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CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

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BY

Jeannette Van alstine

"MRS. R. K. VAN ALSTINE."

> Endlich! eine Charlotte Corday, die ich zwar mit Zweifel und Bangigkeit in die Hand nehme, aber doch ist die Neugier gross.
>
> *Letter from Schiller to Goethe, July 1804.*

LONDON:
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1890.

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TO

MY DEAR MOTHER,

TO WHOSE EARLY TEACHINGS AND CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT
I OWE EVERY STUDIOUS TASTE AND AMBITION,
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS LOVINGLY
INSCRIBED.

Reclass. D.F. 2-19-34

PREFACE.

WITH the exception of the meagre and almost invariably incorrect notices in cyclopedias and biographical dictionaries, no one, as far as I am aware, has told in English the tragic story of Charlotte Corday's life. Even by her own countrymen so much has been written that is mere legend, nay, even pure invention, and that, too, by men of position and influence in the literary world, that the task of unravelling the closely interwoven threads of romance and reality has been both difficult and laborious.

The greater part of Charlotte Corday's life was passed in such seclusion, and she emerged into publicity so suddenly and for so short a time, that for upwards of three-quarters of a century, those who had occasion to write of her had scarcely any authentic facts or reliable materials to work upon. Legend after legend grew up, now about her lovers, now about what she said and did, either in the quiet days of her life in the country or during the short period when she appeared in Paris. Her biographers have adopted these legends only too readily, and in their desire to fill the many gaps in the story of her life, have still further obscured the truth with exaggeration and conjecture.

In the work of separating these myths from really authentic information, the papers relating to the French Revolution, which have been collected and most admirably arranged and annotated by M. Chas. Vatel, have been of inestimable value and assistance. In these papers he has, after many years of patient research, given to the world, letters, facts, anecdotes, and much other curious matter not previously known, concerning some of the most interesting characters of the French Revolution.

It has been my earnest endeavour to present to the reader in the following pages as complete a life of

Charlotte Corday as possible, and one containing only well-authenticated facts.

In the translation of her letters I have departed somewhat from the text, as I was unwilling to sacrifice the idea of the writer for the sake of being strictly literal. In the copies of the originals given in the Appendix, Charlotte's orthography and punctuation have been scrupulously preserved.

JEANETTE VAN ALSTINE.

London, N.W.,
September, 1889.

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CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL.

> "Let States that aim at greatness take heed how their nobility and gentlemen do multiply too fast; for that maketh the common subject grow to be a peasant and base swain, driven out of heart, and in effect but a gentleman's labourer."
>
> *Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms, &c.*—Bacon.

Historians have fallen into the habit of attributing the great social upheaval known as the French Revolution to the faults of commission and omission of the three kings whose reigns immediately preceded it. Too much stress has been laid upon the injustice of Louis XIV., the wickedness of Louis XV., the weakness and extravagance of Louis XVI.

as direct causes of the Revolution. Incompetent and vacillating, unkingly in character and appearance as the last unfortunate monarch was, his faults were not potent factors in the causing of the outbreak. Even had he combined the statesmanship and craft of Louis XI. with the manly fearlessness of Henry V. of England, Louis XVI. could never have prevented, though he might perhaps have retarded, the birth of constitutional liberty. For centuries the giant child had been growing beneath the heart of France, and no human power could have averted the awful throes that heralded its struggle into life.

The causes of the Revolution must be sought for from the very earliest existence of France as a nation under one head; from the days when hereditary monarchy was first evolved from the primitive elective monarchy. In those early ages, the office of King was purely an elective one: filled generally by the most efficient and powerful of the military chiefs. It carried with it little but martial authority, and was dependent in great measure upon the merits and talents of the holder—a scheme of government sufficiently republican in its rudiments.

The legislative power lay at this time almost entirely in the hands of the great barons and fief-holders, who were absolute lords upon their own domains, exercising the right of life and death upon their vassals, and making war independently upon whom they pleased. Upon the election of a king the barons pledged themselves to assist and sustain him in war, each furnishing men and treasure in proportion to the size and importance of his fief—all joining forces for the general good. But the kings, having acquired the taste for rule, became gradually more aggressive, and profiting by the continual feuds among the barons, steadily increased their own power. Whenever the Crown embraced the cause of one vassal against another, it exacted in return some great concession, generally one which imperilled the feudal rights of the vassal; and thus by almost imperceptible degrees the successive kings drew the power into their own hands. One by one the privileges of the barons were withdrawn, until after three centuries of open battering and covert undermining, the walls of the ancient fortress of feudalism were levelled, and the foundation of absolute monarchy built upon the ruins. This was not accomplished without fierce and protracted struggles on the part of the fief-holders, and their dogged resistance to the encroachments of royalty made the throne of France a very insecure and uncomfortable seat.

Even when the kings had subjugated their vassals by seizing their fiefs, suppressing the baronial parliaments, and annulling the old right of administering justice, they were obliged to be constantly on the alert to defend their newly-acquired powers. Indeed, from Philip Augustus to Louis XI. history shows us one long intermittent struggle on the part of the kings to maintain their ascendency. When foreign powers threatened France with invasion, or new conquests were to be made to enlarge her territory, the home questions were for a time shelved and forgotten, and in the triumph of victory or the humiliation of defeat, the nation stood for the moment united. But scarcely had the victorious shouts died away, or the people recovered from the depression of defeat, before the old feuds broke out with renewed bitterness.

When the nobles had at last realised that the royal authority was too firmly established to be overthrown, they endeavoured to obtain control of the government by filling the offices of advisers and ministers of the king. They led or restrained him according to their desires, working always for the elevation and aggrandizement of their own order, and not for the good of the nation.

The State was divided roughly into three great orders—nobility, clergy, and commons, but each of these orders was subdivided into many classes. The nobility, for instance, comprised the dependants of the court, who lived upon the bounty and favours of the king, and monopolised the lucrative government offices and upper ranks of the army; the *parvenus*, or recently ennobled, who held the civil offices, and were judges and administrators of justice; and, lastly, the landed proprietors, who retained a few of their ancient feudal privileges, and derived their means of subsistence from their seignorial dues and the labour of their peasants. The subdivisions of the clergy were yet more clearly defined, and consisted of three distinct classes—the rich and nobly-born, to whom fell the luxurious abbeys and episcopal sees with their princely revenues; the political clergy, whose clerical duties were almost lost sight of in their capacities of Court advisers and directors; and, lastly, the hardworking apostolic men, who laboured with their flocks, sharing their poverty and understanding without being able to relieve their distress.

Each subdivision of the commons was also possessed of separate interests, and animated by a sense of hostility towards the rest. First in order were the rich traders, bankers, and merchants; these hated their customers the aristocrats, who were perpetually humiliating their *bourgeois* pride. Then came the class of smaller tradesmen, upon whom the heavy taxes pressed the most; and last of all the farmers and peasants, whose lives, in point of comfort and dignity, were but little above those of the beasts of the field.

In a recent work on this subject by Richard H. Dabney, the social state of France is well described: "Everywhere there was hatred between the classes. The *bourgeoisie* hated the nobility, while the peasantry hated *bourgeoisie* and nobility alike. The lesser lords hated the dukes and marquises and counts; and the petty *bourgeoisie* hated the rich notables. The laity hated the clergy, and the poor parsons hated the luxurious archbishops and bishops."

Thus each class strove and worked solely for its own interests, caring nothing for the nation at large, and giving little heed to the condition, necessities, or opinion of any outside its own circle.

This fatal want of unity and national spirit was the great primary cause of the Revolution. The aims and desires of the sovereign were not the aims and desires of his subjects, and each laboured for the attainment of a different end. What wonder that this long-continued and fierce strain weakened the chain which bound the nation together, making the final rupture an inevitable consequence of internal rottenness?

For centuries the parliament of France was merely an instrument of the Crown, convoked at the pleasure of the reigning king—usually when fresh subsidies were to be obtained—and although it was composed of the three powerful classes—nobility, clergy, and rich commoners—it had really but a faint voice in the adjustment of national affairs. Even the taxes were levied by the sovereign independently of parliament, and all real power was vested in his hands; indeed, from the subjugation of the Fronde (which was the practical disarming of the aristocracy) to the outbreak of the Revolution, the monarchy of France was absolutely arbitrary.

Individual life was kept entirely under the control of the king by means of the famous *lettres de cachet,* which were orders committing any subject, lay or cleric, noble or commoner, to imprisonment during the king's pleasure without the formality of accusation or trial. When it is remembered that these orders, bearing the royal signature, were frequently given by the king to his favourites with the names left in blank, it will be at once seen what awful weapons of revenge and injustice they often were. The estates of the victims were usually confiscated, and helped to keep the royal coffers well filled.

The wealth of the nation was equally under the control of the Crown by means of the taxes, which were moreover most unjustly distributed. They were levied by the king, and although the parliament had nominally the right to refuse an impost, it was in reality powerless, for by a *lit de justice* the king could compel its assent and punish its members by imprisonment and exile.

As the nobility claimed the "privilege" of not being taxed at all, and the clergy that of imposing their own taxes, which they paid to suit themselves, in "gratuities," the burden of the heavy imposts fell almost entirely upon the shoulders of the long-suffering people. And this was not all; in addition to the taxes levied by the king were the dues claimed by the nobles as lords of the manor—a relic of the ancient feudalism—and the tithes demanded by the clergy, all of which had to come out of the people who only owned about one-third of the lands.

Among the most deeply resented of the many imposts were the *gabelle,* or salt tax; the *taine,* or the wine tax; and the *corvée,* a law which called the peasants from the cultivation of their fields; or harvesting of their crops, to labour gratuitously upon the king's highways, and build the magnificent roads that so excited Arthur Young's wonder when he was travelling through France just before the outbreak of the Revolution.

Perhaps the tax on salt was the most exasperating to the people, because of the constant meddling with and invasion of private life which its enforcement entailed. The manufacture of salt was a Government monopoly, and was so jealously guarded that even the natural deposits of salt in Provence were destroyed, and heavy fines were imposed on anyone who used sea-water for its saline qualities, or even allowed the cattle to eat the salt grass of the marshes.

The purchase from the Government, at an exorbitant price, of a certain quantity of salt for culinary and table purposes was obligatory, and if part of this supply was saved by the economical householder for the use of the cattle, or for curing meat or fish, he was subjected to a heavy fine, and compelled to buy a separate supply for these purposes.

The *taine* was not as universally irritating as the *gabelle,* because it affected only the wine-growers and dealers, and outrageous as it was, its injustice was less widely felt. But those who did fall under it were ground almost to starvation by its iron provisions. And yet these taxpayers, whose emaciated shoulders supported the entire royal and governmental edifice, had absolutely no political rights and were not eligible for any office in the system that lived by them; in fact, the only privilege allowed them was that of being killed for the king in times of war.

Yet in spite of the sufferings of the lower classes, it was not among them that the seeds of rebellion germinated; it was the innately disloyal and stiff necked aristocracy that first promulgated the doctrines of freedom. The chains of slavery and poverty lay too heavy upon the oppressed for them to think of, or care for, aught but providing for the immediate daily necessities of their half-starved bodies. These poor creatures, who scarcely understood their own degradation, were dumb until their task-masters taught them speech; unarmed until those same masters, with thoughtless indifference, placed in their hands the weapons with which, in their desperation, they hewed their way from darkness into light.

Another important impulse to the Revolution was the increased importance and progress of all the fine arts during the 17th century. Ignorance became unfashionable, and intellectual workers received the countenance and encouragement of the Court. Men's minds were brightened and their perceptions sharpened by attrition, and the approval of the rulers of the land fostered the early germs of philosophy which bore such deadly fruit in the 18th century. It was inevitable that the researches and reflections of the master minds of that time should lead them to the consideration of the social and religious aspect of their own nation. Equally inevitable that the gross abuses and the necessity of reform should be made the subject of their writings; the hollowness of the apparent prosperity; the unsatisfactory nature of their faith; the injustice of class distinctions; the rottenness of their social ethics—all these subjects could not fail to present themselves to the minds of the great philosophers of the 18th century. Historians, poets, novelists, all were engrossed with the same theme, and as Ségur tells us, "All writings, all thoughts, all actions, seemed to have but one end, the extirpation of abuses, the propagation of virtue, the relief of the people, the establishment of freedom."

It was in the reign of Louis XV., and just after the peace of 1763, that the sense of uneasiness which had been growing throughout France, settled into avowed and open discontent.

At this time it was confined almost entirely to the younger portion of the *noblesse*, the readers and admirers of Voltaire, Raynal, Diderot, Rousseau, and the host of others who uttered the opinions of the great ones without their genius. The fashionable *salons* were the hot-beds of this spirit of restlessness, where subversive ideas—which, however, had not then ripened into desires—were freely discussed. The beauties of philosophy and philanthropy were aired, the abstract ideas of equality and liberty lauded, the principles and faith of their forefathers attacked and derided, and a passion for innovation cultivated on all sides.

Among the most ardent and enthusiastic disciples of the new opinions were those beautiful and intellectual women whose influence did so much towards propagating them, and making them the fashion of the hour. Indeed, no thoughtful student of the history of France can fail to be struck by the prominent part that women of all classes have played in the political destiny of their country. At times it would seem as if the very life of France had lain in the hollow of a woman's hand, dependent upon the whim and caprice of the moment.

From Pompadour to Eugénie, from The Pucelle to Mdme. Roland, from Theroïgne de Méricourt to the *pétroleuses* of 1871, we find women in the vanguard of political strife, and all through the great Revolution they exercised an influence which has no parallel in history. They were its earliest and principal agents, the first to kindle the revolutionary enthusiasm as they were the first to revolt from, and try to restrain, the mere animal fury to which it at last degenerated.

This influence was born in the salons, fed upon Voltaire and Rousseau, and nursed and petted by the white hands of Court beauties; later it passed into the life of the great middle class, and was wielded by such women as Mdme. de Staël and Mdme. Roland, until at last it fell and perished in the slums, defiled by the unclean touch of the Mdme. Théots and Rose Lacombes of evil fame.

But these dainty aristocrats and charming and brilliant women, who talked so glibly of liberty and freedom, and the emancipation of the people, did not contemplate any practical application of their doctrines. They had no true conception of the magnitude of the subject, but were pleased with its novelty and inclined to smile upon a philosophy which flattered their vanity. They dallied with the fascinating principles, never dreaming that these very weapons with which they toyed so carelessly would one day be used to slay them.

Gradually the discontent spread. The social lines were sharply drawn, and the *roturiers* began audibly to resent their treatment by the privileged classes, who rode rough-shod over them, respecting neither their purses nor their opinions.

The licentiousness of Louis XV.'s Court disgusted the nation. Practically the mistresses of the King ruled the realm, and upon their favour hung every appointment and office, and to slight or ignore their influence meant death, or a *lettre de cachet* consigning the offender to the Bastille.

The shameless debauchery of the Court, which had not been equalled since the later days of the Roman Empire, necessitated a high rate of taxation from which the nobles were nearly, and the clergy quite exempt, but which pressed heavily on the burgher class, and almost crushed the labourers and peasants. The corruptions of the Church had furnished the great writers with ample text for their sermons on reason and philosophy, and irreligion spread like a leprosy through the land, undermining all principles and social law, and preparing the way for license.

When Louis XVI. came into his fatal inheritance, his weakness and irresolution were immediately made manifest. France lay dying of her festering wounds, needing the fearless steady hand of the surgeon, strong as delicate; the trembling uncertain touch of poor Louis could but irritate the sensitive flesh and keep it raw. Like Charles I. of England, he loved his people sincerely, and meant well by them, but he was a weakling totally unfit to deal with a crisis that would have taxed the endurance and strength of a Titan.

From the choice of Maurepas as minister, that ancient courtier whose disgrace under the previous king for offending the mistresses had taught him the fatal lesson of servility and time-serving, a fatality seemed to attend all Louis did. Every reform he undertook was either insufficient or unwise, and although his whole reign presents a succession of ill-advised or untimely concessions, he could neither satisfy the demands of his people, nor stem the torrent of reform by extreme or arbitrary measures.

When Maurepas died, the Queen became virtually minister; and the beautiful young Austrian, whose thoughtless extravagance and disregard of established customs had already begun to make her unpopular, ruled with greater firmness but little more wisdom than her husband. It was to this firmness that she owed her nickname of "Mdme. Veto," given her by a populace which resented her resistance to their increasing demands. With her mother's love of politics and rule, Marie Antoinette had also inherited her pride and obstinacy; but the prescience, forethought, and executive ability that made Maria Theresa's reign to Austria what Elizabeth's was to England had not been transmitted to her hapless daughter.

Haughtily careless of public opinion, Marie Antoinette pursued her own course and made her power felt; and it soon became known that whenever the King resisted the inroads of popular demand, it was in obedience to the advice of his queen. Matters grew worse and worse; the old abuses were not rectified, and new ones were continually appearing; the Court expenses—enormous as they had been before—were increased tenfold, and the nobles, led by the heedless young queen, added daily to the score which was already so heavy against them.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND THE CONVENT.

"He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, * * .
* * * * *
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth
Sufficiently impressed."
Rabbi Ben Ezra.—Robert Browning.

Among the many writers upon the all-absorbing topic of reform was one François de Corday d'Armont, the younger son of a noble family, who languished in an obscure village of Normandy, where a few bare acres just afforded him the absolute necessaries of life. To the pride that comes with gentle blood he added the tastes and habits of a scholar. Galled and repressed by poverty, he had settled into a state of rebellion against the social and political institutions of his day which, in due time, crystallised into sundry pamphlets against tyranny and despotism in general and the rights of primogeniture in particular.

From a literary standpoint these effusions are of small value, but, like so many others of the period, they are instinct with the spirit of blustering revolt that swept over France like the wind before a thunder-storm, and broke at last into that mad intolerance of restraint and thirst for absolute liberty that overturned the throne and deluged the country with blood.

M. de Corday had married a young lady of noble family, Jacqueline-Charlotte Marie de Gonthiers-des-Authiers, whose virtues were her only dowry. To them were born five children, two sons and three daughters, of whom Marie-Anne Charlotte, the subject of this memoir, was born in Argentan, July 27th, 1768, and was the second daughter. The resources of M. de Corday did not increase with his family, and he was at last obliged to part temporarily with some of his children, kindly relatives having offered to relieve him of their maintenance until brighter days.

Charlotte—or Marie, as she was called by her family—was sent to her uncle M. l'Abbé de Corday, who was *curé* of Vicques, a quiet little village not far from Argentan.

During the three years spent under his roof she learned to read, her primer being a treasured volume of Corneille—who, as the good old Abbé often impressed upon the child, was her "great and illustrious ancestor."

This quiet, gentle little girl, who seemed to have inherited her father's studious tastes, won her way deep into the heart of the lonely and scholarly Abbé, and in after years, when she had placed such a lurid aureole upon her brow, he was never weary of telling how sweet a child she had been, and how unselfish and heroic her nature had shown itself even then.

When Charlotte had grown to a helpful age, she was recalled home to lighten the burdens of her mother; and from Mdme. Levaillant, who was Mdme. de Corday's most intimate friend, we get graphic glimpses of the simple home-life, and of the little eight-year-old help-meet. As a natural consequence of the size of the family and the meagreness of the resources, work was plentiful and indulgences rare. Clothed in the coarse homespun of the Normandy peasants, the children worked in the fields, cultivated the garden, and did much of the housekeeping of the cottage, including the spinning, weaving and making of the family clothing.

Although Charlotte was a delicate child, and rather small for her age, she was a tireless little worker, trying in every possible way to save her mother trouble; advising, consoling, and helping her brothers and sisters, and performing her many duties with a precision of judgment beyond her years.

She early accustomed herself to bear her own small troubles in silence, and not add to those of her mother by useless fretting and complaint, and an instance of this childish courage was witnessed and recorded by Mdme. Levaillant. One day when this lady was visiting at the cottage, Charlotte tripped and fell, bruising herself badly on a stone step; Mdme. Levaillant ran to assist and console the little girl, who, instead of lamenting her hurt, bravely fought back her tears and requested that her mother might not be told of it. A few days later Mdme. de Corday, having heard of the circumstance, said to her friend: "That little girl is always hard upon herself; she never complains, and I have to guess when she is ill, for she would never tell me."

In the moments of leisure between the children's many duties M. de Corday tried to give them what education he could, and to train them to thoughtfulness and strength of character; he placed much trust in them, and allowed them a full share in the disposition of his very slender finances. It was his custom to place what ready money he had in a drawer, to which all had free access; then gathering his children around him, he would tell them how long it must last, and appeal to their honour and judgment not to draw upon the little fund for unnecessary luxuries. Each realised that even a small extra expenditure reduced the general comfort of the family, and that every personal taste could be gratified only at the expense of others, and it early became a matter of emulation among these children to deny themselves all little adornments of dress and luxuries of food.

M. de Corday naturally imbued his children with his own political ideas, and his influence on Charlotte's impressionable character was very strong. By the time she was thirteen she had become thoroughly permeated with the subversive republican spirit that was such a marked characteristic of her father's.

When Charlotte was in her thirteenth year Mdme. de Corday gave up the long sordid struggle of her life, folded her tired hands and passed on to her hard-earned rest. Her death was a real calamity to her husband, left unaided to care for his five helpless children—the eldest of whom was not yet fifteen. After a few months of pitiful demoralization, help came; came, too, through the poor dead mother.

Mdme. de Belsunce, the Abbess of the Abbaye aux Dames at Caen, had been a friend of hers, and upon hearing of her death, and the neglected condition of her children, at once proposed taking charge of Charlotte and her younger sister, and educating them with her own niece Mdlle. de Forbin.

M. de Corday gratefully accepted the offer, and sent the two poor little orphans to the Convent.* Mdme. de Belsunce soon became greatly interested in

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* This noble Abbey was founded in 1066 by Matilda of Flanders, the wife of the Conqueror, William I. of England. Its magnificent chapel and cloisters were nearly in ruins when Charlotte Corday was a pupil there; but after having been deserted and almost forgotten until 1830, it was splendidly restored, and is now one of the finest hospitals in France, and the most interesting public building in Caen.

Charlotte, whose beauty began to bloom under the good living and freedom from hard work of the new life.

The careful training of the nuns soon gave to her manners and address the polish that only a fine-grained nature can take, and before long she lost the shyness and awkwardness of her peasant childhood, and showed evidences of her natural grace and intelligence. She studied assiduously and early evinced a strong talent for drawing, and under the tuition of the nuns acquired an unusual proficiency in the use of her pencil.

Quietly the years slipped by, each one bringing growth and expansion to the girl who blossomed like some fair flower in the congenial atmosphere of encouragement and appreciation. Fascinated by the even, gentle life of the nuns, and her heart filled with gratitude and devotion, it was inevitable that Charlotte should pass through that stage of romantic religious fervour and sentimentalism which is experienced by almost every imaginative convent-bred girl. In a letter to her cousin, Mdme. Duhauvelle, written in 1788, we catch a glimpse of this phase of Charlotte's character, and see her in the light of a naïve childlike believer in the fanciful legends of the Roman Church.

"I should have had the honour, Madam, of writing to you sooner, and thanking you for your kind remembrance of me, but I had to go all through the lives of the saints to find my little cousin's patron, whose story I will tell you in few words.

"About the year 300 there was in Rome a woman of quality named Aglaé, who possessed immense riches, and led a very dissipated life; she had but three good qualities—hospitality, liberality, and compassion. After several years passed in crime, Aglaé, touched by the grace of God, told Boniface, her steward, who was also a convert, to go and succour the holy martyrs, and to bring her some of their relics in order that she might show them honour, and obtain the remission of her sins by their intercessions. Boniface said to her jestingly: 'If I find any relics of the martyrs I will bring them; but, Madam, if my relics come without the name of martyr, receive them.' And indeed, Boniface was condemned to death for assisting the saints, and was beheaded, and his servants carried away his body. But an angel appeared to Aglaé, and said: 'He who was your servant is now your brother; receive him as your saviour, and give him a worthy resting-place; your sins will be remitted by his intercession.' Aglaé immediately started with a number of clergy to meet the holy relics, and she built a superb oratory for them, and many miracles took place there. From that time Aglaé renounced the world for ever, gave all her goods to the poor, lived thirteen years in the odour of sanctity, and died the death of the saints. She was buried in the chapel which she had built to St. Boniface, and the Church celebrates their festival on the same day.

"Such, Madam, was the patron of my little cousin, for whom I desire a like end, and whom I kiss very tenderly, as well as her amiable sister. I have been told, Madam, that the business connected with your estates is completed. I congratulate you sincerely, for it is always pleasant to know just how one stands. I, however, cannot rejoice over it, as it is a certain presage that you will leave us. I hope to be able to see you again next year, and to assure you verbally of the respect with which I am, Madam and dear cousin,

"Your very humble and very obedient servant,

"CORDAY.

"My sister desires me to present her respects to you.

She sends a thousand kind messages to your little girls."

Enthusiastic and impressionable, Charlotte possessed the very nature most likely to be dominated by religious feeling, had not her father's influence and her own habits of studious research been her safeguards.

As she grew older and thought more deeply on the teachings she received, there crept into her heart a sense of the insufficiency of the sentimental conventual faith. But although her intelligence was too fine to remain long satisfied with the saints and the Virgin, it was not possible to a loyal nature like hers to look upon the religion of her childhood with contempt, and she always retained an outward respect for the offices of the Church. During Charlotte's stay at the convent Mdme. de Belsunce and her coadjutrix, Mdme. Doulcet de Pontécoulant, showed her much kindness, entrusting her with some of the minor duties of the establishment, and employing her often as secretary and amanuensis.

A letter written in 1789 shows that Charlotte also managed her own modest money affairs, disposing of the small allowance her father could make her, according to her own discretion. This liberty was an unusual one for a young girl to enjoy in those days, and only to be accounted for by the fact that M. de Corday was engaged at this time in a law-suit against his wife's relations, and was unwilling to burden himself with the details of his daughter's outlay. It may have been also part of his scheme of education, and it undoubtedly helped to foster and develop that quality of self-reliance which was already so marked a trait of Charlotte's character.

This letter is further interesting in that it is the only one which has been preserved in which Charlotte signs her full family name.

"*To* M. ALAIN, *Attorney*, *Rue Dauphiné*, *Paris*.

"SIR,

"Enclosed is a bill of exchange payable to your order, which has been sent to me. I beg you to return it to me with the formalities necessary to receive the money in Caen. I need it in much haste. The Lady Abbess desires me to thank you for the offer you made her concerning the mirrors. She does not wish to borrow money this year, so do not get them; moreover, she will not have the bed for M. le Marquis made, so do not order the wood for it, as was arranged. I beg you, Sir, not to make my bill of exchange payable through the Abbey, for reasons of my own.

"I have the honour of remaining, Sir,
"Your very humble and very obedient,
"CORDAY D'ARMONT.

"At the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, Caen,
Sept. 30th, 1789."

The rules of the Order to which Mdme. de Belsunce belonged allowed her to receive her friends at the Convent, and to these social gatherings Charlotte and her sister were often admitted. Most of the guests were, like their hostess, of noble birth and royalist sympathies, and the Abbess' beautiful young protégées received considerable interest and notice from the stately dames who were aware of their father's poverty. Sometimes the presence of a few gentlemen gave a more perceptible flavour of the world to these mild convent festivities; courtly *abbés* told their little stories of Paris and the outer world, and grey-haired marquises and chevaliers imparted the politics of the day in a diluted form to the ladies.

Occasionally younger men obtained an *entrée*, such as Doulcet de Pontécoulant, one of the King's body-guard, who, in virtue of being the nephew of Mdme. de Belsunce's coadjutrix, was a frequent and welcome guest at the convent. This young man became afterwards a consistent moderate Republican, and was elected deputy to the Convention from Caen.

