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## LAUSANNE

*UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME*

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**LAUSANNE CATHEDRAL FROM MONTBENON**

# LAUSANNE

PAINTED BY  
J. HARDWICKE LEWIS &  
MAY HARDWICKE LEWIS

DESCRIBED BY  
FRANCIS GRIBBLE



LONDON  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK  
1909

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## CHAPTER I THE RULE OF SAVOY AND BERNE

Though Lausanne is so near Geneva, its history, in historical times, has been widely different from that of the neighbouring town. Geneva enjoyed a modified independence from an early date, and became completely independent early in the sixteenth century. Lausanne, until nearly 300 years later, endured the domination, first of Savoy, and subsequently of Berne.

The early history is obscure and full of vexed questions as well as unfamiliar names; but the central fact is that the Counts of Savoy—they were not promoted to be Dukes of Savoy until later—took possession of the Canton of Vaud, as well as of the Chablais and the lower Valais, after the death of the last of the Zaeringen, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. For the next 300 years they exercised overlordship, limited by the charters of the towns, and, in the case of Lausanne, by the jurisdiction of the Bishop—a complicated state of things which the Swiss historical societies may be left to unravel. [2]

It seems clear, however, that the Savoyards were no hard taskmasters. 'The country of Vaud,' says its historian, Louis Vulliemin, 'was happy and proud to belong to them. They exacted little from it, and accorded it their powerful protection. The various States used to assemble at Moudon, the central town, summoned by the Council of Moudon, or by the Governor of Vaud, acting as the representative of the Prince. There was no palace. They met in an inn, or in the house of one of the citizens of the neighbourhood. Often they assembled in such small numbers that, for lack of a quorum, no decision could be taken.... No burdensome or unduly progressive measures were adopted. As a rule, the good old customs were confirmed. When a departure from them was resolved upon, it became law by receiving the sanction of the Prince. The business of the herald was to see that it was proclaimed, in the proper places, in a loud and intelligible voice. The Prince had sworn an oath to impose no new legislation that was not in accordance with the will of the nation as expressed by the estates of the realm.'

The most notable of the Governors was Peter of Savoy—the same Peter of Savoy whom we meet in English history, fighting in the civil wars of the days of Simon de Montfort. His headquarters were in the Castle of Chillon, where he not only dispensed justice, but also amended the criminal law. It was the barbarous rule of the time that an offender who had been fined for a misdemeanour should have his nose cut off if he were unable to pay; Peter compelled even the Bishops to abandon that cruel custom. For the rest, to quote Vulliemin: [3]

'He received his vassals in the great hall of the Castle, where their coats of arms hung on the wall around that of the House of Savoy. The blowing of a horn announced that the meal was served. The ladies arrived in their emblazoned best. The chaplain read the grace from a volume bound in violet and gold—the precious depository of Divine law and ecclesiastical ritual. After the feast came the hour of merry recreations. The Court fool and the minstrels took their seats by the side of the Prince, and the nobility thus passed their lives in junketing.'

This is the same writer's picture of the lives of the burghers:

'At Lausanne the three estates met in the month of May. In 1398 they submitted to a fresh drafting of the "Plaid général," which defined the respective rights of bishop, canons, and burghers. Three days were devoted to the hearing of suits. On the fourth day the Plaid, [4]

accompanied by elders, went the round of the streets, and ordered the necessary repairs. All the citizens were required to follow, carrying axes or stakes, so as to be able to lend a hand when required. The Bishop regaled the artificers with bread, wine, and eggs. In return, the blacksmiths had to shoe his horses, the saddlers to provide him with spurs and bridles, and the coachbuilders to supply him with a carriage. Three times a year the Seneschal passed in front of the cobblers' shops, and touched with his rod the pair of boots which he selected for his lordship. In time of war the prelate's army had to serve the Prince for a day and a night without pay, and as much longer as they might be wanted for wages. The Bishop's business was to ransom prisoners, protect the citizens from all injustice, and go to war on their behalf if necessary.



#### **MONT BLANC FROM ABOVE MORGES**

'Each district of the town had its special privileges. The fine for assault and battery was sixty livres in the city where the Bishop resided, sixty sous in the lower town, and only three sous outside the walls. The Bishop could not arrest a citizen without informing the burghers, or hold an inquest on the body of a dead man. The citizens of the Rue de la Bourg sat in judgment on criminals without assessors. Whenever they heard the summons, though they might be at the dinner-table, glass in hand, or in their shops measuring their cloth, they had to run off and give their opinion on the case. In return, they were exempt from certain taxes, had the sole right of placing hucksters' barrows in front of their shops, of using signboards, and of keeping inns.'

[5]

It was the Reformation that terminated this primitive state of affairs. A succession of weak Governors had allowed the hold of the Dukes of Savoy over the country to be relaxed. It was impossible for them to maintain their authority when the people were indoctrinated with the new ideas. The end came when the Duke of Savoy threatened Geneva, and the Bernese marched through Vaud to the rescue, captured Chillon, delivered Bonivard, and kept the Canton for their reward.

From the capture of Chillon onwards, Lausanne, like the rest of Vaud, was a Bernese dependency. Bernese governors (or baillis) were established in all the strong places, and Protestantism became the national religion.

[6]

The conversion of the inhabitants was chiefly effected by Viret, a tailor's son, from Orbe, an excellent man, and a persuasive rather than an eloquent speaker. In 1536, after the fashion of the times, he, Calvin, and Farel challenged the Catholic theologians to a great debate. The monks, recognizing him as a formidable antagonist, had previously tried to get rid of him by surreptitious means. One of them had assaulted him at Payerne, and another had attempted to poison him at Geneva. At Lausanne they were obliged to argue with him, and failed still more conspicuously. The argument lasted for a week, and, at the end of the week, the populace, considering that the Protestant case was proved, proceeded to the cathedral to desecrate the altars and smash the images, while the governors confiscated the Church property and offered it for sale. 'It was thus,' writes Vulliemin, 'that Jost de Diesbach bought the church and vicarage of St. Christophe in order to turn the one into a baking house and the other into a country seat, and that Michel Augsburgberger transformed the ancient church of Baulmes into a stable for his cattle.'

At the same time a disciplinary tribunal, somewhat on the lines of Calvin's theocracy at Geneva, was instituted to supervise the morals of the citizens; and absence from church was made punishable by fine, imprisonment, or banishment. Viret, it is true, was driven to resign his pastorate and leave Lausanne, because he was not allowed to refuse the Holy Communion to notorious evil-livers, and fifty other pastors followed his example; but the pastors who remained drafted a new moral code of sufficient severity, consisting, in the main, of a gloss upon each of the Ten Commandments, giving a list of the offences which it must be understood, for the future, to prohibit. Under the heading of Seventh Commandment, for example, it was written: 'This

[7]



forbids fornication, drunkenness, baptismal and burial banquets, pride, dancing, and the use of tobacco and snuff.'

A number of Sumptuary Laws were also adopted, to check the spread of luxury; and here again we cannot do better than quote Vulliemin:

'The regulations prescribed the dress materials which each class of society might wear, and permitted none but the nobility to appear in gold-embroidered stuffs, brocades, collars of Paris point lace, and lace-embellished shoes. The women of the middle classes were forbidden to wear caps costing more than ten crowns, or any sort of false hair, or more than one petticoat at a time. One regulation settled the size of men's wigs, and another determined how low a lady's bodice might be cut. There was a continual battle between authority and fashion, and fashion was always contriving to evade the law. The purpose of the magistracy was not only to maintain the privileges of the upper classes, but also to fortify domestic morality against the imperious demands of vanity. A special government department was instituted to stop the use of tobacco. The baillis alone considered that the law did not apply to them; but one day, when one of these officials opened his snuff-box in church, the preacher interrupted him. "Here," he said, "one only snuffs the Word of God." Above all things, however, morality was the object of the jealous care of the magistrates of Vaud. So it was with an outburst of holy wrath that they heard that there was at Vevey "a dancing master, a Catholic, whose presence caused great scandals, at balls, in the evenings, between the two sexes." The stranger was banished, and the town was censured for its criminal toleration.'

[8]



**MORGES AND THE LAKE FROM THE ROAD TO VUFFLENS**

Such was the régime, and though, in externals, it resembled the régime at Geneva, there was one very significant difference. The Genevan discipline was self-imposed, and at least expressed the will of a working majority of the people. The Lausanne discipline represented the will of a conqueror imposed upon a subject race, and the conqueror had a rough and heavy hand, and rigorously excluded the subject people from participation in public affairs. The consequences can be traced in their history, habits, and manners.

[9]

There was one poor feeble attempt at revolt. A certain Major Davel, after whom one of the steamboats on the lake is called—a Pietist, and perhaps a religious maniac—a soldier of fortune, whose merits had attracted the attention of such good judges as the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugène, mustered the militia of Cully and marched into Lausanne, declaring that he had come to set the Canton free. Asked for explanations, he replied that he had been guided by direct inspiration from on high. The defence did not save him, and he perished on the scaffold in 1723. The revolution at which he aimed was not to be accomplished for another eighty years, and the event constitutes almost the whole of the political history of Lausanne during the period under review.

[10]

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **EMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRANTS**

[11]

Forbidden to seek careers at home, most of the aristocracy of Vaud went abroad to pursue fortune in the service of some foreign Power. There was always a good opening for them, whether as mercenary soldiers or as instructors of the young, and many of them achieved distinction and rose to high positions. Haldimand of Yverdon became a Lieutenant-General in the British Army and Governor of Canada. Réverdil of Nyon was first tutor to Christian VII. of

Denmark, and afterwards his secretary. Amédée de Laharpe was one of Napoleon's generals; the only General, it is said, in the Army of Italy, who was not guilty of rapacity and extortion. Frédéric César de Laharpe held high office under Alexander I. of Russia; Dupuget of Yverdon was the tutor of the Russian Grand Dukes Nicolas and Michael; J. J. Cart was with Admiral Hood in America; Glayre became Polish Minister at St. Petersburg; Pache became Mayor of Paris; the list could be almost indefinitely extended. [12]

Most of these emigrants, moreover, suffered from the nostalgia which is characteristic of the Swiss. It was not enough for them to come home to die; they liked to return in middle age, and spend at home the money which they had earned abroad. And when they did return, they had, of course, no longer the homely wits of the home-keeping youths. They were men of experience, men of the world, men of polished manners and cosmopolitan culture. Their presence gave a new and a broader tone to Lausanne society. They were not to be driven to church like a flock of sheep, or forbidden to go to the theatre like a pack of schoolboys, or stood in the pillory for playing cards, or told by the preachers what they should eat or wherewithal they should be clothed. So far as they were concerned the discipline of the Consistory broke down, and the Sumptuary Laws did not apply to them. Their example liberalized even the clergy. They insisted upon making Lausanne a pleasant place to live in. Strangers found out that it was pleasant, and came to settle there in large numbers. There was already a foreign colony in Lausanne from quite an early date in the eighteenth century. [13]



**CHÂTEAU DE VUFFLENS, ABOVE LAUSANNE**

Geneva had had its foreign colonists from a still earlier date, but they were exiles—Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, John Knox, John Bodley, William Whittingham, and others, who fled abroad to escape persecution by the Bloody Mary. With one accord they thanked their hosts for the hospitality bestowed upon them, and departed as soon as the accession of Elizabeth made it safe for them to do so. Some of the foreigners at Lausanne were also exiles, it is true, but hardly for conscience' sake, the opinions which had got them into trouble being more often political than religious. But they selected Lausanne as their place of residence because they liked it—not because it was a 'perfect school of Christ,' but because the site and the society were agreeable.

Voltaire himself lived there for a little while before he settled down at Ferney, and encountered no theological objection to the theatrical performances which he organized. Gibbon, who was there at the time, living in the house of Pastor Pavilliard, declared that the entertainments, to which he was sometimes invited, 'refined in a visible degree the manners of Lausanne';<sup>[1]</sup> and the philosopher himself paid a tribute to those manners in a letter to D'Alembert, in which he wrote: [14]  
'All the amenities of society and sound philosophy have found their way into the part of Switzerland in which the climate is most agreeable and wealth abounds. The people here have succeeded in grafting the politeness of Athens upon the simplicity of Sparta.'

---

### **CHAPTER III GIBBON**

Voltaire belongs to Geneva rather than to Lausanne. The most distinguished of the strangers upon whom Lausanne has an exclusive claim is Gibbon.

