

# AN EDUCATOR OF ARISTOCRACY

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There also observe Preceptress Genlis, or Sillery, or Sillery-Genlis,—for our husband is both Count and Marquis, and we have more than one title. Pretentious, frothy; a puritan, yet creedless; darkening counsel by words without wisdom! . . . She would gladly be sincere, yet can grow no sincerer than sincere cant . . . Madame, for her part, trains up a youthful D'Orleans generation in what superfinest morality one can.

CARLYLE.

IN such characteristically mordant terms Carlyle has dismissed one of the most remarkable women who took their share in the courtly life of France just previous to the great Revolution. But Madame de Genlis deserves more than a passing phrase of Carlylean contempt, and this article will endeavour to present her in a more charitable light.

## I

Stephanie Félicité Du Crest was born at Champcéri, near Autun, in Burgundy, on the 25th of January, 1746, "of an ancient but reduced family." While she was still a mere infant, her father purchased the estate of St. Aubin, situated on the banks of the Loire, and in this beautiful spot six years of "innocence and happiness" glided swiftly away. Félicité's education was of the most frivolous and desultory kind. Her father and mother were affectionate and, in some respects, indulgent, but as careless and imprudent as it was possible for parents to be. Her father's chief desire was to make her "a woman of firm mind;" and to that end the little girl was subjected to very severe discipline. Because she had an intense antipathy for spiders, frogs, and mice, she was forced to feed and bring up a mouse, to catch spiders with her fingers, and to hold toads in her hands. One is scarcely surprised to learn that these exercises of her courage not only failed in their purpose, but "powerfully contributed to weaken her nerves." Her mother was so much occupied with household affairs and the visits of her neighbours, that Félicité was left to the care and instruction of the chambermaids. Her first real teacher was the village schoolmistress, who taught her to read with ease in six or seven months. At six years of age she was taken on a visit to Paris, which she at first disliked extremely because of the constrained life she was obliged to lead; for there she was forbidden "to run, to leap, or to ask questions"—a heavy trial to a lively infant with active limbs

and a nimble tongue! In addition to these restrictions she was fitted with an iron collar to rid her of her "country attitudes," and with goggles to cure her of a squint; with whalebone stays which pinched her sorely, and with tight shoes which made it impossible for her to walk. Her hair was tortured with innumerable curl-papers, and she also wore a hoop for the first time in her life. In short, she began her apprenticeship to society—a very trying business in those days. She was consoled for her sufferings, however, by the fine ceremony of her public baptism, where the consciousness of being the principal figure in the scene gratified her precocious vanity, and some splendid presents together with sweetmeats and playthings soon made her forget her "little griefs."

On the return of the family to St. Aubin it was decided that Félicité should have a regular governess, and—as the child possessed a fine voice with a decided taste for music—it became of prime importance that this governess should be musical. Mademoiselle de Mars, a girl of sixteen, the daughter of an organist at Vannes, and herself a performer on the harpsichord, was selected. Pupil and teacher, not very widely separated in years, quickly became attached to each other, and played and worked merrily together like the children they both were. With the exception of her musical powers, Mademoiselle de Mars was exceedingly ignorant—a fact which did not seem much to concern Félicité's discreet parents. At the beginning the daily lesson included the catechism, an abridgement of *The History of Father Buffier*, singing and harpsichord. To save herself the trouble of "deciphering the notes" the child contrived to play wholly by ear, without her teacher being any the wiser. "As for Father Buffier, he was so very tiresome that he was abandoned for ever at the end of eight days, and no one asked any questions about the matter." *Clelia*, a novel by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and *The Theatre* of Mademoiselle Barbier were substituted for the good Father. These tales turned the little girl's fancy to romance and the drama, and she now began to compose little stories and comedies; these, however, she was unable to set down, because as yet she "knew not how to form a single letter."

To such profound studies were added presently lessons in dancing and fencing, with a great deal of amateur acting. The production of various plays—*Zaire*, *Iphigenia*, the *Folies Amoureuses*—served to beguile the tedium of the country for Madame Du Crest and her friends, and the little Félicité always took a leading part which suited her excellently. She spent the greater part of her time in costume; now arrayed as Iphigenia in cherry-

coloured silk with silver trimmings worn over a large hoop, now as "Love" in rose colour with azure wings and floating hair, and now as a pretty boy in a satin suit. She writes:

I led a charming life; in the mornings I played a little on the harpsichord and sung; afterwards I studied my parts; then I took my lesson of dancing and fencing. Afterwards I read till dinner with Mademoiselle de Mars. On quitting table we read pious books, under the direction of Father Antoine. From thence we passed to the drawing-room and there amused ourselves with making garlands of artificial flowers for our fêtes. The servants worked at them along with us, and often worthy Father Antoine has helped us to paint them.