With the strange perversity that seems to have actuated almost all those who have written notices or lives of Charlotte Corday, a pretty but mythical love-story has been attached to these convent days. A young officer named Henri Vicomte de Belsunce—a nephew of the Abbess—is a constant visitor at the convent, the regiment of which he is colonel being garrisoned at Caen. With the consent and encouragement of Mdme. de Belsunce, he pays marked attention to Charlotte Corday, who returns his affection. Later an insurrection breaks out, and the Vicomte de Belsunce, who is an ardent Royalist, with all the prejudices and proud intolerance of his rank, meets with a horrible death in the streets of Caen, being literally torn to pieces by the mob he had helped to infuriate with taunts and threats. The Abbess dies soon after, broken-hearted at the awful fate of her favourite nephew, and Charlotte at once determines to avenge her lover and her benefactress by murdering

Marat, a vengeance which is delayed, however, for nearly three years. Such in brief is the romance.

The facts are these. Henri Vicomte de Belsunce was but a very distant connexion of the Abbess, and, although bearing the same name, belonged to quite a different branch of the family, his full title being Vicomte de Belsunce de Macaïe, while the Abbess was a de Belsunce de Castelmoron. Moreover, Charlotte's friend and benefactress died on the 3rd of February 1787, just three months before the Vicomte de Belsunce's regiment was ordered to Caen. It is, therefore, very doubtful whether he ever knew not only Charlotte Corday but even the Abbess Mdme. de Belsunce.

The only correct part of the story as given by Delasalle, Huard, Thiers, Lamartine, Chéron de Villiers, &c., and the biographical dictionaries, is the death of M. de Belsunce; it took place, however, August 12th, 1789, a *month before the first number of Marat's paper, which was supposed to have instigated his murder, appeared.*

When Fouquier-Tinville was preparing the evidence against Charlotte, he wrote a letter—now in the possession of M. Feuillet de Conches—to the Committee of Public Safety suggesting that her crime had been prompted by a desire to revenge de Belsunce.* He has evidently—intentionally or not—confused the Abbess of La Sainte Trinité, who was Charlotte's friend, with a man bearing the same name, who was not, and it is from this sinister source that the romancers have drawn their sole materials. During the seven years that Charlotte remained at the Abbey, the Republican ideas which she had learned from her father had suffered no change. The rumours heard through the convent walls were of vivid interest to her, and she followed the course of events with intense but silent excitement.

The struggle of the American Colonies for liberty had given an impetus to the discontent of the French, showing themhow their Rrepublican theories looked when put into action, and stimulating their minds with an example of successful effort.

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* CITIZENS,—I beg to bring to your observation that I have just been informed that that female assassin was the friend of de Belsunce, a colonel who was killed in Caen during the insurrection, and that since that event she has cherished an implacable hatred against Marat. That hatred may have been revived by Marat's denunciation of Biron, who was a relative of de Belsunce, and Barbaroux seems to have taken advantage of the criminal feeling of this girl against Marat to persuade her to commit this horrible murder.

(Signed) FOUQUIER-TINVILLE.

The long-smouldering fire had broken out, the Bastille had fallen, the memorable visit of the fishwives to Versailles had been made; the Revolution was an accomplished fact, and the outlook for moderate republicans was cheering.

CHAPTER III.

LE GRAND MANOIR.

I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears;
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
The Task, Book I.—COWPER.

IN 1790 the convents and monasteries were closed by order of the Convention, and Charlotte, then in her twentieth year, was once more turned adrift. Her father's affairs had gone from bad to worse. One of her brothers had emigrated, the other was in the army of Condé; the younger of her sisters was dead, and the elder was still living with her father in the old cottage, where one more inmate would reduce the barely sufficient to real want.

So after spending two months at home with them Charlotte decided to ask a cousin of her mother's to give her shelter for a time, until she could find some suitable asylum.

This cousin—whom Charlotte always called Aunt—was the widow of M. de Bretheville-Gouville, a ruined gentleman who had once been Treasurer of France. She was old, feeble, and poor, and lived in a gloomy house in Caen with only one servant, who was as aged and decrepid as her mistress.

Mdlle. Levaillant the daughter of Mdme. de Corday's old friend, gives an interesting account of the old Aunt's excitement over Charlotte's arrival, which we translate almost verbatim. She says :—

We had scarcely arrived in Caen, when we saw Mdme. de Bretheville hurrying towards us.

"I am so glad you have returned!" she exclaimed to my mother. "I didn't know where to turn. Now you have come to help me, I feel better; but I am greatly worried."

"Why, what about?" asked my mother.

"While you were away a relative whom I do not know, and whose family I had lost sight of for many years, has fallen upon me from the clouds. She came here a month ago, accompanied by a porter carrying a trunk. She told me she had some business to transact in Caen, and hoped I would receive her. She introduced herself, and really is a relation, but the whole affair inconveniences me very much."

"Why so? You are alone; you have no intimate friends. She will make the house more lively, and be a pleasant companion for you," replied my mother.

"That doesn't seem likely, for she scarcely speaks; seems taciturn and reserved, and always appears to be lost in a brown study. I don't know why, but she frightens me. She has the air of meditating some evil business."

Mdme. de Bretheville insisted that Mdme. Levaillant and her daughter should call at once and see the newly arrived niece, and try and find out why she had established herself in such an unceremonious fashion in the home of one who "didn't know her from Eve or Adam," as the old lady quaintly expressed it.

As soon as Charlotte saw Mdme. Levaillant she ran and embraced her, much to the surprise of that lady, who did not anticipate so affectionate a greeting from an apparent stranger.

"What! have you quite forgotten me, then?" exclaimed Charlotte. "Do you not remember little d'Armont?" No sooner were the words spoken than Mdme. Levaillant recognised the child of her old friend, and eagerly returned her embrace.

Matters were at once explained to Mdme. de Bretheville, who upon being assured of the identity of her niece, laid aside all her fears, and prepared herself to look upon Charlotte as a member of her family. In a short time she became so much attached to her, and so pleased with the dutiful little attentions of her young relative, that she invited her to remain with her always, and make the Grand Manoir her home. Even when the novelty of the young girl's presence had worn off, the brightness and interest she brought into her Aunt's dull life continued undiminished, and each year brought them nearer together.

Le Grand Manoir, the house in which Mdme. de Bretheville lived in the Rue St. Jean, was old and gloomy, with a neglected garden in front shut in by high moss-grown walls. In the seclusion of this garden, where the monotonous plashing of an old fountain seemed to emphasise the silence, Charlotte spent much of her time, reading her favourite authors, and dreaming away the long hours which hung heavy on her hands.

She was now, for the first time in her life, absolutely at liberty to regulate her own studies and reading, and appreciating the freedom from the restrictions of the convent, she plunged boldly into Voltaire, Rousseau, and Raynal. To her, as to Mdme. Roland, Plutarch had at the convent always afforded the greatest pleasure; but now she laid aside the lives of her favourite heroes to drink in the new wine of the great French philosophers.

Charlotte read eagerly and intelligently, digesting and assimilating all she absorbed; the necessary relaxation from more thoughtful works she sought in novels of the "Heloïse" and "Faublas" type—dangerous food for the convent-bred girl whose romantic, ardent imagination had long been excited by the records of heroism in the republics of ancient days.

Charlotte Corday's nature was fundamentally robust and truthful, but the sophistries and false philosophy of the teachers at whose feet she sat perverted it, and robbed her of the power of unprejudiced reasoning.

In these days of clearer vision it seems incredible that the strongly biased writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and especially of Raynal—who, though the least able, was perhaps the most popular of these authors—should have exercised such a powerful influence upon their time. This influence is only to be accounted for by the fact that they wrote for readers whose minds were ripe for revolt, and their words—with those of their hundred imitators—suited the national humour, expressing as they did, the opinions which, in the minds of most men, had already become convictions.

Charlotte had grown to be a very handsome girl; slender and tall, with light-brown curling hair, soft grey eyes, and the brilliant complexion that belongs to perfect health. The upper part of her face was peculiarly gentle, and contrasted strangely with the determination of the mouth and almost masculine firmness of the cleft chin; and this apparent contradiction of expression gave to her face an oddity and piquant charm. There are in existence two portraits of Charlotte Corday, Siccardi's, which is in the Rénard collection at Caen, and the one painted by Jaques Hauer during her imprisonment, which is now in the Versailles Museum. Both artists represent her as an undeniably beautiful woman.

Siccardi's portrait, which was painted before Charlotte had become famous, shows a charming face with regular features, and a sweet, serious mouth, whose gentle gravity is strangely at variance with the merriment of a pair of innocent grey eyes.

The picture by Hauer, taken when she was under sentence of death, is even more beautiful; the seriousness has deepened almost to solemnity, and the clear eyes have lost their merriment; but in its place lies an expression of serenity and content that almost suggests beatitude. When she had assumed the red gown of the condemned, it emphasised her fairness, and so heightened her beauty that Hauer was strongly impressed by the effect. After her death he painted in the scarlet dress, scrupulously avoiding, however, any retouching of the face lest he should destroy the likeness.

In after years the red gown was painted out by some other hand, and now the grave, sweet face of Charlotte Corday looks out at us from a cloud of white drapery.

In addition to her physical beauty, Charlotte possessed the rare charm of a perfectly musical voice; indeed, so marked was this trait that every friend who survived her and furnished the world with their recollections of her, mentions it as a strongly distinctive characteristic. "A voice so sweet that once heard it could never be forgotten."

Mdme. de Bretheville was a staunch Royalist, and the few friends which time and the unsettled state of the country had left her were all equally loyal Occasionally they would gather in the gloomy rooms of the Grand Manoir to discuss the changes that had already taken place, and take counsel together upon the best means of avoiding the dangers with which the future seemed to menace them.

Charlotte moved among these relics of the old *régime* with graceful tact, and the deference due from youth to age; listening respectfully but with silent dissent to their lamentations upon the degeneracy of the times.

Thrown thus entirely upon herself for sympathy, she was forced to brood in solitude over her country's troubles, and formulate a hundred romantic schemes for redressing them without the wholesome restraint of outside advice and criticism. This introverted morbid mental life was fraught with the greatest danger for a temperament which was already over-inclined to enthusiasm and exaltation.

Next door to Mdme. Bretheville lived the Marquis de Faudoas, the captain of a cavalry regiment and a Royalist as ardent as herself, and with him his daughter Eléonore and his sister, the widow of the Marquis de Beaurepaire. The two families lived upon terms of great intimacy, and between the three young girls, Charlotte Corday, Eléonore de Faudoas, and Mdlle. Levaillant, there soon grew a strong, if undemonstrative, friendship. They read and studied together, and in spite of the wide difference in their opinions, often held amicable discussions on political matters.

One day, when they were reading English history in the Faudoas garden, Mdlle. Levaillant, who had been moved almost to tears by the misfortunes and tragic fate of Charles I., expressed in the strongest terms her warm admiration for the devotion and unalterable loyalty that has immortalized the partisans of the Stuarts.

"There, my dear," she exclaimed, with girlish enthusiasm, to Eléonore de Faudoas, "that is what I should do if such things happened in France. I would sacrifice myself for my king—I would die for him!"

"Oh," replied Eléonore de Faudoas, laughing, "I should, of course, do all in my power to help him, except dying. But I should much prefer to keep my head upon my shoulders, even though it were on hind side before."

It was only one year afterwards, and within a few weeks of each other, that Charlotte Corday the Republican, and Eléonore de Faudoas the Royalist, suffered death upon the same scaffold that on the 21st January 1793 had brought down the head of Louis XVI.

Charlotte was always peculiarly reserved in the expression of her opinions, and it was but seldom that she could be induced to speak of her political convictions. With the thoughtfulness of affection, she desired to avoid giving pain to her kind old aunt and her friends; but on the one or two occasions when her patriotism got the better of her discretion, she expressed herself with a frankness and firmness that surprised her hearers.

The conversation turned one day upon the women of ancient history—the mother of the Gracchi, and of Coriolanus—and for those heroines she expressed the greatest admiration, and went on to speak with fervid approval of the old Republics, "the noblest of all forms of government." As she uttered these words with unusual fervour, Mdme. Levaillant interrupted her speech, and asked with pained reproach—"Can it be that you are Republican, my dear?"

Charlotte blushed at the warmth into which she had been betrayed, but answered quietly:

"I should be, if the French were worthy of a Republic."

On another occasion, when the conversation had drifted in the direction of politics, Charlotte declared that "Kings are made for the nation, not the nation for kings."

Alarmed and disturbed by the continual rioting and insubordination of Caen, Mdme. Levaillant resolved to leave the place, and seek a refuge where people of Royalist sympathies were in less danger from the mob.

After much deliberation Rouen was decided upon, as that city had gained for itself an enviable character for quietness and moderation—a character, moreover, which it retained intact throughout the Reign of Terror.

Mdme. de Bretheville was in despair at the thought of being separated from her dear and intimate friend, and Charlotte greatly dreaded losing her companion; so that, after a little hesitation, Mdme. de Bretheville concluded to accompany them, a decision which was heartily approved by her niece. But at the last moment the old lady was assailed with a ridiculous timidity about crossing a floating bridge near Rouen, and their united efforts failed to calm her fears or persuade her to proceed with the arrangements for the journey. In vain they even proposed to go round by way of Paris, and thus avoid the dreaded bridge altogether; the alternative inspired her with yet greater terror, and the Rouen plan, as far as Charlotte and her aunt were concerned, had to be reluctantly abandoned. Mdme. Levaillant and her daughter were thus obliged to leave them behind in Caen, and all felt keenly the pain of a parting which they realised might prove final, a fear which the event justified.

Mdme. de Bretheville having relinquished all idea of accompanying her friends, decided to give a farewell dinner in their honour, and accordingly gathered all their mutual friends and relatives together; Charlotte's father, M. de Corday, came from Argentan with his daughter and youngest son, who was on his way to join his brother in Coblentz, whither also was bound another of the guests, M. de Tournélis, Mdme. de Bretheville's cousin.

This young man, whose Royalist fervour had more than once placed him in danger, had on many previous occasions shown that he was very much attracted by Charlotte; the relatives of both looked with approval upon his attentions, and were ready to further the match to the extent of their power. Charlotte, however, instead of encouraging his advances, seemed to take a mischievous and perverse pleasure in expressing her Republican opinions with more than customary openness and frequency in his presence, as if to show him how hostile her views were to all the hopes of the Royalists, and to the cause he had so much at heart.

Mdme. de Bretheville's little dinner began gaily enough. The travellers made light of their flight, saying they were only going for a pleasure trip on the Rhine, and fully expected to return to their winter quarters in Paris. All went well, with merriment, and jesting, and rosy forecasts, until someone proposed the King's health. Everyone rose to honour the toast except Charlotte, who, to the surprise of all, left her glass untouched upon the table and kept her seat. "To the health of the King!" someone repeated, and still the young girl remained unmoved, despite the angry frowns and gestures of her father, who strove to recall her to a sense of the position, and the words of a neighbour who touched her on the arm, and said persuasively:

"Surely you do not refuse to drink to the health of the King, who is so good and so virtuous?"

"I believe he is virtuous," Charlotte replied gently; "but a weak king cannot be a good king. He is powerless to prevent the misfortunes of his people."

In the embarrassment of the moment no one answered, and after drinking the toast the guests resumed their seats in absolute silence.

But the constraint was dissipated a few minutes afterwards by an unforeseen occurrence which threw the whole party into the greatest excitement.

Fauchet, the constitutional bishop of Calvados, was that day making his episcopal entry into Caen, and the procession, on its way through the Rue St. Jean, passed directly under the windows of the Grand Manoir. The cheering of the populace and cries of

"Vive la nation! Vive l'évêque constitutionnel!" exasperated M. de Tournélis and young Corday, and they wanted to answer the Republican cheers with counter-cheers of "Vive le roi!"

It was with much difficulty that the hot-headed young Royalists were restrained; Charlotte seized M. de Tournélis and dragged him into a back room, while M. de Corday sternly silenced his son.

"Do you not fear that such an untimely expression of your sentiments might prove fatal to those around you?" exclaimed Charlotte to the impetuous de Tournélis, whose arm she still held. "If you expect to serve your cause thus, you might just as well not go to Coblentz."

"And had you no fear, Mademoiselle," replied M. de Tournélis, impulsively, "of offending your friends, when you refused just now to join your voice in a national toast so dear to our hearts?"

"My refusal," she answered smiling, "could only harm myself, while you, without any useful end in view, were about to imperil the lives of all who are with you. On which side, I ask, is the feeling the most generous?"

The young man hung his head in silence, and followed Charlotte back to the dining-room, where the rest were discussing the affair.

A gloom seemed to have settled on the party which had been so merry and hopeful an hour before, and soon afterwards the guests dispersed, never to see each other again.

Shortly after the departure of the Levaillants the Marquis de Faudoas removed to Paris, with his family, in order to be near his sovereign in the hour of his peril. On the 10th of August 1792, he was among those of the King's body-guard who strove against overwhelming odds to sustain the last vestiges of royal authority; failing in this, he placed himself among the hostages offered by the loyal nobles for the person of their fallen king. These acts of devotion were more than sufficient to cost him his life, and those of his young daughter of eighteen, and his widowed sister. They were guillotined in Paris on the 25th Messidor.

The almost simultaneous departure from Caen of her two girl-friends left Charlotte's life very blank and empty; she rarely went beyond the limits of the old garden, and confined her interest to following the course of events in the newspapers, and carrying on a rather uncertain correspondence with her absent friends, Mdlle. Levaillant and a Mdlle. Rose Fourgeron du Fayot. The latter had been a class-mate in the convent, and afterwards became Mdme. Riboulet, and was the grandmother of Chéron de Villiers, one of the least inaccurate and untrustworthy of Charlotte's biographers.

In these letters the lonely young girl gives with graphic touch the local colour of her time, and shows in every line how deep was her concern for the welfare of her country; almost every sentence gives evidence of her interest, and indeed, so great is this interest that she identifies herself with France, and feels a sort of personal human sympathy with her nation that leads her to always speak of it as "we." So intense is this earnestness and anxiety that all minor matters are disregarded; and the letters of this girl are strangely free from the innocent frivolity and harmless nonsense usual in the confidential epistles of young girl-correspondents.

"*To* MDLLE. LEVAILLANT.*

"March 1792.

"Is it possible, my dear friend, that while I was complaining of your idleness you were the victim of that cruel small-pox?

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* The original of this letter is now in the collection of M. Chas. Rénard of Caen.

"I can imagine how glad you are to be rid of it, also that it respected your features, which is a favour it does not show to all pretty people. You were ill, and I could not know it! Promise me, my dear, that if you take such a notion again you will let me know beforehand, for I think there is nothing so cruel as being ignorant of the fate of one's friends.

"You ask me for news. At present there is none; all the nice people have gone away, and the maledictions you uttered against our town are taking effect. If there is no grass in the streets, it is only because the season for it has not yet come.

"The Faudoas have gone, and have even taken some of their furniture.

"M. de Cussi has the custody of the flags; he is to marry Mdlle. Fleuriot shortly. In consequence of this general desertion we are very quiet, and the fewer people there are in town the less the danger of an insurrection. If I followed my own inclination I should join the refugees in Rouen, not because I am afraid, but, dear heart, in order to be with you, and to profit by your lessons; for I should very quickly elect you my teacher of languages—English or Italian—and I am sure I should be benefited in all respects.

"My aunt—Mdme. de Bretheville—thanks you for your remembrance of her and for your good wishes; but the state of her health allows her no comfort at present. Nevertheless, she awaits the events of the future, which do not seem desperate, with confidence. She begs you to express to Mdme. L. her gratitude and remembrance, and to assure her of her sincere attachment. She misses you both very much, and feels, as I do, that you are not likely to return to a town which you so justly dislike.

"My brother started a few days ago to join the train of knights-errant; I think it probable that they may encounter some wind-mills on their road. I cannot believe, as the Royalists do, that they will achieve a victory without any fighting, especially as the army of the nation is formidable; I admit that the people are not disciplined, but this idea of liberty inspires them with something that is very like courage, and besides, despair would make them brave. So my mind is not easy on that score. Moreover, what fate awaits us? A fearful despotism, for if they succeed in chaining up the people again, it is falling from Charybdis into Scylla; we shall have to suffer in either case. But my dear, I am unconsciously writing you a political article. All these lamentations will not cure anything, and during the carnival-time especially they should be severely proscribed. Here is a sad affair for me! I have mislaid your letter, and now I am not sure of your address; if this reaches you, please let me know at once. Mdme. Malmonté has gone into the country with Mdme. Malherbe, and I do not know whom else to ask for it; that is why I do not wish in any way to make known my name, lest others should read my scribbling instead of yourself.

"I resume my letter, which has rested for several days, my dear, because I wished to impart to you some great events which we were promised; but, after all, nothing has happened. All is peaceful in spite of the carnival, which one hardly notices however, as masquerades are forbidden; you, I know, will approve of that. M. de Faudoas has returned, no one knows why, or understands his conduct. Be my interpreter with Mdme. L., and assure her of my respectful devotion. Good-bye, dear heart."

"*To* MDLLE. LEVAILLANT.*

"May 1792.

"I always receive your letters with fresh pleasure, my dear friend; but I am sorry to hear you are not well. Apparently, your indisposition is a consequence of the small-pox; you must take care of yourself.

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* The original of this letter is in the autograph collection of M. Casimir Perrier of Paris.

"You ask me, dear heart, what has happened at Verson*; all the abominations that could be committed. Fifty people, more or less, hung and beaten, and women outraged; it even seems that the feeling was principally against them. Three died a few days afterwards, and the rest are still very ill; at least, most of them are. It appears that on Easter Day the people of Verson insulted a National Guard—made fun of his cockade—and that is an iniquity equal to insulting an ass by laughing at his halter. Upon this there ensued tumultuous deliberations. The administrative body of Caen was forced to allow the people—whose preparations lasted until two o'clock—to start (for the offending village). The Verson folk had been warned of the meditated attack from Caen in the morning, but thought they were being hoaxed. In short, the *curé* had only just time to escape, leaving in the highway a corpse whose funeral he was conducting. As you already know, those who were present and were arrested are—the Abbé Adam de la Pallue (a canon of the Sepulchre), a stranger *curé*, and a young *abbé* belonging to the parish. The women are—the Abbé Adam's niece, and the curé's sister. And in addition to all these—the mayor of the parish. They have been in prison only four days.

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* The village of Verson is near Caen. Charlotte was in the habit of going there to visit Mdme Gautier de Villiers, a cousin and friend of whom she was very fond. During the early part of April 1792 a riot occurred there which threatened to become a serious insurrection. It was caused, in the first place, by the refusal of the resident *curé* to take the civil oath. Most of his parishioners sided with him, but a few of the villagers who were strong Republicans insisted upon his expulsion. Unable to compass this alone, they called upon the patriots and National Guard of Caen for assistance; and upon the arrival of these with two cannons, the tumult became a riot. It was with great difficulty that serious bloodshed was prevented by the Directory of the Department, but the deplorable scenes which Charlotte relates could not be avoided.

"A peasant upon being asked by the Municipality, 'Are you a patriot?' replied, 'Alas! yes, gentlemen, I am! Everyone knows I was the first one to bid upon the property of the clergy when it was put up at auction (after confiscation), and you know very well, gentlemen, that honest people would not buy it.'

"I doubt whether a man of wit could have answered them better than this poor fool. The judges, notwithstanding their solemnity, were inclined to smile. How shall I condense this sad chapter? The parish opinion veered round in an instant, in true club fashion, and the new converts, who would have delivered up their *curé* had he re-appeared among them, were all fêted.

> "Vous connaissez le peuple, on le change en un jour;
> Il prodigue aisément sa haine et son amour.

"Let us talk of them no more. The people you mention are in Paris. To-day all the rest of our honest folk leave for Rouen, and we remain almost alone.

* * * * *

"I should have been delighted on all accounts could we have gone to live in your neighbourhood, the more so as we are threatened with an insurrection very soon. However, one can die but once, and I am steeled against the horrors of our situation by the thought that no one will be a loser by my death unless, indeed, you set some value upon my loving friendship. You will perhaps be surprised, dear heart, at my fears, but you would share them if you were here; I could then better explain to you the condition of our town, and the ferment that men's minds are in. Good-bye, my dear; I must close, for it is impossible to write any longer with this pen, and I fear besides that I have already delayed too long in sending this letter to you; the merchants are to leave to-day. Please give Mdme. L. the most respectful messages from me. My aunt desires me to tell you both how dear her remembrance of you is, and begs you to believe in her sincere affection. I shall say nothing of my own love, for I want you to be sure of it without having me chatter of it continually."

"*To* MDLLE. ROSE FOURGERON DU FAYOT.*

"January 28th.

"You have heard the frightful news, my dear Rose, and your heart, like my own, has trembled with indignation. Behold our poor France delivered over to the wretches who have already made us suffer so much. God only knows where it will stop. I know what your sentiments are, so I can tell you frankly what I think of it all. I shudder with horror; the greatest evils that one can imagine lurk in a future ushered in by such events as this. It is very certain that nothing more unfortunate could have happened to us. I am almost reduced to envying those of our relatives who have left their native soil, so entirely do I despair of seeing the peace which I hoped for until lately. These men who were to give us liberty have murdered it; they are but assassins. Let us grieve for the fate of poor France.

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* Original in the possession of M. Chéron de Villiers.

"I know you are very unhappy, and I do not wish to start your tears afresh by the recital of our troubles. All my friends are being persecuted; my aunt has been made the victim of all manner of petty annoyances, since it has been known that she gave an asylum to Delphin when he was fleeing to England. I would do as he has done if I could, but God no doubt keeps us here for some other destiny.

"The captain passed through here on his return to Evreux; he is a pleasant man and seems greatly attached to you, and I like him for the affection he bears you. I do not know where he is now. If you see him again soon, remind him that he promised me a letter of introduction from your relative M. de Veygoux for my brother. I hope to be able to return this favour at some time.

"We are in the power of villains here, and see every variety of them; they leave no one alone. It would make one hate this Republic if one did not remember that 'les forfaits humains n'atteignent pas les cieux.'

"In short, after the fearful blow which has just horrified the world, sympathise with me, my dear Rose, as I sympathise with you. Not a sensitive or generous heart beats that does not shed tears of blood.

"I am to say all manner of things for everyone. You are beloved as ever.

"MARIE DE CORDAY."

CHAPTER IV

THE GIRONDE AND THE MOUNTAIN.

"The time was ominous: social dissolution near and certain; social renovation still a problem, difficult and distant, even though sure."

The French Revolution.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

FROM the time when the first utterances of the eighteenth-century philosophers set men's minds a-working, the upper middle class—*haute bourgeoisie* as they are now called—were eager students and theorizers of reform, both social and political. From their ranks it was that Rousseau, Condorcet, Voltaire, Diderot, and Raynal had sprung; those thinkers whose words had first stirred the instincts of active regenerative patriotism in their countrymen's hearts.

The seed they sowed bore fruit as rapidly as Jonah's gourd. In every town and village arose men who belonged to the new and virile aristocracy of brains; men whose culture and refinement was supplemented by a laudable ambition—the desire to benefit their country and themselves, by an energetic clearing away of the old worn-out machinery of government.

It was of men of this type that the National Assembly was composed; that wonderful embodiment of a nation's majesty which met and conquered the lesser majesty of royalty upon its own ground.

One of the few things pertaining to the French Revolution which are good to think of is the resolute manner in which this Assembly shouldered its responsibilities, and endeavoured to carry out its great designs with consistency and dignity. And these qualities of consistency and dignity were at no time more conspicuous and imposing than during the trying period immediately after the flight and recapture of the royal family. The King's action had placed the power absolutely in the hands of the National Assembly, and the attitude of acceptance in which that body received the trust savoured neither of usurpation nor of arrogance.

Had a capable statesman arisen then, and fearlessly seized the leadership, much of the anguish and terror that followed might have been averted; France might have been spared the dark blot of regicide, and have afforded to observant Europe an example of the mercy as well as the justice of an aroused people. But no such leader was destined to arise then as a saviour of his country; it was at a later date that the soldier and conqueror came, and France found her master; a master more despotic, more absolute, more uncaring than the poor discrowned king whom she had slain in his weakness — the Nemesis of the Revolution and iron-handed avenger of the fallen monarchy of France.

