

OLMUTZ

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STATEMENT  
OF THE  
ATTEMPTED RESCUE  
OF  
GENERAL LAFAYETTE  
FROM  
“OLMUTZ.”

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The friends and family of the late COL. FRANCIS KINLOCH HUGER, of South Carolina, have often been requested to furnish particulars of the attempt to rescue General Lafayette from imprisonment in Austria. Many notices and letters have been at various times published in magazines and newspapers, showing the public interest in the event, and in the young American who risked his life in an effort to serve the friend of his country.

The following account is prepared from the personal narrative and conversations of COL. F. K. HUGER, by one of his family.





## ‘‘ O L M U T Z . ’’

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FRANCIS KINLOCH HUGER, the second son of Major Benjamin Huger, and of Mary Esther Kinloch, was born in Charleston, in September, 1773. Major Huger was killed during the Revolutionary War, before the lines of Charleston, when his son was about six years of age; two years later, his mother being advised to send him to England on account of the delicate state of his health, entrusted him to a stranger, a young Englishman, returning to his country, who placed him, then eight years old, at a good public school, and, except a brief visit to Carolina, when he was about eighteen years of age, he remained abroad until the completion of his education and medical studies, under the distinguished Surgeon, Mr. John Hunter, in London.

In 1794, Mr. Huger having obtained the consent of his friends to travel on the Continent, crossed over to Amsterdam; he was led by his interest in military affairs, to go to Antwerp, then the seat of war, the army under the Duke of York being actively engaged in

Flanders. He would have been pleased to have obtained some military employment, greatly preferring the profession of arms to that of medicine; but finding that impossible, and that Surgeons were much needed, he offered his services, and was engaged on the medical staff for some months, attending the crowded hospitals, and doing all in his power to succour the wounded soldiers entrusted to his care. Having at length seen them embark for their homes in England, he gladly resigned his situation, and pursued his journey to Vienna, where he found that he could procure ample means for recreation and improvement. At the coffee-house that he frequented, persons of various acquirements, character and nationalities were to be met with, among them a gentleman he made acquaintance with, soon proved of peculiar interest to him—Dr. Justis Eric Bollman, a native of Hanover, who spoke English well, and German and French fluently, and who appeared to be highly esteemed by the society of the coffee-house, for his intelligence, acquirements, and gentlemanly deportment. He occasionally made inquiries about America, its institutions, and distinguished men, and spoke of General Lafayette, and his attachment and services to the Republic—in

Mr. Huger's own words, he said "we conversed freely, and I was led to inform him that General Lafayette had first landed at my father's house on North Island, in the harbour of Georgetown, in South Carolina. The small vessel in which they had sailed from France, made the land off that part of the coast lying, as they knew, to the north of Charleston, to which port they were bound, but they feared to proceed without information to that city, which might have fallen into the hands of the British during their voyage. They sent a boat to obtain information, and observing a canoe fishing outside the breakers, desired it might be brought to their vessel. The negroes in the canoe were people of my father's, who alarmed at observing the boat make for them, endeavoured to escape to the shore, but were intercepted and carried on board the vessel; they then piloted the boat with three gentlemen in it, who were General Lafayette, Baron DeKalb and (I think) Steuben, to my father's house on the Island, which they reached about night fall. The first impression of the servants, that it was a privateer's boat, had been communicated to the family, who were soon agreeably relieved from their anxiety. These circumstances were told me by my mother. Their

guests remained with them another day and night, until a carriage and horses could be brought from the plantation, and my father accompanied them by land to Charleston."

"It was in the latter end of September or beginning of October, 1794, that Dr. Bollman called on Mr Huger, at his lodgings in Vienna; he informed him that he had been absent some days on a business of importance, which he was desirous of communicating to him, who he could at least feel certain would not betray him. He then went on to say—would first speak of himself, and informed him that he had been in Paris shortly after the breaking out of the Revolution, that he had been acquainted there with several persons, zealous and distinguished in promoting it; that some of those persons applied to him for his assistance to get M. DeNarbonne, Secretary of War, over to England, who had been proscribed, and was then concealed in Paris, assuring him that he would, by so doing, lay the numerous friends of that gentleman under eternal obligations to him. He undertook the enterprise, and succeeded in it. This brought him acquainted in England with M. DeLally Tolendal, Mr. and Mrs. Church, of New York, Major Pinckney, then the American Minister in London,

and several others. Before this, General Lafayette had withdrawn from France, and had been arrested by Prussian troops, but no certain accounts had been for some time received of him. Dr. Bollman further stated that the General's friends had engaged him to go to the Continent, and endeavour to discover his place of imprisonment, and make efforts of any kind that appeared best calculated to procure his liberation." He had discovered that General Lafayette was imprisoned in the Austrian Fortress of Olmütz; (after visiting various other places) he had recently gone to this stronghold apparently as a casual visitor; had made acquaintance with the Surgeon who had charge of the prisons, and by an adroit assertion of his knowledge that General Lafayette was then under his charge, (which was only a conjecture) induced the unwary physician to answer that the General was in fairly good health; and he even undertook to present Dr. Bollman's compliments, and the assurance that he had lately left his friends in England well. This was answered by a polite message from the General, asking further questions about his friends. The message in reply was (as intended) rather difficult for the German Doctor's memory or pronounciation, and looking about for a piece of

blank paper to write the English names on, he found (by chance) a piece in his pocket, on which he wrote with a pencil, in the Doctor's presence, showing it to him, and adding a line of apparently no consequence, when you have read this, put it in the fire, or "*mettez au feu.*" The General rightly interpreted the last words, and when alone, put the scrap of paper to the fire, instead of into it, and discovered it was closely written in lemon juice, informing him of the efforts of his English friends to rescue him, by the assistance of Dr. Bollman, who now requested some answer and information, as to the best time and mode of making the attempt, and any other particulars he could give him. Either on that or the next day, the unsuspecting Doctor carried a little book from Dr. Bollman to General Lafayette, after he had himself inspected it, requesting the General would give his opinion of the work. The book was soon returned with a polite message, and on the margin in lemon juice he found the following letter, which is here appended :

