

# DURAS LOUISE DURFORT

PRISON JOURNALS  
DURING THE FRENCH  
REVOLUTION

Louise Duras

**Prison Journals During  
the French Revolution**

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# duchesse de Duras

## Prison Journals During the French Revolution

### PRISON LIFE DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

#### WRITTEN IN 1801, THE YEAR IX. OF THE REPUBLIC

The period of my confinement in different prisons during the Reign of Terror was so harassing that the idea of writing out its details did not then occur to me; but when I had the consolation of seeing my son once more, he was desirous of learning all about it. I feared that I should be overcome by my feelings if I tried to relate the details to him, and consequently determined to write the following memoirs.

My parents retired to their estate of Mouchy-le-Châtel, in the Department of the Oise, in the month of September, 1792. I accompanied them thither, and was their sole companion. They resolved, from prudential motives, to receive visits from no one. This privation cost my father nothing, for he was naturally shy, though the positions he had occupied had forced him to live constantly in the great world. My mother, who loved him dearly, accustomed herself to retirement with submission to the will of Providence, with the naturally happy disposition maintained through all the events of her life.

She loved system in all things, and she introduced it so successfully into our daily life that it passed rapidly. Reading, work, play, and walking filled up every moment. My parents took pleasure in furnishing refreshment to the harvesters during their weary labour, in sympathizing with their troubles, and in helping them by kindnesses. In spite of the position in which the Revolution placed my father, and the natural repugnance which he declared he felt for those who were engaged in it, he gave volunteers the means of paying their way. My father had, if I may so express myself, a passion for charity. His hands were always ready to bestow, and whenever he received a sum of money he would in a few hours declare, with satisfaction, that he had none of it left.

He could keep nothing when he knew that others were suffering; hospital visiting, aid rendered in private, all sorts of kind deeds and comforting words, – in fact all good works were familiar to him; in these alone he found happiness.

I have seen him refuse things which he might have considered necessary for himself in order to add to the number of his charities. Yet my father was born with a very unhappy disposition; the fortune, the honours, and all the pleasures that his position secured him were spoiled by the most miserable discontent. I frequently endeavoured, firmly and respectfully, to show him that Heaven had bestowed every gift upon him, and that nothing was wanting to his position. He listened patiently to what I had to say; but I did not succeed in convincing him. I worried myself and gained nothing. My mother, on the contrary, often said to me that if she should return to society she would not desire to change her manner of living in the least. She had a charmingly happy disposition, and was never out of humour for a moment.

Several times during the Revolution it was proposed that I should emigrate. One of my relatives sent for me at different periods, and urged me to consent to do so. I always refused, having a great repugnance to leaving my country, and desiring to watch over the old age of my parents, who were already separated from some of their children.

How great would have been my regret had I not remained with them up to the moment when I was deprived of my liberty. I shall retain to my latest breath the memory of their kindness, and the tenderest gratitude for the good example and daily lessons in virtue which I received from them.

But to return to the details of our family life at Mouchy. Every day I was filled with wonder to see my father, who from his youth had been accustomed to command (he had at the age of seven been given the reversion of the governorship of Versailles, after his father's death), obey without complaint the Revolutionary laws and all those who executed them. Everything worried him under the old régime, yet during the Reign of Terror he was calm because he was entirely resigned to the will of God. Religion had regulated all the actions of his life. It was really, for him, eternal happiness.

We suffered great anxiety during our sojourn at Mouchy. We were utterly ignorant of the fate of my elder brother.<sup>1</sup> A price had been put on his head and the notice of it posted at the corners of the streets of Paris, and the newspapers had stated that he had been guillotined. One afternoon, in the month of October (the 10th), we saw approaching us quite a large body of troops composed of Hussars and National Guards from different villages of the estate of Mouchy. It was preceded by a commissioner of the Committee of General Security, named Landry, who came to arrest my brother, believing that he was concealed in the castle. We were surprised, but not frightened. It was absurd to suppose that he would have chosen his own father's house for his hiding-place. They searched everywhere under pretext of taking him and of seizing arms, but they found nothing.

The official report made by the commissioner and the municipality proves this.

The drawing up of the report and the search lasted from five o'clock in the evening to eleven. Landry, called upon my father to denounce his son, though he could not even know whether he was alive or not. He answered with much dignity that such a demand was as harsh as it was unusual, and that he would not accede to it; yet he asked Landry, to take something to eat, and lent him one of his saddle horses to take him back to his carriage. My father, who was naturally very fiery, knew how to control himself when the importance of the occasion required it.

The officer of the Hussars who commanded the detachment was a very excellent man. He told us that he was marching with his troop along the highway from Beauvais, to Paris; that being required by the commissioner of the Committee of General Security to accompany him to Mouchy, he had been obliged to obey him, though with great repugnance, and that he came with the kindest intentions possible. He gave me an immediate proof of this; for he whispered in my ear that if my brother was in the house he would advise me to hasten his escape, and that he would be very glad of it. I have retained a feeling of real gratitude for this officer, whose name I do not know; he was from the region of Rouen.

The intense animosity which was shown in the attempt to capture my brother increased our anxiety concerning our own fate. A report, circulated by the newspapers, that he was in England somewhat allayed our anxiety; and Monsieur Noël (my father's man of business, who has given proof of the strongest attachment to our family) afterward assured us of its truth. When he entered the drawing-room we were much agitated, not knowing what news he was about to announce to us.

Various accounts have been given of the manner in which my brother escaped the scaffold. Some have said that he escaped from prison by the payment of a hundred thousand crowns to Manuel, then Procureur, of the Commune; others, that he left Paris disguised as a wagoner, and had been seen passing along several roads.

The truth is that he was never arrested, and that he found good and brave men who were kind enough to hide him in their houses; that he remained for several hours in the very top of the Louvre, stretched upon a beam, at the very moment when the famous search of September, 1792, was made; and that afterward he escaped by means of a passport to Granville, where Monsieur Mauduit, his son's old tutor, a naval commissioner, assisted him to embark for Dover.

Monsieur Mauduit, was guillotined, but he made no mention of my brother's affairs at his trial. My poor brother, having sailed from port, thought he had escaped death. A storm compelled his vessel to return to the port. He was obliged to hide himself in a place so close that his suffering for

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<sup>1</sup> The Prince de Poix, who had defended and followed the king on the 10th of August.

want of air came near causing him to betray himself. The search ended just in time to save his life, and he again set sail. It is also false that he used large sums of money to get out of his danger. He was not forced to spend more than two thousand crowns. The knowledge that he was out of danger diminished our daily increasing anxiety.

