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# HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

ON

## LA VENDÉE.

*Ambrise Michel Marie Fabry de la Motte*  
BY MADAME DE SAPINAUD. *de Boisbriquet.*

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. KNIGHT, 7, PALL-MALL, EAST.

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LONDON  
PRINTED BY W. CLOWES,  
Northumberland-court.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE Memoirs, of which a translation is now offered to the Public, have recently appeared in a Collection of Memoirs on the French Revolution, now publishing in Paris. The principal events of the Vendean War are here slightly sketched;—but the Narrative contains the most minute particulars of the sufferings of the inhabitants of that devoted district, forming a picture of the horrors of civil war, perhaps unequalled by any similar delineations of ferocity and suffering. These Memoirs are distinguished by a tone of great simplicity and impartiality, which is the best evidence of their truth. The translator trusts they will be received as an appropriate companion to the interesting Memoirs of the Marchioness de Bonchamps.

*London, March 22, 1824.*



## HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

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## LA VENDÉE.

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**I**T is for you, my dear children, that I have written this history of the misfortunes and the glory of La Vendée. If our triumphs have been great, our disasters have been equally so; and Providence, which crowned our efforts with glory while we remained faithful to our God, abandoned us as soon as we renounced that fidelity. Often, in writing these Memoirs, have I bedewed with my tears the page on which I retraced so many misfortunes. Surrounded as I was by ene-

mies who persecuted me with sanguinary hatred ; clothed in the garb of misery ; and, to complete my wretchedness, separated from my children,—the only consolation I had left was to write for them an account of the heroic deeds and great disasters I witnessed. You will perhaps find in the course of my details that I sometimes depart from the exact order of historical precision ; but how can it be otherwise ? Ever since the fatal day when the Patriots entered Mortagne and set fire to my house, I wandered from cottage to cottage, uncertain where to lay my head ; I know not even whether Providence will ever grant me the happiness of seeing you again and folding you in my arms. In that case this shall be the will of your unfortunate mother. May my children, when they read how their uncle Sapinaud, and their relatives Baudery and Verteuil died, learn

to walk in their steps, and to hold, like them, but one object in view, that of faithfully serving their God and their King! May they, above all, preserve those sentiments of religion with which I have always endeavoured to impress them: and by such means they will procure a life of happiness in this world, and a never-fading glory in the world to come.

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THE war of La Vendée commenced on the 12th March, 1793. The peasants revolted in the district of La Bretière; they afterwards dispersed among the neighbouring parishes, and came in a body to M. Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, better known by the name of La Verrie. “We have chosen you,” said they, “for our general, and you shall march at our head.” Sapinaud en-

deavoured to convince them of the misfortunes they would bring upon themselves and upon La Vendée. "My friends," said he, "this is ridiculous; you are rushing on your own destruction. What can we do? A single department against eighty-two! We should be overpowered at once. It is not for myself that I speak: life has been to me a burden since I have witnessed all the horrors which the barbarians have heaped on our unfortunate country; and I would rather perish at your head in the cause of my God and my king, than submit to be dragged to a prison, as is the common lot of such as I am. Take my advice; return to your homes, and do not throw away your lives to no purpose!" The brave peasantry, however, far from yielding to his remonstrances, insisted that they could never pay obedience to a government which had deprived them of



their priests, and imprisoned their king. “ We have been deceived,” said they ; “ why do they send us constitutional priests ? Those are not the men who attended our fathers on their death-beds, and we will not have them to bless our children ! ” My brother-in-law knew not which course to take ; he hesitated to expose those brave fellows, as well as himself, to an apparently certain death ; but finding that they obstinately persisted, he at length yielded to their entreaties, placed himself at their head, and departed that very day for Les Herbiers. They were joined by the peasantry of La Gaubretière. On their way through La Verrie they went to the house of Sapinaud de la Verrie, and obliged him to march under the command of his uncle ; and that very evening, this undisciplined troop, whose only weapons of defence

were a few fowling-pieces, scythes, and sticks, arrived before Les Herbiers.

The inhabitants had been apprized of their approach, and had collected together all the Patriots they could muster. Two companies of Blues had been sent to their assistance with four or five pieces of cannon. Sapinaud de la Verrie, who saw his uncle advancing at the head of a band of men so ill supplied for an attack, felt that he had sacrificed his life, and prepared himself for the fatal blow which should deprive him of it. The balls whizzed in his ears, and completely deafened him ; yet, in less than a couple of hours, the Vendean drove away the Blues, and became masters of the town. Not one of our men was killed ; and only two were wounded. The number of killed on the Patriots' side was consider-

able, and they left behind them a great quantity of muskets which were distributed among our peasantry.

After this successful expedition, it was learnt that six or seven parishes had united to attack Chollet. The division which Sapinaud commanded desired to be directed on that town, and my brother-in-law readily acceded to their proposal. They arrived beneath the walls at two o'clock. Five hundred dragoons, and the national guard of the neighbouring districts, were assembled in the town for its defence. The commandant advised them to remain within the walls; but as soon as the dragoons perceived the Vendéans, they issued from the gates of Chollet, imagining that a few musket-shots would soon disperse a handful of men without arms or experience; and advancing as far as the wood of Gralot, they

formed for action. The Vendéans, ignorant of the danger to which they exposed themselves, fired as they advanced ; the muskets being ranged in front, and the scythes behind. The first volley they fired upon the Patriots was so well directed that the commandant of the national guard and the colonel of dragoons fell dead on the field. Our men, encouraged by this first advantage, rushed immediately on the foremost column of the enemy. The national guards took the alarm and fled, the Blues were thrown into confusion, and the Vendéans entered Chollet almost without striking a single blow. The enemy was pursued for more than a league beyond the town. This victory was the more glorious as our men were not so numerous as the Patriots, who were, besides, well armed and assisted by troops of the line, while our peasantry, on the contrary, went on singing their can-

ticles, and with few exceptions, wearing their rosaries. There was not the slightest reaction, and Sapinaud contented himself with throwing the most determined of the Patriots into prison. Yet the Vendean had terrible injuries to avenge upon the inhabitants of Chollet, who, at the last balloting for the militia, had attacked the young men of the neighbouring parishes who had come without arms, and had killed some of them; this must necessarily have irritated the neighbouring population against them.

On his return, Sapinaud established his head-quarters at Chantonay. The national guards were terrified; the troops of the line fled in every direction. My brother-in-law wrote to inform me of his success, and he came himself, a few days afterwards, to pay me a visit at Mortagne.

He was far, however, from deluding himself with hope; he assured me that the catastrophe was at hand, and that he and many others would perish. I endeavoured in vain to remove this melancholy presentiment.—“Do not imagine, sister,” he replied, “that I tremble at the prospect of death; I offered the sacrifice of my life the day on which I took up arms. My course is taken; there is an end of it. I will retard as long as I can the fatal moment, but I am sure it will not be long before I pay the forfeit of my life. All I regret is that I cannot be useful, before I die, to the brave fellows who have followed me.”

In vain did his Aides-de-camp, Rangot and Bejarry, endeavour to divert his thoughts; he was struck with the idea of his approaching death. He bade me adieu,

desiring me to comfort myself, and recommending to me his Vendéans.—“ Depend upon it, sister,” said he, as he embraced me, “I shall always be found at the head of my men, and you shall never hear of my having retreated before the enemy.”—As soon as he had got on horseback, there was a general shout of “ Vive le Roi !” and I returned to my fire-side, musing on what he had said.

The very day on which my brother-in-law left me, the Blues advanced beyond Chatillon ; a courier brought the news of this movement to Sapinaud at midnight. He immediately ordered the tocsin to be sounded, and, after making the necessary preparations, he faced the enemy. The Blues, who had expected to surprise him, on being informed of his arrival did not dare to stay to meet him, but retreated.



Sapinaud then left at Chatillon a certain number of troops to defend the place in case of an attack ; and having learnt that a division of the enemy was marching on Chantonay, he hastened to the assistance of that town.

Half a league from Chantonay the Vendean army fell in with the Patriots, headed by a squadron of Gendarmerie. Sapinaud instantly ordered his peasants to halt. " My friends," said he, " let us conquer or die for our God and our King ; follow me !" After this short harangue, he rushed upon the enemy ; a cannon ball carried off a part of his hat ; never had the Vendean fought with so much courage : all the Gendarmes were either killed or wounded ; and the Blues left nearly three thousand men on the field of battle. The Vendean returned triumphant. The



officers and the soldiers united in singing their canticles ; this was the period of our glory.

M. d'Elbée and M. Bonchamps had made wonderful progress in the direction of Beaupréau : they had beat the Republicans at Saint-Florent. The republican general, Gauvillier, having left Chalonne uncovered, and with no other defence than three thousand National Guards, Bonchamps hastened to that town, and sent the following summons to the mayor :

“ Inhabitants of Chalonne,

“ The Generals of the Roman Catholic Army, consisting of five thousand men, send to you M. Rousseau and M. Lebrun, to require you to surrender in the name of God, of religion, and of the Chalonnese prisoners. If you are prepared to

resist, you may reckon on the destruction of your town! But if, on the contrary, you surrender, you will receive a full pardon ; you will bring us your arms, and you will give us four persons of distinction as hostages. We come to you in the name of humanity.”

The mayor, whose name was Vial, expressed his determination to die rather than surrender ; but as soon as the Ven-dean Army was put in motion, all these brave Patriots were eager to capitulate. The army entered Chalonne in triumph, and was received with the loudest acclamations by the populace. The papers of the administration were burnt, and all the arms and ammunition which the town contained were seized. Part of these was distributed among the peasantry, and the rest was forwarded to Mortagne, where a

depôt had been established. This town, which was situated on an eminence, and contained three squares within its boundaries, together with a convent and some old ramparts which commanded the whole of the surrounding country, seemed destined to be the bulwark of La Vendée. M. de Royrand and M. de Bonchamps were constantly sending thither the ammunition and other things taken from the enemy ; my house was occupied by the Staffs in the days of our triumphs, and the enthusiasm excited by victory was unmingled with fear. Our joy was at its highest pitch, even when M. de Piron, on his return from the army of Prussia, triumphed over Santerre in the battle of Coron, a period at which fortune seemed to declare herself against us. I have seen women go down on their knees before the pieces of cannon taken from the enemy,

and sent by Piron to Mortagne, and embrace them with cries of "Vive le Roi!" I cannot refrain from tears when I think of the misfortunes which were then awaiting us!

The Château was at that time filled with bombs, new cannon, shot, and cassoons, together with a great quantity of muskets. The cellars too contained barrels of powder, and workmen of all kinds were busily employed night and day; so that we seemed to be in a fortress. M. Donissan and I gave dinners every day to the superior officers; I also received the Royalists of all ranks: my house was constantly occupied, and it was afterwards the first to be burnt. Such was the situation of Mortagne from the month of May to October.

After the battle of Chantonnay, Sa-

pinaud had sent us three hundred prisoners, among whom was the leader of the *Vengeurs*, who carried fire and sword everywhere. They arrived at Mortagne about eight o'clock in the evening, and I went down to see them as they passed before my door. There were four or five priests among them whose appearance was quite frightful ; shame was painted on their countenances, and as they walked along their eyes were continually wandering, for they did not dare to fix them on any one. I spoke to the leader of the *Vengeurs*, who was richly attired, and whose name was Monet ; one of his companions in misfortune was a young man of Mortagne, whom I was very much surprised to see among the prisoners. His father and mother eagerly came to solicit his pardon, and I was very sorry that I had not the

power to grant it. I sent an express to Sapinaud, and in the meantime they were all marched off to prison. The following day Monet sent me the following letter:—

“ Madam,

“ My brother-in-law, M. Garnier, owed his deliverance to you, and the kindness you displayed on that occasion encourages me to address you, and to beg you to have pity on my condition. I am an only son, and my parents, who love me better than themselves, would willingly give their lives and fortune to redeem me. Require of them a considerable sum for the use of the poor, and they will immediately forward it to you. You are a mother, and if your children should ever experience the same misfortunes that I do, the Almighty

will direct them to some kind-hearted persons who will be to them what you are to me.

“Your servant,

“MONET.”

I sent this letter to M. de Cumont, who commanded in the absence of M. de la Verrie, and wrote to him also myself in favour of the unfortunate young man. Notwithstanding all his faults, I was desirous that he should be pardoned. The sight of misfortune turns vengeance into pity. M. de Cumont, however, replied that the most dreadful death would be too mild a punishment for such a man. Alas ! thought I, he would think otherwise if he had a mother's heart. I knew not how to announce this sad news to the young colonel, but I at length determined on sending him the following letter :—



“ Sir,

“ It gives me great pain that I am unable to follow the dictates of my heart, which would lead me to restore you to your affectionate parents. Yes, Sir, their misfortune and your own remind me that I am a mother, and incline me to serve you. I am exceedingly desirous, since I am not permitted to preserve your body, to endeavour at least to save your soul. Assuming then all the feelings of her to whom you owe your birth, I will venture to call your attention to your past conduct, not for the purpose of adding to your grief, but in order to excite a feeling of repentance. Represent to yourself the unfortunate mothers whom you have deprived of their husbands; think of the fate of those unhappy widows, who know not where to lay their heads, and who are rendered still more inconsolable by the sight of their



poor little orphans ; there are many such in this town who demand your life as a sacrifice to appease the ashes of their husbands and their children. M. Niveleau, a young man of this town, is in the same situation with yourself. His father, mother, and sisters earnestly solicit the freedom of their son and their brother ; but their prayers and their tears will be of no avail ; his death is determined on. Throw yourself, young man, into the arms of God, who alone receives us like a father when we are abandoned by every one else. Be thankful to him that you were not deprived of your life in battle. He has shed his blood for you ; shed yours for him !— Why should you not make him this sacrifice ? It will be dear and precious to him, and you will certainly be rewarded for it. In a few little moments you will stand before his presence ; I offer up my prayers

to him for your pardon, and you, Sir, do not forget me in his abode. I take leave of you with tears in my eyes and a heart full of grief."

The gaoler's wife informed me that the young man shed a torrent of tears on reading my letter. "I must die," said he, "send me a priest." That very evening he confessed, and the next morning he examined himself, and confessed again. The priest informed him, as well as his comrades, that they would not live out the day. M. Monet, instead of abandoning himself to despair, seemed to gain fresh courage. His trust in God took place of fear, and he proceeded to his execution some time after with the greatest composure. The Royalist who was commissioned to convey him thither, returned from the spot overwhelmed with grief. — "How you are

altered!" said I.—“It is the effect of the pain which I have experienced,” he replied; “I have still before my eyes the death of Colonel Monet. The execution has made an impression on me which can never be effaced. These are the last words he addressed to his companions in misfortune:—‘My friends, there is not a single crime that we have not committed; and the death which we are about to suffer is too mild to expiate them, and it would be useless to us, if it were not accompanied by a sincere repentance. Let us earnestly entreat forgiveness of our Lord, through the intercession of his mother, and let us raise our hearts to him; let us join in repeating a *Pater noster* and an *Ave Maria*.’ He then said his prayers with an affecting emotion, and having finished them he threw himself on his knees, kissed the ground, then rose and said to us;—‘My friends

do your duty.' He fell dead on the spot. "This is the first time," added the officer, "that I have been present on such an occasion, and it shall be the last."

On the 5th May, 1793, the plan for taking Thouars was formed. Quétineau, who commanded the Republicans, after having lost the battle, shut himself up in the town with three or four thousand men. The walls, though old, were high enough to protect it from a *coup de main*. There was a moment's hesitation in the Vendean army on its arrival before the fortress. The enemy kept up a brisk fire from the top of the ramparts, which terrified our peasants, accustomed as they were to meet their foes face to face. Sapinaud was on the spot with his division. Henry, who commanded that day, advanced to the foot of the wall amidst a shower of musket-balls. A pea-

sant, named Texin, followed him. "Carle," said Henry, "let me climb up on your shoulders." "With all my heart." "Give me your gun." "Here it is." Henry jumped up and seized a pinnacle of the battlement. At that instant a musket-ball struck him, and slightly grazed his cheek. The soldiers, at sight of the danger which their general ran, rushed forward with tumultuous cries; the place was carried, and General Quétineau surrendered with four thousand men. The Bishop of Agra was taken bearing arms, in the dress of a common soldier; he made himself known to M. de la Rochejaquelein, and told him that he had only taken up arms in the firm hope of passing over to the Vendéans. There was a considerable booty; besides a great quantity of assignats, they found some pieces of cannon, balls, and magazines of military clothing. The Bishop of Agra

arrived that very evening at Mortagne ; he there received the visits of all the neighbouring clergy, and ordained several young men who were prepared for priest's orders.

In order to give a degree of regularity to their operations, the generals formed the plan of establishing a superior council of administration, which should reside at Chatillon. It was composed of the Bishop of Agra, President ; M. de Bernier, priest of Saint Laud ; M. Desessarts, Sen., M. de la Rochefoucauld, M. Jagault, and several others whose names do not now occur to me\*.

\* The council was thus composed: the Bishop of Agra, President ; Michel Desessarts, Sen., Vice-president ; Bernier, Priest of St. Laud ; Bodi, a lawyer ; Michelin, Boutiller, de La Rochefoucauld, Lamaignan, Paillou, Lenoir de Pas-de-Loup, Philibert, Duplessis, Gendron, Coudraya, Brin, Bourasseau, Lyrot, de la Roberie, Carrière. Jagault was Secretary in chief, and Barré de Saint Florent, Secretary of Despatc  
(*Note of the Editor.*)



It was also proposed to appoint a general in chief. M. Sapinaud and M. de Royrand came and slept in my house at Mortagne ; the other superior officers took a different route in order to proceed to Chatillon. The result of this assembly was the appointment of Cathelineau to the office of general in chief. He was a man of uncommon bravery, and, under the rough exterior of a peasant, possessed the heart of a hero and the piety of a saint.