"I have no time my dear friend now to enter into the particulars of my situation, which, however, I will do by the time the trembling doctor can come back, provided you persuade him to give me your answer, or to smuggle another book to you. Let me only say, that the usual means of evasion have been so well provided against that nothing is left for us

but uncommon ones. It is true, that if the Lieutenant or the Corporal Provost were to fetch me at some hour in the morning in the General's name, I think I could get out. But it would be much easier for the Lieutenant, who can ride with me altho' he does not, or for the Corporal, who to my great satisfaction accompanies me, when we are out of town to push forward and meet another carriage with prepared horses. The scheme could not fail unless we were betrayed, which to avoid I have a plan equally easy, and you may depend upon an undoubted success. The Lieutenant is an old slavish hardened fool. The Corporal Provost, a more sensible, covetous, but treacherous and most cowardly rogue. He may be bribed, but his cowardice is such that he may prefer a little reward and no danger to a fortune with some risk. It is a thousand times better to go off in spite of him when we ride out together. We are in a phaeton, nobody with me but the little Corporal, who by the by is afflicted with a rupture, and a clumsy driver, who sometimes as to-day is left at home, and the Corporal drives me in the phaeton. We go different roads, sometimes thro' by-roads, and do not always return the same way we went; but we always go half a German mile, one league, or sometimes a full mile, two leagues from town. But suppose it half a mile, you must overtake us on horseback, as we generally drive slowly; have a trusty man with you, stop the driver. I engage to frighten the little cowardly Corporal with his own sword, I will not have the least difficulty to jump on a led horse, or the horse of a man who can ride some distance behind me. If the driver is not there, so much the better, if he is, he will do nothing but cross himself. Depend upon it, my dear sir, as you may choose your time and place, and have one or two sets of horses on the road, that nobody will think, dare or wish to hinder us; and before the slow formal General knows what we did, or what to do, we shall be safe. My friends LaTour, Moubourg and Pucy think it beyond doubt. It is for this I have asked to ride, and they have not asked it for themselves, in order that I may go out every day. The bolder it seems, and the more unexpected it is, the better it will succeed, and we may say with the poet.

“Presence of mind and courage in distress,  
Are more than armies to secure success.”



“Take care not to mistake Bournonville for Bancal for me. They ride on the days I do not, the one at two, the other at four. I wish you may have pocket pistols for me when I am on horse-back, till then I want them not, and the corporals own sword will be more than sufficient. I ardently hope for an answer my dear friend, and I will be every day ready for the execution. I am going to owe you a thousand times more than life; but do not miss this excellent opportunity; this is certainly *immanquable*, I think. And suppose these governments were to open the door, who knows what they can do.

Adieu, my dear friend, I wish you could know as I do the two men who accompany me. Write if you can by the Doctor; I can also drop a line from the phaeton, but any day you make the attempt, next Sunday or any day after that I shall be ready. Adieu.”

LAFAYETTE.

Dr. Bollman then asked Mr. Huger's assistance in attempting the liberation of General Lafayette, but did not attempt to conceal that there would be danger and difficulty in the enterprise. The offer was immediately accepted, and the comrades proceeded to carry out Dr. Bollman's well arranged plans. They tried in vain to procure a third person, and in October, (1794) left Vienna with a light travelling carriage and two riding horses, intending to appear in the character of a young Englishman and his travelling tutor, for which parts both were well fitted. Dr. Bollman taking the entire direction, and his knowledge of the language, and the roads, and all his arrangements being judiciously contrived to avoid giving

cause of suspicion to any, in that peculiarly suspicious country and period, where, as he well knew, spies of all ranks and ages in the pay of the government abounded, and confidence could be placed in none. They travelled in this way leisurely to Olmütz—the gentlemen generally riding on horseback, and their baggage and servants in their carriage, and went to the same Inn Dr. Bollman had stopped at before, saying they were now on their way to England, and acting out naturally their assumed characters. Dr Bollman informed General Lafayette of his return, and received a note from him, arranging that they should intercept him on his return from his drive, and that when they met, and bowed to him he would draw a white handkerchief across his brow. All was arranged, and the friends waited two days—viewed the public works and places about the town, and went in the evening to the theatre, and watched for the morning General Lafayette would drive out into the Country, as usual. They paid their bill at the hotel, as if about to continue their journey—sent their carriage on ahead to a village called Hoff, several miles on their road, and directed their servants to wait for them there, and mounting their horses, passed through one of the gates into the country.

They had procured passports, and taken every possible precaution. They were not able to take a led horse (as it has been suggested they did) because it would have excited suspicion, and they had tried and ascertained that one of their horses would carry double. Their plan was that General Lafayette should ride one horse and his two friends follow on the other, until near Hoff, when Mr. Huger should get off and walk, while the two gentlemen would go to the Inn, and Dr. Bollman would order out his carriage to the door. When the two gentlemen were seated in it, Dr. Bollman would recollect something left, and dispatch the servant to seek for it, while Mr. Huger, who would be at hand, was to have quietly stepped into the coachman's place, and driven off, leaving the groom to his fate; and once off, the rest would have been clear. But to return to the scene two or three miles from the Fortress of Olmütz. The young men rode so far without seeing the phaeton they expected, that they thought they must have missed it, and returned towards the town, as it was possible some different road might have been taken that day, and they were arranging how they might account for their return; but on their way they saw such a party approaching, as they expected, a phaeton with

two gentlemen in it. They bowed, and the signal was given. Both continued for a while, their opposite course, till presently, the two horsemen turned and followed the phaeton at some little distance. The Town, or Fortress of Olmütz is situated in a level country, with fields lying around, divided by ditches, and not even trees or hedges to conceal what might be passing on the roads. The town is enclosed by walls, well fortified, and surmounted by canon, sentinels and soldiers in every direction, and zealously guarded with all the vigilance and activity necessary to keep up the most complete military establishment. So that two unaided young strangers should in any degree succeed in such an undertaking, is almost marvelous. It was market day, and many passengers on foot and in carts and carriages were on the road to the town.

