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LAFAYETTE



LAFAYETTE IN 1790

From a drawing by Davivier

photo Giraudon

LAFAYETTE

A Revolutionary Gentleman

by

MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE



‘Une statue qui cherche son piédestal’

JACQUES LAFFITTE

‘Il me paraît impossible que la confession complète d’un honnête homme, qui a joué un rôle considérable et qui n’est pas un sot, puisse avoir un fâcheux résultat sur la postérité, plus impartiale lorsqu’elle est fidèlement instruite que le moins passionné et le moins aigri des contemporains’

LAFAYETTE, in a letter to Madame de Tessé

JONATHAN CAPE
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INTRODUCTION

THE Marquis de Lafayette is best remembered for the part he played when still hardly more than a boy in the American War of Independence. Popular memory which naturally dwells on the heroic and colourful in history, has discreetly drawn a veil over the rest of his life. The picture of the young French nobleman, the last fair product of a decaying world, fascinated by the strange beauty of Liberty appearing on the Western horizon, and hastening to her defence, is too delightful to be relegated to a corner of a larger and more complicated study. It is a pity, for the facts which the picture fancifully illustrates are but the first instinctive acts of a long and vivid career, full of meaning when understood as a whole. To sacrifice to the picture those years when Lafayette, for a time the most powerful figure in revolutionary Paris, gave France her tricolour, those events which gave him the opportunity of clinching Napoleon's final downfall, that story of the ghostly veteran of another age returning to direct yet another revolution, is asking too much. But still more unpardonable is it to forget that for sixty years he fought with a rare consistency and a surprising insight for political ideals and social reforms which have in fact dominated the history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As an historical figure he has lost rather than gained by the outward show which he so greatly enjoyed. His biographers have had so much to say about his deeds that they have not stopped to inquire into the real character of so curious a product of the *ancien régime*. Lafayette, so entirely out of his class and time, so accurate in his political and social foresight, so un-French in his reforming busyness, yet in many ways so much of the nobleman, so French in his fierce nationalism, so old-fashioned in his chivalry, so thoroughly eighteenth-century in his religion and philosophy, is a man worth more consideration than he has been given.

He was a revolutionary gentleman. He was a gentleman in the sense in which we use the term in contrast with a professional. He was not a student of politics, theoretical or practical. He had no kind of training and little education in the modern sense. He did not read much, still less did he write any set treatise. He

INTRODUCTION

seemed to feel his way by instinct towards the vital beliefs of sane democracy. Everything came to him naturally and spontaneously, as it should come to the gifted amateur.

It is hardly necessary to comment on the epithet 'revolutionary', except to say that it refers not only to the important part he played in four revolutions, three of which ushered in the age of democracy, but also to the real and deep novelty of his political and social creed. In a time when fierce passions and hatreds were quickly converted into hateful deeds, his own passion kept him on the middle path. Outside America, such posterity as deigns to notice him has judged that path to have been one of weak compromise. Writing a hundred years after his death when we know by experience so much of the weakness, and also, as I believe, so much of the strength of democracy, writing too from a point of view neither French nor American, I suggest that the sneers of the French and the cheers of the Americans demand a new and fairer estimate of the life-work of Lafayette.

MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE

SAVILE CLUB,

LONDON

July, 1933

To
Algar and Theresa Thorold

LAFAYETTE

PART ONE

EDUCATION

(1757-1785)

'Il ne faut pas supposer les gens aveugles parcequ'ils voient plus loin ou autrement que notre société habituelle.'

LAFAYETTE, in his Memoirs

CHAPTER I

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

(1757-1775)

GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE¹ was born on September 6th, 1757. He was therefore thirty-three days older than the Comte d'Artois who was to reign as Charles X, the last of the legitimist kings of France. Seventy-two years later the old monarch, looking back over the years during which Lafayette and he had witnessed the birth of independent America, the end of the *ancien régime*, the rise and fall of Bonaparte, and the maturing of a new point of view in political life threatening the stability of his own semi-constitutional throne, said: 'I know but two men who have ever stood for the same principles, myself and M. de Lafayette, he as the defender of liberty, and I as the king of the aristocracy.'

Change, philosophers tell us, involves a principle of permanence and a principle of difference. As though to help us to apply this truth to political change, nature arranged that these two men should be born within a month of each other. That Charles X should have symbolized the principle of permanence is understandable. He was the brother of the monarch in whose person all authority and privilege were traditionally concentrated. Under the circumstances it was natural that he should have

¹ The name should be spelt in two words, La Fayette, but it was the tendency in the eighteenth century to write such names in one word. Lafayette always seems to have done so, though some biographers have erroneously supposed that he changed the spelling when he dropped the title of Marquis during the Revolution.

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agreed whole-heartedly with the sentiments of his distant cousin, the king of England: 'We will have no innovations in our time'. Why Lafayette should have symbolized the principle of difference and why he should have devoted all his energy to revolution is not so easy to understand.

He was of a race of soldiers. One of his ancestors was a marshal of France, another an ambassador of Charles VII, a third, we are told, sacked the castle of the Polignacs. The Polignacs grew to be one of the most powerful and privileged families of the *ancien régime*, and Lafayette was to have much to do with the last of the great Polignacs. Perhaps the soul of that Lafayette ancestor was taking a special interest in his descendant!

As in so many of the ancient houses of France springing from the feudal knighthood, the constant use of the sword in France's defence had brought glory to the family, but nothing more substantial. The soldiers had not accumulated much wealth, and the young heir was brought up in the country far away from the capital in which the wealth of a commercially prosperous country was spent and wasted. This saved him from the fate of the children of the rich who, despite the fashionable teaching of Rousseau that to nurse one's own child 'is the prettiest thing on earth', were sent away by their mothers to be brought up by servants. Better still, his father, a colonel in the Grenadiers, had been wise enough before going off to the wars for the last time to marry the daughter of a miserly old nobleman of Brittany who was reputed to be fabulously rich. After the advantages of a poor, rough but natural education, the son and heir would inherit a fortune, and the Lafayettes would go to court again.

Thus he succeeded in avoiding the rottenness which was eating through the old nobility that could still maintain itself in Parisian society and in acquiring wealth enough with which to help in the good work of sweeping it away. In truth, it was not so much his own class as the *anoblis* or ennobled, the wealthy bourgeoisie and those members of the nobility allied by marriage to the rich commercial classes who enjoyed the social privileges of an antiquated system. 'Nearly all the women of Versailles,' wrote a contemporary, 'when the latter are of any standing are nothing but bourgeois of quality.' What with rich alliances and shameless pensions, these people enjoyed a share of the wealth of France which would not disgrace the bankers and industrialists of our

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

own day. France with her growing trade in the Mediterranean and the West Indies was a rich country, but her surplus wealth was systematically diverted to the maintenance of self-devouring luxury. No wonder she was face to face with bankruptcy. And what little was left in the Treasury would soon be spent with the encouragement of Lafayette in helping the American colonists, thus making the revolution inevitable and the prosperity of the United States possible.

But criticism of time-honoured institutions and the notion of relating the order of public life to the order of justice or even of common sense had hardly penetrated as far as the mountains and forests of Auvergne, three hundred miles away from Paris, in which province the château of Chavaniac, the home of the Lafayettes, was situated.

The tall, strong, awkward, ungainly boy with his reddish hair, fresh complexion and pale eyes, bent on searching for wolves in the forests could hardly have been aware of the unrest and dissatisfaction of a nation, intellectually emancipated and commercially prosperous, yet imprisoned by institutions and customs suited to a primitive people. His young mind was more affected by talk of war than by criticisms of governments. He had been born in the second year of the Seven Years' War. When he was two years old, his father was killed by a British cannon ball at Minden where the French army suffered defeat through the quarrels of its rival generals. The stories of the war were enough to provide him with the first of the three ideals which he later stated to have kept him fighting for the Americans, 'The humbling of England, the good of my country and the happiness of mankind'. American interests, apparently, came in a poor fourth. He heard that the year of his birth was the year of Rosbach, a battle in which 60,000 Frenchmen and Austrians were routed by Britain's allies, the Prussians, fighting with British money. He was told stories of the disgraceful state of the French army in which seemed to be concentrated all the vices of the French political system. When later he witnessed the troubles of that small army which won independence for America, he remembered how well it compared with the army of the king of France fighting in his childhood.

Other tales of contemporary events may have helped to shape his odd mind. When he was four years old, there was an attempt

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on the king's life, and Damiens, the culprit, had to suffer the frightful penalties of the day. He had his right hand burnt with red-hot pincers, molten lead was poured into the wounds, and after an hour and a quarter's agony his limbs were dragged off his body by four horses. An immense crowd feasted on the sight. The assassination of kings in those days might be rarer than the assassination of presidents in our own, but the risk of undertaking tyrannicide was decidedly greater. This story may have played its part in making Lafayette one of the first opponents of capital punishment.

The boy who was to achieve the emancipation of French Protestants had plenty of opportunity to wonder about religious persecution. The Calas trial which took place when he was five may have been talked of. The Catholic Church of France into which he was of course born and whose sacraments he for a time received, was in a sense an effect of the Reformation. France had persecuted and exiled her Protestants, but the price was a Gallican intolerant State Church. The Protestants who remained in France were outlaws, their marriages were unrecognized, their children called bastards and taken from them, many of their pastors hanged.¹ The centre of Protestantism was not very far from Chavaniac. And what was to be seen of Catholic life did not argue a fervour in the defence of Truth which might justify this harshness. The faith was still strong in the hearts of many hidden and poor, but it was never at a lower ebb among the intelligentsia and the higher clergy. The same social abyss which separated the poor from the rich nobility separated the lower from the higher clergy. The bishops thought that the *curés* were 'coarse, shabby, ignorant, and one must be fond of the odour of garlic in order to feel happy in the society of those who ponder heaven and earth'.

Lafayette's first learning came from a priest, the Abbé Fayon. With him he went at the age of eleven to Paris to be a boarder in the Collège du Plessis. Fayon must have been a typical agnostic churchman of the day, for it was not to his aunts or to his grandmother in Chavaniac, nor to the teaching of heraldry which he remembered to have been the staple fare in college, that he owed his religious scepticism, his *esprit frondeur*, his interest in liberty. 'I have always loved liberty with the enthusiasm of religion, the passion of love, the conviction of geometry,' he wrote later, 'On leaving college where the one thing I disliked was my dependence

¹ These penal laws were applied with varying degrees of severity.

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

on others, I saw and despised the grandeurs and littlenesses of the court, I pitied the futility and insufficiency of society, I was disgusted with the pedantry of the army. I was revolted by all manner of oppression.' Among his school-fellows were two scholars, Vergniaud and Gorsas. Vergniaud became the most eloquent orator in the Legislative Assembly and Gorsas a brilliant revolutionary journalist. It is more likely that the young, independent-minded aristocrat taught them the beginnings of dissatisfaction than that the charity boys should have taught him.

He was shy and clumsy, suffering from what we should now call 'an inferiority complex'. School life bored him and the indifference of his companions troubled him. He would dream of escaping from the burdensome discipline and leaving France altogether to seek for adventure and reputation in lands where he would be better understood. He had little taste for reading and study and his happiest days were those during which the monotony of life was relieved by military parade with the Black Musketeers. But he kept his eyes and ears open, mistrusting the elegant world of polite society in which he would never create a sensation and listening to the new ideas that were soon to destroy the values of that world.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the views of the *philosophes* and the political fashions of the English were ceasing to be the playings of society, they were beginning to be taken seriously. And this seriousness which spoiled their elegance upset the arbiters of social taste. Mme. du Deffand who reigned in her glory during the first half of the century thought that everything was becoming detestable, that everything was in the worst taste. '*Affreux, affreux! Ah! mon Dieu, quel auteur! Qu'il a de la peine, qu'il se donne de tourment pour avoir de l'esprit!*' Rousseau, fifty years ahead of his contemporaries, thought in his turn that the old woman's rigid taste forced her to speak in convulsions. Writing to her friend, Walpole, of the England which the dandies so greatly admired she would say: 'Your liberty does not attract me. That vaunted liberty seems to me far more burdensome than our slavery.'

But the *philosophes* were doing their work in spite of the old lady, not because they were speaking any louder or with more effect, — one way or another they had been talking for years, ever since

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the days of Descartes and Bayle, – but because the decaying state of French social institutions was making thoughtful men realize that the intellectual life of France could not remain much longer merely intellectual. Lafayette, as far as we know, never read a word of their writings until after the Revolution, yet he like many others with brains and character felt the need for something new and different, for the old had no vitality. ‘The great secret of success in France’, wrote Frederick, ‘is to be new.’ That was an old secret: the real novelty of the time was the fact that novelty itself was being taken seriously. It was a serious matter when the king could call the ancient *parlement* (a most conservative and privileged legal body) an assembly of republicans, but it was a much more serious matter that no one even pretended to care when Louis XV died. During his funeral someone was heard shouting the wonderful phrase: ‘*Va-t’en salir l’histoire!*’ So much did men care for the very sap of French public life, for that sacred institution, the kingship. It meant that even the teaching of the *philosophes* was out-of-date, for they looked to the reign of civil liberty under the guidance of an enlightened monarch: ‘It is better to obey a fine lion,’ wrote Voltaire, ‘than two hundred rats of one’s own species.’ The unfortunate Louis XVI had to try to play the part of the fine lion too late. It would have been too late even if he had in fact been a fine lion and not a tame rabbit. It was the *triste figure* of the monarch, unable to ride the storm, which impressed the young Lafayette, thus putting him at once ahead of most of his enlightened contemporaries.

‘Liberty, royalty, aristocracy, democracy, prejudices, reason, novelties, *philosophes*, all together joined in making our days happy’, wrote Ségur, but it was the consciousness that these things meant something vital, and yet that they were all in a muddle which led to ‘a terrible awakening preceded by a sweet sleep and seductive dreams.’ Lafayette’s American adventure was to give him a better chance than anyone else of seeing a way through the muddle. Socially, it was often more advantageous to be a bourgeois man of letters than a nobleman in those last years of the *ancien régime*, for many of the greatest noblemen of Paris and the Court were thoroughly aware that the past was dead. They were merely determined to be ‘first in’ on whatever the future might hold. ‘It was a great point of honour to be in opposition: to be so seemed a duty to the more enlightened, a virtue to the generous,

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

a weapon useful to the *philosophes*, a way of making a stir, a fashion which the youth of the kingdom seized on.' But if many of the youth embraced the fashion, as Ségur goes on to suggest, because 'it is pleasant to descend so long as one believes that it is possible to rise again, because one is enjoying at one and the same time the advantages of a patrician and the sweetness of a plebian philosophy,' a few were taking matters more seriously. The tall, thin, sharp-featured boy, too awkward to be able to dance, too clumsy to make a gracious bow, was among them. 'He had none of the outward graces which went well at court', wrote Bouillé's son, 'his self-love hurt because he could not succeed with those of his own age and the restlessness of his mind together gave to his ideas and his views a more solid character.' Before he ever went to America he admitted that 'republican talk charmed him'. And it was not mere talk, for at the first opportunity he snubbed the king's brother in order to make certain that he would not have to spend his life making a mess of holding the king's shirt or slippers.

There is no evidence that in his youth or at any other period of his life he ever deliberately reasoned out a new idea for himself. He was a practical man, not a professional theorist or philosopher. But from the first he had a genius for looking forward, or perhaps more accurately for looking away from what others took for granted. Cut off by his over-sensitiveness from the world to which he belonged, aware that he must nevertheless do something out of the ordinary, he brooded. Had he had a weaker character or possibly even if he had been more intelligent, he might have wasted himself in morbid introspection. He was too matter-of-fact for that, and instead his loneliness developed a stubbornness of will which goes with logical and limited mind and created in his strong but undisciplined imagination a romantic notion of liberty, 'getting away'. It is easy to see how the liberty, the 'getting away' which he wanted for himself could with more maturity be evolved into a social and political ideal for others. 'I was persuaded', he wrote later, 'that the human race was created in order to be free and that I was born to serve its cause.' He had more than his fair share of natural virtue and this his romantic imagination turned into a religion, a religion of reason, goodness and liberty, 'the august sentiment of pure Deism' as he was to call it.

A boy like that must have been living in the clouds, but, luckily,

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his strongest hold on reality, adventure in a new and better world, was to be more than the dream it is to other boys. His imagination was to be fired by his American adventure, and his mind to be furnished thereby with matter enough with which to preach a new doctrine to the old world. Meanwhile he was rather lost. 'The words, Liberty, Property and Equality, were on everybody's lips', de Ségur tells us, but no one knew what to make of them. They were too different, too strange. Lafayette loved them and took them and all that they connoted in his immature mind with immense seriousness, but only some grand gesture symbolizing these fine-sounding abstractions would shake him out of the coldness and slowness which his relations and friends were deploring.

After all he was still a boy, even though an unusual one. Of more immediate importance than the thoughts which ran through his head were two events for neither of which he was responsible, the inheritance of his grandfather's money and his marriage.

By the time he left school he was the lucky possessor of a fortune which brought in 140,000 *livres* a year.² This money had naturally a profound effect on his life. Without it he would never have gone to America and even if he had succeeded in surmounting obstacles which only money could remove, he would probably have been sent back to Europe like so many of his less fortunate compatriots. What would have happened to him if he had never acquired his American reputation is pure guess-work. At any rate he would not have aspired to be the Washington of the Old World, he would not have come back to France determined to teach her 'the language of Boston.' When the revolution started he was only thirty-two, but the War of Independence had made him a Major-General in two armies, the most picturesque figure in two continents, the obvious leader of the opposition to what had been in France for a thousand years. Money too affected his character. It spoils some people and it gives others the chance they need. It did a little of both to Lafayette. It opened most doors to him, but it made him think that all doors were easy to open. Whenever he discovered that some stuck, he was surprised and shocked. Moreover that doors should be open was so natural a thought to him that he too often left the key in the keyhole to the delight of others who wanted to get through for very different purposes. Money gave him the habit of thinking that life was just a little easier

² Worth at least £14,000 to-day. See Appendix II.

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than it is. Luckily he was saved from the usually fatal result of that disposition by refusing to see that he was mistaken. After a fall, he went on as though nothing had happened and as he lived and worked for seventy-six years he got somewhere near his goal by the end.

His marriage was a pre-arranged affair. The house of Noailles was one of the greatest families of France, far greater than the Lafayettes. Its many members clung together, despite diversity of faith and opinions, around their large Parisian mansion in the rue St. Honoré. 'Are you looking for libertines, male and female', wrote d'Argenson, 'for atheists and *dévots*? There is something of everything in the *boutique des Noailles*.' The son of the head of the family was called the Duc d'Ayen, 'a monster', according to the same writer, 'who works at ruining both religion and king.' In point of fact the duke was no more of a free-thinker than most of his class, and, better than his fellows, he read interesting papers before the *Académie des Sciences*. But the wisest thing he ever did was to marry Henriette d'Aguesseau, the daughter of a distinguished lawyer, thereby enriching his family to the extent of £20,000 a year and acquiring a wife whose life was a monument of Catholic sanctity and of perfect motherhood, whose death was to be one of the greatest crimes of the Revolution.

Her daughters stand out as examples of what the religion and manners of that side of the *ancien régime* which does not get mentioned in history books could produce. Their mother brought them up in the stern tradition of Pascal. Years after, Adrienne who at fourteen became the Marquise de Lafayette, fortifying her soul with the reading of Pascal in times of suffering, used to close the book and imagine that she was listening again to her mother's advice. But it was not all severity. Unconscious, no doubt, that she was following Rousseau's precepts, the wise mother educated her daughters and refused to repress them. Sometimes they got out of hand to her great distress, but Adrienne assured her that 'because you let us talk and argue, you will see that we shall become more obedient than other girls when we are fifteen.'

A miniature of Adrienne at the time of her marriage reveals an expression of sweet, pathetic, but slightly puzzled seriousness: a small, oval face, hardly pretty but with beautiful eyes – 'eyes so expressive, so large, so speaking', as Fanny Burney was to describe them – under dark, rounded eyebrows contrasting with the fashionable mass of powdered hair. How odd must have

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been the family life of these married children, both so mature, she worrying her head with scruples about the truth of the presence of God in the Eucharist so that she had to delay making her first communion, he, sixteen years old, worrying his head with the rottenness of society and the perversity of man.

It was a splendid match for a Lafayette, but the Duc d'Ayen was glad enough to marry one of his daughters to the none too frequent combination of good blood and good money. The pious mother was not so satisfied. She may have guessed the restlessness of her son-in-law's disposition and the shallowness of his conventional religion. As regards his morals she need not have had any fears. His passion was never for flesh and blood. It was all reserved for reputation and abstract ideas, for personal glory and abstract liberty, for popularity and republics. At a time when sexual morality was lax and vice was fashionable among the better-born Catholics and Agnostics alike, and when opportunities for *la galanterie* must have been unusually ample, he remained quite uninterested. His was easy virtue. He had admirers of course for he was wealthy, well-built and not ugly, though his uplifted head, long nose and retreating brow could hardly have inspired confidence. Ségur relates how on one occasion the boy spent a whole night trying to induce him to fight a duel over a woman (perhaps Mme de Simiane, the most constant of his admirers), but the very exaggeration of his behaviour on this one occasion shows that it was part of his attempt to overcome that coldness and awkwardness which his friends were always noticing. His attempts at flirting were like his attempts at drunkenness. Once he did manage to get drunk, but all he could think of saying when his friends carried him home was: 'Don't forget to tell Noailles (his brother-in-law) how much I drank.'

It was hardly to be expected that the prearranged marriage would develop into a passionate love match. Nor did it. When away from her, which was nearly always, he never failed to write to her, as a virtuous husband should, in terms of the most extravagant worship, but it was only after his final return from America when he began to understand the exceptional qualities of his wife, and still more during his imprisonment much of which she voluntarily shared with him, that he became truly fond of her. After her death, he was to be even fonder of her memory, spending a quarter of an hour daily in ceremonial recollection of her.

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The first year of their married life was spent under the roof and supervision of Adrienne's mother. That was a condition of her consent. The bride overcame her religious scruples, scruples which she remembered in later years to have been as intense as any sufferings of her sad life. The catechism's teaching was safe. With admirable tact she completed its lessons by listening to her husband's political views and sympathizing with the generosity and good intentions which prompted them. Her sanctity was sufficient to enable her to live up to her title during the later part of the Revolution: '*La femme Lafayette*'. Her own deep religious conviction never converted him, but it confirmed him in his detestation of all religious persecution and in his dislike of any State religion, Catholic, Protestant or Deist.

We have no record of his interest in these early years in contemporary politics, in the reforms of Turgot, in the quarrels between the *parlement* claiming its constitutional right and the supporters of 'enlightened' royal despotism. All we know is that he was a member of one of the many half-secret societies which abounded in the capital. This one, called the society of the *Épée de Bois*, was composed of fashionable courtiers among whom were the brothers of the king. Among other activities they parodied the procedure of the *parlement* to the scandal of their elders, but to the amusement of the king. The boy could not help being often at court and even on one occasion took Marie-Antoinette to a masked ball where they met the notorious Dubarry. He tried to adapt himself to the manners of his fellows until he was snubbed by the queen who, one evening, mocked him for making a false step in a minuet. In those days it was said that 'vice was immaterial, but ridicule fatal', and he never forgot Marie-Antoinette's laugh.

Whenever he could he left the vanities of Paris to serve with the regiment of which he had been made honorary colonel. On the frontier he could indulge in the silence he preferred, because, as he tells us, 'he rarely heard anyone talk of things worth talking about'. It was noticeable that, even in army life, his ways were austere and his talk unusual in such surroundings. 'A feeling of natural shame, strengthened by his education and the habits of a pure life, prevented him from using unsuitable and trivial expressions. To understand what he was referring to when talking of certain subjects one had to pierce the veil of decency with

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which he clothed them' – this is what his doctor writes of him late in life. The habits of a pure life were being formed in the barracks of the late eighteenth century and the Paris of the *ancien régime!* There can be no doubt that from the beginning he was building up that stern and uncompromising character which enabled him to devote himself heart and soul to his passion for abstract political and social ideals, but which must have considerably limited his talent for social intercourse.

It certainly made him forget the more humdrum duties he owed to his young wife. To her mortification he spent many months of their first years of married life of his own choice by himself in Metz. It was there that on August 8th, 1775, he first heard the real meaning of the troubles in the British colonies in North America.

CHAPTER II

NEW WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

(1775-1777)

THE interest of the ordinary educated Frenchman in the British colonies in North America in the eighteenth century must have been about the same as the interest of the average European to-day in the relations between China and the powers with commercial settlements in that country. The Chinese it is true are a yellow race and the colonists were white, but China is far nearer to us than America was one hundred and sixty years ago.

Between 1770 and 1775 there was a kind of cult of America among an advanced set in France. Raynal had published a large and inaccurate work about the romance, wonders and economic advantages of the New World. Many imitated him, and a romantic reaction against the coldness and precision of the *philosophes* was making itself felt. But to the general public – and Lafayette not being a reader was in this respect a member of the general public – they were distant British settlements, traditionally hostile to the French whose soldiers and missionaries had made the first claim to those remote lands. When the difficulties between the colonists and the Motherland began, the French government realized the possibilities and sent agents to report on the true state of affairs. The government newspapers gave accounts of the troubles, such as the Boston massacre and the Boston Tea Party. Some of these accounts Lafayette must have noticed. But he read them as we should read about China – interesting, but too difficult to follow and, anyhow, not his concern. Then suddenly one evening he came into contact with a man who knew all about it and to whom the matter was very real. The vague ideas he had at the back of his mind took on a new significance: they meant something to him. The man was the Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III, travelling through Europe and that night the honoured guest at a dinner-party in Metz. The prince, true to the tradition of the House of Hanover, was telling his hosts all

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about his brother's difficulties and openly sympathizing with his enemies. Lafayette saw the chance of fighting against England, and that very night he made up his mind to support with his sword the colonial rebels against the rule of his hereditary foe and to solve his troubles about liberty by freeing himself from the entanglements of a life with which he had no sympathy.

It was an extraordinary decision for a young French officer with the brilliant world of ancient France at his feet to make. He was the master of a great fortune; he had married a Noailles; with two such helps he must rise fast in the army. It was impetuous yet it does not prove that the young man was impetuous by nature, for he saw the chance of release from all the constraints of a life artificial to his character. It is unlikely that he understood very clearly what was at stake. In the recital of the colonists' economic grievances, in the story of the blood shed at Lexington, he *may* have grasped what was far from evident to calm intellectual judgment. He certainly saw the chance of revenge for the Treaty of Paris which had shamefully ended the Seven Years' War, for Minden where his father had fallen. If he saw, as he claims, the possibility of an economic, social and political revolution, the birth of a new republican nation to be for the rest of the world in general and for France in particular a model to be imitated, it must have been because the wish was father to the thought, because passion lent him eyes with which to see into the future. But we owe our knowledge of this period of his life mainly to his own memoirs written many years after the French Revolution, and the fact that he was looking back on these days through the tricoloured haze of that Revolution made him see what was essentially a desire for military adventure, for romance and for nationalist revenge as 'the defence of a beautiful cause, as the last fight for liberty'. He cannot too have been entirely unaffected by Raynal and the romantic idealism of a generation inspired by those 'general and exaggerated maxims which', according to Grimm, 'fired the enthusiasm of youths and made them run to the world's end and abandon father, mother and brother to come to the assistance of an Esquimau or a Hottentot.'

The first letter he wrote from American soil after landing at Charleston nearly two years after that dinner-party reflects the spirit of freedom and the spirit of adventure in a better world. 'I have always thought that a king was a creature at any rate use-

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less; from this distance *il fait encore une bien plus triste figure*. . . 'The manners of this country are simple, honest and worthy of a country in which everything speaks of the beautiful name of liberty.' Four days later he added: 'I want to speak of the country and its inhabitants. They are quite as amiable as my enthusiasm had imagined them. Simplicity of ways, a desire to oblige, love of country and liberty, a sweet equality are the rule with everyone here. The richest and the poorest are on the same level, and though immense fortunes exist in this country I defy anyone to find the slightest difference between their respective manners towards each other. What delights me most is that all the citizens are brothers. In America there are no poor, nothing one would even call peasants. All citizens have decent means and the same rights as the most powerful landowners in the land.' What Lafayette's boyish enthusiasm defied anyone to find, another Frenchman, Crèvecoeur, was describing in that very town of Charleston. Crèvecoeur had settled for some years as a farmer and was devoted enough to American institutions, so his testimony is not without weight: 'The three principal classes of inhabitants are lawyers, planters and merchants; this is the province which has afforded to the first the richest spoils, for nothing can exceed their wealth, their power and their influence! The whole mass of provincial liberty has become tributary to this society which far above priests and bishops disdains to be satisfied with the poor Mosaical portion of the tenth. While all is joy, festivity and happiness in Charleston, would you imagine that scenes of misery overspread in the country? Their ears by habit are become deaf, their hearts are hardened, they neither see, hear, nor feel for the woes of the poor slaves from whose labours their wealth proceeds.' He might have added too that where all manual labour was done by blacks a class of poor whites too expensive to be employed was living in distress from hand to mouth. But Lafayette had eyes only for the best. He did not notice that if his judgment was correct, his arrival in the name of liberty and the defence of the Rights of Humanity must have been rather unnecessary. When the colonists talked of liberty, they meant secession; Lafayette imagined that they meant also a liberty which they already enjoyed in a measure undreamed of by a Frenchman.

In fact their appeal to what were destined to be the principles of 1789 was an afterthought. In the first instance it had been to

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the principles of the British Constitution, whose protection they enjoyed. The writings of Voltaire and Rousseau were confined to the libraries of cities like New York and Boston. They were still curiosities. The French were disliked as Papists and sinners. The best-known French name was the infamous Dubarry. Far more natural then was the appeal to concrete British liberties, liberties which had themselves so strongly influenced French publicists. Lafayette never dreamed that his desire to revenge himself on England through her colonies involved a criticism of those very liberal principles which he glorified.

Under the protection of British political institutions the colonists had enjoyed a measure of self-government, of civic education, of self-expression which made the final emancipation possible. The principles of Locke had been ossified by the Whig oligarchy in the Motherland; in the colonies the only oligarchy to be overcome was the oligarchy of the godly among the Puritans. That all the people were godly was a fairly easy inference. Hence as far as the white settlers were concerned, the principles of Locke were taken to be living principles. As for the Indians and blacks – they were neither people nor godly in the strict sense, and so the British colonists treated them more callously than they had ever been treated by the Catholic French.

Nine-tenths of the population were farmers. Unlike the people of Europe, generally massed together in villages and dependent on a master, they were individuals. It was impossible to think of them or deal with them as ‘masses’, and in view of Lafayette’s crusade to ‘fight the last fight of liberty, a fight’, as he put it, ‘in which the consequence of defeat would mean no more shelter and no more hope for liberty’, Crèvecoeur’s remarkable description of the farmer’s life is worth quoting. Its rosy idealism will counter-balance the soul-saving of Lafayette’s crusade. ‘The early knowledge these farmers acquire, the early bargains they make, give them a great degree of sagacity. As farmers they will be litigious. . . . As citizens, it is easy to imagine that they will read the papers, enter into every political disquisition, freely blame and censure governors and others. As Christians, religion curbs them not in their opinions; the laws inspect our actions; our thoughts are left to God. . . . Happy man, didst thou know the extent of thy political felicity that thou mayest never forget that share of gratitude which thou owest to the mild government

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under which thou livest. Thou hast no church dues to pay derived from the most unaccountable donations, the pious offerings of rough ignorance and mistaken zeal; those ancient calamities are unknown to thy land. Thou mayest go to toil and exert the whole energy and circle of thy industry, and try the activity of human nature in all situations. Fear not that a clergyman whom thou never hearest shall demand a tenth part of thy labour. Thy land descended from its great Creator holds not its precious tenure either from a supercilious prince or a proud lord. Thou needest not dread any contradictions in thy government and the laws of thy land. Thou needest not fear those absurd ordinances alternately puzzling the understanding and reason of subjects, and crushing all natural industry. 'Tis all as free as the air thou breathest. Thy land, thy canton is not claimed by any neighbouring monarch who, anxious for new dominion, ravages devastates and despoils its peaceable inhabitants. Rest secure: no cruel militia laws shall be enacted to ravish from thee thy son, and to make him serve an unknown master in his wars; to enrich a foreign land with his carcass, unrelieved in his pains and agonies, unpitied in his death. The produce of thy loins shall not feed foreign wolves and vultures.'

Such were the oppressed whom this young nobleman was to instruct: 'Oppressors and oppressed', he wrote, 'both are to be instructed: that great work must arise or the rights of man perish!'

In one sense the revolution was over before he ever reached American shores. 'For practical purposes', write C. and M. Beard, 'the colonial assemblies in their domestic concerns were their own masters and their strength was increasing. The revolution had actually taken place: nothing but an explosion was necessary to announce it to the rest of the world. Such at least is the judgment of modern scholars who have worked in the dusty records of colonial times rather than in the memoirs of kings, courtiers and politicians.' When we consider the slowness of the movement towards political separation (Lafayette was to be immensely shocked at this: 'When I was in Europe I thought that here almost everyone was a lover of liberty and would rather die free than be a slave. You can conceive my astonishment when I saw that toryism was as openly professed as whiggism'), the quiet business-like atmosphere of a small Congress debating the

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declaration of independence as though it were a matter of daily routine, the jealousy of the States, the unparalleled difficulty of raising and maintaining an army, the refusal of the citizens to be taxed in their own defence and by their own delegates, we cannot doubt that it was a series of accidents, a series of blunders which ultimately decided the fate of the thirteen colonies. It is generally thought that the final break was inevitable, but as early as 1775 Vergennes, the French foreign minister, realized the stupidity of the British politicians: 'If the English are foolish enough to destroy their own force by their own force, to exhaust their finances and to engulf themselves in civil war, why should we interrupt them? Let us quietly watch them consume themselves in civil war.' The fact was that the British government was weak without being generous, clinging as weak authority always must to the letter of the law while admitting by its grudging concessions that its spirit had departed; it encouraged the disaffected and failed to encourage the loyal. Frightened of both extremes, the middle path which it tried to follow was a hopeless trial and error compromise and no firm alternative policy was suggested.

Nevertheless history tells us that a nation was being made. It is to Lafayette's credit that he stumbled through appearances on to the greatness of the cause. Furthermore he was not entirely wrong in mistaking secession for social liberty and equality. No sooner had the revolt got under way than the fight for independence was accompanied by a fight between the productive, working, immigrant, middle classes and those who stood for social privilege and property. The latter did not hesitate to speak of the former as 'mobsters', the 'dirty mob' and a verse like this:

'Down at night the bricklayer or carpenter lies
Next sun a Lycurgus, a Solon doth rise.'

is very reminiscent of the revolution which was to follow in France. A Tory might speak of that 'damned Boston', and Crèvecoeur of 'the citizens of Boston brawling about liberty without knowing what it was', but the brawlers, many of them immigrants and some brought over as indentured servants, that is, semi-slaves, were unconsciously reacting to the servitude and oppression which they or their fathers had experienced in foreign lands.

Lafayette was very confused in his mind about the difference between a political and social revolution, but he was to have

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plenty of opportunity of learning about both in America. After his lesson he could return to his country and speak 'the language which he had heard in Boston, the language which would some day be spoken throughout Europe'.¹

When he left the table which the Duke of Gloucester had honoured with his presence on that August night of 1775, the thought that he would be encouraging the colonists to ease the way for French military revenge on Britain was Lafayette's first consideration. He was never affected by the Anglomania which was prevalent in certain French circles and which considerably embarrassed the French government in its endeavour to increase the sympathy for America. It was partly a social fashion and partly the result of Montesquieu's admiration for British political institutions. Fashions did not trouble him and he had no time to study the subtleties of political theory. Liberty and release meant much the same to his boyish mind, his own release from the conventions of French life and America's release from English dominion. 'The destiny of France and her rival was to be decided. England saw that the loss of her colonies meant the loss of a commerce entirely to her advantage, a quarter of her subjects unceasingly increasing through rapid multiplication and emigration from all parts of Europe; in a word half and the best half of British territory. Should she become one with these colonies, it would be the end of the West Indies and of our possessions in Africa and Asia, of our maritime commerce, of our navy too, of our very political existence.' The patriot leapt to this fantastic conclusion, forgetting even to notice that the inhabitants of France's colonies might also like to enjoy the liberty which he was to help to secure for the British colonists. The French foreign office was more cautious. Vergennes, a serious and wise man with an intolerable habit of making bad jokes in order to lighten the conversation, had no desire for an expensive war and no belief in the value of colonies to the mother land. Whereas Lafayette for ten years could never forget the possibility of recovering Canada, Vergennes would have been horrified to find that Lafayette had conquered it. Before committing himself, Vergennes wanted to make quite sure of the side to which victory would ultimately come. Nor would he act without the help of Spain, and the idea

¹ Lafayette's Memoirs are for the most part written in the third person. Whenever a quotation is given without any reference in the notes or the name of any writer or speaker, it is taken from the Memoirs.

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of fighting for rebels against their king was even more distasteful to the Spanish Bourbons than to the French. Meanwhile secret financial aid and moral encouragement might be discreetly given and no danger incurred. He was all the more ready to do this because a very safe and easy means was suggested to him. Beaumarchais, the clever and light-hearted satirist, had been exiled for writing *Le Barbier de Séville*. In London, his passion for Mademoiselle d'Eon (in reality a man who had preferred to sacrifice his sex, rather than risk his life in a duel) suddenly gave way to a passion for the American cause. He was a difficult man to take seriously, but this time he was serious enough to risk, with Vergennes' connivance, his whole fortune in buying and dispatching supplies to the rebel troops. At the same time no attempt was made to stop a large number of French soldiers and adventurers from serving in the colonial forces. Some, it is true, volunteered to fight for Britain, but the majority, men seeking excitement, avoiding their creditors, or annoyed at lack of promotion at home, thought that their prospects would be brighter in a hastily constructed, amateur army.

With all this activity going on around him, Lafayette did not anticipate any trouble in achieving his object. His money, his relationship to the Noailles, known to be what we should call a Whig family, and his position in the army would surely open all doors to him. He soon discovered his mistake. These qualifications made him a conspicuous figure, and to allow him to depart to America to fight for the rebels might put a spoke in the well oiled wheels of diplomacy. His relations, whatever their political views, thought it a mad enterprise, a violent reaction to the repression and shyness of his youth, as in part it was. His young wife who had given birth to their first child a few months after the dinner to the Duke of Gloucester and who was to give birth to a second a fortnight after he had reached America was deeply distressed. She had not yet become used to the fact that he loved glory and adventure more than her.

For the moment his only encouragement came from his boyhood friends, Noailles and Ségur. It was while the latter was wondering at the enthusiasm of some of his set over the American rebels, when '*le savant jeu anglais, le wisk, se vit tout-à-coup remplacé dans tous les salons par un jeu non moins grave qu'on nomme le boston*', that, one morning, at seven o'clock, Lafayette burst into his room say-

ing: 'I'm off for America. Nobody knows it, but I love you too much to go without letting you share my secret.'

'And how, pray, are you going to arrange your embarkation?' the astonished Ségur replied.

'Listen,' and Lafayette told his story.

Wheels within wheels of diplomatic intrigue were at work. Vergennes at one time had practically arranged the Spanish alliance and there was a chance of immediate war. But the defeats of the rebel army, reported with much exaggeration from British sources, had upset his plans. The Comte de Broglie who had given the dinner to the Duke of Gloucester, the Baron de Kalb, an old German adventurer who had once been chosen by Choiseul to investigate the disaffection in the colonies, Beaumarchais and many others were hovering round the hesitating Vergennes and the bewildered American agent, Silas Deane. The maddest schemes were in the air, and how much the French understood the nature of the affair in America may be gathered from the fact that Broglie was seriously thinking of crossing the Atlantic to be a viceroy or *stadtholder* and generalissimo of the allied forces. Kalb was to go first and prepare the way. Beaumarchais was seeing to the money, clothes, arms and ammunition. Lafayette and some other young noblemen were to accompany Kalb. But there were hitches and the noblemen were formally forbidden to have anything more to do with the expedition.

Unsuccessful with his first lead, Lafayette decided to play trumps, in this case, money. He got round Deane, whose powers were none too well defined, as he found to his cost later, and persuaded him to give Kalb and himself the rank of Major-General in the armies of the United States (he was only nineteen but quickly 'compensating' his inferiority complex), taking care that the commission was dated before the arrival of the more impressive American envoy, Benjamin Franklin. He was wise to see to that for by this time Franklin was so overwhelmed with applications of the sort that on one occasion he wrote to a friend: 'If you would not help to drive me out of France, for God's sake, my dear friend, let this, your twenty-third application, be your last.' Franklin would have been more wary of letting Lafayette go and he would certainly have refused him a Major-General's commission, for it was the highest rank in the American army.

After having negotiated this business satisfactorily, the boy

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simply chartered a vessel at his own expense. Secrecy was all-important and he would not even tell his wife. To avert suspicion, he kept an old promise to visit his cousin, the French ambassador in London. The diplomat, unaware of anything, innocently presented the boy to George III who was as determined to smash the rebels as his guest was to smash him through those rebels, and took him to see General Clinton soon to command in America. Full of enthusiasm he danced, apparently with success, with his unsuspecting foes and wrote home describing 'the witchery of Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire.' But he still had a hold over himself and excused himself from a proposed visit to seaports where the troops were embarking – that would be dishonest.

At last, in March, 1777, a year and a half after the dinner at Metz, a start was made. But so much effort and expense deserved a flourish of trumpets. He wanted to hear the first cheers of his life. With extraordinary simplicity he wrote from Bordeaux to his father-in-law. Even now he failed to send a line to Adrienne. It is not quiet certain whether he had formally retired from the army. If not, he was a deserter. But apart from this, he should have guessed the effect of an implied defiance of the king and the government. Everybody was furious and a *lettre de cachet* ordering him into exile in Italy followed him to Spain. Old Kalb, who was not concerned with any of these affairs and who disapproved of the methods his young friend had adopted, was impatient at further delay. But Lafayette thought he had better go back to Bordeaux to settle the business. There he met a friend who assured him that there had been much less fuss than he imagined. Hearing nothing more, and interpreting silence – quite wrongly – as consent, he crossed the frontier and, himself a rebel against the authority of the king of France, left Europe on April 20th, 1777, on his way 'to be hanged with the poor rebels in America'.

The French Press was mystified. Some said he was disappointed at lack of active service at home; others suggested an unhappy love affair, but Adrienne, who according to Madame du Deffand 'felt dreadful about it', knew that it was not a woman, but only an intangible idea which had sufficed to send her husband across the seas without even saying 'Good-bye'. Lafayette was quite ready to make it up by long and frequent letters begging her forgiveness and assuring her of his eternal love for her. But only very rarely did he receive an answer.

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Strangely enough, Adrienne's mother who had stood out against the marriage understood him best and approved of his behaviour, consoling her daughter by telling her of the greatness of the cause he was furthering. But, after all, Washington who saw in Lafayette the first foreign friend given him by the cause of Independence was probably the best judge of his worth and of the disinterestedness of his action.

CHAPTER III

ON TRIAL

(1777-1779)

‘NEXT to General Washington, Lafayette ranks higher than any public man in the general estimation of Americans. About Jefferson and Madison, Monroe and Adams, there are still differences of opinion. . . . But Lafayette, like Washington, seems to unite all opinions. And, accordingly, the portrait of this venerable friend of Liberty is generally to be found accompanying that of his hardly more illustrious companion in arms and partner in glory.’ Such was the view of a traveller in America some forty years after the establishment of the United States. Hardly less illustrious than Washington himself! It is remarkable even among the flowery descriptions which the Lafayette legend has produced.

A few years later, another English writer in America wrote home: ‘In this room hangs one of the only two portraits to be seen in every inn, great and small: the one is General Washington holding in one hand a roll of paper, and the other extended in a position which indicates what the American would call a very long speech, at least that is my opinion of the matter, but perhaps this arises from my being thoroughly sickened of the eternal picture; the other, which is that which has at this moment raised my ire, is General Lafayette in a brown wig and great-coat, looking like a farmer on a cold day. . . . Whether or not Lafayette’s services made him worthy of all the *éclat* and rejoicing with which he was received on revisiting this country a few years ago, I know not . . . but when he came to America he was received everywhere as the Saviour of the Country.’

With the passing of years, the enthusiasm for a hero changed to the veneration of a saint whose cult was suitably revived during the Great War when the United States army crossed the Atlantic to save France, as the French army had crossed the Atlantic a century and a half earlier to make the United States. The modern judgment is more sober, but none the less remarkable: ‘Lafayette

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occupies a unique place in our history and our hearts. No foreigner and but few of our nation have been so dear to us.'

Why this cult of Lafayette? For when we examine the record of history, it must be admitted that he played a far greater part in the history of French revolutions and European political development than he did in the War of Independence and American history. In the long and authoritative account of the American Revolution in the *Cambridge Modern History*, the name of Lafayette is only once mentioned. He was worth more than that, but it is well to bear the fact in mind lest sense of proportion be lost when reading his name so often in these pages.

Within six months of his landing at Charleston on June 13th, 1777, (three months before his twentieth birthday) he had captured the hearts of the rebels, as the British and their friends called them. The romantic appeal of his adventure, his defiance of the royal authority, his youth, his nobility, his fervour, and not least his wealth put him head and shoulders above the mass of foreign adventurers who for one reason or another had offered their services to the United States. It was soon known, too, that he had become the special friend of Washington, the inaccessible. As time went on, he became in American eyes the symbol of the recognition of the new republic by an ancient nation still with claims to be the greatest in the world. Later, he was the living link between such political ideals as were shared by the American and French Revolutions. He came to the New World as a volunteer from an ancient monarchy, he came as he assured Washington 'to learn and not to teach', he returned to the Old World carrying a message formulated in 'the language of Boston'. When in a critical stage of the war he heard of the words used by the French cabinet informing the British that they had concluded a treaty with the United States, 'The United States having become independent *by their own Declaration*. . .', he remarked: 'That is a principle of national sovereignty which will be recalled to the French one day.' If he really did say that, he must have been remarkably shrewd, but whether the story is true or not, it is typical of his role in the two revolutions.

Compared with the difficulties which he had experienced in reaching the shores of America at all, his career in that land was smooth sailing indeed. Symbolical of trials past and of 'the star on which he counted', the ship that had carried him safely

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for fifty-five dull days was wrecked and lost outside the port of Charleston a few days after his landing.

We have already heard how well he approved of all he saw and did not see. '*Nous autres républicains*', as he calls himself in his first letter, have no need to examine republics too closely: the name is a sufficient warrant for the contents. But the real republicans to his surprise did not at once return his enthusiastic greeting by an enthusiastic welcome. Congress was many weeks' journey from Mr. Deane, their Paris agent, and many days from Charleston itself. Of Lafayette's special merits it knew nothing and it was too busy to inquire closely into his credentials. He had had to borrow money for himself and his companions; his sea journey had been but a comfortable prelude to a tramp of thirty-two days in 'fearful heat' through monotonous country. 'Do not forget a poor wretch who has paid heavily for having left you,' he wrote to Adrienne as the price was being paid.

At last they reached Philadelphia 'in a more pitiable condition even than when we first reached Charleston'. As they made their way through the strange town with its nine or ten straight streets, so different from anything at home, no bells rang out to greet the weary travellers. On the contrary, they were to all intents and purposes shown the door by a member of Congress acting for its President. Not unnaturally, everybody thought that here was another party of foreign adventurers hoping for promotion and money out of the war, and expecting to share in the task of educating the simple Americans in the art of war and government. A year earlier, the Americans had thought that it would be a fine thing to get professional advice, but the quality and character of the first professors made them change their mind. To this day few Europeans who land in New York can resist the temptation of trying to lend an experienced and cultured hand to their immature and uneducated hosts! How much greater must the temptation have been in July, 1777! Their hosts were as sick then of foreign soldiers as they ought to be to-day of British lecturers. However Lafayette struck a new note when he offered to serve as a volunteer and without pay. His case was more carefully examined, his large fortune was judiciously noted, his letters from Deane were read. The result was a compromise. The commission which Deane had given him was repudiated, but Congress

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resolved 'that in consideration of his illustrious family, his zeal and his connections, he have rank and commission of major-general in the army of the United States', but without pay and without command.

He was mortified, but he knew that he was extremely lucky. He had received far better treatment than his companions, than poor Kalb especially, a veteran grown grey in military service and a good soldier, but, alas, without Lafayette's cash. Despite his efforts on their behalf, they had to rest content with the thanks of Congress and the consolation of receiving return tickets free of charge. After a time they relented in Kalb's case, and the old soldier was destined to fight well and die gallantly in the cause of American freedom.

Lafayette's star, powerfully aided by his money, was still shining. His command could wait: star, money and a steady persistence in bringing his claims to the notice of the authorities would bring it him sooner or later. Whatever Congress might think, he soon knew that the great Washington liked him.

Nothing memorable took place at their first meeting. It was at a dinner party. Just before the company broke up, Washington went over to speak to the new volunteer in a general's uniform, wished him well, congratulated him on his zeal and self-sacrifice and invited him to look upon his rough headquarters as his home, albeit an unsuitable place for a French marquis accustomed to the life of a court. In his *Memoirs*, Lafayette recorded his recollections of that meeting with the man whom he regarded as the greatest of the century, 'because I deem him the most virtuous'. 'Though surrounded by officers and citizens, the majesty of his countenance and stature made it impossible not to recognize him. He was equally distinguishable by the kindness and nobility of his greeting. Invited to share his house, he looked upon it from that day as his own; and with such simplicity did the two friends unite, whose mutual attachment and confidence were cemented by sharing each other's greatest interests.'

Lafayette may have been rather vague about the principles of democratic government, but he had clearer ideas on the subject than the majority of individualistic Americans with whom he was in contact. He did not do all the learning. Few officers shared his unbounded respect for the authority of a Congress, obviously incompetent to direct a war. And this respect for the representatives

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of the States, and therefore of the people, he maintained despite severe temptations of which the first was the greatest. He had not been more than a few months in America when he heard that jealous and self-seeking men were plotting to deprive of the command of the army the man whom he had learned to worship as the embodiment of all his vague ideals. Washington had lost Philadelphia; Gates had captured a British general at Saratoga: Gates should therefore replace Washington. All military officers were suspect to a civilian, republican Congress; change them then as often as possible. Attempts were even made to win him over by offers of military responsibilities. The one consolation was that it was not an American, but an Irishman, who was the chief instigator. History would know of the affair as 'Conway's Cabal'.

Nothing came of the intrigue and Congress confirmed Washington's command. Lafayette began to feel that his presence was more than useful; it was becoming necessary. Only six months after reaching America, he felt justified in writing to Adrienne: 'My presence here is more necessary than you may imagine. If I were to go, many Frenchmen who are useful here would follow my example. General Washington would be really unhappy if I were to suggest going away. His confidence in me is greater than I dare admit because of my age; in his position he is likely to be surrounded by flatterers and hidden enemies; in me he finds a faithful friend to whom he can open his heart and from whom he will only learn the truth. Every day we have long conversations, or he writes at length to me and he likes to consult me on the most important matters.' In his Memoirs, he wrote: 'General Washington's trust was always unbounded. But for M. de Lafayette it was unlimited for only in his case did it spring from the heart.' That Lafayette was not exaggerating is shown from the letters of Gaston de Maussion, a French officer serving in America and no great friend of his illustrious fellow countryman: 'The affection of General Washington for Monsieur de Lafayette was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. No father could have shown himself more tender toward his son than the General toward Monsieur de Lafayette.'

The explanation was that few Americans shared the young officer's simple and uncritical enthusiasm for the cause of liberty, because few shared his inherited and inveterate hatred for the British and their 'proud tyranny', and still fewer thought in

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terms of abstract ideas like 'rights' and 'democracy'. As Duportail, one of the best French officers serving in the States and later to be a French minister of war, wrote: 'There is a hundred times more enthusiasm for the revolution in any Paris café than in the whole of the United States put together.' Washington understood Lafayette's singleness of purpose and, since it was not as common as it should have been, he was touched by it. As is so often the case, the foreigner wanted to be more American than the Americans. 'His costume', he wrote, 'his manners, everything was American. He wanted to be more simple, more frugal, more austere than anyone else. Brought up to soft living, he suddenly changed his way of life and his temperament adapted itself to privations and to fatigues.' And this was the easiest part of his task. To adapt himself to the American Army, to the intrigues among superior officers, to the want of discipline in the ranks, to the desire of all to return to their farms as soon as possible, to the disloyalty of many who served the cause with certificates of loyalty to George III in their pockets, in case they were needed, these things required courage and faith on the part of one who had crossed the seas with such pure intentions. Yet no trace of cynicism, no serious criticism marred his chivalrous idealism. It was not Lafayette, but an American who could say: 'We may talk of the enemy's cruelty as we will, but we have no greater cruelty to complain of than the management of the army.' He kept his eye fixed on that small, very small, band of heroic citizen-soldiers who endured the unbelievable hardships of service in the Continental army, soldiers who, whatever their defects, accomplished a military miracle in holding out against the regulars of Britain, a miracle in its way as great as the first victories of the French revolutionary army against the might of the allies fifteen years later.

And how great those hardships were! Pontgibaud, a French volunteer, arrived at Valley Forge that winter, and this is what he saw: 'I saw, grouped together or standing alone, a few militiamen, poorly clad, and for the most part without shoes. In passing through the camp I also noticed soldiers wearing cotton night-caps under their hats, and having for coats and great-coats, coarse woollen blankets, exactly like those provided for the patients in our French hospitals. I learned after that they were the officers and the generals.' Baron Steuben who had come over to train

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this rabble into an army has left the classic account of what he found: 'The eternal ebb and flow of men engaged for three, six and nine months who went and came every day, rendered it impossible to have either a regiment or a company complete. Not only the clothes but the arms were carried off by those who had completed their term of service. The arms at Valley Forge were in a horrible condition, covered with rust, half of them without bayonets, many from which a single shot could not be fired. The description of the dress is easily given. The men were literally naked, some of them in the fullest extent of the word. I saw at Valley Forge officers mounting guard in a sort of dressing-gown made of an old blanket or woollen bedcover. With regard to their military discipline, I can safely say that no such thing existed.'

It was no wonder that Washington came to have such a regard for a young French marquis and colonel who could believe that the sun of liberty was shining somewhere behind that mist.

When Lafayette joined that army as a volunteering Major-General the rebel cause seemed to be desperate. The River Hudson cut the thirteen states in half. By commanding it, the British could hope to divide the Northern from the Southern states. In both they had many allies, but the Southern states they took to be almost entirely loyalist. At this time, New York at the mouth of the Hudson was in their hands, and a British army under Burgoyne was making its way down the Hudson from the north. Howe's army at New York was expected to march up the Hudson and join Burgoyne. Such a junction must have been fatal to America. Instead of doing this, Howe with his eyes on the capital, Philadelphia, and thinking of the loyalists with whom Pennsylvania and Maryland were said to be filled, sailed south.

Washington's chief anxiety, therefore, was the protection of the capital. At last news came that the British had anchored in Chesapeake Bay, the northernmost point of which is only fifty miles south of Philadelphia.

It was in the attempt to check the advance of Howe's army towards the capital that the first battle in which Lafayette ever fought took place. His star was not shining. Not only was his side routed, but he was wounded. Howe who was no fool at fighting a battle, on approaching the Brandywine, a small river which lay across his path and protected the Americans, divided his army into two parts. One attacked directly; the other was sent

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up the river to cross it higher up and come down the opposite bank on to the flank of the enemy. Lafayette obtained leave to fight on the threatened wing. He did wonders to check the rout, despite a wound in his leg. But only the reluctance of the lackadaisical Howe to follow up his victory saved the Americans from complete disaster. According to Lafayette who was in no position to know, the British loss was greater than the American, but in fact the former had only some five hundred casualties, while the latter suffered more than a thousand.

The defeat at Brandywine entailed the loss of Philadelphia, a grave blow. For some weeks, Lafayette was out of it, nursing his wound in a Moravian settlement. While in this peaceful hermitage, he wrote a pathetic letter to Adrienne: 'Be, I pray you, my dear heart, a chatterer in telling my news to Henriette (his baby daughter); my poor Henriette, kiss her a thousand times for me, speak to her of me, but do not tell her all the ill which I deserve. I shall be punished enough when I am not recognized by her on my return. That will be the penance imposed on me by her. Has she yet a sister or a brother?' But little Henriette lay dying, though for some mysterious reason he did not hear of it until seven months after the event.

One of the points that appealed especially to the Americans in the gallant French officer was his heroic self-sacrifice in leaving a devoted young wife and family at home for their sake, and his biographers have generally followed that tradition. His letters are indeed written in the language of tender love. They are in fact the only evidence of his devotion. Adrienne appears to have answered them but very rarely. It seems certain that she was deeply wounded by his behaviour. He was always begging for forgiveness, but she was not impressed by expressions of love which increased in intensity with the increase of distance between them. She was ill too; her first child had died; for long periods she lacked news about her wandering husband. At one moment it was reported that he was killed; at another the *Amsterdam Gazette* reported that at the head of two thousand five hundred men he had routed two thousand Englishmen and taken six hundred prisoners. Marriage under such circumstances could not have brought much happiness to this girl still in her teens. He on his side was also wondering about love. He noticed how different the pre-arranged Parisian matches were from the love affairs of the

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simple colonials: 'It is to the daughter that love is mentioned; their coquetterie is as amiable as it is respectable. In the chance marriages arranged in Paris, the wife's fidelity is often repugnant to nature, to reason, one might almost say to the principles of justice. In America it is one's sweetheart one marries.' Was he thinking of his own case? As things were to turn out, he had no reason to apply these reflections to it, but it was through virtue and virtuous imagination rather than through love that the special difficulties of the early years of their married life were weathered without tragedy. And Adrienne was a saint.

In a few weeks and before he could wear a boot, he was back in camp. He kept on asking Washington for the command of a division, but Washington's orders from Congress being definite, he could do nothing. In fact Lafayette's insistence puzzled him and he imagined that there had been a misunderstanding somewhere. He was glad therefore to take advantage of a clever piece of work on Lafayette's part to recommend him as commander of the Virginia division. It was only a small affair at Gloucester, a few miles south of Philadelphia, and the commmader's report describes it sufficiently: 'The marquis with about four hundred militia and the rifle corps attacked the enemy's picket last evening, killed about twenty and wounded as many more, and took about twenty prisoners. The marquis is charmed with the spirited behaviour of the militia and rifle corps. They drove the enemy about a mile and kept ground until dark.' This report suggests how keen they all were on impressing the influential Frenchman, and Congress agreed to Washington's request. It was the first official recognition by the United States of his services. His period of probation, such as it was, was over.

This good news was followed by still better. Burgoyne had been captured at Saratoga. The unimaginable had taken place: a British army had been caught. If one can talk of a respite in a war in which one of the sides could have swept the other away on any day, if only it would take the trouble, it was a respite. More important, it must decide the French to turn secret aid and encouragement into open alliance. Lafayette was already talking of swimming across the Atlantic to join the French army which would come to the aid of America. The British who even before the disaster had let it be known that they could not end the campaign without ten thousand more troops were consoling them-

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selves by getting the best that life could offer in the gay city of Philadelphia. When the winter of 1777-1778 set in, they gave up fighting to enjoy the company of the pretty daughters of the well-to-do citizens who were having the social season of their lives. André, destined to die so soon and so tragically, was the heart and soul of all the fun and especially popular with the Shippen girls, one of whom was to marry General Arnold, the unconscious cause of André's fate. General Howe was resting in comfort 'all this time a'snoring'. A few miles away, the Continental army, in the condition already described, lay freezing in Valley Forge. The contrast was enough to ennoble still further the cause of liberty in Lafayette's stern estimation.

To a Frenchman, even one anxious to be a good American, America meant Canada, not long since the queen of the French colonies, and, as such, a perpetual danger to the thirteen British colonies. Undeterred by Vergennes' theory that colonies were more bother than they were worth, its reconquest was never far from Lafayette's thoughts.

The 'Conway Cabal' was now at work. It would be a good idea to detach Lafayette from Washington and by attacking Canada promote the French alliance. Congress took the hint and authorized an expedition under Lafayette's command. He did not want to refuse, but he did not wish to take any step which might be construed as a criticism of Washington. He solved the dilemma by accepting but only on condition that Washington was to be considered as his commander-in-chief, and he drove home his point by making some of the Cabal drink to the health of his hero. This they did, he tells us, 'blushing'. But they had the last word. When he arrived in Albany to take command, he found that all their promises had been idle: no preparations had been made; there was no army awaiting him, no arms, no equipment.

He was furious. The proposed expedition had been highly flattering to him; he had dreamed of heroic deeds resounding throughout the world and making him the idol of Paris; he had written to his friends in this spirit. Everybody would say that he had made a fool of himself. To a man as avid of popular applause as Lafayette there is no greater misery than to watch that applause changing into mocking laughter. Such men generally know that the gap between the two is never very great. He unburdened his soul to Washington: 'My being appointed to

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the command of the expedition is known throughout the Continent, it will soon be known in Europe, as I have been desired by members of Congress to write to my friends. My being at the head of the army, people will be in great expectations. What shall I answer? I am afraid it will reflect on my reputation, and I shall be laughed at. My fears on that subject are so strong that I would volunteer to serve as a mere soldier unless Congress offers the means of mending this ugly business by some glorious operation. It is a distressing, ridiculous, foolish and indeed nameless situation.' It was so, and one can hardly blame him for imagining that, like the cricketer who butters an easy catch, everybody had nothing better to do than meditate on this misfortune. Nor must we forget that he was at the age when the ordinary young man is hoping to be chosen to play for his University.

But the youthfulness which saved him from brooding over the insult nearly sacrificed him and some six hundred men to the British. He was sent soon after his return to Valley Forge to reconnoitre near Philadelphia. He pushed ahead lightheartedly, was, according to some, deceived by a female spy, and soon found himself surrounded. But the British could not reckon with his star. He managed to extricate himself. According to de Maussion, Washington was so fond of him that instead of blaming him for impetuosity, he congratulated him on his skill in extricating himself. 'And here is where the qualities of Monsieur de Lafayette, his real qualities, come to the front. He showed himself grateful. How few men can do that!' De Maussion does not say whether he was grateful for the lesson or for the hushing up of the affair.

The Canadian wild goose chase and the Philadelphian escapade were soon forgotten in the wonderful news of the French alliance. It was the turning point of the war, though very far from the end of the danger of defeat. Already the Colonists had benefited more than they knew from France's secret (and unfair) aid. Franklin was clear about this: 'To us France privately professes a real friendship, wishes success to our cause, winks at the supplies we obtain here as much as it can without giving open grounds for complaint to England, privately affords us very essential aids and goes on preparing for war.' But an open alliance meant the co-operation of the French fleet, the possibility of the command of the sea, the cutting off of the British forces. Above all it changed

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the rebels into the respectable allies of their 'most Christian' and 'Catholic' majesties of France and Spain.

Lafayette had written to Maurepas, the French Prime Minister, to tell him that his presence in America had helped the understanding between the two countries, but with the actual negotiations he had had nothing whatever to do. In fact the alliance put him in an awkward position. He was a French officer who had disobeyed his king and at the same time an American major-general. What was he to do?

His youthful hastiness had given him two nationalities which, as will be seen, had disadvantages as well as advantages. Later on, in the French Revolution and after, his attempt to steer a middle course between the extremists of the Right (the aristocratic party) and the extremists of the Left (the Jacobins) gave an obvious handle to all his enemies. He was deemed insincere. He was called *Motier l'un et Motier l'autre* (Motier being his family name), because the story went round that, not being able to understand the language of an Italian, he asked him his nationality, French or Italian? And the man had answered: '*Moitié l'un et moitié l'autre.*' The *Motier l'un et Motier l'autre* of the Revolution was unfair criticism, but the *Motier français et Motier américain* of his early career was his own responsibility and he gloried in it. Which of the two prevailed depended on his mood. In six months he had become the perfect American. At the news of the French alliance, he became the complete Frenchman again. 'Whatever France does is right,' he wrote at a moment of friction between the allies, thus sharing the simple philosophy of all good Frenchmen, and indeed of all good nationalists, in this matter. He would have liked to serve under his cousin, the Comte d'Estaing, whose fleet was being sent across the Atlantic. He wrote to him: 'I should tell you how embarrassing is my position here; for, however agreeable it is for me to be in America, I have always thought, and I have always said it, and written it here, that I should rather be a soldier serving under the French flag than be a general officer anywhere else. My purpose is to leave at once for the Islands, for Europe, even for India, if in any one of these three portions of the globe we are going to make war.' He was quite sincere, but he saw to it that he remained in the more glorious position of a major-general in the Continental army.

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The French alliance had changed the British plans. It was thought best to evacuate Philadelphia in case of a blockade by the French fleet and retreat by land to New York. It was a difficult and dangerous movement, but Clinton, Howe's successor, out-mancœuvred Washington. Only one battle was fought. Lafayette was appointed to the command of six thousand men who were to attack the flank of Clinton's army near Monmouth on June 28th. General Lee claimed the command on account of seniority and Lafayette graciously acquiesced. Whether through treachery or stupidity, Lee failed to attack, and Washington coming up with the main army found that the advance guard was retiring. He lost his temper and ordered Lee to the rear. A ding-dong fight between the two main armies continued until nightfall. Clinton continued his march, while Washington and Lafayette lay together on that hot summer night under the same coat, talking of Lee's treason.

