MADAME ROLAND

MAKERS OF HISTORY

BY

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CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

1754-1767

Many characters of unusual grandeur were developed by the French Revolution. Among them all, there are few more illustrious, or more worthy of notice, than that of Madame Roland. The eventful story of her life contains much to inspire the mind with admiration and with enthusiasm, and to stimulate one to live worthily of those capabilities with which every human heart is endowed. No person can read the record of her lofty spirit and of her heroic acts without a higher appreciation of woman's power, and of the mighty influence one may wield, who combines the charms of a noble and highly-cultivated mind with the fascinations of female delicacy and loveliness. To understand the secret of the almost miraculous influence she exerted, it is necessary to trace her career, with some degree of minuteness, from the cradle to the hour of her sublime and heroic death.

In the year 1754, there was living, in an obscure workshop in Paris, on the crowded Quai des Orfevres, an engraver by the name of Gratien Phlippon. He had married a very beautiful woman, whose placid temperament and cheerful content contrasted strikingly with the restlessness and ceaseless repinings of her husband. The comfortable yet humble apartments of the engraver were over the shop where he plied his daily toil. He was much dissatisfied with his lowly condition in life, and that his family, in the enjoyment of frugal competence alone, were debarred from those luxuries which were so profusely showered upon others. Bitterly and unceasingly he murmured that his lot had been cast in the ranks of obscurity and of unsparing labor, while others, by a more fortunate, although no better merited destiny, were born to ease and affluence, and honor and luxury. This thought of the unjust inequality in man's condition, which soon broke forth with all the volcanic energy of the French Revolution, already began to ferment in the bosoms of the laboring classes, and no one pondered these wide diversities with a more restless spirit, or murmured more loudly and more incessantly than Phlippon. When the day's toil was ended, he loved to gather around him associates whose feelings harmonized with his own, and to descant upon their own grievous oppression and upon the arrogance of aristocratic greatness. With an eloquence which often deeply moved his sympathizing auditory, and fanned to greater intensity the fires which were consuming his own heart, he contrasted their doom of sleepless labor and of comparative penury with the brilliance of the courtly throng, living in idle luxury, and squandering millions in the amusements at Versailles, and sweeping in charioted splendor through the Champs Elysée.

Phlippon was a philosopher, not a Christian. Submission was a virtue he had never learned, and never wished to learn. Christianity, as he saw it developed before him only in the powerful enginery of the Roman Catholic Church, was, in his view, but a formidable barrier against the liberty and the elevation of the people—a bulwark, bristling with superstition and bayonets, behind which nobles and kings were securely intrenched. He consequently became as hostile to the doctrines of the Church as he was to the institutions of the state. The monarch was, in his eye, a tyrant, and God a delusion. The enfranchisement of the people, in his judgment, required the overthrow of both the earthly and the celestial monarch. In these ideas, agitating the heart of Phlippon, behold the origin of the French Revolution. They were diffused in pamphlets and daily papers in theaters and cafés. They were urged by workmen in their shops, by students in their closets. They became the inspiring spirit of science in encyclopedias and reviews, and formed the chorus in all the songs of revelry and libertinism. These sentiments spread from heart to heart, through Paris, through the provinces, till France rose like a demon in its wrath, and the very globe trembled beneath its gigantic and indignant tread.

Madame Phlippon was just the reverse of her husband. She was a woman in whom faith, and trust, and submission predominated. She surrendered her will, without questioning, to all the teachings of the Church of Rome. She was placid, contented, and cheerful, and, though uninquiring in her devotion, undoubtedly sincere in her piety. In every event of life she recognized the overruling hand of Providence, and feeling that the comparatively humble lot assigned her was in accordance with the will of God, she indulged in no repinings, and envied not the more brilliant destiny of lords and ladies. An industrious housewife, she hummed the hymns of contentment and peace from morning till evening. In the cheerful performance of her daily toil, she was ever pouring the balm of her peaceful spirit upon the restless heart of her spouse. Phlippon loved his wife, and often felt the superiority of her Christian temperament.

Of eight children born to these parents, one only, Jeanne Manon, or Jane Mary, survived the hour of birth. Her father first received her to his arms in 1754, and she became the object of his painful and most passionate adoration. Her mother pressed the coveted treasure to her bosom with maternal love, more calm, and deep, and enduring. And now Jane became the central star in this domestic system. Both parents lived in her and for her. She was their earthly all. The mother wished to train her for the Church and for heaven, that she might become an angel and dwell by the throne of God. These bright hopes gilded a prayerful mother's hours of toil and care. The father bitterly repined. Why should his bright and beautiful child—who even in these her infantile years was giving indication of the most brilliant

intellect—why should she be doomed to a life of obscurity and toil, while the garden of the Tuileries and the Elysian Fields were thronged with children, neither so beautiful nor so intelligent, who were reveling in boundless wealth, and living in a world of luxury and splendor which, to Phlippon's imagination, seemed more alluring than any idea he could form of heaven? These thoughts were a consuming fire in the bosom of the ambitious father. They burned with inextinguishable flame.

The fond parent made the sprightly and fascinating child his daily companion. He led her by the hand, and confided to her infantile spirit all his thoughts, his illusions, his day-dreams. To her listening ear he told the story of the arrogance of nobles, of the pride of kings, and of the oppression by which he deemed himself unjustly doomed to a life of penury and toil. The light-hearted child was often weary of these complainings, and turned for relief to the placidity and cheerfulness of her mother's mind. Here she found repose—a soothing, calm, and holy submission. Still the gloom of her father's spirit cast a pensive shade over her own feelings, and infused a tone of melancholy and an air of unnatural reflection into her character. By nature, Jane was endowed with a soul of unusual delicacy. From early childhood, all that is beautiful or sublime in nature, in literature, in character, had charms to rivet her entranced attention. She loved to sit alone at her chamber window in the evening of a summer's day, to gaze upon the gorgeous hues of sunset. As her imagination roved through those portals of a brighter world, which seemed thus, through far-reaching vistas of glory, to be opened to her, she peopled the sun-lit expanse with the creations of her own fancy, and often wept in uncontrollable emotion through the influence of these gathering thoughts. Books of impassioned poetry, and descriptions of heroic character and achievements, were her especial delight. Plutarch's Lives, that book which, more than any other, appears to be the incentive of early genius, was hid beneath her pillow, and read and re-read with tireless avidity. Those illustrious heroes of antiquity became the companions of her solitude and of her hourly thoughts. She adored them and loved them as her own most intimate personal friends. Her character became insensibly molded to their forms, and she was inspired with restless enthusiasm to imitate their deeds. When but twelve years of age, her father found her, one day, weeping that she was not born a Roman maiden. Little did she then imagine that, by talent, by suffering, and by heroism, she was to display a character the history of which would eclipse the proudest narratives in Greek or Roman story.

Jane appears never to have known the frivolity and thoughtlessness of childhood. Before she had entered the fourth year of her age she knew how to read. From that time her thirst for reading was so great, that her parents found no little difficulty in furnishing her with a sufficient supply. She not

only read with eagerness every book which met her eye, but pursued this uninterrupted miscellaneous reading to singular advantage, treasuring up all important facts in her retentive memory. So entirely absorbed was she in her books, that the only successful mode of withdrawing her from them was by offering her flowers, of which she was passionately fond. Books and flowers continued, through all the vicissitudes of her life, even till the hour of her death, to afford her the most exquisite pleasure. She had no playmates, and thought no more of play than did her father and mother, who were her only and her constant companions. From infancy she was accustomed to the thoughts and the emotions of mature minds. In personal appearance she was, in earliest childhood and through life, peculiarly interesting rather than beautiful. As mature years perfected her features and her form, there was in the contour of her graceful figure, and her intellectual countenance, that air of thoughtfulness, of pensiveness, of glowing tenderness and delicacy, which gave her a power of fascination over all hearts. She sought not this power; she thought not of it; but an almost resistless attraction and persuasion accompanied all her words and actions.

It was, perhaps, the absence of playmates, and the habitual converse with mature minds, which, at so early an age, inspired Jane with that insatiate thirst for knowledge which she ever manifested. Books were her only resource in every unoccupied hour. From her walks with her father, and her domestic employments with her mother, she turned to her little library and to her chamber window, and lost herself in the limitless realms of thought. It is often imagined that character is the result of accident—that there is a native and inherent tendency, which triumphs over circumstances, and works out its own results. Without denying that there may be different intellectual gifts with which the soul may be endowed as it comes from the hand of the Creator, it surely is not difficult to perceive that the peculiar training through which the childhood of Jane was conducted was calculated to form the peculiar character which she developed.

In a bright summer's afternoon she might be seen sauntering along the Boulevards, led by her father's hand, gazing upon that scene of gayety with which the eye is never wearied. A gilded coach, drawn by the most beautiful horses in the richest trappings, sweeps along the streets—a gorgeous vision. Servants in showy livery, and out-riders proudly mounted, invest the spectacle with a degree of grandeur, beneath which the imagination of a child sinks exhausted. Phlippon takes his little daughter in his arms to show her the sight, and, as she gazes in infantile wonder and delight, the discontented father says, "Look at that lord, and lady, and child, lolling so voluptuously in their coach. They have no right there. Why must I and my child walk on this hot pavement, while they repose on velvet cushions and revel in all luxury? Oppressive laws compel me to pay a portion of my hard

earnings to support them in their pride and indolence. But a time will come when the people will awake to the consciousness of their wrongs, and their tyrants will tremble before them." He continues his walk in moody silence, brooding over his sense of injustice. They return to their home. Jane wishes that her father kept a carriage, and liveried servants and out-riders. She thinks of politics, and of the tyranny of kings and nobles, and of the unjust inequalities of man. She retires to the solitude of her loved chamber window, and reads of Aristides the Just, of Themistocles with his Spartan virtues, of Brutus, and of the mother of the Gracchi. Greece and Rome rise before her in all their ancient renown. She despises the frivolity of Paris, the effeminacy of the moderns, and her youthful bosom throbs with the desire of being noble in spirit and of achieving great exploits. Thus, when other children of her age were playing with their dolls, she was dreaming of the prostration of nobles and of the overthrow of thrones—of liberty, and fraternity, and equality among mankind. Strange dreams for a child, but still more strange in their fulfillment.

The infidelity of her father and the piety of her mother contended, like counter currents of the ocean, in her bosom. Her active intellect and love of freedom sympathized with the speculations of the so-called philosopher. Her amiable and affectionate disposition and her pensive meditations led her to seek repose in the sublime conceptions and in the soul-soothing consolations of the Christian. Her parents were deeply interested in her education, and were desirous of giving her every advantage for securing the highest attainments. The education of young ladies, at that time, in France, was conducted almost exclusively by nuns in convents. The idea of the silence and solitude of the cloister inspired the highly-imaginative girl with a blaze of enthusiasm. Fondly as she loved her home, she was impatient for the hour to arrive when, with heroic self-sacrifice, she could withdraw from the world and its pleasures, and devote her whole soul to devotion, to meditation, and to study. Her mother's spirit of religion was exerting a powerful influence over her, and one evening she fell at her feet, and, bursting into tears, besought that she might be sent to a convent to prepare to receive her first Christian communion in a suitable frame of mind.

The convent of the sisterhood of the Congregation in Paris was selected for Jane. In the review of her life which she subsequently wrote while immured in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, she says, in relation to this event, "While pressing my dear mother in my arms, at the moment of parting with her for the first time in my life, I thought my heart would have broken; but I was acting in obedience to the voice of God, and I passed the threshold of the cloister, tearfully offering up to him the greatest sacrifice I was capable of making. This was on the 7th of May, 1765, when I was eleven years and two months old. In the gloom of a prison, in the midst of political storms

which ravage my country, and sweep away all that is dear to me, how shall I recall to my mind, and how describe the rapture and tranquillity I enjoyed at this period of my life? What lively colors can express the soft emotions of a young heart endued with tenderness and sensibility, greedy of happiness, beginning to be alive to the beauties of nature, and perceiving the Deity alone? The first night I spent in the convent was a night of agitation. I was no longer under the paternal roof. I was at a distance from that kind mother, who was doubtless thinking of me with affectionate emotion. A dim light diffused itself through the room in which I had been put to bed with four children of my own age. I stole softly from my couch, and drew near the window, the light of the moon enabling me to distinguish the garden, which it overlooked. The deepest silence prevailed around, and I listened to it, if I may use the expression, with a sort of respect. Lofty trees cast their gigantic shadows along the ground, and promised a secure asylum to peaceful meditation. I lifted up my eyes to the heavens; they were unclouded and serene. I imagined that I felt the presence of the Deity smiling upon my sacrifice, and already offering me a reward in the consolatory hope of a celestial abode. Tears of delight flowed down my cheeks. I repeated my vows with holy ecstasy, and went to bed again to taste the slumber of God's chosen children."

Her thirst for knowledge was insatiate, and with untiring assiduity she pursued her studies. Every hour of the day had its appropriate employment, and time flew upon its swiftest wings. Every book which fell in her way sheeagerly perused, and treasured its knowledge or its literary beauties in her memory. Heraldry and books of romance, lives of the saints and fairy legends, biography, travels, history, political philosophy, poetry, and treatises upon morals, were all read and meditated upon by this young child. She had no taste for any childish amusements; and in the hours of recreation, when the mirthful girls around her were forgetting study and care in those games appropriate to their years, she would walk alone in the garden, admiring the flowers, and gazing upon the fleecy clouds in the sky. In all the beauties of nature her eye ever recognized the hand of God, and she ever took pleasure in those sublime thoughts of infinity and eternity which must engross every noble mind. Her teachers had but little to do. Whatever study she engaged in was pursued with such spontaneous zeal, that success had crowned her efforts before others had hardly made a beginning.

In music and drawing she made great proficiency. She was even more fond of all that is beautiful and graceful in the accomplishments of a highly-cultivated mind, than in those more solid studies which she nevertheless pursued with so much energy and interest.

The scenes which she witnessed in the convent were peculiarly calculated to produce an indelible impression upon a mind so imaginative. The chapel for prayer, with its somber twilight and its dimly-burning tapers; the dirges which the organ breathed upon the trembling ear; the imposing pageant of prayer and praise, with the blended costumes of monks and hooded nuns; the knell which tolled the requiem of a departed sister, as, in the gloom of night and by the light of torches, she was conveyed to her burial—all these concomitants of that system of pageantry, arranged so skillfully to impress the senses of the young and the imaginative, fanned to the highest elevation the flames of that poetic temperament she so eminently possessed.

God thus became in Jane's mind a vision of poetic beauty. Religion was the inspiration of enthusiasm and of sentiment. The worship of the Deity was blended with all that was ennobling and beautiful. Moved by these glowing fancies, her susceptible spirit, in these tender years, turned away from atheism, from infidelity, from irreligion, as from that which was unrefined, revolting, vulgar. The consciousness of the presence of God, the adoration of his being, became a passion of her soul. This state of mind was poetry, not religion. It involved no sense of the spirituality of the Divine Law, no consciousness of unworthiness, no need of a Savior. It was an emotion sublime and beautiful, yet merely such an emotion as any one of susceptible temperament might feel when standing in the Vale of Chamouni at midnight, or when listening to the crash of thunder as the tempest wrecks the sky, or when one gazes entranced upon the fair face of nature in a mild and lovely morning of June, when no cloud appears in the blue canopy above us, and no breeze ruffles the leaves of the grove or the glassy surface of the lake, and the songs of birds and the perfume of flowers fill the air. Many mistake the highly poetic enthusiasm which such scenes excite for the spirit of piety.

While Jane was an inmate of the convent, a very interesting young lady, from some disappointment weary of the world, took the veil. When one enters a convent with the intention of becoming a nun, she first takes the white veil, which is an expression of her intention, and thus enters the grade of a novice. During the period of her novitiate, which continues for several months, she is exposed to the severest discipline of vigils, and fastings, and solitude, and prayer, that she may distinctly understand the life of weariness and self-denial upon which she has entered. If, unintimidated by these hardships, she still persists in her determination, she then takes the black veil, and utters her solemn and irrevocable vows to bury herself in the gloom of the cloister, never again to emerge. From this step there is no return. The throbbing heart, which neither cowls nor veils can still, finds in the taper-lighted cell its living tomb, till it sleeps in death. No one with even an ordinary share of sensibility can witness a ceremony involving such

consequences without the deepest emotion. The scene produced an effect upon the spirit of Jane which was never effaced. The wreath of flowers which crowned the beautiful victim; the veil enveloping her person; the solemn and dirge-like chant, the requiem of her burial to all the pleasures of sense and time; the pall which overspread her, emblematic of her consignment to a living tomb, all so deeply affected the impassioned child, that, burying her face in her hands, she wept with uncontrollable emotion.

The thought of the magnitude of the sacrifice which the young novice was making appealed irresistibly to her admiration of the morally sublime. There was in that relinquishment of all the joys of earth a self-surrender to a passionless life of mortification, and penance, and prayer, an apparent heroism, which reminded Jane of her much-admired Roman maidens and matrons. She aspired with most romantic ardor to do, herself, something great and noble. While her sound judgment could not but condemn this abandonment of life, she was inspired with the loftiest enthusiasm to enter, in some worthy way, upon a life of endurance, of sacrifice, and of martyrdom. She felt that she was born for the performance of some great deeds, and she looked down with contempt upon all the ordinary vocations of every-day life. These were the dreams of a romantic girl. They were not, however, the fleeting visions of a sickly and sentimental mind, but the deep, soul-moving aspirations of one of the strongest intellects over which imagination has ever swayed its scepter. One is reminded by these early developments of character of the remark of Napoleon, when some one said, in his presence, "It is nothing but imagination." "Nothing but imagination!" replied this sagacious observer; "imagination rules the world!"

These dim visions of greatness, these lofty aspirations, not for renown, but for the inward consciousness of intellectual elevation, of moral sublimity, of heroism, had no influence, as is ordinarily the case with day-dreams, to give Jane a distaste for life's energetic duties. They did not enervate her character, or convert her into a mere visionary; on the contrary, they but roused and invigorated her to alacrity in the discharge of every duty. They led her to despise ease and luxury, to rejoice in self-denial, and to cultivate, to the highest possible degree, all her faculties of body and of mind, that she might be prepared for any possible destiny. Wild as, at times, her imaginings might have been, her most vivid fancy never could have pictured a career so extraordinary as that to which reality introduced her; and in all the annals of ancient story, she could find no record of sufferings and privations more severe than those which she was called upon to endure. And neither heroine nor hero of any age has shed greater luster upon human nature by the cheerful fortitude with which adversity has been braved.

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH.

The influence of those intense emotions which were excited in the bosom of Jane by the scenes which she witnessed in her childhood in the nunnery were never effaced from her imaginative mind. Nothing can be conceived more strongly calculated to impress the feelings of a romantic girl, than the poetic attractions which are thrown around the Roman Catholic religion by nuns, and cloisters, and dimly-lighted chapels, and faintly-burning tapers, and matins, and vespers, and midnight dirges. Jane had just the spirit to be most deeply captivated by such enchantments. She reveled in those imaginings which clustered in the dim shades of the cloister, in an ecstasy of luxurious enjoyment. The ordinary motives which influence young girls of her age seem to have had no control over her. Her joys were most highly intellectual and spiritual, and her aspirations were far above the usual conceptions of childhood. She, for a time, became entirely fascinated by the novel scenes around her, and surrendered her whole soul to the dominion of the associations with which she was engrossed. In subsequent years, by the energies of a vigorous philosophy, she disenfranchised her intellect from these illusions, and, proceeding to another extreme, wandered in the midst of the cheerless mazes of unbelief; but her fancy retained the traces of these early impressions until the hour of her death. Christianity, even when most heavily encumbered with earthly corruption, is infinitely preferable to no religion at all. Even papacy has never swayed so bloody a scepter as infidelity.

Jane remained in the convent one year, and then, with deep regret, left the nuns, to whom she had become extremely attached. With one of the sisters, who was allied to the nobility, she formed a strong friendship, which continued through life. For many years she kept up a constant correspondence with this friend, and to this correspondence she attributes, in a great degree, that facility in writing which contributed so much to her subsequent celebrity. This letter-writing is one of the best schools of composition, and the parent who is emulous of the improvement of his children in that respect, will do all in his power to encourage the constant use of the pen in these familiar epistles. Thus the most important study, the study of the power of expression, is converted into a pleasure, and is pursued with an avidity which will infallibly secure success. It is a sad mistake to frown upon such efforts as a waste of time.

While in the convent, she, for the first time, partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Her spirit was most deeply impressed and overawed by the sacredness of the ceremony. During several weeks previous to her reception of this solemn ordinance, by solitude, self-examination, and prayer, she

endeavored to prepare herself for that sacred engagement, which she deemed the pledge of her union to God, and of her eternal felicity. When the hour arrived, her feelings were so intensely excited that she wept convulsively, and she was entirely incapable of walking to the altar. She was borne in the arms of two of the nuns. This depth of emotion was entirely unaffected, and secured for her the peculiar reverence of the sacred sisters.

That spirit of pensive reverie, so dangerous and yet so fascinating, to which she loved to surrender herself, was peculiarly in harmony with all the influences with which she was surrounded in the convent, and constituted the very soul of the piety of its inmates. She was encouraged by the commendations of all the sisters to deliver her mind up to the dominion of these day-dreams, with whose intoxicating power every heart is more or less familiar. She loved to retire to the solitude of the cloisters, when the twilight was deepening into darkness, and alone, with measured steps, to pace to and fro, listening to the monotonous echoes of her own footfall, which alone disturbed the solemn silence. At the tomb of a departed sister she would often linger, and, indulging in those melancholy meditations which had for her so many charms, long for her own departure to the bosom of her heavenly Father, where she might enjoy that perfect happiness for which, at times, her spirit glowed with such intense aspirations.

At the close of the year Jane left the peaceful retreat where she had enjoyed so much, and where she had received so many impressions never to be effaced. Her parents, engrossed with care, were unable to pay that attention to their child which her expanding mind required, and she was sent to pass her thirteenth year with her paternal grandmother and her aunt Angelieu. Her grandmother was a dignified lady of much refinement of mind and gracefulness of demeanor, who laid great stress upon all the courtesies of life and the elegances of manners and address. Her aunt was gentle and warm-hearted, and her spirit was deeply imbued with that humble and docile piety, which has so often shone out with pure luster even through all the encumbrances of the Roman Catholic Church. With them she spent a year, in a seclusion from the world almost as entire as that which she found in the solitude of the convent. An occasional visit to her parents, and to her old friends the nuns, was all that interrupted the quiet routine of daily duties. Books continued still her employment and her delight. Her habits of reverie continued unbroken. Her lofty dreams gained a daily increasing ascendency over her character.

She thus continued to dwell in the boundless regions of the intellect and the affections. Even the most commonplace duties of life were rendered attractive to her by investing them with a mysterious connection with her own limitless being. Absorbed in her own thoughts, ever communing with herself, with nature, with the Deity, as the object of her highest sentiment

and aspirations, though she did not despise those of a more humble mental organization, she gave them not a thought. The evening twilight of every fine day still found her at her chamber window, admiring the glories of the setting sun, and feeding her impassioned spirit with those visions of future splendor and happiness which the scene appeared to reveal. She fancied she could almost see the wings of angels gleaming in the purple sunlight. Through those gorgeous avenues, where clouds were piled on golden clouds, she imagined, far away, the mansions of the blessed. These emotions glowing within her, gave themselves utterance in prayers earnest and ardent, while the tears of irrepressible feeling filled her eyes as she thought of that exalted Being, so worthy of her pure and intensest homage.

The father of Jane was delighted with all these indications of a marked and elevated character, and did all in his power to stimulate her to greater zeal in her lofty studies and meditations. Jane became his idol, and the more her imaginative mind became imbued with the spirit of romantic aspirations, the better was he pleased. The ardor of her zeal enabled her to succeed in every thing which she undertook. Invincible industry and energy were united with these dreams. She was ambitious of knowing every thing; and when her father placed in her hands the burin, wishing to teach her to engrave, she immediately acquired such skill as to astonish both of her parents. And she afterward passed many pleasant hours in engraving, on highly-polished plates of brass, beautiful emblems of flowers as tokens of affection for her friends.

The mother of Jane, with far better judgment, endeavored to call back her daughter from that unreal world in which she loved to dwell, and to interest her in the practical duties of life. She began to be impatient for her return home, that she might introduce her to those household employments, the knowledge of which is of such unspeakable importance to every lady. In this she was far from being unsuccessful; for while Jane continued to dream in accordance with the encouragement of her father, she also cordially recognized the good sense of her mother's counsels, and held herself ever in readiness to co-operate with her in all her plans.

The Visit.

A little incident which took place at this time strikingly illustrates the reflective maturity which her character had already acquired. Before the French Revolution, the haughty demeanor of the nobility of France assumed such an aspect as an American, at the present day, can but feebly conceive. One morning, the grandmother of Jane, a woman of dignity and cultivated mind, took her to the house of Madame De Boismorel, a lady of noble rank, whose children she had partly educated. It was a great event, and Jane was dressed with the utmost care to visit the aristocratic mansion. The aspiring

girl, with no disposition to come down to the level of those beneath her, and with still less willingness to do homage to those above her, was entirely unconscious of the mortifying condescension with which she was to be received. The porter at the door saluted Madame Phlippon with politeness, and all the servants whom she met in the hall addressed her with civility. She replied to each with courtesy and with dignity. The grandmother was proud of her grand-daughter, and the servants paid the young lady many compliments. The instinctive pride of Jane took instant alarm. She felt that servants had no right to presume to pay her compliments—that they were thus assuming that she was upon their level. Alas! for poor human nature. All love to ascend. Few are willing to favor equality by stepping down. A tall footman announced them at the door of the magnificent saloon. All the furnishing and arrangements of this aristocratic apartment were calculated to dazzle the eye and bewilder the mind of one unaccustomed to such splendor. Madame De Boismorel, dressed with the most ostentatious display of wealth, was seated upon an ottoman, in stately dignity, employing her fingers with fancy needle-work. Her face was thickly covered with rouge, and, as her guests were announced, she raised her eyes from her embroidery, and fixing a cold and unfeeling glance upon them, without rising to receive them, or even making the slightest inclination of her body, in a very patronizing and condescending tone said to the grandmother,

"Ah! Miss Phlippon, good morning to you!"

Jane, who was far from pleased with her reception in the hall, was exceedingly displeased with her reception in the saloon. The pride of the Roman maiden rose in her bosom, and indignantly she exclaimed to herself, "So my grandmother is called Miss in this house!"

"I am very glad to see you," continued Madame De Boismorel; "and who is this fine girl? your grand-daughter, I suppose? She will make a very pretty woman. Come here, my dear. Ah! I see she is a little bashful. How old is your grand-daughter, Miss Phlippon? Her complexion is rather brown, to be sure, but her skin is clear, and will grow fairer in a few years. She is quite a woman already."

Thus she rattled on for some time, waiting for no answers. At length, turning again to Jane, who had hardly ventured to raise her eyes from the floor, she said, "What a beautiful hand you have got. That hand must be a lucky one. Did you ever venture in a lottery my dear?"

"Never, madam," replied Jane, promptly. "I am not fond of gaming."

"What an admirable voice!" exclaimed the lady. "So sweet and yet so full-toned! But how grave she is! Pray, my dear, are you not a little of a devotee?"

"I know my duty to God," replied Jane, "and I endeavor to fulfill it."

"That's a good girl," the noble lady rejoined. "You wish to take the veil, do you not?"

"I do not know what may be my destination, neither am I at present anxious to conjecture it."

"How very sententious!" Madame De Boismorel replied. "Your grand-daughter reads a great deal, does she not, Miss Phlippon?"

"Yes, madam, reading is her greatest delight."

"Ay, ay," rejoined the lady; "I see how it is. But have a care that she does not turn author. That would be a pity indeed."

During this conversation the cheeks of Jane were flushed with wounded pride, and her heart throbbed most violently. She felt indignant and degraded, and was exceedingly impatient to escape from the humiliating visit. Conscious that she was, in spirit, in no respect inferior to the maidens of Greece and Rome who had so engrossed her admiration, she as instinctively recoiled from the arrogance of the haughty occupant of the parlor as she had repelled the affected equality of the servants in the hall.

A short time after this she was taken to pass a week at the luxurious abodes of Maria Antoinette. Versailles was in itself a city of palaces and of courtiers, where all that could dazzle the eye in regal pomp and princely voluptuousness was concentered. Most girls of her age would have been enchanted and bewildered by this display of royal grandeur. Jane was permitted to witness, and partially to share, all the pomp of luxuriously-spread tables, and presentations, and court balls, and illuminations, and the gilded equipages of embassadors and princes. But this maiden, just emerging from the period of childhood and the seclusion of the cloister, undazzled by all this brilliance, looked sadly on the scene with the condemning eye of a philosopher. The servility of the courtiers excited her contempt. She contrasted the boundless profusion and extravagance which filled these palaces with the absence of comfort in the dwellings of the over-taxed poor, and pondered deeply the value of that regal despotism, which starved the millions to pander to the dissolute indulgence of the few. Her personal pride was also severely stung by perceiving that her own attractions, mental and physical, were entirely overlooked by the crowds which were bowing before the shrines of rank and power. She soon became weary of the painful spectacle. Disgusted with the frivolity of the living, she sought solace for her wounded feelings in companionship with the illustrious dead. She chose the gardens for her resort, and, lingering around the statues which embellished these scenes of almost fairy enchantment, surrendered herself to the luxury of those oft-indulged dreams, which lured

her thoughts away from the trivialities around her to heroic character and brilliant exploits.

"How do you enjoy your visit, my daughter?" inquired her mother.

"I shall be glad when it is ended," was the characteristic reply, "else, in a few more days, I shall so detest all the persons I see that I shall not know what to do with my hatred."

"Why, what harm have these persons done you, my child?"

"They make me feel injustice and look upon absurdity," replied this philosopher of thirteen.

Thus early did she commence her political meditations, and here were planted the germs of that enthusiasm which subsequently nerved her to such exertions for the disenthralment of the people, and the establishment of republican power upon the ruin of the throne of the Bourbons. She thought of the ancient republics, encircled by a halo of visionary glory, and of the heroes and heroines who had been the martyrs of liberty; or, to use her own energetic language, "I sighed at the recollection of Athens, where I could have enjoyed the fine arts without being annoyed at the sight of despotism. I was out of all patience at being a French-woman. Enchanted with the golden period of the Grecian republic, I passed over the storms by which it had been agitated. I forgot the exile of Aristides, the death of Socrates, and the condemnation of Phocion. I little thought that Heaven reserved me to be a witness of similar errors, to profess the same principles, and to participate in the glory of the same persecutions."

Soon after Jane had entered her fourteenth year, she left her grandmother's and returned to her parental home. Her father, though far from opulence, was equally removed from poverty, and, without difficulty, provided his family with a frugal competence. Jane now pursued her studies and her limitless reading with unabated ardor. Her mind, demanding reality and truth as basis for thought, in the developments of character as revealed in biography, in the rise and fall of empires as portrayed in history, in the facts of science, and in the principles of mental and physical philosophy, found its congenial aliment. She accustomed herself to read with her pen in her hand, taking copious abstracts of facts and sentiments which particularly interested her. Not having a large library of her own, many of the books which she read were borrowed, and she carefully extracted from them and treasured in her commonplace book those passages which particularly interested her, that she might read them again and again. With these abstracts and extracts there were freely intermingled her own reflections, and thus all that she read was carefully stored up in her own mind and became a portion of her own intellectual being.

