnes, and his thinness, all that part of the country is very dry, and Zurich with its lake might be better. I should have greatly desired for him a southern province in France, or perhaps Nice, or Pisa. I am very anxious, *ma chère petite chatte*, to know the programme of your journey, and it would be very sweet to me had I part in it, if our monotonous Hamburg does not bore my dear children too much.

There remains a favour that I wish to ask of *cher fils* Hawkings, whom, through you, I cordially embrace. The day after to-morrow our French envoy, Count de Bourgoing,<sup>1</sup> whom you know, leaves here by post. He will travel day and night, and will only stop at Brussels for a few hours. You have met his

<sup>1</sup> Baron Jean-François de Bourgoing, the French diplomat, born at Nevers. He published interesting *Souvenirs d'Histoire Contemporaine* (1748-1811).



wife and sister-in-law. These poor things are almost in despair on account of the hardships and dangers the odious mission he is charged with will subject him to. He is sent at this season 600 leagues away from them, to almost certain failure, with the risk of losing his post (and dying of starvation) if he cannot perform the impossible. He must immediately, in the month of January, rush from Hamburg to Madrid! He leaves with us his wife, who is within a fortnight of her confinement, his sister-in-law, and five children. Further, they let him lose on the exchange of these countries 24,000 marks in three years, for which he receives no indemnity, and he is a man without any private fortune whatsoever! The situation is so unjust, so cruel, and he bears it with such spirit and courage that he inspires pity and esteem in every one here, where there is generally but little tenderness of feeling!

I am moved by their troubles to the bottom of my heart! His excellent and unfortunate sister-in-law, Countess de Tannay, I like very much. The poor woman has as bad a husband as you have a good one. Think of her ill fortune!

Well, after all this preamble the *Sage Tête Blanche* will say, "What in the world does that old grandmother of yours want, with her eternal talk?" Here is my reply. I want your dear husband to do me the kindness of finding out when Monsieur de Bourgoing, envoy of France to the *Cercle de la Basse Saxe*, on his journey to Paris, will pass through Brussels (it will be about the 15th, 16th, or 17th

of January, as he travels night and day), and that he will have the goodness to go and see him for me, for twenty minutes only. Let him say he is the son of Comtesse de Bentinck of Hamburg, and he will be received with open arms. After that, *ma petite chatte*, with her pretty paw, will write to me as quickly as possible and tell me all that passed at the interview, how this poor martyr of politics and his country's constitution is in health, how he bears the journey, and, in fact, everything that could interest and a little console his family, to whom this humane attention on your part will supply a momentary respite to their sorrows!

You see, *mon cher* Hawkings, the confidence that I have in your friendship for me! You will not be ill at ease for one instant with Monsieur de Bourgoing, because he is a very cultivated man who speaks English perfectly, and who lived here on the closest terms of intimacy with Mr. Fraser, who swears by him. I have spoken!

Hamburg, the 16th January, 1792.

Alas, *ma pauvre petite chatte*, so you are like the daughter of Agamemnon, abandoned by the gods and the elect of humanity! But you are not really so much to be pitied, since Hawkings—that is to say your universe—remains! Really, *ma chère enfant*, everything is much more satisfactory with you than with us, where all goes wrong and nothing as I wish it! They said here yesterday that Rochambeau,<sup>1</sup> with

<sup>1</sup> General Donatien Rochambeau, killed at Leipsig. 1750-1813.

50,000 men, was at the gates of Brussels, Luckner<sup>1</sup> in Brisgau, La Fayette at Mayence, and the Royal Family massacred! But Dame Rumour amuses herself in telling lies like a lackey!

I am much puzzled to know if you have seen my dear Tierheim? If you have made your curtsy to their Royal Highnesses? If your husband has spoken to my venerable and worthy Count Mercy? If you are going to run about Europe, and what is the programme of your travels? My old heart tries to follow you, always seated behind you and sometimes hanging on to the sleeve of my pretty descendant when she wants to do something foolish or take a perilous step, and I whisper to her in her ear, *Remember Bousset!* However, thank God, your mother and her interesting party have happily arrived in London. It is my *bien aimé* Guillaume, who never leaves me for a moment in anxiety if he can help it, and whom I love more dearly day by day, who has written delightful letters to the Doctor and to me!

*Adieu, ma chère Sophie, adieu, ma bonne, sage Tête Blanche.* Do not entirely forget the dwellers on the banks of the Elbe, who love you so much.

Hamburg, the 23rd January, 1792.

*Ma chère petite chatte*, now become *courtisane* (*honi soit qui mal y pense*), and her *beau chaton*, how curious

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Luckner, Marshal of France. Born at Cham. Commanded the army of the North in 1792. Died on the scaffold in 1794.



I should be to see your hypocritical air as you drop a profound curtsey to the Archduchess! If my amiable Comtesse Tierheim has been able to describe you, I shall say that she is a past master in the art, but the whole thing must have been amazingly becoming to both of you! Your excellent *Tête Blanche* is equal to whatever he chooses. I am sure he now speaks French like an Academician, he walks once more as strongly as a boy, and he thinks like a wise and good man! One goes very far with all that, and when in addition you have both widened the range of your ideas and of your reflections by the useful knowledge which you intend to acquire of the morals and manner of thinking and living of other nations (for I have confidence in both of you and feel sure that you do not intend to rush about the world to be able to say, "I know the streets, the churches, the pictures, the music, the cooking of all these peoples," and that you will bring back something more useful and luminous), I flatter myself that you will return convinced that if there are good and excellent things in your own country, they may also be found in others, and that if by a miracle I live long enough to see you on your return from your enjoyable tour, you will have so perfected your amiability (and what is worth much more, your solidity, your judgment, your virtues) that your old grandmother will descend to the tomb as proud as Artaban, and will arrive in the Celestial Fields (for I hope to go direct to them) more self-sufficient, more impertinent, than a *petit maitre Francais*, entirely

on account of her just vanity at having such delightful children !

With regard to dear Tierheim, *ma chère enfant*, I ardently desire that all my English family (the children of my old age) should pay to the worthy niece a portion of the affection, sad, tender and ineffaceable, that I have given to the aunt, and which I shall carry with me to the grave, who was the model of all a woman should be, perhaps the best that ever left the hands of the Creator and whom I cannot think of (and the terrible fatality which rendered her precious existence useless) without breaking my heart! Countess Thérèse will explain all that to you. She will also give you with regard to Vienna (if you intend going there) information quite as correct and much more up to date than mine, and will furnish you with some good introductions which, in addition to Countess Clary,<sup>1</sup> who, with her sister, should be your introducers (if you wish to succeed with Count de Kaunitz, my friend and protector), will contribute greatly to your pleasure. Hawkings will find Count Rosamowski there, and the family of Count Thun, who are known both to Milnes and himself, but Countess Tierheim will give you your bearings better than I, and I think that owing to the new developments that have taken place at various Courts it is best to walk warily with the Ambassadors and Ministers of foreign powers.

If you go to Italy, I will try to obtain useful in-

<sup>1</sup> The Dowager Countess Clary was a widow, and kept house for Kaunitz.

troductions for you, as well as at Vienna, for especially when travelling with ladies everything depends on whom one knows. Introductions obtain consideration and prevent the formation of undesirable acquaintances, who are always lying in wait and whose odious shadow invariably falls on the innocent traveller, who does not suspect them, and (grateful for the apparent kindness with which these people overpower him) allows his good nature to make him the Don Quixote of a bad cause and partake of the want of esteem they inspire. The further one advances towards the south or east of Germany, the more one is exposed to this risk!

At Berlin, since the marriage of the Duke of York,<sup>1</sup> it is sufficient to be English in order to be welcome. At Dresden Baron de Bulow, my relation, will do his best to make your stay pleasant; he is to be Danish Minister there, and he is fitted to be a zealous and attentive introducer, but not a guide, being too hot-headed and pretentious, an attitude that foreigners should never adopt if they wish to be liked. I don't know if you intend travelling further, but if you require introductions in Poland and Russia I can get you those as well. And for Stockholm and Copenhagen, they are our daily bread, and it is only necessary for you to choose amongst them.

I am greatly obliged to your husband for his kindness to me, in promising to see Count de Bourgoing when he passes through Brussels. He will oblige

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of York had married Princess Frederica, daughter of the King of Prussia.



me very much, I have so deep a compassion for his family.

We have just now some very pleasant French people here. Not *aigrefins*, grasping and loud of speech, but sensible and interesting people whose troubles one pities and respects.

The Philosopher is in a whirl of dinner parties. He is invited by every one, being liked and sought after. They seldom amuse him, but one must accept hospitalities sometimes, even if one is a philosopher! To-day he goes to Count Schimmelman, which he likes, as they are good, honest people. Poor little Countess L. who sends you a thousand greetings is very delicate, especially in winter, and is anxious about her excellent brother-in-law, Count Pappenheim, who is threatened with apoplexy. Madame Weisbrod has the honour of shaking your velvet paw, and Strousbeer is the consolation of my life in the absence of his master.

*Adieu, belle enfant.*

In view of Charlotte Sophie's horror of revolutionary ideas, which were at their worst about this time, the following extracts from a letter from Ochs (fils), written to her in 1772, is particularly interesting. In his youth Ochs' principles were, as we shall see, quite moderate, but twenty years later he became one of the most prominent exponents of revolutionary principles in Switzerland.

Madame,

What a style is yours! With what humanity are your expressions stamped! If you forget the distance which birth has placed between you and a portion of mankind, your intellect establishes one far greater between you and most men. But pardon me, Madame. Truth has for long urged me to confess this.

I have no poetic talent, a feeling heart helped by a little reflection is all my muse! When it has happened to make itself known, and they have deigned to smile on it, it is my youth, it is my intentions that have saved it. I do not conceal from you, Madame, that I aspire to arrest if possible the progress of error and vice, but I know how to confine my efforts within the limits of my powers. . . .

I have the honour to send you to-day Jacobi's prospectus.

Hamburg, the 10th February, 1792.

A million thanks, *ma chère petite chatte*, and to you too, *mon beau chaton*, for the kind way in which you carried out my somewhat indiscreet commission with regard to Monsieur de Bourgoing. He told his wife of it, who is as much obliged to you as I am. You know that your old grandmother is a German, and an aristocrat from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, and that poor Bourgoing is paid to be a democrat, probably in spite of himself. His position, his total lack of fortune, his numerous family, impose laws upon him that he dare not disobey.

Thus we do not agree in principle, and our hopes must be directly opposed! Also I have no special tie with him, and his tastes, founded on the Sciences and the study of constitutions, manners, customs, and trade questions, as an author who desires both to learn and to teach, engross him too much for the society of an old woman like me to attract him, and the ladies of his family even less, on account of the great difference of age. On any other occasion I should not have used any diplomacy on their behalf, but their difficult and unfortunate position and the firm, frank and praiseworthy way in which I saw him embark in his frail ship on so tempestuous a sea, touched me and attached me to his interests. It was the impulse, irresistible to me, of this compassion (perhaps rather weakness of nerves than virtue) that made me think of giving you both this trouble, so that your letter might pour a little balm on this sad family, really worthy of pity.

We have here just now some emigrants (of the best kind) who interest me naturally much more. These are two French officers, very well born, aged about 35 and 40, who have learnt in France only politeness and agreeableness, and in all else copy the Milneses and you, and seem as attached friends and husbands as devoted to their wives, as are my much loved Hawkings and Milnes.

These two men oblige even the democrats who, for my sins, exist in Hamburg, to esteem them! I find out every day new traits of goodness and generosity in them, which amaze me, and which (in this



age) I am not accustomed to discover in their nation, embittered by misfortune and distorted with frivolity! Mrs. Milnes will make the acquaintance of the very intelligent and amiable wife of one of them, I think they have enough in common to suit each other well. Both of them are beautiful, without *coquetterie*, living in the most perfect harmony with their families, each having three little boys, and adored one and the other by their very amiable husbands whom they love with all their hearts. I must say I wish your brother-in-law had chosen another time for going to Paris and crossing France. Those brigands and the guillotine excite equally my imagination,<sup>1</sup> and I shall have no peace till I know them in the shelter of the antiquities, under the protection of the columns of Trajan and of Titus!

As for you, *ma jolie petite chatte*, I have no idea of your plans, and I occupy my mind in picturing how far you trailed your skirt in saluting the Archduchess, an account of which I hope Madame de Tierheim will send me. I think that Brussels must be interesting enough and gay enough to allow of a stay of some time without ennui, and one can get a sort of first taste of Vienna and perhaps meet people there who appreciate Austrian characteristics and on whom the peculiarities of the Brabançons jar rather dis-

<sup>1</sup> The family of Lord Crewe is connected with that of the Milneses, and there is a tradition in it that Mrs. Milnes saw the head of her great friend, the Princess de Lamballe, carried on a pike in Paris and never recovered from the shock. The date of the Milneses' visit to Paris, and the absence in these letters of any allusion to that awful scene, appear to render the truth of this story doubtful.

agreeably. I am curious to hear what you think of it all.

But, good God! What fearful stories our newspapers tell us just now! This frightful combination against all governments and so many who are in authority, and the emigrants, is it all really true? Or should one class it amongst those tales which a too highly strung imagination circulates nowadays!

And my old and respected Count Mercy? Won't you have the charity to give me one little word in reply on this subject? He is a venerable man from whom one word of remembrance would flatter me more than fifty compliments from princes and all the honours of a Court!

Such news as we have of your acquaintances here, *ma chère Sophie*, amounts to nothing! One eats, one dances, one kills the time! Half a dozen disreputable Frenchmen startle the town and are punished for it. Our two estimable officers wash from France the dirt thrown upon her by others! Poor Luttichau (our one) has been very ill with gout and other complications for weeks past.

Luttichau, ex-Chamberlain, and now Count of the Holy Roman Empire, has gone to visit his country. A professor at Copenhagen, a *savant*, has written a diatribe against this new Count and has included the Emperor and his counsellors in his censure, because of the liberty they have taken in giving this title to a disgraced Dane in return for his money! We watch with interest to see whether the Court at Vienna will so far ignore the matter as to put up with such



GENERAL LOUDON

From an engraving found in Lady Whitshed's Album





public impertinence from a pedantic German-Dane. Nothing surprises one to-day, except to meet with people who not only have sound principles and sound logic but also who put them in practice !

By the bye, *chère petite femme*, ask your husband what has happened to his Irish compatriots ? Has the infection of rebellion spread to these gentlemen ? Shall we have a revolution in that part of the world also ? My heart beats when I think that he might suffer through it and that with ties in the four kingdoms very trying situations might arise for him. Assure me on this point, *ma chère enfant*, for everything that affects you is of primary interest to me. Madame de Binder has had the satisfaction of hearing that a brother, to whom she is much attached, and who was formed and is beloved by the great Loudon, has accomplished an act of firmness and prudence which does credit to his judgment and his courage, is useful to the Court and of benefit to public security, in suppressing and dispersing a rising, which might have become dangerous, between the Moravians and Hungarians.

The little Countess and the Stoic, with the rest of your acquaintances, prostrate themselves before you. Embrace the amiable Tierheim and the Tête Blanche.

Charlotte Sophie had a great admiration for General Loudon. Perhaps, as she often mentions him, the following particulars may be of interest :—

Gideon, Baron von Loudon, was descended

from a Scotch family of that name, settled in Livonia, so at first he was a Russian subject. He entered military service at 15 and fought against the Turks. After the peace, attracted by the fame of the Great Frederick, he went to Berlin. After much weary waiting, during which he supported himself by writing, he was admitted to the King, who took a dislike to him because he was ugly and had red hair. So he returned to Russia, and later on went to Austria. For a long time no one took any notice of him. Then, luckily, just at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, Binder introduced him to Kaunitz, who at once appreciated his genius. He rapidly rose, and in 1757 was made a Major-General.

Hamburg, *February 13th*, 1792.

Only one word, *ma belle petite chatte*. Have you news of the Milneses? I entreat you to tell me of them. I am in mortal terror for them as the insane idea possessed them of spending a fortnight in Paris and of crossing the whole of France to reach Italy. Now Paris at present is a volcano, like Vesuvius at the moment of a frightful eruption, the country full of brigands, no police, no security anywhere, and the robbers of France are not content with merely taking a few guineas from you. Those monsters assassinate without ceremony! I have written to my friend Baron de Blome,<sup>1</sup> the Danish Minister in Paris, beg-

<sup>1</sup> As Denmark was a neutral power, her Minister remained in Paris throughout the Revolution. In 1798 Baron de Blome was Minister at



ging him to help them with his advice and protection, and especially to urge them to leave as quickly as possible! I am on tenterhooks till I hear that they have quitted that unhappy France at this critical moment, and they are people who make mistakes in addressing their letters and leave me in anguish. Shall you alarm me as much, *ma chère enfant*? No! I have confidence in *mon chaton*. He is prudent, he is humane, he is wise.

What is my good Tierheim doing? Is she not glad that Leopold and Kaunitz have at last awakened? It was time! And your English Minister himself (who was anxious, as it suited his country, to leave France to crumble away and disappear) admitted to me that too much had been said and done in Paris, and that the Emperor's patience could not and should not endure their impertinences!

I only ask for news of you, of the Milneses and of Tierheim. These fill my whole heart and I embrace them with all my force. To love you is a creed which makes all of the same religion!

The 22nd February, 1792.

*Ma chère petite chatte*,—It is impossible for me to write you more than five or six lines to-day. I am in deadly anxiety about the Milneses, from whom I have not received a syllable for *five weeks*!

The Doctor, who is also weak enough to love the Milneses, but who is far too confirmed a stoic to St. Petersburg, and there is an extremely interesting series of letters from him to Charlotte Sophie written from there.

admit that he is frightened, scolds me and dismisses me with my anxieties, which in his heart he partakes with me though he swears at them. I let him swear, well knowing, well understanding all his silly philosophy, and I take the liberty of suffering in spite of it! Hasten to tell me if you have news of those lunatics, and pride yourself on being wiser than they! But that would be more remarkable in English people than all their follies! I can speak to you of nothing else. Have you had my letter, with an enclosure for Countess Tierheim? Have you been presented? Do you and *mon bon cher* Hawkins still love your old grandmother a little? I have need to know that to the end of my life! *Adieu, ma petite chatte.* Answer me quickly if you have a human heart.

Hamburg, the 27th February, 1792.

I have seen many *jolis petits chats* in my life, but I have never seen one write so delightfully as you! Your letter of February 15th gave me the greatest pleasure in the world. I perceive that the tone of a Court suits you to perfection, and I count on your skirt having become so accustomed to trail that by the time we have the honour to embrace you here you will be so superior to us all that instinctively we shall fall on our knees! I am very glad that the Archduchess was so amiable, as she well knows how to be with those who please her! That poor princess has had many troubles in the course of her life! The death of her excellent mother was the most over-

powering,<sup>1</sup> and her heart has always been tender, so that she has suffered much more keenly than others ! I have perhaps had a better opportunity than any one else of knowing the intimate details of a certain matter she would not wish revived, so that your reply was admirable ; and, with Madame de Tierheim, I am ready to fall into ecstasies and declare that you are a rival to Cicero and Demosthenes !

As you are able to express yourself so well, *ma chère fille*, take the next opportunity when you go to Court<sup>2</sup> to prostrate me at the feet of Her Royal Highness. Tell her that, as always, deeply attached to the memory of the divine Marie-Thérèse and her august blood, I have followed all her steps, I have felt all her troubles, I have unceasingly admired the courage and virtues of her heroic mother in those of her worthy daughter who has carried out all she promised in her brilliant and interesting girlhood, and that the last and tenderest of my wishes will be that it may please Heaven to keep her and shower upon her all the good she merits and which my heart so ardently desires for her !

Learn this lesson well, *petite chatte*, and mew it out with all that eloquence which made Countess Tierheim fall positively flat !

<sup>1</sup> The Empress Marie Thérèse. The poor Archduchess lost her brother, the Emperor of Austria, a week or so after this letter was written, and had to face another bitter trial eighteen months later in the execution of her sister, Queen Marie Antoinette.

<sup>2</sup> Countess Bentinck invariably refers to attendance at Court as "trainade de chemise." Many of her quaint expressions are very difficult to translate in a happy way.



When, after that, *mon bon chaton* has said some pleasant things for me to Count Mercy, I shall breathe more freely, for I have those two people, Royal and Ministerial, on my mind, and greatly desire a good opportunity to bring to their memory my ancient but sincere existence.

I am not surprised that the Duke of Teschen<sup>1</sup> singled out the good *Tête Blanche* for conversation. From his youth up he always fraternized with people whose talk was useful and instructive. He longed to learn and to repair and to fill up the gaps of an education which was perhaps not so good as princes usually receive. He promised to be humane, and wisely ambitious with sound judgment and a strong leaning towards literature, poetry, etc. I lost sight of him soon after, but a certain clear-sighted person with whom I was very friendly, and whose good opinion this young prince justly sought, often said to me that if he fell into good hands and surroundings he should become, if not famous, at any rate a man of worth and really to be respected, especially if he found a friend who would encourage him to form his own character

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht von Saxe-Teschen had been a distinguished young officer in the Austrian service, and was a younger son of Augustus the Strong, King of Poland. He possessed neither lands nor money; but the Archduchess Christine was her mother's favourite daughter, and as the young couple were deeply in love with each other, Marie Thérèse permitted the marriage and provided most generously for them. Albrecht was made Duke of Teschen, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and a Field-Marshal. They were appointed governors of Hungary, and after the death of Charles of Lorraine the Archduchess Christine was made governor of the Low Countries. Their affection for each other never diminished.

and adopt a standpoint of his own. I do not know if things have turned out as he said, but this prince's position has always been passive rather than active, and this must have an effect on his character.

As for Count Mercy,<sup>1</sup> under the simplest and coldest exterior is hidden the most cultivated, fine and delicate individuality. He served his novitiate in Italy, and he has taken all the character (though not for probity, his own being above reproach) of that nation, impenetrable, peculiar, misanthropic! He is charming to his friends, but eccentric and difficult with others. He became suspicious in Italy, where every one is so, and is full of virtues but as miserly of their use as that of his fortune. He is bored by Society, and only happy in a small selected circle to which he is indispensable, but if he errs in any direction he does it with his whole heart. His merit, in spite of these little defects, is so superior that when one learns to know him really well (which is very difficult) one cannot fail to bestow on him the highest esteem, such as I have given him and which I shall feel for him till I die. His sarcastic humour (if age has not changed it) will please your husband, and I dare assert that if he has an opportunity of seeing him *often* he will discover the truth of what I say and will enjoy his society. It is only his outer form that is cold and often repellent. I impatiently await news of him from *mon bon chaton*. How dear and tender and honest he is when he carries my pretty

<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting letter at Indio from Count Mercy to Charlotte Sophie, written just after the death of Kaunitz.

little Henry<sup>1</sup> to the vessel and sings him to sleep! Thank him very heartily from me and embrace him once, very tenderly.