Three days later, the French fleet carrying four thousand troops, reached the mouth of the Delaware, near Philadelphia. They had come too late to block the British. D'Estaing therefore decided to attack New York, but his ships were too large to enter the harbour. There was nothing left to do but to sail north to Rhode Island and deal with a second British force under Pigot stationed at Newport. It was a dangerous game, for the British fleet were at sea. Washington was again eager to put Lafayette in command of an important division, but again he was frustrated. It was thought better to put half the detachment sent to reinforce Sullivan, who was in command at Rhode Island, under Greene, a native of that state. Lafayette had to be content with sharing his command.

The French fleet arrived on July 29th. Then the troubles began. We must remember how excited the Americans were at the thought of the coming of the French. Apart from the fact that they expected early victory, they imagined that an army of chivalrous, courteous and enthusiastic Lafayettes would adorn their matter-of-fact land and people. Congress had spent a fortnight debating about the correct etiquette on the occasion of the reception of the French minister. Washington was asking Lafayette for a list of the most important gentlemen who would serve in the French army. But the luck of war and mismanagement spoiled the whole effect.

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D'Estaing with many sick on board and short of provisions feared that any delay would enable the British to strengthen their position and give time for the British fleet to arrive before anything had been accomplished. He did not understand the difficulties of dealing with the American militia. Sullivan was short of men, and those he had were according to the French more like Tartar hordes than regular troops. To make matters worse, Lafayette aroused the jealousy of the other American generals by persuading d'Estaing to recommend him as commander of a joint Franco-American force. He was always ready to suggest the obvious solution to all difficulties between the allies: put him in command of both. But he still had all his lessons about human nature to learn; it was meaner than he knew. Neither wanted him.

At last a plan of attack was decided upon. The French landed only to discover that the Americans had not kept to their part of the bargain. As tempers were rising, all disputes were put an end to by the appearance of the British fleet at sea. D'Estaing hastily sailed away, and only a violent storm prevented an engagement. His fleet was badly damaged. When he returned as best he could to Newport, he informed the Americans that he must sail to Boston in order to refit. Then indeed the fat was in the fire. The smouldering jealousies and misunderstandings burst out. Lafayette was asked to persuade d'Estaing to change his mind. The American commander sent a rude note to d'Estaing who refused to reply, stating that such language imposed on him 'the painful, but necessary law of profound silence.'

It is not hard to imagine Lafayette's impotent rage. He was not yet twenty-one. His country had been insulted, but insulted by his friends, those in whom he had put his faith, for whom he had given up everything. He wrote to d'Estaing: 'Can you believe it? I was summoned to a council where a protest was made against a measure taken by a French fleet! I told these gentlemen that my native land was dearer to me than America, that whatever France does is always right, that M. le comte d'Estaing is my friend, and that I am ready to support these opinions by my sword, which has never been put to better use.' There was talk of the Bostonians - Lafayette's much admired Bostonians - closing their port to the French fleet, and later there was a serious riot between the French and the American sailors in that port.

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Sullivan stated in the order of the day that he hoped: 'the event will prove America able to procure with her own arms that which her allies refused to assist her in obtaining,' words which so infuriated the young Frenchman that he came near to having a duel with his commander. He was still in this mood, nursing his wounded national pride, when the English commissioner, Lord Carlisle, in his efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the English and the Americans, accused the French of a 'perfidy too universally acknowledged to require any new proof'. This was more than he could bear. He told d'Estaing that he would kill Carlisle in a duel in full view of the two armies. Carlisle laughed and pointed out that 'these national disputes will be best decided when Admiral Byron and the Count d'Estaing meet each other'.

It was all very schoolboyish, but he acted like a man and not a schoolboy when he swallowed his resentment and undertook a journey to Boston on behalf of Sullivan, in order to ask the Massachusetts authorities to do all they could to help d'Estaing. He returned from this mission in the nick of time to be the last man on the island when the Americans evacuated it.

But he could not forget so soon. His first impulse was to obtain leave to return to France. The renewal of contact with his countrymen, reports of French victories at sea, the possibility of a French invasion of England, and what remained of his anger at the American treatment of his friends which in the end meant that the vaunted alliance had accomplished nothing, made him homesick. It was even said in France that he had written letters expressing profound disgust with the Americans and admitting his mistake in going out to help them. In the heat of the moment he may well have done so.

Rumours of a Canadian expedition made him change his mind. Though he wrote a particularly affectionate letter to Adrienne, assuring her that they would not be separated for much longer, that he loved the new baby whom he had never seen '*à la folie*', that he would soon be asking for pardon at her knees, he was doing his best to forward the Canadian scheme. At first it was taken seriously, but Washington realizing the weakness of the American forces and fearing the political consequences of a conquest of Canada was entirely against it. He even went so far as to suggest that Lafayette might be acting under secret instructions from Versailles. It is possible that at this time

his regard for his young friend was a trifle strained. While they shared their devotion to duty and their love of virtue, while Washington could admire the spirit and military talent of the volunteer who had sacrificed so much for America and his ideals, his balanced and reserved character could have had little in common with the flow of fantastic projects, the long and effusive letters, the ebullient and untempered national pride which had predominated in Lafayette's nature since the arrival of the French fleet. However that may be, he strongly advised him to go home, and – to prevent any gossip about the reasons for his leaving so soon after the misunderstandings at Rhode Island – he urged him to obtain formal leave of absence from Congress. As for the Canadian project, he might as well put it entirely out of his mind. 'If you are hesitating for fear of missing an expedition to Canada,' he wrote, 'my friendship for you makes me warn you that I do not believe the thing likely enough to take place for you to change your plans.'

Congress in one of the many resolutions with which it was pleased to punctuate the career of the rich Frenchman decreed 'that the Marquis de Lafayette, major-general in the service of the United States, have leave to go to France, and that he return at such time as shall be most convenient to him; that the President write a letter to the Marquis returning him the thanks of Congress for that disinterested zeal which led him to America . . . ; that the minister plenipotentiary of the United States at the court of Versailles be directed to cause an elegant sword, with proper devices, to be made and presented in the name of the United States to the Marquis.'

Gérard, the French minister in the States, gave it as his opinion that Lafayette had become 'the idol of Congress, of the army, of the people of America'. It was the opinion of one Frenchman about another, but if it was an exaggeration, it was an exaggerated way of stating what was essentially true. His friendship with Washington, his tireless enthusiasm and energy, his kindness, the money he spent, his politeness and the easy ways of a gentleman who had nothing of the snob about him, even his mistakes and rashness, the natural attributes of youth, had taken America by storm. To the soldiers, he was universally known as 'the Marquis' or 'the soldier's friend.' From this time, we are told, the name of 'Marquis' which had been associated with

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frivolity and lightness became symbolic of seriousness and determination.

During those eighteen months, Lafayette had made trial of his own ability and character, and America had made trial of his services on her behalf. Neither had reason to be dissatisfied with the results. If he had not played a part of the first importance, it was through no fault of his own. No one could find fault with what he had been allowed to do. On at least two occasions, the Conway Cabal and the quarrels in Rhode Island, he had been severely tried. On the first occasion he had behaved like a man; on the second like a boy. No one could complain.

He had but one more adventure before he embarked, an adventure prosaic enough, but which nearly put an end to his career. He caught a bad cold which developed into a '*maladie inflammatoire*.' The strain of the past months in an unfamiliar climate had been terrific. Despite his success he was disappointed, especially disappointed with the affairs at Rhode Island. The sudden change from the privations and hard work of camp life to banquets and celebrations in his honour upset his constitution, and he seemed unable to fight against the illness. To everybody's consternation, the life of the 'Marquis' was despaired of. No one was more anxious than Washington, who often came to obtain the latest news about the invalid. However, he recovered to live another fifty-seven years.

Fortified by the wine of Madeira, he travelled with his doctor to Boston and prepared to embark in the *Alliance*, a frigate put at his disposal by the United States. He had not hesitated to write to Congress asking it to be ready to exchange one of the generals taken at Saratoga for him, should he be captured by the British. Having in this way satisfactorily valued his own importance to the cause of independence, he embarked. His last concern was the chance of being recalled to take part in the Canadian expedition, should it come off. On board, he still looked out for a messenger from Congress. But no one came, and his last note to Washington reads: 'Nothing from Philadelphia; nothing from headquarters. So that everybody, as well as myself, is of the opinion that I should wait no longer. I hope I am right and I hope that I shall hear from you soon. Adieu, my dear and for ever beloved friend, adieu!'

A threat of mutiny on the ship was the most exciting incident

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on the voyage. But according to Pontgibaud, who travelled with him, what disturbed him most was plain sea-sickness. During a particularly bad storm he was heard to murmur: '*Diable!* I have done well certainly. At my time of life, barely twenty years of age, with my name, rank and fortune, and after having married Mlle. de Noailles, to leave everything and serve as a breakfast for codfish!'

CHAPTER IV

THE SAVIOUR OF THE COUNTRY

(1779 - 1781)

I

IT was not on American soil, but during this 'flying visit to France' which in fact lasted over a year that Lafayette did most to earn the title 'The Saviour of the Country' which Mrs. Basil Hall sarcastically gave him. John Adams, who thought that only the French prevented the English on both sides of the Atlantic from dominating the world and who could never trust a Frenchman, not even Lafayette, did him much less than justice when he wrote towards the end of this visit: 'The Marquis de Lafayette is going to Boston on a frigate and surely he wants no recommendation of mine; his own merit and fame are enough. He has been the same friend to us here that he was in America. He has been very assiduous to procure clothes and arms for our army and to promote our interest in every way within his circle.'

The truth is that his reputation enabled him to do more than any other man at this period to maintain the Franco-American alliance and to make it bear fruit. In the words of one student, 'he cemented the French alliance'.

The French were beginning to tire of this long drawn-out conflict. D'Estaing's expedition had failed, and failed, according to the French, because of the behaviour of the Americans. More accurate information about the political games and intrigues of the legislators of the new republic was being obtained. The austere virtues of the Romans with whom they were compared were conspicuous by their absence. Reports of the difficulty of recruiting men to defend the cause of liberty and independence, of the lack of determination to win through, of the constant shortage of money for public purposes in a rich country, of the debasement of the currency and the weakness of their credit were increasing. To these justifiable grounds for criticism were added

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more or less inaccurate stories spread by the disappointed volunteers who had returned or been sent home. The following report is typical: 'The Americans have been used to idleness, to drinking tea and rum, to smoking, etc.; they will not hold out in such a war. It will not do to think of sending a French force to act in concert with them. They have a violent antipathy to the French; they would sooner go over to the British army than fight with the French.' They were singing in the streets of Paris of the American people:

*'Il est sobre par indolence
Et la liberté qu'il encense
N'est que la haine du devoir.'*

The unexpected and triumphant return of the young, romantic, exiled Lafayette came in time to distract the volatile Parisians from these unpleasant considerations. All kinds of rumours about his prowess had been spread abroad. He was the crusader back from the Holy Land – and if the Holy Land was not quite as holy as it ought to be, that was, after all, quite consistent with the story of the Crusades. The English spread the rumour, not entirely without grounds, that he had come back disgusted with the Americans. Paris did not listen. Instead it decided that he had come, fresh from victory, to join in the invasion of England.

*'Et, croyant son pays menacé de la guerre
C'est le patriotisme et le plus pur honneur
Qui rend à son prince un brave serviteur'*

they sang on the stage of the *Comédie Française*. All the most beautiful ladies in Paris tried to kiss him. The king, anxious to be like his subjects, contented himself with a formal punishment for his disobedience, ordering him to keep quiet for a few days in the Noailles house. The queen obtained for him the command of the crack regiment of the Royal Dragoons, though, needless to say, he had to pay £8,000 for the honour. In his own words, 'he left France a rebel and a fugitive, he returned a favourite and triumphant'. Only Choiseul, Louis XV's old minister, refused to be impressed. '*Gilles le Grand*' he called him, after Gilles, the fool's part on the French stage: 'The great Clown,' as we might translate it. He did not hear it then, but it would stick and be quoted twelve years later.

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His very presence in France, because of, or in spite of, anything he might do could not fail to help the cause. Much in fact which he did was foolish and ill-considered. The fact that France's financial situation was none too strong, that responsible statesmen like Turgot and Necker understood that no victory could compensate for the expenses of war, did not occur to him. He had two objects, and all considerations gave way to them.

The first was to send as effective succour as possible to America, 'our cause,' as he described it in a letter to Franklin. The second 'to deflate England's fantastic swollen appearance.'

One busy interfering scheme followed another in rapid succession. First, the Canadian scheme which he could not get out of his mind. But he could find no one to agree with him about it. Congress, he knew, feared French influence in Canada. Now he discovered that the French thought it wiser to free the thirteen states before adding a fourteenth to them. If not Canada, then Ireland, fruitful hunting ground for all who equate liberty with freedom from British dominion. He wrote dogmatically to Washington: 'Ireland is very tired of British tyranny. I tell you in confidence that the plan of my heart would be to make her free and independent like America; I have already been secretly negotiating about the matter.' To his surprise he discovered that the volunteers were arming not against England but in Ireland's defence against France, the common enemy. As Bancroft who had been sent to investigate said: 'The fruit is not ripe.' Next an expedition with the romantic Paul Jones, the founder of the American fleet, as he has been called. Paul Jones whom Lafayette had met shortly after his landing in America was to sail round Britain with a force under Lafayette ready to attack important sea-towns and levy contributions from the frightened citizens to help the American cause. Paul Jones went round Britain and covered himself with glory, but Lafayette by that time was occupied with other and bigger schemes. Meanwhile why not persuade the king of Sweden to lend America a few ships? The Swedish Ambassador was courteous and promised to write to Gustavus III. Lafayette did not know that Gustavus had said on hearing that the French had allied themselves with the rebels: 'I cannot admit that it can be right to support rebels against their king; the example which endeavours to upset all the restrictions of power will be only too readily followed'. If not Sweden,

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then Holland. Holland was as close with her money as Sweden with her ships.

There was nothing for it; he had to settle down to the main business of invading England and sending an expeditionary force to America.

He had been sent to perform garrison duty away from Paris and he was in deadly fear of being overlooked and forgotten. His brave reception had already been forgotten. It was four months old, and there was no modern press to keep heroes in the limelight. He was showering letters on Vergennes who had treated him with much sympathy and seemed to feel something of the charm which had captured Washington. Just as in his letters to America, he was the complete American: 'I desire nothing so passionately as to return to that country whose citizen I consider myself to be,' so to Vergennes, he was the complete Frenchman: 'Remember that I adore my native country, that the thought of seeing England humiliated and crushed makes me tremble with delight.'

Vergennes was a busy man, and not sorry that he only had to glance at letters and not be arguing with the persistent caller. The invasion of England had long been planned. It is indeed as obvious in idea as it has proved impracticable in execution. The Comte de Vaux had command of the expedition that was to take the Isle of Wight. What Vergennes thought of the following words in a letter he received from Lafayette, serving under Vaux, we can only imagine: 'M. de Vaux appears not to have lost the habit of discipline with which I am delighted. For, having been a major-general also in my youth, I have always found that without discipline it is exceedingly difficult to transport a large body of troops: and I consider it particularly necessary in the young army and new expedition which has been entrusted to M. de Vaux.' He was probably making a joke, but it is the joke of a person who is not far from swollen-headedness. The inferiority complex had been over-compensated, and a dressing-down or two would help to prevent the formation of an intolerable attitude of superiority and arrogance. The Fleet never appeared and the expedition had to be called off. The disappointed Lafayette was free to concentrate on the plan of sending an army to the States. He was to be successful, but not without a taste of that dressing-down which would do him no harm.

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To send an army to the States was a questionable policy. It would be expensive, and the recognition by England of America's independence was not the primary object of the war from France's point of view. Moreover there were serious doubts about the reception of such an army in the States. Franklin was sceptical. A repetition of the Rhode Island affair would do more harm than good. Lafayette came forward with his usual solution to this problem. Make him commander-in-chief and all would be well. 'I cannot deny,' he wrote, 'that the Americans are a little difficult to get on with, especially with French natures. But if I were charged with this business, I would stake my head that I could avoid all the difficulties and cause our troops to be perfectly received.' Though he outlined two plans, one if he were put in charge, the other if someone else were, he wrote to Franklin asking him to persuade Vergennes to obtain the command for him. He stated clearly in his memorandum that it would be best if he were selected. At the time it was far more important to dispatch a strong French fleet which might hold even for a short time the command of the sea, but even Lafayette could hardly hope to be made into an admiral, so he concentrated on the army. He had about as much chance of being made its general as he had of being made an admiral. It is doubtful whether his claims were ever considered. He was too young (twenty-two) and his knowledge of America would not weigh against the claims of the many experienced but unemployed generals left over from the Seven Years' War. Furthermore many young officers were bitterly jealous of his success. It is known that when the army heard that it was to co-operate with the Americans, the majority of the officers vowed that they would never serve under the young upstart. Theoretically he was right, as he was going to be throughout his life. In an imperfect world he was wrong. It was a good lesson, but he never learned it. In politics, at any rate, time has shown that his strength lay in his inability to learn it, for his insistence on theory in the end turned theory into practice.

Rochambeau, an adequate and typical old soldier, was appointed. Lafayette whose insistence had forced the decision to send an army at all had to rest content with being made the accredited representative of the French government with the duty of sailing to America at once in order to announce the arrival of an expeditionary force of six thousand men.

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He was glad to think that his work, though unrewarded, must soon bring about victory. But it was not to be. The French fleet was the decisive factor and with that he had had nothing to do. At any rate he could feel that John Adams's cold praise was less accurate than Washington's warm message: 'Your precocious zeal in the cause of liberty, your singular devotion to the young world, your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America, but since your return to France, to serve the United States, your attentive solicitude for the Americans, your close and unchanging friendship for me, have changed those first impressions of esteem and attachment which I had felt for you into a gratitude and love so perfect that neither time nor absence can alter them.'

It need hardly be said that during all those months of restless activity, he had not found much time to fulfil the promises which he had made to Adrienne when writing from America. During the days when he had, at the king's orders, to remain in the Noailles house, he was able to fulfil the promise of Valley Forge, 'once we are re-united, no one will be able to separate us or stop us enjoying together, and the one by means of the other, the sweetness of love and the most delightful, the most tranquil happiness'. But it was only a few days. Adrienne, however, was all forgiveness. She was thrilled at being the wife of the hero of the day. From this time onward there is something altogether admirable and beautiful in her regard for and understanding of a husband from whom she differed so completely in religion, in taste, in manner. He, eternally busied with this scheme and that, tirelessly writing long and dreary letters to great and small, ready, as he told Franklin, to return to America at a moment's notice, pouring forth his views about any and every question of the day; she, preoccupied about her domestic affairs, her devotions, the first communion of her sister. 'The first communion of Pauline was one of those really consoling occasions,' she wrote in her life of her mother, 'she approached Jesus Christ with a fervour proportioned to the liveliness of her faith, and surely He heard the vow of her heart which she has since so often expressed in the words of the Psalmist: "All the desires of my heart are directed to the keeping of Thy commandments"' – yet at the same time endeavouring to sympathize with this strange, idealistic, agnostic husband whom God had

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given her, agreeing to call her son, the heir of many barons of Auvergne, by the barbarous name of 'Georges Washington,' learning to become 'a good American' herself, foreseeing, perhaps, the future difficulties and dangers to which his spirited, unusual views would lead them both.

It is doubtful whether Lafayette ever knew the meaning of real love; it is certain that she grew to be devoted to him. Their daughter, Virginie, about whose name Franklin wrote: 'I think you do well to begin with the most ancient State. And as we cannot have too many of so good a race I hope you and Mme. de Lafayette will go through the thirteen,' remembered how her mother told her that during this period 'her impressions had become deeper and stronger: a more intimate, serious, confidence had united her riper mind to the opinions and plans of her father.' She also related how Adrienne restrained her feelings for him in his presence for fear of making a nuisance of herself. However, so busy was he during this year that we have little record of their domestic life. It was in truth a flying visit, though the flight was rather different and lasted longer than he had expected.

In March, 1780, instead of dodging a *lettre de cachet*, he went to bid good-bye to the king, dressed in his uniform of an American major-general. As France's official representative, he boarded the *Hermione*. His mission was not easy, for so doubtful were the government and Franklin of the wisdom of sending the detachment that it was kept a secret even from Congress. They feared lest the garrulity of some of its members should cause the news to leak out to England. Lafayette was not anxious, but Vergennes was. 'Perhaps it is as well,' the latter wrote a month later, 'that two regiments are left behind, for we shall see how the first troops are received, and whether more are wanted. For you remember that I asked only for four thousand, because I feared that a greater number would disturb and alarm the United States.'

I I

During Lafayette's long absence, the situation in America had not materially altered. Clinton, the British commander, was in a difficult position. Instructions from the incompetent

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Secretary-at-War, Germain, changed with every dispatch. One major operation had been attempted. He had sailed south and taken Charleston in May, 1780, leaving Cornwallis to undertake the recovery of the Carolinas, an enterprise which did so much to weaken the British forces without obtaining any corresponding advantages. Arnold, an American general dazzled by hopes of promotion in the British service and perhaps by thoughts of a peerage, was contemplating putting an end to the war by a betrayal of the trust reposed in him. His advice to Germain was to make a good offer of land and money to every American soldier who would change sides and there would be no further need of sending fresh troops. 'Money will go further than arms in America.' Unfortunately his advice being so obviously interested and his views on such a subject so prejudiced, we cannot tell how far he was right.

While then Clinton lay inactive in New York, time, weariness and the depreciation of the currency were doing more harm to the Continental army than any British victory. A short time before Lafayette's return Washington had written that never had the army been in a worse condition. It was without pay or food. Mutinies were threatening. One British colonel was in command of a regiment entirely composed of Irish deserters from the rebel cause. Congress was still talking and intriguing, suspicious once more of Washington and afraid of a military dictatorship. 'Unless Congress and the States,' wrote Washington, 'act with more energy than they have hitherto done, our cause is lost.' Even honest Lafayette was troubled: 'There are open dissensions in Congress and parties who hate one another as much as the common enemy.' For the first and last time in his life he seems to have approved of a dictatorship, for he wrote to France to say that Washington was likely to be made dictator and that it would be a good thing. De Ternay, the French admiral, summed up the situation after he had been in America a short time in this terse and instructive fashion: 'The fate of North America is still very uncertain and the revolution is not as far advanced as has been believed in Europe.'

We may infer, therefore, that the ovations which Lafayette received in Boston on April 27th, 1780, when he landed were, as he wrote, 'due to his own personal popularity' alone, and not to any foretaste of victory. They contrasted oddly with the cold

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and suspicious reception granted at Newport to Rochambeau's soldiers three months later. Lafayette was still an American in America; Rochambeau was the leader of those Frenchmen, three of whom, according to the colonial tradition, could be whipped by any one English colonist.

Lafayette's first care was to meet Washington and deliver the important instructions which he carried on behalf of the French government. The unemotional commander-in-chief, Lafayette himself assures us of the fact, wept tears of joy on hearing of his young friend's arrival. The conference between them was important and anxious. Lafayette learned of the deplorable state of the army, Washington of the imminent French succour. It was now or never. So disappointed was Lafayette with all the news that he did not dare inform his government of the exact state of affairs. 'Pride has stopped my pen', pride and the fear of undoing all the 'propaganda' work which he had been accomplishing during his leave. 'We have men, we have provisions, we have everything that is wanted, provided the country is awakened and its resources are brought forth.' A bitter statement to have to make four years after the Declaration of Independence, and all the more telling coming, as it did, from the optimist who could see good in everything American.

In July, the French arrived, but with fewer men than were expected. Moreover, as might have been expected, the British fleet bottled them up at once at Newport, while another fleet kept the reinforcements blockaded in Brest. It looked as though for the third year in succession the French alliance was to prove a fiasco. All his labour seemed wasted. He was disappointed and not a little humiliated. Perhaps the Americans had been right in not pressing for a French army in the United States.

In this mood he was asked to act as a go-between Washington and Rochambeau. He had always thought that his position as '*moitié français, moitié américain*' would enable him to ease such relations. It had the opposite effect. Rochambeau was annoyed at not being asked to meet Washington in person. Lafayette was irritated by Rochambeau's unwillingness to do something spectacular in order to justify himself and France. The old veteran, however, had no intention of being dictated to by this boy, whatever his reputation in America might be. 'In regard to your suggestion', he wrote to him, 'that the position of the French in

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Rhode Island is of no service to the Americans, I shall observe to you (i) that I have yet to hear it has done them any harm, (ii) that while the French fleet is guarded here by a superior and concentrated naval force, your coasts are undisturbed, your privateers make valuable captures, and your merchant marine is entirely free. . . . I am afraid of these Savannahs and other events of which I have seen so many in the course of my life. It is a principle in war, as in geometry, that *vis unita fortior*.' It was another mild dressing-down, and Lafayette, with some justification, felt that he had been misunderstood: 'As to what you have said to me about Rhode Island,' he replied, 'if you could have had any detailed idea of what I have said, written and published in the newspapers, if you had seen me often surrounded by a band of American country people, describing the conduct of the French at Newport, if you could only spend three days here with me, you would see the injustice of such a reproach. . . . I am entirely convinced and no one can deny it that if you had not come, it would have gone badly with American affairs during the present campaign.' It was hard luck to be accused at this stage of not appreciating the work of his countrymen, since no one had done more to get them to do the work. Nor could he have derived much consolation from the tone of Rochambeau's reply, the tone of an old father talking to a well-meaning, but foolish and simple child. 'It is always a good thing, my dear Marquis, to believe that the French are invincible, but I shall confide to you a great secret, the result of forty years experience. No soldiers are so easily beaten when they lose faith in their leaders, and that faith they lose at once if they have been placed in personal danger through private ambition. If I have been lucky enough to retain their faith in myself up till now, it is because I have not to reproach myself with having been the cause of the death of a single man through my own ambition . . . and I have come to the conclusion that the fire of your soul and heart have overheated the natural calm and wisdom of your mind. It is ever the old daddy Rochambeau talking to his dear son Lafayette whom he loves, will continue to love and esteem until his last breath.'

This time private misunderstandings neither improved nor made worse the situation. Lafayette had to agree that the command of the sea on the one hand and the command of French

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francs on the other were indispensable to the Americans. Rochambeau could do nothing until the two British armies were separated by sea and land, and Washington could not fight until his forces were better equipped. Lafayette now put the matter clearly before Vergennes: 'Without maritime supremacy, there will be no certain operation in America. . . . If during the autumn, within two months, we should receive a superior maritime force, we should be able to operate against Charleston and reconquer the Southern States. If the English remain masters of the sea, we shall limit ourselves to awaiting attacks difficult to repel. . . . The great obstacle is lack of money. I shall content myself with saying that a sum of money, in specie, intended exclusively for the American army would remove three-quarters of our trouble and that it is absolutely necessary for our clothing next year.'

But across the Atlantic the warnings of Turgot were seen to have been founded in fact. The French purse might be long in comparison with the American, but it was much shorter than it looked. The French were beginning to tire of being asked to fight America's battles for her and pay her mounting expenses. It was not as though the colonies were too poor to raise the money: they *would* not. Having refused to be taxed by England for their own defence they were now no more ready to tax themselves for the same purpose. Luckily for them, France had committed herself too far to think of going back. More good money had to be spent to recover the large amount apparently wasted. Louis would write '*approuvé*' at the bottom of order after order. In the end not his signature, but his head would be taken in payment. Vergennes grumbled, but the money came. 'Congress rely too much upon France for subsidies to maintain their army,' he wrote to the French minister, 'they must absolutely refrain from such exorbitant demands. The great expenses of the war render it impossible for France to meet these demands if they are continued. . . . The king is justified in expecting that the United States should at least provide for the expenses of their own army.' But the stream of begging letters continued, as did 'the machinations of men without principles, honour or modesty' — they are the American general Greene's own words.

Meanwhile the year 1780, a year of stalemate, was drawing to a close. Lafayette had seen no fighting, and his constant

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faith in the cause of freedom was all the more remarkable. As he wrote: 'The monotony, equal to that of a European war, needed a catastrophe to sustain men's interest.' The catastrophe came. It proved to be an act of American treachery for which the price was not to be American disaster, but the sacrifice of a gallant British officer in circumstances which have made his name immortal. To Englishmen the minor part which Lafayette played in the drama of Major André's death will seem as vivid as any incident in his career.

The young, brilliant, witty André, equally popular on the British and the American side was the British adjutant-general. Benedict Arnold was one of the heroes of Saratoga, and in Fortescue's estimation the greatest military genius on the American side. He had lately married Peggy Shippen, the young and beautiful daughter of a rich loyalist of Philadelphia. This connection seems to have provided the temptation which led him to betray his cause. He asked for and obtained through Washington's kindness and personal trust in him the command of West Point, the most important military post in America and the key to the Hudson. It was also the largest depot of stores and ammunition. To hand it over to the British might end the war. Such a service would be rewarded by the highest British honours. Soon he was corresponding with André, acting as Clinton's intermediary. Towards the end of September André was ordered by Clinton to meet Arnold in order to make the final arrangements for the betrayal.

On the night of the 21st, André landed from the British sloop *Vulture*, in order to have a conference on neutral ground. But before it had ended, the *Vulture* had to return. There was nothing for André to do but make his way back through American lines. He received a pass from Arnold, and, throwing a cloak over his uniform, he set out. By a terrible ill-chance, he revealed his nationality to some Americans, one of whom was accidentally wearing a British great-coat he had picked up. They discovered the secret papers in his boot and brought him back as a spy. Only two or three days before these events had taken place, Washington was returning from an interview with Rochambeau accompanied by his staff and Lafayette. They had planned to visit Arnold and examine the fortifications of West Point. They were to breakfast with him on the morning of the 24th, but Washington was delayed and sent Colonel Alexander Hamilton

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to make his excuses. During that breakfast, a note was brought in to Arnold. It contained the news of André's capture. Arnold had no choice. To everybody's astonishment, he jumped up and hurried upstairs. Having explained everything to his fainting wife, he disappeared and made his way safely to the British lines.

What was to be done with André? No one, least of all, Hamilton and Lafayette, his friends and contemporaries, could think of him as a spy. Yet the facts seemed only too clear. Clinton wrote that it was all a mistake. André wrote to Washington that he had been taken into an American post 'against his stipulation, intention and knowledge beforehand. . . . I agreed to meet upon ground not within the posts of either party.' But very quickly the magnitude and horror of the danger from which America had accidentally been saved was realized. André must be the scapegoat. Only one thing could save him: the surrender by the British of the arch-traitor himself, Arnold. 'It was proposed to me,' wrote Hamilton, 'to suggest to André the idea of an exchange for Arnold, but I knew that I should have forfeited his esteem for doing it, and therefore declined.' André had to die, and the sentence of the court martial, of which Lafayette was a member, was a foregone conclusion. Even Lafayette who wrote in later life of 'his sad duty of having to agree to his fate,' and of 'the sympathy and admiration of the whole American army for André' thought very differently at the time. 'I hope André will be hanged', he wrote in a letter, 'he is a man of influence in the British army and his very distinguished social rank will act as a warning to spies of a lesser degree.' Even André's request to be shot like a soldier, instead of being hanged like a malefactor, was not granted by Washington, for did not the British treat a young American spy, Nathan Hale, in this manner? André died bravely, in his uniform, and after admitting the justice of the sentence. His remains were removed forty years later to the company of the great in Westminster Abbey.

No one now doubts that Washington was technically justified in his stern execution of military justice, but there have been few instances in history in which the fulfilling of the letter of the law so clearly involved the sacrifice of an innocent victim. The precedent of Hale was not made use of to strengthen justice but to inflame revenge, and if Washington was responsible, or

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approved of the offer to exchange André for Arnold, or if again, as the British army thought, he threatened André with death in order to force Clinton to surrender Arnold, he, in so far, was guilty of the blood of this young British officer.

The last winter of the war was now approaching, and nothing more could be done for the present. Lafayette, as usual, felt this inactivity keenly. He knew how it was being interpreted at home. 'The French Court,' he wrote to Washington, 'have often complained to me of the inactivity of the American army who, before the alliance, had distinguished themselves by their spirit of enterprise. They have often told me: "Your friends leave us now to fight their battles and do not risk their necks." ' He wrote a long letter outlining a plan for 'Finishing off the campaign by some brilliant stroke,' but Washington, more gently than Rochambeau, assured him: 'Ever since it became evident that the allied armies could not co-operate in this campaign, I have had an eye to the point you mention, determined, if a favourable opening should offer, to embrace it; but, so far as my information goes, the enterprise would not be warranted.' And Lafayette was reduced to the different, but in its way not less gratifying activity of taking his French friends of Paris days who were serving with Rochambeau on sight-seeing tours to the battlefields on which he had distinguished himself; or, as an alternative, of proudly parading before them his Light Brigade, a corps of selected infantry given him by Washington, and decorated with leather helmets with red and black plumes which he had brought with him from France. Thus he passed his days with Noailles, Damas, Charlus, Chastellux, perhaps with Fersen, keeping the Atlantic between him and the attraction of Marie-Antoinette. These soldiers were much taken by the unspoiled charm of the quakeresses of Philadelphia or the puritan ladies of Newport. The legion of the dashing and heartily disliked Lauzun (later Duc de Biron whom we shall meet as a revolutionary general) soon had the reputation of finding itself in whatever spot contained danger or pretty women. For the moment, the pretty women were the only danger.

Lafayette did not however share their evening distractions. Vanity and love of popularity were foibles in which he was willing to indulge; the commoner weakness of soldiers stationed in foreign parts he was proof against. In fact he preached a

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little moral sermon to Noailles about it: 'If I had a mistress, my sentiment would be founded partly on the delicacy of the pride that she should show by not being jealous, and on the liberty that I should have to do everything that I wished, even to neglect her, without ever finding her exigent. That mistress would then attach herself to me for ever – at all events, I think so – if not by a violent passion, at least by the most tender attachment. I do not like girls because stupidity is a bore and impudence disgusting; but so long as they have my kind friends as lovers, their good taste will reconcile me to them.'

One wonders what Adrienne would have thought of these sentiments! Would she have wished that her husband were more human, or, even, more weak, rather than live up to her own supernatural ideal for such very un-supernatural and very priggish reasons?

CHAPTER V

REVENGE

(1781)

THE star on whose protection the agnostic Lafayette had relied since first landing in Charleston had never entirely failed him. It had shone with varying degrees of brightness, but, strangely enough, it had aided him least in his professional capacity: he had been given little opportunity of distinguishing himself as a military commander. The Canadian expedition had been a fiasco, Newport a series of misunderstandings, Brandywine a defeat, Barren Hill a piece of luck, Monmouth a failure. It was as though it had been reserving its beneficent power for the campaigns which ended the fighting in 1781.

During his lifetime, he never denied the popular judgment in France that it was he in particular who was responsible for the bottling up of Cornwallis in Yorktown. In his memoirs he stated: 'after five months of manœuvring, the American general Lafayette had pushed back the army of Cornwallis.' Adrienne's firm conviction was that all his operations in Virginia were undertaken with the deliberate intention of driving the British commander into the very trap into which he actually stumbled. In her essay on her mother written in prison some fifteen years later, she wrote: 'Everyone was saying that the brilliant ending of the war was due to M. de Lafayette who had prepared everything in the midst of obstacles which appeared insurmountable: and what was for me more precious still, we knew that despite the requests made to him, he refused to accept the glory of finishing it off by himself, and let MM. Washington and Rochambeau arrive that the success should be the surer and cost fewer men.' She presumably learned this from him, or at all events he never contradicted her. It is true that his conduct throughout was distinguished and effective; he could not under the circumstances have done more than he did: he might have done much less. But the claim made in the memoirs and the story he allowed his wife to believe were considerably more than the truth. It is a

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pity that a second-rate love of glory should throw a shadow over the true and very fine story of his deeds during that fateful year. The truth provides fame enough for a great man; the embellishments alone provide the ground for the judgment that he was not as great as he appeared to be.

America too has taken more credit for 1781 than impartial history will allow her. It was fate in the shape of British misunderstandings and timely French naval aid which brought the campaign to a close and turned the paper declaration of independence into solid fact. Even so Washington's very understandable caution nearly threw away the gifts of fate.

The year opened in the most inauspicious manner possible. On January 1st, General Wayne's Pennsylvanian division of nearly two thousand men mutinied; it was a large proportion of the Continental army. Other divisions were threatening to do the same. Lafayette when he tried to influence the men – he was 'the soldier's friend' – was peremptorily ordered out of Princetown, a town which the mutineers held.

But mutinies are tangible; they can be grasped and bent. Worse was the fact that prolonged experience of war instead of improving the organization of the army and stiffening the backs of the people was rapidly wasting away America's slender resources. Washington recorded that, on the eve of Yorktown, hardly one state had put one-eighth of its quota of men at the service of the Revolution. Inability to endure taxation, incompetent officials, bad management, intrigues were heaping up their inevitable consequences. We have the testimony of both the American and the French commanders. Washington wrote: 'We are in this hour suspended in the balance. . . . It is equally certain that our troops are fast approaching to nakedness, that we have nothing to clothe them with; that our hospitals are without medicines and our sick without nutriment except such as well men eat; and that our public works are at a stand, and the artificers disbanding. But why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never deliverance must come.' Rochambeau saw the reason: 'The business of this country depends on a dozen tradesmen who by their credit are masters of the country's money . . . the only weapon we have against them is to spend as much money as we have in order to lower their specula-

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tions and the price of the exchange. The naked troops do not obtain one dollar from the most patriotic tradesman, except at an immoderate rate of interest . . . every tradesman in this country has but one idea, to increase his fortune and satisfy an unbounded cupidity.' In the face of it all, Lafayette could still see matter for admiration and hope: 'No European army could stand a tenth of it. Only *citoyens* will endure nakedness, hunger, works and the complete absence of pay.' And it was true: another *citoyen* army, the army of the French Revolution in which he was to serve for a period as one of its three generals, was to show the same endurance and far greater military distinction.

All American eyes were still turned to France, wondering what importance she was now attaching to the American rebels in the European diplomatic game. France was beginning to calculate. Vergennes was doing sums in arithmetic: 'I shall go no further back than last year. I secured by my credit in the course of that year a loan of three million livres. In the month of December, Mr. Franklin found it necessary to have a million. . . . I also secured for his use during that year four million livres. Total eight million. Add to that six million which the king has given them purely as a gratuity, and it follows that Congress has received from us in the space of two years, fourteen million.' But it was waste of energy studying figures. More money had to cross the Atlantic or all that had gone would be lost. Further detachments he would not send. Old Rochambeau had sent his son to obtain more men, but they laughed at him. Vergennes had no intention of making North America the decisive point of the whole war. He was more concerned with the West Indian Islands whence France derived her wealth. It was to that point that he ordered the main fleet under Comte de Grasse, adding to its instructions a cruise to the North Atlantic, if and when practicable, in the hope that a temporary command of the sea, due to the junction with the other fleet at Newport, might be obtained. One foggy morning in March, this fleet all unconscious of the historic destiny in store for it, was borne by a north-easterly breeze out of the port of Brest. Two days later, on the other side of the ocean, the British fleet landed a detachment in Virginia under that General Phillips who had, years before, commanded the battery at Minden which had killed Lafayette's father.

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By this time Lafayette had established himself, not only in his military capacity, but because of his influence, as one of the most important personalities in America. Chastellux, in his description of his voyages on that continent, wrote: 'I shall not be contradicted when I say that mere letters of his had often more influence on certain States than the strongest invitations on the part of Congress.' He was now selected by Washington as the commander of a detachment to operate against, and, if possible, capture Arnold – now a British general – who had been sent by Clinton to create a diversion in Virginia to help Cornwallis operating with success further south in the Carolinas. If they captured Arnold, the Americans proposed to cut off the leg that had been gloriously wounded in America's service and hang the rest of him! Phillips had been sent to reinforce Arnold.

Lafayette's appointment, which must have been due to the power of his star, was unexpected, and it caused resentment. Heath, the commander at West Point, was much mortified: 'I cannot smother my own feelings which have been exceedingly wounded under some considerations on this occasion. I will never admit an idea to enter my breast that it is possible that any officer, especially a foreigner, to have the interest or honour of my country more at heart than I have. . . .' Heath had reason for his disappointment. That appointment meant glory and easily earned glory for the man who received it. But why Lafayette? He did not want it. On the contrary, he was enjoying in imaginary anticipation the pleasure of accompanying Washington to the French headquarters, and watching the man of whom it was sung:

'Thou hast supported an atrocious cause
Against thy king, thy country and thy laws
Committed perjury, encouraged lies,
Forced conscience, broken the most sacred ties'

acknowledged as the proud generalissimo of the armies of ancient France and the young republic. He never dreamed that glory could be obtained anywhere but in the natural centre of operations, New York. Furthermore two strong reasons might have militated against his appointment. Surely the honour of capturing the 'toadeater,' Arnold, of executing him 'in the most summary way,' according to Washington's instructions, should have been

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reserved for an American. More important still, it was proposed that the detachment should co-operate with the French fleet which was to sail to the Chesapeake, a bay which eats into Virginia. Washington had received hints that his French friend, of whom so many French officers were jealous, was not the man to make such co-operation successful. Lafayette himself knew it, and prayed that 'this may not be productive of bad consequences.' As things turned out, the British fleet lost the race for slowness, and when at length the French fleet reached the bay, they found the British there to meet them. An indecisive battle prevented any French co-operation with Lafayette's forces.

Arnold, of whom Lafayette now wrote that he was of little worth and had been little esteemed by the Americans before his treason, was never in any danger of falling into his hands, for, despite the French failure and against Washington's instructions in the event of such failure, Lafayette sailed down the Chesapeake, and finding nothing to do, marched up its banks again without accomplishing anything but catch his first glimpse of Mount Vernon, Washington's beautiful home on the Potomac.

It was now that occurred an incident which leaves the modern reader utterly bewildered by the nature of warfare in the eighteenth century. It appears that a kinsman of Washington was acting as his agent at Mount Vernon. Lafayette heard that this man was sending provisions to the British privateers nearby from Washington's own estate. Lafayette, as modern in the nationalistic and serious spirit in which he took war as in his democratic views, was deeply scandalized, and reported the facts to his commander-in-chief. The provisioning turned out to be part of a bargain according to which, in return for it, the British would restore some of Washington's negroes and undertake not to burn or loot his estate. Washington duly rebuked his cousin, telling him that he would rather have his place destroyed than be the cause of scandal or the excuse for establishing a precedent in the matter. A mild rebuke indeed when we remember that even Cornwallis in a letter to Clinton admitted 'the horrid enormities which are committed by our privateers in Chesapeak-Bay,' enormities against which Arnold to his credit protested.

The expedition against Arnold meant that Lafayette and his men were two hundred miles south of New York, half way, that is, to the scene of the fighting in the south between Cornwallis

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and Greene. They were therefore the obvious people to send to reinforce Greene. Thus it came about that he took an important part in the final campaign of the war.

This Virginia campaign was for the most part a series of misunderstandings on the part of the commanders of both armies. Apart from the actual besieging of Yorktown, there was little fighting. Everyone was trying to guess the purpose of friend and foe, marching with the utmost rapidity hither and thither in the broiling heat of an American summer, until gradually, fatally, the threads unravelled themselves, and a British army was caught in a trap which no one had consciously prepared.

Three weeks after Washington had sent his orders to Lafayette, Cornwallis, to everyone's surprise, most of all to Clinton's, his commander-in-chief, began a rapid march north in order to reconquer Virginia. This, as it proved, fatal move he explained on the ground that the detachments which Clinton had sent to Virginia under Arnold and Phillips must have had for their object the same purpose. By marching north to co-operate with them, Cornwallis would ensure the recovery of the most important southern state, Virginia. But Clinton never imagined that Cornwallis would leave the south undefended, nor attempt the conquest of Virginia while the command of the sea was in doubt. We now know that the two generals were jealous of each other, that the Secretary-at-War was not treating Clinton fairly, that the latter was at loggerheads with the British admiral, that he wanted, because of all this, to resign his command. What was to prove fatal to Britain worked out to Lafayette's advantage. The approach of Cornwallis threw him into a position of immense responsibility. He had to defend Virginia against the combined forces of Cornwallis, Arnold and Phillips. Never did a general succeed so completely – nor so easily.

His first care was to put as many rivers as possible between his men and their northern homes. These New Englanders had the best of reasons for not wishing to march south: they did not believe that the cause of independence was any reason for enduring the heat of a Virginian summer, nor for guarding the homes of these so-called fellow citizens of a distant state. These citizens of New England, 'the most hardened and patient in the world,' as Lafayette thought them, were deserting from him on all sides. 'Many men have deserted: many more will, I fear, take the same course

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. . . these men say they like a hundred lashes better than a journey to the southward.' Instead of lashes, he offered them the chance of participating with him in an adventure: he appealed to their chivalry and allowed those who did not feel equal to sharing all with him, to return home. The result did credit to him and to his men. The desertion ceased. Then he marched to Baltimore where he took it upon himself to borrow £2000 to clothe and shoe his men, trusting that one day a victorious nation would repay him. The ladies of Baltimore showed their appreciation of the hero by giving a traditional ball in his honour and, next day, they turned the ballroom into a clothes factory and sewed shirts for the soldiers.

Not far away, Arnold and Phillips were discussing the chances of an attack on Baltimore, an attack which must have put an end to his plans, for he had less than a thousand regular soldiers. But the British, not for the last time in the year, refused to take a chance. It would require, they thought, 'a reinforcement of a thousand or two thousand men, and a proportion of heavy artillery for constructing batteries against the works we understand to have been constructed at Baltimore.'

Lafayette's boldness paid him well. He was feeling in the best of health, his appetite was increasing, he was independent and in a position of responsibility – how lucky he was to have escaped the codfish! In this cheerful mood he set out without baggage for the strategic point, Richmond, the capital of Virginia. Phillips from the opposite side was doing the same. Lafayette beat him by a day. The morning after his arrival, the British reached Manchester 'from whence they had a view of M. Fayette's army, encamped on the heights of Richmond.' In the evening they retreated. Lafayette had won the first trick.

Three weeks later, Cornwallis, after a march which Lafayette, the most rapid mover on either side, described as 'of amazing celerity,' effected a junction with Arnold (Phillips having in the meantime died) at Petersburg, some thirty miles south of Richmond. A difficult situation had become impossible for Lafayette. Some two thousand militia had been raised, but still he had but three thousand men to oppose to the combined forces of such experienced generals as Cornwallis and Arnold, five thousand men at least, together with a brilliant cavalry division. He had no choice but to fall back as rapidly as he could and effect a

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junction with General Wayne's Pennsylvanians, the nearest American force.

The British, as Washington wrote to Rochambeau 'from their superiority were at full liberty to go where they pleased.' But Cornwallis having no idea of Clinton's plans did not intend to do more than drive Lafayette to a safe distance and then retreat to the sea-coast. He wrote as much in a letter to Clinton, a letter which proves that it was he who chose to retreat and not Lafayette who forced him to it. 'I shall now proceed to dislodge Lafayette from Richmond, and with my light troops destroy any magazines or stores in the neighbourhood. . . . From thence I purpose to move to the neck of Williamsburg (on the Chesapeake) which is represented as healthy, and where some subsistence may be procured, and keep myself unengaged from operations which might interfere with your plan for the campaign, until I have the satisfaction of hearing from you.' Cornwallis is reported to have once said of Lafayette 'Now the boy cannot escape me,' but that letter shows why he did not make more than a half-hearted pursuit.

The result was that Lafayette was able to meet Wayne and the best of many British opportunities of making an end of him was lost. Cornwallis had already turned back as he had planned and was doubling to the coast, covering a hundred miles in twelve days. Hard at his heels was Lafayette whose forces were now about equal to the enemies in number. He bluffed Cornwallis by making as great a show of strength as possible. But Cornwallis kept out of harm's way. 'His Lordship has proceeded so cautiously,' Lafayette wrote, 'and so covered his marches with his cavalry that it has been under the circumstances next to impossible to do him any injury.' This hurried British retreat, to be for the future such a source of gratification to Lafayette, was at the time a great puzzle. The fact was that Cornwallis was paying heavily for his rashness in attempting to 'make solid operations in Virginia.' Clinton, at his wits' end, did nothing to help him; instead he sent him three entirely different sets of orders. Even at this time, Lafayette suspected that all was not well at British headquarters, for he imagined that Cornwallis was so disappointed at not being made commander-in-chief that he was contemplating returning at once to England.

Only on one occasion was there any fighting. It was in the

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first week in July. Cornwallis about to cross the last river that separated him from his temporary objective, Portsmouth, at the mouth of Elizabeth River, tried to entice Lafayette into a trap by pretending that the main army had already crossed and leaving a small detachment as a decoy. He nearly succeeded. Wayne was deceived, but Lafayette was clever enough to suspect the trap, though, had Cornwallis had sufficient determination to follow up his initial success, it would have been already too late. But Lafayette's luck held till the end.

There was no gainsaying the facts: Virginia had been saved. Lafayette had done more than he was asked to do. Moreover his correspondence reveals the great difficulties (not from the British side) against which he had had to contend in order to effect what he did. Insufficiency of provisions and ammunition, militia daily deserting in order to harvest their crops, danger of small-pox – only a born organizer, a hard worker and a man of great faith could have kept up the bluff. The British accidentally played into his hands, but under similar circumstances many an experienced general would have induced even Cornwallis to turn and finish him off once and for all. Had that happened, there might have been no Yorktown. To that extent Lafayette was responsible for the issue. But it was not until the end of July, some days after the retreat, that we find any suspicion in his mind of its possible effect. In a letter of the 31st, he writes: 'If the French fleet were to enter Hampton Roads, I believe the British army would be ours.'

During the next three weeks the situation became clearer. The unravelling was being done. He wrote on August 21st to Washington: 'When a French fleet takes possession of the bay and rivers, and we form a land force superior to the enemy, their army must sooner or later be forced to surrender, as we may get what reinforcements we please. Adieu, my dear general, I heartily thank you for having ordered me to remain in Virginia, and for your goodness to me I am owing the most beautiful prospect I may ever behold.'

The prospect was beautiful, but it was still far from clear. Five days after writing the above, he sent a very different letter to the governor of Virginia: 'Indeed, Sir, unless vigorous measures are adopted, we will be involved deeper and deeper in ruin. Few men in the field; not a sixth part of what is called for, a

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greater number without arms, the greatest part of whom live from day to day upon food that is injurious to their health, without six cartridges per man, and the poor continentals that will soon be our only dependence falling off for want of spirit and flour. Such is, my dear Sir, the present situation of this very small corps; should it be known to Lord Cornwallis, he may ruin us at one stroke, and defeat every project that may have been made for the protection of this State.' And on the bluff put up by this corps depended the possibility of Yorktown and independence! Lafayette was making history at last. It was on the eve of his twenty-fourth birthday.

The situation was equally obscure elsewhere. Washington had definitely made up his mind to concentrate on New York, especially since Clinton had weakened himself by sending reinforcements to Virginia. From Washington's point of view, Lafayette's position held few possibilities. He was a decoy; he might have to be sacrificed. To this day, no one has satisfactorily explained why Cornwallis missed chance after chance of turning on him. It was not Washington, but Rochambeau, who first suggested that Virginia offered better chances of success than New York. As late as the middle of August, a month after the retreat, he found the commander-in-chief in a state of great perplexity. 'It is almost impossible,' Washington wrote to him, 'to fix on a definitive plan of campaign in the doubtful circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our definitive plan of campaign must depend on the position of the enemy at the time and on the circumstances of the arrival of the Comte de Grasse.' Rochambeau was despairing of gaining victory in time, 'this country has been driven to bay, and all its resources are giving out at once.' But this despair saved the situation, for Rochambeau had been writing to de Grasse in a tone which left him no alternative but to sail at once with naval, military and financial aid. De Grasse was coming with every ship of his great fleet, a fact which no Englishman suspected. He made it perfectly clear, on the other hand, that he could not stay long, not longer than the middle of October. Now or never.

At last, on August 19th, only eleven days before the arrival of de Grasse, Washington made up his mind to take the grave risk of moving with the Franco-American army to Virginia, leaving the north ill-protected by Heath's troops from West Point. So

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cleverly did he move that Clinton never even suspected his departure. Slowly, slowly, the army moved south. While the French were laughing, dancing, drinking and generally showing off to the Philadelphians who by now had had a taste of all nationalities, messages were coming imploring speed: 'We cannot do everything, at most prevent the enemy from establishing himself too strongly.'

Four days before the French army had paraded in Philadelphia, on August 30th, de Grasse's twenty-four ships of the line, led by the finest vessel in the navy, a present from the city of Paris and called after it, *Ville de Paris*, reached the Chesapeake. The fog of Brest had at last melted in the brilliant sun of Virginia. For a short space of time the fleet of France was to defy Britain: a score of naval defeats were to be avenged by the surrender of a British army to the rebels of America. . . . Less than six months later that same fleet was to pay the price, and the proud *Ville de Paris* was to be blown up by Rodney on March 12th, 1782.

De Grasse was in a hurry. Britain, he knew, never lost the command of the sea for long. Admiral Digby was on his way with twenty-four ships of the line; de Grasse had already had a taste of Hood's fourteen, and Hood had done more damage than he had suffered. Three thousand men weakened by the long voyage from the West Indies were landed. Their commander, St. Simon, strange to relate, was willing to serve under Lafayette. De Grasse's nervousness made everybody nervous. They must attack Cornwallis at once, he said, or Cornwallis would be relieved and he would sail away. This was, doubtless, the origin of the story that Lafayette might have finished off the campaign single-handed. But he knew that he was in no state to make any attack without incurring risk of disaster. On September 8th, he wrote to Washington: 'Unless I am greatly deceived, there will be madness in attacking them now with our force. Marquis de Saint Simon, Comte de Grasse and General du Portail agree with me in this opinion.' Three days later he wrote to the governor: 'There is not one grain of flour in camp either for the American or French army. What we are to do I know not. . . . I am distressed in the extreme, in a thousand ways, and without the power of offering either myself or the soldiers the smallest relief.' It was still a game of bluff, even with the French reinforcements. Only the belief that he would soon be relieved by the expected

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British fleet could have prevented Cornwallis from breaking through the trap by attacking the allied armies.

By the middle of September, Cornwallis had delayed too long. On the 14th Washington and Rochambeau with their staffs arrived in Williamsburg. At the Head of Elk, the northernmost point of the Chesapeake Bay, they had been met by an officer of the French fleet carrying a letter from de Grasse containing one of the finest compliments Washington ever received: 'Your arrival is worth the presence of four thousand men. This is not idle praise, but the truth straight from a sailor to a brave soldier.'

On the 26th the main body arrived. Cornwallis found himself opposed to some sixteen thousand men by land, and cut off by the flower of the French fleet by sea. If the British fleet did not arrive, it meant the end. One day there were rumours. A letter came from Clinton bidding Cornwallis hold his ground, as relief was near at hand. De Grasse again threatened to sail away. Only Washington's message that the departure of the French fleet might mean 'the disbanding of the whole army' held him to his position. But the star of Lafayette and the thirteen stars of the republic were shining. The British fleet did not appear, and, on October 19th, after a siege in which Lafayette at the head of his Americans did even better than his jealous brother officers at the head of the seasoned French, Cornwallis surrendered his army.

In the words of Lafayette to the old Prime Minister, Maurepas, words which the dying man would never read: 'the play is over, Monsieur le Comte, the fifth act has just ended.'

During that fifth act, he had been in the very centre of the stage; it was not unnatural that he should have come to think that he was responsible for the plot. At any rate, the *dénouement* coincided with his own double ideal, the success of his romantic crusade to rescue threatened liberty, and the satisfaction of his realistic desire for revenge against perfidious Britain.

Three days after the surrender, he wrote to Adrienne who had been suffering the keenest anxiety owing to the false reports spread abroad by the British about the Virginia campaign, summing up his most vivid impressions: 'The most beautiful moment was when St. Simon's division was united to my army, and I found myself in command of three French major-generals

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in turn and their men. I am sorry for Lord Cornwallis about whom I have the highest opinion. He is kind enough to have a good opinion of me, and after having had the enjoyment of paying back in the surrender the nasty business at Charlestown, I do not feel inclined to extend my vengeance.' Lafayette, as ever, more American than the Americans, had insisted, against the wishes of Rochambeau and Washington, that the British army should march out in the fashion of a dishonoured army with their colours cased instead of flying. On the plea of illness, Cornwallis excused himself from appearing at the head of his men on this humiliating occasion, as they marched out of Yorktown to the tune of 'The World Turned Upside Down.' He also refused to dine with Washington, and instead accepted a French invitation. When next day Lafayette came to call on him, Cornwallis was still deeply mortified at having had to surrender to 'rebels.' He asked the Frenchman to see that his countrymen should protect his poor army. Lafayette, stung at any implied criticism of American chivalry, replied: 'You know, my Lord, that the Americans have always been humane towards prisoners.' But Cornwallis was not, perhaps, thinking of the gallantry of Gates and the American soldiers after Saratoga, when Burgoyne had been captured; he was thinking of the infamous way in which that civilian and republican body, Congress, had broken the promises made to those soldiers, despite Washington's protests. Afterwards, the two generals sat down to discuss the campaign, and while Cornwallis went on explaining, explaining, Lafayette was dreaming of the reception he would shortly be given in Paris.

On December 21st, he set sail once more in the *Alliance*, carrying with him a letter in which Washington expressed his 'ardent vows for a propitious voyage, a gracious reception from your prince, an honourable reward for your services, a happy meeting with your lady and friends, and a safe return in the spring.'

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(1782-1785)

ON January 21st, 1782, Lafayette arrived unexpectedly in Paris. It was the day of Marie-Antoinette's churching and the city was officially celebrating the birth of the Dauphin. The king and queen were giving a banquet at the Hôtel de Ville. The citizens of Paris were applauding the hesitating maintenance by the sacred line of kings of its mastery over the threatening forces of death, change and corruption. The future seemed for the moment assured. It was exactly eleven years to the day before that victim-king in that same city mounted the steps of the guillotine.

Among the myriad causes and coincidences which brought about that strange and terrible consummation, the victory of the Americans, brought home to the hearts of the Parisians by the return of the hero who had fought so picturesquely for the sovereignty of the people of another continent, played no unimportant part. Charles X in his old age, believed that his brother's profoundest mistake was his support of the American rebels. Nor is it without significance that the best-known French noblemen who fought in America, Lafayette, Lauzun, Noailles, Rochambeau, the Dillons, the Lameths, were conspicuous in the revolutionary troubles and wars for their fidelity to the cause of nationalist France against the common enemy.

Rumours of Lafayette's return quickly spread over the city. The people were in a mood to greet the herald of victory. It was appropriate that the king, now a father of an heir and rid of the long tutelage of Maurepas,

*'O France, applaudis-toi, triomphe de ton sort
Un dauphin vient de naître et Maurepas est mort,'*

should be greeting his most popular and glorious servant, the victor of Yorktown.

The news of his arrival soon reached the Hôtel de Ville. The

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queen was informed. Outwardly she had to join in the enthusiasm, though Lafayette believed that the reports of her approval of the 'hero of two worlds' were but '*cancan de salon*.' Among her guests that day was Adrienne. Marie-Antoinette who hated court etiquette and conventions even more than Lafayette, urged her to leave at once, even before royalty, that she might embrace her husband. But the timid girl protested, and it was arranged that she should use one of the royal carriages, thus leaving immediately after royalty. There are many versions of that meeting which stirred the imaginations of the romantic Parisians. According to one, the king and queen themselves took her in their coach. According to another, it was only tact which prevented them from being the first to greet the hero. All are agreed that Lafayette ran out of his house to support and carry indoors his young wife who, overcome with emotion, was swooning in his arms.

During the next few weeks, what Jefferson described as 'his canine appetite for popularity' was more than satisfied. Fishwives offered him laurel wreaths, the most beautiful woman in Paris, Mme. de Simiane, openly made love to him, and it may have been she who 'congratulated herself on being born in Lafayette's century,' at the opera they sang about him, he was the guest of honour at a dinner given by the marshals of France, the queen, no longer daring to laugh at his clumsiness, danced a quadrille with him, all the young bloods of the court were asking to return with him to finish off the war, '*Nos jeunes seigneurs veulent tous faire les petits Lafayettes*,' the king, finally, granted him a long and intimate audience assuring him of 'the consideration, admiration and affection he had for Washington.' It was the most wonderful time of his life, for, though he would be cheered again as loudly and as universally, he would never be cheered so sincerely, at least in his native country.

But while he delighted in being the hero of this world, he did not forget that he was also the hero of another across the Atlantic. He had not come back in a private capacity. Just as he had left France two years before as her accredited representative, so now he returned from America as a kind of supernumerary plenipotentiary of the United States, all her European ministers being instructed to consult with him. Not all the enthusiasm of Paris society and of the Parisian crowd could disguise the fact that he was in a ridiculous position. He was a

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French general, a court nobleman, and very obviously a Frenchman in character, yet here he was, a semi-official American, acting in America's interests and aping American ways: 'Although I must enter the French army as a major-general,' he wrote to Washington, 'I shall wear my American uniform and appear from the outside as well as feel from within an American soldier. I shall deal with business and take orders like an officer loaned by the United States, and I shall watch for the happy moment when I can rejoin our beloved flag.'

Lafayette in this matter of nationalities, as later in politics, found it difficult to understand that many things may not be intellectual contradictions, may, in fact, to a sufficiently tortuous mind be intellectual compatibilities, and yet in practice be real impossibilities. It was plain however to others. Both the pursuit of the war and the attempt at peace negotiations were bringing to the surface the radical differences between the real interests of the two countries. France was still complaining that America had not done as much in her own defence as she ought to have done. Vergennes put it almost cruelly when he wrote to the French minister in America: 'Once the French cease to subsidise the American army, it will be as useless as it has been habitually inactive.' Lafayette was all for continuing the war to the bitter end. He could not understand any more than could sturdy old George III that a change of government in England should prevent her from pursuing the war at a time when she still had a good chance of success. 'The evacuation of New York and Charlestown,' Lafayette wrote, 'is as far from their thoughts as the evacuation of London.' He was wrong; but he did not understand the complexities of the Whig mind. And again, 'the only way to get them out is to kick them out.' Nevertheless behind the backs of the French and the mongrel Lafayette, the British and the Americans were finding means of reconciling their interests. John Adams and Jay, the American plenipotentiaries, inherited the old suspicion of Bourbons and Papists. In the end they signed a preliminary treaty of peace with Britain without consulting the ally whose fleet and money had made victory possible.

In these circumstances it is easy to imagine with what irritation a man like John Adams viewed the constant presence of the interfering Lafayette, ever turning up at the wrong moment.

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These feelings were expressed in his usual blunt fashion in a letter to a member of Congress: 'He was taken early into our service and placed in a high command, in which he behaved well, but he has gained more applause than human nature at twenty-five can bear. It has enkindled in him an unbounded ambition which it concerns us to watch. The instruction of Congress to consult with him was very ill-judged; it was lowering themselves and their servants. There is no American minister who would not have always been ready and willing to consult with him; but to enjoin it and make it a duty was an humiliation which would astonish all the world if it was known. Your ministers should confer direct with other powers, and if they choose at any time to make use of a third person, they ought to choose him. The Marquis may live these fifty years. Ten years may bring him by order of succession to the command of your army. You have given him a great deal too much popularity in our own country. . . . This mongrel character of French patriot and American patriot cannot last long. . . . He is now very active, everlastingly busy, ardent to distinguish himself in every way, especially to increase his merit towards America, aiming as I believe at some employment by Congress. Pains are taken to give him the credit for everything. . . .'

Adams need not have mistrusted Lafayette's devotion to the United States. It was Vergennes who, had he known all, would have had most reason to mistrust his compatriot. One of the points, for example, on which the interests of France and America clashed was the right to the Newfoundland fisheries. It was a matter on which Adams, as a New Englander, felt very deeply. Lafayette wrote to Congress about it in terms which would have pleased Adams as much as they would have shocked Vergennes and other Frenchmen: 'According to all I see, I believe that if America insists on having her share of the fisheries, she will obtain it by general treaty.'

As far as the long, protracted and sometimes shady peace negotiations were concerned, his 'everlasting busyness' accomplished little of moment. Throughout his life he was at his worst in the subtleties and falsehoods of diplomacy. He admitted in a letter to Washington that his journey was unfruitful. 'Now I must find in peace or war the means of regaining part of the advantages which I had hoped for from my presence at this

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court.' Jay and Adams who were working behind even Franklin's back had no use for him, while Vergennes who had been sucked dry by America's insatiable thirst for money found that Lafayette's main interest was to squeeze out of him still more. Thus his 'mongrel character of French patriot and American patriot,' the *moitié français et moitié américain*, meant again what it had meant twice before, that he was unpopular with both sides. He was only *persona grata* with the French war party. It is true that he taunted Grenville, the British representative, for not being serious in his desire for peace, but Fitzherbert, the British plenipotentiary, described him to his Prime Minister as 'that vain and insolent young man who goes about fanning the waning flames of ill-will between the two countries.' One of his less serious ways of doing this was to try to obtain some mission to the British court in order to have the satisfaction of strutting before George III in his uniform of American major-general. One of his more serious ways was to keep on harping on the conquest of Canada, his favourite project.