Up to this time, be it observed, Dr. Bollman had been the leader and manager in every respect, for which he seemed peculiarly well fitted, having provided for every contingency with the greatest care and coolest deliberation and resource. Now the leadership was suddenly transferred, in consequence of Dr. Bollman's being very nearsighted, (glasses were not then in use) and all was dark before him, or

a short distance ahead, and he chafed not a little at this personal difficulty. He enquired, "What are they doing now? Are we not too far off?" proposing several times to gallop up to them, Mr. Huger urged delay. "They are going steadily along the road; there is a large party on the road now, passing the phæton. Let them get as far as possible from the fort. They are now slowly trotting along the road." "Well, now is surely the time," said the blind man. "Not yet" being repeated, seemed to rouse his anxiety and excitement to a great pitch, and his ardent young comrade could scarcely control his own feelings and temper, while endeavouring to act with coolness and judgment. At length he said, "now they have stopped the phæton, and General Lafayette and the officer have got out; they seem as if going to walk." "Then *this* must be the time for us." "Not yet," answered his cooler comrade. "Oh! Huger, I trust your heart does not fail you now?" said the usually quiet, composed man. "No indeed, but we must do what is best for success. Now General Lafayette has drawn the officer on a little foot-path that runs above the high-road, holding by his arm; he seems edging off towards the fields; the phæton is slowly following along the

road, the soldier and driver only in it;" presently Huger exclaimed, "he signs to us," as General Lafayette shook a white handkerchief with his disengaged hand, at his back. The excited young men put spurs to their horses and dashed up together. (Had they slowly trotted, or walked up, all might have been very different in result, as Mr. Huger said afterwards.) As General Lafayette heard the clatter of their horses' feet on the hard road, he seized the hilt of the sword worn by the officer, and tried to draw it from the scabbard. The latter immediately grasped the blade by both hands, which were cut by it, and they were struggling for the sword when the riders dashed up. Bollman dismounting first, held out the bridle of his horse to Mr. Huger, who failed to catch it, as the horses were alarmed at the flashing of the sword, or the struggle, and swerved at the moment. The horse dashed aside and galloped off. Huger quickly dismounted, passed his arm through his bridle, and joined the group. The officer had quitted the sword and seized General Lafayette by the throat, and as Bollman rushed against him, he fell, but dragged down the General with him, who faintly cried "*il m'etrangle,*" as Huger seized the hands of the officer and tore them

from the General's throat, while Dr. Bollman held down him on whose arm Mr. Huger had fallen on both knees, as he threw it out to catch at the General. Roaring out at the top of his voice, and Bollman trying to stop him, thrust his hand in his mouth, and was severely bitten. Those in the phaeton did not attempt to come to the rescue, and the driver sat still and gazed. The soldier presently ran back towards the town, shouting and waving his cap, to give the alarm. The two young men consulted a moment. Mr. Huger gave General Lafayette his horse, and a pair of pocket pistols he had brought at his request, and said to him, go to Hoff, one of us will follow you directly. General Lafayette got on the horse and moved off a little way, returned to the two men who were still holding down the officer, and asked again, is there anything I can do? No—go to Hoff, Mr. Huger repeated; we will follow; (had he only spoken in French, and said "*allez a Hoff*," all might have been different, as it seemed the name of that village was unknown to the General, and he thought he was only told to go off.)

The two young men agreed to rise suddenly and release the prostrate officer, who struggled to his feet, glared at them a moment, and then



ran off after General Lafayette, who was then it the high-road cantering away. Mr. Huger had seen the horse which had escaped, caught by a lad at some distance, and without a word, set off running towards it, spite of Dr. Bollman's amazed enquiries, shouted after him as why he was going towards the town? He gave the lad who caught the horse, a piece of money, who ran by his side and helped Dr. Bollman up behind him, at his request, and they proceeded to regain the road. Passengers looked at them curiously as they passed, and heads popped up over the fields, but none offered them any resistance. When they reached the high-road Mr. Huger saw General Lafayette at a distance steadily cantering on—their horse which had become excessively restive, kicked up violently, and threw Dr. Bollman. Huger advised Dr. Bollman to mount in the saddle and let him ride behind, as perhaps the spurs had touched him, which the Doctor wore; and they tried the change; but soon the animal became again restive under its double burden, and could hardly be made to move on rapidly; and presently it put its fore feet in a little ditch by the roadside, and kicked up violently, throwing both the riders. Dr. Bollman was stunned, and it took Huger a little while to assist him, and

ascertain that he was not materially injured. The horse had galloped off, and was seen quietly grazing at some little distance in the field. Mr. Huger went to catch him, which he easily did, and during that short walk, said he made up his mind what he ought to do; (and this was the only occasion he had to shew the disinterested generosity, and simple directness of purpose, of his brave unselfish character.) By this time all the country was alarmed; heads were seen on all sides, looking out for the cause of the commotion. Alarm guns were firing from the battlements; a train of soldiers were seen issuing from the fortress; the crowd on the road stared at them, but as yet no one had attempted to speak to, or stop them. On returning with the horse, Huger assisted Dr. Bollman into the saddle, and then told him that he must proceed *alone* with all speed; that it was useless to endeavour farther to make that horse carry both, and that he would endeavour on foot to follow, but positively refused to impede their chance of success by further trial. The amazed Doctor expostulated—said if only one can ride, why should I go, instead of you, and leave you to destruction? How can I answer it to your friends? But he was answered, do not think of me, or my friends;

think only of General Lafayette. You are in every way the best fitted to assist him, and I positively refuse to impede our chance of success, by attempting to mount that horse again. Thus urged, with evident pain and reluctance, yet convinced by such clear reasons, Dr. Bollman put spurs to his horse, and was quickly out of sight.