We had peaceful consciences, but the condition of affairs was becoming very threatening, and the future very disturbing. We often talked it over. I had the comfort of alleviating the situation of my dear parents, and they showed great pleasure in receiving my attentions. I concealed from them the terrible thoughts which constantly came to my mind, and occupied myself in distracting them from those by which they were sometimes agitated. We had not even the consolation of religious worship, the curate of the parish having taken the oath to the civil constitution exacted from the clergy; but we had had until our arrest opportunity to hear Mass from a Catholic priest. I prayed to God with all my heart for grace sufficient to endure all the terrible things that I foresaw in our future experience. About the 15th of August, 1793, Collot d'Herbois, and Isoré were sent *en mission* into the Departments of the Aisne and the Oise. They immediately put into execution there the decree regarding suspects, though this was not done in Paris until the 18th of the following September. Consequently all the priests and nobles were arrested. On the 23d of August the municipality of Mouchy, notified us of the order to remain under arrest in our residences until the houses of confinement were ready to receive us. The mayor, who was a zealous patriot, disposed to enforce an extreme rather than a moderate execution of the severe laws, told us that this was a measure for the public safety, – a phrase much in use during the Reign of Terror, – and that we need not be alarmed. We were allowed a space of a hundred paces in the park to walk in, and the free use of the courtyard, provided the grating was closed. We went there sometimes to talk with the people. This way of living was only an apprenticeship to the slavery that was impending. One quite singular fact was that, the population of Mouchy, being small, our own dependents acted National Guardsmen, and stood sentinel at our gates. I suppose there were those among them who took pleasure in doing this; for charity's sake I pass over their conduct in silence.

A very few of them, however, gave my parents strong proof of their attachment. I will give a list of their names at the end of these memoirs.

The municipality of Mouchy, sent a petition to the Department of the Oise, asking to be allowed to keep us within its limits and on its own responsibility. It referred in kindly terms to our wise and prudent conduct, and to our submission to the laws. The Department of the Oise, acceded to the petition relative to my parents; but they did not consider me old enough, and it had been said at Beauvais, that they wished to have a titled woman at Chantilly. Consequently a sergeant of the national gendarmes came with four horsemen to take me to Beauvais. I was at that moment sick in bed. The village surgeon, named Marais, and my father's physician considered that I was in no condition to be moved; but their attestations were not sufficient, and the sergeant sent for the physician of the Department, who decided that it was necessary for me to remain at Mouchy, and drew up an official paper in regard to my condition. I remained about five weeks to recuperate, during which time several petitions were sent to the Department in my favour. Monsieur Legendre went to see Collot d'Herbois, and Isoré. But all these efforts were fruitless.

I was so fully persuaded that I was going to be incarcerated that I packed up all my belongings, and hoped that my punishment would suffice for all. It cost me great suffering to leave my honoured parents to whom I had the comfort of being useful.

I was a little better, and had been for a few days going down into the courtyard to take the air, when I saw a man arrive dressed in the uniform of the National Guard, – he was the commander of the Guard at Beauvais, and his name was Poulain. I immediately suspected with what mission he was charged, and arranged with him that my parents should not know of the time of my departure. We agreed that at a signal which he would give me I should under some pretext leave the drawing-room and not return to it. It was important that my parents should not undergo too much emotion. I went up to them quietly and told them of my arrest. At first they bore the announcement bravely.

I avoided saying anything to them which could agitate them, and conversed with the officer upon ordinary subjects. He searched neither my packages nor my papers. At last the moment came when I was obliged to leave them.

I seemed to foresee that I should never again behold my parents.

I went away, saying nothing, but feeling broken-hearted. I felt as though my limbs were giving way under me. And that scene of grief, which I am describing on the very spot where it took place, still causes me deep emotion as I recall it; but there are feelings which it is impossible to express. I have been told since, and Madame Latour also relates it in her journal, that my father and mother remained in a frightful state of dejection; they would take no nourishment, and passed the nights weeping and constantly reiterating that they had been deprived of half their existence when their dear daughter was taken away.

It was on the 6th of October, 1793, that I left Mouchy, at five o'clock in the evening, in one of my father's carriages, with Monsieur Poulain and my maid. We reached Beauvais, after a drive of two hours. The carriage tilted as we drove along; the officer endeavoured to assure me there was no danger. I somewhat insolently replied, 'I fear God, dear Abner, and have no other fear.'<sup>2</sup>

I was, however, suffering intensely inwardly. Fortunately the darkness concealed the tears that fell from my eyes. I prayed Heaven earnestly to sustain my courage.

The officer had orders to have me alight at the prison. He went to the Revolutionary committee to ask permission for me to spend the night at his house; it was granted him. I learned afterward that this kind act, done without my knowledge, and the irreproachable manner in which he had treated me had brought persecution upon him, and that he had been obliged to flee from Beauvais. His wife received me very politely. She tried to make me take some supper; I accepted a very little, but it may easily be imagined that my appetite was not of the best. I passed a wretched night. The desolate situation of my parents weighed constantly upon my mind and heart, – their age, their loneliness (they who so short a time before had been surrounded by so many relatives and friends), and the uncertainty of their future, which left so much to be feared.

I did not have the grief of awakening, so terrible to the unhappy. I received all sorts of care from my kind hostess, who had me breakfast with her husband and herself. After that I set out for a convent of nuns of the third order of Saint Francis, which was occupied by some sick soldiers, and by prisoners who were placed here temporarily until a sufficient number were collected to form a convoy and be sent to Chantilly. I entered a drawing-room where the company was assembled; it was composed of ecclesiastics, a few nobles, and some women. The most important ones were, among others, a man named Poter, head of the manufactory of Chantilly, a nun, a sutler, etc. They scrutinized my countenance. I took pains to please my new companions, and then asked to be conducted to my lodging-room, which was a former linen closet, far away from every one, so that if I had wanted anything it would have been impossible for me to make myself heard.