When Louis, cowed and disheartened by his recapture and the hopelessness of his position, at last accepted the new Constitution, which was virtually his abdication, the *raison d'être* of the National Assembly which had successfully accomplished its mission was withdrawn, and it was dissolved. Never before or since has any body of the representatives of a people been entrusted with higher or nobler duties, or discharged them with more fidelity.

It undertook the Herculean task of cleansing the France of the eighteenth century, and it accomplished it; by its efforts she was purified of the accumulated ills and foulness of centuries, and left clean and pure, but too weak to retain unaided her new-found blessings.

The nation made a great and fatal mistake in allowing the dissolution of the National Assembly and in not sanctioning the re-election of its members. The child Liberty was brought safely into the world, and then left uncared for in its infant helplessness; left to become the prey alternately of party fanaticism, mobocracy, cruelty, bloodshed, and fury, and to be at last sacrificed upon the altar of a little Corsican officer's personal ambition. But "the gods are immortal," and it could not die.

Into the new Assembly came young blood and young talent; men hitherto obscure, eager for chances of personal advancement; men unskilled and inexperienced in the art of government, but hotly enthusiastic and full of new ideas. Their predecessors of the Constituent or National Assembly had secured benefits for the nation, and honour for themselves, by their innovations and subversions; could any better course be pursued? The successors of the National Assembly desired an equal and active share in the work and in the glory of regeneration. "Et nous aussi, nous voulons faire une révolution," exclaimed one of their number, tersely expressing the general feeling.

And so the spirit of change kept the country in continual uncertainty and suspense; nothing was assured, nothing was solid, nothing sacred, and day by day the apprehension and insecurity increased.

Almost in the first days of its existence the new Assembly showed signs of internal division, and very soon three distinct parties declared themselves. The *Feuillants*, who numbered in their ranks most of the department magistrates, the National Guard, and the Army, were under the leadership of Lameth, Damas, Barnave, Duport, and Vaublanc. They were Conservative in their views, and desired a continuance of the Constitutional Monarchy as provided for by the National Assembly; regarded the Revolution as being closed, and disapproved of all further innovations and experiments.

The Jacobins under Robespierre, Danton, Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine were not as yet of much importance. Indeed, they constituted a separate party rather on account of their membership in the Jacobin and Cordelier Clubs than because of their prominence in the Assembly, where they worked in tolerable harmony with the third and most powerful party—that of the Gironde. This was the real revolutionary party, and the one which had the support and affection of the people; no half-and-half Government would satisfy their high ideals—the Monarchy was an incubus which must be shaken off. The Constitution in reforming the old system had robbed it of all its dignity and power; and what use had the emancipated nation for this king by courtesy, this empty name, this smiling mask of royalty which scarcely hid the severe but noble features of Liberty? Away with all shams and pretences, let France be free in name as well as in deed; let her Government be Republican, be pure, and be simple; let liberty and moderation walk hand in hand, assuring freedom and security to every honest law-abiding citizen.

Such were the ideas of the Girondists, modelled on the austere principles of the ancient Republics, and founded on a sincere patriotism and love of order.

Composed almost entirely of men from the great middle classes, which are the true bulwarks of every nation, this party numbered in its ranks more real men of genius than either the *Feuillants* or the Jacobins.

The leaders were men of culture and refinement, who had left their professions of brain and pen to serve their country in her hour of need; lawyers, journalists, poets, and gentlemen by instinct and education. Brissot, who was their acknowledged official chief, was a writer of some note who had already shown his devotion to the abstract principle of personal and national liberty by embracing the cause of the negroes of San Domingo, and proclaiming himself their friend and champion in an eloquent *brochure,* as well as in the Convention. He was a man of great industry, a persevering unflagging worker; absolutely devoted to his cause and never inclined to shirk its responsibilities. In *Le Patriote Français* he uttered the sentiments and explained the plans of his party with honesty and clearness, and his fame would have been assured even if he had been known only as the editor of this paper.

Vergniaud, the orator of the party, was a genius and a stoic, and even among the brilliant men who were his colleagues shone easily as the brightest light of the Gironde. His magic speech seemed to have caught the power of Orpheus' music, and drew forth the applause even of his enemies, while to his friends it was a perpetual inspiration and spur to renewed effort. But with all his genius—or perhaps because of it—Vergniaud was the most *insouciant* and unmanageable of them all. Dreamy and uncertain, he loved his party, and could die for it, but he would not work for it. Only now and then would he shake off the bonds of his natural indolence and pour forth the torrents of poetic eloquence which never failed to electrify his audience, compelling the admiration of all, and raising those who thought with him to the highest pitch of excitement.

Petion, the popular and beloved ex-mayor of Paris, was less polished than his fellow-deputies; he was stern and severe, but honestly patriotic and true to his political opinions, and capable of equal heroism in the day of adversity.

Roland, the "truly good man," the quiet-mannered deliberate philosopher, was an incorruptible statesman whose brief public career was upright and free from self-seeking. His wife, the "Great Citoyenne," the "Egeria of the Gironde," was a noble woman cast in a mould of heroic grandeur. It was in her *salon* that the party grew into existence, and her intrepid patriotism and personal charm made her a sort of queen among the men who gathered encouragement and inspiration from her lips. Gifted with an almost masculine intellect, and a more than masculine indifference to danger; clear-sighted, honourable and energetic, this woman stands foremost among the heroines of the world, and her love for Buzot—that one touch of womanly weakness in a nature otherwise so strong—but makes her character more perfect.

And this Buzot was a handsome and generous young soul, well worthy of affection; his patriotism was as genuine as his devotion to Madame Roland, a devotion fraught with trouble for them both, but so great that it could sweeten even imprisonment and death.

Barbaroux also belonged to this party of brains and honourable endeavour. He was a young man whose cheerful and resolute courage endeared him to his associates, and whose magnificent presence and beautiful classic face earned for him the soubriquet of the "Antinous of France."

Isnard, a buoyant and excitable Provençal, with the easy eloquence and enthusiasm that belong to the children of the south.

Louvet, whose strong dogmatic nature and rigid adherence to his opinions made him a foe to be feared and respected, was gifted with an iron endurance and dauntless spirit, but was often obstinate and a victim of blind prejudice.

Fonfrède, the Benjamin of the party, loyal to his friends at the cost of his young life; Ducos, a merry companion flinging his jests into the face of Death itself; brave Duperret, honest and uncompromising; Grangeneuve, Salles, Gaudet, Meilhan, Gensonné . . . these were the men of the Gironde; the very apostles of liberty, who had first preached the Republic pure and bloodless, and who had worked with all their splendid young energies to overthrow the Throne.

All under forty years of age, they were on fire with zeal and patriotism; eager to sacrifice love and life, if need be, in the cause of true liberty; strong to endure the perils and hardships of outlawry, and at the last accepting their doom with a dignity and fortitude worthy of their high pretensions. An heroic group of which France may well be proud!

The first breach between the Girondists and the Jacobins occurred when the question of war with the European Powers was broached; Brissot advocated war, and the Jacobins, gradually falling into line under Robespierre, opposed it. The discussions raged for three weeks with ever-increasing heat, and from that time forward the bitterness and rancour between the two parties waxed fiercer at every session.

Nor did the temporary triumph of the Girondists, and the final declaration of war, tend to soothe the irritated feelings of the Jacobins, who at once began to plan the overthrow of the Gironde.

Robespierre, Danton, Desmoulins, Marat, Fabre d'Églantine, Hébert, and their associates, gradually obtained control of the mind of Paris, and they had from the beginning the great advantage of being in the midst of their supporters in the insurgent populace, while the adherents of the Girondists were principally in the provinces.

Every day increased the insubordination which was rampant everywhere; in the army, in the cities, in the National Guard itself. The fatal methods of corruption by which the Republicans had sought to render the army useless to the Royalists had been only too successful; mutiny was in the ranks, and impatience of authority and discipline among the officers.

In Paris riot followed riot, until the popular fury broke all bounds and branded across the page of history the lurid date of August 10th. Close upon the massacre of the Swiss Guard and the sacking of the Tuileries, followed the other atrocities of that awful time; the closed barriers on the 28th, the domiciliary visits, the general apprehension and anxiety, and the final celebration of the triumph of the Municipality by the prison butcheries of September. The Assembly was aghast; the power it had wrested from the King had already slipped through its fingers into the irresponsible grasp of the Commune, and it could do nothing to check its abuse. Threats, decrees, prayers and speeches fell on unheeding ears, and their feeble efforts at restraint and prevention were as ropes of sand to bind a madman.

At the time when the King was brought to trial, the Girondists stood midway between the Constitutional party, which had grown to be regarded as the Royalist interest, and the ultra-Republicans, or Jacobins. Their position was a difficult and dangerous one: too much leniency would brand them as Royalists, and by infallibly alienating what remained to them of popular favour, wreck their party; on the other hand their love of justice and law, their principles of humanitarianism and moderation, their repugnance to all unnecessary bloodshed, made them strongly averse to the King's execution. They recognised, moreover, the inadvisability of adding to the irritation of the foreign Powers by laying violent hands upon Louis. His death would be an insult and gage of defiance to every crowned head, and France was then in no condition to throw down the glove to united Europe. Dethroned and imprisoned, the King was no longer a power to be feared, was no longer a king, in fact; for by the Constitution which bore his signature he was a simple citizen, amenable to the same laws as the people.

"After the express or legal abdication of the King, he will be in the class of citizens; he can be accused and tried like them."

Here the very virtues of the Girondists stood in their way; their uprightness and scrupulous honesty forbade them either to deny the powers of the Constitution which they had sworn to defend, or to evade its laws by crooked means. Nevertheless, the blame of the King's sentence must always rest upon them, because they were in the majority in the Convention, and by unanimity of action could have overborne the Jacobins. But apparently insignificant dissensions among themselves divided the votes, and gave the ultra-Republicans the advantage.

Yet after the sentence was passed the Girondists tried to save the life of Louis; they felt none of the personal fury against him that characterised the Parisians, and his political death was sufficient for them. Brissot demanded that the sentence be referred directly to the people, trusting to the better instincts with which his party was always ready to credit it; but his motion was defeated. They had delayed too long; no late measures of justice or appeals to the people's nobler feelings could avail now to save the King, and their tardy efforts only furnished their enemies with fresh cause of complaint.

The weakness of the Girondist party on this occasion was a political *bévue*, and an important factor in its downfall; it had dallied and temporised too long, trusted to eloquence when action was required, greatly disappointing its own constituents without in the least appeasing its enemies.

The attacks of the Jacobins were growing more and more virulent; Camille Desmoulins issued injurious placards and pamphlets, while Marat turned the vitriol malice of *L'Ami du Peuple* against his former colleagues, and Danton and Robespierre thundered at them in the Assembly. The effect of all this enmity soon became visible in the rapidity with which the Girondists lost ground in the favour of the Parisian populace; ground which was at once seized by their opponents.

The Municipality supported and encouraged the Jacobins in their inflammatory speeches, and faithfully followed their advice in all matters of bloodshed and pillage.

In the midst of it all the Legislative Assembly drew to a close, and the National Convention arose in its place. It inaugurated its rule by the proclamation of the Republic One and Indivisible, and the alteration of the Calendar. But the members had brought all the hatreds and strifes of the dissolved Assembly into the new Convention, and the ever-increasing hostility between the Girondists and the Jacobins divided the Convention into two distinct and utterly antagonistic parties. When the Convention met after the September massacres the Girondists sat on the right side of the hall while the Jacobins occupied the higher benches on the left, and it was from this elevated position that their party derived the name of "The Mountain," by which it was thenceforth known.

This party had now acquired a firm hold upon the populace of Paris; its members were for the most part desperate men, who depended only on their cunning and audacity. Fanaticism was a necessary part of their *rôle,* for it was only by bewildering the nation with noisy protestations and daring acts of bloodshed that they could hide their own private designs of self-advancement.

Infinitely inferior to their opponents, the Girondists, in every moral quality, they also lacked their talent and parliamentary eloquence, but they far surpassed them in astuteness and cunning. By their action they seemed to show that they felt intuitively the prophetic truth which La Source put into words—". . . the people have lost their reason; you will die as soon as they recover it."

It was their mission to foster the unreason of the mob, for in its recklessness and fanaticism lay their only safety, and their leaders were well chosen for their inflammatory ability. Denunciation, slander, hatred, unreasoning excitement, these were their tried and trusty weapons.

Robespierre had by the exercise of cautious selfishness, and his usual dogmatic temerity of opinion, reached a position which would have been that of a leader had Danton and Marat allowed him to occupy it alone. He did not fear his opponents, but he dreaded the jealousy and suspicion of his colleagues. Cold, calculating, and ambitious, he cultivated cruelty as a necessary qualification for the position he desired to attain. His vanity and the self-elevation for which he strove were veiled by an ostentatiously correct and modest private life, and nothing was allowed to interfere with the furtherance of his designs. These he pursued with an inflexibility and perseverance that almost resembled courage; but when he fell, victim of his own selfishness and craft, his inherent cowardice was revealed. Weakness is inseparable from a vain nature, and his abject terror of death forms a pitiful contrast to the calm and steadfast courage of so many of his victims.

Danton was of a tougher fibre; a bold, daring, unscrupulous man. Fearing and disdaining no means which he considered likely to further an end, he would instigate a massacre to advance the interests of his party; but as soon as the upward step was taken he was the first to desire a return to humanity. He was not a mere blood-thirsty tyrant, like Hébert, Collet d'Herbois, Chabot, and so many of the lesser lights of the Jacobin party, but an unprincipled wielder of whatever weapon would serve his turn. A man to be feared, but not one to be despised, and could the Girondists have kept him in their ranks he might have swayed their destinies to happier issues. Mdme. Roland could have conciliated him had she been less a woman, but her personal antipathy to him was unconquerable. "Never," she says, "have I seen a face so repulsive and atrocious, so characteristic of brutal passions." Herself a woman of pure life, the notorious uncleanness of the man repelled her, and in spite of the politic efforts of her friends, she could never bring herself to associate with him.

Marat was one of the most noisy and incendiary of the members of the Mountain. Vain, fond of the sound of his own voice, restless, and an incurable agitator and denunciator, he furthered the reign of misrule and bloodshed by every means in his power. He was less conspicuous as a deputy than as a journalist and ranter at the clubs, but his influence was nevertheless as powerful as it was malignant.

Camille Desmoulins was the jester of the party. With cynical levity and cutting ridicule he rebuffed every instinct of gentleness and humanity in the people, systematically blunting their sympathies with ribaldry and derision. That he had done his work only too well, he proved in those later days when he tried to touch their hardened hearts and arouse their pity for himself and the sweet young wife whom he idolised. Every effort brought him only cruel scorn and brutal laughter—he could not reach the waters of compassion for the foam of his own grim jesting.

After the death of the King, matters between the two hostile parties grew rapidly worse. The Mountain appeared to be fast marching towards a dictatorship; already its leaders had formed a triumvirate which held the power of government, and seemed bent on abolishing what remained of order and rule.

The Girondists tried to stem the tide, but only succeeded in establishing their enemies yet more firmly in the popular favour. Bitter was the disillusion of the humanitarian party, forced to contemplate wrongs which it could neither prevent nor redress, and obliged to witness the perversion of its high aims and principles.

"They believe in consolidating the Republic by terror," wrote Vergniaud; "I was fain to see it consolidated by love!"

When the infamous Revolutionary Tribunal was established, the Girondists made a last vain stand for liberty and the honour of the land; but they knew that their cause was lost even then, and that it was only a question of time when they would themselves come under its dread jurisdiction. Brissot, fearless to the last, exclaimed: "Let them but leave me time to clear my memory from dishonour, by voting against this tyranny of the Convention!"

The most fatal political error of the Girondist party was one which is nevertheless their greatest honour as a body of just and merciful men—the arraignment of Marat and Robespierre for their complicity in the prison massacres. The unconstitutional attempt to bring these men to justice established a precedent of the violability of a member of the Convention, which subsequently proved disastrous to the Girondists themselves. Whatever the crimes of which their opponents were guilty, they were yet legally appointed deputies, and as such should have been inviolate; and the failure to bring them to justice closed the long struggle between the parties, and gave the final victory to the Mountain. Yet though the motion was ill-advised, we should be loth to miss it from the pages of history; there are but too few instances of cool determination and fearless upholding of right, for us to cavil at this bright instance.

The trial of Marat and his triumphant acquittal was the direct cause of the proscription of the twenty-nine deputies, and the final downfall of the purest and most patriotic party that French history has yet shown us.

Many were the accusations brought against the Gironde; Royalist sympathies, treachery, fraudulent use of public offices and moneys, conspiracy, federalism, &c. &c. They called it by many names; in reality, it was the incorruptible adherence to principle and fearless unmasking of wrong that the Mountain could not forgive.

CHAPTER V.

THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND.

> "He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be shall never want attentive and favourable hearers."
>
> *Ecclesiastical Polity.*—HOOKER.

JEAN PAUL MARAT was born in Boudray, Switzerland, on the 24th May 1743. His father, who was a doctor, seems to have given him an unusually good education. When he was sixteen he left home to make his own way in the world, and after ten years of wandering about Europe, apparently without any definite aim or occupation, he finally settled in Edinburgh. In 1772 he held a professorship of French literature in the university of St. Andrew's, and he appears to have carried on the study of medicine at the same time, for soon afterwards the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon him, and he left Edinburgh for London, where he immediately commenced practice. Success seems to have attended him, especially in the treatment of diseases of the eyes, to which subject he gave special attention and study. A certain nervous restless energy that characterised him impelled him to work in other fields; and during the ten years of his career as a doctor in London, we find him supplementing his medical studies with experiments in chemistry and electricity, and with keen observation of the methods of the government under which he lived. It was during this period that he wrote most of the books which were published in English and afterwards translated into French. *A Philosophical Essay on Man, or the Laws and Mutual Action of the Body on the Soul,* 3 vols., London 1773, is the best known of his non-political works, but contains little that was new, and shows no great originality or depth of thought. It was followed in 1774 by a pamphlet called *The Chains of Slavery,* a virulent attack on the royal prerogative, which made a slight stir in the political world of England.

In 1779 he removed to Paris to assume the position of physician to the body-guard of the Comte d'Artois, an occupation which left him ample leisure for study and the experiments of which he was so fond. The results of these experiments he described in numerous pamphlets, among which was *Découvertes sur le Feu, l'Electricité et la Lumière;* in this he attacked all the received tenets of science in a characteristically rough manner, which brought down the wrath of the Academy upon the inconoclastic writer.

He also lectured upon physics and optics, and among his pupils was a strikingly handsome lad—Barbaroux by name—who in those later days of strife and tumult became a member of the Convention, an ardent Girondist, and one of Marat's most determined and formidable opponents.

In 1783 the treatise on *Electricity and Magnetism as Applied to Medicine* received the honourable mention of the Academy of Rouen, tempered with strong disapproval of the writer's personalities. Until 1788 Marat continued his studies and researches, spending hours in his laboratory with Franklin, and scheming to revolutionise the scientific world with the result of his experiments.

But the herald thunder-peals of the gathering storm roused him from his ambitious dreams, swept his favourite pursuits from his mind, and turned the full tide of his eager activity into a new channel. The momentous questions of the day filled his thoughts, politics absorbed him, and leaving the service of the Comte d'Artois, he at once joined several of the most pronounced clubs and plunged headlong into his new career.

In 1789 the *Offrande à la Patrie* appeared, heading the long list of incendiary writings that so fatally fascinated and influenced the popular mind. Like all that ever came from Marat's pen, it is vehement and dogmatic, teeming with vindictive denunciations, in this instance of the Ministers of Finance, and absolutely void of literary diction or force.

Our next glimpse of the rabid little man is at the storming of the Bastille, where he appeared in the mob, encouraging and inciting all within reach of his strident voice, but confining his efforts strictly to words and carefully avoiding the posts of bodily danger, a course which he pursued with praiseworthy consistency on all occasions.

At the meeting of the Comité des Carmes on the Sunday following the fall of the Bastille, Marat endeavoured to secure the establishment of a paper, which he was to edit. But finding that the Comité determined to have nothing to do with his plan, he was obliged to let the matter drop for a time. A few days afterwards, however, he issued another of his pamphlets with a high-sounding title, setting forth the rights of man and citizen, and detailing a plan of constitution, "Just, wise, and free."

Neither the snubs of the Comité nor the disapproval of the authorities could silence this noisy agitator, and on the 8th of September 1789 the first number of the *Publiciste Parisien* appeared. It announced itself as a "free and impartial political journal, published by a society of patriots, and edited by M. Marat." It was immediately seized by the Commune, and vigorous efforts were made to suppress it; twice within a month Marat was arrested, but evaded the ostensible objections of the authorities by changing the name of the publication, striking out the words "by a society of patriots," and assuming the sole responsibility of its utterances.

From the ashes of the *Publiciste* arose the famous, or rather infamous, *L'Ami du Peuple,* which began its career by inflaming the populace with false views of the causes of the prevailing scarcity of bread. It assured the people that the Government had deliberately planned the famine in order to starve them into submission, and was purposely withholding supplies until that end was accomplished.

A little adroit flattery, unlimited blustering, and plenty of vehement denunciation were all that was needed to arouse the famine-pinched city. Paris was ripe for revolt, and Marat found it an easy matter to turn the madness of hunger that had seized upon the starving multitudes into the channels that led most directly to his own ends. *L'Ami* had an immediate success, and in spite of the vigilance of the authorities it continued to appear, every number adding fuel to the fire of rebellion which was already kindled.

The result was soon apparent. The "bread insurrection" of October 6th, 1789, when the populace, led by the women of Paris, surged like an angry sea around Versailles, showed Marat where his forte lay, and gave him his first firm hold on the confidence of the mob.

But Lafayette's patrols were upon his track, and he was forced to fly from house to house, issuing his paper under the greatest difficulties, often to have the copies seized before the ink was dry upon the sheets.

His denunciation of Neckar so exasperated the authorities that Paris became no longer safe for him, and he fled to Versailles, where a friend harboured him until the danger was past. In those stormy days the Courts were too full of graver offenders to waste much time on a scurrilous journalist, and in a few days Marat was able to return to Paris, although he was still obliged to remain in concealment and suspend the publication of *L'Ami* for a while.

These days of enforced silence must have been spent in preparing fresh bitterness of speech, for when he set up his press in the Rue de L'Ancienne Comédie and re-issued *L'Ami* on November 5th, it was more virulent and inflammatory than ever.

In the following July, Lafayette was ordered by the Court of the Châtelet to arrest Marat, and was authorised to use what means he deemed fit towards that end; but the slippery little Swiss eluded the General's vigilance by frequent changes of asylum, and final escape from the country. He took refuge in London, from whence he issued his *Appel à la Nation,* in which he represents himself as "the martyr of my zeal for the good of the country," and in a long tirade denounces the Assembly as being composed of "arrogant and vain men who deck themselves with the spoils of the people, hypocrites who mislead, lawyers who sell justice, intriguers who seek to enslave, and rascals who strive to defame the people, scoundrels who are trying to cast them back into destruction," &c. &c. &c. Neckar, the Municipality, the Court of the Châtelet, and Lafayette, all come in for a generous share of abuse and vilification, while the interesting document closes with a bombastic tribute to his own pure and disinterested patriotism. Other brochures followed close upon the heels of the *Appel à la Nation*, among them a second and more violent denunciation of Neckar.

In May 1790 Marat returned to France, and immediately resumed the publication of *L'Ami*. He kept his arrival and place of concealment a strict secret, and the re-appearance of his paper caused a sensation in Paris. Almost the first number contained an attack upon the Court of the Châtelet for its prosecution of the "patriots" of the preceding 5th and 6th of October. "The people," he wrote, "had the right not only to execute by martial law a few of the conspirators, but to immolate them all; they had the right to take the most terrible vengeance upon the ministers of the prince, upon his perfidious advisers, his salaried captains; the right of making the entire corps of royal satellites who are plotting to ruin us, and the innumerable traitors to the country, run the gauntlet of the sword."

It was about this time that the *liaison* of Marat and Simonne Evrard began. She was a young woman of twenty-six, possessed of a small fortune in her own right, which proved most useful to Marat in the re-establishment of his presses in her house in the Rue des Cordeliers, which henceforth became his home.

Fabre d'Eglantine tells us "they were married one fine morning by the sun." At that time purity of life was at a discount, and such an arrangement was by no means considered blamable or shameful; but in view of the facts, the severity of Marat's sanctimonious remarks upon the relation of the sexes rings false.

Poor Simonne, who devoted herself and her belongings to the service of her ugly hero, caring faithfully for his physical health, and shielding him as far as she could from all annoyance and interruption, deserved something better than the position of mistress and household drudge to the "Friend of the People."

Her modest fortune was swallowed up by the expenses of printing *L'Ami*, and the death of Marat left her absolutely destitute. But, woman-like, she remained faithful to the man who had wronged her, and eloquently defended his memory even at the very bar of the Convention. Her unselfish devotion won her the respect of the public, and in her later days she was always addressed as the "Widow Marat." After Marat's death she and his sister Albertine lived together in loneliness and obscurity, barely keeping hunger at bay by making watch-springs, until Simonne's death in the early part of 1824. Albertine Marat died in 1841, at the age of eighty-three, alone, and in the direst poverty, and was buried in the *fosse commune*—the dreary Parisian potters' field.

When the decree of June 10th (1790), which placed the Civil List at 25,000 fr. appeared, Marat's outcry brought the wrath of the Municipality once more upon him, and for a time it seemed as if his only safety lay in flight. But the storm blew over without his being arrested, though he was obliged to have recourse to his old tactics of frequent change of refuge. While he was hiding in the cellar of the Cordeliers Club, Lafayette's patrols made a raid on his printing-office in Simonne's house, broke the presses, and destroyed what numbers of *L'Ami* they could find. These police visits continued until December, yet Marat constantly eluded capture, and it is more than probable that he had friends and adherents among the patrols, who found means of warning him of impending danger. Unless there was corruption and unfaithfulness in Lafayette's ranks, it is difficult to understand how a trained and experienced soldier could have been baffled so long and so successfully by this wasp of a man, whose incessant stings must moreover have given the General ample personal incentive to effect the capture ordered by the Municipality.

In December (1791) the increased vigilance and determination of Lafayette compelled Marat to cross the Channel and take refuge in London again; and there he remained until the following April, when the Cordeliers invited him to return and resume the publication of *L'Ami* under their protection. On the 12th of that month the paper reappeared, more extreme and denunciatory than before. The safety of its editor, who gained ground with the populace, and who had nothing to fear now that Lafayette had fallen and was beyond the frontier, seemed to put a keener edge to his denunciations.

A great deal of blind abuse has been lavished on Marat, and to most people the mere mention of his name is sufficient to call up the image of a fantastic half-human monster, whose unnatural thirst for blood was his most prominent characteristic. Historians seem to have agreed to make him appear a grotesque mixture of animal fury and ignorance, to whose account is laid almost all the blackness and wickedness, and cruelty of the great Revolution.

Michelet, Louis Blanc, Lamartine, Mignet, Thiers, Carlyle—all are at pains to find epithets sufficiently opprobrious to describe him; he is denied all talent, any possible good aims, any redeeming quality, even that of sincerity. We can but admit that he was repulsive and vindictive, and that his enormous influence over the people was systematically used to excite their worst passions, but his consistency and rigid adherence to his principles—extreme and sanguinary as they were—deserve a certain meed of reluctant respect.

Talented he undoubtedly was, a man of varied knowledge and attainments; an accomplished linguist, a skilful physician, and an intelligent dabbler in natural science.

But above all he possessed — partly by intuition, partly by close observation—an intimate knowledge of human nature; and none knew better than he what springs in the public mind he must press in order to produce the effects he desired.