In the beginning of June, the army marched towards Fontenay ; Sapinaud was to attack it with M. de Royrand, on the side next St. Hermine, and Charette and d'Elbée on the other sides. Chalbot, the republican general, had shut himself up in this town with a considerable number of troops. The attack was not well combined, and we experienced a considerable loss.

M. d'Elbée received a wound in the thigh ; four hundred Royalists remained stretched on the field of battle ; and, to complete our misfortune, *Marie-Jeanne* fell into the hands of the enemy, who pursued us closely. Eighty peasants fell gloriously on this occasion ; M. de Lescure had placed them in a valley, with orders to maintain their position to the last extremity, and they had executed this command with admirable pertinacity. After the defeat, the general sent one of his aides-de-camp to them with orders to retreat ; but the Vendean peasantry, proud of having maintained their position, could not believe that the army was defeated ; their first impulse was a refusal to obey : however, after some hesitation, they commenced their march. They had scarcely gone a hundred yards, when they perceived a detachment of the Blues who were guarding the arms taken from the



*Brigands*\*. They immediately poured down upon them, put them to flight, and seizing the cannon, fired a tremendous volley upon the enemy. *Marie-Jeanne*† was there; they embraced it with tears in their eyes.

Our generals, far from being disheartened by this reverse, prepared for a fresh attack. The necessary provisions were made, and,

\* Mad. de Sapinaud on several occasions gives this name to the partisans of her cause.—She of course does not use it as a term of opprobrium.--(*Translator.*)

\* *Marie-Jeanne* was one of twelve pieces of cannon which the Cardinal de Richelieu had placed at his château. It was covered with ornaments and inscriptions in honour of Louis XIV. and of the Cardinal. The Patriots finding this cannon at Richelieu, took possession of it, and made use of it against the *Brigands*. At the battle of Chollet, the insurgents took it from the Republicans. The peasantry held this piece of artillery in such veneration, that they looked upon it as a sure sign of victory. They had adorned it with ribbons, and embraced it with the greatest veneration. (*Note of the Editor.*)

after a few days' rest; the army marched again towards Fontenay.

At a short distance from this town there is a plain of nearly a league in extent. The Republicans had taken their position there, and confidently awaited the Vendean army, elated with the victory they had just obtained. The command of the right wing was intrusted to Bonchamps; Henry commanded the centre with M. Domagné; and Lescure was at the head of the left wing. The first discharge was murderous; a great number of soldiers were killed on both sides. The Vendeans wanted cartridges; a peasant begged some of his captain; "there are plenty there," replied the officer, pointing to the enemy. Our men, terrified at the enemy's cavalry, had already begun to fly, when Lescure advanced thirty yards in front of the ranks, and shouted

“Vive le Roi!” A shower of balls whizzed on each side of him without touching him. “You see, my boys,” said he, turning to his soldiers, “you see the Blues cannot take aim.” The peasants immediately rushed forward; those who had no other arms than iron-headed sticks, flew to take possession of the pieces of cannon. The Patriots, disconcerted by this impetuous attack, sought their safety in the walls of Fontenay; the Vendéans pursued them thither, and vanquished and victors hurried pêle-mêle into the town. Forty pieces of cannon, and an immense quantity of powder and ammunition fell into our hands. The number of prisoners was nearly three thousand, not including eighteen hundred Republicans killed and wounded, and it added not a little to the glory of the day that the Vendéans recovered *Marie-Jeanne*.

The army immediately marched for Saumur, which was defended by eleven thousand men. The position of this town on the Loire rendered it an important point for the Republicans, as from thence they could very quickly pass into La Vendée; it also facilitated their communications with Brittany, and the province of Maine. Santerre commanded the Republican army. After a strong defence, the Vendéans entered the town, and the fort capitulated; Domagné and the young Beaudry d'Asson fell on that occasion. Five thousand of the enemy were either killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. M. de Piron gained immortal glory; he attacked Santerre at Coron, and completely beat him. He owed his victory to an inhabitant of La Salle de Vihiers, the churchwarden of his parish, who, though he could neither write nor read, knew better than anybody all the hills, rivers, and winding

passes for five or six leagues round. The enemy's position enabled this man to estimate his force, and discover his plans. M. de Piron, under his direction, arrived at Coron, without being perceived; his little troop surprised and attacked the numerous army of Santerre, and completely routed it: the most important of the spoils were sent to Mortagne.

In the meantime M. de Royrand proceeded with my brother-in-law in the direction of Luçon, in order to facilitate the intended expedition upon Nantes; but this enterprise was unsuccessful; in the midst of the attack, some soldiers of the regiment of Provence, whom Sapinaud had received into his ranks, went over to the Blues and decided the victory in their favour. Our peasants, alarmed at this partial desertion,

fled in disorder ; and my brother-in-law, in the irritation of the moment, rushed three times upon the enemy's fire, with the intention of meeting a glorious death, but the approaching obscurity of night preserved him. As he left the field of action he was encountered by two of the republican cavalry, who taking him for one of their own men, accosted him with "Comrade, where are the *Brigands?*" Without making any reply, Sapinaud blew out the brains of one, and obliged the other to give up his horse. The army, which had passed over towards Nantes, also experienced a check ; after several unsuccessful attacks, in which a great number of men were lost, Charette was forced to retire.

Westermann, after having assembled a numerous army at Niort, advanced in the

direction of Chatillon, carrying fire and sword wherever he went\*. In vain did Lescure and La Rochejaquelein endeavour to defend the heights of the Moulin aux Chèvres; the enemy entered Chatillon, and Lescure, compelled to fall back on Chollet, and alarmed at the progress of Westermann, summoned Bonchamps and d'Elbée to his assistance. We attacked the enemy during the night; Providence favoured us, and gave us the victory. We took several pieces of cannon, and a great number of prisoners.

After this victory, the Superior Council

\* "The Committee," says Barrère, in his Report, "has prepared measures which tend to exterminate this rebel race of Vendéans, to destroy their haunts, to burn their forests, and to cut down their corn. As the surgeon employs his knife on mortified wounds, so the sword must be employed as the same remedy at Mortagne, Chollet, and Chemillé. Destroy La Vendée, and you save the country.—(*Note of the Editor.*)



entered Chatillon, and it was again assembled to elect a General-in-Chief in room of Cathelineau, who had died in consequence of the wounds he had received. D'Elbée was appointed to succeed him.

The unfortunate Westermann was deprived of his appointment. The general who succeeded him received the most severe and rigorous orders. After rallying his troops at the bridge of Cé, he entered La Vendée and proceeded to Martigné-Briant, where he defeated our troops. On that occasion Bonchamps received a gun-shot wound which rendered it necessary to remove him to Jallais\*.

\* It is said that this general, not being able to find any one to dress his wound, sent for a patriot surgeon who was among the prisoners. The soldiers endeavoured in vain to persuade him not to trust himself to the care of this Republican. Bonchamps, who was as generous as he was brave, did not partake in



D'Elbée proceeded in the direction of Luçon, with the intention of avenging the affront which the Vendéans had sustained. Nine thousand Republicans, under the command of Tuncq, were shut up in that town. D'Elbée attacked it at the head of twenty thousand men; Sapinaud assembled his forces, and joined them to the army; but in consequence of secret communications between the enemy and the prisoners who had been enrolled in our ranks, we lost the battle. Sapinaud, who commanded the advanced-guard, perished at the bridge of Charron. He was betrayed by a deserter, and surrounded by a numerous body of men. Twice he rushed forward to attack, and twice he was

the suspicions of these peasants; he ordered the surgeon to dress his wound, and it was principally to his care that he was indebted for his speedy recovery.—

*(Note of the Editor.)*

repulsed and wounded ; at length he fell exhausted, was taken prisoner and cut to pieces.—“ I die content, since I die for my king !” were the last words he uttered. Four peasants of La Verrie, of which he was proprietor, were killed in attempting to rescue his body from the hands of the murderers. This happened on the 15th of August, 1793 ; and to complete my misfortunes, I received on the same day the news of the arrival of the formidable army of Mayence.

Our generals immediately assembled at La Tremblaie, and held a council of war for the purpose of devising the best means of resisting the attack of the Republicans. D'Elbée reserved to himself the chief command of the army ; Royrand continued to command the centre division ; Charette was opposed to the army of Mayence ; and

Bonchamps remained at the head of his division of Anjou. All these arrangements were of no avail against the enemy, who in a short time took possession of Machecoul, Villeneuve, and Legé, and pushed his advanced-posts as far as Montaigu. The roads were covered with wag-gons, and people were seen flying in every direction.

We were threatened in the direction of Tiffauges by the army of Beysser, and in that of Torfou by Kleber ; the former had entered Montaigu, and the army of Mayence was advancing on Clisson. Our troops were concentrated for the purpose of first attacking Beysser. This was in the month of September, 1793. We had a numerous army and some artillery, but the number of our men rather embarrassed our operations. The battle would have

been lost had it not been for M. Charette. The peasants were already flying in disorder, when Charette drew his sword, and holding up his hat on the point of it, called out to his soldiers,—“ My friends, since you abandon me, I shall go forward myself to conquer or die ; whoever loves me let him follow !” He put spurs to his horse ; his peasants followed him, shouting, “ It is ours, comrades, the day is ours !” All the fugitives, on hearing the noise of the musketry and cries of victory, immediately returned, and combined so well in making the attack that the enemy’s ranks were thrown into confusion. We entered Montaigu that very day, and found there a hundred thousand francs of *Assignats*, ammunition of every kind, and a considerable quantity of clothing which served for our own troops. We lost the brave Dupin in this affair, and Joly was wounded.

In the meantime, the army of Mayence, after taking possession of Clisson, threatened Mortagne. M. de Royrand arrived about two o'clock, and came to me;—"Despatch a courier," said he, "to the generals to inform them that the Blues will be at Les Herbiers in less than two hours time; I have knocked up my horse, and cannot go myself."—Sapinaud de la Verrie, who had succeeded to his uncle's post, was present, along with M. de Chevigné, a Vendean officer of great merit and courage. My cousin immediately departed to rally his troops. I wrote to the generals to desire them to send immediate succour to prevent the Blues from coming out of Les Herbiers, but, either from the courier having mistaken the road, or from some other cause, they did not set out to come to us before the evening. The enemy during that time had taken possession of

the mountain of Les Alouettes, towards Tiffauges; they also took a position in the direction of Chatillon, and blockaded Mortagne on three sides. The generals, on their arrival, perceiving that it was impossible to defend the town, directed all the artillery and ammunition to be cleared out of it, and came to the determination of falling back towards Chollet, in order to be able to pass the Loire, in case of accident.

My troubles increased on the 15th October. I had sent an express in the morning to La Blanchardière, to apprise my children of the misfortunes with which we were threatened, and to advise them to seek their safety by flight; at the same time, I ordered a horse to be saddled to go and meet them, and in waiting the return of the express, I threw myself on my bed to

take a little repose. I had scarcely laid myself down, when they came to inform me that the Blues were entering on every side, and that nothing but immediate flight could save us. One of my maid-servants came into the room at the same time and confirmed the sad news; the only thing to be done was to fly to the nearest wood for shelter. We had scarce entered it, when the roar of the cannon was heard in every direction, and from our station in the woods we could distinguish horsemen galloping about and calling out to slaughter and burn every thing that came within reach. This tumult lasted till three o'clock. We saw two women running off at a distance. Perrine, who had accompanied me, went to meet them, and asked them whence they came;—"Oh, Heavens!" said they, "we have just been robbed by the Blues; they took away all the money we had, and com-



manded us to return to Mortagne, adding that they were going to scour the woods and kill every one they found in them !” On hearing this, Perrine was anxious to quit the retreat we had chosen ; but for my part, I preferred remaining till the evening ; I dreaded falling in with those barbarians. At length, after sunset, we left the wood. Flames were seen in every direction ; I expected to see the wood of Huguet on fire ; but what was my astonishment ! the ruffians had not even entered it : yet I did not dare to go through it, for fear of finding some of those wretches asleep in it. We proceeded to a hamlet not far off. I cannot express the terror with which I was seized on finding the doors of the houses open, and clothes and linen scattered about the street ; it immediately struck me that the inhabitants must have been killed. We immediately left the village and hid



ourselves behind a very thick hedge. Perrine went to get me some water at a neighbouring fountain, for I was almost dying of thirst. She had scarcely left me, when I heard the sound of horses approaching. I was very much terrified lest any misfortune should befall her ; but the Blues merely asked the way to Les Hérbiers, and passed on without doing her any injury. Finding ourselves in greater security than before, and being very much pressed by hunger, we determined on going to La Blanchardière, for I was anxious to see my daughter. We therefore commenced our journey, keeping as much as possible out of the way of the roads and the farm-houses ; but we could not altogether avoid the latter. The first we came to presented a terrifying spectacle ; the doors were wide open and the house was half burnt down ; the cattle and the sheep were lowing and

bleating out of doors, and the poor animals seemed to be calling for assistance. After passing this farm, we met a man and a woman with their little daughter, scarcely three years old. They told us they came from Le Mays, and that the Blues had ravaged the country in every direction. This man had been present at the battle of Chollet, and gave me some information respecting the taking of that town by the Patriots. He told me that M. d'Elbée had taken his position on the heights of St. Christophe-du-Bois, in the design of entering Chollet. At the commencement of the action, the battle had been favourable to the Vendéans; Bonchamps had penetrated the centre of the Republican army, and the ferocious Carrier, minister of the Convention, had just escaped being killed, when a charge of cavalry threw the Royal army into disorder. The generals

endeavoured in vain to arrest the flight of their men, and Bonchamps, at the head of a hundred horsemen, rushed into the midst of one of the enemy's squadrons, unwilling to survive the misfortunes of his country. He received a mortal wound, and would doubtless have remained in the power of the enemy, if M. de Piron had not come up at the head of five or six hundred Vendéans and rescued him from their fury. He added that the army was moving in the direction of Beaupréau, and that he was flying with his wife, because he did not know what might be the result of the battle. I left these good people, because they travelled too slowly to satisfy me, and my anxiety to see my daughter urged me forward. I had very nearly arrived at the end of my journey, when I heard a cry of—"Back, back! There are seven Blues hid among the furze!"—

and at the same time I saw about twenty men and as many women seeking among the furze through which I was about to pass. One of the women recognised me, and told me that my daughter had gone away with her husband the day before. I was extremely mortified at this information, so much so that I fainted away ; upon which the good people carried me to La Mourière, and put me to bed. About six o'clock a young girl arrived from Mortagne ; she told us that there were more than a thousand men there ; that a great number of Royalists had been put to death, and that no quarter was given to those who had arms in their possession ; that her brother-in-law had been killed, as well as her sister, and that it was with great difficulty that she had contrived to escape herself. She added, that the Blues were going to send out patrols about the neigh-

bouring country to set fire to every district.

This news alarmed the inmates of the farm, and it was resolved that we should sleep out of doors. They carried out a blanket for me into a meadow some distance off, from whence we could have a view of the house, in case the Republicans should come and set fire to it, while a large oak and a very thick hedge served to shelter and screen us from observation. I slept for nearly an hour, and found myself almost frozen with the cold when I awoke. I entreated the peasants to take me back to the farm-house, assuring them that as the Blues were in such small numbers at Mortagne, they would not dare to come so far. The good people yielded to my request, and made a good fire which quite revived me. At day-break I bade them

adieu ; and after thanking them for the generous hospitality they had shown towards me, I set off on my journey to St. Laurent. As I passed by La Ronde, I inquired after my daughter, and was assured by a Vendean, who was coming from Beaupréau, that she had crossed the Loire with her husband and children. This peasant was of the environs of Mortagne, and had been engaged in every battle since the commencement of the war. “ Having a little cart of my own,” said he, “ I took my wife and my children, and departed with them for Beaupréau before the battle of Chollet. We had scarcely arrived there, when we saw the Brigands come flying through the place, and crying, ‘ *Sauve qui peut!*’ We soon decided what course to take, and proceeded towards St. Florent, in order to cross the Loire before the arrival of the enemy. A courier had already

engaged all the boats. I was told that M. de Bonchamps was mortally wounded; and, indeed, I saw him carried by on a litter. Before he died, he set at liberty the remainder of the prisoners, to the number of nearly five thousand, and those wretches were no sooner free than they joined our enemies, and turned against us the arms which we were obliged to leave at St. Florent. The crowd was so great, that I had a great deal of trouble in getting my wife and children across. When we had got on the other side of the river, we could find no place of shelter, and were forced to sleep among the furze. The Blues, who were close at our heels, did not allow us long to remain at rest; they pursued us as far as Grandville, where we lost a great number of men; many of our superior officers perished on that occasion; the brave M. de Royrand was wounded,



and died eight days after; M. de Vaugiraud was beside him when he died. His last words were these,—‘ I die content, for I have not survived our disasters; I ask pardon of God for my sins, and I hope every thing from his great mercy.’ He had been in the service all his life, and wore the cross of St. Louis. M. de Verteuil was also killed after the passage of the Loire, as well as M. de Beaurepaire; the latter had been severely wounded at the battle of Chollet. Madame de Mingré was in a carriage with the Demoiselles de la Tremblaie; the carriage was overturned, Madame de Mingré broke one of her legs, and the poor young ladies who were with her were obliged to continue their journey on foot. A great number of ladies of La Vendée, whose names I do not know, also perished at that fatal passage. Some were trodden under foot by the horses,



some died of hunger, others of misery and grief; you cannot form an idea of the horrid spectacle which presented itself; the wounded and dying were seen extended here and there, stretching out their arms and lifting their eyes towards us, without our being able to render them any assistance.