Through this bellicose spirit the French ministers and the American plenipotentiaries were spared his further services towards the end of the year 1782. The war party induced Vergennes to arrange a joint expedition between France and Spain against the West Indies. But even in the army, as we know, many were bitterly jealous of him and it required the positive and reiterated demand of his old friend, d'Estaing, the commander of the expedition, to confirm him in the rank that had been offered him. What he really wanted was to command a detachment which would sail up the Saint Lawrence while the main body was operating in the West Indies. He was promised the chance, but how far this was seriously considered, or how far it was but an excuse to keep him quiet, we can only surmise.

On November 25th, after having extracted a further six million livres from Vergennes, he left Paris to join the expedition at Cadiz.

There was little in common between the modern, liberal spirit of Lafayette and the ancient, Catholic civilization of Spain. Cadiz he could only endure because 'it is less Spanish than other cities.' When he saw the *grandees* of Spain on their knees before their sovereign, he thought that the attitude of these *grands* looking so *petits* was quite enough to make an independent head sneeze. He was granted an audience by the king, and arrived

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in his rebel uniform to the horror of a sovereign who was mindful of the fact that he too had many Colonies.

Since the modern world has spared no pains to rid itself of royalty, it must, doubtless, approve of the fact that Lafayette who was personally acquainted with one Emperor, seven monarchs and five presidents was as unpopular with the former as he was popular with the latter. On this occasion, Charles III of Spain heard that there was talk of making Lafayette governor of Jamaica. His view on the matter was: 'Certainly he must not be; I could not endure it; he would probably found a republic there!' A year or two later, Lafayette met a king of a very different stamp from Charles III. Frederick the Great, with all his enlightenment, had no more love for republics than Charles. Lafayette, on the other hand, admired Frederick for his military genius if for nothing else, and he spent some time inspecting and admiring the Prussian armies, thus contributing the weight of his opinion to revolutionary France's respect for Prussia and hate for Austria whose princess was France's queen. But Frederick understood men, and instead of sharing Charles's fear of Lafayette, he thrust out his sharp chin at him and told him a story. 'I knew a man once,' he rapped out, 'who, after having visited countries where liberty and equality reigned, got it into his head to establish all that in his country. Do you know what happened to him?'

'No, Sire,' replied the astonished Lafayette.

'He was hanged.'

Old Frederick was not far wrong, and Lafayette may have recalled his words when, one day, he heard the crowds shouting at their hero of yesterday the terrible refrain: '*A la lanterne! A la lanterne!*'

While he was in Spain cursing the journey which had brought him to Madrid, instead of 'to the blessed shores of Liberty,' the preliminary articles of peace were signed. All dreams of sailing up the Saint Lawrence with a charter of freedom for Canada were shattered. But a new peace of Paris had avenged the last. The youthful escapade which had brought such a multitude of experiences to a man who had yet to celebrate his twenty-sixth birthday had been finally justified. It is easy, however, to understand the disappointment which tempered the pleasure of attaining his end. Perhaps he felt deep in his heart that life

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could never again offer him such success and glory. Time is not measured by the passage of years, but by the nature of the deeds and thoughts which fill those years. He was young in one sense but prematurely old in another. Yet, had he been able to see into the future, he need not have feared to go on living: his best work, though not his best remembered, was still to come. For the time being he consoled himself for the boredom of peace and hid his ineffective busyness since the glories of Yorktown under dreams of possible future campaigns: 'I hope that we shall not lose our noble titles of officers and soldiers of the American army, so that in the day of danger, we may be recalled from the four corners of the world for the defence of the land which the army has so heroically saved.'

The king of France had recognized his services by his general's commission and the Cross of St. Louis. The Continental army, not yet entirely inoculated against the vanity of hereditary honours, had founded a kind of perpetual society whose members were to wear a medal decorated with a blue and white ribbon, called the Order of the Cincinnati. Frenchmen were much amused and Horace Walpole described what Paris was saying: '*Diable! Saint Senatus! Voilà un plaisant saint! Qui est-ce qui en a entendu parler?*' The *dévots* referred to the *Vie des Saints*, and finding no such apostle in the Church's red book, they are very angry with Washington for encroaching on the Pope's prerogative of creating peers of the Upper House.' For Lafayette the new order, of which he was naturally a member, presented a pretty problem. His drawing-room was filled with gentlemen who had served America in this capacity and that, clamouring to be recommended for honours. Some, faithful to tradition in such matters, offered to pay for the decoration. Despite this boring worry, he does not seem to have felt that this craving for honours was 'enough to make an independent head sneeze'; on the contrary, he defended the interests of the Order against Adams and Jay, and tried to keep it as exclusive as possible that its dignity might be the greater.

Peace had at last given him the chance of settling his growing family. The Lafayettes left the Noailles mansion and set up for themselves in a magnificent house in the rue de Bourbon. The Declaration of Independence faced visitors who entered the house and turned half-right. If they turned half-left, they saw an

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empty space. It was reserved 'for the next declaration, the Declaration of French Rights.'

Adrienne was now separated from her mother who had been her constant attendant in her sorrows and anxieties, her constant nurse in her illnesses and confinements. 'Her tenderness saw to everything and sufficed for everything,' she wrote. The unusual society of her husband provided a different kind of comfort, and she began to worry about the father's influence on their eldest child. She considered it to be her duty 'to instruct her son in Christian doctrine and morals, and to make him love them.' Under these circumstances, would it not be best to separate him from his busy and queer-minded father? Would he not spoil the education she was planning. 'She thought the great affairs of my father,' wrote one of her daughters, 'might harm the education of her son.' So it was decided in the end to place him with a guardian in a separate house. The ideas which might be good for the world in general were best concealed from one who mattered to her far more than all the world. Besides he was indiscriminating in his tastes. It was all very well when he was talking of the emancipation of slaves and the buying of an estate in Cayenne for the purpose - she could co-operate with him in that, for was there not a chance of establishing a Christian mission as well? - or even about obtaining toleration for the persecuted Protestants of the kingdom, but when it came to membership of the Masonic Lodge of St. John of Scotland or to the support of charlatans like Cagliostro and Mesmer, it was a different matter altogether. The most unpleasant rumours, in particular, were being spread abroad about the physical and moral effects of the animal magnetism with which Mesmer was thrilling the capital. No doubt Lafayette's wealth and position enabled him to avoid the promiscuity of Mesmer's consulting room, in which patients, bound together by cords to make the current flow, were hanging on to iron rods projecting from a mysterious bath filled with iron filings and undergoing the 'crisis,' which made some of them spit, cough, experience local and general heat and drove others into convulsions. Lafayette was enthusiastic about it, and his certificate promising to keep the secrets of Mesmer still exists. He proposed to explain it all to Washington when they next met, presumably with the intention of starting American medicine on lines as emotional as her political creeds. When the king

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heard about this fad of Lafayette's, he asked him with that common sense which might have served him well in a less eminent vocation: 'And what do you think Washington will say when he hears that you have become first apothecary boy to Mesmer?' But fame plays odd tricks. Mesmerism is a common word in every European language to-day; Fayettism which once had a vogue is now unknown. Lafayette would not have liked that.

During these days he was planning his long projected visit to the United States. His acclamation as a hero of this world had not lasted very long; he longed for the greater acclamation which would greet him in the other. More insistent even than this was his desire to see his own hero again. Washington was resting at last, and in a famous letter he described to his French admirer the peaceful life he led: 'At length, my dear Marquis, I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac; and under the shadow of my own vine and fig-tree, free from the bustle of a camp, and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, in hopes of catching a gracious smile, can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk, and tread the paths of private life, with heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life until I sleep with my fathers.'

In the late summer of 1784, Lafayette having for the moment nothing to occupy him as soldier or statesman embarked on the *Courrier de New York* in the hopes of catching more than a gracious smile from his prince, the people of America.

We shall not follow his entry into New York, the city which he had so ardently wanted to see in time of war and at the head of his army, nor his progress through Albany, Boston, Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia. We can imagine it. He was to go through it again, and it will be more interesting to read of that second triumphal journey of a man glad to relive the glory of his

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youth after the dangers and disappointments of his revolutionary career. But two incidents stand out, the one for its curiosity, the other for its pathos, his journey to the Indians and his last farewell to Washington.

Behind the narrow provinces of the seaboard were the millions of acres, abounding in natural wealth, in which the Indians roamed. Friction with them was constant. Settlement of the Indian problem, that is, appropriation of the Indian lands, would be gradual. For the time it was most important to keep the peace by negotiation. Once before, Lafayette had visited some tribes. The French had treated them well, and since they saw in Lafayette an important member of the race which they regarded as their fathers, and since Lafayette saw in them 'the children of nature,' so beloved of eighteenth century writers, the visit had proved a great success. It was hoped that they would now remember 'the great Kaweyla,' as they called him, and he was easily persuaded to accompany the commissioners of Congress on their way to Fort Schuyler to negotiate with them. He took with him the *chargé d'affaires* in Philadelphia, Barbé-Marbois, a curious person always in the background of French history during this period, a letter of whose protesting against American territorial ambition had been one of the causes of America's suspicion of Vergennes during the peace negotiations. It is to this man, best remembered perhaps for Talleyrand's description of him 'a reed painted iron,' that we owe our knowledge of the journey.

On the way, the travellers were much gratified by a visit to a local colony of *Shakers*. The disciple of Mesmer was greatly interested in these elect whose convulsive movements not only during their services, but in ordinary intercourse, at meals, on horseback, during work in the fields, would have made a far greater stir in Paris than Mesmer's patients. He tried animal magnetism on them, but without results, perhaps they were under a cloud owing to the recent death of their foundress, the Elect Lady, who had been held to be immortal. A special vacancy had occurred in Heaven, they explained, and it happened that only the Elect Lady was worthy of filling it.

As they travelled they noticed how terribly the Indian raids had devastated the country. This impression of bleakness was strengthened by the bitter cold, and Lafayette, modern in every-

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thing, had to make use of his 'mackintosh,' a coat which he had covered with gum to keep out the cold. Unfortunately the gum had melted in transit, and the *Courrier de Paris* in which it had been packed was displayed on his back for all to read.

At length they reached Fort Schuyler where the representatives of six nations greeted them. The party had come with some alcohol and many bracelets, while Lafayette was armed with the fine speeches. In view of their tragic future history at the hands of the expanding white race, in the shape of speculators, officials, so-called missionaries, all claiming to act with the authority of the United States, Lafayette's words to them make sad reading:

'Listen to the advice of the great Kaweyla. Let my voice resound among all the nations, like that of the health-giving wind which in summer announces and precedes the rains. What have you gained, my children, what have you not lost by the quarrels of the people of the break of day (Europeans)? Be wiser than the white men and since the great council of the United States wishes to treat with you, profit from their good dispositions. Forget not that your brothers are the friends of the great Ononthio (the king of France). He has taken them by the hand; they hold out theirs to you to-day, take it and let us form a strong and shining chain. Until the day when we may smoke again the same pipe and sleep under the same bark, I wish you good health, successful hunting, union, abundance and the realization of all the dreams which promise you happiness.'

One of their chiefs, the great Grasshopper, answered that they would make peace with their American brothers for the sole reason that Ononthio was the friend of the United States. Alas, Ononthio was to perish as they were to perish, both victims of the all-devouring enlightenment of the people of the break of day. For his part, Lafayette acquired through this expedition a Red-Indian servant who gave valuable local colour to his *salon* in Paris on his return.

More important for him than this picturesque excursion was the fact that he was enjoying what proved to be his last opportunity of seeing Washington. Twice he stayed at Mount Vernon, that home which still stands as a monument not only of independence, but also of those two centuries of colonial civilization when were laid the foundations of a prosperity and liberty in many

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ways wider, but in as many more shallow than Washington would have thought possible.

The intercourse between these two men during the last six years had honoured both. It may be that the wealth and birth of the young French volunteer had been the first reason why Washington had treated him so differently from the rest of his countrymen, but this motive had soon given way to genuine admiration and affection. He had been the first to recognize his military skill, he had been the first to appreciate the unselfish idealism, the genuine love of freedom, the honest respect for the individual personality of men which lay behind the childish nationalism, the tawdry love of popularity and first rank, the hectic restlessness, the immature impetuosity of 'the Marquis'. Lafayette's life story will show that in many ways he lacked the quality of greatness, but Washington's faith in him during this period when his faults were so obvious is proof enough that he had it in him to be great. He was to be thrown into circumstances of which it may be said that in them no man was able to be successful and honest. Lafayette was to be honest and his ideals, if not his actions, were to be successful. Washington would not have disapproved of him.

On Lafayette's side, nothing could have been more admirable than the undeviating trust which a naturally ambitious and self-sufficient character reposed in an older and greater man. Few Americans shared this trust, and those who did were themselves the greatest. Time has completely justified them. More than once he admitted that he was lost without Washington, and certainly the rest of his life was the poorer for the separation. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that he owed all his political views to Washington and the Americans. He had come with his mind made up, and when he left American political life was quite undeveloped. He learned of the American constitution, as any other Frenchman did, at second-hand. Nevertheless Washington who knew the difference between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon temperament, between Catholic tradition and Protestant individualism, between an ancient, densely populated, many-classed monarchy and a republic of dispersed pioneers, grown up in the tradition of free political activity, would have warned him not to be too hasty in pinning up in his home next the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of French Rights.

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Now there was no time to learn more. The day of final parting had come. It was in Annapolis, the city to which Washington had sent the fateful order entrusting Lafayette with the defence of Virginia. Washington was to make his way to Mount Vernon, and the Presidency; Lafayette to Paris, the Revolution with the destiny of France in his hands. The parting was typical. A handshake and a brave smile from the old commander-in-chief, a fervent embrace and repeated promises to return again from the Marquis. A last wave from Washington, and the carriage moved off.

A few days later, Lafayette heard from him: 'In the moment of our separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all the love, respect and attachment for you which length of years, close connection, and your merits have inspired me. I have often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I should have of you. And though I wished to say, No, my fears answered, Yes. I called to mind the days of my youth, and found that they had long since fled to return no more. . . . These thoughts darkened the shades, and gave a gloom to the picture, and consequently to my prospect of seeing you again. But I will not repine, I have had my day.'

And Lafayette, from his cabin on board the *Nymphé* answered: 'I will return, again and again, under the roof of Mount Vernon; we will talk of old times. Adieu! Adieu!' And it was adieu.

Lafayette's education was completed.

PART TWO

PRACTICE

(1785-1797)

‘L’homme populaire a constamment voilé en lui l’homme privé.’
(DUC DE DODEAUVILLE).

‘Il est incorrigible, dites-vous. . . . Je l’avoue, ma chère princesse; livré à la plus violente des passions, cette liberté qui eut mes premiers vœux, qui a tant ballotté ma vie, est ici le perpétuel objet de mes méditations solitaires. C’est ce qu’une de mes amies appelait ma sainte folie. . . . Liberté, égalité, seront mes premiers et mes derniers mots. . . . Ah! comme ils ont été profanés!’

(LAFAYETTE, in a letter to PRINCESSE D’HÉNIN, 22/6/93).

CHAPTER I

‘THE LANGUAGE OF BOSTON’

(1785-1789)

‘Do not let your hopes be inflamed by our triumphs on this virgin soil. You will carry our sentiments with you, but if you try to plant them in a country that has been corrupt for centuries, you will encounter obstacles more formidable than ours. Our liberty has been won by blood. You will have to shed it in torrents before liberty can take root in the old world.’

These were the words with which Samuel Cooper, a well-known Whig preacher of Boston, bade farewell to the French troops serving in America. Lafayette anxious, as the Washington of the old world, to teach France ‘the language of Boston’ did not hear them. Had he done so he would not have paid much attention. ‘Men are born to be free,’ he wrote more accurately than Rousseau, and Frenchmen are men as much as Americans. All that can vary are the means of freeing them. He had but to concentrate on the way to adapt an ideal which possessed him before he ever went to America to the conditions of France.

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In every respect, France differed from America. The inequality of wealth and the rooted system of arbitrary taxation presented quite different problems from the sufficiently grave financial difficulties of a country of individualistic pioneers. The educated classes, debarred from living a political life, talked of nothing but politics – the exact opposite of British lands. The uneducated were so far outside the current of public life that Mercier, writing of the Paris he knew before 1789, could make the significant statement: 'Their approval is probably as much feared as their murmurings.' If we believe another contemporary, Chamfort, there were over seven million beggars in the kingdom at a time when to be a beggar and to be a criminal amounted to much the same. How could a Lafayette, one of the first to see that civil liberty depended on political liberty, fit the beggars and the peasants into a democratic system? 'The poor,' said Chamfort, 'are the negroes of Europe,' but the best of democrats can draw the line at colour (though Lafayette did not); they cannot draw it at poverty and lack of education. Furthermore, just as a communist state to-day is throttled by the capitalist states which surround it, so idealistic French institutions must contend with the diplomacy of princes only too ready to pounce on France weakened by feeding on the unfortifying diet of intellectual abstractions. In other words, a military problem inserted its jagged edge into the comfortable support of liberal, equalitarian and fraternal good-wishes. Finally, the character of the two peoples were antithetic: Anglo-Saxons, obeying laws, but suspicious of authority; Latins, ready to obey authority, but despising abstract law.

One thing Lafayette had in his favour, opportunity. The France to which he returned in January, 1785, was rapidly heading towards the public declaration of the bankruptcy which already existed. The yearly deficit was so great, despite the wealth in the country, that nothing but a radical overhaul of the system of public finance could avert a catastrophe. 'The figures about which these gentlemen speak,' said Rivarol to the astronomer Bailly, 'are really astronomical figures. We shall have in future to martial as many zeroes to calculate the budget as we need to establish the distance from Sirius to the Earth.' The *Parlement* while trying to figure as the centre of the opposition to the king was most determined to hinder any new form of taxa-

tion. It was as niggardly in spirit as the modern parliament is extravagant. Every other abuse can be disguised, but no State can for ever disguise the fact that it cannot pay its bills. Calonne, the new Minister of Finance, with his good looks, his easy, attractive manner, his ready wit, his gift for inspiring confidence, was desperately trying to run public business on the principle ‘that a man who wishes to borrow money must look rich and to look rich he must spend freely.’

It could not last. More money must be obtained, and the king, theoretically all-powerful, needed moral support. He was persuaded to have recourse to the expedient thought of by the first of his line, Henry IV. He must gather round him the chief men, the Notables, of the kingdom and persuade them to second him in the carrying through of a revolutionary reform in the finances. It was a dangerous policy, for it was the first admission for many generations that the king could not act without the consent of his subjects. It was a return to the Middle Ages; it was a step towards the nineteenth century. Between the two ideas the slowly built up authority of the kings of France was being crushed.

Lafayette was now nearing thirty, and he had shed a good deal of the youthful exuberance and simple vanity which his military adventures and the atmosphere of the young United States had encouraged. He had a definite place and definite responsibility in French society. He was no longer lost. His house in the rue de Bourbon had become the centre of American interests in France and of the group of reformers who held that Frenchmen would not be citizens until they governed themselves. Adrienne, now in the full bloom of her womanhood, had acquired the gift of being the perfect hostess, equally ready to receive the brightest lights of that society which Morris confessed to be the delight of life, to do the honours in her husband’s name to the numberless political visitors for whom the house was almost a club, or to be the life of intimate parties, encouraging her little daughter to sing a song in English for the benefit of the American minister, Jefferson.

His position enabled him to do more for American interests than her official representatives could, and he became their unofficial ambassador. Every Monday night he would meet the American colony and discuss with them the development of the American constitution and the way to promote their economic interests in the old world.

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In the Constitution he would criticize two points: the omission of a declaration of rights and the 'considerable powers accorded to the president'.

A declaration of rights, was, as we shall see, the primary article of his political faith. To us who have watched such declarations springing up throughout a century and more, only to be swept aside by the cold wind of reality, such a faith seems simple and even fatuous. At the time it had its serious critics. Mirabeau, politically astute and with a genuine passion for the interests of the people, but lacking any conception of a moral order, was saying: 'I cannot even conceive of what practical utility would be a declaration which does not indicate the applications of the principles it declares, since everyone will understand in his own way maxims out of which private interests will draw at their own will the most false consequences.' An aristocrat watching the ruin of a world in which he had been the objective of other men's duties could see its one-sidedness: 'If they had begun by making known the duties of man to society, France would not have suffered so many disasters.' But Lafayette and the democrats of the eighteenth century had not only to make democracy, they had to give reasons why democracy *ought* to be. They were attacking a system whose strength lay in the length of its roots. All they could oppose to it was a moral, even a religious strength, and religion needs a creed, all the more effective if it happens to be true. As de Bonald was to say: 'When morals are lost, they must be written down before they can be recovered.' Lafayette was already thinking beyond the needs of America.

His criticism of the powers of the President, on the other hand, indicates the fatal weakness in his own mind. He had no idea how to fit a strong authority into a liberal state. Had he read more, or had he disliked England less, he might have seen his weakness sooner, for the secret lay in the British constitution. Brought up under a system the faults of which appeared to be due to the irresponsible power of the monarch, he naturally wished to deprive him of as much authority as he could. Since his ministers were only responsible to him, their power had also to be cut down. The result was not liberty but anarchy. In the words of one historian 'he prevented royalty from living properly and the republic from overthrowing royalty.' That was the unfortunate result of being an amateur. But his contemporaries had no better alternatives.

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America's commercial interests gave him an introduction to the mysteries of money and economics. He himself had spent money as he needed it, and sold his capital when he ran short. One of his first actions on returning was to sell a large estate in Brittany. As Jefferson's spokesman in the *Comité du Commerce* which Calonne appointed, he obtained an understanding of economic affairs which his detractors have overlooked. America then was the debtor nation and France the land of prohibitive tariffs. Jefferson, the American, argued as we argue to-day. How could America be expected to pay her debts without the facility for additional exports? 'It is France's interest as well as ours, to multiply the means of payment. These must be found in the catalogue of our exports and among them will be seen neither silver nor gold. We have no mines of either of these metals. Produce is therefore all we can offer.' Unanswerable then as now, but at least Lafayette obtained three free ports for America and the abolition of many taxes interfering with the trade of the two nations.

These activities might help America; they had no effect on the troubles of his own country. The latter now called for his services. Aware of the part he would have to play in the coming struggle, he spent the summer of 1786 in his native Auvergne, arranging the purchase of a large estate. It was whispered that he was aiming at becoming a duke. A French duke was a man apart, for dukes alone were hereditary peers of the realm. Almost anyone might with impunity call himself a marquis, but even the extraordinary abuse of titles did not extend to dukedoms. It was also said that he was angling for a marshal's baton. It is possible that both rumours were true, since these honours would greatly increase the effectiveness of his opposition. He realized that when the questions of nominating the Notables was in the air. Saint-Priest, Minister of State, tells us that he wanted even to be a sovereign! Sovereign of something east of Suez which he could conquer for France in his spare time. For the moment he had to be content with the homage of his native province. Mounted already on the white horse which was to share in the legend of its master, he rode through the cheering people of his new estate.

The nomination to the Assembly of Notables brought him to earth. The Assembly was to be composed of the princes of the blood, bishops, great lords, representatives of the *Parlements*, pro-

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vincial officials. Neither in virtue of his rank nor of his age could he expect nomination. Moreover the language of Boston did not help him. He pressed hard for it, just as he had pressed for his command in America. Calonne put him on the list. There was a howl of annoyance. His name was struck off. Finally he persuaded Calonne to have him re-nominated. The pillars of the *ancien régime* had good reason to be furious.

So in December, 1786, he left Paris to take rooms with his fellow Notables in the Palace of Versailles, unable as he had hoped to 'get in' a little voyage to the Crimea.

Everybody was happy. All would now be plain sailing. Louis who had inherited little from the Bourbon side was only too anxious to share responsibility. 'I did not sleep last night,' he told Calonne, 'but it was through happiness.'

But it is from the opening of the Assembly of Notables that the French Revolution should be dated. For the first time the real state of the kingdom was officially admitted by the king. With that admission went the admitted need for the kind of reform which no living Frenchman was strong enough to carry through.

Little that was said during the next five years added to the disastrous picture revealed in Calonne's opening speech. An enormous deficit was admitted. The inadequacy of ordinary remedies was pointed out. 'What is left wherewith to fill a terrifying void? Abuses? Yes, gentlemen, it is in the abuses themselves that a fund of wealth to which the State has a *right* is to be found. The proscription of abuses alone can furnish the one means of aiding us in our needs. The abuses we are referring to now and which must be abolished for the good of the nation are the greatest, the most sheltered, those whose roots are the deepest and whose branches are the most far-spreading.' The orators of the National Assembly did not speak more emphatically. The Notables were shocked. But on the pretext that the ministry had already concocted all their plans without consulting their advice, they made every difficulty possible. Lafayette was no less opposed to Calonne who had obtained his nomination. But he had a better reason. He insisted that no aid should be given the king until certain constitutional reforms had been accepted. In this way he was the first to link the Assembly with the Revolution. At the same time, true to the judgment of a contemporary: 'He is the most dangerous, for his logic lies wholly in action,' he loudly supported the

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denunciations of the president of the Chamber of Accounts of royal fiscal abuses. The king was so furious that he insisted that no one should say such things unless he was prepared to write them down and sign the paper. Lafayette asked for nothing better. He came next day with his paper, and to the amazement of those around, he quoted chapter and verse of certain scandalous gifts to favourites. The later revelations of the famous *livre rouge* hardly made more stir. ‘I ask why ministers of finance suggest to the king transactions which, being entirely useless for himself, can only be meant to profit individuals. I could ask, as well, why they make him buy estates, when the general opinion is that he ought to be selling those he possesses? . . . And since this open document signed by myself is to be sent to His Majesty, I repeat with double confidence my reflection that these wasted millions are raised by taxes, that taxes cannot be justified unless they are applied to the true needs of the State, that these millions eaten away by depredations and cupidity are the fruit of the sweat, the tears, maybe the very blood of the people, and finally, that the reckoning of misery caused by the raising of these sums so thoughtlessly spent is a terrifying reflection on the justice and goodness which we know to be the natural feelings of His Majesty.’

Such language in 1787 was naturally associated with *lettres de cachet* and the Bastille. Calonne, it was said, was thinking of it. But he had become too unpopular, and the next session was under the presidency of France’s last cardinal minister, Loménie de Brienne.

Lafayette was preparing to drop his most formidable bomb. It was the simple suggestion that the king should convoke a national Assembly at the end of five years.

‘What, Sir, you ask for the convocation of the States-General?’ interposed the brother of the king.

‘Yes, my lord, and more than that.’

‘You tell me that you wish me to write and bring to the king these words: “M. de Lafayette moves that the States-General be convoked,”?’ the Comte de Provence insisted.

‘Yes, my lord.’

After the first consternation, people merely laughed and shrugged their shoulders. A States-General had not been convoked for generations, but a National Assembly, a representation of the

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whole nation in one chamber, was unheard of. It is possible that Lafayette let slip the expression, National Assembly, by mistake, and then made the most of it. The fact remains that only two years later the States-General were convoked, and after a few weeks they turned themselves into the National Assembly.

Meanwhile he made the most of his opportunities to work for his other cherished schemes, emancipation of slaves and Protestants. The persecution of the latter had weakened with the prevalence of free-thought. In Paris, a sixth of the population was reputed to be Protestant, but though they were not allowed any churches, they were not interfered with. On the other hand in certain provinces, the spirit, if not the letter of the law, was maintained. Soon after his return from America, Lafayette had visited Nîmes, the capital of Protestant-land, and saw Paul Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, one of their leading pastors and vowed to the cause of emancipation. The French Protestants were not only excellent citizens but conservative in their views. They had done little to reinforce the legend that social regeneration was the outcome of the Reformation. Even Rabaut who was later to be a light of the National Assembly – when his doctrinal rigorism had been somewhat softened by contact with the Parisian world – was preaching curious words like these: ‘If there should appear on the earth a hand bold enough and powerful enough to overturn thrones, break sceptres, destroy laws, smash the useful bonds of subordination and reduce man to the state of equality which has never existed, what a sad spectacle our unhappy country will present!’ But even such safe political views did not satisfy the Gallican clergy. On Lafayette’s own confession, it was only the support of the broad-minded Bishop of Langres that enabled his motion in the Notables ‘that civil state be restored to Protestants’ to be heard. The bishop told the Assembly that while Lafayette spoke as a philosopher, he would support him as a theologian: ‘I prefer temples to mere preaching, clergy to talkers.’ Lafayette in his turn appealed to the clergy itself: ‘The clergy penetrated with the high principle which the fathers of the Church gloried in professing will doubtless applaud such an act of justice.’ Unfortunately they thought he was trying to be sarcastic, and deleted the words from the records. But he got part of his way, for the Protestants, though not yet allowed liberty of worship or the right to many offices, were, as it has been put, ‘allowed to live’.

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Lafayette was delighted to be able to write to Washington: ‘You will understand how happy I was, last Sunday, to be able to introduce to the ministerial table the first Protestant Churchman who has been able to appear at Versailles since the revocation of 1685.’

It was a minor episode in his full life, but not the least worthy to be remembered by posterity.

In May, 1785, the Notables who had accomplished little were dismissed. They had made the kind of beginning which loudly calls for more. Among the good consequences of their work, Lafayette numbered ‘the habit of thinking about public affairs,’ in the France of that day, a revolutionary habit. In particular nothing had been done to ease the quarrel between the king and the *Parlement* which persistently refused to register his decrees. That was why Lafayette was statesmanlike in his insistence on constitutional changes before the king was granted more money. As things were, both king and *Parlement* were in false positions. The *Parlement* was able to gain public support by refusing to register the new taxes, ostensibly on the ground that the money would be wasted by royal prodigality. The king therefore was unable to persuade the country that only by such a reformation of taxation could the country itself be saved. The result was an incessant flow of protests, riots, disturbances all over the country. ‘The Assembly has put fire to much combustible matter,’ wrote Lafayette to Washington. It was true in every sense.

Working for his policy which in practice came to the same thing as the cry by which America had obtained her liberty, ‘No taxation without representation,’ he toured his native province and enjoyed the ovation which always greets the man who is in favour of saving his fellows’ purse.

Continual revolts and demonstrations, many of which Lafayette blessed, were the cause of a continued social unrest which set free the passions of that lowest stratum of the population, men who had nothing to lose by revolution. And this lawlessness, in its turn, worked its way upwards to the more settled classes, so that by the time the Revolution broke out, Morris could write: ‘I own to you that I am not without such apprehensions, for there is one fatal principle which pervades all ranks. It is a perfect indifference to the violation of all engagements . . . The great mass of the people have no religion but their priests, no law but

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their superiors, no morals but their interests.' This spirit might help the Lafayettes now; it would break them later.

At the time when he was blithely writing to Washington: 'As for me, I ardently hope to obtain a bill of rights and a constitution, and I earnestly wish that they may be obtained as far as possible in a calm way, and satisfactory for all concerned,' placards were being put up in Paris with legends like 'Tremble, tyrants, your reign will soon be over' or 'A Parliament for sale, Ministers to be hanged, a crown to be let.' It still wanted two years to the Revolution. Louis, for his part, was often seen to be quietly crying.

In the summer of 1788, it was decided to have recourse to Lafayette's remedy, the calling of the States-General, for the first time in nearly two hundred years. A few days later the payment of the national debt was suspended. Another few days, and Necker, the honest banker, was recalled to the ministry of finance to make the last attempt to save a bankrupt, rotting system by the virtues of strict book-keeping.

Lafayette was back in his rooms in the palace of Versailles, for the Notables had been re-assembled to decide about the way the States-General should be convoked and should behave. 'We shall see in that assembly some strange meetings,' he prophesied.

Under the stress of crisis, the real character of the great majority of the Notables was revealed. They were firmly determined to grant as little as possible to the *Tiers* or Commons. From the latter's point of view, it was all-important that their deputies should equal the deputies of the Nobility and the Clergy put together, else they would be in a perpetual minority. Furthermore they demanded that decisions in the States-General should depend on the votes of all the deputies and not on the decisions of the three Houses taken separately. Everybody knew that the coming fight would be between the people and the privileged bodies; unless these demands were acceded to, it would always be two-to-one against the Commons. Only one bureau of the Notables voted for the double representation of the Commons, and that one did so by accident, for an old gentleman had fallen asleep during the discussion and gave a casting vote without knowing for what he was voting. But the force of that public opinion which in times of national crisis needs no constitutional permission for its expression had grown so strong that the king

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disregarded the Notables and allowed the double representation of the Commons, only to find, so it was said, that someone had meanwhile hung up a portrait of Charles I in his study. After the decision had been made public, a nobleman accosted Lafayette and said: ‘Well, you ought to be glad; the king is granting you an important point.’ ‘Oh! that is nothing,’ the latter answered, ‘we shall take him further than that.’ The more serious question of the method of voting was left to the States-General itself to thrash out.

During the last winter of the *ancien régime*, he was back in Auvergne busily electioneering. He had had to make up his mind whether he would sit for the Noblesse or the Commons. The moderates in their ‘Constitutional Club’ were in favour of leavening the upper houses with as many liberals as possible, and this opinion was reinforced in his own case by pique. ‘The infamous persecution which I have suffered from Parisian circles,’ he wrote, ‘makes it a kind of duty for me to triumph in spite of it.’ As the representatives of the nobles who hated him he would break them. It was to prove a bad mistake, for instead of breaking them, his pique made him their temporary slave. As a result it was not he, but Mirabeau, more blessed in his sins than Lafayette in his virtues, who had the opportunity of leading the opposition in the Commons, for they had elected him after his rejection by the nobility as too infamous a person to be a noble representative. To secure election Lafayette had to pledge himself to obey the instructions of the nobility which were, of course, diametrically opposed to his own views; he had in fact to swear that they could have his head, if he broke his promise. The thought that ‘the people will have friends enough in their own house’ could not have been of very substantial consolation when he realized that his headstrongness had put him in a false position. His confessor, had he had one, would have told him that the pride of a Lafayette was a worse vice than the lust of a Mirabeau.

Elected at length by 198 votes against 195, he returned to Paris in April, 1788. Though the winter had been severe, the country on the whole was more quiet than it had been. The *cahiers* which contained the deputies’ instructions seem to have been very moderate in tone. Though an occasional one would contain an ominous threat such as ‘if the king refuses our demands, we give power to un-king (*déroiter*) him,’ there was no mandate

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for a republic. It was from the disorderly element in the towns, the unemployed, the criminals and the beggars that the authorities expected trouble. In Paris the elections were being held later than in the provinces, during one of the periodic dearths of bread. That terrible cry, 'Bread! We demand bread,' which recurs like a *motif* during the Revolution was being heard. The merchants were being accused of cornering the flour, and even Necker was unjustly suspected of trying to restore the finances by making profits in this iniquitous way. Up till now riots had not been directed against persons or private property, but on April 27th, a motley crowd of beggars, vagabonds, hungry poor took advantage of a rumour that a rich bourgeois, Réveillon, had spoken slightly of the people to pillage his house. The owner just escaped being the first to swing *à la lanterne*. It is significant that the first to be attacked was not a noble but a rich merchant. The famous word *canaille* was not directed against nobles as such, but against the rich. That was the aspect of the Revolution which Lafayette and the other theorists could not understand. The spirit of cruelty, egged on by hunger, was abroad; it gave an edge to the sentiments of liberty and fraternity. That edge has not yet been blunted.

Meanwhile Lafayette was hard at work with his friend Jefferson devising schemes for the free and honest government of the country, while the government was concentrating as many troops as possible in the capital in case of further outbreaks. Jefferson, abusing to some extent his position as American minister, was suggesting to him a scheme for the States-General truly American in its main feature, the buying out of the king by granting him a much increased income. Together they drafted and redrafted a European declaration of rights – and who should know more about such matters than the author of the declaration of independence? From Jefferson's Lafayette would go to Morris. He found it harder to follow the views of this cynical conservative of the old American school who was to feed Washington with news throughout the Revolution. Morris, who the evening before had probably been making the most of the charm of his one leg before some gay Parisian lady, would tell him that if he understood his business he should be more of an aristocrat than his fellow nobles, since only the maintenance of privilege could guarantee France against the tyranny he hated, whether it came from the

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king or from the people. But Morris was not only a cynic: he was a shrewd politician, and during the Revolution he was always ready to button-hole Lafayette and tell him exactly what he ought to do. Most of the advice went in at one ear and came out at the other, for the American had become a French aristocrat, and the French aristocrat was speaking the language of Boston. One piece of advice he received just before the Revolution he did follow: it was to talk but rarely in the Assembly, reserving his personality and his voice for the important occasions.

The great day was drawing near, and the high world of Paris was drifting to Versailles. The Lafayettes were soon there, Adrienne, as quiet and thoughtful as ever, Lafayette, already smiling that perpetual smile of self-confidence, as though thinking, in the words of a contemporary: ‘Fear nothing; I am here,’ and wearing a sash with the tree of liberty rising from a broken crown and sceptre. They were constant figures in the salon of their aunt, Madame de Tessé, the most advanced of the great ladies who pulled political wires. But at the moment, Versailles was not so interested in the lords and ladies as in the ever more frequent groups of shy, plainly dressed strangers from the provinces, lawyers, mayors, officials, farmers, tradespeople, curates, even a peasant in his Breton costume, who while waiting to become the sovereign legislators of the kingdom of France, were seeing the sights of the town.

CHAPTER II

‘IN A GREAT ADVENTURE’

(1789)

NATURE conspired with man to make the last great pageant of the *ancien régime* an imperishable memory. A bright, clear sun of early summer picked out the colours of the beautiful city freshened by the night's rain. It was a perfect setting for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, a procession more brilliant than any man could remember. Through the blue and gold uniforms of the guards walked the representatives of France, the nobles in lace and cloth of gold, the commons in black, the prelates in scarlet and purple. Behind the canopy came the king and queen with their attendants, little dreaming of the procession which was destined to take place just four months later, still less of that final procession in little more than three years when the king himself would be the victim carried to sacrifice.

On the next day, Tuesday, May 5th, the States-General were opened by the king in person. The *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, a hall familiar enough to Lafayette, for it had been the meeting-place of the Notables, was used for the occasion. Morris had arrived early and was able to enjoy ‘from a cramped position’ the sight of the deputies arriving. Necker was applauded, so was the Duke d’Orléans, so too was a singular bishop who had lived long in his diocese; but Mirabeau was hissed, and silence greeted the queen. Lafayette presumably came in unnoticed.

Amid cheers, the king rose to make his opening speech. Louis with all his goodness was the last man to be able to rise to such an occasion. Twice already he had unwittingly irritated some of the Commons by keeping them waiting for a long time. ‘An individual has no right to keep a nation waiting,’ said some far-seeing grumbler. The king’s halting words informed the deputies that he was the judge of what they ought to discuss. Even so he was applauded. Awkwardly he took his hat off, then, not certain what to do he put it on again, only to decide finally to remain

uncovered. Two more dull and badly delivered speeches from the Treasury and the first day was over. For the first time the queen was cheered as she left.

The next day, the three houses met separately, Lafayette unwillingly following the nobles; Mirabeau happily joining the Commons. The Commons had been unwisely left in the original hall. They took it as the hint it was not meant to be. Planted on the spot, it was for the others to join them or to disregard them. The little band of liberal nobles proposed that their house join the Commons, but they could only muster 47 votes, and Lafayette, bound by his foolish promise to his electors, was not among the forty-seven. His old persecutors did not fail to remind him of his oath. The smile for once turned into an angry scowl and he walked out of the room. Jefferson sympathized, but Lafayette knew that his pride had ruined his chances of leadership at the most important moment of his career. As day followed day, more nobles and clergy went over to the opposition, but he, the keenest of them all, had to sit tight in his false position. His memoirs and correspondence are unusually silent about these first weeks of the States-General.

On June 12th, a memorable day, three curés left the House of the Clergy and crossed to the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*. The next day, nine more. It was enough to decide the Commons. On the 17th, they declared themselves to be the National Assembly, in defiance of king, nobles and clergy. ‘Did the United States wait for the sanction of the king of England?’ shouted a deputy. And Lafayette was not there even to listen to so Fayetteist a sentiment! The next day the clergy followed their humble leaders, but the nobles, exploding with anger, took to gesticulating with drawn swords. The king, suffering from a spasm of nervous rigidity after days of nervous hesitation, made up his mind, as soon as it was too late, to order the three houses to meet separately. Turned out of their hall on some paltry excuse, the Commons, on the advice of Dr. Guillotin, assembled at the Tennis Court, and vowed not to separate until they had given France a constitution. Mirabeau saw his chance of a gesture the dramatic character of which would catch the eye of every future generation. When the Master of Ceremonies asked the Commons to follow the other orders after the king’s formal speech ordering them to separate, he rolled his great fleshy body right up to the unfortunate official

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and, his sunken eyes blazing with anger, he, according to one tradition, contented himself with one short, unprintable, word; according to another, he spoke the famous words: 'Tell your master that only bayonets will force us out of here.' That heavy, inert, unwieldy mass, the people of France, had been given the push which it needed to start it rolling down the hill of revolution.

The nobles began to join the Commons, and Lafayette was free to deliberate, if not to vote, with the new sovereign and revolutionary National Constituent Assembly. He was thinking of resigning in order to free himself of his promise. It would have been better had he done so, but he eased his conscience with the reflection that no one knew what was going to happen in the future, that, at all events, he was ready to die with the Commons, and that 'after having contributed to the liberty of another world, he could not limit himself to be the pawn of the electorate of the Auvergne nobility.'

At this critical time, there was a real danger that he would find no setting to show off his brilliance. In so far as he stood for anything definite, it was for republicanism, and no one was really thinking of a republic. The alternative was a constitutional monarchy, but that to Lafayette meant England with her hereditary peerage, her archaic traditions, her unrepresentative House of Commons. Nor had he any sympathy with the Orleanists who only wished to substitute a king favourable to their private interests for a king on whom no one could count. They were already sounding him, but they could get nothing out of him except the words: 'I only care about liberty, and, since a king is still needed, the present one seems to be as good as anyone else.' He admitted that he disliked the company of politicians, and therefore the Assembly, apart from his own equivocal position in it, did not fit in with his talents.

In this depressed mood he attended the July 4th dinner given by Jefferson and refreshed himself at the sources of honest, simple democracy. Four days later he made his maiden speech. It took him a step nearer the setting for which he was seeking. Troops were being concentrated in Paris owing to the unrest. The Assembly chose to believe that they were intended for a *coup d'état* by which the Assembly would be dismissed. Hence there were loud demands that the safety of the city should be entrusted

to a civilian militia. Lafayette supported these demands, for a militia would give him that direct contact with the people which he believed to be the essence of real revolution. Buoyed up by this forward step, he felt able to make his bid for leadership. It was the right moment to submit to the Assembly ‘his manifesto, his ultimatum, the fruit of his past life, his pledge for the future, his constant vocation, the “First European Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens”.’ As we have seen, he had been working at it for a long time in company with Jefferson. Here it was for France and the world to read: ‘Nature has made men free and equal; distinctions necessary to the social order are based on general utility only. Every man is born with inalienable and imprescriptible rights, such as the right to the liberty of his opinions, the care of his honour and his life, the right to property (Jefferson wanted to cross that out, but Lafayette insisted on retaining it), the entire disposition of his person . . .’ and so the catalogue of sonorous abstractions which, none the less, challenged a thousand years of history, went on. ‘Fine words do not make a revolution,’ commented Morris when he read it, but in this case they made Lafayette, for the declaration was printed and circulated all over Paris during the critical days which preceded the fall of the Bastille.

The propertied citizens were in terror, praying for more Bastilles rather than desiring the fall of that almost empty fortress. Under the stress of imminent danger, they were volunteering to form themselves into a militia. The king’s foolish dismissal of Necker seemed to be a confirmation of the rumour that the troops were going to be used against the middle-classes as well as the ne’er-do-wells. It was a good enough excuse for a demagogue to rouse the latter to action. We need not relate the well-known events of those terrible days, the pillaging, robbing, burning by an army of ‘wild beasts’, the sinister tocsin calling the volunteers to the defence of man and property, the admirable restraint of the royal troops, the seizure of arms, the taking of the Bastille, the bleeding heads raised aloft on pikes to the delight of the monsters and, through some mysterious contagion of blood lust, of many respectable citizens – for Lafayette was not there. His Rights of Man had helped to add to the confusion of a city whose inhabitants hardly knew for what they were fighting. But he remained at Versailles, the elected Vice-President of the Assembly

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which had decided to sit night and day during the crisis. Impotently, but with a certain stoical heroism, the deputies went on with their talking while they knew that a few miles away Paris and with Paris the real France that mattered was reducing laws and constitution-making to so much waste of breath. When they faltered and turned their frightened eyes to the north-east, Lafayette kept them to the mark: 'It is the duty of the Assembly not to interrupt its labours, but to continue them with the calmness of that courage which circumstances must not be allowed to alter.' And so they went on arguing about whether the Declaration of Rights should or should not precede the constitution. Messengers from Paris came in from time to time with the latest news. But the time was not wasted. By being kept at work in Versailles, the deputies never witnessed the real nature of the riots. Thus they were able when it was all over to keep up the pretence. The 'disaster' of the previous day had changed overnight into the glorious legend of July 14th. The people of Paris instead of rising to defend their property against brigands had risen against tyranny and conquered it. The Bastille, as it happened the most comfortable prison in France, had fallen. Paris, after it had recovered from its fright was glad enough to accept all the credit of the mob's work. Was not its volunteer guard and its commune born on that day. '*Le peuple a fait justice.*' Such too was Lafayette's sincere belief throughout his life. With the simple logic of one who had not seen what happened, whose revolutionary career had been made through that day, and who was to be responsible for the maintenance of order in every subsequent riot, he held that it was 'the last insurrection that was necessary, the last which he had willed.'

On the morning of the 15th, Lafayette in his quality of Vice-President was to lead a large deputation to the king, but Louis unexpectedly appeared in person and promised to recall the troops. King, Assembly, people fell into one another's arms. Even an old woman managed to embrace her sovereign as he was accompanied back to the palace to be greeted there by the band of the Swiss Guards playing: '*Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?*' The deputation went instead to Paris to carry the good news of the king's reconciliation with the people. They had to force their way through the cheering crowds, through the bayonets, scythes, pikes with which the militia had armed itself.

At last they reached the Hôtel de Ville where the electors of Paris awaited them. Lafayette had rid himself of the shackles of a deliberative assembly. He was no longer one among twelve hundred others. He was the people's man.

Every inch of space was filled when he rose to speak. Here was an audience to suit his style of oratory. He knew how to turn a phrase so that its meaning should be obscured and its emotional effect be heightened. While they punctuated every sentence with shouts of ‘*Vive le roi!*’ ‘*Vive la nation!*’ he congratulated them on the liberty they gained by their courage, on the great efforts the citizens of Paris had made. ‘The king was deceived,’ he continued, ‘but he is no longer deceived. He knows our misfortunes, and he knows them in order to put an end to them. Coming, as I do, to carry to you his words of peace, I trust, gentlemen, that I shall be able to take back to him that peace of which his heart has such need.’

Amid frantic enthusiasm, the electors and the crowd hailed him as their commander, the commander of their militia, the National Guard. He with a gesture as characteristic of his chivalrous, romantic nature as Mirabeau's hissed insult had been of his direct, personal passion, solemnly drew his sword and swore by it to die, if need be, for the preservation of that precious liberty whose defence had just been entrusted to him. A moment later, the worthy astronomer Bailly, the surprised embodiment of bourgeois honesty, was acclaimed the first mayor of Paris. And so by a spontaneous act of an unconstitutional assembly, the military and civil chiefs of Paris, of France itself, for Paris on such occasions is France, were appointed. In a moment, Lafayette became the most important man in the kingdom, the commander of the armed forces of the people. The king had no option but to recognize the *fait accompli*. But Lafayette with that scrupulous honesty which was always most in evidence when he had done something unconstitutional took every care to be duly elected by the sixty *arrondissements* of the capital.

Everyone thought that the Revolution was over. The new mayor confessed that he was drunk with unexpected joy, a joy which put an end to his most cruel anxieties. The Commons had triumphed over the privileged bodies; the people of Paris had taken advantage of the insurrection to become their own masters in the capital. The Assembly, supported by the people, had but

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to make themselves a free, monarchic constitution with the blessing of the undeceived Louis. All that was required was unity of purpose and self-control. The factious, whether reactionary nobles, intriguing Orleanists, or popular demagogues, would be swept aside by the controlled weight of national France. Lafayette found himself in the position of the responsible agent of that self-control of an emancipated people. It all sounds very well on paper, but the kind of task he had ahead of him may be judged by his own reflections, written on July 16th: 'It is necessary that I should remain here for the people in its delirium can only be kept quiet by myself. Forty thousand souls assemble, the excitement is at its height; I appear, and a word from me disperses them. I have already saved the lives of six persons who were to be hanged in different quarters; but this maddened people will not listen to me always. My position is unlike anyone else's; I am king in Paris, but it is over an angry people, the victim of abominable cabals.' If the revolutionary experiment was to be immediately justified, Lafayette had to grow order out of disorder. He could not command ill-organized volunteer guards, as one commands an army, nor did he want to; he wanted authority to spring from their own liberty; he wanted them to command themselves. Moreover, as must always happen on such occasions he had to fight the less scrupulous leaders who had set themselves the easier business of flattering the people in order to obtain irresponsible power for themselves; he had to fight the opposition with their parrot cry that order must be kept before everything and at all costs; he soon had to fight the impatient revolutionaries, some of whom, like Duport, the Lameths, Barnave, wished to attain the same end as himself by the organization of revolutionary clubs which would control and, if necessary, over-ride the clumsy, slow-moving legislators of the National Assembly; above all he had to fight the elusive king who one day would be on his side and, on the next, in the hands of his bitterest enemies. An impossible ideal, no doubt, but it is well to remember that it was the pure ideal of democratic self-government which for over a century the world has made its own. Lafayette was experimenting with the self-governing force of the human being.

The first experiment was heart-breaking. Within a week of his appointment, a certain old man, Foullon, was dragged from his home by the mob for supposedly cornering wheat. The rumour

spread that he had said: ‘The people ought to be happy enough to be given straw to eat.’ A frenzied crowd, filled, as Lafayette himself relates, with indescribable rage, brought the wretched man to the Hôtel de Ville. Lafayette happened to be away, and the people were about ‘to do justice’ when the commander appeared. He had to fight for justice and his own authority, as the agent of the people’s authority. There was a sudden hush when he appeared, and he rose to speak: ‘I am known to you all; you have made me your commander . . . I must speak to you with all the liberty and frankness for which I am known . . . I insist that the law be respected, that law without which there can be no liberty, without which I could not have shared in the revolution of the old world, without which I cannot share in this revolution. I command that the man be taken to the prison of St. Germain for trial.’ His words made some impression, and those around him were inclined to obey, but the mob outside was still howling, and neither Lafayette nor those near him could make themselves heard. Three times Lafayette rose to speak. For minutes the grim fight between a man and a mob for the life of an old man continued. At last the force of will seemed to cow the blood-thirsty ruffians. Some began to applaud the commander’s words. He was twisting out of them the best that was in them. Suddenly someone saw the idiotic Foullon join in the clapping, and shouted: ‘Look! The two have got an understanding!’ The words were more effective than all Lafayette’s eloquence and will-power. Foulon’s fate was sealed. The old man was seized, dragged out and butchered. To make matters worse, Bertier, Foullon’s son-in-law, was fetched and hacked to death by a hundred sword blows. In the evening the drunken wretches crowded round the pikes which carried their heads, and, as the bleeding remains knocked together, they shouted coarsely: ‘Kiss papa! Kiss papa!’ Morris saw them from afar; his comment was terse: ‘Gracious God! What a people!’

Lafayette learned more about human nature on that day of defeat than on any of his many days of triumph. He seemed broken. His vision of the regenerated mankind, of the reign of light and reason, of rights and constitutions, was clouded over by the blood of Foullon. If he could not make the people control themselves it was not his job to control them against their will. That was for others. He must be obeyed freely or not at all. ‘The

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people have not listened to my advice, and the day on which they fail in their trust in me, I must leave a post in which I can no longer be of use.' But he knew quite well that he wanted to keep the post – that was his weakness – and he firmly believed that there was no hope, if the people could not govern themselves – that was his strength – so he yielded to a universal demand. On condition and on condition only that every elector should swear most solemnly to maintain justice and public order, he decided to carry on.

The massacre of Foullon and Bertier was the first act of tri-coloured Frenchmen, for only a day or two before the mayor had presented the king with the red and blue cockade, the colours of Paris and the colours of the new régime. Lafayette, remembering that they were also the colours of the dangerous Duke of Orléans, had the happy idea of adding white, the national colour of the *ancien régime*. When it was his duty to present to the municipality the proposed plan of organization of the National Guard, he brought with it his new cockade, blue, white and red, and, with prophetic inspiration, he said: 'I bring you a cockade which will go the round of the world, and an institution both civil and military which will triumph over the ancient tactics of Europe, which will conquer arbitrary governments who do not imitate our example, which will overthrow them, if they dare to do so.' Democracy and nationalism, the key-notes of the modern State! The history of modern France! For once at least, Lafayette had struck home, but his whole life was a less happy expression of the same sentiments.

The organization of the National Guard was his most solid contribution to the new France. It was detailed, wearing work reminding him of the organization of that little army in Virginia, when something efficient had to be created out of nothing. Here were a mass of willing citizens of every rank, some of the old *Gardes françaises*, hard-headed, independent, spirited men, and many were deserters from the royal regiments. They had to be made into the bulwark of a precarious law and order. From experience in America, he knew that gentlemen made the best officers and that old soldiers, properly paid, could form a strong nucleus around which new volunteers could cling. But he was fighting the levelling spirit which demanded absolute equality even in an army. The citizens were jealous of the paid companies which were

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the real strength of each of the sixty battalions. It was not long, however, before the amateurs were glad enough to sacrifice their pride and leave the hard work and the pay to the professionals. The ‘*mot*’ went round that the guard was like the rainbow, coming out just after the storm was over. Despite the difficulties, the force gradually took shape, the blue, white and red uniforms were issued, the flags were given and solemnly blessed, the general pranced about on his white horse, the symbol of autonomous law in a land of liberty. It was hard and never-ceasing work. At any moment he might be called to suppress a riot in some part of the city; at another he was fetched to encourage the weaker brethren who, as he confessed himself, would not mount guard in the rain. Even the officers had to be encouraged by a ‘doctored’ recital of his own past experiences: ‘Parisians are sick of serving? Let me remind them of the sufferings experienced by the Americans to safeguard their liberty. They left their homes, their wives, their children for seven years. They were without shelter, without clothes, without bread . . . I swear to you on my honour that for seven years I never heard one real complaint on the part of an American.’

The Foulon incident was soon forgotten. He was in the midst of real work. Walpole in England was already writing that ‘M. de la Fayette governs France instead of their King.’ M. de Ferrières, a nobleman of common sense whose lately published letters give a precious picture of Paris seen through the eyes of an educated man with no axe to grind, was already putting his trust in the strength and honesty of Lafayette. For two years his letters re-affirm his sense of security so long as Lafayette was responsible for order. A remarkable tribute! The key of the Bastille was sent to Washington to remind his father-in-politics that an American light was dawning on France. In his exultation he could write to a friend with a vanity so naïve as to be innocent: ‘I am in a great adventure, and I am happy to think that I shall come out of it without having had to blame myself with one single ambitious thought: after having put the world in its proper place, I shall retire with a fortune worth a quarter of what I had when I entered it.’ And he meant it, for though his life may have been filled with unconscious self-deception, he was no hypocrite.

While, all over the country, castles were being destroyed, title-deeds burned, proprietors driven from their estates, the Assembly

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in Versailles was throwing away the valuables which the people were stealing. On the night of August 4th, Noailles, Lafayette's brother-in-law, rose to tell his fellow-members that since the trouble was due to the feudal privileges of the nobility, the only real remedy was to renounce them voluntarily. As it happened, Noailles was financially ruined, and, being a *cadet* (Jean-sans-Terre, they called him) he had no feudal rights to renounce. No matter, he was a noble and others were not to be outdone in generous sentiments, even if it cost them more. Nobles and bishops followed suit. Anyone who had anything to offer seemed to want to give it to the nation. 'They cried,' a deputy said, 'they kissed one another. What a nation! What glory! What an honour to be a Frenchman!' The feudal order passed away in a night. After the levelling it was time to discuss seriously the rights of equal citizens which Lafayette had proposed to them a month earlier. The final draft that was approved was a modification of the Jefferson-Lafayette suggestion.

It remained to decide how France was going to be governed in future. The task of building up the long-awaited constitution had to be faced. Lafayette was an authority, and all the time which he could spare from his military duties was devoted to giving advice to the liberal leaders in Paris. As he considered that constitution making 'was a secondary question in comparison with the declaration of rights,' he was no doctrinaire about details. In this he was justified, for the history of political organization is one long evidence that the production of the right spirit is of far greater importance than the devising of fool-proof institutions. He wanted a republic, but 'considering the state of inexperience they were in,' he was willing to retain 'the hereditary magistrature, if the people wanted it.' On the other hand, he absolutely refused to consent to any hereditary chamber, favouring in its stead an elective senate or council of Ancients with powers equal to those of the chamber of deputies. But the burning question was the royal veto. Should it be absolute or temporary? He proposed what he called the veto *itératif*, 'the veto *itératif* which would allow the king six years in which to consult the nation or influence its representatives seems to me the best for the executive.' 'I believe,' he said to Bailly, 'that the executive power should be in the hands of a very small number of people.' All this was plainly a reproduction of the American system without a president, but the

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urgency and dangers of the time made him more than adaptable. ‘He did not feel in any way determined to force his ideas, or if you will, his prejudices of America.’ He was responsible for order, and his main anxiety was that a constitution of some sort should be quickly voted. All his efforts were concentrated on making the leaders come to some agreement. Three times they had long discussions at his house, but still they came to no decision. The people meanwhile were growing impatient, and the Assembly was being discredited. Some people began to think that vetoes could be bought and sold, and suspected an underhand traffic in them. The court party were taking courage; they were watching what they hoped to be the swing-back of the pendulum. In despair, Lafayette invited the leaders to Jefferson’s house, the one place he could think of where they would not be disturbed. ‘I beg for liberty’s sake,’ he wrote to the minister, ‘you will break all engagements to give us dinner to-morrow. We shall be some members of the National Assembly – eight of us whom I want to coalize as being the only means to prevent a total dissolution and civil war.’ Still the light of truth, one and eternal, did not shine on these earnest men. While they wrestled in spirit, ruder forces were threatening to sweep them all away.

While the Assembly went on talking and theorizing about how best to do this and that, Lafayette was being asked to hold together the unordered mass of human beings whose expectations had been raised, but whose bread remained as expensive as ever. He might have succeeded by his personal popularity, had others not been working against him. Even Bailly, the broad-minded, genial astronomer-mayor, was a little jealous of his success. ‘It must be said,’ he wrote, ‘that the people are always enthusiastic about Lafayette. His talents, his name, for there is an aristocracy of the imagination which outlives that of principles, his personal, amiable qualities were the reason. It was a contrast with the civil chief who was often forgotten, and for whom there was no enthusiasm.’

But there were rumours that the king would refuse to sanction the self-denying decrees of August 4th. They were better founded than the rumours that Lafayette and Bailly, in concert with Louis, were preparing a *coup d’état*. Bailly was rather bothering his head about whether it was fitting that a free man should bend the knee before the sovereign when the municipality took its solemn oath

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to him. In the end he decided that since the oath was a prayer, and a prayer was addressed to God, he could bend the knee to God, and consider the king to be accidentally in the way. That day too the national guards of Paris and Versailles dined together, and asked Lafayette, who was 'fraternizing' with his men as they dined, to present them to the king and queen.

It would have been well if he had come into closer contact with the king during these days, for it was largely a case of 'first come, first heard' with his majesty. Trouble was round the corner, and no one knew it better than Lafayette. He had warned Saint-Priest and the ministers as early as the second week in September. The Assembly was like a stagnant pool whose waters are ruffled to no purpose by the wind; Orléans was spreading disaffection; the king was in the hands of the hopeful court; the people were no better off than before the taking of the Bastille. But Lafayette was all hypotheses: 'If the king refuses the constitution, I shall combat him; if he accepts it, I shall defend him.' In the end he had to defend him when it was almost too late. Morris summed it up shrewdly: 'I have known my friend Lafayette now for years, and can estimate at its just value both his words and his actions. If the clouds which now lower should be dissipated without a storm, he will be infinitely indebted to fortune, but if it happens otherwise, the world must pardon him much on the score of intention.'

But while Lafayette balanced the purity of different motives, the mob was being worked up. Scarcity of bread was always a sufficient excuse, and the hand-to-mouth method by which it was provided in those dislocated times was working particularly badly. 'For some days the dearth has been extreme,' wrote a nobleman, at the beginning of October, 'this is attributed to the fact that the little towns and villages, each forming a republic apart, and not wishing to let grain circulate freely, stop it on the way and thus Paris is famished.' Another humorously remarked: 'If the quality of the bread does not change before Ash Wednesday, the priests will be able to use it to sign our foreheads with it when they say "remember man that thou art but dust", and when we die we shall form a man of dust all the greater for having partaken of it for eight months.' Soon rumours of the dismissal of the Assembly, the flight of the king, of the coming of the hated Austrians were flying about. Saint-Priest, acting on Lafayette's warning of

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imminent trouble, decided to bring troops to Versailles, and indeed the Assembly was glad of their presence. Despite the scarcity of provisions, the regiments were entertained by the royal body-guard to a magnificent banquet on October 1st, and when the royal family appeared the half-drunken soldiers (they were foreign) tore off their tricolour cockades and shouted that they would have the white cockade. ‘Damn the Assembly!’ they swore, ‘We depend on the king alone, and for him we shall die.’ It was not perhaps quite as serious as it sounds, but it helped those who were organizing trouble in the city.

What Lafayette was doing we cannot tell, but it seems certain that there were agents of Orléans at work among the lowest stratum of the population working them up to a rage over the scarcity of bread for which the king and his banqueting foreign troops were responsible. On August 25th, Lafayette had felt so satisfied with the arrangements he had made for the peace of the city many of whose inhabitants were already disaffected owing to the rumour of the *coup d’état*, that he did not hesitate to accompany Bailly to Versailles. Why was he not taking the same precautions now? Thiébauld, who was at the time a member of the National Guard, expressly tells us that no special orders had been given. ‘Had M. de Lafayette wanted the whole affair could have been foreseen and repressed, but no sufficient preparations were made in time.’ Lafayette himself only says that he had put posts on the roads out of Paris, but that at the demand of the Assembly he had withdrawn them. Democratic conscience again!

On the morning of October 5th, Paris woke up to find an army of ten thousand men and women, the dregs of the town, yelling outside the Hôtel de Ville and threatening to hang the whole Commune, Lafayette and Bailly first of all. Lafayette should never have let the crowd gather together. Once there it would have been difficult to disperse them without bloodshed. ‘To Versailles!’ people were shouting. What was the National Guard to do? Was it for the mob, or against it? Lafayette in the Hôtel de Ville seemed to be mentally paralysed. He feared that if the Guard went to Versailles it would support the mob, and make matters worse. That is the worst of a civic army. On the day of crisis it allows liberty to get the better of law, for the crisis means that the nature of the law itself is in question. He decided to hold the Guard back. It was pouring with rain, and the

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troops and the guards in Versailles could deal with the women whose ardour would be cooled by the cold October rain. But the Commune thought that the Guard ought to follow the crowd. In Versailles the rumour spread that 'Paris was marching on them.' All day Lafayette fought against the mixed crowd of guards and civilians who were determined to drag him at their head along the Versailles road. 'It is strange that Lafayette should wish to command the people when it is for the people to command him,' they were shouting. Seeing, according to his own account, that there was nothing else to be done, fearing, according to Thiébault, the threats of '*À Versailles ou à la lanterne,*' having, according to Fersen who after watching the turn of events with the crowd was hurrying to Versailles to warn the queen, lost his head, he gave way in the late afternoon.

'Riding,' according to an eye-witness, 'at the head of the troops like a criminal led to the slaughter,' he and the motley crowd of guards and civilians tramped their way in the dark and rain along the dozen miles of muddy road that separate the two cities. He tells us that he made them take an oath to defend the king, but Thiébault swears that he never was asked to take an oath; indeed, it was impossible for what was little better than a straggling, muddy mob to take any oaths of that nature.

The crowd of women that had started in the morning had already settled on Versailles like a swarm of evil insects. Some had found their way into the Assembly Hall and were kissing the Bishop of Langres as he tried to keep order in the House. Most of them were outside the palace, screaming at the queen. 'I'll have her thighs,' shouted one. 'I'll have her insides,' answered another. The king ordered that no one should fire on women, and the commander of the royal troops refused to issue cartridges. Everything was done to prevent bloodshed.

