

me to abandon. I will protect her to the last. Look upon us henceforth as inseparable, and rid us of your presence, lest I lose all self-command."

Grasping Astræa's hand, and controlling myself by a violent effort, I turned from him to lead her toward the house.

Perhaps it was this action which suddenly infuriated the demon, who now looked more horrible in the contortions of his unbridled rage than ever; and as I turned I felt, rather than saw, that he had coiled himself up to spring upon me. Relieving myself from her, I instantly faced him. His motions were as quick as light. One hand was upon my chest, and the other was fumbling under his cloak. Suspecting his intention, I seized his right arm and dragged it out. There was a pistol in his hand. It was not a time to exercise much forbearance in consideration of his physical inferiority, and by desperate force I wrenched the pistol from his grasp, and, tossing it over his head, flung it into the river. In the struggle, however, it had gone off, and, by the cry of pain he uttered, I concluded that he was wounded. But I was too much heated to think of that; and, in the fierceness of the conflict between us, I lifted him up by main strength, and flung him upon the ground.

Leaving him there, I hastened to Astræa, and we both went into the house, taking care to lock and bar the door, so that he could not follow us. The windows of the sitting-room went down close to the gravel-walk outside, upon which they opened. These were already secured, and we were safe.

As we sat there, half an hour afterward, a low, piteous voice came wailing through the shutters, uttering one word, which it repeated at intervals, in a tone that pierced me to the soul. "Astræa! Astræa! Astræa!" It was a voice so freighted with sorrow, that, had not evil passions intervened to shut our hearts to its petition, we must have relented and shown mercy to him out of whose despair it issued. But we held our breaths, hardly daring to look in each other's faces, and moved not!

God! all the long night that wailing voice seemed repeating, in fainter tones, "Astræa! Astræa! Astræa!" and she to whom it was addressed, and to whom it appealed in vain—let me not recall the memory! Many years have since trampled out other recollections, but that voice still seems to vibrate on my heart, and the name still surges up as I heard it then, sobbing through tears of mortal agony!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### MADAME DE GENLIS AND MADAME DE STAEL.\*

**B**EFORE the Revolution, I was but very slightly acquainted with Madame de Genlis, her conduct during that disastrous period having

\* This curious piece has recently appeared in the "Gazette de France," and has excited much remark. It is given out to be the production of Charles X. when Monsieur, and was communicated to M. Neycheus by the Marquis de la Roche Jaqueline.

not a little contributed to sink her in my estimation; and the publication of her novel, "The Knights of the Swan" (the *first* edition), completed my dislike to a person who had so cruelly aspersed the character of the queen, my sister-in-law.

On my return to France, I received a letter full of the most passionate expressions of loyalty from beginning to end; the missive being signed Comtesse de Genlis: but imagining this could be but a *plaisanterie* of some intimate friend of my own, I paid no attention whatever to it. However, in two or three days it was followed by a second epistle, complaining of my silence, and appealing to the great sacrifices the writer had made in the interest of my cause, as giving her a *right* to my favorable attention. Talleyrand being present, I asked him if he could explain this enigma.

"Nothing is easier," replied he; "Madame de Genlis is unique. She has lost her own memory, and fancies others have experienced a similar bereavement."

"She speaks," pursued I, "of her virtues, her misfortunes, and Napoleon's persecutions."

"Hem! In 1789 her husband was quite ruined, so the events of that period took nothing from him; and as to the tyranny of Bonaparte, it consisted, in the first place, of giving her a magnificent suite of apartments in the Arsenal; and in the second place, granting her a pension of six thousand francs a year, upon the sole condition of her keeping him every month *au courant* of the literature of the day."

"What shocking ferocity!" replied I, laughing; "a case of infamous despotism indeed. And this martyr to our cause asks to see me!"

"Yes; and pray let your royal highness grant her an audience, were it only for once: I assure you she is most amusing."

I followed the advice of M. de Talleyrand, and accorded to the lady the permission she so pathetically demanded. The evening before she was to present herself, however, came a third missive, recommending a certain Casimir, the *phénix* of the *époque*, and several other persons besides; all, according to Madame de Genlis, particularly celebrated people; and the postscript to this effusion prepared me also beforehand for the request she intended to make, of being appointed governess to the children of my son the Duc de Berry, who was at that time not even married.