“ On reaching the other side of the river, we found our situation still more deplorable; the defeat of the Brigands was complete; they were all flying in different directions in the greatest confusion. I joined the division commanded by M. Henri, and my wife accompanied me to Ancenis, where we determined on returning to Mortagne. I chose a circuitous track, and by means of a large tri-coloured cockade, which I stuck in my hat, I succeeded in crossing the Loire, and have now almost reached my home.”

I was greatly afflicted at the account of so many disasters. A multitude of melancholy ideas presented themselves to my imagination, and I suffered the greatest anxiety from my uncertainty with regard to the fate of my children. What could have become of them after the passage of the Loire? All the reports which were in circulation on the misfortunes of those who had followed the army to Grandville, were calculated to afflict a mother's heart. I should at least have partaken their fate if I could have accompanied them, and I should have had the happiness of dying with them. I immediately set out for St. Laurent.

Just as I was leaving La Ronde, I met the village-priest, a man who was highly respected throughout the surrounding country for his great virtues, and with whom I

had been long acquainted. He was surrounded by several peasants; I judged from his terrified expression, that something extraordinary had befallen him, or that he had received some bad news. I went up to him, and asked him what was the matter. He replied that eight of the Blues had seized him at a short distance from his house, and one of them accosted him with, "Who are you?" The poor priest was so terrified that he could scarcely answer, and one of the ruffians seized him by the collar, and demanded his pocket-book, which he surrendered. They then said to him, "Are you a priest?" "Yes, I am." "You are the priest of La Ronde?" "Yes, Gentlemen." "There is no such thing now; we are all citizens; come, we must kill him!" Upon this, the worthy priest fell on his knees and recommended his soul to God. Heaven inspired one of the soldiers with

compassion ; he addressed his comrades and said, “ Come, we have done enough ; we must not kill him. He has not deceived us ; he is no traitor. Get up, and go about your business.” The old man rose, but his terror fixed him to the spot. Fortunately for him, the patriots perceived that their detachment was already at some distance, and hastened to join it, and some peasants coming up assisted him to return to his house. Notwithstanding the alarm I felt at what he had told me, I continued my journey towards St. Laurent ; on arriving there, I immediately went to the house of a female relative, who informed me that several ladies had arrived there from Beau-préau. While I was preparing to go to them for the purpose of inquiring after my daughter, my cousin, who was at the window, perceived a young woman at a distance whom she took for Madame de Cha-

vagne, and exclaimed, "There is your daughter." I threw myself upon her neck and embraced her; I knew not how to express my joy. I hastened out with her, and we approached the object of our transports. Alas! it was not she. I said to her, "Ah! Mademoiselle, you were taken for my daughter!" These words drew tears to her eyes, and she said to me, "Madam, I am not so fortunate as to have a mother; I have just lost her at Saint Florent. We were on the banks of the Loire; the crowd was so great that my mother was hurried into the boat without her unfortunate daughter. I stretched out my arms to her and looked after her with tears in my eyes, when all of a sudden the boat upset, and all the passengers fell into the river. When my mother was taken out, she was found to be dead; I spent the

night by her side, not knowing where I was, nor what I ought to do! and in the morning some peasants assisted me in carrying her body to a neighbouring farm, where the last honours were paid to her remains." I endeavoured to console this unfortunate young woman, and left her in the care of the Demoiselles de La Rochefoucauld, who were about to pass through her canton.

After staying some days at St. Laurent, without receiving any information respecting my daughter, my extreme anxiety with regard to her fate, made me determined to return to Mortagne. I was in hopes of being able to find some one there who would run the risk of crossing the Loire and bearing a letter to my son-in-law; I was assured also that no harm would befall me, and

therefore I decided on going. My cousin and I parted, and shed as many tears as if we were never to meet again.

I did not meet with any Blues along the road, but I was terribly alarmed when I arrived at Mortagne. The streets were full of Patriots and soldiers of the enemy's troops; several of them asked me, with an oath, who I was? I heard a woman say to them, "she is a worthy lady." The very day of my arrival, in order to escape insults, I put on a disguise, and sent to the members of the municipality to beg them to come and see me, telling them at the same time that I had a favour to ask of them. Things were strangely altered, for, only a fortnight before, these very gentlemen came to receive my commands and to ask favours of me. My physician, who was one of the chief men of the commune,



came on my invitation ; I begged him to give me a certificate and a passport for a man, whom I wished to send to Beaupréau ; but this he refused. On the same day the cattle were removed from the Bois-Huguet. I immediately wrote to M. Lacour, whose life Sapinaud had saved, and whom I had maintained during the period of our prosperity ; I wrote to him, I say, to ask the cause of this removal, and at the same time to beg him to inform me, whether there was any risk in my situation ; but he did not even deign to send me an answer. The doctor assured me, however, that I had nothing to fear, as I was under the protection of the municipality. I did not think proper to trust these fine promises, and the after-events proved that I acted wisely, for all the women of quality who gave credit to the promises of these gentlemen perished the victims of their credulity. The



commandant of Mortagne, a few days after my arrival, sent for Madame de la Sorinière and her three daughters, and the ruffians who were commissioned to bring them before him, first robbed them of the little they had remaining, and then insulted them. On their arrival at Mortagne, they were taken before the commandant, who was surrounded by a set of fellows as inhuman as himself. The poor ladies were half dead from the cruel treatment they had experienced. The eldest of the young ladies spoke to these tigers, and begged them to give a seat to her mother, who was very much fatigued. "She shall have some straw to rest upon," said one of the Patriots. This cruel answer opened the eyes of the unfortunate women to the horrors of their situation. "My children," said the mother, "we are led to our slaughter."—In fact, they were conducted

the next day, to Angers, where they perished on the scaffold. Just as they were ascending the fatal cart, a citizen proposed to the youngest, who was very pretty, to marry her, but she received the proposal with indignation, and replied to him haughtily; “ would you have me marry one of the accomplices of my mother’s murder ;—I prefer the scaffold to such ignominy, and I thank Heaven for delivering me from a world which is inhabited only by monsters.” On pronouncing these words she threw herself into her mother’s arms, and after having affectionately embraced her, without shedding a single tear, they both rushed into eternity. Her sisters met their fate with equal courage.

At the same period they brought to Mortagne, the Demoiselles de la Besse and de Lapinière, together with a young lady

who was residing with them. Three of these unfortunate ladies were killed on the road by the wretches, and the fourth, Mademoiselle de la Guittière, arrived alone and was sent to Angers, where the Revolutionary Tribunal condemned her to death.

Madame de Vaugiraud, and Madame de Concise, were also conducted to Doué, where they died of want and ill treatment. Madame de Concise was thrown from the top of a staircase, and survived her fall only eight days.

Instead of following the example of these ladies, and running the risk of remaining at home, I left Mortagne at day-break, accompanied by Perrine. As there were no guards except at the door of the commandant, I found no difficulty in getting out of the town. I went first to La Verrie,

and entered the house of my unfortunate brother-in-law. As soon as I rested myself a little, for I was very much fatigued, I sent for a peasant of the name of Simon, whom I knew, and who was greatly indebted to my family, and I begged him to conceal me in his house. “ Alas, Madam,” replied he, “ I would lodge you with great pleasure if I had not so many children, but I fear they would not be sufficiently secret ; however, I know two good old women who have got an upper and a lower room, and I will go and speak to them.” He returned in high spirits to inform me that the old women would be able to conceal me wonderfully well, and that there would be no danger of my being discovered ; he went himself to prepare a bed for me in the room which I was to occupy. I was scarcely installed in my new lodging, than they came to inform me that the citizens of

Mortagne were coming for the purpose of searching the town. At the same time I heard the trampling of horses, and the song of

Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,  
Les aristocrates à la lanterne,

sung by the riders. I recommended myself to God, and as the good women of the house burnt nothing but resin, (which yields but a pale light,) I hastened down stairs. In a short time the Patriots came and knocked at the door, which was opened by one of the old women. "Does Godro live here?" said they, entering the house. "No," she replied, "he lives in the other street." "Come," said they, "and shew us the way." I trembled like an aspen-leaf. The good woman immediately went out with them to point out Godro's house, and there the matter ended. However, as the Patriots renewed their searches every

day, and as I ran the risk of being discovered by the citizens of Mortagne, I thought it most prudent to seek another place of shelter.

At this period, Charette and Cathelineau (Pierre, the brother of the general in chief,) were endeavouring to create a fresh insurrection. They had communicated with all the neighbouring parishes, and Cathelineau had even advanced as far as la Gaubretière. Simon brought me this information, and asked whether I did not think it would be best for me to join them. M. de la Bordelière offered to accompany me, and was to meet me at midnight. I consented with joy to the proposal, and in the mean time threw myself on my bed, where I slept till night. One of the old women called me at ten o'clock; I arose, and remained till three in the morning in anxious ex-

pectation. My patience was at length exhausted, and I sent one of the old women to Simon to ascertain the cause of the delay. She brought back word that Madame de la Bordelière would not allow her husband to depart.—Singular destiny!—That very day her husband was informed against by two peasants whom he had engaged to accompany him ; his house was surrounded by a score of Blues ; he was conducted to Mortagne, and thence to Chollet where he was shot.

Simon came to me towards the evening to tell me that after this event it would be dangerous for me to remain at La Verrie ; that M. Cathelineau had gone away in the course of the day, and that the Republicans would shortly make a more rigorous search than ever. I was therefore obliged to make up my mind to depart that very



evening. The rain poured in torrents, and as we did not wish to take the high roads we were compelled to stop at La Gaubretière. On the following day I recommenced my journey about six o'clock in the evening; there was a high wind, and the moon which rose about nine o'clock, gave but a feeble light; I was alarmed at the slightest noise, and fancied that a troop of Blues was coming to seize me. It was very late when I arrived at Les Landes,—where I was fortunate enough to enter a house inhabited by some very worthy peasants. They had three children; the wife was a native of Angers, and made me pass for one of her relations; they gave me the name of Fortin, and instructed me how to answer in the event of my being questioned, as to who I was and whence I came. Alas! I was far from wishing to go out: my legs were so swollen that I could not

walk up stairs to my room, or rather to my prison; for such it really was. I did not dare to go down stairs, but spent whole days in the depth of winter in this room, which was dreadfully cold. As the parish of Les Landes is within the district of Montaigu, I had less to fear from the citizens of Mortagne. The Blues came into the village, it is true, and often even to the very house where I lodged; but the children were always on the watch, and ran to tell me when they perceived them. On those occasions I went up into a little spare garret, where I was almost frozen with cold; for we were now in the month of December.

In the meantime, a few days before the commencement of the new year, (1794,) M. Charette advanced as far as Quatre-Chemins, at the head of twelve thousand

men. He even came within a short distance of Mortagne, but there he was deserted by more than half of his peasants; the remainder were either killed or wounded, and he himself escaped with great difficulty. After this signal disaster, he ordered a novennary, or nine days' prayers, and a general fast to appease the wrath of God, and to obtain from his mercy success in the next encounter. At the same time he despatched couriers in the direction of Nantes to demand succour, and a large portion of the troops which were sent passed through Les Landes about nine o'clock at night. In spite of the state of the weather, which was truly dreadful, the good villagers took the lead to point out to them the most favourable roads. When the Patriots arrived, they hastened to inform Charette of the circumstance, giving him at the same time an account of the

position and number of the enemy ; and he managed matters so well, that even after his first defeat, he was the victor at Les Quatre-Chemins ; so much so, that the Republicans used to call that spot their burial-place. At this juncture, Stofflet and La Rochejaquelein recrossed the Loire and formed an army at Maulevrier, which served to reinforce Charette. The enemy was thus obliged to divide his forces, and Cathelineau attacked him in the direction of Chemillé ; at the same time Sapinaud de la Verrie recrossed the river with Jourdan, and returned to his Canton, for the purpose of collecting troops. As soon as I heard of his arrival, I sent Madame Guérin, at whose house I lodged, to enquire after my daughter. He sent me word that my daughter and my son-in-law were both in good health, but that my grand-daughter had died of the small-pox.

This information was far from satisfying me. Alas! thought I, why have they not tried to recross the Loire? Their fate should have been mine. But it was my unhappy lot to be left alone in the world, to be a solitary witness of the greatest horrors.

On the 27th December, a young girl of the name of Corbète, was seized by the Blues. She was very pretty, and formed rather to inspire tenderness than fury; the wretches endeavoured to seduce her. They proposed to conduct her to their commandant, promising her all sorts of riches; but finding that she was deaf to their promises, they fancied that sufferings would render her more tractable, and commenced their work of barbarity by tearing out her nails one after the other. The poor girl uttered the most piercing shrieks,

which were only answered by an exclamation of—"Well then, you little wretch, why don't you yield, and then we would give over torturing you."—"Do whatever you please," she replied, "my body is in your power, but my soul is in the hands of God, who will make me amends for all the torments you inflict upon me." They cut off both her breasts, and the unfortunate girl fainted away with loss of blood ; they then committed the most shocking outrages on her person. "Wretches," exclaimed a peasant, who had been attracted by her cries to the spot, "are you not yet satisfied with your barbarity towards this poor victim?" One of the Blues immediately drew his sabre, and after pursuing him a long time, overtook and killed him. This horrible catastrophe took place at Tiffauges (a league from Les Landes.) To complete my misery

I received information that the Brigands, who were on the other side of the Loire, had been defeated; that the Blues had massacred an astonishing number of people, and that all the prisoners had been taken to Nantes, where they would doubtless be put to death. Judge of the grief I felt at this information; I fancied I already saw my beloved daughter in the hands of those butchers. Gracious heavens! what torture I endured! I could not remain any longer at Les Landes, and determined on returning to Saint-Laurent, in the hope of being able to hear some account of my poor daughter. I therefore sent for the peasant who had brought me here, and begged him to conduct me to La Gaubretière, where I proposed to stay at the house of a carpenter on whose integrity I could rely. I resolved on commencing my journey the



next day, on which, as it happened to be twelfth-day, I thought it likely that the Blues would not come out of Mortagne.

In the evening I announced to my hosts my intention of quitting them the following day. The good people endeavoured to detain me, but in vain ; my resolution was taken, for I felt the utmost anxiety to learn the fate of my children. I quitted Les Landes at mid-day, and I could not help shedding tears on parting with my worthy protectors.

The wife of my conductor was in waiting for me among some furze ; the poor woman was murdered a few days after. Thirty of the Brigands crossed the Loire, and a part of them even went to sleep at Les Landes, where they were well received. The Patriots of Montaigu, as soon as they heard

of this movement, went there also. They killed the priest and his sister, together with a great number of women, and it was then that this poor creature was murdered in her garden with four children, one of whom was at the breast. She was found dead; the youngest of her children was still lying at her breast; the others were stretched by her side. Her husband in the most distressing affliction brought me this sad news; he added that the peasants of his village were going to take up arms and follow M. de Sapinaud, and he said he was determined to die or to avenge the death of his wife.

On arriving at La Gaubretière, I sent for the wife of my carpenter, who immediately came to me, and told me that Madame de Boissy was concealed in her house, and that she entreated me to go to her for a little

time. I followed her without hesitation, and found Madame de Boissy, with her two daughters. We embraced, with tears in our eyes; my grief was increased at seeing her in company with her daughters. "Ah! madam," I exclaimed, "how much you are favoured by heaven! You are with your children; and I perhaps at this moment am deprived of mine!"—She endeavoured to console me, and told me that her husband had left La Borderie with M. and Madame d'Elbée and M. d'Hauterive; and that those gentlemen had taken refuge in the island of Noirmoutiers, which made her very uneasy, as she had been informed that the Patriots were on the point of taking possession of it. This news was far from diminishing my sorrow; we took leave of each other, with tears in our eyes. The carpenter's son then led me to a farm to which his mother had directed him,

and where she expected I should be well received.

Before I entered the house I discharged my guide and paid him ; a practice which I always observed. I found an old woman sitting by the corner of the fire. I saluted her, and begged her to give me a lodging for a single night, adding that I intended to depart early next morning for St. Laurent, where I had a relation who was a nun of La Sagesse. She replied dryly that she could not give me a bed ; I then said to her, “ I do not ask you for a bed, but merely for shelter.” “ You had better go further on,” was her only reply. I felt the tears starting into my eyes ; but resigning myself to my fate, I repeated a *pater noster* and an *ave Maria*, and threw myself with confidence into the arms of Providence. “ My good woman,” said I, “ would you have the

kindness to give me a guide to another farm." The maid-servant, who was present, immediately offered to accompany me ; she helped me over a little stream, into which I might otherwise have fallen, for it was a very dark night, and led me within a short distance of a farm-house, the inhabitants of which were of a very different kind from those whom I had just left. The master of the house and his wife were seated near a large fire, surrounded by five children and two of their cousins. As soon as they perceived me, the man, who occupied the best place, rose and saluted me with great politeness ; I asked him to give me a lodging. " With great pleasure," he replied. I eagerly returned him thanks ; I was so much affected, I scarce knew how to express my gratitude. As soon as the two cousins had taken leave of them, the good woman threw her arms

about my neck and exclaimed, “ Ah ! Mad. de Sapinaud, is it you I have the honour to receive into my house !” Her children surrounded and caressed me ; they all assured me that they thought I was dead ; that they had been told I was massacred when the Blues first entered Mortagne. “ Alas ! my good friends,” I replied, “ Heaven has hitherto saved me from the fury of my enemies, but, from the bitterness with which they pursue me, I expect sooner or later to fall into their hands.” They gave me a good supper and a bed. I begged them to allow one of their children to conduct me next morning to St. Laurent, where I was desirous to arrive by day-break ; the two eldest immediately offered their services. How thankful was I at that moment to God for not allowing me to be received at the last farm-house ! I slept very little ; about two o'clock in the morn-

ing I arose, and called the eldest son of my host ; “ Come, John,” said I, “ let us depart.” What was my astonishment when he told me that it had been snowing the whole of the night ; that in many places it was more than a foot deep, and that we should find great difficulty in reaching St. Laurent ! I told him that I was determined on going, that I hoped he would give me his arm, and that by his assistance I should be better enabled to avoid the dangerous places : he immediately called his brother, and we set out on our journey. It was terribly cold ; the snow froze as it fell, which rendered it firmer. We were obliged to cross the high road from Les Herbiers to Mortagne, through which the citizens were almost continually passing day and night. One of my guides always walked about a hundred yards before us, to be on the look out, and in case of perceiving any



danger, he was to return and inform us. My heart beat as I crossed the high road. As soon as we had got to some distance from it, I was obliged to sit down ; my strength failed me, and I was covered with perspiration, though it was so cold that the snow was frozen on my clothes. My conductors were equally insensible of the cold ; they sometimes carried me. We never went by the paths for fear our foot-steps should discover us, but kept along the hedges and ditches, and my legs were quite torn with the thorns. At length we lost our way ; the eldest of my companions ran on before us and perceived a house where he was known ; on their positive assurance that I had nothing to fear, I desired them to knock that we might warm ourselves a little. I was so tired that I could not walk a step. I desired the inmates of the farmhouse not to discover me, and to call me

by the name of La Fortin, which I had borne ever since my departure from La Verrie ; the good people got up and made a good fire. After I had rested a few minutes I paid my guides and departed for St. Laurent.