Mr. Huger walked as fast as he could, in the direction he had seen his friends depart; sometimes stopped to breathe and rest a moment, and looked around for some place of concealment, in vain, then pushed on, hoping to reach a hill he saw in the distance, crowned with wood, thinking that if he could reach it, he might conceal himself in the wood until night. Several horsemen seemed coming up, as if in pursuit, and as one approached him, he jumped down into a dry ditch nearly breast high, which ran along the side of the road, hoping the man might pass him by as he walked along in it. As the man jumped from his horse and looked down at him, he saw that it was not a soldier, but a peasant, and thinking this his last chance, he sprang out of the ditch, seizing the horse's bridle with one hand, while he held out in the other what money and gold pieces he had in his pocket, crying out in German "give me

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your horse." The man clutched the money, but resisted and would not give up his horse—two or three others riding up together, it was evident all struggle would be useless. The soldiers were now at hand, and he surrendered without further effort. They placed him between two rows of fixed bayonets; and with an ever increasing croud of spectators, marched back to the fortress.

It is now time to turn to the other parties in this adventure. General Lafayette, it will be remembered, had left his two deliverers on the ground and ridden off at their repeated request, not knowing exactly the direction, but hoping they would soon overtake him. He had not proceeded far before he came to a fork in the road, and took one he guessed to be in the direction of the frontiers. It proved to be the wrong one, in which he continued to ride rapidly for many miles; at length when his good horse was much jaded, he approached a village nearly thirty miles off, and he determined to procure, if possible, another horse, and addressed himself to an honest looking countryman in the outskirts of the village, stating that he was in want of a guide and a horse to take him on his hurried journey, and inquiring if the man would assist to procure them, without his

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entering the village. This the man undertook, and directed him to proceed along a lane at a little distance, promising to return to him at the end of it. The peasant then ran to the police, and gave information of the stranger, and his request for a horse. General Lafayette had not advanced far along the lane before he was met and surrounded by a party of soldiers, and immediately carried before a Magistrate. But he did not lose his presence of mind; he told a plausible story of his being in the country upon business, but had been detained and had lost his way; had ridden hard, as he was very anxious to reach his home on the frontiers before night, and told his story with such coolness and apparent accuracy, that the Magistrate seemed to hesitate, when a young man among the spectators in the Court-room called out, "I believe that is General Lafayette—I am almost sure I saw him when he was arrested at Neisse." Then decided the Magistrate, on the bare possibility that such is the case, you must remain my prisoner till we hear from Olmutz. There being no farther hope, therefore, General Lafayette calmly acknowledged his identity, requesting some refreshment, and his evening cup of coffee, and was the next day taken back to his old quarters in Olmutz. This treatment he reports, was much the same as before.

Dr. Bollman arrived alone at Hoff. After waiting as long as he could venture to delay, in hopes one of the others might arrive, towards night took the carriage, and the course the party had intended to pursue, crossed into Silesia, and lingered about the frontier, particularly near the mines of Tarrowitz, hoping General Lafayette might have escaped, and be concealed among them. But he was arrested at the Village of Waldenburg, and after some delay and correspondence with the government officers, he was handed over to the Austrians, and re-conducted to Olmütz, where he was put into a separate cell, but treated in all particulars in the same manner as Mr. Huger had already been, for nearly three weeks.

To resume the account of Mr. Huger's arrest:

Wearied and almost exhausted, he was carried at once before a Magistrate in the Town Hall, a large room which was filled with officers, soldiers, and spectators; an interpreter was assigned him, who could speak both French and English, and translated his answers into German. This was Professor Passi, who always proved a good friend to him.

The room was presently cleared of spectators; the Military Commandant, Civil Magis-

trate, and others forming his Court, and he was placed at the end of a long table, and questioned by the Magistrate; his answers translated by the interpreter were written down by a Secretary. Feeling that their enterprise had failed, and that others might be injured by his allowing them to be suspected, he thought it best to tell the whole and exact truth, narrated the facts from the first conception of the enterprise, explained that they had no accomplices—no assistants whatever, and that no parties were aware of the design of Dr. Bollman and himself, but General Lafayette. He was evidently not believed, and afterwards heard that all whom he had named in any way, had got into trouble on their account, and that the unsuspecting Medical Director of the prison had lost his place.

At the end of the examination a commitment was made out. He was searched, and his money, watch, knife, and even pencil taken from him. A file of soldiers received him, and took him again through the streets to the prison. Not going up the steps, but after passing through several rooms on the ground floor, stopped before one with double doors and huge locks, which it seemed might be called the felon's den. This was a large room



with several occupants, all in chains, some fastened to the wall, others to a long bar, so that they could shuffle from one end of the room to the other. Each had a sort of long bench, as seat and bed, some straw on it, and a thick rug, as if to serve for mattress and blanket; a pitcher of water, and a loaf of black bread placed near. He was ironed around one ankle and wrist, and the chains fastened high above his head, to a staple in the wall over his bed: Thus provided, he was left to find what repose he could. His companions appeared to be all low criminals, dirty and repulsive in appearance; he understood enough of the language to discover that their talk was of a similar character. They questioned him about himself, and enquired into the nature of the offense which brought him there; and on his explaining, as well as he could, they said, he thought, with increased respect for him: Oh! yours is a political crime; this is not the place for you; they will not keep you here long, which he was not sorry to hear, not then understanding that they thought he might soon be elevated to the scaffold. He felt terribly wearied and excited, and longed for quiet and sleep, but could only obtain snatches of rest, and hardly of forgetfulness, while the horrid forms and faces around him, with their

German chattering and wrangling kept up through the whole night, seemed to him a hideous sort of nightmare. The only refreshment was frequent drafts of water from his pitcher; for, feverish and excited, he could find no rest. The next morning he met with a little act from one of the convicts, which he mentioned, to prove that everywhere some touch of goodness and kindness may be found, even in a felon's den.

The next morning a panel in the prison door was pushed open, and a man looked in and asked, who wants breakfast? All told their different wants, and gave little pieces of money for the purchase. The man then asked the new comer if he did not wish for something? Oh! yes, a cup of coffee or chocolate—something to drink he very much wished. You have money I suppose, said the man? Plenty in my trunk, but they have taken all I had about me, was the answer. That's a pity! and the panel closed. The man presently returned with the various portions, and again asked Mr. Huger if he was sure he had no money at all to get coffee with, and being convinced, shut the panel, again, saying, that's a pity, leaving the youth to his miserable prison fare. Presently a large, coarse-looking man in double irons

shuffled up to him, holding out a roll of nice white bread, saying, here, young man, eat this, you are more used to such things than I am, so I give it to you, for I do not need it. He thanked the man and accepted the kindness, but on breaking off a piece, found his parched lips refused all solid food, so returned it to the donor, who seemed to understand him, and said, I know how you feel, but added as if in pity, you will soon get used to this sort of life.