He was a turbulent, bold, sagacious man, who with an inordinate love of rule yet cared nothing for its mere insignia; it was the fact itself he coveted, the iron grasp on the people's action, the grim power of bending or breaking men to his will. Obstinate, forceful, virulent, his restless activity and energy made him pursue every aim with a dogged perseverance that was well-nigh resistless. It is only necessary to read a dozen numbers of *L'Ami du Peuple* to see this insistence exemplified. Over and over again he repeats an idea, often in the same words, until it is beaten and hammered into the minds of the people; indeed, one might almost suppose him to have taken for his motto the old saw which declares that if a thing is only affirmed often enough, it will eventually be believed.

Marat's vanity led him to greatly over-estimate his own mental powers, and his bombastic assumption imposed upon the class he ruled; the ignorant are ever ready to credit their superiors with more knowledge than they possess—to take them to a great extent at their own valuation.

His combativeness and vindictiveness were natural to him, qualities inborn, and not by any means the outcome of a righteous indignation at the oppression of the people, as some of his later biographers would have us believe. He had the snappy, querulous temper of the terrier, quick to take offence and eagerly aggressive; but what made him so dangerous a foe was the bull-dog tenacity of grip, a quality which is happily rare in persons of the terrier type.

Long before Marat occupied himself with political questions he exhibited this spiteful spirit; his scientific writings are full of personal attacks upon his colleagues, and it is observable in everything he ever wrote. When the Rouen Academy "crowned" his brochure on *Electricity and Magnetism as applied to Medicine,* the faculty rebuked the author in strong terms for his "rude treatment of estimable writers."

Marat was a born agitator, and his pugnacity and determination made him a formidable one; he bit like vitriol into the face of France, defaced and wounded her, leaving scars that even now are not wholly obliterated.

Originality of thought or expression he had absolutely none, and his books show merely an aptitude for adapting and vamping up other men's views. He exhibits no deep research or luminous scholarship, only an extensive superficial knowledge, and a sort of encyclopedic memory.

Rousseau's *Contrat Social* seems to have furnished him with his political ideas, and his brochures are, one and all, variations and exaggerations of this primary theme. What Mercier says of the Jacobins collectively may very well apply to Marat: "They stole the pages of our philosophical writings; but it was after greatly perverting them, and making a criminal instead of a civil application of them that the Revolution—pure and unblemished in its origin—became, by reason of these gross plagiarisms, a fury girdled by serpents and armed with torches and daggers—the terror of neighbouring countries, and for a long time to come the horror of posterity."

In his *Législation Criminelle* Marat uses the arguments which have since gained such a wearisome familiarity in the mouths of modern Socialists. "Only bound to society by its disadvantages, are they obliged to respect its laws? Undoubtedly not. If society abandons them they re-enter the normal state, and when they recover by force the rights which they could not alienate except to secure greater advantages all authority which opposes them is tyrannical, and the judge who condemns them to death is only a cowardly assassin."

A slight alteration of language and style, and could we not fancy it is Lassalle, Bax, or Herr Most who is holding forth?

There have been one or two attempts within the last ten years to present Marat to us in the guise of a martyr, a hero misunderstood, a white-souled patriot hitherto unappreciated. But in spite of the poetic assertions of these enthusiastic biographers of his—each of whom by the way is an avowed Socialist—the personal record of the man as found in his writings and speeches must inevitably condemn him. That he was more closely and intimately concerned in the September massacres than either Danton or Robespierre, has been proven beyond a doubt, and the horrible proclamation calling upon the provincial towns to follow the example of the Capital, emanated from the brain of Marat, and was written, aye and even printed, by his hand.

A few extracts taken at random will suffice to show the character of his infamous paper, and to disperse the rosy mist of humane benevolence and love of his kind, in which MM. Bougeart, Brunet, and Bax have tried to envelope him.

The italics in the following extracts are reproduced from the originals.

Cease wasting your time in thinking of means of defence, there remains for you only the one which I have so often recommended, *a general insurrection, and executions by the populace.* Begin by making sure of the king, the dauphin, and the royal family; place them under a strong guard, and let their heads answer for whatever happens. Next hew down without hesitation the head of the general, those of the ministers and ex-ministers who are against the Revolution, those of the anti-revolutionary mayor, and the municipal officers. Make the entire *état majeur* of Paris, all the blacks, and the ministers of the National Assembly, and every known supporter of despotism, run the gauntlet of the sword. I repeat, that only this means of saving the country remains to you. Six months ago five or six hundred heads would have sufficed to raise you from destruction. Now that you have stupidly allowed your implacable enemies to form plots, and unite, perhaps five or six thousand must be struck down; but if it were necessary to strike down 20,000 there is no possibility of hesitation for an instant. If you do not anticipate them they will murder you barbarously to insure their domination; remember the massacre of Nancy. Let perfidious quietists exclaim at barbarism! No, no; it is not he who advises you to overthrow your enemies who is likely to murder you.—*L'Ami du Peuple,* Dec. 18, 1790.

DENUNCIATION OF LAFAYETTE.

To the important post of general of the Parisian army, none but proved patriots should have been raised, and they should have been allowed to remain there but a month at the longest. The inhabitants of the capital have had the stupidity to appoint to this position a low servant of the court, and they have committed the folly of suffering him to remain there for eighteen months. And this cunning tartuffe, this adroit rascal, this mean rogue, has employed a thousand artifices to make himself master of the citizen guard and the national forces. False demonstrations of patriotism, honeyed speeches, cajoleries, curvettings, warlike parades and processions, military festivals, funereal pomp, brawling, debauchery, flattery, promises, bribery,—every resource of seduction, imposture and perfidy has been used in turn for this end. . . . No, I shall not rest until he has expiated his crimes by a shameful death. Every day I will point out his traps, his secret practices, his plots, his outrages; every day I will reveal his lies, his impostures, his rascality, his turpitude; every day I will drag him in the mire, until, horrified at the fate which awaits him, he seeks safety in flight, or in having me murdered by his cut-throats.—*L'Ami du Peuple*, Dec. 19, 1790.

In the present cruel position of the country, the only thing left for the nation to do to avert the dangers with which it is threatened by the enemies of the Revolution and foreign Powers, is to secure the king, the dauphin, and the royal family, and especially the queen and the ministers. To keep them under strict guard, and to warn them that their heads will be answerable for whatever may happen. This duty devolves upon the people of the capital. As to all the other towns in the kingdom, they must take like measures in regard to former nobles, prelates, lawyers, aristocrats, and in short, of all the supporters of the old *régime*. Then at the first invasion of French territory, or at the first cannon-shot, kill them all without exception, beginning with the *maréchaussée*, and the royal satellites.—*L'Ami du Peuple*, Jan. 13, 1791.

Blind citizens! Will you always be foolish, will you never open your eyes? Ten months ago the fall of five hundred heads would have assured your happiness; now, in order to save yourselves, you will perhaps be obliged to strike down a hundred thousand, after having seen your brothers, wives, and children murdered.—*L'Ami du Peuple* Jan. 30, 1791.

You should have assembled all citizens who are friends of their country, and arrested the ministers some fine night, and if the treacherous Assembly had refused to punish them by the hangman, you should have killed them yourselves without hesitation! —*L'Ami du Peuple*, Feb. 12, 1791.

If you are dissatisfied with your officers, dismiss them; if violence is used towards you, then comrades, unite and thrust your bayonets into their bellies up to the very barrel.—*L'Ami du Peuple*, Feb. 14, 1791.

Oh, people! what are you about? Your leaders are betraying you Arm yourselves with daggers, murder the perfidious Lafayette, and the cowardly Bailly; hurry then to the Senate and drag out from there the conscript fathers; impale these representatives who are sold to the court, and let their bleeding limbs, hung upon the cornices of the hall, inspire with terror all those who would fill their places!—*L'Ami du Peuple*, July 1791.

I shall not believe in the Republic until the head of Louis XVI. is no longer on his shoulders.—*Journal de la République*, Nov. 19, 1792.

The machine will never work until the people bring two hundred thousand scoundrels to justice. They must reduce their representatives and agents to one quarter of their present number.—*Le Publiciste Parisien*, Dec. 1792.

In all countries where the rights of the people are not empty titles, existing only in a pompous declaration, the looting of a few shops, upon whose doors the speculating proprietors would be hung, would soon put an end to these embezzlements.—*Le Publiciste Parisien*, Feb. 1793.

Dreary reading this, and we close the book with a shudder, remembering how docile those old-time readers proved to the teachings of this master of murder, and how his bitter denunciations brought noble heads and innocent beneath the axe as well as those deserving of their fate.

CHAPTER VI.

PREPARATIONS.

"I will do a thing which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation."

"But enquire not ye of mine act, for I will not declare it unto you, till the things be finished that I do."—*The Book of Judith*, chap. viii., v. 32, 34.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY has frequently been called a Girondist, but in point of fact she was not in any sense a political woman, and belonged to no party or sect. Undoubtedly she sympathised with the Gironde, partly because their moderate principles most nearly harmonised with her own Utopian dreams, and partly because so many of its members were known and honoured in Caen. But although in the main sympathising with the ideas of the Girondists, she very strongly disapproved of some of their proceedings in the Convention; notably the severe measures prompted by them against the emigrant Royalists, and the priests who had refused to take the civil oath. She always made her dislike and contempt for the Constitutional clergy very evident; the pusillanimity and want of true faith in the religion they professed, which led them to desecrate their altars and turn their Sacraments into empty farce, was hateful to her. Charlotte was essentially womanly, and cowardice in any form was therefore abominable in her eyes; and in spite of her personal emancipation from the trammels of her Church, she respected and admired those who, being able to retain their faith, had the courage and steadfastness to suffer rather than abase it. Not even to hear Fauchet, the Constitutional bishop of Calvados, whose eloquence and personal magnetism were so wonderful, would she waive her prejudices: acknowledged Girondist and able preacher as he was, she had only words of contempt for him.

Quietly and unobtrusively Charlotte Corday's life grew and ripened to fruition under the shadow of the Grand Manoir walls; most of her time was passed with her old aunt, and it was but seldom that she appeared outside the doors of her home. This very stillness and uneventfulness of her own life served to heighten her interest in public affairs, and she devoured every newspaper and pamphlet that she could obtain with an almost morbid eagerness.

The publications that came in her way were mostly Girondist organs, Brissot de Warville's *Patriote Français,* the *Courier Universel,* the *Courier Français,* and others less well known. Anxiously and with pain and indignation, Charlotte watched the prospect of a just and moderate government, such as she had dreamed of for so long, become less and less favourable. True, the tarnished lilies of the monarchy had been rooted up, but in their stead a hideous fungus of misrule and licence was growing with fearful rapidity. Each day recorded some new disaster, and the papers were full of warnings and exhortations, lamentations and discouragement—sad reading enough for this silent, impressionable girl, whose love for her tortured country was so great that each of its throes sent a sympathetic pang through her own heart.

In the Convention the Girondists had been bravely fighting a losing battle, and straining every nerve to preserve the liberty they had worked so hard to establish from the hands of the Jacobins, whose triumph meant anarchy for France. They had failed, and now some of their more hopeful members who had fled to the provinces were trying to raise an army, which was to deliver Paris from the Jacobins and replace the Gironde at the nation's helm. Petion, Buzot, Barbaroux, Valady, Gaudet, Meilhan, Salles, Louvet, and Larivière had taken refuge in the department of Calvados, and were all working to arouse the somewhat sluggish enthusiasm of the provincials.

Burning speeches, eloquent highly-spiced pamphlets and manifestoes, newspaper articles, sermons, promises, threats, were issued every day by the deputies, who used every weapon in the armoury of coercion and persuasion; and the text of all these speeches and writings was Marat. He had played a more prominent part than either Danton or Robespierre in the proscription of the Girondists, and by his insults and denunciations had aroused their hatred far more than his colleagues. The people of Calvados, not unnaturally, grew to suppose that he was possessed of much greater powers than the other two members of the triumvirate, as well as of a really monstrous malignity; Charlotte Corday erred with the rest.

"The horror inspired by his maxims, and the popular idea of his personal hideousness," says Garat, "made the people think they saw his influence in everything, so that they imagined that *he* was the Mountain, or that all its members were like him." When the proscribed Girondists set up their headquarters in Caen, the popular enthusiasm increased at once, and in proportion to its increase was the feeling against Marat and the Mountain intensified.

The universal excitement was like wine to Charlotte Corday; the near presence of the men who were being persecuted in the cause of her beloved Republic intoxicated her, adding fuel to her patriotic ardour, and creating in her a sort of *besoin de se battre*—a feeling not altogether unknown to American women a quarter of a century ago.

The lawlessness of the Parisians filled her with greater anger than the injustice of the Monarchy had ever done. "These men who were to give us liberty have murdered it; they are but assassins!" she writes on the death of the King, her whole being tingling with indignant pain at the rude shattering of her ideals. But it was for the Republic she sorrowed, not for Louis XVI.; she thought only of the harm that the unnecessary murder would do the cause. She loved the new-born Republic so ardently, and had hoped so much from its establishment, that it wrung her heart to see it step aside from rectitude and dignity. Brooding over these events, and believing that anarchy and chaos were about to plunge the country into ruin, her romantic excitable mind began to form wild schemes for the liberation of her unhappy land.

Her trouble and preoccupation became so evident at last that Mdme. de Bretheville asked her one day what it was that was weighing on her mind, and making her so unhappy. Her answer was: "I sorrow for the miseries of my country and of my relations; for yours also, oh, my dear! For who can assure me that you may not be struck by one of those thunderbolts which have already deprived so many citizens of life? As long as Marat lives there will never be any safety for the friends of law and humanity."

In her eagerness to obtain accurate accounts of the state of Paris, and desiring perhaps to see the hero-deputies in person, Charlotte went to the Town Hall to visit Barbaroux, who received his beautiful visitor with the greatest deference, and that charmingly chivalrous manner which was one of the handsome young deputy's most attractive characteristics. Charlotte's girlish pride was pleased by her reception, and when Barbaroux detailed to her, with all the eloquence of which he was master, the humiliation and wrongs endured by his party and himself at the hands of the revolutionists, her sympathy knew no bounds. Each vivid word added its quota to her excitement, deepened her strong repugnance to Marat, and made her long to do something for these persecuted heroes.

Until the proscribed deputies came to Caen Charlotte had never associated with public men, and her political ideas were neither clear nor practical. Watching the conflict from afar, it seemed to her as if she suddenly saw the solution of the trouble; saw just where one bold blow would sever the cord that bound her country to misery and ruin. She, like the rest of Calvados, supposed Marat to be the chief, if not the sole, instigator of the horrors of Paris, and imagined that his death would be the quickest and surest means of restoring the country to order. As Lamartine aptly expresses it: "Elle vit la perte de la France, elle vit les victimes, elle crut voir le tyran." Inexperienced and impulsive, she looked no farther than the death of one tyrant, never realising the hydra-like nature of the species; her reasoning powers were not of the highest order, and she did not grasp the real situation, and could not foresee the inevitable consequences of such an act upon the very party she wished to serve.

Charlotte Corday possessed neither the clear-sighted political prescience, nor the virility of intellect that characterised Mdme. Roland, but even the "Great Citoyenne" did not surpass her in singleness of purpose and uncalculating devotion to the cause she loved.

The idea of killing Marat having fully taken possession of Charlotte's mind, she matured her plans with care, and mapped out for herself the exact course she intended to pursue. With the dramatic instincts of her race she purposed attacking her victim in public, and making of his death and her own—for she knew she would die soon after him—a striking and impressive scene; a sort of solemn expiation on the very spot where his crimes were committed. Circumstances upset these carefully-laid plans, and obliged her to have recourse to a duplicity and falsehood that were distasteful to her, but which she reconciled to her conscience by the sophistries of her favourite, Raynal. "We do not owe truth to our tyrants," "All means are good towards such an end," &c. &c.

No regret or compunction for the crime itself seems to have troubled her, either before or after it was committed; her self-abnegation was perfect, and she thought only of the preservation of the Republic, and the salvation of France.

The necessary excuse for the journey to Paris was unconsciously furnished by Charlotte's friend, Mdlle. de Forbin, the niece of the Abbess to whom Charlotte and her sister owed their education. Mdlle. de Forbin, who had taken refuge in Switzerland, found herself sorely in need of certain tithes and dues, to which, as a canoness of Troyes, she was entitled. The papers substantiating her claim were in the keeping of the Minister of the Interior, and Mdlle. de Forbin wrote and begged Charlotte to negotiate the matter for her if it were possible. She promised to do so, and consulted Barbaroux upon the best way of accomplishing her mission. With his usual kindliness and good nature he promised to give her a letter of introduction to Lauze Duperret, a member of the Convention, and a Girondist who had escaped proscription. With his assistance Barbaroux assured Charlotte that she would be able to obtain access to the Minister without delay, but he bade her entertain scant hope for the success of her enterprise.

With all her plans laid, and her preparations almost completed, Charlotte delayed their execution for a few days in order to visit once more the few friends of hers who yet remained in Caen; a strange shining through of natural womanly affection from behind the thick mists of hatred and fanaticism!

On the 5th of July she went to Verson, where it will be remembered, her cousin Mdme. Gautier de Villiers, lived. It was a serene summer's day, and the air was sweet with the fragrance of the hay-strewn meadows, and full of the peculiar charm and magic of midsummer. Here, and among scents and sounds like these, Charlotte had spent many happy days, reading and dreaming the languid hours away in the shady corners of the wide-spread fields; to the woman whose heart was filled with stormy emotions, and dark with the shadow of her fearful resolve, the calm and quiet of those other days must have seemed like a memory of another existence.

Upon entering Mdme. de Villiers' house, Charlotte found her cousin busy with household affairs. After an affectionate greeting, she exclaimed abruptly:—"I have come to say good-bye; I must go on a journey, and would not leave without coming to kiss you."

Something in the tone of the young girl's voice led Mdme. de Villiers to look at her, and she noticed that her face bore traces of severe agitation; her eyes were shining with unusual brilliancy, and she seemed to be endeavouring to master some emotion. With a delicate tact Mdme. de Villiers continued her work, the shelling of some peas, and without appearing to notice Charlotte's disturbed manner, asked her some commonplace questions about the contemplated journey. After a few rather incoherent replies, and a vain attempt to talk of indifferent topics, Charlotte suddenly rose, and throwing down a handful of the peas which she had unconsciously crushed while she spoke, flung her arms round her cousin's neck, and after kissing her repeatedly, left the house as abruptly as she had entered it.

Upon her return to the Grand Manoir she busied herself with the destruction of all the Girondist addresses, proclamations, manifestoes, &c., which she had collected since the proscription of the deputies. These had done their work and brought in many recruits to the army which the Girondists had been trying to raise.

Sunday, the 7th July, had been appointed for the great review of the National Guard by General Vimpfen, and after the review a battalion of volunteers was to be formed to join the Federal army, which, stationed at Evreux under the command of de Puisaye, was already 2,000 strong.

The proscribed deputies, and the authorities of Calvados were to receive them with all the pomp and military circumstance likely to rouse their enthusiasm and inflame their courage, and all that Caen held of beauty and fashion assembled to applaud and honour the volunteers. But at the call of General Vimpfen only seventeen stepped forward from the ranks!

Charlotte was among the spectators on a balcony with some of the deputies, and when she saw the pitiful showing of seventeen recruits her indignation and contempt were so plainly expressed in her face that Petion, who was present, noticed it, but mistook its cause. Attributing her distress to disapproval of the departure of the volunteers, he asked her, with his usual brusque sarcasm:

"Would you be sorry if they did not go?"

Reddening with offended pride, she turned away in silence, and walked to her home.

Most of Charlotte's biographers have adopted the imaginary figure of Franquelin—created in the first place by Paul Delasalle—as a real person, and one of Charlotte's suitors. The genius of Lamartine breathes into him the breath of life, and under the pen of the master he really lives. He loves, and is beloved; is one of the few who volunteer to deliver Paris from the anarchists; receives his death-blow when Charlotte dies, and survives her but a short time and is buried with her portrait and letters upon his heart.

A charming episode, delightfully told, and attractive to the casual reader; but the student who is in search of facts desires not fancy, and will none of it, however beguilingly it may be disguised in the serious garb of history.

As Charlotte passed by the workshop of Lunel, a carpenter who lived on the ground floor of Mdme. de Bretheville's house, she saw him playing cards with his wife. She stopped and exclaimed with sudden bitterness, "Yes; you can play cards while your country is dying!" Then added, as if to herself, "No; it shall never be said that a Marat reigned over France!" and passed on hurriedly into the house, leaving Lunel and his wife surprised and startled at a vehemence so different from her usual quiet friendliness.

When she again went to the Hotel de l'Intendance to get the letter to Duperret that Barbaroux had offered her in order to simplify the business of her friend, she found he had forgotten it. After promising to write and send it to her on the next day, without fail, the conversation turned, as usual, upon current events, and the fiasco of the great review of the volunteers. Charlotte gradually led it to the state of Paris, and the danger of anarchy which seemed so imminent there, hoping thus to glean some details which would be useful to the accomplishment of her scheme.

While they were talking Petion came in and greeted her rather ironically as "the pretty aristocrat who comes to see the Republicans." Something in his tone and manner wounded Charlotte's pride. "You judge me now without knowing me, citizen Petion," she replied with gentle dignity. "Some day you will know what I am."

Louvet gives us a pleasant picture of Charlotte in these days which is well worth transcribing.

"To the Hotel de l'Intendance, where we were all living, came a young girl to see Barbaroux. A young girl, who was tall and well formed, and of the most pleasing appearance and nicest manners. There was something in her face both handsome and lovely, and in her whole carriage a blending of gentleness and pride that was a true expression of her beautiful soul. She always came accompanied by an old servant, and awaited Barbaroux in a *salon* through which some of us were continually passing."

The very next day Barbaroux sent Charlotte the promised letter to Duperret, and a packet of papers which she had offered to deliver for him; all sealed together in a large envelope. To his friendly little note of farewell, wishing her *bon-voyage,* and asking her to keep him informed of her movements, she sent an answer in which, after acknowledging his kindness, she promises—in ambiguous words—to acquaint him with "the success of the enterprise."

After carefully burning all her letters, newspapers, pamphlets, and every scrap of paper that might bring trouble upon any of her friends, Charlotte went to reserve her place in the stage-coach which left on the 9th. She secured an inside seat, engaged it in her own name, and then attended to having an old passport viséd and signed for present use. Not until all her arrangements were completed did Charlotte tell her aunt that she was going away. If her scheme was to be successful it was impossible even then that she should let Mdme. de Bretheville know of her destination, so she proposed a visit to her father, as a friend was going to Argentan on the morrow.

And now the hardest of her tasks confronted her—the writing of the letter of farewell to that father whom she could not trust herself to go and see, and whom she is obliged to deceive.

"I owe you obedience, my dear papa," she writes, "yet I am going away without your permission. I leave without seeing you, because that would give me too much pain. I am going to England, because I do not believe one can live happily and quietly in France for a very long while to come. I put this letter in the post, just as I am leaving, and when you receive it I shall no longer be in the country. Heaven denies us the pleasure of living together, as it has denied us many other pleasures. Perhaps it will be more merciful to our country. Farewell, my dear papa; kiss my sister for me, and do not forget me."

Charlotte made no elaborate farewell to her aunt, fearing perhaps to distress her, or arouse her suspicions, and when she left the house Mdme. de Bretheville little suspected it was to be for ever.

On the basement stairs she met a little comrade of hers, the twelve-year-old son of Lunel, the carpenter, whom she had been in the habit of noticing and petting. Turning to the child she gave him a small portfolio which she carried, and which contained some of her sketches, saying, "Here is something for you, Louis; be very good, and kiss me, for you will never see me again."

On her way to the coach office she had to pass the house of a friend, a Mdme. Malfilâtre, and seeing her at the window Charlotte went in. When she left she kissed her with more than usual affection, then turning to her son, a boy of sixteen, kissed him also, and that caress was the last she ever gave. The boy lived to be seventy-five years old, but he always treasured the memory of that kiss with reverent pride, remembering that he was the last friend her lips had touched. An hour later she was on her way to Paris.

Charlotte's graceful letter to Barbaroux, which appears entire in a later chapter, gives the account of her journey so fully that it is needless to recapitulate it here.

On Thursday, July 11th, at about noon, she arrived in Paris, and by the advice of the guard of the stage-coach went directly to the Hotel de la Providence, in the Rue des Vieux Augustins. This proved to be a third or fourth rate establishment, presided over by a Louise Grollier, who after subjecting Charlotte to the lengthy catechism required by the police of that troubled time, and registering her answers, assigned her a room on the first floor. It was a large, meanly-furnished apartment, untidy, and not over-clean. The bed was not made up, and Charlotte requested the porter who had conducted her upstairs to attend to it. While he was thus occupied he conversed affably with the newly-arrived guest, told her his name was Fouillard, and asked her about the state of Caen. Charlotte gave him some idea of the insurrection of the province; told him sixty thousand men were marching upon Paris, and that during her journey she had noticed a number of troops on their way to Normandy, and then proceeded to question him upon the news of the city, ending by asking:

"What news is there here of little Marat?"

Fouillard replied that he was just then seriously ill, and had not for some time past been able to go to the Convention.

"What is thought of this man?" asked Charlotte.

"The patriots like him very much, but the aristocrats hate him," replied the porter.

The news of Marat's illness disarranged Charlotte's plans, and she at once saw she must abandon the idea of killing him in his seat at the Convention, and seek him in his own house. She determined to lose no time about it, and dismissed Fouillard, saying she was going out, and would require writing materials when she returned.

From the hotel she went straight to the house of Lauze Duperret, 41, Rue St. Thomas-du-Louvre, having inquired her way of the porter; she arrived there about half-past one, but did not find the deputy at home. Entrusting Barbaroux's package of letters to Duperret's daughters, she named an early hour in the evening to call again, but although Duperret saw her then, it was too late to go to the Minister. After arranging to do so on the morrow, he courteously escorted her to the hotel, and seems to have been much impressed by her.

"I noticed something singular in her manner and appearance," he said to his daughters when he returned; "to-morrow I shall see what it means."

The next morning Duperret was punctual to his appointment, and calling for Charlotte took her to the Minister of the Interior. Garat, who then held the office, was unable to receive them, but appointed an audience at eight o'clock of the same evening. As they walked back to the hotel, the conversation naturally turned upon the insurrection in Calvados, the insurgent condition of Caen, and Duperret's friends and comrades, the proscribed Girondist deputies, of whom he was anxious to get reliable and recent news.

During the day Duperret called and told Charlotte that as he had just heard he had fallen under the suspicion of the Mountain, he feared his influence might do her friend's cause more harm than good; he advised her to let the matter rest until she had procured a power-of-attorney from Mdlle. de Forbin, without which he believed all efforts would be useless. He also asked her to receive him again the next day, as he desired to give her some letters and papers to carry back to his friends in Caen. Charlotte thanked him for the trouble he had taken to serve a stranger, but requested him not to call again until he heard from her, which should be soon. As he turned to go she called him back, and said impulsively:

"Leave the Convention, you can no longer do any good there; go to Caen and join your colleagues, your brethren——"

"My post is in Paris, and I shall not desert it," Duperret answered, proudly.

"It is folly!" exclaimed Charlotte; then added in a lower tone, and more earnestly than before: "Again let me tell you to go; believe me, and fly before to-morrow evening."

Thus ended her short acquaintance with Lauze Duperret, an acquaintance fraught with terrible disaster for him, causing his arrest, proscription and death.

After Duperret's departure Charlotte remained quietly at the hotel, writing the following address to her countrymen; an address which is at once her justification and a noble soul-stirring appeal to the patriotism of France.

"ADDRESS TO THE FRENCH.*

"How long, O unhappy Frenchmen, will you delight in strife and division? Too long already have party leaders and other scoundrels preferred the interests of their ambition to the public weal. Oh, why, ye unfortunate victims of their fury, will ye kill one another, and by annihilating yourselves, help to establish the edifice of their tyranny upon broken-hearted France? Upon every side the various factions are breaking asunder, the Mountain alone triumphs by the strength of its wickedness and despotism; its vile plots are hatched by monsters gorged with your blood, who are dragging us to destruction by a thousand different roads.