Last night I received at last, thank God, a letter from Mrs. Milnes, of February 13th, from Paris, written at the moment of getting into their coach to leave. I bless Heaven for it, and long to hear that they are out of that unhappy kingdom! She gives me an address at Genoa. They are, begging their pardons, great fools when they travel. I would as soon try to understand the journeys of people from Bedlam as theirs. They let me nearly die of fear, and out of four letters which I wrote them they only tell me of the receipt of two. They did nothing in Paris but occupy themselves (*à l'Anglaise*) with a sister-in-law whom they found there, and after having for no reason whatever exposed themselves to the greatest dangers, they have seen nothing, learnt nothing, and are now, without doubt, just as aimlessly wandering across this wretched kingdom where at every stage one meets an obstacle!

Let us now turn to your affairs. It is true, *ma chère enfant*, that I misread your pleasant letter and that I believed (knowing that your eyes were fixed on the south) your intention was to return by the north. It was for that reason I wrote to you "if I live to see you on your return,"<sup>2</sup> but I had not much faith in your plans, and I foresaw events that might upset them. When I read the letter again, I joyfully per-

<sup>1</sup> The Milneses evidently left their children at Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Sophie copied nearly every letter she wrote.



ceived my error, but my prophetic idea was the same, and now you verify it by the great secret you have confided to me. There is but one thing in the whole matter which pains me, and that is the fact that my children enquire if my house will be open to them, and when? As if it was not so always, and these dear children had not the right and certainty of being always received with open arms!

But in spite of all that, your plans need great consideration, for my maxim with my children and my friends is and always will be to think of their well-being before I think of my pleasure.

From this point *la vieille prudence grandmaternelle* goes on to give much practical advice with regard to the expected event. The respective advantages of Holland and Hamburg are weighed, and Sophie is entreated not to follow the new-fangled custom of having a doctor, but to be content with a good nurse, and on no account to carry out the modern plan of feeding the child herself, as if she does so she cannot expect the baby to turn out the Hercules he might otherwise be! Sophie is warned not to count too much on the very special providence of the English, but to take every precaution herself.

You wish the Philosopher well, *ma chère petite chatte*, and I think you could give him a great pleasure. The question is to find out if a certain

Monsieur Kruthoven, a Hungarian, is still Secretary to His Excellency, Count Mercy d'Argenteuil. He was the intimate friend of Weisbrod, and his silence grieves him. He is not the man to admit it, but I have noticed it. Find out therefore first if Monsieur Kruthoven is still with that Minister, and if not, where he is. If you could get a little note from him, or merely a word of remembrance, and send it to me, you would do me a great pleasure in enabling me to give him a delightful surprise, for I have rarely seen him display greater affection for any one than for this Monsieur Kruthoven, and though he defends himself from the accusation as if he had committed a murder, he is capable of friendship, and the forgetfulness of this friend saddens him.

Reply on a separate piece of paper, please, as sometimes I show him your letters, for he is attached to you, and if he knew that I had guessed and written this, he would tear out my eyes; he prides himself on his stoicism and in being of less worth than he is.

## CHAPTER XIX

*To Captain H. Whitshed.*

Hamburg, the 2nd March, 1792.

**N**EVER have I had a more pleasant surprise, *mon cher fils*, than in receiving four beautiful pages in French, from your dear and worthy hand !

But listen a little to the story I have to tell you about this priceless missive !

I was alone at dinner when it arrived. Our Doctor was out (for he is very gay just now) and only returned in the evening. Meanwhile I had read and re-read the letter, admiring the French, the expressions and the writing, but not being able to understand in the slightest degree what it meant. I racked my brain to try and comprehend what *mon judicieux chaton* wished to say about Monsieur de Bourgoing with *his purse*, and his apology for not having offered it. As I was quite unable to solve the problem, I waited till past nine o'clock when our wise man returned, and I told him that my intelligence could not arrive at understanding your charming epistle, and that I really thought our dear Hawkings was amusing himself at the expense of his grandmother and that the whole thing must conceal an English joke !



That learned person placed the letter under his nose, and next day, with a wise expression he gave me, by the light of a former experience, the key to the enigma. Some years ago the French Minister, Monsieur de Noailles, introduced to me a *protégé* of his, Baron d'Espagnac, and asked me to invite him to Embsbuttel. I wrote to him *myself* in these terms :—

“La Comtesse de Bentinck prie Monsieur le Baron d'Espagnac de diner et de passer la soirée a l'assemblée chez elle à Embsbuttel.”

D'Espagnac, much surprised, came to dinner, and during the evening he asked in Monsieur de Noailles' ear how much he had to pay for the reception? The Marquis of course laughed at him, whereupon the Baron produced my invitation, saying he had it in my own writing that he was expected to pay! Unluckily, instead of *passer* I am in the habit of writing with a long and a short “s” what looks like *payer*, and this was the cause of that cock and bull story!

Look at my letter to the *petite chatte* once more if you have it, and you will see that I begged you to *passer a l'auberge* of Monsieur de Bourgoing, which you read for the most impertinent and amusing call on your purse!

Imagine, *mon cher fils*, how this has made us laugh! I should have eternally cursed my miserable double “s,” changed into “y,” were it not for the delicious pleasure which they obtained for me, in the well-written letter I received from *mon bien aimé fils*, a proof of the excess of his kindness and generosity, without my

having had the insolence to provoke it, a proof that he is now sufficiently at home in a language that I know for me to enjoy the full scope of his mind, his experience and his feelings. I will forgive myself thirty "y's" at such a price! I beg of you to laugh heartily with *la petite chatte* over this story! Continue to make her the happiest of women, and to bestow some affection on an old woman who loves you as dearly as if she had given you birth.

Hamburg, the 5th March, 1792.

I must confess that of all the *petites chattes* created, you are the most amiable! I thank you a million times for the news you have given me of the Milneses. I have heard nothing of them since their few lines from Paris. Your news from Sens assures me that they have quitted, safe and sound, that wretched city. Alas, *ma chère fille*, perhaps in the few days that are left to me I shall see all Germany, all Europe, in as violent and threatening a state! Everything seems to foretell it, and no one who reflects can contemplate the future without terror! The wisdom of your Government,<sup>1</sup> the fortunate position of your island, the sensible national character will preserve you longer than other nations from the general upheaval, but in the end, you, too, must experience it. The infection of the spirit of the times has spread everywhere, and I do not think that any inoculation is proof against this terrible poison. What does the good Tête

<sup>1</sup> In March, 1792, George III was King, and Pitt Prime Minister.

Blanche say about it? Does he think my fears premature? Now that he speaks French like an Academician we can discourse and dispute together! Do you really ask me in good faith *if* and *when* I can have you? The heart, the arms, the maternal home, can they be for an instant closed to my dear children? You know our manner of life and our climate, my little dwellings in the town and in the country. I can never dare to transplant myself to Embsbuttell earlier than the end of April, or the beginning of May. If you prefer the town, it is before that time that you will find our little circle there, just ready to separate. From May till the autumn I never move from the country. I have told you in the fullest detail and in total opposition to my own interests what I think would be best for you, according to the way we view such matters. It is now for you to decide. You are sure to be received, looked after, cared for with the greatest tenderness should you come here.

We have here just now a young Frenchman, nephew of a former lieutenant of police, gentle, sensible, greatly occupied in instructing himself, whom our Philosopher sees a good deal of because he has no undesirable national traits and seems honest and reflective. This young man spent three or four months in Ireland, and speaks of that country with passionate admiration, describing the scenery most admirably. But it is of the hospitality, of the social spirit, that he never ceases to talk. He spoke to me of a Duke of Leeds, with whom he spent several weeks, and two or



three other people whom he could not praise enough, amongst them two sisters of the Duke of Richmond, who are married there. He declares that Irish people are better looking, more amiable, more interesting even than the English, to whom he is passionately attached. Finally he assured me that if he could control his destiny, of all the countries that he would choose to live in he would prefer Ireland, for the beauty of its scenery and the manners and sociability of its inhabitants, so that were I forty-five or fifty years younger I should go immediately and pitch my tent in Ireland, and seek out the family of that dear Hawkings, to convince myself with my own eyes that he has a mother over there, and dispute with her as to which of us loves her son most dearly, while blessing her for giving birth to one who is the joy of all our lives.

This young Frenchman knows Guillaume and Rhoon. He met one in London and the other at Gottingen, where he studied. We have also another very interesting Frenchman here. He is from Normandy, an officer of the King's body-guard which was so severely handled in October at Versailles. He was on a commission for the regiment at that terrible time. If you desire to know his history, you have only to take the Bible and read the book of Job and you will learn it, except that he had not a devil of a wife like the defunct Mr. Job and that I have never seen him scratch himself with the lid of a pot. He thinks that your husband and Guillaume must have made the acquaintance of his brother, a naval

officer who commanded the vessel you were on at Cherbourg. He is called Chaumontel. Does Hawkings remember the name and the man? This one longs to know him, and my *grand garçon* also, but as he is soon leaving for Coblenz I fear he will not have this pleasure, nor they either, for he is one of the most sensible, amiable, interesting Frenchmen that I have ever met, and so much so that if he were neither married nor a Catholic he is just the husband I should choose for Henriette. He would not disfigure the quartette made up of Hawkings, Guillaume, and Milnes, which it is so difficult to equal, and of which his honesty, his good-nature, his intelligence, and his various interesting qualities would render him worthy.

Paschen spent the day recently with me and asked me to give you both his compliments and respects. He had just returned from visiting his beautiful property in Mecklenburg.

I do not talk to you of the sad and threatening aspect of the world's theatre, and the horrors which are taking place. I do not wish to lose myself in them, for they tear my heart. One cannot end when one enters on them.

I embrace *chatte et chaton*, and hope I have in no way transgressed in this letter.

Hamburg, the 9th March, 1792.

Do not be angry with me, *mes chers et meilleurs enfants*, if I write you only a few lines to-day. I am as though struck by a thunderbolt through the death

of our great and wise Emperor!<sup>1</sup> He was the best of all our sovereigns. He was the son of that divine Marie Thérèse, for whom the whole world still mourns, and whose loss will be a hundred times more keenly felt on the death of her image and her successor.

If you have the opportunity, place my homage and my sorrow at the feet of their august daughter and sister. What will happen to that poor Queen of France? Good God, what a blow for her! I cannot bear to think of this sad picture. And the worthy Count Mercy! He also must be overwhelmed by such a catastrophe!

Oh, *ma chère Sophie*, my heart is torn, I can write no more! If England, if Ireland were threatened with an upheaval, with total destruction, would not Hawkings and you be much to be pitied? Well, I love my country as truly as do you both, and above all I am attached in the most unchanging way (without interest or expectation of anything) to that good and noble House of Austria. How grieved my poor Countess Tierheim will be! Console her as well as you can. Friendship is a blessed balm. If you have no opportunity of speaking to the Archduchess, ask that amiable Countess to do so for me instead. Embrace your husband on my part and receive the homage of the Philosopher.

From this date, and till six months later, the letters are on black-edged paper.

<sup>1</sup> Leopold.



Hamburg, the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1792.

Even if I should explode like an old musket I must still write four lines to my *chère petite chatte* and that delightful Hawkings whom the good God has made on purpose, with my dear Guillaume, to console me for having lived forty years deprived of my children.

I have been very ill in bed for the last fortnight, and was unable to endure a glimmer of light on account of the violence of the pains in my head. For twenty years I don't remember having had any so severe. There was no danger (though at my age everything is so), but I suffered so much that the weakness of old age was forgotten beneath it. The Philosopher never would write to you. He said very wisely that with the best intentions in the world no one in Brussels can cure or relieve any one in Hamburg who has fever or plague or anything else, though one may worry people if they are anxious, or annoy them if they are not, and that the patient is either cured or dead before the letter arrives! That for these reasons, as a sensible man, he had no wish to set pen to paper and merely upset you, and that it would be time enough when the truth of the proverb that "ill weeds thrive apace" had been verified and your grandmother was well again for her to write herself and tell you that she had a cough, a *migraine*, a *colique*, and various other ailments!

To these profound and mathematical arguments

I had no answer, the event has proved the wisdom of the Philosopher, and he has gone to drink a glass of beer at Bosselhof to the health of his admirable sagacity, and I, with the bit taken from between my teeth, though I am not yet quite free, hasten without his permission to write to my *chers enfants*, but only to tell them that I embrace them and beg them to do the same for me to my dear Countess Thérèse, and say to all those dear people who are the joy of my old age that I am greatly puzzled to decide whom I love the most : my little *minette à patte de velours*, or her dear husband, or the little future kitten whom I see in my mind !

*Adieu donc, enfants que vous êtes !* Thank God that I am not fifty-eight years younger, for then I am sure you would not allow me to love that good Hawkings as much as I should wish !

Hamburg, the 26th March, 1792.

You certainly are the most singular, the most pleasant, the most amiable little lunatic that I have ever seen in my life !

Where did you learn to hand your letters from an old sibyl of 76 to an Archduchess, just as if you were giving her a State paper, a plan of a battle-field, or a treaty of peace ? Do you really believe in that little brain of yours that one treats a daughter of the Cæsars like an ordinary person ?

*Ma belle petite chatte*, this little episode is as like you as two drops of water ! I really must beg my dear Hawkings to chastise you, and severely, to teach

you how to deal with German princesses and with the old etiquette of the time of your grandmother. The worst, however, that can come of it all is that the Archduchess will conclude that your grandmother is in her dotage and this judgment upon her cannot be considered premature! However, my scolding over, I am not sorry that this amiable princess, so loved by her divine mother, has discovered that which she certainly would little suspect and could never have learnt but for your mischief, that you Northern folk sometimes hide away your etiquette in a corner.

I have asked dear Countess Thérèse to watch over you more closely and keep you in order.

I greatly hope that you will not leave Brussels without once more attending Court and in a proper manner, and I hope to goodness that Countess Tierheim, the Duchess of Ahremberg and your husband will cling on to you if you are seized with a sudden desire to throw your arms round the neck of the Archduchess when you take leave of that good and gracious princess. After the way you carried off my Phœbus I am sure of nothing, and I beg those about you to keep you in sight and report your doings to me!

To turn to my old friend Mercy. Is he always outwardly as cold as the mountains of Ireland, and very amiable, very sarcastic, very honest, and very interesting when one has pierced the crust? They say he intends settling at Brussels! Oh how this revolution must grieve and distress him! He had been given a number of charming possessions near



Paris which, when his work was over, were a constant delight to him. Besides being deprived of all these it is said that everything belonging to him has been ruined and destroyed. Has his mistress (his wife, as some think), La Rosalie,<sup>1</sup> followed or abandoned him? At his age, a habit of thirty years, even a bad one, which has to be broken, becomes a great misfortune. Everything about him is interesting to me, in spite of his coldness, for he has beneath it all character and merit, and you will give me great pleasure by trying to find out any details concerning him, especially if you come to Embsuttel to tell me them. I wish that he was in Vienna instead of Brussels. If the House of Austria has the great misfortune to lose Prince Kaunitz,<sup>2</sup> the young King would find in Mercy perhaps the only man able to replace that Nestor, age, judgment and experience being so necessary at the head of the Council of a young monarch. Does Hawkings think Mercy's health good enough and his mental vigour sufficient to enable him to take up this post?

The Duchess of Ahremberg is a sister of the Counts of Brancas Lauragais, whom I used to know well. They were very clever, but in different ways, and a Monsieur de Bruyere who travelled with them seemed to know all about it! Prince Henry of Prussia made a great deal of talk about it.

<sup>1</sup> *La Rosalie* (Mlle. Levasseur) was an opera singer. She died in 1826, aged 77. Mercy is believed not to have married her.

<sup>2</sup> Kaunitz died in 1794.

## CHAPTER XX

*Petite chatte,*

The 30th March, 1792.

I DON'T know if you have yet received the official account of the attempt on the life of the King of Sweden?<sup>1</sup> In any case, please send a copy to Mr. Weisbrod through the Chargé d'Affaires of Sweden whom I have asked for it.

From the letters of the 20th from Stockholm there was some hope for the King's life. I dare not count on it yet, however. There was a warning letter to the King which he paid no attention to, and it is very strange if true. If you have not seen it I will send it to you.

I have Colchester cheese and porter all ready for you. Weisbrod, Nietien, Stroutsbeer and I, all four, await you with open arms. I can write no more to you on account of headache and the many letters which await answers. Give tender messages for me to all the family, but especially embrace Hawkings to suffocation.

The 3rd April, 1792.

I send you, *mon cher fils*, a cutting from a newspaper, which I read with great attention. I confess

<sup>1</sup> The King, Gustavus III, was the son of the Prince-Bishop of Euton, who afterwards became King of Sweden, and had been a suitor for the hand of Countess Bentinck in her youth.

I knew little of that beautiful, attractive corner of your empire, so near and yet so unfamiliar to us! Since I have had the sweet privilege of calling you, in truth, my son, the country which gave you birth has become extremely interesting to me. It has inspired a sort of patriotism in me such as I feel for my own country, and I am nearly as much its debtor for the precious gift it made me!

In addition to all this, I was seized with the desire to know if what I read was true, so I send you the whole article. I have addressed it to Doorwerth,<sup>1</sup> to my house steward (or Maître Jacques as you prefer to call him). He will see that you get it, or may perhaps have the honour of handing it to you himself, while begging you, if you will rejoice me with your longed-for presence, to rest for a day at Doorwerth and to receive there his respects on my behalf. This is the preface to my enclosure! Throw both one and the other in the fire if they bore you! Ennui is a sort of poison that nothing but religious zeal can make palatable to those who swallow it!

Embrace my *chère petite chatte*.

*Adieu, mon cher fils.*

Hamburg, the 6th April, 1792.

I wanted to write you a sensible letter, but at the very moment when I put pen to paper to give myself up to that dear task, they announced to me the death of the King of Sweden. Since my infancy

<sup>1</sup> Doorwerth, near Arnhem, her beautiful castle and property referred to in the earlier part of this book.



I have held this illustrious House in respect, and I pinned all my hope to this heroic prince on whom I counted to save Europe from that pestilent gangrene which is on the point of overturning the whole world, and which marches towards anarchy and barbarism by the road of murders, assaults, poisons and such repeated horrors that my spirit fails me and my imagination, awakened by these terrifying spectacles, cannot be controlled.

I will only write you two words, *ma chère Sophie*, to tell you that I have had a letter from Mr. Milnes from Turin of the 16th March, as perhaps you have none yet. They were very well, and very glad to be out of France.

I embrace Hawkings. My house steward will send him from Doorwerth the little packet I announced to him. Love me always a little, *mes chers enfants*. I will return it to you very heartily.

The Milneses will spend Easter at Rome and then go straight to Naples. The wife of our friend Paschen has died of a stroke of apoplexy, and he is inconsolable.

*P.S.*—My letter was sealed and ready to go when I received yours. Thank God that you stand the journey so well! It will be very sweet to me to embrace my dear children, and perhaps it may happen so.

I am still between my bed and my sofa and in the town.

Don't decide to come and give me a surprise in

town, because there is not one room to be had in the month of April except those which face south, and they are so hot that neither you nor I could endure them. I must manage to be at Embsbittel before I receive you, and that will not be possible before the end of this month. I shall go out and live in the garden<sup>1</sup> directly my bad health and the season allow it, but the country is uninhabitable before the last days of April. If you come earlier you will place me in great difficulties on account of the tyranny of the gates<sup>2</sup> and my people, who have to make the remove first, while if you give me plenty of notice we shall have all in good order, and you will be comfortable and we also.

Since I finished my letter to you I have heard that they opened the body of the King of Sweden and found the ball and two nails embedded between the ribs. He died with heroic courage, and gave advice to his son worthy of the father of a sage and a great man. He pardoned his assassins. In fact, he drew tears even from the eyes of his enemies. The Duke of Sudermann is regent.

I embrace you and can write no more.

*The 20th April, 1792.*

I don't know why they say "A wicked one-eyed person." Are one-eyed people always wicked? If

<sup>1</sup> The house at Embsbittel was often referred to simply as "the garden."

<sup>2</sup> The gates of Hamburg were shut every evening at an early hour in spring.

so, you have a wicked grandmother, for I have an eye entirely shut, which I hold on to firmly with one hand while I write to you with the other.

This is to tell you, *ma belle petite chatte*, that they are getting ready my rooms and yours at Embsbittel, and if the weather continues as at present I can easily be there on the 26th, 27th or 28th of April, so that from the last week of the month, the 29th, I shall be able to receive you. I begin to walk a little with Fifi. I went to-day with my head tied up, to Embsbittel, to delight my heart with the idea of embracing you there, and at the thought that I shall be able to enjoy all the wit and wisdom of Hawkings, now that he speaks French like an Academician!

Finally I confess to you, *ma chère Sophie*, that I am worn out by these poisonings, assassinations and horrors. My imagination has been so tortured that I have lost even the little sleep I usually get. They fear that the Emperor of Russia has not swallowed the amount that would have prevented his accomplishing his hostile projects against those French monsters!

The King of Prussia is threatened by the same anonymous letters which announced the assassination of the King of Sweden. The Elector of Trèves has had a similar one. At Vienna they believe the death of the Emperor was not natural. Finally, it is known that there is an authentic list (that is, with signatures) of more than two thousand persons, of whom two or three hundred are scattered about at the Courts, even in the depths of Russia, to stir up the people against



their government and get rid of those princes who do not hold with their principles.

That is what we have arrived at, *ma chère Sophie!* It makes one shudder, and my age is a greater boon to me than yours, though please God, your wise country will be the last to be upheaved and may endure another half-century! It is God's will!

My best compliments, greetings, etc., to your aunts, to the legion of cousins, but above all to your dear husband.

The gay Philosopher has not an instant to himself.

*Adieu, petite chatte.*

Embsbuttel, the 1st May, 1792.

I have only one eye, *petite chatte*, yet I write you two words to send you the enclosed for your husband. They are so many sword thrusts for my poor old heart, a real tantalization when I read that it is not to be at Hamburg, and your odious doctor says not in London!

Thank Heaven! Guillaume, *le bien aimé* Guillaume, has arrived in harbour without accident and has written me the most charming letter in the world. I breathe again on his account, but I tremble on another. This life is but a chess-board, where every white piece has a black one next it! And what do you intend to do now? Is there a ray of hope for me? But I am not an egoist, I am only the tenderest of mothers of the *plus jolis petits chats du monde!* The post has only just come and it leaves again directly, so

I write in haste. I am bombarded with news. They tell me that Messrs. Pitt and Fox are approaching each other, and hold secret conferences. Also that out of friendship for the King of Prussia and for Holland you in England will take some French islands and give them to the loyalists. If you are so wise and reasonable as to do that I shall love you dearly. I should like to put my poor Leopold, my heroic Gustavus, my simpleton Louis, justice, order and humanity in their proper places! Do not oppose these honest desires, my dear English, and you will be doing the best of good works! Even the Philosopher Weisbrod will admire you!

They tell me to hold my tongue and seal up my talk! So I embrace you and your amiable husband till I stifle you both. Love me a little if you have time.

Embsbuttel, the 8th May, 1792.