This agreeable life came to a most disagreeable conclusion in 1759, when Félicité was barely thirteen. In that year her father lost his fortune and was obliged to sell St. Aubin. A paltry annuity of 1200 francs a year was all that remained of their former wealth; "and," says Félicité, "not a refuge for us on the earth!" M. Du Crest, to the great grief of his daughter, who loved him tenderly, set sail for St. Domingo, where he hoped to re-establish his fortunes. His wife and two children were left in Paris to fend for themselves as best they might, and for several years they drifted helplessly from one resting-place to another. At first they made their home at Passy with M. de la Popelinière, the farmer-general. Then they took lodgings in Paris in the Rue Neuve St. Paul. Next they occupied rooms in an ornamental pavilion situated in the beautiful pleasure-grounds that surrounded a country house at Chantilly. But here, after some months of ease, their generous host was suddenly clapped into prison by his creditors armed with a *lettre de cachet*, his disconsolate wife settled her affairs and closed the chateau, and the Du Crests once more found themselves adrift. Finally, after numerous changes, they sought an asylum in the Convent of St. Joseph where they remained until Félicité's marriage. Long before that event her father had returned from St. Domingo, no better off in pocket than when he left, and very much worse in health. He had experienced many vicissitudes, having been taken prisoner by the English on his way back to his native land, and detained for some time in an English seaport town. Scarcely was he freed and back again in Paris when he was arrested for debt and carried off to the Fort L'Evêque. This was a mortal wound from which he never recovered; and although soon released, he shortly after fell victim to a "malignant fever."

All these afflicting occurrences are very depressing to relate, but Mademoiselle Félicité's life, even in these dark days, was not

wholly sad. During their passage she grew into womanhood; and, if one can credit the portrait of herself which she has drawn with such minute detail, had become an exceedingly bewitching young person with a rich store of gifts and graces. Whether living on the hospitality of her friends, or lodging in an obscure corner of Paris, or dwelling within the quiet precincts of the convent, she always managed to extract some amusement from life. There were always fêtes to go to, at which her youth and beauty—to say nothing of her musical gifts—made her a principal figure, and that alone went a long way toward consoling her for the hard knocks dealt her by fate. To her singing and harpsichord playing she had added a knowledge of the guitar, the violin, the harp, and the *bagpipes*! She was still passionately fond of acting, and had an incorrigible love of practical joking, as well as a fine appetite for bonbons and flattery. Sometimes, it is true, her enjoyment was clouded by the suspicion that those who “loaded” her with kindness and by whom she was “excessively caressed” valued her only because of her accomplishments, and this feeling, she complains “bred in me a taste for solitude, and an excessive timidity.” Of this effect, I am bound to say, there is little trace in her *Memoirs*. Although so young, she already had had several opportunities to marry; but the active brain beneath the thick chestnut hair was both shrewd and ambitious, and she knew what she wanted. An old man she would not have; “and”, she says, “I was determined to marry no one but a man of quality, and belonging to the court.”

Now it had so befallen that in those days when her father was a prisoner in the hands of the English, he had had as a fellow captive a young French officer of high rank, the Comte de Genlis, who in addition to possessing great personal beauty was of acknowledged courage. To him the fond father displayed a miniature he always carried with him, which represented Félicité seated at her harp. The young man was struck with this picture. “He made many inquiries about me”—she says in her *Memoirs*—“and believed all that was said by a father who believed me faultless.” The Comte received his freedom first, and hastened to Paris where he sought the acquaintance of the original of the portrait, and won her gratitude by procuring the release of her father. The sequel to this tale could be guessed by a child. M. le Comte possessed the rank and connections desired by Mademoiselle; he had in addition the incomparable attractions of youth and beauty. Of course the affair was not without difficulties. Mademoiselle Du Crest, however charming, was quite penniless, and her lover was not much richer. Moreover, before M. de Genlis had fixed his affections on

Mademoiselle Félicité he had given his promise to an uncle, the head of his house, to marry a lady that gentleman had selected for him. The matter was settled by a secret marriage, which nine days later was solemnly ratified by a public ceremony. The uncle, quite naturally, was enraged; his anger was both violent and long continued. The delinquent bridegroom waited on him, but was refused admittance; he wrote, but received no answer. The young couple bore these domestic storms with philosophical good humour. Money cares sat as lightly on them as if they had been denizens of the Forest of Arden. After ten days of testing the degree of chill the social atmosphere of Paris held for them, they yielded gracefully to public opinion and retired to the family estate of Genlis. There they were cordially welcomed by the Marquis de Genlis, elder brother of M. le Comte, himself a reprehensible sheep of the inkiest dye, living there in disgrace under a family ban.