Another day and night he spent in this wretched place. The following day they brought his new suit of prison clothes, which had been made for him, and took away his own. They were of coarse woolen cloth, of a peculiar red brick-dust color, (both conspicuous and well known). Then he was taken to a solitary cell, partly above ground, with no window; but a slit high up admitted a dim light. It had the same kind of long bench, with straw and rug, and he was chained in the same way, fastened to the wall, and left alone.

Then followed daily examinations before the Magistrate. At first he was led through the streets chained, and guarded by soldiers; but afterwards the Court was held in a different part of the prison buildings, and he was taken there by the jailor and one or two attendants,

through a covered way. During these examinations the effort was to make him confess some crime, or acknowledge some plot, and the cross-questioning, to try and confuse him was evident, and annoying. They signified they could compel him to speak the truth, which meant, they could use torture to extort it. His indignation and disgust at such a one-sided trial was openly expressed, and he urged them to bring witnesses—to shew him his accomplices, and to tell him of what he was accused. Always answering his judges with the same assertion, I have told you the whole truth, and never could be made to vary in his account. His interpreter, Professor Passi, he was aware, often softened his expressions of indignation at his treatment.

On one occasion after some weeks of these wearisome and useless examinations, while waiting in an anti-room for his trial to begin, Mr. Huger spoke to Professor Passi in French, of the harshness and injustice with which he was treated—thrown in a dungeon, and chained like a criminal; deprived of his clothes and property, and harassed by examinations where his word was disbelieved, and no witnesses or accusers brought to confront him, and he spoke in earnest and irritated disapproval of the course pursued by the Court. He was listened to by

an officer whom he had before observed at many of his examinations—a venerable, fine looking old soldier, who now spoke to him in French, saying, you speak young man as if you were not guilty of a very grave offense against the law, and yet you have voluntarily confessed such in violating the decrees of the Emperor, and injuring his subjects.

Mr. Huger answered, that every man would think himself right in attempting to set aside a cruel and unjust decree, such as that which deprived General Lafayette of his liberty; but he was not aware, that by an act of his, he had injured any of the Emperor's subjects. You have done so, however, to some, and also to myself, answered this benevolent and distinguished looking officer, Count D'Arco, who explained farther: I am the commandant of this fortress; I am a Venetian by birth, and have for years been in the employ of the Emperor of Austria; I have won my way to positions of trust and honor, have held high places in the confidence of those above me, and been considered an officer of merit. This long established reputation you have injured; your act of rescuing a prisoner from a military post under my command, has certainly tarnished, if not destroyed my reputation. On Mr. Huger's

expressing his regret at the injury he had unknowingly inflicted, the Count assured him he perfectly understood and accepted the apology to himself personally, but that he only spoke of himself to shew the extent of the offence which he had committed, and added, if I were in trouble, and needed a friend, I would wish that friend should be an American.

On another occasion, some time after this, on again meeting Count D'Arco, while waiting for the continued examinations, Mr. Huger again expressed his annoyance at the injustice with which he was treated, and showed some irritation and dislike to the Count's assertion that he might depend upon the clemency of the Emperor, asking how he could expect clemency from one who would not show justice to Gen. Lafayette? He was answered: "You speak like one in a fever—do you know what is the punishment awarded to the crime which you acknowledge—of trying to free a State prisoner?" "No!" "Well, the penalty is DEATH!" A solemn announcement, which silenced, and for the time astonished and overcame the youth, who could only bow to it, hardly hearing the words of kindly interest of the dignified, noble-looking old soldier, who still bade him hope in the clemency of the Emperor.

He had never before fully understood or felt his position. He had not supposed his life would be taken, and on thinking out the matter for himself, he still believed it probable that Dr. Bollman and himself would not be executed; still this conversation showed him clearly what others thought of his situation, and he no longer made complaints of his treatment, or indulged in petulant remarks upon the conduct of others; but determined to bear all they could inflict, with cool and quiet courage, satisfied with the acquittal in his own heart of crime, and content with the motive and conduct which had caused him that wearisome imprisonment.

He heard, with regret, of the death of Count D'Arco, before he was liberated.

In about three months, when it was discovered that there was no political plot, of which these young men had been at first suspected, and it was decided that they were only to be tried for forcing a military post, their situation was improved.

Mr. Huger was removed from the small dungeon to a higher and better apartment above ground, and less damp, having one window high up on the wall, admitting light, and one star could sometimes be seen, but neither sun or moon; the chains were longer,



and admitted of his taking three steps, the length of his cell. This was all the exercise he had for about three months more, after which he was allowed to walk, at fixed hours, alone in the yard. His fare also was improved—once or twice a week a piece of meat, a mutton bone or some broth, was added to the dry bread and water, and always meat on Sunday.

Still no books were allowed, and his request for his trunk and property constantly refused; but still he felt they were more kindly considered.