What a delightful prospect you offer me, *ma chère petite chatte*. I cannot express my joy, and can never thank you enough, you and your amiable husband. No, never did God create so good a husband, so delightful a grandson, as he. I try to hold myself in check not to love him too much, and you and Guillaume and the Milnes and your excellent mother, for one has to die and separate oneself from them all! Why, through the amiability of you all, render this indispensable necessity so difficult? Before I knew you all I should have taken this *mauvais pas* without a murmur. I should have left only objects that were

trying or indifferent to me. You are the cause that I shall die like a coward, you take from me the glory of a false heroism which I should have rejoiced in on my arrival in the next world! I look forward with impatience to the welcome post that will fix the time of my happiness. Everything is ready in my garden here, and I await you with the liveliest joy. Prepare yourself for ennui and my increased decrepitude, for the winter gave me my *coup de grâce*. The sight of you alone is perhaps capable of giving me new life. No one, even to the depths of the Philosopher, has failed to be moved at the idea of your arrival.

*Bon soir, mon aimable petite chatte.*

I am enchanted that my brave Austrians have, near Mons, well beaten those vile Frenchmen.

Embsbuttel, the 11th May, 1792.

*Aimable petite chatte*, come, come! They must take great care of you, and I count on your aunt, and especially on your husband to do so.

Here are some questions which I beg you to answer me.

1. Tell me exactly who accompanies you, the number of your servants, male and female, and their duties.

2. Does each lady sleep alone, or has each a maid who sleeps in her room?

3. You know the house. Tell me your ideas, and anything you can think of that would add to your comfort or convenience.

4. Tell me what day you leave Utrecht.



5. And especially by what route. There are three, as far as I know. (1) By Varel (a great *détour*). (2) By Lingen and Kloppenburg, Oldenburg and Bremen, or (3) by Osnabrück. Which shall you take?

Now, little woman, if you fail to answer me on even one of these points, and to tell me if you cross the Elbe at Haaburg or at Tollenspicker, and what day you expect to arrive, I will show you that I am your grandmother in the full sense of the term! If you try to coax me with your beautiful velvet paws, I shall be just as ferocious as the French people, and then look out for the guillotine! Meanwhile the Professor is in readiness to cut the cord!

*Adieu.*

*N.B.* I have been at Embsbuttcl for the last fortnight, so that I beg you on no account to stop in Hamburg. If you come by Haaburg you should disembark at Altona which will save you an hour, and you will find my coach there and as many carriages as you want. Your husband knows it all as well as he does the domain of his patron Neptune.

Embsbuttcl, the 20th May, 1792.

*Chère petite chatte*, and you *sage Roué*, conductor of such an interesting troop, I send you an experienced servant who will take you at Haaburg to the best lodging and receive your orders, but who especially will convey to you the pleasure and impatience with which I await you. If I was thirty or forty years younger you would have found me flying to meet you. But unfortunately I have neither legs, nor

back, nor lungs, nor head which are not disabled. The heart alone goes fast and well, but the poor devil cannot travel by himself, and the machine which contains my ancient existence would not sustain him on the pleasant journey he desires to make to prove to you a few hours earlier my sincere gratitude for the extreme goodness and kindness. These alone have induced you to submit to the boredom and fatigue of so long a pilgrimage through that impertinent Westphalia to prove to me your friendship.

Prepare your aunt for all my tiresome decrepitudes, a cold which attacked me a day or two ago has taken from me the half of the half of the poor five senses that Nature has left me. Bring me your indulgence and friendship, and I will put myself under the protection of the excellent *Tête Blanche*, who will make up for all I lack and will believe in the sentiments with which I daily receive proofs of his goodness with the most tender gratitude.

They spent seven weeks on a visit to Emsbüttel. I have one very tangible link with this period in the shape of a beautiful silver gilt service, inscribed "Charlotte Sophie Bentinck, née Comtesse of Aldenburg, to her granddaughter Sophie Henriette Hawkins-Whitshed, Hamburg, July, 1792."

## CHAPTER XXI

**T**HE following letter is obviously a reply to one announcing the dangerous illness of Sophie's mother.

Embsbittel, the 9th of July, 1792.

*Mon cher fils*, what a sad position is ours! The crushing news from England, the condition of Sophie (without considering the Milneses and their children and poor Henriette and Jean, witnesses of this cruel spectacle), Guillaume's profound sorrow, yours which I can feel from here, with your tender heart and your affection for that worthy mother who loved you as one of her own children, this difficult journey, having to conceal your grief for the sake of your poor wife, all that presents itself before my imagination in such dark colours that I almost sink under it! Guillaume, who on this occasion has shown himself in a light that has rendered him a hundred times dearer to me than ever before, having struck the difficult balance between the deepest grief and the most admirable presence of mind, delicacy of sentiment and reasonableness, who, in a word, has never seemed more worthy to be your brother and, what is more, your friend, this dear Guillaume, the joy and pride of my life, leaves to-morrow, goes away alone,



without one person near him to whom he can open his poor suffering heart!

At the bottom, it is through me, it is the kindness and goodness you all, *mes chers enfants*, have shown in coming to see me, that has redoubled your trials and difficulties! This idea, in addition to all my other calamities, has torn my heart! If only I could relieve your troubles I should bear my own less impatiently! But I must control my feelings so that I can support this dear and excellent Guillaume, who would be quite overcome if I gave way. I have made the greatest efforts in spite of my horror, stimulated by the example he has given me. But soon I shall see him leave, amidst so many saddening circumstances, perhaps I shall lose him never to see him again, nor you either, my dear children, and the bitterness of all these thoughts is more than I can bear!

I await to-morrow's post like a man condemned to be executed awaits the moment to ascend the scaffold! Our misfortune will then be known, and the moment after my *cher* Guillaume will be taken from me! Have the charity to send me four lines to say how your poor wife is, when Guillaume has left you, or get some other member of the family to write to me. I write this late on Monday morning, in the cruel uncertainty of what to-morrow's letters may bring us. I will write a few lines to Sophie (if Guillaume approves) for to-morrow's post, in which I will not say a word of our sad news, for I ought to write to her after her letter from Haarb-urg. If she receives nothing she will be surprised

at my silence, as I told her she would find letters from me at The Hague. If she already knows, my letter will not matter, and if you have not told her yet she will not suspect, as she might from my silence, that something is wrong. I will send my letter to your aunt who will give it to you to use, or throw into the fire, as you find best.

*Tuesday morning.*

We are going into town to await those sad tidings, which no doubt will pierce us to the heart. I fear the worst, and have no hope, and yet, now that the moment to end this terrible uncertainty approaches, I would delay it if I could, for I think it will be worse than even the uncertainty itself!

It is on account of that dear Sophie that I am so alarmed. How can you hide her calamity from her till she reaches The Hague? Will not some unlucky chance, impossible to provide against, disclose it to her? And then, even if you succeed in keeping it from her till then, must she not know it in the end? And can she bear it? With so tender and feeling a heart as yours, *mon cher fils*, what a cruel and unhappy position! I really do not know whom to pity most, you all or myself. I had so sincere an affection for that excellent woman, on whom I counted to watch over my dear children after my death. Forgive me, *mon cher Hawkings*, if I tire you with my useless anxieties. I have no one in the world but yourself to whom I can speak in the full confidence of friendship and the certainty that he feels this terrible news

as keenly as I do. Far from further depressing the spirits of your poor brother-in-law, I had to accomplish the impossible to drive out the despair he felt only too deeply. The trying journey he has to make to The Hague and to England, with nothing but sadness awaiting him there, is dreadful to think of. I have had many troubles during my agitated and unhappy life, but have never experienced a moment more bitter than this!

When Guillaume has left you, let me have two lines—no more—to say that Sophie is calmed and that there is hope that this terrible blow will not injure her health. Say to her all that your good and feeling heart dictates. I will not write to her on this subject as it would affect her too much. The more I expressed my feelings, the more I should move hers. Tell her unceasingly from me that it is essential to preserve a child whose father you are and who will be like you. This thought, so touching for her, may give her strength to control her natural sorrow. If I were with her I should say nothing but that, and I should feel certain of calming her. But I would let her weep, I would at first encourage her to do so.

But I encroach on your patience, if you have had enough to read so far.

Weisbrod, incapable of expressing his feelings, is yet deeply affected by our situation, and begs me to tell you so with the assurance of the tender respect he feels for you all.

We shall pass a sad time till this cruel crisis is



over. For my part, I dare not hope to live long enough to accustom myself to such a privation !

Countess de Linage, Madame de Binder and Tauvenay have done their utmost for Guillaume on this sad occasion.

*Adieu, mon cher fils.* I have a last request to you, perhaps the most important of all. In thinking of Sophie and of her brother, *do not forget yourself.* Do not forget that when one has such a heart as yours, one risks wearing out the body of a Hercules, and tell yourself continually that your preservation is the first object in the world to that wife, to that friend who is so tenderly attached to you. Do not refuse me a third place after them. Think, I beg of you, that you are doing them no good by injuring yourself, and that the best service you can render them is to take care of the worthy object of their affection. Do not count too surely on your health, which in such trying positions is more affected in naturally strong and robust constitutions than in those who bend more readily beneath troubles. If you really love your poor wife, preserve for her him whom she holds most dear and on whom the whole joy of her life depends. *Adieu, mon cher fils.*

The fiction that Mrs. John Albert Bentinck's sight was affected, preventing her from writing letters, was kept up for some months, so that Sophie's confinement might be over before she knew of her mother's death. The following was no doubt the letter referred to in the preceding one.



RENIRA

Wife of Captain John Albert Bentinck and daughter of Jean,  
Baron de Tuyll de Serooskerken

From a portrait by Romney, in the possession of Mr. Henry Aldenburg Bentinck





Embsbuttel, the 10th July, 1792.

*Ma chère petite chatte*, I am in great trouble and anxiety. Two gazettes declare that Prince Kaunitz is very ill and has applied for the acceptance of his resignation. Neither Monsieur de Binder nor I have heard one word of it, but the papers receive news by Breslau two days before our letters reach us from Vienna. To this is added my solicitude for your mother's health, which Guillaume tells me disquiets him, on account of the trial it is to her not to be able to read or write.

All this grieves me deeply, the baths I am ordered fatigue me, and the heat wears me out! Do not give me any anxiety on your account, *ma chère petite chatte*, I have enough as it is. I tremble for that good old Prince, my respected friend. I am sad, and nothing but the friendship of *mes chers chatons* reconciles me to life. Tell your kind aunt that I fear I shall not be able to write to her to-day, it is already too late, and I felt too ill all the morning. Directly I am able I will assure her of my attachment to her.

*Adieu, jolie petite chatte*. The Philosopher prostrates himself.

*To Captain Hawkins-Whitshed.*

Alone, after Guillaume's departure.

Hamburg, the 10th July, in town.

Alas! *mon cher fils*, our sorrow has culminated and no hope remains! The best of mothers, the most to be respected of women, left us on July 1st! May

this terrible blow not bring on us a second! May your tender care soften for dear Sophie the bitterness of her loss.

Guillaume, that good, affectionate Guillaume, left here at one o'clock for Haarburg. He travels by Osnabrück so as to avoid you, for though Sophie may know nothing, his arrival would be sure to excite her. We have warned every one as far as possible so that this sad secret may remain in your hands. Pray prevent any one writing to Milnes and upsetting the arrangement we have made by which he hears of it before his poor wife does. I have worn myself out writing, and it is overpoweringly hot. I received the thunderbolt which took away all hope, at twelve o'clock, and at one I saw my *bien aimé* Guillaume leave.

I can only add, *mon cher* Hawkings, that half dead as I am I still love you with all my heart.

I arranged with Guillaume that I should write Sophie a letter which I enclose, so that if she knows nothing you can give it to her and her suspicions will not be aroused by my silence.

Embsbittel, the 10th July, 1792.

I have received your dear letter from Bremen, *mon aimable petite chatte*, but it is so hot that I have hardly the strength to breathe and move my fingers.

You will realize what a terrible blank you left behind you, and now the accursed state of affairs in Ireland has taken from me your brother also! He is not certain yet whether he will travel by Holland or

Ostend. Pity me! To lose you all at the same time is indeed hard!

To-morrow I have a sad pleasure party of democrats at my house, a dinner for Madame de Bourgoing who leaves by sea for Bordeaux with three little children. Blanchard has arrived and will watch over all.<sup>1</sup>

There are nothing but *fêtes* and pleasure parties here this week. While my dear ones go further and further from me others spend the time in rejoicing. The French inhabitants celebrate their 14th July<sup>2</sup> at the inn at Embsbuttel, and Monsieur de Tauvenay, like a gallant knight, will come and spend the day with me to defend us against them, if the Jacobins<sup>3</sup> resent my aristocratic principles.

Both he and Monsieur Paschen present their homage to you, as does also the Doctor, who says that he does not suffice to himself like Diogenes, and begs you not to deprive him of his sunshine.

Embrace *mon chaton* for me. *Adieu, chère Sophie.*  
I perish from heat.

Embsbuttel, the 17th July, 1792.

*Mon cher* Hawkings, I suffer so cruelly in these days of uncertainty, alone and isolated, thinking of all your troubles and my own, separated from you

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps François Blanchard, the inventor of the parachute. He was killed by a fall at The Hague (1753-1809).

<sup>2</sup> The first insurrection of the Parisians at the period of the Revolution, resulting in the taking of the Bastille, July 14th, 1789.

<sup>3</sup> The members of the famous revolutionary club, which held its meetings in the former convent of the Jacobins in the Rue St. Honoré, Paris. The Jacobins were amongst the most violent of the revolutionaries, and supported up to the last the Committee of Public Safety and Robespierre. The club was closed in 1794.



and from my dear Guillaume, who set off on his journey in a truly lamentable condition, trembling for Sophie, very anxious about the Milneses, for poor Henriette (who has drunk the bitter cup to the very dregs), for poor Jean, who is perhaps still too young to realize all he has lost. I cannot know how it will all turn out for another two, or perhaps five days. The terrible news from Worcester on the 10th, and worse still on the 13th, as well as Guillaume's departure, which drew tears from the eyes even of those indifferent to our sorrow, who only saw him go by! No! you cannot realize the horror of that fortnight! Pardon me if I seize upon you, as a drowning person upon a plank! It is in cruel moments such as this that I address myself to my dear son and friend! How has poor Sophie supported the terrible news? In God's name tell me. And above all do not be misled by the calm which perhaps she will try to show, in order not to pain you too much! Do not let her out of your sight; you alone, on earth, can make up to her for everything! Nothing but such love as she feels for you can console her for the loss of such a mother!

I have had a letter from Guillaume from Osna-brück. I calculate that he may have been able to join you at Utrecht on the evening of the 13th, or at The Hague on the morning of the 14th, but as he must have missed the packet on the 13th he will remain with you till to-day and then embark. Your married sister will have been poor Henriette's sole support. You and yours, *mon cher* Hawkings, seem

to have been created for the consolation and the happiness of my children. Good Mrs. Puget is doing that which I should be doing, which I should wish to do. She is being a mother to my dear grandchild!

At this very moment I have received a letter from my daughter-in-law.<sup>1</sup> The poor woman is overwhelmed with sorrow, and as her letter is undated I cannot understand it at all! She says that Sophie has written to her from Utrecht that she will arrive the same day at The Hague! That she knows nothing and that she trembles at the idea of having to tell her the frightful news! This has upset me very much, and to make all worse they have sent off Charles to England and my poor Guillaume, who had such need of support, will now have to travel alone the whole way to London! This pierces me to the heart! How can one find some one to go with him who will not be in his way? It is impossible! Why are there not two Hawkings in the world, one for Sophie and one for his friend, and may God give me one too! The world can never have enough of such beings, and unhappily they are so rare! I am ashamed, *mon cher fils*, to have written to you at such length. I must write two or three letters more, and it is an effort to me as my head is very painful. It is to you only (for your sins) that I write with pleasure, *mon cher enfant*.

*No one* must write to the Milneses, for fear that his wife receives the shock first. If Sophie writes (knowing everything), keep back the letter, and warn your

<sup>1</sup> Rhoon's mother and the sister of Mrs. John Albert Bentinck.

aunt, Mitje, and Jaqueline. We have taken every precaution so that Milnes may hear of it, instead of his wife, at Florence or Genoa. If only your brother in Italy says nothing !

Embsbittel, the 20th July, 1792.

I thank God, *ma chère petite chatte*, that your terrible journey from my vile country is safely ended. It alarmed me much for you. I should like to embrace your *aimable chaton* in gratitude for all the care he has taken of my *jolie petite mère*. It is true that he has taken from me my *bien aimé grand garçon*, but as it was for his good, which I prefer to my own, I pardon him, and am even tenderly indebted to him. He wants to make an Irishman of him ; and since I have known that good and honest husband of yours, the Irish nation has placed itself for me in the front rank !

I meanwhile take the liberty, Madame Sophie, of talking to you very little to-day, and for the following excellent reasons :—

*Primo*. Because it is frightfully hot.

*Secondo*. Because I am to-day more stupid than Madame de Lerche.

*Terzo*. Because I feel the effects of my vapour baths, which would exhaust an Englishman six and a half feet high !

*Quarto*. Because the Doctor is scolding me and tells me to stop.

For these excellent reasons I beg you to say *bonjour* from me to your worthy husband and yourself. Do not forget the grumbling old grandmother.



## CHAPTER XXII

Embsbuttel, *the 24th July, 1792.*

**I** MUST say that for *une petite chatte* God never made a more amiable little creature than yourself!

Yesterday I received from you a very pleasant letter from Zütphen. It had travelled half over Germany before it reached me. I think it had been to see the Coronation of the Emperor, for it was quite out of breath when it arrived here. They very ingenuously chose for this *fête*, so important for the repose of Germany, precisely the day of the French abomination!<sup>1</sup> The German sponge had wiped from Europe the stain of France, for which she blushed. The Jacobins also celebrated their 14th here at the inn at Embsbuttel. You can understand, *ma chère Sophie*, that your grandmother was furious when she heard their demonstrations of joy, and that the Philosopher amused himself with her exclamations of useless rage!

At last I have received a long letter from the Milneses from Naples, dated 16th June. She will return to you painting like Raphael, for she tells me she does nothing else! It is certain that she has

<sup>1</sup> July 14th.

great talent for that beautiful art. She does not speak of leaving yet. The air of Naples suits her perfectly, and as she cannot go to Spa she is wise being where she is to profit by it as long as possible. One does not often repeat those long journeys, so one should enjoy them while one can.

We have been trembling here for the life of the King and Queen of France on the 14th. Thank God they have not yet been massacred! Alas! Perhaps that has already been decided upon! I wish that the Duke of Brunswick<sup>1</sup> was before Paris. Hawkings is sitting in a corner by you, and says "No!" Take him out of it and beg him to let me bring these vile Frenchmen to reason! I will use my power discreetly. I would have states where no arbitrary custom-house duties should be imposed, and responsible ministers who should never dare to use *lettres de cachet*. The nobles and the clergy should pay in proportion to their means, but the King should be respected as he is in England. May Hawkings approve my scheme, which is reasonable and therefore in sympathy with his instincts.

Adieu, *jolie petite chatte*.

<sup>1</sup> The Prussian General, head of the allied armies. On July 25th, 1792 (the very day after this letter was written), he published the famous manifesto of Coblenz in the name of the combined Powers. This irritated the Parisians and the National Assembly and led to the events of the 10th August, when, on account of the withdrawal of the Girondist ministers, the Parisians rose, and the permanent imprisonment of Louis XVI was brought about and the fall of the Royal Family. The Duke of Brunswick was conquered at the Battle of Valmy by Dumouriez and Kellerman on September 20th of this year.

A long letter from Countess Bentinck to Captain H. Whitshed, dated July 24th, follows the above, but is of little interest to the general reader, being largely a repetition of what has gone before and an expression of gratitude for the very kind letter from him she has just received. She says she will shortly write to Sophie “quelque folie, d’un ton de gazette, pendant que j’ai le mort dans le cœur.”

Embsbittel, *the 31st July, 1792.*

Good morning, *ma chère petite chatte*. I am rather anxious about your aunt’s health. Give me news of her and beg her not to think only of her children, but also a little of herself. How is it that Mitje, at her age, suffers from her eyes? I wish I had supplied her with a bottle of my “Chasse Lunettes” when she was here. To any one so fond of reading and work as she is, I know nothing more trying than eyes which refuse to do their duty.

I am now able to walk in the Troade, thanks to Monsieur Le Chevalier, and I visit the tombs of Achilles and Hector. You will admit that they are worth at least as much as the Devil’s Bridge and our Goose Market? It is to your academy of Edinburgh that I owe, in the first instance, this pleasure. The work is short, very pleasantly written, and inspires as much confidence as it contains taste and simplicity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I found amongst my books a copy of this work, *Voyage de la Troade*, by Jean Baptiste Le Chevalier, published in 1791.



The little Countess sends you warm greetings. Tierheim speaks unceasingly of you and with the deepest tenderness. Her friend, Count de F., is at Vienna, but so overcome by the cruel death of a brother, whom he dearly loved, and whom those French furies massacred, that he refuses to go anywhere or see any one. His friends can do nothing with him. He gives himself up entirely to his trouble. I have begged Thérèse to use her influence to persuade him to listen to his friends. We shall see if she succeeds. He will find people much prejudiced in his favour, sympathizing with his grief and many anxious to do him honour. I hope our common friend will bring it about.

Adieu, *mon aimable petite chatte*. Tell your husband, in good French, that which is true in all languages dead or living, namely, that I love him with all my heart.

My letter written and ready to leave I received four words from Guillaume, just arrived in London. He seems not without anxiety for your mother's eyes. I, too, was uneasy, knowing her exactitude, on account of two or three letters of mine to which she had not replied. He explains this silence which had alarmed me. I am reassured by the skill of her doctor, but these eye troubles are very disagreeable, especially to some one like her who likes to work and read. But you must not worry yourself too much, *ma chère enfant*. You have, and you soon will have other objects even more dear. A husband such as I believe

there is no other in the world, and a dear child to whom you will give birth. The most excellent of mothers herself would wish this, and would rejoice that you should love them even better than herself. I perceived this feeling in her here, and her manner of thinking, so tender, so wise, should put all egoism far from you. Take care of yourself, therefore, for these dear objects, and recollect how fortunate you are, even more so than during the first part of your life when you had a father and mother whom you could love and respect.

It will be remembered that Charlotte Sophie, on her father's death, became his sole heir. She gave up a large part of her possessions to her son, who died. Then they went to his son, Rhoon, who claimed a further large amount. After various concessions his grandmother refused to part with any more, as she wished to leave it to Guillaume and to provide for others dependent on her. These letters enter, from time to time, very fully into the matter, but I have omitted everything except occasional short references, as family disputes are seldom edifying and can be of but little general interest. People had very different ideas in those days about the holding of property by women, and from the evidence in my hands I confess that my sympathies are with Charlotte Sophie. She was a great heiress, yet in her old age she was comparatively poor, and all her life she was hard up.

The 31st July, 1792.

*Mon cher et meilleur ami, cent fois plus encore que fils.* I am worn out with fatigue and by my bath, by the heat, and by my headaches. I have had two or three hours' talk with an honest man whom Rhoon has sent to me without definite instructions or authorization, making a fool I am sure both of him and me. I have written seven or eight letters, and the post only came at half-past two and leaves at half-past six. I hear that our poor Sophie is a little prepared for her and our sorrow. She even says something about it in her letter. I replied on the lines you and Guillaume laid down, only referring to her mother's eyes.

I tremble at the thought of the blow she will receive, but perhaps it may be less dangerous now than later on.