Jane's mother, conscious of the importance to her child of a knowledge of domestic duties, took her to the market to obtain meat and vegetables, and occasionally placed upon her the responsibility of most of the family purchases; and yet the unaffected, queenly dignity with which the imaginative girl yielded herself to these most useful yet prosaic avocations was such, that when she entered the market, the fruit-women hastened to serve her before the other customers. The first comers, instead of being offended by this neglect, stepped aside, struck by those indescribable indications of superiority which ever gave her such a resistless influence over other minds. It is quite remarkable that Jane, apparently, never turned with repugnance from these humble avocations of domestic life. It speaks most highly in behalf of the intelligence and sound judgment of her mother, that she was enabled thus successfully to allure her daughter from her proud imaginings and her realms of romance to those unattractive practical duties which our daily necessities demand. At one hour, this ardent and impassioned maiden might have been seen in her little chamber absorbed in studies of deepest research. The highest themes which can elevate or engross the mind of man claimed her profound and delighted reveries. The next hour she might be seen in the kitchen, under the guidance of her placid and pious mother, receiving from her judicious lips lessons upon frugality, and industry, and economy. The white apron was bound around her waist, and her hands, which, but a few moments before, were busy with the circles of the celestial globe, were now occupied in preparing vegetables for dinner. There was thus united in the character of Jane the appreciation of all that is beautiful, chivalric, and sublime in the world of fact and the world of imagination, and also domestic skill and practical common sense. She was thus prepared to fascinate by the graces and elegances of a refined and polished mind, and to create for herself, in the midst of all the vicissitudes of life, a region of loveliness in which her spirit could ever dwell; and, at the same time, she possessed that sagacity and tact, and those habits of usefulness, which prepared her to meet calmly all the changes of fortune, and over them all to triumph. With that self-appreciation, the expression of which, with her, was frankness rather than vanity, she subsequently writes, "This mixture of serious studies, agreeable relaxations, and domestic cares, was rendered pleasant by my mother's good management, and fitted me for every thing. It seemed to forebode the vicissitudes of future life, and enabled me to bear them. In every place I am at home. I can prepare my own dinner with as much address as Philopœmen cut wood; but no one seeing me thus engaged would think it an office in which I ought to be employed."

Jane was thus prepared by Providence for that career which she rendered so illustrious through her talents and her sufferings. At this early period there

were struggling in her bosom those very emotions which soon after agitated every mind in France, and which overthrew in chaotic ruin both the altar and the throne. The dissolute lives of many of the Catholic clergy, and their indolence and luxury, began to alarm her faith. The unceasing denunciations of her father gave additional impulse to every such suggestion. She could not but see that the pride and power of the state were sustained by the superstitious terrors wielded by the Church. She could not be blind to the trickery by which money was wrested from tortured consciences, and from ignorance, imbecility, and dotage. She could not but admire her mother's placid piety, neither could she conceal from herself that her faith was feeling, her principles sentiments. Deeply as her own feelings had been impressed in the convent, and much as she loved the gentle sisters there, she sought in vain for a foundation for the gigantic fabric of spiritual dominion towering above her. She looked upon the gorgeous pomp of papal worship, with its gormandizing pastors and its starving flocks, with its pageants to excite the sense and to paralyze the mind, with its friars and monks loitering in sloth and uselessness, and often in the grossest dissipation, and her reason gradually began to condemn it as a gigantic superstition for the enthrallment of mankind. Still, the influence of Christian sentiments, like a guardian angel, ever hovered around her, and when her bewildered mind was groping amid the labyrinths of unbelief, her heart still clung to all that is pure in Christian morals, and to all that is consolatory in the hopes of immortality; and even when benighted in the most painful atheistic doubts, conscience became her deity; its voice she most reverently obeyed.

She turned from the Church to the state. She saw the sons and the daughters of aristocratic pride, glittering in gilded chariots, and surrounded by insolent menials, sweep by her, through the Elysian Fields, while she trod the dusty pathway. Her proud spirit revolted, more and more, at the apparent injustice. She had studied the organization of society. She was familiar with the modes of popular oppression. She understood the operation of that system of taxes, so ingeniously devised to sink the mass of the people in poverty and degradation, that princes and nobles might revel in voluptuous splendor. Indignation nerved her spirit as she reflected upon the usurpation thus ostentatiously displayed. The seclusion in which she lived encouraged deep musings upon these vast inequalities of life. Piety had not taught her submission. Philosophy had not yet taught her the impossibility of adjusting these allotments of our earthly state, so as to distribute the gifts of fortune in accordance with merit. Little, however, did the proud grandees imagine, as in courtly splendor they swept by the plebeian maiden, enveloping her in the dust of their chariots, that her voice

would yet aid to upheave their castles from their foundations, and whelm the monarchy and the aristocracy of France in one common ruin.

At this time circumstances brought her in contact with several ladies connected with noble families. The ignorance of these ladies, their pride, their arrogance, excited in Jane's mind deep contempt. She could not but feel her own immeasurable superiority over them, and yet she perceived with indignation that the accident of birth invested them with a factitious dignity, which enabled them to look down upon her with condescension. A lady of noble birth, who had lost fortune and friends through the fraud and dissipation of those connected with her, came to board for a short time in her father's family. This lady was forty years of age, insufferably proud of her pedigree, and in her manners stiff and repulsive. She was exceedingly illiterate and uninformed, being unable to write a line with correctness, and having no knowledge beyond that which may be picked up in the ball-room and the theater. There was nothing in her character to win esteem. She was trying, by a law-suit, to recover a portion of her lost fortune. Jane wrote petitions for her, and letters, and sometimes went with her to make interest with persons whose influence would be important. She perceived that, notwithstanding her deficiency in every personal quality to inspire esteem or love, she was treated, in consequence of her birth, with the most marked deference. Whenever she mentioned the names of her high-born ancestry—and those names were ever upon her lips—she was listened to with the greatest respect. Jane contrasted the reception which this illiterate descendant of nobility enjoyed with the reception which her grandmother encountered in the visit to Madame De Boismorel, and it appeared to her that the world was exceedingly unjust, and that the institutions of society were highly absurd. Thus was her mind training for activity in the arena of revolution. She was pondering deeply all the abuses of society. She had become enamored of the republican liberty of antiquity. She was ready to embrace with enthusiasm any hopes of change. All the games and amusements of girlhood appeared to her frivolous, as, day after day, her whole mental powers were engrossed by these profound contemplations, and by aspirations for the elevation of herself and of mankind.

CHAPTER III.

MAIDENHOOD.

1770-1775

Asoul so active, so imaginative, and so full of feeling as that of Jane, could not long slumber unconscious of the emotion of love. In the unaffected and touching narrative which she gives of her own character, in the Journal which she subsequently wrote in the gloom of a prison, she alludes to the first rising of that mysterious passion in her bosom. With that frankness which ever marked her character, she describes the strange fluttering of her heart, the embarrassment, the attraction, and the instinctive diffidence she experienced when in the presence of a young man who had, all unconsciously, interested her affections. It seems that there was a youthful painter named Taboral, of pale, and pensive, and intellectual countenance—an artist with soul-inspired enthusiasm beaming from his eye—who occasionally called upon her father. Jane had just been reading the Heloise of Rousseau, that gushing fountain of sentimentality. Her young heart took fire. His features mingled insensibly in her dreamings and her visions, and dwelt, a welcome guest, in her castles in the air. The diffident young man, with all the sensitiveness of genius, could not speak to the daughter, of whose accomplishments the father was so justly proud, without blushing like a girl. When Jane heard him in the shop, she always contrived to make some errand to go in. There was a pencil or something else to be sought for. But the moment she was in the presence of Taboral, instinctive embarrassment drove her away, and she retired more rapidly than she entered, and with a palpitating heart ran to hide herself in her little chamber.

This emotion, however, was fleeting and transient, and soon forgotten. Indeed, highly imaginative as was Jane, her imagination was vigorous and intellectual, and her tastes led her far away from those enervating love-dreams in which a weaker mind would have indulged. A young lady so fascinating in mind and person could not but attract much attention. Many suitors began to appear, one after another, but she manifested no interest in any of them. The customs of society in France were such at that time, that it was difficult for any one who sought the hand of Jane to obtain an introduction to her. Consequently, the expedient was usually adopted of writing first to her parents. These letters were always immediately shown to Jane. She judged of the character of the writer by the character of the epistles. Her father, knowing her intellectual superiority, looked to her as his secretary to reply to all these letters. She consequently wrote the answers, which her father carefully copied, and sent in his own name. She was often amused with the gravity with which she, as the father of herself,

with parental prudence discussed her own interests. In subsequent years she wrote to kings and to cabinets in the name of her husband; and the sentiments which flowed from her pen, adopted by the ministry of France as their own, guided the councils of nations.

Her father, regarding commerce as the source of wealth, and wealth as the source of power and dignity, was very anxious that his daughter should accept some of the lucrative offers she was receiving from young men of the family acquaintance who were engaged in trade. But Jane had no such thought. Her proud spirit revolted from such a connection. From her sublimated position among the ancient heroes, and her ambitious aspirings to dwell in the loftiest regions of intellect, she could not think of allying her soul with those whose energies were expended in buying and selling; and she declared that she would have no husband but one with whom she could cherish congenial sympathies.

At one time a rich meat merchant of the neighborhood solicited her hand. Her father, allured by his wealth, was very anxious that his daughter should accept the offer. In reply to his urgency Jane firmly replied,

"I can not, dear father, descend from my noble imaginings. What I want in a husband is a soul, not a fortune. I will die single rather than prostitute my own mind in a union with a being with whom I have no sympathies. Brought up from my infancy in connection with the great men of all ages—familiar with lofty ideas and illustrious examples—have I lived with Plato, with all the philosophers, all the poets, all the politicians of antiquity, merely to unite myself with a shop-keeper, who will neither appreciate nor feel any thing as I do? Why have you suffered me, father, to contract these intellectual habits and tastes, if you wish me to form such an alliance? I know not whom I may marry; but it must be one who can share my thoughts and sympathize with my pursuits."

"But, my daughter, there are many men of business who have extensive information and polished manners."

"That may be," Jane answered, "but they do not possess the kind of information, and the character of mind, and the intellectual tastes which I wish any one who is my husband to possess."

"Do you not suppose," rejoined her father, "that Mr. —— and his wife are happy? He has just retired from business with an ample fortune. They have a beautiful house, and receive the best of company."

"I am no judge," was the reply, "of other people's happiness. But my own heart is not fixed on riches. I conceive that the strictest union of affection is requisite to conjugal felicity. I can not connect myself with any man whose tastes and sympathies are not in accordance with my own. My husband

must be my superior. Since both nature and the laws give him the pre-eminence, I should be ashamed if he did not really deserve it."

"I suppose, then, you want a counselor for your husband. But ladies are seldom happy with these learned gentlemen. They have a great deal of pride, and very little money."

"Father," Jane earnestly replied, "I care not about the profession. I wish only to marry a man whom I can love."

"But you persist in thinking such a man will never be found in trade. You will find it, however, a very pleasant thing to sit at ease in your own parlor while your husband is accumulating a fortune. Now there is Madame Dargens: she understands diamonds as well as her husband. She can make good bargains in his absence, and could carry on all his business perfectly well if she were left a widow. You are intelligent. You perfectly understand that branch of business since you studied the treatise on precious stones. You might do whatever you please. You would have led a very happy life if you could but have fancied Delorme, Dabrieul, or—"

"Father," earnestly exclaimed Jane, "I have discovered that the only way to make a fortune in trade is by selling dear that which has been bought cheap; by overcharging the customer, and beating down the poor workman. I could never descend to such practices; nor could I respect a man who made them his occupation from morning till night."

"Do you then suppose that there are no honest tradesmen?"

"I presume that there are," was the reply; "but the number is not large; and among them I am not likely to find a husband who will sympathize with me."

"And what will you do if you do not find the idol of your imagination?"

"I will live single."

"Perhaps you will not find that as pleasant as you imagine. You may think that there is time enough yet. But weariness will come at last. The crowd of lovers will soon pass away and you know the fable."

"Well, then, by meriting happiness, I will take revenge upon the injustice which would deprive me of it."

"Oh! now you are in the clouds again, my child. It is very pleasant to soar to such a height, but it is not easy to keep the elevation."

The judicious mother of Jane, anxious to see her daughter settled in life, endeavored to form a match for her with a young physician. Much maneuvering was necessary to bring about the desired result. The young practitioner wasnothing loth to lend his aid. The pecuniary arrangements were all made, and the bargain completed, before Jane knew any thing of

the matter. The mother and daughter went out one morning to make a call upon a friend, at whose house the prospective husband of Jane, by previous appointment, was accidentally to be. It was a curious interview. The friends so overacted their part, that Jane immediately saw through the plot. Her mother was pensive and anxious. Her friends were voluble, and prodigal of sly intimations. The young gentleman was very lavish of his powers of pleasing, loaded Jane with flippant compliments, devoured confectionary with high relish, and chattered most flippantly in the most approved style of fashionable inanition. The high-spirited girl had no idea of being thus disposed of in the matrimonial bazaar. The profession of the doctor was pleasing to her, as it promised an enlightened mind, and she was willing to consent to make his acquaintance. Her mother urged her to decide at once.

"What, mother!" she exclaimed, "would you have me take one for my husband upon the strength of a single interview?"

"It is not exactly so," she replied. "This young gentleman's intimacy with our friends enables us to judge of his conduct and way of life. We know his disposition. These are the main points. You have attained the proper age to be settled in the world. You have refused many offers from tradesmen, and it is from that class alone that you are likely to receive addresses. You seem fully resolved never to marry a man in business. You may never have another such offer. The present match is very eligible in every external point of view. Beware how you reject it too lightly."

Jane, thus urged, consented to see the young physician at her father's house, that she might become acquainted with him. She, however, determined that no earthly power should induce her to marry him, unless she found in him a congenial spirit. Fortunately, she was saved all further trouble in the matter by a dispute which arose between her lover and her father respecting the pecuniary arrangements, and which broke off all further connection between the parties.

Her mother's health now began rapidly to decline. A stroke of palsy deprived her of her accustomed elasticity of spirits, and, secluding herself from society, she became silent and sad. In view of approaching death, she often lamented that she could not see her daughter well married before she left the world. An offer which Jane received from a very honest, industrious, and thrifty jeweler, aroused anew a mother's maternal solicitude.

"Why," she exclaimed, with melancholy earnestness, "will you reject this young man? He has an amiable disposition, and high reputation for integrity and sobriety. He is already in easy circumstances, and is in a fair way of soon acquiring a brilliant fortune. He knows that you have a superior mind. He professes great esteem for you, and will be proud of following your advice. You might lead him in any way you like."

"But, my dear mother, I do not want a husband who is to be led. He would be too cumbersome a child for me to take care of."

"Do you know that you are a very whimsical girl, my child? And how do you think you would like a husband who was your master and tyrant?"

"I certainly," Jane replied, "should not like a man who assumed airs of authority, for that would only provoke me to resist. But I am sure that I could never love a husband whom it was necessary for me to govern. I should be ashamed of my own power."

"I understand you, Jane. You would like to have a man think himself the master, while he obeyed you in every particular."

"No, mother, it is not that either. I hate servitude; but empire would only embarrass me. I wish to gain the affections of a man who would make his happiness consist in contributing to mine, as his good sense and regard for me should dictate."

"But, my daughter, there would be hardly such a thing in the world as a happy couple, if happiness could not exist without that perfect congeniality of taste and opinions which you imagine to be so necessary."

"I do not know, mother, of a single person whose happiness I envy."

"Very well; but among those matches which you do not envy, there may be some far preferable to remaining always single. I may be called out of the world sooner than you imagine. Your father is still young. I can not tell you all the disagreeable things my fondness for you makes me fear. I should be indeed happy, could I see you united to some worthy man before I die."

This was the first time that the idea of her mother's death ever seriously entered the mind of Jane. With an eager gaze, she fixed her eye upon her pale and wasted cheek and her emaciate frame, and the dreadful truth, with the suddenness of a revelation, burst upon her. Her whole frame shook with emotion, and she burst into a flood of tears. Her mother, much moved, tried to console her.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear child," said she, tenderly. "I am not dangerously ill. But in forming our plans, we should take into consideration all chances. A worthy man offers you his hand. You have now attained your twentieth year. You can not expect as many suitors as you have had for the last five years. I may be suddenly taken from you. Do not, then, reject a husband who, it is true, has not all the refinement you could desire, but who will love you, and with whom you can be happy."

"Yes, my dear mother," exclaimed Jane, with a deep and impassioned sigh, "as happy as you have been."

The expression escaped her in the excitement of the moment. Never before had she ventured in the remotest way to allude to the total want of congeniality which she could not but perceive existed between her father and her mother. Indeed, her mother's character for patience and placid submission was so remarkable, that Jane did not know how deeply she had suffered, nor what a life of martyrdom she was leading. The effect of Jane's unpremeditated remark opened her eyes to the sad reality. Her mother was greatly disconcerted. Her cheek changed color. Her lip trembled. She made no reply. She never again opened her lips upon the subject of the marriage of her child.

The father of Jane, with no religious belief to control his passions or guide his conduct, was gradually falling into those habits of dissipation to which he was peculiarly exposed by the character of the times. He neglected his business. He formed disreputable acquaintances. He became irritable and domineering over his wife, and was often absent from home, with convivial clubs, until a late hour of the night. Neither mother nor daughter ever uttered one word to each other in reference to the failings of the husband and father. Jane, however, had so powerful an influence over him, that she often, by her persuasive skill, averted the storm which was about to descend upon her meek and unresisting parent.

The poor mother, in silence and sorrow, was sinking to the tomb far more rapidly than Jane imagined. One summer's day, the father, mother, and daughter took a short excursion into the country. The day was warm and beautiful. In a little boat they glided over the pleasant waters of the Seine, feasting their eyes with the beauties of nature and art which fringed the shores. The pale cheek of the dying wife became flushed with animation as she once again breathed the invigorating air of the country, and the daughter beguiled her fears with the delusive hope that it was the flush of returning health. When they reached their home, Madame Phlippon, fatigued with the excursion, retired to her chamber for rest. Jane, accompanied by her maid, went to the convent to call upon her old friends the nuns. She made a very short call.

"Why are you in such haste?" inquired Sister Agatha.

"I am anxious to return to my mother."

"But you told me that she was better."

"She is much better than usual. But I have a strange feeling of solicitude about her. I shall not feel easy until I see her again."

She hurried home, and was met at the door by a little girl, who informed her that her mother was very dangerously ill. She flew to the room, and found her almost lifeless. Another stroke of paralysis had done its work, and she

was dying. She raised her languid eyes to her child, but her palsied tongue could speak no word of tenderness. One arm only obeyed the impulse of her will. She raised it, and affectionately patted the cheek of her beloved daughter, and wiped the tears which were flowing down her cheeks. The priest came to administer the last consolations of religion. Jane, with her eyes riveted upon her dying parent, endeavored to hold the light. Overpowered with anguish, the light suddenly dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless upon the floor. When she recovered from this swoon her mother was dead.

Jane was entirely overwhelmed with uncontrollable and delirious sorrow. For many days it was apprehended that her own life would fall a sacrifice to the blow which her affections had received. Instead of being a support to the family in this hour of trial, she added to the burden and the care. The Abbé Legrand, who stood by her bedside as her whole frame was shaken by convulsions, very sensibly remarked, "It is a good thing to possess sensibility. It is very unfortunate to have so much of it." Gradually Jane regained composure, but life, to her, was darkened. She now began to realize all those evils which her fond mother had apprehended. Speaking of her departed parent, she says, "The world never contained a better or a more amiable woman. There was nothing brilliant in her character, but she possessed every quality to endear her to all by whom she was known. Naturally endowed with the sweetest disposition, virtue seemed never to cost her any effort. Her pure and tranquil spirit pursued its even course like the docile stream that bathes with equal gentleness, the foot of the rock which holds it captive, and the valley which it at once enriches and adorns. With her death was concluded the tranquillity of my youth, which till then was passed in the enjoyment of blissful affections and beloved occupations."

Jane soon found her parental home, indeed, a melancholy abode. She was truly alone in the world. Her father now began to advance with more rapid footsteps in the career of dissipation. A victim to that infidelity which presents no obstacle to crime, he yielded himself a willing captive to the dominion of passion, and disorder reigned through the desolated household. Jane had the mortification of seeing a woman received into the family to take her mother's place, in a union unsanctified by the laws of God. A deep melancholy settled down upon the mind of the wounded girl, and she felt that she was desolate and an alien in her own home. She shut herself up in her chamber with her thoughts and her books. All the chords of her sensitive nature now vibrated only responsive to those melancholy tones which are the dirges of the broken heart. As there never was genius untinged by melancholy, so may it be doubted whether there ever was greatness of character which had not been nurtured in the school of great affliction. Her heart now began to feel irrepressible longings for the

sympathy of some congenial friend, upon whose supporting bosom she could lean her aching head. In lonely musings she solaced herself, and nurtured her own thoughts by writing. Her pen became her friend, and the resource of every weary hour. She freely gave utterance in her diary to all her feelings and all her emotions. Her manuscripts of abstracts, and extracts, and original thoughts, became quite voluminous. In this way she was daily cultivating that power of expression and that force of eloquence which so often, in subsequent life, astonished and charmed her friends.

In every development of character in her most eventful future career, one can distinctly trace the influence of these vicissitudes of early life, and of these impressions thus powerfully stamped upon her nature. Philosophy, romance, and religious sentiment, an impassioned mind and a glowing heart, admiration of heroism, and emulation of martyrdom in some noble cause, all conspired to give her sovereignty over the affections of others, and to enable her to sway human wills almost at pleasure.

M. Boismorel, husband of the aristocratic lady to whom Jane once paid so disagreeable a visit, called one day at the shop of M. Phlippon, and the proud father could not refrain from showing him some of the writings of Jane. The nobleman had sense enough to be very much pleased with the talent which they displayed, and wrote her a very flattering letter, offering her the free use of his very valuable library, and urging her to devote her life to literary pursuits, and at once to commence authorship. Jane was highly gratified by this commendation, and most eagerly availed herself of his most valuable offer. In reply to his suggestion respecting authorship, she inclosed the following lines:

"Aux hommes ouvrant la carrièreDes grands et des nobles talents,Ils n'ont mis aucune barrièreA leurs plus sublimes èlans.

"De mon sexe foible et sensible,Ils ne veulent que des vertus;Nous pouvons imiter Titus,Mais dans un sentier moins penible.

"Joussiez du bien d'être admisA toutes ces sortes de gloriePour nous le temple de mémoireEst dans le cœurs de nos amis."

These lines have been thus vigorously translated in the interesting sketch given by Mrs. Child of Madame Roland:

"To man's aspiring sex 'tis givenTo climb the highest hill of fame;To tread the shortest road to heaven,And gain by death a deathless name.

"Of well-fought fields and trophies wonThe memory lives while ages pass;Graven on everlasting stone,Or written on retentive brass.

"But to poor feeble womankindThe meed of glory is denied;Within a narrow sphere confined.The lowly virtues are their pride.

"Yet not deciduous is their fame,Ending where frail existence ends;A sacred temple holds their name—The heart of their surviving friends."

A friendly correspondence ensued between Jane and M. De Boismorel, which continued through his life. He was a very worthy and intelligent man, and became so much interested in his young friend, that he wished to connect her in marriage with his son. This young man was indolent and irresolute in character, and his father thought that he would be greatly benefited by a wife of decision and judgment. Jane, however, was no more disposed to fall in love with rank than with wealth, and took no fancy whatever to the characterless young nobleman. The judicious father saw that it would be utterly unavailing to urge the suit, and the matter was dropped.

Through the friendship of M. De Boismorel, she was often introduced to the great world of lords and ladies. Even his formal and haughty wife became much interested in the fascinating young lady, and her brilliant talents and accomplishments secured her invitations to many social interviews to which she would not have been entitled by her birth. This slight acquaintance with the nobility of France did not, however, elevate them in her esteem. She found the conversation of the old marquises and antiquated dowagers who frequented the salons of Madame De Boismorel more insipid and illiterate than that of the tradespeople who visited her father's shop, and upon whom those nobles looked down with such contempt. Jane was also disgusted with the many indications she saw, not only of indolence and voluptuousness, but of dissipation and utter want of principle. Her good sense enabled her to move among these people as a studious observer of this aspect of human nature, neither adopting their costume nor imitating their manners. She was very unostentatious and simple in her style of dress, and never, in the slightest degree, affected the mannerism of mindless and heartless fashion.

Madame De Boismorel, at one time eulogizing her taste in these respects, remarked,

"You do not love feathers, do you, Miss Phlippon? How very different you are from the giddy-headed girls around us!"

"I never wear feathers," Jane replied, "because I do not think that they would correspond with the condition in life of an artist's daughter who is going about on foot."

"But, were you in a different situation in life, would you then wear feathers?"

"I do not know what I should do in that case. I attach very slight importance to such trifles. I merely consider what is suitable for myself, and should be very sorry to judge of others by the superficial information afforded by their dress."

M. Phlippon now began to advance more rapidly in the career of dissipation. Jane did every thing in her power to lure him to love his home. All her efforts were entirely unavailing. Night after night he was absent until the latest hours at convivial clubs and card-parties. He formed acquaintance with those with whom Jane could not only have no congeniality of taste, but who must have excited in her emotions of the deepest repugnance. These companions were often at his house; and the comfortable property which M. Phlippon possessed, under this course of dissipation was fast melting away. Jane's situation was now painful in the extreme. Her mother, who had been the guardian angel of her life, was sleeping in the grave. Her father was advancing with the most rapid strides in the road to ruin. Jane was in danger of soon being left an orphan andutterly penniless. Her father was daily becoming more neglectful and unkind to his daughter, as he became more dissatisfied with himself and with the world. Under these circumstances, Jane, by the advice of friends, had resort to a legal process, by which there was secured to her, from the wreck of her mother's fortune, an annual income of about one hundred dollars.

In these gloomy hours which clouded the morning of life's tempestuous day, Jane found an unfailing resource and solace in her love of literature. With pen in hand, extracting beautiful passages and expanding suggested thoughts, she forgot her griefs and beguiled many hours, which would otherwise have been burdened with intolerable wretchedness. Maria Antoinette, woe-worn and weary, in tones of despair uttered the exclamation, "Oh! what a resource, amid the casualties of life, must there be in a highly-cultivated mind." The plebeian maiden could utter the same exclamation in accents of joyfulness.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE.

1776-1785

When Jane was in the convent, she became acquainted with a young lady from Amiens, Sophia Cannet. They formed for each other a strong attachment, and commenced a correspondence which continued for many years. There was a gentleman in Amiens by the name of Roland de la Platière, born of an opulent family, and holding the quite important office of inspector of manufactures. His time was mainly occupied in traveling and study. Being deeply interested in all subjects relating to political economy, he had devoted much attention to that noble science, and had written several treatises upon commerce, mechanics, and agriculture, which had given him, in the literary and scientific world, no little celebrity. He frequently visited the father of Sophia. She often spoke to him of her friend Jane, showed him her portrait, and read to him extracts from her glowing letters. The calm philosopher became very much interested in the enthusiastic maiden, and entreated Sophia to give him a letter of introduction to her, upon one of his annual visits to Paris. Sophia had also often written to Jane of her father's friend, whom she regarded with so much reverence.

One day Jane was sitting alone in her desolate home, absorbed in pensive musings, when M. Roland entered, bearing a letter of introduction to her from Sophia. "You will receive this letter," her friend wrote, "by the hand of the philosopher of whom I have so often written to you. M. Roland is an enlightened man, of antique manners, without reproach, except for his passion for the ancients, his contempt for the moderns, and his too high estimation of his own virtue."

The gentleman thus introduced to her was about forty years old. He was tall, slender, and well formed, with a little stoop in his gait, and manifested in his manners that self-possession which is the result of conscious worth and intellectual power, while, at the same time, he exhibited that slight and not displeasing awkwardness which one unavoidably acquires in hours devoted to silence and study. Still, Madame Roland says, in her description of his person, that he was courteous and winning; and though his manners did not possess all the easy elegance of the man of fashion, they united the politeness of the well-bred man with the unostentatious gravity of the philosopher. He was thin, with a complexion much tanned. His broad and intellectual brow, covered with but few hairs, added to the imposing attractiveness of his features. When listening, his countenance had an expression of deep thoughtfulness, and almost of sadness; but when excited in speaking, a smile of great cheerfulness spread over his animated features.

His voice was rich and sonorous; his mode of speech brief and sententious; his conversation full of information, and rich in suggestive thought.

Jane, the enthusiastic, romantic Jane, saw in the serene philosopher one of the sages of antiquity, and almost literally bowed and worshiped. All the sentiments of M. Roland were in accordance with the most cherished emotions which glowed in her own mind. She found what she had ever been seeking, but had never found before, a truly sympathetic soul. She thought not of love. She looked up to M. Roland as to a superior being—to an oracle, by whose decisions she could judge whether her own opinions were right or wrong. It is true that M. Roland, cool and unimpassioned in all his mental operations, never entered those airy realms of beauty and those visionary regions of romance where Jane loved, at times, to revel. And perhaps Jane venerated him still more for his more stern and unimaginative philosophy. But his meditative wisdom, his abstraction from the frivolous pursuits of life, his high ambition, his elevated pleasures, his consciousness of superiority over the mass of his fellow-men, and his sleepless desire to be a benefactor of humanity, were all traits of character which resistlessly attracted the admiration of Jane. She adored him as a disciple adores his master. She listened eagerly to all his words, and loved communion with his thoughts. M. Roland was by no means insensible to this homage, and though he looked upon her with none of the emotions of a lover, he was charmed with her society because she was so delighted with his own conversation. By the faculty of attentively listening to what others had to say, Madame Roland affirms that she made more friends than by any remarks she ever made of her own. The two minds, not hearts, were at once united; but this platonic union soon led to one more tender.

M. Roland had recently been traveling in Germany, and had written a copious journal of his tour. As he was about to depart from Paris for Italy, he left this journal, with other manuscripts, in the hands of Jane. "These manuscripts," she writes, "made me better acquainted with him, during the eighteen months he passed in Italy, than frequent visits could have done. They consisted of travels, reflections, plans of literary works, and personal anecdotes. A strong mind, strict principles, and personal taste, were evident in every page." He also introduced Jane to his brother, a Benedictine monk. During the eighteen months of his absence from Paris, he was traveling in Italy, Switzerland, Sicily, and Malta, and writing notes upon those countries, which he afterward published. These notes he communicated to his brother the monk, and he transmitted them to Jane. She read them with intense interest. At length he returned again to Paris, and their acquaintance was renewed. M. Roland submitted to her his literary projects, and was much gratified in finding that she approved of all that he did and all that he contemplated. She found in him an invaluable friend. His gravity, his

intellectual life, his almost stoical philosophy impressed her imagination and captivated her understanding. Two or three years passed away ere either of them seemed to have thought of the other in the light of a lover. She regarded him as a guide and friend. There was no ardor of youthful love warming her heart. There were no impassioned affections glowing in her bosom and impelling her to his side. Intellectual enthusiasm alone animated her in welcoming an intellectual union with a noble mind. M. Roland, on the other hand, looked with placid and paternal admiration upon the brilliant girl. He was captivated by her genius and the charms of her conversation, and, above all, by her profound admiration of himself. They were mutually happy in each other's society, and were glad to meet and loth to part. They conversed upon literary projects, upon political reforms, upon speculations in philosophy and science. M. Roland was naturally self-confident, opinionated, and domineering. Jane regarded him with so much reverence that she received his opinions for law. Thus he was flattered and she was happy.