He was sent there, in the first instance, as a punishment for having embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and was lodged in the house of M. Pavilliard, a Calvinistic minister, whose



instructions were to educate his pupil if possible, but to convert him at all costs. The desired conversion was effected, though it was more thorough than had been intended. Gibbon was persuaded to receive the Sacrament from a Protestant pastor, but never troubled himself with religion afterwards except in the capacity of historian. But, though he was at first treated like a schoolboy, and consoled himself for the loss of his liberty by getting drunk, he soon fell in love with the town—'Fanny Lausanne,' as he called it in a letter—and also fell in love with Mademoiselle Suzanne Curchod. That is one of the most famous of all literary love-stories, and one may properly pause here to relate it at length. [16]

Mademoiselle Curchod was the daughter of a country clergyman—very well educated, very beautiful, and very generally admired. Her earliest admirers were, naturally, the rising young ministers of the Gospel.<sup>[2]</sup> It amused her to invite them to sign documents, composed in playful imitation of legal contracts, binding themselves 'to come and preach at Crassier as often as she required, without waiting to be solicited, pressed, or entreated, seeing that the greatest of their pleasures was to oblige her on every possible occasion.' Her female friends, hearing of this, wrote to her expressing their disapproval, and strongly advising her to turn the preachers out of the house as soon as they had finished their sermons; but there is no evidence that she acted on their advice.



**THE SPIRES OF ST. FRANÇOIS,  
LAUSANNE**

Visiting Lausanne, she extended the circle of her admirers. Her bright intelligence enabled her to shine as a member of a certain Société du Printemps, and also of a certain Académie des Eaux—a debating club given to the discussion of such problems as 'Does an element of mystery really make love more agreeable?' or 'Can there be friendship between a man and a woman in the same sense as between two women or two men?' Her conduct in this connection was such that her friends warned her that her desire to make herself agreeable to young men was too clearly advertised; but it does not appear that the warning made any impression on her. At all events, she was very successful in making herself agreeable to Gibbon, then a lad about eighteen years of age. 'Saw Mademoiselle Curchod. Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori,' is one of the early entries in his diary; and we have a picture of Gibbon, at about the same date, from Mademoiselle Curchod's own pen. In middle age—as we can see from his portraits—he was an ugly, ungainly, podgy little man; but it is not thus that he appears in the portrait drawn by the woman who loved him. [17]

'He has beautiful hair,' Mademoiselle Curchod writes, 'a pretty hand, and the air of a man of rank. His face is so intellectual and strange that I know no one like him. It has so much expression that one is always finding something new in it. His gestures are so appropriate that they add much to his speech. In a word, he has one of those extraordinary faces that one never tires of trying to depict. He knows the respect that is due to women. His courtesy is easy without verging on familiarity. He dances moderately well.' [18]

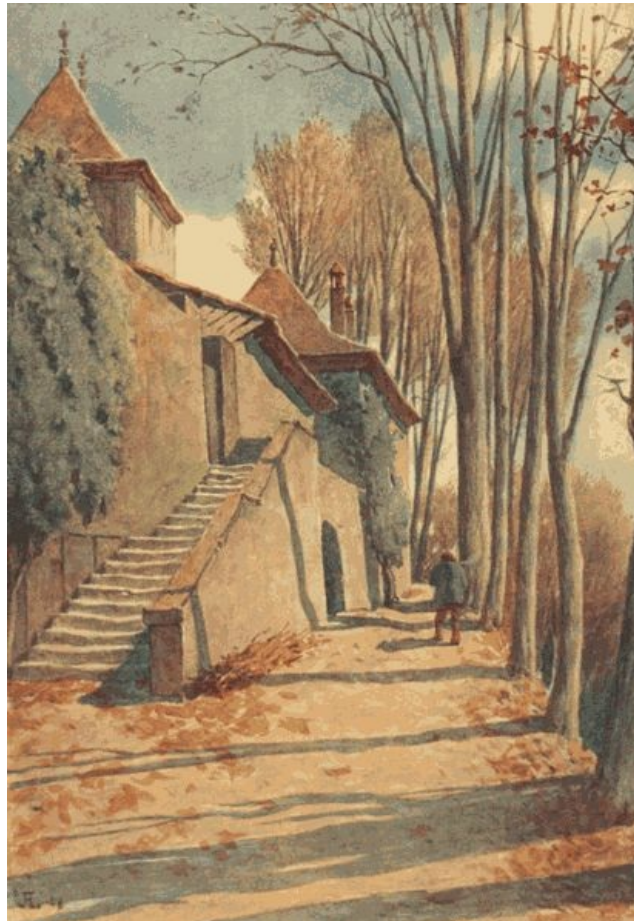
So these two naturally—and rightly and properly—fell in love; they must have seemed each other's ideal complements, if ever lovers were. But they were not to marry. The story of their attachment, their separation, and their subsequent Platonic friendship is one of the romances of literature. Gibbon himself has told the story in one of the most frequently quoted passages of his autobiography. His version of it is inexact and misleading; but it must be quoted, if only in order that it may be criticized:

'I need not blush,' he writes, 'at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod were embellished by the virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was respectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content with a small salary and laborious duty in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village he bestowed a liberal, and even learned, education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages; and in her short visits to some relations at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honourably encouraged the connection. In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity; but on my return to England I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that, without his consent, I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem.'

[19]

[20]

Such is Gibbon's story, which is also the accepted story. It is, perhaps, a palliation of its inaccuracies that, at the time when he wrote it down, he and Mademoiselle Curchod—then Madame Necker—were on such pleasant terms of friendship that neither of them cared to remember or be reminded that either had ever treated the other badly. We shall come to that matter presently; here it is proper that the inaccuracies should be noted.



### CHÂTEAU DE PRANGINS

THE STEPS BY WHICH JOSEPH BUONAPARTE ESCAPED IN  
1815

Gibbon's story, it will be observed, gives us the impression that, on getting home, he lost no time

in opening his heart to his father, and, having done this, lost no further time in acquainting Mademoiselle Curchod with his father's views. M. d'Haussonville tells us that he left Lausanne in 1758, kept Mademoiselle Curchod waiting four years for a letter,<sup>[3]</sup> and then in 1762 sat down and wrote, breaking off the engagement. One shrinks from the attempt to picture the feelings of the poor girl who, after enduring suspense, and trying to frame excuses for silence, broke the seal of the long-expected missive, only to read:

[21]

'I do not know how to begin this letter. Yet begin it I must. I take up my pen, I drop it, I resume it. This commencement shows you what it is that I am about to say. Spare me the rest. Yes, Mademoiselle, I must renounce you for ever. The sentence is passed; my heart laments it; but, in the presence of my duty, every other consideration must be silent....

'My father spoke of the cruelty of deserting him, and of sending him prematurely to his grave, of the cowardice of trampling underfoot my duty to my country. I withdrew to my room and remained there for two hours. I will not attempt to picture to you my state of mind. But I left my room to tell my father that I agreed to sacrifice to him the happiness of my life.

'Mademoiselle, may you be happier than I can ever hope to be! This will always be my prayer; this will even be my consolation.... Assure M. and Madame Curchod of my respect, my esteem, and my regrets. Good-bye. I shall always remember Mademoiselle Curchod as the most worthy, the most charming, of women. May she not entirely forget a man who does not deserve the despair to which he is a prey.'

[22]

Even this, however, was not the end of the story, though one would think it was if one had only Gibbon's narrative to go by. In 1763 he revisited Lausanne, and his own story of his sojourn does not so much as mention Mademoiselle Curchod's name. One would gather from it either that he did not see her, or that love had already on both sides 'subsided in friendship and esteem.' But when the Vicomte d'Haussonville was given access to the archives of the Necker family, he found letters proving that this was not by any means the case.

Mademoiselle Curchod's father was then dead, and she was living at Geneva, supporting her mother by teaching. Some of her friends—notably Pastor Moulton—tried to bring Gibbon to a sense of the obligations which they felt he owed to her. Rousseau was brought into the business, and expressed an opinion which led Gibbon to retort, 'That extraordinary man, whom I admire and pity, should have been less precipitate in condemning the moral character and conduct of a stranger.' It is useless, however, to try to piece the whole story together—the materials are inadequate. One can only take the letters which the Vicomte d'Haussonville has published, and which, as he points out, are by no means the whole of the correspondence, and see what sidelights they throw upon it.

[23]

First we have one of Mademoiselle Curchod's letters. Whether she wrote it because she had met Gibbon and found his manner towards her changed, or was perplexed and troubled because he had not sought a meeting, we have no means of knowing. But it is quite clear that she wrote it under the sense of having been treated badly.

'For five years,' she writes, 'I have, by my unique and, indeed, inconceivable behaviour, done sacrifice to this chimera. At last my heart, romantic as it is, has been convinced of my mistake. I ask you, on my knees, to dissuade me from my madness in loving you. Subscribe the full confession of your indifference, and my soul will adapt itself to the changed conditions; certainty will bring me the tranquillity for which I sigh. You will be the most contemptible of men if you refuse to be frank with me. God will punish you, in spite of my prayers, if there is the least hypocrisy in your reply.'

[24]

The reply is lost. Mademoiselle Curchod presumably destroyed it because it pained her. Apparently it contained a proposal of Platonic friendship as a substitute for love. At all events, Mademoiselle Curchod's answer seems to accept that situation, whether with ulterior designs or not, for it begins:

'What is fortune to me? Besides, it is not to you that I have sacrificed it, but to an imaginary being which will never exist elsewhere than in a silly, romantic head like mine. From the moment when your letter disillusioned me, you resumed your place, in my eyes, on the same footing as other men; and, after being the only man whom I could love, you have become one of those to whom I feel the least drawn, because you are the one that bears the least resemblance to my chimerical ideal.... Follow out the plan that you propose, place your attachment for me on the same footing as that of my other friends, and you will find me as confiding, as tender, and, at the same time, as indifferent as I am to them.'

[25]

And the writer proceeds to take up the Platonic position at once, to criticize Gibbon's first essay in literature, to offer him useful introductions, and to ask him to advise her whether she would be likely to be well treated if she took a situation as 'lady companion' in England.

Even in this Platonic correspondence, however, Gibbon, with a prudence beyond his years, seems to have scented danger.

'Mademoiselle,' he wrote, 'must you be for ever pressing upon me a happiness which sound reason compels me to decline? I have forfeited your love. Your friendship is left to me, and it bestows so much honour upon me that I cannot hesitate. I accept it, mademoiselle, as a precious offering in exchange for my own friendship, which is already yours, and as a blessing of which I know the value too well to be disposed to lose it.

'But this correspondence, mademoiselle, I am sensible of the pleasures which it brings me, but, at the same time, I am conscious of its dangers. I feel the dangers that it has for me; I fear the



dangers that it may have for both of us. Permit me to avoid those dangers by my silence. Forgive my fears, mademoiselle; they have their origin in my esteem for you.' [26]

And he proceeded to answer her questions concerning the position and prospects of 'lady companions' in England, expecting, no doubt, that he would hear no more from her.

Even then, however, the story was not ended. The most passionate of Mademoiselle Curchod's letters bears a later date. It is the letter of a woman who feels that she has been treated shamefully. If it were not that Mademoiselle Curchod made a happy marriage so very soon afterwards, one would also say that it was the letter of a woman whose heart was broken. One gathers from it that, while Mademoiselle Curchod appreciated Gibbon's difficulty in marrying her while he was dependent upon his father, she was willing to wait for him until his father's death should leave him free to follow the impulse of his heart. In the meantime she reproaches him for having caused her to reject other offers of marriage, and protests that it is not true, whatever calumnious gossips may have said, that, in Gibbon's absence, she has flirted with other men. Above all, she protests that she has not flirted with Gibbon's great friend, M. Deyverdun. Her last words are:

'I am treating you as an honest man of the world, who is incapable of breaking his promise, of seduction, or of treachery, but who has, instead of that, amused himself in racking my heart with tortures, well prepared, and well carried into effect. I will not threaten you, therefore, with the wrath of heaven—the expression that escaped from me in my first emotion. But I assure you, without laying any claim to the gift of prophecy, that you will one day regret the irreparable loss that you have incurred in alienating for ever the too frank and tender heart of

'S. C.'



**LAUSANNE, LOOKING EAST**

The rest is silence; and the presumption is strong that these were actually the last words which sealed the estrangement. If it were not for Mademoiselle Curchod's subsequent attitude towards him, one would be bound to say that Gibbon behaved abominably. But, as we shall see presently, her resentment was not enduring. Perhaps she was aware of extenuating circumstances that we do not know of. Perhaps, in her heart of hearts, she was conscious of having spread her net to catch a husband who then seemed a very brilliant match to the daughter of the country clergyman. The letter of the friend who begged her not to advertise so clearly her desire to make herself agreeable to men would certainly lend some colour to the suggestion. At any rate, since she herself forgave Gibbon, it seems unfair for anyone else to press the case against him. [28]

It was nearly twenty years later—in 1783—that Gibbon decided to make Lausanne his home.