Monsieur Allou, our neighbour from Mouchy, who frequently came to see my parents, rendered me all the service in his power, and persuaded me to have a young girl, a prisoner, sleep in my apartment. I agreed, though with extreme reluctance, for I greatly preferred being alone. Sad thoughts prevented my sleeping, besides my being so unaccustomed to lying upon sacking for a bed. I at once had to give up the habit of having a light, upon which I was very dependent; but being destined to undergo great privations, I from that moment renounced the conveniences of life and set myself to learn how to attend to my own wants. As a beginning, I made some chocolate, which was horrible. Seeing my incapacity, I took some lessons, and after a day or two I ventured to invite one of my neighbours to breakfast; and she felt herself obliged, for politeness' sake, to praise my new talent. I arranged my employments so that the days might not seem so long. I read, I wrote, and I fixed a certain time to walk in the cloisters. They were always filled with the odour of sulphur, which was

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<sup>2</sup> A line of Racine. – Translator.

much used in the house for treating the soldiers afflicted with the itch. The air was not good on account of the gutters of stagnant water which crossed the yard. We were not allowed to go into the garden; it was appropriated to the use of the convalescents. The old chapel of the nuns was still in existence, and most of the prisoners went there to say their prayers. I sometimes thought how great in the eyes of Heaven must be the difference between us and the pure spirits who had gone there before us. They had voluntarily given up their liberty to consecrate it to God, while I felt that the loss of mine was a great sacrifice. Formerly the walls of this sacred place echoed only the praises of God, and now within them the soldiers blasphemed undisturbed. One day while I was at confession I was deafened by the songs of the Terror, the guardhouse of the Revolutionary army being just back of my room.

Among the prisoners there were some venerable priests, who set us an example of perfect submission to the will of Providence. I tried hard to imitate them. Shortly after my arrival at St. François the steward of Mouchy, named Legendre (whom I shall set down at the end of these memoirs among those persons who have been most devoted to us), was arrested and thrown into our prison on account of his attachment to my parents. I was particularly distressed at this, because if I had sent warning to him at Beauvais, when Monsieur Poulain came to arrest me at Mouchy, he would have had time to escape. I told him all I felt on this point. I shall have occasion to speak of him again more than once.

Upon a petition from Monsieur Poulain to the Revolutionary committee of Beauvais, my waiting-woman (Mademoiselle Dubois) was granted permission to come for an hour each day to St. François, to assist me in making my toilet. To that I have never attached the slightest importance; but it was a real satisfaction to me to receive through her some tidings from my parents, and to send them information concerning myself, and which they too received with kindest interest. Imagine how terrible a shock it was to me when I heard through Monsieur Allou, our neighbour from Mouchy, that they had been carried off on the 16th of October, by order of the Committee of General Security and taken to Paris to the great prison of La Force. I knew none of the details (they are recounted in Madame Latour's memoirs), and was completely overwhelmed. This poor man was moved also, and we wept together. I had hoped that the advanced age of my parents, their virtues, and the voice of the poor would appease the anger of the established authorities; but Robespierre, having learned that the great proprietors who had estates in the environs, had retired to them, and were living quietly upon them, resolved to drive them away and have them put in prison.

My parents passed only twenty-four hours in La Force. They were transferred to the Luxembourg, which they left only to pass into eternity.

Every day I heard sad news through prisoners who read the public papers, and who desired to communicate it to me. I refused to listen, thinking that to do so was only to incur additional pain. One day, when I was wondering what my parents were undergoing, I saw enter the cloister Monsieur d'Aryon, a captain of the National Guard (a very honest man, to whom I was afterward under many obligations), who seemed anxious not to meet me, so entirely was he dismayed by his mission. He sent a prisoner to deliver to me my order of imprisonment, of which the following is a copy: —

*Beauvais, this 19th of October,*

*28th day of the 2d month of  
the year II. of the Republic.*

You are informed that you are to start for Chantilly on the night of this day, Saturday to Sunday. You would do well to make all your preparations to take with you everything absolutely necessary to you.

If you have occasion to procure a carriage, let me know.

(Signed)

*E. Portier. Michel,*

*Taquet, Dufour,*  
*Procureur, of the Commune.*

To Madame Duras [la dame Duras], whose carriage is at the Golden Lion. She can use it if she wishes to do so.

It was addressed to 'Madame Duras, St. François.'

As soon as we had been informed of the order to leave, we became anxious to know whether all the prisoners at St. François were to be of the party. Only a portion of them were destined at that time for Chantilly. We passed the whole day in packing our belongings. Mine were taken there from Mouchy, which spared me for that time the worry of moving them, to which I was afterward compelled to accustom myself. I forgot to say that the keeper of St. François was the most humane of all under whom I was placed. I could not determine whether I was sorry or glad to change my prison. Those to which I was going were infinitely more wretched; but I did not then know their terrible methods.

About eleven o'clock at night we were told to get into the carriage, but the train did not start till midnight. It was composed of wagons and carriages of different sorts. I took in mine Monsieur de Reignac, an officer of the King's Constitutional Guard, who was afterward guillotined, a nun from the Hôtel-Dieu at Beauvais, and my waiting-woman. My coachman, to whom this journey was exceedingly distressing, wept the whole way. We were escorted by the Beauvais, National Guard, part on foot and part on horseback. As it was moonlight the people came out in front of their doors to hoot at us and throw stones at us. The train which had preceded us had been insulted infinitely worse. Monsieur Descourtils, an old and very estimable soldier, who had on all occasions rendered services to the town of Beauvais, and also Monsieur Wallon, the kind patron of the poor, were treated in the most outrageous manner.

Our procession moved so slowly, and we stopped so often, that we did not reach Clermont until eleven o'clock in the morning, after having come six leagues. My nun, who was not accustomed to travelling in a carriage, was almost nauseated all the way. I read throughout almost the whole journey.

We dined at an inn in Clermont. The people watched us dismount with an expression of pity. This feeling, which it is generally so undesirable to inspire, gave us pleasure on account of its rarity during the Reign of Terror. Nothing worthy of remark took place during our short stay at Clermont, unless it was the manner in which we were guarded. Our escort, being obliged to rest and get something to eat, confided us to the care of the National Guard of the city, among whom there were some prisoners who had been placed there to increase the size of the troop. The vicinity of Fitz-James made me sadly recall memories of the past. I had been so happy there from my earliest childhood; now nothing was left me but to regret it; all those with whom I had spent my life there were either dead or gone away. But while I was giving way to these sad thoughts, we were told it was time to leave. The train started, and we reached Chantilly at three o'clock.

It would be difficult to describe the confusion caused by the unpacking of the many vehicles loaded with mattresses and other things belonging to the prisoners, all thrown haphazard in the court, without other order than to unload them, and that the bundles should not be taken upstairs till the next day, when there would be time to examine them.