M. Roland returned to his official post at Amiens, and engaged in preparing his work on Italy for the press. They carried on a voluminous and regular correspondence. He forwarded to her, in manuscript, all the sheets of his proposed publication, and she returned them with the accompanying thoughts which their perusal elicited. Now and then an expression of decorous endearment would escape from each pen in the midst of philosophic discussions and political speculations. It was several years after their acquaintance commenced before M. Roland made an avowal of his attachment. Jane knew very well the pride of the Roland family, and that her worldly circumstances were such that, in their estimation, the connection would not seem an advantageous one. She also was too proud to enter into a family who might feel dishonored by the alliance. She therefore frankly told him that she felt much honored by his addresses, and that she esteemed him more highly than any other man she had ever met. She assured him that she should be most happy to make him a full return for his affection, but that her father was a ruined man, and that, by his increasing debts and his errors of character, still deeper disgrace might be entailed upon all connected with him; and she therefore could not think of allowing M. Roland to make his generosity to her a source of future mortification to himself.

This was not the spirit most likely to repel the philosophic lover. The more she manifested this elevation of soul, in which Jane was perfectly sincere, the more earnestly did M. Roland persist in his plea. At last Jane, influenced by his entreaties, consented that he should make proposals to her father. He wrote to M. Phlippon. In reply, he received an insulting letter, containing a blunt refusal. M. Phlippon declared that he had no idea of having for a son-

in-law a man of such rigid principles, who would ever be reproaching him for all his little errors. He also told his daughter that she would find in a man of such austere virtue, not a companion and an equal, but a censor and a tyrant. Jane laid this refusal of her father deeply to heart, and, resolving that if she could not marry the man of her choice, she would marry no one else, she wrote to M. Roland, requesting him to abandon his design, and not to expose himself to any further affronts. She then requested permission of her father to retire to a convent.

Her reception at the convent, where she was already held in such high esteem, was cordial in the extreme. The scanty income she had saved from her mother's property rendered it necessary for her to live with the utmost frugality. She determined to regulate her expenses in accordance with this small sum. Potatoes, rice, and beans, with a little salt, and occasionally the luxury of a little butter, were her only food. She allowed herself to leave the convent but twice a week: once, to call, for an hour, upon a relative, and once to visit her father, and look over his linen. She had a little room under the roof, in the attic, where the pattering of the rain upon the tiles soothed to pensive thought, and lulled her to sleep by night. She carefully secluded herself from association with the other inmates of the convent, receiving only a visit of an hour each evening from the much-loved Sister Agatha. Her time she devoted, with unremitting diligence, to those literary avocations in which she found so much delight. The quiet and seclusion of this life had many charms for Jane. Indeed, a person with such resources for enjoyment within herself could never be very weary. The votaries of fashion and gayety are they to whom existence grows languid and life a burden. Several months thus glided away in tranquillity. She occasionally walked in the garden, at hours when no one else was there. The spirit of resignation, which she had so long cultivated; the peaceful conscience she enjoyed, in view of duty performed; the elevation of spirit, which enabled her to rise superior to misfortune; the methodical arrangement of time, which assigned to each hour its appropriate duty; the habit of close application, which riveted her attention to her studies; the highly-cultivated taste and buoyantly-winged imagination, which opened before her all the fairy realms of fancy, were treasures which gilded her cell and enriched her heart. She passed, it is true, some melancholy hours; but even that melancholy had its charms, and was more rich in enjoyment than the most mirthful moments through which the unreflecting flutter. M. Roland continued a very constant and kind correspondence with Jane, but she was not a little wounded by the philosophic resignation with which he submitted to her father's stern refusal. In the course of five or six months he again visited Paris, and called at the convent to see Jane. He saw her pale and pensive face behind a grating, and the sight of one who had suffered so much from her faithful

love for him, and the sound of her voice, which ever possessed a peculiar charm, revived in his mind those impressions which had been somewhat fading away. He again renewed his offer, and entreated her to allow the marriage ceremony at once to be performed by his brother the prior. Jane was in much perplexity. She did not feel that her father was in a situation longer to control her, and she was a little mortified by the want of ardor which her philosophical lover had displayed. The illusion of romantic love was entirely dispelled from her mind, and, at the same time, she felt flattered by his perseverance, by the evidence that his most mature judgment approved of his choice, and by his readiness to encounter all the unpleasant circumstances in which he might be involved by his alliance with her. Jane, without much delay, yielded to his appeals. They were married in the winter of 1780. Jane was then twenty-five years of age. Her husband was twenty years her senior.

The first year of their marriage life they passed in Paris. It was to Madame Roland a year of great enjoyment. Her husband was publishing a work upon the arts, and she, with all the energy of her enthusiastic mind, entered into all his literary enterprises. With great care and accuracy, she prepared his manuscripts for the press, and corrected the proofs. She lived in the study with him, became the companion of all his thoughts, and his assistant in all his labors. The only recreations in which she indulged, during the winter, were to attend a course of lectures upon natural history and botany. M. Roland had hired ready-furnished lodgings. She, well instructed by her mother in domestic duties, observing that all kinds of cooking did not agree with him, took pleasure in preparing his food with her own hands. Her husband engrossed her whole time, and, being naturally rather austere and imperious, he wished so to seclude her from the society of others as to monopolize all her capabilities of friendly feeling. She submitted to the exaction without a murmur, though there were hours in which she felt that she had made, indeed, a serious sacrifice of her youthful and buoyant affections. Madame Roland devoted herself so entirely to the studies in which her husband was engaged that her health was seriously impaired. Accustomed as she was to share in all his pursuits, he began to think that he could not do without her at any time or on any occasion.

At the close of the year M. Roland returned to Amiens with his wife. She soon gave birth to a daughter, her only child, whom she nurtured with the most assiduous care. Her literary labors were, however, unremitted, and, though a mother and a nurse, she still lived in the study with her books and her pen. M. Roland was writing several articles for an encyclopedia. She aided most efficiently in collecting the materials and arranging the matter. Indeed, she wielded a far more vigorous pen than he did. Her copiousness of language, her facility of expression, and the play of her fancy, gave her the

command of a very fascinating style; and M. Roland obtained the credit for many passages rich in diction and beautiful in imagery for which he was indebted to the glowing imagination of his wife. Frequent sickness of her husband alarmed her for his life. The tenderness with which she watched over him strengthened the tie which united them. He could not but love a young and beautiful wife so devoted to him. She could not but love one upon whom she was conferring such rich blessings. They remained in Amiens for four years. Their little daughter Eudora was a source of great delight to the fond parents, and Madame Roland took the deepest interest in the developments of her infantile mind. The office of M. Roland was highly lucrative, and his literary projects successful; and their position in society was that of an opulent family of illustrious descent—for the ancestors of M. Roland had been nobles. He now, with his accumulated wealth, was desirous of being reinstated in that ancestral rank which the family had lost with the loss of fortune. Neither must we blame our republican heroine too much that, under this change of circumstances, she was not unwilling that he should resume that exalted social position to which she believed him to be so richly entitled. It could hardly be unpleasant to her to be addressed as Lady Roland. It is the infirmity of our frail nature that it is more agreeable to ascend to the heights of those who are above us, than to aid those below to reach the level we have attained. Encountering some embarrassments in their application for letters-patent of nobility, the subject was set aside for the time, and was never after renewed. The attempt, however, subsequently exposed them to great ridicule from their democratic opponents.

About this time they visited England. They were received with much attention, and Madame Roland admired exceedingly the comparatively free institutions of that country. She felt that the English, as a nation, were immeasurably superior to the French, and returned to her own home more than ever dissatisfied with the despotic monarchy by which the people of France were oppressed.

From Amiens, M. Roland removed to the city of Lyons, his native place, in which wider sphere he continued the duties of his office as Inspector General of Commerce and Manufactures. In the winter they resided in the city. During the summer they retired to M. Roland's paternal estate, La Platière, a very beautiful rural retreat but a few miles from Lyons. The mother of M. Roland and an elder brother resided on the same estate. They constituted the ingredient of bitterness in their cup of joy. It seems that in this life it must ever be that each pleasure shall have its pain. No happiness can come unalloyed. La Platière possessed for Madame Roland all the essentials of an earthly paradise; but those trials which are the unvarying lot of fallen humanity obtained entrance there. Her mother-in-law was proud, imperious, ignorant, petulant, and disagreeable in every development

of character. There are few greater annoyances of life than an irritable woman, rendered doubly morose by the infirmities of years. The brother was coarse and arrogant, without any delicacy of feeling himself, and apparently unconscious that others could be troubled by any such sensitiveness. The disciplined spirit of Madame Roland triumphed over even these annoyances, and she gradually infused through the discordant household, by her own cheerful spirit, a great improvement in harmony and peace. It is not, however, possible that Madame Roland should have shed many tears when, on one bright autumnal day, this hasty tongue and turbulent spirit were hushed in that repose from which there is no awaking. Immediately after this event, attracted by the quiet of this secluded retreat, they took up their abode there for both summer and winter.

La Platière.

La Platière, the paternal inheritance of M. Roland, was an estate situated at the base of the mountains of Beaujolais, in the valley of the Saône. It is a region solitary and wild, with rivulets, meandering down from the mountains, fringed with willows and poplars, and threading their way through narrow, yet smooth and fertile meadows, luxuriant with vineyards. A large, square stone house, with regular windows, and a roof, nearly flat, of red tiles, constituted the comfortable, spacious, and substantial mansion. The eaves projected quite a distance beyond the walls, to protect the windows from the summer's sun and the winter's rain and snow. The external walls, straight, and entirely unornamented, were covered with white plaster, which, in many places, the storms of years had cracked and peeled off. The house stood elevated from the ground, and the front door was entered by ascending five massive stone steps, which were surmounted by a rusty iron balustrade. Barns, wine-presses, dove-cotes and sheep-pens were clustered about, so that the farm-house, with its out-buildings, almost presented the aspect of a little village. A vegetable garden; a flower garden, with serpentine walks and arbors embowered in odoriferous and flowering shrubs; an orchard, casting the shade of a great variety of fruit-trees over the closely-mown greensward, and a vineyard, with long lines of low-trimmed grape vines, gave a finish to this most rural and attractive picture. In the distance was seen the rugged range of the mountains of Beaujolais, while still further in the distance rose towering above them the snow-capped summits of the Alps. Here, in this social solitude, in this harmony of silence, in this wide expanse of nature, Madame Roland passed five of the happiest years of her life—five such years as few mortals enjoy on earth. She, whose spirit had been so often exhilarated by the view of the tree tops and the few square yards of blue sky which were visible from the window of her city home, was enchanted with the exuberance of the prospect of mountain and meadow, water and sky, so lavishly spread out before her. The expanse,

apparently so limitless, open to her view, invited her fancy to a range equally boundless. Nature and imagination were her friends, and in their realms she found her home. Enjoying an ample income, engaged constantly in the most ennobling literary pursuits, rejoicing in the society of her husband and her little Eudora, and superintending her domestic concerns with an ease and skill which made that superintendence a pleasure, time flew upon its swiftest wings.

Her mode of life during these five calm and sunny years which intervened between the cloudy morning and the tempestuous evening of her days, must have been exceedingly attractive. She rose with the sun, devoted sundry attentions to her husband and child, and personally superintended the arrangements for breakfast, taking an affectionate pleasure in preparing very nicely her husband's frugal food with her own hands. That social meal, ever, in a loving family, the most joyous interview of the day, being passed, M. Roland entered the library for his intellectual toil, taking with him, for his silent companion, the idolized little Eudora. She amused herself with her pencil, or reading, or other studies, which her father and mother superintended. Madame Roland, in the mean time, devoted herself, with most systematic energy, to her domestic concerns. She was a perfect housekeeper, and each morning all the interests of her family, from the cellar to the garret, passed under her eye. She superintended the preservation of the fruit, the storage of the wine, the sorting of the linen, and those other details of domestic life which engross the attention of a good housewife. The systematic division of time, which seemed to be an instinctive principle of her nature, enabled her to accomplish all this in two hours. She had faithful and devoted servants to do the work. The superintendence was all that was required. This genius to superintend and be the head, while others contribute the hands, is not the most common of human endowments. Madame Roland, having thus attended to her domestic concerns, laid aside those cares for the remainder of the day, and entered the study to join her husband in his labors there. These intellectual employments ever possessed for her peculiar attractions. The scientific celebrity of M. Roland, and his political position, attracted many visitors to La Platière; consequently, they had, almost invariably, company to dine. At the close of the literary labors of the morning, Madame Roland dressed for dinner, and, with all that fascination of mind and manners so peculiarly her own, met her guests at the dinner-table. The labor of the day was then over. The repast was prolonged with social converse. After dinner, they walked in the garden, sauntered through the vineyard, and looked at the innumerable objects of interest which are ever to be found in the yard of a spacious farm. Madame Roland frequently retired to the library, to write letters to her friends, or to superintend the lessons of Eudora. Occasionally, of a fine day,

leaning upon her husband's arm, she would walk for several miles, calling at the cottages of the peasantry, whom she greatly endeared to her by her unvarying kindness. In the evening, after tea, they again resorted to the library. Guests of distinguished name and influence were frequently with them, and the hours glided swiftly, cheered by the brilliance of philosophy and genius. The journals of the day were read, Madame Roland being usually called upon as reader. When not thus reading, she usually sat at her work-table, employing her fingers with her needle, while she took a quiet and unobtrusive part in the conversation. "This kind of life," says Madame Roland, "would be very austere, were not my husband a man of great merit, whom I love with my whole heart. Tender friendship and unbounded confidence mark every moment of existence, and stamp a value upon all things, which nothing without them would have. It is the life most favorable to virtue and happiness. I appreciate its worth. I congratulate myself on enjoying it; and I exert my best endeavors to make it last." Again she draws the captivating picture of rural pleasures. "I am preserving pears, which will be delicious. We are drying raisins and prunes. We make our breakfast upon wine; overlook the servants busy in the vineyard; repose in the shady groves, and on the green meadows; gather walnuts from the trees; and, having collected our stock of fruit for the winter, spread it in the garret to dry. After breakfast this morning, we are all going in a body to gather almonds. Throw off, then, dear friend, your fetters for a while, and come and join us in our retreat. You will find here true friendship and real simplicity of heart."

Madame Roland, among her other innumerable accomplishments, had acquired no little skill in the science of medicine. Situated in a region where the poor peasants had no access to physicians, she was not only liberal in distributing among them many little comforts, but, with the most self-denying assiduity, she visited them in sickness, and prescribed for their maladies. She was often sent for, to go a distance of ten or twelve miles to visit the sick. From such appeals she never turned away. On Sundays, her court-yard was filled with peasants, who had assembled from all the region round, some as invalids, to seek relief, and others who came with such little tokens of their gratitude as their poverty enabled them to bring. Here appears a little rosy-cheeked boy with a basket of chestnuts; or a care-worn mother, pale and thin, but with a grateful eye presenting to her benefactrice a few small, fragrant cheeses, made of goat's milk; and there is an old man, hobbling upon crutches, with a basket of apples from his orchard. She was delighted with these indications of gratitude and sensibility on the part of the unenlightened and lowly peasantry. Her republican notions, which she had cherished so fondly in her early years, but from which she had somewhat swerved when seeking a patent of nobility for her husband, began

now to revive in her bosom with new ardor. She was regarded as peculiarly the friend of the poor and the humble; and at all the hearth-fires in the cottages of that retired valley, her name was pronounced in tones almost of adoration. More and more Madame Roland and her husband began to identify their interests with those of the poor around them, and to plead with tongue and pen for popular rights. Her intercourse with the poor led her to feel more deeply the oppression of laws, framed to indulge the few in luxury, while the many were consigned to penury and hopeless ignorance. She acquired boundless faith in the virtue of the people, and thought that their disenthralment would usher in a millennium of unalloyed happiness. She now saw the ocean of human passions reposing in its perfect calm. She afterward saw that same ocean when lashed by the tempest.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

1791-1792

Madame Roland was thus living at La Platière, in the enjoyment of all that this world can give of peace and happiness, when the first portentous mutterings of that terrible moral tempest, the French Revolution, fell upon her ears. She eagerly caught the sounds, and, believing them the precursor of the most signal political and social blessings, rejoiced in the assurance that the hour was approaching when long-oppressed humanity would reassert its rights and achieve its triumph. Little did she dream of the woes which in surging billows were to roll over her country, and which were to ingulf her, and all whom she loved, in their resistless tide. She dreamed—a very pardonable dream for a philanthropic lady—that an ignorant and enslaved people could be led from Egyptian bondage to the promised land without the weary sufferings of the wilderness and the desert. Her faith in the regenerative capabilities of human nature was so strong, that she could foresee no obstacles and no dangers in the way of immediate and universal disfranchisement from every custom, and from all laws and usages which her judgment disapproved. Her whole soul was aroused, and she devoted all her affections and every energy of her mind to the welfare of the human race. It is hardly to be supposed, human nature being such as it is, but that the mortifications she met in early life from the arrogance of those above her, and the difficulties she encountered in obtaining letters-patent of nobility, exerted some influence in animating her zeal. Her enthusiastic devotion stimulated the ardor of her less excitable spouse; and all her friends, by her fascinating powers of eloquence both of voice and pen, were gradually inspired by the same intense emotions which had absorbed her whole being.

Louis XVI. and Maria Antoinette had but recently inherited the throne of the Bourbons. Louis was benevolent, but destitute of the decision of character requisite to hold the reins of government in so stormy a period. Maria Antoinette had neither culture of mind nor knowledge of the world. She was an amiable but spoiled child, with great native nobleness of character, but with those defects which are the natural and inevitable consequence of the frivolous education she had received. She thought never of duty and responsibility; always and only of pleasure. It was her misfortune rather than her fault, that the idea never entered her mind that kings and queens had aught else to do than to indulge in luxury. It would be hardly possible to conceive of two characters less qualified to occupy the throne in stormy times than were Louis and Maria. The people were slowly, but with resistless power, rising against the abuses, enormous and hoary with age, of the

aristocracy and the monarchy. Louis, a man of unblemished kindness, integrity, and purity, was made the scape-goat for the sins of haughty, oppressive, profligate princes, who for centuries had trodden, with iron hoofs, upon the necks of their subjects. The accumulated hate of ages was poured upon his devoted head. The irresolute monarch had no conception of his position.

The king, in pursuance of his system of conciliation, as the clamors of discontent swelled louder and longer from all parts of France, convened the National Assembly. This body consisted of the nobility, the higher clergy, and representatives, chosen by the people from all parts of France. M. Roland, who was quite an idol with the populace of Lyons and its vicinity, and who now was beginning to lose caste with the aristocracy, was chosen, by a very strong vote, as the representative to the Assembly from the city of Lyons. In that busy city the revolutionary movement had commenced with great power, and the name of Roland was the rallying point of the people now struggling to escape from ages of oppression. M. Roland spent some time in his city residence, drawn thither by the intense interest of the times, and in the saloon of Madame Roland meetings were every evening held by the most influential gentlemen of the revolutionary party. Her ardor stimulated their zeal, and her well-stored mind and fascinating conversational eloquence guided their councils. The impetuous young men of the city gathered around this impassioned woman, from whose lips words of liberty fell so enchantingly upon their ears, and with chivalric devotion surrendered themselves to the guidance of her mind.

In this rising conflict between plebeian and patrician, between democrat and aristocrat, the position in which M. Roland and wife were placed, as most conspicuous and influential members of the revolutionary party, arrayed against them, with daily increasing animosity, all the aristocratic community of Lyons. Each day their names were pronounced by the advocates of reform with more enthusiasm, and by their opponents with deepening hostility. The applause and the censure alike invigorated Madame Roland, and her whole soul became absorbed in the one idea of popular liberty. This object became her passion, and she devoted herself to it with the concentration of every energy of mind and heart.

On the 20th of February, 1791, Madame Roland accompanied her husband to Paris, as he took his seat, with a name already prominent, in the National Assembly. Five years before, she had left the metropolis in obscurity and depression. She now returned with wealth, with elevated rank, with brilliant reputation, and exulting in conscious power. Her persuasive influence was dictating those measures which were driving the ancient nobility of France from their chateaux, and her vigorous mind was guiding those blows before which the throne of the Bourbons trembled. The unblemished and

incorruptible integrity of M. Roland, his simplicity of manners and acknowledged ability, invested him immediately with much authority among his associates. The brilliance of his wife, and her most fascinating colloquial powers, also reflected much luster upon his name. Madame Roland, with her glowing zeal, had just written a pamphlet upon the new order of things, in language so powerful and impressive that more than sixty thousand copies had been sold—an enormous number, considering the comparative fewness of readers at that time. She, of course, was received with the most flattering attention, and great deference was paid to her opinions. She attended daily the sittings of the Assembly, and listened with the deepest interest to the debates. The king and queen had already been torn from their palaces at Versailles, and were virtually prisoners in the Tuileries. Many of the nobles had fled from the perils which seemed to be gathering around them, and had joined the army of emigrants at Coblentz. A few, however, of the nobility, and many of the higher clergy, remained heroically at their posts, and, as members of the Assembly, made valiant but unavailing efforts to defend the ancient prerogatives of the crown and of the Church. Madame Roland witnessed with mortification, which she could neither repress nor conceal, the decided superiority of the court party in dignity, and polish of manners, and in general intellectual culture, over those of plebeian origin, who were struggling, with the energy of an infant Hercules, for the overthrow of despotic power. All her tastes were with the ancient nobility and their defenders. All her principles were with the people. And as she contrasted the unrefined exterior and clumsy speech of the democratic leaders with the courtly bearing and elegant diction of those who rallied around the throne, she was aroused to a more vehement desire for the social and intellectual elevation of those with whom she had cast in her lot. The conflict with the nobles was of short continuance. The energy of rising democracy soon vanquished them. Violence took the place of law. And now the conflict for power arose between those of the Republicans who were more and those who were less radical in their plans of reform. The most moderate party, consisting of those who would sustain the throne, but limit its powers by a free constitution, retaining many of the institutions and customs which antiquity had rendered venerable, was called the Girondist party. It was so called because their most prominent leaders were from the department of the Gironde. They would deprive the king of many of his prerogatives, but not of his crown. They would take from him his despotic power, but not his life. They would raise the mass of the people to the enjoyment of liberty, but to liberty controlled by vigorous law. Opposed to them were the Jacobins—far more radical in their views of reform. They would overthrow both throne and altar, break down all privileged orders, confiscate the property of the nobles, and place prince and beggar on the footing of equality. These were the two great parties into which revolutionary France was divided and the

conflict between them was the most fierce and implacable earth has ever witnessed.

M. Roland and wife, occupying a residence in Paris, which was a convenient place of rendezvous, by their attractions gathered around them every evening many of the most influential members of the Assembly. They attached themselves, with all their zeal and energy, to the Girondists. Four evenings of every week, the leaders of this party met in the saloon of Madame Roland, to deliberate respecting their measures. Among them there was a young lawyer from the country, with a stupid expression of countenance, sallow complexion, and ungainly gestures, who had made himself excessively unpopular by the prosy speeches with which he was ever wearying the Assembly. He had often been floored by argument and coughed down by contempt, but he seemed alike insensible to sarcasm and to insult. Alone in the Assembly, without a friend, he attacked all parties alike, and was by all disregarded. But he possessed an indomitable energy, and unwavering fixedness of purpose, a profound contempt for luxury and wealth, and a stoical indifference to reputation and to personal indulgence, which secured to him more and more of an ascendency, until, at the name of Robespierre, all France trembled. This young man, silent and moody, appeared with others in the saloon of Madame Roland. She was struck with his singularity, and impressed with an instinctive consciousness of his peculiar genius. He was captivated by those charms of conversation in which Madame Roland was unrivaled. Silently—for he had no conversational powers—he lingered around her chair, treasured up her spontaneous tropes and metaphors, and absorbed her sentiments. He had a clear perception of the state of the times, was perhaps a sincere patriot, and had no ties of friendship, no scruples of conscience, no instincts of mercy, to turn him aside from any measures of blood or woe which might accomplish his plans.

ROBESPIERRE.

Though the Girondists and the Jacobins were the two great parties now contending in the tumultuous arena of French revolution, there still remained the enfeebled and broken remains of the court party, with their insulted and humiliated king at their head, and also numerous cliques and minor divisions of those struggling for power. At the political evening reunions in the saloon of Madame Roland, she was invariably present, not as a prominent actor in the scenes, taking a conspicuous part in the social debates, but as a quiet and modest lady, of well-known intellectual supremacy, whose active mind took the liveliest interest in the agitations of the hour. The influence she exerted was the polished, refined, attractive influence of an accomplished woman, who moved in her own appropriate sphere. She made no Amazonian speeches. She mingled not with men in the clamor of debate. With an invisible hand she gently and winningly touched

the springs of action in other hearts. With feminine conversational eloquence, she threw out sagacious suggestions, which others eagerly adopted, and advocated, and carried into vigorous execution. She did no violence to that delicacy of perception which is woman's tower and strength. She moved not from that sphere where woman reigns so resistlessly, and dreamed not of laying aside the graceful and polished weapons of her own sex, to grasp the heavier and coarser armor of man, which no woman can wield. By such an endeavor, one does but excite the repugnance of all except the unfortunate few, who can see no peculiar sacredness in woman's person, mind, or heart.

As the gentlemen assembled in the retired parlor, or rather library and study, appropriated to these confidential interviews, Madame Roland took her seat at a little work-table, aside from the circle where her husband and his friends were discussing their political measures. Busy with her needle or with her pen, she listened to every word that was uttered, and often bit her lips to check the almost irrepressible desire to speak out in condemnation of some feeble proposal or to urge some bolder action. At the close of the evening, when frank and social converse ensued, her voice was heard in low, but sweet and winning tones, as one after another of the members were attracted to her side. Robespierre, at such times silent and thoughtful, was ever bending over her chair. He studied Madame Roland with even more of stoical apathy than another man would study a book which he admires. The next day his companions would smile at the effrontery with which Robespierre would give utterance, in the Assembly, not only to the sentiments, but even to the very words and phrases which he had so carefully garnered from the exuberant diction of his eloquent instructress. Occasionally, every eye would be riveted upon him, and every ear attentive, as he gave utterance to some lofty sentiment, in impassioned language, which had been heard before, in sweeter tones, from more persuasive lips.

But the Revolution, like a spirit of destruction, was now careering onward with resistless power. Liberty was becoming lawlessness. Mobs rioted through the streets, burned chateaux, demolished convents, hunted, even to death, priests and nobles, sacked the palaces of the king, and defiled the altars of religion. The Girondists, illustrious, eloquent, patriotic men, sincerely desirous of breaking the arm of despotism and of introducing a well-regulated liberty, now began to tremble. They saw that a spirit was evoked which might trample every thing sacred in the dust. Their opponents, the Jacobins, rallying the populace around them with the cry, "Kill, burn, destroy," were for rushing onward in this career of demolition, till every vestige of gradations of rank and every restraint of religion should be swept from the land. The Girondists paused in deep embarrassment. They could not retrace their steps and try to re-establish the throne. The

endeavor would not only be utterly unavailing, but would, with certainty, involve them in speedy and retrieveless ruin. They could not unite with the Jacobins in their reckless onset upon every thing which time had rendered venerable, and substitute for decency, and law, and order, the capricious volitions of an insolent, ignorant, and degraded mob. The only hope that remained for them was to struggle to continue firm in the position which they had already assumed. It was the only hope for France. The restoration of the monarchy was impossible. The triumph of the Jacobins was ruin. Which of these two parties in the Assembly shall array around its banners the millions of the populace of France, now aroused to the full consciousness of their power? Which can bid highest for the popular vote? Which can pander most successfully to the popular palate? The Girondists had talent, and integrity, and incorruptible patriotism. They foresaw their peril, but they resolved to meet it, and, if they must perish, to perish with their armor on. No one discerned this danger at an earlier period than Madame Roland. She warned her friends of its approach, even before they were conscious of the gulf to which they were tending. She urged the adoption of precautionary measures, by which a retreat might be effected when their post should be no longer tenable. "I once thought," said Madame Roland, "that there were no evils worse than regal despotism. I now see that there are other calamities vastly more to be dreaded."

Robespierre, who had associated with the Girondists with rather a sullen and Ishmaelitish spirit, holding himself in readiness to go here or there, as events might indicate to be politic, began now to incline toward the more popular party, of which he subsequently became the inspiring demon. Though he was daily attracting more attention, he had not yet risen to popularity. On one occasion, being accused of advocating some unpopular measure, the clamors of the multitude were raised against him, and vows of vengeance were uttered, loud and deep, through the streets of Paris. His enemies in the Assembly took advantage of this to bring an act of accusation against him, which would relieve them of his presence by the decisive energy of the ax of the guillotine. Robespierre's danger was most imminent, and he was obliged to conceal himself. Madame Roland, inspired by those courageous impulses which ever ennobled her, went at midnight, accompanied by her husband, to his retreat, to invite him to a more secure asylum in their own house. Madame Roland then hastened to a very influential friend, M. Busot, allowing no weariness to interrupt her philanthropy, and entreated him to hasten immediately and endeavor to exculpate Robespierre, before an act of accusation should be issued against him. M. Busot hesitated, but, unable to resist the earnest appeal of Madame Roland, replied, "I will do all in my power to save this unfortunate young man, although I am far from partaking the opinion of many respecting him.

He thinks too much of himself to love liberty; but he serves it, and that is enough for me. I will defend him." Thus was the life of Robespierre saved. He lived to reward his benefactors by consigning them all to prison and to death. Says Lamartine sublimely, "Beneath the dungeons of the Conciergerie, Madame Roland remembered that night with satisfaction. If Robespierre recalled it in his power, this memory must have fallen colder upon his heart than the ax of the headsman."

The powerful influence which Madame Roland was thus exerting could not be concealed. Her husband became more illustrious through that brilliance she was ever anxious to reflect upon him. She appeared to have no ambition for personal renown. She sought only to elevate the position and expand the celebrity of her companion. It was whispered from ear to ear, and now and then openly asserted in the Assembly, that the bold and decisive measures of the Girondists received their impulse from the youthful and lovely wife of M. Roland.