A good deal of water had flowed under the bridge in the meantime. He had written, and published, half of his History; and that half had sufficed to make him famous. He had been an officer in the militia and a Member of Parliament. He had been a constant figure in fashionable society, and an occasional figure in literary society; a fellow-member with Charles James Fox of Boodle's, White's, and Brooks's; a fellow-member of the Literary Club with Johnson, Burke, Adam Smith, Oliver Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Joseph Banks. He had held office in the department of the Board of Trade, and lost it at the time of the coalition between Fox and North. His applications for employment in the Diplomatic Service—whether as Secretary to the Embassy at Paris or as Minister Plenipotentiary at Berne—had been politely rejected. And he had become a middle-aged bachelor whose income, unless supplemented by the emoluments of some public office, hardly sufficed for the demands of his social position. [29]

In these circumstances it occurred to him to propose to his friend, M. Deyverdun—the same M. Deyverdun with whom Mademoiselle Curchod vowed that she had never flirted—that they should keep house together at Lausanne. M. Deyverdun, who was like himself a confirmed bachelor of moderate means, and had a larger house than he wanted, was delighted with the proposal. All Gibbon's friends and relatives told him that he was making a fool of himself; but he knew better. He sold all his property, except his library, and 'bade a long farewell to the *fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ*.' His first winter, as he puts it in his delightful style, 'was given to a general embrace without nice discrimination of persons and characters.' The comprehensive embrace completed, he settled down to work.

His life at Lausanne is faithfully mirrored in his letters, more particularly in his letters to Lord Sheffield. It was at once a luxurious and an industrious life. One fact which stands out clearly is that Gibbon took no exercise. He boasts that, in a period of five years, he never moved five miles from Lausanne; he apologizes for a corpulence which makes it absolutely impossible for him to cross the Great Saint Bernard; he admits that, when he entertained Mr. Fox, he did not go for walks with that statesman, but hired a guide to do so on his behalf. He also drank a great deal of Madeira and Malvoisie. His letters to Lord Sheffield are full of appeals for pipes of these exhilarating beverages. He declares that they are necessary for the preservation of his health, and appears to have persuaded himself that they were good for gout. The consequence was that he had several severe attacks of that distressing malady. [30]

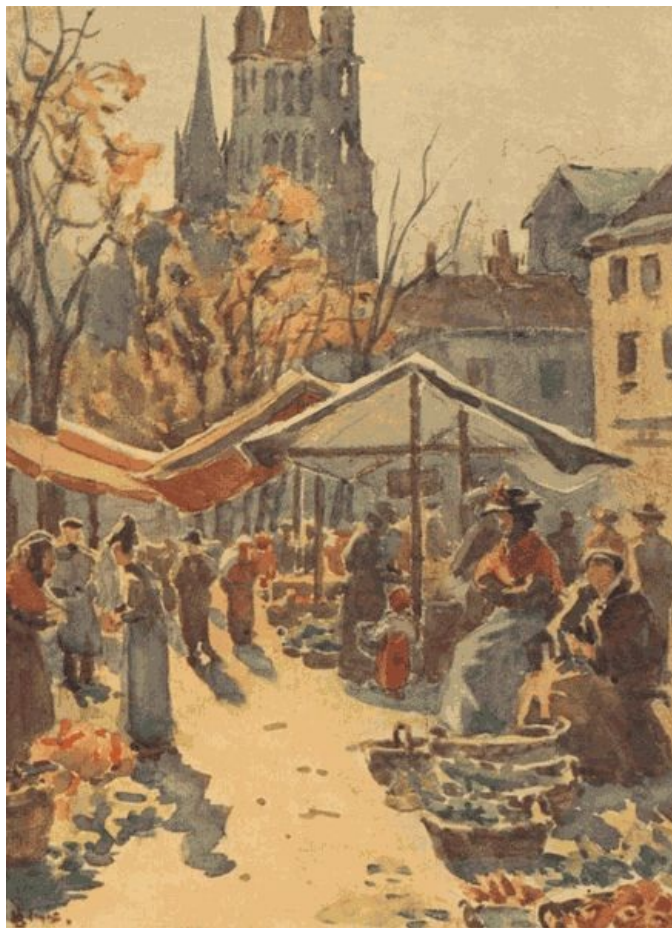
Gout or no gout, however, he freely enjoyed the relaxation of social intercourse. He was never tired of pointing out to his correspondents that, whereas in London he was nobody in particular, in Lausanne he was a leader of society. His position there was, in fact, similar in many ways to that of Voltaire at Geneva; though he differed from Voltaire in always keeping on good terms with all his neighbours. To be invited to his parties was no less a mark of distinction than it had been, a generation earlier, to be invited to the philosopher's parties at Ferney. One of the letters tells us how he gave a ball, and stole away to bed at 2 a.m., leaving the young people, his guests, to keep it up till after sunrise. He also gave frequent dinners, and still more frequent card-parties. When the gout was very bad, he gave card-parties in his bedroom. [31]

Distinguished strangers often came to see him, and gave Lausanne the tone of a fashionable resort. 'You talk of Lausanne,' he writes, 'as a place of retirement, yet, from the situation and freedom of the Pays de Vaud, all nations, and all extraordinary characters are astonished to meet each other. The Abbé Raynal, the great Gibbon, and Mercier, author of the "Tableau de Paris," have been in the same room. The other day the Prince and Princesse de Ligne, the Duke and Duchess d'Ursel, etc., came from Brussels on purpose to act a comedy.' And again: 'A few weeks ago, as I was walking on our terrace with M. Tissot, the celebrated physician; M. Mercier, the author of the "Tableau de Paris"; the Abbé Raynal; Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle Necker; the Abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Lewis the Fifteenth; the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, and a dozen Counts, Barons, and extraordinary persons,' etc.

From time to time he faced the question whether it would be well to marry. Madame Necker dissuaded him from the adventure on the ground that in order to marry happily it is necessary to marry young. It is not certain that her advice was disinterested, but it was good advice to give to a man who, after expressing his readiness to adopt 'some expedient, even the most desperate, to secure the domestic society of a female companion,' summed up his sentiments upon the subject in this candid language: [32]

'I am not in love with any of the hyænas of Lausanne, though there are some who keep their claws tolerably well pared. Sometimes, in a solitary mood, I have fancied myself married to one or another of those whose society and conversation are the most pleasing to me; but when I have painted in my fancy all the probable consequences of such a union, I have started from my dream, rejoiced in my escape, and ejaculated a thanksgiving that I was still in possession of my natural freedom.'





**THE MARKET-PLACE, LAUSANNE**

This, however, was not written until after the History was finished. Gibbon never felt the need of a female companion so long as he had his work to occupy him. The fact that he began to feel it acutely as soon as ever the work was done gives an added pathos to this, the most famous and the most frequently quoted passage of his memoirs:

[33]

'I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all Nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.'

The life of the historian was, in fact, destined to last only for another six years—years in which he sometimes was desperately anxious to relieve his loneliness, aggravated by the death of Deyverdun, by seeking 'the domestic society of a female companion,' but inclined, on the whole, to the opinion encouraged by Madame Necker, that the remedy would be worse than the disease. We probably shall not be wrong in conjecturing that the pleasure which he derived from Madame Necker's correspondence and society assisted him in coming to this decision. At any rate, we must admit that there are few literary romances more remarkable than this story, of the renewal of love some thirty years or so after a lovers' quarrel.

[34]

The lovers parted, as we have seen, with high-strung feelings—at least upon the lady's side. They met again soon after Mademoiselle Curchod had accepted the heart and hand of Jacques Necker, the rich Parisian banker, destined to become Louis XVI.'s Minister of Finance. Gibbon, coming to Paris, called, and was well received. We have accounts of the visit from both of them. Madame Necker says that her vanity was flattered because Gibbon appeared to be dazzled by the contemplation of her wealth. Gibbon complains that he was not taken very seriously, that M. Necker invited him to supper every evening, and went to bed, leaving him alone with his wife. The philosopher Balzac would have called him a fool, and classed him with the *prédestinés*; but it does not appear that scandal, or occasion for scandal, or anything worse than the interchange of sentimental *persiflage*, resulted.

[35]

A gap in the history of their friendship follows, but in 1776 we find the Neckers visiting Gibbon in Bentinck Street. Gibbon writes patronizingly of the husband as 'a sensible, good-natured creature,' and of the wife he says: 'I live with her just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple, reasonable Suisse.''

We need not interpret this statement *au pied de la lettre*, but the visit certainly marks a stage in the story of their intimacy. Gibbon went to see the Neckers in Paris in the following year, and

after his return to London Madame du Deffand told him how she had talked to Madame Necker about him. 'We talked of M. Gibbon. Of what else? Of M. Gibbon—continually of M. Gibbon.' And Madame Necker herself wrote, at about the same time, with reference to the publication of the first volumes of 'The Decline and Fall':

'Wherever I go your books shall follow me, and give me pleasure and happiness. If you write, too, your letters will be welcome and appreciated. If you do not write ... but I refuse to contemplate this painful possibility.' [36]

Gibbon's migration to Lausanne and the Neckers' purchase of their famous country seat at Coppet united them by still closer ties, and one cannot help noticing that at this period of their lives—when they were both something over fifty years of age—Madame Necker's letters to Gibbon became at once more frequent and more affectionate. Some of those letters, indeed, can only be distinguished from love-letters by reading into them our knowledge of Madame Necker's reputation for propriety. We have seen her dissuading Gibbon from marriage on the ground that to marry late is to marry unhappily. Another reason which she gives is that 'without a miracle it would be impossible to find a woman worthy of you.' Of a contemplated visit to Lausanne she says: 'I am looking forward with a delightful sentiment to the day I am to pass with you.' And afterwards:

'Returning here, and finding only the tombs of those I loved so well, I found you, as it were, a solitary tree whose shade still covers the desert which separates me from the first years of my life.'

And in another letter, more sentimental still, we read:

[37]

'Come back to us when you are free. The moment of your leisure ought always to belong to her who has been *your first love and your last*. I cannot make up my mind which of these titles is the sweeter and the dearer to my heart.'

What are we to make of it all? Nothing, assuredly, that entitles us to cast a stone at Madame Necker, or to express for her husband a pity which he never felt for himself. Yet one imagines that after M. Necker, who kept such early hours, had retired to his well-earned repose, there must sometimes have been certain sentimental communings, in which the old note of *persiflage* was no longer to be heard. One listens in fancy to the regrets of these two who never forgot that they had once been lovers—regrets, no doubt, not openly expressed, but only coyly hinted—for the things that might have been.

The regrets, we may take it, were tempered by the lurking consciousness that things were really better as they were. The lovers must have known that, if they had married on nothing a year, the one would never have written his history and the other would never have had her salon, but they would have been two struggling nonentities whom the world would never have heard of. They must have felt, too, that the success in life which they had achieved separately, but could not possibly have achieved together, had meant much to them: that in winning it they had fulfilled their destinies; that their tempers would have soured if they had had to live without it. All this they must have admitted to themselves, and even in their most candid moments, to each other. And yet—and yet—

[38]



LA TOUR DE HALDIMAND, OUCHY, LAUSANNE

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## CHAPTER IV MADAME DE MONTOLIEU—DR. TISSOT

[39]

To us, as we look backwards, Gibbon in Lausanne society figures as a Triton among the minnows, but to his contemporaries he probably seemed less important. He certainly did to his contemporaries in London. Boswell, as we all know, considered him the intellectual inferior of Dr. Johnson; and there is the story of the Duke of St. Albans accepting a presentation copy of his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' with the genial remark, 'Hallo! Another two d—d thick volumes! Always scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon!' No one in Lausanne took quite such a Philistine tone as that, but it is doubtful whether even Lausanne would have voted him a higher position than that of *Primus inter pares*. Lausanne, after all, had its native notables, and was too near to its celebrities to see them in their true perspective. It had, among others, Madame de Montolieu.

She was a beauty as well as a woman of letters, and Gibbon himself admired her in both capacities. He wrote to Lord Sheffield that there was 'danger' for him, and he was in danger of making himself ridiculous if of nothing worse. The story is told that he fell upon his knees to make a declaration of love to Madame Montolieu, and being too fat to rise without assistance, had to be helped to his feet by a domestic servant summoned for the purpose. He bore no malice, however, but even persuaded the lady to publish a novel which she had written 'to amuse an aged relative,' offering, when she objected, to attest his belief in its merits by printing it under his own signature.