When I had nearly arrived at that place, I met a miller, and asked him whether there were many citizens in the town ; he replied that several inhabitants of Mortagne had passed the night there, but that he thought they would go away again. On arriving at St. Laurent I went to an old governess, who had formerly had the care of my daughter. On entering the house I found a man and woman there who were strangers to me ; I threw my arms round her neck and addressed her as my mother. She recognised me immediately, notwithstanding my disguise ; I was half dead with cold,

and my stockings and petticoats were wet through. She gave me some soup, which I had great need of after my fatiguing journey. I told her that I had something to communicate from her brother; the people who were with us then left the room, and her husband was out at work. When we were alone I begged her to find me a room where I could conceal myself, and she at length procured me an apartment at the house of Madame Gilbert, an honest peasant, whose husband had crossed the Loire. The day after my arrival I learned that M. d'Elbée, M. de Boissy and M. d'Hauterive had been shot in the island of Noirmoutiers. When they were seized, M. de Boissy entreated one of his servants who had accompanied him to save himself by flight; but the generous Vendean disdained to do so. "Do you think," said he to his master, "that I do not know how to die

for my God?—I will never abandon you.” The Blues proposed to those three gentlemen, that if they would recognise the Republic, no harm should be done to them. “You are brave fellows,” said the republican-general; “but,” said he, turning to M. d’Elbée, “if our lives were in your hands as yours are in ours, what would you do to us?” “Just what you are going to do to me,” was the reply. On receiving this answer he directed them to be placed together, and ordered his soldiers to shoot them, which was immediately done.

I learned at the same time that M. de Chevigné, who had lost his wife and children in crossing the Loire, had returned and rejoined Charette, who had entrusted him with the command of one of his divisions, but that on the very day of his arrival, he had been killed by a gun-shot.

Madame Gilbert informed me also that the Blues were coming to St. Laurent, and that they would carry fire and sword every where, and would kill all those who had taken up their abode in that place ; they were very much irritated, for the Brigands had attacked them at Chollet, and had killed a great number of their men. M. de la Rochejaquelein was present at this attack, as was also Stofflet. M. Henri, like a spirited young fellow, pursued two dragoons, who were flying ; he killed one of them, and his sword was raised to kill the other, when the dragoon begged for mercy ; he had scarcely granted it, than the ruffian, who had a brace of pistols at his saddle-bow, fired one at M. Henri. Stofflet and several other soldiers came up at the instant and cut down the dragoon, but the brave La Rochejaquelein was no more ; they took care to carry his body

out of sight, and to circulate a report that he was only wounded; and his own soldiers did not know of his death until Sapinaud and Charette concluded the treaty of peace with the Republicans. I received this information towards evening, and, as may be imagined, I spent but a restless night. The next day passed over quietly enough; but about seven o'clock they brought us word that the Blues were coming into the town, and that they had put the carpenters into requisition to repair the bridge; my hostess made me get into a cock-loft, where I drew the ladder after me, and shut down the trap-door, which, being situated between two beams, was scarcely visible. The Blues, however, merely passed through the place, and proceeded to Maulevrier, the mayor of which town had sent for them to arrest two Brigands of Stofflet's army. I do not know whether fear produces sleep,

but that very night I slept till nine in the morning. We remained two days without any thing occurring, but we received very bad news ; the Blues had shot twenty-five men of Maulevrier, who were informed against by the Patriots of the place. The wicked mayor, whose name I refrain from mentioning, because he has children still living, and I think blame should be confined to the individual—this wicked mayor accompanied the Blues to the houses where the Brigands were concealed, ordered them to be taken one by one, and conducted to a neighbouring field, where they were shot. The brave Vendéans died without uttering a single murmur ; I even believe that the greater part of them were very glad to be led to their execution.

The account of this butchery greatly affected me ; I could get no sleep the whole



of the night. Next day we received information that the Blues were to sleep at St. Laurent that night, and would set fire to the town the next morning. The inhabitants were all busily employed in getting their furniture out of doors, and I was compelled to seek another retreat. I went to the house of two old women, one of whom had been in my service, and begged them to take me in ; they were busy packing up, and told me that they could not conceal me, but that there was an old woman of La Barbinière lodging in a little coach-house without a chimney, at the back of their house, and that the Blues would certainly not set fire to it ; I begged one of the old women to show me the way to it. It was an old ruinous place, which had formerly served as a stable for a single horse ; the old woman who inhabited it had cleared away a few bricks in one of

the corners to make a passage for the smoke, and there was a little narrow bed in one corner, so short that my feet projected beyond it. However I was very happy that the poor woman agreed to receive me, and I remained with her six days without meeting with any annoyance, though we were in daily expectation of the incendiary patriots, whose progress was in the meantime somewhat checked by the sudden re-appearance of M. Domagné at Cerises. This Vendean officer even advanced sometimes as far as La Chapelle, a small parish not far from St. Laurent. He had crossed the Loire at St. Florent, and had proceeded in the direction of Nantes. Having been fortunate enough to save his money amidst the disasters of the times, when he arrived within a short distance of Nantes, he met with a peasant who was driving a pair of oxen which had

been entrusted to his charge ; he accosted him, and begged him to sell him the cattle and to change clothes with him, adding that he would pay him whatever he chose to ask. After some hesitation the man consented, and was very well satisfied with his bargain ; (I had this story from M. Domagné's own mouth). Under this disguise, M. Domagné drove the cattle to their place of destination, and applied for a passport to return home, which was immediately granted. He said he was from Clisson, and, as soon as he had arrived at that place, he joined M. Cathelineau (Pierre), and afterwards returned, at very great risk, to Cerises, where he mustered his forces and took La Chatenaye before the Blues were aware of his arrival. He pillaged the store-houses which the republicans had established there, and distributed a part of the booty to his soldiers. Two days

after, however, the Blues having received reinforcements, came to St. Laurent, entered all the houses and committed dreadful outrages. I heard them pass repeatedly before the house where I was concealed, and on those occasions I threw myself on my knees in terror, and fancied I saw them standing over me with their drawn swords ready to kill me, as they did Madame de la Touche, a few days before, at la Gaubretière. That unfortunate lady on hearing them enter her house, hastened down stairs with a bottle of wine, hoping to appease them by her politeness, but the first Blue who entered killed her ; her head rolled into the basin of a fountain in the court-yard before her house. The approach of night delivered us from these murderers. I called Perrine ; she told us they would return the next day. “ Let us depart,” said I, “ before their return ; let us go and spend the

day at Étourneau ;” this was a mill, which belonged to my children. The waters were swollen, and it was impossible to pass the bridge ; the servant, who had now become the master, was absent when we arrived, and there was nobody at the place except the maid-servant and a little girl of nine years old ; the former master of the mill, with his wife and eight children, had crossed the Loire. The servant had only returned eight days ago ; he did not know what had become of them. He had been told that his master, Beaulieu, had been murdered at Le Mans in the arms of his wife and his two daughters, that his wife had been carried to prison, where she died of grief and misery the following day ; but he could not believe this melancholy news. He appeared sorry at having quitted M. Henri, and seemed disposed to go and join him again.

At day-break, I left the mill, and went and hid myself among the furze. This was the longest day of my life. About two o'clock, I thought it was all over with me ; the field in which I had taken refuge inclined in a sloping direction, and was separated by a heap of stones from the high road to La Barbinière. All of a sudden, I heard the sound of stones rolling, and a dreadful noise, like that of a mob of people coming down opposite to the place where I was concealed ; I thought I had been betrayed, and that the Republicans were coming to take me. I got into a hedge and covered myself with some furze, which I had cut down to sit upon ; I was half dead with fear ; the noise still approached me, and I was in the act of saying my prayers, when I heard the lowing of a cow by my side. I immediately got up and took a large sprig of furze in



my hand for the purpose of driving her away if she should come towards me, but the animal passed close by me without taking any notice. These poor animals wandered at random like their masters, and like them too they returned to their stalls in the evening, for after sun-set there was no longer any reason to fear the Blues. I therefore got out of my hiding place and returned to St. Laurent, where I arrived at eight o'clock at night. The two succeeding days passed over without any accident, and I remained in bed until the evening. If the Blues had come, Perrine would have told them that I was her sister who had been long ill ; besides it was so dark in my little room, there was so much smoke, though they only had a fire in the morning, and my linen was so black, that I looked like a gipsy. There was a good woman in the neighbourhood, of the name of Jala-



bert, a nun, who often came to see me and showed me great attention. I endeavoured to acknowledge her kindness as well as I could. One day at the latter end of January, about four o'clock in the afternoon, I heard a cry of "the Blues are coming!" I was with Perrine, who said, "I will go out to see whether there are many of them." "O Heavens!" said I, "stay where you are, there will always be enough of them to kill us;" but I attempted in vain to detain her; she ran out and left me. I immediately went to Madame Jalabert, who was also out; in the state in which I was, it was impossible to recognise me; I was completely in rags; I wore an old woollen cap, which had turned quite yellow; I had put a crust of bread on one side of my mouth between the gums and the cheek; I had blackened my eyebrows, and an old piece of linen, which I had tied under my chin, con-

cealed the half of my countenance ; besides all this, the tears, which had flowed almost incessantly for four months, had completely changed my appearance, so that it was impossible to know me. As I was leaving the house, I was terrified almost to death at meeting four Blues who were coming in. “ Stay, where you are, good woman,” said they, “ you seem very ill.” I left them, however, without making any reply ; I found the door of my little room closed, and I was obliged to take refuge with my neighbour, whose house, which was very large, was full of lodgers ; a great number of Blues came into it. I sat down on a stone near the door, and saw sixteen soldiers enter in succession, and lay down their arms in the house, saying at the same time that they must have some fire, for that they were very cold and very hungry. Each carried a bit of meat on his halbert and

they called for water to wash it; I rose and offered to be their cook. They told me to draw some water and wash their meat, adding, that no one should make their soup but themselves, for that they would not trust the "rascally brigand-women." I was afraid from this beginning that all would go wrong with us; but as life had now become a burden to me, I thought only of preparing myself for death. I had been assured in the morning, that my daughter and her husband had died in the hospital, and this information rendered me so indifferent as to what might have become of us, that I stood calmly looking at those wretches, whose appearance terrified every one else around me.

At the approach of night they commanded that no one should stir out of the house, and threatened to shoot every one they saw

out of doors. As the lower room was full of soldiers, I proposed to some women who were there to accompany me up stairs, where the Republicans were not so numerous. The mistress of the house was delighted at my proposition, for her cupboards were full of linen, and she was afraid they might break them open to get at their contents. The commandant was seated near the fire, with his head inclined downwards, so that I could not see his face; he did not utter a single word. There were also three Germans, and a young man who seemed to be an officer, for the rest obeyed him. As we were near the door, and it was very cold, he said to us, "Citizens, come near the fire." My companions could not speak for terror. I replied that we were not cold. "You are terribly frightened," returned he, "are you not?"—"The sight of you," said I,

and the torments you have inflicted on every one since you have become masters of La Vendée, are not calculated to inspire us with confidence." "To-morrow," he replied, "you shall all be shot; at the same time those who choose to go to Mortagne or Chollet may have passports; those that remain will be shot." "Citizens," said I, "I do not fear death; you, perhaps, have been the cause of the death of all I held dearest in the world." Upon these words Mademoiselle Benore touched me with her elbow, and made signs for me to hold my tongue. "I do not fear death," I repeated, "I only fear the tortures which you delight in inflicting." "The women," he replied, "are all the cause of our misfortunes; if it had not been for them, the Republic would have been already established, and we should have been sitting quietly at our fire-sides. Every one of you shall die." "If

it had not been for the women," said I, "you would have had fifteen of your men shot in this parish; but they went down on their knees before the Brigands and entreated them to spare the men's lives." "Ah! how do you know that, citizen?" said he. "Because I was present myself," I replied, "and went down on my knees with the rest of them; I told them that they ought not to shoot the prisoners they had just taken. 'Who will preserve them?' said they. 'Myself,' I replied, 'and all the women in the town.' In fact they were left in our keeping. You see, citizen, the women have not always injured you; if it had not been for them, you would never have entered La Vendée; they have done service to you, and great wrong to us, for they have given up to you their country and their children." "You have plenty to say for yourself," said he. "Certainly,"



I replied, "it is all I have left to do."  
"Come near the fire," said he. I rose and stretched out my hand, desiring him to feel whether I was cold. "No," he replied, "but that is from fear." I was as hot as fire.

At the same time he desired me to make a bed for the Commandant. My companions did not dare to open their lips; I asked him whether he would choose to sleep in a small room adjoining, where there was a good bed. He went to examine whether it would do, and desired me to put clean sheets on the bed, which I promised to do immediately. The mistress of the house, who was present, and did not wish to open her cupboards in the presence of the Germans, said she had got no sheets. Without expressing the least surprise, I said to her, "Give me the key of your cup-



boards." She gave me such a look, that if my heart had not been almost bursting with grief, I could not have refrained from laughing; she had a good deal of trouble to find the key, but at length she gave it me. I said to Mademoiselle Benore, "take a candle, and let us go and make the bed for the Commandant, he looks very tired; though it is very hard to be obliged to serve these butchers." "Ah! my dear Fortin," she replied, "I am so terrified, that I can stir neither leg nor foot." "Come, come," said I, "cheer up, my good friend; to-morrow they will put an end to our miseries." After we had made the bed, we returned, and told them, that if their Commandant wished to take repose, his room was ready. He rose, and two of the Germans walked before him; one of them carried a light, the other the Commandant's weapons, and the man who had

conversed with me offered him his arm. On their return they began to drink, and every now and then they turned round and swore at us. I expected that when the effects of the liquor began to operate, the wretches would murder us. I never felt so courageous in my life, and I told my companions so; I had a good knife in my pocket; I was determined to make use of it if they should offer to insult me. In about a quarter of an hour, the officer asked me whether we would spend the night where we were, or go down stairs. I got up immediately. "You give us permission then, citizen?" said I.—"Yes, yes," he replied; "go along, but do not attempt to escape. There are guards in every direction. Do you know," added he, "whether the Brigands are at Malevrier?"—"I know nothing about it, citizen," I answered.—"How far is Malevrier from

here?"—"Three-quarters of a league, citizen."—"What! so near?" said he. He then spoke by signs to the Germans, who, I think, did not understand him. I suspected him to be a monk, who had been at Mortagne, and who was called father Dumont. I was very glad to get down stairs; we had not eaten a morsel since noon, and yet none of us felt any inclination to eat. The mistress of the house, whose name was Bodrie, was so dreadfully afraid of their breaking open the cupboards, that she made herself quite ill. On going below, we found twelve Republicans stretched on mattresses; three of the beds had been taken away, and carried into the garden along with the tables. Some were playing at *trente-un*, the others were asleep; one of these wretches had a fever, and was continually uttering the most lamentable cries; the remainder were lying round the fire, and

talking of Charette, while my companions and I were seated on the ground by the window. I was on a little stone step under the window, and an old kettle full of ashes served me for a cushion. I listened to the conversation of the Blues. One of them said to his comrades, "We are going to burn and kill every thing that comes in our way, and then Charette will come at our heels, and kill us in our turn." "Yes," said another, "provided they don't send us to that cursed place they called the Quatre-chemins! By all the devils in hell, we should never get out of it alive!" I heard no more, for I fell asleep, and did not wake till day-break. My companions reproached me with having slept, when my death was so near at hand. "Alas! my dear friends," said I, "if you felt the excruciating pain that I do, you would look forward to death as to the conclusion of your torments. I

am to blame, I confess, in not employing these last moments in appeasing the anger of God, by repenting, as far as possible, of my sins." While I was occupied in making these lamentations, the good nun, who had taken so much care of me, came in, and asked me how I had passed the night. She told us that she had not been able to close her eyes, and that she had overheard the most terrifying conversation; that one of the Blues had boasted of having killed his father, because he was an aristocrat; and that another had in his possession the tongue of a child, whose mother he had murdered.