Consequently it was the custom to go to bed on a chair the first night, after a very scanty supper, or to accept the mattress of some prisoner willing to deprive himself of it. As we passed the iron grating at the entrance of the place, I recalled the 2d of September, and said to Monsieur de Reignac

that it was quite probable that we were being gathered together to be made to submit to the same fate; he seemed to think so too. Several attempts had been made to invent conspiracies, which had in fact no real existence at Chantilly any more than in other prisons. In order to render the name prison less terrible, they were called houses of arrest, of justice, of detention, etc.; but as during the Reign of Terror these words were synonyms, I shall make use of them without distinction. The whole party was taken into a beautifully gilded chapel, where I had heard Mass in the time of the Prince de Condé. It was quite filled with bags of flour; I found one which was placed in a comfortable position, and seated myself on it. Then the steward of the house, by name Notté, member for the Department of the Oise, mounted on the altar steps to call the roll, holding in his hand the list of those who composed the party; he had on his right a man named Marchand (who was the son of a very respectable waiting-woman of my aunt, Madame la Maréchale de Noailles), an agent of the Revolutionary army, who was in the confidence of the Committee of Public Safety. He seemed to take pleasure, as the names of the priests and nobles were called, in saying the harshest and most cutting things to them. A village vicar from the environs of Beauvais, and I had the worst of it all. This poor priest was quite in a tremor; but as for me, I did not mind it at all. This man Marchand asked Notté if he had taken care to see that I was very poorly lodged, and he replied that he had selected for me the smallest room to be had. When the roll-call was over, Mademoiselle Dubois, my waiting-woman, asked permission to remain in prison with me. The commissioners refused her request, and declared their determination of sending away all those not prisoners who up to that time had remained in the place. She was much grieved at parting from me. I was not sorry to give her up, for I had been extremely worried to see her suffering and deprived of liberty on account of her attachment to me. I remember with gratitude the feeling she showed for me at that time, and I am very glad to record it in this memoir. After a very long and wearisome discussion we left the chapel, quite curious to see our new quarters. I was agreeably surprised when they conducted me to a small room, neat and prettily gilded, where I was to be alone. Notté had had the good manners to keep it for me. I valued it the more when I saw the lodgings of my travelling companions. Several prisoners came to see me. I was not acquainted with one of them. I seemed to have been shipwrecked on an island inhabited by good people. They welcomed me heartily, and I was permitted to have my belongings, which had come from Mouchy, sent up to me at once. Consequently I had the pleasure of sleeping on a bed, – a rare thing on the day of one's arrival. Several of my neighbours were kind enough to help me make it up. I was quite overcome, and terribly fatigued. I received all these kindnesses as graciously as possible, but was impatient to be left to repose. Mademoiselle de Pons, now Madame de Tourzel, came with a message from her mother, asking me to supper; and Madame de Chevigné invited me to breakfast next morning. I accepted the second invitation with pleasure. I had never known these ladies intimately. They were the only ones belonging to the court who were in the house. I had only met them at the houses of my acquaintances.

The fatigue I had undergone the day before made me sleep. I had scarcely risen when Mademoiselle Lëfvre, the sister-in-law of the steward of Mouchy, came to my room to give me information concerning the inhabitants of our prison, and advice about my own arrangements, – all of which was very useful to me. It is a very sad thing to find oneself utterly alone in the midst of a crowd. Monsieur Notté paid me a visit; I did not find his face so severe as it had seemed on the arrival of our party, when he stood beside the commissioner of the Revolutionary army. He spoke pleasantly to me, and told me that, as the prisoners were very much crowded in their lodgings, he thought it best to put some one with me in a little cabinet which was under my control. In order to enter it one had to pass through my room. He allowed me to select the person, and I chose the hospital sister who had come from Beauvais, with me. She was a good woman, the daughter of a village farrier, without education, but a great help to me in the daily needs of life. I had an opportunity to show her my gratitude for it all during a severe illness of hers, when I acted not only as her nurse, but also as her physician, as she was not willing to see a doctor. She frequently gave me proof of the fact that when one has not received certain ideas in youth it is impossible to comprehend some of the simplest things. I would alter my

phrases in every possible way in order to enable her to understand what I meant, – among other things respect for opinion, etc. She remained with me until I was removed to Paris, and was never annoying to me. This was a great blessing, since our companionship was enforced. I soon began to pay visits among our colony, which was composed of very incongruous material. There were priests, nobles, nuns, magistrates, soldiers, merchants, and a large number of what were called 'sans-culottes,' from all parts of the country, and who were excellent people. I had near me a mail-carrier, a barmaid, and other domestics, whom I highly esteemed. They had become greatly attached to a venerable curate from Beauvais who lodged with them. They called him their father, rendered him many services, and took perfect care of him during a serious illness which he had while in prison. I first learned something of the character and habits of our companions, and which of them seemed most honest. They told me that we had among us samples of all sorts of persons and opinions. There were priests, real confessors of Jesus Christ, to be revered on account of their patience and their charity, others who had renounced their profession, and declared from the pulpit that they had formerly only uttered fables. One of these unprincipled priests, a man still very young, who had served in a regiment, often said that he did not know why he was kept in prison, for on every occasion since the Revolution he had done whatever he had been desired to do. When civic festivals were given in the village of Chantilly he had been the composer of couplets. He wore habitually the national uniform. We had two abbesses, – the abbess of the Parc-aux-Dames and the abbess of Royal-Lieu, Madame de Soulanges, who was nearly eighty years old, and had been under-governess to Madame Louise at Fontevault, and was tenderly beloved by her. During her sojourns in Compègne the princess used to go to see her every day. (Madame Louise, daughter of Louis XV., a Carmelite at St. Denis, had been brought up at the abbey of Fontevault, together with Madame Victoire and Madame Sophie.)

I discovered, soon after my arrival at Chantilly that loss of liberty unites neither minds nor hearts, and that people are the same in prison as in the world at large, – jealous, intriguing, false; for there were among us many spies, – an epithet, however, which was often lightly bestowed. I endeavoured to be polite to every one, and intimate only with a very small circle.