[40]

The novel in question was 'Caroline de Lichtfield,' which has passed through many editions—the first in 1786 and the last in 1846—and been translated into English. Its enthusiastic reception launched its author upon a career. Her collected works, including a French translation of 'The Swiss Family Robinson,' fill 105 volumes; and a host of imitators arose. 'Well! are they still turning out novels at Lausanne?' was one of the questions that Napoleon asked the Council of the Helvetic Republic; and Louis Bridel, brother of the more famous Doyen Bridel, writing in 1787, drew a graphic picture of the Lausanne ladies, all with one accord engaged in literary toil:

[41]

'The romance of "Caroline," and the renown which it has brought its author, has caused such a ferment in our feminine heads that, jealous of the reputation of one of their number, they cover an incredible quantity of paper with ink. They pass their days in writing novels; their toilette tables are no longer covered with chiffons, but with sheets of notepaper; and, if one unfolds a curlpaper, one is sure to find that it is a fragment of a love-letter, or of a romantic description.'

Madame de Charrière, a rival craftswoman of whom we shall have to speak, the author of 'Lettres de Lausanne,' did not like Madame de Montolieu. She called her a 'provincial coquette,' and



ridiculed her 'pretensions,' maintaining that, though her countrymen were attracted by her charms, 'the English who boarded with her stepfather considered her a disgustingly dirty and untidy person.' But Gibbon, who was not only English but a man of taste, thought otherwise, as we have seen; and his judgment may be accepted as the less prejudiced of the two. And Madame de Montolieu's literary success, at any rate, is not to be disputed. She lived to be an octogenarian, and retained her popularity until the last.<sup>[4]</sup> She and her only child, dying simultaneously, were buried in the same grave, on which may be read the inscription, 'Here I am, O Lord, with the son whom Thou hast given me!'

[42]

Dr. Tissot, whom we have already met on the Terrace at Lausanne, is another celebrity of the period who merits further mention. He and Gibbon once danced a minuet together at an evening party—a penalty imposed upon them in a game of 'forfeits.' They thus, says Tissot's German biographer, Eynard, 'revived the innocent pleasures of Arcadia of old'; but the great physician, is less famous for the way in which he took his pleasures than for the way in which he did his work. Tronchin of Geneva had been the medical attendant of the cosmopolitan aristocracy, had anticipated Rousseau in exhorting mothers to nurse their own children, and had ventured, with a rude hand, to open the windows of the Palace of Versailles. Tissot of Lausanne aspired to be the medical adviser of the common people. 'While,' he wrote, 'we are attending the most brilliant portion of humanity in the cities, the most useful members of society are perishing miserably in the country villages.'

[43]

Obviously, he could not do much personally to cure the ailments of a scattered rural population; but he did what he might to help them by writing popular manuals of hygiene. Some of his advice is not even now out of date. He denounced the vice of overfeeding the delicate: 'The more one loves an invalid, the more one tries to make him eat; and that is to kill him with kindness.' He also spoke vigorous words against excessive tea-drinking:

'These teapots full of hot water which I find on people's tables remind me of the box of Pandora from which all evils issued—but with this difference, that they do not even leave hope behind, but, being a cause of hypochondria, disseminate melancholy and despair.'

These excellent pamphlets brought Tissot fame and the friendship of the great. Joseph II. offered him a medical chair at the University of Padua, which he occupied for two years. He was offered, but did not accept, the posts of physician at the Courts of Hanover and Poland. The Prince of Wurtemberg—he whom Rousseau addressed in the famous letter beginning 'If I had had the misfortune to be born a Prince'—settled at Lausanne in order to be near him; and many interesting people sought his advice by correspondence. In particular a certain young gunner wrote from Ajaccio to ask what his uncle, an Archdeacon, had better take for the gout. The orthography is curious: 'S'il asseie de remuer les genoux, des douleurs égus lui font cesser son accion.' The signature is 'BUONAPARTE, *Officier au régiment de la Fère.*'

[44]



LAUSANNE FROM THE SIGNAL

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## CHAPTER V

### BENJAMIN CONSTANT AND MADAME DE STAËL

[45]

Next, though they do not become interesting until a somewhat later date, we may mention the

Constants: Rosalie de Constant, the witty little hunchback whose sentimental correspondence with Bernardin de Saint-Pierre has recently been published, and her more famous cousin, Benjamin Constant de Rebecque, the story of whose love for Madame de Staël has recently been revived.<sup>[5]</sup> That is another story which will be here in its proper place.

Benjamin was a man of many love-affairs; 'Constant the inconstant' was the name that women called him by. He was the son of a Swiss soldier of fortune, and had a cosmopolitan education at Oxford and Edinburgh, in Belgium and in Germany. In his youth he held the post of Chamberlain at the Court of Brunswick, where he acquired distinguished manners. He was brilliant, though shallow, and there was something Wertheresque about him. [46]

Born in 1767, he was married, in 1789, to the ugliest of the Duchess of Brunswick's maids of honour. He said afterwards that he had married her for no particular reason that he could remember, but that his reasons for divorcing her were clear enough. After his separation from her, he consoled himself by an intrigue with Madame de Charrière—a Dutch lady, married to a Switzer, residing at Colombier, near Neuchâtel, and known as the authoress of several sentimental novels. It was an affair that could hardly have lasted long in any case, seeing that the lady was twenty-seven years older than her lover. As a matter of fact it came to a quick end when the lover met Madame de Staël.

The details of that meeting are curious. Being at Lausanne, Benjamin Constant set out to call on Madame de Staël at Coppet. His relatives already knew, and he was interested to make her acquaintance. It happened that he met Madame de Staël on the road, driving from Coppet to Lausanne. He stopped the carriage and introduced himself. She invited him to get in, and drove him back. Finding his company agreeable, she pressed him to stay to supper with her. He did so, and was farther rewarded by an invitation to breakfast with his hostess on the following morning. [47]

It was to Madame de Charrière herself that Benjamin Constant first confided the impression that Madame de Staël had made upon him.

'It is the most interesting acquaintance that I have ever made,' he wrote. 'Seldom have I seen such a combination of alluring and dazzling qualities, such brilliance, and such good sense, a friendliness so expansive and so cultivated, such generosity of sentiment, and such gentle courtesy. She is the second woman I have met for whom I could have counted the world well lost—you know who was the first. She is, in fact, a being apart—a superior being, such as one meets but once in a century.'

Having read that, Madame de Charrière knew that she had passed for ever out of Benjamin Constant's life. His own writings give us a glimpse of the early days of the new intimacy. Two passages from his diary, the second supplementing the first, supply the picture. Thus we read, on one day:

'I had agreed with Madame de Staël that, in order to avoid compromising her, I should never stay with her later than midnight. Whatever the charm of her conversation, and however passionate my desire for something more than her conversation, I had to submit to this rule. But this evening, the time having passed more quickly than usual, I pulled out my watch to demonstrate that it was not yet time for me to go. But the inexorable minute-hand having deceived me, in a moment of childish anger I flung the instrument of my condemnation on the floor and broke it. "How silly you are!" Madame de Staël exclaimed. But what a smile I perceived shining through her reproaches! Decidedly my broken watch will do me a good turn.'

And the next day we find the entry:

'I have not bought myself a new watch. I do not need one any more.'

For a time the affair proceeded satisfactorily, no serious cloud appearing on the horizon until the death of M. de Staël. Then, of course, Madame de Staël was free to marry her lover, and Benjamin Constant proposed that she should do so. But she would not. One reason was that she did not wish to change a name that her writings had made famous; another, and perhaps a weightier one, that, though she loved Benjamin, she had no confidence in him—'Constant the inconstant' was inconstant still. Though he loved Madame de Staël, he loved other women too. His intimacy with Madame Talma, the actor's wife, was notorious, and was not the only intimacy of the kind with which rumour credited him. Altogether, he was not the sort of man whom any woman could marry with any certainty that he would make her happy. [49]

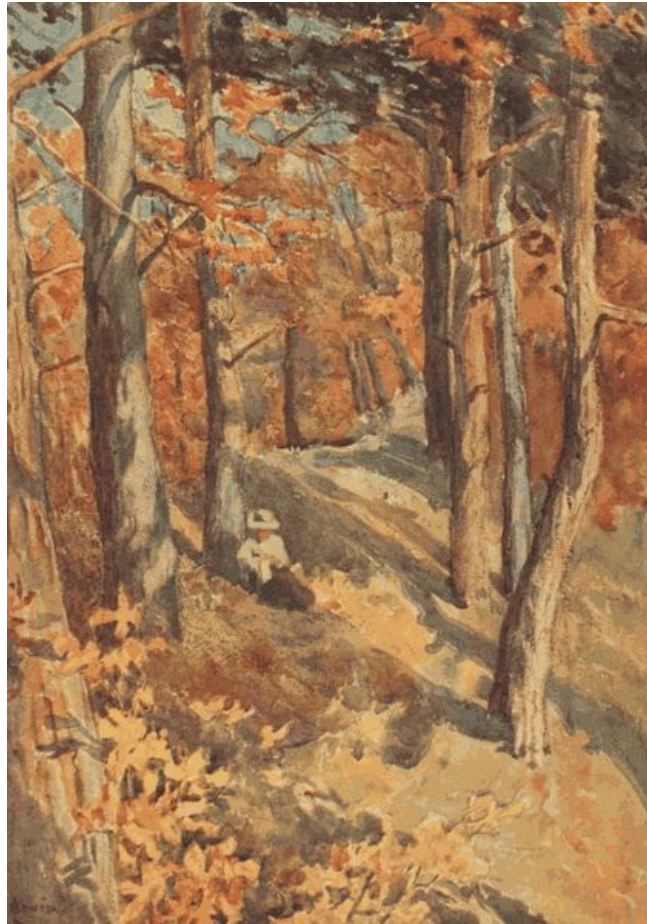
So Madame de Staël refused to marry Benjamin Constant, and with her refusal their relations entered upon a fresh and interesting phase. Henceforward the story is one of subsiding passion on his part, and very desperate efforts on hers to fan the dying embers of his desire. Again and again he tried to break with her; again and again she overwhelmed him with her reproaches, and brought him back, a penitent slave, suing for the renewal of her favour. The time when these things happened was the time when her salon at Coppet was at the zenith of its renown. The story is told for us by Benjamin Constant himself, in his 'Journal Intime,' a diary not written for publication, but published, long after his death, in the *Revue Internationale*,<sup>[6]</sup> in 1887.

The tone, at first, is that of a man whom lassitude has overtaken after elegant debauchery. Benjamin Constant is only thirty-seven, yet he already feels himself an old man, whose powers are failing, who is no longer capable of strong emotion, or even of taking an intelligent interest in life. He writes, in fact, as if he were very tired. When something happens to remind him of his old attachment to Madame de Charrière, he writes thus: [50]

'It is seven years since I saw her—ten since our intimacy ended. How easily I then used to break every tie that bored me! How confident I was that I could always form others when I pleased!



How clearly I felt that my life was mine to do what I liked with, and what a difference ten years have made! Now everything seems precarious, and ready to fly away from me. Even the privileges that I have do not make me happy. But I have passed the age of giving up anything, because I feel that I am powerless to replace anything.'



**IN THE FOREST OF SAUVABELIN, ABOVE  
LAUSANNE**

He describes—sometimes with a languid resignation, and sometimes with a peevish resentment—Madame de Staël's repeated endeavours to drag him, a more or less reluctant victim, at her chariot wheels. This is a very typical entry:

'A lively supper with the Prince de Belmonte. Left alone with Madame de Staël. The storm gradually rises. A fearful scene, lasting till three o'clock in the morning—on my lack of sensibility, my untrustworthiness, the failure of my actions to correspond with my sentiments. Alas! I would be glad to escape from monotonous lamentations, not over real calamities, but upon the universal laws of nature, and upon the advent of old age. I should be glad if she would not ask me for love after a *liaison* of ten years' standing, at a time when we are both nearly forty years old, and after I have declared, times out of number, that I have no longer any love to give her. It is a declaration which I have never withdrawn, except for the purpose of calming storms of passion which frightened me.'

[51]

So is this:

'A letter from Madame de Staël, who finds my letters melancholy, and asks what it is that I require to make me happy. Alas! what I require is my liberty, and that is precisely what I am not allowed to have. I am reminded of the story of the hussar who took an interest in the prisoner whom he had to put to death, and said to him: "Ask me any favour you like, except to spare your life."'

And this:

'A fearful scene this evening with Madame de Staël. I announce my intention of leaving her definitely. A second scene follows. Frenzy: reconciliation impossible; departure difficult. I must go away and get married.'

[52]

And this:

'Madame de Staël has won me back to her again.'