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* The original was sold in Paris in 1855, at an auction of historical autographs. The first bid was 300fr., and it was sold for 770fr. It is now in a private collection, and still shows the pin-holes made when Charlotte Corday fastened it to her fichu.

"We are working at our own undoing with greater energy than we ever put into the conquest of liberty. Oh, Frenchmen! in a little while there will remain of you only the memory of your existence. Even now the indignant departments are marching upon Paris, and the fire of discord and civil war is already kindled throughout one half of this vast realm; there is yet a possibility of extinguishing it, but the means must be prompt.

"That vilest of all wretches, Marat, whose name alone suffices to conjure up an image of every crime, in falling beneath the avenging steel has shaken the Mountain, has made Danton and Robespierre grow pale, and terrified the other villains who are seated on this throne of blood. But they are encompassed by bolts which the avenging gods of humanity only suspend in order to render their final fall more terrible, and to warn others who might be tempted to build their fortunes on the ruins of an oppressed people.

"Frenchmen, you know your enemies; arise, then, and march upon them. Let the Mountain be annihilated, and only brothers and friends will remain! I know not whether Heaven holds in reserve for us a republican form of government, but only in the very excess of its anger could it give us a ruler from the Mountain.

"Oh, France! your happiness depends upon the proper execution of your laws; but I break none in killing Marat. Condemned by the whole world, he stands outside the pale of the law. What just tribunal would condemn me? If I am guilty, so was Alcides when he destroyed the monsters; yet did he encounter any as odious as Marat?

"Oh, friends of humanity, you will not regret a wild beast who has fattened on your blood! And you sad aristocrats, whom the Revolution has treated too roughly, you will not regret him either; you and he had nothing in common.

"Oh, my country, thy misfortunes tear my heart! I can only offer thee my life, and I thank Heaven for the liberty I have to dispose of it. No one will lose by my death. In killing myself, I shall not be like Paris. I desire my last breath to be useful to my fellow-citizens.

"Let my head, carried through Paris, be a rallying sign for all the friends of law; let the Mountain—already tottering—see its fall written with my blood; let me be their last victim, and the avenged universe will declare that I have deserved well of humanity.

"For the rest, if some should view my conduct in a different light, I care little.

"Qu'à l'univers surpris, cette grande action
Soit un objet d'horreur ou d'admiration,
Mon esprit, peu jaloux de vivre en la mémoire,
Ne considére point le reproche ou la gloire :
Toujours indépendant et toujours citoyen,
Mon devoir me suffit, tout le reste n'est rien.
Allez, ne songez plus qu'à sortir d'esclavage !

"My relatives and friends ought not to be molested, for no one knew of my plans. I add my register of baptism to this address, to show what the most feeble hand can accomplish when nerved by true self-sacrifice.

"Frenchmen ! should I fail in my enterprise, I have at least pointed the way: you know your enemies—arise, march, and strike !"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAGEDY.

> " . . . . this even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips."
>
> *Macbeth*, Act I., Sc. vii.

On Saturday, the 13th of July 1793, Charlotte rose early, and by six o'clock was walking in the gardens of the Palais Royal.

The long green arcades were deserted, the air was fresh and cool, and sweet with the scents and bird-songs of the early summer morning; it was a scene of perfect quiet and loveliness, a little oasis of peace and beauty set in the midst of the turbid, striving, blood-stained city. And it was to this one pure spot in guilty Paris that the unconscious and terrible irony of fate led Charlotte Corday, that she might there determine, undisturbed, the minutiæ of a long-planned murder!

The calm and sweetness of the hour and place were in entire dissonance with her mood, and she paced to and fro under the dewy trees, all unconscious of her surroundings, and absorbed in the re-arrangement of the plans which Marat's illness had rendered impracticable. Anxious to avoid failure by nervousness or indecision, she thought out her mode of action step by step.

Marat's illness and consequent confinement to his house had for ever shattered her favourite plan of a public assassination, which in her eyes appeared a just and solemn expiation of his crimes. Nothing remained for her to do but to seek him in the privacy of his home, and this made her undertaking more difficult as she was quite ignorant of his private life and habits, while at the same time it increased the possibility of failure; and it was failure she dreaded above all else.

At half-past seven Charlotte left the gardens, and finding that the shops were being opened, entered the first cutler's she came to and bought a stout kitchen knife with a dark wood handle, enclosed in a shagreen sheath. As she walked back to the hotel she heard the newsdealers shouting out the most interesting items of their papers; chief among these items was the sentence passed upon the assailants of Leonard Bourdon, one of the most strenuous of Marat's provincial supporters and imitators. While on a drunken revel in Orléans, Bourdon had refused to answer the repeated "Qui vive?" of the Municipal Guard, whereupon the sentinel charged him with his bayonet, and inflicted a slight flesh wound in the arm. For this injury Bourdon swore he would have revenge, and when he became sober he pronounced the city to be in a state of revolt, and ordered the immediate arrest and imprisonment of twenty-six of the most respectable citizens. The fact that they were nearly all ignorant of the whole affair could not save them, and the usual ghastly mockery of a trial ended in the death of nine upon the guillotine.

Charlotte, who had been much interested in the unfortunate Orléanais, and had followed the accounts of their so-called trial in the Caen paper, bought a copy of one of the journals, and was horrified at the shameful carnage. It was one more drop in the full cup of her hatred of Marat, one more touch of the spur to her already willing resolution.

Immediately after breakfasting Charlotte called a carriage, and told the driver to take her to Marat's house. So obscure was this man's mode of life that even the public driver did not know where he lived, but by dint of inquiring they finally arrived at the Rue des Cordeliers at about eleven o'clock. The *portière,* that important and disagreeable female Cerberus who guards the approach to all houses in Paris, protested against the entry of the young stranger; but disregarding her voluble chatter, Charlotte penetrated to the ante-chamber and asked to be shown to Marat's room, as she had news of importance to communicate to him.

Simonne Evrard, Marat's mistress, declared it impossible that anyone should be admitted, and upon Charlotte's insisting further, several other women came forward with noisy support of Simonne's refusal.

Repulsed for the nonce, Charlotte drove back to the hotel and wrote a letter which she despatched without a moment's delay. It was addressed, "To Citizen Marat, Faubourg St. Germain, Rue des Cordeliers, Paris," and read as follows :—

"Paris, 13 July, II. year of the Republic.

"CITIZEN,

"I have just arrived from Caen. Your love of our country leads me to suppose that you will be anxious to hear about the unfortunate events in that part of the Republic. I shall therefore present myself at your house about one o'clock. Be kind enough to receive me, and grant me a moment's interview. I will put you in the way of rendering a great service to France.

"MARIE CORDAY."

Marat received this letter at about half-past seven in the evening, and while he was reading it Charlotte was already at his door. Before starting for his house the second time she had written another note, to be delivered to him in case she was again refused admittance. It read—"I wrote to you this morning, Marat; have you received my letter, and may I hope for a moment's audience? If you have received it I hope you will not refuse me, as the matter is so important. It should suffice that I am very unhappy to give me a right to your protection."

She then dressed herself with scrupulous care, giving to the operation far more time and thought than she was wont to. As if to symbolise the purity of her motives she chose a dress of pure white, and although it was the fashion of the day to leave the bosom uncovered, her fichu of spotless muslin was crossed high upon her breast and tied behind at her waist. In its folds she hid her weapon, and the address to her countrymen which she had written the day before.

When Charlotte arrived at Marat's house, she found the cook and the *portière* in the little ante-room, busy folding the last edition of *L'Ami du Peuple.* To her question as to whether Marat had received her letter, and was willing to see her, the portress replied, "It may be among the many letters he receives every day, but I cannot tell."

But Charlotte was determined not to be sent away again, and explained that she had travelled a very long way expressly to see Marat, and had already called without being admitted. Simonne Evrard, hearing the sound of contending voices, came out of Marat's room, and at Charlotte's earnest entreaty, consented to ask him to receive her. Returning almost immediately, with a favourable answer, she ushered Charlotte into the presence of the sick man.

The room was small, paved with brick, badly lighted, and almost unfurnished. On the wall hung a pair of pistols with the inscription "Death" above them, several numbers of *L'Ami du Peuple* were scattered on the floor. Marat's bath stood in the centre of the room, and a board laid across it enabled him to write; a square block of wood close beside it did duty as a table, and held his inkstand and a medicine glass.

And now, for the first time, Charlotte saw the man whom she held in such abhorrence, and his appearance was not calculated to diminish her hatred or remove her preconceived idea of him. Clothed in a ragged gown without sleeves, his head wrapped in a dirty cloth, his features distorted by evil passions and drawn and sallowed by illness, he presented a sickening and repulsive spectacle. Squalid, unclean, hideous; even in his medicated bath he was making out proscription lists, and planning new cruelties, fearful lest the long immersions necessitated by his loathsome disease should delay by a moment the satisfaction of his love of bloodshed.

With a shudder of disgust, the white-robed girl approached and made known the ostensible object of her visit. Marat began at once to question her about affairs at Caen, and she told him how the seventeen deputies, with some of the department administrators, had formed a corps for the great federal army at Evreux, which was to march on Paris and deliver it from the anarchists.

Marat then demanded the names of the deputies who were heading the insurrection, saying, as he noted down each one in succession, "For the scaffold."

After a moment's silence he added, "Very good; in a few days I shall have them all guillotined in Paris."

Beside herself with horror and disgust, Charlotte summoned all her courage, and seizing the knife with both hands, plunged it up to the very handle in Marat's right breast.

"Help, my dear, help!" he cried, and fell back.

The blow, struck from above with the strength of nervous desperation, had passed through the lung, and penetrating the clavicle, severed the carotid artery.

The cry of the murdered man brought the portress to his side, and she was speedily followed by Simonne Evrard and Laurent Bas, a messenger who had just brought the paper for *L'Ami du Peuple.* The last beats of his heart were forcing the blood in great gushes from the wound, and before they could move him, or do anything to staunch the flow, Marat was dead.

A dentist who lived in the upper story of the house now appeared on the scene, attracted by the noise, and with his help the women carried the dead man to a bed in an adjoining room. As soon as Laurent Bas perceived that Marat was beyond help, he turned to Charlotte, threw her down and beat her brutally with a chair; he would probably have killed her but for the arrival of the guard, who handed her over to Guellard Dumesnil, the police commissioner of the district. He took her into the *salon*, there to await the two other officers before whom she would be examined.

After the first formalities, and giving of her name and age, and the details of her journey to Paris, and of her stay in the city, Charlotte was asked what led her to commit the murder, to which she answered:

"Seeing civil war about to break out all over France, and feeling sure that Marat was the principal author of these misfortunes, I determined to sacrifice my own life in order to save that of my country."

The examination proceeded at great length, and was taken down verbatim by one of the officers present. The prisoner was then searched, and in her pocket was found the note to Marat, also a silver thimble, a ball of white thread, a passport, and some money; but hidden in her bosom was the shagreen case which fitted the knife, and the address to the French pinned to the inner folds of her fichu.

In the meantime Legendre, Maure, Chabot, and Drouet had been sent to the house by the Committee of Public Safety as soon as the news of Marat's death had been received, but they only arrived towards the end of the examination.

Throughout these stormy scenes Charlotte Corday had preserved perfect calmness and presence of mind, answering all the questions put to her with lucidity and conciseness, and quietly correcting the mistakes of the official report.

When Legendre pretended to recognise in her a woman who had called at his house that morning, she replied with quiet irony: "You are mistaken, citizen; such a man as you is not capable of being the tyrant of his country, and is not worth the trouble of punishing. Besides, I had no intention of striking any but Marat."

Chabot, the unfrocked Capuchin monk, whose cynicism and bold impudence Charlotte had often heard of, asked her how she was able to strike Marat so accurately to the heart. "The indignation which swelled my own," she answered, "showed me the place."

A few minutes afterwards he stretched out his hand and took her watch, whereupon she asked him sarcastically: "Have you forgotten that the Capuchins are under the vow of poverty?"

Harmand de la Meuse, who was present during Charlotte's examination, speaks in terms of warm admiration of her "presence of mind, which was as imperturbable as it was admirable," and describes her beauty in glowing terms. After depicting her face as we already know it, he closes with a delicate allusion to the "graces of her form, which a painful accident exposed to him." Chabot had been plying her with trivial questions, evidently more for the purpose of making her speak to him than to elicit information, and had accompanied his words with bold looks of the most offensive admiration. Outraged by his vile attentions, Charlotte, whose hands were bound, threw herself suddenly back to escape from the pollution of his touch as he attempted to withdraw the paper which was pinned inside her fichu. The violence of the movement, aided perhaps by Chabot's brutality, disarranged the muslin scarf and severed the fastenings of her bodice. Crimson with shame, Charlotte begged to have her hands liberated that she might readjust her dress, and stood with her face to the wall until her request had been complied with and she had repaired the disorder.

After she had signed the report of her examination, the National Guards were about to bind her again; but holding out her hands she showed how the rough cords had bruised and torn the delicate skin, and appealed to the members of the Committee. "Gentlemen," she said, "unless it is your desire to make me suffer before I die, allow me to draw down my sleeves or to wear gloves under the bonds you are preparing for me."

Her request was granted, and she was conducted into the adjoining room where Marat's corpse lay. The gaping wound was uncovered, and for the first time Charlotte seemed troubled. Her voice trembled as she answered, "Yes, I killed him"; and she turned away white and shuddering from the ghastly sight. Simonne Evrard and her sister were sobbing by the bed-side, and as Charlotte looked upon their unfeigned sorrow, she seemed to realise with a sort of dazed wonder that Marat had been really loved by some. This "tiger," this "monster," with his unnatural appetite for blood, was after all a man with human feelings hidden somewhere under the hard crust of his cruelty.

It was two o'clock in the morning when the prisoner was placed under the charge of Drouet and Chabot, and conducted to the prison of l'Abbaye. The carriage which had brought her to the house was still at the door, and was engaged by Drouet to take her to the prison.

For hours a crowd had been gathering before the house, waiting eagerly to see the murderess of Marat; and her appearance in the doorway, with Chabot and Drouet on either side, was greeted with a perfect roar of fury. When Charlotte heard the threatening sound, and saw the angry faces of the multitude under the flare of their torches, she thought the second act of the tragedy was about to be enacted, and that, as she had foreseen, she would be torn to pieces by the mob. Not for one moment did her splendid courage falter. She had expected this fate and was prepared to meet it, but the long day and night, full of lurid emotions and active exercise, had told upon the physique of the woman; the overwrought body gave way, and she fainted. Even then the maddened populace would have seized her, but for Drouet, whose firm determined voice was heard above the clamour, sternly demanding the proper execution of the law.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS.

> "Heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right; and although a different breeding, and different religion, and greater intellectual activity would have modified or even reversed the particular action, yet for the hero that thing he does is the highest deed, and is not open to the censure of philosophers or divines."
>
> *Essay on Heroism.*—EMERSON.

WHEN Charlotte regained consciousness, after her long swoon, she was surprised to find herself in the prison of l'Abbaye, alive and unharmed. The cell allotted to her was the same that had been occupied by Brissot, and was used later by Mdme. Roland. The latter describes it "as a dirty little square room, with a small iron-barred window which admitted the evil smells of the street more freely than the light and sun." Charlotte's avowal of her crime, and complete assumption of its responsibility, had rendered it unnecessary to keep her in solitary confinement, and on the 14th and 15th of July she was allowed to talk to the other prisoners. Indeed, the only unnecessary harshness shown to her in prison seems to have been the stationing of two gensd'armes in her cell night and day. This gratuitous indignity was probably a mean revenge of Chabot's for the cutting sarcasm of her speeches to him during the first examination, and the undisguised contempt and disgust with which she met his advances. At least she attributes it to that in her letter to Barbaroux, and there seems to be no other explanation of an outrage to which not even the hated Queen and her friends were exposed.

Chafing under such an indignity, and believing it to have been prompted by Chabot's spite, Charlotte complained by letter to the Committee of Public Safety; and when she found that it elicited no reply, she wrote again, adding another request to the one of being allowed to sleep in private.*

"The 15th July, IInd year of the Republic.

"Citizens composing the Committee of Public Safety,—

"As I have still a little while to live, may I hope, citizens, that you will permit my portrait to be painted. I should like to leave this token of remembrance to my friends. Moreover, just as the portraits of good citizens are cherished, curiosity sometimes causes those of great criminals to be sought for; it serves to perpetuate the horror of their crimes. If you deign to notice my request, I beg you to send me a miniature painter to-morrow. I also renew my appeal of being allowed to sleep unwatched. Believe, I beg you, in my entire gratitude,

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* This letter now forms part of the valuable Chambry Collection of Revolutionary Relics.

"MARIE CORDAY.

"In the streets I hear continual cries announcing the arrest of my accomplice, Fauchet. I have never seen him except from a window, and that more than two years ago. I neither like nor respect him. I have always considered him to be a man of vivid imagination and no firmness of character: he is the last person in the world to whom I should have confided any important undertaking. If this declaration can be of use to him, I certify to its truth.

"CORDAY."

At the suggestion of Fouquier-Tinville, Charlotte was allowed free use of pen and ink, and assured that any letters which she might write would be forwarded to her friends; this indulgence was, however, only advised by the wily public prosecutor, because he hoped to surprise in her letters some unguarded expression that might implicate others, or at least furnish him with a clue to her real relations with the Girondists. Not suspecting that the permission to write was only a trap, Charlotte profited by it to keep her promise to Barbaroux, and spent the long hours of her confinement in writing him the letter which Thiers characterises as "full of graciousness, intelligence, and elevation."

Louvet, in writing to Barbaroux after Charlotte's death, says: "Either nothing that is beautiful in the French Revolution will endure, or this letter will pass down the centuries. Ah, my dear Barbaroux, in the whole of your career, so enviable throughout, I have never envied you anything but the honour of having your name attached to this letter."

Certainly it is by far the most natural and unstudied of the letters which have been preserved; the language is direct and simple, and comparatively free from the stiltedness and affectation of style of the day.

When Charlotte mentions the Revolutionists, it is with the irony

> Which, like the polished razor, keen,
> Wounds with a touch that 's neither felt nor seen;

and she speaks of her own fate with indifference, except at that one pathetic passage where, for a moment, she loses confidence in herself and falters, and is doubtful of her courage at the last; a natural womanly fear which proved to be unfounded. Over the earnestness of the whole a graceful badinage plays like summer lightning, gradually fading towards the end as the stars of hope and courage and pure intent shine out in the clear serenity of the darkening sky.

"In the prisons of the Abbey, in the
former room of Brissot, the second
day of the preparation for peace.

"You desired, citizen, to know the details of my voyage so I shall not spare you the smallest incident. I was with good Mountaineers, who talked to their heart's content, and their speeches (as silly as their appearance was disagreeable) conduced not a little towards sending me to sleep. I only awoke, so to speak, on reaching Paris. One of our travellers, who evidently admires sleeping women, mistook me for the daughter of one of his old friends, supposed me to have a fortune which I do not possess, called me by a name I had never heard, and finally offered me his fortune and his hand. At last I grew tired of his speeches and said—'We are playing quite a comedy of cross purposes, it is a pity that so much talent should remain without an audience, I will call our travelling companions that they may have their share of the fun.' This put him in a very bad humour. During the night he sang plaintive songs, provocative of slumber, and at last I parted with him in Paris, refusing to give him my address or that of my father, of whom he wanted to ask me in marriage. He departed in a very bad temper.

"I was not aware that these gentlemen (the Committee of Public Safety) had examined my fellow-travellers, so I persisted in not recognising any of them, in order to spare them the annoyance of being questioned. In acting thus I followed the precepts of my oracle Raynal, who says, 'We do not owe the truth to our tyrants.' It was through the lady passenger that they found out that I knew you, and had been to see Duperret. You know Duperret's strength of character; he answered them with the most exact truthfulness, and I have confirmed his deposition with my own. There is no evidence whatever against him, but his very steadfastness is a crime in their eyes. I was afraid that they would discover I had been to see him, and I repented of having done so when it was too late, and tried to avert the danger by making him promise to join you; but he is too resolute to allow himself to be influenced.

"When I made up my mind to accomplish my design, I was determined that neither he nor anyone else should know of it, yet—would you believe it?—Fauchet has been imprisoned as my accomplice; he who did not even know of my existence! But they are not at all pleased to have only an insignificant woman to offer to the manes of their great man.

"Pardon me, O my fellow-beings; that speech dishonours your kind. He was a wild beast who was about to devour France with the fire of civil war.

"Now we can cry 'Long live Peace!' Thank Heaven that he was not born a Frenchman!

"There were four members at my first examination. Chabot looked and acted like a fool; Legendre tried to make out that he had seen me in the morning at his house; I who had never even thought of the man. I do not consider that he has ability enough to be the tyrant of his country, and besides I had no intention of punishing so many. People who saw me for the first time pretended that they had known me a long while.

"I think that the last words of Marat have been printed. I doubt whether he uttered any, but here are the last he said to me. After having written down all your names, and those of the administrators of Calvados, who are at Evreux, he told me for my satisfaction that in a few days he would have you all guillotined in Paris. Those words sealed his doom. If the department hangs his portrait opposite that of St. Fargeau, they ought to have those words engraved in letters of gold underneath it.

"I will not give you any details of the great affair, the newspapers will tell you all you want to know of it. That which clinched my decision was the courage with which our volunteers enlisted on Sunday 7th July; you remember how charmed I was by it, and I promised myself then that I would make Petion repent the suspicion of my sentiments which he has always manifested. 'Would you be sorry if they did not go?' he said to me. Finally I thought of the many brave folks coming after the head of one man, whom they might perhaps have missed after all, and who would have dragged those many good citizens down to destruction with him. He did not deserve so much honour, the hand of a woman was enough for him. I admit that I employed an unworthy artifice in order to make him receive me, but all means are fair under such circumstances.

"When I left Caen, I intended to sacrifice him on the very summit of his mountain; but when I reached Paris he was not attending the Convention.

"I wish I had kept your letter; it would have shown them that I had no accomplice. However, that fact will establish itself. We are such good Republicans in Paris that we cannot conceive how a useless woman, whose life at its best could be of no great value, can sacrifice herself in cold blood to save her country.

"I quite expected instant death, but some courageous men, who were really above all praise, saved me from the very excusable fury of those whom I had bereaved. As I was really calm, I suffered much from the lamentations of some women; but whoso saves his country does not count the cost.

"I hope that peace may be established soon. This is a great preliminary, without which we should never have had it. I have enjoyed a delicious peace of mind for two days; the happiness of my country constitutes mine, and there is no act of self-sacrifice that does not confer more pleasure than pain.

"I have no doubt they will torment my father somewhat, although he has already enough to afflict him in my loss. If I indulged in a jest at your expense, I beg you to let it pass; I merely obeyed the natural levity of my character. In my last letter I made him think that, fearing the horrors of civil war, I was going to England; at that time my plan was to remain *incognita,* kill Marat publicly, and, dying myself immediately afterwards, let the Parisians seek my name in vain.

"I beg you, citizen—you and your colleagues—to undertake the defence of my relatives and friends if they are troubled. I say nothing to my dear aristocrat friends, but I preserve their memory in my heart.

"I have never hated but one human being, and I have already shown with how great a hatred, but there are thousands for whom my love is stronger even than was my hate.

"The possession of a lively imagination and a sensitive heart give promise of a stormy life, and I beg those who might mourn for me to consider that fact; they will then be glad to think of me as being at peace in the Elysian fields with Brutus and the ancients.

"As for the moderns, there are but few true patriots among them who could die for their country; almost all are selfish. Alas, what a poor people this is to found a Republic!

"The establishment of peace is imperative, but the government will have to come as best it can; at least—unless I am greatly mistaken—the Mountain will not reign.

"I am as comfortable as possible in my prison, and the gaolers are the kindest people. I have, moreover, been furnished with police officers, to prevent me from feeling dull, I suppose; I find nothing to complain of in this arrangement during the day, but it is very disagreeable at night. I complained of this indecency, but the Committee did not think it worth while to take any notice of my letter. I believe it is an idea of Chabot's, for none but a Capuchin would think of such a thing.

"I pass my time in writing songs, and I give that last verse of Valady's* to all who will accept it. I assure the Parisians that we have only taken up arms against anarchy, which is absolutely the truth."

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* The song to which Charlotte refers was called the "Marseillaise of Normandy," and was written by Girey-du-Pré. but for a long while erroneously attributed to Valady. The last verse runs:—

"Saintes lois, liberté, patrie,
Guidez nos bataillons vengeurs
Nous marchons contre l'anarchie,
Certains de revenir vainquers.
De Septembre tristes victimes,
Vos bourreaux vont être punis
France, tes lâches ennemis
Vont enfin expier leur crimes.
Aux armes citoyens! Terrassez les brigands!
La loi! c'est le seul cri, c'est le vœu des Normands!"

This letter was interrupted by Charlotte's first appearance before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and was produced at her examination. It is now on file, with the records of her trial, in the archives of the nation.

"I have been transferred to the Conciergerie, and the gentlemen of the jury have promised to send my letter to you, so I continue it. I have undergone a long examination, the report of which I hope you will procure, if it is made public. I had upon me, at the time of my arrest, an address to the friends of peace; I cannot send it to you, but shall demand its publication, I fear in vain. Yesterday evening I thought of offering my portrait to the department of Calvados, but the Committee of Public Safety, of whom I requested permission to have it painted, did not answer my letter, and now it is too late. I beg you, citizen, to make known the contents of my letter to citizen Bougon, the *procureur général* of the department; I do not address it to him for several reasons, of which the first is that I am not sure whether he is at Evreux at present, and fear, besides, that being of a sensitive nature, he will be distressed at the news of my death. However, he is sufficiently good citizen to console himself with the prospect of peace. I know how much he desires it, and I trust that, in facilitating its establishment, I have fulfilled his wishes. If any of my friends wish to read this letter, please do not refuse it to anyone.

"I must, it seems, have a counsel for my defence; it is the rule, and I have chosen mine from the Mountain—Gustave Doulcet. I imagine he will decline the honour, which would not, however, give him much work. I thought of selecting Robespierre or Chabot!

"I shall request permission to dispose of the remainder of my money, and shall then offer it to the wives and children of those brave men of Caen who have gone to deliver Paris.

"It is very wonderful that the populace should have allowed me to be transferred from the Abbaye to the Conciergerie unharmed; it is another proof of their moderation. Tell our good inhabitants of Caen of this, they sometimes permit themselves little insurrections which are not easily restrained.

"I am to be tried to-morrow, and by noon, probably, 'I shall have lived,' to use the language of the Romans. People will perforce believe in the valour of the inhabitants of Calvados, when they see that even the women of that country are capable of resolution. But for the rest I do not know what the last moments may be, and it is the end that crowns the deed. I have no need to affect insensibility to my fate, for up to the present moment I have not the least fear of death. I have never valued my life, except for the use it might be to others.

"I hope that Duperret and Fouchet will be liberated to-morrow. They pretend that I am the woman the latter took to one of the tribunes of the Convention. What right had he to take a woman there? As a deputy, his place is not in the tribunes, and as a bishop, he has no business to be with women, so this error administers a little correction to him. But Duperret has nothing to reproach himself with. Marat will not go to the Pantheon, although he deserved to. I commission you to collect the proper papers for his funeral oration.

"I hope you will not give up Mdlle. de Forbin's business; here is her address, in case it is necessary to write to her:—Alexandrine Forbin, à Mendresin par Zurich en Suisse. Please tell her that I love her dearly. I shall write a word to papa, but to my other friends I say nothing. I ask of them only prompt forgetfulness, for their sorrow would dishonour my memory.

"Tell General Vimpfen that I think I have helped him to win more than one battle, by facilitating peace. Farewell citizen, I commend myself to the remembrance of the true friends of peace.

"The prisoners of the Conciergerie, far from abusing me as the people in the streets do, appear to pity me; misfortune always makes one compassionate. This is my last reflection.

"Tuesday 16, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

"To the citizen Barbaroux, deputy to the National Convention, rue des Carmes, hotel de l'Intendance, Caen.

"CORDAY."