The Commandant entered at this juncture, and made a terrible uproar. "What," said he "not a locksmith or a farrier to be found in a town like this; they have all hid themselves. If the Brigands had

wanted them they would have come fast enough." He then turned to us and desired us to run and find him a farrier ; he promised that no harm should be done to him, and said we might bring him along with us. The nun, who was very courageous, offered to go and look for one. "Tell him," said the Commandant, "that I want him to open the door of the chapel where I intend to put all the grain I can find ; we shall set fire to the place at two o'clock, so take all you can out of your houses."—"What will be the use of that, Commandant?" said the nun, "since you intend to shoot us all." "Oh, but we will not shoot those who go to Mortagne or Chollet." "Yes, but we cannot depart to-day, citizen." "We will give you three days ; after which time we will return, and shoot all those that we find remaining here." The farrier arrived during this conversa-

tion. The Commandant ordered him to open the door of the chapel; and he directed all the grain and flour that could be found to be carried thither. Madame Jabert had a bushel of flour; the Blues were preparing to carry it away, when she ran to the Commandant, and begged him to let her keep it. "In three days you will be shot, and you will have no need of any thing," was the barbarian's reply.— "But during those three days, citizen, you would not have us die for hunger?" He turned his back upon her; she returned towards the Blues, who, having seen her speaking to their Commandant, thought she had obtained permission to keep her bushel of flour, and left it behind them.

We went into the garden, by order of the Commandant. It was almost mid-day; we heard the drums beat; we were told that



all who were informed against were confined in the church. As I was of that number, I expected that if any of the inhabitants of Mortagne should happen to pass through the town, I should infallibly be discovered. Two Republicans arrived; a weaver of the name of Bremon brought them to assist him in removing his son who was sick; they placed him on a mattress in the middle of the garden. While I was in the act of stooping to arrange the pillows, I was astonished to hear myself called by my own name. "Madame Sapinaud," said the sick man, "how much I am indebted to you." "Wretched man," said I, "do not address me thus; my name is Fortin." "Very well," said he; "Fortin, be it so; I am a priest. You see, therefore, I have no less reason to fear than yourself; do not abandon me, I beseech you; stay beside me." I sat down as he desired; Bremon's

wife and daughter came up at the same moment, and told us that they were beginning to set the houses on fire. We heard the sound of musket-shots, and a thick smoke began to rise from the houses ; I even thought that the fire of musketry came nearer. I fell on my knees, at the same time holding my head as high as I could, that the Blues might not miss me ; I expected to die, and I had made the sacrifice of my life. One of the wretches came towards me, and I thought that all the rest were following him. The flames of the neighbouring houses, and the noise of the falling bricks and beams, made so frightful a clatter, that I could neither hear nor see any thing. The wretch came up to me, and snatched off my cap, I thought he was going to cut off my head ; but the girl Bremon was there ; she was young and pretty, and as soon as he perceived her, he left me

and ran towards her. "Who is that man lying there?" said he. "He is my brother, who is unwell," she replied. He took him by the arm; "Come," said he, "I am going to cure you." I thought he would have killed him. "What are you going to do?" I exclaimed; "do you not see he is dying?" He then let go of him, and turning to the young Bremon, "Come here," said he, "let me kiss you." The poor girl defended herself as well as she could, and luckily her mother was at hand. I said to her, "Protect your daughter, while I run for assistance." In my hurry, I leaped over several hedges. I heard voices; "Oh, heavens, if it should be the Blues!" I looked over a hedge, and saw something like women's caps; I came up to them, quite out of breath, and found nearly fifty women assembled. Madame Richeteau asked me whether the Blues were gone away; I told her that one of

them had seized the girl Bremon, and that her mother had great difficulty in defending her. As I pronounced these words, the young girl came up, with her hair dishevelled, her handkerchief and cap torn off, and calling out with all her strength, “Go, for Heaven’s sake, go, and assist my mother! he will kill her.” The cowardly women looked at each other and said, “Will you come?” “Will you come?”—but nobody went. In the mean time the woman defended herself with great spirit. “You ruffian!” said she, “your comrades are all gone; if the Brigands get hold of you, they will kill you.” At length she returned to her daughter; but she had been dreadfully ill used, so much so, that she died a few days after. Her daughter threw her arms round her neck, and exclaimed, “Ah! my dear mother, I ran away and left you; he has treated you very ill.”

I returned, in company with several other women, to the poor priest; he was half dead with grief at what he had witnessed. Some females, bolder than the rest, went to ascertain whether the Blues had really gone; others ran to their houses, to see whether they were quite burned down, and to endeavour to extinguish the fire. Madame Richeteau and Madame La Chêne assisted me in carrying the priest into Bremon's house, a part of which had not suffered at all from the fire. "Alas!" said he, "they have not killed us to-day, but they told us that they would return in three days; they had better have killed us all at once, than have left us three days in expectation of our fate." I was of his opinion. As it was late, I returned to Bodrie's house, which had suffered little from the fire, in consequence of the commandant having slept there, and there were three or

four rooms still remaining. I found the good woman in a very ill-humour. On the first night she had not the command of her own house ; for as it had been less injured by the fire than almost any in the town, the people assembled there in crowds. I took Perrine with me, and she assisted me to remove a blanket and a mattress, on which we spent the night ; but I did not sleep so well as I had done the night before, with a kettle full of ashes for my pillow.

At day-break Madame Bodrie prepared to take leave of all who were in her house, and began with myself. She stated as a reason that if I should be discovered I should be the cause of her death. I did not well know what reply to make or what course to pursue. Gaillard, the nun, who had a right to exercise some authority in

the house, as her two nieces had hired the half of it, said to me, "Remain, I have a right to one room at least." I did as I was desired, and our hostess was so dreadfully terrified that she fell ill and died a short time after. Gaillard's brother, on hearing of the arrival of the Blues, ran and hid himself among the furze bushes, along with a friend of his named Flandry, who was blind. The Patriots discovered them and took them to the church, where they were shot. We persuaded the nun that her brother had gone to join the army of the Vendéans.

On entering the town the incendiaries killed a farmer who had been driving a waggon for them. His wife hearing a gun shot went out to see what had happened, and was horror-struck at finding her husband stretched dead on the ground, with



the blood gushing in torrents from a wound, which he had received on his head. She fainted away, and the oxen continued to proceed without a driver. Luckily the mayor came up and led them to the farm-house; though he was a citizen, he could not refrain from shedding tears: he even assisted in removing the farmer's wife. The unfortunate woman died a few days afterwards, and one of her sons, who was with the waggon, was also killed. On hearing of the death of his mother, he threw away his whip and attempted to escape, but one of the wretches fired after him and killed him on the spot. All these catastrophes took place at a short distance from the garden, where we had taken refuge! Every one was in tears. The cattle returned and continued lowing at their masters' doors. Oh! how different was this from those tranquil and happy evenings, when I used to see the

herds coming down to the sound of flutes and drums towards their stalls ! As soon as the angelus sounded, the women used to leave their distaffs and fondly bring out their little children to meet their returning husbands. The little creatures ran delighted into their fathers' arms, and they went all together to the Temple of their Saviour to place themselves under the protection of the Virgin. Such happy recollections increase my pains, from the loss of hope, which alone can animate the heart. Oh ! Heavens ! never shall I forget that dreadful day.

Two days passed amidst these inexpressible torments, and the third day was anxiously expected. The Blues had promised to return in the evening ; a woman from La Verrie arrived, and told us that the incendiaries had done nothing but rob and

murder, and that it was their intention to carry fire and sword every where. I feared they would kill my grandson, who was concealed in that town ; and to increase my misery, I did not dare to inquire after him for fear of discovering myself. “ Alas ! ” thought I, “ of what use will it be to ask after his fate ; if I find that he is dead it will only increase my misery ; it will be better for me to pray the Lord to preserve him ; besides, if he is dead, I shall doubtless share the same fate in a few days.” On leaving La Verrie the incendiaries did not come to St. Laurent, but went to La Gaubretière, where they did not remain long, for they were afraid of Charette, who was not far off. They murdered nearly three hundred women in the wood of Beau-repaire, and were very near killing Mad. de Boissy, with her two grand-daughters. This lady had hid herself among the furze ;

a citizen discovering them, went up to them and said, "The column is about to pass, if they see you they will kill you; lie down on the ground and do not stir; I will go and tell them that I have seen nothing in this direction." Some of them were humane, particularly among the Germans, who would not kill the women, though they gave no quarter to the men. On leaving La Gaubretière, they intended to have gone to Chambréteau for the purpose of setting it on fire, but an extraordinary courier arrived at two o'clock with strict orders for the suspension of the massacres. We were soon informed of this happy news, which afforded us a ray of hope. Alas! our happiness was of short duration! The citizens of Mortagne came almost daily to St. Laurent, on their way to Maulevrier, so that I was terribly frightened. They generally arrived about eleven o'clock, and

then all, who, like me, had been informed against, were obliged to conceal themselves. I generally took refuge in an old ruinous house, almost filled with dung. I used to get up on part of an old floor, and remain there until they had gone through the town. One day two Blues passed in front of the place, and one of them said to his comrade "Come, let us see whether there is any thing inside here." I thought it was all over with me ; but the other replied, " nonsense, what do you want to do in the dung ? come along." These words saved my life. I heard the noise of their steps for a long time ; for they walked round the building, and I fancied a short time after that I could distinguish the sound of a woman's voice. When I left my hiding-place I was always careful to seize some favourable moment when I could slip by without being per-

ceived. Oh! how long those days appeared to me!

A fortnight had elapsed since the burning of St. Laurent, when we received information of the arrival of the Brigands; their plan was to attack Mortagne. This news was far from being agreeable to me, for I fancied, as soon as the Blues were informed of it, they would finish burning the few houses which remained. The Brigands did not arrive, but advanced as far as Maulevrier, where the Blues, who did not think they were so close at hand, no sooner perceived them than they fell back towards Mortagne, passed through St. Laurent, and returned the next day with two thousand men.

As soon as they appeared, every one fled

from this town. We were informed of their arrival by a mason of the name of Jencheleau, who ran into the house where I was, and exclaimed, "The Blues are coming! I have no time to go further; you must let me hide myself here." He immediately lowered the top of the bed, which was on springs, and by means of a little ladder, which he had brought with him, he raised a trap-door, which was concealed between two beams, and ascended; I followed him: we drew up the ladder and the top of the bed, and awaited the result of the arrival of this Republican division. The enemy on entering the town fired a volley of musketry, and the balls fell in showers on the roof under which I was concealed. I said to Jencheleau, "If there should be any holes in the roof of the house the balls are as likely to kill us here as out of doors." He could scarcely answer



me ; I thought he was going to faint, and I endeavoured to revive him. "Come," said I, "Jencheleau, let us devote to God the few moments which remain to us ; the Blues will no doubt set fire to the house, when they have killed the few Vendéans who remain in this town, but if we die by force, remember that our Saviour died for us of his own free will ; he will recompense us in heaven for all that we suffer on earth ; and do you think we shall not be a hundred times happier then, than we are now, placed as we are between life and death ?"

We heard so great a noise from the horses' feet that we concluded the Patriots were very numerous, and that they would destroy every thing ; but in the mean time, a citizen of Maulevrier came and advised them to put themselves on their guard, for that Stofflet and Marigny had rallied

their forces, and were advancing towards Chollet. This information obliged them to return speedily to Mortagne, in order to oppose the Brigands. They immediately beat to arms. I advised Jencheleau to take courage, and told him that our enemies would probably soon depart. I looked through a small aperture, and saw them cross the bridge. I then persuaded him to get up, and assured him there was nothing more to fear. The peasant got up and looked out himself, but just as he had placed his eye at the aperture, the discharge of a musket so terrified him that he fell flat on the ground. At the same time I could distinguish at a distance the sound of groans like those of a man who had been shot, and an exclamation of, "Oh! for God's sake, despatch me! I am undone!"—These cries made me shudder, and I remained nearly a quarter of an hour without daring to stir,

At length the noise entirely ceased, and on looking out, I saw a woman in the street, which completely removed our fears; the Blues had really departed, and we were again saved. Jencheleau's wife then came to call her husband.

Nothing else occurred during the three following days, but on the fourth, about two o'clock we heard a cry of "The Blues are coming!" There was no time for escaping, for they arrived the very instant their presence was announced. I climbed however into my cock-loft, while a number of women assembled in the room below; and thus we awaited our fate. I had scarcely got up into the loft, than I heard a musket-shot. "My God!" said I, "one of my companions has certainly been killed!"

At the same time there was a general cry of "To arms! to arms! the Brigands

are coming!" — I looked through my little aperture and saw the Blues hurrying towards the bridge; I thought the Brigands had really arrived, and hastened down from my hiding place. The nun was below stairs; I asked her what had taken place, "Oh! my dear Fortin," said she, "while you were in the loft, four of those wretches entered the room below, and said to us, 'Brigand women, why have you not left the town? come forward, you must be shot!' I then addressed myself to one of them who did not look quite so bad as his comrades. 'What, Citizen,' said I, 'will you kill me?'—upon which another of the fellows exclaimed, 'these Brigand women must all be shot! Why did you not go to Mortagne or Chollet?'—My dear Fortin, I never was so terrified in my life. They had even dragged us out of the house to our execu-

tion, when the sudden discharge of a musket saved our lives. A Brigand had concealed himself behind a wall, but fearing to be surprised by the Blues, he attempted to climb to the top of it, and threw his gun over first in order to accomplish his purpose the more easily. The gun in its fall went off and put the incendiaries to flight. This single fact is a sufficient proof of the bravery of the Republicans.”

On their arrival at Mortagne, they did not fail to report that the Brigands had surrounded St. Laurent, and for three days the inhabitants of that town were in the greatest alarm, expecting every moment to see us arrive.

As soon as they had recovered from the first impulse of terror, they ventured to return. It was about three o'clock on Ash-

Wednesday, when we heard the sound of the bells which were attached to the dogs they sent forward ; for the Blues generally took about a dozen dogs with them when they went to any distance from Mortagne. These animals were employed for the purpose of hunting out those who were concealed. We hastened out of doors, and we had scarcely reached the middle of the street when we perceived our enemies galloping at full speed, and shouting, “ Vive la République !” I saw a young girl named Catherine at a door ; I said to her, “ Every body is flying, and yet you remain ?”—“ I have a sister,” she replied, “ who is lying ill, and I will not abandon her.”—“ Well then !” said I, “ I will remain with you.” I went up a half-burnt staircase into a small room which had escaped the fire ; her sister was in bed, and had a fever. She



said to me, "Are you come to die with us?" —"Yes, my dear child," I replied. Our enemies soon made their appearance, crying, "Where have these Brigand women got to?" They searched in every direction, pillaged every thing they could find, and broke and burned all that they could not carry away. However they did not set fire to the houses. Whenever they passed before the place where I had taken shelter I thought they would have come up and killed us. At length about nine o'clock at night they went back to Mortagne, at least we heard nothing more of them after that hour. As soon as they were gone, I said to Catharine, "Let us depart; they will no doubt return to-morrow, and though we have escaped their fury to-day, who knows whether we shall have the same good fortune then?" She acceded to my proposition



and after having made a little packet of the things she thought she might have the most occasion for, we departed.

We had scarcely walked a quarter of a league when we heard an exclamation of "Surrender, Brigand, or you are a dead man!" We stopped and listened, but hearing no further noise, we recommenced our journey and arrived at La Chapelle. Madame de la Vicendière, who was related to my children, and whose son afterwards distinguished himself among the Royalists, had come there for a few days; she had contrived to keep out of the way for three weeks, but the Blues at length forced her to fly, set fire to the farm in which she was concealed, and killed the farmer.

The son of my hostess, who served under

Stofflet, had just obtained leave of absence ; he informed us that his general had beaten the Blues at La Tour, on Shrove Tuesday, and that he and his men had refreshed themselves with the victuals, which had been prepared by the Republicans. He told us also that Stofflet had carried off the barrels of wine and brandy, which he had taken, and established in the forest of Vezin a hospital for the wounded. Women were employed to wash their linen, and make lint for their wounds, and priests were appointed to attend to their spiritual welfare. A vigilant guard and two pieces of cannon were stationed at the door of the hospital. Mills had been erected, by order of the general, to grind the corn, and huts had been built for the workmen. As active in repose as he was courageous in battle, Stofflet provided for every thing. His soldiers always beheld

him in the midst of danger ; but he was inexorable towards those who were deficient in valour, or who had recourse to plunder after victory. The young man left his mother when his term of absence had expired, and she seemed to take leave of him with indifference, but as soon as he was out of sight, she gave way to her tears. “ He is the only one I care for in this world,” said she ; “ if he should die, I will not long survive him.”

The three royalist chiefs had effected their junction, and the Blues believed that the royalist army amounted to twenty thousand men, whereas it did not exceed two thousand. The enemy, notwithstanding, came to Mortagne to escort some patriot refugees. They constructed fortifications there, and intended to construct some at Chollet also ; but Stofflet and Marigny interrupted these

labours, and driving the Blues from the town, entered it in triumph. The Republicans revenged themselves by setting fire to all the mills in the neighbourhood, and if it had not been for those which Stofflet erected in the forest of Vezin, the Royalists must have died of hunger. Sapinaud and Marigny, who had at first experienced a check, returned to the siege of Mortagne. Every thing was in readiness for the attack, and success appeared certain, when the enemy, under favour of the night, evacuated the town, and the Royalists entered in the beginning of March.

At this period the Blues killed the young Mademoiselle de Marmande, in one of their visits to St. Laurent, and sacrificed Mademoiselle de Bodrie in the flames of her own apartment. My two maid-servants, who had long been separated from me, came to

meet me at La Chapelle, and informed me that the incendiaries were advancing. I left my benevolent hostess with regret, and proceeded towards Treizevent. Charette came up to oppose the ravages of the incendiaries; but while he protected the country, he took from the peasants what little subsistence they enjoyed. Hence his soldiers were termed the Black Sheep. Whether through friends or foes the cottagers were equally the victims of war, and their misfortunes were equalled only by their courage and fidelity. Charette, who took an interest in my safety, sent to advise me to retire to Château-Mur. On my way there I passed by Moulins; never was place better named than this, for the least breath of wind must have sufficed to turn a mill upon it.