Just at this period it so happened that I was besieged by more than a dozen persons of every rank in regard to Madame de Staël, formerly exiled by Bonaparte, and who had rushed to Paris without taking breath, fully persuaded every one there, and throughout all France, was impatient to see her again. Madame de Staël had a double view in thus introducing herself to me; namely, to direct my proceedings entirely, and to obtain payment of the two million francs deposited in the treasury by her father during his ministry. I confess I was not prepossessed in favor of Madame de Staël, for she also, in

1789, had manifested so much hatred toward the Bourbons, that I thought all she could possibly look to from us, was the liberty of living in Paris unmolested: but I little knew her. She, on her side, imagined that we ought to be grateful to her for having quarreled with Bonaparte—her own pride being, in fact, the sole cause of the rupture.

M. de Fontanes and M. de Châteaubriand were the first who mentioned her to me; and to the importance with which they treated the matter, I answered, laughing, "So Madame la Baronne de Staël is then a supreme power?"

"Indeed she is, and it might have very unfavorable effects did your royal highness overlook her: for what she asserts, every one believes, and then—she has suffered so much!"

"Very likely; but what did she make my poor sister-in-law the queen suffer? Do you think I can forget the abominable things she said, the falsehoods she told? and was it not in consequence of them, and the public's belief of them, that she owed the possibility of the embassadress of Sweden's being able to dare insult that unfortunate princess in her very palace?"

Madame de Staël's envoys, who manifested some confusion at the fidelity of my memory, implored me to forget the past, think only of the future, and remember that the genius of Madame de Staël, whose reputation was European, might be of the utmost advantage, or the reverse. Tired of disputing I yielded; consented to receive this *femme célèbre*, as they all called her, and fixed for her reception the same day I had notified to Madame de Genlis.

My brother has said, "Punctuality is the politeness of kings"—words as true and just as they are happily expressed; and the princes of my family have never been found wanting in good manners; so I was in my study waiting when Madame de Genlis was announced. I was astonished at the sight of a long, dry woman, with a swarthy complexion, dressed in a printed cotton gown, any thing but clean, and a shawl covered with dust, her habit-shirt, her hair even, bearing marks of great negligence. I had read her works, and remembering all she said about neatness, and cleanliness, and proper attention to one's dress, I thought she added another to the many who fail to add example to their precepts. While making these reflections, Madame de Genlis was firing off a volley of courtesies; and upon finishing what she deemed the requisite number, she pulled out of a great huge bag four manuscripts of enormous dimensions.

"I bring," commenced the lady, "to your royal highness what will amply repay any kindness you may show to me—No. 1 is a plan of conduct, and the project of a constitution; No. 2 contains a collection of speeches in answer to those likely to be addressed to Monsieur; No. 3, addresses and letters proper to send to foreign powers, the provinces, &c.; and in No. 4 Monsieur will find a plan of education, the only one

proper to be pursued by royalty, in reading which, your royal highness will feel as convinced of the extent of my acquisitions as of the purity of my loyalty."

Many in my place might have been angry; but, on the contrary, I thanked her with an air of polite sincerity for the treasures she was so obliging as to confide to me, and then consoled with her upon the misfortunes she had endured under the tyranny of Bonaparte.

"Alas! Monsieur, this abominable despot dared to make a mere plaything of me! and yet I strove, by wise advice, to guide him right, and teach him to regulate his conduct properly: but he would not be led. I even offered to mediate between him and the Pope, but he did not so much as answer me upon this subject; although (being a most profound theologian) I could have smoothed almost all difficulties when the Concordat was in question."

This last piece of pretension was almost too much for my gravity. However, I applauded the zeal of this new mother of the church, and was going to put an end to the interview, when it came into my head to ask her if she was well acquainted with Madame de Staël.

"God forbid!" cried she, making a sign of the cross: "I have no acquaintance with *such people*; and I but do my duty in warning those who have not perused the works of that lady, to bear in mind that they are written in the worst possible taste, and are also extremely immoral. Let your royal highness turn your thoughts from such books; you will find in mine all that is necessary to know. I suppose monsieur has not yet seen *Little Necker*?"

"Madame la Baronne de Staël Holstein has asked for an audience, and I even suspect she may be already arrived at the Tuileries."

"Let your royal highness beware of this woman! See in her the implacable enemy of the Bourbons, and in me their most devoted slave!"

This new proof of the want of memory in Madame de Genlis amused me as much as the other absurdities she had favored me with; and I was in the act of making her the ordinary salutations of adieu, when I observed her blush purple, and her proud rival entered.