I made some visits every day, and received visitors after dinner, during which time I also worked. Sometimes some patriots whom I recognized quite well, pretended to be aristocrats, so as to make me talk; it was without doubt the most disagreeable part of the day. The time passed without great weariness, for I filled it up with prayer and reading, and a little walking in a courtyard, walled on four sides, and very dreary looking. At first we were able to go to the grating and talk with persons outside; but it was not desired that we should do this, and to prevent it planks were placed over the grating. These concealed the outer view and made communication impossible. On the third story there were terraces on the leads, upon which all our windows opened; and these windows, in several instances, also served as doors; only one person could pass through them at a time. It was really a comical sight, this file of prisoners, dressed in all sorts of costumes, and going around and around like a panorama. We were frequently obliged to stop on account of the great number of promenaders. Mademoiselle de Pons, who played on the piano, accompanied on the violin by Monsieur de Corberon (an officer of the French Guards, who was afterwards guillotined), entertained us most agreeably; she occupied one of the apartments of which I have just spoken. The view from it was very pleasant, – the most beautiful rippling waters, numerous villages, a superb forest, fine buildings belonging to the château, and a green lawn most charming to look upon. I thoroughly examined every portion of our prison. Several of the large rooms had been divided by plank partitions which were only six or seven feet high. Those who occupied these compartments during the winter suffered excessively from cold. In the rooms which were not so divided there were put as many as twenty-five persons. I noticed the arrangement of one of these communities, in which the curtain-less beds were placed so close together that during the day the prisoners, in order to move around, were obliged to pile them up on top of one another. Here is a list of the individuals occupying this room: A republican general and his wife, a curate from Noyon, twenty-seven years old, several young men, two estimable

mothers of families, with five or six daughters from fourteen to twenty years. In another there were a soldier with two or three nuns. The one next to mine contained a general, called Monsieur de Coincy, eighty-three years old, who still retained his strength, his wife, his son, his daughter, a nun of the Visitation, and Mesdemoiselles de Grammont-Caderousse, the eldest of whom was about fourteen. A special annoyance in our prison was the mingling of the sexes in the same lodging. I was the more thankful for my little cell. Marchand, the commissioner of the Revolutionary army, came to make me a visit; he found nothing to complain of in the furnishing of my apartment, which was composed of a servant's bed, two chairs, and a table. The beds and the trunks served as seats when the company was too numerous. Generally luxury was an offence to him. I told him he could find no fault with mine. I was mistaken; he answered that I as well as my parents had once had too much of it. He went from one end to the other of the place, and took it into his head, in order to annoy those ladies who seemed somewhat careful of their toilets, to order them to have their hair cut off; and he also sent *sans-culottes* to sleep in their rooms. These poor fellows were as much worried at this as those who were compelled to submit to it. They used to come as late as they possibly could and go away very early in the morning. They were very well behaved, with the exception of a cobbler from Compiègne, of whom his hosts complained bitterly; he was ill-tempered and annoying. One of his comrades, probably better reared, came near dying of colic through his politeness in not wishing to awaken those with whom he was forced to lodge.

Care had been taken, in order to avoid too active a correspondence between the prisoners and outsiders, to send those who were inhabitants of the district of Senlis to the abbey of St. Paul at Beauvais, and those of Beauvais, to Chantilly. We could not write even to our parents, nor could we receive news from them without a great deal of trouble. Of all the privations we were forced to undergo, this was the hardest to bear. While Notté was at the head of the house, the prisoners continually complained of him, though our situation was endurable. The wretched are naturally fault-finding.

I assured them that if he went away it would be worse for us; and so it actually happened. This man was passionate but not wicked. I had found out that one should never ask him anything in the presence of other persons, because he feared lest they might be indiscreet; but in private he was quite accommodating. I never had any reason to complain of him. By one of the strange chances of the Revolution, he is now in want, and at the very time when I am writing this memoir, is soliciting my protection, which I would willingly grant him if it were better worth having.

I was generally strictly obedient to the rules of the household, and consequently had to endure fewer annoyances than those who strove to evade them. It is true that they changed so frequently that it was difficult to keep the run of them.

We were guarded at first by the gendarmerie, afterward by the National Guard of Chantilly. I was informed of this by a carpenter who, while doing some work in my room, told me he was now our military commander. I found it necessary to ask his permission to do something the next day, and I did so in such a serious manner that Madame Séguier, who was present, could not help laughing.

The Revolutionary army succeeded the National Guard, and made its entrance into the house in a manner suitable to the functions with which it was charged. At ten o'clock in the evening we learned that there were cannon pointed toward the château, and at the same moment we heard the grating open amid songs which sounded more like rage than joy. The van-guard was preceded by cannon, drums, and torches. Women mingled with the procession. The refrain of '*Ça ira, les aristocrates à la lanterne!*' was repeated with stubborn animosity. My neighbours were seized with terror, and rushed trembling into my apartment. I reassured them as well as I could without knowing why, except that the feeling of fear is one to which I do not readily yield.

When the troop had finished its dances and songs in the courtyard, and gone through a sort of march, it placed its sentinels and retired. I had the full benefit of the performance, as my windows opened on the courtyard.

I cannot now remember the exact time, but a few days after the scene I have just described took place, several prisoners were sent to the prisons at Paris, among them Monsieur de Vernon, Master of Horse to the king, who had gout in his hands, but on whom they put handcuffs. A curate named Daniel was sent off with him. They were taken to the prison of the Carmelites on the Rue de Vaugirard. A party of thirty persons followed them immediately. Madame de Pontevès seeing them carrying off her husband, asked a commissioner named Martin for permission to go with him. He answered her roughly, granted her request, and then separated them when they reached Paris. One of them was put in the Madelonnettes, and the other in Ste. Pélagie. In order to fill the prisons of Paris it was sometimes necessary to draw recruits from the neighbouring prisons; for this purpose different pretexts were made. Evil designs were imputed to the prisoners, – such as anti-revolutionary projects; for instance, one was called an agitator if he spoke to the keeper or to the commissioner in order to make known his wants.

When any one came to inspect us I kept in the background. I was obliged, however, to appear before Martin, the commissioner extraordinary, who was accompanied by a man with a red cap, and had a roll-call of all the prisoners. He only asked me my name. A sort of officer who was with them said that he had dined once at the house of Monsieur de Duras, at Bordeaux, and had been very well entertained. I did not continue the conversation. Some of the prisoners pleaded their causes, and petitioned to be allowed to go free. I withdrew as soon as I possibly could.