In September, 1791, the Assembly was dissolved, and M. and Madame Roland returned to the rural quiet of La Platière. But in pruning the vines, and feeding the poultry, and cultivating the flowers which so peacefully bloomed in their garden, they could not forget the exciting scenes through which they had passed, and the still more exciting scenes which they foresaw were to come. She kept up a constant correspondence with Robespierre and Busot, and furnished many very able articles for a widely-circulated journal, established by the Girondists for the advocacy of their political views. The question now arose between herself and her husband whether they should relinquish the agitations and the perils of a political life in these stormy times, and cloister themselves in rural seclusion, in the calm luxury of literary and scientific enterprise, or launch forth again upon the storm-swept ocean of revolution and anarchy. Few who understand the human heart will doubt of the decision to which they came. The chickens were left in the yard, the rabbits in the warren, and the flowers were abandoned to bloom in solitude; and before the snows of December had whitened the hills, they were again installed in tumultuous Paris. A new Assembly had just been convened, from which all the members of the one but recently dissolved were by law excluded. Their friends were rapidly assembling in Paris from their summer retreats, and influential men, from all parts of the empire, were gathering in the metropolis, to watch the progress of affairs. Clubs were formed to discuss the great questions of the day, to mold public opinion, and to overawe the Assembly. It was a period of darkness and of gloom; but there is something so intoxicating in the draughts of homage and power, that those who have once quaffed them find all milder stimulants stale and insipid. No sooner were M. and Madame Roland established in their city residence, than they were involved in all the

plots and the counterplots of the Revolution. M. Roland was grave, taciturn, oracular. He had no brilliance of talent to excite envy. He displayed no ostentation in dress, or equipage, or manners, to provoke the desire in others to humble him. His reputation for stoical virtue gave a wide sweep to his influence. His very silence invested him with a mysterious wisdom. Consequently, no one feared him as a rival, and he was freely thrust forward as the unobjectionable head of a party by all who hoped through him to promote their own interests. He was what we call in America an available candidate. Madame Roland, on the contrary, was animated and brilliant. Her genius was universally admired. Her bold suggestions, her shrewd counsel, her lively repartee, her capability of cutting sarcasm, rarely exercised, her deep and impassioned benevolence, her unvarying cheerfulness, the sincerity and enthusiasm of her philanthropy, and the unrivaled brilliance of her conversational powers, made her the center of a system around which the brightest intellects were revolving. Vergniaud, Pétion, Brissot, and others, whose names were then comparatively unknown, but whose fame has since resounded through the civilized world, loved to do her homage.

The spirit of the Revolution was still advancing with gigantic strides, and the already shattered throne was reeling beneath the redoubled blows of the insurgent people. Massacres were rife all over the kingdom. The sky was nightly illumined by conflagrations. The nobles were abandoning their estates, and escaping from perils and death to take refuge in the bosom of the little army of emigrants at Coblentz. The king, insulted and a prisoner, reigned but in name. Under these circumstances, Louis was compelled to dismiss his ministry and to call in another more acceptable to the people. The king hoped, by the appointment of a Republican ministry, to pacify the democratic spirit. There was no other resource left him but abdication. It was a bitter cup for him to drink. His proud and spirited queen declared that she would rather die than throw herself into the arms of Republicans for protection. He yielded to the pressure, dismissed his ministers, and surrendered himself to the Girondists for the appointment of a new ministry. The Girondists called upon M. Roland to take the important post of Minister of the Interior. It was a perilous position to fill, but what danger will not ambition face? In the present posture of affairs, the Minister of the Interior was the monarch of France. M. Roland, whose quiet and hidden ambition had been feeding upon its success, smiled nervously at the power which, thus unsolicited, was passing into his hands. Madame Roland, whose all-absorbing passion it now was to elevate her husband to the highest summits of greatness, was gratified in view of the honor and agitated in view of the peril; but, to her exalted spirit, the greater the danger, the more heroic the act. "The burden is heavy," she said; "but Roland has a great consciousness

of his own powers, and would derive fresh strength from the feeling of being useful to liberty and his country."

In March, 1792, he entered upon his arduous and exalted office. The palace formerly occupied by the Controller General of Finance, most gorgeously furnished by Madame Necker in the days of her glory, was appropriated to their use. Madame Roland entered this splendid establishment, and, elevated in social eminence above the most exalted nobles of France, fulfilled all the complicated duties of her station with a grace and dignity which have never been surpassed. Thus had Jane risen from that humble position in which the daughter of the engraver, in solitude, communed with her books, to be the mistress of a palace of aristocratic grandeur, and the associate of statesmen and princes.

When M. Roland made his first appearance at court as the minister of his royal master, instead of arraying himself in the court-dress which the customs of the times required, he affected, in his costume, the simplicity of his principles. He wished to appear in his exalted station still the man of the people. He had not forgotten the impression produced in France by Franklin, as in the most republican simplicity of dress he moved among the glittering throng at Versailles. He accordingly presented himself at the Tuileries in a plain black coat, with a round hat, and dusty shoes fastened with ribbons instead of buckles. The courtiers were indignant. The king was highly displeased at what he considered an act of disrespect. The master of ceremonies was in consternation, and exclaimed with a look of horror to General Damuriez, "My dear sir, he has not even buckles in his shoes!" "Mercy upon us!" exclaimed the old general, with the most laughable expression of affected gravity, "we shall then all go to ruin together!"

The king, however, soon forgot the neglect of etiquette in the momentous questions which were pressing upon his attention. He felt the importance of securing the confidence and good will of his ministers, and he approached them with the utmost affability and conciliation. M. Roland returned from his first interview with the monarch quite enchanted with his excellent disposition and his patriotic spirit. He assured his wife that the community had formed a totally erroneous estimate of the king; that he was sincerely a friend to the reforms which were taking place, and was a hearty supporter of the Constitution which had been apparently forced upon him. The prompt reply of Madame Roland displayed even more than her characteristic sagacity. "If Louis is sincerely a friend of the Constitution, he must be virtuous beyond the common race of mortals. Mistrust your own virtue, M. Roland. You are only an honest countryman wandering amid a crowd of courtiers—virtue in danger amid a myriad of vices. They speak our language; we do not know theirs. No! Louis can not love the chains that fetter him. He may feign to caress them. He thinks only of how he can spurn

them. Fallen greatness loves not its decadence. No man likes his humiliation. Trust in human nature; that never deceives. Distrust courts. Your virtue is too elevated to see the snares which courtiers spread beneath your feet."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MINISTRY OF M. ROLAND.

1792

From all the spacious apartments of the magnificent mansion allotted as the residence of the Minister of the Interior, Madame Roland selected a small and retired parlor, which she had furnished with every attraction as a library and a study. This was her much-loved retreat, and here M. Roland, in the presence of his wife, was accustomed to see his friends in all their confidential intercourse. Thus she was not only made acquainted with all the important occurrences of the times, but she formed an intimate personal acquaintance with the leading actors in these eventful movements. Louis, adopting a vacillating policy, in his endeavors to conciliate each party was losing the confidence and the support of all. The Girondists, foreseeing the danger which threatened the king and all the institutions of government, were anxious that he should be persuaded to abandon these mistaken measures, and firmly and openly advocate the reforms which had already taken place. They felt that if he would energetically take his stand in the position which the Girondists had assumed, there was still safety for himself and the nation. The Girondists, at this time, wished to sustain the throne, but they wished to limit its power and surround it by the institutions of republican liberty. The king, animated by his far more strong-minded, energetic, and ambitious queen, was slowly and reluctantly surrendering point by point as the pressure of the multitude compelled, while he was continually hoping that some change in affairs would enable him to regain his lost power.

The position of the Girondists began to be more and more perilous. The army of emigrant nobles at Coblentz, within the dominions of the King of Prussia, was rapidly increasing in numbers. Frederic was threatening, in alliance with all the most powerful crowns of Europe, to march with a resistless army to Paris, reinstate the king in his lost authority, and take signal vengeance upon the leaders of the Revolution. There were hundreds of thousands in France, the most illustrious in rank and opulence, who would join such an army. The Roman Catholic priesthood, to a man, would lend to it the influence of all its spiritual authority. Paris was every hour agitated by rumors of the approach of the armies of invasion. The people all believed that Louis wished to escape from Paris and head that army. The king was spiritless, undecided, and ever vacillating in his plans. Maria Antoinette would have gone through fire and blood to have rallied those hosts around her banner. Such was the position of the Girondists in reference to the Royalists. They were ready to adopt the most energetic measures to repel the interference of this armed confederacy.

On the other hand, they saw another party, noisy, turbulent, sanguinary, rising beneath them, and threatening with destruction all connected in any way with the execrated throne. This new party, now emerging from the lowest strata of society, upheaving all its superincumbent masses, consisted of the wan, the starving, the haggard, the reckless. All of the abandoned and the dissolute rallied beneath its banners. They called themselves the people. Amazonian fish-women; overgrown boys, with the faces and the hearts of demons; men and girls, who had no homes but the kennels of Paris, in countless thousands swelled its demonstrations of power, whenever it pleased its leaders to call them out. This was the Jacobin party.

The Girondists trembled before this mysterious apparition now looming up before them, and clamoring for the overthrow of all human distinctions. The crown had been struck from the head of the king, and was snatched at by the most menial and degraded of his subjects. The Girondists, through Madame Roland, urged the Minister of the Interior that he should demand of the king an immediate proclamation of war against the emigrants and their supporters, and that he should also issue a decree against the Catholic clergy who would not support the measures of the Revolution. It was, indeed, a bitter draught for the king to drink. Louis declared that he would rather die than sign such a decree. The pressure of the populace was so tremendous, displayed in mobs, and conflagrations, and massacres, that these decisive measures seemed absolutely indispensable for the preservation of the Girondist party and the safety of the king. M. Roland was urged to present to the throne a most earnest letter of expostulation and advice. Madame Roland sat down at her desk and wrote the letter for her husband. It was expressed in that glowing and impassioned style so eminently at her command. Its fervid eloquence was inspired by the foresight she had of impending perils. M. Roland, impressed by its eloquence, yet almost trembling in view of its boldness and its truths, presented the letter to the king. Its last paragraphs will give one some idea of its character.

"Love, serve the Revolution, and the people will love it and serve it in you. Deposed priests agitate the provinces. Ratify the measures to extirpate their fanaticism. Paris trembles in view of its danger. Surround its walls with an army of defense. Delay longer, and you will be deemed a conspirator and an accomplice. Just Heaven! hast thou stricken kings with blindness? I know that truth is rarely welcomed at the foot of thrones. I know, too, that the withholding of truth from kings renders revolutions so often necessary. As a citizen, a minister, I owe truth to the king, and nothing shall prevent me from making it reach his ear."

The advice contained in this letter was most unpalatable to the enfeebled monarch. The adoption of the course it recommended was apparently his

only chance of refuge from certain destruction. We must respect the magnanimityof the king in refusing to sign the decree against the firmest friends of his throne, and we must also respect those who were struggling against despotic power for the establishment of civil and religious freedom. When we think of the king and his suffering family, our sympathies are so enlisted in behalf of their woes that we condemn the letter as harsh and unfeeling. When we think for how many ages the people of France had been crushed into poverty and debasement, we rejoice to hear stern and uncompromising truth fall upon the ear of royalty. And yet Madame Roland's letter rather excites our admiration for her wonderful abilities than allures us to her by developments of female loveliness. This celebrated letter was presented to the king on the 11th of June, 1792. On the same day M. Roland received a letter from the king informing him that he was dismissed from office. It is impossible to refrain from applauding the king for this manifestation of spirit and self-respect. Had he exhibited more of this energy, he might at least have had the honor of dying more gloriously; but, as the intrepid wife of the minister dictated the letter to the king, we can not doubt that it was the imperious wife of the king who dictated the dismissal in reply. Maria Antoinette and Madame Roland met as Greek meets Greek.

"Here am I, dismissed from office," was M. Roland's exclamation to his wife on his return home.

"Present your letter to the Assembly, that the nation may see for what counsel you have been dismissed," replied the undaunted wife.

M. Roland did so. He was received as a martyr to patriotism. The letter was read amid the loudest applauses. It was ordered to be printed, and circulated by tens of thousands through the eighty-three departments of the kingdom; and from all those departments there came rolling back upon the metropolis the echo of the most tumultuous indignation and applause. The famous letter was read by all France—nay, more, by all Europe. Roland was a hero. The plaudits of the million fell upon the ear of the defeated minister, while the execrations of the million rose more loudly and ominously around the tottering throne. This blow, struck by Madame Roland, was by far the heaviest the throne of France had yet received. She who so loved to play the part of a heroine was not at all dismayed by defeat, when it came with such an aggrandizement of power. Upon this wave of enthusiastic popularity Madame Roland and her husband retired from the magnificent palace where they had dwelt for so short a time, and, with a little pardonable ostentation, selected for their retreat very humble apartments in an apparently obscure street of the agitated metropolis. It was the retirement of a philosopher proud of the gloom of his garret. But M. Roland and wife were more powerful now than ever before. The famous letter had placed them in the front ranks of the friends of reform, and enshrined them in the hearts of the ever fickle

populace. Even the Jacobins were compelled to swell the universal voice of commendation. M. Roland's apartments were ever thronged. All important plans were discussed and shaped by him and his wife before they were presented in the Assembly.

There was a young statesman then in Paris named Barbaroux, of remarkable beauty of person, and of the richest mental endowments. The elegance of his stature and the pensive melancholy of his classic features invested him with a peculiar power of fascination. Between him and Madame Roland there existed the most pure, though the strongest friendship. One day he was sitting with M. Roland and wife, in social conference upon the desperate troubles of the times, when the dismissed minister said to him, "What is to be done to save France? There is no army upon which we can rely to resist invasion. Unless we can circumvent the plots of the court, all we have gained is lost. In six weeks the Austrians will be at Paris. Have we, then, labored at the most glorious of revolutions for so many years, to see it overthrown in a single day? If liberty dies in France, it is lost forever to mankind. All the hopes of philosophy are deceived. Prejudice and tyranny will again grasp the world. Let us prevent this misfortune. If the armies of despotism overrun the north of France, let us retire to the southern provinces, and there establish a republic of freemen."

The tears glistened in the eyes of his wife as she listened to this bold proposal, so heroic in its conception, so full of hazard, and demanding such miracles of self-sacrifice and devotion. Madame Roland, who perhaps originally suggested the idea to her husband, urged it with all her impassioned energy. Barbaroux was just the man to have his whole soul inflamed by an enterprise of such grandeur. He drew a rapid sketch of the resources and hopes of liberty in the south, and, taking a map, traced the limits of the republic, from the Doubs, the Aire, and the Rhone, to La Dordogne; and from the inaccessible mountains of Auvergne, to Durance and the sea. A serene joy passed over the features of the three, thus quietly originating a plan which was, with an earthquake's power, to make every throne in Europe totter, and to convulse Christendom to its very center. Barbaroux left them deeply impressed with a sense of the grandeur and the perils of the enterprise, and remarked to a friend, "Of all the men of modern times, Roland seems to me most to resemble Cato; but it must be owned that it is to his wife that his courage and talents are due." Previous to this hour the Girondists had wished to sustain the throne, and merely to surround it with free institutions. They had taken the government of England for their model. From this day the Girondists, freed from all obligations to the king, conspired secretly in Madame Roland's chamber, and publicly in the tribune, for the entire overthrow of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic like that of the United States. They rivaled

the Jacobins in the endeavor to see who could strike the heaviest blows against the throne. It was now a struggle between life and death. The triumph of the invading army would be the utter destruction of all connected with the revolutionary movement. And thus did Madame Roland exert an influence more powerful, perhaps, than that of any other one mind in the demolition of the Bourbon despotism.

Her influence over the Girondist party was such as no man ever can exert. Her conduct, frank and open-hearted, was irreproachable, ever above even the slightest suspicion of indiscretion. She could not be insensible to the homage, the admiration of those she gathered around her. Buzot adored Madame Roland as the inspiration of his mind, as the idol of his worship. She had involuntarily gained that entire ascendency over his whole being which made her the world to him. The secret of this resistless enchantment was concealed until her death; it was then disclosed, and revealed the mystery of a spiritual conflict such as few can comprehend. She writes of Buzot, "Sensible, ardent, melancholy, he seems born to give and share happiness. This man would forget the universe in the sweetness of private virtues. Capable of sublime impulses and unvarying affections, the vulgar, who like to depreciate what it can not equal, accuse him of being a dreamer. Of sweet countenance, elegant figure, there is always in his attire that care, neatness, and propriety which announce the respect of self as well as of others. While the dregs of the nation elevate the flatterers and corrupters of the people to station—while cut-throats swear, drink, and clothe themselves in rags, in order to fraternize with the populace, Buzot possesses the morality of Socrates, and maintains the decorum of Scipio. So they pull down his house, and banish him as they did Aristides. I am astonished that they have not issued a decree that his name should be forgotten."

These words Madame Roland wrote in her dungeon the night before her execution. Buzot was then an exile, pursued by unrelenting fury, and concealed in the caves of St. Emilion. When the tidings reached him of the death of Madame Roland, he fell to the ground as if struck by lightning. For many days he was in a state of phrensy, and was never again restored to cheerfulness.

Danton now appeared in the saloon of Madame Roland, with his gigantic stature, and shaggy hair, and voice of thunder, and crouched at the feet of this mistress of hearts, whom his sagacity perceived was soon again to be the dispenser of power. She comprehended at a glance his herculean abilities, and the important aid he could render the Republican cause. She wished to win his co-operation, and at first tried to conciliate him, "as a woman would pat a lion;" but soon, convinced of his heartlessness and utter want of principle, she spurned him with abhorrence. He subsequently endeavored, again and again, to reinstate himself in her favor, but in vain.

Every hour scenes of new violence were being enacted in Paris and throughout all France. Roland was the idol of the nation. The famous letter was the subject of universal admiration. The outcry against his dismission was falling in thunder tones on the ear of the king. This act had fanned to increased intensity those flames of revolutionary phrensy which were now glaring with portentous flashes in every part of France. The people, intoxicated and maddened by the discovery of their power, were now arrayed, with irresistible thirstings for destruction and blood, against the king, the court, and the nobility. The royal family, imprisoned in the Tuileries, were each day drinking of the cup of humiliation to its lowest dregs. Austria and Prussia, united with the emigrants at Coblentz, prepared to march to Paris to reinstate the king upon his throne. Excitement, consternation, phrensy, pervaded all hearts. A vast assemblage of countless thousands of women, and boys, and wan and starving men, gathered in the streets of Paris. Harangues against the king and the aristocrats rendered them delirious with rage. They crowded all the avenues to the Tuileries, burst through the gates and over the walls, dashed down the doors and stove in the windows, and, with obscene ribaldry, rioted through all the apartments sacred to royalty. They thrust the dirty red cap of Jacobinism upon the head of the King. They poured into the ear of the humiliated queen the most revolting and loathsome execrations. There was no hope for Louis but in the recall of M. Roland. The court party could give him no protection. The Jacobins were upon him in locust legions. M. Roland alone could bring the Girondists, as a shield, between the throne and the mob. He was recalled, and again moved, in calm triumph, from his obscure chambers to the regal palace of the minister. If Madame Roland's letter dismissed him from office, her letter also restored him again with an enormous accumulation of power.

The Library.

His situation was not an enviable one. Elevated as it was in dignity and influence, it was full of perplexity, toil, and peril. The spirit of revolution was now rampant, and no earthly power could stay it. It was inevitable that those who would not recklessly ride upon its billows must be overwhelmed by its resistless surges. Madame Roland was far more conscious of the peril than her husband. With intense emotion, but calmly and firmly, she looked upon the gathering storm. The peculiarity of her character, and her great moral courage, was illustrated by the mode of life she vigorously adopted. Raised from obscurity to a position so commanding, with rank and wealth bowing obsequiously around her, she was entirely undazzled, and resolved that, consecrating all her energies to the demands of the tempestuous times, she would waste no time in fashionable parties and heartless visits. "My love of study," she said, "is as great as my detestation of cards, and the society of

silly people affords me no amusement." Twice a week she gave a dinner to the members of the ministry, and other influential men in the political world, with whom her husband wished to converse. The palace was furnished to their hands by its former occupants with Oriental luxury. Selecting for her own use, as before, one of the smallest parlors, she furnished it as her library. Here she lived, engrossed in study, busy with her pen, and taking an unostentatious and unseen, but most active part, in all those measures which were literally agitating the whole civilized world. Her little library was the sanctuary for all confidential conversation upon matters of state. Here her husband met his political friends to mature their measures. The gentlemen gathered, evening after evening, around the table in the center of the room, M. Roland, with his serene, reflective brow, presiding at their head, while Madame Roland, at her work-table by the fireside, employed herself with her needle or her pen. Her mind, however, was absorbed by the conversation which was passing. M. Roland, in fact, in giving his own views, was but recapitulating those sentiments with which his mind was imbued from previous conference with his companion.

It is not possible that one endowed with the ardent and glowing imagination of Madame Roland should not, at times, feel inwardly the spirit of exultation in the consciousness of this vast power. From the windows of her palaceshe looked down upon the shop of the mechanic where her infancy was cradled, and upon those dusty streets where she had walked an obscure child, while proud aristocracy swept by her in splendor—that very aristocracy looking now imploringly to her for a smile. She possessed that peculiar tact, which enabled her often to guide the course of political measures without appearing to do so. She was only anxious to promote the glory of her husband, and was never more happy than when he was receiving plaudits for works which she had performed. She wrote many of his proclamations, his letters, his state papers, and with all the glowing fervor of an enthusiastic woman. "Without me," she writes, "my husband would have been quite as good a minister, for his knowledge, his activity, his integrity were all his own; but with me he attracted more attention, because I infused into his writings that mixture of spirit and gentleness, of authoritative reason and seducing sentiment, which is, perhaps, only to be found in the language of a woman who has a clear head and a feeling heart." This frank avowal of just self-appreciation is not vanity. A vain woman could not have won the love and homage of so many of the noblest men of France.

A curious circumstance occurred at this time, which forcibly and even ludicrously struck Madame Roland's mind, as she reflected upon the wonderful changes of life, and the peculiar position which she now occupied. Some French artists had been imprisoned by the pope at Rome. The Executive Council of France wished to remonstrate and demand their

release. Madame Roland sat down to write the letter, severe and authoritative, to his holiness, threatening him with the severest vengeance if he refused to comply with the request. As in her little library she prepared this communication to the head of the Papal States and of the Catholic Church, she paused, with her pen in her hand, and reflected upon her situation but a few years before as the humble daughter of an engraver. She recalled to mind the emotions of superstitious awe and adoration with which, in the nunnery, she had regarded his holiness as next to the Deity, and almost his equal. She read over some of the imperious passages which she had now addressed to the pope in the unaffected dignity of conscious power, and the contrast was so striking, and struck her as so ludicrous, that she burst into an uncontrollable paroxysm of laughter.

When Jane was a diffident maiden of seventeen, she went once with her aunt to the residence of a nobleman of exalted rank and vast wealth, and had there been invited to dine with the servants. The proud spirit of Jane was touched to the quick. With a burning brow she sat down in the servants' hall, with stewards, and butlers, and cooks, and footmen, and valet de chambres, and ladies' maids of every degree, all dressed in tawdry finery, and assuming the most disgusting airs of self-importance. She went home despising in her heart both lords and menials, and dreaming, with new aspirations, of her Roman republic. One day, when Madame Roland was in power, she had just passed from her splendid dining-room, where she had been entertaining the most distinguished men of the empire, into her drawing-room, when a gray-headed gentleman entered, and bowing profoundly and most obsequiously before her, entreated the honor of an introduction to the Minister of the Interior. This gentleman was M. Haudry, with whose servants she had been invited to dine. This once proud aristocrat, who, in the wreck of the Revolution, had lost both wealth and rank, now saw Madame Roland elevated as far above him as he had formerly been exalted above her. She remembered the many scenes in which her spirit had been humiliated by haughty assumptions. She could not but feel the triumph to which circumstances had borne her, though magnanimity restrained its manifestation.

Anarchy now reigned throughout France. The king and the royal family were imprisoned in the Temple. The Girondists in the Legislative Assembly, which had now assumed the name of the National Convention, and M. Roland at the head of the ministry, were struggling, with herculean exertions, to restore the dominion of law, and, if possible, to save the life of the king. The Jacobins, who, unable to resist the boundless popularity of M. Roland, had, for a time, co-operated with the Girondists, now began to separate themselves again more and more widely from them. They flattered the mob. They encouraged every possible demonstration of lawless violence. They

pandered to the passions of the multitude by affecting grossness and vulgarity in person, and language, and manners; by clamoring for the division of property, and for the death of the king. In tones daily increasing in boldness and efficiency, they declared the Girondists to be the friends of the monarch, and the enemies of popular liberty. Upon this tumultuous wave of polluted democracy, now rising with resistless and crested billow, Danton and Robespierre were riding into their terrific power. Humanity shut its eyes in view of the hideous apparition of wan and haggard beggary and crime. The deep mutterings of this rising storm, which no earthly hand might stay, rolled heavily upon the ear of Europe. Christendom looked astounded upon the spectacle of a barbarian invasion bursting forth from the cellars and garrets of Paris. Oppressed and degraded humanity was about to take vengeance for its ages of accumulated wrongs. The throne was demolished. The insulted royal family, in rags and almost in starvation, were in a dungeon. The universal cry from the masses of the people was now for a republic. Jacobins and Girondists united in this cry; but the Jacobins accused the Girondists of being insincere, and of secretly plotting for the restoration of the king.

Madame Roland, in the name of her husband, drew up for the Convention the plan of a republic as a substitute for the throne. From childhood she had yearned for a republic, with its liberty and purity, fascinated by the ideal ofRoman virtue, from which her lively imagination had banished all human corruption. But now that the throne and hereditary rank were virtually abolished, and all France clamoring for a republic, and the pen in her hand to present to the National Assembly a Constitution of popular liberty, her heart misgave her. Her husband was nominally Minister of the Interior, but his power was gone. The mob of Paris had usurped the place of king, and Constitution, and law. The Jacobins were attaining the decided ascendency. The guillotine was daily crimsoned with the blood of the noblest citizens of France. The streets and the prisons were polluted with the massacre of the innocent. The soul of Madame Roland recoiled with horror at the scenes she daily witnessed. The Girondists struggled in vain to resist the torrent, but they were swept before it. The time had been when the proclamation of a republic would have filled her soul with inexpressible joy. Now she could see no gleam of hope for her country. The restoration of the monarchy was impossible. The substitution of a republic was inevitable. No earthly power could prevent it. In that republic she saw only the precursor of her own ruin, the ruin of all dear to her, and general anarchy. With a dejected spirit she wrote to a friend, "We are under the knife of Robespierre and Marat. You know my enthusiasm for the Revolution. I am ashamed of it now. It has been sullied by monsters. It is hideous."

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME ROLAND AND THE JACOBINS.

1792

The Prussians were now advancing on their march to Paris. One after another of the frontier cities of France were capitulating to the invaders as the storm of bomb-shells, from the batteries of the allied army, was rained down upon their roofs. The French were retreating before their triumphant adversaries. Sanguine hopes sprung up in the bosoms of the friends of the monarchy that the artillery of the Prussians would soon demolish the iron doors of the Temple, where the king and the royal family were imprisoned, and reinstate the captive monarch upon his throne. The Revolutionists were almost frantic in view of their peril. They knew that there were tens of thousands in Paris, of the most wealthy and the most influential, and hundreds of thousands in France, who would, at the slightest prospect of success, welcome the Prussians as their deliverers. Should the king thus prove victorious, the leaders in the revolutionary movement had sinned too deeply to hope for pardon. Death was their inevitable doom. Consternation pervaded the metropolis. The magnitude of this peril united all the revolutionary parties for their common defense. Even Vergniaud, the most eloquent leader of the Girondists, proposed a decree of death against every citizen of a besieged city who should speak of surrender.

It was midnight in the Assembly. The most extraordinary and despotic measures were adopted by acclamation to meet the fearful emergency. "We must rouse the whole populace of France," exclaimed Danton, in those tones which now began to thrill so portentously upon the ear of Europe, "and hurl them, en masse, upon our invaders. There are traitors in Paris, ready to join our foes. We must arrest them all, however numerous they may be. The peril is imminent. The precautions adopted must be correspondingly prompt and decisive. With the morning sun we must visit every dwelling in Paris, and imprison those whom we have reason to fear will join the enemies of the nation, even though they be thirty thousand in number."

The decree passed without hesitation. The gates of Paris were to be locked, that none might escape. Carriages were to be excluded from the streets. All citizens were ordered to be at home. The sections, the tribunals, the clubs were to suspend their sittings, that the public attention might not be distracted. All houses were to be brilliantly lighted in the evening, that the search might be more effectually conducted. Commissaries, accompanied by armed soldiers, were, in the name of the law, to enter every dwelling. Each citizen should show what arms he had. If any thing excited suspicion, the individual and his premises were to be searched with the utmost vigilance. If the slightest deception had been practiced, in denying or in not fully

confessing any suspicious appearances, the person was to be arrested and imprisoned. If a person were found in any dwelling but his own, he was to be imprisoned as under suspicion. Guards were to be placed in all unoccupied houses. A double cordon of soldiers were stationed around the walls, to arrest all who should attempt to escape. Armed boats floated upon the Seine, at the two extremities of Paris, that every possible passage of escape might be closed. Gardens, groves, promenades, all were to be searched.

With so much energy was this work conducted, that that very night a body of workmen were sent, with torches and suitable tools, to open an access to the subterranean burial-grounds extending under a portion of Paris, that a speedy disposal might be made of the anticipated multitude of dead bodies. The decree, conveying terror to ten thousand bosoms, spread with the rapidity of lightning through the streets and the dwellings of Paris. Every one who had expressed a sentiment of loyalty; every one who had a friend who was an emigrant or a loyalist; every one who had uttered a word of censure in reference to the sanguinary atrocities of the Revolution; every one who inherited an illustrious name, or who had an unfriendly neighbor or an inimical servant, trembled at the swift approach of the impending doom.

Bands of men, armed with pikes, brought into power from the dregs of society, insolent, merciless, and resistless, accompanied by martial music, traversed the streets in all directions. As the commissaries knocked at a door, the family within were pale and paralyzed with terror. The brutal inquisitors appeared to delight in the anguish which their stern office extorted, and the more refined the family in culture or the more elevated in rank, the more severely did vulgarity in power trample them in the dust of humiliation. They took with them workmen acquainted with all possible modes of concealment. They broke locks, burst in panels, cut open beds and mattresses, tore up floors, sounded wells, explored garrets and cellars for secret doors and vaults, and could they find in any house an individual whom affection or hospitality had sheltered, a rusty gun, an old picture of any member of the royal family, a button with the royal arms, a letter from a suspected person, or containing a sentiment against the "Reign of Terror," the father was instantly and rudely torn from his home, his wife, his children, and hurried with ignominious violence, as a traitor unfit to live, through the streets, to the prison. It was a night of woe in Paris.

The friends of the monarchy soon found all efforts at concealment unavailing. They had at first crept into chimneys, from which they were soon smoked out. They had concealed themselves behind tapestry. But pikes and bayonets were with derision thrust through their bodies. They had burrowed in holes in the cellars, and endeavored to blind the eye of pursuit by coverings of barrels, or lumber, or wood, or coal. But the stratagems of

affection were equally matched by the sagacity of revolutionary phrensy, and the doomed were dragged to light. Many of the Royalists had fled to the hospitals, where, in the wards of infection, they shared the beds of the dead and the dying. But even there they were followed and arrested. The domiciliary visits were continued for three days. "The whole city was like a prisoner, whose limbs are held while he is searched and fettered." Ten thousand suspected persons were seized and committed to the prisons. Many were massacred in their dwellings or in the streets. Some were subsequently liberated, as having been unjustly arrested.