The two ladies exchanged a haughty bow, and the comedy, which had just finished with the departure of Madame de Genlis, recommenced under a different form when Madame de Staël appeared on the stage. The baroness was dressed, not certainly dirtily, like the countess, but quite as absurdly. She wore a red satin gown, embroidered with flowers of gold and silk; a profusion of diamonds; rings enough to stock a pawnbroker's shop; and, I must add, that I never before saw so low a cut corsage display less inviting charms. Upon her head was a huge turban, constructed on the pattern of that worn by the Cumean sibyl, which put a finishing stroke to a costume so little in harmony with her style of face. I scarcely understand how a woman of genius *can* have such a

false, vulgar taste. Madame de Staël began by apologizing for occupying a few moments which she doubted not I should have preferred giving to Madame de Genlis. "She is one of the illustrations of the day," observed she with a sneering smile—"a colossus of religious faith, and represents in her person, she fancies, all the literature of the age. Ah, ah, monsieur, in the hands of *such people* the world would soon retrograde; while it should, on the contrary, be impelled forward, and your royal highness be the first to put yourself at the head of this great movement. To you should belong the glory of giving the impulse, guided by *my experience*."

"Come," thought I, "here is another going to plague me with plans of conduct, and constitutions, and reforms, which I am to persuade the king my brother to adopt. It seems to be an insanity in France this composing of new constitutions." While I was making these reflections, madame had time to give utterance to a thousand fine phrases, every one more sublime than the preceding. However, to put an end to them, I asked her if there was any thing she wished to demand.

"Ah, dear!—oh yes, prince!" replied the lady in an indifferent tone. "A mere trifle—less than nothing—two millions, without counting the interest at five per cent.; but these are matters I leave entirely to my men of business, being for my own part much more absorbed in politics and the science of government."

"Alas! madame, the king has arrived in France with his mind made up upon most subjects, the fruit of twenty-five years' meditation; and I fear he is not likely to profit by your good intentions!"

"Then so much the worse for him and for France! All the world knows what it cost Bonaparte his refusing to follow my advice, and pay me my two millions. I have studied the Revolution profoundly, followed it through all its phases, and I flatter myself I am the only pilot who can hold with one hand the rudder of the state, if at least I have Benjamin for steersman."

"Benjamin! Benjamin—who?" asked I, in surprise.

"It would give me the deepest distress," replied she, "to think that the name of M. le Baron de Rebecque Benjamin de Constant has never reached the ears of your royal highness. One of his ancestors saved the life of Henri Quatre. Devoted to the descendants of this good king, he is ready to serve them; and among several *constitutions* he has in his portfolio, you will probably find one with annotations and reflections by myself, which will suit you. Adopt it, and choose Benjamin Constant to carry out the idea."

It seemed like a thing resolved—an event decided upon—this proposal of inventing a constitution for us. I kept as long as I could upon the defensive; but Madame de Staël, carried away by her zeal and enthusiasm, instead of

speaking of what personally concerned herself, knocked me about with arguments, and crushed me under threats and menaces; so, tired to death of entertaining, instead of a clever, humble woman, a roaring politician in petticoats, I finished the audience, leaving her as little satisfied as myself with the interview. Madame de Genlis was ten times less disagreeable, and twenty times more amusing.

That same evening I had M. le Prince de Talleyrand with me, and I was confounded by hearing him say, "So your royal highness has made Madame de Staël completely quarrel with me now?"

"Me! I never so much as pronounced your name."

"Notwithstanding that, she is convinced that I am the person who prevents your royal highness from employing her in your political relations, and that I am jealous of Benjamin Constant. She is resolved on revenge."

"Ha, ha—and what can she do?"

"A very great deal of mischief, monseigneur. She has numerous partisans; and if she declares herself Bonapartiste, we must look to ourselves."

"That *would* be curious."

"Oh, I shall take upon myself to prevent her going so far; but she will be Royalist no longer, and we shall suffer from that."

At this time I had not the remotest idea what a mere man, still less a mere woman, could do in France; but now I understand it perfectly, and if Madame de Staël was living—Heaven pardon me!—I would strike up a flirtation with her.

#### THE TWO ROADS.

IT was New-Year's night. An aged man was standing at a window. He raised his mournful eyes toward the deep-blue sky, where the stars were floating, like white lilies, on the surface of a clear, calm lake. Then he cast them on the earth, where few more hopeless beings than himself now moved toward their certain goal—the tomb. Already he had passed sixty of the stages which lead to it, and he had brought from his journey nothing but errors and remorse. His health was destroyed, his mind vacant, his heart sorrowful, and his old age devoid of comfort. The days of his youth rose up in a vision before him, and he recalled the solemn moment, when his father had placed him at the entrance of two roads, one leading into a peaceful, sunny land, covered with a fertile harvest, and resounding with soft, sweet songs; while the other conducted the wanderer into a deep, dark cave, whence there was no issue, where poison flowed instead of water, and where serpents hissed and crawled.

He looked toward the sky, and cried out in his agony, "O youth, return! O my father, place me once more at the entrance to life, that I may choose the better way!"

But the days of his youth and his father had both passed away. He saw wandering lights