Until, finally, their relations gradually going from bad to worse, we reach this striking piece of eloquence:

'Yes, certainly I am more anxious than ever to break it off. She is the most egoistical, the most excitable, the most ungrateful, the most vain, and the most vindictive of women. Why didn't I break it off long ago? She is odious and intolerable to me. I must have done with her or die. She is more volcanic than all the volcanoes in the world put together. She is like an old *procureur*,

with serpents in her hair, demanding the fulfilment of a contract in Alexandrine verse.'

It was in marriage that Benjamin Constant gradually decided to seek a haven of refuge from these tempestuous passions. But, though he is continually touching on the subject in his diary, he generally refers to it without enthusiasm. Marriage is 'necessary' for him, but there are objections to every particular marriage that suggests itself. Sometimes the objections are expressed in general terms: [53]

'Went to a party, where I met several agreeable women. But I am very unfortunate. In the women whom I might be able and willing to marry there is always a something that does not suit me. Meanwhile my life advances.'

Sometimes the objections are particularized:

'Trip to Geneva; called on the Mesdemoiselles de Sellon; saw Amélie Fabry again. She is as dark as ever, as lively as ever, as wide awake as ever. How I should have hated her, if they had succeeded in making me marry her! Yet she is really a very amiable girl. But I am always unfortunate in finding some insuperable objection in every woman whom I think of marrying. Madame de Hardenberg was tiresome and romantic; Mrs. Lindsay was forty, and had two illegitimate children. Madame de Staël, who understands me better than anyone else does, will not be satisfied with my friendship when I can no longer give her my love. This poor Amélie, who would like me to marry her, is thirty-two, and portionless, and has ridiculous mannerisms, which become more accentuated as she grows older. Antoinette, who is twenty, well off, and not particularly ridiculous, is such a common little thing to look at.' [54]

But Benjamin Constant finally decided to marry Madame Dutertre.<sup>[7]</sup> He bought her from her husband, who, for a sum of money, was willing to divorce her; but it was not without a violent struggle that he tore himself away from Madame de Staël. Let us trace the story of the struggle in his diary. Madame Dutertre was an old friend:

'Called on Madame Dutertre, who has improved wonderfully in appearance. I made advances which she did not repel. The citadel is to fall to-night. Two years' resistance is quite long enough.

'Off to the country with Charlotte. She is an angel. I love her better every day. She is so sweet, so amiable. What a fool I was to refuse to have anything to do with her twelve years ago! What mad passion for independence drove me to put my neck under the foot of the most imperious woman in the world!

'We are back in Paris. Joyous days; delights of love. What the devil is the meaning of it? It is twelve years since I last felt a similar emotion. This woman, whom I have refused a hundred times, who has always loved me, whom I have sent away, whom I left eighteen months ago—this woman now turns my head. Evidently the contrast with Madame de Staël is the cause of it all. The contrast of her impetuosity, her egoism, and her continual preoccupation with herself, with the gentleness, the calm, the humble and modest bearing of Charlotte, makes the latter a thousand times more dear to me. I am tired of the *man-woman* whose iron hand has for ten years held me fast, when I have a really womanly woman to intoxicate and enchant me. If I can marry her, I shall not hesitate. Everything depends on the line M. Dutertre takes.' [55]

M. Dutertre, as has been stated, took the line of offering to consent to a divorce provided it were made worth his while to do so. Madame de Staël was more difficult to deal with. The first entry which gives us a glimpse of her feelings is as follows:

'Madame de Staël is back; she will not hear of our relations being broken off. The best way will be not to see her again, but to wait at Lausanne for orders from Charlotte—my good angel whom I bless for saving me. Schlegel writes that Madame de Staël declares that, if I leave her, she will kill herself. I don't believe a word of it.' [56]

Followed by:

'Unhappy fool that I am; weakness overcomes me; I start for Coppet. Tenderness, despair, and then the trump card, "I shall kill myself."'

He fled to Lausanne, but—

'What was the good of coming here? Madame de Staël has come after me, and all my plans are upset. In the evening there was a fearful scene, lasting till five o'clock in the morning. I am violent, and put myself in the wrong. But, my poor Charlotte, I will not forsake you.'

Yet he had hardly written these lines when he was false to them. Madame de Staël came a second time to Lausanne to fetch him, and we read:

'She came; she threw herself at my feet; she raised frightful cries of pain and desolation. A heart of iron would not have resisted. I am back at Coppet with her. I have promised to stay six weeks, and Charlotte is expecting me at the end of the month. My God! what am I to do? I am trampling my future happiness under my feet....

'I receive a letter from Charlotte, who is more loving and more sure of me than ever. Would she forgive me if she knew where I am and what I am doing? How slowly the time passes! Into what an abyss have I not hurled myself! Last night we had a dreadful scene. Shall I ever get out of it all alive? I have to pass my time in falsehood and deceptions in order to avoid the furious outbreaks which so terrify me. If it were not for the hopes which I build upon Madame de Staël's approaching departure to Vienna, this life would be unbearable. To console myself I spend my time in picturing how things will go if they go well. This is my Castle in Spain. Charlotte finishes her arrangements, and makes her preparations secretly. Madame de Staël, suspecting nothing, [57]

sets out for Vienna. I marry Charlotte, and we pass the winter pleasantly at Lausanne.'



#### CHÂTEAU DE BLONAY

Though this was not exactly how things happened, the marriage was nevertheless speedily and safely celebrated. But alas! poor Benjamin! It was now his turn, in the midst of his domestic bliss, to feel the pangs of unrequited love. Having fled from Madame de Staël, he sighed for her. His diary is full of his regrets. It is:

'Charlotte is good and sweet. I build myself foolish ideals, and throw the blame of my own folly upon others. At bottom Charlotte is what women always are. I have blamed individuals where I ought to have blamed the species. But for my work, and for the good advice that I need, I regret Madame de Staël more than ever.'

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Or it is:

'A letter from Madame de Staël, from which I gather that, this time, all is really over between us. So be it. It is my own doing. I must steer my course alone, but I must take care not to fetter myself with other ties which would be infinitely less agreeable.'

Or again:

'I have lost Madame de Staël, and I shall never recover from the blow.'

And the truth was, indeed, that Madame de Staël had ceased to care, and that another had succeeded to Benjamin Constant's place in her heart.

His name was Albert de Rocca, and he was a young French officer who had been wounded in the Spanish wars. His personal beauty was such that a Spanish woman, finding him left for dead upon a battle-field, had taken him home with her, and nursed him back to health, saying that it was a pity that such a beautiful young man should die. His age was twenty-three, and Madame de Staël's was forty-five. But the affection that sprang up between them was deep and genuine. 'I will love her,' he said, 'so dearly that she will end by marrying me.' And when she protested that she was old enough to be his mother, he answered that the mention of that word only gave him a further reason for loving her. 'He is fascinated,' Baron de Voght wrote, 'by his relations with Madame de Staël, and the tears of his father cannot induce him to abandon it.'

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So she married him, though, for reasons of her own, she insisted that the marriage should be kept a secret. It seemed to her that a young husband would make her ridiculous, but that a young lover would not; very possibly she was right according to the moral standard of the age. At any rate her husband posed as her lover, and in that capacity quarrelled with Constant, with whom he nearly fought a duel, and travelled with her to Russia, to Sweden, and to England, and lived with her in Paris and at Coppet. But it was at this period, when her fame was at its zenith, that Madame de Staël wrote: 'Fame is for women only a splendid mourning for happiness.'

But the end was drawing near. Madame de Staël had lived all her life at high pressure, and her health was undermined. A lingering illness, of which the fatal issue was foreseen, overtook her.

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She struggled against it, declaring that she would live for Rocca's sake. But all in vain. She died in Paris in 1817. Rocca himself, who only survived her a few months, was too ill to be with her. Benjamin Constant spent a night of mourning in her death-chamber. They buried her at Coppet amid general lamentations.

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## CHAPTER VI THE REVOLUTION

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At Lausanne, as at Geneva, the thunders of the French Revolution echoed. Gibbon heard them, and was alarmed, as if at the approach of the end of the world. The patriots of Vaud heard them, and rejoiced at the hope of a new era about to be begun. Their Excellencies of Berne felt the edifice of their dominion crumbling about their ears. The burghers of Morges began the trouble by disinterring from their archives an old charter, on the strength of which they refused to pay for the mending of the roads, while a pastor named Martin exhorted his congregation to withhold the tithe that was levied on potatoes. Then a fête was held at Rolle to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and 6,000 Bernese invaded the country, arrested the ringleaders, and compelled the magistrates to swear allegiance at the point of the bayonet. César Laharpe and J. J. Cart appealed to the French to intervene.

At first the French hesitated. Robespierre was not ambitious of foreign conquests, having his hands full enough at home, but the Directorate took larger views. Switzerland was reputed to be rich—and *was für plunder!* A division of the army of Italy crossed the lake on January 28, 1798, and took possession of Lausanne. For a space there was civil war. Vaudois volunteers fought under their green flag, while a certain Loyal Legion, under Colonel de Rovéraz, distinguished itself at Fraubrunnen, in defence of Berne. The French, however, were so much stronger than the Bernese that the issue could not long remain in doubt. It was the Swiss money that the French wanted, and the gold found in the vaults of the Treasury of Berne was carried off to Paris, while the Canton of Vaud was accorded a new and independent constitution.

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**THE RHONE VALLEY FROM MONT PELERIN**

There were other revolutions, and revisions, and reconstructions to follow. When the Holy Alliance remodelled the map of Europe in 1815, the fate of Vaud, like that of so many other minor nationalities, hung in the balance. The Bernese fully expected to be allowed to re-establish their dominion; but Alexander I., prompted by Laharpe, prevented them. 'You have done a great deal for me,' the Emperor is reported to have said to the Liberator. 'What can I do for you?' And the Liberator's answer was: 'Sire, all that I ask is permission to speak to your Majesty of my country whenever I wish.' He spoke in 1815, and the Emperor listened; and the claims of Berne were rejected; and Laharpe took a house at Lausanne, and looked down on the scene of his triumphs, and fought his battles over again, and frequented Madame de Staël, whom in more stormy days he had written of as 'une infernale gueuse,' and was revered by all as the 'Grand Old Man' of the Canton.

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There were further political changes in 1830, in 1845, and in 1861; but of these we need not speak. Their interest is no more than local. What the English traveller chiefly sees in the Lausanne of the nineteenth century is an increasing English colony, and the loudly vaunted educational facilities.

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## CHAPTER VII

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## THE ENGLISH COLONY—THE EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES

Of the English colony there is not perhaps a great deal to be said, except that it fills two churches on Sundays, and at all times monopolizes the Ouchy road. It has never consisted of distinguished persons like the English colony at Florence; on the other hand, it has never included so large a proportion of disreputable persons as the English colonies at Brussels and Boulogne. Gibbon cannot be said to have belonged to it, since, in his day, it did not yet exist; and it can hardly claim Dickens, since his sojourn there was of comparatively brief duration. In the main it is composed of very young and rather elderly members of the respectable middle classes. There is an English club, and there are opportunities of playing bridge. The life is inexpensive, not because commodities are specially cheap, but because there are no wealthy residents to set extravagant standards. A small income goes a long way there; and the climate is salubrious for all those whose bronchial tubes are in a condition to resist the *bise*.

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These are conditions which please a great many people—notably the wandering spinsters who 'live in their boxes,' and the retired officers and civil servants who have to subsist upon their pensions. At Lausanne they can economize without feeling the pinch of poverty, and without feeling envious—or perceiving that their wives feel envious—of more prosperous neighbours. The sunshine costs nothing, and the amusements cost very little; they can go about in knickerbockers and wear out their old clothes without fearing that their solvency will be suspected. There is no need for them to learn a foreign tongue, since they form their own society, and mix very little with the Swiss who accept them, but do not pretend to like them. They live lazily, but healthily, and, on the whole, contentedly.

Of course, there is another side to the medal, and a price to be paid for the advantages. The colonists are exiles who have severed old ties, and have a difficulty in forming new ones. Their existence is rather animal than human, and rather vegetable than animal. They lose their energy and their intelligence; they are like plants no longer growing in a garden, but uprooted and flung upon the grass. A stranger finds it difficult to converse with them, and fancies that they must be terribly bored. Perhaps they are; but perhaps, too, it is better to be bored in the sunshine than busy in a London fog. So they linger on, persuading themselves that they do so for their children's sake rather than their own, and referring the stranger, if he happens to question them, to the wonderful educational advantages of the town.

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But what is the sober truth about those educational advantages? That is another branch of the subject which seems to be worth a passing word.