Thirty priests were dragged into a room at the Hotel de Ville. Five coaches, each containing six of the obnoxious prisoners, started to convey them to the prison of the Abbayé. A countless mob gathered around them as an alarm-gun gave the signal for the coaches to proceed on their way. The windows were open that the populace might see those whom they deemed traitors to their country, and whom they believed to be ready to join the army of invasion, now so triumphantly approaching. Every moment the mob increased in density, and with difficulty the coaches wormed their way through the tumultuous gatherings. Oaths and execrations rose on every side. Gestures and threats of violence were fearfully increasing, when a vast multitude of men, and women, and boys came roaring down a cross-street, and so completely blocked up the way that a peaceful passage was impossible. The carriages stopped. A man with his shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and a glittering saber in his hand, forced his way through the escort, and, deliberately standing upon the steps of one of the coaches, clinging with one hand to the door, plunged again, and again, and again his saber into the bodies of the priests, wherever chance might direct it. He drew it out reeking with blood, and waved it before the people. A hideous yell of applause rose from the multitude, and again he plunged his saber into the carriage. The assassin then passed to the next coach, and again enacted the same act of horrid butchery upon the struggling priests crowded into the carriages, with no shield and with no escape. Thus he went, from one to the other, through the whole line of coaches, while the armed escort looked on with derisive laughter, and shouts of fiendish exultation rose from the phrensied multitude. The mounted troops slowly forced open a passage for the carriages, and they moved along, marking their passage by the streams of blood which dripped, from their dead and dying inmates, upon the pavements. When they arrived at the prison, eight dead bodies were dragged from the floor of the vehicles, and many of those not dead were horridly mutilated and clotted with gore. The wretched victims precipitated themselves with the utmost consternation into the prison, as a retreat from the billows of rage surging and roaring around them.

But the scene within was still more terrible than that without. In the spacious hall opening into the court-yard of the prison there was a table, around which sat twelve men. Their brawny limbs, and coarse and brutal countenances, proclaimed them familiar with debauch and blood. Their attire was that of the lowest class in society, with woolen caps on their heads, shirt sleeves rolled up, unembarrassed by either vest or coat, and butchers' aprons bound around them. At the head of the table sat Maillard, at that time the idol of the blood-thirsty mob of Paris. These men composed a self-constituted tribunal to award life or instant death to those brought before them. First appeared one hundred and fifty Swiss officers and soldiers who had been in the employ of the king. They were brought en masse before the tribunal. "You have assassinated the people," said Maillard, "and they demand vengeance." The door was open. The assassins in the court-yard, with weapons reeking with blood, were howling for their prey. The soldiers were driven into the yard, and they fell beneath the blows of bayonets, sabers, and clubs, and their gory bodies were piled up, a hideous mound, in the corners of the court. The priests, without delay, met with the same fate. A moment sufficed for trial, and verdict, and execution. Night came. Brandy and excitement had roused the demon in the human heart. Life was a plaything, murder a pastime. Torches were lighted, refreshments introduced, songs of mirth and joviality rose upon the night air, and still the horrid carnage continued unabated. Now and then, from caprice, one was liberated; but the innocent and the guilty fell alike. Suspicion was crime. An illustrious name was guilt. There was no time for defense. A frown from the judge was followed by a blow from the assassin. A similar scene was transpiring in all the prisons of Paris. Carts were continually arriving to remove the dead bodies, which accumulated much faster than they could be borne away. The court-yards became wet and slippery with blood. Straw was brought in and strewn thickly over the stones, and benches were placed against the walls to accommodate those women who wished to gaze upon the butchery. The benches were immediately filled with females, exulting in the death of all whom they deemed tainted with aristocracy, and rejoicing to see the exalted and the refined falling beneath the clubs of the ragged and the degraded. The murderers made use of the bodies of the dead for seats, upon which they drank their brandy mingled with gunpowder, and smoked their pipes. In the nine prisons of Paris these horrors continued unabated till they were emptied of their victims. Men most illustrious in philanthropy, rank, and virtue, were brained with clubs by overgrown boys, who accompanied their blows with fiendish laughter. Ladies of the highest accomplishments, of exalted beauty and of spotless purity, were hacked in pieces by the lowest wretches who had crawled from the dens of pollution, and their dismembered limbs were borne on the points of pikes in derision through

the streets of the metropolis. Children, even, were involved in this blind slaughter. They were called the cubs of aristocracy.

We can not enter more minutely into the details of these sickening scenes, for the soul turns from them weary of life; and yet thus far we must go, for it is important that all eyes should read this dreadful yet instructive lesson—that all may know that there is no despotism so dreadful as the despotism of anarchy—that there are no laws more to be abhorred than the absence of all law.

In the prison of the Bicetre there were three thousand five hundred captives. The ruffians forced the gates, drove in the dungeon doors with cannon, and for five days and five nights continued the slaughter. The phrensy of the intoxicated mob increased each day, and hordes came pouring out from all the foul dens of pollution greedy for carnage. The fevered thirst for blood was inextinguishable. No tongue can now tell the number of the victims. The mangled bodies were hurried to the catacombs, and thrown into an indiscriminate heap of corruption. By many it is estimated that more than ten thousand fell during these massacres. The tidings of these outrages spread through all the provinces of France, and stimulated to similar atrocities the mob in every city. At Orleans the houses of merchants were sacked, the merchants and others of wealth or high standing massacred, while some who had offered resistance were burned at slow fires.

In one town, in the vicinity of the Prussian army, some Loyalist gentlemen, sanguine in view of the success of their friends, got up an entertainment in honor of their victories. At this entertainment their daughters danced. The young ladies were all arrested, fourteen in number, and taken in a cart to the guillotine. These young and beautiful girls, all between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, and from the most refined and opulent families, were beheaded. The group of youth and innocence stood clustered at the foot of the scaffold, while, one by one, their companions ascended, were bound to the plank, the ax fell, and their heads dropped into the basket. It seems that there must have been some supernatural power of support to have sustained children under so awful an ordeal. There were no faintings, no loud lamentations, no shrieks of despair. With the serenity of martyrs they met their fate, each one emulous of showing to her companions how much like a heroine she could die.

These scenes were enacted at the instigation of the Jacobins. Danton and Marat urged on these merciless measures of lawless violence. "We must," said they, "strike terror into the hearts of our foes. It is our only safety." They sent agents into the most degraded quarters of the city to rouse and direct the mob. They voted abundant supplies to the wretched assassins who had broken into the prisons, and involved youth and age, and

innocence and guilt, in indiscriminate carnage. The murderers, reeking in intoxication and besmeared with blood, came in crowds to the door of the municipality to claim their reward. "Do you think," said a brawny, gigantic wretch, with tucked-up sleeves, in the garb of a butcher, and with his whole person bespattered with blood and brains, "do you think that I have earned but twenty-four francs to-day? I have killed forty aristocrats with my own hands!" The money was soon exhausted, and still the crowd of assassins thronged the committee. Indignant that their claims were not instantly discharged, they presented their bloody weapons at the throats of their instigators, and threatened them with immediate death if the money were not furnished. Thus urged, the committee succeeded in paying one half the sum, and gave bonds for the rest.

M. Roland was almost frantic in view of these horrors, which he had no power to quell. The mob, headed by the Jacobins, had now the complete ascendency, and he was minister but in name. He urged upon the Assembly the adoption of immediate and energetic measures to arrest these execrable deeds of lawless violence. Many of the Girondists in the Assembly gave vehement but unavailing utterance to their execration of the massacres. Others were intimidated by the weapon which the Jacobins were now so effectually wielding; for they knew that it might not be very difficult so to direct the fury of the mob as to turn those sharp blades, now dripping with blood, from the prisons into the hall of Assembly, and upon the throats of all obnoxious to Jacobin power. The Girondists trembled in view of their danger. They had aided in opening the sluice-ways of a torrent which was now sweeping every thing before it. Madame Roland distinctly saw and deeply felt the peril to which she and her friends were exposed. She knew, and they all knew, that defeat was death. The great struggle now in the Assembly was for the popular voice. The Girondists hoped, though almost in despair, that it was not yet too late to show the people the horrors of anarchy, and to rally around themselves the multitude to sustain a well-established and law-revering republic. The Jacobins determined to send their opponents to the scaffold, and by the aid of the terrors of the mob, now enlisted on their side, resistlessly to carry all their measures. A hint from the Jacobin leaders surrounded the Assembly with the hideous howlings of a haggard concourse of beings just as merciless and demoniac as lost spirits. They exhibited these allies to the Girondists as a bull-dog shows his teeth.

In speeches, and placards, and proclamations they declared the Girondists to be, in heart, the enemies of the Republic. They accused them of hating the Revolution in consequence of its necessary severity, and of plotting in secret for the restoration of the king. With great adroitness, they introduced measures which the Girondists must either support, and thus aid the

Jacobins, or oppose, and increase the suspicion of the populace, and rouse their rage against them. The allied army, with seven thousand French emigrants and over a hundred thousand highly-disciplined troops, under the most ableand experienced generals, was slowly but surely advancing toward Paris, to release the king, replace him on the throne, and avenge the insults to royalty. The booming of their artillery was heard reverberating among the hills of France, ever drawing nearer and nearer to the insurgent metropolis, and sending consternation into all hearts. Under these circumstances, the Jacobins, having massacred those deemed the friends of the aristocrats, now gathered their strength to sweep before them all their adversaries. They passed a decree ordering every man in Paris, capable of bearing arms, to shoulder his musket and march to the frontiers to meet the invaders. If money was wanted, it was only necessary to send to the guillotine the aristocrat who possessed it, and to confiscate his estate.

Robespierre and Danton had now broken off all intimacy with Madame Roland and her friends. They no longer appeared in the little library where the Girondist leaders so often met, but, placing themselves at the head of the unorganized and tumultuous party now so rapidly gaining the ascendency, they were swept before it as the crest is borne by the billow. Madame Roland urged most strenuously upon her friends that those persons in the Assembly, the leaders of the Jacobin party, who had instigated the massacres in the prisons, should be accused, and brought to trial and punishment. It required peculiar boldness, at that hour, to accuse Robespierre and Danton of crime. Though thousands in France were horror-stricken at these outrages, the mob, who now ruled Paris, would rally instantaneously at the sound of the tocsin for the protection of their idols.

Madame Roland was one evening urging Vergniaud to take that heroic and desperate stand. "The only hope for France," said she "is in the sacredness of law. This atrocious carnage causes thousands of bosoms to thrill with horror, and all the wise and the good in France and in the world will rise to sustain those who expose their own hearts as a barrier to arrest such enormities."

"Of what avail," was the reply, in tones of sadness, "can such exertions be? The assassins are supported by all the power of the street. Such a conflict must necessarily terminate in a street fight. The cannon are with our foes. The most prominent of the friends of order are massacred. Terror will restrain the rest. We shall only provoke our own destruction."

"Of what use is life," rejoins the intrepid woman, "if we must live in this base subjection to a degraded mob? Let us contend for the right, and if we must die, let us rejoice to die with dignity and with heroism."

Though despairing of success, and apprehensive that their own doom was already sealed, M. Roland and Vergniaud, roused to action by this ruling spirit, the next day made their appearance in the Assembly with the heroic resolve to throw themselves before the torrent now rushing so wildly. They stood there, however, but the representatives of Madame Roland, inspired by her energies, and giving utterance to those eloquent sentiments which had burst from her lips.

The Assembly listened in silence as M. Roland, in an energetic discourse, proclaimed the true principles of law and order, and called upon the Assembly to defend its own dignity against popular violence, and to raise an armed force consecrated to the security of liberty and justice. Encouraged by these appearances of returning moderation, others of the Girondists rose, and, with great boldness and vehemence, urged decisive action. "It requires some courage," said Kersaint, "to rise up here against assassins, but it is time to erect scaffolds for those who provoke assassination." The strife continued for two or three days, with that intense excitement which a conflict for life or death must necessarily engender. The question between the Girondist and the Jacobin was, "Who shall lie down on the guillotine?" For some time the issue of the struggle was uncertain. The Jacobins summoned their allies, the mob. They surrounded the doors and the windows of the Assembly, and with their howlings sustained their friends. "I have just passed through the crowd," said a member, "and have witnessed its excitement. If the act of accusation is carried, many a head will lie low before another morning dawns." The Girondists found themselves, at the close of the struggle, defeated, yet not so decidedly but that they still clung to hope.

M. Roland, who had not yet entirely lost, with the people, that popularity which swept him, on so triumphant a billow, again into the office of Minister of the Interior, now, conscious of his utter impotency, presented to the Assembly his resignation of power which was merely nominal. Great efforts had for some time been made, by his adversaries, to turn the tide of popular hatred against him, and especially against his wife, whom Danton and Robespierre recognized and proclaimed as the animating and inspiring soul of the Girondist party.

The friends of Roland urged, with high encomiums upon his character, that he should be invited to retain his post. The sentiment of the Assembly was wavering in his favor. Danton, excessively annoyed, arose and said, with a sneer, "I oppose the invitation. Nobody appreciates M. Roland more justly than myself. But if you give him this invitation, you must give his wife one also. Every one knows that M. Roland is not alone in his department. As for myself, in my department I am alone. I have no wife to help me."

These indecorous and malicious allusions were received with shouts of derisive laughter from the Jacobin benches. The majority, however, frowned upon Danton with deep reproaches for such an attack upon a lady. One of the Girondists immediately ascended the tribune. "What signifies it to the country," said he, "whether Roland possesses an intelligent wife, who inspires him with her additional energy, or whether he acts from his own resolution alone?" The defense was received with much applause.

The next day, Roland, as Minister of the Interior, presented a letter to the Convention, expressing his determination to continue in office. It was written by Madame Roland in strains of most glowing eloquence, and in the spirit of the loftiest heroism and the most dignified defiance. "The Convention is wise," said this letter, "in not giving a solemn invitation to a man to remain in the ministry. It would attach too great importance to a name. But thedeliberation honors me, and clearly pronounces the desire of the Convention. That wish satisfies me. It opens to me the career. I espouse it with courage. I remain in the ministry. I remain because there are perils to face. I am not blind to them, but I brave them fearlessly. The salvation of my country is the object in view. To that I devote myself, even to death. I am accused of wanting courage. Is no courage requisite in these times in denouncing the protectors of assassins?"

Thus Madame Roland, sheltered in the seclusion of her library, met, in spirit, in the fierce struggle of the tribune, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. They knew from whose shafts these keen arrows were shot. The Girondists knew to whom they were indebted for many of the most skillful parries and retaliatory blows. The one party looked to her almost with adoration; the other, with implacable hate. Never before, probably, in the history of the world, has a woman occupied such a position, and never by a woman will such a position be occupied again. Danton began to recoil from the gulf opening before him, and wished to return to alliance with the Girondists. He expressed the most profound admiration for the talents, energy, and sagacity of Madame Roland. "We must act together," said he, "or the wave of the Revolution will overwhelm us all. United, we can stem it. Disunited, it will overpower us." Again he appeared in the library of Madame Roland, in a last interview with the Girondists. He desired a coalition. They could not agree. Danton insisted that they must overlook the massacres, and give at least an implied assent to their necessity. "We will agree to all," said the Girondists, "except impunity to murderers and their accomplices." The conference was broken up. Danton, irritated, withdrew, and placed himself by the side of Robespierre. Again the Jacobins and the Girondists prepared for the renewal of their struggle. It was not a struggle for power merely, but for life. The Girondists, knowing that the fury of the Revolution would soon sweep over every thing, unless they could bring back the people to a sense of

justice—would punish with the scaffold those who had incited the massacre of thousands of uncondemned citizens. The Jacobins would rid themselves of their adversaries by overwhelming them in the same carnage to which they had consigned the Loyalists. Madame Roland might have fled from these perils, and have retired with her husband to regions of tranquillity and of safety but she urged M. Roland to remain at his post and resolved to remain herself and meet her destiny, whatever it might be. Never did a mortal face danger, with a full appreciation of its magnitude, with more stoicism than was exhibited by this most ardent and enthusiastic of women.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAST STRUGGLES OF THE GIRONDISTS.

1792-1793

The Jacobins now resolved to bring the king to trial. By placards posted in the streets, by inflammatory speeches in the Convention, in public gatherings, and in the clubs, by false assertions and slanders of every conceivable nature, they had roused the ignorant populace to the full conviction that the king was the author of every calamity now impending. The storm of the Revolution had swept desolation through all the walks of peaceful industry. Starvation, gaunt and terrible, began to stare the population of Paris directly in the face. The infuriated mob hung the bakers upon the lamp-posts before their own doors for refusing to supply them with bread. The peasant dared not carry provisions into the city, for he was sure of being robbed by the sovereign people, who had attained the freedom of committing all crimes with impunity. The multitude fully believed that there was a conspiracy formed by the king in his prison, and by the friends of royalty, to starve the people into subjection. Portentous murmurs were now also borne on every breeze, uttered by a thousand unseen voices, that the Girondists were accomplices in this conspiracy; that they hated the Revolution; that they wished to save the life of the king; that they would welcome the army of invasion, as affording them an opportunity to reinstate Louis upon the throne. The Jacobins, it was declared, were the only true friends of the people. The Girondists were accused of being in league with the aristocrats. These suspicions rose and floated over Paris like the mist of the ocean. They were every where encountered, and yet presented no resistance to be assailed. They were intimated in the Jacobin journals; they were suggested, with daily increasing distinctness, at the tribune. And in those multitudinous gatherings, where Marat stood in filth and rags to harangue the miserable, and the vicious, and the starving, they were proclaimed loudly, and with execrations. The Jacobins rejoiced that they had now, by the force of circumstances, crowded their adversaries into a position from which they could not easily extricate themselves. Should the Girondists vote for the death of the king, they would thus support the Jacobins in those sanguinary measures, so popular with the mob, which had now become the right arm of Jacobin power. The glory would also all redound to the Jacobins, for it would not be difficult to convince the multitude that the Girondists merely submitted to a measure which they were unable to resist. Should the Girondists, on the other hand, true to their instinctive abhorrence of these deeds of blood, dare to vote against the death of the king, they would be ruined irretrievably. They would then stand unmasked before the people as traitors to the Republic and the friends of royalty. Like noxious beasts, they would be hunted through the streets and

massacred at their own firesides. The Girondists perceived distinctly the vortex of destruction toward which they were so rapidly circling. Many and anxious were their deliberations, night after night, in the library of Madame Roland. In the midst of the fearful peril, it was not easy to decide what either duty or apparent policy required.

The Jacobins now made a direct and infamous attempt to turn the rage of the populace against Madame Roland. Achille Viard, one of those unprincipled adventurers with which the stormy times had filled the metropolis, was employed, as a spy, to feign attachment to the Girondist party, and to seek the acquaintance, and insinuate himself into the confidence of Madame Roland. By perversions and exaggerations of her language, he was to fabricate an accusation against her which would bring her head to the scaffold. Madame Roland instantly penetrated his character, and he was repulsed from her presence by the most contemptuous neglect. He, however, appeared before the Assembly as her accuser, and charged her with carrying on a secret correspondence with persons of influence at home and abroad, to protect the king. She was summoned to present herself before the Convention, to confront her accuser, and defend herself from the scaffold. Her gentle yet imperial spirit was undaunted by the magnitude of the peril. Her name had often been mentioned in the Assembly as the inspiring genius of the most influential and eloquent party which had risen up amid the storms of the Revolution. Her talents, her accomplishments, her fascinating conversational eloquence, had spread her renown widely through Europe. A large number of the most illustrious men in that legislative hall, both ardent young men and those venerable with age, regarded her with the most profound admiration—almost with religious homage. Others, conscious of her power, and often foiled by her sagacity, hated her with implacable hatred, and determined, either by the ax of the guillotine or by the poniard of the assassin, to remove her from their way.

The aspect of a young and beautiful woman, combining in her person and mind all the attractions of nature and genius, with her cheek glowing with heroic resolution, and her demeanor exhibiting the most perfect feminine loveliness and modesty, entering this vast assembly of irritated men to speak in defense of her life, at once hushed the clamor of hoarse voices, and subdued the rage of angry disputants. Silence the most respectful instantly filled the hall. Every eye was fixed upon her. The hearts of her friends throbbed with sympathy and with love. Her enemies were more than half disarmed, and wished that they, also, were honored as her friends. She stood before the bar.

"What is your name?" inquired the president.

She paused for a moment, and then, fixing her eye calmly upon her interrogator, in those clear and liquid tones which left their vibration upon the ear long after her voice was hushed in death, answered,

"Roland! a name of which I am proud, for it is that of a good and an honorable man."

"Do you know Achille Viard?" the president inquired.

"I have once, and but once, seen him."

"What has passed between you?"

"Twice he has written to me, soliciting an interview. Once I saw him. After a short conversation, I perceived that he was a spy, and dismissed him with the contempt he deserved."

The calm dignity of her replies, the ingenuous frankness of her manners, and the manifest malice and falsehood of Viard's accusation, made even her enemies ashamed of their unchivalrous prosecution. Briefly, in tremulous tones of voice, but with a spirit of firmness which no terrors could daunt, she entered upon her defense. It was the first time that a female voice had been heard in the midst of the clamor of these enraged combatants. The Assembly, unused to such a scene, were fascinated by her attractive eloquence. Viard, convicted of meanness, and treachery, and falsehood, dared not open his lips. Madame Roland was acquitted by acclamation. Upon the spot the president proposed that the marked respect of the Convention be conferred upon Madame Roland. With enthusiasm the resolution was carried. As she retired from the hall, her bosom glowing with the excitement of the perfect triumph she had won, her ear was greeted with the enthusiastic applause of the whole assembly. The eyes of all France had been attracted to her as she thus defended herself and her friends, and confounded her enemies. Marat gnashed his teeth with rage. Danton was gloomy and silent. Robespierre, vanquished by charms which had so often before enthralled him, expressed his contempt for the conspiracy, and, for the last time, smiled upon his early friend, whom he soon, with the most stoical indifference, dragged to the scaffold.

The evening after the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic, when there was still some faint hope that there might yet be found intelligence and virtue in the people to sustain the Constitution, the Girondists met at Madame Roland's, and celebrated, with trembling exultation, the birth of popular liberty. The Constitution of the United States was the beau ideal of the Girondists, and, vainly dreaming that the institutions which Washington and his compatriots had established in Christian America were now firmly planted in infidel France, they endeavored to cast the veil of oblivion over the past, and to spread over the

future the illusions of hope. The men here assembled were the most illustrious of the nation. Noble sentiments passed from mind to mind. Madame Roland, pale with emotion, conscious of the perils which were so portentously rising around them, shone with a preternatural brilliance in the solemn rejoicing of that evening. The aged Roland gazed with tears of fond affection and of gratified pride upon his lovely wife, as if in spirit asking her if all the loftiest aspirations of their souls were not now answered. The victorious Republicans hardly knew whether to sing triumphant songs or funeral dirges. Vergniaud, the renowned orator of the party, was prominent above them all. With a pale cheek, and a serene and pensive smile, he sat in silence, his mind evidently wandering among the rising apparitions of the future. At the close of the supper he filled his glass, and rising, proposed to drink to the eternity of the Republic. Madame Roland, whose mind was ever filled with classic recollections, scattered from a bouquet which she held in her hand, some rose leaves on the wine in his glass. Vergniaud drank the wine, and then said, in a low voice, "We should quaff cypress leaves, not rose leaves, in our wine to-night. In drinking to a republic, stained, at its birth, with the blood of massacre, who knows but that we drink to our own death. But no matter. Were this wine my own blood, I would drain it to liberty and equality." All the guests, with enthusiasm, responded, "Vive la Republique!" After dinner, Roland read to the company a paper drawn up by himself and wife in reference to the state of the Republic, which views were to be presented the next day to the Convention.

The royal family were still in the dungeons of the Temple, lingering through the dreary hours of the most desolate imprisonment. Phrensied mobs, rioting through the streets of Paris, and overawing all law, demanded, with loudest execrations, the death of the king. A man having ventured to say that he thought that the Republic might be established without shedding the blood of Louis, was immediately stabbed to the heart, and his mutilated remains were dragged through the streets of Paris in fiendish revelry. A poor vendor of pamphlets and newspapers, coming out of a reading-room, was accused of selling books favorable to royalty. The suspicion was crime, and he fell, pierced by thirty daggers. Such warnings as these were significant and impressive, and few dared utter a word in favor of the king.

It was the month of January, 1793, when the imprisoned monarch was brought into the hall of the Convention for his trial. It was a gloomy day for France, and all external nature seemed shrouded in darkness and sorrow. Clouds of mist were sweeping through the chill air, and a few feeble lamps glimmered along the narrow avenues and gloomy passages, which were darkened by the approach of a winter's night. Armed soldiers surrounded the building. Heavy pieces of artillery faced every approach. Cannoneers, with lighted matches, stood at their side, ready to scatter a storm of grape-

shot upon every foe. A mob of countless thousands were surging to and fro through all the neighboring streets. The deep, dull murmurings of the multitude swelled in unison with the sighings of the storm rising upon the somber night. It was with no little difficulty that the deputies could force their way through the ocean of human beings surrounding the Assembly. The coarse garb, the angry features, the harsh voices, the fierce and significant gestures, proclaimed too clearly that the mob had determined to have the life of the king, and that, unless the deputies should vote his death, both king and deputies should perish together. As each deputy threaded his way through the thronging masses, he heard, in threatening tones, muttered into his ear deep and emphatic, "His death or thine!"

Persons who were familiar with the faces of all the members were stationed at particular points, and called out aloud to the multitude the names of the deputies as they elbowed their way through the surging multitudes. At the names of Danton, Marat, Robespierre, the ranks opened to make way for these idols of the populace, and shouts of the most enthusiastic greeting fell upon their ears. When the names of Vergniaud, Brissot, and others of the leading Girondists were mentioned, clinched fists, brandished daggers, and angry menaces declared that those who refused to obey the wishes of the people should encounter dire revenge. The very sentinels placed to guard the deputies encouraged the mob to insult and violence. The lobbies were filled with the most sanguinary ruffians of Paris. The interior of the hall was dimly lighted. A chandelier, suspended from the center of the ceiling, illuminated certain portions of the room, while the more distant parts remained in deep obscurity. That all might act under the full sense of their responsibility to the mob, Robespierre had proposed and carried the vote that the silent form of ballot should be rejected, and that each deputy, in his turn, should ascend the tribune, and, with a distinct voice, announce his sentence. For some time after the voting commenced it was quite uncertain how the decision would turn. In the alternate record of the vote, death and exile appeared to be equally balanced. All now depended upon the course which the Girondists should pursue. If they should vote for death, the doom of the king was sealed. Vergniaud was the first of that party to be called to record his sentence. It was well known that he looked with repugnance and horror upon the sanguinary scenes with which the Revolution had been deformed, and that he had often avowed his sympathy for the hard fate of a prince whose greatest crime was weakness. His vote would unquestionably be the index of that of the whole party, and thus the life or death of the king appeared to be suspended from his lips. It was known that the very evening before, while supping with a lady who expressed much commiseration for the captives in the Temple, he had declared that he would save the life of the king. The courage of Vergniaud was above suspicion, and his integrity above

reproach. Difficult as it was to judge impartially, with the cannon and the pikes of the mob leveled at his breast, it was not doubted that he would vote conscientiously.

As the name of Vergniaud was called, all conversation instantly ceased. Perfect silence pervaded the hall, and every eye was riveted upon him. Slowly he ascended the steps of the tribune. His brow was calm, but his mouth closely compressed, as if to sustain some firm resolve. He paused for a moment, and the Assembly was breathless with suspense. He contracted his eyebrows, as if again reflecting upon his decision, and then, in a low, solemn, firm voice, uttered the word "Death."

The most profound silence reigned for a moment, and then again the low murmur of suppressed conversation filled the hall. Vergniaud descended from the tribune and disappeared in the crowd. All hope for the king was now gone. The rest of the Girondists also voted for death, and Louis was condemned to the scaffold.

This united vote upon the death of the king for a short time mingled together again the Girondists and the Jacobins. But the dominant party, elated by the victory which they had gained over their adversaries, were encouraged to fresh extortions. Perils increased. Europe was rising in arms against the blood-stained Republic. The execution of the king aroused emotions of unconquerable detestation in the bosoms of thousands who had previously looked upon the Revolution with favor. Those who had any opulence to forfeit, or any position in society to maintain, were ready to welcome as deliverers the allied army of invasion. It was then, to meet this emergency, that that terrible Revolutionary Tribunal was organized, which raised the ax of the guillotine as the one all-potent instrument of government, and which shed such oceans of innocent blood. "Two hundred and sixty thousand heads," said Marat, "must fall before France will be safe from internal foes." Danton, Marat, and Robespierre were now in the ascendency, riding with resistless power upon the billows of mob violence. Whenever they wished to carry any measure, they sent forth their agents to the dens and lurking-places of degradation and crime, and surrounded and filled the hall of the Assembly with blood-thirsty assassins. "Those who call themselvesrespectable," said Marat, "wish to give laws to those whom they call the rabble. We will teach them that the time is come in which the rabble is to reign."

This Revolutionary Tribunal, consisting of five judges, a jury, and a public accuser, all appointed by the Convention, was proposed and decreed on the same evening. It possessed unlimited powers to confiscate property and take life. The Girondists dared not vote against this tribunal. The public voice would pronounce them the worst of traitors. France was now a charnel-

house. Blood flowed in streams which were never dry. Innocence had no protection. Virtue was suspicion, suspicion a crime, the guillotine the penalty, and the confiscated estate the bribe to accusation. Thus there was erected, in the name of liberty and popular rights, over the ruins of the French monarchy, a system of despotism the most atrocious and merciless under which humanity has ever groaned.

Again and again had the Jacobins called the mob into the Assembly, and compelled the members to vote with the poniards of assassins at their breasts. Madame Roland now despaired of liberty. Calumny, instead of gratitude, was unsparingly heaped upon herself and her husband. This requital, so unexpected, was more dreadful to her than the scaffold. All the promised fruits of the Revolution had disappeared, and desolation and crime alone were realized. The Girondists still met in Madame Roland's library to deliberate concerning measures for averting the impending ruin. All was unavailing.

The most distressing embarrassments now surrounded M. Roland. He could not abandon power without abandoning himself and his supporters in the Assembly to the guillotine; and while continuing in power, he was compelled to witness deeds of atrocity from which not only his soul revolted, but to which it was necessary for him apparently to give his sanction. His cheek grew pale and wan with care. He could neither eat nor sleep. The Republic had proved an utter failure, and France was but a tempest-tossed ocean of anarchy.

Thus situated, M. Roland, with the most melancholy forebodings, sent in his final resignation. He retired to humble lodgings in one of the obscure streets of Paris. Here, anxiously watching the progress of events, he began to make preparations to leave the mob-enthralled metropolis, and seek a retreat, in the calm seclusion of La Platière, from these storms which no human power could allay. Still, the influence of Roland and his wife was feared by those who were directing the terrible enginery of lawless violence. It was well known by them both that assassins had been employed to silence them with the poniard. Madame Roland seemed, however, perfectly insensible to personal fear. She thought only of her husband and her child. Desperate men were seen lurking about the house, and their friends urged them to remove as speedily as possible from the perils by which they were surrounded. Neither the sacredness of law nor the weapons of their friends could longer afford them any protection. The danger became so imminent that the friends of Madame Roland brought her the dress of a peasant girl, and entreated her to put it on, as a disguise, and escape by night, that her husband might follow after her, unencumbered by his family; but she proudly repelled that which she deemed a cowardly artifice. She threw the dress aside, exclaiming, "I am ashamed to resort to any such expedient. I

will neither disguise myself, nor make any attempt at secret escape. My enemies may find me always in my place. If I am assassinated, it shall be in my own home. I owe my country an example of firmness, and I will give it."