His jailor would sometimes chat with him a little while, or would send his wife to take his meals, when he would try to make her talk to him, telling her he was endeavoring to learn her language. She told him Dr. Bollman was in the room just over his, and he often got her to take up a message of inquiry, and sometimes she would bring back his reply; but so strict were the rules, and all requests regarded with so much suspicion, that it was difficult to manage any sort of communication; however, they did sometimes effect it; they had somehow agreed that Mr. Huger *must* write a letter, and get the jailor to post it. Mr. Huger wanted to ask some question with regard to it, and got the jailor's wife to take up to Bollman a black

silk neck handkerchief of his, which he had prepared before hand, having printed on the inside a few words with a bit of white mortar taken from his wall, he showed the young woman this handkerchief, and asked her to take it up to his friend and show him the three knots he put in it before her, saying *she* could judge; it could do no harm to her, or any human being, to show that knotted handkerchief, and she agreed, being amused, apparently, at being taught to say an English word, and repeat "Examine," when she gave it to him. This was done, and somehow Dr. Bollman got a little scrap of dingy paper, sent Huger, and shortly afterwards let down a little ink in a walnut shell from the window above, which he reached with some difficulty, and the following letter was written on the scrap of paper, directed "Mr. Pinckney, American Minister, London." It was put into another cover by the jailor, and redirected, (and is now extant) :

"I have just a moment to inform you of my health, and entreat you to write to my mother, and enclose this scrap of paper for her comfort. Our sentence is not yet known, though I have been flattered with the hope of being shortly free. Mr. Bollman is in the same prison, but has been prevented from giving full

accounts of the circumstances that caused our failure. Mons. de LaF. would certainly have escaped, but was known at a small town where he changed his horse ; he had already mounted a fresh one when stopped. His treatment, however, is the same as before. Bollman is in chains, and we are not allowed to see each other. Don't forget us. F. K. H.

*“ Olmütz, Jan. 5th, 1795.”*

Mr. Huger's money was, as has been said, taken from him when he was captured, but they were enabled to bribe the jailor to assist them, because Dr. Bollman had very adroitly secreted some of his own. When brought back to Olmütz, knowing that he would be searched, and probably deprived of everything, he put a gold piece into the palm of each hand, and on drawing off his gloves laid them, with the gold inside of them, on the table beside his hat. They remained untouched until he put them on again when he was led to his prison. Thus he had something from the first, and afterwards received through the jailor remittances from his friends outside, and by paying this man a little in hand, and making large promises for the future, they were able to secure his assistance in many ways, and to induce him to forward

this letter, in which he tells of the welfare of others as well as of his own, and by mentioning that Bollman was in chains, leaves his friends to infer that his own treatment was no less severe.

Several weeks elapsed, however, without their receiving any answer, and Dr. Bollman told the jailor that he must take another letter to a different post office, as the first had probably failed or miscarried. The man hesitated at performing so dangerous a service for a merely promised reward, but Bollman threatened that if he did not take the second, he would inform against him for having sent the first letter, and promised a still higher bribe if he would successfully forward the present one. The man at last yielded, procured a larger piece of coarse paper, which was also addressed—

FOR MR. PINCKNEY,

*Minister Plenipo. of the United States of America,  
London.*

OLMUTZ, 17th Feb'y, 1795.

*My Dear Sir :*

I have once more an opportunity of writing you by secret conveyance, and have the satisfaction to inform you that our prospects begin to brighten a little. After three months of severe and close confinement, when we expect-

ed to learn something of our fate, we were at first greatly mortified to find ourselves turned over to the criminal judge, to be tried for having forced the guard of a fortress, and in that situation we are at present, daily expecting to undergo our examination, and however severe the punishment the law inflicts upon our crime, (if I may call it by such a name,) there are so many circumstances in our favor, that we have just grounds to expect a mild sentence. Mr. Lafayette is, I hear, well, and his treatment not more severe than before this unsuccessful attempt to recover his liberty. It is some consolation that it failed from accidents which it was not possible to guard against. First, from our being separated, and from the horse on which Bollman and myself rode falling with us, and, in consequence, Mr. Lafayette mistook his way—he rode hard, however, had reached a town thirty miles hence, had passed himself for a merchant, and procured a fresh horse, when he was known by a clerk who had seen him when transported from Neisse, and secured with the assistance of the persons present. From this place he had only twenty miles to reach the frontier, which had he once gained, he would probably have escaped, as the pursuit took a different direction in following Bollman.

Yours, &c.,            F. K. HUGER.

The Court renewed its examinations on the new subject of accusation. Soon after they were allowed to meet in the presence of others, and Professor Passi, their interpreter, always evinced his friendly interest, and took every opportunity he judged discreet to converse with them in French, and told them they had friends who were making exertions in their favor. They afterwards discovered that he particularly alluded to the nobleman in whose family he was a tutor, a Count Mitrowsky, who had taken pains to get their case favorably represented at Court, and had not spared his money to influence the Judge to obtain as lenient a verdict as possible in their case, and procured for them several little indulgences. Still the tedious delays of the examination and trial dragged on for some months more.

The court-room was in the same building as the jail, and sometimes Mr. Huger would be taken to it by the jailor alone, or with only one assistant. He had by this time learned to express himself in German, and understood what was addressed to him. He was on easy terms with those around, as they took the tone of the officers, by whom they saw these prisoners were treated with some consideration.

One day, as they were passing along these rooms, the jailor said: "You were asking me of the punishments here—this is one;" and he pointed to a large ring in the floor—he raised by it a square of stone, and bade his companion look in, telling him a criminal had lived and died there. It was a square cell, in which a man could neither stand or lie down, but must always sit upright, and even there a ring on one side, from which hung a chain, showed that the hapless wretch, even in that living tomb, bore iron fetters, till his release. The jailor went on to show instruments of torture, and on being asked, said he had never acted as an executioner, jocularly adding, but it may be my fate to operate upon you, and I will show you how it is done.

He explained the process by taking from the wall a straight wide sword, sharp on both sides; the criminal would be made to kneel down, with his eyes bandaged—the executioner putting the sword-hilt to his own waist, and swaying it from side to side, once or twice, should give a sharp decisive blow, which ought at one stroke to take the head clear off; but he had known bunglers to take two, or even three strokes. He hoped he would always be more successful. He placed a candle on a chair and acted the agree-

able scene, observing that he had never performed it in earnest, but if he did, he hoped he might take a head off as he did the top of that candle, without oversetting it.

Some time before their sentence was known, they were allowed twice a week to walk in the court-yard an hour each, an indulgence they very greatly enjoyed, procured for them, they had reason to believe, by the interests of the kind friends their misfortunes had created for them.

At length their sentence was made known to them.

One month's captivity in light irons—to labor on the public works—and afterwards to be banished from the Austrian dominions.