Monsieur de Saint-Souplet, the king's esquire, who was constantly worrying about getting the news, was taken away, arraigned before the Revolutionary tribunal, and perished on the scaffold with his father, who was eighty years old, and one of his brothers. He was denounced by one of his servants; but the latter was guillotined with him for not having betrayed his master sooner. We now began to hear of a great many executions; that of Madame de Larochevoucauld-Durtal caused me intense sorrow, and also made me extremely anxious for the future. She was a widow of thirty years, lived a most retired life, caring for her parents, and occupied solely with their happiness and with works of charity. She was carried off from the Anglaises, where she had been imprisoned with her mother, who was very old and extremely infirm. She was taken before the Revolutionary tribunal as a witness for her uncle, Monsieur de l'Aigle, whose mind was affected. He compromised her in consequence of his weakness of mind, and the address of a letter which did not belong to her was made a pretext to remove her from the position of witness to that of criminal. Sentence was passed at once upon her. As something was the matter with the guillotine that day, she spent twenty-four hours in the record-office awaiting her execution; during this time she lovingly and zealously exhorted her uncle to meet death bravely. She assured him many times that she forgave him for being the cause of her own death; and after having somewhat aroused his senses, she showed him how to die resignedly.

I could not understand how it was that the prisoners who were every day hearing sad news should feel the need of being amused. They assembled to play with high stakes, have music, dance, etc. A Monsieur Leloir, an architect from Paris, and quite facetious, was the leader of all the amusements. I was constantly invited to join them, but always refused.

Notté was sent away from the place, and a grocer from Chantilly, named Vion, became our keeper. This was the golden age of our house. Leloir had influence over him, and as he was one of the prisoners, we reaped the benefit of it; but the commissioners of the Revolutionary committees of the neighbouring villages, the greater part of whom were employed about us, were able to persecute us. In fact, any one could do so who chose to take the trouble. I will give an example of this which is ludicrous enough: A man named Bizoti, employed as a wagoner, had the curiosity to pay us a visit, and took real pleasure in abusing all the priests. There was an old maid from Vandeuil, once fond of the chase, who was in the habit of wearing a costume somewhat masculine, composed of a man's hat and a dressing-gown. The wagoner-citizen said to her: 'I know you; you are a curate;' and then he addressed to her the same abusive language he had used to the priests. Loud bursts of laughter followed this. I sometimes went to see this spinster, who was very original.

I was very fond of the family of Monsieur de Boury, a captain of the French Guards, who had a wife and ten children. They are examples of every virtue; the father is truly religious, honourable, and well instructed; the wife is sweet and good. The harmony that pervades their life recalls that of the old Patriarchs. They were entirely resigned to the decrees of Providence, and preached to us by their example. A number of pious prisoners used to gather in their apartment for prayer and edifying reading. In all the house it was the spot I enjoyed most. It seemed to me that there one breathed purer air than anywhere else.

My chief amusement was to watch from my window the young people of fourteen or fifteen, who played foot-ball in the courtyard, forgetful of their captivity, and never dreaming that execution could await them. Alas! The Terror laid hold on one of them. Young Goussainville, only fifteen years old, was beheaded with his father. Several of the prisoners had brought their children with them, even nursing babies. (Madame de Maupeou was nursing one.) These children were of all ages; I could never understand how any one dared bring them into houses so full of dangers, to say nothing of the bad air. The laws now forbid persons to be received among the prisoners who desire to be there for the purpose of caring for those they love, which is very wise. We had at Chantilly several examples of that sort of devotion. The spirit of everything there was, in general, better than in the prison where I have since been.

Our keepers took a notion to put us at a common table, and this custom was afterward elegantly called 'eating in mess.' At first, during our sojourn at Chantilly, we were fed by eating-house keepers, established at the château. The keeper Désignon was one of the number. He served, beyond comparison, the worst fare to his customers; but I took it from motives of policy, knowing that he had more consideration for those whose food he furnished. He never failed in respect to me. Although he was only the subaltern of the commissioner, he arrogated the right to abuse those of the prisoners who asked to change their lodgings or to be less crowded together in the rooms they were occupying. The new arrangement was a calamity for him, since he had contracted with the government to supply all those who could not pay for their own food, and of these there was a large number.

A table was set in the gilded gallery of the Petit Château,<sup>3</sup> without a cloth, and with two hundred covers. The tables were reset three times, for there were many more than six hundred prisoners in the house; but the old and infirm were allowed to remain in their apartments. One of the tables was occupied by priests and unmarried men, the second by married people and children, the third by those who were alone; and this was my situation. The places were all numbered, and each of us had a duplicate number. When the bell rang, we came like children going to school, with baskets, in which were our plates, goblets, etc. Often the previous dinner was not over, and we had to stand a long time in groups in the drawing-room, which was next the gallery. We ate soup, which was only water with a few lentils such as are fed to horses, grass for spinach, sprouted potatoes, and a perfectly disgusting stew called *ratatouille*. I suppose that this word is not in the dictionary of the Academy, and that the Institute is not likely to put it there. We rose from the table hungry. There was a very hearty young man to whom we used to send all that was left at our table, in order to appease his hunger in some degree.

The members of the Revolutionary committee, with the officers of our guard, marched around our table with their red caps on their heads. There was one of them – the peruke-maker for the whole company – who watched us closely, to see if any one abstained from meat. Under such circumstances it was not easy to keep Lent. Many persons, however, did keep it strictly, although the grand vicars of the diocese had exempted three days.

Our tables were surrounded by sentinels of the Revolutionary army. I sometimes conversed with them. I found one among them to whom his service was extremely disagreeable. He was a servant

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<sup>3</sup> This 'little château,' dated from the sixteenth century, is one of the finest specimens of Renaissance architecture in existence, and was included in the gift of the Duc d'Aumale to the French nation (1886). The Grand Château, where Condé had spent twenty years of his life, and which was so famous for its literary associations with the names of Molière, Boileau, Racine, and La Fontaine, was destroyed in 1793. – Translator.

whom want had compelled to take such a wretched position. He pitied us, and would willingly have afforded some alleviation of our terrible condition. One of the guards' duties was to accompany, with drawn sabres, the washerwomen when they came to bring and carry away our linen. This performance was truly humiliating, and I made some effort to avoid its most embarrassing details.

One day a commissioner delivered a most atrocious reproof to the keeper. He told him that there did not enough prisoners die in the house. In fact, through lack of care, the bad food, and the incapacity of the health officers, a great many would have died; but Providence protected them, and their constitutions held out much better than could have been expected.