In God's name, when she is overcome by it, make her drink a great deal, in small quantities, but often, nothing heating, but nothing too chilling. Let her cry, encourage her to weep, her tears will lessen the danger. No porter, no wine; when she is thirsty some sweet *tisane* only. Why cannot I fly to her, and at least share your trouble! I bear you both in my heart with maternal, but alas useless tenderness!

The 31st July, 1792.<sup>1</sup>

*Mon paresseux chaton.* Tell me in some phrases by your charming velvet paw that you find time to love your old grandmother a little.

<sup>1</sup> This, written the same day as the last, is obviously intended to be shown to Sophie.



I need it, to keep up my heart amidst my vapour baths. They are horribly violent and my head can hardly bear them. A word of friendship revives me.

An Irishman, a friend of Guillaume's, is coming to stay with me. I could almost devour him out of friendship, for in addition to him who sends him to me he comes from that dear country to which I owe the greatest happiness of my last days, my dear Hawkings.

My dear old friend, Count de Görtz, has lost his wife, whom he loved *à l'anglaise*. Think of it! He is heartbroken.

I am sure that they are going to massacre the poor King and Queen of France, and it makes me wretched.

I am alone, separated by rivers and seas from my dear children, and I suffer everywhere, but as it is only my body it is bearable, and I should console myself if Sophie's trouble was safely over and I had the hope of seeing you, her, Guillaume and those good Milneses. Alas! Why am I in this cursed country, where only the bears can keep in good health!

I must however add that the Philosopher, Paschen, Tauvenay, everybody, is devotedly attached to you. Send me your good wishes. I think I deserve them, even in my dotage, for I love you with all my heart.

*Pour mon chaton bien-aimé.*

*To Captain H. Whitshed.*

*August 14.*

. . . I am anxious about Prince Kaunitz, who was said to be ill. He is well in health, but he is dis-

contented, and I am afraid he meditates retiring on the return of the Emperor. In addition to that I am most uneasy about the Queen of France. She is the daughter of Marie Thérèse, who was an angel, whom you would have loved whether she was a Queen or not! Added to all this I have most unpleasant letters from Rhoon. I will tell you all about it, *mon cher Hawkings*, for I feel sure that in family *memoirs* he will speak against me and also accuse me of being a toady. And this you know I am not.

I reopen my letter to tell you that I have just received a few lines from *cher* Guillaume. He is at Tunbridge with Henriette, upon whom your good sister has showered kindnesses, which I accept as if done to me. I begin to think that if one seeks real humanity, gentle virtues, the kindness so touching to feeling hearts, one should go and look for them in Ireland.

I hope Milnes received my two letters to Florence; the third has gone to Genoa. I pray God that one of these letters has reached him. Guillaume says also, "We are going to dine at Richmond to-day with Mr. Keene, the uncle of our dear Hawkings. Mr. and Mrs. Puget have overwhelmed us with kindness. How happy one is to be connected with such a family. You must feel it as much as I do, my dear mother."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Very many of Charlotte Sophie's friends and relations addressed her thus.

Why am I not forty years younger! I should quit Hamburg, I should forget my country, while leaving it my blessing, and I should go and live near you in Ireland, where I should find Sophie, *mon bien-aimé* Guillaume, the Milneses, and your family! It would be my universe, but that admirable woman, that dear one we have lost, she would always be wanting to me!

Embsbattel, the 7th August, 1792.

I will only send you four words to-day, *ma chère petite chatte*, for I have had a very fatiguing week. First of all, my baths. Then the oppression of very stormy atmosphere. Then the danger at the Tuileries, which keenly affects me, my arm which all that aggravates, and on the top of everything else a big dinner party which I had to go and give in town, like a loyal German, for the Coronation of our young and interesting Emperor. I had to dress, make curtseys, pay compliments to Monsieur de Binder, look pleased while my heart was as big as a balloon! For I confess I was much alarmed by the false news about Prince Kaunitz, and also, *ma chère* Sophie, the illness of your poor mother has made me anxious, and I am as yet by no means reassured.

So I was very glad when that trying day was over and I had begun my vapour baths again, disagreeable though they are. They make me for the time much more imbecile than the good old grandmother whom you left here. Nevertheless, I had one joyful moment amidst all that. The wife of my nephew



Charles Kniphausen (who was like a son to me before I had the pleasure of knowing you) has had a son. Be so good as to imitate her, and not Madame de Rhoon. *Ma chère* Sophie, you will bring it to me, I shall spoil it, the wise Hawkings will scold me, he will desire to hang all grandmothers, I will let him say what he likes and the little one will be so happy with me, he will be so like his father and mother, that I shall not be able to spoil him whatever I do! Oh what a charming Castle in Spain for me, *ma chère enfant!* But if fortune refuses us happiness, let us try to find it in imagination!

Ask your husband to stand there in front of you. And then embrace, but *very respectfully*, your lord and master on the part of his old grandmother. Give me your pretty paw after that and wish me well and Weisbrod also, if you have time.

Embsbuttel, the 7th August, 1792.

Tell me, my dear friend, what you think of the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto to the French? I so like to gather up the fragments of your judgments. They are so simple and so luminous! I missed, by an unlucky fatality, making the acquaintance of General O'Hara,<sup>1</sup> which I am very sorry for, but he has promised to come and see me on his return from St. Petersburg. Shall I live as long as that? A great question! The day before yesterday, while they fired three hundred cannon-shots for the

<sup>1</sup> General O'Hara took part in the war against France. He was made prisoner by Napoleon in 1793.

Emperor, it was my seventy-seventh birthday! Twenty-four people were dining with me, and that wicked Doctor all the time kept threatening to tell my agreeable visitors that it was my *fête* also! He is by nature as malicious as an elderly monkey, even before you gave him the finishing touch! I have been reading the travels of Monsieur le Chevalier, and if it were not in German I would send it to you. I fancy that in the Society amongst which you live at The Hague not many people read. Of all the family, Charles alone (and possibly Henry) seems to me ever to open a book.<sup>1</sup> Mitje was described to me as a positive fount of science. Perhaps through modesty she hides it. In that case you will enjoy her conversation. When one is in trouble, a book, it seems to me, is a necessary resource! Nothing except a true friend is worth more, but that is not what every one has the happiness to possess or to feel! Our Stoic (who is not one to you), Tauvenay and Paschen, etc., etc., at the head of all your acquaintances, send you every good wish that you may come satisfactorily out of all your trials. Every one has daughters just now, even the German princesses are so unskilful. So prepare your philosophy and have patience if you receive nothing better. Please God we shall bring you through all, safe and sound.

*Adieu.*

<sup>1</sup> Sophie, however, was evidently a great reader, and a number of classical French works, containing her book plate, are in my possession.

The 21st August, 1792.

*Chère petite chatte*, I am in such a bad temper from having written volumes, grilled my limbs for the last time, and overheated my brain with the French horrors, that I know neither what I do nor what I say! But you are so exceedingly kind, and your letter has just reached me with half a dozen others (which I shall read only to-morrow, but have already devoured yours, as is my custom), that I must send two words, though my postillon who will carry the packet to town is crying out like a blind man who has lost his stick! I must just tell you that I had a letter from Mrs. Milnes, of July 27th, from Siena, or rather a volume so elegant and so full of learned antiquities that I think that pretty woman must have earned a doctor's gown! She is well, which is the chief thing, but her poor husband cannot support the hot weather which seems to suit her.

You have just as good a right as she has to beauty such as that of her little Henry, for he is the image of your father at his age, and then your husband is so handsome, so handsome, that it would not be a miracle if your *chefs-d'œuvre* were Adonises.

The Philosopher would be proud to receive a mark of your gracious remembrance; even if your paw is not of velvet a simple "mew" will suffice, and would be more pleasing to his ear than an opera by Glück!

*Adieu, bonne petite mère.* Do not forget that you have an old grandmother who loves you like the apple of her eye.





SIR ROBERT SHORE MILNES, BART.

From a portrait by Romney, in the possession of Mr. Henry Aldenburg Bentinck



Embsbuttcl, the 21st August, 1792.

I breathe more freely, *mon cher fils*, as I have been able to convey my sad news to Mr. Milnes without the knowledge of his wife. I will copy for you here what he says in two letters which I received from him at the same time, and by the same post a very gay letter from Mrs. Milnes dated July 27th from Siena.

That from your brother-in-law is as follows:—

“This instant, Madame, I was given your letter. I was with Charlotte but thanks to your precautions she suspected nothing. I do not yet know how to act, for it was like one existence between mother and daughter, and I, too, have never had such a blow. The loss is irreparable. I had and I have a sort of adoration for Mrs. Bentinck.”

The second is from Leghorn, of August 2nd:—

“I am at this moment, my dear mother, an object of compassion. Your daughter Charlotte is extraordinarily well; her gaiety, her health, are completely re-established, but when she learns of our terrible loss I think, with alarm, of what may happen. I myself am feeling it so bitterly that I am almost incapable of dealing with the matter, and yet it is I who must sustain her.

“I let you know yesterday that your letter had succeeded. They gave it to me, it is true, while we were at dinner, but the way you announced this sad blow so held me back that Charlotte suspected nothing, although she saw that the letter was from



you. You can feel assured that I will follow your advice. In consequence of it I have written this morning to poor Guillaume that we shall go from here to Geneva, and I have promised him that I will make no plans till I hear from him, but that I think we shall be obliged to join our children.

“I am very uneasy about Henriette. Her health was bad, and what a frightful situation to be in in her feeble state! Forgive me if I end, Madame, but I am afraid of arousing your daughter’s suspicion. You shall hear from me from Genoa.”

The following is from what Mrs. Milnes wrote me from Siena on July 27th :—

“From Leghorn we shall go to Lerici, where we shall hire a boat to take us to Genoa, which will make the journeying much less fatiguing, and the coast from Lerici to Genoa is one of the most beautiful things in Italy. One takes a large boat with twelve oars, absolutely at one’s orders, and in it one glides slowly along near the coast. From Genoa we shall go to Turin, and then to Geneva, being anxious to reach a cooler country as soon as possible on account of Milnes, who is suffocated here.”

Now you know as much as I do, and can take your measures with greater certainty.

I told Milnes that you had decided to try to keep our sad secret from Sophie till after her confinement, and have begged him if he writes to you to address the letter to your good aunt, Madame de Varel. I think I can now do nothing more. If Henriette joins you at The Hague, it would be the end of our

secret, and you will pardon the liberty I take in pointing it out. I quite understand the difficulty there might be in her crossing the sea later, but could not Guillaume bring her not to The Hague but to Utrecht, to Jaqueline (who, as you have proved, has the art of keeping a secret), and then she could wait till the time had passed and Sophie's confinement was over, or if that would not do, then perhaps she could stay with her aunt Athlone.<sup>1</sup>

Embsbuttel, the 28th August, 1792.

I wrote to you, *mon cher fils*, a week ago saying I had received two letters from Mr. Milnes. To-day I send you a copy, word for word, of one I had from him the day before yesterday.

“Genoa, the 7th August.

“We arrived here, my dear mother, on the evening of the 5th, and intend leaving for Turin on the 9th. Your poor daughter is still incapable of writing to you, but you shall have a letter from her from Geneva. I think I did not say in my last letter that my chief reason for stopping at Genoa was that I knew a clever English doctor who lives here, and he was of great use to me in the first sad moments, which nature could hardly bear. Although I had done my utmost to control my own sorrow, so as to tell her as gently as possible of our misfortune, yet the condition into which the first suspicion threw her took away all the mastery I had acquired over myself,

<sup>1</sup> Jaqueline's mother, *née* De Tuyll, a sister of Madame de Varel and of Mrs. John Albert Bentinck.

and we both of us needed a third person to help us over that trying time. We hope, Madame, to find letters from you at Genoa. They will be a real consolation to your daughter."

Now, *mon cher fils*, you know all I can tell you of the poor Milneses. I feel very sorry for them. That good and kind Milnes has not your strength of character. He did not, when young, brave the dangers that you did. He has not exercised his physique as you have done since your childhood. His bodily structure itself is less strong than yours, and his heart is nearly as tender! I can picture him from here in his terrible anxiety for the wife whom he adores, and my breath is taken away from the intense pity I feel for him! But be very careful with them both; they must not have any part to play in your secret. They would betray it in spite of themselves, for it would be stronger than they, and those dear children should not appear on the scene till all mystery is at an end! Milnes loved his mother-in-law as a son. With him it was carried to the verge of enthusiasm, so that in addition to the blow he had to give to his wife, he was overwhelmed with his own sorrow. Alas that worthy and honest man does not find in his own family the qualities and virtues that you have in yours! No Mrs. Puget, so generous and good, who surrounds our dear Henriette with maternal affection and care! Far from that! His worst, perhaps his only, enemies (for who could be one who knew his noble character?) are his own relations, and that is what poisons the life of a good man!



I shall not feel really easy in my mind till *mon cher* Hawkings has on his knee a little son (or daughter if so it must be) who will gesticulate more pleasantly for him than Monsieur Schröder, or even Garrick himself!

What do you think of the strange desertion of Monsieur de La Fayette and of his *État Major*?

I am not writing to-day to my dear Sophie, as three letters to The Hague alone are more than I can manage. I have now to write to Guillaume.

La Fayette, having made every effort to save the Royal Family of France, had to fly from the country. He took refuge in neutral territory at Liège, where he was taken by the Austrians and kept as a State prisoner for five years.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Embsbuttél, the 31st August, 1792.

*Bonne et chère petit chatte,*

**N**O one ever had a more delightful mode of expression than your little mewings! I shall not fail to conform literally to your wishes, and will put them at once into execution. To-morrow a vessel, the "Sonica," leaves here for London. She will carry a bottle of *Chasse Lunette* water for your mother, addressed to Guillaume, to whom I will say that it comes from you, and I will explain its contents, for I have not myself the actual receipt. One can feel quite safe in using it. My grandmother,<sup>1</sup> from whom we have it, obtained it herself from Louis XIV, she used it for forty years, my mother for fifty, and I nearly as long, every day, with the same success. I think that such an experience is worth all the opinions of experts! But in spite of this, I am afraid the water will be of no use in a case like hers, for it is intended to *preserve* the sight enfeebled by work or age or from having cried a great deal, and does not pretend to cure a malady of the eyes, such as that which now grieves us and which no one but a good doctor, assisted by a clever oculist,

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Amelie, Countess of Aldenburg, *née* Princess de la Trémiole.

on the spot, can cure. I sent a bottle a week ago to your cousin Mitje; she must have received it by now, and I hope that if she uses it night and morning for several months her sight will be strengthened; hers is the sort of case for which it is intended.

Your heart is too tender, *ma chère fille*, not to be affected by the frightful catastrophes in France! They are revolting to humanity, and the moment is a very terrible one, for it seems to me that I can see the scaffold ready and the steel of the executioners lifted above the head of that unhappy couple, and I am in utter despair, the blood of that divine Marie Thérèse being too precious for me to see it treated with such indignity without being outraged! I must say that the conduct of the Jacobins is incomprehensible to me, and that I cannot understand their motives. If an army of two hundred thousand men, the best troops in the world, was not already near or perhaps even actually on French territory; if they could, with the slightest hope of success, expect by their number to hold in check the great European Powers whom they have driven to desperation, I should say, "Well! The fat is in the fire! They will risk all to gain all!" But what can they hope for in the long run against such enemies, their armies without experienced officers, without discipline, without harmony amongst themselves, soldiers who are accustomed to order about, to dismiss, their own chiefs, without any arms except writing-paper, without means for keeping the huge unruly crowd of *canaille*, with which they have inundated Paris,



supplied with the necessities of existence! Can a more frightful spectacle be imagined than that of this starving town, awaiting the coming of an army to punish its wickedness! Why have they brought things to this point? Why especially (these monsters who are in power, barbarous as they are, have nevertheless intelligence and some judgment), why render to the Bourbons, whom they wish to destroy, and to the Powers who are coming to defend them, the eminent service of drawing out of their feet the one thorn which wounded them and embarrassed them, that famous Constitution, their work, their banner<sup>1</sup> and their Palladium, which would have put the conciliatory Powers into the greatest difficulty by opposing to them this almost unanimously expressed wish of a great people when the question arose of forming another sort of government? Instead of this, having themselves renounced it, and perjured themselves in so doing, they have smoothed the road and made it easy for the kings and their defenders to re-establish at least a part of the old order of things, at which no one has the right to grumble nor to rebuild an edifice which their own hands have pulled down! I have found such inconsequence in all this that I lose myself! I should like to hear what your husband and Guillaume have to say on the matter.

By the bye, *ma chère enfant*, some of our newspapers say that you are indignant and impatient in England

<sup>1</sup> The word is *oriflamme*, which was the ancient banner of the Kings of France. Originally it was the banner of the Abbey of St. Denis, red, with golden flames. It was not used after the Battle of Agincourt (1415).

on account of the French abominations, that they do not love those wild beasts and do not approve of their copying the sad farce of Charles I. That for these reasons your government intends to make common cause with our princes, to put an end to the Jacobin excesses. If that proves to be true, I will kiss Pitt on both cheeks, and also the hand of your Royal George, at the risk of taking the king's evil.

Our minister (who at present is Monsieur le Hog) was dining the other day with a merchant (an elegant Marquis of this place) and a large number of Hamburg democrats, and one Frenchman. The fastidious host (either in agreement with him, or by some other refinement) armed himself with a glass, and said to the Jacobin minister, "If you were not there I should be much tempted to give a toast." "Which?" "That of the new French Republic!" "Do not hesitate a moment; I belong to it also! Let us drink to the Republic!" Every one drank, and Monsieur le Hog also. The Frenchman got up, rolled his napkin, and said to the Marquis (as he calls himself), "I cannot drink that toast, which is contrary to the oath of every honest Frenchman," and he left the room, no one replying except by lowering his eyes. This is one of our little anecdotes. No one knows what will happen. Every one talks but no one acts. This Le Hog is an intriguer of the first order, who is active in embroiling and denying that he has done so, the whole with an air of *bonhomie*.

What are you doing with your Mr. Maulde at The Hague, who they tell us is like our Monsieur

Le Hog? Do you still recognize him as Minister, though he only represents madmen? If he is as clever as ours, he will twist you round his fingers!

I am still very anxious about my good old Prince Kaunitz, although people tell me he is well and again in the Emperor's favour. I have reasons for being uneasy about him; nevertheless, I fear for the Emperor, for the King of Prussia and for the Duke of Brunswick on account of the Proclamation. In fact, I am afraid of everything, and that is not a pleasant state of mind, nor does it tend to make me gay.

I have been advised to try some "chocolat de santé" of an English make, invented by one of your famous medical men, Dr. Theophile Lobb, a celebrated member of your College of Science, etc. etc., in London, they tell me. I don't know him from Adam nor from Eve, but faith is everything; it will restore and rejuvenate me! It will deliver me from old age and from gout; it will make my stomach and my limbs strong again; I shall become as fresh, as lithe, as you. Everything is possible, they say, in this century; and if that is true, a clever Englishman should bring about the double miracle more easily than any one else. Prepare yourself, therefore, when you sit quietly on the banks of the Tiber, or at the foot of Vesuvius, to see Madame your grandmother, arriving by post night and day, the Philosopher yawning from fatigue, and unable to keep up with the pace at which she makes him travel, smiling, alert, turning the head of St. Peter and flirting with the Sacred College—— and *Vive* Dr. Lobb!



Embrace my dear Hawkings to suffocation and distribute judiciously my greetings to all around you.

*Adieu, petite Minette.*

The 4th September, 1792.

The post has arrived, *ma chère petite chatte*, but it is late. I have come to town to see the wife of one of my friends, who is ill, and to whom I can render certain little civilities. I must thank you very tenderly for the charming attention you have shown me. You know that though they baptized me with half the alphabet they only gave me two names that are of any use, of which one only can be changed into the masculine, and that is Charlotte and it may be abbreviated to Caca. The other, which is also yours, is Sophie, and would not this do for a girl, or if it is *un petit chat* does "Charles" please you? Only allow me to say that as your aunt is giving you her maternal care on this occasion it seems to me that her name should follow yours, and that of Hawkings first of all. This little mark of gratitude is what you would wish, and your husband also, so I venture to mention it, though sure that there was no need for me to do so.

I write in haste. I have no time to write to Hawkings to-day. It is from pure vanity that he will not let you admire his superb French. I am in ecstasies with it. By the next post he will have some of my idle talk, to serve as foils to his elegant phrases.

*Adieu, petite mère.* In eighteen days from now we will have a talk, no matter what the handsome papa says. Good things must be waited for.

Embsbattel, the 4th September, 1792.

I write early to you to-day, *mon cher fils*, and I shall myself take my letter to town, where I am going to dine. I am in terrible anxiety about the Queen of France, who most assuredly those monsters will take to the scaffold, before the Duke of Brunswick has time to arrive and rescue her. I am so uneasy that as the time gets nearer I can hardly lose sight for a moment, night or day, of the sad picture.

I cannot quite understand what you think of La Fayette, whether you esteem him or the contrary? The line he has adopted does not seem to me very brilliant. Perhaps he could not act otherwise, as up to now all he has done is to appear to know how to die. If I was Washington I should not be very proud of my pupil!

As for me, who loved and esteemed him with my whole heart, when, on his *début*, I thought I saw in him nerve and strength of spirit, I groaned to myself when ambition and jealousy rendered him ungrateful and rebellious, and since then I have only afflicted myself when I thought of him, because I could no longer respect him. No continuity in his principles, no trace of genius, and constant faults of delicacy, the heart of a miserable little intriguer instead of that of a great man, whom I expect to have to paint in black on my tablets. I can say with Voltaire :—

“Que je le plains ! Son sort a trop de cruauté !  
Mais je le plains surtout de l’avoir mérité !”

I must say that I would prefer that agreeable

*parvenu*<sup>1</sup> and partisan to be Maréchal of France! His imprudent and even brutal probity please me. He was not French, he had enjoyed a good pension for thirty years from this same King, in whose name he was recalled. He returned, and went straight to the point. He said exactly what he thought to the King, and, what is more, to those cannibals in authority! And he let himself be banished for daring to speak the truth and declare that he did not care to see an entire kingdom perjuring itself for fear of a pack of scoundrels!

If he does not end by going back on all this, if fear or interest do not degrade him, if he risks everything, even his head, to avoid committing any baseness, I will confer upon him that esteem which La Fayette, to my great regret, has forced me to take away from him!

Do you agree with me in all that, *mon cher fils*? Our good Tierheim can tell you much more about it, for they have taken this singular prisoner to Nivelles, and I have asked her for details which I shall not fail to communicate to you, if she gives them to me.

If you want something to be really angry about, I will give you an excellent opportunity. It would

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Necker, born at Geneva, 1732. A banker of Paris and French Minister of Finance. He had a great reputation for skill and uprightness. He was banished after failing to put right the finances of the country, but public opinion obliged the King to recall him, and Necker did all in his power, though without success, to bring order into the tangled web of finance. He died in 1804. His wife was famed for her good deeds and brilliant intellect. Madame de Staël was their daughter.



even be worthy of you to enrage yourself against that cowardly King of Poland, whom infamy has set on the throne, who is sustained on it by shame, and who has only been lifted so high the better to display his baseness!<sup>1</sup>

Dare I admit it to you? He seems to me a hundred times more contemptible than that unhappy Louis XVI! I think that is a statement I should have no difficulty in proving. But we have other things to occupy our minds and to await with open arms.