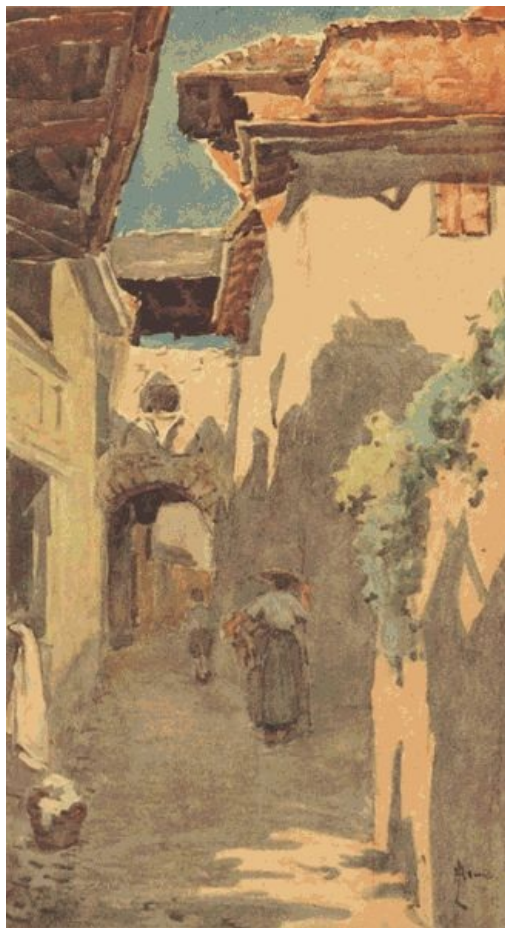
Assuredly the Swiss have a great reputation as educators, and that reputation stands nowhere higher than in the Canton of Vaud. Yverdon is in the Canton of Vaud, and it was there that Pestalozzi kept his school. Moreover, just as it has been said that every citizen of Ticino is by nature a hotel-keeper, so it has been said that every citizen of Vaud is by nature a professor. Professors, as we have already seen, were among the Canton's chief 'articles of export' during the Bernese domination, and kings preferred the Vaudois professors to any others. Yet a sufficient number of professors—and perhaps the best of them—have always remained behind, so that teaching and learning have continued to be great native industries. The question which is left is, How do the Swiss systems of education compare with ours?

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The answer is commonplace, and sounds platitudinous: they are better than ours in some respects, and inferior in others. Let us elaborate and particularize.

Scholarship, in the accepted English sense of the word, hardly exists in Switzerland. A Swiss Jebb is almost unthinkable, and if anyone proposes to find a Swiss Bentley in Casaubon, the answer must be that Casaubon was not really Swiss, though he was, for a time, a professor at Geneva. In the matter of the classics the German scholars have always been more learned than the Swiss, and the English scholars have always been both more learned and more graceful; indeed, in the sort of scholarship which enables a man to speak and write his own language properly the Swiss have always been sadly to seek. Swiss French is atrocious, and the French of Lausanne, though a shade better than that of Fribourg, is worse than that of Geneva or Neuchâtel. When the French themselves wish to say that a man's style is clumsy, they liken it to 'a Swiss translation from the Belgian.'





**A STREET IN ST. SAPHORIN**

Nor have the Swiss ever made any notable contribution to original philosophic thought. Their principal metaphysicians, like Charles Bonnet, have been merely theologians in disguise, who have started by assuming the points which they undertook to prove, and have been unable to keep their metaphysics and their theology apart, as did, for example, Bishop Berkeley and Dean Mansell. The great names in the history of speculative thought—such names as those of Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Comte, Herbert Spencer, and T. H. Green—have been English, or German, or French, or Dutch. One does not find a single Swiss name among them. The great Swiss names, when we get away from theology, all stand for something scientific, practical, concrete. Lavater, Gesner, Saussure, Jomini—such are a few of the instances that may be cited to point our moral and lead us up to our generalization, which is as follows: [69]

Elementary education is excellent in Switzerland; but the higher education is too technical and utilitarian to satisfy those who consider that the function of education is to cultivate the mind. The elementary schools of the Canton of Vaud are probably better than those of the County of London; but the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne are a poor substitute for those of Oxford and Cambridge. [70]

Let us by all means give praise where praise is due. The Medical Faculties of Berne and Lausanne have a European reputation; and it is said that engineering is nowhere taught better than at the Zurich Polytechnic. The practical side of the Swiss character is also well exemplified in the various schools for waiters, for watch-makers, and for bee-keepers. But it is possible—or it seems so to an English University man—for education to be too practical; and the Swiss have surely committed that excess in devising that educational abomination, the School of Commerce. Nothing is ever taught in a School of Commerce that a man who has been properly educated elsewhere cannot pick up in six weeks; and the curriculum, though it may sharpen the wits, can only, at the best, produce a superior kind of bagman.

Swiss education, therefore, has its drawbacks even for a Switzer; and, for a young Englishman of the better class, it has other drawbacks in addition. It is not merely that he learns less than he would in England because an unfamiliar language is the medium of instruction. He also acquires the wrong tone and the wrong manner, misses opportunities of making useful friends, and finds himself, when he grows up, a stranger in his own country—a stranger not only to the people, but to the ways and modes of thought. That is a disadvantage which was pointed out as long ago as the eighteenth century, by Dr. John Moore, when a nobleman who had thought of sending his son to the University of Geneva asked his advice on the subject. 'The boy would return,' said the doctor, 'a kind of a Frenchman, and would so be disqualified for success in English life.' [71]

The same criticism still applies. We are better cosmopolitans nowadays than were Dr. Moore's contemporaries, but the differences between the nations still subsist; and, just as each nation has the system of education which it deserves, so it has the system of education which best prepares a man to fight the battle of life in his own country. In England, more than in any other country, success depends comparatively little upon book-learning, and very much upon character and the possession of certain qualities which, in our insular pride, we vaunt as specially 'British.' These

qualities are not to be acquired in the Swiss schools. The qualities that are to be acquired there may, in some respects, be better and more solid; but they are not so useful in Great Britain. An English boy educated in a Swiss school is, as a rule, when he leaves, rather a clumsy lout, with a smattering of bad French, emancipated from certain prejudices which might be useful to him, but steeped in other prejudices which are likely to stand in his way. One always has the feeling that more might have been made of him at home: not merely at Eton or Harrow, but at Clifton or Marlborough, or even at St. Paul's or the Bedford Grammar School. [72]

On the whole, therefore, the educational *raison d'être* of the English colony at Lausanne disappears under investigation—at any rate, so far as the boys are concerned. The girls, from a certain point of view, may be better off there; for the Swiss girls' schools are good, and the snobbishness which is the vice of English girls' schools is discouraged in them. For the girls, difficulties only arise when they reach a marriageable age. There are no husbands for them at Lausanne, or anywhere in Switzerland, unless it be at Montreux, where Anglo-Indians sometimes come on leave, since all the men whom they meet—one is speaking only of their own countrymen—are either too young or too old—mere students, or else superannuated veterans. They know it, and lament their lot aloud; and the Swiss know it, too, and make remarks. The English colony at Lausanne, they say, is *une vraie pépinière de vieilles filles*. [73]

But this is an excursus. We must return to Lausanne, and take another look at its social and intellectual life.



THE DENTS DU MIDI AND LA TOUR FROM "ENTRE DEUX VILLES"

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## CHAPTER VIII

### VINET AND SAINTE-BEUVE—JUSTE OLIVIER

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The centre of the intellectual life was always the University. It could not be otherwise in a country in which every man is born a pedagogue. In England the view has come to prevail that literature only begins to be vital when it ceases to be academic. In the Canton of Vaud the literature is academic or nothing, and even the poets are professors, unbending in their hours of sentimental ease; while the literature of revolt is the bitter cry of professors who have forfeited their chairs on account of their religious or political opinions. As the result of each revolution in turn we see a company of professors put to flight. The casualties of that sort are at least as numerous as the broken heads.

The detailed relation of such professorial vicissitudes belongs, however, to the native antiquary. Here it will suffice to recall a few more notable names.

A Swiss historian would doubtless say that the greatest of the names is that of Alexandre Vinet. In his hot youth he wrote riotous poetry: [76]

'O mes amis, vidons bouteille  
Et laissons faire le destin.  
Le Dieu qui préside à la treille  
Est notre unique souverain.'

Afterwards he became austere, and played a great part in theological controversy. He hated the Revivalists, whom he described as 'lunatics at large'; but he insisted that religious liberty should be the heritage of all, and, while opposing established churches, exercised a profound spiritual influence. He was a great Broad Churchman, and we may class him as the F. W. Robertson or F. D. Maurice of the Canton of Vaud. Sainte-Beuve blew his trumpet, and he, on his part, almost

persuaded Sainte-Beuve to become a Protestant.

Sainte-Beuve, it is hardly too much to say, came to Lausanne in search of a religion. St. Simonism had disappointed him, and so had the Liberal Catholicism of Lamennais. Lamennais, in fact, had gone too fast and too far for him—had, as it were, he said, taken him for a drive, and spilt him in a ditch, and left him there and driven on. None the less, he earnestly desired to be spiritually-minded and a devout believer, feeling, in particular, an inclination towards mysticism, though unable to profess himself a mystic. 'I have,' he wrote to a friend, 'the sense of these things, but not the things themselves.' It seemed to him that he might find 'the things themselves' at Lausanne, if he went there in the proper spirit and sat at Vinet's feet. [77]

His Swiss friend, Juste Olivier, a professor who was also a poet, procured him an engagement to deliver a course of lectures at the Lausanne Academy,<sup>[8]</sup> and he embarked upon his errand with as much humility as was compatible with professorship. Left free to choose his own subject, he decided to treat of Port Royal and the Jansenists—the most spiritually-minded of the Catholics, and those who had the closest affinity with the Protestants. By means of his lectures he thought to build himself a bridge by which to pass from the one camp to the other.

His elocution was defective, and his lectures were not quite such a success as he could have wished. The students used to meet in the cafés to parody them in the evenings. On the other hand, however, serious people eagerly watched the developments of the spiritual drama. Not only did it seem to them that the fate of a soul was in the balance—they were also hoping to see Protestantism score the sort of triumph that would make a noise in Paris. So they asked daily for news of Sainte-Beuve, as of a sick man lying at death's door, and asked Vinet, whom they regarded as his spiritual physician, to issue a bulletin. And Vinet's bulletin was to this effect: 'I think he is convinced, but not yet converted.' But Vinet, as he was soon to discover, was only partly right. [78]

That Sainte-Beuve was not converted was, indeed, obvious enough, seeing that he was making violent love to his neighbour's wife at the time—between him and 'conversion' stood the obstructive charms of Madame Olivier. But it is equally true that he was not convinced; and, by a crowning irony, he found his faith evaporating as he got to close quarters with the subject, through the study of which he had expected to achieve conviction. The great history of Port Royal, begun by a believer, was finished by a sceptic. 'Moral bankruptcy,' is M. Michaut's description of his condition, and there is a sense in which it might be applied even by those who desire to dissociate morality from creeds. It was the end—at any rate, for Sainte-Beuve—of all emotion which was not either purely sensual or purely intellectual. He could not be a mystic, as he could not be a poet, because he lacked the necessary genius; and forms of religion which depended, not on intuition, but on authority, were repugnant to his sane intelligence. So he said a sad farewell to Christianity, and sought no substitute. 'I am mournfully looking on at the death of my heart,' he wrote to Vinet; and he went away and resigned himself to become a materialist, a voluptuary, and a critic. [79]

And now a word about that Juste Olivier to whom Sainte-Beuve owed his appointment, and to whose wife Sainte-Beuve made love. The poet and the critic had met at Paris, where Olivier had gone to prepare himself for the Chair of Literature at Neuchâtel. He was promoted, three years later, to the Chair of History at Lausanne, which he occupied for twelve years, acting also, during part of the time, as editor of the *Revue Suisse*, to which Sainte-Beuve contributed. The Revolution of 1845 unseated him. He went to Paris, where he achieved no great success, and was homesick there for five-and-twenty years. The Swiss forgot him, and the Parisians did not understand him. But, in 1870, when there was no longer a living to be made in Paris, he came home again. One may quote the pathetic picture of his home-coming, drawn by M. Philippe Godet: [80]

'He had to live. For three winters the poet travelled through French Switzerland, lecturing, reading his verses, relating his reminiscences, with that melancholy humour which gave his speech its charm. The public—I speak of what I saw—was polite, respectful, and nothing more. Olivier felt almost a stranger in his own country. But he consoled himself, in the summer, at Gryon, "the high village facing the Alps of Vaud," which he has so often celebrated. He was to sing, at the mid-August fête, his song to the Shepherds of Anzeindaz. And there they understood him and applauded. He had his day of happiness and glory among these simple mountaineers. He was, for an hour, what it had been the dream of his life to be, the national singer of the Vaudois country.'