One day as we were dining in the gallery of the Petit Château, I recalled the beautiful pictures which formerly adorned it, the armour of the great Condé, pierced with bullets, his victories represented by the great painters, all the festivals I had attended in that place; but happily these ideas came to me rarely. I generally had there very commonplace thoughts; those which concerned my bill of fare, – such as the endeavour to introduce into it, by means of bribery, a pound of butter or a few eggs, – absorbed me. In this connection I had a very amusing encounter with our new commissioner, named Perdrix. This man had a grotesque figure, and wore a costume not less so. His former profession had been to paint the dogs of Monsieur the Prince of Condé. He probably imagined it would add to his dignity to be more severe than his predecessors. We were allowed to speak to him only through an opening made in the wall. I one day presented myself at this strange parlour to ask him to allow me to have six pounds of chocolate which he had held back; he replied with dignity that he would allow me exactly as much of it as was good for my stomach. I assured him that in order to have the dose exact the only way was to have me breakfast every morning with the surgeon, and said moreover, that I wanted to give it to a sick man. He did not grant my request, and I went away somewhat angry at not being able to obtain the nourishment which kept up my strength. My charwoman, who fortunately was also his, brought back to me the full supply the next day.

I will leave off these small details, and tell how a poor soldier of the Revolutionary army, the father of a family, being unacquainted with Chantilly, arrived there in the night, and losing his way, fell into one of the moats which surrounded the castle. At daybreak some of the prisoners saw the man struggling and screaming. Monsieur de Bouquerolle, an officer of the navy, who knew how to swim (he was the eldest son of the much respected family of Boury), started to go into the water after him. The sentinel prevented his doing so, telling him that it was a prisoner who had escaped, and left the man to perish. His body was found afterward, and it was recognized as that of one of their own men. Monsieur de Corberon and a curate asked that the body should be brought into the house, in order to try the usual means of restoring the drowned to life. This was granted them; and they used every means in their power for several hours, but without success. After this act of cruelty one can imagine how incensed the prisoners were. Well, they had their revenge in taking up a collection for the widow and children which amounted to six hundred francs. These were the people who during the Revolution were called criminals.

The parties sent off increased in number to an alarming degree. Each day when one went off we were filled with consternation. Husbands were separated from their wives, mothers from their children; and those who had no interests so dear had to regret some one of their companions. We did not know where they were taken, nor what took place in the prisons at Paris. For my part, I imagined them to be still worse than ours; and I was quite right, in spite of the continual vexations, hunger, and daily anxieties which we experienced.

One evening as I was taking a walk on the terraces in the delightful moonlight, which gleamed over the forest and made the waters sparkle, my ears delighted by the rippling sound, my eyes taking in all the beauty which surrounded me, I congratulated myself upon being, after all, less unfortunate than a great many persons whom I loved and respected. The wretched situation of my parents came over me at that moment so terribly that I shed tears. I scarcely ever received news from them, or from any of the friends who were dear to me.

Eatables were forbidden to be brought to us, lest letters should be concealed in them; and this reduced us sometimes to the necessity of eating soup made of salt and water only.

The Revolutionary guard took it into their heads to go on patrol from ten to eleven o'clock in the evening. They put out the lights, and made the prisoners go to bed. One day the soldiers came with drawn sabres into the apartment of Madame de Boursonne (former lady-in-waiting to Mesdames), who was very ill from hemorrhage, and had a constant fever. They went up to her bed, examined her closely, and said aloud 'that they would not have the trouble of visiting her long.' She came near dying after they went out. These kind fellow-citizens frequently had the goodness to forget to come to see me, because they knew that my cell was somewhat apart from the others.

Suddenly a party of forty prisoners were set at liberty in accordance with a command from their communes, under a law which granted the communes this right. There was general rejoicing among those who departed, and sweet hope for those who remained; but it was seen that by this means the prisons would be emptied, and the law was repealed. I was glad to take leave of two good Sisters of Charity from Noyon, thinking of all they would do for the poor whom they cared for so tenderly; but scarcely had a few prisoners been set at liberty when a larger number came to replace them. The districts of Beauvais, Noyon, Senlis, and Compiègne were most zealous in gathering recruits. We never had any vacancies. One day I met an old nun whom I did not know, bent with age and infirmities, who seemed to be suffering terrible pain in the side of her face. One of her companions told me that as she was getting into the wagon which brought her to Chantilly she made the sign of the cross; and one of the soldiers of the escort was so indignant that he gave her a frightful blow on her cheek which broke several of her teeth. How horrible! I took great pleasure in visiting these holy virgins, who were inconsolable at being compelled to leave their retreats where peace and innocence reigned. In order to console them for this, they were lodged so close to the coarsest men in the house that they constantly heard things said which made them very unhappy. They endured their strange and terrible situation with perfect resignation, and never failed to read their office as though they were in their convent.

My companions in misfortune differed very much; there were some who, in the hope of obtaining their liberty, undertook the rôle of informer. Several of them tried to sound me; they were not rewarded for their trouble. When they told me tales I would not listen, but immediately changed the conversation.

One thing which astonishes me as I look back is how little I suffered from *ennui* during my captivity. My thoughts were confined within a very narrow sphere. They dwelt upon my regret at being separated from those I loved and upon the needs of my daily life. The want of exercise, which is absolutely necessary to me from habits contracted in my childhood, gave me too great fulness of blood. I had violent rushes of blood to the head, and also rheumatism. Once on awakening I felt so stunned that I called the hospital nurse, who lodged near me. She thought I was dying, and went for help. This condition, which was really dangerous, was relieved by vomiting. I fell asleep; and when I woke I found myself surrounded by kind people, to whom I acknowledged my gratitude, and then burst into tears. They did not know what to make of it. I excused myself, and explained to them that once several years before I had had a similar attack, when I was surrounded by friends and relatives, and now I was terribly alone. I regained my composure, and then went out into the air.

The weak condition to which I was reduced made me unable to restrain the feelings and emotions which these sad memories aroused, though generally I have an aversion to speaking of what grieves me. The health officer of the prison was sent for; he was a violent revolutionist, small, very dark, uneducated, and dressed in a *carmagnole*, the uniform of the *sans-culottes*. Being difficult to bleed, I dared not have him bleed me, although I was in great need of it. He put leeches on my neck, which eased the pains in my head.

Very disturbing news reached us from Paris, and those were the only tidings which could come to us. It was reported that we were to be interrogated by means of blanks, which must be filled up.

I had a great dread of this kind of torture on account of my love of truth, which might compromise both myself and others. Heaven did not allow them to realize this base project.

One of the prisoners died from the mistaken treatment of that imbecile surgeon, who, without asking him if he had hernia, gave him an emetic, which caused his death in twenty-four hours.