They were informed it was universally considered a very mild sentence. Mr. Huger said he would consider the order to labor very much more tolerable than the inactive monotony of his confinement. Perhaps for this reason, or by the same kind influence which certainly operated wonderfully in their favor, it was soon commuted to fourteen days further confinement and banishment.

The two young men were together when this was announced to them, and their heartfelt rejoicings may be imagined. Professor Passi,



who now often came to them, told them he and other friends advised that they should depart immediately after they had signed the paper, promising to observe the order of banishment. On the day of departure, he told them their passports were ready, a carriage ordered, and all arrangements made before-hand. Their trunks and clothes (untouched) were restored to them, and they were well pleased to recognize their former selves, though hardly able to know their own faces when a glass was first shown them. Now, after nearly eight months close imprisonment, though thinner and graver, they were both in good health. Professor Passi accompanied them to the house of their unknown but generous friend, Count Mitrowski, who introduced them to his daughters, two young ladies just grown up, who addressed them in English, a delicate courtesy they felt was very charming.

A little collation had been prepared for them, and they seemed disposed to linger; but their excellent friend, Professor Passi, was evidently anxious they should depart as speedily as possible, and informed them that post-horses had been ordered to be ready for them all along the road, until they reached the frontier, where they arrived without delay or impediment.

During Mr. Huger's captivity, his friends in America had endeavoured to procure the assistance of our Government; the following letter is of interest on the subject :

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

September 16th, 1795.

SIR:

The President of the United States, now at Mount Vernon, has sent me your letter to him, dated New Port, Rhode Island, of the 6th inst., which he has directed me to acknowledge. The President's benevolence, and his respect for the connections of Mr. F. K. Huger, would prompt him to adopt any practicable measure for obtaining his release, but besides that the cause of Mr. Huger's confinement would render an application delicate and difficult, the United States having no public functionary in the Austrian dominions, where General Lafayette and Mr. Huger are in durance, the President knows not any channel through which a movement of the kind could at present be made.

I am, respectfully, your obd't servt.,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

TO FRANCIS KINLOCH, ESQ.

That the President did not look with indifference or disapprobation upon the effort of his young countryman, although diplomatic necessities had prevented his interference in the matter, was distinctly expressed. Soon after Mr. Huger's release he returned to America, and being in Philadelphia, where President Washington then resided, was invited to dine with him. It was a strictly family party, of only five or six persons, and after dinner the General spoke to him of the effort which he had made to liberate his friend, saying that he had watched with deep interest the whole event, and wished that it had met with the success that it deserved.

Those few words of approval, uttered in his own reserved and quiet manner, were deemed a gratifying reward by the young man.

A pamphlet was published by Dr. Bollman, dated Dresden, August 1st, 1795, addressed to Mrs. Church, London. This lady was one of General Lafayette's American friends, who took deep interest in the success of Dr. Bollman's enterprise, which had been planned by the General's friends in London. He gives very much the same account, though briefly.

Dr. Bollman came to America a few years after Mr. Huger's return home, whom he visited, and travelled through several of the

States, seeking some business or position, which he at length found in Philadelphia, where he married, but died in a few years, leaving two young daughters.

In the Magazine of American History, (edited by John A. Stephens,) June, 1881, may be found a translation of some of General Lafayette's letters, and of the examination of Mr. Huger before the Court of Olmütz, which singularly resemble his own account of the transaction. These were procured from the Imperial Archives in Vienna.

The following letter from General Lafayette, written on his liberation, about three years later, will be found of interest:

similar letter [c. Sept 20, 1797] in SC Hi  
(copy)

LETTER OF GENERAL LAFAYETTE TO COL. F. HUGER  
AFTER HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON.

HAMBURG, (the date is wanting.)

*My Dear Huger:*

The same friend whose liberties you so generously undertook and whose beating heart turns to you in the moment he regains his life and liberty, here addresses you, and hastens to offer you the tribute of his inexpressible and unbounded gratitude.

What you have done for me and how you have done it, binds me forever to you with the ties of esteem and love.

The sufferings and danger which you have borne with so much courage and spirit did not find in me so much fortitude, and in the midst of fear and anxiety from which I could not free myself from the day of your capture to that of your release. I was so cruelly tortured by my apprehensions, that it

would probably have cost me my life, if the blessed news of your liberation had not reached me, in spite of the orders to conceal it from me. It would be in vain even to undertake to describe to you my feelings.

How hardly they have treated you, my admirable friend! I fear that your sufferings during your captivity may have injured your health. I adjure you to advise me in detail of your welfare, in which I am so much concerned. I wish I could discuss with you the exact circumstances of your adventure and to acknowledge the generous and self-sacrificing part you have had in it. To leave you at the time and before I saw you mounted on horseback was impossible, and I returned when your failure to come caused me to fear that something had happened to you.

Then again I supposed that while I was in search of you, you had taken another road, and tho' I saw clearly that it would be better for me to leave the Austrian territory, yet it would have been impossible for me to have continued on my way if your fate had been known to me, and as I was forced to do so, I could not regret that I was recaptured.

You knew that twelve months later my wife and daughters shared my captivity. Through them I had the consolation of hearing from you:—they thought they would be permitted to write you from Olmutz, and I hoped through them to be able to express to you and to Bollman my gratitude. I need not tell you how great our disappointment, since you must have heard that the few lines the mother ventured to write to her son, and which she sent to the American Consul, were stopped in Vienna and returned.

My two friends Latour Maubourg and Pucy beg me to lay at your feet the expression of their esteem and love, which they will be proud to feel for you at their dying moment. It was on the 19th September, five months after hostilities had ended, that we were liberated.

This had been demanded upon the part of France on the first day of the conferences at Leobon, and promises were made but not fulfilled; repeated applications were repeatedly evaded. At last my former adjutant, Louis Rouen, was sent by Bonaparte and Clarke to Vienna to put an end to these

procrastinations, and altho' we had shortly before declined some propositions that had been made us, it was agreed to bring us here, where we were to be delivered into American hands, it having been previously stipulated that we were to leave the German territory within ten days.