By ten o'clock, the torches of Lafayette and the guard were seen nearing the town. According to Madame de Stael who caught a glimpse of him, he was as calm and placid as ever. On his way to the palace, he swore to the president of the Assembly that he had come to protect the king and obtain the recall of the foreign troops. Then, unaccompanied, he reached the palace gates. Was he friend or foe? He had some difficulty in gaining admittance. A troop of horse nearby was ready to carry the king to safety. But he was admitted, and as he passed through the

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ante-chamber someone said: ‘Look at Cromwell!’ Lafayette heard and proudly answered: ‘Sir, Cromwell would not have entered alone.’

He saw the king, and arranged that a platoon of bodyguards should retire into the palace, that the rest of the bodyguards should be dismissed and that the outside posts should be defended by the national guards. By three o’clock in the morning everything seemed peaceful. The guards were in good order, the mob were prepared to make the best of an uncomfortable night now that the rain had stopped, the women were taking off their skirts to dry and clean them. And Lafayette, ‘the great sleeper General Morpheus,’ according to his enemies, went to sleep against his king. It would have been well if he had snatched a few hours of sleep then. Instead he went on busying himself until five o’clock. Then, fagged out, he lay down on a bench and rested. Five o’clock! Just as the new day was beginning, the most critical time of all, the early morning.

While he was resting, a gate into the palace was opened. No one knows through whose mistake or betrayal. Into it poured a number of ruffians. The body-guard fired at last. The mob attacked them, savagely killing two of them and wounding others. They rushed up the palace stairs. The queen barely escaped them as they shouted that they would make a fricassee of her liver. Lafayette warned, and always at his best when duty was clear, rushed after them with some of the Guard. He was just in time to save the royal family. But the real danger was only beginning. The mob outside the palace were still howling. It might come to a fight at any moment, and many of the Guards were not to be relied on to defend the unpopular king against the will of the people. He was still the agent of their self-control. He must appeal to their better feelings, make them see their mistake. There was one way: to appeal to their chivalry, to their hearts. He would show them from the balcony their beautiful, pale, half-dressed queen.

‘Madame, what are your personal wishes?’ he asked her courteously.

‘I know the fate which awaits me,’ she answered with magnificent courage, ‘but my duty is to die at the feet of the king and in the arms of my children.’

‘Come with me and show yourself to the people’—she shuddered

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at the thought of those ghastly, hating faces; she winced at the blow of fate which offered this tall, distant busybody with his fatally high-minded ideals as the sole protector at that hour of her children and herself. She hesitated.

‘Go to the balcony alone? Did you not see what signs they were making?’

‘Come,’ and he led her gently out on to the balcony. They were greeted with a roar. Was it a cheer or a curse? He took her trembling hand, trembling with cold, not fear, and with a low bow, he kissed it. It was enough. ‘*Vive le général! Vive la reine!*’ the fickle crowd shouted. Then the king came out with some guards. Lafayette stepped up to one, and taking off his tricolour cockade fixed it on his uniform. ‘*Vivent les gardes du corps.*’ The danger was over.

Years after, Lafayette remarked: ‘The balcony scene was worth more than the twenty hours of talking which had preceded it.’ But he had got his way. The people had conquered themselves, and very little blood had been shed. The monarchy was reprieved, and Lafayette, after having seemingly never ruined it, was its saviour. Later in the day, Madame Adelaïde took an opportunity of drawing him aside and whispering: ‘I owe you more than my life, I owe you the life of the king, my poor nephew.’

The crowd had come to Versailles, not to kill the king and queen, but to obtain bread. There were stories that Orléans himself had been seen mixing with it outside the palace. Certainly many Orleanists were there. Now they were content to bring the king back to Paris, ‘the baker, the baker’s wife and the baker’s boy,’ they called them. Earlier in the morning the heads of the unfortunate body-guardsmen were taken to Paris on pikes, but they had disappeared before the sad procession started. On the way back, Lafayette confessed to d’Estaing that the night’s events were turning him into a royalist. Two days later, he told Orléans: ‘I have been more responsible than anyone for breaking the steps that lead to the throne; the nation has put the king on the last step; I shall keep him there despite you, and before you take his place, you will have to pass over my body, a difficult thing to do.’

The news of the king’s arrival had preceded them, and all Paris awaited the victor, his virtual prisoner and the sacks of flour stolen from Versailles. As though to greet them too, the

weak October sun had come out in the late afternoon, and the night was fine, though cold and windy. By nine o'clock, they were at the Hôtel de Ville. As they walked up the steps of the building, the indefatigable Lafayette asked the weary monarch to promise the people that he would never leave Paris. ‘I cannot promise what I may not be able to do,’ he muttered sadly. However the municipality decided then and there that Paris would in future be the royal residence. Once more the king and queen had to appear at a balcony. Then as the rain began to fall again, they were driven amid cheers to the half-furnished, cold and damp Tuileries.

The first phase of the Revolution was over. Versailles, and with it the glory of the greatest royal court on earth, was a thing of the past. The people had conquered and captured the king over the heads of their representatives. Lafayette had made his task harder than ever, and his responsibility was to be even greater. Yet he had, mainly by good fortune perhaps, secured a few more months during which the king, the government and the Assembly could defeat the intriguers by giving the country some kind of organization.

CHAPTER III

LAFAYETTE AND MIRABEAU

A FORTNIGHT later the Assembly followed the king to Paris and, like him, exchanged spacious and comfortable quarters in Versailles for bare, dreary and ill-furnished ones in the capital. The king, the Assembly, the Commune, the National Guard, the 'clubs' were all concentrated within a small area. Lafayette's hope was still to maintain the peace by educating the people in self-control while the Assembly hastened the formulation of the constitution, the Commune governed Paris, and the king, supported by liberal ministers, maintained an authority strong enough to keep the intriguers and foreign powers at bay until the constitution was ready to be accepted by him.

What 'maintaining the peace' involved may be realized, curiously enough, from the testimony of the man who had no love for Lafayette, Mirabeau. In a speech made by him on the occasion when Lafayette and Bailly came to the House to welcome it in the name of Paris, he said: 'You are aware of the situation, of the difficulties truly beyond description in the midst of which these virtuous citizens have found themselves. Prudence forbids me to recount all the delicate circumstances, all the dangerous crises, all the personal dangers, all the threats, all the sorrows of their position in a city of 700,000 souls in constant fermentation through a revolution which has upset all arrangements, in a time of trouble and terror when invisible hands have made plenty vanish and worked in secret against the anxious efforts of the chiefs to nourish that immense people obliged to conquer by patience the slice of bread which they have already gained by the sweat of their brow. What an administration! What a time! A time when all must be dared and all feared, when trouble springs from trouble, when riots are caused by their cures, when moderation is necessary and yet appears equivocal, timid, pusillanimous, when much force is needed and yet is interpreted as tyranny, when the only hope is to give way by wisdom and lead disorder in order to keep it within bounds, when in the midst of insur-

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mountable difficulties one's brow must remain unruffled, one's manner ever calm.'

It was a fine tribute, but how came it to be uttered by the self-seeking and ambitious Mirabeau? It is a long story, and to understand it we must pass for a moment from events to personalities.

Men are incalculable, and it was some time before the sympathizers with the Revolution sorted themselves out into discernible groups. In the first group were the 'respectable' moderates, nobles like Lafayette, Laroche foucauld, Latour Maubourg, the Lameth brothers and lawyers like Mounier, Duport and Barnave. Next came the capable, but fundamentally unscrupulous freelances, like Orléans, Talleyrand and Mirabeau, Lastly the demagogues, like Desmoulins, Danton and Marat, who were content to cause trouble by working directly on the mob.

At the beginning, Lafayette was very closely connected with the Lameths and Duport. The Lameths in many ways resembled him. They came from an even nobler family, they had fought in America, they were colonels, they were young, handsome and filled with enthusiasm. But it was enthusiasm for oppressed individuals, not for ideas. Duport, technically a noble owing to his office, was a bourgeois, but he had more sympathy with Lafayette's mind. He was large-hearted, benevolent, and as sincere a believer in the far-reaching benefits of a reform of the criminal code as was Lafayette in the making of a constitution. But under the influence of the Lameths, he came to believe, as Lafayette said, 'in ploughing deep.' Through these men, Lafayette came into contact with a brilliant young deputy, the second orator of the Assembly, Barnave, whose essential moderation was forgotten after his unfortunate rhetorical question when Foulon and Bertier had been butchered: 'Was their blood then so pure?'

It was not long before Lafayette found himself drifting apart from this able circle of friends to their common loss. The rift widened, and they became the leaders of the Society of Friends of the Constitution, later to be known as the *Club de Jacobins*, while he remained faithful to the Assembly and the people. Were they jealous of him and his power? Did he consider himself 'a cut above them'? At all events, it was they who were responsible for the break. He never ceased to regret Duport's friendship, and he used often to think with sorrow of the 'years when Duport loved

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me.' Barnave had never had much love for him. 'Lafayette,' he wrote, 'is not easily troubled by storms, but he is never equal to great occasions; he has no wit and little genius; after he has conceived projects which are vast because he is hungry for glory, but which are never either new nor profound, he lowers himself to all sorts of petty means to carry them out; so that if few men make fewer of those big mistakes which affect the public and their own fame, few are better fitted to make all men who see him at close quarters despise what history calls heroes.'

In this last sentence lay, perhaps, the real cause of these men's dislike for Lafayette: they resented the hero in him. Not for his benefit and glory was the revolution being made, yet to judge by the behaviour of the people it seemed at times as though they were confounding the cause of liberty with hero-worship for their general. On his side, Lafayette suspected these Jacobins of being untrue to constitutional government established by the will of the people and soon to be ratified by the king. He also suspected them of being in touch with Orléans. To his dying day, he held that it was the intrigues and self-seeking of these old friends which were responsible for prolonging anarchy and for finally covering the land with blood. In this he was less than fair to them, but his instinct was right. The Jacobin club was to destroy all his dreams. Those early meetings of ardent reformers, under the philosophic gaze of St. Thomas Aquinas whose portrait hung on the wall of the library of the Dominican convent in which they met, developed into a net-work of affiliated societies spreading over the whole of the kingdom. Owing to the failure of the Assembly to provide for any central control of local authorities, these societies came in time to substitute themselves for constitutional administration, in the interest of the extremists. In his *Memoirs*, Lafayette roundly accuses them of having from the beginning incited the National Guard to disobedience, and of denouncing the constituted local authorities. His word is our only evidence of this behaviour during the early part of the Revolution, and he may have been reading back into its quiet beginnings courses of action which were only true of it at a later stage.

Thus within four months of the start, he found, like Washington, that power and popularity are the most perfect insulators. His natural contacts were broken, and instead of true friends a host of intriguers and place-seekers were filling his house. Morris soon

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found by experience that the rue de Bourbon was the last place in which to give a few quiet words of advice to his *protégé*. The name of place-seeker is not inappropriate for such powerful men as Orléans and Mirabeau. Orléans did not despair of using Lafayette's popularity for his own ends. But one test of character Lafayette was always ready to apply, the test of moral worth. He agreed with the 'angelic Madame Elisabeth,' as he called the king's sister, that God did not wish to save France by people without principles and morals, — though not for the same religious reasons. His agreement became all the firmer when he read contemporary pamphlets in which the private life of Orléans was compared with his own. 'Happy husband,' they wrote of him, 'good father, true friend, one admires in Lafayette the good man as much as the hero.' He had his reputation to live up to. Moreover he was persuaded that Orléans' agents had had much to do with the days of October. How much, he knew not, neither do we. But he suspected enough to give him courage to denounce the king's cousin '*Corps à corps*.' Mirabeau, too, he suspected of 'being in' with Orléans, but Mirabeau afterwards said that he would not have Orléans for his valet, and, according to Lamarck, he turned 'yellow, green, ghastly with horror,' when the queen accused him of it.

Mirabeau had to be dealt with more tactfully, but Lafayette could stand up to a weak bully like Orléans. He boldly ordered him to leave the kingdom: 'Monseigneur, I fear that there will soon be on the scaffold someone of your name; you intend to have me assassinated, but be sure that you yourself will be also an hour later.' Then he added quietly that it would be best if he saved his face by slipping over to England on some official excuse. Orléans collapsed like a pricked balloon, and his courage only returned to him when he was back with his friends who persuaded him to call Lafayette's bluff. 'Have you any proofs of my misconduct?' he asked at another meeting. 'Unfortunately I have not; if I had, you would already have been arrested,' Lafayette answered. Orléans took him at his word and disappeared. This incident shows that towards the end of 1789 Lafayette was the strongest man in France.

To deal with Mirabeau was a very different matter. Though Barnave tells us that 'Mirabeau's popularity, like that of M. d'Orléans, was always accompanied by a good deal of suspicion,'

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he was altogether on another plane of ability. He was the orator of the Revolution, and could with a few words rouse the Assembly to a white heat of indignation and fury. But he was no mere demagogue. Whatever may be said of the purity of his intentions, he alone had ideas which were immediately constructive and the power to carry them out. His piercing eyes were fixed immovably on the essentials of the situation as it presented itself at the moment though he had no objection to letting his hands feel here and there for any pickings which might be offered through the stupidity or misunderstandings of others. As he said, thinking no doubt of Lafayette, 'petty morality destroys great morality.' In his view the immediate need was for a strong government at any price. He had sounded the Jacobin leaders, and he was to sound them again, but he seems to have believed sincerely that only a strengthened monarchy supported by a ministry of all the talents riding roughshod over the prejudices of all extremists could save the newly-acquired liberties of the French people. To achieve this, the co-operation of the popular Lafayette was essential.

It was an ideal opportunity for an understanding between the two men. Mirabeau, moneyless, unpopular with the court and 'respectable' society, without official position or support, unworried by scruples about means, badly needed the backing of a man who by his position could dictate to the king and impose upon the people; Lafayette, stiff, awkward and distant, always a little late to see the evil of his fellows, sadly needed the help of Mirabeau's intelligence and knowledge of human nature. But the very need these two men had of one another emphasized the unnaturalness of the alliance. Morris when he heard of its possibility said: 'Every honest Frenchman will ask himself the cause of what he will call a very strange coalition. There are in the world men who are to be employed, not trusted. Virtue must ever be sullied by an alliance with vice, and liberty will blush at her introduction if led by a hand polluted.' Still Lafayette, who was much less of a simpleton than he allowed himself at times to appear, tried not to allow his personal feelings to gain the upper hand. He saw, for example, more clearly than Morris that Mirabeau had 'sublime talents', and that, though his 'morality shocked him,' he might be used for the good of the cause. A meeting between the two took place shortly after the days of October. Most of the time was spent in speculative cabinet building. Mira-

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beau, as was his custom, tried to shock Lafayette by tales of his wickedness, and pulled his leg by threatening to do all kinds of unpleasant things to the queen. Gilles-César, as Mirabeau called him, still inspired by the balcony scene, warned him solemnly that he would have nothing to do with him, if he had any designs on her majesty. 'Oh well!' Mirabeau laughed, 'since you say so, let her live. After all, a humbled queen might be of more use, for a murdered queen would only serve to make a story for a poor dramatist, like Guibert.' The story reached Marie-Antoinette, and Lafayette was not a little puzzled to find that despite it, she seemed to prefer the aid of the reprobate to his own offers of service.

Thus it came about that, at the opening of the Assembly in Paris, Mirabeau put himself out to praise the work of Lafayette. He needed him in order to step from his shoulders into the arms of the king, to gain a fortune for himself and to save France. But Lafayette, simple enough to be taken in by Mirabeau's little jokes, was wary of his behaviour. In his endeavour to unite all able men in the defence of the Revolution, he was more anxious to come to an understanding with the Jacobin triumvirate (Duport, Barnave and Alexandre Lameth) and his other early friends. He wrote to Mounier, for example: 'Remember that the one way of assuring the triumph of the people's cause, of giving liberty to the nation, of returning to the head the power which he needs in order to do good, is by the reunion of all good citizens and the harmony of all parts of the State. Do not be discouraged or ill-tempered, and if I perish in my efforts to save the country, spare me the reproach of having abandoned those with whom reunion would have saved us and whose opposition could be the means of losing all.'

All the time he could spare from his pressing duties, from keeping order, from helping the mayor to organize the provision of bread, he devoted to these attempts to force a strong liberal ministry on the king. In late October and early November, he had almost daily interviews with Mirabeau. Talleyrand too was in the picture, but Lafayette was repelled by him because 'he is a bad man and false' – at least he thought so until Morris whispered to him that Talleyrand had been speaking well of him to the king. 'This goes further towards convincing him that Talleyrand is an honest man than many good actions,' adds the malicious Morris, growing a little weary of a Lafayette who on his side

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was showing signs of being bored by Morris's advice and perpetual hopping about on one sound leg from *salon* to *salon* pulling wires as fast as he could. Meanwhile Mirabeau was pushing him harder and harder. He flattered him crudely: 'Whatever may be, I shall be yours to the end, for your great qualities have strongly drawn me, and it is impossible not to take a keen interest in a destiny so beautiful and so closely attached to the Revolution which is leading the nation to liberty.' This was a preliminary to a request for money. Lafayette sent him half the sum he asked for, and Mirabeau in a rage said: 'What a man! What a destiny!' Then a conference lasting half the night during which Mirabeau's pock-marked, rugged face would break into a charming smile and with the fascinating manner of one who had broken many a heart, he talked of their twin destiny to strengthen and free their country. But Lafayette was not to be caught so easily and the best efforts of the orator who could sway the Assembly failed to clear the puzzled look in the pale, distant-seeing eyes of his intended victim. As Mirabeau left in the early hours of the morning, he could be heard muttering: 'Hopeless! Can't make up his mind, hasn't the courage to break a promise, hasn't the will to keep one in time. After all, he is powerless until the explosion comes, and then goodness knows what he will do. A miserable pawn!'

Before these political schemes could bear fruit, an unexpected blow ruined all Mirabeau's hopes of being a kind of minister without portfolio. The Jacobin club decided to oppose the motion that ministers should be invited to sit in the Assembly, and on November 7th carried the motion that no deputy could be a minister. Lafayette tells us that he had no decided views about the matter, but that two or three months later, he went so far as to talk to the queen about it in order to see if the Assembly's decision could be changed. The motion was in fact one of the most fatal of the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, since it made any harmony between the executive and the legislature impossible. The king and the Assembly were condemned by it to

¹ Mirabeau knew how to get his own back on Lafayette. On one occasion he asked for a sum of money in order to be able to appear at the House without fear of meeting his creditors. Lafayette arranged for a friend to advance him what he needed. Next day Mirabeau did not appear after all. Lafayette was indignant, but Mirabeau sent him a note: 'You have forgotten my debts.' Thereupon Lafayette paid him the money himself and complained to the friend of his carelessness. 'But I paid him,' the latter answered, 'here is the receipt.' So that time Mirabeau got double.

live apart and opposed. Sooner or later one or the other would have to disappear through the force of the other. Mirabeau rightly fought for the principle of ministerial responsibility to the Assembly, but it may be suspected that his ardour was due in part at least to the fact that his own career depended on his being able to form part of the ministry. He was therefore furious with Lafayette for his indifference.

As the days shortened and the first winter of the Revolution set in, there seemed to be a considerable chance that the coming year would witness the consolidation of reform and the beginning of peaceful constitutional government. There had been 'a miracle of the multiplication of the loaves,' as the abundance of bread since the days of October was irreverently called. Lafayette wrote to Mounier that, provided bread did not again become scarce, he could answer for the peace in Paris. To Washington he sent New Year greetings and assured him that 'they were on their way to a tolerable conclusion, despite the recurrent efforts of ambitious and reactionary men. Now that what has been is destroyed, a new political edifice is in process of construction. Without being perfect it suffices to guarantee liberty.'

Despite the excitements of the past six months, the social world of Paris had not greatly altered. Some figures had disappeared; some had even gone to the wilds of America in order to discover a better world; many were complaining of their diminished incomes; but the *salons* were as gay as ever. 'We have been enjoying some charming teas; there is much fun going on,' is a typical comment. The arrest of the so-called Marquis de Favras, an adventurer who with some degree of encouragement from the Comte de Provence, the king's brother, had planned a counter-revolution of which the first step was to be the murder of Bailly and Lafayette, did not interfere with the celebrations of drinking the old year out and the new year in. On the last night of 1789, Madame de Simiane whom some without proof or probability suspected of being Lafayette's mistress, sent him an apple which had fallen on her in the theatre from the 'gods' with a note inscribed: 'Here, my dear General, is the first fruit of the Revolution which has so far reached me.' A little later, Lafayette, among his many curious duties, undertook to keep the carnival within bounds and in particular prevented the merry-makers from shouting after passers-by and plastering their backs with whitewash.

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Equally at home with ridiculous and sublime duties, he continued meanwhile to rally all good and able men round the constitutional Crown, even trying to work with General Bouillé, a confirmed, but broad-minded royalist. Talleyrand was saying that after having relied on abstract principles, Lafayette had now fallen back on the hopelessness of goodwill, and nothing could serve better to show how little common understanding can be squeezed out of mere goodwill than honest Bouillé's judgment on his efforts: 'He was a hero of fiction trying to preserve honesty, disinterestedness, trying to live in the pure spirit of chivalry, while at the head of a criminal conspiracy. Helped by circumstances rather than by talents, he had reached such a powerful position that he might have dictated laws, given a government to France, raised his destiny to the highest eminence attainable by a private person; instead of this he lost himself like a madman and dragged with him in his fall the king, the monarchy and the whole of France.' The trouble was that the doctrinaire democrat thought 'the highest eminence attainable by a private person' was a temptation to be rejected however serious the situation. Once, in America, he had thought it a good thing for Washington to be invested with dictatorial powers; now he realized the position sufficiently to play again with the idea. Morris wrote: 'He shows clearly in his countenance that it (dictatorship) is the wish of his heart. I ask him what authority? He says a kind of dictatorship, such as Generalissimo, he does not exactly know what will be the title.' But frightened of a step which might lead him further than conscience would allow, he stopped and allowed the kingdom to drift, vaguely hoping that his efforts to rally all patriots would somehow produce a collective responsibility more representative than his own.

Gradually he realized the hopelessness of the idea in these times of nervy uncertainty, of quick suspicion, of barely disguised hatreds even among men with substantially the same ends in view. His own position was greatly worsened by a tactless remark. He quoted in a speech a saying which he had learned in America: 'Insurrection is the most sacred of duties.' It was useless for him to explain that he was quoting it in order to point out that the time for insurrection was over. His past career was against him. If insurrection is ever a sacred duty, it may become so again whenever the conscience of the individual demands it.

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'Would to God,' he wrote in his Memoirs, 'that the sacred duty of resistance to oppression had been exercised against the violation of constitutional authority in 1792, against the bloody tyranny of the Terror, against the arbitrary ambition of the Empire.' Exactly, and can we blame the royalists in 1790 for suspecting him of believing that there might again be a sacred duty of insurrection against the king. It was an unfortunate remark in any context at a time when he was aiming at maintaining order and upholding the authority of the king's government. There were plots and rumours of plots, and he unconsciously reveals, in a letter to Madame de Simiane, that the mind behind the impassive face was swinging about like a weather-cock. 'In such a case, the abandoning of the king can alone save the public cause without a civil war, a likely event to-day, owing to the hopes of the aristocrats and the consequent shuffling of the cards by the factious. You have often preached to me deference to the king and queen; it was waste of effort, for my character forces me to pay them such deference since their misfortunes; but, believe me, they would have been better served, and so would the public good, by a hard man. They are big children who will only swallow salutary medicine when frightened by were-wolves. Do not believe that I am capable of a frivolous intrigue to obtain power. . . .'

Mirabeau having thrown out a bait first to the king's brother, then to the Jacobins, and seeing that neither would do more than nibble, took advantage of Lafayette's uncertainty to sound him once more. 'You were trying in vain to make tall men out of pygmies,' he wrote in April, 'the Barnaves, Duports and Lameths no longer tire you with their inaction. In the midst of all the dangers I forget to mention the greatest, the inaction of the one man who can ward them off. No one knows better than I do the elements of fear and hope which attract the sanest part of the nation towards you . . . If ever I violate the laws of political alliance which I am offering to you, make use of this letter to show the world that I am a false and perfidious man in writing to you.'

A few days after writing this letter, he proved his falsity and perfidy by secretly selling, at a very high price, his services to the Court. The harassed queen could think of no better alternative.

It was unfortunate for Mirabeau that this arrangement

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should have been concluded just before the vital debate on the right of making peace and war, in other words, on the king's control of foreign affairs, his last prerogative. It meant siding openly with the unpopular right. The split between Lafayette and the Jacobins, after having been kept in abeyance for some time, had been renewed, and a new club, the Society of 1789, in which Lafayette's influence was predominant had been founded. Thus Mirabeau and Lafayette were once again drawn together. All this did not increase their popularity. A pamphlet entitled: 'Treason of Comte de Mirabeau discovered' was selling rapidly, and the paper *Orateur du Peuple* printed the ominous words: 'Mirabeau, Mirabeau, less talents, please, and more virtue, or beware the lantern!'

By great tactical skill and abundant deceit, he emerged from the debate unscathed, but he needed the help of Lafayette more than ever. He therefore wrote a letter to him which we cannot read without imagining the great mass of flesh twisting itself in hypocritical humility and cringing in adulation: 'Oh! Monsieur de Lafayette, Richelieu was Richelieu against the nation for the court, and though Richelieu did much harm to the liberty of the people, he did plenty of good to the monarchy. You be a Richelieu for the court and for the nation, and thus you will remake the monarchy while increasing and consolidating the liberty of the people. But Richelieu had his *capucin*, Joseph; you, too, have your *Eminence grise*, or you will perish yourself without saving us. Your great qualities have need of my push; my push has need of your great qualities.' On the very same day, he wrote to the Court in one of his regular bulletins: 'He is the idol of the day, the supposed general of the Constitution, the rival of the monarch, the guardian of kings. Master of the army of Paris and so of Paris itself; master of Paris, and so of the national guards of the kingdom, able to dispose of the executive power, if the ministers are of his choice, by this means becoming, first, master of the army, and, next, of the legislature, will he not become the most absolute, the most redoubtable of leaders? . . . Of all citizens, Monsieur de Lafayette is the one on whom the king can least rely.' In the same letter, he significantly suggests that General Bouillé might be a better instrument for the king's purposes. Did it mean that Mirabeau, the idol of the Revolution, was going so far as to hint that not by constitutional means, but

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by civil and possibly foreign war was the royal cause to be saved? We know at least that the queen in a letter written in June wrote that he was advising them to ask Prussia and Austria to keep a close watch on events.

Whatever Mirabeau's ultimate plans might be, and whatever use or abuse of Lafayette he had in mind, he certainly succeeded in increasing the personal dislike of the royal couple for the commander of the National Guard. Louis, under the influence of his wife, was beginning to resent Lafayette's courteous, but constant, instructions and admonitions such as: 'I would observe that in time of Revolution nothing is an indifferent matter. Would the king please make up his mind to abolish the need for nobility proofs for admission to the Court . . . I beg the king to pardon my importunities. I would give the last drop of my blood to keep him from the danger of factions . . . I venture to ask the king to allow me to state my views in this way, because I believe it to be most convenient for him that I should deposit in the bosom of His Majesty the counsels which he has allowed me to offer . . .'. At last His Majesty sat down and wrote: 'We have entire confidence in you, but you are so occupied with the duties of your position that you cannot be expected to suffice for everything . . . We need a man of talent and activity who can do what you, through lack of time, cannot. Hence we desire of the zeal and attachment of M. de Lafayette that he should be ready to work with Mirabeau in the interests of the State, of my service and my person.' But he did not dare send the letter. Marie-Antoinette had to rest content with insinuations. Typical of her attitude was her remark after the commander had risked his life in trying to save some wretch from being hanged by a mob for having stolen a sack of oats: 'Odd that he should always be trying to save everyone but kings.'

In this spring and early summer of 1790, Lafayette must often have wondered at the complexity of revolution making in the old world. In the new he had made nothing but friends; here with the best intentions in the world – did he not tell the Assembly that he spoke 'with the calmness of a pure conscience which had never had to blush at a single sentiment, at a single action' – he seemed to make nothing but secret or avowed enemies, to meet nothing but petty intrigue. Even in the Assembly itself he was accused of causing sedition in different parts of the country in

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order to obtain an army with which to carry off the king, and a motion was debated to prevent the National Guard from approaching nearer than three miles of the Assembly. So obvious had the rift between himself and his old friends become that Charles Lameth was suspected of intriguing to obtain the command of the National Guard for himself.

Mirabeau's nicknames for Lafayette, 'Cromwell-Grandison', 'The Mayor of the Palace', 'Gilles-César,' were common property, and his enmity now that he was safely installed as the secret and well-paid adviser of the Court, was so little disguised that Lafayette was driven to console himself with the sound of the following pompous words: 'I have conquered the king of England in his might, the king of France in his authority, the people in its fury, I shall certainly not yield to M. de Mirabeau.' When the latter heard, he laughed: 'Really, that sort of thing would do for a Music-Hall,' but he added, for he was not without his pride: 'He shall pay for it some day.' The journalists lampooned and caricatured Lafayette unmercifully, and described with relish his participation in the Corpus Christi procession: 'It was not without admiration that we saw the hero of America honour himself by appearing in a religious ceremony; we smiled when we saw the hand accustomed to grasp a sword humbly hold a blessed candle received from the hands of a Levite of the Lord.'

Separated from the Jacobins, laughed at by Mirabeau, distrusted by the Assembly, suspected by the Court, hated by the queen, he was left, a picture of injured innocence, to the care of a little band of female hero-worshippers, Mme. de Simiane, the Princesses de Poix, d'Hénin and de Bouillon and to that of the masses who had not yet come into contact with the demagogues. He badly needed some glorious and spectacular event by which to re-establish his waning popularity. That star of his which he had ceased to invoke during these busy times had not deserted him. It was to shine again, perhaps more brightly than ever, but the effort would be too much for it. It would flicker for a time, and then go out for many years.

CHAPTER IV

LA CRISE DE LA FEDERATION (1790)

THE ideals of liberty and equality perpetually elude the pursuit of their most ardent seekers, for the first involves the awkwardness that one man's liberty is likely to be his fellow's repression and the second is plainly contrary to the facts of the concrete world in which men are created unequal. They can only make a plausible showing when they are introduced heavily shackled with qualifications and distinctions. But the third catchword of Revolutionary France, fraternity, having no definite meaning and involving nothing more than the goodwill of the excited heart, is more easily justified. Moreover it clothes the nakedness of the first two with the vestments of what is practically religious devotion. It may not last, but for a day it can be attained in its completeness. The feast of the Federation on the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille celebrated that frenzy of fraternity which would soon become a frenzy for the blood of those who were unable to keep it up.

In different parts of the country members of the National Guards had been meeting together with religious pomp and ceremonial in order to swear fidelity to the laws made by the Assembly, and it was thought that the great anniversary would be a suitable day for such a national federation in Paris itself. No one was to be outdone in fraternity, the king approved, the Right as well as the Left supported the idea, the Paris authorities set to work to make it a triumph, Lafayette imagined all Frenchmen dancing with joy round their beloved general and his equally beloved white charger.

Before the sacred feast there was still time to decree one last purificatory rite by which all Frenchmen would be fitted to take part in the celebration. Privileges had been decreed away, why not the meaningless badges of such privileges as well? Some foreigners, or reputed to be such, had come to congratulate the Assembly and to ask to be allowed to witness the show. Warmed by their enthusiasm, the Assembly listened to Lameth who

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suggested that the chained figures symbolizing the provinces conquered by Louis XIV should be removed from the statue in the Place des Victoires. While they were about it, someone else added, why not remove all symbols of vanity, all titles, all place-names, all armorial bearings – in fact all the spikes and angles of a gothic system. Before he had finished speaking, up jumped Lameth and Lafayette. Lameth got in first, but Lafayette was a good second. ‘The motion which you have made and which M. Lameth supports,’ he said, ‘is so necessary a consequence of the constitution that it is impossible to make the slightest objection to it; I am content to support it with all my heart. If a man deserves well of the State, we shall not make him “comte” or noble, but we shall say: “Such a man has saved the State on such a day;” I feel that these words have something of the American character, precious fruit of the new world which ought to serve mightily to renew the youth of the old.’ On the next day he had a scruple, because he reflected that it would be more consonant with liberty if instead of forbidding people to take titles, anybody should be allowed to take any title that pleased his fancy. No one took much notice of his amendment to this effect. Mirabeau supported the motion in the House, but the story goes that when he returned home, he called for his valet and said to him: ‘If you imagine that as a result of what has taken place in the Assembly, you can cease to call me *Monsieur le comte*, you are very much mistaken.’ Lafayette, though he did not go so far as his enemies who referred to him as M. Motier, dropped his title and the use of the particle ‘*de*.’

The only cloud on the horizon in those days of fraternizing was the return of Orléans. Lafayette sent one of his aides-de-camp to London to keep him away seeing that the reasons which demanded his departure still demanded his prolonged sojourn in foreign parts. But Orléans pointed out that his absence had not diminished the riots in Paris, and Lafayette, the victim perhaps of the contagion of goodwill, took no further steps to keep him out of the kingdom.

Despite unseasonable weather, the whole of Paris (*des femmes en plumes, des raccrocheuses, des moines, des chevaliers de Saint Louis, des pousse-culs*) seemed to be busy in the Champ-de-Mars building the erections needed for the ceremony, an *arc-de-triomphe* under which the king and the officials were to pass, a large stand decorated

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with blue and gold for the Assembly with a royal box in the centre, and, most important of all, the altar in the middle of the field at which the oaths would be taken and Talleyrand's last mass be said.

Mirabeau, foreseeing the danger of too much Lafayette-worship, was very anxious to obtain the presidency of the Assembly for the occasion in order to make the king and himself the centre of the picture, but Lafayette's opposition – 'he had no objection to Mirabeau being president at another time, but for this special occasion he insisted on the president being a virtuous patriot' – spoiled his plans.

On July 10th, the fourteen thousand representatives of the National Guards of France unanimously elected Lafayette major-general of the Federation, the king himself being the chief. On the 13th, the *Fédérés* led by their general presented themselves at the bar of the House and Lafayette made the kind of speech which suited the occasion perfectly:

'Yes, gentlemen, our hands shall rise together at the same hour, at the same instant: our brothers from all parts of the kingdom will take the oath that shall unite them. With what transports we shall unfold before their eyes these banners, pledges of our union and the inviolability of our oath! With what transports will they receive them! May the solemnity of this great day be the signal of the conciliation of parties, of the forgetting of quarrels, of peace and public happiness!' And how earnestly he meant every word and every repetition of each word!

A deputation went to the king, and Louis for once replied in language that would not have been unworthy of his ancestor, Saint Louis: 'Tell them that the king is their father, their brother, their friend: that he cannot be happy unless they are happy, great unless they are great, powerful unless they are free, rich unless they are prosperous, sad unless they are sad. Above all repeat my words or rather the sentiments of my heart in the humblest cottages, in the hovels of the unfortunate; tell them that although I cannot accompany them into their homes, I wish to be there, nevertheless, by my love and by my laws which protect the feeble, to watch over them, to live for them, to die for them, if need be.'

The morning of the Fourteenth was wetter than ever. Soon the tramp of three hundred thousand Parisians had converted the Champ-de-Mars into a quagmire, but it took more than that to

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damp the spirit of fraternity. By about midday the official procession was arriving. At last the king and queen were ready to take their places. It had been arranged that the queen who was supposed to have no official position should not sit by the side of the king. Marie-Antoinette thought it another slap in the face administered by Lafayette, and was confirmed in her suspicion when she saw him ordering to their posts some of the guards who, she was told, had come to ask her to sit where she pleased. It was he too, it seems, who decided that the king should take the oath from his throne and not steal his own thunder by taking it at the altar. Shower followed shower as each person wandered about searching for his appointed place. It was not until four o'clock that Talleyrand in his pontifical robes, attended by four hundred tricoloured priests, could begin his mass to the music of eighteen hundred players. Lafayette stood by the altar, satisfied and sincere. By the time Talleyrand, amused and insincere, had come to the end of his contribution, the weather had cleared and a bright sun confirmed the view that the oath was more important than Talleyrand's mass. Lafayette marched to the throne and received back from the king, the chief of the Federation, the orders he had given him the day before. Then to the blare of trumpets, he mounted the steps of the improvised sanctuary, drew his sword, and holding it on the altar, swore the fidelity of the *Fédérés* to the king, the nation and the law. Immediately a hundred thousand hands were raised and a hundred thousand voices answered: 'I swear,' and the guns roared their approval. Next the king from his corner read the oath while the crowd was shouting: '*Vive l'assemblée nationale! Vive le roi!*' While a mighty *Te Deum* was being sung, citizens and soldiers fell into each others' fraternal arms. Lafayette himself who had momentarily attained his dream of representing – with the full approval of the law – free and united France in his own person, was carried to his white horse by the crowd, kissing his clothes, his hands, even his face. Mounted again, he pushed his way through the people who hung on to his boots and thighs. Free at last, he galloped away, as an eye-witness expressed it, 'into the centuries to come.' Adrienne that night realized that no price was too great to pay for a husband like hers. The rest of Paris appeared to be dancing over the ruins of the Bastille until the morning.

Such was the Sunday of the Revolution. Work-a-day Monday

followed without interruption. In fact it brought with it two new problems to add to the perplexities of the men of good will, foreign relations and the future of the Church.

No one was a stronger believer than Lafayette in the universality of the Rights of Man. He had learned about them three thousand miles away; he almost alone had wanted to apply them even to coloured races. There was no reason now why they should be confined to the frontiers of France. On the contrary he had spared no effort since his return from America to keep in touch with patriots, as he called them, in Ireland, Holland, Corsica, Poland, wherever, in fact, the flag of liberty had a chance of flying. He was no pacifist and he had no objection to forcing people to be free. The light of liberty shone so strongly that it blinded him and all the others to its own constitution. The tricolour would go round the world. The Assembly on the other hand had been disposed to distinguish between liberty and nationalism, and its resolutions in the cause of peace had culminated in the article of the Constitution which reads: 'The French nation renounces the undertaking of any war in view of making conquests.' Such an unusual disposition on the part of the sons of Louis XIV delighted the chancelleries of Europe. It made it much easier for them to conquer France. It would under the circumstances be a bad blunder on the part of the Emperor or the king of Prussia to come to the help of their brother of France; the more revolution, the better for them. Unfortunately for both sides, the facts of revolution are more real than many of its aspirations. It had, for example, been imitated in Belgium, and Belgium was the property of the Emperor. Avignon, a piece of Papal property, had driven out the Papal authorities and formed itself into a commune – these were dangerous precedents for the monarchs of the *ancien régime*. The abolition of privileges affected certain German princes on the Eastern frontier. Rumours of the activities of *émigrés* under Artois and Calonne, and, most important of all, the relationship of the queen to the Emperor were links between France and her neighbours which could not be entirely controlled by either side. It did not need a very discerning eye to see that Lafayette's view that the Tricolour would conquer Europe or Europe the Tricolour was more likely to be correct than the Assembly's naive hopes. If so, it was of the first importance to see to the organization of the French army.

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At the moment the army seemed to be on the point of dissolution through lack of discipline. From one end of the country to the other regiments were disaffected. The Federation excitements and subversive propaganda had upset the soldiers, and the officers, mostly reactionary, dealt tactlessly with the men's political views.

On August 6th, three regiments mutinied in Nancy, one of the most important garrison towns. Lafayette, as usual when he saw clearly, did not hesitate. He induced the Assembly to act with all possible sternness and to authorize Bouillé, who had lately been sniggering at his weakness behind his back, to put down the mutiny without counting the cost. He himself wrote to him to say that the execution of the orders should be 'complete and sharp. . . . It seems to me, my dear cousin, that we must strike an imposing blow for the good of the whole army, and stop by a severe example the general dissolution which is threatening.' Bouillé took him at his word and suppressed the mutiny at the cost of over five hundred lives. It was a staggering event even in those days when life was still held cheap. The Assembly, recovering from its unwonted determination, tried to make up for it by dealing leniently with the mutineers. The effect was to undo all the good Lafayette and Bouillé had done and to deepen the quarrel between the two wings of the Left. Lafayette voted an official approval of Bouillé's conduct and supported Bailly in arranging a commemoration service on the Champ-de-Mars for those who had been killed in suppressing the mutiny. As one may imagine, the popularity he had regained at the Federation was not wearing well. Marat screamed with fury: 'Soul of mud, fortune has done everything for you, but you have preferred to the joy of being the saviour of France the dishonourable part of petty ambition, of greedy courtier, of perfidious double-dealer, and to crown the horror, of vile *suppôt* of the despot.' Even the legendary white horse was asked to join in the bad language: 'I am only a white horse, but I have to carry a Jean F . . . whom I shall trample on one day. I, I alone, shall rid the country of a traitor, and the French nation filled with a sense of recognition for my services, instead of singing a *libera* will chant without ceasing *Alleluia*.' In a letter to Washington written a day or two before the orders to Bouillé had been carried out, he confessed – and the confession coming from him is significant – that his determination to keep order 'has lately

lost me some popularity with the people.' It was not so much due to his military firmness which contrasted with his more democratic methods with civilians and civilian guards as to the increasing power of the demagogues, Danton, Marat and Desmoulins, who were running the Cordeliers Club, a club which stood in the same relation to the Jacobins as Communist organizations stand to-day to Parliamentary socialism.

Mirabeau, it need hardly be said, was ready to take full vengeance for Lafayette's refusal to support him for the presidency of the Assembly. He thought he saw his opportunity to destroy an impaired popularity altogether and his conduct during the autumn seems to have been guided by this motive. While Lafayette, in the words of one historian, 'was obstinately bent on keeping the terms of a contract repudiated by each of the contracting parties,' Mirabeau, with extraordinarily skilful perfidy, was succeeding at one and the same time in being more revolutionary than the Jacobins and more royalist than the king. In September the hard-working Necker, managing the kingdom behind the scenes, could do no more and resigned. A new ministry would have to be formed. Mirabeau concentrated on preventing Lafayette from imposing his friends on the king. In letter after letter to the Court he insisted on this point with so much emphasis that one must suppose Lafayette's influence to have been considerably greater than would at first sight appear. He suggested various petty ways discrediting the general, and even resorted to almost hysterical language: 'Above all it is important that not one of Lafayette's choices should be accepted; it is as important as honour, as safety, as life itself.'

While Mirabeau was keeping one of his feet planted among the Jacobins, he was complaining to the Court of Lafayette's treachery in nominating Barnave, Duport, Lameth and Pétion to a Committee for revising the Constitution. Actually Lafayette was making another attempt to re-unite the two wings of the Left: 'I have realized from my dealings with the chiefs of the Clubs that their ideas are more in harmony with mine than their feelings. If this committee works harmoniously, it will succeed all the better seeing that it is composed of both sections of the popular party.' But Mirabeau, the secret adviser of the Court, and not Lafayette, the candid advocate of popular sovereignty, succeeded in regaining the Jacobin friendship. Soon he became

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the president of the Jacobin club and when accused of secret relations with the queen answered equivocally: 'My reputation is part of the domain of French freedom.' There was a question of whether the warships were to fly the white flag or the tricolour; he seized the occasion to recover his popularity by an inspiring speech on the Tricolour, assuring the Court that 'one must dissemble when one wishes to help force by skill, just as one must tack in a storm'. At the same time he continued to hammer at Lafayette: 'As for him, I shall pursue him without intermission to the feet of the throne, on to the throne itself, should he mount it. The present dangers to the king, my terrible fears for the future, have they any other cause than the existence of that man?'

Lafayette, used to popularity, habituated to success, reckoning almost on infallibility, felt these encircling waves of hatred, the hatred of Mirabeau, the hatred of Marie-Antoinette, the hatred of Marat, the hatred of the Jacobins, the hatred of the aristocrats. 'This morning', wrote one of the latter sarcastically, 'I saw our great general. He had only two grooms with him. How I admired the wonderful presence of mind he showed in giving orders to his coachman to be careful not to run over anybody. A great man indeed!' In a moment of expansion he wrote to Mme. de Simiane: 'I am distressed not to find in your company that tenderness needed by a torn, a betrayed heart who sees the most beautiful revolution compromised by despicable passions and who cares not whether he ends like Washington or Sidney.' The cynical Morris was taking every opportunity of patting him on the back and whispering: 'I told you so.' 'Poor Lafayette!' he notes, 'he begins to suffer the consequences which always attend too great elevation. *Il s'éclipse au premier.*' 'Poor Lafayette,' had got into trouble for appointing members of the National Guard to do service at the Tuileries as a bodyguard without consulting the Assembly - 'Unconstitutional! Is he going to be a military dictator?' they said, as Congress had said of Washington ten years earlier. He had to console himself with the reflection that 'all the honest people are for me, from the poorest to those who are not *aristocrates enragés*; even the honest Jacobins are on my side, despite my refusal to go to their club.' The trouble was that honest men were not growing in numbers.

Yet he was far from finished. Had he known it his position was in some ways stronger than ever. From being a vague symbol

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of revolutionary goodwill, he had become the recognized leader of the moderate party, the Fayetteists, the party of the Club of 1789, soon to be known as the Feuillants. He had the support of the bourgeois classes, the people who corresponded most nearly to the citizens of the United States. The Guard with some exceptions was still faithful to him. Despite Mirabeau's efforts he still had the ear of the king and it was his men – inconspicuous nonentities for the most part – who formed the new administration in November. Unfortunately for him and the king, the second of the new questions which were agitating France, the status of the Church, would soon agitate these moderately calm waters.

In history nothing has shown up better the practical hollowness of doctrinaire enlightenment than its inability to understand and therefore to deal with the force of religion. To Catholic Adrienne's influence Lafayette owed his superior insight into this difficult problem. We have already had occasion to notice the corruption in the Church of France at the end of the eighteenth century. Its wealth (popularly much exaggerated), its secularism, its Gallicanism, and the abyss which separated the higher from the lower clergy seemed to indicate that its force was spent. Morris, an impartial observer often shrewd in his judgment, was silly enough on this point to think that the popularity of anti-religious plays in Paris would complete its ruin. A Protestant like Barnave believed that the Declaration of Rights would put an end to religious orders, since monks were clearly not in a position to exercise their natural rights. Those who were responsible for obtaining public money saw in it nothing but a mine which could save the State from bankruptcy. First, its property was used as a guarantee behind an issue of paper-money; next, that property was declared to be national; thirdly, the clergy were to be incorporated in the revolutionary State in return for their public salaries. Were religion as simple to manage as other departments of public life, such a programme would have been excellent. Lafayette was more cautious: 'Lafayette,' he wrote, 'had near him an unanswerable argument, that faith could be allied with the most liberal virtue and the most complete patriotism.' He did not wish to disturb that particular hornets' nest. But others not bothered by American toleration and pious homes thought otherwise. 'We are a Convention,' said one deputy, 'we have the power to change religion.' Unfortunately Lafayette's idea of

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universal toleration was difficult to apply in a country in which only one religion counted. Despite first appearances the Church was still immensely strong. Determined to master it, the Assembly decided that the incorporation of the Church should also be a reformation. They were going to have a simplified, purified, primitive State Church. By that simple and apparently logical step, the whole aspect of the Revolution was changed. From now onwards French Catholics, that is, the majority of Frenchmen and all the clergy were debarred from drifting down the river of liberty, fraternity and equality: they had either to take a definite jump across a deep valley, or they had somehow to ease their consciences by finding a way round. It was no longer revolution with eyes half-open; it was revolution with eyes open or counter-revolution. The unfortunate king, hating decisions, found himself called upon to bear the responsibility of millions of his subjects, and by his supreme decision to accept or reject the Revolution in the name of Catholics.

In this matter Lafayette had no scruples of conscience. He certainly was not aware of the hold which religion could have on a people, but Adrienne's life taught him that it could mean everything to a good and wise individual. She had been working with him in the background, entertaining his many guests, keeping his friends and snubbing his enemies. Morris for example noted that she was warm or cold to him according to the way he had treated her husband. In her daughter's words: 'She saw that my father was the chief figure in a revolution of which no one could foresee the end; she understood the meaning of each trouble without any disillusion, yet she was ever strengthened by his principles and convinced of the good which he could perform and the evil which he could avert.' Out of regard for her, therefore, Lafayette was very tactful about the civil constitution of the clergy, as the new measures were entitled. On principle they differed. Lafayette, whose religion was the Constitution, accepted the will of the Assembly. She, as a good Catholic, would have nothing to do with it. She even went to the length on one occasion of causing a scandal by dining out when the civil Archbishop of Paris dined officially at her house, and she had no hesitation in making use of her position as Lafayette's wife to act as an intermediary between the Pope and the old clergy. But in all matters of detail, he exerted himself to protect and make easy the life of

the persecuted priests, for whom he demanded, according to his principle of universal toleration, full liberty of conscience. When he was engaged in hurrying the execution of the measure which would allow priests who had not taken the oath to say mass, he wrote: 'I am the midwife of this operation. It is remarkable that the democratic *dévots* seem to be content and that only the real aristocrats are angry because we are taking away religion from their opposition. The ecclesiastical committee was speaking to me of precautions to be taken against *les réfractaires*. I told them that the National Guard was ready to play any air they liked so long as the keyboard was not changed which is the Declaration of Rights. You are quite wrong in believing that nuns have to hear the constitutional mass. Read Article ix . . .'

By this time, Louis, of course, had given way. In November and December he had nearly been driven insane by being called upon to give his sanction to the Civil Constitution and the oath which every cleric who wanted to be paid must take. Mirabeau, who had supported the measures with energy, whispered that all was for the best since it would rally more people to the opposition. This was not a great consolation when one is driven to mortal sin. At last wearied by the fight, and perhaps encouraged by his sister who said: 'This Revolution is as much of a mystery as the Blessed Trinity,' he signed only to find that practically every Bishop and the great majority of the clergy refused to take the oath, and supported by the attitude of the French Church the Pope at last condemned the Civil Constitution. Talleyrand, acting as a bishop for the last time, had the privilege of consecrating the new bishops of a Church which had elected to substitute for the Vicar of Christ the authority of Jesus Christ alone. With the blessing of the most insincere of the prelates of the Church of Rome the asceticism and purity of the primitive Church was to be restored.

Louis had given way, but Louis' conscience held firm. Religious war had begun, and it was certain that Lafayette's policy of a constitutional monarchy with Louis as monarch was doomed. Bailly had no illusions on the point, though he was Lafayette's closest supporter. As a philosopher he viewed with disgust 'behaviour worthy of the Inquisition after Voltairian toleration.'

'Do you realize,' he said one day to Lafayette, 'that a girl has been whipped on the steps of the Theatine Church? She was

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whipped for a crime of faith, that is, of opinion. On the wall of the church they stuck a notice: "Warning to pious aristocrats. Purge given gratis." Such is the state we have come to! Lafayette suggested that the interference of the Pope was partly responsible for the bitter feeling.

'How could it be otherwise?' Bailly reminded him, 'Did you expect anything else? The day before yesterday they burned an effigy of the Pope. War is declared. Soon we shall be back to the days of Charles IX.'

'They say the nuncio is going to leave Paris,' mused Lafayette.

'The nuncio? I prophesy something far more disturbing,' whispered Bailly, 'a departure which will take place without drums or trumpets, but which will have quite an importance, very different from the farewell of the nuncio.'

Lafayette jumped up. 'You are joking! Have you forgotten my existence? I solemnly assure you that not a mouse, not a mouse, I repeat, will leave the Tuileries. If the constitutional monarchy were destroyed, it would give way to a demagogic hydra whose head, as you know, grows again whenever it is cut off. Never shall we allow such an abortion, such an illusion.'

Bailly as we know proved a shrewd prophet. Louis, the conscience-stricken sinner, was a different man from Louis, the sincere but weak co-partner in the Assembly's work. He gazed from the windows of the Tuileries towards the Eastern frontier and beyond.

CHAPTER V

LAFAYETTE AND LOUIS XVI

(1790 - 1791)

By the end of 1790, Lafayette expressed himself as thoroughly disgusted with the king. Yet to whom else could he look? As General Bouillé's son wrote, he was the only other good man, and though someone else said that Lafayette 'would never rest until he became president of the Republic or died a glorious death in the presence of 200,000 people,' he had no real desire and certainly no conceivable chance of reaching the first of these alternatives. Republicanism, it must be remembered, was not a 'live issue' at all before the flight of the king and Condorcet's republican declaration six months later. By October, the king, for his part, was writing to General Bouillé to inform him that the gaolership of Lafayette had become insupportable. Without Lafayette his only chance was counter-revolution with the help of the very unwilling foreign powers. The royal army, as was to be proved in a few months, had become entirely unreliable. Once the civil constitution had been sanctioned, constitutional monarchy under Louis could not be sincere or lasting. No wonder he allowed General Bouillé a free hand to do what he could to prepare the counter-revolution.

Lafayette, hearing of Bouillé's activities, wrote to complain of his insincerity. Bouillé's reply was unanswerable: 'A year ago you were telling me that a strong popular monarchy was your intention and will. Did you not promise me that a public force was to be established without which the exercise of the best laws would be impossible? And were you not in a better position then than now to carry out your intention? But what has happened since? Many opposition parties have been formed. The Jacobins have greatly increased their influence and force, so that it is no longer possible to destroy them or reckon what harm will be done to France. Disorder has increased in France. Discontent has increased among the people. The revolutionary clubs have all

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power at this moment in nearly all the towns. Will not your constitutional building be thrown down and you yourself buried under the ruins?" What Lafayette had failed to do in 1790, he certainly could not effect in 1791, for the Revolution was rapidly ceasing to be a question of law, and becoming a question of force. It must be supported by force or attacked with force. The Washington of the old world did not want to see that, for it spelt not the failure of his deeds, but the far more disturbing failure of his ideals.

No one understood the true state of affairs better than Mirabeau. He bestrode the centre with one foot among the counter-revolutionaries and the other among the Jacobins, ready as circumstances should prompt to bring the right foot up to the left or the left up to the right. Lafayette sat blinking hopefully between his giant legs. His letters during the early part of 1791 show that he still believed that the fulfilment of his constitutional ideals lay round the next corner but one. 'If it is questionable,' he wrote to Washington, 'whether I can personally escape so many enemies, the success of our great and good revolution is assured.' Or in a letter to Bouillé of all people: 'My dearest wish is to end quickly and well this revolution, to establish the constitution on a sound basis, to make use for this purpose of whatever public confidence and private means I may possess, and then in civil or military life to be nothing but an active citizen, and, if war breaks out, your aide-de-camp without rank or command.'

But just as the events of 1790 had destroyed the hopes of peacefully establishing a constitutional monarchy through Lafayette and the Assembly, so the events of the first six months of 1791 destroyed the possibility of establishing it by some form of counter-revolution. The prophecy made one hundred and twenty years earlier by the Cardinal de Retz was fatally coming true: 'The people must count for much whenever they think themselves everything. Their force lies in their imagination, and it can be truly said that, unlike all other forces, they can do, when they have reached a certain point, whatever they think they can do.'

As early as June, 1790, Malouet, a royalist deputy, had suggested an appeal to the *cahiers* of 1789 by the king safely entrenched in some provincial town. That the idea was not so far-fetched is proved by the fact that he wanted to communicate it to Lafayette and even to Barnave. But the king would not listen. In

this proposal however lay the best constructive suggestion for saving the monarchy and the moderate revolution. Lafayette later, as we shall see, was driven to adopt it, but once again the king, or rather the queen, would not listen. At the beginning of 1791, so many plans were discussed by the king, the queen, Mirabeau, Fersen, Bouillé that it is difficult to be certain about any definitive proposal. The general idea, however, was clear. With or without the connivance of the Emperor, who, by appearing on the frontier would give an excuse for moving and strengthening the army – so much was suggested not only by the queen but by Bouillé as well – the king would escape from Paris and take command of that part of the army which remained loyal to him; the Assembly would be dissolved on the grounds that it had gone beyond its mandate and because the king, not having been a free man, had not been in a position to give a valid sanction to its decrees. A new Assembly would be elected which, Mirabeau guaranteed, would support the claim of the king to be free and to have sufficient executive power. How far the royal family were counting on Mirabeau's contribution; how far on the help of *émigrés* and foreigners we can only guess.

If Lafayette could have been won over to some such plan in 1791, instead of in 1792 when the Court had lost all vestige of confidence in him, it might well have succeeded. Bouillé's son was sent in January to sound him, but the old general's fears that Lafayette would be more ready to suspect the purity of intention of the royalists than of the Jacobins were well founded. Lafayette told Bouillé that he had no ambition but the public good and the achievement of a happy and free constitution. Not only would he have nothing to do with any plan which opposed the will of the Assembly, but he refused to believe that Bouillé could be seriously considering it. In February he wrote to him: 'There are people, I am told, who are turning over in their minds great schemes; it is all the fruit of petty ambition. As for honest people like ourselves, we must move straight and openly towards a useful and well-known end. All those mysteries and intrigues only help rascals, just as the chimeras of evil heads only serve the purpose of their enemies.' And so Mirabeau's 'petty ambition' had to do without Lafayette's 'honesty'. The last conference between them, evidently an unsuccessful one, took place in the first week in February, 1791.

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Mirabeau was tacking for the last time, not because he had become honest but because death was very near. Apparently with the idea of preparing the way for a popular counter-revolution, he was quarrelling bitterly with the Jacobin leaders. By the irony of fate this despiser of Lafayette was thereby drawn to support him at the end.

On February 28th, the news spread that the mob was destroying the prison of Vincennes, a few miles outside Paris. A battalion of the National Guard under brewer Santerre had gone to the scene on the pretext of keeping order, but in reality to co-operate with the mob. Every Parisian riot was attributed to the gold of Orléans, but in this case it seems possible that the mob was incited by some irresponsible royalists, for, while Lafayette was away, a small number of nobles were planning to make an attack on the National Guards posted outside the Tuileries. It was a mad scheme, and luckily for all concerned, Lafayette restored order in Vincennes quickly enough to be back in Paris before anything serious could take place. He rushed to the palace in an extremely bad temper, dealt with the 'Knights of the Dagger' as these nobles were afterwards called, like naughty schoolboys – 'he treated us,' wrote one of them, 'as though we had been *abbés ou séminaristes révoltés*, or, if one prefers, like little schoolboys to be chastised; instead of making it a matter of hate, he made fun of us and laughed at us, distributing our weapons to the guards in the midst of jeers and jokes; it was quite comical and Lafayette was responsible for giving it that turn' – then he told M. Villequier, the first Gentleman of the Bedchamber, exactly what he thought of his behaviour, and expressed his regrets to the king who confessed that the intemperate zeal of his friends would end by undoing him. All kinds of accounts of the horrors he perpetrated were quickly spread abroad by his enemies, but we can trust the word of Madame Elisabeth when she wrote to a friend: '*M. de Lafayette s'est fort bien conduit.*'

That same night Mirabeau issued a proclamation approving of the conduct of the authorities and hinted at the factiousness of the Jacobin leaders: 'The factious are those who constantly tell you that liberty is endangered; have you not your National Guards, those vigilant sentinels of public liberty?' A few hours later he was violently denounced at the club for his pains, and, as a result, he ceased for ever from going there. How far he was

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sincere at the end in his support of the counter-revolution, no one will ever know. A few days before he died, he told Cabanis, his friend of the Left, that if the king were to leave Paris he himself would mount the tribune to proclaim the throne vacant and announce the Republic. On April 2nd, after an illness of five days, the most striking and puzzling of the great actors of the French Revolution died. Even his death was a puzzle. Everyone talked of poison – years later Talleyrand was assaulted by a man who accused him of having killed Mirabeau – but no one could prove anything. In truth, his life, his size, his vices, his intense energy and work account sufficiently for the collapse of his body. The most unscrupulous opportunist in his methods, his ends were not without consistency. He wanted the people to be happy, France to be a great nation and himself to be comfortable, rich and, above all, powerful.

The world found him worthy of praise. In the remotest provinces of France, in foreign lands, the name of Mirabeau symbolized the revolution of the people of France. Three hundred thousand people attended his funeral; Lafayette with his staff rode at the head of the procession. 'He was not naturally a bad man,' he wrote later, 'he even had quite good movements, and the oddest thing about him was the wish to appear worse than he was.' As for his reception into another world, we may leave that to the words of Madame Elisabeth: 'Mirabeau has decided to see whether the Revolution was approved of in the next world. Good God! What an awakening that must have been!'

The death of Mirabeau left the Court in an awkward position. For months he had sent it secret advice, and, whatever may be said about his motives for doing so, the advice had been shrewd. The queen when she heard of his death is said to have wept for she realised that her last resource was gone. 'His death,' wrote Lafayette, 'left the Court unformed ideas of which they made foolish use.'

For some time the Jacobins who were growing suspicious of the king's manœuvres had been trying to forestall them. One of the methods was to make him appoint foreign ambassadors who would officially declare to the foreign powers that the king of France was personally identified with the Revolution. Bouillé does not hesitate to accuse Lafayette of making use of his creature, Duportail, now minister of war, in order to weaken the army. But as

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so often happened in the Revolution a lucky accident did more than the best laid plans to further the ends of the revolutionaries.

Easter is the testing time of Catholics in a public position. By receiving the sacraments they publicly attest their faith, by omitting to do so, they publicly repudiate it. In the case of Louis, it was a question of which brand of Catholicism he would profess. Would he be given absolution by the old clergy? Could he fulfil his Easter duties as the revolutionaries wished him to in a 'civil' church? He thought it would be more prudent if he slipped away to the privacy of St. Cloud. There was nothing unusual in this. Despite his so-called captivity he had gone there more than once since leaving Versailles. But either the fear of his escape or the desire of some people to force him to commit himself caused a large crowd to gather outside the palace to prevent the king from leaving. Lafayette believed that the trouble had been planned some time before by Mirabeau in order to prove the Court's complaint that the king was not a free man. He tells us that he had taken special precautions to facilitate the king's departure, but, if so, why did he not prevent the crowd from assembling, still more how came it to be that the National Guards on duty outside the palace that day were, as he suggests, in the payment of the Court? Whatever the cause, it is certain that the Guards disobeyed his orders and helped the crowd to keep the king in the palace. Lafayette could do nothing with them. The king was a prisoner of the people after all. Marie-Antoinette had her chance of adding to Lafayette's mortification: 'Now, will you admit that we are not free?' she taunted him. And Louis, doubtless prompted by her, refused his offer of escort to St. Cloud later in the day, saying that he had ascertained from his confessor that so long as he did not go to communion in a 'civil' church, he would have done enough for the salvation of his soul. It is at least fair to say that all this *sounds* like a conspiracy against Lafayette. He resigned his position, of course, but not because he had been publicly disobeyed, but because the king had refused his help when the trouble was over. After the murder of Foullon, there had been reason for taking back his resignation. On this occasion the only logical proceeding would have been to retire until the king had made his intentions quite clear. Instead of doing this, however, he listened to petition after petition, received the mayor and the municipality in his house, heard of the loud

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public clamour that he should withdraw his resignation, wrote a long proclamation to explain why he could not, and then, just in time, he unbent and forgave his children, though in the first instance he had not blamed them. Or, more simply, as Morris put it: 'Ternant tells me that he urged Lafayette to resign and that he agreed, but found afterwards various reasons for not doing it. This is like him.'

A good deal of his mortification was forgotten in the delightful evidence of his seemingly undiminished popularity. He sat down to write all about it to Washington: 'It all seems to me to be a kind of phenomenon, but there is no doubt that my popularity has not been shaken. Here is the proof. The National Guard disobeyed me . . .' and then follows the story.

He took the opportunity of seeking a *rapprochement* with the old Jacobin triumvirate who by now had been replaced at the club by some of their more extreme brethren. With them he might form an inner Left party, still ready to uphold the authority of the monarch, but a monarch to all intents and purposes powerless. By this time the latter had to all appearances given way entirely and indeed abjectly. He ordered, as he was bidden, the foreign secretary to inform the powers that the stories of his captivity, of his unhappiness, of his diminished authority, were all lies. He received absolution from a 'civil' priest and communicated in a 'civil' church. But the public insult and these further humiliations put an end to a long period of hesitation. He *must* escape from it altogether. The queen and Fersen had been right.

The real purpose, in fact, of the flight of June 21st is difficult to determine. Bouillé in the course of a long secret correspondence with the king left the latter no hope of rallying a French army round him. With great bitterness he accuses Lafayette, who had been so encouraging in the Nancy mutiny, and the Jacobins of having done all in their power to complete the disaffection of the army. 'The whole of the French infantry was so corrupt that I only had one regiment which I could risk in the service of the king. All my best troops were taken from me, with the greatest care, and at the time not more than thirty squadrons remained faithful to their sovereign; the artillery was so bad that I should not have been able to find enough men to man a single gun.' As for the Austrians, Bouillé tells us that they showed no sign of taking one single step to help their sovereign's sister

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and brother-in-law. However, as early as May, the king informed Bouillé that he was planning to fly from Paris in the middle of June, because he understood that the Austrian troops would then be at Arlon, a few miles across the frontier. From that date Bouillé made all preparations possible to assure the success of the journey. At the same time, the king gave Lafayette, according to the latter's account, repeated assurances that he would never leave Paris, so much so that Lafayette felt guilty of appearing to doubt the royal word by maintaining the usual guard at the Tuileries. On the 20th, Louis had a long interview with the commander of the National Guard, the nature of which we do not know. Rumours of possible attempts to escape had spread about, and Lafayette doubled the guard. That night the famous escape of the royal family took place.