But the end is melancholy. He died in a chalet at Gryon in January, 1876, a broken and disappointed man, reluctant even to speak of his work or hear it spoken of. There is a deep pathos in one of his last letters which M. Godet quotes:

'It is a melancholy history—that of our country. It did nothing for Viret or Vinet; and, though I do not rank myself with them, I too know what neglect means. "Come and have a drink"—that is their last word here. I had hoped for better things. What a beautiful dream it was! At least I have been loyal to it, even if I have not, as I fancy, done all that it was in me to do. Since the day when, in one of my first printed poems, I wrote, "Un génie est caché dans tous les lieux que j'aime," I have obstinately sought out that genius, and tried to make it speak. It has answered me, I think more often than its voice has been heard.'





LUTRY

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## CHAPTER IX NYON

[83]

Lausanne, for the purposes of this volume, must be taken to include such neighbouring lake-side towns as Morges, and Rolle, and Nyon. Morges we have already seen distinguishing itself by refusing, on principle, to pay for the mending of the roads, and so paving the way for the subsequent insurrection. Nowadays it is the seat of an arsenal, and is said to have an aristocratic population, interested in literature. Rolle was the home of the Laharpes, and boasts a statue of César de Laharpe by Pradier. A colony of French and Genevan political exiles once flourished there, and Madame de Staël was a frequent visitor. Voltaire once proposed to buy an estate in the neighbourhood—the Château des Menthon—but the Bernese would not let him do so, alleging the curious reason that the philosopher was a Roman Catholic. Nyon is the dirtiest town on the Lake—or would be if Villeneuve were not dirtier. But it is also one of the most picturesque—the castle being nobly situated and in a fine state of preservation—and it has its interesting memories.

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One of its interesting associations is with the Waldenses. These persecuted Protestants had fled, or been driven out, from their mountain home above Turin. Switzerland received them hospitably, but they were homesick. They resolved to go back; not to slink back in twos and threes, but to march back, with their flags flying, like courageous Christian soldiers. They mustered at Nyon, and thence crossed the lake under the leadership of the fighting pastor, Henri Arnaud, and marched across the mountains to effect their 'glorious re-entry.' It was a great military feat, and no less a judge than Napoleon has paid his tribute to the military genius of the commander. The returning exiles defeated the soldiers of Savoy in more than one pitched battle. One thinks of them generally as the 'slaughtered saints, whose bones' inspired one of the finest of Milton's sonnets, but theirs were not the only bones that whitened the valleys during that notable expedition.

Nyon again recalls the memory of Bonstetten, who governed it for a season on behalf of Berne. If all the Bernese Governors had been like him, Vaud would have been a contented country, though he is chiefly remembered as a wit and a man of culture, who lived to be eighty-seven without ever seeming to grow old. In his youth he travelled in England, and was the friend of Gray; in his old age he lived at Geneva, and was the friend of Byron. In the meantime he had been the friend of Madame de Staël, and a pillar of the cosmopolitan society at Coppet. He wrote some books, but they are dead and buried. What lives is the recollection of the genial old gentleman whom everybody liked, and who proved—what needed a great deal of proving—that it was possible for a Bernese to be gracious and frivolous, and to have a sense of humour. He detested the society of his native city, and wrote a delightfully sarcastic description of its daily life in a letter to one of the Hallers:

[85]

'We are living here, as we always do. We sleep, we breakfast, we yawn, we drag through the morning, and we digest our food. And then we dine, and then we dress, and then we swagger in the Arcades, and say to ourselves: "I am charming and clever, for the spelling of my name makes me capable of governing and illuminating two hundred thousand souls." And then we accost a lady with a pretty figure decently enveloped in a mantle, and then we go to a party and circle round a dozen turtle-doves, and deliver ourselves of platitudes with the air of saying something

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clever. Then we have something to eat, and, finding our intellectual resources exhausted, amuse ourselves with paper games; and then we go to bed, feeling satisfied with ourselves—for we have been delightful.<sup>1</sup>

Out of sympathy with Berne, Bonstetten had a good deal more sympathy than Berne liked with the revolutionary party. It is said that his sympathies lost him his post; but before that happened he had time to render a useful service to one of the most eminent of the revolutionists. He was at supper one day with a considerable number of guests when his servant whispered in his ear that a mysterious stranger was without, asking to speak with him. He stepped into the garden, where a man, miserably dressed, was waiting for him in the summer-house. He inquired his errand, and the answer was: 'I am Carnot, and I am perishing from hunger. I implore you to give me shelter for the night.' Bonstetten not only gave him shelter for the night, but, on the following morning, gave him a passport under an assumed name. One can understand that his superiors at Berne did not regard him as a model functionary, but Carnot never forgot his kindness. When he became Napoleon's War Minister, he invited him to Paris, introduced him to the Emperor, and heaped proofs of his gratitude upon him.

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**CULLY FROM EPESSE: AUTUMN**

Perhaps it is also worth noting that, in the days before the railways, Nyon was on the highroad from France to Switzerland. The track descended there from Saint-Cergues, where it crossed the Jura; and by it travelled Madame de Staël, and Benjamin Constant, and Voltaire, and many another whom we have met in the course of this rambling narrative. There is a new road now, with wide, sweeping curves, and a gentle gradient; but enough of the old road remains to show us how shamefully bad it was—a narrow road, of uneven surface, plunging headlong through the pine-forest. The lumbering old coaches, with their six horses, must have had a very bad time there, and it is no wonder that Napoleon ordered a road to be made over the Col de la Faucille to supersede it.

But enough of Nyon and the Canton de Vaud! We must cross the lake to the French shore; and, as first impressions are always the most graphic, permission has been obtained to print here the writer's own first impressions, contributed a few years since, to the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

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## **CHAPTER X**

### **THE FRENCH SHORE**

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What strikes the holiday traveller about the French shore is that it is so much better managed than the Swiss shore. Its natural advantages are fewer—they are, in fact, very few indeed. Evian—and when one speaks of the French shore one is principally thinking of Evian—stands with its back to the high mountains instead of facing them. Consequently it has no views to compare with the views from Lausanne, Geneva, and Vevey. Its hinterland is commonplace, except for those who make a great effort and go up the Dent d'Oche. The mouth of the Dranse, hard by, is a dreary collection of detritus. There are hardly any literary landmarks, except the few that recall the memory of St. Francis de Sales. Whence English travellers have, almost with one accord, drawn the inference that it is not worth while to go to Evian. But they are wrong. The French think otherwise, and the French are right. They do not go there, as some suppose, because they are crippled with diseases and need the waters to wash poisons out of their blood and their organs: the Evian water is the sort of water that the whole, as well as the sick, can drink by the bucketful without feeling a penny the worse for it. Their purpose in going to Evian is to live a life of luxury and leisure. No doubt they pay through the nose for the privilege. Inquiry at one hotel elicited the statement that the worst rooms were let at eight and the best at eighty francs a day—with service *à la carte* on the same scale. But other hotels are cheaper, and it is also possible to hire a villa, a flat, a lodging; and, in any case, it is right that Evian should be introduced to the

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English tourist as the one place on the Lake of Geneva in which the life of leisure and luxury is possible.

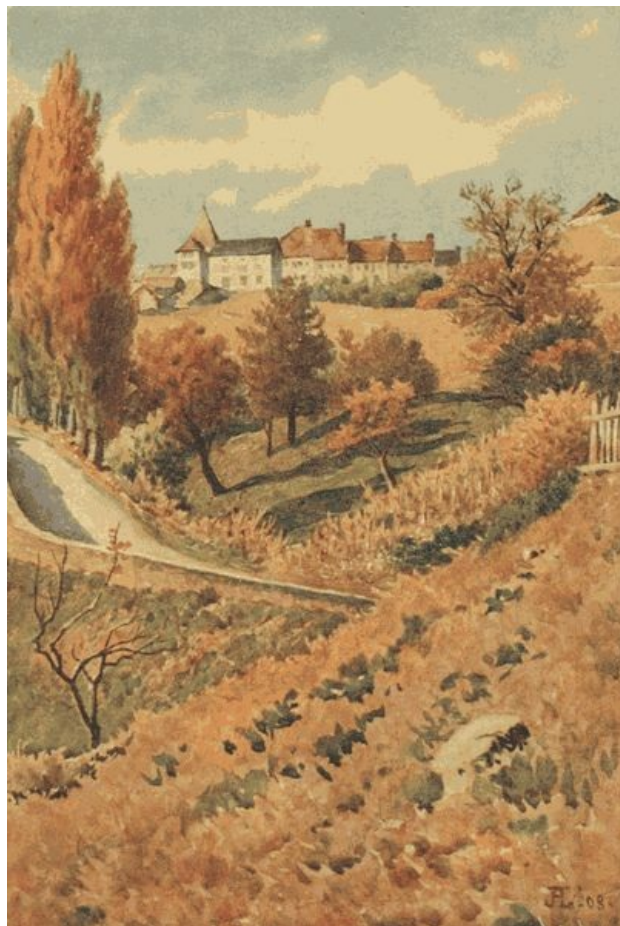
There is no real luxury at Geneva itself, though there are high prices and immense hotels. Instead of having good music at fixed hours, they have indifferent music all day long. The whole air is full of a continual tinkle-tinkle; louder than the tinkle-tinkle rises the hooting of the steamers and the trams; louder still are the voices of the trippers, mostly Americans, inquiring the prices of things, or complaining that they have lost their luggage. The society at the boasted Kursaal is an unpolished horde, mainly composed of the Geneva clerks and shop-assistants losing their salaries at *petits chevaux*. Nor are things much better elsewhere on the Swiss shore. Nyon, for instance, is by nature an earthly paradise, and they have formed a society for developing it. What they really want is a society for cleaning it, since it is the present practice of the inhabitants to empty their dustbins over their garden walls into the lake, with results appalling to the nostrils of the stranger. At Lausanne, or Vevey, or Montreux—other earthly paradises—you escape this nuisance; but even there, in the season, you have the feeling that the place is one vast hotel, and that everybody is waiting with packed boxes for the omnibus. But cross to Evian. The town is a little smaller than Montreux, but just as full. Yet it never seems to be crowded. There is no hurrying or bustling. You are in nobody's way, and nobody is in your way; which means that Evian is properly managed.

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They do not encourage you to come to Evian in the capacity of tripper. On the contrary, they try to arrange things so that you must sacrifice your lunch in order to get there, and your dinner in order to get home. But this is a part of the secret of good management, as you will appreciate if you stay there. No knickerbockered army, headed by a polyglot guide in a straw hat with a label on it, will invade your peace, but you will be free to live your lotus-eating life in your own way. You will probably live most of it in the casino, which is a proper casino, differing from the Geneva Kursaal as cheese from chalk. There is so much shade that it is always cool there, even on the hottest day. You will lunch there on a shaded terrace, assisted by a sympathetic waiter, who understands that a good lunch is an end in itself, and not merely a device for keeping body and soul together until the evening. You will linger long and agreeably over the coffee and liqueurs, without feeling that someone else wants your seat. Nor will you be bothered, as in Geneva, by the squeaking of a futile fiddle, or by hawkers offering picture postcards. But, at the appointed hour, there will be a proper concert with a programme, and a well-behaved and well-dressed audience: beautiful French ladies looking as if they had stepped out of fashion plates; beautiful French children looking as if they had been cut out of Aunt Louisa's picture-book; fantastic Frenchmen, looking as if they were dressed for amateur theatricals. Then, when the evening comes, and you have dined as well as you have lunched, there will be a performance in the little theatre, given by artistes from Paris, who come on to Evian from Aix-les-Bains: Réjane, Jeanne Granier, Charlotte Wiehe, or others. Or there will be a ball in the grand style—not in the least like the balls in the Hall-by-the-Sea at Margate—given in as good a ballroom as the heart of a dancer could wish for. But no hurrying, or hustling, or excitement. At Evian, if nowhere else on Lake Lemman, life is a leisurely pageant.

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For the rest, there is little enough for you to do—nothing, in fact, except to stroll up and down the long avenue of linked plane-trees by the lake-side, observe how clean they keep the water, and gaze across its calm surface to the Swiss shore where the trippers make a noise. But this has always been a favourite occupation of the dwellers on the French shore, whether in fact or works of fiction. From Meillerie St. Preux gazed across at the *bosquet* of Clarens. From Thonon St. Francis de Sales gazed across, pondering plans for working the Counter-Reformation in the Canton de Vaud. From Evian itself, Madame de Warens gazed across, regretting the home of her youth to which she could never return, because, when she left it, she had abandoned her religion, and taken with her certain goods and chattels which her creditors were about to seize.