But since the health of my wife does not admit of our embarking at this advanced season we design to settle during the winter in Danish territory—probably in Holstein—which although a German province belongs to the King of Denmark, a friend of the Republic, and a very independant power.

My health is better than I expected and although I am still weak and exhausted yet I hope soon to recuperate. My two friends, and especially Pucy, are much more affected than myself, but I trust they will soon recover. Of our servants, one is in a condition that causes anxiety, the other has suffered a good deal, but is improving. My daughters are doing tolerably well. My wife has for the last fifteen months been in a lamentable condition. Fresh air and exercise, perhaps, would have benefitted her, but these were denied her. She is very much emaciated and weak.

The malady that formerly affected the arm has now settled in one of the legs, fortunately the inner parts have remained free from it, the extremities only being affected. All the doctors agree that it would be madness to cross the ocean before she is somewhat improved, and therefore we intend to establish a common hospital and devote ourselves to our recuperation.

You see, my dear friend, I set you the example of being very circumstantial, and I hope you will not conceal from me the slightest thing that concerns my hero and benefactor.

I need not tell you that the joy I feel at my liberty has been lessened by the news, that troubles have arisen between the Republic and the United States. The exact circumstances are entirely unknown to me, but I am sure that nothing can be more impolitic for both parties, and that it is my warmest wish to see everything amicably adjusted. It ought never to have happened. I hope all will be well. Would to God I could be of any assistance. Farewell, my dear Huger. My regards to all our friends in your section of the United States.

When shall I have the supreme happiness of seeing you again, that I may recall to myself with you all the circumstances that are so honorable for you and so inestimable for me:— all the circumstances of your noble, good and admirable conduct in the most generous undertaking I have ever heard of.

When shall I be able to express to you even the smallest part of my esteem and gratitude, with which your personal character, your heroic friendship and your sacrifices for me, inspire in me and which bind me to you forever with all the feelings that can glow in a heart filled with gratitude and love.

Your eternally devoted and grateful

LAFAYETTE.

Immediately on his liberation, Mr. Huger returned to England, but soon hastened to rejoin his friends in America. By their desire he remained in Philadelphia to complete his medical education, and there obtained a diploma, but never practiced.

Not long after his return to Carolina, when about to commence the business of a Rice planter, on the Waccamaw River, he was much gratified at receiving; unsolicited, the commission of a Captain in the United States Army, with orders to join his regiment in New York, on the approach of the French War, in 1798, which happily proved a bloodless hostility, and in a few years he resigned.

He married the second daughter of General Thomas Pinckney, in 1802, and led for many years a prosperous and private life at the high hills of Santee, his summer home, near States-

burg, always declining all offers of public position, although he twice served in the Legislature of the State.

At the commencement of hostilities with Great Britain, in 1812, he offered his services to the United States, received the commission of a Colonel, and was placed on the staff of General Thomas Pinckney, who was in command of the Carolinas and Georgia, and served until the cessation of hostilities in 1815, when he gladly returned to his home.

On General Lafayette's last visit to this country in 1824, Col. Huger met him in New York; it seems to have afforded great pleasure to both to meet, and renew the personal intercourse that had been so brief between them. Of course neither could have recognized the other, as they had never met, but for those few moments on the plains of Olmutz, and although they had frequently corresponded, there were many interesting details they were glad to discuss together. Col. Huger said he had never learnt till then, what a very narrow escape they had, by leaving Olmutz as soon as liberated. They had hardly crossed the frontier before an order was received from Vienna, to quash the proceedings of the Court, and hold the prisoners for a new trial, the result of which would



probably have been very different, as it was known the Emperor was displeased with so lenient a decree; and Mr. Huger said it then made him shudder, after near thirty years of happy home life, to hear from General Lafayette how imminent was the fate he had so feared for them. He told, that they would probably have been doomed to imprisonment for life, known only to their jailors or keepers by a sign or a number, and thus their very names be erased from the world, making it impossible for their friends ever to trace them. They would have been taken at night, closely guarded, from one prison to another in the Austrian dominions, and so have passed the remainder of their hopeless lives.

Col. Huger, by request of General Lafayette, accompanied him and several of his friends to Yorktown, where a public reception was given him, to commemorate his last military service on our shores.

In the Spring of the next year Col. Huger re-joined General Lafayette in Columbia, and accompanied him to Charleston, where he, his son George Washington, and his friend Mr. LeVasseur, became the guests of the city. Apartments were furnished for them in St. Andrew's Hall, where they were handsomely

entertained for a week, and every possible attention, both public and private was shewn, including a dinner, given by the Cincinnati Society, and a grand reception, ending in a ball, at the theatre in Broad Street.

During this visit General Lafayette frequently expressed the warmest regard and admiration for Col. Huger, and when alone with him, took occasion to speak of the unexpected and generous gift just made him by the Congress of the United States, of lands in Florida, and said it would afford him much additional gratification could he be allowed to transfer to the name of his friend, a portion of these lands, as a useful provision for him and his family. The kind offer was thankfully but decidedly declined, Col. Huger saying he had property sufficient for his daughters, and would teach his sons to work for themselves.

This graceful unostentatious act of General Lafayette's, it is proper should be here recorded. When these guests proceeded on their journey, Col. Huger and several gentlemen accompanied them to Edisto Island, Beaufort and Savannah. The journey was continued to Florida, whence General Lafayette returned to New York, by the Western route, and bade adieu to this country forever.

In 1826, Col. Huger, with his family, moved to the healthful and pleasant neighbourhood of Pendleton, where he made himself a comfortable mountain home. He was much interested in his farm, and in the education of the youth of his neighbourhood, as well as in that of his own children. He was always fond of books, and as active life receded, reading was the happy occupation and resource of his old age.

His watchwords were always "Temperance and Moderation," which he truly observed and practiced in every possible way. His serious, yet cheerful and contented temper, made his always a happy home.

Towards the close of his life, he returned to his native city, Charleston, where, surrounded by friends and family, he gently and peacefully ended his days, departing this life suddenly and painlessly, on 14th February, 1855, aged eighty-one years and five months.