I do not think I shall write to my *bien aimée petite chatte* to-day. If the post brings anything needing a reply, I will add it to this. Meanwhile I embrace you.

Embsbuttel, the 11th September, 1792.

*Jolie petite chatte,*

I have to rush into town and dine there every post day on account of my letters and because of the anguish we are in about the French and I especially for the poor Queen. The post came yesterday and Tauvenay and the little Countess dined with us in town. The gazettes have told us nothing new, merely confirming the taking of Longwy and, *they believe*, of Thionville. We returned before the closing of the gates, that is to say by seven. As I got out of my carriage I found a note announcing the most terrible new massacres which must have taken place on the 2nd or 3rd of September, and they

<sup>1</sup> Augustus Poniatowski, under the name of Stanislaus II. The second partition of Poland took place in 1793.

were described with so much detail that it seems impossible to doubt them. Even the Philosopher (St. Thomas the Doubter) cannot help admitting their probable truth. I did not sleep at all during the night, it is now only six o'clock in the morning and I have sent the postilion on horseback to town to put at least an end to our suspense. The circumstances are so frightful, that one's hair rises on one's head!

During the past week I have had an occupation which has been partly pleasant and partly sad. A lady, ill of a decline, the result of the most cruel sorrows, has come here from Sweden, on her way to Italy, her doctors considering that only mild and wholesome air, and absence from business and from those who are too much affected by her malady, can cure her.

As her father was a great friend of mine, and her husband also, her people wrote to me about her. She is amiable, and worthy of compassion. She is as pale as death and as thin as our little French consul here. She must have been very pretty, but is now only a plaintive shadow of herself. The poor woman has taken a great liking to me, without knowing why, and when she heard that you were later on going to Italy, she begged me to try and obtain an opportunity for her to meet you, if you were anywhere near. God knows if she will arrive alive, but if she does I pray you to let her have this satisfaction. You will not regret it, for she is cultivated and her conversation is agreeable. I think she is good-hearted and appears born to be happy, the loved daughter of Count

Fersen, one of the most distinguished and respected men of his country. She married a man who is much esteemed but from whom she has had to be absent for a large portion of her life, as her old father, overcome by his sorrows, could not have borne their weight without the support of his dear daughter, whose position as Lady-in-Waiting at the Palace attached to those duties which the interests of her son and of her children after the revolution made it desirable for her to consider. She has four children, well brought up, at least the two that I have seen. Her eldest brother is an officer of France, that handsome Count Fersen who tried to save the King at Varennes, and risked execution had they managed to catch him after the failure of the attempt.

Now you know all about this lady should you meet her in Italy, *chère petite chatte*. Keep this letter to refresh your memory. I have promised to give you a letter for her. I will let you know if she arrives alive at Pisa.

Field-Marshal Count Frederick Axel von Fersen was said to have been descended from a Scotch family (Macpherson). He was the most determined political antagonist of Gustavus III, and the eloquent leader of "les chapeaux," representing the privileges of the nobility, as opposed to the King's determination to curtail their power. He was an extremely handsome man, and three of his daughters were noted beauties. His son, Count Axel von Fersen, lived



for a long time at the Court of France, and showed the greatest devotion to Marie Antoinette. "Soon after the Queen's execution he lost in quick succession his dearest friends: his father, to whom he was deeply attached, his mother, sister, and his best friend, Baron Taube." He was killed in the streets of Stockholm by the mob on the, to him, fatal date of June 20th, 1810—just nineteen years after the flight to Varennes. The *Diary and Correspondence of Count Axel Fersen* has been translated by Katherine Prescott Wormeley, and discloses the untiring efforts made by the little party at Brussels, including the Archduchess Christine, Count Fersen, Count Mercy and Crawford, to rescue the Royal Family of France. It will be remembered that Count Axel Fersen acted as coachman during the first part of the flight to Varennes.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Hamburg, the 11th September, 1792.

**H**OW does one manage when one is seventy-seven years old not to die of joy when a friend (whom one loves as one who would an only son) has attained his utmost and purest happiness after so much anxiety and sorrow, through an event that the ordinary husband treats with the utmost indifference ?

Oh, *mon cher* Hawkings, with what sincere veneration do I regard you, so different from, so superior to most of your sex, and I consider my *petite chatte* a thousand times more happy than if she shared the crown of half a dozen Kings and Emperors who would hold out to her a sceptre of gold with a heart of iron !

God bless father, mother and child. If He keeps them always happy I shall console myself for never having been so in my life ! I become so by them and that suffices.

We will speak another time of the arrival of Mademoiselle your daughter.

The Philosopher is as gay as a bird. He gravely begged me in the first harangue I believe he was ever capable of, to explain to you what he feels so strongly that he has no time to express it ! The whole household is overjoyed, and I shall make every one drink too much, beginning with Caca and Fifi, to the health

of the *petite, petite chatte!* I have sent to announce the *chef-d'œuvre* to the Countess, to the Binders, to the Kurtzrocks, to Tauvenay, to Fraser and to Paschen. All rejoice with us and send a thousand compliments, respects and friendly greetings to my pretty descendant!

Were it not for that abominable massacre in Paris, I think my head would have turned with delight.

Use a little philosophy in your sweet and natural joy. Think of taking the air and getting some exercise after all that has passed. Tell your wife not to be too energetic at first so that she can be more so with greater certainty later on.

*Adieu.*

Embsbuttel, the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1792.

Well, *mon beau papa*, is Mademoiselle Minette your daughter very charming? Is she very witty? Is she as graceful as she is pretty? And has she a noble appetite? If you please, give me a faithful account of all that. I need some enlivening details from you all, to relieve my heart a little in the midst of the atrocious news from France. I await the *coup-de-grâce* to-day in town, *mon cher fils*. We are threatened with the confirmation of the sad rumour of the murder of all the royal family, and I hear they have cut off the head of my relation the Duchess de la Trémoille.<sup>1</sup> All

<sup>1</sup> Louise de Chatillon, Princess de Tarente, Duchess de la Trémoille, was arrested on August 11th because she was the great friend of the Princesse de Lamballe. She was imprisoned for ten days in the Abbaye and then liberated, when she left for England.



that darkens my soul and prevents me from feeling your joy as keenly as I should have done at a time not marked by all these horrors. But when I tell myself that my *chère petite chatte* has vaulted lightly over this rough obstacle, that a friend whom I esteem as heartily as I love him, after months of anguish, breathes freely again, and thanks God, I forget for a moment the horror which dominates me and I am full of happiness and joy. The Milneses will soon be in England and then Henriette can come and join you.

Sophie ought to take care of herself *more than is usual* in view of all the circumstances, remain longer in bed and in her room so as to strengthen and restore all that has been deranged. The results may not appear now, but will certainly manifest themselves later on.

Here is my sermon. In God's name do not allow a *régime à la Milnes!* None of those eternal appetisers to stimulate the palate, and the instant after four or five eggs to counteract them! Then all the treatment of that beautiful little Henry, who only began to get strong when they let him alone! Ask your good aunt, since you believe in her, if I am not right! Oh how tiresome an old woman is when she begins to preach! Very good! But when one has a *filz cheri* one's duty is to weary him, in order to save him from worse things. That proves more real affection than to flatter him, and it is better to yawn than to weep!

*Adieu.* Embrace the little mother.

Embsbittel, the 18th September, 1792.

You have made my hair stand on end, *mon cher fils*, with your terrifying account. Much science is used at such times nowadays. The question is, are we any better off with it? It is a question I shall not try to answer, though there is a great deal to be said. Science has once and for all taken the ascendant, and my feeble voice would count for little in the balance of opinion. The best of all is that I thank God on my knees with you that the *chère petite chatte* and the *chatillon* are safe and sound.

Those *coups de force* of getting up for an hour in the afternoon, far from reassuring me, diminish my tranquillity. I think that in Physic there should be definite rules, just as in Mathematics, and at my age one leans always towards what is prudent. It does no harm, at least, an advantage it does not share with temerity. Had you been born a German, you would have felt as I do; were I English I should perhaps have followed the stream and held your ideas. Let us each have the honesty, without being annoyed with each other, to admit "every one in looking at red, blue, green, distinguishes it, *but sees it differently*, the proof of which is their preferences, whereas if all saw alike one only of the colours would be preferred by all!" You will say, our old grandmother is frightfully argumentative to-day! You are right! Enough!

But in God's name, do not start too soon on your journey! If nature is not thoroughly restored you

risk too much, and six weeks is the least you should allow. I must say I cannot agree at all with your idea of carrying about an infant in a cradle, which is shaken up for months during your journey, while all our best doctors call "Murder!" if you even rock a baby gently! I fall from one heresy into another, *mon cher* Hawkings, but I love you too much not to have my heart on my lips for you.

I am dreadfully sad and uneasy about the poor Queen of France! Are you not revolted by all these horrors? I am overwhelmed! You like reading. Well, obtain *Sur les Pouvoir Executif*, by Monsieur Necker. This man, who through his fatal ambition, his boundless vanity, has lost all, writes nevertheless against the patricians, who themselves devour him, but writes extremely well and swears by England. It will certainly interest you.

Madame de Varel has written me a very touching letter which has much saddened me. I have replied with the same sincerity.

*Adieu, mon cher fils.*

On March 25th, 1793, Dumouriez left the service of the French Republic and allied himself with Austria. He went to England in June of that year but was expelled. He then settled near Hamburg till recalled to London in October, 1803, when he began his scheme for the defence of England. He died March 14th, 1823, and is buried in Henley church.





MARIE CATHERINE, COUNTESS BENTINCK OF VAREL  
*née* de Tuyll, widow of Charlotte Sophie's elder son

From a picture in the possession of Count Bentinck



Embsbuttcl, the 25th September, 1792.

I have such a violent cold, *mon cher ami*, that I really am not fit to talk to you. I have not even the strength to rejoice from head to foot at the excellent news of the brilliant victory of the Duke of Brunswick over that braggart Dumouriez. My poor Queen of France is still alive, and I venture to hope, in this age of miracles, that one may take place in her favour. They say that the King of England is interesting himself in the fate of that unhappy family and that he has threatened the murderers.

If that turns out to be true I will forgive him his mercantile, insidious, and base policy, and the horrors he has permitted to dishonour the century and humanity.

I write with difficulty, and before the arrival of the post from Holland, by which we await the confirmation of this great news. It will not come till the gates are closed, and I cannot reply till Friday.

I embrace feebly but tenderly *la petite chatte* and the *chatillon*. The handsome papa is too much my friend for me to ask him to submit to an embrace from an old woman of seventy-seven.

*Adieu, mon cher fils.*

Embsbuttcl, the 5th October, 1792.

The Doctor and I often talk of the pleasure we shall have in seeing all the family again, especially *ce cher* Hawkings, dancing his little daughter on his knee! Even the Philosopher's stoicism is extinguished by such spectacles! Alas, shall I live to enjoy it?



I doubt it, *ma chère* Sophie, but if you complete your journey happily, and I know that you are always content, you, and my dear Hawkings and my *bien-aimé* Guillaume and all that delicious and honest English family whom God seems to have created to compensate me for half a century of misfortunes, if all of these are happy I shall die satisfied, for when one has lived for seventy-seven years one has lived enough! That little Henriette commences to attract my heart strongly to her. I try not to give way to it, but I cannot help myself! The irresistible Guillaume got it into his head to obtain for her the conquest of this old ruined fort!

*Apropos* of fortresses, the French hold Comines, but on the other hand the armies are in flight on the approach of the Duke of Brunswick. May he save the royal family, and punish some of those monsters who seem to have come from the south of Africa to metamorphose the French into cannibals!

Adieu, *ma chère et aimable petite chatte*. The Philosopher kisses your paw.

A long letter, dated October 5th, to Captain H. Whitshed, follows. The last paragraph only is of interest.

Guess if you can, with Milnes, who is probably coming to dinner with me next Sunday, and make Guillaume guess too! It is Mr. Holland,<sup>1</sup> nephew of Mr. Fox! What do you think of that?

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Holland.

Embsbuttcl, the 12th October, 1792.

*Mon aimable petite chatte.* My fingers are frozen to the roots and my old blood flows more slowly than that of the Dutchmen, your good friends. I am alarmed by these premature storms for Henriette, whom that *cher méchant grand garçon* makes me love in spite of myself, without having ever seen her! I shall not breathe freely till all these good people are with you. I want Guillaume to gaze very attentively at Mademoiselle Chattillon and then tell me if she is as beautiful as my little Henry. If he thinks so, he has only to marry them at once!

For the last three or four days we have been very unhappy, *ma chère Sophie*, about that unfortunate adventure of Spier. Tell me, you or Hawkings, what they say where you are? To whom attribute such negligence and ignorance of the first rules of war? Was it in the school of the Great Frederick and of brave Laudon that our chiefs learnt the rules of prudence which have taught them to guard so badly their first object, the magazine? Here is an impertinent question for an old woman! But recollect that I only venture to whisper it into your ear.

The Philosopher has his foot on a chair and says it is—I don't know what! I think quite to myself that it is gout, which makes people live a century with a little swearing to help them! Don't tell him I said so.

When I am in town I will close this letter, after I hear if it is true that the Duke of Brunswick has

surrounded the French and captured that boaster, Dumouriez! That would be too good! But I hardly dare to expect it!

Tell my dear Hawkings that one of our most important merchants here, a raging Democrat, invited *for interest* to a large dinner party one of the principal murderers of the King of Sweden, Count de Ribbing<sup>1</sup> (who walks about here, shows himself at the theatre and carries his head high). Everybody avoids him like the plague. Well, this merchant had got hold of some people of the highest class, who did not know him (he changed his name after his banishment), amongst others your Minister, Mr. Fraser, who fortunately had his suspicions and asked if he was to be a guest? The other replied, "Perhaps!" "Very well," said Mr. Fraser, "in this uncertainty I refuse, and shall remain at home!" The answer did him honour. The merchants at the Exchange murmured, they say, but to-day everything is permitted to people with money and impudence!

I beg the *jolie maman* to try and love me a little when she has leisure.

<sup>1</sup> "Count Adolf Ludwig Ribbing, an ex-officer of the Guards, of resolute temper, handsome person, and fairly good parts, may be said to have imbibed a hatred of the King with his mother's milk, for he had been taught from his earliest infancy to regard Gustavus as a monster of iniquity. He had also been disappointed in his hopes of preferment, and when the beautiful and wealthy Miss de Geer rejected his suit in favour of Baron Essex, Ribbing instantly jumped at the false conclusion that it was at the instigation of the King, and never rested till he had revenged himself."—*Gustavus III and his Contemporaries*, by R. Nisbet Bain.





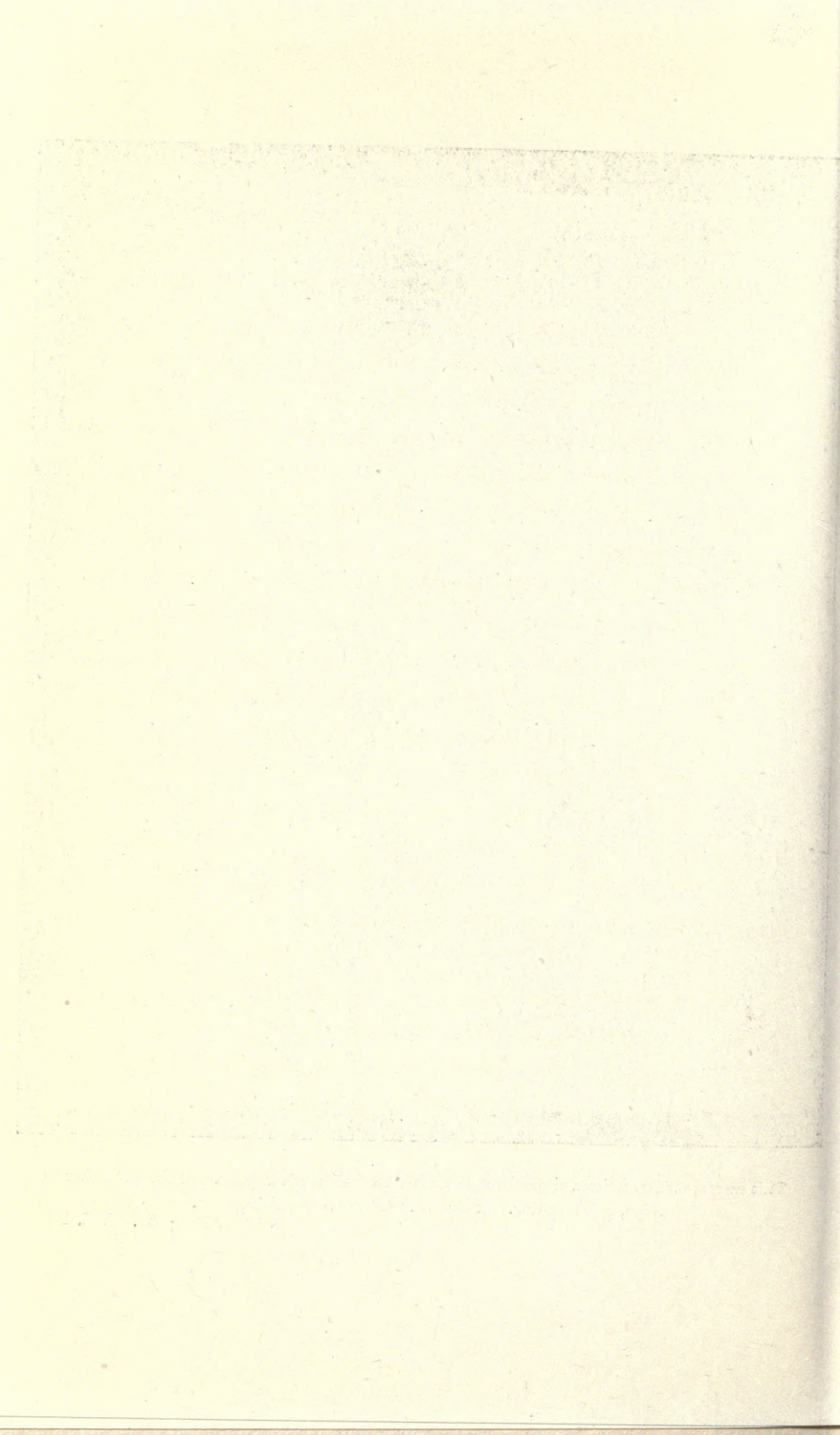
Mes sentimens avantageux pour la maison de  
Prusse, sentimens dont j'ai donne des preuves  
efficaces, me permettent d'en esperer autant de  
sa part. Je m'y attends d'autant plus, que j'ai tou-  
jours été convaincue de son affection reciproque.  
La guerre qui se prepare entre l'Empereur des Ro-  
mains et les Hollandois excite l'attention immediate  
du cabinet de Berlin, dont ces derniers tâchent,  
par toutes sortes d'intrigues, de surprendre l'ac-  
cession. Notre sagesse reconnaît que les potenti-  
ons de l'Empereur sont aussi justes que modérées.  
La nature elle-même a accordé aux Pays Bas  
et Autrichiens l'usage et l'utilité du fleuve en litige.  
Il n'y a que l'Autriche qui puisse, en vertu du droit  
naturel et de celui des gens, faire usage d'un  
droit exclusif sur la riviere en question. Aussi  
l'equité et le desintéressement de Joseph II peu-  
vent seuls faire part à d'autres peuples de ce  
droit, appartenant exclusivement à ses états.  
Les sentimens de l'Autriche méritent l'estime  
et l'attention de toutes les cours de l'Europe: tan-  
dis que l'avidité des Hollandois, et le jugement

This memorandum, written throughout by Catherine the Great's own hand at the end of her  
reign, is interesting. It was with Charlotte Sophie's papers.

qu'ils se sont permis à l'occasion du traité de Munster, sur la maison d'Autriche, sont connus et blâmables à tous égards. Rien ne peut être allégué avec fondement en faveur de la Hollande: ainsi elle ne mérite le secours d'aucune puissance étrangère: il faut soumettre à la modération de l'Empereur seul les suites que ces Républicains se sont attirées par leur obstination. Je suis fermement résolue d'appuyer ses prétentions de toutes mes forces de terre et de mer, avec autant d'efficacité que s'il s'agissait du bien de mon empire. J'espère que cette déclaration de mes sentimens aura le succès que mérite notre amitié réciproque, qui n'a jamais été interrompue.

Catherine.





The 16th October, 1792.

Here, *mon cher fils*, is a sort of circular letter for you, for your aunt, for the *petite chatte*, for all whom it concerns. I am in the very middle of the horrors of house removing, with half my people ill with bad colds. Mack, Sophie, the Professor, Marie, the daughter of my *garderobière* Richay, and Louis! You can fancy how uncomfortable one is at 77 years of age when I tell you that yesterday, for example, I came into town *alone*, without either a maid or a lackey, with Caca and Nitien. I am distressed beyond measure by public affairs. I suffer from the bad humour of the elements, for it is bitterly cold, with a wind that takes my breath away. I see myself at the point of entering a circle where the Jacobins try to speak loudly, and the very sight of them takes away my appetite. I quit a mode of life which is tranquil and free, which suits my few remaining faculties and is to my taste. I hate towns, and ours has all the defects of one without any of their advantages. My heart is German, as yours and that of Guillaume are Irish and English. Judge, therefore, the grief I must be in. If you wish to catechize me on my convictions and my faith, I shall reply, quite frankly :—

I believe in the all-powerful mother, the great Catherine, arbitrator of all the cabinets, and regulating the heavens and the earth.

I believe in the inconsequence, the absurdity, the blindness of all the nations, in the false principles

of the great, the medium, and the small. In the wrongs of the Sovereigns, in the greater wrongs of the people, in the abuse of every principle, even the best, in envy, in the jealousy which divides the allies, whose unity alone could have re-established order. I picture Louis XVI unhappily saved by an arrangement worse than death, having shamefully served as a pretext to ambitious views, badly supported, and to an insidious policy which the builders themselves (except Catherine) found extremely bad.

I believe, finally, in the lack of good faith in ministers, in the universal absence of good principles, in the total want of harmony in courts and in eternal calamity through too blinding a light on one side and too little on the other. Amen.

After confessing myself to my dear Hawkings, I am off to town, and I embrace through him all the family, after which I return to my packing.

Poor Count Schulemburg is still between life and death.

The 30th October, 1792.

What does my dear Hawkings say to all that is happening in Germany, in France, in Savoy, in England, in Ireland? What does he think of a republic *in its cradle* which dictates as this does to other nations? What tone will it take when it is full grown? Does he feel confident of its moderation? Of its equity? Of its virtues? Will they be born in the breast of anarchy, disorder, perjury, the absence of all good faith, of all duty, of all



obedience, of even the laws of humanity? Will he tell me what he thinks of it all, that I may correct my own judgment by means of his? Meanwhile I am so afflicted by all that is taking place that I have lost what little sleep and appetite I had. Many of my relations and friends have suffered from this invasion, to say nothing of the disgrace such want of skill has brought on my fellow-citizens. One cannot conceal the appearance of *perfidy*, which has tried to hide itself beneath a profession of ignorance. It is hard to see the dregs of the French nation humiliating to such a point a country till now considered noble, brave and generous, and especially renowned in the art of war and for its superior tactics.