On arriving at Château-Mur, I had time

to breathe a little after my long and painful fatigues. I had already been three weeks there, when M. de Marigny, pale and exhausted, unexpectedly entered the room where I was. I thought he had met with some misfortune, and I felt very great anxiety. "Ah! Madam," said he, embracing me, "I thought you had been no longer alive, and the report of your death has caused me many a tear. I have behaved very ill towards you, and I have come to ask your pardon. (M. de Marigny, in opposition to my directions, had persisted in putting his horses into my stables at Mortagne, which were entirely occupied by those of the other royalist officers; but I had quite forgotten the circumstance.) Why," continued he, "did we not follow your advice; we should not then have crossed the Loire. Why, after having crossed it, did we not return to La Vendée,



when we were triumphant at Laval? I should not then have been as I now am, on the eve of my death. I have been through life the victim of my vivacity, and I have committed many faults; but that which I have just been guilty of, will be fatal to me. We had assembled at Jallais, where we formed a determination to undertake nothing without the concurrence of the three armies; we had even sworn, under pain of death, in case of disobedience, to submit to Charette in whatever he should recommend to us for the destruction of the incendiaries. A day was appointed for the attack, and the line of march was marked out for us. The place of rendezvous was fixed, and we were all to assemble there at the same hour, and to surround and attack the incendiaries at the same moment. After my departure, I fell in with a small village on the road where they sold excellent wine,



and we were tempted to drink a great deal too much of it. I had some farms near Ceriseau, which had escaped the general conflagration ; my officers, who were from the neighbourhood, and who had their property near the village, advised me to go there, which they said would be better than joining the other divisions, and marching towards Coron, where not a single house, not even the poorest cottage, had escaped the fire. Being under the influence of wine, I allowed myself to be guided by their counsel, and was unfaithful to my oath. Stofflet and Charette have judged my conduct worthy of death ; if it had not been for me, they say, the incendiaries could not have escaped. It was decided that I should be tried by a council of war, and I have been condemned to be shot. That Stofflet is a mere brute, he is a vulgar fellow ; Charette appeared less

vindictive, but Sapinaud was the only one who pitied me." "Stofflet may be a man of low birth," I replied, "but you must allow that he is able to command. Write to Charette; as for Sapinaud, you have nothing to fear from him." He bade me adieu in the greatest sorrow, and I felt for his situation. The next day, Charette sent two couriers to Château-Mur to discover what had become of M. de Marigny; they asked me whether I had not seen him; I replied in the negative, and told them that I did not know where he was.

A few days after, the advanced guard of the Brigands arrived at Château-Mur; they were taken for the Blues, and there was a general alarm, when all of a sudden the people called out "It is the Brigands!" and the women all burst out a-laughing. The army soon followed the corps which had

advanced before it. M. Fleuriot and M. Charette came to see me ; I availed myself of the attachment which Charette had always shown towards me, to obtain M. de Marigny's pardon ; he promised it, but he soon forgot his promise. M. de Marigny was obliged to keep beyond his reach and retired to the abode of his fathers ; his grief accompanied him there, and he fell seriously ill. The inhabitants of Cerisais, who adored him, continually went to inquire after him. At length his strength and courage triumphed over his disorder ; his convalescence excited a pleasure equalled only by the grief which had been produced by his illness ; and he was just beginning to enjoy it, when Stofflet had him arrested by the Chasseurs. He was inexorable. Alas ! how could he resolve on depriving the King of so devoted a subject, and his country of one of her most valiant defenders ?

Charette, who was formerly so humble and so modest, was now scarcely recognizable; his hat was ornamented with feathers, his cravat edged with lace, his violet-coloured suit was embroidered with green silk and silver, and a number of young and handsome women formed his train. During the first war he had presented a model of every virtue, and particularly that of an exemplary piety. It was not uncommon for people to say on the return of Monday, "This is the day of Charette's triumph;" for on that day, after having ordered several masses to be said, he had obtained a complete victory at Les Quatre-Chemins.

This general's rear was not so brilliant as his advance-guard. The former was accompanied by a number of women from the marshes, who had been fortunate enough

to escape the fury of the flames and the sword. They were for the most part bare-footed, and both themselves and their little children were covered with rags ; their husbands had been killed and their cottages burned ; and they had no prospect of hope for the future, nor any other refuge than an army which was every moment in danger of becoming a prey to the enemy. I pitied them greatly ; perhaps, thought I, this is the fate of my poor daughter ; if, indeed, she is still alive. The repose which I had enjoyed at Château-Mur was not of long duration ; the Blues returned there on Whit-sunday. I quitted it along with a great number of the inhabitants before their arrival. The unfortunate mothers took with them their dearest treasures, their children, who followed them with difficulty, and cried aloud ; others carried their children in their arms, and the poor

little infants, too young to know their fate and the affliction of their mothers, returned their tender caresses with a smile. My maid-servants and myself, who travelled in the disguise of countrywomen, shared with these unfortunate creatures the brown bread and butter, which we carried in our wallets. The relation which I have given of the disastrous scenes of St. Laurent, and those I have just described, which were continually recurring in La Vendée,—added to the grief occasioned by the death of beloved objects, or by the absence of relatives, who had been forced to quit their homes, and the misery caused by the disappointment of the dearest hopes,—dreadful as such recitals are, will afford but a feeble idea of our misfortunes. I learned that there was now a greater degree of tranquillity at St. Laurent, where my affections still attracted me, and I was at length enabled to retire to La

Barbinière. But who can describe the sorrow I felt on entering those now empty apartments, where I had so often embraced my daughter and her little children!

In several battles Charette obtained victories, which seemed almost miraculous. At one moment his power would seem to be annihilated, and the next he would appear again with greater boldness than ever; his name had become the terror of an enemy six times more numerous than himself; after having harassed and fatigued his foes, he forced them to retire, and withdrew himself into the forest of Galins. His first care was to provide for the maintenance of his troops. At his word there arose a multitude of mills, which were formed of barrels, in the bottom of which were placed large and solid stones, which had been previously hollowed out; while a sort of pestle,



turned by the labour of a man, reduced the corn to powder. By this means however it was impossible to grind more than two bushels a day. The women vied with the men in these occupations, and used wooden mallets to bruise the corn ; this was their principal employment during the day ; and in the evening, after putting their children to bed, they sat up by the light of their resin-candles, and repaired the clothing of the soldiers. If any alarm arose they abandoned every thing for their children, and taking them in their arms, they held them pressed to their bosoms until quiet was restored.

These women had built little huts for themselves and their families, as well as small sheds for their cows, which they frequently removed from place to place, to avoid the asps, which came about them. In

spite of their vigilance, the smell of the milk, which the women heated in order to obtain cream, continually attracted these reptiles, which are so common in La Vendée. A mantua-maker, who came to see me at La Barbinière, had spent three months in this forest, and she assured me that she had often seen as many as six of them round one of the vessels into which the milk had been poured; but she had never heard of any one having been bitten by them.

About the end of June, the Blues marched against Sapinaud, whose headquarters were at Beaurepaire; Charette, who had been informed of their intention, came to his assistance and joined his troops to those of Sapinaud. The enemy, though much superior in force, was completely beaten. The rout was so complete, that

the fugitives came in the direction of St. Laurent and La Barbinière, instead of proceeding towards Montaigu. I saw several soldiers, who had been dragged from their homes against their inclination, and who were discontented with being employed in the service of a set of monstrous tyrants, who were much more occupied with their own fortunes than with the happiness of France.

At this period I fell ill, yet notwithstanding my anxiety and sorrow, it was not long before I returned to a state of convalescence. M. de Béjary, who had just arrived from Ancenis, then paid me a visit; he informed me that he had been seriously wounded at the battle of Le Mans; he told me he had been thrown into a waggon along with several wounded men, who were being conveyed to La Flèche, but all of

them except himself had died of pain and fatigue, a few leagues from Sablé. M. de Béjary entreated the driver, who seemed to have compassion on their misfortunes, to allow him to get out of the waggon, and as there were no witnesses at hand, the man permitted him to do so. He then dragged himself into a field near Sablé, where exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood, he perceived a countrywoman, who was driving a flock of sheep, and being too weak to go towards her, he stretched out his hands in sign of supplication for assistance; but she immediately fled. He was afraid that she had been alarmed at his appearance, which he knew must have been more like that of a corpse than of a living man, but what was his surprise when he saw her return with two peasants, who lifted him gently from the place where he was lying, and carried him in their arms to

a farm-house. They cleared out a pig-sty for him, and after having placed some straw and blankets in it, they laid him upon them as gently as they could. The women regularly dressed his wounds. When the Blues came near the farm, the peasants drove their pigs into the sty and placed a heap of straw before the door. These assiduous and benevolent cares hastened his cure, and he was soon in a condition to depart. He then purchased of his hosts a peasant's dress, and took leave of them after paying them handsomely with assignats, which he had been fortunate enough to preserve about his person. He arrived in his rustic costume at Ancenis, whence he proceeded safe and sound to join the army of the centre.

He told me that my daughter and M. de Veau de Chavagne, her husband, were con-

cealed in a farm near Ancenis. This pleasing, but unfounded information restored my health sooner than the best of doctors could have done. A number of the Blues received orders at this period to march to the frontiers, and our country was now relieved of a part of its burden.

Stofflet and Bernier held their headquarters at Nevi, at the Chateau de La Maurosière; they kept a good table, and received visits from all the surrounding neighbourhood. The ladies came to them in their finest dresses, the finest at least, which they were able to preserve from the ravages of war.

Charette, what could be his motive I know not, after having agreed with Stofflet to employ four hundred thousand francs in assignats, opposed for a time their circula-

tion. This was one of the principal causes of the discord which soon arose among them.

Sapinaud desired that the men of Mortagne, St. Christophe, and St. Hilaire should march under his command; his uncle, the Chevalier Sapinaud de la Verrie, had had these parishes under him, before the appointment of a general-in-chief; and for that reason they ought, he said, to be subjected to him; however, I made Sapinaud consent to desist from this claim, and to imitate the example of his uncle, who preferred the love of the Vendéans to the authority which he exercised over them. The enemy, whose strength had become greatly diminished by part of his troops being sent to the frontiers, had the art to make Charette and Sapinaud consent to a treaty of peace. This treaty was signed at La Jau-



naye. Charette did not acquaint Stofflet with this measure, though Sapinaud had entreated him to do so, and Stofflet irritated at this proceeding, marched against Sapinaud, who was then absent from Sourdis, his paternal residence. He carried away his horses and every thing else that he could take from the house ; and Delaunay, at the same period, deserted Charette's party.

Stofflet, now pressed on all sides by the Republican troops, at length concluded a treaty of peace with them also. The enemy's generals showed him a great deal of attention ; they even formed hunting-parties with him. The conditions of their treaty with Charette and Sapinaud were on the contrary, very badly observed, and the Royalists would have been obliged to resume their arms even if the descent of Quiberon had not taken place.

MADAME DE SAPINAUD mentions nothing in these memoirs that has not been inscribed in the annals of her glorious misfortunes, a work which establishes the title of Madame La Marquise de la Rochejaquelein and M. de Bonchamps to the gratitude of La Vendée. She bewails that insidious peace by which the commissaries of the convention abused the ardent desire which the Vendéans felt to restore the happiness of their country, for which alone they desired to conquer or die. Like faithful and devoted Frenchmen, they wished to contribute to the return of their king and the peace of his subjects; they armed themselves only against the factious and the regicides.

The peace was of short duration; it lasted but a few days, and Charette and

Stofflet recommenced their career of arms ; but their valour was of no avail against the treachery and superior number of their enemy. After defending themselves to the last moment, they were obliged to yield to force ; they were surprised and surrounded by the enemy, Stofflet in Anjou, and Charette in Brittany. The latter was taken in a wood near La Chabaussière. Wounded in the head, and exhausted with fatigue, he was leaning on two young peasants for support ; but he was deprived of this last prop of fidelity by two musket-shots, which laid the generous soldiers at his feet, and he became the prisoner of Travot.

Stofflet and he had been engaged in more than a hundred and fifty battles, and had often triumphed over those who had conquered all except La Vendée. They both lived with equal glory and died with equal

resignation, Stofflet at Angiers, the 23d of Feb., 1796, and Charette at Nantes, six weeks after.

The recollection of their God and of their king, consoled them up to their latest moments, and their lips were pronouncing their very names, when they fell under the hands of their murderers. Charette's coat was sold for six hundred francs ; and the terror he had excited was still so great that the revolutionists required his body to be disinterred that they might be satisfied that he was no more. These warriors, who were so dreaded by the enemies of the throne, inspired, notwithstanding, the tenderest and most generous friendship. The young German, whom Stofflet had chosen for his aid-de-camp, would willingly have sacrificed his life to save him, but not being

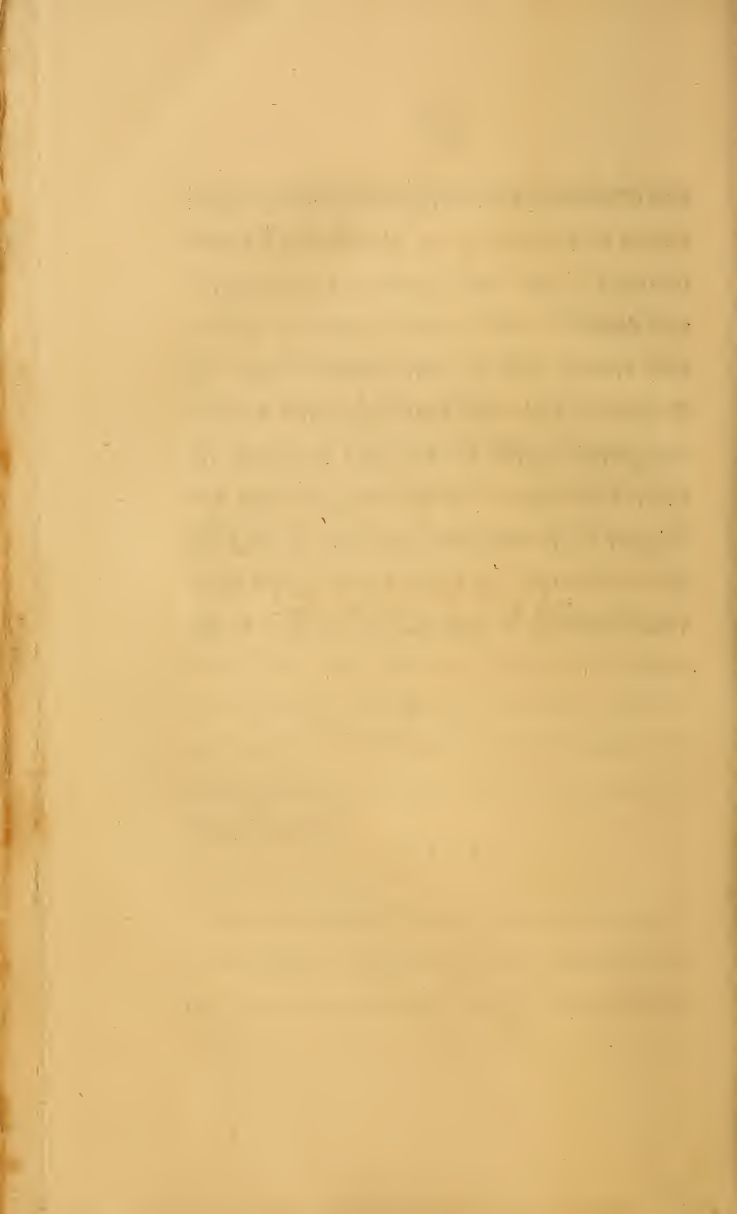
able to gratify his wish, he felt pleasure in sharing his fate.

There was a soldier of the same nation who never abandoned Charette to the last. Seeing him on the point of being taken, he put on the hat and coat of his general, and exposed himself to the fire of the Republicans, in the intention of dying for him, and thus procuring him time for escape; but they passed by him without doing him any injury, as soon as they discovered that he was not Charette. Disappointed at the failure of his stratagem, he rushed forward to die with honour on the field of battle.

Let us compare Buonaparte, seeking pardon from his conquerors and going to hide his shame in a foreign land, with Stofflet

and Charette, who were equally calm, when bound in chains; as in the days of their triumph; who both preferred misfortune and death in their own country, to peace and riches, which were offered them in England; and who both preserved an unconquered spirit to the last moment of their existence:—let us compare that foreigner with these two Frenchmen, and let us see whether he loved his country better than they did, or was better entitled to its love.

THE END.





APPENDIX.



# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF SOME OF THE

## VENDEAN GENERALS\*.

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### BONCHAMPS.