"Forgive me, my dear papa, for having disposed of my existence without your permission, but I have avenged many innocent victims, and prevented many new disasters. Some day, when the people are disabused of their errors, they will rejoice that I delivered them from a tyrant. When I tried to make you believe I was going to England, I did so because I hoped to remain *incognita*, but I soon saw that that would be impossible. I hope they will not annoy you, and, at all events, I believe you will find defenders in Caen. I chose Gustave Doulcet for my counsel, but an attaint of this kind admits of no defence. It is a mere matter of form. Good-bye, my dear papa, I beg you to forget me, or rather to rejoice over my fate; the cause is good. I embrace my sister, whom I love with my whole heart, also my relatives. Do not forget this verse of Corneille's: 'The shame lies in the crime, not in the scaffold.'

"I am to be judged to-morrow at eight o'clock.

"The 16th July. "CORDAY."

Charlotte's letters never reached those to whom they were addressed; some extracts and garbled versions appeared in the papers, but they were speedily suppressed by the Committee of Public Safety, that body having concluded that, "it is not necessary, and would perhaps be dangerous, to give too much publicity to the letters of this extraordinary woman, who has already aroused the interest of the ill-disposed far too much." They were placed on file, with the official papers connected with the trial.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL.

"Lasciate ogni speranza, voi, che'ntrate."
La Divina Commedia.—Canto III., "Dell Inferno."

ON the night of the murder, all was terror and confusion in the streets; no one slept, the air was full of shouting and lamentation, torches cast their lurid glare upon the groups of excited men and women who stood discussing the dreadful event, while above the uproar the monotonous cry of the armed patrol rang out in dolorous accents: "Marat is dead! Citizens, Marat has been murdered!"

The news had spread like wild-fire throughout Paris, and the friends of the dead man were already clamouring loudly for vengeance upon the woman who had dared to strike the idol of the gutters.

When the murder was announced at the Jacobin Club there ensued a scene of indescribable confusion, in the midst of which Hébert arose and moved that the honours of an apotheosis be demanded of the National Convention for the "murdered patriot," and that his bust be placed in the midst of the General Assembly. But in spite of the public lamentation and eulogistic speeches that followed each other in quick succession, the predominant feeling among the Jacobins was rather one of insecurity and dread than of sorrow for their dead colleague; they knew how deep was their own blood-guiltiness, and feared that a like vengeance might at any moment overtake them.

Robespierre, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins held counsel together during the night, and resolved to attribute the murder of Marat to the Girondist party, and declare that the crime was but part of a vast plot against the national representation.

Notwithstanding their public mourning and grief, each of the revolutionary leaders breathed freer when Marat was removed, for they had always feared him; feared lest his keen insight should detect the selfishness of their aims, and see that the secret desire of each was to raise himself to a dictatorship. Moreover, they trembled lest he should succeed in obtaining the supreme office for himself, and his death was a relief in that it removed a rival, and that a formidable one.

The apparent harmony between these men was but a thin politic veneer, which hid the real distrust which each felt of the others. They recognised the necessity of concerted action to a certain point, and each resolved to countenance the rest until that point was attained; after which it would be each man for himself in a hand-to-hand encounter, wherein no quarter would be given or expected.

The morning after the murder the Convention met early, and the president made an official announcement of Marat's death. The Jacobins at once demanded for him the honours of the Pantheon, and although Robespierre opposed the motion it was carried, as Bentabole roughly exclaimed, "in spite of the jealous"; and then the arrangements were discussed for that ostentatious public funeral which is one of the grimmest satires of the Revolution.

Chabot, the unfrocked monk, next proceeded to give a highly-coloured and exaggerated account of Charlotte, assuming an air of great importance by virtue of his presence at her first examination. He represented her as a bold masculine creature who was merely a tool of the Gironde. Mixing fact and fancy in glorious confusion, he described in detail the imaginary plot against the Convention, and closed his farrago by brandishing the blood-stained weapon which had killed Marat. The Convention at once passed an order to the Revolutionary Tribunal to proceed immediately against the murderess and her accomplices.

This Revolutionary Tribunal, against the establishment of which the Girondists had protested with humane vehemence, had already begun to make a sanguinary name for itself. Possessed of unlimited power to judge, condemn, and execute, it was responsible to none for its decrees, and in the accomplishment of its fearful work was a law unto itself.

Louis Sebastien Mercier describes it in his *Le Nouveau Paris* as "a tribunal a thousandfold more odious than the Inquisition, more inconceivable than all the tribunals of blood that have covered the world in centuries of darkness. . . . It was the work of the anarchist faction; they wanted an unlimited authority, which fell later on the heads of a few of its founders."

Montané, the president, had been a lieutenant of the Sénéschal of Toulouse, and was a Revolutionist of the most extreme type; the two judges who sat with him were Foucault and Roussillon, men of mediocre intelligence, whose only qualification for the position they held was a blind hatred of everything that was not of the Mountain.

But it was the Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, who made the Revolutionary Tribunal such a terrible weapon in the hands of the Terrorists. He was a man of good birth and great ability, who after squandering a rich inheritance in dissipation and debauchery, attached himself to Hérault Sechelles, used him as a stepping-stone, and then sent him to the scaffold without a shadow of compunction. Keen and shrewd, with an absolute genius for detective work, Fouquier-Tinville was relentless in hunting down his victims, and brought to his work an enthusiasm and pitiless perseverance that have given his name an infamous celebrity. Few were allowed to escape him, and when he had succeeded in having every one of the accused upon his list sentenced to death, he celebrated the event by an orgie of drunken debauchery. The failure to compass a prisoner's condemnation caused him bitter disappointment, while an acquittal filled him with baffled rage—but, alas, these instances of failure were but too few!

In the case of Charlotte Corday the habitual zeal of Fouquier-Tinville was encouraged and stimulated by Robespierre and Danton, who saw in the murder of Marat a useful weapon against the moderate Republicans.

Such were the "ensanguined executioner-judges," to again quote Mercier, "who surrounded the figure of Liberty with piles of dead bodies . . . those whom the anarchist faction desired to make the heads of a Republic."

There were some preliminary formalities to be gone through before Charlotte Corday could be brought up for trial, the Revolutionary Tribunal not having as yet laid aside those outward forms of justice which it discarded later when Terror was king, and the press of its bloody work too heavy for waste of time on formalities.

Fouquier-Tinville prepared his evidence with all his customary astuteness, filling in the gaps with inventions of his own, and using every possible means to discover some accomplices to suffer with Charlotte.

On the 16th, at nine o'clock in the morning, she was summoned to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The proceedings opened with the cross-examination of the witnesses by Montané, Foucault, and Roussillon, which it is needless to reproduce here, as they merely related what has already been told, adding some minor falsities which were afterwards refuted by Charlotte. At eleven o'clock the prisoner was put on the stand and subjected to a long interrogatory upon the details already given. Montané and Fouquier-Tinville cross-examined her in turn, so also did Wolff—another member of the Tribunal—but they found it impossible to disturb her serenity or make her contradict herself in any statement.

"What was the object of your journey to Paris?" Montané asked her.

"I had no other object; I came solely to kill Marat."

"What were the motives that induced you to commit such a horrible deed?"

"His many crimes."

"What crimes do you attribute to him?"

"The desolation of France, and the civil war which he has kindled throughout the kingdom."

"Upon what foundation do you rest the foregoing accusations?"

"That his past crimes are a proof of his present crimes; that he instigated the massacres of September; that it was he who kept alive the fire of civil war in order that he might be chosen Dictator; that it was he who attempted to infringe upon the sovereignty of the people by causing the arrest and imprisonment of the deputies to the Convention on May 31st."

"What proof have you that Marat was the author of the evils you mention?"

"I cannot show any proof, but it is the general opinion of France, and the future will prove it; Marat hid his designs behind a mask of patriotism."

The boldness of this answer silenced Montané upon the question of Charlotte's motives, and he returned to the actual facts.

"Did you intend to kill him when you struck the blow?"

"That was my firm intention."

"Did you know when you aimed the blow as you did, that it would kill Marat?"

"I thought so."

"An action so atrocious could never have been committed by a woman of your age unless incited thereunto by someone."

"I did not confide my plans to anyone; in killing Marat I did not consider that I was killing a human being, but a wild beast who was devouring the French."

"Why do you assume that Marat was a wild beast?"

"Because of the riots he excited, and the massacres of which he was the instigator; and because lately in Caen he tried to obtain control of the coinage, at all costs."

"How did you know that Marat was trying to control the coinage?"

"I cannot produce proofs; but a certain person who has been arrested was furnished with money which he was carrying to Paris, and he is now on trial."

"When you went to the Minister of the Interior, was it not with the design of murdering him?"

"No; I did not consider him dangerous enough."

Montané then proceeded to question her upon her social status, the home and means of her aunt, and her acquaintance with the proscribed deputies.

Absolutely fearless and truthful where she alone was concerned, she used a generous caution and reserve in all replies which might implicate others, showing an eager determination to keep the full responsibility of her act upon her own shoulders.

It was in vain that Montané tried to confuse her by clothing a former question in new words:

"You cannot convince anyone that a person of your age and sex could have conceived such a crime, and proposed executing it in the Convention, unless instructed to do so by some person or persons whom you are unwilling to name; for instance, Barbaroux, Duperret, or some others known to be enemies of Marat."

"That shows but a poor knowledge of the human heart," Charlotte replied. "It is easier to carry out such a project upon the strength of one's own hatred than upon that of others."

"Did you not tell us that in Caen the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic was desired?"

"The people and the administrators have sworn allegiance to the Republic United and Indivisible, and it is inscribed on all their banners; they have risen only against the anarchists, and wish to deliver the Parisians from out of their power."

Baffled by her lucid answers and unruffled calm, Montané made yet a last effort to force from her an acknowledgment that she had an accomplice.

"Did not Barbaroux ask you to give him an account of your journey, and did he not know what its motive was?"

"Barbaroux requested particulars of my journey by letter, but he did not know what its real object was. I am sorry I burned his letter, as it would show that no one knew the true object of my journey."

"If Barbaroux had not been aware of the object of your journey, you would not have promised him the secret of it; and, besides, you would not have laid yourself out so obligingly in the letter in question, commenced by you to day."

"The letter is intended for more than one person, and that is why I have entered into detail."

"Were you not assured that immediately after you killed Marat you would be killed yourself?"

"No one assured me of it; but I was convinced that it would be so, and therefore I explained my motive in the Address to the French found upon me. I desired it to be known after my death."

In compliance with the usual form, Charlotte Corday was requested to choose her counsel for the defence, and she named citizen Doulcet de Pontécoulant, Deputy to the Convention from Caen. He was the nephew of Mdme. de Pontécoulant, of the Abbaye de la Sainte Trinité, and had known Charlotte since her school days.

The only important fact that the long examination had succeeded in proving was the existence of a correspondence with Barbaroux; a valuable piece of evidence against the Gironde from a political point of view, and a foundation for the accusation of complicity with the crime from a judicial standpoint.

The tribunal then ordered Charlotte to be removed to the Conciergerie, that gloomy ante-chamber of the guillotine, from whence so many were led forth to an unmerited death.

It was dark when she arrived in her new prison, and was once more left alone with the two gendarmes, who still watched her day and night. At her request the gaoler procured her some paper and ink, and she immediately began to write the second letter to Barbaroux, or rather to complete the first which had been interrupted by her examination. When she had finished, she wrote a few words of affectionate farewell to her father.

On the 17th of July 1793, at eight o'clock in the morning, Charlotte Corday was led before the Revolutionary Tribunal for final judgment. She wore the same white gown which she had put on for the fatal interview with Marat, and a Normandy cap of white muslin, from under which her light brown curls fell loose upon her shoulders.

As she passed out of the prison she stopped to speak to the *concierge,* thanking him with her usual kindliness for his attention, and asking him to have some breakfast for her when she returned. "The gentlemen are probably anxious to dispose of this business without delay," she added with quiet irony as she passed through the gate.

A dense crowd had assembled in the Court to see the "bold masculine woman" about whom they had heard so much, the "monster" who had killed their beloved Marat, and her appearance at the bar was greeted with a hoarse murmur of anger. But the quiet dignity and calm of the beautiful girl, and her proud modesty of bearing silenced them, and they gazed at her with a stupid surprise and sort of reluctant admiration.

Her official defender says that "judges, jury, spectators, all appeared before her as before the judge of a supreme tribunal. Her features have been painted and her words recorded, but no art has been able to picture the noble mind that is expressed in all her features. The great effect of the trial was in things one felt, but found it impossible to express." Charlotte was not handcuffed, and the ease of her pose and natural grace of her gestures were untrammelled and free.

After the jury had been sworn in she was allowed to sit down, and Montané, the president, asked her whether her counsel was present.

"I had chosen a friend," she replied, "but have heard nothing of him since. Apparently he had not the courage to undertake my defence."

Chauveau de la Garde was then appointed by Montané, with Citizen Grenier as assistant, and they took their seats next to the prisoner, who looked uneasily at Chauveau de la Garde as though she feared he might try to palliate or deny her crime.* Wolff then rose and read the indictment, immediately after which the witnesses were called.

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* Chauveau de la Garde, whose notes supply the most valuable and authentic account of Charlotte Corday's trial, deserves more than a cursory mention. He conducted Mdme. Roland's defence in such wise as to call forth her admiration and gratitude, and he always exhibited a respectful sympathy for his clients, whether they were republican or aristocrat. He was a gentleman by birth as well as by instinct, and must have possessed great ability and tact, for in spite of his courageous defences of pre-condemned criminals, and the sympathy he often showed for them, he outlived the Revolution, and saw France raised from her degradation by the strong hand of the great Corsican.

Simonne Evrard, Marat's mistress, sobbed bitterly while giving her evidence, and seemed so overcome with grief that Charlotte's hitherto perfect composure broke down for a moment, and she interrupted the woman's testimony with an agitated—

"Yes; it was I who killed him!" as if by the avowal to cut short the painful reiteration of the details of her crime.

"I wished," she said, in reply to Montané's question of her intention, "to sacrifice him upon the summit of the Mountain. If I had thought I could succeed in that manner I should have preferred it to any other. I was quite convinced that I should then be the immediate victim of the people, and that was what I desired."

Taunted by her cross-examiner with having employed falsehood to gain access to Marat, she replied:

"I acknowledge that that was unworthy of me, but all means are good when the nation is to be saved. Besides, I was obliged to pretend to esteem him in order to obtain access to him; men like that are suspicious."

"Who inspired you with such hatred of Marat?"

"I had no need of the hatred of others; mine was enough."

"But the idea of killing him must have been suggested to you by some one; who persuaded you to do this murder?"

"What one does not conceive oneself one does not execute well."

"What did you hate in him?"

"His crimes."

"What do you mean by his crimes?"

"The ravages of France, which I consider to be his work."

"But what you call the ravages of France are not his work alone."

"Perhaps not, but he contributed all he could towards its total destruction."

"What did you hope to accomplish by killing him?"

"To restore peace to my country."

"Do you suppose you have murdered all the Marats?"

"That one dead—the rest will perhaps tremble."

The answers, as here given, were taken down by Chauveau de la Garde, and are absolutely correct; the rest of the trial is from the *Moniteur*, which would not have dared in those dangerous days to reproduce the fearless replies of the prisoner, who, by the power of her wonderful voice and beautiful presence, kept even the unruly mob in the body of the court in respectful silence.

A few minor points in the testimony of some of the witnesses were corrected by Charlotte, but she only denied that which implicated Lauze Duperret. She did all in her power to clear him, and prove that she alone was the guilty one. Again and again she reiterates that she only is responsible for both the thought and the deed.

"I should never have committed such a crime upon the advice of others; I repeat that I alone conceived it, and put it into execution."

Her marvellous fortitude deserted her again for a moment when the knife, still stained and corroded with blood, was held up to her for identification.

"Yes; I recognise it, I recognise it!" she cried, shuddering.

Fouquier-Tinville then observed that the accuracy with which she had struck a vital spot at the first blow showed her proficiency in crime.

"Oh, the monster! He thinks I am a common assassin!" cried Charlotte.

The words escaped her almost like the cry of a wounded creature, and her face was eloquent with outraged pride as she leaned over the bar and looked Fouquier-Tinville full in the face. His cold deliberate cruelty had pierced her armour of self-control, and stabbed her to the quick. What cared she for imprisonment or the scaffold? But it was the very bitterness of death to have her action vulgarised; to see the tragedy and sacrifice of her life dragged from its heroic heights and degraded to the level of a common crime.

Fouquier-Tinville next produced the two letters to Barbaroux, and the one she had written to M. de Corday since her arrest. When her farewell words to her father were read, her eyes clouded with tears; but she fought them back bravely, and raised her head with all its old pride when Corneille's verse was reached, "The shame lies in the crime, not in the scaffold."

When Montané asked her whether she desired to add anything to the second letter to Barbaroux:

"There is but one sentence to add," she replied; "it is this: 'The leader of anarchy is no more; you will have peace.'" To this reply, which shows her still undaunted, she added: "The Committee of Public Safety has promised to see that the first of these letters reaches Barbaroux, that he may let all my friends know of it. I rely upon the Revolutionary Tribunal to forward the second one."[*]

Fouquier-Tinville closed his long cross-examination by demanding the head of the prisoner, and Montané declared the evidence for the prosecution closed, and called for the defence.

Chauveau de la Garde had received his instructions from Montané, who had told him what line of defence to adopt. Charlotte was to be declared insane. Chaveau de la Garde knew she was condemned beforehand, and that no legal skill could save her, but he also realised that the empty form could be used as another means of humiliation. But her counsel was a man of feeling and integrity; the youth and beauty of his client had profoundly impressed him, and, having read her character in her face, he was sure that the plea of insanity would seem to her only a fresh indignity. So with simple honesty he limited himself to a few earnest words, which, if they could not save his client, would at least not insult her.

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[*] Neither the letters to Barbaroux nor the one to her father ever reached their destination. They were placed on file with the report of the trial, and are now in the archives of the nation in Paris. These records, which are of an inestimable historical and archæological value, narrowly escaped destruction during the Commune of 1871, and were only preserved to France, and to the world, by the heroic efforts of their custodian M. Maury and his assistants, these gentlemen having risked their lives to save the public archives.

"When," says Chauveau de la Garde in his notes, "I rose to speak, a dull, confused noise was at first audible in the assembly, followed, if one may so express one's self, by a silence as of death, which chilled me to the soul. During the speech of the public prosecutor, the jury had sent me a message enjoining me to be silent, and the president another, commanding me to confine myself to declaring that the prisoner was mad. They all wished me to humiliate her.

"As for her, her face was ever the same, except that she looked at me in a manner that convinced me that she did not want to be justified. I could not doubt that after the examination, and besides it would have been impossible, as independently of her confession there were the legal proofs of premeditated homicide.

"Nevertheless, being fully decided to do my duty, I would say nothing that my conscience and the accused could disapprove;—suddenly the idea flashed upon me of confining myself to a single observation, which in an assembly of the people, or of legislators, might have been a complete defence, and

I said: 'The prisoner confesses with calmness the horrible crime she has committed, she confesses calmly having premeditated it for a long time; she confesses its most dreadful details; in a word, she confesses everything, and does not even seek to justify herself. That, citizens of the jury, is her whole defence. This imperturbable calm, this entire abnegation of self which betrays no remorse, even in the very presence of death itself; this sublime calm and abnegation under such circumstances are contrary to nature. They can only be explained by the excitement of political fanaticism which armed her hand. It is for you, citizens of the jury, to judge what weight that moral consideration should have in the scales of justice. I leave it to your consideration."

After deliberating for a quarter of an hour, the jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty, and Fouquier-Tinville at once rose to demand the full sentence of the law—death. When Montané asked Charlotte whether she had anything to plead against the application of the law she did not answer, and she listened with perfect composure while the judges one by one voted aloud for her execution, and while the long sentence of death, and confiscation of her goods was read. As soon as it was over she requested permission to speak to her counsel, and the request being granted, she turned to Chauveau de la Garde, "with ineffable grace and sweetness," and said:

"Monsieur, I desire to thank you greatly for presenting my defence with a courage and manner worthy of us both. These gentlemen," indicating the judges, "confiscate my property—but I will give you a greater proof of my gratitude; I ask of you to pay my prison debts, and I rely upon your generosity."

This trust was scrupulously respected, and Charlotte's prison debts, which amounted to thirty-six livres (assignats), were paid by Chauveau de la Garde on the day after her execution.

CHAPTER X.

THE DARK HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.
Horace, Carm. iii. 2.

Our lamp is spent, it's out. . . .
. . . And then, what's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make Death proud to take us.
Antony and Cleopatra, Act iv., sc. xiii.

After the sentence of death had been passed, and the proceedings before the Revolutionary Tribunal concluded, Charlotte was escorted back to the Conciergerie by the two gendarmes. At the foot of the winding stair which led to her cell she found the porter Richard and his wife awaiting her return, and requested them to send her the artist who, she had noticed, was sketching her during the trial.

Upon entering her cell she was surprised to find it occupied by a priest—one of the Constitutional clergy—who had been sent by the Revolutionary Tribunal to administer the consolations of religion and attend her to the scaffold. With gentle insistence she declined to hear his admonitions or receive his offices. "I thank those who thought of sending you," she said; "I appreciate their kindness, but I do not need your ministrations."

Finding that persuasion was useless, the priest withdrew, and a few minutes after his departure Richard returned accompanied by Jacques Hauer, the young artist who had received permission from the Revolutionary Tribunal to paint Charlotte's portrait according to her request.

After thanking him for the evident interest he had taken in the result of her trial, she begged him to make a miniature copy of the portrait he was about to paint, and send it to her father. The promise was eagerly given, and faithfully kept.

Throughout the sitting, which lasted an hour and a half, Charlotte conversed quietly on ordinary topics, and exhibited such tranquillity and ease of spirit that the artist almost forgot how few moments of life were left to his beautiful model.

As soon as Hauer released Charlotte from constraint, she turned abruptly to the table, and as if a sudden thought had entered her mind, seized a pen and began to write, but almost at the same moment the door behind her opened, and the executioner and his two assistants entered carrying the red gown of the condemned. "What, already!" Charlotte exclaimed, and then addressing herself to Sanson, the executioner, she asked him to delay a minute. The request being readily granted, she at once resumed her pen and rapidly wrote a short note, which she folded and asked one of the assistants to send it to Doulcet de Pontécoulant.*

Rising from the table Charlotte moved her chair to the middle of the cell, and taking off her cap allowed

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* Indignant and contemptuous, as a true woman ever is in the presence of pusillanimity, she wrote:—

"Citizen Doulcet de Pontécoulant is a coward to have refused to defend me, when the matter was so easy. He who did so acquitted himself with all possible dignity, and I shall be grateful to him to the last moment.

"MARIE DE CORDAY."

Charlotte was unjust to her acquaintance of the old convent days; he was no coward, and would assuredly have accepted her trust had he received the message in time. But when Fouquier-Tinville's official notification of her choice of him for counsel was sent, Pontécoulant was absent from Paris, and the messenger carried it back to the Tribunal. But the red-handed goddess of Anarchy, who had driven poor Justice from her throne, brooked no delay in the execution of her mandates; another counsel was appointed, and when Pontécoulant returned, it was four days too late, either to serve the masses of her beautiful hair to fall in a shower almost to the ground; taking the scissors from Sanson she cut off a long curl, which she gave to Jacques Hauer, saying:

"Monsieur, I know not how to thank you for the deep interest you have shown in my fate, and for the trouble you have taken on my behalf. I have only this to offer you; accept it as a keepsake."

The executioner then cut off the rest of her hair, which she asked Richard to give to his wife, as the only proof she could offer of her gratitude to them both for the kindness and consideration which they had shown her during her imprisonment. When she put on the scarlet gown in which the law robed its condemned murderers, the spectators were astonished at the strange radiance which the vivid colour imparted to her beauty.

Sanson came forward to tie her hands, but showing him where her wrists were still sore from the chafing of

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his friend or correct her mistake. He at once explained his non-receipt of the summons officially to Montané, and also in the newspapers, courageously adding that he considered it an honour to have been selected by Charlotte to defend her, and that he would assuredly have done so had he known of her danger. That he was absent at the time was a source of life-long regret to him, and Buzot, mentioning the circumstance in his *Mémoirs*, says, "Doulcet is inconsolable" the rope when she was bound in Marat's house, she asked whether she could wear gloves. The executioner answered that she could do so if she wished, but it was unnecessary as he could bind her without hurting her.

"To be sure; those others had not had your experience," she said, as she submitted her bare hands to him without further hesitation; adding, when all was finished: "This is the toilet of death, performed by rather rough hands, but it leads to immortality."

Outside, a howling crowd was surging round the prison walls; herds of men and women of the lowest type, so low indeed as scarce to deserve the human name; the very dregs and lees of the people that any deep stirring of a nation brings to the surface. Alike in every country, whether it be France or England, Germany or America, we see them "issuing like birds of prey from their eeries in the garrets, or crawling like wolves, in fierce cowardly packs, from their burrows in the cellars," whenever the law is in peril and licence holds momentary sway.

Prominent among them, in blasphemy and filthy ribaldry, were those furies of the Revolution, the unsexed women known as "the knitters of the guillotine." Let loose by the Municipality—at the suggestion of Robespierre—from the vilest dens of Parisian infamy, and encouraged to inflame the murderous instincts of the mob, they spent their time at the foot of the scaffold, and seamed a stitch in their work whenever the thud of a fallen head told of another victim slaughtered.

Charlotte mounted the tumbrel with a firm step, declining the chair which Sanson offered her, and was quite undismayed by the mob, whose yells of execration and fierce maledictions were, however, soon drowned by the thunder of a sudden summer storm.

Sanson was obliged, on account of the density of the crowd to drive very slowly, but during the two hours it took to reach the goal of that tragic ride Charlotte stood proudly erect, with hands bound behind her, the drenched red gown clinging to her in heavy classic folds, and a smile of ineffable gentleness and peace upon her lips which did not even lose their colour.

Several times Sanson turned to see whether she showed any sign of weakening, and at last he said:

"Do you not find the way very long?"

"Bah!" she answered, "we are sure to arrive all the same."

As they neared the Place de la Révolution, where the guillotine stretched its hungry arms almost opposite the dismantled Tuileries, an impulse of humane pity prompted Sanson to place himself before Charlotte, in order to prevent her from seeeing the instrument of her death too suddenly; but she noticed his action, and bending forward to look, said quietly: "Surely I have the right to be curious; I never saw one before." And her singularly musical voice was clear and calm as usual.

While Sanson was clearing the way to the foot of the scaffold, she descended from the tumbrel without waiting for assistance, and passing through the serried ranks of the crowd, lightly mounted the steps. On the platform, while the executioner was occupied with his ghastly preparations, his assistant tore away Charlotte's fichu with brutal roughness, exposing the creamy neck and shoulders to the jeering mob. For one moment her face flamed with indignant scarlet, then it paled again to its natural colour, and when she had regained her composure, she turned as if to address the crowd, but the beating of the drums frustrated her purpose. As she stood thus smiling a kindly farewell to the people, the sun suddenly pierced through a rift in the storm-clouds and flooded her face and figure with the glory of its setting rays. Framed in this halo of crimson light Charlotte moved to the spot indicated by Sanson, and laid her head under the knife.

Legros, the brutal assistant, held up the head to the gaze of the spectators and, undeterred by the smile of content on the beautiful dead face, struck it repeatedly with his open hand.*

But somehow the mob had lost its ardour, and his action called forth but faint applause, and the usual

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* This action did not meet with the general approval of the crowd, and called forth the indignation of Sanson in strong terms; he mentioned the circumstance to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and a few days afterwards they took the matter into consideration. The admiration and compassion for Charlotte had grown so strong in the interim that they deemed it wise to humour the popular feeling a little, and accordingly consigned Legros to prison for eight days. At the same time a letter was published—signed by Rousillon, one of the judges—from which we extract the following:—

"To the Editor of the *Paris Chronicle.*

"Citizen—After the sword of the law had fallen upon the murderess of Marat, the man Legros, one of the assistants at the execution, having seized the head to show it to the people, permitted himself to apply several buffets to the face of the inanimate head which was no longer guilty. This act of barbarism was disapproved of by the people, and Citizen Michonis, administrator of police, could not abstain from correcting this man, who, if he is not a barbarian, was at least cries of "Vive la Nation!" and "Vive la Republique!" were weak and few.