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## CHAPTER XI

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### HISTORY OF THE FRENCH SHORE—FELIX V

The history of the French shore, which has only recently belonged to France, may be told in briefest outline. In the earliest times of which we need take cognizance it belonged to the Dukes of Savoy, whose domains continued for a considerable distance up the valley of the Rhone. Then came the war of 1536, of which we have spoken more than once, in which the Bernese took the territory away from them. Part of it was recovered by Duke Emanuel Philibert in 1564, and the whole was reassigned by treaty in 1593. The inhabitants had, in the meantime, been converted to Protestantism, and the first task of Savoy was to reconvert them. A mission for that purpose was led by St. Francis de Sales, and the principles of the Counter-Reformation quickly triumphed. The French Revolution brought a French army to Savoy, but the expelled rulers came to their own again when the Holy Alliance resettled the map of Europe. Nothing further happened until the war which resulted in the consolidation of a United Italy. Savoy (together with Nice) was then Napoleon III.'s reward for ejecting the Austrian garrison from Italian territory. The country had long been French in its language and its sympathies, and the people were quite willing, if not actively anxious, to change their allegiance; and the history of Savoy has, since that date, belonged to the history of France. Its extreme Catholicism, like that of Brittany, gave trouble at the time of the expulsion of the Religious Orders, but that is a question of modern politics into which it is unnecessary to enter here. We will search instead for the historical and literary landmarks.

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Our first interesting name is that of Duke Amadeus VIII. The death of his eldest son caused him profound grief, and 'in 1431,' says Bishop Creighton, 'he retired from active life, and built himself a luxurious retreat at Ripaille, whither he withdrew with seven companions to lead a life of religious seclusion. His abode was called the Temple of St. Maurice; he and his followers wore grey cloaks, like hermits, with gold crosses round their necks and long staffs in their hands.' But though Duke Amadeus dressed as a hermit, he hardly lived as one; and as for religious seclusion, he interpreted it after a fashion of his own. 'Vitam magis voluptuosam quam penitentialem degebat,' is the statement of his biographer, Æneas Sylvius; and his jovial proceedings added to the French language the new expression 'faire Ripaille.'

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Those were the days, however, when the Council of Basle accused Pope Eugenius IV. of heresy and schism. An Opposition Pope was wanted, and the Council decided to offer the dignity to the ducal hermit, who was living a voluptuous rather than a penitential life. A deputation was sent to wait upon him at Ripaille. Amadeus, with his hermit companions, advanced to meet the visitors, with a cross borne before him, and discussed the proposal in a thoroughly business-like spirit. 'What,' he asked, 'do you expect the Pope to live on? I cannot consume my patrimony and disinherit my sons.' He was promised a grant of first-fruits of vacant benefices, and that satisfied him, though he made the further stipulation that he should not be required to shave. As a matter of fact, however, he was presently shamed into shaving by the respectful amazement of the devout; and he took the name of Felix V. and entered Basle attended by his two sons—'an unusual escort for a Pope,' as Creighton justly remarks—and was crowned by the Cardinal of Aries, the only Cardinal present, on July 24, 1440.

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The question then arose, Which Pope would be recognized by the other European Principalities and Powers? By degrees it was found that the balance of opinion was against Felix V., and in favour of Eugenius IV. and his successor Nicolas V.; and Felix V. then discovered that he did not greatly care about his somewhat shadowy honours. He had had much anxiety, and only a small and irregular stipend. So, on April 7, 1449, he was persuaded to resign the Papal office, and less than two years afterwards he died. 'He was more useful to the Church by his death than by his life,' says Æneas Sylvius. But that is as it may be. He was, at all events, an interesting figure and a better man than Æneas himself, seeing that Æneas, afterwards Pius II., candidly confessed that he was 'neither holier than David nor wiser than Solomon,' and actually wrote love-letters to help Sigismund, Count of Tyrol, 'to overcome the resistance of a girl who shrank from his dishonourable proposals.'



THE RHONE VALLEY FROM CHEXBRES

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## CHAPTER XII

### ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

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A greater figure—perhaps the greatest of all figures in the history of Savoy—is that of St. Francis de Sales. It is a little difficult to speak of him without appearing to stir the embers of theological disputation. But the effort must be made, since he is much too notable a man to be passed over; and the task may be made easier by the fact that he is a Catholic of whom Protestants speak well, even though they have to recognize in him one of the most damaging of their opponents. They respect his character even in the act of examining his propositions; they perceive that it was just because his character was so admirable that he was able to do the cause of the Reformation so much harm.

He combined qualities which, in that age, were rarely found conjoined, being at once a gentleman and a scholar, a man of saintly humility, and yet of energy and courage. Such men were scarce in both religious camps. The Reformers had their share of virile vigour, and the best of them were among the most learned men of their time; but, on the whole, they lacked good manners and 'sweet reasonableness.' Their methods were often violent, and their speech was often coarse. They upset altars and smashed stained-glass windows, and threw sacred images into the rivers, and, as we have seen, 'crowned Roman Catholic priests with cow-dung.' Their vocabulary, too, was scurrilous, as was natural, seeing that many of them had risen to eminence in their church from some very humble rank in life. They lacked the grand style in theology, and one could find excuses for calling them vulgarians.

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No doubt there was more of the grand style among their Catholic opponents, but they also fell short in many ways of the Christian ideal. Many of them were dissolute debauchees. The case of Æneas Sylvius, already cited, shows that the most cynical immorality was not incompatible with the highest ecclesiastical advancement, and, indeed, it is notorious that the loose lives of ecclesiastical dignitaries did more than their unscriptural doctrines to discredit the Church of Rome and make the Reformation possible. There were prelates of whom it could truly be said that they spared neither men in their anger nor women in their lust; and even among those whose reputation was sweeter, there were a good many who would have passed a very bad quarter of an hour if haled before Calvin's Consistory and cross-examined. Even if they had passed the moral standards, they would have been found guilty of luxury and arrogance. They were unduly addicted to purple and fine linen, and made no pretence to live a simple life.

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On each side, however, there were exceptions, exempt from the characteristic faults of their parties, and these, even in that age of vehement polemics, were able to recognize and appreciate one another. On the Protestant side there was M. de Bèze—the 'gentleman reformer,' as he has been called—who, drawing a useful inspiration from the memories of his unregenerate days, was able to speak affably with his enemies in the gate. On the Catholic side there was St. Francis de Sales, whom the study of the Humane Letters had indeed humanized, who was transparently sincere, and who, by the charm of his character, disarmed antagonism. In an age in which men of all religious opinions (and of none) lived in daily peril of torture and the stake, each of these two men believed that the other was honestly mistaken, and would have liked to be his friend.

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Judged by the historical results of his principal achievement, St. Francis can hardly escape condemnation as a maker of mischief and a stirrer-up of strife. To him, and to him alone, was due the triumph of the Counter-Reformation in Chablais. If he had declined that missionary enterprise, or failed in it, the Duke of Savoy would not have been encouraged to make the treacherous attempt upon Genevan independence known as the Escalade. That plot was actually laid at Thonon, at a meeting held to celebrate and rejoice over St. Francis de Sales' apostolic achievements. He must have known of it; he was in a position to protest against it; he does not



appear to have done anything of the kind. It went forward, and Spanish soldiers were hired to cut Genevan throats in the name of the Church of St. Peter. There we have cause and effect—a saintly man interfering with freedom of thought, and so bringing, not peace, but a sword.

That is the summing-up of the matter which impartial logic compels; but, somehow or other, it does not much interfere with the friendliness of one's feelings towards St. Francis de Sales. The rude logic of events did not correspond to any syllogism in his mind. The narrowness of his outlook was that of his country and his age; the sweetness of his temper was his own. He loved his erring brothers, as he considered them, and his concern was for the salvation of their souls. He did disinterestedly, and at great personal sacrifice, the duty which he conceived to lie nearest to him; he did it like a soldier, who must not reason why, and with a serene and lofty courage.

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The courage of missionaries has often, it is true, been the subject of exaggerated eulogy. Courage is no uncommon human quality; and it is doubtful whether good men are, on an average, any braver than bad men. It is not only the soldier who, as a matter of course, takes risks quite equal to those of the missionary. The brigand, the highwayman, and the beach-comber, to say nothing of the terrorist, who is generally an atheist, also do so; and, these things being so, much of the talk about the heroism of Christian heroes is almost indecently vainglorious. Yet, even when all the necessary deductions have been made, there remains something singularly fascinating in the courage of St. Francis de Sales.

He was not by nature pugnacious, as was, for example, Farel, who took an Irishman's delight in a row, and considered that it was all in the day's work when he was fustigated by women, or dragged up and down the floor of a church by the beard. His tastes, on the contrary, were refined, and his inclinations were for the life of the cloister or the study. He went into the wilds of Chablais—and it was really a wild country in those days—because he had been called and chosen, and because there was work to be done there which he was considered specially capable of doing. Men with guns took pot-shots at him in the dark places of the forests; and he once spent a whole winter's night in a tree-top, while a pack of hungry wolves howled at him from below. Such adventures were repugnant to his gentle and sensitive nature; but he faced them and persevered, year after year, until at last his pertinacity was rewarded. More as a tribute to his unique personality than to his arguments—which, of course, were only the commonplaces of Catholic apologetics—Chablais surrendered to the Church. Even though one wishes that Chablais had held out, one cannot help regarding its evangelist as a sympathetic figure. Pope Alexander VII. canonized him in 1665.

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**THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN, VEVEY**



St. Francis de Sales, was not only a missionary, but also a man of letters, and—especially—a patron of letters. Thirty years before Richelieu founded the French Academy, he founded the Florimontane Academy—with the motto *Flores fructusque perennes*—in Savoy, and thus forged one of the links between the literature of Savoy and that of France. More than one great writer, whom we carelessly class as French, was really of Savoyard origin. Vaugelas, described by Sainte-Beuve 'as the first of our correct and polished grammarians,' was the son of the Vaugelas who helped St. Francis de Sales in the formation of his literary society at Annecy. St. Réal, the forerunner of Montesquieu, was also a Savoyard; and so were Count Xavier de Maistre, author of the widely-read 'Voyage Autour de ma Chambre,' and Count Joseph de Maistre, his more distinguished brother.

Joseph de Maistre, indeed, is the greatest of the literary sons of Savoy, and a worthy inheritor of the traditions of the saint, his predecessor. An aristocrat, and a senator, he was a man of forty when the revolutionary storm burst upon his country. For a season he took refuge in Lausanne, where he often met, and argued with, Madame de Staël, whom he regarded as a woman with a good heart but a perverted head. His discussions with her, he said, 'nearly made the Swiss die with laughing, though we conducted them without quarrelling.' Afterwards he was sent to represent his sovereign at the Court of St. Petersburg, where, he complains, he had to get on as best he could, 'without a salary, without a secretary, and without a fur-lined overcoat.' Both there and at Lausanne he wrote. [106]

His date and his circumstances class him with the literary *émigrés*—with Madame de Staël, Châteaubriand, and Sénancour; but he lacks their melancholy and their sentimentalism. He and Châteaubriand, indeed, resemble one another as two champions of the Catholic religion; but they support that religion from widely different points of view. Châteaubriand is before all things the religious æsthete. He deduces the truth of a creed from its beauty, and is very little concerned with its bearing upon moral conduct. Joseph de Maistre, on the contrary, seems to believe in the authority of the Church because he believes in authority generally. He is an Absolutist who hates all Radicals, and regards the schismatic as the worst kind of Radical. He makes a religion of the principle of 'keeping people in their place,' and he supports his religion with epigrams. The epigrams are very good, though the religion is very bad. The French, like the sound critics that they are, have proved themselves capable of enjoying the one while refusing to have very much to do with the other. [107]

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FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Gibbon's acquaintance with Voltaire was only slight. *Vidi tantum*, he writes.
- [2] Poems addressed to her by these young theologians may be found in defunct magazines and annuals.
- [3] This is not quite accurate. The letter which M. d'Haussonville dates 1762 conveys a salutation to Pastor Curchod, who died in 1760. It must have been written, therefore, not in 1762, but in 1758 or 1759.
- [4] She sheltered Madame de Genlis in her flight from the Revolution.
- [5] By the present author in 'Madame de Staël and her Lovers.'
- [6] It has since been republished separately.
- [7] Madame de Hardenberg, divorced and remarried.
- [8] It was not made a University until later.

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