THE name of Bonchamps is universally known ; his exploits have immortalized his memory. It will, perhaps, be interesting to learn what were his manners and his habits in those days when he was far from expecting the celebrity which he afterwards obtained, or even desiring it. Naturally humble and modest, he did not waste his time in idle hopes. He entered the service in his sixteenth year, possessed of but an imperfect education,—and was solely indebted for what he afterwards became, to the happy qualities with which

\* These notices (with the exception of that of MM. Sapinaud,) were written by the son of Madame de Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, whose name is so dear to the Vendéans, and who translated the psalms into French verse.—(*Note of the Editor.*)

Heaven had endowed him. His manners were noble and agreeable; he was of middling stature, but well made; his features were expressive, his complexion dark, his hair thick and curly; his lips, which were rather thick, gave an expression of simplicity to his countenance; his teeth were of a brilliant whiteness, and his eyes sparkled with intelligence. His language, though somewhat laboured, gave a just conception of his ideas. When he spoke of his campaign in India, made under M. de Suffren, in the second batallion of Aquitaine commanded by M. de Damas, his comrades pressed around him to listen to his story; and there was not a dry eye to be seen when he described the disorder under which he laboured on board the ship, and from which he recovered only by a sort of miracle. Like Madame de Maintenon, he was destined to return from the gates of death to fill the world with his name. Nobody was ever more beloved or more respected; not even the officers of his regiment. He was sensible to the charms of friendship, and was no less attached to all that tends to the luxury and enjoyment of life. His exterior was brilliant, his expenses considerable; an income of thirty thousand livres would scarce have sufficed to meet them, and he did not possess half that revenue. Every distinguished officer that arrived in our garrisons was entertained by

him. He was fond of study, and had a taste for the fine arts. He never went to bed at night without having first read for several hours by the light of a lamp, which was placed in the middle of the apartment so as to illuminate the whole. In the morning his servant called him very early, and placed by his bed-side a pair of red slippers, silk pantaloons, and an elegant dressing-gown. As soon as he arose, he placed himself before a glass, and sang some of his favourite airs, accompanying himself at the same time on the harp. He cultivated, in succession, the studies of drawing, music, literature, and mathematics. He followed the fashion in his dress, at least so far as his military costume would allow him to do so. A portion of his afternoon was devoted to the practice of all kinds of military evolutions, which he executed on a table with metal soldiers, both horse and foot. His evening was divided between society and play. He was often a considerable loser, yet his wit and gaiety suffered no diminution. His conversation was always the same; it was instructive and varied, though sometimes degenerating into punning, of which he was rather fond. He was desirous of advancing in the military profession, yet this desire was kept within proper bounds; and his humanity, which was so strikingly displayed at the time of his death, rendered him beloved both by

the officers and soldiers. Two of our men were turned out of the regiment while we were in garrison at Mézières, and were condemned to fight a duel before their departure. M. de Bonchamps opposed the sentence; "is it not enough," said he, "to dishonour them, without obliging them to kill each other?" The officers yielded to this advice. As for Bonchamps, he never fought a duel in his life; he detested them, and the gentleness and amenity of his manners kept him out of the way of them. The MM. Soyer informed me of the admirable answer he gave Stofflet on being challenged by him; "No, Sir, I will not accept your challenge; God and the king can alone dispose of my life, and your cause would suffer too great a loss if it were deprived of yours." He was naturally too kind-hearted to be insensible to the charms of female beauty, and he had conceived for the daughter of a gentleman of Brittany, an attachment which absence had only served to increase; he solicited her hand in marriage, but her father opposed his desires. This disappointment affected him deeply, and he used to tell me that he could never be happy again. We shared the same apartments, and the same table; our pleasures and our sorrows were in common. For the space of five years, few days have passed without his having spoken to me of his charming

Brittanese. He was often seized with fits of melancholy which lasted whole hours, and we then took great care not to disturb his silence. When his serenity returned, he felt grateful for this attention. I was also his travelling companion. The first thing he did when we stopped at any town, was to look out for a tavern where he could play at chess. He has left me alone, young as I was, and ignorant of Paris, for a whole day, while he was playing game after game, at the Café Valois. Yet he was my Mentor, and was greatly attached to me, and I felt sincerely grateful for his attentions. What most astonished me was, that fond as he was of application, even in abstract studies, he took no care of his fortune and his affairs, but left us, who were so much younger than himself, to discharge his accounts at the inns, the billiard-rooms, and the shops; that sensible as he was to female beauty, the prettiest woman was indifferent to him, unless she had also some talent to recommend her; and that with all his taste for grandeur, and his desire of advancement, he disdained intrigue and adulation. I accompanied him to Paris when he went to solicit the hand of Mademoiselle de Scépeaux in marriage. The first evening of our arrival, having gone to one of the theatres, we saw there a young female whose grace and beauty attracted the attention of every one.



Bonchamps recognised her, and the tears started into his eyes. I guessed that this was the young lady whom he had so deeply loved ; and I was not mistaken. When the play was over he had an affecting interview with her, in the course of which he learned that she was married to a captain in the navy. Happily Mademoiselle de Scépeaux yielded to his solicitations, and put a period to his sorrows ; ambition also contributed to remove them, but the revolution prevented the accomplishment of his hopes. He wished to rise only by honourable degrees, and he only looked for happiness in retirement and in the bosom of his family. For this reason he did not accompany our regiment into emigration. The reign of terror occasioned him to abandon Paris ; he returned to his paternal château, situated in the neighbourhood of St. Florent, on a small hill between two rivers. He wished to have spent his days there in solitude ; but Heaven had destined him to be the object of the admiration of mankind, and the model of every virtue. But for the war of La Vendée, Bonchamps would have remained unknown, and might have furnished an illustration of those beautiful lines of Gray :—

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
 The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

## D'ELBÉE.

M. d'Elbée's father was a superior officer in the service of Saxony. On his death his son was placed in a regiment of French cavalry, but dissatisfied at not being able to rise higher than the rank of lieutenant, he quitted the service. Like M. de Bonchamps he amused himself with making war on a small scale with regiments and squadrons cast in metal, and like him too, he was brave, honourable, and a devoted friend. Both of them, when they wished to marry, sought merit and beauty in preference to riches. M. d'Elbée, when on the point of being united with a young lady of Nantes, who was very handsome and very rich, preferred the hand of Mlle. d'Hauterive, who, though her fortune was but small, possessed a sensible and generous soul, and whose devotion to her husband cannot be surpassed. I have traced the points of resemblance between the two heroes of La Vendée, but there were also qualities which distinguished them from each other. While Bonchamps's appearance was pleasing and prepossessing, that of d'Elbée was sombre and severe. His dark, yellow complexion, and his bright eyes deeply seated in his head, added to his expression of gravity. He was thin, and of middle stature; his language was sententious and slow. As soon

as he was possessed with a sentiment, he carried it to a pitch of enthusiasm. He had smiled on the commencement of the Revolution; the spirit of Voltaire and the style of Rousseau had seduced him; but he was shocked with the first revolutionary scenes. The misfortunes of the Royal Family attached him for ever to their cause; he lived and died for them. M. d'Elbée and his friend M. de Boissy begged to be allowed to die together, and Madame d'Elbée entreated that she might not be permitted to survive her husband, and her wish was granted. They were united in the closest bonds of affection during life, and did not wish to be separated even in death. They had at that time an infant son in the cradle. This child outlived the misfortunes of La Vendée. His amiable character and his education gave rise to the greatest hopes, and his conduct in the guard of honour which he entered, proved that he was the worthy inheritor of his father's glory, as he was of his misfortunes. Being of so corpulent a habit of body as to find difficulty in sitting on horseback, he fell in a charge made on the enemy, and was killed.

## CHARETTE.

Charette, the relation of whose exploits is the best praise that can be given him, was for a long time in so delicate a state of health, that he feared he would be obliged to quit the navy in which he held the rank of lieutenant. He possessed an insatiate taste for pleasure, and seemed to be in every respect disqualified for a profession so fraught with perils and fatigue as that of arms. But the first shot that was fired in La Vendée operated upon him like the arms presented to the disguised Achilles. He became on a sudden distinguished for his valour and piety; he even carried this last virtue so far as to make his soldiers fast on the eve of battle. He told his beads with them, and cherished in their hearts the united enthusiasm of honour and religion. This zeal, had it been well directed, would have obtained great advantages; it would have prevented Charette from separating from the other armies; it would have rendered his party invincible. But unfortunately, this fervour was of short duration; the sight of some pretty women who owed their exaltation to his courage, soon damped his ardour; but the weaknesses of the hero have disappeared before his glory, and have been eclipsed by it. The love of his country was always his predomi-

nant passion. A few days before he was taken prisoner, an officer with whom I am acquainted, said to him, "Why did you not accept the advantageous proposals of the Directory?"—"Honour," he replied, "compelled me to decline them; while Charette lives he will pursue his course (*tant que Charette palpitera, la charrette roulera*)." When he had fallen into the enemy's hands, he said to the cousin of my brother's wife, who had obtained leave to see him in prison;—"my friend, the Directory will take care not to disgrace themselves; besides, my death would irritate the people against them." Even if the Council, which condemned him, had been favourable to him, he could not have failed to die in a few days, for his wounds had mortified.

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#### SOYER.

The MM. Soyer, born of a family of merchants residing at Chemillé, soon raised themselves to the highest rank in society, by their devotion to the king, and the nobleness of their conduct. I have already paid a just tribute of praise to the courage of M. François Soyer. His elder brother equally distinguished himself in Stofflet's army by his bravery, his intelligence, and his conciliating

spirit. He was sent to Nantes by M. Cathelineau, the general-in-chief of the Vendean armies, to dispose the minds of the people in favour of the Royalists. In this attempt he completely succeeded, and the town would certainly have been taken, had it not been for a merchant, who, by a profuse distribution of money, gained over the people and a part of the national guard. If Nantes had fallen, Brittany and the western provinces must have followed, and much blood would have been spared. Few Royalists can boast of more honourable deeds of arms than M. Soyer; when he was surrounded at Chatillon by four hussars, he killed all the four, and rejoined his division. His body is covered with scars; the only part of him that remains is his heart, which is devoted entirely to his God and his king. The heroes of this army equalled in courage all that is related as most remarkable among the Romans. M. Soyer has told me that one of their horsemen, on being informed that the enemy had pitched a camp by the side of the great road leading from Chemillé to the Pont-de-Cé, immediately resolved on killing the commander. Regardless of the danger of the enterprise, he passed with his face on his horse's neck through the midst of several platoons of the enemy, which were marching to join their division; he was exposed to



several shots, but escaped them all, arrived at the spot, cleared the trenches, penetrated to the very tent of the commander, dismounted, entered, shot him dead with a pistol, mounted his horse, galloped off, and was on the point of leaping the last entrenchment of the camp, when he received a mortal wound, and fell shouting "Vive le Roi!" M. Soyer was himself witness of a remarkable example of devotion to the royal cause in the person of his youngest brother. This young man, who was at the college of Angers, employed the money which was allowed him for his amusement, in purchasing gun-powder. As the scholars went regularly twice a-week out of the town to walk, he took advantage of these opportunities to forward his powder to some prudent Royalists, who were acquainted with his secret. This new mode of serving the king was the more praiseworthy, as the young scholar was perfectly aware of the risk he ran. M. Soyer was appointed major-general of Stofflet's army, and the latter might have restored France to his king, if he had listened to Soyer's advice, which was never to separate himself from Charette. The union of these two chiefs would have produced astonishing effects. After Stofflet's death, M. Soyer might have obtained the appointment of commander-in-chief; but he was as modest as he was brave, and



preferred appointing to that office M. Charles d'Autichamp, whose name must be held in honour by every Frenchman. At the conclusion of the war, and on the 18th Fructidor, his house was continually an asylum for the emigrants. He is now a field-marshal, and has espoused Mlle. de Grignon. It was but just that beauty and glory should be the recompense of honour and courage.

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#### SAPINAUD.

M. Sapinaud de la Rainie was born at the Château de Sourdy, in Bas-Poitou, on the 3d December, 1760. In 1778 he was appointed gentleman cadet in the regiment of Foix, and he retired in 1779 with the rank of first lieutenant. Five of his brothers, four of whom had served as officers for several years, emigrated with their corps. On the 10th March, 1793, he joined his uncle the Chevalier Sapinaud de la Verrie, and attacked the garrisons of Tiffauges and Les Herbiers. He then joined his division to that of the chiefs of Anjou, and along with them took possession of le Boisgroleau and Chollet. He afterwards took the command of the town of Mortagne, where he maintained very important correspondence with all the Corps d'Armée, and saved the

artillery on the arrival of the troops of Mayence. In the campaign of Outre-Loire he commanded as chief of division; and after the fatal retreat of the Mans, he procured a little boat at Ancenis, where he re-crossed the Loire with Henri de la Rochejaquelein, Stofflet, Vaugiraud, and La Ville-Beaugé. Shortly after their arrival on the other side of the river, they were informed by their host that the house in which they had taken shelter was surrounded by Republicans; yet they continued to sleep soundly, so great was the fatigue they had undergone.

Sapinaud was welcomed by the Vendéans as their deliverer; he re-organized the army of the centre at the beginning of the year 1794, and defeated a corps of three hundred Republicans at La Gaubretière. Having at length succeeded in collecting eighteen hundred men, he sent two Royalists to convey the information to Charette, but they both fell victims to their zeal. A third offered to fulfil the commission. Sapinaud pointed out to him the danger attending its execution. "General," replied the brave peasant, "fear nothing; Heaven will protect us." And so indeed it happened, for he carried his message in safety to Charette, who joined Sapinaud at Chauffe. The generals had scarcely time to exchange salutations, when they learnt that two hundred men

were marching against the town. They hastened to meet them, attacked and dispersed them; another column which attempted to surprise them in the evening, shared the same fate. The river, which had overflowed its banks, added to their disasters; for those who escaped the sword, became the victims of the waves. The two generals then proceeded towards Légé, which they carried after several sanguinary battles. Two pieces of cannon, two cassoons, and a large quantity of clothing were the reward of this victory. At the taking of this town, M. Joly, a chief of Division in Charette's army, on learning that his son had received a mortal wound, threw himself from his horse and flew to his relief. A soldier came up at the same moment, and informing him that one of his sons who served among the Blues, had been taken prisoner, asked him what should be done with the young man; "Shoot him!" he replied, his eyes still fixed upon his dying son, whom he pressed tenderly to his bosom and bathed with his tears. Sapinaud and Charette were not so fortunate at the bridge of James as at Légé; one had his horse wounded, and the other had his killed under him. They withdrew to La Grotte, near Vicille Vigne, and there separated. In the beginning of March, 1794, Sapinaud joined a division of Stofflet's army to his own, and attempted to take possession of Mortagne, but not succeeding in the

first instance, he made a second attack upon it in company with Marigny, which was also unsuccessful. Preparations were already made for a third attack, when the enemy, taking advantage of the obscurity of the night, evacuated the place. The three Royalist chiefs formed a junction, about the end of April, to drive back the incendiary columns commanded by Cordelier. They proposed to Charette to appoint him general-in-chief; he replied that he would prefer seeing M. Fleuriot, his uncle, in that situation; this reply displeased Stofflet, and nothing more was said on the subject.

The Royalist troops, after pursuing the Incendiaries as far as Saint Florent, fell back upon Jallais; they there determined on making a fresh attack, and it was agreed that every officer who should quit the army before the Incendiaries were exterminated, should be held and punished as a traitor.

Sapinaud had scarcely commenced his march at the head of eight hundred men, to carry this plan into execution, than he received orders to return to Jallais, where a council of war was assembled, which condemned Marigny to death, for having violated his promise. This officer, dissatisfied with the want of attention paid by Charette and Stofflet to his division, had withdrawn it into the Commune of Cerisais.

His friend Sapinaud refused to sign this cruel

decree. The mildness of his disposition made him endeavour to conciliate the minds of others. It was he who informed Stofflet of the conferences of La Jaunaye; he even persuaded him to proceed thither to concert measures with Charette. That general, unfortunately, had left the place; he had gone to curb the spirit of discontent which had manifested itself among the officers of his troops in consequence of the peace. Sapinaud signed the treaty at La Jaunaye in Feb. 1795, and entered Nantes as general of the army of the centre, in company with Charette.

Whilst Sapinaud was maintaining with glory the cause of the throne and the altar, five of his brothers and two of his cousins, of the same name with himself, were defending the same cause under the banners of the French princes and their allies. Henri Sapinaud, who had volunteered his services in the regiment of La Châtre, had already perished in the glorious sortie from Menain. That officer, after having pierced the battalions of the enemy with the column under his command, and adorned the hats of his soldiers with the tufts of the vanquished Grenadiers, led them to the station which had been allotted to them by the general. Their comrades coming up to the same spot in the twilight of the morning, took them for French



Grenadiers and killed them. The greater part of them were Vendéans : that valiant blood was always shed, wherever there were any laurels to gather. Two other brothers of the general, Edward and Prosper de Sapinaud, Chevaliers de St. Louis, were at this period sent into La Vendée by the Prince de Condé, to compliment their brother ; and the Chevalier Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, who had been appointed by the Duke of York, Lieutenant in the British Hulans, for having killed a Republican colonel in a battle near Nimègue, during the campaign of Holland, quitted that advantageous post to return to La Vendée, which was then almost in a hopeless condition. M. Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet was also appointed officer in Lowenstein's corps. The events of Quiberon had then produced a recommencement of hostilities. Charette had given the signal for war at Les Essarts, and Sapinaud at Mortagne. The latter gave notice the day before to the Republican general, that he would attack him in his camp at La Croix-de-Mission, as he had before announced to him, and M. de Bejarry and himself proceeded thither in different directions. They put the enemy to flight, after killing three hundred men and taking a great number prisoners. It has been erroneously supposed that they surprised and cut

to pieces the Republicans at Mortagne; this is quite a mistake. I have stated the facts as they occurred, and the distinguished loyalty of M. de Sapinaud's character is the best proof that can be given of them. He co-operated with all the chiefs, directed his army wherever he could assist them to conquer, and even gave up a portion of his estate; he was the intimate friend of Charette. That general, previously to his death, sent to him by a common friend the last proofs of his esteem.