There is no reason to suppose that Madame de Genlis's marriage was other than a love match. Love, indeed, could have been the only motive for a union so decidedly unprofitable on both sides. They had everything to make them congenial. They were both young, attractive, talented, of high birth and higher spirits. They dance across the pages of the *Memoirs* in the joyous *camaraderie* of youth and gaiety, with much the same air of unreality that hovers over the delicate paintings of Watteau. No doubt the Comtesse looked back on those early days through rose-coloured spectacles, but her recollections are nearly all happy ones. Sometimes they lived at Genlis, sometimes in Paris; sometimes they visited the homes of their different relatives, who were reconciled after a time by the tact and winsomeness of the little bride. But always they are shown in full pursuit of pleasure and often capturing it, too,—always acting, dancing, hunting; playing practical jokes like a couple of irresponsible schoolboys, designing and carrying out brilliant fêtes with a seriousness and energy that almost elevated these idle amusements into an important occupation of life. Even the older people in this unreal world frolicked away their time like their juniors, so who can wonder at the young folk?

Thus much for the childhood and youth of Madame de Genlis —for that joyous and exultant period when, as the poet hath it, with "linked fantasies" one "swings the earth a trinket at the wrist." She and her husband, like a thousand other thoughtless, self-indulgent aristocrats, played merrily along the highway of life, all unconscious that the fires of revolution were sullenly smouldering beneath the crust over which their carelsss feet tripped lightly. The Comtesse was still in full pursuit of pleasure when she took

the serious step which plunged her into a different world, and which, therefore, forms a distinct epoch in her history.

## II.

In 1770, Madame de Genlis became lady of honour to the Duchesse de Chartres, while her husband, who cared little about her having the place, "and declared he would not consent to let me enter the Palais Royal," says the Comtesse, "unless he was attached to it himself," obtained the post of captain of the guards in the household of the Duc.

In a picture of the Comtesse the materials of which have been furnished by the lady herself, it will not be necessary to assign any reasons, or ascribe any motives, for this step other than those she herself gives. Of course, the world of gossip had its own opinion. If you wish to know it, you have only to study contemporary memoirs. "I took" says the Comtesse, "a spotless character with me into the Palais Royal." The world was inclined to believe that she did not bring it out again. The atmosphere of the Palais Royal was not conducive to the preservation of spotless reputations! It will be sufficient, however, for my purpose to say that she confesses that the step was a foolish one; that she took it in opposition to the last wishes of a dear dead friend, who in life had kept her from it; and that she admits with shame having been governed by ambition and vanity when taking it. "I saw," she says, "many snares and dangers scattered along my path, but I saw splendour, and I was carried away by vanity, curiosity, and presumption. I was delighted at the thought of entering this splendid court, the refinement and elegance of which had fascinated my imagination; but I could not conceal from myself that I was risking my peace of mind."

No worse surroundings could have been found for a young, attractive, and giddy woman. Ere long the charming Comtesse discovered that the fair prospect concealed some very disagreeable pitfalls for the unwary. She tells us:

For the first time, I was surrounded by malevolent glances . . . . After passing six months at the Palais Royal, I had experienced so many marks of calumny and malignity, that I resolved to withdraw myself from it for some time. The Duchesse de Chartres had, of her own accord, conceived a great friendship for me. She was told many malignant things about me, but she always refused to believe them; she saw such a spirit of animosity against me, that she easily recognized the ill-disguised and passionate language of envy, . . . she became attached to me with

a kind of passion which lasted in all its strength more than fifteen years. . . . this was the first motive of the ardent jealousy of which I was the object, for nine years, at the Palais Royal.

Se non é vero, é ben trovato! Why should a lady's statement be too closely sifted? Everyone knows that jealousy lies at the bottom of much of the evil speaking in this world!