She, however, was so fully aware of her peril, and each night was burdened with such atrocities, that she placed loaded pistols under her pillow, to defend herself from those outrages, worse than death, of which the Revolution afforded so many examples. While the influence of the Girondists was entirely overborne by the clamors of the mob in Paris, in the more virtuous rural districts, far removed from the corruption of the capital, their influence was on the increase. The name of M. Roland, uttered with execrations in the metropolis by the vagabonds swarming from all parts of Europe, was spoken in tones of veneration in the departments, where husbandmen tilled the soil, and loved the reign of law and peace. Hence the Jacobins had serious cause to fear a reaction, and determined to silence their voices by the slide of the guillotine. The most desperate measures were now adopted for the destruction of the Girondists. One conspiracy was formed to collect the mob, ever ready to obey a signal from Marat, around the Assembly, to incite them to burst in at the doors and the windows, and fill the hall with confusion, while picked men were to poniard the Girondists in their seats. The conspiracy was detected and exposed but a few hours before its appointed execution. The Jacobin leaders, protected by their savage allies, were raised above the power of law, and set all punishment at defiance.

A night was again designated, in which bands of armed men were to surround the dwelling of each Girondist, and assassinate these foes of Jacobin domination in their beds. This plot also was revealed to the Girondists but a few hours before its destined catastrophe, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the doomed victims obtained extrication from the toils which had been wound around them. Disastrous news was now daily arriving from the frontiers. The most alarming tidings came of insurrections in La Vendee, and other important portions of France, in favor of the restoration of the monarchy. These gathering perils threw terror into the hearts of the Jacobins, and roused them to deeds of desperation. Though Madame Roland was now in comparative obscurity, night after night the most illustrious men of France, battling for liberty and for life in the Convention, ascended the dark staircase to her secluded room, hidden in the depth of a court of the Rue de la Harpe, and there talked over the scenes of the day, and deliberated respecting the morrow.

The Jacobins now planned one of those horrible insurrections which sent a thrill of terror into every bosom in Paris. Assembling the multitudinous throng of demoniac men and women which the troubled times had collected from every portion of Christendom, they gathered them around the hall of

the Assembly to enforce their demands. It was three o'clock in the morning of the 31st of May, 1793, when the dismal sounds of the alarm bells, spreading from belfry to belfry, and the deep booming of the insurrection gun, reverberating through the streets, aroused the citizens from their slumbers, producing universal excitement and consternation. A cold and freezing wind swept clouds of mist through the gloomy air, and the moaning storm seemed the appropriate requiem of a sorrow-stricken world. The Hotel de Ville was the appointed place of rendezvous for the swarming multitudes. The affrighted citizens, knowing but too well to what scenes of violence and blood these demonstrations were the precursors, threw up their windows, and looked out with fainting hearts upon the dusky forms crowding by like apparitions of darkness. The rumbling of the wheels of heavy artillery, the flash of powder, with the frequent report of firearms, and the uproar and the clamor of countless voices, were fearful omens of a day to dawn in blacker darkness than the night. The Girondists had recently been called in the journals and inflammatory speeches of their adversaries the Rolandists. The name was given them in recognition of the prominent position of Madame Roland in the party, and with the endeavor to cast reproach upon her and her husband. Through all the portentous mutterings of this rising storm could be heard deep and significant execrations and menaces, coupled with the names of leading members of the Girondist party. "Down with the aristocrats, the traitors, the Rolandists!" shouted incessantly hoarse voices and shrill voices, of drunken men, of reckless boys, of fiendish women.

The Girondists, apprehensive of some movement of this kind, had generally taken the precaution not to sleep that night in their own dwellings. The intrepid Vergniaud alone refused to adopt any measure of safety. "What signifies life to me now?" said he; "my blood may be more eloquent than my words in awakening and saving my country. I am ready for the sacrifice." One of the Girondists, M. Rabout, a man of deep, reflective piety, hearing these noises, rose from his bed, listened a moment at his window to the tumult swelling up from every street of the vast metropolis, and calmly exclaiming, "Illa suprema dies," it is our last day, prostrated himself at the foot of his bed, and invoked aloud the Divine protection upon his companions, his country, and himself. Many of his friends were with him, friends who knew not the power of prayer. But there are hours in which every soul instinctively craves the mercy of its Creator. They all bowed reverently, and were profoundly affected by the supplications of their Christian friend. Fortified and tranquilized by the potency of prayer, and determining to die, if die they must, at the post of duty, at six o'clock they descended into the street, with pistols and daggers concealed beneath their clothes. They succeeded, unrecognized, in reaching the Convention in safety.

One or two of the Jacobin party were assembled there at that early hour, and Danton, pale with the excitement of a sleepless night, walking to and fro in nervous agitation, greeted his old friends with a wan and melancholy smile. "Do you see," said Louvet to Gaudet, "what horrible hope shines upon that hideous face?" The members rapidly collected. The hall was soon filled. The Girondists were now helpless, their sinews of power were cut, and the struggle was virtually over. All that remained for them was to meet their fate heroically and with an unvanquished spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

ARREST OF MADAME ROLAND.

1793

France was now governed by the Convention. The Convention was governed by the mob of Paris. The Jacobins were the head of this mob. They roused its rage, and guided its fury, when and where they listed. The friendship of the mob was secured and retained by ever pandering to their passions. The Jacobins claimed to be exclusively the friends of the people, and advocated all those measures which tended to crush the elevated and flatter the degraded. Robespierre, Danton, Marat, were now the idols of the populace.

On the morning of the 30th of May, 1793, the streets of Paris were darkened with a dismal storm of low, scudding clouds, and chilling winds, and sleet and rain. Pools of water stood in the miry streets, and every aspect of nature was cheerless and desolate. But there was another storm raging in those streets, more terrible than any elemental warfare. In locust legions, the deformed, the haggard, the brutalized in form, in features, in mind, in heart—demoniac men, satanic women, boys burly, sensual, blood-thirsty, like imps of darkness rioted along toward the Convention, an interminable multitude whom no one could count. Their hideous howlings thrilled upon the ear, and sent panic to the heart. There was no power to resist them. There was no protection from their violence. And thousands wished that they might call up even the most despotic king who ever sat upon the throne of France, from his grave, to drive back that most terrible of all earthly despotisms, the despotism of a mob. This was the power with which the Jacobins backed their arguments. This was the gory blade which they waved before their adversaries, and called the sword of justice.

The Assembly consisted of about eight hundred members. There were twenty-two illustrious men who were considered the leaders of the Girondist party. The Jacobins had resolved that they should be accused of treason, arrested, and condemned. The Convention had refused to submit to the arbitrary and bloody demand. The mob were now assembled to coerce submission. The melancholy tocsin, and the thunders of the alarm gun, resounded through the air, as the countless throng came pouring along like ocean billows, with a resistlessness which no power could stay. They surrounded the Assembly on every side, forced their way into the hall, filled every vacant space, clambered upon the benches, crowded the speaker in his chair, brandished their daggers, and mingled their oaths and imprecations with the fierce debate. Even the Jacobins were terrified by the frightful spirits whom they had evoked. "Down with the Girondists!" "Death to the traitors!" the assassins shouted. The clamor of the mob silenced the Girondists, and they hardly made an attempt to speak in their defense. They

sat upon their benches, pale with the emotions which the fearful scenes excited, yet firm and unwavering. As Couthon, a Jacobin orator, was uttering deep denunciations, he became breathless with the vehemence of his passionate speech. He turned to a waiter for a glass of water. "Take to Couthon a glass of blood," said Vergniaud; "he is thirsting for it."

The decree of accusation was proposed, and carried, without debate, beneath the poniards of uncounted thousands of assassins. The mob was triumphant. By acclamation it was then voted that all Paris should be joyfully illuminated, in celebration of the triumph of the people over those who would arrest the onward career of the Revolution; and every citizen of Paris well knew the doom which awaited him if brilliant lights were not burning at his windows. It was then voted, and with enthusiasm, that the Convention should go out and fraternize with the multitude. Who would have the temerity, in such an hour, to oppose the affectionate demonstration? The degraded Assembly obeyed the mandate of the mob, and marched into the streets, where they were hugged in the unclean arms and pressed to the foul bosoms of beggary, and infamy, and pollution. Louis was avenged. The hours of the day had now passed; night had come; but it was noonday light in the brilliantly-illuminated streets of the metropolis. The Convention, surrounded by torch-bearers, and an innumerable concourse of drunken men and women, rioting in hideous orgies, traversed, in compulsory procession, the principal streets of the city. The Girondists were led as captives to grace the triumph. "Which do you prefer," said a Jacobin to Vergniaud, "this ovation or the scaffold?" "It is all the same to me," replied Vergniaud, with stoical indifference. "There is no choice between this walk and the guillotine. It conducts us to it." The twenty-two Girondists were arrested and committed to prison.

During this dreadful day, while these scenes were passing in the Assembly, Madame Roland and her husband were in their solitary room, oppressed with the most painful suspense. The cry and the uproar of the insurgent city, the tolling of bells and thundering of cannon, were borne upon the wailings of the gloomy storm, and sent consternation even to the stoutest hearts. There was now no room for escape, for the barriers were closed and carefully watched. Madame Roland knew perfectly well that if her friends fell she must fall with them. She had shared their principles; she had guided their measures, and she wished to participate in their doom. It was this honorable feeling which led her to refuse to provide for her own safety, and which induced her to abide, in the midst of ever increasing danger, with her associates. No person obnoxious to suspicion could enter the street without fearful peril, though, through the lingering hours of the day, friends brought them tidings of the current of events. Nothing remained to be done but to await, as patiently as possible, the blow that was inevitably to fall.

The twilight was darkening into night, when six armed men ascended the stairs and burst into Roland's apartment. The philosopher looked calmly upon them as, in the name of the Convention, they informed him of his arrest. "I do not recognize the authority of your warrant," said M. Roland, "and shall not voluntarily follow you. I can only oppose the resistance of my gray hairs, but I will protest against it with my last breath."

The leader of the party replied, "I have no orders to use violence. I will go and report your answer to the council, leaving, in the mean time, a guard to secure your person."

This was an hour to rouse all the energy and heroic resolution of Madame Roland. She immediately sat down, and, with that rapidity of action which her highly-disciplined mind had attained, wrote, in a few moments, a letter to the Convention. Leaving a friend who was in the house with her husband, she ordered a hackney coach, and drove as fast as possible to the Tuileries, where the Assembly was in session. The garden of the Tuileries was filled with the tumultuary concourse. She forced her way through the crowd till she arrived at the doors of the outer halls. Sentinels were stationed at all the passages, who would not allow her to enter.

"Citizens," said she, at last adroitly adopting the vernacular of the Jacobins, "in this day of salvation for our country, in the midst of those traitors who threaten us, you know not the importance of some notes which I have to transmit to the president."

These words were a talisman. The doors were thrown open, and she entered the petitioners' hall. "I wish to see one of the messengers of the House," she said to one of the inner sentinels.

"Wait till one comes out," was the gruff reply.

She waited for a quarter of an hour in burning impatience. Her ear was almost stunned with the deafening clamor of debate, of applause, of execrations, which now in dying murmurs, and again in thundering reverberations, awakening responsive echoes along the thronged streets, swelled upon the night air. Of all human sounds, the uproar of a countless multitude of maddened human voices is the most awful.

At last she caught a glimpse of the messenger who had summoned her to appear before the bar of the Assembly in reply to the accusations of Viard, informed him of their peril, and implored him to hand her letter to the president. The messenger, M. Rôze, took the paper, and, elbowing his way through the throng, disappeared. An hour elapsed, which seemed an age. The tumult within continued unabated. At length M. Rôze reappeared.

"Well!" said Madame Roland, eagerly, "what has been done with my letter?"

"I have given it to the president," was the reply, "but nothing has been done with it as yet. Indescribable confusion prevails. The mob demand the accusation of the Girondists. I have just assisted one to escape by a private way. Others are endeavoring, concealed by the tumult, to effect their escape. There is no knowing what is to happen."

"Alas!" Madame Roland replied, "my letter will not be read. Do send some deputy to me, with whom I can speak a few words."

"Whom shall I send?"

"Indeed I have but little acquaintance with any, and but little esteem for any, except those who are proscribed. Tell Vergniaud that I am inquiring for him."

Vergniaud, notwithstanding the terrific agitations of the hour, immediately attended the summons of Madame Roland. She implored him to try to get her admission to the bar, that she might speak in defense of her husband and her friends.

"In the present state of the Assembly," said Vergniaud, "it would be impossible, and if possible, of no avail. The Convention has lost all power. It has become but the weapon of the rabble. Your words can do no good."

"They may do much good," replied Madame Roland. "I can venture to say that which you could not say without exposing yourself to accusation. I fear nothing. If I can not save Roland, I will utter with energy truths which may be useful to the Republic. An example of courage may shame the nation."

"Think how unavailing the attempt," replied Vergniaud. "Your letter can not possibly be read for two or three hours. A crowd of petitioners throng the bar. Noise, and confusion, and violence fill the House."

Madame Roland paused for a moment, and replied, "I must then hasten home, and ascertain what has become of my husband. I will immediately return. Tell our friends so."

Vergniaud sadly pressed her hand, as if for a last farewell, and returned, invigorated by her courage, to encounter the storm which was hailed upon him in the Assembly. She hastened to her dwelling, and found that her husband had succeeded in eluding the surveillance of his guards, and, escaping by a back passage, had taken refuge in the house of a friend. After a short search she found him in his asylum, and, too deeply moved to weep, threw herself into his arms, informed him of what she had done, rejoiced at his safety, and heroically returned to the Convention, resolved, if possible, to obtain admission there. It was now near midnight. The streets were brilliant with illuminations; but Madame Roland knew not of which party these illuminations celebrated the triumph.

On her arrival at the court of the Tuileries, which had so recently been thronged by a mob of forty thousand men, she found it silent and deserted. The sitting was ended. The members, accompanied by the populace with whom they had fraternized, were traversing the streets. A few sentinels stood shivering in the cold and drizzling rain around the doors of the national palace. A group of rough-looking men were gathered before a cannon. Madame Roland approached them.

"Citizens," inquired she, "has every thing gone well to-night?"

"Oh! wonderfully well," was the reply. "The deputies and the people embraced, and sung the Marseilles Hymn, there, under the tree of liberty."

"And what has become of the twenty-two Girondists?"

"They are all to be arrested."

Madame Roland was almost stunned by the blow. Hastily crossing the court, she arrived at her hackney-coach. A very pretty dog, which had lost its master, followed her. "Is the poor little creature yours?" inquired the coachman. The tones of kindness with which he spoke called up the first tears which had moistened the eyes of Madame Roland that eventful night.

"I should like him for my little boy," said the coachman.

Madame Roland, gratified to have, at such an hour, for a driver, a father and a man of feeling, said, "Put him into the coach, and I will take care of him for you. Drive immediately to the galleries of the Louvre." Madame Roland caressed the affectionate animal, and, weary of the passions of man, longed for retirement from the world, and to seclude herself with those animals who would repay kindness with gratitude. She sank back in her seat, exclaiming, "O that we could escape from France, and find a home in the law-governed republic of America."

Alighting at the Louvre, she called upon a friend, with whom she wished to consult upon the means of effecting M. Roland's escape from the city. He had just gone to bed, but arose, conversed about various plans, and made an appointment to meet her at seven o'clock the next morning. Entirely unmindful of herself, she thought only of the rescue of her friends. Exhausted with excitement and toil, she returned to her desolated home, bent over the sleeping form of her child, and gave vent to a mother's gushing love in a flood of tears. Recovering her fortitude, she sat down and wrote to M. Roland a minute account of all her proceedings. It would have periled his safety had she attempted to share his asylum. The gray of a dull and somber morning was just beginning to appear as Madame Roland threw herself upon a bed for a few moments of repose. Overwhelmed by sorrow and fatigue, she had just fallen asleep, when a band of armed men rudely broke into her house, and demanded to be conducted to her apartment. She knew

too well the object of the summons. The order for her arrest was presented her. She calmly read it, and requested permission to write to a friend. The request was granted. When the note was finished, the officer informed her that it would be necessary for him to be made acquainted with its contents. She quietly tore it into fragments, and cast it into the fire. Then, imprinting her last kiss upon the cheek of her unconscious child, with the composure which such a catastrophe would naturally produce in so heroic a mind, she left her home for the prison. Blood had been flowing too freely in Paris, the guillotine had been too active in its operations, for Madame Roland to entertain any doubts whither the path she now trod was tending.

It was early in the morning of a bleak and dismal day as Madame Roland accompanied the officers through the hall of her dwelling, where she had been the object of such enthusiastic admiration and affection. The servants gathered around her, and filled the house with their lamentations. Even the hardened soldiers were moved by the scene, and one of them exclaimed, "How much you are beloved!" Madame Roland, who alone was tranquil in this hour of trial, calmly replied, "Because I love." As she was led from the house by the gens d'armes, a vast crowd collected around the door, who, believing her to be a traitor to her country, and in league with their enemies, shouted, "A la guillotine!" Unmoved by their cries, she looked calmly and compassionately upon the populace, without gesture or reply. One of the officers, to relieve her from the insults to which she was exposed, asked her if she wished to have the windows of the carriage closed.

"No!" she replied; "oppressed innocence should not assume the attitude of crime and shame. I do not fear the looks of honest men, and I brave those of my enemies."

"You have very great resolution," was the reply, "thus calmly to await justice."

"Justice!" she exclaimed; "were justice done I should not be here. But I shall go to the scaffold as fearlessly as I now proceed to the prison."

"Roland's flight," said one of the officers, brutally, "is a proof of his guilt."

She indignantly replied, "It is so atrocious to persecute a man who has rendered such services to the cause of liberty. His conduct has been so open and his accounts so clear, that he is perfectly justifiable in avoiding the last outrages of envy and malice. Just as Aristides and inflexible as Cato, he is indebted to his virtues for his enemies. Let them satiate their fury upon me. I defy their power, and devote myself to death. He ought to save himself for the sake of his country, to which he may yet do good."

When they arrived at the prison of the Abbayé, Madame Roland was first conducted into a large, dark, gloomy room, which was occupied by a

number of men, who, in attitudes of the deepest melancholy, were either pacing the floor or reclining upon some miserable pallets. From this room she ascended a narrow and dirty staircase to the jailer's apartment. The jailer's wife was a kind woman, and immediately felt the power of the attractions of her fascinating prisoner. As no cell was yet provided for her, she permitted her to remain in her room for the rest of the day. The commissioners who had brought her to the prison gave orders that she should receive no indulgence, but be treated with the utmost rigor. The instructions, however, being merely verbal, were but little regarded. She was furnished with comfortable refreshment instead of the repulsive prison fare, and, after breakfast, was permitted to write a letter to the National Assembly upon her illegal arrest. Thus passed the day.

At ten o'clock in the evening, her cell being prepared, she entered it for the first time. It was a cold, bare room, with walls blackened by the dust and damp of ages. There was a small fire-place in the room, and a narrow window, with a double iron grating, which admitted but a dim twilight even at noon day. In one corner there was a pallet of straw. The chill night air crept in at the unglazed window, and the dismal tolling of the tocsin proclaimed that the metropolis was still the scene of tumult and of violence. Madame Roland threw herself upon her humble bed, and was so overpowered by fatigue and exhaustion that she woke not from her dreamless slumber until twelve o'clock of the next day.

Eudora, who had been left by her mother in the care of weeping domestics, was taken by a friend, and watched over and protected with maternal care. Though Madame Roland never saw her idolized child again, her heart was comforted in the prison by the assurance that she had found a home with those who, for her mother's sake, would love and cherish her.

The tidings of the arrest and imprisonment of Madame Roland soon reached the ears of her unfortunate husband in his retreat. His embarrassment was most agonizing. To remain and participate in her doom, whatever that doom might be, would only diminish her chances of escape and magnify her peril; and yet it seemed not magnanimous to abandon his noble wife to encounter her merciless foes alone. The triumphant Jacobins were now, with the eagerness of blood-hounds, searching every nook and corner in Paris, to drag the fallen minister from his concealment. It soon became evident that no dark hiding-place in the metropolis could long conceal him from the vigilant search which was commenced, and that he must seek safety in precipitate flight. His friends obtained for him the tattered garb of a peasant. In a dark night, alone and trembling, he stole from his retreat, and commenced a journey on foot, by a circuitous and unfrequented route, to gain the frontiers of Switzerland. He hoped to find a temporary refuge by burying himself among the lonely passes of the Alps. A man can face his

foes with a spirit undaunted and unyielding, but he can not fly from them without trembling as he looks behind. For two or three days, with blistered feet, and a heart agitated even beyond all his powers of stoical endurance, he toiled painfully along his dreary journey. As he was entering Moulines, his marked features were recognized. He was arrested, taken back to Paris, and cast into prison, where he languished for some time. He subsequently again made his escape, and was concealed by some friends in the vicinity of Rouen, where he remained in a state of indescribable suspense and anguish until the death of his wife.

When Madame Roland awoke from her long sleep, instead of yielding to despair and surrendering herself to useless repinings, she immediately began to arrange her cell as comfortably as possible, and to look around for such sources of comfort and enjoyment as might yet be obtained. The course she pursued most beautifully illustrates the power of a contented and cheerful spirit not only to alleviate the pangs of severest affliction, but to gild with comfort even the darkest of earthly sorrows. With those smiles of unaffected affability which won to her all hearts, she obtained the favor of a small table, and then of a neat white spread to cover it. This she placed near the window to serve for her writing-desk. To keep this table, which she prized so highly, unsoiled, she smilingly told her keeper that she should make a dining-table of her stove. A rusty dining-table indeed it was. Two hair-pins, which she drew from her own clustering ringlets, she drove into a shelf for pegs to hang her clothes upon. These arrangements she made as cheerfully as when superintending the disposition of the gorgeous furniture in the palace over which she had presided with so much elegance and grace. Having thus provided her study, her next care was to obtain a few books. She happened to have Thomson's Seasons, a favorite volume of hers, in her pocket. Through the jailer's wife she succeeded in obtaining Plutarch's Lives and Sheridan's Dictionary.

The jailer and his wife were both charmed with their prisoner, and invited her to dine with them that day. In the solitude of her cell she could distinctly hear the rolling of drums, the tolling of bells, and all those sounds of tumult which announced that the storm of popular insurrection was still sweeping through the streets. One of her faithful servants called to see her, and, on beholding her mistress in such a situation, the poor girl burst into tears. Madame Roland was, for a moment, overcome by this sensibility; she, however, soon again regained her self-command. She endeavored to banish from her mind all painful thoughts of her husband and her child, and to accommodate herself as heroically as possible to her situation. The prison regulations were very severe. The government allowed twenty pence per day for the support of each prisoner. Ten pence was to be paid to the jailer for the furniture he put into the cell; ten pence only remained for food. The

prisoners were, however, allowed to purchase such food as they pleased from their own purse. Madame Roland, with that stoicism which enabled her to triumph over all ordinary ills, resolved to conform to the prison allowance. She took bread and water alone for breakfast. The dinner was coarse meat and vegetables. The money she saved by this great frugality she distributed among the poorer prisoners. The only indulgence she allowed herself was in the purchase of books and flowers. In reading and with her pen she beguiled the weary days of her imprisonment. And though at times her spirit was overwhelmed with anguish in view of her desolate home and blighted hopes, she still found great solace in the warm affections which sprang up around her, even in the uncongenial atmosphere of a prison.

Though she had been compelled to abandon all the enthusiastic dreams of her youth, she still retained confidence in her faith that these dark storms would ere long disappear from the political horizon, and that a brighter day would soon dawn upon the nations. No misfortunes could disturb the serenity of her soul, and no accumulating perils could daunt her courage. She immediately made a methodical arrangement of her time, so as to appropriate stated employment to every hour. She cheered herself with the reflection that her husband was safe in his retreat, with kind friends ready to minister to all his wants. She felt assured that her daughter was received with maternal love by one who would ever watch over her with the tenderest care. The agitation of the terrible conflict was over. She submitted with calmness and quietude to her lot. After having been so long tossed by storms, she seemed to find a peaceful harbor in her prison cell, and her spirit wandered back to those days, so serene and happy, which she spent with her books in the little chamber beneath her father's roof. She however, made every effort in her power to regain her freedom. She wrote to the Assembly, protesting against her illegal arrest. She found all these efforts unavailing. Still, she gave way to no despondency, and uttered no murmurs. Most of her time she employed in writing historic notices of the scenes through which she had passed. These papers she intrusted, for preservation, to a friend, who occasionally gained access to her. These articles, written with great eloquence and feeling, were subsequently published with her memoirs. Having such resources in her own highly-cultivated mind, even the hours of imprisonment glided rapidly and happily along. Time had no tardy flight, and there probably might have been found many a lady in Europe lolling in a sumptuous carriage, or reclining upon a silken couch, who had far fewer hours of enjoyment.

One day some commissioners called at her cell, hoping to extort from her the secret of her husband's retreat. She looked them calmly in the face, and said, "Gentlemen, I know perfectly well where my husband is. I scorn to tell you a lie. I know also my own strength. And I assure you that there is no

earthly power which can induce me to betray him." The commissioners withdrew, admiring her heroism, and convinced that she was still able to wield an influence which might yet bring the guillotine upon their own necks. Her doom was sealed. Her heroism was her crime. She was too illustrious to live.

CHAPTER X.

FATE OF THE GIRONDISTS.

1793

As the fate of the Girondist party, of which Madame Roland was the soul, is so intimately connected with her history, we must leave her in the prison, while we turn aside to contemplate the doom of her companions. The portentous thunders of the approaching storm had given such warning to the Girondists, that many had effected their escape from Paris, and in various disguises, in friendlessness and poverty, were wandering over Europe. Others, however, were too proud to fly. Conscious of the most elevated patriotic sentiments, and with no criminations of conscience, except for sacrificing too much in love for their country, they resolved to remain firm at their post, and to face their foes. Calmly and sternly they awaited the onset. This heroic courage did but arouse and invigorate their foes. Mercy had long since died in France.

Immediately after the tumult of that dreadful night in which the Convention was inundated with assassins clamoring for blood, twenty-one of the Girondists were arrested and thrown into the dungeons of the Conciergerie. Imprisoned together, and fully conscious that their trial would be but a mockery, and that their doom was already sealed, they fortified one another with all the consolations which philosophy and the pride of magnanimity could administer. In those gloomy cells, beneath the level of the street, into whose deep and grated windows the rays of the noonday sun could but feebly penetrate, their faces soon grew wan, and wasted, and haggard, from confinement, the foul prison air, and woe.

There is no sight more deplorable than that of an accomplished man of intellectual tastes, accustomed to all the refinements of polished life, plunged into those depths of misery from which the decencies even of our social being are excluded. These illustrious statesmen and eloquent orators, whose words had vibrated upon the ear of Europe, were transformed into the most revolting aspect of beggared and haggard misery. Their clothes, ruined by the humid filth of their dungeons, moldered to decay. Unwashed, unshorn, in the loss almost of the aspect of humanity, they became repulsive to each other. Unsupported by any of those consolations which religion affords, many hours of the blackest gloom must have enveloped them.

Not a few of the deputies were young men, in the morning of their energetic being, their bosoms glowing with all the passions of this tumultuous world, buoyant with hope, stimulated by love, invigorated by perfect health. And they found themselves thus suddenly plunged from the heights of honor and

power to the dismal darkness of the dungeon, from whence they could emerge only to be led to the scaffold. All the bright hopes of life had gone down amid the gloom of midnight darkness. Several months lingered slowly away while these men were awaiting their trial. Day after day they heard the tolling of the tocsin, the reverberations of the alarm gun, and the beating of the insurrection drum, as the demon of lawless violence rioted through the streets of the blood-stained metropolis. The execrations of the mob, loud and fiend-like, accompanied the cart of the condemned, as it rumbled upon the pavements above their heads, bearing the victims of popular fury to the guillotine; and still, most stoically, they struggled to nerve their souls with fortitude to meet their fate.

From these massive stone walls, guarded by triple doors of iron and watched by numerous sentinels, answerable for the safe custody of their prisoners with their lives, there was no possibility of escape. The rigor of their imprisonment was, consequently, somewhat softened as weeks passed on, and they were occasionally permitted to see their friends through the iron wicket. Books, also, aided to relieve the tedium of confinement. The brother-in-law of Vergniaud came to visit him, and brought with him his son, a child ten years of age. The features of the fair boy reminded Vergniaud of his beloved sister, and awoke mournfully in his heart the remembrance of departed joys. When the child saw his uncle imprisoned like a malefactor, his cheeks haggard and sunken, his matted hair straggling over his forehead, his long beard disfiguring his face, and his clothes hanging in tatters, he clung to his father, affrighted by the sad sight, and burst into tears.

"My child," said Vergniaud, kindly, taking him in his arms, "look well at me. When you are a man, you can say that you saw Vergniaud, the founder of the Republic, at the most glorious period, and in the most splendid costume he ever wore—that in which he suffered unmerited persecution, and in which he prepared to die for liberty." These words produced a deep impression upon the mind of the child. He remembered them to repeat them after the lapse of half a century.

The cells in which they were imprisoned still remain as they were left on the morning in which these illustrious men were led to their execution. On the dingy walls of stone are still recorded those sentiments which they had inscribed there, and which indicate the nature of those emotions which animated and sustained them. These proverbial maxims and heroic expressions, gleaned from French tragedies or the classic page, were written with the blood which they had drawn from their own veins. In one place is carefully written,

"Quand il n'a pu sauver la liberté de Rome,Caton est libre encore et suit mourir en homme."

"When he no longer had power to preserve the liberty of RomeCato still was free, and knew how to die for man."

Again,

"Cui virtus non deestIlle nunquam omnino miser."

"He who retains his integrityCan never be wholly miserable."

In another place,

"La vraie liberté est celle de l'ame."

"True liberty is that of the soul."

On a beam was written,

"Dignum certe Deo spectaculum fortem virum cum calamitate colluctantem."

"Even God may look with pleasure upon a brave man struggling against adversity."

Again,

"Quels solides appui dans le malheur suprême!J'ai pour moi ma vertu, l'équité, Dieu même."

"How substantial the consolation in the greatest calamityI have for mine, my virtue, justice, God himself."

Beneath this was written,

"Le jour n'est pas plus pur que le fond de mon cœur."

"The day is not more pure than the depths of my heart."

In large letters of blood there was inscribed, in the hand-writing of Vergniaud,

"Potius mori quam fœdari."

"Death is preferable to dishonor."

But one sentence is recorded there which could be considered strictly of a religious character. It was taken from the "Imitation of Christ."

"Remember that you are not called to a life of indulgence and pleasure, but to toil and to suffer."