At the taking of Mortagne, a superior officer possessed of the most agreeable and engaging qualities, fell into the hands of Sapinaud. His face and figure were of the most handsome description, and a congenial taste for music and drawing, a corresponding mildness of character, and an equality of age, quickly united the conqueror and the captive in the bonds of a sincere affection. This interesting man soon learned to partake in the sentiments of the Vendéans. The verses which he addressed to Sapinaud in the autumn of 1795, during the absence of that general, who had gone to join Charette, afford a convincing proof of his change of opinion. They were as follow :

Au général dont l'absence  
 Nous rend doublement malheureux,  
 J'ose adresser ces couplets ; trop heureux  
 S'ils nous procuraient sa présence !



Au sein de la neige et des glaces  
 Précipitez vos bataillons ;  
 Bravez les bruyantes menaces  
 De la bise et des aquilons ;  
 Ne craignez point que la victoire  
 S'enfuie à l'aspect des hivers ;  
 Tous les temps sont bons pour la gloire,  
 Et les lauriers sont toujours verts.  
 Guerriers, la mort est-elle à craindre,  
 Quand l'on combat pour ses foyers ?  
 Le Guerrier se pourrait-il plaindre,  
 Lorsqu'il tombe sur ses lauriers ?  
 Mourir, c'est rendre à la nature  
 Un bien qu'elle nous a prêté ;  
 Et, quand on meurt sur son armure,  
 C'est naître à l'immortalité !

This unfortunate young man was not allowed to meet the glorious death which he describes ; another officer, one of his fellow-prisoners, jealous of the interest which he excited, accused him of having formed a plot with the Republican soldiers to deliver them and put the Royalists to death. M. de Fleuriot gave credit to the infamous calumny, and the interesting captive was shot in the woods of the Château de Beaurepaire. Sapinaud, on his return, was dreadfully afflicted at this iniquitous decision, which deprived the king of a subject who would have served him with zeal, and his own heart of a grateful friend whom he hoped to restore to happiness.

The disasters of Quiberon enabled the enemy to employ all their forces against the Vendéans, who, deceived in the peace which had been made with the commissioners sent to Jaunaye, and in the hopes they had formed of the Quiberon expedition, and enfeebled by the divisions of their chiefs, felt themselves abandoned by fortune ; but their glory remained faithful to them, and still blazed over the last moments of Stofflet and Charette. General Sapinaud was obliged to yield to the storm, and to await a more favourable period.

A few months before the 18th Fructidor, he married Mademoiselle Marie-Louise Charette, grand-daughter of the general of that name, and daughter of M. Charette, that general's cousin. Incapable of serving any other power than that for which he had sworn to live and die, he maintained the peasantry in those sentiments which have procured them everlasting honour ; and during the three months which preceded the return of the Bourbons in 1814, he went from cottage to cottage both by day and night, preparing them to enter with fresh vigour, on the career of honour. It was agreed that they should receive the sacrament on Easter-Sunday, meet at the appointed place on the Monday, and on the Tuesday display their banners to the cries of " Vive le Roi ! " Thus nourished by celestial food, and supported

by the God of armies, what enemy could resist them? Scarcely were their swords unsheathed, when they suddenly received information that Monsieur, the king's brother, the harbinger of happier days, was approaching in the name of that monarch to present the olive-branch, the emblem of peace. M. de Sapinaud was charged to bear to the foot of the throne the tribute of devotion of his brave followers. If there be any pleasure unalloyed on earth, it is that which he experienced on this occasion; for a faithful subject must always feel an inexpressible joy in the notice of his prince.

He assisted the Marquis of La Rochejaquelein during the interregnum, and would have followed him to Les Marais, but for the desertion which that project occasioned in his army. Left with a handful of men, he was obliged to seek reinforcements at Bazouge, a parish of La Rairie, and was on his way to join the Marquis of La Rochejaquelein, when he received the account of his death. The Vendéans, and indeed every Frenchman whose heart is sensible to glory, deplored the fate of that young hero, thus cut off by the sword of battle in the very flower of his age. General Sapinaud was appointed general-in-chief; and, in that high rank, he not only established additional claims to the esteem of his countrymen, but, by

the peace to which he acquiesced, succeeded in preserving to the king the precious blood of his faithful subjects. His reply to General De Sagé, who proposed to him to form a junction with the army of the Loire against the allied powers, proves that he felt the importance and dignity of the office with which his country had intrusted him.

“General, why do you not rather think of joining us ; that would be the only means of obtaining the mercy of the king whom we serve, and will continue to serve till death ? The spotless banner is the only standard round which the Vendéans can rally.”

The King has appointed him lieutenant-general, Cordon-Rouge, Inspector of the National Guards of La Vendée, and Chevalier of the legion of honour. On the return of the king of France, Ferdinand, King of Spain, sent him the cross of the order of Charles III. Just as he was beginning to enjoy the glory and reward of his services, the assassination of the prince who bore so near a resemblance to the good Henry, plunged him into a profound affliction, which nothing but the birth of the duke of Bourdeaux could have relieved.

## SAPINAUD DE BOIS-HUGUET.

The Chevalier Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, known by the name of La Verrie, had served five and twenty years in the gardes-du-corps. He had remained in La Vendée to be useful to his nephews, MM. Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, officers in active service, who emigrated with their regiments. In the beginning of March 1793, he attacked the garrisons of Tiffauges and Les Herbiers, and carried away three pieces of cannon. On his return to La Verrie he saved M. de Beaulieu, the father of twelve children, and a zealous partisan of the revolution, from the fury of the peasantry. Heaven rewarded him for this generous action, and gave him the victory at the battle of Les Guérinières, on which occasion the peasants displayed equal intelligence and courage. Learning that the Republicans were advancing to attack them, to the number of two thousand, they suddenly quitted their chiefs, and disregarding their orders to return, proceeded by a very narrow road, to surprise the enemy, who were hastening to reach the bridge of Gravereau, but who being seized with a sudden panic, were completely routed, and lost a thousand men in their retreat.

M. de Sapinaud, after this glorious action, established his head-quarters at the Château d'Oie,

called, some years before, L'Abergement, and which MM. Sapinaud, who were formerly the proprietors of it, had sold. Here, in the birth-place of his fathers, just as he was beginning to repose after the fatigues of war, General Marcé took possession of Chantonnay. He immediately marched against him and drove him back. That general returned on the 19th March, with fifteen hundred men, and gave battle to the Royalists in the valley of Le Laye. The latter repulsed them, and penetrated their columns. The enemy's artillery, however, stood their ground, and M. de Sapinaud seeing that the Vendéans were alarmed at the repeated discharges, animated them with this brief and heroic address :—" My friends, fear nothing ; look at me, and follow me !" Attentively watching the moment when the match was applied to the guns, he fell flat on the ground while the balls passed over him, then rose, rushed forward, and followed by the peasants, who imitated his example, took possession of the batteries. M. de Royrand, whose age and services, rather than his capacity, had obtained his appointment as general-in-chief, complimented M. de Sapinaud on his boldness in confronting death. " You are mistaken, my friend," said he ; " I fear death as much as any one, but I should be sorry not to meet danger as bravely as others." This battle, known under the



name of St. Vincent, spread the greatest terror among the Republicans, and made the Royalists masters of an immense extent of territory.

M. de Sapinaud having occasion to return to La Verrie on some private business, was obliged to raise troops there immediately, and to advance towards Chatillon, from which place the enemy fled at his approach. He pursued his march as far as La Châtaigneraye, from whence he forwarded two pieces of cannon and two barrels of powder, to Mortagne. He also went there in person, and was received in triumph. The house of his sister-in-law, Madame Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, was not empty for a moment during the six hours he spent there. M. de Royrand and he marched with the other chiefs against Fontenay ; about the end of May, they brought up their divisions in the direction of St. Hermine, while the other generals commenced the attack on two opposite points ; Fontenay was soon the reward of their valour. The booty was considerable, but it was unequally divided, which excited the complaints of M. de Royrand.

A short time afterwards, M. Sapinaud de la Verrie took a number of prisoners in a battle near Chantonnay, and among them was Colonel Monnet. This was the last ray of happiness which fate shed on his career. The unsuccessful attack of



Luçon, at the end of June, overwhelmed him with grief. He was himself the last to quit the field of battle, yet nothing could arrest the flight of the Royal army, occasioned by the deserters whom M. de Royrand had imprudently received into his division, returning to their flag. In the mean time the army of the centre being desirous to stop the progress of General Tuncq, M. de Sapinaud was chosen to command the advance-guard.

As he was approaching the bridge of Charron to take possession of that important station, he was betrayed by a protestant deserter, who communicated the counter-sign to the enemy, and he found himself surrounded on every side. Twice he rushed forward to the attack, and twice he was driven back and mortally wounded. Four peasants, one of whom was named Guiton, of the village of La Verrie, of which Sapinaud was the proprietor, forfeited their lives in attempting to rescue his body from the murderers. A price had been set upon his head, so much were his influence and valour dreaded by the enemy. Thus perished on the field of honour, the Chevalier Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet, in his fifty-fifth year. The Royal army, in the official bulletin of the superior council, deploras his death in the following words :

“ We owe a well-merited tribute of praise and

regret to M. Sapinaud de la Verrie \*, who, being wounded in the first attack of the bridge of Char-ron, fell into the hands of the enemy, and experienced the most cruel tortures from them.”

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ACCOUNT OF

THE PASSAGE OF THE LOIRE †.

In the Autumn of 1793, the Royalists of La Vendée passed the Loire, crossed the Maine and Brittany, and after obtaining several victories over the troops which were opposed to them, they laid siege to the little port of Grandville, in Normandy. This plan had been concerted with the English, who had promised to send a squadron, and to supply the Royalists with troops and artillery. The winds, however, were constantly unfavourable to the success of this enterprise, and

\* M. de la Verrie was nearly five feet six inches high, and was well made. His countenance was as noble and animated as his figure was well proportioned. His forehead was small and rather projecting, his eyes were black and very brilliant, his nose and mouth well-turned, and his whole face had an agreeable expression. He had a good deal of hair, but age and misfortune had whitened it.

† We have been furnished with these observations by a writer well known and esteemed by the friends of religion and of the king.—(*Note of the Editor.*)

the resistance of Grandville was still more so. The object was to have taken possession of this port, and thus to have procured a free communication with the islands of Jersey and Guernsey. It would not have been difficult to have fortified this little place ; and by this means to have secured a channel for the frequent supply of troops and ammunition. Young Forestier, in the course of the attack on this town, had climbed to the very ramparts ; his brave soldiers hastened to follow him, when a deserter from the Republican troops, who had been received into their ranks, cried out, “ Back ! Back !—we are betrayed !” A Vendean officer blew out his brains on the spot ; but terror had already spread among the besiegers, and nothing would check their retreat, which was accelerated too by the desire of returning to their native soil. It was succeeded by sad disasters. The English, whose progress had been impeded by contrary winds, did not come up to the coast until the royal army was already at a great distance from it.

On the 2d of October, a squadron, under the command of Admiral Macbride, came in sight of Cape La Hogue, passed before Cherbourg, and went along the coast to Grandville. This squadron, which was composed of several ships of war, floating batteries, and transports, had about seven

thousand English troops on board, besides a corps of French emigrants, which were to be joined by others already assembled at Jersey and Guernsey. The Earl of Moira headed the enterprise, but not perceiving on the coast the signals which had been agreed upon, he anchored at Jersey, and remained there some time. He there received intelligence of the disasters of the Royalists, and thus this expedition, for which the English government had entered into considerable expenses, was completely useless; for, there was no longer the least hope of any co-operation on the part of the Royalists in that quarter.

It is the more necessary to state these facts here, as they have not been mentioned in the histories and memoirs relating to the Revolution. Writers of the Republican party, and even some of those attached to the Royal cause, have reproached the British government with having on this occasion deceived the Royalists of La Vendée. These details, I trust, will justify the English ministry in this particular at least. The account which I have here given is extracted from the English gazettes, and official reports.

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ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL VICTIMS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL OF LAVAL, AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE VENDEANS.

A woman of La Vendée, who had been forced by sickness to remain at Laval with her three daughters, was discovered and condemned to death by those infamous judges, to whom the name of men cannot be given without disgracing mankind. Some there were who had courage to raise their voices in the cause of humanity, but they were no more heard than the cries of a child lost in a forest during a storm.

The youngest of the victims who was but sixteen years of age, and who was singularly beautiful, was overpowered with terror at sight of the preparations for her execution ; but her mother's voice soon restored her self-possession. Like the mother of the Machabæi she begged to be put to death last ; and, after supporting the courage of her children, her soul was wafted to Heaven to share their glory, and to increase it by her presence.

Another Vendean woman was conducted in a state of pregnancy to prison, where she was delivered of a male child. A person who was beside her, hearing her weep during the pains of childbirth, asked her how she would have sufficient fortitude

to bear up during her execution. "I now yield to the sufferings and complaints of nature," she replied, "but on the scaffold God will be with me."

She suckled her child during six weeks; and, at the expiration of that period her sentence was communicated to her. She received the intelligence with resignation. She requested permission to carry her child in her arms to the spot where her hair was to be cut off previous to her execution. This solicitation was acceded to. The maternal tenderness and the confidence in Heaven which were depicted in her countenance, powerfully affected all who beheld her. On reaching the fatal spot she gave her infant a last kiss, and placed it in the arms of the woman who had had charge of her in the jail. "Take this poor little orphan," said she, "I confide it to your care. I can only offer you my watch in return for your goodness; but Heaven, I trust, will hear my prayers, and discharge the debt of gratitude I owe you." She then calmly ascended the scaffold. The executioner wished to take off her shawl, lest it might impede him in the horrible operation which he was about to perform. "No," said she, "I would rather not be uncovered; I care not how much I suffer." Her infant, deprived of



her care, withered like a tender bud when excluded from the fostering rays of the sun. It was restored to her, not in this world, where happiness is merely an empty name, but in those realms of bliss, where joy reigns everlastingly, and where sorrow never enters.

The people of Laval had sensibly increased the Royalist army during the passage of the Loire. They shared with the Royalists their provisions, &c., and took part in their engagements. Thus the people of Laval are never mentioned in the faithful land, without receiving a tribute of praise.

God has rewarded them by protecting in their country a convent of Trappists. These holy men, who are engaged night and day in offering up prayers to move the mercy of Heaven in behalf of the sinful, perform mass twice every week for the soldiers who perished at the battle of Laval, in 1793. I saw two of these saints on earth: one was brother Marie-Joseph, formerly Baron de Geramb, a general in the Austrian service, and chamberlain to the Emperor Francis; the other was brother Joseph, formerly known by the name of M. de Champlois, grand-vicar of the diocese of Nice. I never met with any ecclesiastics more distinguished for information and talent, amiable conduct, and humility.



I picture to myself the image of these two pious men, when I seek to form an idea of the perfect beings who have passed from earth to heaven.

THE END.

LONDON:  
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7, Pall Mall East, March 22, 1824.

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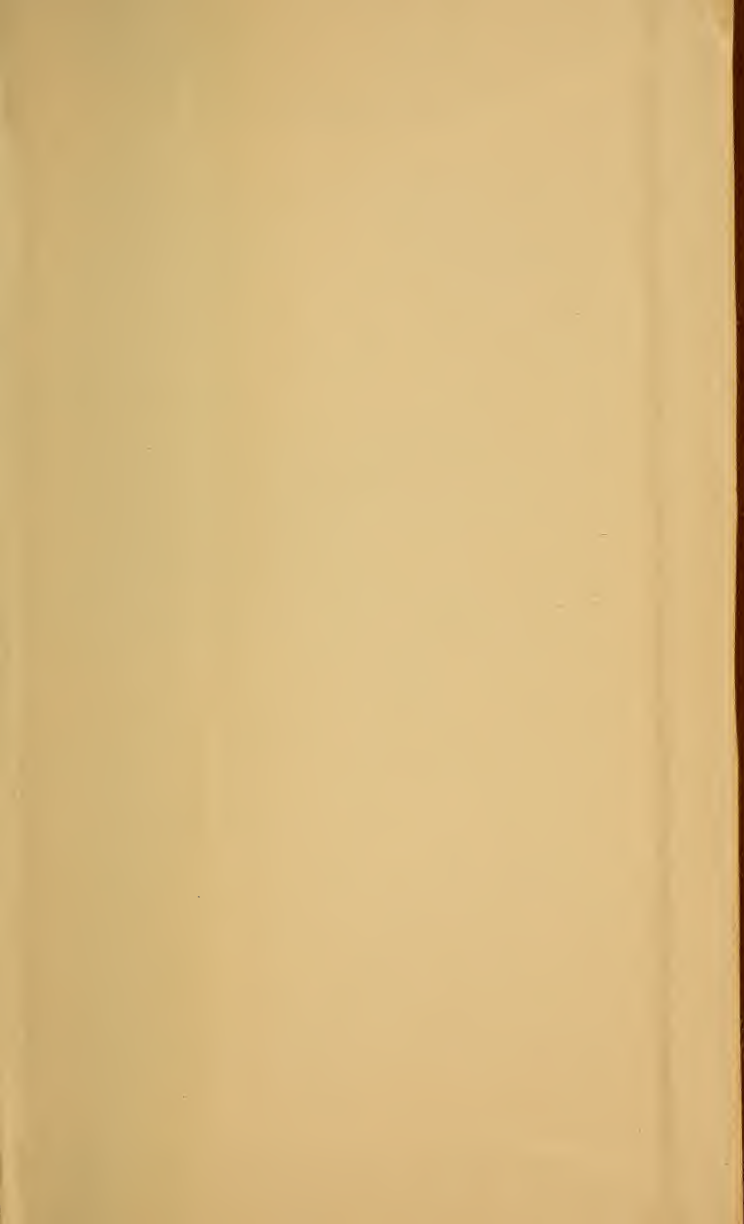
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