But all that is buried beneath the disgrace of this campaign! A Dumouriez, vile spy of the kings whom to-day he anathematizes, whom I have seen imprisoned and carried away from here amidst the execrations of the crowd.<sup>1</sup> Who himself said to me, speaking of Louis XV and impatient because he would not exert his power, "That man never knew how to be a king!" Such a man is to-day the happy rival of the hero of Germany, the disciple of the great Frederick, the Duke of Brunswick! That perjured hand will gather many laurels, and

<sup>1</sup> Dumouriez was imprisoned in 1770. He had been employed on a secret mission to Poland, and was on the point of starting for one in Germany. The Paris Secret Service Police were tired of his everlasting intrigues, and put him in the Bastille, where he remained six months. He was then sent to the Château of Caen, where he had an excellent time. He was liberated in 1774.

blind humanity will judge only by the results! Without looking to the causes it pronounces on the effects!

You are English, *mon cher fils*, and consequently born in regions where logic preponderates; bring then the torch of common sense into the thick mists of party spirit, of frivolity, of irresponsibility! Be of no country, but of all, a citizen of the world. Explain to me what I see and cannot understand, the blindness of the people, the imbecile insensibility of courts, the indifference of individuals who are menaced by the same catastrophes and await them, laughing with all their hearts, while the wise shudder! They who shuddered when formerly there seemed something to laugh at!

I understand as little about the plans of Henriette and Guillaume as about those of the Sovereigns! When do they intend to embark? Will they give Dumouriez time to close the port of Ostend to them as well as that of Calais? I am afraid that they will find that poor Thérèse Tierheim has emigrated! If the Archduchess moves, if she leaves Brussels, I have entreated Thérèse to go also! The French make war on convents of noble foundation, and since they have treated the Brabançons so shamefully, the Austrians will certainly be subjected to still greater atrocities. I am very anxious about her. Please give her good advice, and urge her not to be too brave.

Embrace *la petite chatte* and also *la toute petite*.

## CHAPTER XXV

Hamburg, the 1st November, 1792.

**B**OTH my arms dropped to my sides, *ma chère petite chatte*, on reading your letter. What an extraordinary idea of yours to go and visit, with a baby too that obliges you to travel slowly, almost the very theatre of war! At the moment when the Archduchess and her court prepare to leave Brussels, you want to go there, when perhaps the very same week you will have to fly for your lives and when the best horses will be refused to foreigners! I expect, too, that the adroit Monsieur Dumouriez will pay some attention to you, and the Brabançons as well, come out when one will from a mousehole where one had no business to be. I hope of course that this conquest may not take place, and that the valorous Gascon will not succeed in his new project. It is certain, however, that there will be much trouble and turmoil in that town and that everything will be frightfully expensive, and a stay there far from agreeable. In God's name, *mes chers enfants*, think twice before you expose yourselves to such dangers or at least to certain unpleasantness. You are at least fairly safe for the present where you are, though I confess I do not think it will last even in Holland, if they



continue in this inexcusable way to allow France to dictate to Europe. But at least there are various exits from The Hague, while at Brussels you are isolated. If it is true, as it seems but too probable, that Prussia is making a shameful peace with France, certainly these cannibals, in order to secure that powerful ally, will not press forward at once into Holland, and the House of Orange will have a respite before the mine is sprung. At least wait a little and see what turn things will take, and if Custine and Dumouriez continue to make every one tremble. Monsieur de Rhoon should know more than others and will surely not let you leave without warning you of the risk you run.

*Adieu, ma chère enfant.*

The 2nd November, 1792.

I suspect that, in the bottom of your heart, the courage, the principles, the success of the French prejudice you a little in their favour, and you say to yourself, but *very softly*, "These people harmonize with my way of thinking and cause me no fear." Have I guessed rightly, *mon cher* Hawkings? Oh do not become like the people, the dupe of these political hypocrites! Do you really believe for a single instant that it is love of country, liberty, equality, the happiness of nations, which animates the Petions, the Manuels, the Dumouriez, the Custines?

You are too clear-sighted, *mon cher fils*, and the mask is too badly put on to hide from your eyes the frightful face it covers!

Alas ! your England, your Ireland, are perhaps as near the abyss as my poor Germany ! Wait a little, and you will shudder at this fatal resemblance ! You have no idea, Monsieur, how torn my heart is by all this ! The inexcusable, insane, and shameful conduct of our German courts grieves me too much ! It is not from a poor old woman at Hamburg, forgotten by every one, that you will take an opinion on the stupidities that are committed at Berlin and Vienna. But this poor old woman has an individual conviction (which, after all, is the only true thing). She interests herself (God knows why !) in this combination of States, speaking the same tongue as she does and which, on a large sheet of paper, they have painted the same colour as the place where she was born.

This is her history, and that of all the patriotism in the world ! These feelings are to be respected, for they may be of use ! Only one must not outrage them. But the nature of man has outraged everything !

The Philosopher is nearly well. All that is going on amazes him and his logic floats in the air, as somewhere in Genesis it is said that the Spirit floated on the waters while the earth was evolved from chaos. He awaits this development with a systematic tranquillity, which is just as curious as our impatience. He never likes to prophesy, because he prefers dealing with certainties. If in the heat of conversation he is caught prophesying he quickly recovers himself, and laughs at the prophets, the newsmongers, the

aristocrats, the democrats, and when we reach the fifth act and all is known, he alone has made no mistakes! It has not been given to your grandmother to be so wise. She cries, argues, worries herself, alters nothing that is wrong, but prevents herself from stifling under it all!

*Adieu, mon cher fils.* Reflect, I entreat you on my knees. All has gone so well up to now in your dear family! How would it be if you had to suddenly fly, if Mademoiselle Chattillon took it into her head, for example, to cut her teeth, and that in spite of everything you had to travel night and day? What a position, *mon cher* Hawkings! Poor Tierheim is perhaps on the point of asking for a refuge with you at The Hague! And you, meanwhile, are marching out to meet Monsieur Dumouriez at Brussels! I await your answer in fear and trembling. Do not be angry, for the heart is seldom mistaken even if the brain errs.

*Adieu.*

The following letter is addressed

A Madame  
Madame de Hawkins Wiethaedt  
née Comtesse de Bentinck  
Chez Monsieur le Comte de Bentinck  
Capitaine de Haut Bord  
in Privy Gardens  
White Hall                   à  
London

Fr. Amsterdam.



So they had returned to England, but went there after all by Brussels.

Hamburg, the 28th December, 1792.

I commence, *chère petite mère*, by rejoicing and thanking God for preserving you amidst so many dangers (all of your own seeking) and bringing you safely back into the bosom of your amiable family. Alas! I feel, I understand perfectly all that must be passing in your heart.<sup>1</sup> I have not the strength to say more about that which troubles the little repose that is left to me.

I am not in a condition to talk of politics. I tremble always for the daughter of my divine Marie Thérèse and for her unhappy husband. I cannot refrain from saying that if England, instead of her narrow little mercantile policy, had taken in time the tone that humanity, equity, prudence and honour required of her, things would never have reached their present horrible point, and torrents of blood, thousands of unhappy victims, and millions of pounds would have been saved! An end must however be put to it all, but the opportunity of doing so at the right moment has been most unskillfully lost. That is what I reproach Mr. Pitt for. As for Fox, never have I so despised, so abhorred him! I should like to see him banished, with that unworthy Egalité,<sup>2</sup> to an island in the South

<sup>1</sup> The near prospect of war, when her husband and brother would be called out on active service.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Egalité, Duke of Orleans, who voted for the King's death.

Seas. The King of Prussia should reconcile every just man with Sovereigns! He is showing himself the most generous, the bravest, the most estimable of true German patriots. I would with a good heart beat the Duke of Portland for sacrificing his own fortune and his country to the most contemptible of egoists. That is called *obstinacy*, not firmness.

I am afraid that my opinions will not suit every one. But is the axiom always true that union is strength and disunion is destruction?

I have, I admit, never understood why sensible people like the English are not revolted by that detestable party spirit, for which one blushes, and which elsewhere one would be ashamed to confess to. It is the enemy of reason, of equity, of moderation—the most precious virtues of the citizen. No guide is more turbulent, more false, more blind. The English will not be the first and wisest nation in Europe till they realize the vice of this fatal leaning of theirs, which causes them to quit the beautiful and simple road of justice and truth and to associate themselves with a cabal which detracts from and lowers the value of all their virtues!

Oh, what a great and noble *rôle* the Duke of Portland might have played to-day, if, preferring his country to everything else, and braving all prejudice and the false judgments of the few, he had united all parties and undertaken the measures England needs, and left this bawling egoist, eaten up with ambition and envy, to wallow in the mud of his invective, and obliged him to go away to another country to try to

find some self-respect. It would have been then that the Duke would have deserved a civil crown, but not in preferring a modern Catilina to his country and her true glory.

I already hear the mewings that my remarks awaken, and the outcry against the opinions of the terrible old grandmother, who has the impertinence to criticise the fine maxims for so long current in England which, according to them, her weak German brain is quite unable to understand! Very well! An armistice, if you please, till I bring my teeth and nails into action!

Luttichau presents his homage to you, and a thousand friendly greetings to Jean. He has been staying with me for the last fortnight, but I have been too ill to see him till yesterday. Tell me if any of you know a Scotchman called Lord Findlater? I think he is a worthy man, but very eccentric. I embrace *chatons*, *enfants*, Opposition, Government, but above all the Chevalier Banks; and if it is not displeasing to his profound learning, I take the liberty of loving him with all my heart in spite of my own complete ignorance!

*Adieu, petite chatte.*

16th January, 1793.

*Ma chère petite chatte*,—Let us turn for a moment to The Hague and to Hamburg. Our town was alarmed for a moment lest Custine should visit it when he was at Frankfort. It made us laugh, for their terror had no common sense. Frank-



fort, for that matter, behaved magnificently, and has been the glory of our German Free Towns. Meanwhile, that miserable Le Hoc<sup>1</sup> continues to give himself airs here, and finds some cowardly merchants who fraternize with him to the dishonour of their country. The Prussian Minister alone stands up for the honour of his nation. The others consider that their proper vocation is to eat and drink heartily, and this they do with indefatigable ardour. The air of Diplomacy is subject to epidemics, for your English Minister (apparently in imitation of the others) has made an intimate friend of Le Hoc, a minister no one recognizes, and that at the moment when every one avoids him like the plague, and you are going to come to blows with the French! I am very sorry on his account, as he is a good soul, always laughing, but he is making himself absurd and losing the respect which both he and his position should command, for this Le Hoc has a bad moral reputation as well, and lends himself to all sorts of infamous schemes. We have several French people here who have had to emigrate,<sup>2</sup> but they keep themselves to themselves. No nation has behaved so generously and nobly to these unfortunate people as yours.

<sup>1</sup> Envoy from the French Republic, Hamburg being a Free Town.

<sup>2</sup> Hamburg became from now onwards a favourite resort of French emigrants.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Hamburg, the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 1793.

*Ma pauvre chère petite chatte,*

**S**O war is absolutely declared between you and France! The frightful state of my country obliges me as a good patriot to desire it, but what feelings rise up against this duty! That dear Guillaume, that strange Hawkings whom one loves in spite of himself, your sorrows, those of your sisters, my own interests in Holland and the dangers the family there will run, all this rends my heart. I have been in my room for three months, and the poor Philosopher has been imprisoned for seven weeks, and this morning he is worse than ever. It is harder for him than for me, as he has not my gay humour, made to endure suffering.

I assure you, *ma chère petite chatte*, that our position all the winter has been cruel. Not a moment of joy. Nothing but anguish, horrors and sufferings. All that you are suffering is now added to these. In fact, *ma chère Sophie*, I swim in a sea of inexpressible misery. There are moments when I whisper to myself, without daring to lift my eyes, that I hope Hawkings will not get a ship. I say to myself, "He has proved himself so courageous already, his

reputation is made. His situation, nature, humanity, impose different duties from those he formerly discharged." This idea calms and tranquillizes me momentarily for you, but the illusion passes at the thought of the brave *chaton*, his arm uplifted to strike me down! I can hear him saying from here, "The words of an old woman! She should be ashamed to write such folly!" and you, in tears, replying, "You are right, the poor old thing is doting!"

I would gladly send you some little items of news from here, but the sea is so full already of French privateers that our letters might easily be seized before your ships have time to guard their passage. I should not like a paragraph of my poor rhetoric to furnish material for an article in our *Moniteur*.

Guillaume has not answered me about the Duchess de la Trémoille. Is this poor lady included in that severe order which banishes all emigrants from London and the seaports? What does our friend Ruffo say of the calamities of his country? And the chastisement they gave his people in the very middle of the capital? Ask him why the King,<sup>1</sup> his master, who has three or four millions of subjects, and nearly double the revenue of the King of Den-

<sup>1</sup> Kingdom of the two Sicilies. The King of Naples was Ferdinand IV, who had married a daughter of the Empress Marie Thérèse. His wife tried in vain to win him over from his hunting and amusements to play a king's part in Naples. It was owing to her exertions that Sir John Acton undertook to supervise the construction of a navy. I understand that, with Lord Acton's assistance, his Life is now being written.



mark, and that in a region where one lives for the half on account of the climate, has not, like this northern monarch, forty good ships of the line in a much better harbour. Why, having such enormous resources of corn (while the Danes have none) in that admirable Sicily, formerly the granary of Rome (without counting the fruits of its delightful climate), ask him why his King does not play the great rôle he should, remembering all this, and nature pointing the way at every step. He need only have the journeys of our young Bartels in Calabria and Sicily translated into Italian and read out to the King and Queen!

I have written you a long letter, *ma chère petite chatte*, with nothing in it. Embrace Hawkings, the little one, Henriette, and above all my *grand garçon*, and try to embrace yourself from me, and may God support you.

*Adieu.*

The 19th March, 1793.

Here, *ma chère petite chatte*, is a very sad letter from our poor friend Tierheim, which I received two days ago. You will see how overwhelmed she is. The mother of poor Thérèse was a sister of my intimate friend, Princess Trautson. I knew her well. All the business of the family, all the confidences, all the troubles, were laid on her! It was just as in your home! I admit that your worthy mother surpassed her, but one can have a very superior intellect without having one to equal hers. It is a cruel and irreparable loss for our old friend. The dear one

who has gone leaves a husband who is in despair, who in losing her loses all, and who, at 80 years of age, is deprived of a wife who was the support of his family, a woman full of good sense and courage, who made any and every sacrifice for the good and advantage of her children. There remains to him, in addition to his daughter, a son who is far away, and I do not know if that large and beautiful property in Lower Austria where I have spent many pleasant days, still belongs to them. Never, perhaps, has any family had so many misfortunes! This brother, who married the niece of the Prince de Liège, will be obliged, I should think, to go to Lower Austria, no longer having his mother to look after his affairs. As for our dear Thérèse, I hope she may be able later on to re-enter her convent of Nivelles, perhaps this spring even. Her position there is her only fortune, for I doubt if there will be much for her from her paternal possessions, and her mother had nothing after the reverses of fortune of her father, Baron de Haager, who, having been very wealthy, was reduced to extremely straitened means through a piece of magnanimity on his part which found more admirers than imitators.

I flatter myself, *ma chère Sophie*, since the last good news, that we need no longer be uneasy about your husband and your brother. If in so bad a government as that of France to-day, fear and terror once take possession of the troops and of the people (who call themselves *Sovereign*), I think that no human art can prevent a complete overturn. As there would

then be neither principles, nor plans, nor harmonious measures, nor chief, nor obedience, nor, in consequence, any scheme for provisioning Paris (for your navy would prevent any food being landed under a neutral flag), it seems to me that it will not need three months to end the matter and work this counter-revolution by famine, against which all their eloquence and democratic lies will inspire no confidence, nor stop for a moment the fury of the people, when they realize to what a depth of misery their leaders have brought them !

We are most impatient for your news. A contrary wind has kept back two posts from you. I am overjoyed that it was my good Austrians who saved the family of the Stadholder of whom you think so much. May this real service soften you a little towards us and calm your differences, which are so unworthy of you. May the wisdom which Solomon possessed so very many centuries ago be renewed in favour of your ministers, whose opinions and actions will decide the fortune of the world. Put your great work in hand, submit the French to a wise ruler whom you will yourself assist, give them a Sovereign strong enough to establish order but not strong enough to destroy it. If this cannot be, divide it like brothers. There is enough to satisfy all interests, and you in England are such clever *constructors*, and know so well how to hold the scales, that you will be able to carry through this matter. If my hopes are realized poor Louis XVI will reascend this blood-stained throne, and both Sovereigns and people will



equally have profited by the violent lesson that France will have given them.

Ask that dear Hawkings if I am right.

The 2nd April, 1793.

I really believed, *mon cher* Hawkings, that I was very angry with you a few weeks ago. It seems you knew me better than I knew myself (they say such things happen!) I accept with pleasure, on your word, the good opinion you wish to give me of myself, and I am charmed to find that I am worth much more than I thought; mine is a queer little heart, as soft as melted butter, in an age of unfeeling hardness.

What you told me rather enigmatically about the journey of my *cher grand Garçon* did not, happily, torment me for long. I received at the same time several letters from Holland which told me without any mystery that the two brothers had arrived and had been sent to the island of Dordrecht. As I well knew Rhoon's armaments and his gunboats, and also that, thank God, Dumouriez and his Frenchmen had left and gone to Brabant (where the Austrians made short work of him) and that the Duke of Brunswick was at Bois-le-Duc, I was not afraid, and the only uneasiness left was lest my two knights-errant conducted by the clever head of Rhoon (which is worth two English ones) would not go and fight a few wind-mills for something to do!

I am very much obliged to you, *mon cher fils*, for the light you throw for me on Ireland. You have

interested me greatly in that country, and I find an infinite amount of justice and common sense in what you tell me.

Tolerance is a virtue composed of humanity and common sense. It has always seemed to me a necessary, useful and proper principle, but there is no rule without an exception. The Roman Catholic religion has certain elements so dangerous that they may, it seems to me, form precisely those exceptions which you are so wise in advocating. In any case I think that in view of the present situation in England and the busybodies attracted to Ireland by the French and the opposition, the English will have to renounce their former prudent measures, and to avoid more serious trouble will be obliged to pass certain measures in favour of the Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

I urgently appeal to your *chère petite chatte* on behalf of the amiable and unfortunate Madame de Vibray, sister of the Viscount de Blangy, whom I think you met at my house two years ago when her husband was the King's Minister in Denmark. This poor woman, who is so good-hearted and interesting, is very much on my mind. She is as tender a wife, as good a mother, as your Sophie and Mrs. Milnes. In fact, she is in every way worthy of their friendship

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Portland was in favour of measures of this sort. The King strongly opposed them. On February 21st, 1795, George III wrote to him, referring to "so very serious and unprecedented a proposal as the change proposed in Ireland," and on the 28th the King wrote again stigmatizing the measures proposed for the relief of the Irish Catholics as "dangerous." (Letters preserved at Welbeck Abbey from George III to the 3rd Duke of Portland.)

and that of your sister. I recommend her to you all. Here is her position :—

She was born Countess de Blangy, and her mother is in Normandy and is very rich. Her portion should be about fifty thousand *livres* a year, but the revolution, and her worthy husband being proscribed as an *émigré* by those monsters because he would not remain as their Minister after his master had been deposed, deprived his wife and daughter of this expectation, and plunged the whole family into poverty. Monsieur de Vibray cannot enter France without losing his head. The child cannot inherit if she is not in France, the mother risks at least her liberty, and perhaps her life, if she goes there. She wishes, however, to risk everything, not for herself but for her only child, whom she desires to place in her mother's care, in order to try and save her fortune. She goes to England either alone (conducted by an ecclesiastic, one of the best of men, and quite unlike an ordinary priest, Secretary to the Ambassador of Naples in London), or else her husband will take her. They will leave this week, I think, profiting by the convoy protected by your vessels, so that if the wind is favourable they may be in London at the same time as this letter. She will first send my letter to Sophie, and I beg you to open it, or Henriette if you are not there, and to have the charity to go and see her, and try to guide her French vivacity and impulsiveness, and above all to ascertain clearly if this poor woman can go to France without risk, helping her with your prudence and judgment.



When you know her you will like her as much as I do. She is an excellent woman and quite according to your English taste, as brave as a lion, a tender mother, with a grateful heart. So many pleasant virtues, in addition to the misfortunes which she bears so heroically that she never allows herself to utter one word of complaint, belong to a range of thought as fine as your own. Do not let her lightly risk her life. In fact, do for her what I am sure you would do without being asked for any gentle soul in misfortune.

*Adieu*, then, *mon cher* Hawkings. Embrace *la petite* and *la grande chatte* and Henriette, and give news soon about them all to your old grandmother, friend, and scold, who even while she scolds knows how to love you as long as there is any life in her.

The 8th April, 1793.

*Chère petite chatte*,—I write to you to-day to say that I cannot write.

The reasons are many and excellent. First of all I hear nothing but news of victories. Directly the door opens they announce a new crown of laurels to be given. I am overjoyed. They send me notes. I reply. I ask for details. Do you realize that we have far exceeded all our hopes, and posterity in reading our history will say we have lied, for we have done that which was impossible.

In truth, *ma chère Sophie*, twelve battles (large and small), and all won, do not displease you, do they, and all in one month (from March 1st to 31st)? It

is an unheard-of thing, and so much the worse for them who will not see the finger of a just God, tired of permitting the crimes and abominations of a nation of wild beasts that He should exterminate.

The rest of this letter repeats what was said in the last about Madame de Vibray. In the letter following (that of April 15th) this is amplified, and her change of plans is referred to as follows. I give nearly all the rest of the letter, as it seems to me interesting and characteristic.

The unprecedented successes of the Imperialists and the behaviour of Dumouriez<sup>1</sup> have changed the projects of Madame de Vibray, and they believe that the whole situation will take a different aspect, and that our brave Germans (especially if you help them otherwise than by words) will succeed in establishing a different régime in France which will permit of the return of those to whom something remains of their rightful possessions. They have gone to Brabant, hoping soon to return to their home. May God grant it! The spectacle which daily afflicts us of the victims of those cannibals is too painful!

As some compensation for this amiable couple whom you will not see, permit me, *chère petite chatte*, to ask of you and our *cher papa* Hawkings a small

<sup>1</sup> Dumouriez opened negotiations with Austria on March 25th and allied himself with Coburg on the 30th, offering the whole of his army for a march on Paris to restore order. His soldiers, however, refused to follow him.

work of kindness for an honest man who much desires it.

This is a French *abbé* named De Preynes, at present chaplain to the Embassy of the Duke de Cicignano, Minister of Naples in London.

He has spent several months here, where he was much liked, just as he was at Copenhagen, where he passed a long time with this Minister. He is sensible, gentle, discreet, with none of the defects of his cloth, and very pleasant to talk to. He would much like to know you, and I feel sure that his society would be agreeable to you. Introduce him to Mr. Ruffo, whom he also greatly desires to know, from what we have told him. Monsieur de Preynes will carry four lines from me, which he absolutely insisted on, to make sure of penetrating into your house, delighted to feel, he says, that he will find a protector in a strange country in *Signor à Tête Blanche*, to whom I also introduce him. He will arrive by sea with the English convoy.