The treatment of the sick was terrible; no medicine was given them, no one was appointed to nurse them, and even the prisoners were forbidden to show them any attention. I once saw five cases of putrid fever in one room. A respectable girl from Crépy, who stayed in the apartment, was obliged to spend every night waiting on the patients. A good schoolmaster, who also was in the room, helped her as well as he could. I have seen him since, with great pleasure, and I entertain a real esteem for him.

Madame de Boursonne, who had recovered from her illness, and from the visit of the revolutionists, heard that Monsieur d'Ecquevilly, her father, was dying at Amiens. One may imagine her great desire to go to him and hear his last words; but an insurmountable barrier was placed between us and those dear to us. She could only hope to hear frequently from him, being very near him; but our keeper, Perdrix, refused even this, and kept all letters addressed to her. After a fortnight of terrible suspense had passed, he sent for her to come to him; this was for the purpose of reading to her, in the presence of every one, the letter announcing the death of her father, without even allowing her to have it, which at least would have given her the consolation of learning the details. Poor Madame de Boursonne was in a terrible state. I did everything in my power for her, and took her back to her own room.

One day as I was sitting alone in my chamber some officers of our guard came in with Monsieur Lambert, the Commissioner of War. The dread of something frightful was the first thing that flashed across my mind; but I was mistaken in my fear. This Monsieur Lambert, to whom I had rendered services under the old régime, had expressed a desire to see the place and my little cell. I made no sign of recognition because of the fear I had always had since the Revolution of compromising those who wished me well. When the officers were going out he let them pass before him, and said to me that if I had need of his services and wished to send off any letters he would take charge of them, and would be delighted to do me any kindness. I cannot tell how touched I was by this proposition, which, however, I was unwilling to accept. During the Reign of Terror the slightest kindness offered to persons of our rank was so dangerous that I still feel grateful to him for his good will.

Perdrix did not spoil us. Several of us asked him for a copy of our entry in the jail-book; this seemed a small favour, but we could not obtain it. The clerk of the commune of Chantilly came quite frequently to the château, in order to give certificates of residence. He showed a sort of interest in the prisoners. Whenever they were not harshly treated it was on account of the natural amiability of individuals. Monsieur Wallon, of Beauvais, having confidence in the clerk, commissioned him to procure some money for him; he accepted the commission graciously, and disappeared. I never should have imagined it necessary to have one's residence in a prison certified. It seemed to me that to make a list of those who were there would have been sufficient; but it turned out very well for me that I took the precaution I thought superfluous, as I was inscribed upon the list of *émigrés* during my imprisonment.

I was not pleased at the reception given a fat curate from Noyon who had apostatized, and had denounced and caused to be imprisoned a good many of our fellow-prisoners. He was hooted at from the head of any stairway he attempted to ascend; and the crowd pushed him back, and used syringes upon him. I was very sorry to see a man so lost to principle among us; but I should have preferred not to see any unfortunate being insulted. Any one is unfortunate who has lost his liberty; and those who are wicked are the most to be pitied under such circumstances. I was sorry also for those who, instead of thinking of more serious things, fed themselves with vain hopes concerning the future, and the possibility of shaking off their fetters.

I grew accustomed to living at Chantilly, and my companions in misfortune treated me with great kindness. Madame de Séguier and Mademoiselle le Caron de Troupure, now Madame Flomond,

both amiable and excellent women, were a great comfort to me. I tried to help those who needed courage. The Coincy family, who lodged near me, were good company. I had great consolation from a religious point of view. A venerable priest undertook to confess me, and even to give me the communion. He had had the courage to bring a large supply of consecrated wafers, and had kept them in spite of the danger he ran should the fact have been discovered.

I was quite content with my fate, since I was compelled to endure a hard one. I could not have asked to be in a better prison; Providence had placed me there, and six months sojourn had accustomed me to it.

Toward the end of March, 1794, I received a letter from my mother, full of kindness, but which grieved me very much. She told me that she had thought it astonishing that I made no application to the government commissioners who came to Chantilly, to be allowed to join her. This intimation seemed to be an order and a command of Providence which altered my destiny. I immediately inquired when Citizen Martin, who inspected our house, was to come. I presented him a petition, asking to be sent to the Luxembourg by the first train destined for Paris. He assented, and then occupied himself in getting ready a most atrocious party, composed of young girls who were torn from the arms of their mothers without knowing for what they were destined.

Many persons believed, and it was really talked of, that the intentions of the Terrorists was to marry them to *sans-culottes*. To this party were added some priests, women, laymen, etc. The unhappy mothers were in despair. I was a witness of the scene with Madame de Pons (formerly Vicomtesse) at Perdrix's apartments. She fell on her knees before him and before Martin; she said everything to them that the desperation of such a moment could suggest, using the most touching expressions; they would listen to nothing. She fell fainting at their feet. After she recovered her consciousness, she implored to be permitted at least to follow her daughter; they refused her.

I forgot to say that a moment before Madame de Pons came to see Perdrix the latter had sent for her daughter, and in the presence of Martin and two gendarmes said to her,

'What is your name?'

'Pons.'

'Yes, but give your Christian names.'

'You should speak to my mother; I will go for her.'

'No, no; I ask you for your names.'

'There they are. May I know what use you have for them?'

'You will leave here with other prisoners to-morrow, to go to another prison.'

'Without mamma! O God! What will be my fate?'

'Go, or I will have you carried out.'

Madame de Pons wrote several letters to Martin, asking only for a delay; she offered all her property to the Republic; and the only answer she received was, 'Your daughter must go!'

I busied myself in arranging my trunks and packing them for the Luxembourg, so as to have with me only what was strictly necessary. On the 3d of April, 1794, we were told to hold ourselves in readiness to leave the next day or the day following, as the carriages were expected. My travelling companions were in despair at leaving their parents, but I delighted at going to see mine once more; every one said pleasant things to me. I received many testimonials of interest and regret from the prisoners. There were some from whom I was grieved to part, and a secret presentiment (though generally I do not believe in them) seemed to warn me that the reunion with my parents would never be effected. The days of the 3d and 4th were passed in leave-taking. I did not know that the train was to start early on the 5th, the anniversary of the birth of my son. I was summoned at ten o'clock in the morning. I found the wagons almost full; consequently I had a wretched seat next a vile woman who boasted of being a friend of Robespierre, and told us that she would receive on the way some marks of public interest. She sat almost half on top of me; and to add to our suffering, the straw which is usually put in the bottom of the carts for calves, was left out. When we left, the courtyard was filled

with our companions in misery, who were mourning and sighing over our fate. They concealed their tears, fearing to let them be seen.

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