Even the infamous "knitters" were cowed and awed for the moment by the grave simplicity and courage of this beautiful girl, and the crowd dispersed with unwonted quietness, amid the occasional flashes of lightning and the muttered thunder of the retreating storm.

After being subjected to brutal outrage, all that remained of Charlotte Corday was buried in the cemetery of the Madeleine, rue Anjou Saint-Honoré, almost on the spot afterwards occupied by the monument to Louis XVI.

In 1815 the coffin was removed to Montparnasse, and given up to the care of the Saint-Albin family who were connected by blood with the Cordays.

M. de Corday was placed under arrest in Caen, and forced to submit to a rigorous examination, but ultimately released. Mdme. de Bretheville suffered much greater annoyance, and ran some danger of being killed by the mob, who stormed her house and threatened to pull it down about her ears. She escaped

guilty of a cowardly action. Upon being informed of this indignity, the Tribunal thought it advisable to give Citizen Legros a lesson by putting him in prison, and intends further to reprimand him *coram populo*."

their fury, however, and lived to the age of eighty years, dying at last in the same chamber which Charlotte had occupied when she lived at the Grand Manoir.

On the 14th July, the very day after the murder, when the public odium against Charlotte was at its highest, and the papers were full of eulogies of Marat, a placard had mysteriously appeared in various parts of Paris, which applauded her action, and compared her to the other great heroine of France, Joan of Arc. It came from the hand of Adam Luchs, an emissary from the court of Germany, and an enthusiastic susceptible dreamer, whose ardent republicanism had been revolted by the continual butcheries he had witnessed. Two days after Charlotte's execution he issued a long manifesto signed with his name, in which he set forth his reactionary opinions with reckless temerity.

After condemning in strong terms the crime of murder in the general acceptation of the word, Adam Luchs proceeds to urge the purity of Charlotte Corday's motive as a justification of her act, for which he coins the word "tyrannicide." He places her on the same level with Brutus and Cato, and demands for her, in warm terms, the honour and veneration of posterity.

The latter half of his manifesto is a most impassioned description of his own feelings, and apostrophe to the woman who has inspired him with such a mad unreasoning passion. This strange document concludes with the denunciation of the Tribunal that had condemned her, and the earnest expression of a desire to die under the same knife as Charlotte.

Adam Luchs had followed the course of her trial with interest, and had been impressed by the accounts of her calm courage; but he saw her for the first time when she stood in the tumbrel on her way to the scaffold, and her youth and beauty set his heart aflame.

Among all the strange and pathetic love-stories of the Revolution, when hearts were won within prison walls and wedded by the guillotine, is there another as fantastic and wonderful as that of Adam Luchs?

He perfectly realised, when he published his fiery proclamation, that he would have to pay for his temerity with his life; and he was arrested and sent to the prison of La Force on the 24th of July. The Revolutionary Tribunal was no respecter of persons, and his character of foreign representative could not protect him, but the strenuous efforts of his friends procured him the promise of pardon and release if he would publicly retract what he had written, and promise to remain silent in the future. These conditions Adam Luchs refused even to discuss, and after languishing in prison till the 10th of October, he was brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and condemned to death. The trial began at nine in the morning, and at four o'clock of the same day he was guillotined.

A few minutes before the proceedings before the Tribunal opened, he said to a friend: "If they intend to honour me by death upon their guillotine, from which all ignominy has been removed by the pure blood shed there on the 17th July, I hope the executioner will give my head the same number of blows that Charlotte's received." . . . . "Thou wilt forgive me, sublime Charlotte," he exclaimed after the sentence was passed, "if I find it impossible at the last moment to exhibit the courage and gentleness that were thine. I glory in thy superiority, for is it not right that the person adored should be above the adorer?"

But the courage of Adam Luchs did equal that of the woman he invoked, and as this ardent lover mounted the steps of the guillotine, he exclaimed with a smile of satisfaction, "At last I am to die for Charlotte!"

And Charlotte's heroes, those men of the Gironde whom she so warmly admired, and whose cause she wished to serve, what was the verdict they passed upon her? Unanimously one of appreciation of her intention, and wondering admiration for her courage and patriotic self-sacrifice. "She teaches us how to die!" exclaims Vergniaud, and Barbaroux regrets when it is too late that he did not cultivate her acquaintance more eagerly, and appreciate her more truly. Among them all Petion is perhaps the most outspoken in her praise, thus verifying the proud words she spoke to him in the Hotel de l'Intendance, just before she went to Paris: "You judge me, Citizen Petion, without knowing me. Some day you will know what I am."

But while the Girondists applauded Charlotte's heroism they could but deplore and condemn her fatal error of judgment. Writes Mdme. Roland to Buzot: "A wonderful woman, who consulted only her own courage, came here to give death to the apostle of murder and pillage; she deserves the admiration of the world, but for want of proper knowledge of the state of things she chose her time and her victim badly." And Louvet, after invoking her as "the future idol of Republicans," and pouring out a torrent of eloquence in her behalf, adds, that if, as their enemies averred, the Girondists had armed her hand, it would not have been against Marat.

Had the Girondists been capable of planning the murder of one of their oppressors by the innocent hand of an inexperienced woman, they would have undoubtedly selected Danton for the victim, as he was the one they feared the most. The mere fact that Charlotte directed her blow against Marat should be sufficient to exonerate the Girondists from complicity in her crime, for they knew, though she did not, that the malady from which he was suffering must terminate fatally very soon.

And now came that dark time of depression and despair, when the Girondists were forced to acknowledge that all hope was over. True, the wildest days of the Terror when the frantic death-throes of Liberty shook all Europe, and made its peoples stand aghast, had yet to come; but any re-establishment of the Moderate Party was now clearly impossible, and this they fully realised.

"In the cities," writes Buzot, sadly, "everyone pretends to be a *sans-culotte,* because those who are not are guillotined; in the country, the most unjust requisitions are obeyed, because the disobedient are guillotined; everywhere youths are entering the army, because those who remain at home are guillotined. The guillotine, that is the great reason for everything; it is to-day the mainspring of the French Government. This people is Republican by force of the guillotine."

And soon this all-devouring guillotine was to destroy his friends and colleagues. On the 30th October, 1793, Brissot, Vergniaud, Sillery, Lasource, Duchâtel, Ducos, Fonfréde, Valazé, with thirteen others, were condemned to death, while the remaining members of the Gironde were outlawed.

Valazé stabbed himself when the sentence of death was pronounced, but his corpse was decapitated by the guillotine when the rest were executed.

To the last the strong *esprit de corps* survived among these men, and they sustained and encouraged each other to the end; Vergniaud, who had provided himself with poison, would not use it, preferring to suffer with his companions.

We have heard much of the prison banquet of the condemned Girondists, at which a theatric and callous frivolity is supposed to have reigned. The first mention of it is by Thiers, who is notably inexact, and it is afterwards elaborated by the sentimentality of

Lamartine, and others, into the fantastic legend we are familiar with to-day. The sole foundation upon which these romancers built are the words of Buzot:—"My friends ate their last meal together; it was pleasant and even cheerful; a servant of Duprat's waited on them." No other chronicler of the time mentions the circumstance at all, and Riouffe—in his *Mémoirs d'un Détenu*—fond of detail as he is, would assuredly have given an account of an event of the kind had it ever taken place. The picture that he gives of the condemned deputies is far more consistent with the dignity and real stoicism of these men than is the ostentatious levity of the mythical banquet. "Interest is awakened," he says, "by the sound of these famous names, but I have little wherewith to satisfy it. I arrived only two days before their condemnation, as though to be a witness of their death. Their minds dwelt in such heights that it was impossible to address ordinary consolation to them. Brissot was grave and thoughtful; Gensonné reserved; Vergniaud sometimes grave and sometimes less serious. As for Valazé, his eyes held something inexpressibly heavenly."

Firm to the last, they marched to their death singing the Marseillaise; as one by one their number lessened the chorus grew fainter, until the voice of

Vigée rang out alone for a moment, and then was silenced for ever by the descending blade.

On the 8th of November Mdme. Roland was guillotined; the *Great Citoyenne* whom Carlyle apostrophizes: "Noble white vision, with its high queenly face, its soft, proud eyes, long black hair flowing down to the girdle, and as brave a heart as ever beat in woman's bosom!" Her husband followed her, as she had predicted he would, very soon, "dying by his own hand because he was unwilling to remain in a world polluted by crimes."

And the rest of the Girondists, where were they? Wandering in hunger, cold, and weariness; hiding by day lest they fell into the hands of their foes, and travelling by night; lost, yet afraid to ask their way; starving, but not daring to beg for food. Every aim of their lives defeated, their ideals shattered, their loved Republic dishonoured, their friends dead or dispersed, their wives and children in peril, and themselves in outlawry with a price upon their heads.

In the beautiful letter of farewell which Salles wrote to his wife, he tells of the suspense and misery he endured when, with de Cussi and de Grangeneuve, he at last found refuge in Bordeaux. De Grangeneuve's father hid them in an end of his attic, and built up a partition so as to shut off all entrance except through the roof. Here they cowered for three long weeks, ragged, without fire or light, expecting every moment to be seized, and finding the final discovery rather a relief than otherwise. Dragged from the house, and guillotined with their aged host and his sister, they met their fate with the calmness to be expected of such men.

Louvet, after enduring equal hardships, sweetened however, by the loving companionship of his intrepid "Lodoïska"—the wife he idolised—succeeded at last in escaping with her to Switzerland.

Petion, Buzot, and Barbaroux remained hidden in the caverns of St. Emilion for several months, but, their asylum being finally discovered, they fled to the woods, with Marcou's bloodhounds upon their track, and no prospect of help or safety. Barbaroux, too lame and footsore to walk without assistance, and finding that he was detaining his friends, shot himself, but the ball only shattered his jaw, and he was captured and sent to Bordeaux. He was guillotined on the 6th Messidor, five days after Salles, Gaudet, and Grangeneuve.

Buzot and Petion escaped from their pursuers, only to die of starvation, cold and exposure, and their bodies were found a week afterwards all torn and mangled by the dogs.

Such was the end of the Gironde, the party which in every office had shown the greatest courage and perseverance in defending the rights of the people. For eight stormy months they had braved the fury of a crazy populace, bearing threats and insults with dignity, and fearlessly upholding the cause of true liberty.

Personally, these men had little to gain and much to lose by the Revolution. Their social position was assured, their tastes and pursuits not of a kind to be affected by the caprices and injustice of the old *régime*, and they had no individual grievances. But they believed in the right of the people to be well-governed, and for the sake of this belief they left their homes and gave their substance and their lives. Loyal, patriotic, and self-sacrificing, their names shine out from the black back-ground of that awful time in letters of white light.

Buzot when writing those hurried but earnest appeals to posterity, which he calls mémoirs, in the caverns of St. Emilion, is touched at times with prophetic fire. "Honourable victims of tyranny!" he writes in glowing eulogy of his dead comrades, "you will be avenged! A day will come when posterity will pronounce your name only with the hushed voice of veneration and gratitude. Like Phocion and Sydney, you have died for the liberty of your country; like them, you will live for ever in the memory of man!"

Their very faults were those that sprang from their virtues; they were too proud to stoop to cunning, too pure to be corrupted, too ready to credit the people with their own steadfastness of purpose, and too sincere in their love of liberty to profane it to unworthy uses.

Had the Gironde had one half of the unscrupulous audacity of the Jacobins, it would have triumphed; but it disdained the use of weapons which its adversaries wielded, and fought their cruelty and rapacity with eloquent speeches and moderate measures. It was, in fine, a party whose aims were high and patriotic; weak sometimes where they should have been strong, injudicious when cautious judgment was of vital importance, dilatory when immediate and concerted action might have saved them, but always clean-handed and free from the taint of self-interest. Standing midway between the Royalists and the ultra-republicans, they represent all that was purest, noblest, and most disinterested of republican France.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

Nec bene fecit; nec male fecit; sed inter fecit.

AMONG the many heroic women of history there is not one whose name thrills us with as strange a mingling of admiration and repulsion as that of Charlotte Corday. We shudder when we think of the cool, deliberately-planned murder; but after studying her beautiful womanly face, and tracing her life step by step, from innocent childhood to the unsullied girlhood full of noble dreams and unselfish desires, which ended upon the scaffold, we learn first to understand and then to love her.

"Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner," said a celebrated Frenchman; and from a close study of Charlotte Corday's life, and of the times in which she lived, we may learn much which seems to extenuate though it cannot justify her crime. It was a period of entire social disorganization, all laws both human and divine were practically in abeyance, and there was no power or authority to appeal to against men of the type of Marat. In times like these the punishment of such offenders has always rested with individuals, and the act of Charlotte Corday cannot therefore be judged by the standards of our day. She was an ardent lover of her country, ready to lay down her life in its cause and for its sake, and she saw this dearly-loved country staggering under the load of misfortune and woe that had been laid upon it, as she believed, by Marat. To her he seemed a monster, a wild beast, a malignant inhuman thing to be mercilessly hunted out of the world before he could accomplish further evil.

Again, the influence of Charlotte's father was very strong, and we have already seen how early he imbued her with a hatred of tyranny, and a desire for the establishment of a Republican form of government. But there was always this difference in the nature of the father and the daughter; M. de Corday's rather weak lymphatic temperament was satisfied with verbal protest against wrong, while the more fiery, energetic nature of his daughter burned to redress it. Action was a necessity with her, and she longed, at whatever cost to herself, to do something helpful; to take some personal part in the struggle that was convulsing the country.

The love of the dramatic, which is so strong an element in the character of the Latin races, was largely developed in Charlotte Corday, and her ideal of patriotism was the performance of some heroic *coup de théatre* that would save her country and confer immortality upon herself.

The long seclusion of the convent, and the isolation of her after life in the dull home of her aunt, fostered her natural taste for reading and dreaming; indeed, every circumstance of her life seems to have been especially designed to increase the tendency to morbidness which belongs to all sensitive and romantic natures.

"As we look into her soft, sad eyes," says Michelet, "we realise something which perhaps explains her whole destiny: she had always been alone. Yes, it is the only thing about her that is not attractive. In this being so charming and so good, there lurked that sinister power, the demon of solitude."

Lamartine has set the fashion of calling Charlotte Corday an atheist, and has undoubtedly done her memory a grave injustice. Those who knew her well have testified to her faith, and her own letters prove it; writing upon the death of the King she laments not being able to follow her brothers who had emigrated, adding reverently: "But God keeps us here for other destinies." And in the letter to Mdme. Levaillant, in which she relates the struggle between the constitutional and unconstitutional clergy at Verson, it is easy to see where her sympathies are.

M. l'Abbé de Corday, who outlived the Terror, and cherished the memory of the sweet little niece who had brightened his lonely home for three years with tender pride, always indignantly repudiated the accusation of her irreligion, and he spoke from an intimate and life-long knowledge of Charlotte's character. The persistent refusal of spiritual guidance when she was in prison gave some colour to the assertion of Lamartine, but there is no doubt that this refusal was prompted solely by her contempt for the constitutional clergy —a contempt sufficiently plainly expressed during her residence at the Grand Manoir, and the time of her trial.

Those who have written of Charlotte Corday have been, with the one exception of Klause, a German, her own countrymen, and with the genuine Gallic love of romance, they have almost all furnished her with numerous suitors. We have already seen that Henri de Belsunce, and a mythical personage called Franquelin, have been honoured with her regard in the pages of these sentimental biographers; and Barbaroux, the handsome and eloquent young deputy, has also been credited with having been her lover. But his own memoirs and letters sufficiently disprove the statement, and show how slight the acquaintance between them really was. Not even the "Antinous of France" had power to touch a heart so filled with devotion and anxiety for a distracted country.

There was always a certain austerity and reserve about Charlotte Corday which, while it in no wise detracted from her gentleness, compelled the respect and courtesy of all who came in contact with her. Even as a child she possessed a remarkable self-reliance, and it was this self-reliance which, in her later years, prevented her from feeling that need of love and marriage in the abstract which so much oftener than true affection drives a girl into the arms of a lover.

Love never touched Charlotte Corday; her thoughts were too full of her country's miseries to leave room for a more personal sentiment, and her heart was as virgin as the post-mortem proved her beautiful body. Among all the infamy and blood-curdling horror of that fearful time, the sacrilege wrought by vindictive curiosity upon the dead girl who had so gallantly paid for her crime with her life, seems to us the very climax of inhuman brutality.

Wherever the name of Charlotte Corday is mentioned in history, it is with a generous appreciation of her courage and the purity of her motive for her crime. Even Carlyle, the great cynic and fault-finder, has only words of praise and admiration for "this fair young Charlotte" who "emerged from her secluded stillness, suddenly like a Star; cruel-lovely, with a half-angelic, half-dæmoniac splendour; to gleam for a moment, and in a moment to be extinguished: to be held in memory, so bright and complete was she, through long centuries!"

Lamartine, in a noble passage which we need no apology for transcribing here at full length, eloquently and once for all sums up the judgment of posterity upon a deed which, if it cannot be justified, it would be mere pedantry to condemn when viewed by the light of its surroundings.

Such was the life and death of Charlotte Corday. In the presence of murder history dares not glorify her, but in the presence of heroism history cannot blame. The appreciation of such an action places before the soul the dread alternative of misjudging virtue, or of lauding assassination. Like the painter who, in despair at being unable to depict the expression of a complex emotion, threw a veil over the face of his model and left the problem to the spectator, so must this mystery be left to struggle eternally for solution in the depths of the human conscience.

There are matters which may not be judged by man, but which rise without intermediary, and without appeal, straight to the tribunal of God. There are some actions in which weakness and strength, purity of motive and culpable means, error and truth, murder and martyrdom, are so closely blended that one cannot describe them in one word, and one knows not whether to call them crimes or virtues.

The culpable devotion of Charlotte Corday is numbered among these acts which admiration and horror would leave for ever doubtful if morality did not condemn them. As for us, if we were to seek a name for this sublime saviour of her country, and generous murderess of tyranny, a name which should express equally the enthusiasm of our emotion for her, and the severity of our judgment on her act, we should create an expression which unites the two extremes of admiration and horror in human speech, and call her the Angel of Assassination.

Charlotte Corday lived in an age of mental exaltation and moral heroism, qualities which, though misdirected and ill-applied, very often feverish and sometimes unnatural, were yet unquestionably genuine; and she was a true child of her time. In those days women strove to do and dare what their fathers and brothers and husbands were doing, and many a stirring speech delivered in the Assembly or at the great political clubs had been born in the brain of a woman. They did not content themselves with a passive part, they were full of ardour, sinking individual aims and affections in the general conflict, and, ready to sacrifice all for their cause; they rushed into the battle of the nation impetuously and eagerly, and claimed the privilege of fighting for their country side by side with the men.

Olympe de Gouges expressed the general feeling of her sex when she said: "Women have as good a right to mount the tribune, as they have to ascend the scaffold." Illiterate and obscure as she was, that *mot* has made her famous.

The women of the Revolution are a lasting glory to France, and their heroism does more than aught else to redeem the pages of that blood-stained chapter of its history.

In the heart of a true woman there is always a store of latent courage that only needs the spur of a strong excitement to call it forth. Court dames who, in happier days, would have fainted at the sight of a cut finger and gone into hysterics because they were denied a coveted jewel, faced privation, insult, imprisonment, and shameful death with a proud courage and noble serenity that fill us with admiring wonder. The most familiar example of this high dignity, under unequalled suffering, is the Queen Marie Antoinette, "that imperial woman," whose husk of selfishness, frivolity, and folly fell from her at the first touch of misfortune, leaving only those beautiful qualities which have made her one of the brightest examples of the world's womanhood. But the names of noble women throng to our mind, for Royalist and Republican alike showed a calm intrepidity in which there was nothing of bravado, and one could fill pages with the bare mention of such heroines as Mdlle. de Sombreuil, the devoted daughter; Manon Roland, patriotic and fearless; the Princesse de Lamballe, the loyal friend; Madame Royale, a figure almost too angelic to be of earth; poor little loving Lucille Desmoulins; Mdme. de Condorcet, the faithful young wife; Louvet's beloved "Lodoïska," braving the miseries of outlawry with a fortitude worthy of her lion-hearted husband.

Indeed, it is a curious fact that among the many female victims of that time only one woman—the notorious Du Barry—is recorded as having displayed cowardice in the face of death.

There clings about Charlotte Corday a peculiar fascination and pathos which no other historical figure possesses; her life was sacrificed to an unattainable ideal, her aspirations were thwarted, and her self-immolation was rendered useless, nay, even made to recoil upon her friends.

A great regret arises in us that this young life should have been wasted; that a mind so noble and generous should have been perverted by empty sophistries, and that such heroic and exalted patriotism should have stooped to stain its hands with crime.

"'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord," and as we trace the disastrous effects of her crime we realise anew that individuals cannot with impunity arrogate to themselves the rights of divine or civil law. Peace was restored to France, but not by Charlotte Corday's act, and, nearly a century after her crime—which did not accelerate its establishment by one day—the Republic of which she dreamed became a fact.

The influence of the French Revolution has been incalculably widespread and potent in keeping tyranny within bounds, whether it be the tyranny of the throne or of the mob. Every country of Europe, indeed every country of the world, felt in a greater or less degree the shock of that vast upheaval, and can to-day trace to its example and inspiration some great national reform or impulse towards fuller enlightenment. An influence that has been felt not only in the politics and conduct of national affairs in Europe, but in social ethics, and religious faith.

For nearly one hundred years the Titanic force has worked in comparative quietude, but that it is fully spent none can believe who are alive to the signs of the times. Within the last few years we have felt its pressure in the wide territory of the Russian Empire; and even on the far shores of the free Western Republic its mutterings are at times distinctly audible.

Injustice and oppression linger yet upon the earth, and not until these lurking demons have been slain will the giant Progress sleep, or allow a halt to be called in the great onward march of international advancement.

From every earnest heart is breathed a fervent prayer, that from this continual ebb and flow of Revolutionary effort we may at last obtain, not a mere spasmodic improvement, but the real, tangible, lasting victory of Right and Truth.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Mdlle. de Corday *à* M. Alain, Négociant,

rue Dauphine, à Paris.

Voici Monsieur une lettre de change que l'on m'a envoyés payable a vos ordres. Je vous prie de me la renvoyer avec les formalités nécessaire pour en recevoir largent à Caën, jen suis trés pressés, Mdme. labesse ma chargés de vous remercier des ofre que vous lui avés faite relativement aux glaces. Elle ne veut point emprunter cette année ainsi ne les ayés pas, de plus elle ne fera pas faire le lit de M. le Marquis. Par conséquend elle vous prie de ne pas faire faire le bois comme cela était convenu. Je vous prie monsieur de ne pas faire payer ma lettre de change par labayë jai des raisons pour cela. J'ai l'honneur detre Monsieur votre trés humble et trés obeissante,

Corday d'Armont.

A labayë Sainte Trinité de Caën,
ce 30 septembre, '89.

MDLLE. DE CORDAY *à* MDME. DUHAUVELLE.

Probably (1788.)

J'aurés eu l'honneur, Madame, de vous écrire plutôt et de vous remercier de votre souvenir, mais il ma fallu feuilleter toutes les vies de Saints pour trouver la patroune de ma petite cousine dont je vais vous dire la vie en peu de mots.

Il y avait à Rome vers l'an 300 une femme de qualité nommé Aglaé; elle possédait des richesses immenses et menait une vie trés dissipée, elle n'avait que trois bonnes qualités, l'hospitalité, la liberalité, la compassion. Après plusieurs années passées dans le crime, Aglaé touchée de la grâce, dit à Boniface son intendant, aussi converti, daller assister les saints martyrs et de lui en apporter des reliques afin de les honorer et d'obtenir par leurs intercessions la remission de ses pechés. Boniface lui dit en plaisantant, si je trouve des reliques des martyrs je les apporterai, mais Madame, si mes reliques viénne sans le nom des martyrs, recevés-les. En effet Boniface assistant les sains fut condamné a mort et en la tête tranchée, ses domestiques remportèrent son corps. Cependant un ange apparut à Aglaé et lui dit: Celui qui était votre serviteur est maintenant vôtre frère, recevés-le comme vôtre Seigneur et le placés dignement, vos péchés vous seront remis par son intercession. Elle partit aussitôt avec un nombreux Clergé et alla au devant des saintes reliques. Aglaé lui fit bâtir un superbe oratoir où il se fit bien des miracles. Des lors Aglaé renonça pour toujours au monde, donna tout son bien aux pauvres, vêcut encore 18 ans dans les exercises de piété et mourut de la mort des saints. Elle fut enterrés dans la chapelle quelle avait bâtie à St. Boniface, l'église en fait la fête le même jour.

Voila Madame quelle fut la patronne de ma petite cousine à qui je désire une fin pareille et que j'embrasse bien tendrement ainsi que son aimable sœur. On ma dit Madame que vos afaires étaient terminées raport à votre terre, je vous en fais mon sincère compliment, car il est bien heureux de savoir à quoi s'en tenir. Je ne puis cependant m'en réjouir puisque c'est un présage certain que vous allés nous quitter. Je désire être dans le cas de vous voir encore l'année prochaine et de vous assurer de vive voix du respect avce lequel je suis, Madame et chère consine,

Votre trés humble et très obéissante servante,

CORDAY.

Ma sœur me charge de vous présenter son respect, elle dit mille choses honnêtes à vos petites.

Ce 24 septembre, 1788.

Letters to MDLLE. LEVAILLANT.

Mars, 1792.

Est-il possible, ma cherè amie, que pendant que je murmurés contre votre paresse, vous fussiez la victime de cette cruelle petite vérole ! Je crois que vous devés être contente d'en être quitte, et de ce quelle à respecté vos traits ; c'est une grâce qu'elle n'accorde pas à toutes les jolies personnes. Vous étiez malade, et je ne pouvés le savoir. Promettés-moi, ma très-chère, que si cette fantaisie vous reprend, vous me le manderés d'avance ; car je ne trouve rien de si cruel que d'ignorer le sort de ses amis. Vous me demandés des nouvelles ; à present, mon cœur, il n 'y en à plus dans nôtre ville ; les âmes sensibles sont ressuscitées et parties ; les malédictions que vous avés proférées contre notre ville font leur effet. S'il n 'y a pas encore d'herbe dans les rues, c'est que la saison n'en est pas venue. Les Faudoas sont partis, et même une partie de leurs meubles. M. de Cussi a la garde des drapeaux. Il épouse en peu Mdlle. Fleuriot. Avec cette désertation générale, nous sommes forts tranquilles, et moins il y aura de monde, moins il y aura de dangers d'insurrection. Si cela dépendait de moi, j'augmenterés le nombre des réfugiés à Rouen, non par inquiétude, mais, mon cœur, pour être avec vous, pour profiter de vos leçons ; car je vous choisirés bien vite pour maîtresse de langue, anglaise ou italienne, et je suis sûre que je profiterés avec vous de toute manière. Mdme. Bretheville, ma tante, vous remercie bien de votre souvenir et du désir que vous avés de contribuer à son repos ; mais sa santé et son goût ne lui promettant aucun soulagement ; elle attend avec confiance les événements futurs, qui ne paraissent pas désespérés ; elle vous prie de témoigner à Mdme. L * * * toute sa reconnaissance de son souvenir, et de lui dire que personne ne peut lui être plus sincerèment attachée ; elle vous regrette beaucoup l'une et l'autre, et se persuade ainsi que moi, que vous n'êtes pas près de revenir dans une ville que vous méprisés si justement. Mon frère est parti, il y a quelques jours pour augmenter le nombre des chevaliers errants; ils pourront rencontrer à leur chemin des moulins à vent. Je ne saurés penser, comme nos fameux aristocrates, qu'on fera une entrée triomphante sans combattre, d'autant que l'armement de la nation est formidable; je veux bien que les gens qui sont pour eux ne soient pas disciplinés, mais cette idée de liberté donne quelque chose qui ressemble au courage; et, d'ailleurs, le désespoir peut encore les servir; je ne suis donc pas tranquille; et de plus, quel est le sort qui nous attend? Un despotisme épouvantable; si l'on parvient à renchaîner le peuple, c'est tomber de Charybede en Scylla, il nous faudra toujours souffrir. Mais, ma belle, c'est un journal que je vous écris contre mon intention, car toutes ces lamentations-là ne nous guériront de rien; pendant le carnival, elles doivent être plus sévèrement proscrites. Je vous dirai une triste nouvelle pour moi, c'est que j'ai égaré votre lettre; je ne sais plus votre addresse; si cella-là vous parvient je vous prie de me le mander tout de suite. Mdme. Malmonté est partie pour la compagne avec Mdme. Malherbe, et je ne sais à qui avoir recours; c'est pourquoi je ne veux en rien faire connaître mon nom à ceux qui pourraient à votre place, et contre ma volonté, prendre lecture de mon griffonage.