How it was accomplished successfully will always be something of a mystery. When we remember the ceremonial and public nature of the royal life, that the children were taken by the queen to the carriage outside while the bustle and traffic of the palace was still going on, that the guarding of the palace was so strict that a man slept outside Madame Elisabeth's room, we shall not be surprised at the strength of the rumour that Lafayette himself was an accomplice. Of all the explanations offered, Saint-Priest, who was in a position to know, has given the most curious. He asserts that Lafayette, in order to trap the queen was in the habit of leaving one door into the palace unguarded so that Marie-Antoinette could secretly receive her supposed lover, Fersen. It was through this door, according to him, that the royal family escaped. That night Lafayette was certainly near the palace, passing close to the carriage in which the children were awaiting their parents. The queen herself brushed past him as she left, Yet that he should have connived at the escape is utterly incredible. More than once he had answered on his life for the king's safety in Paris. The royal family believed that the first effect of their escape would be the massacring of Lafayette who was responsible for their custody. And in fact, the next day, the people, we are told, were astonished that 'the general who had answered for the king on his head and who had let him escape had not so far had his own head cut off and carried at the end of a pike.'

The next few days were critical in Lafayette's life. It was

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probably only the first scepticism of a people who had become used to rumours of the king's escape which saved the town from the worst riot of the Revolution. But it was also typical of the French character that when the actual escape did take place, all the qualities which lay dormant at less critical times were brought out. The Assembly after a momentary panic behaved with dignity and firmness; the people, amazed at seeing Lafayette's coolness and boldness in walking abroad smiling and unaccompanied, contained its rising anger. As soon as he had been informed of the escape, he dispatched his aides-de-camp in all likely directions to pursue and stop the royal family. He then hurried to the Tuileries, but was stopped by the excited crowd. It must be remembered that the king's flight was interpreted as a prelude to an Austrian invasion, and Lafayette's life depended solely on the mood of a fickle mob. He did what he could by shouting with a smile: 'You will all be the gainers, for the suppression of the royal civil list will mean twenty *sous* for you all,' and then more seriously: 'Call this a disaster? What would you call a counter-revolution which took away your freedom.' The Assembly sent men to ensure his safety, but he told them, loudly enough to be heard: 'I have never been in greater safety, since the roads are filled with the people.' His star was making up for its neglect of him when the king escaped, and no harm came to him, though, according to Alexandre Lameth, he had to be dragged 'from the furies of the multitude.'

In the Assembly, a deputy rose to denounce him, but Barnave defended him. 'M. Lafayette since the beginning of the Revolution has shown the opinions, the intentions and the conduct of a good citizen; M. Lafayette deserves our trust and he ought to receive it.' It was lucky that he had sought again the friendship of the old Jacobin leaders a few weeks earlier. They had saved him from the mob and the deputies. The latter, after having taken measures to preserve order and to recapture the king, proceeded to the orders of the day as though nothing had happened; the former worked off their anger by pulling down royal emblems and signs. The National Guard kept the peace with remarkable efficiency.

The departure of the king and the feebleness of the proclamation which he left behind him, complaining among other things of the discomfort of the Tuileries compared with his other residences,

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drew all parties momentarily together. The Right felt that they had been betrayed, the moderates had been deprived of the headstone of their constitutional erection, the Jacobins feared imminent anarchy. When the news came that the men of the future, Robespierre and Danton, were causing trouble in the Jacobin club, all the deputies who were members of the club went there in a body to keep order. The Jacobins were amazed to see Lafayette enter arm-in-arm with Lameth, followed by his old enemies, Duport and Barnave. As soon as he saw them, Danton, who was one of the leaders of the demagogic Cordeliers club and who hated Lafayette for what he considered his middle-class sympathies, jumped up and shouted: 'M. le Commandant-Général has promised on his head that the king would not go; we demand either the person of the king or the head of the Commandant-Général.' While the five hundred members roared their approval, Lameth, young and good-looking, took the place of the broad-faced, heavy-featured lawyer, and explained why he had come with Lafayette: 'I ask Danton whether it is not true that he came to see me once and asked whether it was not necessary to ruin Lafayette, and is it not true that I answered: "He has done much for liberty, and if liberty is threatened we shall be seen re-united to defend it." . . . If the Constitution were in danger, M. Lafayette would die for it.' This speech quietened the audience, and Lafayette himself could rise to explain. But he was tired, and, according to an onlooker, he turned the same two sentences round and round like an omelette, and after a quarter of an hour of this he sat down. He might, as he says in his memoirs, have accused Danton of having been overpaid in the interests of the Court for his services on the Municipal Council, but he was wise to let well severely alone. No one could deny that he had been responsible for keeping the mouse in the mouse-trap, as Bailly put it, and that he had failed. Greater men have paid the extreme penalty for less, and not only had he saved his own head, he had momentarily strengthened his position. In the king's absence, Paris looked to him.

But the same fate which decreed that the gentle, kindly, indulgent grandson of Marie Leczinska should be forced to guide France in the stormiest days of her history, decreed also that he should only escape the intolerable burden by paying with his life for the blindness of his ancestors. The road to Varennes was not

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the way of escape, it shut the prison doors on him for the last time.

On the evening of the 22nd, after much time had been spent in the customary revolutionary solace, a renewal of oaths all round, voices were heard outside the Assembly shouting: 'The king is taken, the king has been captured.' Measures were at once decided upon to ensure the king's safety during what must prove a perilous return journey, and commissioners were appointed to take charge and accompany the king to Paris. They were Barnave, Pétion and Lafayette's most intimate friend, Latour Maubourg. These measures may have saved the king's life; they did not save him and his family from the grossest insults on the part of the people. However, the Assembly and Lafayette's Guards had more control over the Parisians. After the royal coach had been greeted by Lafayette and his staff – the queen was astonished to see him still alive – at the *barrière de Pantin*, the royal family encountered a deathly silence. The crowd was kept back by lines of National Guards, their arms reversed as at a funeral or a defeat. Not a sound except the clatter of the horses' feet and the rattle of the big carriage as it rolled over the cobblestones. Only when it reached the Tuileries did the people show signs of anger. They attempted to seize the *gardes-du-corps* who had accompanied the fugitives. The queen shouted to Lafayette to save their lives. Barnave, Pétion and Lafayette held the crowd back with some difficulty, and the weary travellers entered their home. The king seemed rather relieved and smiled at Lafayette, as the latter began to scold: 'Your Majesty knows my attachment; but I have never disguised the fact that the moment Your Majesty separates his cause from that of the people, I remain with the people. Has Your Majesty any orders to give?' Louis laughed and answered: 'I'm afraid that I am more at your orders than you are at mine.' The queen, whose hair had turned white in the course of a week, was bitter. She offered Lafayette the keys of her jewel case to save him and his friends the trouble of rifling its contents. When he naturally refused to touch them, she shrugged her shoulders and said: 'No doubt I shall find others with less fine feelings than yourself.' The commissioners formally handed over the responsibility for the king to Lafayette who posted sentinels in the bedrooms. With his usual scrupulousness – comical in less tragic circumstances – he argued with some

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deputies who held that the decrees of the Assembly implied the separation of the different members of the royal family, that since the decree was not clear, he was justified in giving his captives the benefit of the doubt. And so he left them not only prisoners in effect but in the plainest sense of the term.

CHAPTER VI

A CONSTITUTION IN THE AIR

(1791)

THE National Assembly, like so many elected Chambers since its day, was singularly out of touch with what Cardinal de Retz had called 'the imagination of the people' which it represented. It had gone far beyond its original mandate, yet it stopped as far short of what may be called their effective will in the summer of 1791. That its sins of commission were many is proved by the short life of most of the provisions of its long-debated constitution. But its most fatal mistake was a sin of omission. It tried to act as though the king had never made the futile attempt to escape. It pretended that he had been carried off; it reserved its censures for his advisers; it refused to face the glaring fact that the flight to Varennes had made all the difference to the position of the monarchy. To try to impose on the people of Paris the monarch who, in M. Madelin's graphic expression, 'still bore the traces on his face of the spit of the people of the provinces,' was playing into the hands of the extremists. The steadfastness of the Parisians during the king's absence was mistaken for acquiescence: it was more like stupefaction. Marat, Desmoulins, Danton, Brissot and the rest of the extreme Left had little need to exert themselves unduly. Louis was a standing argument against the forces of conservatism and moderation. Lafayette had received a bigger shock than anyone else. If he had not liked Louis, he had trusted him, as he always trusted those who gave their solemn word of honour. He had been the chief culprit and it was up to him to repair his blunder. Something of the severity of that shock may be guessed from Morris's description of the staid and balanced Adrienne when he called on her a few days after the event: 'Go to see M. de Lafayette, who is not come in, but I converse with his wife who seems to be half-wild.'

Lafayette's first impulse was to depose the king and set up the republic. He was in constant relation with Brissot, the future Girondin, and an old friend of his through common interests

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in slave-emancipation and in America. If we believe Brissot's memoirs, Lafayette was at this time expressing his abhorrence of the constitutional monarchists. At all events the mood passed. Whether he feared the danger of anarchy or the intrigues of Orléans who was favouring the regency of his son, later Louis-Philippe, he was very soon in league again with his friends of the inside Left, Barnave, Duport and Lameth, supporting the impossible monarchy on the dangerous principle that 'a devil you know is better than a devil you don't know.' Visions of rallying all good men again round the throne came back. In answer to the Cordeliers' petition that the king should be taken as having abdicated by his flight and should only be reinstated by the will of the nation, he supported Barnave's famous speech in favour of 'stopping the Revolution': 'All the world must feel to-day that it is for the common interest that the Revolution should stop,' said Barnave. The faith these men had in the power of the human will was admirable, but the effect was pathetic: the first attempt to stop the Revolution was the so-called Massacre of the Champ-de-Mars.

Ever since the king's flight the Cordeliers had waged a veiled war on the monarchy. They were making France for the first time in the Revolution republican in sentiment. Their method was twofold; first, to spread disaffection among the working classes, especially by encouraging and organizing strikes; second, to claim the right to oppose the Assembly by gigantic petitions which they contended expressed the real will of the people. They wanted, in fact, government by plebiscite, instead of by representation. These methods worked so well that even some of the National Guards were affected and tore the king's name off their flags. Lafayette and Bailly took special precautionary measures against disorder. The clash which Lafayette had so long tried to avoid by teaching the people self-control seemed to be about to come; when it came he had no hesitation in defending order and constitutional rule. '*Ci-devant châteaux*', as someone called them, were again being burnt; municipalities and disaffected National Guards were leading the rioters. Could the Assembly and the authorities encumbered by the dead-weight of a humiliated king maintain order and save the constitutional Revolution? The president of the Assembly spoke plainly: 'To oppose to the laws a combined resistance and to try to move individual forces in opposition to

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the general will is to attack the Constitution in its foundation. Discover the crimes and find out the criminals.'

On Saturday, July 16th, the chief petition prepared by the Cordeliers Club was taken to the Champ-de-Mars, and read to the crowd by Danton. There was no trouble. Next day was Sunday, a public holiday, and a larger crowd might be expected. The Assembly forbade any demonstrations. Nevertheless the petition was carried to the altar of the Federation, *l'autel de la patrie*, as it was called. Suddenly the story went round that two National Guards had been discovered under the altar preparing to blow it and the petitioners sky-high. They were immediately massacred. It turned out that they were not guards, but peaceful citizens presumably enjoying a cheap night's rest, or trying to obtain a near view of the proceedings. Lafayette was sent for. When he arrived, someone fired at him point-blank, but the pistol misfired. He refused to arrest the murderer whom the guards were holding – another chance for self-control – and the little drama was later held by the Jacobins to have been pre-arranged. It was a bad beginning to a stormy day, in the literal as well as the metaphorical meaning of the word. However, the crowd were quiet enough, one man even playing the fiddle while others danced around him. Later in the morning the official deputations arrived and, since the petition had been held to be illegal, a Monsieur Robert sat down there and then to write a new one, demanding the trial of the king by a Convention. Still there was no trouble. But in the afternoon the atmosphere changed. The very crowding together of so many whose minds and feelings had been worked on for so long was enough to change their mood. The day was oppressively hot.

Not far away, Lafayette was talking to Bailly: 'There is a storm about; do you feel it? Look how heavy the sky is.' And Bailly answered: 'Warn me at once whatever happens. I have the red flag with me. We must be ready for any emergency.' The red flag was the signal for martial law. On the Champ-de-Mars, some of the crowd began to throw stones about, particularly at one of Lafayette's aides-de-camp. But still the dreaded outbreak did not materialise. After all there is no safer place for an angry crowd than a large field.

We do not know his precise reason, but towards evening Bailly decided to proclaim martial law and disperse the crowd. The

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National Guards, angry at having to work on a Sunday, accompanied Lafayette to the scene. They carried the dreaded flag. At a quarter to eight they reached the spot where thirteen months earlier the whole of France vowed its fraternity and good-will. Their arrival gave the people the needed excuse, the target they were looking for. The soldiers were greeted with hisses and angry murmurs. Bricks and stones flew about. The drums were rolled to drown the sound of voices, as the armed men began to charge. Suddenly a shot was fired, one of the guards was wounded. Without waiting for orders, the rest of the guards fired into the air. But the mob stood firm. Lafayette had not accustomed it to such treatment. Then the exasperated guards fired right into the centre of the crowd. Everyone rushed off in terror, and some fifteen killed and as many wounded lay on the field to bear first witness of the failure of Lafayette's patient demonstration that human beings are wise enough to keep themselves in public order by their own self-control. It was particularly bad luck that the blood should have been needlessly sacrificed on a day when the trial was nearly successful. There had been a bad mismanagement. The authorities, and Lafayette no less than the others, had become so nervy that the weapons with which they were entrusted for the preservation of order went off by themselves in their trembling hands before they were quite sure whether they were needed. Within two days, half Paris believed that about five hundred peaceful citizens had been massacred by the orders of the tyrant Lafayette and their bodies thrown into the Seine. The other half was loud in praise of his conduct. It had come to brute force after all, the force of order pitted against the force of disorder. Unfortunately for the force of order, Lafayette's experiment meant that the trial of strength had come a year too late.

Lafayette was now a military dictator. Danton was obliged to fly, many extremists were arrested, the Cordeliers Club was forcibly shut up. But it was work against the grain. He had tried so hard to avoid having to act in an un-American spirit. He lost his hold on the people, and the Jacobins jeered at his reconciliation with Lameth and Duport. But many, probably the majority, fearing for the future, ceased to attend the stormy meetings in the Dominican convent and repaired to the Feuillants convent. Here they were joined by Lafayette's 'Society of 1789,' and so a new rival club, the Feuillants, came into being. It

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might have provided the backing which the royalists so badly needed. But just as the Assembly had grown weary of its drawn-out struggle to realize the impossible ideal of legal revolution, so these moderates came together at a time when the fight had gone out of them. They knew in their hearts that there was no future for them. Until 'the people had got what they thought they could get,' it must all be make-believe. They had grown old in the course of those eventful two years. Instead of active organization and popular appeal, the Feuillants only added more debates to the interminable debates of the Assembly. Lafayette was called the general of the Feuillants or *Feuilles mortes*. They were caricatured as old gentlemen hobbling about on sticks. The caricaturists underrated the truth: they were already in another and better world. In fact, to the historian who knows the future, these last two months of the existence of the Constituent Assembly seem like an interlude during which all responsible Frenchmen are transported into dream-land. While the demagogues were steadily gaining adherents and strengthening their hold over the leaders and led of the morrow, while the great powers were intriguing and scheming as they watched their old enemy crumbling of her own accord, while the *émigrés* were planning their revenge, while the army was completing its disintegration, while the harvest was a quarter of what it had been a year before, while the administration of the kingdom was completely disorganized – the 'respectables' of Paris were persuading themselves that the Revolution was at last ending. For the Constitution was now complete. The bridge was finished just as the rushing waters were undermining the piers.

Lafayette, who in the end saw some of its weaknesses more clearly than his fellow deputies, because he could compare it to his beloved American model, made great final efforts to amend it. Had he succeeded, it would have been to no purpose. He still believed that a second chamber was an essential part of a liberal constitution, but his last fight was against the provision that the Constitution should remain unchanged for thirty years. It was at least a realistic step, for there was no doubt that it would not last thirty months. In the Declaration of Rights which he had laid before the Assembly after its opening, he had included the right of the people to 'constitutional and peaceful means of revising and modifying the form of government.' In accordance with this

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he proposed that the amendment of the Constitution should be possible whenever a Convention, or body distinct from the ordinary legislature, should demand it in the name of the people. It was the least any sane man could do. For the last time he asked the Assembly to be guided by the example of America. But they had grown tired of his everlasting America, and the only answer he obtained was a sigh: '*Ah! L'Amérique! . . .*' In one matter his persistence bore fruit. It was decided that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy should be an ordinary, not a constitutional law; it could therefore be abolished by any succeeding assembly. Adrienne's influence for once bore fruit.

It was nothing but a game, for the Constitution was a constitution in the air. The men who were to rule France within a year understood the meaning of Revolution: they had no patience with these first idealists who tried to build a delicate legal edifice on a foundation as illegal as their own. A new tradition would have to be grown before right in France could have a chance against might. Lafayette and the others were useful only in so far as they contributed to that tradition, and Lafayette alone foresaw the ultimate result, though only towards the end of his long life did he understand the pain involved in bringing to birth the children of the nineteenth century. As though they were aware in their hearts of their own dismal function, the legislators of the Constituent Assembly ended by passing the most extraordinary decree of all, the self-denying ordinance by which no deputy could be elected to the next Legislative Assembly. They were proclaiming the suicide of the first Revolution, for continuity of self-consciousness is as much the sign of survival in republics as in persons. As it happened, it was an unnecessary gesture. France of the first revolution would die in any case.

The game of make-believe was kept up till the end. Lafayette moved that a general amnesty should be proclaimed, that passports should be abolished and that all oaths, except the civic oath, should be disregarded. Given that the revolution was going to be ended by decree, there was no harm in doing it on the grand scale, and so, on September 14th, 1791, the resurrected monarch – fourteen months before he ascended the steps of the guillotine – went down to the Assembly and with the same ceremonial as when he opened the States-General in Versailles he swore fidelity to the completed Constitution. It was to be the final oath of a

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period when oath followed oath in desperate protest in the name of petty wills against the oncoming storm. This time there was no fumbling with hats; instead the awkward king mismanaged the sitting and the standing. He rose to pronounce the words, but the Assembly, as a sovereign body, remained seated. Half-way through, Louis noticed that he alone was standing, so he promptly sat down and continued the oath in that unceremonial posture. He had not changed much in two years.

On the 17th, Paris gave itself over to feasting and rejoicing, a celebration without a morrow, as it has been described. Barnave's wish that the Revolution should be stopped had apparently been granted. As Lafayette had hoped, all good men had rallied round the man he liked to call 'the hereditary president of the executive power' – all good men, but not the men who mattered. Marie-Antoinette had no delusions. Her instinct told her that the sufferings she had undergone required more than the passage of time and the decrees of the men who had been responsible for them to be changed into happiness. They were more real than time, they were stretching into the future. 'The constitution is so monstrous,' she said, 'that it is impossible that it can last for long.' Morris, too, from a disinterested point of view wrote to Washington: 'It is a general and almost universal conviction that this Constitution is inexecutable; the makers to a man condemn it. Judge what must be the opinion of others.' Lafayette seemed to be too tired to think at all. For over two years he had not only played his important part in the events which have been briefly narrated in these pages – a part which, while it provoked much criticism then as now, forced from the honest and sensible Duke of Chartres (later Louis-Philippe) the following judgment: 'They entirely misunderstood in the Court the vigour and cleverness with which in the midst of the greatest difficulties Lafayette and his friends had fixed the monarchic government in the person of the king; they were not just towards him among the *émigrés*' – he had also been occupied every day from early morning until late at night with the management of the National Guard, with the endless conferences with the king, party leaders, ministers; he had often appeared in the Assembly and at the meetings of the Clubs; he had belonged to many committees and interested himself in the patriots abroad and the delicate question of the slaves in the French colonies; moreover he willingly imposed on

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himself the burden of constant letter writing, even during the most critical moments of the most critical days. Now that it all seemed over, he did not so much see his dream coming true, as see the truth for which he had laboured appearing in a kind of tired dream. All he asked for was to be allowed to sleep a little. We have only one short note of his written in September. It ends with the words: 'The presentation of the Constitution to the king will take place on Wednesday; the remainder of the week will suffice for the organization of the National Guard, and next week, I hope, will see the king's acceptance and my resignation. Adieu!' That undated note must have been written near his thirty-fourth birthday. He was therefore at the height of his physical and mental powers. He was still young enough not to fear action and risk, yet his experience should have given him the judgment of age. During the rejoicings over the Constitution, his popularity had revived. The majority of the National Guard had remained faithful to him. As much as anybody, more than most, he had been responsible for France's present position. But he was too tired to carry on, too tired to ask himself whether his work was really finished. Perhaps too he was thinking of Washington who, when his immediate task was ended, bade farewell to his men and retired to the fig-trees of Mount Vernon. Like Washington, he would bid farewell to the National Guards and retire to the forests of Auvergne. Perhaps when he had rested he would be recalled, like Washington, to watch over the boyhood days of the new tricoloured France and deal with the difficulties ahead of which even so sublimely optimistic a man could hardly fail to be conscious.

On October 8th he bade farewell to the National Guard in Washingtonian language: 'I have reached the term of my office according to my promise to the capital when, placed by the will of the people at the head of the citizens who were the first to devote themselves to the conquest and maintenance of liberty, I undertook to hold aloft the sacred standard of the Revolution which the faith of the people confided to me . . . To serve you until this day, gentlemen, was the duty imposed on me by the beliefs which have animated my entire life and by the debt of devotion which your trust in me has created. To return without any reserve to my country all the power and influence she gave me to defend her during the troubles to which she has been subject, that is what I owe not only to myself, but to the only

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form of ambition which is in me . . . Accept, gentlemen, the good wishes of a most dear friend not only for the prosperity of all, but for the happiness too of each one of you in particular, and may the memory of that friend, often present in your thoughts, mingle with the sentiment which unites us all, to live as free men, or to die.'

That same day he set off with Adrienne and his family on one of the many triumphal journeys which punctuated his life. This time, however, an ominous shadow followed the civic crowns which were offered him, for the National Guards of the provinces had volunteered to take turns in guarding him. Threats of assassination were frequent. He had been a popular hero for fifteen years, now he was also a well-hated man.

When he reached his ancestral home in Chavaniac, a deputation of the National Guard met him. Already he was envisaging the possible need for his further services: 'You see me back,' he told them, 'in the place of my birth; I shall only leave it to defend or consolidate our common liberty when it is endangered; I trust I shall be here for a long time.'

He was there for two months.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL AND POLITICIAN

(1791 - 1792)

ADRIENNE with her kindly charity had no desire to brood over the past. She describes her husband during this short interval of rest as 'ever the same, after having been through three such years of storm, preserving the simplicity of his ways, that flower of sentiment for his aunt and the place of his birth, happy with his children, delighted to see himself cherished by the two mothers whom he loved so much - in fact, so sweet a spectacle gave new youth to the faculties of my mother.' It sounds an unfamiliar picture, yet the fact was that he had never had a chance of being himself since the days of his boyhood. Frightened of himself as a boy, he had taken refuge on the most open stage of all, the stage which all men are admitted to see, the stage of public life. Much had been sacrificed to the subconscious desire of holding his audience at all costs. Like the best of actors he had identified himself with the drama in which he played. He had come to believe that he was a prophet. But his greatest success had been an actor's success: he had succeeded as none of his contemporaries had succeeded in drawing the audience. In the language of our time, he had enjoyed first-rate publicity. Nevertheless for all his display of feverish activity, his 'eternal busyness', he had not lived. Most of all he had not suffered. He had his difficulties, but they were mechanical difficulties that could be removed by action and adjustment; he had his failures, but before he had time to think about them, a new round of applause had distracted and delighted him. His most serious failure, the failure to teach the people how to control themselves, was only just being made clear to him when the hallucination of the Revolution's success deceived him and those who thought with him. The real test of his character had yet to come. What would he do when he discovered that the comedy in which he had been playing the hero's part was turning into tragedy. A good actor feels a hero when he plays the hero's part, he may feel happy when the character he represents is

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happy, but he cannot really feel the suffering, anguish, misery that he is required to imitate. Lafayette had felt himself to be a hero, he had felt happy; that meant nothing. But there is no way of confounding real failure with stage failure. When the story requires that the lights should go out and the people should depart and that the hero should be laughed at, it is more than a story, it is reality. Failure would awaken the hero of two worlds; it would show his real worth as a man.

He had arrived in Chavaniac, as he himself notes, on the anniversary of Yorktown. But little else recalled the happy days of his youthful glory. The news from Paris told no tale of the consolidation of the new State. The Legislative Assembly had no sooner taken their seats at the Manège than the defenders of the Constitution, those who had been friends of the old Centre and inside Left, found themselves pushed over to the Right, fighting as in times of change all parties of the Right must fight, with their backs to the wall. Theodore Lameth, brother of Alexandre, was among the Right. So was Dumas, Lafayette's right-hand man in the organization of the National Guard, while Brissot and the Girondins made the pace on the Left. Suspicion of the king, fear of the *émigrés*, now twenty thousand strong at Coblenz, panic at the rapidly increasing desertion of officers from the army, a sense that war was imminent, the halving of the value of the paper-money, renewed threats of famine in the larger cities, these things were sharpening the tempers of the Patriots, sharpening them to the fineness of a guillotine blade's edge. Lafayette liked clear issues, liberty against tyranny, America against England, France against the enemy. During his stay in Chavaniac, the Revolution was developing in so complicated a way that he was lucky to be temporarily out of it. He was more profitably engaged 'bowing', as he put it, 'with delectation before a village mayor,' or refusing with tact the offer of the Assembly of his *département* to be a member of its administration, a member of a County Council, in fact, 'Your occupations, so great and useful, cannot be combined with the imperious need for rest which forced me to private life,' or sighing at the news that he had only received some three thousand votes out of a possible eighty thousand for the Mayoralty of Paris for which his friends had nominated him.

But the goddess who presides over the gifts of chance found a way of bringing him on to the stage once more. She had sent him

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to America, she had made him commander of the National Guard; now she offered him the one opportunity which could suit his talents and temperament during the height of the revolutionary intrigues, a general command in the army which, whatever happened, must defend the Eastern frontier against the enemy. He was informed in December that Narbonne, the minister of war, despite the king's opposition, had appointed him general commanding the army of the centre. '*La patrie* had marked out for its commanders, Generals Rochambeau, Luckner and Lafayette,' the Assembly was told. 'Papa' Rochambeau we have already met; Luckner, an old man twice Lafayette's age, had fought against France in the Seven Years' War. He could hardly speak French and knew nothing about war except how to attack: '*Oui, oui, moi tourne par la droite, tourne par la gauche, et marcher vite,*' was his usual contribution to councils-of-war.

This third opportunity of Lafayette's life was perhaps the greatest. He was in the flower of his age, he had had military experience of volunteer, half-organized armies in America, he had had more than enough political experience, enough at any rate to realize the danger of politics, his duties were plain, his essential task straightforward, if laborious. The victorious days of Valmy and Jemmapes were only nine months ahead, the great re-organization of the personnel and tactics of the French army which would enable it first to defy and then to conquer Europe was shortly to begin. Something of the glorious possibilities which lay before him may be imagined by recalling the names of soldiers under his command, Berthier, Macdonald, Mortier, Jourdan, Grouchy, Ney, Murat, the Marshals and Princes of the Empire. So far he had been lucky. In running away from himself, he had found another public self. He would soon have to decide whether he really preferred glorious publicity or inglorious sincerity.

The army of the centre, nominally 50,000 strong, but in reality not more than 30,000, was responsible for roughly two hundred miles of frontier, from the Ardennes to the north of Alsace, with headquarters at Metz. Thither he went at once, by way of Paris, where he was greeted by the Assembly: 'The people of France will always confidently oppose to nations and tyrants, the Constitution and Lafayette.' A visit to the king was held by the royalists to be a defiance of the Court, by the Left to be subservience to it. He hastened from the capital among the

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cheers of his old Guard and reached Metz to be in time for a conference between the generals and the Minister of War.

War seemed imminent, but luckily for France the declaration was postponed for a few weeks. This time was badly needed, for the country was totally unfitted to wage war against anybody. 'Without an army, without discipline, without money, and it is we who want to attack!' wrote the queen.

The state of the army was indeed far from satisfactory. During the first year of the Revolution, the officers had been loyal to the new regime; they had taken the prescribed oaths and accepted the tricolour. But after the abolition of titles and the establishment of an *émigré* army near the frontier, their attitude had become increasingly counter-revolutionary, and desertions rapidly increased in number. It would have been wisest if the Constituent Assembly had taken the advice of Robespierre and retired all the officers, replacing them with men who could work in harmony with the ranks who had accepted whole-heartedly the principles of the Revolution. Instead they resorted to the cheaper remedy of more oath-taking, so that, by the time war was approaching, the officers who remained were constantly asking each other the question: 'When are you off? Where are you going to?' The inevitable result was great insubordination among the men. This was aggravated by the arrival of half-trained volunteers called for by the old Assembly and the raw recruits which the new one was conscripting. Luckily by the time Lafayette took command, these evils had to some extent worn themselves out. Half the officers who remained were fairly reliable, the other half were soon to disappear, many men had been promoted and the army itself was tiring of insubordination. His own example, too, was a steadying factor, and Latour-Maubourg could write within three months of his arrival: 'You are constantly hearing about undisciplined, bad-intentioned troops. As far as we are concerned, nothing could be more false. They have a fine spirit.'

A military camp was not the place to experiment with self-control, and as an officer he insisted on ruthless discipline and uncompromising severity, to the horror of the Jacobins and the delight of Rochambeau and Luckner who dared not imitate him. It was due to his influence that horse artillery, the value of which he had learned during his visit to Prussia, had been introduced

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into the army. He was planning and teaching new tactics, especially the covering of the main body by a corps of skirmishers, a principle which was to form an essential part of Carnot's reorganization of the Revolutionary army. He was a natural leader of men, and his severity and tireless energy increased his popularity with the men rather than decreased it. In America, fifteen years earlier, it had done the same. He still gave himself the pleasure of combining discipline with revolutionary propaganda, and he used to infuriate the aristocratic officers by parading the regiments and reading to them the law which declared 'infamous and traitor to the country the Frenchman who dared to strike with a sacrilegious hand the arch of the laws.' This was done partly with the purpose of ridding himself of officers whom he did not trust. 'The sooner they go, the better,' he used to say.

Towards the end of February he was called to Paris, the seat of political temptation, for a military conference. He hardly knew which way to turn. His old friends were trying to avoid war, but to do so they were committing the unpardonable crime of intriguing with Austria; the *Comité autrichien* they were called. The Girondins wanted to control the rapidly increasing anarchy by precipitating war. He did not want war, in fact he went so far as to say that the political situation was more interesting than the objects of war; still less however did he want understandings with Austria, the embodiment of all he hated. He confined himself therefore to supporting the energetic but moderate minister of war, Narbonne, who had appointed him. Unfortunately he made the grave mistake of supporting him in a letter which was published. By doing this, he sinned against the constitutional rule that the military department must be subordinated to the political authorities. It was a good enough excuse to get rid of Narbonne who was disliked by the king for his support of Lafayette and by the Girondins for his support of the king. Louis had no choice but to appoint an even more radical ministry, so that Lafayette's first venture into politics as a revolutionary general proved to be the first step in his ultimate downfall. Instead of the sympathetic and encouraging support of Narbonne, he had to deal with a very different personality, Dumouriez, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Like himself, Dumouriez was a general-politician, and nothing

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could be more fatal to French interests on the eve of war than to be governed by a politician who was jealous of the generals in the field and to be defended by a general who was suspicious of the political motives of the virtual head of the Ministry. In many ways the two men resembled each other. They both detested the extremists, wished to avoid anarchy at any price and realized the necessity for a thorough disciplining of the army. Both admired the Prussians and hated the Austrians. Both had courage and imagination. Both were what we should call gentlemen, realizing, Lafayette perhaps unconsciously, Dumouriez very consciously, that their culture and breeding made them in many ways superior to the bourgeois lawyers to whose rule France was drifting. But the resemblances were accidental. The difference between their appearances told a truer tale; Lafayette with his narrow, pale face, his elongated thin nose, his head always thrown back, his distant look, Dumouriez with his bright, playful eyes, his delicately moulded, slightly snub nose, his straight and firm upper lip, his full colour. Lafayette bumped into men, as he looked right through them to the vision beyond; Dumouriez saw through men too, but he delicately skipped round them with a smile, tripped them up from behind, and then took their place. If, in 1792, a shrewd prophet had been granted the vision of a Frenchman being crowned Emperor at *Notre Dame* in 1805, he might have been pardoned for supposing that it must be Dumouriez.

Once Dumouriez was in the ministry, war was certain. He felt that war alone could save the country from disintegration, and he believed that a vigorous campaign concentrated against the Austrian Netherlands would separate Prussia from Austria without too grave a risk of the weak French army, since the latter would be supported by the disaffected Belgians. Donning his red cap of liberty, he charmed the Jacobins by his smiles and language and soon dissipated their anxieties. By the middle of April war was declared.

It was in any case inevitable, and Lafayette's advice to the Minister of War: 'If war is inevitable do not declare it until we are ready,' was without any effect. It was all-important to be the first to strike. Dumouriez could hardly be blamed for not guessing how utterly feeble the first French attack would be. His plan was to advance three armies into Belgium, one under

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Dillon towards Tournai, another under Biron (whom we have already met in America under the name of Lauzun) towards Mons, some thirty miles south, while the main army of the centre under Lafayette would march towards Namur. The first two armies were drawn from Rochambeau's main army, but Dumouriez had planned the movement behind his back. Rochambeau happened to know that his men were unfit to undertake so bold an advance, and he laughed at Dumouriez's belief that the Belgians would emigrate to France *en masse*. Such intrigues and divided counsels made probable failure certain. The two armies no sooner came into contact with the enemy than they promptly about-turned, flying as rapidly as possible and in the utmost disorder, one of them on the way murdering Dillon, its general. According to Lafayette, royalist officers started the rout by the cry: 'We are betrayed! We are cut off!' According to Dumouriez it was the result of *un complot très noire* of the Jacobins. But neither was there to see. Lafayette was busy carrying out with conspicuous skill his share of the movement. He moved his army with his old American energy some 130 miles in a few days, and the enemy's guns were just beginning to fire from outside Namur when he received intelligence of the disasters of the Northern army. He had no alternative but to march back again.

It was soon obvious that the French could do nothing, while the Austrians would do nothing. Lafayette was therefore free to concentrate, unluckily for himself, on the political situation.

Two sensible courses lay open to him. Either to maintain the command of his army, carry out his instructions and keep out of politics, or to make use of his army to bring about a counter-revolution in Paris and save the king and the moderates.

Neither course was easy, for he was suspected and detested by Jacobins and Royalists alike. The cry: 'Hang Lafayette and Bailly' was so frequently heard in the capital that only a steady determination to defend France against the common enemy whoever might rule in Paris could keep him the command. His own view, expressed in his Memoirs, that Rochambeau, Luckner and himself were the only generals capable of commanding an army, was, if not correct, the popular belief. He had the full confidence of the troops: 'Men and horses, we would let ourselves be cut in two for him,' the soldiers used to say. Even when the crisis came, he was offered the position of generalissimo, if only

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he would submit to the Jacobins. But this same reputation which might have saved him, had he kept out of political mischief, made him the one man who could still save the king and the beloved Declaration of Rights. There could be but one method at this stage, the method of force. A force equal in magnitude to that which was bringing about the Terror would alone save democracy, and the only force available was Lafayette's army. To use it would mean civil war, a denial of all the ideals of the Revolution, a confession of failure more complete than his own personal ruin. The proclamation which he sent to the Assembly in June proves that he was considering the possibility of this final recourse, though, curiously enough, in his *Memoirs* written years after these events, he explains in a sentence that is as pathetic as any in those six volumes why he determined to send the proclamation: 'Lafayette thought it to be his duty to denounce the Assembly formally, for it was daily violating the Declaration of Rights which it had been the first to swear on July 14th, 1790, in the name of armed France represented by fourteen thousand deputies of the National Guards.' If he had really thought that at the time he would have been like a father lecturing his son for throwing lighted matches about while the house was burning. The expulsion of priests, the disbanding of the royal guard, the formation of an armed camp near Paris, the issuing of a decree to the army threatening constitutionalists as well as royalists were samples of the violations of the Declaration of Rights against which he wanted to do nothing but protest. Luckily for his reputation the proclamation itself reveals a more human spirit than the later attempt to explain it away for the sake of consistency.

It was a fine piece of writing implicitly threatening the government with the hostility of the army, if it did not mend its ways: 'It is not here among my brave troops that timid sentiments are allowed: patriotism, energy, discipline, patience, mutual confidence, all the civic and military virtues I find here. Here the principles of liberty and equality are cherished, the laws are respected, property is sacred; here we have no experience of calumny and faction. And when I think that France has many millions of men ready to become such soldiers, I ask myself to what a low degree a great people has been reduced . . . But that we, soldiers of liberty, may fight efficiently and die usefully

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in her cause, it is necessary that the citizens rallied in defence of the constitution should be assured of the rights which it guarantees to respect with a religious fidelity that will be the despair of secret and open enemies.' 'When Cromwell spoke like that,' said someone on hearing the letter, 'liberty was lost in England: I cannot persuade myself that the emulator of Washington has the intention of imitating the conduct of the Protector.' And it was made out that the letter was a forgery. Unfortunately it was only the language not the conduct of Cromwell of which Lafayette was giving an imitation. It was not that he was weak or frightened of deeds; he was frightened of ideas, frightened of sinning against the law to save it.

Within a few days the bold proclamation was forgotten in another manifestation of the direct will of the mob. On June 20th, the professional agitators had the mob on the move. The king, now in the hands of Dumouriez, had dismissed the Girondins. They must be brought back and so the mob was paraded. Practically without opposition – Lafayette was not there – the people forced their way into the royal palace. The extraordinary scene is well-known. Armed with pikes, swords, forks, scythes, they pushed into the royal apartments, encountered the king, threatened him with death if he would not don the red cap, insulted him to his face, shared a bottle of wine with him, forced the queen to put the ensign of liberty on the young dauphin's head so that what with the stifling heat and the great scarlet cap falling over his little face, the child was almost suffocated.

The grossness of the insult momentarily turned the tide in the king's favour. Counties, districts and municipalities wrote to the king to express their indignation. As soon as he heard the news, Lafayette, chivalry for the moment overcoming liberal conscience, wrote: 'I must make every effort rather than see liberty, justice and the fatherland sacrificed to the factious. My fight with them is to the death, and I must end it soon, for if I have to fight them alone, I shall do it without counting their strength or their numbers.' At last his blood was up. Without telling a soul, except to ask Luckner for permission, he rushed with one solitary aide-de-camp to Paris. His heated imagination conjured up a picture of himself, the hero of two worlds, stopping by his mere personality the full career of Revolution, and when the vision seemed too fantastic he argued that he had only to appear for all

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good men to rally round him and fight the evil work of a small but powerful and vicious faction. Unfortunately the Court whom he had haughtily patronized for three years would not trust him any more than the factious. 'Better perish utterly than be saved by Lafayette,' Madame Campan makes Marie-Antoinette say, and Madame Royale, the tragic survivor of that tragic family, wrote later: 'If my mother could have overcome her prejudice against M. de Lafayette, if they had trusted in him a little more, my unfortunate parents would still be alive.'

His arrival in Paris made less impression than he expected. Had he known it, it had often been rumoured that he was secretly working in the capital while ostensibly with the army on the frontier. He appeared before the Assembly in order to assure them that he and no other had written the proclamation of the week before. He demanded that the leaders of the mob should be arrested, that the Jacobin club should be closed, and that the constituted authorities should be respected. Even at this late hour he tried to save law by legal methods. But the president found refuge in the kind of ambiguous terminology which had served Lafayette so well in times past: 'The National Assembly has sworn to maintain the constitution. Faithful to its oath, it will know how to guarantee it against all attacks.' Then, having lost any advantage he might have gained by the suddenness of his appearance, he visited the king, who, he tells us, never seemed so sincere in his determination to uphold the Constitution. It was only on the third day that he suggested doing 'what was necessary for the service of the Constitution and public order,' namely put himself at the head of the National Guard and do for himself what the Assembly would not do. There was to be a review of the Guards that day, but his plans were defeated by a sudden cancellation of the review. The queen, it was said, was 'double-crossing' him: she had warned the mayor, Pétion, and Lafayette was left to profit from a last whisper from the persistent Morris: 'Return soon to the army or go to Orléans and make up your mind to *fight* for a good constitution or for that wretched piece of paper which bears the name: in six weeks it will be too late.'

It is easy to say that Lafayette ought to have done this and that, but it must be remembered that practically the whole direction of the forces of the capital had passed out of his hands,

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that no man could trust his neighbour, that the behaviour of the Court was fatally petty, that his own life was in constant danger. Théodore Lameth, no friend of his, summed up his actions during that week as follows: 'At that time, it must be said, he rose above the excitement of which love of celebrity made him ceaselessly the victim and devoted himself without reserve, with great courage and an admirable superiority.' The simple truth was that there existed but one force sufficiently organized and over which he had a sufficient hold to sustain the crumbling edifice, his own army. But to use it meant civil war with the enemy on the frontier; it also meant that the factious would be put legally in the right; it would be counter-revolution, the contradiction of fifteen years' work.

Two days later, he returned 'sadly' to his army wondering how it could be that 'a Jacobin minority could make itself the master of Paris, while nearly forty thousand citizens of the National Guard wanted the Constitution.' The Jacobins, for their part, were wondering how to be finally rid of him: 'After his departure denunciations and posters against him heap themselves up one on top of the other,' wrote a contemporary in a letter. The royalists were wondering what his latest intrigue could be: 'As for me,' wrote one of them, 'I do not doubt that he is an intriguer and a scoundrel who has thrown himself into the Revolution because his ambition prompts him to play a great role. Now that he sees the way things are going, he is trying to find an excuse to join the other side. Taking him all in all he is a man altogether inestimable in my opinion and one whom I take not to be frank and loyal, but he will find it difficult to get out of this business.' The Right called his action 'Quixotry or High Treason'; the Left 'Monkery' (after General Monk).

In truth, the Court was not so suspicious of Lafayette's motives as of his ability to help them. They doubted whether the republican army would really follow him; they doubted whether he would really lead the army. Marie-Antoinette was writing: 'In any case, the foreign powers alone can save us; the army is lost. . . . At all cost the powers must come to our help, and it is the Emperor's duty to put himself at their head and to arrange everything.' She was, too, completely under the influence of Fersen, writing from Brussels: 'Keep the war going and do not leave Paris.' And again: 'Only try to remain in Paris and you

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will be helped. The King of Prussia has made his plans.' She would have done better to listen to a less loved adviser.

The attack on Belgium having been abandoned, a very unusual military manœuvre was undertaken. Luckner, the commander-in-chief, was to take over the personal command of the Southern army, while Lafayette was to take his place. But instead of a mere interchange of generals, it was decided to interchange armies as well. There were various excuses for this procedure. The men would fight better under their own commanders; they were already so mixed up that, as Lafayette said, it would be as easy a way of disentangling them as any other; the manœuvre might puzzle the enemy. Was the real reason to aid Lafayette to prepare the flight of the king? At all events, it was surprisingly convenient for his purpose.

The feast of the Federation was approaching, and he was hoping to take advantage of the coincidence of this constitutional feast, when the 'king in constitution' might be expected to regain some good-will popularity, with the moving of his army through a point not more than twenty leagues distance from Compiègne, a place to which the royal family might legally travel. His idea was to persuade the king to leave Paris openly, and ostensibly to go to Compiègne. Lafayette would then fetch him, and safe from the Parisians and protected by the army he could challenge the extremists and restore the Constitution. If he were not allowed to leave Paris, Lafayette, it must be presumed, would feel morally justified in marching on the capital in defence of the law.

It was a good plan because it would put the Jacobins in the wrong without forcing Louis to sin against the Revolution. The king's friends accepted it, and the king himself seemed to approve. But Marie-Antoinette refused. '*Le roi est disposé à se prêter à ce projet: la reine le combat,*' she wrote to Fersen. Why? Partly because she could not stomach being twice saved by Lafayette, as she said, thinking of the days of October; partly because she did not wish to place the king in a position which would render less justifiable the help of the Emperor. She prevailed. Lafayette was thanked but his services were declined. Is it possible that France owes the Terror to the pride of a woman and a man, both of whom were so largely responsible in opposite ways for 1789? Marie-Antoinette was too proud to accept help from a man who

had never concealed his disdain for her as a woman; Lafayette was too proud to admit that the rules of the constitutional game he had concocted were inadequate to meet the new situation. Just as Marie-Antoinette preferred to risk the destruction of all her world rather than be saved by Lafayette, so he, by some moral perversion even more complex, preferred to see his own work destroyed than saved by unconstitutional means. The legal web which he had helped to spin had caught him instead of the enemies for which it had been prepared.

Meanwhile Luckner had been called to the capital, ostensibly to represent the army at the Federation, but in reality to be questioned by the *Comité des Douze*, a forerunner of the Committee of Public Safety, about Lafayette's actions and intentions. Luckner was only responsible to the king, and he should have refused to answer this committee without the royal consent, but the old man, terrified for his life, muttered in unintelligible German so ambiguously that the Committee were able to pretend that he had confirmed their suspicions of Lafayette's plan to march on the capital. To confirm this, Gobel, constitutional arch-bishop of Paris, invited him to dinner and, having made him drunk, extracted a confession from him. 'Paris fills me with horror' was all that he could say to Lafayette when he wrote on the next morning. The latter denied the accusation point-blank: 'Have I proposed to M. le Maréchal Luckner to march with his armies on Paris? To this, my answer in four short words is: "That is not true!"' If only it had been true!

Dissolution of royalist France, now practically in a state of anarchy, was rapidly approaching. On the front the strangest events were taking place. Dumouriez had taken refuge from political dangers by obtaining a command with the armies. He promised to serve under Lafayette and to put off their personal quarrel until more suitable times: 'I promise to serve faithfully for your own glory, provided that you work for the good of the country.' After this somewhat equivocal promise from a subordinate to his commanding officer, he proceeded to intrigue with the Assembly behind the backs of Luckner and Lafayette in order to obtain the full command of the Northern army and renew his pet scheme of invading Belgium. Luckner ordered him south, but he wrote to the king to complain of the order. In the end he got his way, and it was evident that no general could consider

himself safe from the successful disobedience of his subordinates. It was like the American Congress fifteen years before. What happened on the frontier was but a side-show as far as the politicians were concerned.

Throughout July, denunciations of the king were succeeding one another ever more rapidly. The arrival of bands of *fédérés* for the feast were filling the city with hot-heads. The famous Marseillais were singing the war hymn which with Lafayette's tricolour was to symbolize the freedom and nationalism of a new France. A half-angry, half-patriotic excitement was carrying men off their feet. Suddenly the cry, '*La patrie est en danger*,' was passed from mouth to mouth. The Austrians would be in Paris by the winter. The Austrians? That was the queen, the court. The nation was harbouring the arch-spy in its heart.

In the midst of the confusion, the Assembly as though desirous of taking its last freely drawn breath voted against the accusation of Lafayette for treason by a majority of nearly two hundred. Lafayette's patent honesty in the face of every calumny made him a long time a-dying. 'It was the last day of the liberty which had been established for three years in France,' wrote Lafayette to console himself.

On August 10th, the Tuileries were stormed and a thousand years of Frankish monarchy succumbed to the people of Paris, while young Captain Bonaparte, the Corsican, looked on marveling at the victory of the mob. Lafayette's old National Guards were conspicuous by their support of the mob; it was left to the soldiers of the oldest European republic, Switzerland, to be butchered for the king of France.

Even now Lafayette could have saved himself. As a military general, his services were still necessary to the country, and the new victors were willing to bargain for his support by offering him the command of the army. For the first time he really had to face the issue between himself and his love of successful popularity. For the first time the two were in opposition. His conduct was a magnificent vindication of his sincerity, a sincerity which he carried to a degree which would have made Mirabeau, Dumouriez, Talleyrand, Bonaparte shake with laughter.

In this supreme moment when the very coping stone of the Constitution had been removed, he found a means of being faithful to the broken arches. Lest the military power should for an

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instant be independent of the civil, he wrote to the local government of the county in which he was situated, 'the nearest of the constituted authorities which remained free.' He told them that the imminent danger of foreign invasion made it impossible for him to march in their name on Paris, so he proposed that the local governments of the neighbouring counties should form a kind of provisional government in support of the Constitution and the Declaration of Rights. Meanwhile the Convention now in power in Paris was sending commissioners to secure the adhesion of the army. When they arrived in Sedan, they were received by the local authorities. Prompted by Lafayette, the mayor arrested them on the ground that they would serve as hostages so long as the deputies of the Assembly were prevented from fulfilling their sovereign functions. This was when the offer of the chief command was made to him. Tempters! 'The sacred resistance to oppression,' he told them, 'demands that I should make no move, utter no expression contrary to the principles of the constitution and liberty. I have once refused the sword of *connétable* as payment for becoming the king's creature: I now refuse the sword of generalissimo as payment for being republic-anized.' The difference between right and wrong was as clear to him as it has ever been to a saint on his death-bed, to a martyr at the stake. To right he even added a gesture of generosity as much to the credit of his idealistic chivalry as it was fatal to the cause on which so many lives depended. When the mayor suggested that the pamphlets and papers preaching sedition which the Jacobins were sending to the troops should be stopped on the way, Lafayette retorted with indignation: 'Such methods are unworthy of our cause, let us leave them to our adversaries.' The martyr's consistency gains him the reward of Heaven; Lafayette's helped to set up the guillotine which he escaped. The pamphlets spread among the soldiers. While the king was free, such propaganda might not have done much harm; now that his suspension was a *fait accompli*, they did their work. Lafayette could no longer rely on his army. All around him he saw nothing but treason and intrigue. Luckner was shedding tears in the south, Dumouriez was laughing in the north, Biron was triumphing in the Jacobin cause on the Rhine, Lafayette at Sedan was being treated as the leader of a new faction: 'The flood of decrees issued under the name of the usurped

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legislative body gave an air of revolt to Lafayette's resistance, so legitimate in itself,' he wrote bitterly. So much for the letter of the law! It was the last straw. His constitutional religion demanded of him even the sacrifice of appearances: he was no longer even looked upon as the defender of constituted authority, for the Constitution had disappeared. He played again with the idea of returning to Paris alone, but he could no longer deceive himself. As Morris wrote: 'had he done so, he would have been cut to pieces.' His death would not even be a glorious one in the presence of 200,000 people.

More commissioners were sent, this time to deprive him of his command and to take him to Paris. It was the end of sixteen years of glory. But better than death was life; life during which he might be able to justify himself, to assert that he had been right all the time, that he alone had been right, that whatever men might do, liberty and equality, truth and goodness would prevail in the end. He had better not die, for he would be needed again.

And so, one Sunday morning, August 19th, 1792, as the first autumn leaves were beginning to fall, a little procession of men on horse-back rode through the frontier town of Bouillon on their way to exile. The hero of two worlds, now wanted in Paris 'For rebellion against the law, for conspiracy against liberty, for plotting against the nation' (how equivocal the beloved words were!) rode at their head on a white horse. By his side was Latour Maubourg, his faithful companion; behind, his staff, Romeuf, La Colombe, Gouvion. With them too was his old political friend and enemy, Alexandre Lameth, united to him at the last by misfortune. Last, came Felix, his servant, and another lad from the castle of Chavaniac.

Lafayette had lost everything, but he was himself, as much of a misfit in the world around him as he had been in the Paris of 1775.

PART III

REFLECTION

(1797-1815)

'Mon ambition fut toujours d'être supérieur à l'ambition, et vous savez que d'être honoré dans une ferme de la France, *vraiment* libre, me paraîtrait un plus haut degré d'élévation que si j'étais président de la république.'

LAFAYETTE, in a letter to MADAME DE TESSÉ,
March 25th, 1797.

CHAPTER I

IMPRISONMENT

(1792-1797)

THAT same inability to understand the motives that move men of flesh and blood which had kept 'the father of the French Revolution,' as Burke called Lafayette, alien to the development of his own child, was the cause of his bitter disappointment and surprise at the reception given him by the foreign powers. Had he not sacrificed himself in defence of the king and the Constitution? Moreover, was he not an American citizen and general, too? He wrote to Adrienne who had been left to take care of herself: 'I cannot believe that they will have such bad faith as to hold on to strangers who by their patriotic and constitutional declaration have taken the trouble to distinguish themselves from the *émigrés*'; to his 'unfortunate and divine' friend Laroche-foucauld (already massacred by the people as a prominent Fayetteist): 'I believe that the Court of Vienna will find it to be impolitic to break the law of nations against us who have shown ourselves so opposed to the Jacobinism of which it complains': to William Short, American minister in Holland: 'I am an American citizen and an American officer. I am no longer in the service of France. In demanding my release you will be acting within your rights.'

To such arguments, worth the consideration of a court of law,

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the powers had but one utilitarian answer: 'The existence of Lafayette is incompatible with the safety of the governments of Europe.' In the eyes of Europe he was the arch-revolutionary, the vowed enemy of the social philosophy which maintained the princes on their thrones. To them the difference between constitutional monarchy and republics was a matter of the very least importance. Of the two they preferred the avowed hostility of republicans. They understood it better. With an insight which one might not have expected of the dull-minded monarchs who ruled Europe because they happened to be their fathers' sons, they correctly perceived that the moral and logical principles of Lafayette were a greater danger to them than the angry passions of demagogues and mobs, no better and no worse than the demagogues and mobs whom their fathers had had from time to time to chastise. At all events there is not the slightest doubt that not only the princes of Prussia and Austria, but also the Bourbons, hated Lafayette even more than they hated the actual regicides. And the history of the nineteenth century justifies their choice in that it was not so much the extreme revolutionaries as the gradual conversion of public opinion to the philosophy of a Lafayette which made it impossible for kings to govern subjects.

Under the circumstances, it was not surprising that when the exhausted party reached the enemies' lines, the Austrian commandant could scarcely believe the glorious news: 'Lafayette captured? Really Lafayette? Run at once and tell the Duc de Bourbon. Quick to Brussels. Lafayette, Lafayette, can it be the real, living Lafayette?' And he went on muttering the name to himself. And so the party were taken as prisoners of war to Namur.

It took Lafayette a few days to realize what defeat meant. It was a very unfamiliar experience for him. For a few days he lived on the overflow of optimism from the past. He even thought that he would be having an opportunity of a little revolution-hunting in Holland: 'How the proscribed general would have loved to direct a Dutch movement and make a diversion behind the backs of the enemy! But the Orange influence was dominant in Holland.' Three-quarters of his first letter to Adrienne is of the style: 'You know that my spirit is not the kind which allows itself to be broken . . .' But towards the end he begins to break down: 'I make no excuses to my children nor to you for having ruined my

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family: none of you would have wished me to save my face by conduct contrary to the dictates of my conscience. Come with me: let us settle in America: there we shall find the liberty which no longer exists in France: and my love will try to make it up to you for all the happinesses which you have lost.'

As the true extent of his fall dawned on him, he veered from one mood to another. At first he could not believe that he would even be held as a prisoner. Within a few days he was certain that he was staring death in the face. Short, the American minister, did not answer. He had taken Morris's advice which was 'the less we meddle in the great quarrel which agitates Europe, the better it will be for us.' Lafayette had only himself to blame: *he* had never taken Morris's advice.

In this mood, Lafayette solemnly bade farewell to his friends and dictated his last message to the world which had rejected him. In it he appealed to posterity and offered his vision of a regenerated social order to future generations: 'The truths which I have uttered, my labours in the two worlds will not perish. Aristocracy and despotism are mortally wounded, and my blood, crying for vengeance, will give to liberty new defenders.'

But the Austrians could find better use for him alive than dead. It was intended that he should be kept as a hostage until the royal family were set free. Unfortunate Marie-Antoinette! After having refused the help of the despised 'little blond' as she called him, she had now to depend for her life on a humble supplication on the part of the Jacobins for the return of their most bitter enemy in exchange for her freedom. After being a shadow across her life, he was apparently to be a shadow across her death.

From time to time on their wanderings round three sides of a square, from Namur to Nivelles, from Nivelles to Coblenz, from Coblenz to Wesel, some thirty miles from the Dutch frontier, Lafayette had the opportunity of showing his old spirit. Once they were asked to give up the treasure which, it was supposed, they had stolen from the French army when they escaped. 'Well, I suppose that *is* the kind of thing their royal highnesses would have done in our places,' Lafayette suggested. Actually they had nothing but the little money which the sale of their horses had realized. At Namur, somewhat half-hearted attempts were made to gain them to the allied cause, and more determined ones to extract information from them. All they could

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extract from him was: 'I should not have imagined that anyone would take the liberty of asking me questions which it does not suit me to answer.' In Wesel, he answered the same kind of requests with the words: 'I consider that the king of Prussia is a very impertinent fellow to make such demands.' He refused to give his parole on the ground that it might be interpreted as acquiescence in the way he was being treated. Such behaviour did not pay. To add to their trials, the prisoners were taken from prison to prison in public. Their coming was advertised. Windows on the route were booked by curious sightseers. Crowds watched them pass. It was supposed to be good propaganda against France and the Revolution, but the good folk of Germany were disappointed. Their plight inspired sympathy, not hatred.

In the fortress of Wesel where they stayed until the end of the year, the prisoners were kept in separate, damp, vermin-ridden cells. They were not allowed to see one another. They were deprived of all exercise. All communication with the outside world was forbidden. Lafayette, used to hard work, good living and plenty of exercise, nearly died of the monstrous treatment. He was saved by another transfer, this time half way across Germany in a cart during the coldest part of the winter. On the way, a strange fate brought the prisoners and Louis' brothers to the same inn on the same night. Only one of the royal suite had the kindness to speak to Lafayette. It was just a short month before the consummation of the king's sacrifice. The journey restored his health, but conditions in the new prison in Magdeburg were hardly better than at Wesel. After a year, the king of Prussia grew tired of his responsibility for Lafayette, and, in 1794, he was taken to Neisse, near the Austrian frontier. The Emperor did not want him either, but instead of solving the difficulty by releasing him, he was buried deeper than ever in the fortress of Olmütz near the Western Carpathians in present-day Czecho-Slovakia. It was in the late spring of 1794 when the Terror in Paris was at its height.

Life within the four walls of a prison cell is as monotonous to tell of as it must be to endure. But while the hero of two worlds was reduced to eating with his hands – a method in which, he assured his gaoler, he had grown quite expert during his intercourse with the Indians in North America – a small number of faithful friends in England, America and France were trying to

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hew down a path through the entanglements of warring Europe along which he might be led to freedom and safety.

Adrienne had not been able to do much for him. She had to protect her children and relations, compromised by their Lafayette blood. For some reason she was treated with comparative justice and consideration. There were plenty of grounds for her arrest, and plenty of reasons for arresting her without grounds, but she was left under *surveillance* in Chavaniac. When she heard of her husband's trials, her one regret was that she had given her word not to escape, for she wanted to share everything with him. She asked Morris to draft a letter for her to the king of Prussia to plead for her husband, but considering that the tone of his letter was too humble, she wrote herself a dignified appeal. She received of course no answer. Nor did Washington reply to a letter of hers. She wrote again, but all he could do was to place some money at her disposal. It was strange that the Lafayettes who had owed so much to their inherited fortunes and to whom so many were indebted through their prodigality should now find their circumstances eased by this American loan. Lafayette had spent heavily and borrowed freely, and now the Revolution was likely to confiscate what remained of their estates.

Washington was in a very difficult position. He had no grounds for interfering. Moreover to the outside world, Lafayette appeared to be in a very equivocal position. He had stood for an idea which it would take another fifty years for the public conscience to understand. He was a heretic. He had been rejected by the old France; the new France fashioned by violent reaction to the old understood him no better; he had done nothing to make other powers, except America, love him. And in America itself, public opinion was puzzled. From a distance the Revolution had been hailed with enthusiasm. A spiritual union seemed to confirm the alliance of the war of independence, France had fought to help the ideas of the new republic. Her reward was to be converted to this better way. Her present war with England intensified the feeling of kinship. The methods of the revolutionaries did not greatly shock public opinion. Jokes were made about the king's execution: '*Capet sine capite*,' they were saying. A fervour partly revolutionary, partly anti-Catholic, swept over a town like Charleston where the citizens wore *bonnets rouges* and carried the tricolour. Why then, these vague sympathizers asked, did Lafayette fly

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just as the accomplishment of his work was at hand? In the end people solved their doubts by supposing that he had been misled, or that he had suffered from some mental aberration. 'Our friend and brother Lafayette. May a generous nation forgive his errors (if any) and receive him to her bosom.' This was not the mood in which to make determined efforts to have him released. Only gradually, as news of his suffering filtered through, did a feeling first of pity and then of indignation arise. Now it was: 'The Marquis de la Fayette! May the gloom of a despot's prison be soon exchanged for the embraces of his father Washington in the land of freedom.' Washington's loan may have been due to the peculiar sympathy which his financial difficulties aroused in American hearts. He had seemed to them so generous and so rich, the richest man fighting for their cause! It was even suggested that a special tax should be levied 'for the sole purpose of raising him a considerable property.'

None of this goodwill, however, helped Adrienne in her immediate troubles. In the middle of June, 1793, she had the consolation of seeing two letters written by her husband from prison. He would not write to her personally, because he knew that 'the dear inviolability of letters no longer existed in France.' Despite the heavy handicap of having to write with a tooth-pick and ink composed of vinegar, soot and suet on a blank page of some old *tome*, he had smuggled through some lengthy screeds. After a time they took pity on him, and allowed him more suitable means of writing. Such letters were of course censored. For the most part he consoled himself with the thought of the vileness of the present rulers of France and the rectitude of his own past conduct. But occasionally his prolonged meditations in their ceaseless wanderings struck a patch of light which, had he been guided by it earlier, might have saved France and himself from much misery: 'How the situation in the two countries (France and America) has differed! In France a great political ignorance, servile habits, inequality of wealth have made its citizens even after the conquest of their rights the enemies of legal constraint and the willing subjects of oppression.' Captivity too was mellowing his old feelings against England: 'From Constantinople to Lisbon, from Kamtchatka to Amsterdam, all the *bastilles* are waiting for me: the Hurons and the Iroquois forests are peopled with my friends; the despots of Europe and their courts, there are

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the savages, as far as I am concerned. Though they love me not at St. James's, there at least is a nation and there are laws . . . If Mr. Fox asks you for news of me, show him this scribble. Though I hardly know what is happening in the world, I am satisfied that Mr. Fox is right. I esteem him too much not to believe that he is as revolted as I am by the Jacobin atrocities which have stained the most beautiful of causes . . . Certainly it will not be in the cause of liberty that Mr. Pitt will have himself killed.'

When the Princess d'Hénin, who had now transferred to the heaths of Surrey the little group of liberal ladies who had so admired Lafayette in Paris, and to whom he wrote most frequently, complained that his manners were irritating the powers, he answered: 'I have only lost my temper twice, and that was when they dared to consult me against my country. Apart from that I have only opposed their cruel and base conduct with a disdain, ever calm and sometimes, perhaps, a trifle sarcastic.' One wonders what Talleyrand, now one of the objects of these ladies' solicitude, thought of such words, when they were shown to him at Juniper Hall.

Adrienne's life in the summer of 1793 was in far greater danger than her husband's. The fall of the Girondins and the treason of Dumouriez had driven France to that final frenzy of suspicion and hatred in which human life was ruthlessly sacrificed in the interests of that impossibility, security without trust. With a name like Noailles-Lafayette, there was little chance of her being overlooked. But she was not arrested until November 13th, and being popular in her husband's native province, she might have escaped with nothing worse than the taste of a provincial prison. But her name marked her out, and in the spring of 1794 she was taken to Paris. She arrived on the feast of the Supreme Being, the climax of the moral perversions which had resulted from trying to impose a doctrinaire order on a demoralized humanity. Among her prisons was her husband's old school, Le Plessis, where only twenty years before he had chafed against restraint. On June 27th, her sister's parents-in-law were executed. Three weeks later, her grandmother, her mother and her sister, Louise, '*la céleste vicomtesse*,' as she was called, were herded into two tumbrils with seven others and dragged to the guillotine. The sacrifice of a grandmother, a mother and her daughter, women of three generations who hardly knew the meaning of

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politics was but an incident in the tragic endeavour to create liberty without self-control, equality without sympathy, fraternity without love. It was one of the last incidents. Four days later Robespierre fell: two days after he was guillotined. The Terror was over.