I have at present a charming visitor staying with me. It is the author of the book on the discovery of the true site of Troy, Monsieur Le Chevalier. He has been with me for the last week, and amuses us enormously, the Doctor and me, for he combines great learning with the faculty of conversing delightfully. This pleasure will soon come to an end; but I wander in the isles of the Archipelago, in Athens and elsewhere, and I assure you that these journeys have been the delight of my heart!

The poor Philosopher still suffers from his foot,



neither he nor I can get rid of our ills : he of his gout and I of my old age !

The doings of Dumouriez naturally puzzle us very much, and no one can understand them. I tremble for the Royal Family in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

They have given us, as commandant of this town, a Hanoverian officer whom no one knows yet, called Querenheim. You shall have his dimensions when I have taken his measure.

Every one here who knows your husband and you is devoted to you and tells me to say so, the Doctor, stoic though he is, at the head of the troop. On your part embrace the whole of my English family for me, and let the Chevalier Banks believe himself one of them, for the degree of my esteem for him is in line with my sentiments for you all. *Has he a good medal on the death of Louis XVI?* Please reply to this. *Adieu, petite chatte.* Do not forget your old grandmother on the banks of the Elbe.

Hamburg, the 30th April, 1793.

I understand nothing, *mon aimable petite chatte*, of your posts nor of the fortune of my letters ! I do not cease to write to you, and yet you receive none of them ! Here is the list of those which have left my hand for England since the middle of March, that is to say for the last six weeks. You will find it inside the envelope.

<sup>1</sup> Louis XVI was executed on January 21st, 1793, Marie Antoinette on October 15th of the same year, and Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister, in 1794. None of the earlier letters of 1793 refer to the King's execution, so it appears as if one must be missing.

What events have taken place since then ! That of Dumouriez must have amused you for a moment. We expected much from it, but it seems that the mountain has brought forth a mouse ! If you have him now in England, something may come of it. This is what I wait to hear in order to believe it. Our poor little Denmark takes the tone of a great Power, and declares her intention of remaining neutral (that is to say, fishing in troubled waters and drawing out the profit for herself, while spoiling and upsetting the measures of all the other Powers). She ventures to jeer at Russia, and we are very curious to see how Dame Catherine will take this rebellion, and in what way she will punish the Danes for their arrogance. The Kings are not accustomed to such audacity, and we are impatient to know how they will apply a sharp reprimand to the Minister who has dared to make himself the organ of this insurrection. Our *cher* Guillaume has pleased and annoyed me very much during his journeys between London and Brussels. He is the bosom friend of the Prince of Coburg,<sup>1</sup> which rejoices me, but I am sorry that this good and honest prince was so easily duped by that crafty Dumouriez. It seems to me that after the adventure of the King of Prussia and the Duke of Brunswick in Champagne, a second trap should not have succeeded.

Here are some amusing verses to make you laugh.

<sup>1</sup> It was to the Prince of Coburg that Dumouriez submitted, and it would be interesting to know if it was Guillaume who advised him to go to England and afterwards to settle near Hamburg.

## 1.

Toujours sur l'humide element  
 D'Orleans a fait des Merveilles  
 Et le grand vainqueur donnessant  
 Va, dit on, ramer à Marseilles.

## 2.

Rendons grâce à la liberté  
 Qui l'exile sur nos galères  
 Un amant de l'égalité  
 N'y peut rencontrer que des freres.

## 3.

Ce prince aimoit depuis longtemps  
 Des forçats l'aimable coiffeure  
 Pour leur goûts et leur sentiments  
 Il les reçut de la Nature.

## 4.

S'il lui manque la Fleur de Lis  
 Vite, qu'on applique à ce drole  
 Un si vil enfant des Louis  
 Ne peut l'avoir que sur l'épaule!

This pleasantry has amused people here very much.

No one has answered me one word for three months about that poor Duchess de la Trémoille, who so keenly interests me that I begged you and Henriette to go and see her and show her some attention, expressing to her my sincere respect for her and the sentiments with which she inspires me. Guillaume told me she was a very superior woman. *Ma chère petite chatte*, enlighten me on this matter. If you have reasons for not wishing to meet the Duchess, then imagine that I have said nothing. But if this is not so, please interest yourself a little in a relative distinguished for her misfortunes and



her virtues, and find means to let her know that the Marquis d'Argenteuil and his family are here and greatly desire news of her, they are ardently attached to her. The post has just arrived and your dear letter which I have no time to read before closing this. Alas! your poor Aunt is very ill, I am deeply sorry for her children. Guillaume wrote to me from Antwerp and from Brussels, but the last letter has not reached me yet. He will find three from me in London. I embrace him tenderly. *Adieu.*

That the Duchess knew of and valued Charlotte Sophie's efforts on her behalf is evident from the following interesting letter from the Duchess to Countess Bentinck :—

London, *June 23rd* (1794?).

It would be difficult for me to bear witness as I desire to all the unmerited kindness you have shown me. Your feeling heart puts much too high a price on the fidelity and devotion that I had for my masters, especially for the Queen, one only had to give rein to one's heart to adore her. I saw in her Majesty virtue, goodness, and courage developed to the uttermost extent; I saw all that should have been admired, misunderstood, and my heart which I had entirely given to her, has garnered all and her image lives there. I have suffered so deeply through all that were dear to me that now it is only by seizing the opportunities of helping my unhappy friends that I hope to find some consolation. . . . Baron de Blome will be my support, my adviser.

## CHAPTER XXVII

The 7th May, 1793.

LEAVE me in peace, *petite chatte*. You are so outrageously, so impertinently, so superlatively amiable that you drag from me the most fatiguing sentiments, in my bad health and my advanced age. I, poor old woman, adoring nothing but goodness of heart and domestic virtue, am overwhelmed with your kindness amidst your own happy surroundings, and your pity for the troubles of others, even for those whom you have never seen. *Petite chatte*, it moves me so much, that my poor old blood is quite agitated by it! I would wish to thank God, on my knees, for having given me such good children, and I have not the strength to get there! I had fully intended not writing to you to-day, as I had written to Mrs. Milnes and to Guillaume. But I must tell you how much I esteem you, and scold you for being so attractive. It would have been admirable forty years ago when I had the faculty of loving you all as much as you deserved. You, the Milneses, your husband, and even Henriette whom I have never seen, and then that *grand garçon* who shortens my life by sweetening it with his friendship.

Away with you, *petite femme*, with your fatiguing calls on my affection! You even fling that little *chatillon* at me, and ask me to love her also! As if my heart was the widow's cruse of oil of the prophet, which never lessened!

Madame de Vibray knows by now of all your intended kindness. The poor woman is full of feeling, and I am certain that the wise and carefully expressed advice you sent her will weigh more with her than all our entreaties.

I am uneasy about Thérèse T. She should have arrived and is usually very exact. The Duke of York says they wanted to fight the Prince of Coburg on the occasion of his ridiculous manifesto, though not with the Duke of Orleans, but one is as untrue as the other! Guillaume will explain all that much better to you than I, as he was at Antwerp. I suppose by now your husband has joined you, and I breathe more freely. Your heart gives you such a right to happiness that I cannot bear anything to trouble you. Embrace all of them from me, and be so good as to be less amiable in future so that one can contend with you. The Philosopher admires you all, each in his own way, and thinks that he must leave to me the trouble of telling you so. He makes a mistake, for I shall tell you nothing! *Adieu.*

The 14th May, 1793.

I don't know why I write to you to-day, *aimable petite chatte*, for I am overpowered by the heat, with my limbs swollen till they present the contour of



those of young Hoggner, one arm in great pain, a mass of correspondence, a head as bad as that of your Mr. Sheridan, and my heart upside down by reason of the numerous objects which affect it.

I am still in town and am enraged because I am kept here.<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Le Chevalier<sup>2</sup> left this morning. He is such an interesting person that I assure you Hawkings and Guillaume would admit that, though a Frenchman, he is worthy of being English. He is one of the most honest, simple, truthful men I know, with gentle manners and of charming character. An evenness of temper, a gentle gaiety, is combined with a solidity which is amazing in a Frenchman. He is learned without pedantry, capable of the deepest feeling but entirely without affectation, a rare character by reason of the number of advantages and virtues he unites. He has the tone of the best society and the gift of pleasing without a suspicion of falseness. His short stay has given the greatest pleasure to Weisbrod and to me, and we saw him leave this morning with real regret. He is doing us the pleasure of making a little journey of a year with the sons of my relation, the late Madame de Bulow.<sup>3</sup> It is a great happiness for those young

<sup>1</sup> A recent accident to her foot had prevented the customary move to Embsbittel. This was described in the last letter, which has been omitted.

<sup>2</sup> The well-known writer and traveller already referred to.

<sup>3</sup> There is a letter at Indio from Baron de Bulow dated February 9th, 1793, in which he asks Charlotte Sophie to try and arrange this. He writes the name Lechevalier, but in the book on Troy it is Le Chevalier in two words; also in the letters of Charlotte Sophie.

people, for he is the very man to keep them in the right path. If I am still alive, in a year from now he will come back and see me, before he undertakes a long journey to study antiquities in Asia. I should like you to meet him. I have given him an account of you and Hawkings, and for my sake he loves you both, till he knows you and can do so for your own. All my English tribe have become the objects of so much curiosity to him and the *grand garçon* and the *chaton* have become so essential, that I think he would take as long a journey to contemplate them as he would to see a monument of Hector or Achilles!

We tremble with impatience.

The folly of the Prince of Coburg with Dumouriez is, I fear, more than mere stupidity.

I shudder for Vienna as much as for London and Berlin, no one seems to walk uprightly. Each has his own special little object, and while that is so nothing of real value can be done.

Adieu, *aimable petite femme*. Your heart reconciles me to creation, and to three-quarters of my troubles.

Embsbattel, the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1793.

*Chère petite chatte!* So you are in London with Henriette, and made much of by every one, according to what the *grand garçon* tells me. At last, for a week, I have been at Embsbattel, alone, ill, but extremely happy to see nothing but green and to hear no longer the rattling of coaches and the crying out of matches. Nini, Stroutsbeer, my parrot, my bullfinches, are the best company possible. There is



nothing but the sight of your rooms which makes my heart ache. Thus is everything poisoned in this life! Alas, *ma chère Sophie*, we have a hard trial before us, when all we love most on earth are on the water or hunting wild beasts!

I should be delighted if my dear children could take a prize in the style of the "Dumouriez"! It would be a splendid thing for Guillaume especially, but our family is not lucky in such matters, for you must admit that your Admiral Gell<sup>1</sup> needed neither great skill nor great courage to put sixty thousand pounds into his pocket!

On account of the emigrants we have a great many people here just now, and our assemblies are as crowded as in winter. They have given us a Com-mandant who is as decidedly German as the emigrants are decidedly French. He comes from Hanover and his wife from Stad. I think they are good, like good bread, and that is much! But also it is all! He is called Baron von Querrenhein.

In case by any chance you would like to know the names of the principal emigrants here, I give them to you (fourteen left yesterday, having changed their names, which it is said were Rohan and Guimeney).

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Gell, on April 14th, had fallen in with and captured the French privateer, the "General Dumouriez," while she was conveying to a French port a Spanish galleon, the "Sant-Jago," which had been taken eleven days before. This galleon, bound from Lima to Spain, carried cargo of immense value, and both were safely brought to Plymouth where, after tedious litigation, the Spanish vessel was given as a prize to her captor. This condemnation of a recaptured ship caused a great stir at Madrid, and was one of the chief causes of the war which afterwards broke out between England and Spain.



The young Marquis de Priest has left for Sweden. They say that for his age, which is 19, he is a prodigy in geometry and mathematics, and he seemed to me gentle and sensible. Those who remain are the Marquis de la Roche Aymon, nephew of the Cardinal<sup>1</sup> of the same name and son of Count de St. Esprit, Master of the Horse. The Marquis d'Argenteuil is a relation of the Duchess de la Trémoille, and devotedly attached to her. He constantly asks me about her. There is also a Monsieur Verjoilliane who was at the head of the Government du Lionois, and a Counte de Toulouse who bears the simple title of Abbé Raimond, etc., etc.

My impertinent paper does not leave me space to embrace *mon chaton* and Henriette.

Embsbattel, the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1793.

To-day, *ma chère petite chatte*, I am going to take a great liberty with you. But with such a heart as yours one can never go wrong if one pleads for humanity.

The frightful catastrophe of the Ambassador of Naples in London<sup>2</sup> is known better to you than to me. He had with him a chaplain, a French priest, his intimate friend, the Abbé de Preynes, of whom I have already written several times to you, and who spent three or four months with us.

<sup>1</sup> The Cardinal de la Roche Aymon was Grand Almoner to the King of France.

<sup>2</sup> The Naples Ambassador, the Duke of Cicinniano, shot himself in London. No reason could be discovered for the act, as he was popular, and not in money difficulties.

The poor Duke had given him a home in his exile, and promised to secure his future under the protection of his Court. So by this odious occurrence he loses his friend, his protector and all his hopes. It is true that the late Duke had already spoken about him and perhaps partly arranged for something for him at Naples, but what is certain is this, that the Duchess de Theodosa (or Theodora, for I do not know her name very well, and Weisbrod has taken the letter to town), the good and loving sister of the defunct, who is very well off, and, they say, of a noble nature, has declared that this friend of her brother's will be doubly hers, and that she will take entirely upon herself to carry out his wishes.

I do not therefore ask any service of you in so far as the relieving of his poverty is concerned, but I beg you to show a little interest in an honest man, overwhelmed by as terrible a blow as any feeling heart can suffer. He is our friend, and if you and Hawkings and Henriette will allow him to come and see you sometimes and try and console him a little you will put me under the greatest obligation.

I pray God night and day for you all. My heart is always with you. Where is your brother Jean? We have been expecting him for a month. *Aimable petite chatte*, forgive me this stupid letter. Tell me what they say in London about the death of that unfortunate Duke. Embrace your husband and your sister and send us Jean.

*Adieu, mon enfant.*

The 12th July, 1793.

*Mon aimable petite chatte*, your old grandmother is good for nothing nowadays. In winter she is ill in bed, and in summer she is ill everywhere. It was so cold a week ago that I could not move my fingers. It is so hot to-day that I am stifled.

A thousand thanks for all the trouble you are taking about the Duchess de la Trémouille. I admit that I think of her a great deal, and I shall be enchanted when I know that she is aware of the keen interest with which she inspires me. Please God, I may be of some small use to her. I should at least like to know if she has any consolation in these trials. In addition to our relationship, her tender attachment to the daughter of my divine Marie Thérèse renders her an object of gratitude and affection to me. We have here, in addition to Monsieur d'Argenteuil, the husband and eldest son of a *Dame de Palais* of the Queen, in the country, the Marquis de le Roche Aimon, who speaks of her with respect and veneration. Do you begin to have hopes for that Sovereign who is so much to be pitied, and for her poor family? I see our emigrants, our aristocrats, already singing songs of victory, because some fine underlinen has been sent to Madame Elizabeth, and some playthings to the poor little Dauphin. To me it is impossible to regain hope so easily. Accustomed to see things in their darkest aspect, I perceive this unfortunate family still in the power of the most contemptible scoundrels, and threatened with the chance of falling



into the hands of even worse than cannibals. I see for them no refuge except a bloodstained throne, perhaps still more dangerous than the prison in which they groan.

All that is not reassuring to me. God alone knows how it will end.

Mr. Fraser (the English Minister), the friend of your husband and Guillaume, is going to be married to the young widow of the son of Monsieur Hoggner. She was first married to a Dutchman for six weeks, then to this young Hoggner for three weeks, and is the widow of both, and is not yet twenty-one years old. She has fourteen to fifteen thousand florins of Holland yearly and no children. She is gentle and tolerably amiable. The wedding will be at The Hague.

You ask me if I think that the war will end this year. Alas! who am I to see clearly in such darkness! I confess that nothing will surprise me. Everything seems possible to me, but I think it very unlikely that there should be an end soon. I see the material for half a dozen wars, and the pit that I look into appears bottomless.

If you really intend to send me Jean, please do so soon; and if you must have a commission to carry out for me get your sister to choose me some good pencils for Weisbrod to draw with, and some for me in wood to write with. *Adieu, aimable, bonne et meilleure petite chatte.*

The 19th July, 1793.

I hasten to chat a little more with you, *ma chère petite chatte*, while you are still in London, from

whence one can have news of you. Your country houses, at fifteen or twenty German leagues from the capital, do not, in the matter of the certainty of the posts and the general convenience, resemble our gardens at the town gates, where one can comfortably await news, information and consolation. Once you are shut up away in the country, the Milneses somewhere else, equally far from the world, Jean with me and Henriette with you, our poor dear sailors God knows where, in truth I shall feel as if you were in the desert of Sahara or the sands of Libya !

Meanwhile, Condé is taken. But instead of helping that brave Gaston to support the public cause, instead of sending only seven or eight vessels to the coast of Normandy or Brittany, you receive Count d'Artois with contempt, and send him about his business, with a severity which must discourage the whole of the Royalist party in France. You snatch the victory from the hands of that brave Gaston who, were it not for your action (and even if only the very slightest demonstration had been made in his favour in England), would have been able to accomplish what he wished far more surely, and not have seen panic seize upon those whom the English could so easily have encouraged to declare themselves for the right cause. All this pains me intensely.

The poor Germans pour out their blood and their treasure for a cause just as important for all peoples and all sovereigns ; and the others, if they do not actually oppose them, second them so badly that one hardly knows whether to consider them as friends or

enemies. You will say that I am in a bad temper—that all this is not your fault! I know it well, *ma pauvre petite chatte!* And when I tell you all this, in the bitterness of my spirit, it is not you that I blame! I only relieve my heart in disclosing to you my feelings!

The Philosopher is still in town, and does not seem likely to stay at Embsbuttlet at all this summer. He hates with all his heart life in the country, which I adore. It is better, therefore, for each of us to do as he likes, especially as, by another eccentricity, he walks a great deal when he is in town, going hither and thither running, trotting! While in the country it is impossible to get him out of his room, and everything displeases him! Now he is gay and cheerful, when he comes three or four times a week to see me.

Nini and Stroutsbeer, without forgetting my parrot, compose my society here, and I am not dull for one moment. There are two families at Altona, emigrants, whom I like very much. In one of these is a young man who is very clever, and has a great knowledge of Greek and Roman coins. He is a disciple of Barthélémy<sup>1</sup> and of the Hamiltons.<sup>2</sup> This gives me a great deal of pleasure in my own line.

*Adieu, aimable petite mère.*

<sup>1</sup> The Abbé Jean-Jacques Barthélémy, a learned and cultivated Frenchman, author of the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grece*. Died 1795. He had been a friend of Charlotte Sophie's when she was at Vienna.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Hamilton, British Minister at Naples, and his wife, Nelson's Lady Hamilton



At 6 p.m.—My letter written, *ma chère fille*, I have just received one from that poor Abbé de Preynes. He tells me that, thank God, he has obtained a place as chaplain with a minister and leaves at the end of the month and will pass through here, that he longs to know you and to bring me news of you, and that your amiable husband has been to see him and he was so unfortunate as to miss him. I beg you to let him know when he can see you for a moment so that he may tell me about you. Show him the little one also so that he can describe her to me, and Henriette. He must look well at you all, for I shall question him *à la Schulemburg*.

Especially let him see *le chaton*, of whom I am so proud, if he is with you.

Do not lose one moment in sending him the enclosed. The Duchess de Theodosa must be an angel of goodness and virtue; he will tell her about you, and she will be an acquaintance ready made for you when you go to Naples. I told the Abbé to see to that. I embrace you once more. Forgive me for asking you to take charge of this letter, but it is for a good man who is very unhappy.

*Adieu, mon enfant.*

The 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1793.

Your good brother and his fellow traveller have arrived here safe and sound. Their passage was quick and comfortable, but they very nearly had an accident, a great lumbering vessel, larger than theirs, having almost run them down. They have given me your

beautiful magnifying glass, which has already made eyes at my Kings and my Emperors.<sup>1</sup> It is excellent, and I am greatly obliged to you for it.

I find Jean greatly altered for the better. He speaks intelligible French, and his bearing is more assured and his manner easier. They have gone into town this morning to look round. Unfortunately these two young men have no resource here just now except Mr. Fraser (the Philosopher being still at war with his foot), and as he is in love and engaged to be married, he takes no notice of anything except his torch of Hymen and the Hoggner family, so he is of no use to any one else! There is not, as far as I know, a single English person here, and I doubt if they would care for any of our emigrants. My young antiquary is only 21, but he is graver and older than his father, who is more than double, and he feels their misfortunes more deeply, so that he does not easily make friends. Thus no one remains but Tauvenay,<sup>2</sup> who at any other time would be a resource for them, but he is in such trouble through the misfortunes of his country, and so busy in helping and sympathizing with his unfortunate compatriots, that one hardly sees anything of him, nor would one venture to interfere with so noble an occupation.

I send a thousand tender wishes to the *chaton* and the little *chatillon*. Adieu.

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to her collection of medals.

<sup>2</sup> He was a great friend of the young Duke of Orleans and other members of the Royal Family.

The 30th July, 1793.

It is fitting, *ma chère petite chatte*, that I should use the first of the pens which I owe to your kindness in expressing my gratitude. They are a valuable present to me, being so well made, such as Hamburg, to her shame, is quite unable to produce. I shall find myself spared the greater part of my troubles by using these really choice instruments, which I owe to your friendly and obliging attention.

For the last two days we have been triumphant, for hardly had they taken Condé than we heard that Mayence was given up. Valenciennes interests me even more than the Prussians at Mayence, as my dear Austrians are there amongst whom I have many acquaintances, for your cousin Henry, my friend Chaumontel and many more whom I know are with that army. We begin to hope that all may now go well (though with my eternal pessimism I do not give myself over with any confidence to this hope).

Jean assures me, *chère petite chatte*, that you are already settled in a pretty country place<sup>1</sup> where your husband can spend a few weeks longer with you, while his "Arrogant" is being replated. It is thus at an immense distance from London that I talk to my dear children.