La Source and Sillery, two very devoted friends, occupied a cell together. La Source was a devoted Christian, and found, in the consolations of piety, an unfailing support. Sillery possessed a feeling heart, and was soothed and comforted by the devotion of his friend. La Source composed a beautiful

hymn, adapted to a sweet and solemn air, which they called their evening service. Night after night this mournful dirge was heard gently issuing from the darkness of their cell, in tones so melodious and plaintive that they never died away from the memory of those who heard them. It is difficult to conceive of any thing more affecting than this knell, so softly uttered at midnight in those dark and dismal dungeons.

"Calm all the tumults that invadeOur souls, and lend thy powerful aid.Oh! source of mercy! soothe our pains,And break, O break our cruel chains!To Thee the captive pours his cry,To Thee the mourner loves to fly.The incense of our tears receive—'Tis all the incense we can give.

"Eternal Power! our cause defend,O God! of innocence the friend.Near Thee forever she resides,In Thee forever she confides.Thou know'st the secrets of the breast:Thou know'st the oppressor and the oppress'd.Do thou our wrongs with pity see,Avert a doom offending thee.

"But should the murderer's arm prevail;Should tyranny our lives assail;Unmoved, triumphant, scorning death,We'll bless Thee with our latest breath.The hour, the glorious hour will come,That consecrates the patriots' tomb;And with the pang our memory claims,Our country will avenge our names."

Summer had come and gone while these distinguished prisoners were awaiting their doom. World-weary and sick at heart, they still struggled to sustain each other, and to meet their dreadful fate with heroic constancy. The day for their trial at length arrived. It was the 20th of October, 1793. They had long been held up before the mob, by placards and impassioned harangues, as traitors to their country, and the populace of Paris were clamorous for their consignment to the guillotine. They were led from the dungeons of the Conciergerie to the misnamed Halls of Justice. A vast concourse of angry men surrounded the tribunal, and filled the air with execrations. Paris that day presented the aspect of a camp. The Jacobins, conscious that there were still thousands of the most influential of the citizens who regarded the Girondists with veneration as incorruptible patriots, determined to prevent the possibility of a rescue. They had some cause to apprehend a counter revolution. They therefore gathered around the scene of trial all that imposing military array which they had at their disposal. Cavalry, with plumes, and helmets, and naked sabers, were sweeping the streets, that no accumulations of the multitude might gather force. The pavements trembled beneath the rumbling wheels of heavy artillery, ready to belch forth their storm of grape-shot upon any opposing foe. Long lines of infantry, with loaded muskets and glittering bayonets, guarded all the avenues to the tribunal, where rancorous passion sat enthroned in mockery upon the seat of justice.

The prisoners had nerved themselves sternly to meet this crisis of their doom. Two by two, in solemn procession, they marched to the bar of judgment, and took their seat upon benches surrounded by gens d'armes and a frowning populace, and arraigned before judges already determined upon their doom. The eyes of the world were, however, upon them. The accused were illustrious in integrity, in rank, in talent. In the distant provinces there were thousands who were their friends. It was necessary to go through the formality of a trial. A few of the accused still clung to the hope of life. They vainly dreamed it possible that, by silence, and the abandonment of themselves to the resistless power by which they were crushed, some mercy might be elicited. It was a weakness unworthy of these great men. But there are few minds which can remain firm while immured for months in the wasting misery of a dungeon. In those glooms the sinews of mental energy wither with dying hope. The trial continued for a week. On the 30th of October, at eleven o'clock at night, the verdict was brought in. They were all declared guilty of having conspired against the Republic, and were condemned to death. With the light of the next morning's sun they were to be led to the guillotine.

As the sentence was pronounced, one of the accused, M. Valazé, made a motion with his hand, as if to tear his garment, and fell from his seat upon the floor. "What, Valazé," said Brissot, striving to support him, "are you losing your courage?" "No," replied Valazé, faintly, "I am dying;" and he expired, with his hand still grasping the hilt of the dagger with which he had pierced his heart. For a moment it was a scene of unutterable horror. The condemned gathered sadly around the remains of their lifeless companion. Some, who had confidently expected acquittal, overcome by the near approach of death, yielded to momentary weakness, and gave utterance to reproaches and lamentations. Others, pale and stupefied, gazed around in moody silence. One, in the delirium of enthusiasm, throwing his arms above his head, shouted, "This is the most glorious day of my life!" Vergniaud, seated upon the highest bench, with the composure of philosophy and piety combined, looked upon the scene, exulting in the victory his own spirit had achieved over peril and death.

The weakness which a few displayed was but momentary. They rallied their energies boldly to meet their inevitable doom. They gathered for a moment around the corpse of their lifeless companion, and were then formed in procession, to march back to their cells. It was midnight as the condemned Girondists were led from the bar of the Palace of Justice back to the dungeons of the Conciergerie, there to wait till the swift-winged hours should bring the dawn which was to guide their steps to the guillotine. Their presence of mind had now returned, and their bosoms glowed with the loftiest enthusiasm. In fulfillment of a promise they had made their fellow-

prisoners, to inform them of their fate by the echoes of their voices, they burst into the Marseillaise Hymn. The vaults of the Conciergerie rang with the song as they shouted, in tones of exultant energy,

"Allons, enfans de la patrie,Le jour de glorie est arrivé,Contre nous de la tyrannieL'étendard sanglant est levé.

"Come! children of your country, come!The day of glory dawns on high,And tyranny has wide unfurl'dHer blood-stain'd banner in the sky."

It was their death-knell. As they were slowly led along through the gloomy corridors of their prison to the cells, these dirge-like wailings of a triumphant song penetrated the remotest dungeons of that dismal abode, and roused every wretched head from its pallet. The arms of the guard clattered along the stone floor of the subterranean caverns, and the unhappy victims of the Revolution, roused from the temporary oblivion of sleep, or from dreams of the homes of refinement and luxury from which they had been torn, glared through the iron gratings upon the melancholy procession, and uttered last words of adieu to those whose fate they almost envied. The acquittal of the Girondists would have given them some little hope that they also might find mercy. Now they sunk back upon their pillows in despair, and lamentations and wailings filled the prison.

The condemned, now that their fate was sealed, had laid aside all weakness, and, mutually encouraging one another, prepared as martyrs to encounter the last stern trial. They were all placed in one large room opening into several cells, and the lifeless body of their companion was deposited in one of the corners. By a decree of the tribunal, the still warm and bleeding remains of Valazé were to be carried back to the cell, and to be conveyed the next morning, in the same cart with the prisoners, to the guillotine. The ax was to sever the head from the lifeless body, and all the headless trunks were to be interred together.

A wealthy friend, who had escaped proscription, and was concealed in Paris, had agreed to send them a sumptuous banquet the night after their trial, which banquet was to prove to them a funeral repast or a triumphant feast, according to the verdict of acquittal or condemnation. Their friend kept his word. Soon after the prisoners were remanded to their cell, a table was spread, and preparations were made for their last supper. There was a large oaken table in the prison, where those awaiting their trial, and those awaiting their execution, met for their coarse prison fare. A rich cloth was spread upon that table. Servants entered, bearing brilliant lamps, which illuminated the dismal vault with an unnatural luster, and spread the glare of noonday light upon the miserable pallets of straw, the rusty iron gratings and chains, and the stone walls weeping with moisture, which no ray of the sun or warmth of fire ever dried away. It was a strange scene, that brilliant

festival, in the midst of the glooms of the most dismal dungeon, with one dead body lying upon the floor, and those for whom the feast was prepared waiting only for the early dawn to light them to their death and burial. The richest viands of meats and wines were brought in and placed before the condemned. Vases of flowers diffused their fragrance and expanded their beauty where flowers were never seen to bloom before. Wan and haggard faces, unwashed and unshorn, gazed upon the unwonted spectacle, as dazzling flambeaux, and rich table furniture, and bouquets, and costly dishes appeared, one after another, until the board was covered with luxury and splendor.

In silence the condemned took their places at the table. They were men of brilliant intellects, of enthusiastic eloquence, thrown suddenly from the heights of power to the foot of the scaffold. A priest, the Abbé Lambert, the intimate personal friend of several of the most eminent of the Girondists, had obtained admittance into the prison to accompany his friends to the guillotine, and to administer to them the last consolations of religion. He stood in the corridor, looking through the open door upon those assembled around the table, and, with his pencil in his hand, noted down their words, their gestures, their sighs—their weakness and their strength. It is to him that we are indebted for all knowledge of the sublime scenes enacted at the last supper of the Girondists. The repast was prolonged until the dawn of morning began to steal faintly in at the grated windows of the prison and the gathering tumult without announced the preparations to conduct them to their execution.

Vergniaud, the most prominent and the most eloquent of their number, presided at the feast. He had little, save the love of glory, to bind him to life, for he had neither father nor mother, wife nor child; and he doubted not that posterity would do him justice, and that his death would be the most glorious act of his life. No one could imagine, from the calm and subdued conversation, and the quiet appetite with which these distinguished men partook of the entertainment, that this was their last repast, and but the prelude to a violent death. But when the cloth was removed, and the fruits, the wines, and the flowers alone remained, the conversation became animated, gay, and at times rose to hilarity. Several of the youngest men of the party, in sallies of wit and outbursts of laughter, endeavored to repel the gloom which darkened their spirits in view of death on the morrow. It was unnatural gayety, unreal, unworthy of the men. Death is not a jest, and no one can honor himself by trying to make it so. A spirit truly noble can encounter this king of terrors with fortitude, but never with levity. Still, now and then, shouts of laughter and songs of merriment burst from the lips of these young men, as they endeavored, with a kind of hysterical energy, to

nerve themselves to show to their enemies their contempt of life and of death. Others were more thoughtful, serene, and truly brave.

"What shall we be doing to-morrow at this time?" said Ducos.

All paused. Religion had its hopes, philosophy its dreams, infidelity its dreary blank. Each answered according to his faith. "We shall sleep after the fatigues of the day," said some, "to wake no more." Atheism had darkened their minds. "Death is an eternal sleep," had become their gloomy creed. They looked forward to the slide of the guillotine as ending all thought, and consigning them back to that non-existence from which they had emerged at their creation. "No!" replied Fauchet, Carru, and others, "annihilation is not our destiny. We are immortal. These bodies may perish. These living thoughts, these boundless aspirations, can never die. To-morrow, far away in other worlds, we shall think, and feel, and act and solve the problems of the immaterial destiny of the human mind." Immortality was the theme. The song was hushed upon these dying lips. The forced laughter fainted away. Standing upon the brink of that dread abyss from whence no one has returned with tidings, every soul felt a longing for immortality. They turned to Vergniaud, whose brilliant intellect, whose soul-moving eloquence, whose spotless life commanded their reverence, and appealed to him for light, and truth, and consolation. His words are lost. The effect of his discourse alone is described. "Never," said the abbé "had his look, his gesture, his language, and his voice more profoundly affected his hearers." In the conclusion of a discourse which is described as one of almost superhuman eloquence, during which some were aroused to the most exalted enthusiasm, all were deeply moved, and many wept, Vergniaud exclaimed,

"Death is but the greatest act of life, since it gives birth to a higher state of existence. Were it not thus there would be something greater than God. It would be the just man immolating himself uselessly and hopelessly for his country. This supposition is a folly of blasphemy, and I repel it with contempt and horror. No! Vergniaud is not greater than God, but God is more just than Vergniaud; and He will not to-morrow suffer him to ascend a scaffold but to justify and avenge him in future ages."

And now the light of day began to stream in at the windows. "Let us go to bed," said one, "and sleep until we are called to go forth to our last sleep. Life is a thing so trifling that it is not worth the hour of sleep we lose in regretting it."

"Let us rather watch," said another, "during the few moments which remain to us. Eternity is so certain and so terrible that a thousand lives would not suffice to prepare for it."

They rose from the table, and most of them retired to their cells and threw themselves upon their beds for a few moments of bodily repose and meditation. Thirteen, however, remained in the larger apartment, finding a certain kind of support in society. In a low tone of voice they conversed with each other. They were worn out with excitement, fatigue, and want of sleep. Some wept. Sleep kindly came to some, and lulled their spirits into momentary oblivion.

At ten o'clock the iron doors grated on their hinges, and the tramp of the gens d'armes, with the clattering of their sabers, was heard reverberating through the gloomy corridors and vaults of their dungeon, as they came, with the executioners, to lead the condemned to the scaffold. Their long hair was cut from their necks, that the ax, with unobstructed edge, might do its work. Each one left some simple and affecting souvenir to friends. Gensonné picked up a lock of his black hair, and gave it to the Abbé Lambert to give to his wife. "Tell her," said he, "that it is the only memorial of my love which I can transmit to her, and that my last thoughts in death were hers." Vergniaud drew from his pocket his watch, and, with his knife, scratched upon the case a few lines of tender remembrance, and sent the token to a young lady to whom he was devotedly attached, and to whom he was ere long to have been married. Each gave to the abbé some legacy of affection to be conveyed to loved ones who were to be left behind. Few emotions are stronger in the hour of death than the desire to be embalmed in the affections of those who are dear to us.

All being ready, the gens d'armes marched the condemned, in a column, into the prison-yard, where five rude carts were awaiting them, to convey them to the scaffold. The countless thousands of Paris were swarming around the prison, filling the court, and rolling, like ocean tides, into every adjacent avenue. Each cart contained five persons, with the exception of the last, into which the dead body of Valazé had been cast with four of his living companions.

And now came to the Girondists their hour of triumph. Heroism rose exultant over all ills. The brilliant sun and the elastic air of an October morning invigorated their bodies, and the scene of sublimity through which they were passing stimulated their spirits to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. As the carts moved from the court-yard, with one simultaneous voice, clear and sonorous, the Girondists burst into the Marseillaise Hymn. The crowd gazed in silence as this funereal chant, not like the wailings of a dirge, but like the strains of an exultant song, swelled and died away upon the air. Here and there some friendly voice among the populace ventured to swell the volume of sound as the significant words were uttered,

"Contre nous de la tyrannieL'étendard sanglant est levé."

"And tyranny has wide unfurl'dHer blood-stain'd banner in the sky."

At the end of each verse their voices sank for a moment into silence. The strain was then again renewed, loud and sonorous. On arriving at the scaffold, they all embraced in one long, last adieu. It was a token of their communion in death as in life. They then, in concert, loudly and firmly resumed their funereal chant. One ascended the scaffold, continuing the song with his companions. He was bound to the plank. Still his voice was heard full and strong. The plank slowly fell. Still his voice, without a tremor, joined in the triumphant chorus. The glittering ax glided like lightning down the groove. His head fell into the basket, and one voice was hushed forever. Another ascended, and another, and another, each with the song bursting loudly from his lips, till death ended the strain. There was no weakness. No step trembled, no cheek paled, no voice faltered. But each succeeding moment the song grew more faint as head after head fell, and the bleeding bodies were piled side by side. At last one voice alone continued the song. It was that of Vergniaud, the most illustrious of them all. Long confinement had spread deathly pallor over his intellectual features, but firm and dauntless, and with a voice of surpassing richness, he continued the solo into which the chorus had now died away. Without the tremor of a nerve, he mounted the scaffold. For a moment he stood in silence, as he looked down upon the lifeless bodies of his friends, and around upon the overawed multitude gazing in silent admiration upon this heroic enthusiasm. As he then surrendered himself to the executioner, he commenced anew the strain,

"Allons! enfans de la patrie,Le jour de glorie est arrivé."

"Come! children of your country, come!The day of glory dawns on high."

In the midst of the exultant tones, the ax glided on its bloody mission, and those lips, which had guided the storm of revolution, and whose patriotic appeals had thrilled upon the ear of France, were silent in death. Thus perished the Girondists, the founders of the Republic and its victims. Their votes consigned Louis and Maria to the guillotine, and they were the first to follow them. One cart conveyed the twenty-one bodies away, and they were thrown into one pit, by the side of the grave of Louis XVI.

Execution of the Girondists.

They committed many errors. Few minds could discern distinctly the path of truth and duty through the clouds and vapors of those stormy times. But they were most sincerely devoted to the liberties of France. They overthrew the monarchy, and established the Republic. They died because they refused to open those sluice-ways of blood which the people demanded. A few of the Girondists had made their escape. Pétion, Buzot, Barbaroux, and

Gaudet wandered in disguise, and hid themselves in the caves of wild and unfrequented mountains. La Fayette, who was one of the most noble and illustrious apostles of this creed, was saved from the guillotine by weary years of imprisonment in the dungeons of Olmutz. Madame Roland lingered in her cell, striving to maintain serenity, while her soul was tortured with the tidings of carnage and woe which every morning's dawn brought to her ears.

The Jacobins were now more and more clamorous for blood. They strove to tear La Fayette from his dungeon, that they might triumph in his death. They pursued, with implacable vigilance, the Girondists who had escaped from their fury. They trained blood-hounds to scent them out in their wild retreats, where they were suffering, from cold and starvation, all that human nature can possibly endure. For a time, five of them lived together in a cavern, thirty feet in depth. This cavern had a secret communication with the cellar of a house. Their generous hostess, periling her own life for them, daily supplied them with food. She could furnish them only with the most scanty fare, lest she should be betrayed by the purchase of provisions necessary for so many mouths. It was mid-winter. No fire warmed them in their damp and gloomy vault, and this living burial must have been worse than death. The search became so rigid that it was necessary for them to disperse. One directed his steps toward the Pyrenees. He was arrested and executed. Three toiled along by night, through cold, and snow, and rain, the keen wind piercing their tattered garments, till their sufferings made them reckless of life. They were arrested, and found, in the blade of the guillotine, a refuge from their woes. At last all were taken and executed but Pétion and Buzot. Their fate is involved in mystery. None can tell what their sufferings were during the days and the nights of their weary wanderings, when no eye but that of God could see them. Some peasants found among the mountains, where they had taken refuge, human remains rent in pieces by the wolves. The tattered garments were scattered around where the teeth of the ferocious animals had left them. They were all that was left of the noble Pétion and Buzot. But how did they die? Worn out by suffering and abandoned to despair, did they fall by their own hands? Did they perish from exposure to hunger and exhaustion, and the freezing blasts of winter? Or, in their weakness, were they attacked by the famished wolves of the mountains? The dying scene of Pétion and Buzot is involved in impenetrable obscurity. Its tragic accompaniments can only be revealed when all mysteries shall be unfolded.

CHAPTER XI.

PRISON LIFE.

1793

Madame Roland remained for four months in the Abbayé prison. On the 24th day of her imprisonment, to her inexpressible astonishment, an officer entered her cell, and informed her that she was liberated, as no charge could be found against her. Hardly crediting her senses—fearing that she should wake up and find her freedom but the blissful delirium of a dream—she took a coach and hastened to her own door. Her eyes were full of tears of joy, and her heart almost bursting with the throbbings of delight, in the anticipation of again pressing her idolized child to her bosom. Her hand was upon the door latch—she had not yet passed the threshold—when two men, who had watched at the door of her dwelling, again seized her in the name of the law. In spite of her tears and supplications, they conveyed her to the prison of St. Pélagié. This loathsome receptacle of crime was filled with the abandoned females who had been swept, in impurity and degradation, from the streets of Paris. It was, apparently, a studied humiliation, to compel their victim to associate with beings from whom her soul shrunk with loathing. She had resigned herself to die, but not to the society of infamy and pollution.

The Jacobins, conscious of the illegality of her first arrest, and dreading her power, were anxious to secure her upon a more legal footing. They adopted, therefore, this measure of liberating her and arresting her a second time. Even her firm and resigned spirit was for a moment vanquished by this cruel blow. Her blissful dream of happiness was so instantaneously converted into the blackness of despair, that she buried her face in her hands, and, in the anguish of a bruised and broken heart, wept aloud. The struggle, though short, was very violent ere she regained her wonted composure. She soon, however, won the compassionate sympathy of her jailers, and was removed from this degrading companionship to a narrow cell, where she could enjoy the luxury of being alone. An humble bed was spread for her in one corner, and a small table was placed near the few rays of light which stole feebly in through the iron grating of the inaccessible window. Summoningall her fortitude to her aid, she again resumed her usual occupations, allotting to each hour of the day its regular employment. She engaged vigorously in the study of the English language, and passed some hours every day in drawing, of which accomplishment she was very fond. She had no patterns to copy; but her imagination wandered through the green fields and by the murmuring brooks of her rural home. Now she roved with free footsteps through the vineyards which sprang up beneath her creative pencil. Now she floated upon the placid lake, reclining upon the

bosom of her husband and caressing her child, beneath the tranquil sublimity of the evening sky. Again she sat down at the humble fireside of the peasant, ministering to the wants of the needy, and receiving the recompense of grateful hearts. Thus, on the free wing of imagination, she penetrated all scenes of beauty, and spread them out in vivid reality before her eye. At times she almost forgot that she was a captive. Well might she have exclaimed, in the language of Maria Antoinette, "What a resource, amid the calamities of life, is a highly-cultivated mind!"

A few devoted friends periled their own lives by gaining occasional access to her. During the dark hours of that reign of terror and of blood, no crime was more unpardonable than the manifestation of sympathy for the accused. These friends, calling as often as prudence would allow, brought to her presents of fruit and of flowers. At last the jailer's wife, unable to resist the pleadings of her own heart for one whom she could not but love and admire, ventured to remove her to a more comfortable apartment, where the daylight shone brightly in through the iron bars of the window. Here she could see the clouds and the birds soaring in the free air. She was even allowed, through her friends, to procure a piano-forte, which afforded her many hours of recreation. Music, drawing, and flowers were the embellishments of her life. Madame Bouchaud, the wife of the jailer, conceived for her prisoner the kindest affection, and daily visited her, doing every thing in her power to alleviate the bitterness of her imprisonment. At last her sympathies were so aroused, that, regardless of all prudential considerations, she offered to aid her in making her escape. Madame Roland was deeply moved by this proof of devotion, and, though she was fully aware that she must soon place her head upon the scaffold, she firmly refused all entreaties to escape in any way which might endanger her friend. Others united with Madame Bouchaud in entreating her to accept of her generous offer. Their efforts were entirely unavailing. She preferred to die herself rather than to incur the possibility of exposing those who loved her to the guillotine. The kindness with which Madame Roland was treated was soon spied out by those in power. The jailer was severely reprimanded, and ordered immediately to remove the piano-forte from the room, and to confine Madame Roland rigorously in her cell. This change did not disturb the equanimity of her spirit. She had studied so deeply and admired so profoundly all that was noble in the most illustrious characters of antiquity, that her mind instinctively assumed the same model. She found elevated enjoyment in triumphing over every earthly ill.

An English lady, then residing in France, who had often visited her in the days of her power, when her home presented all that earth could give of splendor, and when wealth and rank were bowing obsequiously around her,

thus describes a visit which she paid to her cell in these dark days of adversity.

"I visited her in the prison of Sainte Pélagié, where her soul, superior to circumstances, retained its accustomed serenity, and she conversed with the same animated cheerfulness in her cheerless dudgeon as she used to do in the hotel of the minister. She had provided herself with a few books, and I found her reading Plutarch. She told me that she expected to die, and the look of placid resignation with which she said it convinced me that she was prepared to meet death with a firmness worthy of her exalted character. When I inquired after her daughter, an only child of thirteen years of age, she burst into tears; and, at the overwhelming recollection of her husband and child, the courage of the victim of liberty was lost in the feelings of the wife and the mother."

The merciless commissioners had ordered her to be incarcerated in a cell which no beam of light could penetrate. But her compassionate keepers ventured to misunderstand the orders, and to place her in a room where a few rays of the morning sun could struggle through the grated windows, and where the light of day, though seen but dimly, might still, in some degree, cheer those eyes so soon to be closed forever. The soul, instinctively appreciative of beauty, will under the most adverse circumstances, evoke congenial visions. Her friends brought her flowers, of which from childhood she had been most passionately fond. These cherished plants seemed to comprehend and requite unaffected love. At the iron window of her prison they appeared to grow with the joy and luxuriance of gratitude. With intertwining leaf and blossom, they concealed the rusty bars, till they changed the aspect of the grated cell into a garden bower, where birds might nestle and sing, and poets might love to linger.

Madame Roland in Prison.

When in the convent, she had formed a strong attachment for one of her companions, which the lapse of time had not diminished. Through all the vicissitudes of their lives they had kept up a constant correspondence. This friend, Henriette Cannet, one day obtained access to her prison, and, in the exercise of that romantic friendship of which this world can present but few parallels, urged Madame Roland to exchange garments with her, and thus escape from prison and the scaffold. "If you remain," said Henriette, "your death is inevitable. If I remain in your place, they will not take my life, but, after a short imprisonment, I shall be liberated. None fear me, and I am too obscure to attract attention in these troubled times. I," she continued, "am a widow, and childless. There are no responsibilities which claim my time. You have a husband, advanced in years, and a lovely little child, both needing your utmost care." Thus she pleaded with her to exchange attire, and

endeavor to escape. But neither prayers nor tears availed. "They would kill thee, my good Henriette!" exclaimed Madame Roland, embracing her friend with tears of emotion. "Thy blood would ever rest on me. Sooner would I suffer a thousand deaths than reproach myself with thine." Henriette, finding all her entreaties in vain, sadly bade her adieu, and was never permitted to see her more.

Robespierre was now in the zenith of his power. He was the arbiter of life and death. One word from him would restore Madame Roland to liberty. But he had steeled his heart against every sentiment of humanity, and was not willing to deprive the guillotine of a single victim. One day Madame Roland was lying sick in the infirmary of the prison. A physician attended her, who styled himself the friend of Robespierre. The mention of his name recalled to her remembrance their early friendship, and her own exertions to save his life when it was in imminent peril. This suggested to her the idea of writing to him. She obeyed the impulse, and wrote as follows:

"Robespierre! I am about to put you to the proof, and to repeat to you what I said respecting your character to the friend who has undertaken to deliver this letter. You may be very sure that it is no suppliant who addresses you. I never asked a favor yet of any human being, and it is not from the depths of a prison I would supplicate him who could, if he pleased, restore me to liberty. No! prayers and entreaties belong to the guilty or to slaves. Neither would murmurs or complaints accord with my nature. I know how to bear all. I also well know that at the beginning of every republic the revolutions which effected them have invariably selected the principal actors in the change as their victims. It is their fate to experience this, as it becomes the task of the historian to avenge their memories. Still I am at a loss to imagine how I, a mere woman, should be exposed to the fury of a storm, ordinarily suffered to expend itself upon the great leaders of a revolution. You, Robespierre, were well acquainted with my husband, and I defy you to say that you ever thought him other than an honorable man. He had all the roughness of virtue, even as Cato possessed its asperity. Disgusted with business, irritated by persecution, weary of the world, and worn out with years and exertions, he desired only to bury himself and his troubles in some unknown spot, and to conceal himself there to save the age he lived in from the commission of a crime.

"My pretended confederacy would be amusing, were it not too serious a matter for a jest. Whence, then, arises that degree of animosity manifested toward me? I never injured a creature in my life, and can not find it in my heart to wish evil even to those who injure and oppress me. Brought up in solitude, my mind directed to serious studies, of simple tastes, an enthusiastic admirer of the Revolution—excluded, by my sex, from participating in public affairs, yet taking delight in conversing of them—I

despised the first calumnies circulated respecting me, attributing them to the envy felt by the ignorant and low-minded at what they were pleased to style my elevated position, but to which I infinitely preferred the peaceful obscurity in which I had passed so many happy days.

"Yet I have now been for five months the inhabitant of a prison, torn from my beloved child, whose innocent head may never more be pillowed upon a mother's breast; far from all I hold dear; the mark for the invectives of a mistaken people; constrained to hear the very sentinels, as they keep watch beneath my windows, discussing the subject of my approaching execution, and outraged by reading the violent and disgusting diatribes poured forth against me by hirelings of the press, who have never once beheld me. I have wearied no one with requests, petitions, or demands. On the contrary, I feel proudly equal to battle with my own ill fortune, and it may be to trample it under my feet.

"Robespierre! I send not this softened picture of my condition to excite your pity. No! such a sentiment, expressed by you, would not only offend me, but be rejected as it deserves. I write for your edification. Fortune is fickle—popular favor equally so. Look at the fate of those who led on the revolutions of former ages—the idols of the people, and afterward their governors—from Vitellius to Cæsar, or from Hippo, the orator of Syracuse, down to our Parisian speakers. Scylla and Marius proscribed thousands of knights and senators, besides a vast number of other unfortunate beings; but were they enabled to prevent history from handing down their names to the just execration of posterity, and did they themselves enjoy happiness? Whatever may be the fate awarded to me, I shall know how to submit to it in a manner worthy of myself, or to anticipate it should I deem it advisable. After receiving the honors of persecution, am I to expect the still greater one of martyrdom? Speak! It is something to know your fate, and a spirit such as mine can boldly face it, be it as it may. Should you bestow upon my letter a fair and impartial perusal, it will neither be useless to you nor to my country. But, under any circumstances, this I say, Robespierre—and you can not deny the truth of my assertion—none who have ever known me can persecute me without a feeling of remorse."

Madame Roland preferred to die rather than to owe her life to the compassion of her enemies. Could she obtain a triumphant acquittal, through the force of her own integrity, she would greatly exult. But her imperial spirit would not stoop to the acceptance of a pardon from those who deserved the execrations of mankind; such a pardon she would have torn in fragments, and have stepped resolutely upon the scaffold.

There is something cold and chilling in the supports which pride and philosophy alone can afford under the calamities of life. Madame Roland had

met with Christianity only as it appeared in the pomp and parade of the Catholic Church, and in the openly-dissolute lives of its ignorant or voluptuous priesthood. While her poetic temperament was moved by the sublime conception of a God ruling over the world of matter and the world of mind, revealed religion, as her spirit encountered it, consisted only in gorgeous pageants, and ridiculous dogmas, and puerile traditions. The spirit of piety and pure devotion she could admire. Her natural temperament was serious, reflective, and prayerful. Her mind, so far as religion was concerned, was very much in the state of that of any intellectual, high-minded, uncorruptible Roman, who renounced, without opposing, the idolatry of the benighted multitude; who groped painfully for some revelation of God and of truth; who at times believed fully in a superintending providence, and again had fears whether there were any God or any immortality. In the processions, the relics, the grotesque garb,and the spiritual terrors wielded by the Roman Catholic priesthood, she could behold but barefaced deception. The papal system appeared to her but as a colossal monster, oppressing the people with hideous superstition, and sustaining, with its superhuman energies, the corruption of the nobles and of the throne. In rejecting this system, she had no friend to conduct her to the warm, sheltered, and congenial retreats of evangelical piety. She was led almost inevitably, by the philosophy of the times, to those chilling, barren, storm-swept heights, where the soul can find no shelter but in its own indomitable energies of endurance. These energies Madame Roland displayed in such a degree as to give her a name among the very first of those in any age who by heroism have shed luster upon human nature.

Under the influence of these feelings, she came to the conclusion that it would be more honorable for her to die by her own hand than to be dragged to the guillotine by her foes. She obtained some poison, and sat down calmly to write her last thoughts, and her last messages of love, before she should plunge into the deep mystery of the unknown. There is something exceedingly affecting in the vague and shadowy prayer which she offered on this occasion. It betrays a painful uncertainty whether there were any superintending Deity to hear her cry, and yet it was the soul's instinctive breathing for a support higher and holier than could be found within itself.