Adrienne, broken in spirit by these tragedies and in daily expectation of her turn, was safe. Being Lafayette's wife, she was not released like so many others, but this, sad as it was, only emphasized the narrowness of her escape from death. She was not set free until the early part of 1794.

By that time, her husband had been in Olmütz for more than six months, cut off entirely from the outside world, forbidden to write or to receive letters. The prison doctor, however, would not answer for his life if he were not allowed some fresh air, so, every other day, he was taken for a drive in the country. These drives gave two friends the opportunity of helping him to escape. A letter was smuggled to him, and the day was fixed. Everything turned out perfectly. Lafayette momentarily got rid of the soldiers by giving them some money to spend in an inn nearby. Left alone with his gaoler, he seized his sword. As they were struggling, the two friends rode up. Lafayette jumped on to one of their horses, and, as they shouted to him: 'Get to Hoff!' he galloped away. Unfortunately he had understood them to say: 'Get off,' and after having ridden a short distance, he stopped and waited for them to come up. But they had gone in another direction. So he turned back, only to meet the soldiers who were looking for him. He managed to draw away from them, but in an unknown country he was helpless. He was re-arrested some eight leagues away from prison. After this they guarded him more strictly than ever, and he had nothing better to do than 'to defend my own constitution as constantly and apparently with as little success as I have defended the national constitution,' as he wrote with a new sense of humour, the fruit of suffering and defeat.

After her release, Adrienne had but one aim: 'to travel,' as Fox put it, 'on the wings of duty and love in order to share her husband's captivity'. Her first care was to provide for the continuation of her son's education. She obtained a passport for him under the name of Motier and sent him to America, certain that 'though she did not see eye to eye with Washington about the

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way of having her husband released,' he would do everything to protect his young namesake, George Washington Lafayette. She then took her daughters with her to Hamburg where Pauline, her sister, was living with their wise old aunt de Tessé. The latter had made sure of being comfortable, for, as Pauline wrote, she had taken care not to 'flit from France like a swallow, bearing with her in order to travel lightly nothing but the plumage of her wings.' This old friend of Voltaire was adding to her means by running a farm so that she could shelter *émigrés* at whose views she laughed and *curés* whose sworn foe she declared herself to be. Nothing but extraordinary love or a passionate sense of duty could have kept Adrienne firm in her resolution to continue her journey after 'the inexpressible sweetness' of returning to her sister as though from the tomb. She travelled to Vienna under the name of Mrs. Motier, citizen of Hartford, Conn., where her husband owned some land. She had brought her daughters with her, deeming that their mother's protection was their greatest need. She saw the Emperor, and he gave her permission to live in prison with her husband. But there was no hope of release: 'My hands are tied,' he admitted to her. She refused to listen to those who tried to dissuade her from sharing so hard a life, and, on October 24th, 1795, this *mulier fortis timens Dominum* reached Olmütz. As the spires of the town came into sight she began to recite the canticle of Tobias:

'Thou are great, O Lord, for ever, and thy kingdom is unto all ages.

'For Thou scourgest and Thou savest; Thou leadest down to Hell, and bringest up again; and there is none that can escape Thy hand.

'My soul, bless thou the Lord, because the Lord our God hath delivered Jerusalem from all her troubles.'

That same morning she was led along the cold and dismal passages of the prison. A gaoler opened a gate, then through darker and more forbidding galleries until they reached a massive door secured by two heavy padlocks. Behind was another door similarly secured. The last bolt slipped back, the door was pulled open, and there in the half-light of the narrow cell sat the prisoner of the Central Powers. Since his attempted escape no one had seen him, and no letter had reached him. His face was drawn, pale

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and unbelievably thin so that, she could hardly recognize him. His clothes were torn and dirty. He looked inexpressibly weary, but not defeated. He had been given no warning about the arrival of his wife and daughters. What he felt we can but guess. He had ever been cold and undemonstrative, too busy with the amelioration of the lot of humanity to have much time for the intimacies of domestic life. He hardly deserved the spiritual release brought by Adrienne at such a cost to herself, for from that day she shared not only his life, but his privations and his captivity. Even as she was embracing him, the gaoler snatched her purse and three forks from her bag. She was forced to eat with her hands; she was not allowed to hear Mass, nor to write to her son, and, though the inhuman treatment broke her health to such an extent that she had fever for eleven months, she was not even given an armchair in which to rest. But she was at last happy, happier than she had ever been in her broken life, for she had her husband to herself for the first time. Up till then his career had fascinated her, but fascination does not endure. She could now pour on him the tenderness and pity which she had shown to the poor and the prisoners in Paris, the protection and sympathy she had given to the proscribed priests of Auvergne. Her reward was the consciousness of the awakening in him of a love a thousand times deeper than those superlatively expressed sentiments which gave the world the romantic love story of the young hero who had torn himself away from his beloved wife in order to fight for the cause of liberty in distant America.

The passage of time, the stories of the nature of their captivity, the touching romance of his wife and daughters' sacrifice for him helped to create an international sympathy for the prisoners of Olmütz, as they were universally called. But the sympathy was not official. Just because it was impossible to state clearly on what grounds they had been held captive and treated with a barbaric severity it was also impossible to find a good reason for releasing them without admitting the injustice of the whole affair. If Lafayette had been a public danger in 1792, nothing had happened in five years to make him less of a danger. On the contrary, everyone knew that after the revolutionary disease in France had run its course, Lafayette would be ready to start again, for in him the disease was not a fever, but an organic trouble. After four years of imprisonment, he could still write:

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'The question is about the principles fixed in the Declaration of Rights, and as to these even though he (Lafayette) were to stand alone in the world, he would not give way an inch. It is a question not only of a character whom for twenty years the friends of liberty have watched, but of a situation which must sooner or later, whether it be by the example of Lafayette or by his personal help, serve the same cause. He was in the first place the man of general liberty rather than the man of any nation, and the revolution rather than any birth has been his real title to French citizenship.'

The Austrians, as Morris in Vienna testifies, seemed to have developed a personal hatred for this inconvenient prisoner. Some were still hoping that his hanging could be managed. They did not realize that the young general Bonaparte, now making his first bid for military glory, would soon blot out almost the memory of his predecessor's comparatively pale career. The English feared that if he went to America, he would stir up ill-will between the two countries at a moment when Anglo-American relations were improving. In France, the Directorate, and still more Bonaparte, had no wish to see the return of a possible rival. It was left, therefore, to private persons to work for his release. Madame de Stael and Fox were conspicuous for their persistence on his behalf. 'The eloquence of Fox,' wrote Adrienne, 'while it rendered us the immense and incomparable service of forcing Pitt to a public abandonment of his ally as far as our affair was concerned, has certainly produced a great effect as well on the Court of Vienna and on our subordinate gaolers.' But even Fox appreciated the fact that they had fared better than most of their relations and political rivals: they had, as Sièyes said of himself, 'lived'. Later Fox said to Lafayette: 'Confess that your imprisonment spared you the necessity of making a choice at many crises when it must have been very difficult for an honest man to make one which befitted him.'

It was only in America that public opinion veered round completely to his side. As the Revolution progressed, American enthusiasm for French disciples cooled. The Churches denounced French atheism and brutality. British agents were making the best of the situation and a treaty favourable to the British interpretation of the rights of neutrals was signed in 1794. By 1795, America and France were not far from a state of war. By 1796,

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Americans were clear that not only had Lafayette been shamefully treated, but that he had been right after all. 'The Lament of Washington,' a poem sung everywhere 'to a plaintive air composed on the execution of Marie-Antoinette,' gives an interesting illustration of how America felt and how she expressed herself:

'As beside his cheerful fire,
Midst his happy family,
Sat a venerable sire,
Tears were starting from his eyes,
Selfish blessings were forgot,
Whilst he thought on Fayette's lot,
Once so happy in our plains,
Now in poverty and chains.

Courage, Child of Washington,
Though thy fate disastrous seem,
We have seen the setting sun,
Rise and burn with brighter beams,
Thy country soon shall break thy chains,
And take thee to her arms again.'

Unfortunately, odes and tears, and even dramatic sketches composed about his life were of little use in overcoming what Jefferson called 'the distance and difference of principle which gave little hold to General Washington on the gaolers of Lafayette.' What that distance meant is realized when we read a letter of R. G. Harper, the very man who moved a resolution in Congress to ask for Lafayette's release: 'The writer thinks himself bound to state that he has received the most satisfactory information that Lafayette never was in a dungeon, that while detained as a prisoner by the Emperor of Germany his confinement was of the mildest nature, in a spacious building, a great part of the whole of which was open to him, with a good table, good lodgings and a library.' Washington wrote personally and privately to the Emperor in May, 1796, but the prisoners had another year to face. In the end, it was not the goodwill of Lafayette's sympathizers but the victories of Bonaparte which overcame Austrian obstinacy.

Under the leadership of France's young general, the prophecy of the veteran – in fact only twelve years his senior – Lafayette

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that the tricolour would go the round of the world was coming true. In April, 1796, he had issued the famous proclamation which Lafayette would have given many years of his life to have been in a position to utter: 'Soldiers! In fifteen days you have won six victories, taken twenty-one flags, conquered the richest part of Piedmont . . . Peoples of Italy! The French army has come to break your chains; the French people is the friend of all peoples . . . We fight as generous enemies and only have our quarrel with the tyrants who are enslaving you.' Within a year he had consolidated his early successes in Austrian Italy, gained the battles of Lodi, Arcola and Rivoli, imposed his will on the Directorate, and crossed the Austrian frontier. Vienna itself seemed to be threatened. In April, 1797, he was in a position to dictate preliminaries of peace. In October, the treaty of Campo-Formio was signed.

Meanwhile France had been retracing the steps by which it had moved towards the climax of the Revolution. The Constitution of the Year III was an improved re-hash of the Constitution of 1791, with features such as the two Chambers and liberty of religious cult which made it in Lafayette's eyes 'the best that has yet been seen.' In a few months the first of the *coups d'état* by which arbitrary rule was to be re-established was due. It was an interval, therefore, during which there was some public sympathy in France for the prisoners of Olmutz suffering in the cause of the moderate republicanism to which France had returned. A short sketch was even acted in Paris in which the victorious Bonaparte was represented as rescuing the Lafayette family from their dungeon cell. The Directorate felt bound to ask Bonaparte to take advantage of his position to demand their release. But Bonaparte did not want any Lafayette or shadow of Lafayette in France. Lafayette might or might not be a serious rival: at all events, it was safer to keep him from temptation. Still less did the Austrians want him to wander freely in any part of the Empire.

At last the puzzle about what to do with a prisoner whom Bonaparte did not want to see on the left bank of the Rhine and whom the Austrians refused to entertain on the right bank was solved by transporting him to Hamburg, there to be handed over to the American consul in the hope that he would rid Europe of his presence altogether by crossing once again the Atlantic.

On September 19th, 1797, the gates of the fortress in Olmütz

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were opened, and the little party, Lafayette, Adrienne, Anastasie and Virginie, Latour Maubourg, Pusy, the servants Felix and Chavaniac, began the long journey that would lead them to freedom. On their way they met with much sympathy, and even at times Lafayette's heart was gladdened by the sound, so long unheard, of popular applause. As the Marquis de Chasteler who had been sent to ask him for the undertaking not to re-enter Austria had said: 'The doctrine of the Rights of Man has quite enough apostles already in Germany.' Despite appearances, the cause for which Lafayette had lived, suffered and nearly died had not stood still during those long years of enforced inactivity.

CHAPTER II

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(1797-1799)

IN the case of most people, middle age is the period of achievement. Lafayette was only forty when he came out of prison. In other words he still had the best years of his life to live. But those five terrible years broke his life in two. His gaolers could restore his liberty; they could not give back to him the unity and development of his life and career; they could not give back to him the chance of fitting the second part of his life into the first. The shadow of those years darkens his middle age. He left prison an ageing man, and it was only his remarkable vigour of mind and body which enabled him late in life to regain something of his youthful spirit and accomplish as an old man the work which he would naturally have achieved in the fullness of his manhood.

Another shadow, too, intensified the darkness of those middle years, the shadow of Bonaparte. Lafayette's character was too simple and spontaneous not to be affected by the genius of the man who might in other circumstances have been a rival, but, broken as he was during this period, he could only oppose the unscrupulous tyranny of the Emperor by unspoken defiance and contempt. This saved his reputation and his conscience, but it buried him deeper than ever in the shadows. But these years, contrasting so grimly with the blaze of his youth, do much to reveal the real Lafayette, unknown for the most part to posterity who only remember the outward show which, in happier times, he knew too well how to stage.

When he first came out of prison he was blinded by the light of a world to which he had grown unaccustomed and puzzled by a new pattern which he could not follow. Carried forward by joy of his own liberation and the desire to turn his prolonged solitary meditations into action, he persuaded himself that the world had been advancing along the path which he had shown it: 'The doctrine of the declaration of rights, though disfigured and soiled

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by Jacobinism, has everywhere become the terror of governments and the symbol of the enlightened portion of their subjects. A mass of antiquated abuses no longer exists. Hereditary oppressions, the aristocracy of corporations, internal hindrances to trade, arbitrary industrial taxes, privileges, monopolies, mortmain, feudal rights, banalities, tithes, inequality of taxes and justice, venality, torture, inquisition, castration of children, slave trade and many other iniquities sacred in many States, have disappeared before the revolutionary standard. That standard, which I handed over to the National Guards, had gloriously realized the predictions in which no foreign, French, or even patriot soldiers had ever really believed.' But as he became accustomed to the blaze of light, he began to see details. It was a very different picture: 'It is only too clear to me that all parties have no regard for liberty, that civic energy is lost, that the people are despised and not bothered about, that power and rapine for some, rest and frivolity for others, are the only objects of their appetite and attention. Aristocrats, royalists, patriots, Jacobins pass in turn into the arbitrary balance of the government; republicanism and royalism are still rallying words, but liberty is worn out for everybody. Let us not talk of liberty, morality, of all the sentiments which are no longer even in name the order of the day . . . The world seems to me to have grown smaller . . .'

This moodiness which made him pass rapidly from unfounded optimism to equally unfounded pessimism was the result of mental and physical fatigue. His imagination and his will stubbornly concentrated on the world of his ideals had always tended to be out of touch with reality, but he had been intelligent and robust enough to keep himself in sufficiently close contact with it to be an actor and not a dreamer. But the contact, always precarious, was now completely broken, and his mind having nothing to feed on but the memory of the past could retain only the brightness, not the steadiness or the detail of the ideal vision. He was a broken man still retaining the vigour of the various parts of his being, but unable any longer to co-ordinate them. Pauline, his sister-in-law, was more right than she knew when she exclaimed: '*Ce pauvre Gilbert! Dieu le préserve d'être jamais de nouveau sur la scène!*' The ten years which followed his imprisonment present a more tragic picture even than the five years of prison. Physical compulsion restrains the liberty of the greatest man; it is only when he

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is liberated that its effect on the liberty of his spirit can be discerned.

On October 14th, 1797, the tired but excited party reached Hamburg where they were to be delivered up to the American consul. The American colony was making such a celebration of the event that Lafayette began to think that he was re-living at once the glory of his days in America. The only surly figure was Morris, wondering whether he would ever again see the money which he had lent to the Lafayettes. The prisoners, he grumbled, were late, difficult, wasting their own and everybody else's time, full of professions of gratitude unlikely to go much further than professions. He surmised that Lafayette had no serious intention of going to America and he did his best to persuade him not to try to re-enter France: 'A perfect nullity is the safer game for you.'

Indeed there was the trouble. What were they to do, and where were they to go? Adrienne, suffering from prison treatment, was in any case too ill to face the dangerous and long journey across the Atlantic, while financial troubles made her presence in Paris imperative. Hamburg they had to leave at once. Germany was closed to them. Lafayette had no desire to find refuge in Tory England at war with France. Every other country seemed to be threatened with a French invasion.

To make matters worse, he started his new life by making France's Directorial government more hostile to him than it need have been. On the way to Hamburg, he had learned of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor. The sinister term *coup d'état* was enough to make him angry. Had not the era of such things ended with 1776 in America and 1789 in France? All he heard was that a majority of the Directorate had expelled a minority which happened to be composed of the two Directors who had done most to help his release, Carnot and Barthélemy, and that 188 deputies had been proscribed without legal judgment. To add to their sins, the *Fructidoriens*, as they were called, had publicly spoken of the 'perfidy of Lafayette'. He therefore snubbed the new government by refusing to thank the Directory for his release with the result that it sold his last remaining estates in Brittany. He soon realized that he had condemned the *Fructidoriens* too quickly, for it chanced that they had been defending the principles of the Revolution against the intrigues of the Royalist reactionaries. But it was too

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late: he had turned suspicion into hostility, and France was more closed to him than ever.

He was therefore forced to spend a year in Holstein, a dependency of the Germanic Empire, but practically part of neutral Denmark, and once again Adrienne recited the Cantic of Tobias as the exiles sailed across the lake of Ploen to disembark on the shores of Mme. de Tessé's house and farm at Witmold, near Kiel. Within a few weeks, Adrienne, who was not an *émigrée*, left him to attend to her inheritance in Paris.

During this period of early exile, he had ample time to contemplate his position and to decide about his future. Would he accept failure and make arrangements to take the practically irrevocable step of establishing himself in America? He often played with the idea, once going so far as to suggest that he should go without Adrienne. He thought of settling in New England in order to be as far away as possible from the parts of America still desecrated by negro slavery. But he found fair enough excuses to hide even from himself the real truth, that he still wanted to be back in Paris on his white horse and hear the cheers of the old Parisian mob and make the principles of 1789 safe for Europe. One of them was that he would not have enough money. The hero who had dazzled a continent by his wealth and prodigality was now forced to write: 'I must procure a shelter elsewhere, for we should not have enough money to keep the family six months in an American hotel . . . I now have no place anywhere but in the heart of my friends.' He confessed in a letter to Jefferson that he was plainly ruined. And it was only too true that serious financial difficulties added their sordid note to more dignified sorrows. He had managed to retain property bringing in something over £1000 a year, but he owed far more than that, and the expenses of his family were growing. His penniless daughter had to the scandal of all relations married a penniless suitor. '*Le mariage de la faim avec le soif*' was the way Mme. de Tessé, who had to foot the bill, expressed it. The future depended on the settlement of Adrienne's inheritance about which the prospects were very uncertain.

Another excuse was to be found in the bad relations between America and France. Talleyrand, in his usual post of adviser to any French government, had defied America's claim to neutral rights on the high seas in time of war. His suggestion

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that a large tip for himself might induce him to change the French attitude had not mended matters, and France and America were virtually at war. Washington could not help allowing the anger which he felt against the French government to overflow on to the luckless Lafayette.

Washington was now nearing the end of his days. A bitter blow of fate cast this dark shadow on the last relations between master and favourite pupil. Excusing himself on the ground that he was daily expecting Lafayette in person, the master did not answer his letters. But when he did, his letter was not encouraging: 'When the harmony between this country and France shall be re-established, no one will receive you with more open arms or with a greater affection than I. But it would be insincerity on my part and altogether against the friendship I bear you to say that I desire to see you before that time.' Lafayette's dreams seemed shattered indeed! His old companion in arms, Alexander Hamilton, was no less emphatic: 'I have never believed that France could be turned into a republic . . . In the present state of our relations with France, I cannot press you to come here, and until a radical change should take place, I should be sorry to hear that you had come back.'

Sorrow, disillusionment, even humility overcame at times during these dark days Lafayette's natural serenity and optimism, but only once did he give way to the cruel spirit which he had had to face so often on the part of others. His old friend and enemy with whom he had escaped, Alexandre Lameth, wrote to congratulate him on his release. For once, Lafayette would not shake hands and 'make it up': 'We were friends during the first month of the Revolution; in the month of October began a quarrel the circumstances of which, during its long continuance, destroyed all possibility of an intimate friendship between us . . . If it were not ridiculous in our circumstances to talk of parties, I would say that there is no political community between us. I confine myself to saying that we cannot look upon each other nor be looked upon as friends . . .' This unfortunate and entirely inaccurate letter is memorable only because it stands alone and because it is evidence that it was not lack of feelings but habitual self-control which explains Lafayette's charitable temper. Lameth wrote again, but he never received any answer.

Typical of Lafayette's depression is a passage from his letters like

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the following: 'The loss I have suffered directly in the Revolution is immense. Apart from the cruel loss of my near relations, a beloved mother-in-law and a beloved sister-in-law, of the friends of all my life, it is enough to read of the law against all the suspects of the commune of Robespierre, the screws of all the prisons, the acts of accusation of the Revolutionary tribunals, to see with what ruthlessness the crime of being attached to my person and to my principles has been pursued.' Or again the humble, almost childlike attitude revealed in his letters to Adrienne in Paris is a strange contrast with the busy and thoughtless neglect of his more prosperous days. He had ventured to criticize some details of her conduct during the negotiations about her property and on behalf of her *émigrés* friends. But Adrienne, grown stronger and more virile, perhaps unconsciously compensating for her husband's new weakness, resented his criticism. She hinted that being on the spot she was perfectly capable of managing these affairs herself. At once he was all apology and contrition: 'I agree with pleasure and with all my heart,' he replied, 'that it was I who was in the wrong, and that you are right on these two points, as indeed on all others.'

Among his multitudinous schemes for passing the long hours was the preparation of a long work on comparative political science. He explained to her in great detail how he would compare chapter by chapter all the public institutions and customs under the *ancien régime* with those of modern France, and how he would gradually extend the scope of the work to include the United States, Britain and Germany. Had the work been carried out adequately, it would have been invaluable, but when Adrienne objected, somewhat unreasonably, that such a recall of the past would hurt the feelings of her friends and relations, the chastened hero dropped all idea of it like an obedient child: '*Je n'y pense plus . . . Adieu, adieu, adieu, mon cher coeur; je vous demande pardon de vous avoir tant tourmenté et je vous embrasse ainsi que Virginie de tout mon coeur.*'

Adrienne had been working hard and with ability, for she was able to secure the inheritance of 50,000 francs which included the property of Lagrange, forty miles south-east of Paris. Chavaniac was sold to the old aunt who had held it during the Revolution with the spirit of a Joan of Arc. Thus they were to be saved from poverty or from having to live on the bounty of others.

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As an impotent but proud man will, Lafayette often deceived himself as well as others by saying that he wished for nothing more than an honourable and useful old age in dignified retirement. For the future he would devote himself to farming Lagrange, or, maybe, some property in America. 'Unless I am given a very great opportunity of serving liberty and my country in a way that suits my convenience, my political life is at an end. For my friends, I shall be full of life; for the public a kind of picture in a museum or a book in a library . . . My reason tells me that there will never again be anything for me to do, that my reputation even demands that I should put an end to my political career . . . Those who know my views and desires must be convinced that the services which I can now render my country are of the kind which can be combined with a life suitable to my position, to my wife, to myself, that is to say in a peaceful and philosophic establishment in a good farm, far enough away from the capital not to be importuned in my solitude and able only to see my intimate friends.'

Despite these good resolutions, in October, 1789, he left Holstein to stay at Vianen in Holland, a country a step nearer France and at this time filled with French soldiers. When the suitable time came, the next step would be so much the easier.

In truth the political situation in France was such as to re-awaken all his old dreams. The five-headed Directory was without unity of mind or strength of will. Only where Bonaparte was present in person did military success compensate for weakness at home. A strong government with the whole weight of France behind it was needed, if the aggressive policy of revolutionary France was not to end in disaster. A new, hated political system had challenged the old order. Could it live up to its pretensions? Democracy and nationalism seemed to call for his experienced hand. 'You tell me,' he wrote to a friend soon after settling in Holland, 'that public opinion is veering round towards me. I believe truly, and especially after meeting Frenchmen again here, that that opinion has never changed. I am sorry for my countrymen for I should have preferred a great anger, which at least is a real feeling, to the universal downtroddenness before the terror of the day. I have found military goodwill at the point in which I left it. My white horse and myself would be received in Paris, the one as well as the other, and the only murmur would be:

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“Why are we not revenging ourselves?” So much for the crowd.” And again, analysing the situation with some perspicacity ‘We have returned to the vicious circle of cures by means of further illnesses, and since the governed have not sufficient energy to get out of it by themselves, those who have power or some of them at least must find it to be to their interest to restore liberty and justice. The Directors are alarming rather than powerful. Their defensive forces, the bayonets, only belong to them by their governing right, not by personal affection, and that, in a democratic state, is not a very solid means of reliance.’ This state of affairs raised his hopes – not the enthusiastic hopes of pre-prison days – but rather a hope against hope that some point of insertion for his own activity could be found.

At first he was content to think of himself as well employed in improving Franco-American relations, but when in June, 1799, a French officer came in the name of Carnot to sound him on behalf of the moderate party, more exciting ideas were revolving in his mind. He was too cautious, still perhaps too frightened of himself to nibble at the first fly, especially as Adrienne had been warned by Sièyes in Paris, one of the Directors, that while he was himself no enemy of Lafayette, he must remind her that his return would be most dangerous: ‘It might mean worse than prison,’ he assured her. But there seemed no doubt that his return with a blare of liberal trumpets could not be long delayed. He was already informing Adrienne that there must be no question of the journey to America so long as ‘there is the slightest hope of serving my country. While I see the advance of the coalition against France and the whole of humanity, while I recognize my personal enemies at the head of that terrible league, I feel that I can do nothing but put myself on the opposite side and fight until my extinction.’

He was still suspicious of the motives of his possible friends, but already far less suspicious of the *coup d'état* of Prairial – by which Sièyes had obtained chief power – than he had been of Fructidor. ‘I am persuaded that if there be a means of uniting and vivifying good citizens, of stopping half-way between Jacobinism and counter-revolution, that means would be our return to France . . . I think deliverance would be welcomed from anybody. However discontented with the revolution people may be, aristocrats will always be regarded as people who have preferred their

own to the public interest, monarchists have left no trace, Dumouriez is an intriguer, Moreau is not popular with civilians – As for Bonaparte, he is the high constable of the *Conventionnel* party; he can become master of France. Doubtless he is the one Sièyes and his friends are waiting for.’ Which was quite true.

There was the rub, Bonaparte. Some time before, a tired Lafayette had written to a friend: ‘You tell me that I must act alone and by myself, then my friends will follow me. But before anything else they must bring the right occasion to birth. If only an opportunity is created, great or little, of restoring liberty, be assured that I shall not be asleep.’ Very different were the actions of young Bonaparte. He was not waiting for his friends to create opportunities for him. So tired was Lafayette that he refused to consider ‘the prodigious general,’ as he called him, as an upstart or a rival. Like tired France, he was looking to Bonaparte to give a lead. His admiration for his military skill was unselfish and unbounded, and he was content to think of him as a Messiah destined to bring France redemption from internal anarchy and oppression and to carry across Europe the tricolour which he had given her. He asked only to be allowed to participate in the completion of the work of which he had been the precursor.

While playing chess, one evening in October, 1799, news was brought to him that Bonaparte had returned suddenly to the capital, leaving his army to get out of its perilous situation in Egypt as best it could. The Directory was doomed. Was it his chance to share with Bonaparte in a new restoration of the principles of 1789? Had not Joséphine said to Adrienne: ‘Your husband and mine must work together?’ He wrote at the time: ‘You are right in judging that since the defeats of the coalition the discontented expect salvation only from within. The moment is therefore very favourable to Bonaparte. He will not be risking any personal advantage for the sake of liberty; he has proved that his soul can quite happily watch its violation and even co-operate with such violation. Nevertheless if his glory and his ambition demand his going forward with the good cause, he will do it. His wish must be that the republic should be established on the solid foundations of liberty and justice. Perhaps he wishes to become president for life. I would greatly like such an arrangement; it would be a very curious experiment.’ Already he was

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imagining what role he would play in the new regime. Perhaps he would be best in his oldest role, that of military commander: perhaps he would be more useful as a diplomat to arrange an understanding between France and England, or France and America. Anyhow without wishing any longer to play the chief part, there would be plenty of work for him to do.

Just before leaving exile for ever, he wrote to his old friend, Romeuf: 'We must leave nothing undone to finish off the Revolution to the advantage of liberty. They will see later that then no one will be more eager than I for retreat and rest. It appears that they have thought that I was holding myself back too long. It is clearly to Bonaparte's interest to unite himself with us, with me especially, for my position forbids me to be tempted by the possible objects of his ambition, I who would willingly give my vote to make him president of a free, just and well-organized republic . . . Is it not the moment for all republicans in good faith, for all patriots to rally round the true principles of liberty?'

Adrienne in Paris was the first to present her husband's compliments to the victorious general. The latter had been shown some of Lafayette's letters containing hinting sentences like: 'How to bring back the sentiments and ideas of 1789? It cannot be by phrases, they have been too much abused. We require clear measures and esteemed men.' The rumour went round that Lafayette was to be made generalissimo of the National Guards. Bonaparte received a nice letter from him assuring him of 'the happy conviction, citizen-general, that to cherish your glory and to wish for your success is not only a mark of attachment and gratitude but a civic duty.' But these pretty compliments were all on one side. Bonaparte, master of France by the *coup d'état* of Brumaire (November 9th, 1799) had no intention of sharing his power with anybody, least of all the uncompromising constitutionalist of 1789 conveniently exiled in Holland.

A few days later the First Consul was informed that Lafayette, travelling with a false passport, had returned to Paris!

Bonaparte's rage was reported to be unbounded; Talleyrand on the spot as usual and other councillors begged Lafayette to return to Holland as rapidly as he had come. Formally he was an *émigré*, and Bonaparte had the legal right to have him arrested. But Lafayette dared him to do his worst. 'You ought to know me well enough,' he told the councillors, 'to realize that such an

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imperious and threatening tone is quite enough to fix me in my determination . . . It would be a good joke indeed if I were arrested to-night by the National Guard and put in prison to-morrow as the restorer of the principles of 1789!' In the end he compromised by sending Adrienne to Bonaparte to explain his intentions. And Bonaparte compromised by asking her to persuade her husband to avoid all kind of publicity at the crisis the ins and outs of which he was not in a position to appreciate. 'I am charmed to make your acquaintance', he told her, 'but while you have much spirit, you do not understand this business. Lafayette will understand what I mean.'

Lafayette did not understand, but not being able to believe that a great personality and a great general like Bonaparte could be entirely without ability to appreciate the luminous and enlightened principles of the new world, and entirely unappreciative of his talents, he was willing to wait in retirement until the latter's power was sufficiently well-established to be able to govern by the light of both. Moreover he had no alternative. Public spirit, as he had often noticed since his prison days, was crushed. The succession of *coups d'état* since 1789 had accustomed the people to arbitrary illegality. So, disappointed but still hoping, he went to farm Adrienne's property, Lagrange.

CHAPTER III

LAFAYETTE AND NAPOLEON

(1799 - 1814)

THE Chateau de Lagrange, Lafayette's last home, had come to Adrienne through the d'Aguesseau, her prosperous lawyer ancestors on her mother's side. Its gloomy, creeper-covered, massive towers still bearing the marks of the cannon balls of ancient wars, the crumbling walls, the damp and neglect caused by years of disuse made it seem a fitting place for a neglected hero. Yet to-day it stands as strong and as unnoticed as ever. Napoleon born in Corsica and living in other people's palaces has not left a French home behind him.

How curious to the student of human nature is the contrast between these two men whose antagonistic principles are so faithfully represented in the composition of the modern state. Imperialistic, utilitarian, ruthless when in danger, centralized and knitted together so that the individual is but a cypher and the abstract nation the only reality – so much it owes to Napoleon's consolidating rule; democratic, humanitarian, optimistic, trying to reflect the individual sense of good and bad, tolerant, jealous of civil liberty, aiming at political liberty – such at least is the avowed ideal inherited from the principles for which Lafayette lived. These two aspects do not often mix well, as we know, any more than Napoleon and Lafayette mixed well, but the one without the other would be pure tyranny or unsubstantial Utopia. 'Lafayette may be right in theory', Napoleon once remarked, 'but what is theory?' But Lafayette had not even been altogether right in theory since he had not been able to fit a strong executive into the democratic state. Napoleon maintaining the realistic reforms of the Revolution and suspending the idealistic ones, restored the all-powerful executive of the *ancien régime*. 'What do you want?' he once asked the criticising Lafayette, 'Sièyes (the author of the Consular Constitution) put nothing but shadows everywhere: a shadow of a legislative power, a shadow of a judiciary, a shadow

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of government: we surely needed some substance somewhere. *Ma foi*, I've put it all here.'

Despite the fact that Napoleon on St. Helena, still acutely conscious of the part Lafayette had played in forcing his final abdication, dismissed him as a 'mere noodle', it is certain that he had a real respect and not a little personal liking for his powerless political enemy, while Lafayette on his side never disguised his deep admiration for all that was great and good in Napoleon. For some time the two men, still uncertain about the future, manœuvred to find the best position from which to deal with each other. One of the first pieces of news which came to Lafayette's gloomy residence was the death of Washington. A Memorial Service was to be held in Paris, but the cautious Bonaparte not only refused to have 'the Saviour of the Country' invited, but forbade the panegyrist to mention his name. Only with difficulty, too, did Lafayette succeed in having his name struck off the list of proscribed *émigrés*.

On his side, Lafayette was waiting to see how the new constitution would turn out. His worst fears were realized. Based on the maxim that 'to act is the function of one only: to deliberate is the function of many,' the constitution of the Year VIII made no mention of the Declaration of Rights, reduced elective power to an appearance and concentrated all action in the irresponsible hands of the First Consul, elected for ten years by a nominated Senate. In the face of this undisguised reversal of the principles of 1789 Lafayette, aware that Bonaparte's strength deprived him of all power of effective resistance, decided to take up a permanent attitude of silent disapproval, pathetically reserving to himself the right to serve France as a volunteer in the Consul's armies if France were in danger. Bonaparte, who was told this by some courtier trying to raise a laugh at Lafayette's expense, answered sharply: 'Well, would you have done as much?' In fact he did not despair of joining this intransigent opponent to his own following. He admitted that without Lafayette his own career would never have been possible. He knew that a man is not hated as Lafayette was hated unless there is something in him worth hating. 'You may say what you like,' he remarked one day, 'it is none the less true that no one is so hated as he is by the enemies of liberty and of France; how well I know, I who arranged his release, what a price the foreign Powers set on his retention.' And to him he once

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said: 'The princes and their friends hate me, but it is nothing in comparison with their hatred of you. I could not have imagined that human hatred could go so far.'

When Lafayette came to see him in order to have his old friends, especially Monsieur and Madame de Tessé, struck off the list of *émigrés*, he took the opportunity of having a long exchange of views. No doubt the fact that Lafayette despite his political ideas was after all one of the great aristocrats of France had its weight with the *parvenu*. The aristocrat did not fail to notice this little weakness: 'It is really difficult to imagine,' he wrote later, 'to what an extent the ideas of the *ancien régime* had taken hold of this man of the Revolution,' and he maliciously related one of the most amusing stories ever told about the Emperor. Napoleon was dining one day with Francis of Austria, his father-in-law, and had occasion to remind the company that he too was a nobleman. 'I know it', answered Francis, 'I have read all about it in a book about Corsica in which the nobility of your family is referred to.' 'Have you got the book?' asked the excited Emperor, 'will you lend it to me?' 'Unfortunately,' smiled Francis, 'it was among the books that the French took from me when you were in Vienna.'

In those early days, then, Bonaparte seemed willing to do a great deal to ensure his support. First came the offer of the American Embassy, but Lafayette refused on the ground that he was too much of an American to live in the United States as a foreigner. Then a seat in the Senate, or if that were too compromising, a seat on his local County Council. But all honours, great or small, he refused on the sensible ground that they must inevitably make matters worse by bringing his opposition into the limelight. Bonaparte had perforce to give in, though he hated the thought that Lafayette's attitude held him up to the public as a tyrant. 'No one likes to be considered that,' he said. Nevertheless they remained for a year or two on excellent terms. There were even rumours of a possible match between Virginie, Lafayette's daughter, and Lucien, Bonaparte's difficult brother. At Joséphine's parties or in the intimacy of Bonaparte's private closet, they discussed every topic of interest, the campaigns in America, the mistakes of 1792, the fatal conduct of the *émigrés*, the nature of the Bourbons, the meaning of liberty and tyranny, the position of the Church in the State, and not least Bonaparte's own conduct. 'He has never said anything worse about me behind my back than

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he has said to my face,' the latter remarked to someone who was telling tales about Lafayette. As they chatted, Lafayette, 'more attracted than I ought to have been by a despot,' saw in the little bright-eyed, snuffing Consul the image of the imperious, courtly and dirty Frederick of Prussia, with whom he had once discussed many of these topics, while they were still but mere ideas.

Then, in the summer of 1802, came the news that the Consul for ten years' duration proposed to become Consul for life. The path to imperial honours was being made smooth. Lafayette stood almost alone in refusing to vote for him. 'You know my political principles,' he wrote to a friend. 'And since psalms have become fashionable again, I have a right to say for myself the *sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper*.' Bonaparte did not fail to notice this powerless but morally weighty defiance of the man who was now calling himself *le naufragé*. When he was being congratulated on the unanimity of Frenchmen's support of his rule, he said: 'No, I have against me the enthusiasm for liberty, Lafayette for example.' Lafayette had the courtesy to write a letter of explanation, but he received no answer. The interviews ceased. Buried now deeper than ever in his country seat, the revolutionary gentleman kept a finger of silent scorn pointed at the man who was 'shining with a glory more imposing by its character than its nobility,' and the First Consul ceased to refer to his admonitor, except to say on one occasion, 'Only one man has not been corrected. Lafayette has not budged an inch. You see him quiet. Well, I tell you, he is quite ready to start again.'

During these years of forced leisure, *le naufragé* became a model French country gentleman. Superintending the laying-out of his grounds – he might often be seen shouting at the gardeners from his library in the tower with an old naval megaphone – walking over his farm, writing his memoirs of an evening, busying himself with the accounts, for he had to make ends meet, entertaining the friends of liberty who came to him on pilgrimage, he succeeded against all expectations in imitating the character and sharing the tastes which Washington had once so eloquently described to him in that classical letter after the War of Independence. Experience and suffering had smoothed the edges of his temperament. A sense of humour, a better understanding of the diversity and charm of human beings in flesh and blood was turning the intolerant and defiantly self-conscious idealism of his youth into an unaffected

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devotion to the realities, the men and women whom he had too often regarded as nothing but the objects of a logical and liberal providence whose instrument he was called to be. A self-centred unselfishness was becoming unselfish love; moral virtue was growing into human goodness. The thin, pale, upthrust head had become more heavy, more coarse, but the cheeks were ruddier and the smile more natural. The head was still held high and the brow was unruffled, for the mellowness had not lowered his ideals, nor made him blush at any public word or action of the past. Coming down to earth might have its advantages, but it did not change the nature of his vocation to be the prophet of that 'holy folly, liberty'.

Friends noticed the changes. Fanny Burney and her husband, D'Arblay, Lafayette's old aide-de-camp, came to Lagrange and Fanny recorded her impressions: 'With all the various faults charged against him in public life, his conduct in private could admit of but one description. He was all that is respectable and amiable, fond, attentive and instructive to his children, active and zealous for his friends, gentle and equal with his servants and displaying, upon every occasion, the tenderest gratitude to his wife who followed him to captivity and to whom, from that period, he became, by universal account, far more warmly and exclusively attached than he had ever been formerly, though her virtues and conduct had always been objects to him of respect and esteem.' Another man, St. Marc-Girardin, the journalist, who knew him only in his later life, remarked: 'There is goodness enough in his personality to make up for three or four villains.' The Peace of Amiens in 1802 brought to Paris a host of English Whigs to see the effects of the cataclysmic revolution which they had defended at first with sincerity, but later more for consistency and notoriety's sake. Fox, Fitz-Patrick, Holland, Bedford, Lauderdale, Erskine – they all met the survivor from the shipwreck. Fox stayed at Lagrange, and shook his head at the turn events were taking, but when Lafayette was too pessimistic, he consoled him with the assurance 'that liberty would be born again, not for us, for George at best and surely for his children'.

Sufferings and consolations succeeded each other in this full, human life, as they do in the lives of ordinary mortals. One winter's day he slipped badly on a piece of ice. His thigh-bone was broken. A brilliant doctor, delighted to find an idealistic

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victim on whom he could experiment for the good of humanity and to his own financial advantage, suggested that he could re-set the leg in such a way that he would not become lame for life. It would mean forty days of agony. Lafayette accepted. A clumsy instrument was strapped round his leg in order to stretch it. Pus poured from the wounds, but the doctor encouraged him and he encouraged the doctor to persevere. 'I experienced the maximum of pain a human body can support: for forty days and forty nights I suffered cruelly,' was his simple and graphic way of expressing that agony. The old *curé* would come and console him, shaking his head with a smile and telling him that, alas, even such a Lent as this would profit him nothing in the next world since he endured it with a spirit of but natural and stoical resignation. At last the infernal machine was taken off. A part of his leg came with it; what was left was terribly crushed and mutilated. He recovered very slowly only to find himself lamed for life with a permanently stiffened hip. Instead of driving the doctor from his house, he thanked him for having taken so much trouble, and away the doctor went to try new experiments, but never again that one. Adrienne spent those days in prayer: 'We are on the rack,' she repeated, 'may God stretch us on His Cross.'

These sufferings were soon forgotten in the joy of Virginie's wedding to a young, rich and religious nobleman, Louis de Lasteyrie, and the same *curé* who had given absolution as the guillotine blade fell on Virginie's great-grandmother, grandmother and aunt, that fatal morning of the Terror, pronounced the nuptial benediction in a room adjoining Lafayette's sick bed on the morning of April 30th, 1802.

And so the years were passing, marked but rarely by events of common importance to the warring world and the retired general. Napoleon made a last attempt to ingratiate himself, by dangling the Cordon of the newly-instituted Legion of Honour before him, but the nobleman of the *ancien régime* who had trampled on dignities and honours rooted in antiquity merely laughed at this new-fangled imitation. His son, George Washington, was made to suffer for this snub: despite his distinguished military services Bonaparte refused to promote him as he deserved.

Lafayette was corresponding regularly with Jefferson, now President of the United States. That vast stretch of territory which covered nearly a third of the United States, the then

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Louisiana, had just been sold by Napoleon, and Jefferson would have liked to have made Lafayette its Governor. 'I sincerely wish you were on the spot, that we might avail ourselves of your services as Governor of Louisiana.' A little later on the occasion of the Aaron Burr conspiracy he paid him an even higher compliment: 'I should prefer your sole presence to an army of ten thousand men, to ensure the tranquillity of this land.' But to go to America at this time would look like an admission that his ideals had been permanently disappointed in the land of his birth. 'I readily acknowledge,' he wrote, 'that in our going immediately to Louisiana there is for me and there alone perhaps to be expected the reunion of dignity and safety. No less am I animated than thirty years ago by the idea to walk along with American Liberty in her progress throughout the continent. When to be employed in her service either as a magistrate, a missionary or a soldier would render the end of my life as happy as the beginning has been - Yet, my dear friend, you have also been a witness and partaker in my expectation of French and of course of European liberty. In America the cause of Mankind is won and insured. No thing can stop change, or sully its course, here it is reckoned to be lost and irretrievable. But to pronounce its doom to myself, to proclaim it, as it were, by a final Expatriation is a confession so repugnant to my sanguine nature, that unless I am quite forced to it, I don't know how the ground however disadvantageous, much less, how the hope, however faint it is, can be totally abandoned. . . . And while I consider the prodigious influence of French doctrines on the future destinies of the world I persuade myself that I, a promoter of this Revolution, must not acknowledge the impossibility to see it, in our days, restored on its true basis of generous, upright, and in one word, of American Liberty.'¹ After his release from prison, it had been the old itch to appear on the public stage again which had prevented him settling in America. Nine years of domestic life in a world of disillusionment had prompted him to make this fine act of unselfish faith and devotion to his principles.

Soon a far more poignant sacrifice had to be made. Adrienne was to be called upon to give up her life because of her devotion to him. The illness which she had contracted at Olmütz had

¹ This letter, taken from Chinard: *Letters of Lafayette and Jefferson* will give the reader an idea of how he wrote and spelt the English language.

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never really left her. She was always trying to hide the fact in order to spare her husband and children anxiety. For some years her spirit had conquered her weakened body. She had continued her good works, while devoting herself to the cause of her many *émigrés* friends and taking care of her husband, who looked to her to make up for the love and admiration once received from the great and the small of the earth. One of her last preoccupations was to make sacred the spot where her mother and her sister had been buried. Through her care the adjoining land was bought and on it a chapel was erected where nuns of Perpetual Adoration prayed day and night for their souls, as they were to continue to pray for hers and her husband's. This work of religious and filial charity fitly consummated her life.

On August 22nd, 1807, she had a particularly severe recurrence of the old fever. In October she was taken to Paris. Her sufferings were great, but even in her delirium she was only confused about places and dreamed happy dreams about those around her. She kept possession of her soul. As she grew weaker her thoughts were concentrated on but two objects, God and her husband. Her love of him which had once been struggling to develop in an arid soil had now burst into the fullest bloom. 'Do you feel like me?' she asked her sister one day, 'the need to love and to be loved?' And then she would turn to him with an expression of such tender love that those near her were surprised at such intensity of affection. Her one anxiety now was that his soul should be saved. But even so she only liked to broach the subject with the greatest delicacy and tact. She felt that in some mysterious Divine way the truth of Dogma would be made safe and yet that such men as her husband would be granted the Beatific Vision. And made happy by this thought, she smiled at him and told him that though he might not be a Christian, he would always be a Fayetteist. 'And you, yourself, are you not one too, just a little?' he whispered - 'Yes, with all my heart!' The year wore on. Near the point of death she was heard praying: it was her favourite prayer, the Canticle of Tobias. On the night of Christmas Eve, as the Catholic folk in the houses around were preparing to go to Midnight Mass, she uttered her last words: 'I am not suffering: I wish you all the peace of the Lord', and then to the broken-hearted husband kneeling by the bedside: '*Je suis toute à vous.*' As the priests in the churches were pronouncing the first words

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of the Catholic Mass: 'I will go in unto the altar of God,' she ascended to God Himself.

It is not necessary to describe the sorrow of Lafayette. As though he could not contain it within himself, he poured it forth in a long, distressing letter to Latour-Maubourg. To Jefferson, with unconscious candour, he admitted that marriage had probably shortened her life, and confessed that 'before this blow I did not know what it was to be unhappy.' After this relief he kept his feelings to himself, gradually letting them pass into a kind of religious veneration for her memory. At one time he could have seen her die and hardly noticed the difference, but when she did die she had become part of his own life.

Other deaths too marked the passage of years and the changing of time into history. Not long before Adrienne's death his oldest schoolboy friend, his companion in America, his supporter in the Revolution, the Vicomte de Noailles, the husband of the angelic Louise, had been killed by the British in the West Indies. Soon too the last link with the eighteenth century to which after all he owed his existence and his upbringing, his aged great-aunt, who had bought Chavaniac, passed away.

A few years more, and old Madame de Tessé, so long another mother to him, went to that part of Heaven which must have been specially constructed to reward according to their original tastes those men and women who preserved the gentleness and charity of religion in an age when orthodox religion had ceased to be for them a live option. The old lady, it appeared, could not survive the death of the husband whose existence had been hardly known to her social and intellectual friends: 'A habit of fifty-eight years is not one that I can get rid of' were among the last words of Lafayette's unswerving champion and admirer, whom Madame de Staël described as the greatest mind she had ever known.

He was paying the inevitable payment demanded of those who begin life too young, or live it too long. His ties had nearly all been with people older than himself, and the young world growing up around him seemed to have no sympathy with the faith which in his day had been too novel for his contemporaries. 'The world', he repeated, 'has grown smaller.' Those ideals of liberty, justice, toleration, humanitarianism, springing from a philosophic contemplation of an ordered, logical and kindly universe beyond the haphazard of spatial and temporal shocks, ideals which in

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Athens of old, in medieval Europe, in the political tradition of England, in the revolution of America have aroused what is best in the spirit of man, he saw crushed temporarily at least by the will of one self-seeking, misguided man. The whole of France, the whole of Europe even, were being attracted to the burning light. His fellow nobles, once estimable for their pride, if for nothing more, were now scrambling for tawdry imperial honours: a daughter of the Hapsburgs was being utilized to produce a Bonapartist dynasty; the ancient Church was being pushed into imperial shape without regard for its Pope. These time-honoured institutions which he had not succeeded in converting to something greater than themselves were gladly prostituting themselves to please this despot. The middle classes whom he had wanted to make the backbone of the liberal state, the poor who had escaped dying for the despot on the field of battle had been given no chance to protest. He stood alone with his old enemy England against this all-devouring power. Nor dared he, like England, hope for its defeat, for to defeat Napoleon now meant defeating France whom he loved as well as liberty itself. With the defeat of France might go what was left of the revolutionary reforms as well.

He could but watch the inevitable, aware that his judgments and impulses, once so potent, had now no meaning for anyone. In the early days of the Consulate he had foreseen a good deal. He had done his best to persuade Bonaparte of the advantages of complete religious toleration: 'Really pious people will bless you; I know through my family that all they ask for is complete liberty of worship. The Faubourg St. Germain may blame you but what difference will that make? Some *philosophes* too, enemies of every cult. But they are wrong and you will be justified.' Bonaparte laughed and answered: 'You will have nothing to complain of with my idea of a Concordat, for I shall place priests in a position inferior to that in which you left them; a bishop will feel himself highly honoured to find himself at table with a *préfet*.' 'Be frank', Lafayette interrupted, 'admit that all this has but one object, to be able to have the little phial poured on your head.' That was a prophecy made, if we trust Lafayette's own account of the conversation, three years before its accomplishment.

As the Tricolour began in earnest to go the round of the world, he watched with mixed feelings: 'The roads to Paris', he wrote to Jefferson, 'are covered with kings and princes who come to pay

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their court. . . . I had rather they were popular deputies to a general federation of liberty and equality, but I cannot help observing what has been the prodigious influence of that revolutionary movement although misguided on its way, and the enthusiasm and talents of which an aristocratic monarchy should ever have prevented the display.' But then he saw the price that had to be paid: 'In order to satisfy this mania, geographically gigantic and morally petty, we have had to waste an immense intellectual and physical force, apply a Machiavellian genius to degrade liberal and patriotic ideas, to debase parties, opinions and peoples, unite the glory of a brilliant administration to the foolishness, taxes and vexations necessary to a despotic scheme, remain suspicious of independence and industry, hostile to light, opposed to the natural advance of the century. . . . Napoleon's existence has had to be founded on nothing but the maintenance of success.' And such success would not always be maintained. He was one of the first to notice the economic danger of the Continental system, provoked though it might be by Britain. 'Where the people at large and even the members of the government,' he wrote to Jefferson in 1809, 'would like to improve the circumstances into a vindication of neutral rights and form a more intimate intercourse with America, the mistaken, unaccountable and fixed policy of the Emperor has an effect quite the reverse of what common justice, national interest and his own hatred of England ought to dictate.' He admitted however that 'our embargo which has been a very trying measure has produced one very happy and permanent effect: it has set us all on domestic manufacture.'

In 1810, when Napoleon was at the height of his power, Jefferson received from his French friend another warning letter: 'The recital of the acts of the imperial power, singular mixture of greatness borrowed from the revolution and counter-revolutionary abasement, will tell you of our triumphs over foreign enemies, the recent aggrandizement of our territory beyond the limits suited to us, as well as the new measures against public liberty.' He had already noticed that Spain was a danger spot: 'In Spain there is no sense of energetic resistance, mutual barbarities, horrid and hitherto unavailing destruction.' By 1812 the note of warning had become more emphatic: 'At this moment immense continental forces under Napoleon are about to attack the Russian Empire, starting from the banks of the Niemen. Will Alexander offer battle?

LAFAYETTE AND NAPOLEON

Will he ask for a conference? In both cases he runs the risk of being defeated or caught: but if he chooses to drag out the war, he may well put his rival in an awkward situation.' After the events he was able to round off his extremely shrewd contemporary impressions: 'If Bonaparte had frankly organized ancient Poland and finally granted independence and liberty to all behind him, he might have justified his wars and repaired his earlier conduct; but never did his idea of glory rise above universal monarchy.'

Three months after Napoleon's first abdication, he summed up his judgment of him in a letter to Jefferson: 'The strong and singular genius of Napoleon had been disharmonized by the folly of his ambition, the immorality of his mind and this grain of madness not incompatible with great Talents, but which is developed by the love and *succès* of despotism. He trifled with and literally lost immense armies, sent abroad all the military stores of France, left the country defenceless and exhausted and avowed a determination to have the last man, the last shilling of Europe.'

Such sound and at the time singular criticisms of Napoleon which history has endorsed should be enough to dissipate that third legend of Lafayette which has too long survived the American and the French legend, the legend that he was no more than a vainglorious swashbuckler. But from the point of view of Lafayette's subsequent career, it was lucky that Napoleon defeated himself, and thereby freed his admonitor from his spiritual imprisonment so that he could play a part in yet another revolution and hold up again the battered but still defiant standard of 1789.

PART FOUR

ACCOMPLISHMENT

(1814 - 1834)

'Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same.'

BROWNING

CHAPTER I

IN AT THE DEATH

(1814 - 1815)

WHEN Napoleon fell and the Bourbons were restored to the throne of France, Lafayette was fifty-seven. When the sixtieth year is in sight most men think of retirement and the placid enjoyment of the evening of life. But Lafayette had had twenty-two years of unwanted retirement: he had had his period of old age; the time for accomplishment, for a renewal of his youth, had to be in the sixties and the seventies. His enemies and rivals had seen to that. He accepted the challenge. As he grew older, his health improved, his spirit freshened, the very wrinkles on his face smoothed out, the old smile re-appeared, a defiant red wig hid his baldness, the only incurable effect of prison life, his very lameness was an asset, at least in America, for who could doubt that it was the effect of the wound at the battle of Brandywine?

The opportunity which Lafayette fifteen years earlier had asked his friends to make for him was now being prepared. A Malet was being shot for an attempt to restore the constitution and refusing to defend himself: 'The defender of the rights of his country has no need to defend himself: he triumphs or he dies.' An Alexis de Noailles (Lafayette's nephew) was scouring Europe to find supporters for the constitutional monarchy. Napoleon's own *Corps Législatif* was brave enough to demand in its formal address a restoration of the free exercise of political rights in return for its whole-hearted support of the threatened Empire. But in the end

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it took the actual invasion of the allies, that unheard-of event, to keep Lafayette in Paris and away from his beloved Lagrange.

All that seemed clear to the political leaders in March, 1814, was that Napoleon could rule no longer. Who would take his place? It was all important that Frenchmen should make up their own minds before the allies made it up for them. But fourteen years of despotism are a bad training for common national action. Moreover everyone still went in fear of the old master. Might not his wizardry conjure up victory in the very hour of defeat? It was safer not to play too open a hand. Safer for everyone except Lafayette, for he alone, having never been under any obligation to the Emperor in return for his services to him, was not in a position of having to dissemble. But equally for that very reason, he had no followers. 'I wanted and even hoped that a national movement should precede foreign intervention,' he wrote in April to Lord Holland. In this endeavour he tried to put himself at the head of the National Guard. He tried as well to persuade one of Napoleon's marshals to force the Emperor's abdication by taking command of the army before it was forced from him by the allies. He went round looking for liberals who would help him to give France a liberal government before another despotism was forced on it. He found that everyone agreed in theory, but asked to be excused from active participation. The truth was that he was out of touch with real politics after all those years, and his mere name had lost its old potency.

And so the precious time was lost. On March 31st, Paris capitulated. The Russians entered to the delight – so some record – of the Parisians, who were both relieved to find that Paris was not to be burnt like another Moscow, and who shrewdly foresaw that these rich Easterners would soon be pouring their gold across the counters of the fashionable Paris shops. Lafayette retired into his lodging and melted into tears.

While he had been vainly trying to revive the smouldering embers of liberalism, the unscrupulous but thoroughly realistic Talleyrand, with a command over every political string, had been preparing his own comfort during the next few years by negotiating with the Bourbons. He knew as well as Lafayette that liberalism was not dead in France. His own political views, in so far as he allowed any theory to bear weight in the solution of practical puzzles, were not so unlike Lafayette's, but he realized

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that liberal matter required a form, a shape. Three forms might be imposed on it: some Napoleonic regency, the Duke of Orléans or the legitimate heir of Louis XVI, the Comte de Provence. The first two suggested endless difficulties, but the Comte de Provence, who for nineteen years had been calling himself Louis XVIII, was supported by England, was himself reputed to be the most liberal of the Bourbons and was the natural candidate of the still powerful royalists. As what Talleyrand wanted generally came to be, or rather as he was able to foresee, on Easter Tuesday, April 12th, the Comte d'Artois, by a strange irony resplendent in the uniform of Lafayette's old National Guard, entered Paris to take charge of the kingdom until his brother had recovered from an attack of gout.

As Lafayette remarked, the popularity of the return of the Bourbons was the measure of the unpopularity of the later Napoleonic despotism. No one greeted them more generously than the man who had ruined his own career by trying – too late – to save the throne of Louis XVI. And the Bourbons, delighted to hear a man speak with the aristocratic twang of the *ancien régime* (can it have been in this case improved by American contacts?) for the moment seemed willing to forget the fact that it was he who had done most to shake it so that it must topple over. But Lafayette's greeting was on certain conditions, the same conditions, as history was to show, as were being subconsciously made by the people of France. 'I had more means of seeing the future than most of the others', he wrote in his Memoirs, 'my associations in youth, my relations with the princes, my contemporaries, my constant dealings with their parties, everything warned me that this restoration would be but a counter-revolution, more or less openly disguised. I should have been too wary to have recalled the Bourbons myself, but, such is the force of first impressions, I saw them again with pleasure, the sight of the Comte d'Artois in the road moved me greatly, I forgave them their wrongs even those against my country and I wished with all my heart that liberty might mix with the reign of the brothers and daughter of Louis XVI.'

Determined to go more than half-way along the road of reconciliation, he, of all men, put on the hated white cockade and went to Court. It was a triumph for the Bourbons; he had not done anything of the kind for Bonaparte; it may have done something

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to turn their heads, for while the mature Lafayette was broad-minded enough to give way on symbols, he was as uncompromising as ever about the symbolized.

Still his judgment about the first restoration was not harsh; the Bourbons had only themselves to blame for having started by arousing the loyalty of a man like Lafayette, and ended by arousing not only his active enmity but the opposition of millions far less intransigent than this leader of French liberalism. 'Yet among inexcusable faults and deplorable weaknesses,' he wrote to Jefferson at this time, 'two evident facts must be acknowledged. There has been a more proper sense and a positive care of public liberty under the Restoration than at the time of Charles II, and there are more symptoms and chances of freedom than could ever have been expected under the masterly despotism and iron hand of Bonaparte. . . . Bonaparte or the Bourbons have been and still are the alternative in a country where the idea of a republican executive has become synonymous with the excesses committed under that name. In the meanwhile, you see the king of Spain, a vile fool, restoring the Inquisition after having expelled the Cortes, the Pope is re-establishing the old system; the king of Sardinia destroying every useful innovation made in Piedmont, and Austria submitting her ancient possessions to the illiberal system of her Cabinet. Yet the advantages derived from the first impulse, the intent of the Revolution notwithstanding all that has happened since are widely extended and deeply rooted. Most of them have resisted the powerful hand of Bonaparte. They are more than a match for the feeble uncertain devices of their adversaries. . . . But I am convinced that those rights of mankind which in 1789 have been the blessing of the end of the last century shall before the end of the present one be the undisputed creed and insured property not only of this but of every European nation.'

He was wise to allow so long a time for their recognition; the immediate future was not encouraging. The Charter by which the Bourbons guaranteed a selection of those rights instead of being imposed by the people on the invited Bourbons was vouchsafed by them to the people 'in the nineteenth year of the reign of Louis XVIII.' The liberty of the Press was refused. The king would not accept the services of the old Imperial Guard. The nobility which had been the first to fly from danger in 1789 and the first to receive

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favours from the Emperor was talking loudly of the restoration of feudal rights, the tithe and the return of their property. On the last point Lafayette's view was far from revolutionary: 'All confiscation is in my opinion unjust. But in agreeing about past spoliations we must come back to the observation of Cicero after the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla, to the general opinion about the expropriations in Ireland, which is that a late reparation would be but a new spoliation.' That was in fact the sensible course which the Bourbons followed despite the wails of their supporters. But with people it was otherwise. Lafayette was not encouraged to come to Court again. Those about the king, if not the king himself, still regarded him as the arch-enemy, and, more particularly wounding to his feelings, the royal Press printed a book under the specific patronage of Louis XVI's daughter which repeated all the old royalist calumnies about his behaviour in 1791 and 1792, calling him in short '*un misérable*'.

While he was arranging to publish a refutation, the startling news that Bonaparte had landed from Elba on the south coast of France put an end to all activity, royalist or otherwise, as suddenly as when the movement of a cinematograph film is arrested. Within twenty days the Emperor was back in Paris with the assurance that the army was for him. Louis was back on his travels. The people were silent and suspicious. At Lady Rumford's house all the intellectuals and politicians were discussing their future. Lafayette was there, serious and determined, a white cockade proclaiming at least his unaltered opposition to the Emperor. Benjamin Constant, who had just written a manifesto against the tyrant, was nervous. The Lameths, not yet on speaking terms with Lafayette, were pessimistic. Madame de Staël was explaining why she was packing her baggage.

Writing in later years, Lafayette attributed Napoleon's immediate success to the thinly disguised illiberal tendencies of the Bourbons ('I have found that the country near Lagrange is delighted by his return which means for it a second abolition of tithes and feudal rights, the *curés* and ancient *privilégiés* having for the most part announced or let appear their immediate hopes'), the divisions in the Congress of Vienna and the fact that the Bourbons had not known how to attach to themselves the military force. With Napoleon's own conduct, Lafayette, who knew the meaning of imprisonment and exile, could sympathize: 'I am far from

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supposing that a man whose existence has been immense, to whom for fifteen years so many lives have been bound, should not have preserved many of those understandings and hopes which have in all times been the consolation of the proscribed of any eminence.' But he had little faith in the Emperor's newly-formed liberal professions. 'Napoleon,' he wrote to the Princess d'Hénin, 'republican in Provence, half-republican at Lyons, absolute emperor in Paris, has discovered that salvation lies only in making himself a constitutionalist. He appears a strange mixture of imperial, terrorist and liberal measures, but public opinion is stronger than he, and since he is prodigiously talented, he submits to all that he cannot dominate with a cleverness of which the others are far from possessing.' In fact, while Louis XVIII who might have been 'a good and simple guardian of the rights of the people' was carried away by a knightly mania and pretensions to a gallantry which did not even suit his fat body in comparative youth, Napoleon began by playing the part of a republican: 'Surrounded by the crowd, he bared his breast, gaily proposing to gain the prize which it was said had been put upon his head.'

Neither skin-deep protestations, nor even the restoration of 'the sign of emancipation and glory', the Tricolour, deceived Lafayette. He left Lagrange to go once more to Paris 'carrying from his retirement nothing but a will to oppose Napoleon.' While the Emperor was making his way through France towards the capital 'bent', in Thiers' phrase, 'under the weight of his past faults', meeting after meeting of liberals were held to decide what to do. These men could talk but they could not act. Only Lafayette seemed to have a definite plan: 'I counselled an immediate calling up of the members of all the national assemblies since 1789 who were in Paris in order to oppose a great moral force to the physical already on Bonaparte's side and which could only be brought back by a shaking of opinion. I added that it would be prudent to set aside the nephews of the king and only make use of the Duke Orléans the one popular prince.' His support of Orléans, the son of his old enemy, Philippe-Egalité, at this juncture is another proof that personalities were entirely forgotten. He was the last person to condemn a man because he was the son of his father—that was an aristocratic principle. It was proposed that Lafayette should be named again commander of the National Guard. But the fear of Bonaparte and the fear of the Bourbons, one or other

of whom was sure to reign again, deprived the liberals of will-power. Napoleon was in Paris before any plan could be settled.

Napoleon now listened to that 'metaphysic of political first causes' at which he had sneered three years earlier. He decreed the liberty of the Press and graciously heard the Council of State informing him that 'Sovereignty resides in the people; it is the only legitimate source of power. In 1789 the nation conquered back its rights for a long time usurped or misunderstood. . . .' and he answered as though adding a second assenting verse according to the rhythm of a Jewish canticle: 'And Sovereignty itself can only be hereditary because the interest of the people demands it.'

Everybody was taken in, even Benjamin Constant, the gay and attractive writer who had taken it upon himself to teach the French how to govern themselves *à l'Anglaise*. But when Constant, after setting to work to draft a new Constitution, wrote to Lafayette to persuade him that the Emperor's conversion was genuine, the man whose life was a by-word for acting on impulse was still thoroughly sceptical. He could not forget that every French ruler with whom he had come into contact had made similar professions and had broken them as soon as he could with safety. Constant, though only ten years his junior, was but a boy when the test was the experience of the broken words of monarchs. In reply Lafayette set forth the confession of his political faith and the conditions of his support which must be quoted at some length to give the reader an idea of the political theory of the mature and experienced revolutionary gentleman.