Je reprends ma lettre, qui a dormi plusieurs jours, ma très-belle, parce qu'on nous annonçait de grands événements que je voulés vous mander, et rien n'est arrivé; tout est en paix malgré le carnaval, dont on ne s'aperçoit pas ; les masques sont défendus ; vous trouverés cela juste. M. de Faudoas est de retour ; on ne sait pourquoi, personne ne comprend sa conduite. Servés-moi d'interprète auprès de Mdme. L * * * , et l'assurés de mon respectueux dévouement. Adieu, mon cœur.

Mai 1792.

Je reçois toujours avec un nouveau plaisir, ma belle amie, les témoignages de votre amitié ; mais ce qui m'afflige, c'est que vous soyés indisposée. Il paraîtrait que c'est une suite de la petite-vérole. Il faut vous ménager. Vous me demandés, mon cœur, ce qui est arrivé à Verson : toutes les abominations qu'on peut commettre, une cinquantaine de personnes tondues, battues, des femmes outragées ; il paraît même qu'on n'en voulait qu' à elles. Trois sont mortes quelques jours après ;— les autres sont encore malades, au moins la plupart. Ceux de Verson avaient le jour de Pâques insulté un national et même sa cocarde ; c'est insulter un âne jusque dans sa bride.—Là-dessus délibérations tumultueuses : on force les corps administratifs à permettre le départ de Caen, dont les préparatifs durérent jusqu'à deux heures et demie. Ceux de Verson, avertis le matin, crurent qu'on se moquait d'eux. Enfin, le curé eut le temps de se sauver, en laissant dans le chemin une personne morte dont on faisait l'enterrement. Vous savés que ceux qui étaient lá, et qui ont été pris sont ; l'abbé Adam et de la Pallue, chanoine du Sépulcre ; un curé étranger et un jeune abbé de la paroisse ; les femmes sont : la nièce de l'abbé Adam, la sœur du curé, et puis le maire de la paroisse. Ils n'ont été que quatre jours en prison. Un paysan, interrogé par les municipaux :—" Etes-vou patriote ?"—" Hélas ! oui, messieurs, je le suis ! Tout le monde sait que j'ai mis le premier à l'enchère sur les biens du clergé, et vous savés bien, messieurs, que les honnêtes gens n'en voulaient pas." Je ne sais si un homme d'esprit eût mieux répondu que cette pauvre bête ; mais les juges mêmes, malgré leur gravité, eurent envie de sourire. Que vous dirai-je, enfin, pour terminer en abrégé ce triste chapitre ? La paroisse a changé dans l'instant et a joué au club ; ou a fêté les nouveaux convertis, qui eussent livré leur curé, s' il avait reparu chez eux.

> Vous connaisssés le peuple, on le change en un jour ;
> Il prodigue aisément sa haine et son amour.

Ne parlons plus d'eux. Toutes les personnes dont vous me parlés sont à Paris. Aujourd'hui, le reste de nos honnêtes gens partent pour Rouen,—et nous restons presque seules. Que voulés-vous ? A l'impossible nul n'est tenu. J'aurés été charmée à tous égards que nous eussions pris domicile dans votre pays, d'autant qu'on nous menace d'une très-prochaine insurrection. On ne meurt qu'une fois, et ce qui me rassure contre les horreurs de nôtre situation, c'est que personne ne perdra en me perdant, à moins que vous ne comptiés à quelque chose ma tendre amitié. Vous serés peut-être surprise, mon cœur, de voir mes craintes ; vous les partageriés, j'en suis sûre, si vous étiés ici. Ou pourra vous dire en quel état est nôtre ville et comme les esprits fermentent. Adieu, ma belle, je vous quitte, car il m'est impossible d'écrire plus longtemps avec cette plume, et je crains d'avoir déjà trop tardé à vous envoyer cette lettre; les marchands doivent partir aujourdhui. Je vous prie de me servir d'interprète, de dire à Mdme. L * * * les choses les plus honnêtes et les plus respectueuses. Ma tante me charge de lui témoigner, ainsi qu'à vous, combien son souvenir lui est cher, et vous prie de compter sur son sincère attachement. Je ne vous dis rien de ma tendresse; je veux que vous en soyés persuadée sans que je radote toujours la même chose.

Letter to Mdlle. Rose Fougeron du Fuyot.

Ce 28 Janvier.

Vous savés l'affreuse nouvelle, ma bonne Rose; vôtre cœur comme mon cœur en a tressailli d'indignation; voilà donc nostre pauvre France livrée aux misérables qui nous ont desjà fait tant de mal. Dieu sait où cela s'arrêtera. Moi, qui connés vos bons sentiments, je puys vous en dire ce que je pense. Je frémis d'horreur et d'indignation Tout ce qu'on peut rêver d'affreux se trouve dans l'avenir que nous prépare de tels événements. Il est bien manifeste que rien de plus malheureux ne pouvait nous arrivé. J'en suys presque réduite à envier le sort de ceux de nos parents qui ont quitté le sol de la patrie, tant je désespère pour nous de voir revenir cette tranquillité que j'avés espérée il n'y a pas encor lontems. Tous ces hommes qui devaient nous donné la liberté l'ont assissinée; ce ne sont que des bourreaux. Pleurons sur le sort de la pauvre France.

Je vous says bien malheureuse et je ne voudrés pas faire couler encor vos larmes par le récit de nos douleurs. Tous mes amis sont persécutés; ma tante est l'objet de toute sorte de tracasseries, depuis qu'on a sçu qu'elle avait donné asyle à Delphin quand il a passé en Angleterre. J'en fairés autant que lui se je le pouvés, mais Dieu nous retient icy pour d'autres destinées.

La capitaine a passé par icy en retournant d'Evreux, c'est un homme aimable et qui vous est fort attaché; je l'estime beaucoup pour l'affection qu'il vous porte. Je ne sais où il est à présent. Si vous le revoyés bientôt, rapelés-lui qu'il m'a promis une lettre de recommandation de M. de Veygoux votre parent en faveur de mon frère. Je voudrés quelque jour lui revaloir ce bon office. Nous sommes icy en proye aux brigans, nous en voyons de toutes les couleurs; ils ne laissent personne tranquille, ça en serait à prendre cette république en horreur si on ne savait que *les forfaits des humains n'atteignent pas les Cieux.*

Bref, après le coup horrible qui vient d'épouvanter l'univers, plaignés-moi ma bonne Rose, comme je vous plains vous-mesme, parcequ'il n'y a pas un cœur sensible et généreux qui ne doive répandre des larmes de saug.

Je vous dys bien des choses de la part de tout le monde on vous aime toujours bien.

Marie de Corday.

Letter to her FATHER.

Je vous dois obéisance, mon cher papa, cepandant je pars sans vôtre permission, je pars sans vous voir parceque j'en aurés trop douleur. Je vais en Angleterre par ce que je ne crois pas qu'on puisse vivre en France heureux et tranquile de bien lontems. En partant je mets cette lettre à la poste pour vous et quant vous la recevrés je ne serai plus en ce pays. Le ciel nous refuse le bonheur de vivre ensemble comme il nous en a refusé d'autres. Il sera petétre plus clément pour nôtre patrie.

Adieu, mon cher papa, embrassés ma sœur pour moi et ne m'oubliés pas.

CORDAY.

ADDRESSE AUX FRANÇAIS.

Amis des Loix et de la Paix.

Jusqu'à quand, ô malheureux Français, vous plairés-vous dans le trouble et les divisions? Assés et trop longtemps des factieux et des scélérats ont mis l'intérest de leur ambition à la place de l'intérest générale; pourquoi, ô infortunés victime de leur fureur, pourquoi vous égorger, vous anéantir vous-même pour établir l'édifice de leur tyrannie sur les ruines de la France désolée?

Les factions éclatent de toutes parts; la Montagne triomphe par le crime et par l'oppression; quelques monstres, abreuvés de votre sang, conduisent ses détestables complots et nous mènent au precipice par mille chemins divers.

Nous travaillons à nôtre propre perte avec plus d'énergie que l'on n'en mit jamais à conquérir la liberté ! O Français ! encore un peu de temps, et il ne restera de vous que le souvenir de vôtre existence !

Déjà les départements indignés marchent sur Paris ; déjà le feu de la *Discorde* et de la guerre civile embrase la moitié de ce vaste Empire ; il est encore un moyen de l'éteindre ; mais ce moyen doit être prompt. Déjà le plus vil des scélérats, Marat, dont le nom seul présente l'image de tous les crimes, en tombant sous le fer vengeur, ébranle la Montagne et fait pâlir Danton et Robespierre, les autres brigands assis sur ce trône sanglant, environnés de la foudre, que les dieux vengeurs de l'humanité ne suspendent sans doute que pour rendre leur chute plus éclatante, et pour effrayer tous ceux qui seraient tentés d'établir leur fortune sur les ruines des peuples abusés ! Français ! Vous connaissés vos ennemis, levés-vous ! Marchés ! Que la Montagne anéantie ne laisse plus que des frères et des amis ! J'ignore si le ciel nous réserve un gouvernement républicain ; mais il ne peut nous donner un Montagnard pour maître que dans l'excès de ces vengeances. . . . O France ! Ton repos dépend de l'exécution de la loi ; je n'y porte point atteinte en tuant Marat, condamné par l'univers, il est hors la loi. . . . Quel tribunal me jugera ? Si je suis coupable, Alcide l'était donc lorsqu'il détruisit les monstres ; mais en rencontra-t-il de si odieux ? O amis de l'humanité, vous ne regretterés point une bête féroce engraissée de vôtre sang ! Et vous, tristes aristocrates que la Révolution n'a pas assés ménagés, vous ne le regretterés pas non plus, vous n'avez rien de commun avec lui. O ma Patrie! tes infortunes déchirent mon cœur; je ne puis t'offrir que ma vie, et je rends grâce au ciel de la liberté que j'ai d'en disposer; personne ne perdra par ma mort; je n'imiterai point Paris en me tuant; je veux que mon dernier soupir soit utile à mes concitoyens; que ma tête, portée dans Paris, soit un signe de ralliement pour tous les amis des loix, et que la Montagne chancelante voye sa perte écrite avec mon sang; que je sois leur dernière victime, et que l'univers vengé déclare que j'ai bien mérité de l'humanité. Au reste, si l'on voyait ma conduite d'un autre oeil, je m'en inquiète peu:—

> Qu'à l'univers surpris, cette grande action,
> Soit un objet d'horreur ou d'ádmiration,
> Mon esprit, peu jaloux de vivre en la mémoire,
> Ne considère point le reproche ou la gloire:
> Toujours indépendant et toujours citoyen,
> Mon devoir me suffit, tout le reste n'est rien.
> Allés, ne songés plus qu'à sortir d'esclavage! . . . .

Mes parents et mes amis ne doivent point être inquiétés; personne ne savait mes projets. Je joins mon extrait de baptême à cette adresse pour montrer ce que peut la plus faible main conduite par un entier dévouement. Si je ne réussis pas dans mon entreprise, Français, je vous ai montré le chemin; vous connaissés vos ennemis, levés-vous, marchès, et frappés.

To Marat.

Paris, 13 juillet, l'an II de la République.

Citoyen, j'arrive de Caën. Votre amour pour la patrie me fait présumer que vous connaîtrés avec plaisir les malheureux événements de cette partie de la République. Je me présenterai donc chez vous vers une heure. Ayés la bonté de me recevoir et de m'accorder un moment d'entretien. Je vous mettrai à même de rendre un grand service à la France.

Je suis, &c.

Marie Corday.

This letter bears the address :—

Au Citoyen Marat, faubourg Saint-Germain,
rue des Cordeliers, à Paris.

"Je vous ai écrit ce matin, Marat, avés-vous reçu ma lettre, puis-je espèrer un moment d'audience, si vous l'avés reçue, j'espère que vous ne me refuserés pas, voyant combien la chose est intéressante, suffit que je sois bien malheureuse pour avoir droit à votre protection."

To the COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

Du 15 juillet 1793, II de la République.

Citoyens composant le Comité de sûreté générale,—Puisque j'ai encore quelques instants à vivre pourais-je espèrer citoyens que vous me permettrés de me faire peindre je voudrais laisser cette marque de mon souvenir à mes amis, d'ailleurs comme on chérit l'image des Bons Citoyens, la curiosité fait quelquefois rechercher ceux des grands criminels, ce qui sert à perpétuer l'horreur de leurs crimes, si vous daignés faire attention à ma demande, je vous prie de m'envoyer demain un peintre en migniature, je vous renouvelle celle de me laisser dormir seule, croyés, je vous prie, à toute ma reconnaissance.

MARIE CORDAY.

J'entends sans cesse crier dans la rue larestation de Fauchet mon complice, je ne l'ai jamais vu que par la fenêtre et il y a plus de deux ans, je ne laime ny ne lestime, je lui ai toujours cru une imagination exaltée et nulle fermeté de caractère, cest lhomme au monde à qui j'aurais le moins volontiers confié un projet, si cette déclaration peut lui servir, j'en certifie la verité.

CORDAY.

To Barbaroux.

Aux prisons de labayë, dans la ci devant
chambre de Brissot le second jour de la
préparation a la paix.

Vous avés desiré citoyen le detail de mon voyage. Je ne vous ferai point grâce de la moindre anedote. Jetais avec de bons montagnards que je laissé parlé tout leur content et leurs propos aussi sots que leurs personnes etaient desagreable, ne servirent pas peu à mendormir, je ne me réveillé pour ainsi dire qu'à Paris. Un de nos voyageurs qui aime sans doute les femmes dormante, me prit pour la fille d'un de ses anciens amis, me supposa une fortune que je nai pas, me donna un nom que je navais jamais entendu, et enfin m'ofrit sa fortune et sa main. Quand je fus ennuyée de ses propos : Nous jouons parfaitement la comedie lui dis-je il est malheureux avec autant de talent de n'avoir point de spectateur je vais chercher nos compagnons de voyage pour qu'ils prenne leur part du divertissement, je le laissé de bien mauvaise humeur. La nuit il chanta des chansons plaintive, propre a exciter le sommeil, je le quittai enfin a paris refusant de lui donner mon adresse ny celle de mon père a qui il voulait me demander, il me quitta de bien manvaise humeur. Jygnorais que ses Messieurs eussent interogé les voyageurs, et je soutins ne les connaître aucuns pour ne point leur donner le désagrément de sexpliquer. Je suivais en cela mon oracle Rainal qui dit qu'on ne doit pas la vérité à ses tyrans C'est par la voyageuse qui était avec moi qu'ils on su que je vous connaissais et que javais parlé à Duperret, Vous connaissés lâme ferme de Duperret il leur a repondu lexate vérité. Jai confirmé sa déposition par la mienne, il ny a rien contre lui, mais sa fermeté est un crime. Je craignais je lavouë, quon ne découvrit que je lui avais parlé je men repentit trop tard, je voulu le reparer en lengageant a vous aller retrouver, il est trop decidé pour se laisser engager, *sure de son innocence et de celle de tout le monde* je me décidé a lexecution de mon projet. Le croiriés-vous Fauchet est en prison comme mon complice lui qui ignorait mon existance, mais on nest guere content de navoir qu'une femme sans conséquence à offrir aux mânes de ce grand homme,—Pardon o humains ce mot deshonore votre espèce, cetait une bête féroce qui allait devorer le reste de la France par le feu de la guerre civile, maintenant vive la paix, grâce au ciel il netait pas né Français, Quatre membre se trouverent a mon premier interogatoire, Chabot avait lair d'un fou, Le Gendre voulait mavoir vue le matin chés lui, moi qui nai jamais songé a cet homme, je ne lui crois pas dassés grands moyens pour être le tyrran de son pays, et je ne prétendais pas punir tant de monde. Tous ce qui me voyaient pour la première fois pretendaient me connaître de longtems. Je crois que l'on a imprimé les dernières paroles de Marat je doute qu'il en ait proféré, mais voila les dernières quil ma ditte, après avoir Ecrit vas noms a tous et ceux des administrateurs du Calvados qui sont a Evreux il me dit pour me consoler que dans peu de jours il vous ferait tous guillotiné a paris, Ces derniers mots déciderent de son sort, Si le département met sa figure vis a vis celle de St.

Fargeau il poura faire graver ses paroles en lettres d'or. Je ne vous ferai aucun detail sur ce grand Evenement les journeaux vous en parleront, javouë que ce qui ma décidée tout a fait cest le courage avec lequel nos volontaires se sont enrollés dimanche 7 juillet vous vous souvenés comme jen étaient charmée, et je me promettaient bien de faire repentir petion des soupçons qu'il manifesta sur mes sentiments Est-ce que vous seriés fâchés sils ne partaient pas, me dit-il. Enfin done jai considéré que tant de braves gens venant pour avoir la tête d'un seul homme quils auraient manqué, ou qui aurait entraîné dans sa perte beaucoup de bons citoyens, il ne méritait pas tant d'honneur, sufisait de la main d'une femme, Javouë que jai employé un artifice perfide pour lattirer a me recevoir, tous les moyens sont bons dans une telle circonstance, Je comptais en partant de Caën le sacrifier sur la cime de sa Montagne, mais il n'allait plus a la Convention, je voudrais avoir conservé votre lettre on aurait mieux connu que je n'avais pas de complice, enfin cela seclaircira, Nous sommes si bons républicains a paris que lon ne conçoit pas comment une femme inutile dont la plus longue vie serait bonne rien peut se sacrifier de sangfroy pour sauver tout son pays, je mattendais bien a mourir dans linstant, des hommes courageux et vrayemont au dessus de tout Eloge m'ont préservée de la fureur bien excusable des malheureux que javais faits Comme jetais vrayement de sangfroy je soufris des cris de quelques femmes, mais qui sauve la patrie ne saperçoit point de ce quil en coute, puisse la paix setablir aussitôt que je la désire, voila un grand preliminaire, sans cela nous ne laurions jamais eus, je jouis delicieusement de la paix depuis deux jours, le bonheur de mon pays fait le mien, il nest point de devouement dont on ne retire plus de jouissance qu'il n'en coûte a sy décider, Je ne doute pas que lon ne tourmente un peu mon père qui a déja bien assés de ma perte pour lafliger. Sil si trouvait quelques plaisanteries sur votre compte je vous prie de me la passer je suivais la legerté de mon caractère ; Dans ma dernière lettre je lui faisais croire que redoutant les horreurs de la guerre civile je me retirais en Angleterre, alôrs mon projet Etait de garder l'incognito de tuer Marat publiquement et mourant aussitôt laisser les parisiens chercher inutilement mon nom, Je vous prie citoyen vous et vos collegues de prendre la défense de mes parens et amis si on les inquiétent je ne dis rien a mes chers amis Aristocrates, je conserve leur souvenir dans mon cœur. Je nai jamais hai qu'un seul être et jai fait voir avec qu'elle violence, mais il en est mille que jaime encore plus que je ne le haissais, Une imagination vive un coeur sensible promettent me vie bien orageuse je prie ceux que me regretterais de le considérer et ils se rejouiront de me voir jouir du repos dans les Champs-Elisées avec Brutus et quelques anciens, pour les modernes, il est peu de vrays patriotes qui sache mourir pour leur pays presque tout est égoïsme, quel triste peuple pour fonder une République, il faut du moins fonder la paix et le gouvernment viendra comme il poura, du moins ce ne sera pas la Montagne qui regnera si l'on men croit. Je suis on ne peut mieux dans ma prison, les concierges sont les meilleurs gens possible, on ma donné de gens d'armes pour me preserver de l'ennui, jai trouvé cela fort bien pour le jour et fort mal pour la nuit, je me suis plainte de cette indécence le Comité na pas jugé a propos dy faire attention je crois que c'est de l'invention de Chabot, il ny a qu'un capucin qui puisse avoir ses idées, Je passe mon temps a ecrire des chansons, je donne le dernier couplet de celle de Valady à tous ceux qui le veulent je promets à tous les parisiens que nous ne prenons les armes que contre lanarchie, ce qui est exactement vray.

Second Letter to Barbaroux.

Ici l'on m'a transférée à la Conciergerie, et ses Messieurs du grand jury m'ont promis de vous envoyer ma lettre, je continue donc. Jai preté un long interogatoire, je vous prie de vous le procurer s'il est rendu publique Javais une adresse sur moi lors de mon arestation aux amis de la paix je ne puis vous lenvoyer jen demanderai la publication je crois bien en vain, Javais eu une idée hier au soir, de faire homage de mon portrait au département du Calvados, mais le comité de salut publique à qui je lavais demandé ne ma point répondu, et maintenant il est trop tard. Je vous prie citoyen de faire part de ma lettre au citoyen *Bougon procureur G le sindic du sept. je ne la lui adresse pas pour plusieurs raisons* d'abord *je ne suis pas sure que dans ce moment il soit a Evreux, je crains de plus quêtant naturellemente* sensible il ne soit afligé de ma mort, Je le crois cependant assés bon citoyen pour se consoler par lespoir de la paix Je sais combien il la désire et jespère qu'en la facilitant jai rempli ses voeux, Si quelques amis demandaient communication de cette lettre je vous prie de ne la refuser a personne, il faut un défenseur cest la regle, jai pris le mien sur la Montagne cest Gustave Doulcet, jymagine quil refusera cet honneur cela ne lui donnait cependant guere douvrage, Jai pensé demander Robespierre ou Chabot. Je demanderai à disposé du reste de mon argent et alors je loffre aux femmes et enfans des braves habitants de Caën partis pour délivrer Paris, il est bien Etonnant que la peuple mait laissés conduire de labayë a la Conciergerie. Cest une preuve nouvelle de sa moderation Ditte-le a nos bons habitants de Caën ils se permittent quelquefois de petites insurrections que l'on ne contient pas si facilement Cest demain a huit heure que lon me juge, probablement à midi jauré vécu, pour parler le language romain, On doit croire a la valeur des habitants du Calvados puisque les femmes même de ce pays sont capable de fermeté, au reste jygnore comme se passeront les derniers moments et cest la fin qui couronne l'œuvre, Je n'ai point besoin dafecter dinsensibilité sur mon sort car jusqu'a cet instant je nai pas la moindre crainte de la mort, je nestimai jamais la vie que par lutilité dont elle devait être, Jespere que demain Duperret et Fauchet seront mis en liberté on prétend que ce dernier ma conduitte a la Convention dans une tribune, De quoi se mele til dy conduire des femmes, Comme depute il ne devait point être aux tribune et comme Evêque il ne devait point être avec des femmes, ainsi cest une petite correction. Mais Duperret na aucun reproche à se faire—Marat nira point au Panthéon, il le méritait pourtant bien, je vous charge de recuellir les pièces propres à faire son oraison funebre, Jespere que vous n'abondonnerés point lafaire de Mdme. Forbin, voici son adresse sil est besoin de lui ecrire. Alexandrine Forbin, à Mendresie par Zurich en Suisse. Je vous prie de lui dire que je l'aime de tout mon cœur. Je vais ecrire un mot à papa je ne dis rien à mes autres amis, je ne leurs demande qu'un prompt oubli, leur afliction desonorerait ma mémoire, Ditte au general Vimpfen que je crois lui avoir aidé à gagner plus d'une bataille, en lui facilitant la paix, adieu citoyen je me recommande au souvenir des vrays amis de la paix.

Les prisonniers de la Conciergerie, loin de minjurer comme ceux des ruës, avaient lair de me plaindre, le malheur rend toujours compatissant; cest ma dernière réflexion.

Mardy 16, à nuit heures du soir.

Au citoyen Barbaroux deputé de la Convention nationale, refugié à Caën ruë des Carmes hotel de lintendance.

CORDAY.

(TO HER FATHER FROM THE CONCIERGERIE.)

À. M. DE CORDAY D'ARMONT,

Rue du Bègle, à Argentan.

Pardonnés-moi mon cher papa d'avoir disposé de mon existance sans votre permission, Jai vengé bien d'innocentes victimes, jai prevenu bien d'autres désastres, le peuple un jour desabusé, se rejouira d'être delivré d'un tyran, Si jai cherché a vous persuadé que je passais en Angleterre, cesque jesperais garder lincognito mais jen ai reconnu limpossibilité. Jespere que vous ne serés point tourmente en tous cas je crois que vous auriés des defenseurs a Caën, j'ai pris pour défenseur Gustave Doulcet, un tel attentat ne permet nulle defense Cest pour la forme, adieu mon Cher papa je vous prie de moublier, ou plutôt de vous rejouir de mon sort la cause en est belle, J'embrasse ma sœur que jaime de tout mon cœur ainsi que tous mes parens, n'oubliés pas ce vers de Corneille Le crime fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud. C'est demain a huit heures que l'on me juge, ce 16 juillet.

CORDAY.

(*To* DOULCET DE PONTÉCOULANT.)

Le citoyen Doulcet de Pontécoulant est un lache davoir refusé de me defendre, lorsque la chôse etait si facile, Celui qui la fait s'en est acquité avec toute la dignité possible, je lui en conserve ma reconnaissance jusqu'au dernier moment.

MARIE DE CORDAY.

(PASSE-PORT.)

PATRIE—LIBERTÉ—ÉGALITÉ.

Département du Calvados.
(*District de Caën.*)

Laissez passer la citoyenne *Marie Cordey,* natif *du Mesnil-Imbert,* domicilié à *Caën,* municipalité *de Caën,* district *de Caen,* département *du Calvados,* âgé de 24 *ans,* taille de *cinq pieds un pouce,* cheveux et soureils *chatains,* yeux *gris,* front *élevé,* nez *large,* bouche *moyenne,* menton *rond, fourchu,* visage *oval.*

Prêtez-lui aide et assistance en cas de besoin, dans la route qu'il va faire pour aller à *Argentan.*

Délivré en la Maison Commune de Caën, le 8 avril 1793, l'an II. de la République Française, par nous *Fossey l'ainé,* Officier Municipal. Expédié par nous, Greffier soussigné, et à le dit *citoyenne Corday,* signé :

MARIE CORDAY :
Heni, greffier.

On the back of this passport, which is preserved in the archives of Paris, is added the following :

"Vu en la Maison Commune de Caën, pour aller à Paris.

"Le 23 avril 1793, l'an II. de la République.

"Enguellard, officier-municipal."

GENEALOGICAL TREE.

PIERRE CORNEILLE,
Père du Grand Corneille.

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3. Marie Corneille.

épouse en 2nd noces
Jacques de Farcy,
Trésorier de France à
Alençon.

2. Thomas Corneille.
4. Martha Corneille.

épouse
F. le Bouyer.

leur fils
Bernard Le Bouyer de Fontenelle.

Marie de Farcy.

Françoise de Farcy.

épouse
Adrien de Corday.
leur fils
Jacques Adrien de Corday.

épouse
Marie de Bellot de la Motte.

Cinq fils, dont le dernier
Jacques-François de Corday d'Armont.

épouse
Jacqueline-Charlotte-Marie
De Ganthier des Authieux.

Deux fils et trois filles, dont la seconde
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