"Divinity! Supreme Being! Spirit of the Universe! great principle of all that I feel great, or good, or immortal within myself—whose existence I believe in, because I must have emanated from something superior to that by which I am surrounded—I am about to reunite myself to thy essence." In her farewell note to her husband, she writes, "Forgive me, my esteemed and justly-honored husband, for taking upon myself to dispose of a life I had consecrated to you. Believe me, I could have loved life and you better for your misfortunes, had I been permitted to share them with you. At present,

by my death, you are only freed from a useless object of unavailing anguish."

All the fountains of a mother's love gush forth as she writes to her idolized Eudora: "Pardon me, my beloved child, my sweet daughter, whose gentle image dwells within my heart, and whose very remembrance shakes my sternest resolution. Never would your fond mother have left you helpless in the world, could she but have remained to guide and guard you."

Then, apostrophizing her friends, she exclaims, "And you, my cherished friends, transfer to my motherless child the affection you have ever manifested for me. Grieve not at a resolution which ends my many and severe trials. You know me too well to believe that weakness or terror have instigated the step I am about to take."

She made her will, bequeathing such trifling souvenirs of affection as still remained in her possession to her daughter, her friends, and her servants. She then reverted to all she had loved and admired of the beauties of nature, and which she was now to leave forever. "Farewell!" she wrote, "farewell, glorious sun! that never failed to gild my windows with thy golden rays, ere thou hiddest thy brightness in the heavens. Adieu, ye lonely banks of the Saône, whose wild beauty could fill my heart with such deep delight. And you too, poor but honest people of Thizy, whose labors I lightened, whose distress I relieved, and whose sick beds I tended—farewell! Adieu, oh! peaceful chambers of my childhood, where I learned to love virtue and truth—where my imagination found in books and study the food to delight it, and where I learned in silence to command my passions and to despise my vanity. Again farewell, my child! Remember your mother. Doubtless your fate will be less severe than hers. Adieu, beloved child! whom I nourished at my breast, and earnestly desired to imbue with every feeling and opinion I myself entertained."

The cup of poison was in her hand. In her heart there was no consciousness that she should violate the command of any higher power by drinking it. But love for her child triumphed. The smile of Eudora rose before her, and for her sake she clung to life. She threw away the poison, resolved never again to think of a voluntary withdrawal from the cares and sorrows of her earthly lot, but with unwavering fortitude to surrender herself to those influences over which she could no longer exert any control. This brief conflict ended, she resumed her wonted composure and cheerfulness.

Tacitus was now her favorite author. Hours and days she passed in studying his glowing descriptions of heroic character and deeds. Heroism became her religion; magnanimity and fortitude the idols of her soul. With a glistening eye and a bosom throbbing with lofty emotion, she meditated upon his graphic paintings of the martyrdom of patriots and philosophers, where the

soul, by its inherent energies, triumphed over obloquy, and pain, and death. Anticipating that each day might conduct her to the scaffold, she led her spirit through all the possible particulars of the tragic drama, that she might become familiar with terror, and look upon the block and the ax with an undaunted eye.

Many hours of every day she beguiled in writing the memoirs of her own life. It was an eloquent and a touching narrative, written with the expectation that each sentence might be interrupted by the entrance of the executioners to conduct her to trial and to the guillotine. In this unveiling of the heart to the world, one sees a noble nature, generous and strong, animated to benevolence by native generosity, and nerved to resignation by fatalism. The consciousness of spiritual elevation constituted her only religion and her only solace. The anticipation of a lofty reputation after death was her only heaven. The Christian must pity while he must admire. No one can read the thoughts she penned but with the deepest emotion.

Now her mind wanders to the hours of her precocious and dreamy childhood, and lingers in her little chamber, gazing upon the golden sunset, and her eye is bathed in tears as she reflects upon her early home, desolated by death, and still more desolated by that unhonored union which the infidelity of the times tolerated, when one took the position of the wife unblessed by the sanction of Heaven. Again her spirit wings its flight through the gloomy bars of the prison to the beautiful rural home to which her bridal introduced her, where she spent her happiest years, and she forgets the iron, and the stone, and the dungeon-glooms which surround her, as in imagination she walks again among her flowers and through the green fields, and, at the vintage, eats the rich, ripe clusters of the grape. Her pleasant household cares, her dairy, the domestic fowls recognizing her voice, and fed from her own hand; her library and her congenial intellectual pursuits rise before her, an entrancing vision, and she mourns, like Eve, the loss of Eden. The days of celebrity and of power engross her thoughts. Her husband is again minister of the king. The most influential statesmen and brilliant orators are gathered around her chair. Her mind is guiding the surging billows of the Revolution, and influencing the decisions of the proudest thrones of Europe.

The slightest movement dispels the illusion. From dreams she awakes to reality. She is a prisoner in a gloomy cell of stone and iron, from which there is no possible extrication. A bloody death awaits her. Her husband is a fugitive, pursued by human blood-hounds more merciless than the brute. Her daughter, the object of her most idolatrous love, is left fatherless and motherless in this cold world. The guillotine has already consigned many of those whom she loved best to the grave. But a few more days of sorrow can dimly struggle through her prison windows ere she must be conducted to

the scaffold. Woman's nature triumphs over philosophic fortitude, and she finds momentary relief in a flood of tears.

The Girondists were led from their dungeons in the Conciergerie to their execution on the 31st of October, 1793. Upon that very day Madame Roland was conveyed from the prison of St. Pélagié to the same gloomy cells vacated by the death of her friends. She was cast into a bare and miserable dungeon, in that subterranean receptacle of woe, where there was not even a bed. Another prisoner, moved with compassion, drew his own pallet into her cell, that she might not be compelled to throw herself for repose upon the cold, wet stones. The chill air of winter had now come, and yet no covering was allowed her. Through the long night she shivered with the cold.

The prison of the Conciergerie consists of a series of dark and damp subterranean vaults situated beneath the floor of the Palace of Justice. Imagination can conceive of nothing more dismal than these somber caverns, with long and winding galleries opening into cells as dark as the tomb. You descend by a flight of massive stone steps into this sepulchral abode, and, passing through double doors, whose iron strength time has deformed but not weakened, you enter upon the vast labyrinthine prison, where the imagination wanders affrighted through intricate mazes of halls, and arches, and vaults, and dungeons, rendered only more appalling by the dim light which struggles through those grated orifices which pierced the massive walls. The Seine flows by upon one side, separated only by the high way of the quays. The bed of the Seine is above the floor of the prison. The surrounding earth was consequently saturated with water, and the oozing moisture diffused over the walls and the floors the humidity of the sepulcher. The plash of the river; the rumbling of carts upon the pavements overhead; the heavy tramp of countless footfalls, as the multitude poured into and out of the halls of justice, mingled with the moaning of the prisoners in those solitary cells. There were one or two narrow courts scattered in this vast structure, where the prisoners could look up the precipitous walls, as of a well, towering high above them, and see a few square yards of sky. The gigantic quadrangular tower, reared above these firm foundations, was formerly the imperial palace from which issued all power and law. Here the French kings reveled in voluptuousness, with their prisoners groaning beneath their feet. This strong-hold of feudalism had now become the tomb of the monarchy. In one of the most loathsome of these cells, Maria Antoinette, the daughter of the Cæsars, had languished in misery as profound as mortals can suffer, till, in the endurance of every conceivable insult, she was dragged to the guillotine.

It was into a cell adjoining that which the hapless queen had occupied that Madame Roland was cast. Here the proud daughter of the emperors of Austria and the humble child of the artisan, each, after a career of

unexampled vicissitudes, found their paths to meet but a few steps from the scaffold. The victim of the monarchy and the victim of the Revolution were conducted to the same dungeons and perished on the same block. They met as antagonists in the stormy arena of the French Revolution. They were nearly of equal age. The one possessed the prestige of wealth, and rank, and ancestral power; the other, the energy of a vigorous and cultivated mind. Both were endowed with unusual attractions of person, spirits invigorated by enthusiasm, and the loftiest heroism. From the antagonism of life they met in death.

CHAPTER XII

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF MADAME ROLAND.

1793

The day after Madame Roland was placed in the Conciergerie, she was visited by one of the notorious officers of the revolutionary party, and very closely questioned concerning the friendship she had entertained for the Girondists. She frankly avowed the elevated affection and esteem with which she cherished their memory, but she declared that she and they were the cordial friends of republican liberty; that they wished to preserve, not to destroy, the Constitution. The examination was vexatious and intolerant in the extreme. It lasted for three hours, and consisted in an incessant torrent of criminations, to which she was hardly permitted to offer one word in reply. This examination taught her the nature of the accusations which would be brought against her. She sat down in her cell that very night, and, with a rapid pen, sketched that defense which has been pronounced one of themost eloquent and touching monuments of the Revolution. It so beautifully illustrates the heroism of her character, the serenity of her spirit, and the beauty and energy of her mental operations, that it will ever be read with the liveliest interest.

"I am accused," she writes, "of being the accomplice of men called conspirators. My intimacy with a few of these gentlemen is of much older date than the occurrences in consequence of which they are now deemed rebels. Our correspondence, since they left Paris, has been entirely foreign to public affairs. Properly speaking, I have been engaged in no political correspondence whatever, and in that respect I might confine myself to a simple denial. I certainly can not be called upon to give an account of my particular affections. I have, however, the right to be proud of these friendships. I glory in them. I wish to conceal nothing. I acknowledge that, with expressions of regret at my confinement, I received an intimation that Duperret had two letters for me, whether written by one or by two of my friends, before or after their leaving Paris, I can not say. Duperret had delivered them into other hands, and they never came to mine. Another time I received a pressing invitation to break my chains, and an offer of services, to assist me in effecting my escape in any way I might think proper, and to convey me whithersoever I might afterward wish to go. I was dissuaded from listening to such proposals by duty and by honor: by duty, that I might not endanger the safety of those to whose care I was confided; and by honor, because I preferred the risk of an unjust trial to exposing myself to the suspicion of guilt by a flight unworthy of me. When I consented to my arrest, it was not with the intention of afterward making my escape. Without doubt, if all means of communication had not been cut off, or if I had not been

prevented by confinement, I should have endeavored to learn what had become of my friends. I know of no law by which my doing so is forbidden. In what age or in what nation was it ever considered a crime to be faithful to those sentiments of esteem and brotherly affection which bind man to man?

"I do not pretend to judge of the measures of those who have been proscribed, but I will never believe in the evil intentions of men of whose probity and patriotism I am thoroughly convinced. If they erred, it was unintentionally. They fall without being abased, and I regard them as being unfortunate without being liable to blame. I am perfectly easy as to their glory, and willingly consent to participate in the honor of being oppressed by their enemies. They are accused of having conspired against their country, but I know that they were firm friends of the Republic. They were, however, humane men, and were persuaded that good laws were necessary to procure the Republic the good will of persons who doubted whether the Republic could be maintained. It is more difficult to conciliate than to kill. The history of every age proves that it requires great talents to lead men to virtue by wise institutions, while force suffices to oppress them by terror, or to annihilate them by death. I have often heard them assert that abundance, as well as happiness, can only proceed from an equitable, protecting, and beneficent government. The omnipotence of the bayonet may produce fear, but not bread. I have seen them animated by the most lively enthusiasm for the good of the people, disdaining to flatter them, and resolved rather to fall victims to their delusion than to be the means of keeping it up. I confess that these principles and this conduct appeared to me totally different from the sentiments and proceedings of tyrants, or ambitious men, who seek to please the people to effect their subjugation. It inspired me with the highest esteem for those generous men. This error, if an error it be, will accompany me to the grave, whither I shall be proud of following those whom I was not permitted to accompany.

"My defense is more important for those who wish for the truth than it is for myself. Calm and contented in the consciousness of having done my duty, I look forward to futurity with perfect peace of mind. My serious turn and studious habits have preserved me alike from the follies of dissipation and from the bustle of intrigue. A friend to liberty, on which reflection had taught me to set a just value, I beheld the Revolution with delight, persuaded it was destined to put an end to the arbitrary power I detested, and to the abuses I had so often lamented, when reflecting with pity upon the indigent classes of society. I took an interest in the progress of the Revolution, and spoke with warmth of public affairs, but I did not pass the bounds prescribed by my sex. Some small talents, a considerable share of philosophy, a degree of courage more uncommon, and which did not permit me to weaken my husband's energy in dangerous times—such, perhaps, are

the qualities which those who know me may have indiscreetly extolled, and which may have made me enemies among those to whom I am unknown. M. Roland sometimes employed me as a secretary, and the famous letter to the king, for instance, is copied entirely in my hand-writing. This would be an excellent item to add to my indictment, if the Austrians were trying me, and if they should have thought fit to extend a minister's responsibility to his wife. But M. Roland long ago manifested his knowledge of, and his attachment to, the great principles of political economy. The proof is to be found in his numerous works published during the last fifteen years. His learning and his probity are all his own. He stood in no need of a wife to make him an able minister. Never were secret councils held at his house. His colleagues and a few friends met once a week at his table, and there conversed, in a public manner, on matters in which every body was concerned. His writings, which breathe throughout a love of order and peace, and which enforce the best principles of public prosperity and morals, will forever attest his wisdom. His accounts prove his integrity.

"As to the offense imputed to me, I observe that I never was intimate with Duperret. I saw him occasionally at the time of M. Roland's administration. He never came to our house during the six months that my husband was no longer in office. The same remark will apply to other members, our friends, which surely does not accord with the plots and conspiracies laid to our charge. It is evident, by my first letter to Duperret, I only wrote to him because I knew not to whom else to address myself, and because I imagined he would readily consent to oblige me. My correspondence with him could not, then, be concerted. It could not be the consequence of any previous intimacy, and could have only one object in view. It gave me afterward an opportunity of receiving accounts from those who had just absented themselves, and with whom I was connected by the ties of friendship, independently of all political considerations. The latter were totally out of the question in the kind of correspondence I kept up with them during the early part of their absence. No written memorial bears witness against me in that respect. Those adduced only lead to the belief that I partook of the opinions and sentiments of the persons called conspirators. This deduction is well founded. I confess it without reserve. I am proud of the conformity. But I never manifested my opinion in a way which can be construed into a crime, or which tended to occasion any disturbance. Now, to become an accomplice in any plan whatever, it is necessary to give advice, or to furnish means of execution. I have done neither. There is no law to condemn me.

"I know that, in revolutions, law as well as justice is often forgotten, and the proof of it is that I am here. I owe my trial to nothing but the prejudices and violent animosities which arise in times of great agitation, and which are generally directed against those who have been placed in conspicuous

situations, or are known to possess any energy or spirit. It would have been easy for my courage to put me out of the reach of the sentence which I foresaw would be pronounced against me. But I thought it rather became me to undergo that sentence. I thought that I owed the example to my country. I thought that if I were to be condemned, it must be right to leave to tyranny all the odium of sacrificing a woman, whose crime is that of possessing some small talent, which she never misapplied, a zealous desire to promote the welfare of mankind, and courage enough to acknowledge her friends when in misfortune, and to do homage to virtue at the risk of life. Minds which have any claim to greatness are capable of divesting themselves of selfish considerations. They feel that they belong to the whole human race. Their views are directed to posterity. I am the wife of a virtuous man exposed to persecution. I was the friend of men who have been proscribed and immolated by delusion, and the hatred of jealous mediocrity. It is necessary that I should perish in my turn, because it is a rule with tyranny to sacrifice those whom it has grievously oppressed, and to annihilate the very witnesses of its misdeeds. I have this double claim to death at your hands, and I expect it. When innocence walks to the scaffold at the command of error and perversity, every step she takes is an advance toward glory. May I be the last victim sacrificed to the furious spirit of party. I shall leave with joy this unfortunate earth, which swallows up the friends of virtue and drinks the blood of the just.

"Truth! friendship! my country! sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, accept my last sacrifice. My life was devoted to you, and you will render my death easy and glorious.

"Just Heaven! enlighten this unfortunate people for whom I desired liberty. Liberty! it is for noble minds, who despise death, and who know how, upon occasion, to give it to themselves. It is not for weak beings, who enter into a composition with guilt, and cover selfishness and cowardice with the name of prudence. It is not for corrupt wretches, who rise from the bed of debauchery, or from the mire of indigence, to feast their eyes upon the blood that streams from the scaffold. It is the portion of a people who delight in humanity, practice justice, despise their flatterers, and respect the truth. While you are not such a people, O my fellow-citizens! you will talk in vain of liberty. Instead of liberty you will have licentiousness, to which you will all fall victims in your turn. You will ask for bread; dead bodies will be given you, and you at last will bow down your own necks to the yoke.

"I have neither concealed my sentiments nor my opinions. I know that a Roman lady was sent to the scaffold for lamenting the death of her son. I know that, in times of delusion and party rage, he who dares avow himself the friend of the condemned or of the proscribed exposes himself to their fate. But I have no fear of death. I never feared any thing but guilt, and I will

not purchase life at the expense of a base subterfuge. Woe to the times! woe to the people among whom doing homage to disregarded truth can be attended with danger; and happy is he who, in such circumstances, is bold enough to brave it.

"It is now your part to see whether it answer your purpose to condemn me without proof upon mere matter of opinion, and without the support or justification of any law."

Having concluded this magnanimous defense, which she wrote in one evening with the rapidity which characterized all her mental operations, she retired to rest, and slept with the serenity of a child. She was called upon several times by committees sent from the revolutionary tribunal for examination. They were resolved to take her life, but were anxious to do it, if possible, under the forms of law. She passed through all their examinations with the most perfect composure and the most dignified self-possession. Her enemies could not withhold their expressions of admiration as they saw her in her sepulchral cell of stone and of iron, cheerful, fascinating, and perfectly at ease. She knew that she was to be led from that cell to a violent death, and yet no faltering of soul could be detected. Her spirit had apparently achieved a perfect victory over all earthly ills.

The upper part of the door of her cell was an iron grating. The surrounding cells were filled with the most illustrious ladies and gentlemen of France. As the hour of death drew near, her courage and animation seemed to increase. Her features glowed with enthusiasm; her thoughts and expressions were refulgent with sublimity, and her whole aspect assumed the impress of one appointed to fill some great and lofty destiny. She remained but a few days in the Conciergerie before she was led to the scaffold. During those few days, by her example and her encouraging words, she spread among the numerous prisoners there an enthusiasm and a spirit of heroism which elevated, above the fear of the scaffold, even the most timid and depressed. This glow of feeling and exhilaration gave a new impress of sweetness and fascination to her beauty. The length of her captivity, the calmness with which she contemplated the certain approach of death, gave to her voice that depth of tone and slight tremulousness of utterance which sent her eloquent words home with thrilling power to every heart. Those who were walking in the corridor, or who were the occupants of adjoining cells, often called for her to speak to them words of encouragement and consolation.

Standing upon a stool at the door of her own cell, she grasped with her hands the iron grating which separated her from her audience. This was her tribune. The melodious accents of her voice floated along the labyrinthine avenues of those dismal dungeons, penetrating cell after cell, and arousing energy in hearts which had been abandoned to despair. It was, indeed, a

strange scene which was thus witnessed in these sepulchral caverns. The silence, as of the grave, reigned there, while the clear and musical tones of Madame Roland, as of an angel of consolation, vibrated through the rusty bars, and along the dark, damp cloisters. One who was at that time an inmate of the prison, and survived those dreadful scenes, has described, in glowing terms, the almost miraculous effects of her soul-moving eloquence. She was already past the prime of life, but she was still fascinating. Combined with the most wonderful power of expression, she possessed a voice so exquisitely musical, that, long after her lips were silenced in death, its tones vibrated in lingering strains in the souls of those by whom they had ever been heard. The prisoners listened with the most profound attention to her glowing words, and regarded her almost as a celestial spirit, who had come to animate them to heroic deeds. She often spoke of the Girondists who had already perished upon the guillotine. With perfect fearlessness she avowed her friendship for them, and ever spoke of them as our friends. She, however, was careful never to utter a word which would bring tears into the eye. She wished to avoid herself all the weakness of tender emotions, and to lure the thoughts of her companions away from every contemplation which could enervate their energies.

Occasionally, in the solitude of her cell, as the image of her husband and of her child rose before her, and her imagination dwelt upon her desolated home and her blighted hopes—her husband denounced and pursued by lawless violence, and her child soon to be an orphan—woman's tenderness would triumph over the heroine's stoicism. Burying, for a moment, her face in her hands, she would burst into a flood of tears. Immediately struggling to regain composure, she would brush her tears away, and dress her countenance in its accustomed smiles. She remained in the Conciergerie but one week, and during that time so endeared herself to all as to become the prominent object of attention and love. Her case is one of the most extraordinary the history of the world has presented, in which the very highest degree of heroism is combined with the most resistless charms of feminine loveliness. An unfeminine woman can never be loved by men. She may be respected for her talents, she may be honored for her philanthropy, but she can not win the warmer emotions of the heart. But Madame Roland, with an energy of will, an infallibility of purpose, a firmness of stoical endurance which no mortal man has ever exceeded, combined that gentleness, and tenderness, and affection—that instinctive sense of the proprieties of her sex—which gathered around her a love as pure and as enthusiastic as woman ever excited. And while her friends, many of whom were the most illustrious men in France, had enthroned her as an idol in their hearts, the breath of slander never ventured to intimate that she was guilty even of an impropriety.

The day before her trial, her advocate, Chauveau de la Garde, visited her to consult respecting her defense. She, well aware that no one could speak a word in her favor but at the peril of his own life, and also fully conscious that her doom was already sealed, drew a ring from her finger, and said to him,

"To-morrow I shall be no more. I know the fate which awaits me. Your kind assistance can not avail aught for me, and would but endanger you. I pray you, therefore, not to come to the tribunal, but to accept of this last testimony of my regard."

The next day she was led to her trial. She attired herself in a white robe, as a symbol of her innocence, and her long dark hair fell in thick curls on her neck and shoulders. She emerged from her dungeon a vision of unusual loveliness. The prisoners who were walking in the corridors gathered around her, and with smiles and words of encouragement she infused energy into their hearts. Calm and invincible she met her judges. She was accused of the crimes of being the wife of M. Roland and the friend of his friends. Proudly she acknowledged herself guilty of both those charges. Whenever she attempted to utter a word in her defense, she was brow-beaten by the judges, and silenced by the clamors of the mob which filled the tribunal. The mob now ruled with undisputed sway in both legislative and executive halls. The serenity of her eye was untroubled, and the composure of her disciplined spirit unmoved, save by the exaltation of enthusiasm, as she noted the progress of the trial, which was bearing her rapidly and resistlessly to the scaffold. It was, however, difficult to bring any accusation against her by which, under the form of law, she could be condemned. France, even in its darkest hour, was rather ashamed to behead a woman, upon whom the eyes of all Europe were fixed, simply for being the wife of her husband and the friend of his friends. At last the president demanded of her that she should reveal her husband's asylum. She proudly replied,

"I do not know of any law by which I can be obliged to violate the strongest feelings of nature." This was sufficient, and she was immediately condemned. Her sentence was thus expressed:

"The public accuser has drawn up the present indictment against Jane Mary Phlippon, the wife of Roland, late Minister of the Interior for having wickedly and designedly aided and assisted in the conspiracy which existed against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, against the liberty and safety of the French people, by assembling, at her house, in secret council, the principal chiefs of that conspiracy, and by keeping up a correspondence tending to facilitate their treasonable designs. The tribunal, having heard the public accuser deliver his reasons concerning the application of the law, condemns Jane Mary Phlippon, wife of Roland, to the punishment of death."

She listened calmly to her sentence, and then, rising, bowed with dignity to her judges, and, smiling, said,

"I thank you, gentlemen, for thinking me worthy of sharing the fate of the great men whom you have assassinated. I shall endeavor to imitate their firmness on the scaffold."

With the buoyant step of a child, and with a rapidity which almost betokened joy, she passed beneath the narrow portal, and descended to her cell, from which she was to be led, with the morning light, to a bloody death. The prisoners had assembled to greet her on her return, and anxiously gathered around her. She looked upon them with a smile of perfect tranquillity, and, drawing her hand across her neck, made a sign expressive of her doom. But a few hours elapsed between her sentence and her execution. She retired to her cell, wrote a few words of parting to her friends, played, upon a harp which had found its way into the prison, her requiem, in tones so wild and mournful, that, floating, in the dark hours of the night, through those sepulchral caverns, they fell like unearthly music upon the despairing souls there incarcerated.

The morning of the 10th of November, 1793, dawned gloomily upon Paris. It was one of the darkest days of that reign of terror which, for so long a period, enveloped France in its somber shades. The ponderous gates of the court-yard of the Conciergerie opened that morning to a long procession of carts loaded with victims for the guillotine. Madame Roland had contemplated her fate too long, and had disciplined her spirit too severely, to fail of fortitude in this last hour of trial. She came from her cell scrupulously attired for the bridal of death. A serene smile was upon her cheek, and the glow of joyous animation lighted up her features as she waved an adieu to the weeping prisoners who gathered around her. The last cart was assigned to Madame Roland. She entered it with a step as light and elastic as if it were a carriage for a pleasant morning's drive. By her side stood an infirm old man, M. La Marche. He was pale and trembling, and his fainting heart, in view of the approaching terror, almost ceased to beat. She sustained him by her arm, and addressed to him words of consolation and encouragement, in cheerful accents and with a benignant smile. The poor old man felt that God had sent an angel to strengthen him in the dark hour of death. As the cart heavily rumbled along the pavement, drawing nearer and nearer to the guillotine, two or three times, by her cheerful words, she even caused a smile faintly to play upon his pallid lips.

The guillotine was now the principal instrument of amusement for the populace of Paris. It was so elevated that all could have a good view of the spectacle it presented. To witness the conduct of nobles and of ladies, of boys and of girls, while passing through the horrors of a sanguinary death,

was far more exciting than the unreal and bombastic tragedies of the theater, or the conflicts of the cock-pit and the bear garden. A countless throng flooded the streets, men, women, and children, shouting, laughing, execrating. The celebrity of Madame Roland, her extraordinary grace and beauty, and her aspect, not only of heroic fearlessness, but of joyous exhilaration, made her the prominent object of the public gaze. A white robe gracefully enveloped her perfect form, and her black and glossy hair, which for some reason the executioners had neglected to cut, fell in rich profusion to her waist. A keen November blast swept the streets, under the influence of which, and the excitement of the scene, her animated countenance glowed with all the ruddy bloom of youth. She stood firmly in the cart, looking with a serene eye upon the crowds which lined the streets, and listening with unruffled serenity to the clamor which filled the air. A large crowd surrounded the cart in which Madame Roland stood, shouting, "To the guillotine! to the guillotine!" She looked kindly upon them, and, bending over the railing of the cart, said to them, in tones as placid as if she were addressing her own child, "My friends, I am going to the guillotine. In a few moments I shall be there. They who send me thither will ere long follow me. I go innocent. They will come stained with blood. You who now applaud our execution will then applaud theirs with equal zeal."

Madame Roland had continued writing her memoirs until the hour in which she left her cell for the scaffold. When the cart had almost arrived at the foot of the guillotine, her spirit was so deeply moved by the tragic scene—such emotions came rushing in upon her soul from departing time and opening eternity, that she could not repress the desire to pen down her glowing thoughts. She entreated an officer to furnish her for a moment with pen and paper. The request was refused. It is much to be regretted that we are thus deprived of that unwritten chapter of her life. It can not be doubted that the words she would then have written would have long vibrated upon the ear of a listening world. Soul-utterances will force their way over mountains, and valleys, and oceans. Despotism can not arrest them. Time can not enfeeble them.

The long procession arrived at the guillotine, and the bloody work commenced. The victims were dragged from the carts, and the ax rose and fell with unceasing rapidity. Head after head fell into the basket, and the pile of bleeding trunks rapidly increased in size. The executioners approached the cart where Madame Roland stood by the side of her fainting companion. With an animated countenance and a cheerful smile, she was all engrossed in endeavoring to infuse fortitude into his soul. The executioner grasped her by the arm. "Stay," said she, slightly resisting his grasp; "I have one favor to ask, and that is not for myself. I beseech you grant it me." Then turning to the old man, she said, "Do you precede me to the scaffold. To see my blood

flow would make you suffer the bitterness of death twice over. I must spare you the pain of witnessing my execution." The stern officer gave a surly refusal, replying, "My orders are to take you first." With that winning smile and that fascinating grace which were almost resistless, she rejoined, "You can not, surely, refuse a woman her last request." The hard-hearted executor of the law was brought within the influence of her enchantment. He paused, looked at her for a moment in slight bewilderment, and yielded. The poor old man, more dead than alive, was conducted upon the scaffold and placed beneath the fatal ax. Madame Roland, without the slightest change of color, or the apparent tremor of a nerve, saw the ponderous instrument, with its glittering edge, glide upon its deadly mission, and the decapitated trunk of her friend was thrown aside to give place for her. With a placid countenance and a buoyant step, she ascended the platform. The guillotine was erected upon the vacant spot between the gardens of the Tuileries and the Elysian Fields, then known as the Place de la Revolution. This spot is now called the Place de la Concorde. It is unsurpassed by any other place in Europe. Two marble fountains now embellish the spot. The blood-stained guillotine, from which crimson rivulets were ever flowing, then occupied the space upon which one of these fountains has been erected; and a clay statue to Liberty reared its hypocritical front where the Egyptian obelisk now rises. Madame Roland stood for a moment upon the elevated platform, looked calmly around upon the vast concourse, and then bowing before the colossal statue, exclaimed, "O Liberty! Liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name." She surrendered herself to the executioner, and was bound to the plank. The plank fell to its horizontal position, bringing her head under the fatal ax. The glittering steel glided through the groove, and the head of Madame Roland was severed from her body.

Execution of Madame Roland.

Thus died Madame Roland, in the thirty-ninth year of her age. Her death oppressed all who had known her with the deepest grief. Her intimate friend Buzot, who was then a fugitive, on hearing the tidings, was thrown into a state of perfect delirium, from which he did not recover for many days. Her faithful female servant was so overwhelmed with grief, that she presented herself before the tribunal, and implored them to let her die upon the same scaffold where her beloved mistress had perished. The tribunal, amazed at such transports of attachment, declared that she was mad, and ordered her to be removed from their presence. A man-servant made the same application, and was sent to the guillotine.

The grief of M. Roland, when apprised of the event, was unbounded. For a time he entirely lost his senses. Life to him was no longer endurable. He knew not of any consolations of religion. Philosophy could only nerve him to stoicism. Privately he left, by night, the kind friends who had hospitably

concealed him for six months, and wandered to such a distance from his asylum as to secure his protectors from any danger on his account. Through the long hours of the winter's night he continued his dreary walk, till the first gray of the morning appeared in the east. Drawing a long stiletto from the inside of his walking-stick, he placed the head of it against the trunk of a tree, and threw himself upon the sharp weapon. The point pierced his heart, and he fell lifeless upon the frozen ground. Some peasants passing by discovered his body. A piece of paper was pinned to the breast of his coat, upon which there were written these words: "Whoever thou art that findest these remains, respect them as those of a virtuous man. After hearing of my wife's death, I would not stay another day in a world so stained with crime."

The daughter of Madame Roland succeeded in escaping the fury of the tyrants of the Revolution. She lived surrounded by kind protectors, and in subsequent years was married to M. Champeneaux, the son of one of her mother's intimate friends.

Such was the wonderful career of Madame Roland. It is a history full of instruction, and ever reminds us that truth is stranger than fiction.

THE END.