'It is only possible to be the active head of a free people in a republic if, as president or director, one is submitted to constant criticism and legal responsibility. It is only possible to be a constitutional monarch when inviolable, that is inactive, and nothing but the elector of the responsible ministers who are in consequence the judges of each order they receive from the king. A different situation is doubtless preferable not only for Napoleon but for every man who loves action and glory. . . . Do you believe that either of these positions would long suit a character so impetuous, so enterprising and so impatient of contradiction? No liberty can exist in a country unless there be a representation freely and broadly elected, disposing of the raising and the spending of the public

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funds, making all laws, organizing all military forces, and with power to dissolve those forces, deliberating with open doors, in debates published in newspapers ; unless there be complete liberty of the Press, supported by everything which guarantees individual liberty; unless all offences are removed from exceptional tribunals and submitted even independently of the will of the legislature to the justice of juries suitably formed. The civil crimes of soldiers, too, must be so dealt with and the system of their penal discipline be voted by the assemblies . . . If you have any influence on the work of those who make the constitution do not allow the elective principle for municipalities, justices of the peace, county and municipal councils to be tampered with: remember all your wise thoughts about the election of the Chamber of Deputies; do not leave to the *préfet* the formation of the list of juries. . . . Let the counties and municipalities do all that can be entrusted to them. Do not forget the Mutiny Bill; organize the National Guard; re-read the law of the Constituent Assembly on the right of peace and war. Allow me to ask you how will you form the Chamber of Peers? Even supposing you give preference, despite Hume's opinion, to the principle of hereditary legislators and even in some cases of hereditary judges, will you find in the more notable part of the nation a hereditary element which would be preferable to a Senate elected for life? Let me suggest another heresy against your opinions: it is that some pay, thirty francs for a day's service for example, such as is the custom in the American Congress, is a system preferable to the English which makes all deputies pay their own expenses. I believe it will be easy to secure the liberty and equality of worship; the Government will maintain the nomination of the principal ministers, but it would save itself much trouble and many quarrels if it left the choice and payment of inferior ministers to the municipalities or to assemblies of mere citizens. . . .'

If the reader who may be interested in political theory should care to analyse for himself this important letter he will find that, though written in 1815 when the Parliamentary system was as yet untried on the Continent and was still to go through much further evolution in England, it contains not only the chief but some of the detailed characteristics of modern democratic government as practised in unitary states who have followed the British model. Lafayette, as we have said, was an amateur in such matters. He had not read much; he wrote nothing. He had been only influenced

by the amorphous American colonies of the seventeen-eighties, yet by some kind of political intuition he had discovered and sorted out the principles of Parliamentary democracy as it came in time to be accepted by the majority of the nations of Europe. His influence in the actual dissemination of these principles was almost entirely by the spoken word which historians cannot trace. Whether it was great or small is difficult to say, but at least a letter like this is sufficient to refute the common judgment that he was entirely the victim of abstract words, like 'liberty' and 'justice', of which he was inordinately fond. His part in the democratic movement was chiefly that of priest and prophet; he had to keep the sacred light burning; he had to spend his life exhorting and encouraging. This kind of activity does not lend itself to detailed exposition and discussion. But that is no reason for supposing that he was incapable of it.

Constant's letter prepared Lafayette for a message from Joseph, the Emperor's brother, who had always shown a special friendliness towards him even in the Emperor's council, and who was deeply anxious to obtain the support of the most worthy of the liberals. On April 21st, three weeks after Napoleon's return, the two had a long and important conference. 'After having embraced one another and made such conventional remarks as are suitable after an interval of absence during which he had occupied two thrones, Joseph got to business' – so Lafayette begins his account of the interview. Lafayette did not pretend to trust Bonaparte further than he saw him, but he was now ready to admit, after the way the Bourbons had behaved, that the constitutional government of the Emperor was the lesser of two evils. 'The proposed general meeting in the Champ de Mars to acclaim publicly and popularly the Emperor's right to the throne in virtue of the people's sovereignty was nothing but a piece of jugglery, a plan to usurp by acclamation power which ought to be the result of the deliberation of real deputies'. 'But it is never too late to mend, and the most efficacious means of restoring public confidence, of raising a national spirit, of establishing a material and moral resistance, was to overcome the Emperor's reluctance to convoke immediately a constituent Chamber of Representatives.' Joseph admitted how unwilling the Emperor was to leave Paris for the field of battle in the hands of such an assembly. Something, however, had been done since an 'act additional to the Imperial

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Constitution' constituting two legislative assemblies was to be decreed and Lafayette himself was to be the first member of the peerage. This imperial decree would be submitted to plebiscite. After the plebiscite and presumably when the military campaign was over, the Chambers would be convoked.

This conversation reported to the Emperor had the effect of persuading the latter to have the Chambers convoked *at once*. The peerage Lafayette would not accept. But instead, trusting to his conviction that once the Chambers were in being they would be in a position to control or even to depose the Emperor, he officially broke his long retirement from public life by allowing himself to be elected deputy for Seine-et-Marne.

Thus after twenty-three years, he found himself one of the first members of a legislative body strong enough to depose the Emperor, and a supporter of a Constitution which for all its unpopularity with the liberal extremists was the freest that France had yet enjoyed. The broken threads had been satisfactorily knotted together again.

To his surprise he found himself among friends. The long years of disturbed history, more picturesque to read about than to live, had after all been but the aimless ruffling of the waters. Despite them the tide had been steadily coming in. The ideas which he had defended in season and out of season, for which he had been mocked as an intemperate visionary or an empty-headed idealist, had become the accepted political doctrine of all but a minority of ultra-royalist or Bonapartist deputies. Lanjuinais, one of the frankest and most implacable of the advanced Breton deputies to the States-General, an original member of the *Comité Breton*, the parent of all revolutionary clubs, was elected president of the House and, more remarkable still, he himself, of all people, was the next most popular candidate. He was appointed the first of the four vice-presidents. Even the quarrel with the Lameths was made up. It was they who asked him to shake hands and he answered smiling: 'What men you are, are there no bounds to your generosity.' Thus he appeared to have timed his return to public life with good judgment.

On June 7th the opening of Parliament was celebrated with much pomp. Napoleon, though grown fat and flabby, his face lined and tired, still knew how to wear the imperial robes with a dignity which the gouty Louis, tied to his armchair, could not

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emulate. Lafayette as he watched him in the midst of his Council and the peers of the realm thought he saw him bite his lips with anger. After the ceremony, Lafayette and Napoleon met for an instant. The Emperor stared at the man whom he had never conquered: 'You look younger,' he muttered at last, 'the air of the country has done you good.' 'It has, Sire,' was the only reply. With a sigh the Emperor stepped into his coach and drove – to Waterloo.

A fortnight later, defeated and disgraced, he was back in the capital. Rumour after rumour spread among the legislatures. Fouché, Davout, Carnot, Sieyès, every possible leader had his opinion, and his future to safeguard. The Emperor was going to dissolve the Chamber. He would make a last attempt to rally his compatriots round his despotic person to save France. . . . No, he would abdicate. His son, the King of Rome, would be proclaimed. . . . He would fly to save himself. . . . He would drive the deputies out of Paris at the head of his Guard.

In the midst of the excitement, on the morning of June 21st, Lafayette who had heard from Fouché that Napoleon intended to dissolve the Chambers mounted the rostrum in the House. Amidst an extraordinary silence – it is the word of a witness – in a quiet 'drawing-room' tone of voice he spoke to the Assembly and asked it to vote the following revolutionary resolutions which in the end restored the rule of the Bourbons:

1. The Chamber of Representatives declares that the independence of the nation is threatened.
2. The Chamber declares itself to be in permanent session; any attempt to dissolve it is a crime of high treason. . . .
3. The army has merited well at the hands of the country.
4. The Minister of the Interior is invited to muster and arm the National Guard. . . .
5. The Ministers of War, Foreign Affairs, the Interior, and the Police are invited to come immediately to the Assembly.

The resolutions which amounted to a usurpation of supreme power by the House in defiance of the Imperial Constitution were unanimously adopted. The ministers, accompanied by Lucien, the Emperor's brother, came to give an account of their stewardship. Lucien most tactlessly and unjustifiably accused the nation of lacking endurance. Lafayette rose and said slowly in words that cut like steel: 'Prince, that is a calumny. By what right do you dare to accuse the nation of levity, of want of perseverance in the

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Emperor's interest. The nation has followed him on the fields of Italy, over the burning sands of Egypt, in the immense plains of Germany, across the frozen deserts of Russia. Six hundred thousand Frenchmen lie on the shores of the Ebro and the Tagus. How many have fallen on the banks of the Danube, the Elbe, the Niemen and the Moscova? The nation has followed him in fifty battles, in his defeats as in his victories, and for doing so we have to mourn the blood of three million Frenchmen.' It sounded, as Thiers has said, a judgment of posterity on the Napoleonic rule. Lucien could not reply. Napoleon was boiling with rage: 'I knew I ought to have got rid of these people before I left. It is the end: they will ruin France.'

The scene changed. A council of thirty, the officers of state, the ministers and Presidents of the Chamber met in the Tuileries. They began by talking of defence and finance and the National Guard, but everyone was waiting for the first person to have the courage to broach the subject which they knew was their real business. It had of course to be Lafayette. He rose and demanded 'that we all go to the Emperor to inform him that after all that has happened his *abdication* has become necessary to the safety of the nation.' Still the Council was too nervous, but he knew that his speech had but put into words the thought in everybody's mind. Next morning the Chamber was angry at hearing that the Council had not adopted Lafayette's proposal, and one deputy after another rose to demand the abdication. The news came that the Emperor was obdurate. Lafayette whispered to a councillor that he might go and tell the Emperor that if he would not abdicate he would rise to propose his dethronement. An hour later the message came. Lafayette later described to Lady Morgan¹ how the Emperor appeared on this fatal day: 'We found him upon this occasion, as upon many others, acting out of the ordinary rules of calculation: neither affecting the pathetic dignity of fallen greatness, nor evincing the uncontrollable dejection of disappointed ambition, of hopes crushed never to revive and of splendour quenched never to be rekindled. We found him calm and serene – he received us with a faint but gracious smile – he spoke with firmness and precision.'

The abdication was, doubtless, inevitable, but Napoleon never forgave Lafayette for the leading part he had played. During his

¹ See Notes.

last years on St. Helena he could not think of him without bitter hatred which found expression in words of childish spite: 'He was a man without talents, civil or military: narrow mind, hypocritical character, dominated by vague ideas of liberty, undigested and ill-thought out. Still, in private life Lafayette was an honest man. His good nature ever made him dupe of men and things. His arousing of the Chamber after Waterloo lost us everything.'

As usual, Lafayette received no reward for his services. Napoleon's abdication instead of being the preliminary step to the real work of forming a strong, national interregnum able, as he had hoped, to impose its moral force on the victorious allies, let loose all the old intrigues and pettinesses. The Bourbons, Orléans, a Regency, which would it be? A provisional government was formed, but its members were elected by the machinations of party. The Bonapartists would not support Lafayette; the Orleanists thought him too conscientious to give himself whole-heartedly to their cause; many who were hoping for honours remembered that he was opposed to a hereditary peerage. Above all, Fouché, a master of intrigue, was determined to keep this living conscience out. He could only count on 140 votes, 60 too few to ensure election. This curious assembly which had been so earnest in its desire for a liberal constitution, which, in fact, was to continue its debates on the subject until the very day of Louis' return, became the dupe of Fouché, and elected him President of the provisional government. Fouché, the regicide, Napoleon's notorious minister of police, the man whom Lafayette bracketed with Talleyrand as the two who had principally contributed to 'the diabolic work of despotism. The one as familiar with the *ancien régime* as with the new, making up by the subtlety of his tact for the lack of productive genius . . . the other knowing only how to act, but a past master in the intrigues of police, in the activity of clubs, in *coup d'états* of every description. Fouché, proud of his agility in jumping out of a sinking ship and scrambling on to one that is still afloat. . . .' This is precisely what Fouché had been doing since Napoleon's abdication. He got into touch with Louis wandering about in Flanders. Since he was a regicide it was an awkward business, but he succeeded, and while Lafayette was pushed out of the way by appointing him to the hopeless mission of negotiating with the allied armies, the small matter of restoring Louis to his throne was satisfactorily arranged.

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The Assembly which on July 5th had issued a constitutional manifesto, more closely expressing the aspirations of 1789 than any since that date, found itself shut out of its meeting place on the 8th. 'Is this by order of the Prince Regent of England?' asked Lafayette sarcastically, and invited the deputies to meet in the house in which he was staying. But the consciousness of public support which had taken the States-General on a similar occasion to the Tennis Court no longer existed. France was too tired for such a show of energy. Moreover the allies were dictating their terms to a defeated country. The *Moniteur*, the official newspaper, printed the sentence: 'The Chambers are dissolved, the king will enter Paris at three o'clock in the afternoon.' He did so, the willing but helpless creature of the victorious armies of Europe.

To all appearances Lafayette had failed again. He admitted in a letter to Lord Holland that he had perhaps put too much trust in his compatriots, who were always too ready to believe in the good faith of politicians, in the patriotism of ambitious men, and in guarantees based on interest and not on morality. Nevertheless beneath it all there could be no doubt that the people of France were beginning once again to attach more weight to things than to people. 'It knows its rights and feels its needs,' he wrote. Time would tell. Did not Charles Fox when he was staying at Lagrange say: 'If only our two countries can manage to have at the same time a liberal administration, the cause of the human race is gained.' Twenty-five years before he had thought that a little goodwill and a great deal of courage could clear away the debris of centuries of oppression which hid from his fellow men the shining light of reason. He realized now that task was beyond the power of any one generation, but that was no reason for desisting. Already he thought that some glimmers were plainly shining through. He lived in an age when it did not occur to men that when all was cleared away they might find that the light of reason did not shine as brightly as they hoped.

CHAPTER II

CLEARING AWAY THE DEBRIS

(1815 - 1824)

LAFAYETTE, looking as Napoleon had said to him, much younger, went back to his farm conscious that, if he lived long enough, he would be called from the plough again to encourage his compatriots to take the next step forward. He was not dissatisfied with what he had accomplished during the last few weeks. It might have been but a grand gesture, but it was worth making. He had had time to proclaim again, as though no interval had occurred, the doctrine of 1789, and he had found more willing listeners than he had expected. He had upheld the interest of his country against enemies who had found too many sympathizers within France itself. He had played an important part in the overthrow of the despot whom he admired personally so much more than the Bourbons, but whose political rule he detested as short-sighted, immoral and sinning against the light of social reason. Liberalism as a doctrine had been restored to France. Even the *Ultras*, though hating liberalism like sin, had to make a show of it. 'I rather like to see the *Ultras* making a refuge for the ministers by putting forward the liberal principles which we have been preaching to them in vain for the last thirty years,' he wrote sarcastically in 1816 to Lady Morgan.

His private life too was happier. The old generation had passed away. Adrienne had been restored to him as an object of religious veneration. New friends who looked upon him as the patriarch of their political faith came to visit him, as Lady Morgan wrote 'with the same pleasure as the pilgrim begins his first unwearied steps to the shrine of sainted excellence.' He himself had founded a race of liberal patriots by blood, for – to quote again from Lady Morgan's diary – 'when the sound of the well-remembered tocsin summoned us to the evening repast . . . the whole family of three generations were assembled in the fine old *salle à manger*, the stone hall with its groined roof . . . By-the-by, the company at La Grange was seldom less than from twenty to thirty guests, the

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venerable chief occupying the centre of the table between his two youngest grandchildren. Gaiety and contentment were upon every countenance; all gold and silver vessels were banished from the table, and the refreshments, without being *recherchés*, were varied and *appétisants*. The charming education of the dear children, and perhaps also their fine original natures, prevented their being importunate or troublesome, and not one *enfant terrible* was to be found among these noble descendants of the two great races, Noailles and La Fayette.' His family physician, Dr. Cloquet, has also told us about the ways of life at Lagrange: 'High-living, frivolity, flashing pleasures, were banished from Lagrange . . . All manner of distraction was at the guest's disposal and you could without fear give yourself over to your tastes in study, drawing and conversation; you could draw on Lafayette for all the information you might need for your studies. Should you, maybe, desire some more active distraction? Why, the most charming walks were all about you, you might row on the lake and visit its little islands, you might fish or shoot, you might even disport like children on the grass or on the haystacks without any fear of compromising your decorum; often young and old gave themselves over to these amusements of tender years.' But beware of overstepping the limits of Fayettist decorum – Dr. Cloquet reminds us that 'one young man having become a trifle too emancipated, Lafayette did not say anything to him; but though he treated him with extreme politeness, he made him feel that his conduct was not approved, and the young hothead left the castle that very night.'

In the evening, 'after the departure of the children who kissed all the grand parents and made the most graceful little salutes to the stranger guests,' everybody 'fell to discourse,' or rather listened to the views of the patriarch. No doubt it was on such occasions that Lafayette had a chance of expressing those social views and relating those experiences which are scattered up and down his Memoirs. We can imagine his conversation.

He would, for example, tell them of his one meeting with the victor of Waterloo, how the hook-nosed Tory said to him that he approved of the imprisonment of the Spanish Parliament: 'I never liked him after that, but I expect the dislike was mutual.' Then of his impressions about the Emperor Alexander with his noble and sincere manner, a monarch after his own heart.

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Broad-minded, high-principled, intelligent! – ‘if only the Bourbons had listened to his advice! I told him that misfortune *must* have mended their ways – ‘Mended their ways?’ Alexander answered, ‘They are uncorrected and incorrigible. Only one, the Duke of Orléans, has liberal views; as for the others, they are hopeless. It was not my fault that we brought them back: they seemed to spring on us from every side. I tried to make the king give up his pretended nineteen years of reigning and other absurdities of the kind. What could I do when the deputies and the king were in agreement?’ But even Alexander, Lafayette would go on to tell them, with all his modern ways was behind the times. How could his humanity endure the arbitrariness and atrocity of torture?’

Such a subject would lead him to speak of another of his cherished ideas, the reform of the penal code and of prisons. ‘The majority of houses we call houses of correction are really places of deterioration far more likely to push criminals into the career of vice and crime than to draw them out of it. The amount of crime is truly deplorable, but it will last until we know how to make use of means of amending criminals instead of fastening them by chains like savage beasts in a menagerie or killing them like mad dogs.’ Then to his views on capital punishment. ‘No society has the right to take what it cannot give back, and this is especially obvious in the case of political and religious opinion, for these subjects touch what is dearest, most sacred and inviolable in man.’ Could his guests have seen a hundred years into the future, they would have noticed that their host’s queer, advanced, heretical opinions were exactly what three-quarters of the Western world were taking for granted.

Another evening he would talk of slavery, that survival of barbaric times, which he had done so much to eradicate. Those who said that he had learnt everything, parrot-wise, from America, had, among other things, to account for his advance on much American opinion in this matter. ‘The only good thing the Congress of Vienna ever did was to abolish the slave trade. We who worked for it forty years earlier were considered visionaries; in another forty years people will not understand how such an infamous trade can have ever been tolerated.’ He had no patience with the other performances of the Congress of Vienna which tried to parcel out Europe according to the vaunted

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principle of legitimacy. 'Legitimacy? Cabalistic word! Legitimacy is nothing but a partitioning of souls whereby every crowned head gathers what he can, or what he wants, around him without any regard for what the people may aspire to be. It is only a question of finding out how many square miles, how many taxable subjects, how many conscripts shall be given to each *legitimate* master. Legitimacy makes Saxon souls Prussian, Venetians Austrian, Poles Russian, Rhinelanders Prussian.'

From legitimacy to its sister, aristocracy. There were many kinds of aristocracy, the aristocracy of strength, wealth, intelligence, bourgeois aristocracy, religious, military, academic aristocracy and not least the aristocracy of the white race. 'They are not all to be condemned, but all have dangers, and in proportion to the necessary advantages they give to a select few, they demand a moral insight and wisdom able to make these few servants of mankind's general good instead of masters. But artificial titles of nobility are more likely to do nothing but fix the vanity, cruelty and oppression of the descendants of possibly illustrious ancestors. The pride of the ancient feudal nobility generally so hardened the hearts of its members, persuading them that other men belonged to an inferior race, that they could without scruple of conscience treat their dogs and horses better than their servants.'

There were few subjects of what we call social interest about which he did not have a definite view: gambling, lotteries, private property, the suffrage, commerce, industry, agriculture, free trade, the progress of civilization. About them all he was in advance of even his fellow liberals. He held for example that the payment of any tax, however small, was enough to qualify a man to be an elector, and this at a time when so advanced a man as Benjamin Constant was writing: 'Those whom poverty keeps in perpetual dependence and condemns to irregular work are not more enlightened about public affairs than children, nor more interested in national prosperity than foreigners.'

He practised in his private relations what he taught the public. His charity to the poor was remarkable. In the year 1817 a year of intense agricultural depression, he used to feed seven hundred peasants a day, and when money and grain were running short, he moved to Chavaniac in order to leave what remained to his tenants. To the latter his kindness was proverbial, and, on one occasion, instead of bringing to justice a peasant who had

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injured himself while stealing wood from his estate, he had the man sent to Paris to be cured at his expense.

He had of course the defects that go with a mind intensely interested in the world which he could touch and see. He had read some history, but such references to it as are met with in his writings are always trite and obvious. Even the literature of the Enlightenment can only have been cursorily looked over, and that for the most part while he was in prison. Montesquieu, de Lolme and Hume appear to have been the political theorists with whom he was best acquainted. There is no evidence of an appreciation of literature as an art, of real interest in painting or sculpture, not even in the beauty of nature about which his generation was so enthusiastic. It is even recorded by Cloquet that he had no love for flowers. His grounds were laid out with the sole idea of producing an efficient farm and pleasing his 'agricultural vanity'. He was in this matter far ahead of his French rivals. His great flock of merino sheep, one of the first introduced into France, was the admiration of the county. The famous Coke of Norfolk sent him some Devon cattle. Pigs from Baltimore and China were further evidence of his sparing no pains to be the owner of the finest stock in France.

But the zest with which he threw himself into agricultural and domestic life after the fall of Napoleon was not of the kind which restricts itself to such homely pursuits. On the contrary he was preparing to return to public life with the energy of renewed youth and, it must be confessed, a recklessness which can only be excused on the grounds of the few years which he could expect to live.

His political activity under the Restoration is that of a man who may still be able to keep his temper outwardly, but who has really lost all patience with the rulers of the day. He had kept quiet for three years, partly to give the restored Bourbons a chance and partly because the position for a democrat was awkward. During that time the government was the victim of the royalist cry for vengeance on the revolutionaries and bonapartists. And they had the people behind them. The 'White Terror' has been grossly exaggerated, and stupidly misnamed, but even though less than a dozen executions avenged the return of Napoleon and the victims of Waterloo, for months half the country felt itself to be in danger of the other half. Special tribunals, imprisonments,

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spying, petty ill-treatment, brigandage kept nerves on edge and tempers hot. Until the inevitable reaction set in, Lafayette and the other liberals avoided the awkward problem of taking sides in a struggle in which the king and the government were the moderates, and the royalists and the majority of the people the victims of irrational and primitive passion.

He did not have long to wait. Not only in France, but all over Europe, the seeds planted in 1789, and so relentlessly trampled on for thirty years by the extremists of either side were breaking through the unfriendly soil. It was the testing time. The old world, governments, Churches, Tories, the privileged by birth of every description were dimly aware that their last chance of destroying these new shoots was at hand. To their credit, it must be said that they sincerely believed them to be noxious weeds. Whether right or wrong, they failed in their main endeavour, but they did succeed in preventing the natural growth of a bold and constructive liberalism aware of the real social and economic needs of the emancipated classes. To the cause of protecting the growth even though to a distorted life of this nascent liberalism Lafayette was to devote the last years of his life.

From now onwards his political career was closely associated with that of Constant. The latter's biographer writes: 'From the time of the hundred days, Constant may be said to have hitched his political waggon to Lafayette's star, taking him for his pattern and guide. They usually represented the same constituencies and made their political tours together; Constant was ever ready to come to the General's defence in the Chamber, and it was Lafayette who was selected to deliver the funeral oration over his bier.'

But Lafayette was not only to be a 'respectable' liberal leader in Parliament, he was also to be the chief of the little band of republicans whose opposition to the Bourbons was far more thorough-going and radical. The actual electorate numbered only 90,000 out of a population of twenty-nine millions, and while over the whole of the West of France the nobility, the clergy and the landowners controlled the opinions of the people, there were districts in the East and South in which an industrial bourgeoisie and the working classes were earnest in their demands for serious reform. An extra-Parliamentary and largely secret organization was preparing itself for an attack on the government by direct

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action. The leaders of this movement were for the most part older men who had been through the revolution and the educated youth of the upper middle classes for whom the revolution was already a glorious chapter of French history. The link between them was the name of Lafayette.

At first Lafayette was content to take his place among the liberals in the Chamber of Deputies. After an electoral reform which because it gave the vote to one Frenchman in three hundred terrified the *Ultras*, he was elected for the Département of Sarthe. The Government and the local authorities had done everything they could to prevent so unpopular a return, thereby, as Lafayette pointed out, making the affair all the more flattering to him and humiliating for them. By December, 1818, he appeared in the House, dressed in the stiff blue uniform with a high silver collar covered with fleurs-de-lis, the official uniform of a French legislator. When the session opened, hundreds applied for tickets of admission, and most of them had come to see the return of the Hero of Two Worlds whose election had created a stir even in foreign countries. Castlereagh was there in the Ambassadors' gallery. How he must have despised this fanatical, visionary Frenchman! Lady Morgan describes what she saw: 'The hero of the day was Lafayette: I never saw such a sensation as he excited when he arose to take his oath to the king; almost everyone arose too, and murmurs ran round the whole audience. His calm emphatic manner of saying '*je jure*,' was quite affecting. I never saw him so grand, so noble. He stood silent and conspicuous by his superior height, while the peers (all creatures formed of Bonapartists) were throwing up their hats and white feathers, and screaming with the royalist ladies, *vive le roi!* Who there had not ejaculated there *je jure* to all governments under heaven, and yielded to all in turn save Lafayette? I observed that before he pronounced the word he stretched out his hand in a very emphatic manner.'

He had not changed. The first time he rose to speak was against a proposal to amend the new electoral reforms. 'It is indeed strange that this law, restricted as it has been by the terms of the charter, should appear to some people to be too democratic, when in the United States, for example, direct election by every tax payer has existed with success and without troubles . . . Has not our zeal for bettering things plenty to

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occupy itself with? A bill about the liberty of the press has been brought up. The discussion of the budget, the duty of appropriating every penny for its determined purpose, will give us only too many opportunities for showing that the splendour of a State does not consist in the luxury of its abuses, but in the severe economy of its administration and the free development of its industry . . . ' Mr. Gladstone forty years later could not have put it more clearly, nor in a better rounded period.

The routine of Parliamentary work went on, Lafayette with his little liberal group, the doctrinaire Constant, the fiery Manuel, the learned noble, Voyer d'Argenson, the banker Laffitte, General Foy, taking their chances of pointing out abuses, defending the proscribed, angering the *Ultras*, unsettling the Ministry trying hard to maintain a moderate rule in the teeth of the royalists until, on Carnival Sunday, 1820, the whole of France was shocked by the assassination of the Duke of Berry, the king's nephew and second heir to the throne. It was the act of a fanatic, but it gave the Right the opportunity they needed. The attempt to liberalize the government had failed. The *Ultras* were being returned at the elections; the king, now an invalid and tiring of the unequal struggle, seemed to come more under the influence of his brother, the Comte d'Artois, 'the king of the aristocracy,' the spirit of 1815 was rekindled, the old oppressive legislation was re-enacted.

It was now that Lafayette in scarcely veiled terms declared open war on legal authority itself. One of the first proposals was, of course, to tighten up the 'revolutionary' electoral law. Lafayette jumped up, and for more than an hour let the House have a piece of his mind to the cheers of the Left and the boos of the Right. Dangerous language, dangerous because of his reputation, came to his lips: 'We are tired of revolutions, satiated with glories, but we shall not allow ourselves to be deprived of our dearly bought rights and interests. Our youth demands liberty with a reasoned and therefore all the more irresistible ardour. Do not force them by threatening to deprive them of all the useful results of the Revolution to seize for themselves the sacred sheaf of the principles of eternal truth and sovereign justice . . . ' Surely this was plain incitement to the 'sacred duty of insurrection'? While the plaudits of the Left were continuing, he was being answered, and effectively answered: 'The honourable member recalls the Revolution. Are those times not associated in his mind with sad experiences and

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useful remembrances? Many a time must he have felt death in his soul and the blush rising to his countenance as he realized that after having incited the people, not only was it impossible always to stop them from running to crime, but it was necessary often to follow them and sometimes even to lead them.' Lafayette bit his lips, and in deference, so he said, to the fact that the speaker was a dying man, he did not answer.

If there was any lesson to be learned from this incident, he did not learn it. The attack on the Right was to be of a more direct nature.

According to Odilon Barrot, a young lawyer-politician whose temperament and career were to be those of a *petit* Lafayette, 'a fever of conspiracy seemed to take hold of the most virile part of the French nation.' The republicans were importing the habits and methods of the Italian Carbonari. The Statutes of that secret revolutionary society had been imported from Naples. Within a short space of time France was covered with *ventes* as the local centres of the society were called. Whether Lafayette took it at all seriously, whether he really thought it to be a possible means of restoring the principles of 1789, or whether it was just naughtiness, another attempt to embarrass the government, we have no means of knowing. The fact remains that he was clearly implicated in the various plots against the legal authorities, which were a feature of the years 1820-1822. At any rate he made one stipulation before consenting to being the figure-head of these conspiracies; it was that all secret societies should agree that their object should not be to set up any special kind of government, republican or otherwise, but convoke a National Assembly on the lines of the Assembly of 1791 which 'emanating from the bosom of the people should make known the national will.' It was an extreme instance of the political principle to which he had been faithful all his life: give the people free rein, then trust and teach them to control themselves. Given the rationalistic premises of the Enlightenment, it was a perfectly reasonable deduction.

The first conspiracy, sometimes called the conspiracy of the Bazar Français had for its object the setting up of a provisional government under Lafayette himself. It was a childish affair, hardly more than a students' rag. It is unlikely that Lafayette did more than give it a distant paternal benediction. The police got wind of the plan, and the students rapidly dispersed. The

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authorities affirmed that Lafayette, as head of the *comité républicain* had encouraged the students, but they did not dare follow up their accusations.

In 1821, letters written by Constant and himself supposedly inciting to insurrection were read aloud at an important trial. But Lafayette had the excellent defence that they contained sentiments no more seditious than the ones with which he was constantly entertaining the House. Later in the year, a much more serious affair was discovered by the police. The Carbonari had organized a first-class conspiracy by which, on the morning of the first of January, 1822, a provisional government was to be proclaimed in various towns all over the country. The garrisons of the towns had been tampered with, and the conspirators were really aiming at resolution. The town of Belfort in the East and Saumur in the West were to be the headquarters, and to Belfort Lafayette, as one of the three members of the projected government, travelled between Christmas and the New Year. When nearing the end of the journey he was stopped and warned that all had been discovered. He retreated so rapidly that he left a carriage behind him. This was taken to Belfort, and had it not been for the presence of mind of some of his friends who secreted it away it would have provided first-class evidence of his complicity. It was a narrow shave for him and for the authorities, for, had they proved his complicity, the action against him which they would have had to take must have infuriated a far larger portion of the population than mere electoral returns would indicate. But others of less eminence were not so fortunate. Despite his efforts on their behalf, eight were guillotined, and even Constant was condemned to prison.

Lafayette's Memoirs do not extend to this period and such letters as we possess make no mention of conspiratorial activity. It is therefore difficult to judge of his intentions, but a biographer who has come to like and admire his subject must exercise ingenuity if he wishes to justify his conduct during this period. All conspiracies that fail tend to provoke derision, and Lafayette himself once admitted that 'from the Boston riots until the last attempt at Grenoble I have always heard a revolutionary affair called anarchic or patriotic according to the degree of its success.' But it is not success so much as reasonable chance of success due on the one hand to a sufficiently widely distributed consciousness

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of provocation and on the other to the command of serious and adequate means to effect the immediate end which may justify revolutionary action. In these plots neither condition obtained, and Lafayette in his more reasonable moments would not have considered that the necessary sacrifice of life could be justified by the probable chance of success. But when the worst that can be said about his irresponsibility and impatience during these years has been said, it may be added that they refute the accusation of Napoleon that he was always afraid of putting into action what was in his mind. His more 'respectable' friends and his relations deplored his behaviour, but they could do little with him for, *en famille* 'he is always perfect and full of the best advice,' as his sister-in-law said.

More to the point and far more dignified, despite their extremism, were his speeches in the House. His budget speech of 1821 was the greatest speech of his life, and probably as fine a defence of liberal democracy as had ever been made on the Continent. He spared no one. The size of the national debt was due to coming to terms with, instead of defying the allies – a procedure which the people of France would prevent another time by springing to arms themselves. The royal civil list was a disgraceful extravagance compared with the salary of the American president, or even with the British civil list. Owing to the temporary apostasy of the revolution, Europe had now to maintain two whole sets of dynasties, nobilities and privileges. The enormous police expenses were due to a confusion between the spirit of sedition and the vigorous manifestation of public spirit. The police were a 'great and perpetual administrative lie, whether royal or imperial, I do not care . . . No doubt that insolent and vile organization which, under the name of police, has done more than all other causes put together to poison public morals, encourage domestic betrayals and private crimes, to excite conspiracies and disorders, will in time be dragged out of the mud.' Then a plea for free public education, for higher payments in the services, attacks on the corporations of the clergy, on monastic orders devoted to foreign powers, and finally a long peroration eloquently describing all the changes which had been effected in the teeth of the reactionaries since the Revolution.

The speech was all the more effective because the only calm man in the House was himself. While the howls of the Rights and

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the bravos of the Left punctuated every remark, he stood at the rostrum pale and erect, occasionally taking a pinch of snuff, as though he were the last person the row was about.

But he was not always able to keep control of his temper. On one occasion his son had to prevent the old gentleman, furious at being called a traitor, from jumping over the barrier and following up his repeated shouts of 'liar!' 'coward!' with a hand to hand encounter. In his last years nothing pleased him better than to call to mind the grand gesture which ended his present legislative labours. Manuel had been expelled from the House for a seditious speech. The next day he arrived and took his place as usual. Amidst intense excitement, a section of the National Guard marched into the Chamber with orders to take him out by force. Lafayette could not believe his eyes. His own child, the National Guard, undertaking such dirty work! He sprang from his seat and ordered the officer to march out his men. The officer hesitated, but the men obeyed their historic leader. In the end Manuel had to be removed by the police. As he was taken out, sixty deputies of the Left rose, and, led by Lafayette, followed him. 'The scene was worthy,' he wrote, 'of the early days of the Revolution.'

Lafayette never returned to a Parliament of Louis XVIII, for the years of liberal guerilla warfare had to all appearances only served to strengthen the position of the *Ultras*. The authorities had taken the measure of their unorganized, conspiring opponents. The electoral law had been amended by a system of plural voting, intimidation and sharp practices had made assurance doubly sure, and the liberals lost their seats. Soon the old king himself who had always attempted to restrain the worst excesses of his keenest supporters, accomplished the unique feat of dying as king in his own kingdom of France, and Charles X began his short and unenlightened reign.

Lafayette deserved a holiday from the short-lived and dangerous triumphs, the sneers and calumnies which were the lot of a Liberal leader under the Restoration, and decided to enjoy the homage long overdue of the nation which still regarded him with undisturbed faith as the hero of Two Worlds, the Saviour of the Country.

'THE SAVIOUR OF THE COUNTRY' II

(1824-1825)

WHETHER Lafayette believed in a reward for the just after death is uncertain; it is however certain that the question did not greatly trouble him, the more so as almost alone among men he received on this earth a reward far better suited to his tastes than any of the imaginative pictures by which mankind has so far represented to itself the state of heavenly bliss. From August, 1824, to September, 1825, he was in his heaven. To travel more than five thousand miles in triumph, to be cheered day in and day out by every living soul within sight, to hear speech after speech read by every notability in the land, to listen to poem after poem recited by the best child in every school – in a word, to receive for four hundred days to the fullest extent conceivable the spontaneous homage of a nation of ten million free citizens must have been an experience approaching as near the infinite and unlimited as anything which he could conceive. Modern methods of publicity at the service of Atlantic flyers have in our day organized greater triumphs, but in his time and for long after it Lafayette's journey must have been unique.

Though nearing seventy, Lafayette thrived on it. He never felt the immense physical fatigue of endless journeying in coaches over half-made roads, of ceaseless smiling and bowing, of constantly hearing the same sentiments expressed and of constantly answering in the same suitable phrases. It was noticed that as time went on he grew stronger and more able to enter into the full spirit of those for whom it was but one day's *festa*, so that he returned to France a younger man in everything but age than when he left. It was otherwise with his little French secretary to whose labours we owe not only a detailed account of the progress, but also a fascinating picture of the America of the early nineteenth century. At times he would wake up so exhausted that he was physically sick, and friends thought that he must have

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caught one of the many local fevers. But after a drink and another hour's rest, he braced himself up to following his illustrious master on the next stage.

For a long time Lafayette had been planning this visit to his spiritual home, but he always feared that his departure from France might be interpreted as a confession of failure. When at last it was rumoured that he really might come, President Monroe was able to inform him that the Eighteenth Congress – the same Congress which has immortalized itself by its approval of the Monroe doctrine – had resolved to put a man-of-war at his disposal for the journey. This honour Lafayette refused, but embarked from Havre with his son and secretary on the *Cadmus*, commanded by an officer whose father had served under Lafayette. He was to be the first of many such, for in the United States every other man seemed to claim the Marquis' – he was such again – special attention on the ground of having served or knowing someone who had served under him in the War of Independence.

As they left the shores of France, they could still hear the angry shouts of the police specially instructed to prevent the populace from cheering the liberal leader. 'How mean, how contemptibly mean were the vexations thrown in the way of the old veteran when he embarked' was the verdict of Mr. Foster, the first American who wrote about these events, with the following purpose: 'That posterity may teach their children to lisp the name of Lafayette with affection and reverence; that gratitude may glow in their bosoms when are rehearsed to them the noble deeds of that friend of our country, to liberty, to the RIGHTS OF MAN! – for the name of Lafayette must ever be associated with all that is great and good and glorious in the human character.'

A month later, on the evening of August 14th, the western sun setting behind what was then in truth 'little, old' New York, greeted the travellers as sincerely, if not as effectively, as it has greeted millions since by transforming for their enjoyment the hard, cold lines of the palaces of steel into a 'city bright and glorified whose gates a pearly lustre pour.'

He arrived at a period of the United States history when the sorrows, quarrels, meannesses that must accompany even the consolidation of thirteen free States into one Republic were being forgotten. The Loyalists, driven from their homes and property,

had by now become part of the buried past with its buried injustices. The Federalists, who in making the Republic had had to stand up to the calumnies and reproaches of men of narrow and small vision, had passed on their great work to their old opponents, and the latter knowing how to reconcile their democratic and individualistic sentiments with the glory of the accomplished Republic had begun the great expansion into the west. By 1824, not only the old thirteen States but as many new ones were offering their immense riches to the pioneers of the new world. Steamboats were about to open up the water communications, canals were to improve on nature's plans. It was the 'era of good feeling.' To Lafayette fresh from the hard lights and shadows of a realistic world shaped by the fight for the survival of what had been, this soft wash of universal good-will covering any harsh lines which time would bring out was a delightful contrast.

Since his ship arrived on a Saturday evening, and since the observance of Sunday was even more important than Lafayette, he was asked to wait until Monday for his formal reception. Every gun in New York boomed, every band played, every man, woman and child was cheering as he set his foot again on American soil after forty years of absence. From that instant until his departure, guns, bands and people never ceased to boom, play and cheer. Before he had left the tender which took him ashore he had already begun to meet the veterans who claimed to have fought by his side. He was, it must be remembered, being greeted not only as the friend of liberty, but as the last surviving general of the War of Independence.

Some idea of the scope of his triumphal progress may be obtained from a brief description of the route along which he travelled during his stay. From New York he went by way of New Haven and Providence to Boston. From Boston back to New York by the roundabout route of Concord and Hartford. Then from New York to Albany and back again. Then to Philadelphia, Washington and Richmond, and back to Washington. So much for 1824, a distance of at least 1500 miles. It was but a trifle compared with the schedule for 1825. He set out in February through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama to Mobile on the gulf of Mexico. Across the water to New Orleans. A thousand miles up the Mississippi to St. Louis. Down again to the Ohio River. Along the Ohio and Cumberland rivers to Nashville,

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Tennessee. Back to the Ohio and up it to Cincinnati. Thence into Western Virginia and Pennsylvania to Lake Erie and Buffalo. And finally across New York State into Massachusetts to be in Boston by June. A journey of nearly 5000 miles in four and a half months, or an average of nearly forty miles a day by coach and primitive river steamer! Surely it may be claimed for Lafayette that not only did he anticipate modern political theory, but also the modern conquest of space, and in these anticipations it was his own will and determination which compensated for the absence of the mechanical invention and technique which have so greatly aided us in both.

During the first series of 'trips', he covered again the ground with which the events of the war had made him familiar. Instead of being welcomed by the fire of the red-coats, he found awaiting him 'two hundred misses, arrayed in white. Protected by a file of soldiers on each side and holding up in their hands bunches of flowers which they strewed in his path.' Instead of the half-naked, deserting troops, he was surrounded by hundreds of children with sashes on which were inscribed the words: '*Nous vous aimons Lafayette.*' Instead of the sound of guns, he was hearing high-pitched voices singing:

'We bow not the neck
And we bend not the knee,
But our hearts, Lafayette,
We surrender to thee.'

Instead of the squabbles and jealousies of the political authorities, he was now only aware of their unanimous resolutions to pay him the nation's and the cities' honours. Instead of firing a musket at the British, he edified Boston by aiming at a target and hitting it just above the bull's eye. Instead of inspecting his brave and vigorous corps of light infantry with the gay plumes brought from France, he met the decrepit and lamed survivors so that the tears came to his eyes and he sighed: 'O my brave light infantry! O my gallant soldiers!' Many things which in those hectic days he had not had time to enjoy, he now saw magnified and enriched. He was particularly impressed with Harvard University. 'It is with pleasure,' he told the faculty, that I find myself again at the University which I visited for the first time more than forty years ago. The great improvements which have been made during the

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interval are striking evidences of the tendency of liberal institutions to promote the progress of civilization and learning.’ A Latin quotation ended his speech, but this, we are told, the Harvard faculty did not catch!

As he moved from place to place, the people were amazed by his tirelessness and his immense appetite. Six perch, a duck and a plate of porridge was, we must suppose, a typical breakfast. To kind inquirers sympathizing with the fatigue which he must be feeling, he would reply: ‘I am enjoying it all too much to feel at all tired.’ And the enjoyment was not all complacent vanity. He was enjoying what he saw of America, of her good spirit, of her generous hospitality, of the masses of free and contented citizens, living their own life, earning their daily bread unrestricted by petty and antiquated ordinances, unhampered by the inheritance of political and economic problems arising at least in part from the claims and counter-claims of corporations, classes, peoples, claims founded not on common sense or reason but out of the very friction which unjust solutions in the past had set up. To him there was something Divine in the very appearance of those who greeted him. ‘There was no order of people,’ writes the chronicler, ‘no privileged communities. Mechanics in their shirt-sleeves, labourers, generals, judges, clergymen and all classes pressed forward to take him by the hand. The hardy sons of toil left their ploughs in the half-furrowed field, and cast aside their instruments of husbandry in order to acclaim him.’ This was the justification, the triumph of Fayettism, this was why he had been so stubborn, so certain of himself, so apparently conceited. He could not foresee the day when, overburdened by the weight of the wealth acquired in these ideal conditions, this society would begin to ask itself whether liberty and good-fellowship, comfort and economic development, were sufficient to provide the human being with the self-control and discipline which human life in any conditions requires.

Back in New York, he celebrated his birthday, September 6th, with the fellows of that one American privileged body, the Society of the Cincinnati, of which he was almost the doyen. But the real feast was to be in Castle Garden. On a warm and beautiful autumn night, a thousand torches, as many coloured lights, helped the full moon to illuminate a gigantic representation of Lagrange, and before it the upper six thousand of New York

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danced around, those pretty ladies, who were lucky enough, with the Marquis. In ecstasy at the sight, the American chronicler exclaims: 'London boasts of its Vauxhall; Paris of its Champs d'Elysées: Naples of San Carlos, but foreign gentlemen present admitted that they had never seen anything to equal the fête in the several countries to which they respectively belong.'

Determined as always not to disarrange his programme, the Marquis left the ball at two o'clock in the morning to embark in a steamer to Albany. In that capital city of New York State – again, if we trust Mr. Foster who assures us that no one has been found to deny it – the celebrations were varied by the presence of a live eagle on the top of the civic temple which obligingly pointed its beak and flapped its wings as Lafayette passed by.

At Trenton, on the way to Philadelphia, he had the opportunity of varying his compliments, for when he was greeted by twenty-four ladies dressed to represent the twenty-four States of the Union he smiled at them and assured them that 'in his opinion, always saving Congress' Sovereignty, the States were never so well represented before.' Near Trenton, too, a shadow of the old world loomed before him. Old Joseph Bonaparte, whom he had last seen just before Waterloo, was living there in exile among the beautiful pictures and exquisite marbles which alone remained to remind him of the substantiality of the two thrones on which his brother had placed him during those years when fairy tales came true. They had always been on good terms and now they talked for two hours. Even the secretary, Le Vasseur, has not managed to give the world the substance of that interesting conversation, and Mr. Foster has not had the courage to invent it.

At length they came to something entirely new to Lafayette, Washington City, the capital of the United States. In its beginnings he could dream of its future: 'In this august place,' he said, 'which bears the most venerable of all ancient and modern names, I have, sir, the pleasure to contemplate not only a centry of that Constitutional Union so necessary to these States, so important to the interests of mankind, but also a great political school where attentively observed from other parts of the world, they may be taught the practical science of true social order.' The President's residence struck him then as it has struck most European visitors since by the absence of sentries or any other of 'those puerile

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adornments for which so many ninnies dance attendance at the ante-chambers of the palaces of Europe.’

From Washington he naturally went to Mount Vernon and the tomb of Washington. It was the visit of a son who did not remember his own father to the tomb of a man who in those distant days of his education surprised America by the tender and paternal care he took for a young French nobleman, one of many who had come to seek adventure in foreign wars. Those days and the memory he had kept of them, not the unfortunate coolness of the period when a Talleyrand represented the spirit of France, were at this time present in his mind. Perhaps too the thought of Washington’s integrity and the example he must ever be to the American nation consoled him at a time when what he saw of the Presidential election campaigns of the capital which were in full swing must have reminded him that even here men were not exempt from the pettinesses and self-seekings of party politicians.

From the memory of Washington to the delightful intercourse with the living Jefferson, the American he most admired after him. Jefferson was over eighty now, but carrying his years marvelously and enjoying all the vigour of his soul and spirit. Le Vasseur was a little troubled by the slaves of Monticello whom this friend of liberty employed, but he found that they were happy, and dreaded nothing so much as gaining their freedom at the possible risk of losing so good a master. Still there it was, a queer instance of the practical superiority of the American over the most fool-proof of liberal theories. More than once on this journey the faithful disciple of Lafayette had his eyes opened to the complexity of practical life compared with the facileness of theory. He was truly scandalized, for example, at finding that crafty Jesuits had already penetrated into the new continent and set up prospering educational establishments. ‘When I saw the Reverends in the costume of their order, I could not at first repress a painful sentiment. All the misdeeds of which they have been guilty in Europe crowded up in my imagination, and I lamented the blindness of the Americans who trust the education of their children to a sect so inimical to liberty.’ He asked a friend why they were not driven out. ‘It would be contrary to the spirit of liberty,’ was the answer, ‘and unjust to the Jesuits of whom we have no grounds for complaint.’ – ‘They are too few now,’ Le Vasseur answered. ‘Think what has happened in France and tremble!’ –

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'Oh, but it cannot happen here. You see we have no king, no State religion, no monopoly. With whom could the Jesuits intrigue?' – 'But in Europe,' Le Vasseur persisted, 'we cannot get rid of them. We cannot oust them from the University or the King's council, or the wealthy establishments they have founded, or from the offices they have obtained.' – 'Very well,' the wise American retorted, 'get rid of these things. Keep the Jesuits, and you will find that yours are no more dangerous than ours.'

Soon he was back again in Washington where on the reiterated advice of everyone he was persuaded to remain during the worst of the winter. He had a little leisure to reflect on 'the unutterable goodness of the American people,' and to recognize 'the incomparable superiority of this happy land'. He remembered too as was his custom 'that cruel and sad anniversary. I often think of that admirable sentiment which made her urge us, as though by instinct, to make this journey to the United States. If only we had kept her to enjoy that of which she seemed to have a premonition!' While he was in the capital, Congress voted him the sum of 200,000 dollars and a township in recognition of his services. Feeling that it would be more gracious to accept than to refuse, and not a little thankful to think that this money would help him to rebuild the fortune which he should have left to his children but which he had squandered on revolutions and conspiracies, he accepted the money.

It was well into February, therefore, before he started the real grand tour into the south and west. To this day the visitor to America brought up to think of it as one vast history-less uniformity is amazed at the variety and romance to be found below the too obvious surface. No country, for example, can boast of a richer and more picturesque collection of place names, revealing at every turn the fascination of its origins. Plain Anglo-Saxon breaks into the music of Indian sounds; the adventurous stories of French missionaries contrast with the simplicity of negro life; all the saints in the Calendar appear in their magnificent Spanish dress side by side with the importations from classical Greece. What is still true to-day was far truer then when the origins were not a memory, but often a reality uncomfortable both for romantic and realistic pioneer. It is impossible to give in these pages any account of that long adventure, but one or two interesting details we cannot entirely pass over.

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Lafayette, a true boy in such matters, experienced a very special thrill when they approached the town of Fayetteville in North Carolina. Here indeed was the monumental immortality he had been seeking. Years before he had been sent a sketch of the little town and he recognized it as he approached the wide main street and Georgian Town Hall. It had a population of some four thousand souls, of whom curiously enough a third were slaves. These tobacco growers made special efforts to be worthy of the views of their patron saint. ‘The jargon of legitimacy,’ the rough farmers told him, ‘is not understood among us. We acknowledge no Holy Alliance but that of religion and virtue, liberty and knowledge. The sun of liberty is everywhere extending the sphere of its creating influence. South America has been regenerated and its fetters have broken. The thrones of Europe which have no support but the power of bayonets have been shaken to their foundations, and the genius of our country may speedily celebrate the spirit of universal emancipation.’ Perhaps the sight of the many hundreds of slaves whom these universal emancipators had overlooked or a feeling of satiety brought on a passing mood of depression. Bleak Fayetteville filled with cheering crowds that did not know him made him long again for the intimacies of Lagrange. ‘I feel,’ he wrote home, ‘a constantly increasing need of finding myself again with you. That sensation of awakening from sleep in times of sorrow is continually coming to me as I move among the brilliant and touching gatherings to which I must nevertheless give myself over with affection and thankfulness.’ He may have felt like this more often than he acknowledged, for his paradise was an earthly one and he was a man.

One of the most interesting figures he met was an old capuchin of New Orleans. Le Vasseur, though he must have been familiar enough with it in France, describes in detail the long brown habit and cord. This old white-bearded priest ‘being animated with ardent and sincere piety, prays for the whole world without asking prayers from anyone; he does not think it his duty to disturb consciences by attempting to gain proselytes in the name of God.’ He had given himself over to the work of aiding those who suffered from the yellow fever, but in the midst of his suffering flock he had himself developed a fever in the cause of those liberal ideals for which Lafayette had been living and so many

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others had died in nineteenth century Europe. It is true that 'being a capuchin he begged a little,' but he had his little liberal burden to endure: 'Liberty and charity compose the religion of Père Antoine, and therefore he is not beloved of his bishop.' The venerable man, like another Simeon, was waiting for an opportunity to sing his *Nunc Dimittis*. In Lafayette he saw the new prophet of the Lord. He threw himself into his arms and weeping copiously he chanted: 'My son, I have found favour with the Lord as he had permitted me to see and hear before my death the worthiest apostle of liberty. Twelve million men have been made happy and free by you. Surely you are the favoured one of God, you who have done so much for your fellow men!' And as Lafayette equally moved by this very novel experience was trying to detach himself from the clinging friar, the latter cried: 'think of my poor Spain! Do not forget my poor country. Do not give her up, my dear country, my unfortunate country!'

From New Orleans he travelled on the steamer *Natchez* up the broad Mississippi. It was spring, and in the cool, clear evenings the haunting melodies of the negroes singing on the plantations could be heard on board. Curious men, half French and half Indian, were asking: 'Is there not another famous general called Napoleon?' To make his adventures complete the steamer struck a snag on the Ohio river and sank. It was in the middle of the night, but despite the confusion and the cries everyone was safely lowered into the lifeboat. Only Lafayette's little dog who had rushed back to look for him in his cabin was lost. Next day they were picked up by the *Paragon* and reached Louisville none the worse for the narrow escape.

At Buffalo, an old Indian chief, who had formed part of the council held at Fort Schuyler, came to pay his respects to Kaweyla, but instead of talking this time of matters of state the veterans sympathized with each other's old age. The Chief felt that time had treated Kaweyla more gently than himself, for while a blaze of ruddy hair covered the general's head, Red Jacket had to display a completely bald pate. Lafayette did not disclose the secret of the red hair lest Red Jacket should scalp an enemy in order to imitate him.

Two days before the appointed date the party reached Boston. June 17th was the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill. The day was spent at the scene of the battle with the whole

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population of Boston, but that very evening the indefatigable man was writing home about his experiences: ‘I like to speak to you after one of the most beautiful patriotic feasts ever held. It can only be compared with the Federation of ’90. Two hundred thousand Americans, they say, were united for the anniversary of Bunker Hill to lay the foundation stone of a superb monument. I was received yesterday by the Massachusetts legislature, and to-day in the most perfect weather imaginable we have celebrated the great anniversary. Nothing can convey to you the effect of that republican prayer spoken before an immense gathering by an old chaplain who had fought at Bunker Hill, of the survivors of that day uncovering their white hairs when the President of the Association addressed them. And I too rose at the head of all the other revolutionary soldiers to receive our acknowledgment.’ ‘This,’ he told the four thousand guests at a banquet that evening, ‘this is the fiftieth anniversary of the freedom of America, another fifty years and we shall be drinking to an emancipated Europe!’

He remained in America long enough to say a final good-bye to Jefferson and to celebrate his sixty-eighth birthday. On the next day, September 7th, he sailed, this time in an American man-of-war which he could not refuse, to France again.

As he left the shores of the western world his mind no doubt was filled with the sentiments he had been hearing expressed so often and which Mr. Foster has put into words once and for all: ‘How pitiful, how insignificant the persecution of a few petty tyrants in France towards the man who has rendered such important services to his nation. While we behold in Europe an alliance, hypocritically denominated HOLY, we observe in the western hemisphere a *real* holy alliance of free states, extending the blessings of liberty to every citizen, protecting him and the possession of property and all his natural and social rights . . . Where our illustrious guest once saw forests, he now beholds cities, and the fields he left covered with woods now rise up to his view in a high state of cultivation with all their embellishments. Such are the marvels produced by LIBERTY!’

CHAPTER IV

‘POPULAR MONARCHY AND REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS’

(1825-1830)

HAD Mr. Foster sailed with his hero he would have found that his worst fears about the state of Europe were not exaggerated. The same Royal Guard and the same policemen were making the same bullying noises and waving the same sabres at the citizens gathered in Rouen to welcome Lafayette home. The same reactionary ministry was maintaining Jesuits, nobles, King's Councils, holy alliances and such-like horrors bred in the dark and sordid history of an immoral continent. In fact matters were worse, for Charles X had succeeded to Louis XVIII, and in his solemn consecration at Rheims cathedral with such sacred oil as had been ‘miraculously’ preserved from the sacrilegious hands of the Revolution, he had as good as affirmed that his authority came from God alone and not from the Charter which to the horror of the Papal Nuncio he had been weak enough to mention.

But Lafayette, glad to be home, ever optimistic when lack of news and contact gave his spirit a chance to assert its natural self, and still glowing with the warmth of American goodwill, seemed unusually well-satisfied: ‘France is in a quiet state and even less likely to experience early commotions than when I left it. While the Government continues its counter-revolutionary march, liberal opinion is gaining ground; industry progresses, all of which slowly makes for independence.’ Charles X, too, so unlike his brothers in appearance, tall, thin, dignified, able to ride a horse like a man, may have momentarily touched that chivalrous sentiment which lay deep in Lafayette’s nature. They were contemporaries to the year, they had been fellow members of the *Epée de Bois*, they had sat on the same commission in the *Notables*. Charles, for his part, glad to hear a man speak with the old-fashioned accent of the old times, always spoke well of the old liberal and asked after him when travelling in his constituency, thereby scandalizing and surprising the Bishop and

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the *Préfet*. Hard facts, however, would soon drive away such sentimental weaknesses.

His visit to America had interested him in a new and vast field for revolutionary propaganda, and his correspondence on this subject fully occupied his time for the present. Like Canning he was looking to yet another new world to make up for his doubtful success in the old. Letters were being dispatched to his ‘dear and respectable friend, Monsieur de Rivadavia, President of the Republic de la Plata’, to the ‘President Liberator, Bolivar’, to ‘dear Monsieur Gomez’. He became so enthusiastic about the merits of these dark-skinned children of modern liberty and nationalism that his old dislike for England was revived. The impudence of Canning ascribing to himself the merit of South American liberation! When asked to subscribe for the casting of a medal in his honour he was moved to write a long and indignant letter which reflects the contemporary opinion on the Continent about an England so self-satisfied with her enlightenment, suppression of the slave-trade, her protection of nations threatened by the chancelleries of the *ancien régime*: ‘I know well that in England there are few statesmen who have not pretended to confound the revolution of ’89 with the terror of ’93, republican feelings with the madness of anarchy, because in their patriotism *à la romaine* they are terrified of anything which may threaten to develop rival industries and offer any comparison disadvantageous to their aristocratic system. That is the secret of their dislike for the United States. It is then easy to understand why the satiric genius of Canning, even though become the ardent disciple of the school of Pitt, should have been directed against true French liberty and its first promoters . . . The two continents of the American hemisphere were extraordinarily amused to hear of Canning’s declaration that it was *he* who had called into existence South America and Mexico. I should not like then to give a public assent to that assertion, I who, surrounded by the ministers of all the American republics and even of the Emperor of Brazil in Washington, have so often made public tribute to that phrase of President Monroe’s message . . . The first declaration of rights published in Europe said that “no man may be forced to consent to any laws not consented to by his representatives,” and it is not an author’s self-love which holds me that statement of the representative system. Now the electoral system in England is

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shockingly removed from this. Not only do the radicals and whigs profess electoral reform, but Pitt himself once said in the City of London that until such reform there would be no liberty in England. Canning, on the contrary, on one of the last occasions on which he spoke said that so long as he lived he would be opposed to the slightest change in parliamentary representation. I do not wish to discuss it here, but it would be inconsistent of me to give such a view any kind of sanction. For many years I have viewed with much severity English politics in the Greek question, and even though the English should now work for her independence or allow it to come about – a matter about which I doubt – this act of humanity would come very late in the day . . . I feel then that I cannot concur in the homage to be rendered in the name of the peoples of two worlds to the sentiments and principles of that great statesman whose death I regret, whose talents I appreciate and whom I find in comparison with the actual government in France to be admirable in his liberalism, his frankness and his breadth of mind. But, alas, what a standard of comparison! . . .’

Among his distinguished visitors at this time was the patriarch of Utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham. It would be interesting to know their conversation, for despite their common ultimate purpose they cannot have had much sympathy for one another. To Bentham all Lafayette’s enthusiasms, his insistence on the abstract rights of man, his quasi-mystical reverence for the spirit informing the freed citizens of the world, his respect for personality, his hatred for the moral iniquity of tyrants, monopolies, privileges were delusions only a little less dangerous than the time-honoured phrases such as the Divine Right, the Natural Law, the sacredness of Tradition under which the past had cloaked the appalling muddle it had made of man and the world. And Lafayette could not have approved of Bentham’s saying that security was more important than liberty, nor of his cold, calculating system according to which the souls of men were to be made factors in an utilitarian order of mathematical simplicity. But if the two veterans did not agree about the details of enlightenment, they found neutral ground on which to understand each other. A rose of Syria out of Lafayette’s garden was long remembered with affection by Bentham who, in his turn, left the liberal hero a ring containing a lock of his hair.

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Social and epistolary intercourse with the liberals of the four corners of the globe had soon to give way to the resumption of earnest political activity at home. His American triumph had not been without political significance in France. Despite the censorship, accounts of it had filtered through, and more than ever he was looked upon, as Guizot's biographer puts it, 'as the great name of the opposition.' And by 1827 the opposition was no longer confined to hot-headed students or extremists lurking, as the *Ultrás* thought, in dark corners with daggers under their cloaks. The Villèle ministry was making the discovery which the advisers of Louis XVI had made too late, that inadequate political institutions instead of repressing public opinion only made its voice sound the louder. It is more effective to blare on a trumpet on one's own than when playing with an orchestra.

Moreover two additional factors were giving the opposition the concrete appeal which it needed. The first was a recurrence of bad times. The financial slump of 1826 in England was being severely felt in France, and even the liberals were complaining that it paid better to shout: 'Bread, a penny a loaf!' than: 'Save the Charter'. They were soon to discover, as their successors have discovered, that the two cries go admirably together. The second was a wave of anti-clericalism. The priest in France, a country in which men, as they should, either love or hate religion, can always be used as a spark to explode repressed feelings. When the priest happens to support the unpopular political party, the opposition have an easy task. Between 1824 and 1827 a veritable rain of abuse from speakers, books, pamphlets and papers poured on the sacerdotal shield of the government. It is under the circumstance remarkable and greatly to his credit that Lafayette made no attempt to make easy capital either out of the financial distress nor out of the unpopularity of the priests. The nearest approach in his writings to the latter is a sarcastic reference to 'the intrigues of the apostolic and aristocratic party.' But the evidences of a deep-seated dissatisfaction spreading, perhaps for the first time since the Revolution, all over the provinces are not wanting. It is only necessary to quote the words of so sane and philosophic an observer as Lamennais: 'In this part of France (Brittany) the revolution is increasing at sight. I do not think it is behind-hand in other places. The future is in the opinions which penetrate and rouse the masses, and it will belong at first to the genius of

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destruction . . . A king without royalty, ministers without a ministry, total absence of government, and in the face of it all a young revolution full of ardour and self-confidence, that is what we see.'

By the autumn of 1827 the ministry of Villèle had become so unpopular with the extremists of the Left and of the Right that a general election could no longer be postponed, and the unholy alliance of the two wings secured for the opposition a majority of sixty. Lafayette was returned for Meaux, a borough of his county of residence. So the two years which preceded the fall of the Bourbons were a period of comparative calm, and Lafayette, whose house in Paris was as much the recognized centre of the political extremists as Nodier's was the centre for the literary young men with new and romantic ideas, did nothing to make the ministry's task more difficult. Events were to prove that the ministry's moderation was a step back *pour mieux sauter*, but he charitably read it as 'two steps back and three steps forward, so we are gaining on the balance . . . There is a general feeling of betterment to which I am not insensible.'

While engaged in the routine work of opposition, he would occasionally startle the House with a sentence which carried the complacent deputies right out of their associations and time: 'Not your miserable 50,000 francs, nor even 500,000 francs are what is needed by this great social duty; in a proper and fair system of public elementary education, five millions would seem to me the most desirable budget allocation.' But for the most part he was content to let 'two steps back and three forward' carry the country towards the inevitable goal. 'On the left of the House,' he wrote to an American friend, 'sit the men of less timid courage, of stouter opinions, some of them like my son and myself, altogether republicans, trying in good faith to establish decent institutions on the basis of the Charter, but reserving to themselves, if all liberty is impossible, if the Charter itself is continually broken, to remain as much as they can in the fullness of their imprescriptible rights.'

The call to defend these rights by revolution again was not long in coming, and to Lafayette, the past master in the art, the new France looked once more.

On August 6th, 1829, the Martignac ministry was dismissed. Villèle offered to form another on the same basis, but Charles X

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at last made up his mind to trust God and defy public opinion by appointing Polignac as prime minister. Polignac was his favourite – scandalmongers said his son – the prince of the *Ultras*, the symbol of the *ancien régime*. With him was associated as minister of war Bourmont, the man who had betrayed the French army in 1815. No one could doubt that with such ministers Charles must reign by effective Divine right or not at all. The diary of Chateaubriand’s wife is worth quoting: ‘France when these ministers came was quiet, the churches filled, the papers as moderate and royalist as could be wished and this under a ministry of which one part was deceiving the other. But at any rate people believed the ministry to be at least sincere in part and that kept them quiet. Now exasperation is at its height, the elections are all liberal, and Lafayette who might three months ago have travelled over Europe without being noticed cannot take a step without being carried in triumph.’