Now that, having no other resource, Jean is obliged to talk to me a good deal, I am able to discover in him intelligence, originality, common sense and a

<sup>1</sup> With her sister at Langwith Lodge near Welbeck Abbey. Langwith Lodge belongs to the Duke of Portland, who rebuilt it about 1900.



praiseworthy frankness and sound judgment in many things. But I should like him to have some fixed object, and not merely to live from day to day. I should like him not only to have the curiosity to see things, but to know how to see them and to take trouble in learning about them. That is the misfortune with young people who travel. They pass through various countries, they see the rivers, notice a bridge here and another there, visit the churches, look at the pictures, go to one or two country villas, swallow some dinners and suppers with people whose names they forget directly after, and finally they return home, just as ignorant as when they set out. That is the history of the travels of three-fourths of the young men of all the countries I know. It was not that of Guillaume or of your husband. They knew how to profit by their journeys. They brought back knowledge of the navies of the countries they saw, of the manners and customs, of the strength or weakness of the nations. I wish Jean knew how to do the same. He is wanting in the enterprise which distinguishes his brother. I do my best to inspire him with self-reliance. I ask him to do the honours of my house, and he lends himself to it with a good grace. That obliges him to entertain ladies, to get used to speaking French. Little by little I will let loose scraps of advice for his benefit. He has got a German master and is studying that language. His friend seems to me very good-tempered, and gay and pleasant. He is as neat and decorous as a Dutchwoman. But I know too

little of him to discuss him. They want to go to Copenhagen. The present moment seems to me a dangerous one, on account of the intrigues in which they try to entangle strangers, so I am not anxious to help them in this project. The Russian fleet has no business to be there, and all those to whom I could have given introductions that would have been useful are away. For instance, my nephew, Count de Hassthousen, Cabinet Minister and *cordon bleu*, is in Jutland, and Count d'Oden, President of the Council, one of my best friends, has had a fall at Odensee from the top to the bottom of his staircase. Luttichau and his wife are at Fionie, as is my niece, the Countess of Holstein Lettraberg, and her daughter, the young widowed Countess of Hassthausen, and another relation, the Countess of Lamerwig, are all in the country, far from Copenhagen. I have therefore literally not one address amongst all my relations and friends to give them, even the youngest Holstein girl, my niece's daughter, married to a *cordon bleu*, Baron de Rabe, being away at Pivimund and expected here in a fortnight.

I hope that you and Mrs. Milnes and Guillaume will approve of my views. I should greatly have liked to know the intentions of the family, of Guillaume, of the Duke of Portland, with regard to the young man's future, so that all I do and say here might be in conformity with his destiny. I begged Guillaume and you also, to tell me, but have heard nothing yet, so that I act in the dark without knowing if I am doing right or wrong, and with the

best intentions in the world of being useful to him, I might altogether fail. Your dear mother, who intended to send him to me last year, told me she would supply me with all necessary information, so that his visit would not be a waste of time, just at the age when time is of most importance. The matter is very much on my mind, for the ideas, and even the principles of English people, are so entirely different to those of Germans that I am always afraid I shall oppose yours, and do just the opposite to what you would wish, and this troubles me very much, *ma chère* Sophie, for on no account must an old grandmother who lives at one end of the world upset the affairs of her dear children destined to live in England and think in an English manner.

The post from France has just arrived but brought us no news of Valenciennes, on which just now all eyes are fixed. As Monsieur de Bulow's two sons, our relations, have gone there, hoping to see something, we are rather uneasy, I especially, as it was I who arranged with Monsieur l'Abbé Le Chevalier to be tutor to these two young people, and I much regret if, in order to satisfy a useless curiosity, they put themselves in danger. They are destined to serve their country in diplomacy so that this journey of theirs is a senseless, quixotic business. I should never pardon myself if I had helped to bring it about with unfortunate results.

Yesterday we had our last assembly here, on account of the closing of the gates. A young lady from Hanover (a Grothe, a relation of the Minister),



lovely as a rose, was at it. All our men of fashion, even those over seventy years of age, as well as our emigrants, contested for the notice of this charming object. Jean, alone, appeared not to see her, and his travelling companion merely remarked, "She is not ugly!" *Vive l'Angleterre!*

*Adieu, chère petite chatte.*

The 10th September, 1793.

Well, *chère petite chatte*, so you are in a part of the country of which God has not given me the faculty of pronouncing the name! Your *pauvre Chaton* is still with you! The *petite Chatillon* is busy with her love affairs with my beautiful little Henry, while Henriette amuses herself with the fixed stars and flirts with the planets! And, what is saddest to me, is that my dear Guillaume is sailing on the perfidious element! Jean and his companion are at Copenhagen; I hope with all my heart the journey is worth the cost. I confess to you, that with our German ideas, it is very difficult for us to get used to the English custom which permits, during the precious age of study and culture of the mind, beings as raw as uncooked artichokes to run about the world without object, without direction, seeing while perceiving nothing, and quite ignorant even of what there is to see, bringing back little except the recollection of a few church spires that they have noticed and a few roads they have travelled on. Their trip to Holstein was short, only a week. Yet a Count of the Empire, having everything he could want and travelling in the

very best style, would have done it at half the cost. What have they brought back? Being able to say "We have seen Holstein"? Luckily, they went on the Canal. I doubt if you asked them anything about it in London they would be able to reply!

Now they are at Copenhagen. I have no idea with what object! If Jean was intended for the Navy I should say, they want to see the Sound, the Belts, the Coast, the Fleet. Very good! Perhaps that may be useful in their profession. But you will admit that for a London clergyman nothing that Copenhagen contains is of the slightest value! If it is to amuse themselves, I also say, good, after their studies are finished, but not if it interrupts them and turns their heads at the very moment when they need to keep them fixed. Besides, one should have a travelling companion who would be useful, better educated than oneself, and able to give information and advice, and not himself require to receive them. He must also be presentable. They asked Mr. Fraser, your King's Minister, for letters of introduction to his colleague at Copenhagen. He enquired from them if they had clothes in which they could appear, as he knew that any gentleman having a presentable name would be taken by him at once to the Prime Minister, Count de Bernstorff, and then presented at Court. They answered that they had not, and Mr. Fraser was much embarrassed, wondering what his colleague would do. For this reason I did not dare to give them letters to any one, for I could not send to persons in high positions any

but properly clothed human beings, and not young men in rags. All this has been very unpleasant and embarrassing. Every country has its usages, but one must absolutely submit to those of the country one visits if one wishes to succeed. Finally, if one must travel, one should try to do it with the least possible expense. They travel on a "Stuhlwagen," a coach with thirty-six places, very humbly, yet in spite of that they spend more than a great nobleman with a beautiful private carriage. Directly they arrive in a hotel they ask for the best food, the best wine, a room for each of them (N.B. not even having a servant). Our hotel keepers, who are no fools where their own interest is concerned, see at once the sort of people they have to do with, make out their bills, of which the young men understand nothing, not speaking the language, and only comprehending the total. You can easily understand, *ma chère* Sophie, what that would come to in a journey of three or four weeks, and it would be as useless to them as it would be to me to go and see the country of the Ardennes. Add to this that his travelling companion is of an age, an appearance, a name, a bearing which gives him no standing at all in Germany or Denmark. Prevent your brother from being sought out by those who may desire to meet him, this appendix being *unpresentable anywhere*, and stop those who would offer hospitality to your brother from embarking on it, while a companion is with him who has neither name nor, above all, manners, to pass in a circle of a certain rank. I speak to you sincerely,



*ma chère petite chatte.* I know nothing about the young man (who may have fifty virtues of which I am ignorant) and who seems to me gentle and honest, in whom I have noticed nothing vicious or bad, but on the other hand nothing of merit. He would probably do well in the hands of an older man able to influence and teach him the A B C, which he knows none too well, of how to behave, how to dress, what to do in society, but it is very bad for a youth like your brother who himself needs, not certainly the complete reformation in manners required by his companion, but an occasional piece of advice to guide his judgment, his intellect and his expenditure if he does not wish to abandon these to providence alone. All this has worried me, and it would serve no good purpose were I to hide it from you, in fact I should reproach myself did I do so if you and Hawkings and the good Milneses can use your influence and help this poor boy to whom I am attached, and who deserves to find in his family the affection and assistance of that excellent mother whom, too soon, he has lost. I am anxious only for Jean's future, and I confess to you, *ma chère petite chatte*, that I think him too inexperienced to plan this out by himself at present, and this is a fact that young people, especially in England, do not like to be told, and find it difficult to believe. Keep all I have said to yourselves, and tell me your ideas and those of Mr. Milnes and Hawkings.

I embrace you all.

The 24th September, 1793.

. . . You do wisely to busy yourself, but bear one thing in mind. All talents are pleasant, but all do not equally deserve cultivation. All pass the time, but all do not do so to advantage. Some are rich with treasures that they leave behind. Others are empty, and when they are gone nothing is left. Drawing is useful, innocent, full of charm. It fixes the attention, it increases the observation, it familiarizes us with the beauties of nature. If the eyes never grew feeble, if the hand never became uncertain it would be the first of its kind and the most to be recommended. As for music, it is a true charlatan which deceives you. There is nothing so enchanting as its sounds ; but nothing more frivolous and perhaps more dangerous. It enervates the senses without ennobling the heart. It tickles the ear and makes it insensible to all else than harmony. It attracts to itself bad company. It renders companionship necessary, nearly always with a race corrupted, corrupting, and contemptible, and after hours and months and years have been sacrificed in perfecting oneself in a superficial and useless art, what remains to the reasoning man of the millions of vain sounds which have passed through his head and of which he cannot give the tiniest mite to any one else? I know very well that I am striking at all the preconceived opinions and tastes of people. They will reply, "It is because she does not care for music" ; and they will be wrong. I have loved

it only too well, and through it I have wasted twelve or fourteen years. It was one of the greatest musicians of the time who pointed out to me the vanity of it! I only want to say, not that if one is musical and has a husband to whom music gives pleasure, one should not cultivate the gift, but that one should not rank it with useful talents or with the real resources of life, and it is in quest of these last that one should go in order to place the most precious of one's possessions, time and youth, in the surest, most lucrative, most enduring investment, instead of losing them altogether.

I have met many people in trouble and misfortune. I have met a few who confess that they are happy. But amongst them all I have not met one whom amusements that appeal only to the senses, such as music, have been able to console in affliction or satisfy when happy.

The heart and the mind demand totally different food to that of the senses. The latter weaken with age, and if one nevertheless tries to keep them in full vigour they destroy the individuality instead of preserving it.

Those harmonious sounds, drawn from the depths of a throat specially given by nature, can move, touch, but say nothing to a heart in real trouble. This is not a quality one asks of music. It breathes love—and that not of the highest—or anger, or fury, which one feels without reason, and which in any case is much better not experienced! Can you give me one single example where music has made a person



wiser, more prudent, more generous, more grateful, more just, more pious, a better husband, a better father, a better son, a better friend?

How much time, how many years are lost through frivolous work, from which one gains nothing but vanity, which idlers only enjoy, and which, like dangerous liquids, intoxicates even more surely than do they, when they make of a man a mere brute deprived of his reason, the most precious of his gifts. The passion for harmonious sounds carries people just as far, *ma chère petite chatte*. Only the symptoms are less marked and less ridiculous.

I do not know in what old book I read long ago, that a certain government had forbidden music to be learnt by any one intending to be a Judge, because the ear, accustomed to beautiful sounds, would always bias the mind in favour of an advocate with a sonorous voice.

Do not make me quarrel with the lovers of a really enchanting art. Their number is too great, and I should be beaten without mercy. Only reflect on this idea, which your reason, above that of most people, will tell you the worth of.

What my own experience has proved to me, *ma chère Sophie*, is that the study of history is of all pursuits possible to our sex that which best repays us. It is the most lasting of pleasures, and is a resource at all times of life, and in all situations happy or unhappy. The question is too large, and I am too feeble after three weeks of illness to enter fully into it to-day. Another time it will be a task

for you to follow what I have to say about it. You will have had labour enough to read what I have written up to now.

Oh how happy I should have been with my dear children and that famous Chevalier Banks and his family, whose visit gave you so much pleasure! He would have put up with your old grandmother through affection for you, and her veneration for him would have taken the place of merit in his eyes. I pity you, however, because the pleasure was so short, and Hawkings was not able to share it.

I embrace you, *aimable petite chatte*, and Mademoiselle *chatillon* and the *cher chaton*, whose destination I beg you to tell me, and also Henriette.

I found a letter amongst those of Charlotte Sophie from Signor D. Ruffo to Sophie referring to an interview he had had with a singing-master in London. Sophie had evidently suggested that he should spend some months in the country to train the voices of the three sisters. The project seems to have fallen through. I have been unable to discover if Signor Ruffo was any relation to the famous Cardinal Ruffo.

The following refers to Baron Blome who was soon to be appointed Danish Minister to St. Petersburg.

The 1st October, 1793.

I have had to dine in town on two successive days, but I did so with the greatest pleasure as I thereby prolonged each time by an hour the satisfaction of

seeing again one of my oldest friends on his way from England. I have known and esteemed him for thirty-seven years. He was Danish Minister in Paris for twenty-seven years and saw the whole revolution from beginning to end. He met Guillaume and Mrs. Milnes in Paris, and said that she very nearly turned his head as she passed through, and that it was not so much the danger she ran of being inconvenienced by those cannibals as his own in seeing more of her that made him advise them to leave as quickly as possible!<sup>1</sup> He is a charming man, and beyond all that one of the most honest creatures I ever met in my life. He leaves this morning for his cold and doleful country where he must be frozen in the winter. He hopes if I am alive next summer to pass through here again and see me, a pleasure that would be especially delightful if my dear children were here then. I am expecting another old friend of thirty years' standing, a much older man, more broken down, but who is perhaps even more attached to me. Not so amiable but quite as reliable, perhaps superior in knowledge of the world and very pleasant, quiet and interesting. He will stay with me, but I fear his visit will be short as his advanced age makes it imprudent for him to travel in winter.

The failure of your miserable Siege of Dunkirk has lost to the allies all the advantages of the most glorious campaign in the whole of the world's history. In order to obey your selfish commands the Prince of Coburg sacrificed the surest, wisest, most excellent

<sup>1</sup> See page 204.



plan of campaign, and by scattering this formidable army which was assembled close to the conquered town of Valenciennes gave to the French their one opportunity of passing in between the two towns and shedding torrents of blood. You have shocked and disgusted all the allies by your actions, so different from those which one would expect from a good ally who considered only what was best for the cause. You have sacrificed so imprudently, so uselessly and so tragically everything to one power alone, abusing the need that they had of you in order to lay down the law to your own dishonour and that of every one else! I am cruelly afflicted by all this, *ma chère petite chatte*, for this fatal policy has spoilt everything—you, as well as I, risk thereby the loss of all we hold dear in the world. And why? For a cause which you have yourself lost through your obstinacy in insisting on directing it from a distance of 100 leagues, and for your sole advantage. This is the unhappy history of wars conducted by allies! The great Frederick said most truly that he only succeeded because it was his one brain alone against four or five each stronger than himself! Oh, how bad a counsellor is this detestable selfishness! Formerly, if one power or another had an advantage, one did not trouble about it. But now that the whole future of Christendom is involved it is sad to see such a school of thought arise! Finally, *ma chère petite chatte*, every one cries out against the English and calls them the authors of all our troubles. They greatly fear a revolt in Hanover, and the Dutch also begin to count

the cost of their friendship with England. I am so unhappy I should like to hide myself away in a cavern and hear no more of the world.

This fatal revolution has upset all my little domestic arrangements. I have to economize in a way that is very bitter and inconveniences me cruelly. I submit to this, however, more easily than to your dangers and sufferings, for the safety of the whole world would make me resigned to my own personal privations, so it is very hard after all that to find the entire benefit of it thrown away, and those from whom one expected so much the cause of the disaster! I am foolish to talk to you in my present dark mood, but the desire to do so has carried me away. Every one here sends you a thousand compliments and all are interested in your troubles. Every one loves that amiable Hawkings. God will bring him back to you safe and sound. Is it true that the Duke of Richmond has quitted the service, and that Lord Howe is going to leave also? I shall be very sorry if the last is true, as he is fond of *mon grand garçon*. Tell me what you did with my letter to the Abbé, and if he is with the Duchess Theodosa? As for the Duchess de la Trémoille, as she is so proud one must try to be of service to her if one can without consulting her, which one of her best friends and I myself are doing, but God knows if anything will come of it. If I am so fortunate as to succeed I shall apply to your uncle.

*Adieu, mon ange.*

The 8th October, 1793.

. . . Their more than barbarous treatment of the poor Queen really poisons my life. Things have come to such a point that the news of her death would be welcome to me. This unhappy Princess has not for one instant dishonoured the noble blood which is in her veins, and she has known how to be the worthy daughter of Marie Thérèse and of the Cæsars, amidst the brigands, and regicides and executioners. If Germany has always been looked upon as the sworn foe of France, one must acknowledge that they have now an excellent reason for their enmity, the behaviour of the cannibals to the Queen alone sufficing (without speaking of all the other horrors) to cover them with infamy, and dishonour them without possibility of absolution in the annals of civilized nations.

Your capture of Toulon (if you follow it up) is the most decisive event in this dreadful war. If you succeed in securing the South of France for the counter revolution, in helping Marseilles, Bordeaux, the King of Sardinia, Lyons, it will be you who will have re-established the French monarchy and saved that beautiful and unhappy country from inevitable destruction. It would be a noble thing, *ma chère fille*, after having been sworn foes for so long to become the saviour and benefactor of your now detested rival, and this *rôle* would be amazingly becoming to a generous and proud nation such as yours. This mode of acting and thinking would procure centuries



of peace, rest and happiness for the world. You see, *ma chère petite chatte*, that my aged imagination has taken the bit between its teeth and carried me away into regions of thought outside the land of probability!

Now let us leave all this on one side and speak of other things.

I am going to dine in town to save an old friend and relation the bother of having to leave at dessert on account of those tiresome gates. The little Countess will be of the party and we shall drink your health. This relation is Count de Bentheim Steinfort, who will one day, when all his inheritances have fallen in to him, be one of the most considerable owners of property in Germany and the most important of all the Counts of the Holy Empire. At present he has only a couple of beautiful properties which he governs in such a way that his small number of subjects adore him, and those who will be under him in future pray that the time may soon come for him to rule over them, his uncle making them far from happy. I will try to send Milnes a small sketch of what he has done on his estates, having an entire income not exceeding four to five thousand pounds and obliged to keep up a sort of little Court according to the custom of our German titled houses, and this is especially necessary in his case, as his wife is a Duchess of one of the oldest—in fact, royal—families of Denmark. Further, he has Regents, Chancellors, Law Courts, a guard of 100 men and grenadiers. You will see all this if I can get the plans for Milnes, showing how he works

his little country and does it without incurring a single debt. You will say I have not been truthful when you look at it, and though the Philosopher and I have heard all about it we cannot understand how it is managed. Jean will take it with him if I get it. He has not arrived yet, and I only expect him the day after to-morrow. He is delighted with Denmark and makes just and sensible observations on what he has seen, so I trust that the whole of his tour will not be money thrown away. I shall still be here when he comes. I am loth to return to town. Since August, when the earlier closing of the gates began to inconvenience people, I have enjoyed the rest and liberty which I am so fond of and which I shall quit with regret. It is only my eyes which have suffered, for, as I cannot be idle, I have used them rather too much by candle-light.

Some of our poor emigrants are in great trouble on account of the latest arrests in France. Yesterday one was here whose wife, only daughter, and a son of 13, whom they wanted to make a cabin boy on a vessel, had this sad experience. The Duchess de Chatillon, mother of the Duchess de la Trémoille, suffered the same catastrophe. I have not yet been able to discover if her poor old grandmother, the Duchess de la Vallière, was taken also.<sup>1</sup> It is heart-breaking. The poor lady in England must have been overwhelmed by this thunderbolt. Her friend and mine, the Danish Minister, will be in Denmark next month, and I have furnished him with all pos-

<sup>1</sup> Both were imprisoned but were released later.

sible information (of which he was as ignorant as is the Duchess herself). He has promised to do all he possibly can without hurting the pride of this illustrious and unfortunate lady.

*Adieu, petite chatte.* I wish I loved you all less, then I should suffer less on your account.

Mitje is overwhelmed about Lady Aughrim. She was her most intimate friend. She has written, they say, without giving the address of her retreat, and says she is very content and very happy. That cannot last. I think I know the family of the hero of this bad romance very well.

*Adieu, chère petite chatte.*



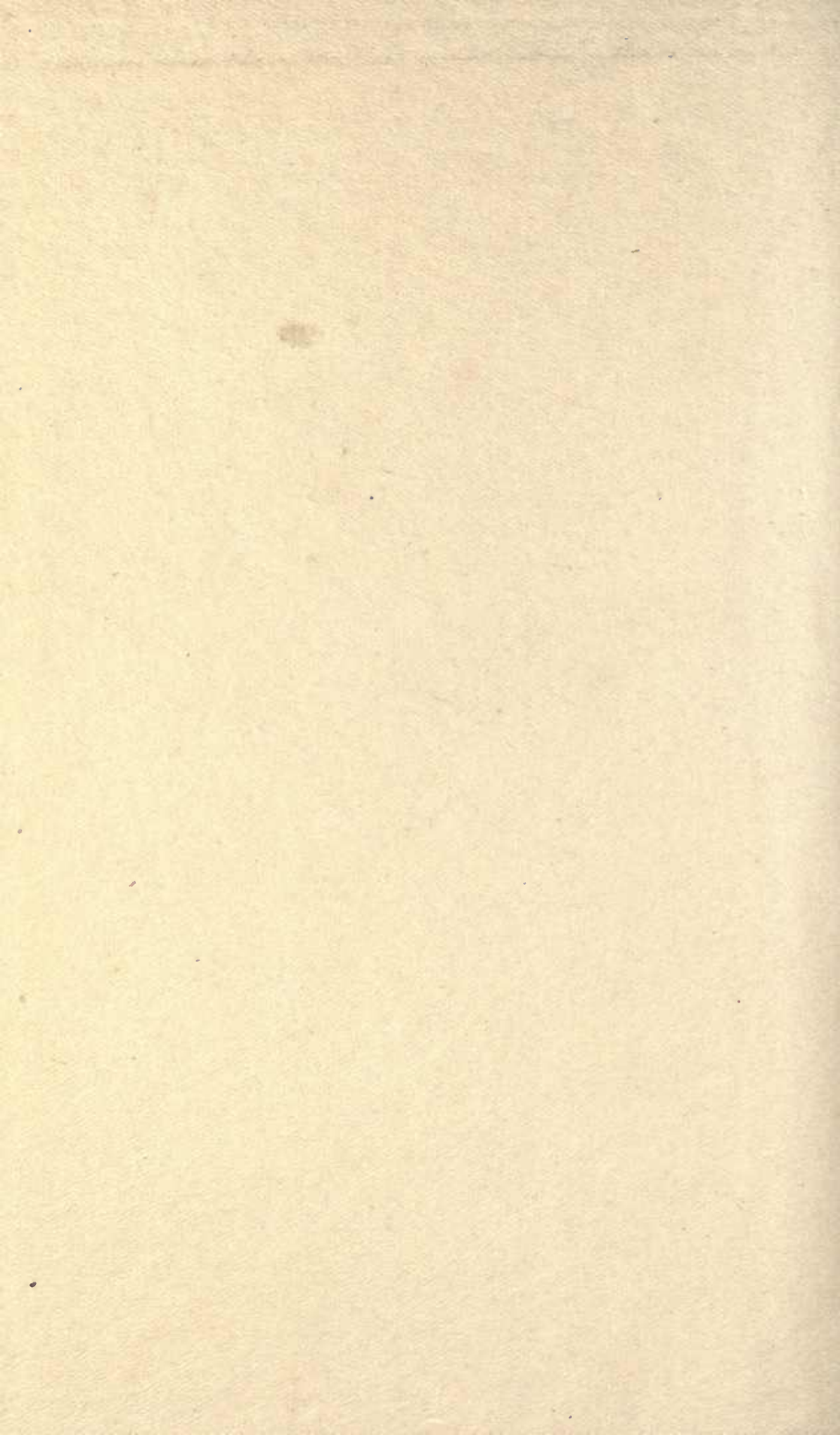
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