These last words refer to his journey in the south which he was making when the Polignac ministry was appointed. One of the signs that both sides were beginning to realize the importance of the public opinion which could not find expression in the narrow elective system were the political journeys made to test the feelings of the country. From the liberal point of view no one was more fitted to make such a journey than Lafayette. In his youth he had felt like a mixture of prophet and crusading Knight of liberty; in his old age he was regarded by everyone as having been both. All that remained for him to do, as Laffitte wittily remarked, was to go about seeking a pedestal. But as he would neither rest nor die he made the best of matters by carrying his pedestal with him. He had set it up in nearly every town of the United States; now was his opportunity to do the same in the towns of France. In Brioude and Chavaniac he had been acclaimed as a great liberal and as a native, but it was only when the news of Polignac’s appointment reached him at Le Puy that his journey became a triumph as remarkable as his triumph in the United States.

Crowds accompanied him, laurel wreaths thrown at him, triumphal arches greeted him, fireworks illuminated his passage, he was acclaimed the greatest citizen of the world. Through six counties he was carried in triumph. It was America all over again, the same banquets, the same speeches, the same receptions except that everything was unofficial and frowned on by the local

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authorities. He was careful not to make fiery speeches, and only at the end of the tour in the 'advanced' city of Lyons did he allow himself language in keeping with the mood of those around him: 'No more concessions is what the official papers are saying. No more concessions the people of France will say in its turn, and with a better right when it demands those institutions so long awaited which alone can guarantee the enjoyment of our imprescriptible rights. The force of every government exists only in the arms and in the purse of the citizens that compose the nation. The French nation knows its rights and it will know how to defend them.'

While he was thus arousing public opinion in the south, a new daily newspaper, the *Tribune*, put itself in opposition to the soft-hearted parliamentary liberalism and, in co-operation with Lafayette, organized a republican society prepared to have recourse to arms. Other associations in Paris and the provinces were collecting 'village Hampdens' ready to refuse to pay their taxes. Incendiarism re-appeared in Normandy, organized, it was said, by royal agents as an excuse for the importation of troops. Everybody was comparing Charles X to James II and looking for another 1688. 'Not a revolution,' they said, 'Horrid word! Just an accident, a change of personnel in the highest places.' 'The two parties, counter-revolutionary and liberal,' wrote Lafayette back in Lagrange, 'are in the presence of one another . . . We shall see what will happen this winter.' They had to wait until March, 1830, before the king and Polignac made the first move.

When the Houses met on March 2nd, Charles' cap, so it is related, slipped off his head to be returned to him by the Duke of Orléans. Something more miraculous than that was required if he was to keep his throne after the king's speech. Lafayette's mind went back again to the day of June 23rd, 1789, when he heard the royal threat to maintain royal rights by force if necessary. But whereas Louis XVI had faced a Parliament to whom the dethronement of the king was a sacrilegious innovation, Charles X faced 221 members, a majority in the House of forty, who had seen a king executed and an emperor twice dethroned. Those members made it clear that the king's ministers must go or they, the representatives of the French nation, would go, and if they went, there would no more nation for the king to reign

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over. ‘I have announced my resolutions; they are unchangeable; my ministers will let you know my will,’ was the stubborn and courageous reply. Within a fortnight Parliament was dissolved. The knowing Talleyrand smiled: ‘A prorogation! I shall then buy myself a property in Switzerland.’ Two-thirds of France set to work to re-elect everyone of those 221 members. Lafayette attended the banquet on April 1st, which opened the campaign. Unfortunately the banquet emphasized the difference between the republicans and the constitutional royalists of the opposition. Should they drink to the king and the three powers alone? Lafayette who cared only for ‘the substance of liberty’ was careful not to commit himself. The republicans fearing a split gave way. Whatever the toast, he was content to hear his young friend, Odilon Barrot, cry: ‘To brutal force, force shall reply.’ He knew that the king must take the next false step; on its nature depended the wisest answer.

The elections were as successful as was expected despite the king’s personal appeal to the people not to return men who would force him to arbitrary measures: ‘It is a king who is asking you, a father who is calling to you.’ As soon as the last results were known, the king and father issued the famous ordinances of July. The liberty of the press was suspended, the Chamber was dissolved, the electoral law was changed, men whose *ultraism* had kept them from the king’s council were called back. The step was as fatal as it was unnecessary. Had Charles given in to the principle of ministerial responsibility, he might have died on the throne, a well-beloved monarch, but he was the kind of man who believed that Polignac, ‘his dear Jules’, was in the habit of receiving apparitions from the Virgin Mary approving of his conduct and encouraging him to persevere. It was difficult for such men to govern in the nineteenth century.

The lesson of French revolutions is not the proverbial insecurity of men who wear a crown, but their remarkable security. Louis XVI and Charles X, despite the blindness and mistakes of their reigns, might when it came to the crisis have saved their thrones if only they had shown some comparatively low degree of intelligence and common sense.

The only thing that mattered on the Monday of that historic last week of July, 1830, was the temper of the Paris lower middle classes. And that temper was not the temper of doctrinaire revolu-

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tionaries, but a personal anger, aggravated by lack of news, against the violation of all pledges. With a terrible spontaneity these leaderless classes, especially the printers who were most directly concerned resolved not to obey. Nothing was done to re-assure them, nothing to distract them. Before they had time to think, they found themselves defending their houses, their shops, their streets, their convictions against the soldiers. Had the king recognized the moral injustice of his action or even the fact that it was so interpreted in Paris, he might have given way on the Monday, the Tuesday, even the Wednesday and kept his throne. He gave way on Thursday a day too late. By that time the Opposition, thinking only slightly faster than the king, had had time to give itself some kind of backbone. Even then it was a very wobbly backbone, for not one of the leaders, Lafayette included, had ideas clear enough or a will strong enough to mould the revolutionary material drifting to and fro along the narrow Paris streets from the Town Hall to the Palais Bourbon, from Laffitte's house to Neuilly, and, it may be added, melting under the broiling sun of a Paris heat-wave.

Lafayette rushed from Lagrange to Paris on the Tuesday. To reach his house he already had to climb over barricades erected by the people across the streets to impede the advance of Marmont's troops. The crowds gathered near them were still shouting 'Long live the Charter,' and the next morning the chief thought in his mind was as he wrote a letter was: 'the incredible foolishness of the king at a time when no one asks for anything better than to live quietly under the Charter and be satisfied with such ameliorations as it calls for.' But just as Louis went hunting while his throne was being shaken, so his stubborn brother passed the time playing whist and asking Polignac about his visions. It is true that on Tuesday evening Marmont reported that the insurrection was over. But it was on that day too that the first meeting of a handful of liberal deputies on the one hand and a gathering of doctrinaire republicans on the other took place.

As the sun rose on Wednesday morning after what de Vigny called 'a silent and solemn night', Odilon Barrot, the deputies' secretary, wandered about a deserted Paris whose beauty was only marred by corpses lying here and there. By Wednesday evening hundreds of citizens and more than a thousand soldiers had paid

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with their lives for the victory of the people now under the direction of the republican leaders. The troops caught by barricades or trying to make headway under a rain of ‘tables, arm-chairs, chairs, cupboards, dishes, tureens, bedroom utensils, blinds, fire-dogs, bottles, stools, sideboards, brooms, saucepans, slippers, scales with their weights, flower-pots, bedposts, even, they say, a piano’ had practically given up the fight. The Town Hall and Notre Dame had been taken and the tricolour, a weapon worth an army left by the Bourbons in the hands of their opponents, was flying over Paris. Couriers had been rushing through the city calling for Lafayette to tell him that the Revolution had broken out in the provinces.

At the Town Hall which the republicans had taken, it was being presumed that a republic would be proclaimed with Lafayette as president. Lafayette said that his name had been selected by public opinion to be the head of the insurrection, though the public were far too occupied with fighting to have an opinion. Still, the crowds outside the Town Hall shouted for him and Odilon Barrot, who was in a position to know, admitted that ‘in those days Lafayette was invested with a veritable moral and political dictatorship the title of which was in no decree, but which seemed so necessary that no one would contest it.’ But Lafayette for all his playing with direct action had not lived his life of constitutional sanctity for nothing. Not the republicans at the Town Hall but the group of liberal deputies at Laffitte’s house were in his view the seed of constitutional sovereignty sown by the dying Restoration. He had been acclaimed almost instinctively as commander of his old National Guard, but his conscience told him that this nomination had to be accepted from the deputies.

The next morning, Thursday, the deputies officially confirmed his appointment, thereby, as Barrot said: ‘resurrecting for the new generation all the memories, all the noble impulses of our first and great revolution, and finding himself, as general-in-chief of all the National Guards in France, at the head of the only armed force which could then be used.’ They appointed a municipal commission, carefully avoiding the dangerous word ‘provisional government’, to be responsible for the executive at the Town Hall. Meanwhile the people were completing the work of the day before and driving the troops outside the capital. Every-

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thing now depended on Lafayette's intentions. The people had fought and died. Whom for? What for? The government printing press was turning out his proclamations to Parisians, but in them there was not a word to suggest a solution of the problem which was in everybody's mind. He might be moral dictator; he would not be real dictator outside such constitutional shadows as he could conjure up. At last when all was lost, Charles woke from his game of whist and had his doubts about Polignac's visions. He sent a commission to revoke the ordinances and appoint new liberal ministers. But two thousand lives were too high a price to pay for another Bourbon blunder. Lafayette expressed the sense of popular anger in the words: 'All reconciliation is impossible; the royal family has ceased to reign.' '*Il est trop tard*' was all the answer the king's commissioners could obtain. And Charles consistent to the end bowed his head saying: 'Our cause is God's cause, but Providence tries its servants.'

During this day, Thursday, Lafayette, 'holding' according to an eye-witness, 'a sort of quasi-revolutionary court at the Hôtel de Ville,' sat in an arm-chair 'motionless, his eyes fixed as though in a stupor,' waiting and thinking out the course which should assure most liberty with the least danger of insecurity. To many the old revolutionary hero must have seemed like a ghost re-appearing on earth. The republicans around him were trying to persuade him to accept the presidency. The deputies nearby were debating, as is their wont, every aspect of the matter. The people around were re-opening their shops and preparing to return to work, trusting their leaders not to let them down. All were unconscious of another man pacing up and down a room in his summer residence at Neuilly, a suburb of Paris, and trying to pluck up courage to take a sister's advice: it was Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orléans. Should he follow his cousin Charles with whom he had been on excellent terms? Should he ride into Paris and take his chance of being the next king? Adelaïde persuaded him to risk it.

Next morning, Friday the 30th, the deputies met again. In the midst of their talk, Odilon Barrot entered in his National Guard uniform bearing a letter from Lafayette. It was the fruit of his meditations. For hours lying on a bed – for he happened to be unwell – and constantly interrupted by republican and constitutional deputations insisting on the importance of an immediate

decision, he had been talking to Barrot as coolly ‘as though it were a simple question of philosophy or history.’ After forty years he still enjoyed (or suffered from) that curious tension (or deadening) of the nerves at the moment of crisis which contrasted so glaringly with the temperament of the Frenchmen around him. Should it be a republic or a constitutional monarchy under Orléans? He had hated and despised Orléans’ father; he had given his life to propagate faith in the republican institutions of America; he had but to raise his finger to be president of the French republic, the Washington of the old world at last. But Barrot kept on hammering in his objections. ‘It is not a question of theory, of the best possible government; it is a question of France, France situated among strong enemies, France needing a stable government, a powerful army. France cannot risk another return to Jacobinism. Under a republic or a monarchy France, unlike America, can only survive if she knows her own mind, Is it better that that mind should be represented by a responsible honest permanent monarch or an elected president changing every few years?’ The weary general, so clear about theory, so successful as a prophet and leader, so unlucky at having to make practical decisions about theoretical questions, was still uncertain and thoughtful. Other Orléanists entered, Rémusat, Mathieu Dumas, at last – brightest stroke on the part of the Orléanists – the American minister came in to assure him that the United States would prefer a popular monarchy. At last, and for the last time, he let his reason dominate his natural feelings. For the last time he trusted if not a Bourbon, a cousin of the Bourbons. For the last time, he declined the power which lay in his grasp. Barrot jumped up, told an Orléanist to let the Duke know, and carry Lafayette’s message to the deputies. It urged them to make up their minds about the constitutional guarantees which they must be ready to demand before the crown was offered. ‘You must first stipulate in a General Assembly the conditions demanded by the people and offer the crown at the same time as the stipulated guarantees are proclaimed.’ A commission was sent to obtain the consent of some peers and an invitation was made to Orléans to exercise the functions of Lieutenant-Governor of the kingdom. By an odd coincidence, Charles in the hopes of assuring the crown to his nephew was just making the same invitation.

The next morning, Saturday, the 31st, the crowds round the

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Town Hall and still more the republicans within were surprised and angry to see a proclamation of the Duke of Orléans to the people of Paris placarded over the town. 'Orléans is a Bourbon,' they shouted. *À bas les Bourbons! Vive la liberté. Vive la République!* Another proclamation from the deputies was issued to explain the guarantees which Orléans would give, though in fact he had never given any. Suddenly the crowd began to divide. A procession was coming. It was the fat, smiling, sweating Orléans on horseback swathed in a tricolour ribbon fixed in his hat. Behind him were the deputies. The crowd watched sullenly. Some shouts of '*à bas les Bourbons,*' were again heard. Someone cried: '*Ce n'est pas un Bourbon, c'est un Valois.*' Tired of these dynastic conundrums, they began to shout once more '*Vive Lafayette!*' The procession entered the Town Hall. Within was a strange scene. Lafayette was in his armchair. Around him monarchists, republicans, even Saint-Simonien socialists were pushing like modern newspaper reporters seeking for some special message to the interest they represent. The duke came up followed by Constant who, not to be outdone by Lafayette's indisposition, was being carried on a chair. Lafayette rose to greet the Prince, together they walked up the stairs amidst a menacing silence. At the top of the stairs the declaration of the deputies was read. Thus were constitutional consciences saved. No cheers greeted this virtuous act. Outside, the people were still murmuring. But Lafayette, who had once before saved a throne by a well-executed balcony scene, rose again to the occasion. He held out his hand to the duke. A tricolour flag, the most important of properties, was at hand. The two walked out on to the balcony swathed in the folds of the blue, white and red and fell into each other's arms. It was too much for the Paris crowd. Charles X, Henry V, Napoleon II, Republics, Directories were forgotten in this beautiful marriage of constitutional monarchy with the living symbol of liberty under the blessing of the tricolour. '*Vive le duc d'Orléans! Vive Lafayette!*' – the cries resounded from every side. As Chateaubriand put it: 'A republican kiss has made a king.' And no one noticed that Orléans had been to all intents and purposes put on the throne without conceding one single guarantee. No one – except Orléans himself, who on the strength of it always repudiated the so-called programme of the Hôtel de Ville which Lafayette brought to him the next morning.

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Orléans, a soldier by trade and generally an exile by accident, was the first prince of the royal house of France who had been allowed by the circumstances of his upbringing and early career to develop those qualities of brain and character which are traditionally supposed to be the inheritance of the average Frenchman. He was brave, but cautious; he saw clearly, but not very far. He judged instinctively that security mattered more than liberty, that comfort was more important than glory; there was no ostentation about him, but plenty of pride; he knew that it was wiser to sympathize with the other man's point of view than to challenge it; he realized that a good laugh was the best solvent of any hard obstacle that might be encountered. On this morning, above all, he felt that he must not commit himself and yet that he must keep the friendship and support of Lafayette. A pleasant chat about this and that would be the best policy. Lafayette came back not to the point, but to the goodwill that missed the point.

‘You know,’ he said, ‘that I am a republican, and that I look on the constitution of the United States as the best ever devised.’

‘Of course, exactly,’ answered Louis-Philippe, who had a great affection for England and very little for America, ‘I agree with you. No one can live in America for two years and not see that. But do you think that considering the situation in France we could adopt it as it stands?’

‘No, indeed,’ answered Lafayette, ‘what we need to-day is a popular throne surrounded by republican institutions – *quite* republican, I mean.’

‘Ah!’ said the Prince, who knew he was being committed to nothing but words, ‘that is just what I think myself.’

And they parted equally satisfied with one another.

Charles from Rambouillet was still threatening to fight, but when Lafayette sent a motley horde of guards, citizens and soldiers to defy him he decided to move by easy stages to Cherbourg, and thence to England.

A few days later, Orléans was called to the throne of the French, not as Philippe VII, but as Louis-Philippe I, the first and the last of the ‘popular’ kings of France. A charter only slightly more liberal than the one conceded by Louis XVIII was demanded of him, so that at the end of all the bloodshed and excitement the

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crowd that shouted 'long live the charter' at the beginning of the days of July received what they wanted, and Lafayette's popular monarchy with republican institutions remained a figment of his imagination. But on the principle of 'three steps forward, three steps back' the republic itself had been brought a very big step nearer.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST FIGHT

(1830)

JUST as Washington, according to tradition, never told a lie, so Lafayette never consciously broke his word. But Washington did not expect others to live by so high a standard as himself. Lafayette did. And it was his unlucky fate to live in a period when men not only broke their word – they always do that – but when they made a habit of taking oaths in a hopeless endeavour to make up for their last broken word by a yet more solemn attestation. Conscious perhaps of the futility of such political oaths, Lafayette in his first proclamation as Commander of the National Guards of France in 1830 wrote: ‘I shall make no profession of faith; my sentiments are known.’ A fine sentence, and one that he alone could have made with sincerity. But he had always had to pay the penalty of honesty and the simplicity that too often goes with it. He had maintained Louis XVI on the throne and extracted from him every promise conceivable, but it had made no difference. Now he had put Louis-Philippe on the same throne, trusting to the prince’s good-sense and goodwill. He believed that he had meant what he said about republican institutions. Had he? Alas, there is no such thing in high politics as simple word-keeping. The situation changes too quickly, and a ruler’s actions are governed as much by such changes as by his ideals and promises. A vague consciousness of this truth may have been the decisive influence when he shook his head on being asked point-blank during the days of July whether he would take the responsibility for a republic. He was frightened not, as so many of his biographers have made out, of committing *himself*, but of committing his political faith, the political gospel which he had preached for fifty years, to the test of action during immaturity. He had not forgotten the Terror. He realized by instinct that it was better for himself, his fellows and the ideas which he was propagating to remain in opposition for some years to come. He

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was seventy-three, and his decision meant that he would never see the promised land, but he preferred to die contemplating the intact vision than watching the crude and probably cruel realization. Like Charles X, it was said, he never forgot and never learned anything, yet he had learned that the political system which worked admirably in America could not, forty years after the Revolution, be yet applied to Frenchmen.

His first reaction was one of natural disappointment. 'We tried to obtain for liberty everything that circumstances permitted', he wrote as soon as the revolution of July was over. In less than a month his attitude had completely changed. 'We have made a beautiful and quick revolution', he wrote to Lady Morgan towards the end of August, 'all its glory belongs to the people of Paris, that is to say to the portion of the population which is least well off, to the students of the schools of law and medicine. . . . I am glad to see that you approve of the resolution taken by *nous autres républicains* in helping to establish a popular throne by fitting it with republican institutions.' In that fierce, yet orderly, fighting, in that rapid return to peace and work he could see the long-awaited solution to the political problem set by the first revolution. The people, that is the lower middle classes and the workers, whose freedom and happiness had always been the first object of his labours were being educated to self-control. In the first revolution they had been the mob whom he had had to suppress; in the second, they had done all the work and carried their leaders to a just settlement. The French working man was developing the qualities of a citizen of the United States. In comparison with this immense step forward, the behaviour of Louis-Philippe was a secondary consideration.

He was now once more commander of the National Guards, and he saw in that citizen militia the instrument by which this moral and political education could be completed. He wanted to admit the working man to the Guard. 'You must explain to the king,' he said to Rumigny, one of Louis-Philippe's aides-de-camp, 'the one means of assuring peace and quietness in France: it is to incorporate in the National Guard *every workman without exception*. We must have them all. The working men are no longer rioters; they are moral men whose good instincts should be encouraged. They love liberty and understand it.' Rumigny, like all his class was flabbergasted: 'How absurd to arm the people,

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especially the lower people, to maintain order!' And like them he deemed the general '*un niais politique*.'

But Lafayette's instinct was accurate. The Revolution of July by putting the bourgeois in power had opened the real political and economic question of the nineteenth century, the status of the working-man. But the old man was past tackling it. It is true that 'his political ideas had remained green', but truer than that 'his canine thirst for popularity' had grown greener with age. The hero of two worlds, the first commander of the National Guard of Paris, the general of the Revolutionary army, the de-throner of Bonaparte, the sponsor of the first Orléans king, the commander now of the National Guards of France – he was looking back on it all and, whatever posterity might say, he found it good, and he knew that the people were finding it good. He wanted to finish in the style he loved best. He was still the idol of that intangible popular force which had swept away the Bourbons and which would now keep in order the stop-gap Orléans. Not a royal palace, but Lafayette's residence was the Mecca of all that was alive in Paris. A witness described his Tuesday reception as follows: 'It is a public *salon* to which friends bring friends, sons their fathers, travellers their companions. All who figure in politics, science, literature, popular causes are crowded together on the noisy floor, some in dirty boots, some in silk stockings, some in uniform, some in buttoned frock-coats. . . . Thither the whole of France, the whole of Europe, the whole of America have sent their deputations. Lafayette himself, revelling in the enthusiasm which he inspires, walks among the groups, his sallow face faded by the dust of the revolutions he has been through, his body broken by age, his eyes a trifle dim, his speech a little difficult, but succeeding in concealing these signs of decrepitude by the perfect manners which betray the marquis of the eighteenth century in the democrat of the nineteenth. As he comes, the groups thin out and make way for him while everybody whispers: "It is he." ' One writer of the time, a M. Luchet, should have immortalized himself by succeeding in beating everybody, even Mr. Foster, in his eulogy of the hero. 'His image visits me at night. I take hold of it, I kiss it, I cuddle it. I call it honour, country, liberty, glory. I watch it taking the shape of a man, majestic, with serene, calm and beautiful brow and it seems to bless me. . . . Tender benedictions and one in particular which I mistook for

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God's when one day I really received it and he leaned over to say with a broken voice: "Good-bye, my friend". In comparison with Lafayette, Louis-Philippe seemed to be no one at all, and a caricaturist aptly illustrated the popular feeling when he drew a picture of the king with his crown in his hand waiting for Lafayette to say: 'Sire, pray put it on.'

What the caricaturist depicted was exactly what Louis-Philippe had no intention of doing. Lafayette's republican institutions, his bold schemes for the arming and educating of the working classes, his certainty that the time was at hand when the masses could be incorporated into the active membership of the State did not appeal to the cautious monarch who never forgot that his father died on the scaffold and who discerned in the commercial classes that desire for quiet and economy needed by a secure and prosperous country. There was a radical difference, not only of outlook but also of temperament between the bourgeois king of whom it was said that he would have jumped after a penny thrown into the river by a passer-by and the revolutionary gentleman who had scattered millions in the interests of his fellow men. The fight between them was short and sharp for Louis-Philippe knew that Lafayette's chivalry was the weakest spot in a weak armour.

'*Nous cherchons à tenir un juste milieu*' so the king expressed his policy. But the *juste milieu* was a balance which steadied the upper class bourgeoisie hated by legitimists, republicans, bonapartists, liberal and illiberal catholics, romanticists, socialists. It was the kind of *juste milieu* which Lafayette once described as agreeing, when someone argued that four and four make ten, to split the difference and call it nine. For the moment most of this brightly coloured opposition who had no patience with splitting the difference accurately or inaccurately was content to use the popular and romantic name of Lafayette as a convenient rallying cry.

It turned out that the duel between the king and Lafayette was to be fought over the political corpses of Polignac and three other royalists ministers of Charles X. These men after their fall gave even more trouble than when they were in power since, having failed to escape from the country, they had to be tried. Thousands of Frenchmen had shed their blood in the fight against them. Should they not pay for this with their own heads? The king remembering the fatal effect of the White Terror had no

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intention of sacrificing them to the demand for vengeance. Lafayette was in a dilemma. One of the proudest moments of his life was when, after having obtained from the king the release of some political prisoners of the Restoration, he walked into the palace with them and heard the butler introducing: '*Messieurs les condamnés politiques.*' He was strongly in favour of the abolition of capital punishment and he had to support the adroit motion in cases of political crime only which had been suggested by the king in order to save the heads of the accused ministers. Moreover he particularly wanted to protect Polignac, the man who had once proscribed him, in order to show the difference between their natures. But, outside the palace gates, the cries of the people demanding vengeance could be heard. If he supported the king, he would strengthen the conservative bourgeois rule and lose his own popularity; if he supported the people, he would be contradicting himself and failing in his duty to keep the peace. Worst of all, the National Guards were strongly in favour of the death penalty. It is strange that 'the man of indecisions', as Mirabeau had called him forty years earlier, should have had so many critical decisions to make and now at the age of seventy-three should be called upon to make perhaps the hardest of all. It was the penalty of having to play the cards fairly after having over-bid. But in playing this last difficult hand, he made up his mind to follow the system which he had used many times before. He determined to be for the last time the agent of the people's self-control. The prisoners would be saved and the people themselves would save them and in spite of it keep the peace.

The crisis threatened to be as serious as the Days of July. On December 10th, the accused ministers were taken to the Luxembourg where they were to be tried. The agitation against them had been so threatening that every precaution was taken. Lafayette was put in charge of the regular troops as well as of the National Guard. The king appeared to repose complete confidence in him and wrote daily to thank him for 'the good efforts and for the success he had obtained.' On the 12th the trial opened. To add to the general unrest, an immense crowd which reminded the older generation of the funeral of Mirabeau gathered to pay their last homage to the remains of Benjamin Constant. Lafayette spoke the funeral oration and stumbled on the side of the grave of his disciple and teacher. Some people took it as a presentiment.

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While the trial was in process, both sides were preparing for the critical day of the verdict. On the 15th, Lafayette wrote: 'Next week may be very stormy. We shall do our best to maintain public order and the purity of the revolution.' He had made the Luxembourg itself his headquarters. His plan was to maintain order through his influence on the people themselves with the help of the National Guard. If possible, no troops were to be used. In his Order of the Day of the 19th, he recalled solemnly to the Guards the chief events of his life and hinted that their self-control would be the best means of forcing the government along the path of 'a popular throne surrounded by republican institutions.' He reminded them frankly that though he loved popularity more than life itself, he would have no hesitation in sacrificing both rather than fail in his duty or suffer a crime, 'persuaded that no end justifies means which public or private morality would disavow'. Coming from anyone else, this tone of pleading would have been proof of great weakness; coming from Lafayette after a life devoted to teaching the people how to control themselves, it was immensely courageous. The king still seemed to approve -- in words at least; but the ministers were terrified. Theirs was the ultimate responsibility. The Minister of the Interior insisted on troops being present and Lafayette grudgingly yielded: 'You are using too much of the army and not enough of the people,' he warned him.

On the 20th, the day before the verdict was expected, immense and angry crowds began to assemble outside the Luxembourg. Lafayette's sympathetic firmness was already wearing thin. Courageous as ever, he went among the crowd to harangue it, but, according to Victor Hugo, who was present, some of the malcontents seized the patriarch and carried him about shouting, 'Here is General Lafayette, who wants him?' Even this gross insult did not make him lose his temper. 'I do not recognize here the fighters of the barricades', he shouted. 'No wonder,' someone retorted, 'You were not with them.'

The next day the trial was over, but the Minister of the Interior, who had lost all confidence in the general and in his singular methods, hurried the prisoners to Vincennes secretly by a back door. Paris looked like a field of battle. The people cheated of their right were ready to move forward. Against them, or perhaps for them, thirty thousand bayonets shone in the pale winter sun. The

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National Guards had been mistrusted by the government, for to their care the prisoners were to have been handed over. Would they raise their bayonets against the people? For the first time in French history the people and the bourgeoisie found themselves face to face. An accident saved them from clashing. A false rumour was spread that the prisoners had been condemned to death, and the crowd hesitated. By the time the truth that they had not been condemned was known, it was too late. The short December day was over, but torches, fires and cries of anger reminded the authorities that the crowd had not entirely dispersed. Lafayette went out to harangue them, as he had harangued crowds forty years earlier, as he would be haranguing communists to-day if his span of life had been trebled. Out there in the cool December evening by the uncertain, flickering lights of a thousand torches, his gaunt figure rising out of the shadows symbolized the faith of the nineteenth century in the natural goodness that lay concealed under the sullen faces of an angry mob.

An hour earlier he had been having a different kind of conference, a conference with youth. During the Days of July, the University students had played an important part. He turned now to their leaders, the leaders of the next generation, and asked them to be an example to France of popular self-control. They had helped to dethrone a king, would they help now to maintain order and, by so doing, complete the revolution for which they had fought? Either that, or France would rush into anarchy over the corpses of himself and the rest of the faithful National Guard.

On the next day, the 22nd, Paris enjoyed the strange sight of masses of students wearing sashes inscribed with the words '*Ordre Public*' marching at the head of thousands of working men, and being graciously received by their king. All over the capital the following words were placarded: 'The king, elected by us, Lafayette, Dupont de l'Eure, Odilon Barrot, our friends and yours, have promised on their honour to work for the complete organization of that liberty which has been sold to us and which we have paid for in July.'

The danger was over, and not a drop of blood had been spilled. Lafayette's faith in the people's self-control had for once been justified by the events. But it had been a near thing and the bourgeois liberals had no intention of allowing the old man another chance of experimenting. Nor could the people them-

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selves appreciate his intentions. His bust had been destroyed by the mob that very morning. The opportunity of getting rid of him for the last time was too good to be missed. On the 22nd, the king had still been all affability: 'I must thank you first of all, my dear general, for having given once more the example of courage, patriotism and respect for the law, as you have often done during your long and noble career.' On the 23rd, his tone was changing: 'I am going to take advantage of the beautiful weather, my dear general, to go for a ride and thank the reserves of the National Guard. . . . I do not ask you to accompany me, it would be too tiring for you.' On the 24th, the House encouraged by the ministers took the opportunity of a debate on the law of the National Guards to suppress the position of Commander-in-Chief with the proviso that Lafayette might retain the honorary command as a special favour. The ministers made it clear also that they did not consider themselves bound by any promises which he might have made during the course of the week. It was the first challenge of the bourgeois king to the revolutionary forces which had carried him to a temporary throne. It was a dangerous step, for no one quite knew how deep went the popularity of the general. The British Ambassador wrote to Palmerston to warn him of possibly serious trouble. But after all the revolutionary movement at this stage proved to be little more than Lafayette's bark. Nothing happened. The link between the old men and the new had been stretched too far. It snapped, and no one noticed the fact. The young men were launched on their own.

Lafayette had not been in the House during the debate which put an end to his career. When he heard of it, he could not believe it possible. Had he failed? The king's letters were there to prove the contrary. Mortified, but not angry, he sat down there and then to write to the king and hand in his resignation. 'The President of the Council has been kind enough to propose to give me the title of Honorary Commander. Surely he will feel, and your Majesty, too, that such nominal honours do not suit the institutions of a free people, nor myself.' Perhaps he expected that his resignation would frighten the king and make him revoke the order, but it is more probable that the pride of the old nobleman was asserting itself once more. The king hypocritically pretended that he knew nothing about it: 'I have not yet read the account of the debate, nor the resolutions that have been taken.' Lafayette

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was not deceived, but with courtly dignity he went to see Louis-Philippe and explained his position. The king who realized that the offer of resignation put him in the strong position of being able to plead with the man whom he wanted to ruin pretended to urge him to change his mind. Lafayette retorted with his list of reforms, the programme of the Hôtel de Ville; they were the price of his allegiance. It was safe at last for the bourgeois king to smile at the simplicity of his chivalrous enemy.

Some of his friends made half-hearted attempts to make him reconsider his position. 'Think of it', said Laffitte, 'to-day in uniform you are the first citizen of the kingdom. To-morrow mingled with the crowd you would be but the first of the anarchists.' A few journals made a fuss, but the people for whom he had worked so hard and whose insults he had borne so courageously did not bestir themselves. They were no more grateful than the sovereigns they had made and unmade. Louis-Philippe was heartily cheered when, a day or two later, he reviewed the National Guard of Paris, accompanied by its new commander. Within three months Louis Philippe was to accept the resignation of Laffitte and with him the rest of the party of movement. The programme of the Hôtel de Ville, the popular monarchy surrounded by republican institutions, was a dead letter. Goodwill had proved no stronger than oaths.

As in 1792, so in 1830, Lafayette had tried for too much and fallen between two stools. Barrot, his friend, thought that he had 'preserved the throne from inevitable catastrophe'. The bourgeois liberals thought that his vanity and weakness had nearly brought about a catastrophe. Louis Blanc, the radical socialist, thought that had he been more intelligent he would have seen that he had no right to sacrifice his popularity in order to maintain a social order of which he fundamentally disapproved. He had to console himself with the thought that while men always reject ideas, ideas in the end govern men, even Frenchmen. They would come to his point of view, but not in his time. 'The march of liberty,' he wrote with immortal optimism to a friend in America on the first day of the New Year, 'may be opposed, sometimes more, sometimes less, but the movement has really started, and our great work will bear its fruit in France and in every country.'

CHAPTER VI

'NO MORE OIL'

(1831-1834)

WITH his resignation from his command of the National Guards of France the political importance of Lafayette came to an end. There was, to be sure, as in Shakespearean comedies a short fifth act which carried the story gently forward into the flow of daily normal life and the veteran of four revolutions even more gently to the peaceful end which fitly counterbalanced his full and eventful life.

Louis-Philippe had rightly discerned that the urgent need of France strained by the cataclysmic history of the last fifty years was peace, security and economy, and the bulk of the population was prepared to support him for the time in return for these benefits. The early wave of excitement which had carried Lafayette to his last adventure subsided, and the strong currents which caused the light swell on the surface would take longer than the three years which Lafayette had still to live to make their presence feared. But Lafayette knew that the world would not end with him nor with Louis-Philippe. The new generation would come to expect something more than the rough, plain fare of the bourgeois monarch. Lafayette had lived with Raynal and Voltaire, the men who had preached civil liberty; he himself had carried from America the gospel of political liberty; around him were growing up the disciples of Saint-Simon and Fourier, men of the future like Proudhon and Louis Blanc, the prophets of industrial and economic liberty. He had never been a reader and the still 'bookish' theories of the young Utopians about him do not seem to have attracted his attention. He was content to give his support to practical means of furthering his ideal of fitting free people into a free society such as the 'Free Association for the Education of the People', a curiously modern attempt at adult education suppressed in 1834. But he would have sympathized with the socialist writers whose ideals completed his own vision of all men

co-operating under rational and humane regulations and reaching the aim of human existence by building up on the foundation of a natural goodness free to manifest itself, as soon as the antiquated and cruel shackles of a ‘gothic’ world were removed. To us who look back from another hundred years it seems a naive, a pathetic creed. We see that that Reason which for Lafayette had taken the place of the Christian God has proved with the new problems which it sets and the answers which it hides to be more of a devil than a God; we see that that natural goodness which for him replaced the dualism between supernatural goodness and sin has shown itself to be but a struggle of determined beings to survive by overreaching their neighbour. Looking back either from the Christian point of view or from the realistic modern point of view, we can retrace his career and watch him failing through his faith in a rational coherence which has never existed on this side of the grave and his lack of knowledge of the motives which actuate the man who *is*, however much he may realize that he *ought to be* otherwise.

But if we turn from theory to practice, we shall be equally surprised to find how oddly primitive was the bourgeois liberalism against the spirit of which these last years of Lafayette’s life was set. Let us listen to the verdict of a contemporary of the ‘popular’ monarch who had promised to live surrounded by republican institutions: ‘At home, everything remained to be done. Our code of law required to be amended, our commerce, our agriculture and our industry to be freed, our municipal and commercial institutions to be created, our taxation to be revised, and above all our parliamentary system – under which out of thirty million Frenchmen only two hundred thousand had votes, under which the deputies bought a majority of the two hundred thousand electors and the king a majority of the two hundred and fifty deputies – required absolute reconstruction. Louis-Philippe would not allow anything to be done. If he could have prevented it, we should not have had a railroad. He would not allow our monstrous centralization to be touched. The owners of forests were permitted to deprive us of cheap fuel, the owners of forges of cheap iron, the owners of factories of cheap clothing.’

In the face of this stagnation, suited only to the narrow-minded French *rentier*, Lafayette’s well-thumbed programme of the Hôtel de Ville which he kept waving under the noses of the smug depu-

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ties of the Right could hardly be called factious. What did it consist of? We can reconstitute its main features from his last speeches and letters.

First he accepted with gratitude the changes that had been effected in July: 'I am not of those who say that we have gained nothing in the Revolution of July, 1830. I recall juries in political and press matters, liberty promised in education, the initiative of laws given back to parliament, some improvements in the legislative and electoral forms and the revision of the peerage.' But it was only a small beginning. His most persistent attack was on the electoral law: 'The right to elect does not come from above; it belongs to all citizens and no one but those who are incapable of using the right should be excluded. . . . What for Europe seems like Utopia has been the common practice for the United States for fifty years. There every taxpayer is an elector and among the taxpayers are numbered the militia-men who have paid during the year the personal tribute of one day's service. Everything takes place without inconvenience and trouble; such is the power of popular education, of civic tradition and of completely national institutions. I do not believe that it is necessary for a Frenchman to be able to pay a tax of two hundred francs in order to acquire the honesty which will keep him immune from selling his vote, nor the good sense which will make him choose a decent representative for his country.' His next point was the suppression of the House of Peers and its replacement by a Senate 'suitable to the spirit of representative government'. The French nobility was no longer representative of anything but the will of the Sovereign or his servants, 'but there are other aristocracies than the aristocracy of nobility, and I call such any privilege given to the few against the majority when such rights can be exercised by the majority without the least inconvenience for public order.' He considered administrative devolution and municipal reform to be essential to healthy democracy. 'The present law takes away from more than half the rate-payers the right to elect members of the Councils and gives the king the nomination of mayors and other officers even though in other countries less free than France such a power is not given to the monarch.' The same reform should be extended even to communes, the smallest political units. 'In a word, instead of going back, we should go forward in the national system; we should develop citizens so that

they may be in a fit state one day to exercise all their rights, and *they can only learn to do this by practising those rights.*’

In his address to the electors of Meaux, the last of his many manifestoes, he summed up his political and social aspirations: ‘I should like to see in our programme religious liberty, so long as cult is removed from the civil state and consciences from the intolerances of believers and unbelievers; free education, so long as the people who receive from the State primary instruction and the means of secondary are not prevented from having family and private education; liberty of the Press which must for ever be freed from the present entanglements of printing and newspaper taxes; the responsibility of executive officers and the proper means of ensuring it, of departmental councils which, being elected by all the citizens, should be in complete charge of local affairs; economy at home, so long as such economy is directed towards my well-known preference for a State run as simply as possible; the settlement of the royal civil list, so long as it is fixed in the spirit, I do not say of the 130,000 francs of a president of the United States, but of a popular throne and the domestic virtues of a citizen-monarch; lastly the additional article of the Charter, if we may owe to it the abolition of the hereditary peerage.’

It would be difficult to find at this date a more sober, sensible and modern programme. Another fifty years, and Lafayette’s reforms were considered by good conservatives the natural and equitable basis of a tolerable State! He no longer insisted on the Declaration of Rights which, forty years earlier, had been his chief preoccupation. Its work had been done. It was taken for granted. Those who had laughed at his empty theorizing had forgotten man’s need for a creed. Lafayette’s fifty years of public life in France measured the distance between the recital of the creed of modern democracy and the first solutions of the practical problems which the application of that creed entailed.

To the end he was willing to cross swords with old opponents and amuse the House by creating a piquant situation. Typical of such was the debate on titles of nobility. It was proposed to punish those who insisted on bearing titles to which they had no right. The nobleman of the eighteenth century who had ceased to bear his title outside America rose to defend the hundreds of *parvenus* who had given themselves titles to which the *grand seigneur* could afford to be indulgent. ‘How odd,’ he said to the puzzled House,

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'that this equalitarian regime should defend the nobility by suggesting punishments more severe than any under the *ancien régime* itself. Everybody knows – at least those who have lived as long as myself know – that in those days no measures were ever taken against usurpers of titles; at most the tribunals refused to use such titles as appeared to be held without right. The abuses that mattered were not abuses of titles but abuses of tenure of land. Lands were differently qualified, but titles of "marquis", "comtes", etc., were taken according to the will of families.' At this point the *parvenus* were opening their eyes; the real thing was evidently very different from the imitation. Lafayette went on instructing them: 'The Constituent Assembly put an end to all those feudal rights. . . .' Then, smiling, he turned to the Comte Charles de Lameth sitting on the conservative benches and said: 'The scythe of time has spared two of its members who are sitting to-day in this place, and they are the two who were warmest in their support of the decree to which I am referring.' Everybody began to laugh and look at the old Jacobin whose principles had worn a little through rough usage. Lameth rose, beside himself with rage, but Lafayette gently motioned him to remain seated and passed it off with the admission: 'Well, perhaps, I should admit that the form of that decree *was* a trifle exaggerated.' After all the Lameths with whom Lafayette had been on fairly friendly terms since the fall of Napoleon had remained moderate royalists from first to last. Lafayette's consistency had been a more subtle one.

His interest in foreign affairs, or rather in the spread of liberal ideas in foreign countries, had not abated. Nationalism, his first passion, had not weakened with the years, and somehow it was always compatible with democracy, as indeed it has only too truly proved to be. His chief concern towards the end, however, was the liberation of Poland from the powers who had partitioned her. We can imagine the tolerant smile, the shrug of the shoulders of the cynical Palmerston, as he glanced over a letter he had received from the hero of two worlds: 'And Poland? What will you do? What shall we? Certainly it would be a sad thing if the long-standing indignation of your country over the partition, the interest of all Western Europe and the happy combination in England and France of two liberal administrations and kings could not succeed in re-erecting the barrier whose usefulness no one denies and should allow a generous nation to be

crushed, a nation a stranger to Russia though forced to submit to the Russian monarch.’ It was Palmerston who suggested that, however successful democracy might prove in other directions, it must always blunder in foreign affairs since it could not wait on events, nor change its mind after seeing a mistake. And certainly foreign affairs as they were managed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a sealed book to this democrat. In this biography we have not dwelt on his constant relations with ‘patriots’ all the world over, for the moves in the diplomatic game were not affected by the inrush of a little healthy air. The master of the game was a Talleyrand and, that being so, it is not altogether to Lafayette’s discredit that he was a child in such matters.

During this short fifth act, he enjoyed perhaps for the first time the reasonable homage due to a distinguished and honest past. The absurd and evanescent adulation of the people of revolutionary Paris was at an end. The Atlantic separated him for ever from the hero-worship of the United States. The equally exaggerated hatred of princes and aristocrats had passed with the regime of which they had been the ornaments; the artificiality of his relations with the government during the Empire was forgotten. Instead he was an honoured and still popular citizen among all classes of citizens; he was the object of the special devotion of relations, intimate friends and political associates. His grant from the American legislature and the repayment of a compensation for the money taken from him during the Revolution left him moderately wealthy and happy to realize that he would leave his progeny well provided for. In Paris or at Lagrange visitors still abounded. He was growing deaf now and uric acid was stiffening his joints as age was unbending his mind. His old shyness had given way to a passion for kissing everybody. ‘*Le père biseur*’, they called him. Instead of relating the exploits of his life as he had been doing for so long, he would tell homely stories about the *ancien régime* which he would certainly have thought unfitted for recital a few years earlier. In other ways also he was becoming more sympathetic. He showed some interest in religion and the clergy, though, despite the presence of the curé of his parish at his death-bed, there were never any signs of Adrienne’s last prayer for his conversion being answered. The last book he was ever to read was Lamennais’ *Paroles d’un croyant*. It was a pity perhaps that he struck on a work which was to cause

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considerable scandal in the Church and great suffering to its author. But to another generation of Catholicism the words of Lamennais would have been more welcome. It was a revelation to the stern Deist that a Catholic apologist priest could be so liberal-minded: 'I never thought that the abbé de Lamennais was more republican than I; his book is well written and full of enthusiasm; it will make a sensation and produce scandal among the believers to whom it is addressed.' He was right.

Only with Louis-Philippe were his relations strained. He firmly believed that the king had broken his unspoken word, and he therefore refused to appear at the Tuileries. The Tuileries was not sorry, and it is related that at his last appearance an officer of the household whispered loud enough to be heard by the general as he was walking out: "*Adieu l'Amérique!*" The veteran revolutionary would have been glad to know that the cousin of the Bourbons was destined to follow the royal road to exile.

To the last his interest was in the future and directed on to the problems which would tax the succeeding generations. A month before he died the working-men of Lyons rose against the enforcement of the law prohibiting associations and combinations. It was a terrible and bloody fight for the economic rights of the workers. In one of the last letters Lafayette ever wrote, addressed strangely enough by the romanticist of politics to the famous writer of romantic fiction, Fenimore Cooper, we read these words: 'The French papers of various opinions will tell you that the liberties and tranquillity of this country are in a very precarious state. The Law against unions of working-men cannot but have a bad effect. There has been at Lyons a fight between the workers and the troops which has lasted four days; the insurrection has been put down. A handful of discontented have resorted to arms in Paris. They have been beaten by an overwhelming superiority of forces, but not without bloodshed. It seems that they are preparing illiberal laws and measures.' There was the point at which Lafayette fitly left the evolution of democracy. Civil liberty had been in large measure obtained; political liberty was fast developing; industrial liberty and the status of the working man was still the interest and concern of a small band of dangerous theorists. Just before he died it happened that his pale and dreamy eyes were being attracted by the light of one of the first quarrels concerning industrial organization in France.

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Three weeks after writing that letter, on May 9th, 1834, he was caught in Paris by a treacherous change of the spring weather. A cold wind and torrential rain followed the bright morning sun. He had not been well a month or two before and in his weakened state he was unable to fight against the chill which he caught. Strange that in those ten days of illness it was not his admirers nor even his children in whose company he seemed to find most pleasure; it was his old man-servant, Bastien, and his little dog who refused to let anyone but the old retainer touch his master's clothes. He had spent his life in the company of the stars, his dying brought him close, close as possible, to what is simplest and most near to man, the two companions who of all creatures must have known him best. Four or five days before his death, he was attacked by a severe depression and he despaired of recovering. But like all his depressions this one quickly left him and he talked of the fight between his fever and quinine: ‘Give me as much as possible, and the quinine is bound to win!’ Soon he knew that he was fighting the last fight, that no revolution could upset the last master. He was watching the stove vainly trying to maintain the warmth that was departing for ever: ‘What would you?’ he said. ‘Life is like the flame of a lamp. When there is no more oil, *zest!* the flame goes out and it is finished.’

For twenty hours he fought for breath. In the early morning of May 20th all his children were by his bedside. He opened his tired eyes and seemed to look on each of them in turn as though to express a farewell. A few minutes later he drew his last breath.

At the funeral the Government forbade all demonstrations and orations. But three thousand of the National Guard he had created and commanded paid him the last military honours. As the body was being carried into the Church of the Assumption some of these civic soldiers broke from the ranks to help to carry the coffin. Their uniforms seemed to encircle him for the last time with the colours of the Tricolour he had left to the keeping of France.

They buried him by the side of Adrienne in the cemetery of Picpus. Earth from the United States was mingled with the soil of France. French sisters of Perpetual Adoration pray for the repose of his soul, as they pray ceaselessly for and perhaps to Adrienne, while American pilgrims still care to lay a flower on his tombstone.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

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THIS biography makes no claim to be fully documented. I have therefore refrained from loading it with references and notes which would distract the ordinary reader and be superfluous for the student of the period. Such references as it is my duty to acknowledge and authorities for more controversial matters are collected at the end of the book. Here I should like to mention some of the works which I have found most helpful. What I owe to their authors, both living and dead, is evident, and I acknowledge it with gratitude.

- (1) The six volumes of the *Mémoires, correspondance et manuscrits du Général Lafayette, publiés par sa famille*. The chief source book. The letters in so far as they can be checked appear to be fairly accurate. Many are omitted and most shortened, sometimes for the purpose of making their subject more consistent and, it may be added, less human. The *Mémoires* were written many years after the events of which they relate, but Lafayette was an honest man. That at least should be remembered when comparing his account with that of less scrupulous persons.
- (2) Charavay: *Le Général La Fayette*. The most complete account of the facts of Lafayette's life. Though hardly more than that, it is invaluable to all his biographers.
- (3) Brand Whitlock: *La Fayette* (two volumes). A well-written and picturesque account of all the events, but with little interest in the significance of Lafayette's life. The reader who wishes to have a fuller account of his life than the scope of my work has enabled me to include is referred to Mr. Whitlock's pages.
- (4) Edith Sichel: *The Household of the Lafayettes*. A charming study. It is not always accurate in detail, but Miss Sichel has set a high standard for those who venture to write on the topics with which she deals.
- (5) Jules Thomas: *Correspondance inédite de La Fayette 1793-1801*. The essay which precedes these important letters is the best attempt which I have seen to understand Lafayette. While I do not always agree with M. Thomas, especially in his contention that Lafayette's ideal was the *bourgeois* State, I owe much to him.
- (6) G. Chinard: *Lafayette in Virginia* and *Letters of Lafayette and Jefferson*. Both these recent works contain a large number of hitherto unpublished letters of great importance.
- (7) Cloquet: *Souvenirs de La Fayette*. Invaluable for private life.
- (8) M. de Lasteyrie: *Vie de Madame de Lafayette*.
- (9) *Lettres inédites du général de La Fayette au vicomte de Noailles*.

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- (10) Charlemagne Tower: *The Marquis de La Fayette in the American Revolution*. A most painstaking and detailed book which owes much to Doniol's enormous work on the French participation in the war of Independence.
 - (11) Bernard Fay: *L'Esprit Révolutionnaire en France et aux Etats-Unis à la fin du 18e siècle*. A fully documented and scholarly work of the first importance.
 - (12) Fortescue: *History of the British Army Vol. 3*. Balances the many American accounts of the fighting and nature of the war.
 - (13) V. L. Parrington: *The Colonial Mind*.
 - (14) L. C. Hatch: *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*.
 - (15) Vicomte de Noailles: *Les Français dans l'Amérique du Nord* (a modern work).
 - (16) Henri Carré: *La Noblesse de France et l'opinion publique au 18e siècle* should be read by anyone who wishes to understand its subject.
 - (17) La Gorce: *Histoire religieuse de la Révolution Française*.
 - (18) Madelin: *French Revolution and Men of the French Revolution*.
 - (19) Vaissière: *Lettres d'Aristocrates*.
 - (20) Denys Cochin: *Louis-Philippe* contains a great deal about Lafayette and is written with more sympathy than most Frenchmen show.
 - (21) Roux: *La Restauration*.
 - (22) Thureau-Dangin: *Monarchie de Juillet*.
 - (23) Weill: *Histoire du Parti Républicain en France*.
- Other general works will be found mentioned in the notes.

Among biographies and memoirs, the following have been most useful:

Bacourt: *Correspondance entre Mirabeau et La Marck*.
 Belloc: *Marie-Antoinette and Danton*.
 Bouillé (father): *Mémoires sur La Revolution Française*.
 Bouillé (son): *Souvenirs et Fragments*.
 Bradby: *Barnave*.
 de Ségur: *Mémoires*.
 Dubreton: *Louis XVIII*.
 Duff Cooper: *Talleyrand*.
 du L.: *Mme. Elisabeth de France*.
 Ferrières: *Correspondance Inédite*.
 Gouverneur Morris: *Diary and Letters*.
 Lameth T.: *Mémoires and Notes et Souvenirs*.
 Laurent: *Bailly*.
 Loménie: *Les Mirabeau*.
 Madelin: *Fouché*.
 Mme. de Montagu: *Mémoires*.
 Odilon Barrot: *Mémoires*.
 Saint-Priest: *Mémoires*.
 Schermerhorn: *Benjamin Constant*.
 Södernjelm: *Fersen et Marie-Antoinette*.

APPENDIX II

VALUE OF MONEY AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It is quite meaningless to write of sums of money in terms of *louis* and *livres*. Most books make no attempt to translate the old currency into modern currency, and I have seen some who work on the principle that a *livre* means a pound, that therefore 100 *livres* equal £100.

Any attempt to convert *livres* into pounds and dollars is at best a rough and ready approximation, but I have risked calling a *livre* two shillings (or fifty cents), so that by dividing so many *livres* by ten the rough equivalent in the purchasing power in terms of modern pounds is obtained. This is certainly an underestimate, but it is best to be on the safe side.

Nominally a *livre* was worth a fraction less than the pre-war franc, but a study of prices of common commodities in France towards the end of the eighteenth century proves that it purchased rather more than twice as much as the franc towards the end of the nineteenth. In *Histoire Economique de la Propriété, des Salaires, des Denrées, etc.*, the Vicomte d'Avenel has collected an immense list of prices at every period of French history.

The following selection may be instructive.

	1776—1800	1890
Labourer's wages by the day	.45 fr.	1.50 fr.
Private servants, male, by the year	77.00 fr.	369.00 fr.
Ditto, female	42.00 fr.	300.00 fr.
A suit of common clothes for men	10.44 fr.	25.00 fr.
Ditto, for women	6.75 fr.	25.00 fr.
Luxury suit for men	219.00 fr.	219.00 fr.
Ditto, for women	2295.00 fr.	2295.00 fr.
Wheat (by hectolitre)	15.00 fr.	20.00 fr.
Paris Property (by sq. metre)	28.00 fr.	129.00 fr.
Paris House	39800.00 fr.	260000.00 fr.
Provincial House	5075.00 fr.	13759.00 fr.

Taking the year 1890 as 100, the value of money spent between 1776 and 1800 in buying land was more than twice as much (209); in food one and a half (162); in an average of commodities almost exactly twice (201).

NOTES

NOTES TO PART I, CHAPTER I

- p. 14 Quoted in *Carré: op. cit.*
- p. 17, l. 35 Quoted in Leonard Woolf: *After the Deluge.*
- p. 18, l. 15 Quoted in Leonard Woolf: *After the Deluge.*
- p. 20 Lafayette's income at different times is set out in a *Compte Rendu*, given in Chinard: *The Letters of Lafayette and Jefferson*, p. 303. As a young man money meant nothing to him but after he had spent most of his fortune and suffered the confiscation of the rest, he was much concerned about his own financial future and that of his children. His letters to Jefferson are full of this concern.
- p. 22 Mme. de Simiane was the sister of Lafayette's friend, the Duc de Damas. She was generally considered the most beautiful woman in Paris. See Lameth: *Memories*, p. 109, 110.

PART I, CHAPTER II

- p. 27, 28, 29 Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur: *Letters from an American Farmer, Sketches of 18th century America.*
- p. 28, l. 1-5 Fay: *op. cit.*
- p. 30 Quoted in Tower: *op. cit.* Subsequent quotations from Vergennes are from the same book.
- p. 30 See Parrington: *op. cit.* especially Bk. II, Pt. I, Ch. I, and Pt. II, Ch. I.
- p. 33 Hatch: *op. cit.*, p. 47.

PART I, CHAPTER III

- p. 36 *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 48, p. 281. Review of 'America, Historical, Statistical and Descriptive,' by J. S. Buckingham.
- p. 36 Mrs. Basil Hall: *The Aristocratic Journey*, pp. 50, 51.
- p. 36, 37 James H. Penniman: *What Lafayette did for America* (1921).
- pp. 40 and 44 From a letter printed in 'Washington and Lafayette,' by Princess Radziwill. *Century Magazine*, July, 1926.
- p. 40, l. 3-6 Quoted in Fortescue: *op. cit.*
- p. 41 Pontgibaud: *A French volunteer in the War of Independence.*
- p. 42 Quoted in Tower: *op. cit.*
- p. 45 See B. Whitlock: *op. cit.* I, p. 115.
- p. 47 The story is given in Lenôtre: *Romances of the French Revolution*, I, p. 306.
- p. 48, l. 36 Fay: *op. cit.*
- p. 53 Pontgibaud: *op. cit.*

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PART I, CHAPTER IV

- p. 54 Warren-Adams Letters. *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* II., p. 231.
 p. 54, l. 17, l. 18 Hatch: *op. cit.*, p. 70.
 p. 55, l. 3 Quoted in Fortescue: *op. cit.*
 p. 55, l. 9 Fay: *op. cit.*
 p. 56, l. 35 Quoted in Blennerhassett: *Life of Madame de Staël*.
 p. 61, l. 36 See Fortescue: *op. cit.*
 p. 61, l. 33 Fay: *op. cit.*
 p. 65 See *Life of Arnold*, by Isaac Arnold.
 p. 66 See *English Historical Review* V, 31.

PART I, CHAPTER V

For the view taken here in this important chapter, consult Fortescue: *op. cit.*, *Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy*, compiled by B. F. Stevens, Chinard: *Lafayette in Virginia*, Unpublished letters, and Vicomte de Noailles: *Les Français dans l'Amérique du Nord*.

- p. 72, l. 17-22 Hatch: *op. cit.*, p. 37.
 p. 76, l. 9-19 *Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy*, II, p. 50.
 p. 79 See this letter and others in Chinard: *op. cit.*

PART I, CHAPTER VI

- p. 84 Warren-Adams Letters, II, p. 213.
 p. 86 Fitzmaurice: *Life of Lord Shelburne*, III, p. 320.
 p. 88 Letters of Horace Walpole, XIII, p. 108.
 p. 90 The Writings of Washington, x. 346.
 pp. 91, 92. See Montbas: *Avec Lafayette chez les Iroquois*.

PART II, CHAPTER I

See especially Fay: *op. cit.* and Chinard: *The letters of Lafayette and Jefferson*.

- p. 95 Quoted in Acton: *Lecturer on the French Revolution*, p. 32.
 p. 96 Mercier L. S.: *Tableau de Paris*.
 p. 96 Chamfort: *Aphorismes*.
 p. 96 Given in Bailly's life by Laurent.
 p. 97 Fay: *op. cit.*
 p. 98 Vaissière: *Lettres d'Aristocrates*.
 p. 98, l. 37 Du Bled: *Les Causeurs de la Révolution*. Quoted in Dodeauville, *op. cit.*
 p. 99 See further 'Lafayette as Commercial Expert,' in *American Historical Review*, XXXVI, p. 561 and Chinard, *op. cit.*
 p. 99 St.-Priest: *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 235.
 p. 102 See Read: *Lafayette, Washington and the Protestants of France*.
 p. 105 Given in *Souvenirs et Fragments*: Bouillé (son).
 p. 105, l. 33 Dodeauville: *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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PART II, CHAPTER II

I have usually followed Madelin: *op. cit.* and Lavissee for the main events.

- p. 116, 117 See British Museum Pamphlets on the French Rev. (National Guard).
- p. 117 Walpole's Letters vol. XIV.
- p. 117 Marquis de Ferrieres. *Corrèspondance Inédite*, pp. 147, 203, 235, 391.
- p. 119 Laurent: *Bailly*.
- p. 120 *Mémoires de Saint-Priest*, II, p. 1-5.
- p. 120 Vaissière: *op. cit.*
- pp. 121-122 *Mémoires du Baron Thiébault*.
- p. 122 Sodernjelm: *op. cit.*, p. 135.
- p. 122 McNair Wilson: *Madame de Staël*.
- p. 124 Du L.: *Une Grande Chrétienne, Mme. Elisabeth de France*.

PART II, CHAPTER III

For this chapter, see especially: Loménie: *Les Mirabeau*. Bacourt: *Letters of Lamarck and Mirabeau*. Bradby: *Barnave*. Mcrris: *op. cit.* B.M. Pamphlets on Lafayette. Du L.: *op. cit.* Laurent: *op. cit.* Belloc: *Marie-Antoinette*.

- p. 132n Story given in Lameth: *Notes et Souvenirs*, p. 198.
- p. 134 *Mémoires sur la Rév. Fran.*, by Bouillé (father).

PART II, CHAPTER IV

- p. 140 Vaissière: *op. cit.*
- p. 142, l. 36 Thiébault: *op. cit.*
- p. 145 Thomas: *Lettres Inédites*, from the *Etude Psychologique*.
- p. 146 Vaissière: *op. cit.*
- p. 149 Du L.: *op. cit.*
- pp. 149, 150 Given in Laurent: *Bailly*.

PART II, CHAPTER V

See Bouillé (father): *op. cit.*

- p. 152 Quoted in Dodeauville: *Une Politique française au 19^{em} siècle*. p. 27.
- p. 154 Du L.: *op. cit.*
- p. 155 Duff Cooper: *Talleyrand*.
- p. 158 *Saint Priest*: *op. cit.*, II, pp. 91, 94.
- pp. 159-160 Bradby: *op. cit.*
- p. 160 Belloc: *Danton*, Chap. IV., and Appendix III.

PART II, CHAPTER VI

- p. 163-166 See Laurent, Belloc, Bradby: *op. cit.*
- p. 167, l. 12 Challamel: *Histoire-Musée de la République Française*.
- p. 169 Quoted in Cochin: *Louis-Philippe*, p. 83.

NOTES

PART II, CHAPTER VII

For the French army and the early fighting, I am especially indebted to Hartmann: *Les officiers de l'armée royale et la Révolution*; and R. Phipps: *The Armies of the First French Republic*.

p. 175 *Lettres de Marie-Antoinette*. Soc. d'hist. contemp.

p. 178ff See Belloc: *Last Days of the French Monarchy. Essay on Lafayette*. Belloc's indictment seems to me to be partly vitiated by his erroneous belief that Lafayette was Commander-in-Chief.

p. 182 *Lameth: op. cit.*, p. 135.

p. 182 *Vaissière: op. cit.*

pp. 182, 183 *Sodernjelm: op. cit.* and *Lettres de Marie-Antoinette*.

PART III, CHAPTER I

pp. 193, 194 Fay: *op. cit.*

p. 194 Hazen: *American Opinion of the French Revolution*, p. 263.

p. 195 D. Cooper: *op. cit.*

pp. 195, 196 Sichel: *op. cit.*

Lenôtre: *Jardin de Picpus*.

p. 200 Hazen: *op. cit.*, p. 264.

p. 200 *American Historical Association Report*, 1913, ii., p. 39n.

PART III, CHAPTER II

The letters of Lafayette in this chapter are mostly taken from Thomas: *Lettres Inédites*.

p. 207 Lameth: *Mémoires*, pp. 132-145.

PART III, CHAPTER III

Conversations of Lafayette and Napoleon are given in the *Mémoires*. Sichel: *op. cit.* has a charming chapter on the same subject.

p. 218, l. 15 Quoted in Whitlock: *op. cit.*, II, p. 127.

p. 218, l. 26 Quoted in Dodeauville: *op. cit.*, p. 36.

p. 221 Lenôtre: *op. cit.*

PART IV, CHAPTER I

See especially: Thiers: *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, Vol. 19 and 20.

p. 236 Lameth: *Mémoires*, p. 174.

p. 238 Morgan: *France*: II, p. 311. Sydney Lady Morgan was a well-known Irish novelist. She became a great admirer of Lafayette and a constant visitor at Lagrange.

p. 239 *Dictionnaire-Napoléon*: Hinard, p. 295, 296.

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PART IV, CHAPTER II

See: Weill: *Hist. du Parti; Républicain en France.*

- p. 241, 242 Morgan: *Passages from my autobiography.*
- p. 244 Quoted in Weill: *op. cit.* p. 4.
- p. 246 Schermerhorn: *op. cit.*, p. 310.
- p. 247 Morgan: *Passages from my autobiography.*
- p. 248 Roux: *La Restauration*, I, Chap. III.
- p. 250 Roux: *La Restauration*, II, Chap. IV.

PART IV, CHAPTER III

See in general: Le Vasseur: *Lafayette in America in 1824-1825.*
J. Foster of Portland U.S.: *A Sketch of General Lafayette's Tour on his Late visit to the United States.*

PART IV, CHAPTER IV

See especially: Roux: *La Restauration.* Blanc: *Histoire de Dix Ans.*
Thureau-Dangin: *Monarchie de Juillet.* Givard: *Les Trois Glorieuses.*

- p. 267 Lamennais: Lamennais et Vitrolles: *Correspondence*, p. 171.
- p. 269 Mme. de Chateaubriand. *Memoires et Lettres*, 128
- p. 270 Weill: *op. cit.*
- p. 273 *Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne*, pp. 261, 262.
- p. 274, l. 18 *Mémoires du Comte de Rambuteau.*

PART IV, CHAPTER V

See Lucas Dubreton: *Royauté Bourgeoise.*

- p. 280 l. 33 *Souvenirs du Général de Rumigny*, pp. 248, 249.
- pp. 281, 282 Quotations from Thureau-Dangin: *Monarchie de Juillet*, I, p. 130, 131.
- p. 283 Blanc: *op. cit.*, II, p. 220.
- p. 285 Blanc: *op. cit.*, II, Chap. VI.
- p. 286 B. Wilson: *The Paris Embassy.*

PART IV, CHAPTER VI

- p. 288 Weill: *op. cit.*, p. 77.
- p. 289 Beaumont in Nassau Senior's *Conversations.* Quoted in Soltau: *French Political Thought in the 19th century*, p. 57.
- p. 295 Lenôtre: *op. cit.*

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