Happily for the Comtesse, she had resources within herself which served to console her when outward circumstances were unfriendly. Her passion for learning opened to her a peaceful realm in which she could seek forgetfulness of all jarring elements, and more and more as time passed on she withdrew herself into this retreat. It is amazing to read a list of the books she studied and the different subjects she mastered. Up to the time of her marriage her chief, almost her sole, study, had been music; but at Genlis there was an excellent library, and there she first cultivated a taste for reading. She made the acquaintance of Pascal, Corneille, and Madame de Sévigné, as well as many other authors; and to help her in remembering what she read she made copious extracts, of which in time she gathered an enormous collection. But book knowledge alone did not satisfy her. She studied medicine with a country doctor, cooking with her friends the nuns, drawing and painting with her husband, and even "endeavoured to have some idea of field labour and gardening." "I have been *totally* ignorant of nothing," she says, "and have been able to speak tolerably on all subjects." At the Palais Royal she continued her studies, adding to them natural history. She formed a collection of shells, minerals, and stones, which during the Revolution was confiscated and sold for the benefit of the nation. One of her most intimate friends was the celebrated Buffon; "We spoke of nothing but literature," she writes, "and I questioned him continually on his style and manner of writing." The Comtesse had her own aspirations toward a literary career, and was eager for any hints that might help her to obtain success. She never wasted a moment. The dressing of her long hair afforded time for study, and when journeying from one royal residence to another she usually managed to be alone in the coach that she might read or write.

Her early passion for teaching had never forsaken the Comtesse. At Genlis she had found a willing pupil in her sister-in-law, whom she taught "singing and orthography." Later on, her own two little girls offered her a delightful opportunity to test her theories of education. At the Palais Royal she had a distinguished pupil in the Duchesse de Chartres who learned from her "history,

orthography, and mythology." All these occupations soothed and distracted her restless spirit. Like the Venerable Bede, she could say with truth on looking back over her life:—"My constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or writing."

### III.

Madame de Genlis's gift for teaching fixed her destiny for the next fifteen years. In 1777 she was selected by the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres to superintend the education of their twin daughters, (one of whom died young, however,) and a little later on, she assumed the charge of the three young princes as well. The Comtesse was at this period still extraordinarily attractive—one cannot doubt it, because it is her own assertion—yet she resolved to seclude herself with her little pupils within the precincts of a convent that she might devote herself more entirely to her new duties. For this purpose a handsome pavilion was built for her in the gardens surrounding the Convent of Belle Chasse. Here she gathered about her a miniature academy not unlike that early school taught by Vittorino da Feltre at the court of Mantua in the fifteenth century, where princes and peasants sat side by side at their lessons. For Madame's scholars included not only the Orleans princes, her own children, and her nephew and niece, but also a little English waif of humble parentage and remarkable beauty, afterwards famous as the lovely Pamela, Lady Edward Fitzgerald.

It was the work Madame de Genlis accomplished during these fifteen years that gave her celebrity. It is quite possible, in spite of the praise she lavishes on herself, to refuse admiration to the giddy romp who danced with lackeys in a *guinguette*, and rouged and patched the sleeping nuns in the convent where she was staying, to the great scandal of the establishment; or to the self-satisfied little actress, who in shepherdess costume, played her bagpipes on a flower-decked boat to amuse the guests at Sillery. But one can have nothing but commendation for the brilliant young woman who worked out such a useful and comprehensive scheme of education. Her account of her methods is of absorbing interest to those who care for the subject. It is possible that she was indebted to Rousseau for some of her ideas—one is the more inclined to believe that such was the case because she denies it with so much vehemence—but the original and striking manner in which these ideas were developed was all her own. This is the more astonishing when one remembers how lacking her own education had been in solid elements, how little she had by way of example in the life



around her, and how few were the hints she could obtain even from books. She perceived clearly and worked out carefully three of the fundamental principles of child-teaching; first, that what a child learns through the eye makes an ineffaceable impression on the brain and is the first step in awakening the intelligence; secondly, that manual training should supplement and accompany mental; and thirdly, that true education does not concern itself with the mind or the body only, but cares for the symmetrical development of the moral character as well. It is a singular fact that scarcely any great reform or discovery is ever born in one mind alone; it occurs simultaneously to several thinkers who approach the matter from different points of view. Thus while Madame de Genlis was making her experiments in education in a narrow and restricted circle, the great Pestalozzi in a wider sphere was working out the same ideas. Both, however, were far in advance of their time. It was not till many years later that their methods were fully understood and generally applied.

Study for a moment the details of Madame de Genlis's scheme of education, and you will see how comprehensive it was. The children were not merely instructed for a certain number of hours each day. They were surrounded by an educative atmosphere which they absorbed unconsciously and without effort. Here is her own account:—

I tried to render everything useful to my plan of education, even to the furniture of Belle Chasse. The tapestry of the princesses' room represented busts of the seven Kings of Rome, and the emperors and empresses down to Constantine. Over the doors were painted scenes from the same history. Two large fire-screens represented the Kings of France; the hand-screens and the tops of the dining-room doors were covered with mythological pictures. The staircase was entirely covered with maps, which could be taken down for the lessons; the maps of the south were at the foot of the stair, and those of the north at the top. . . . I caused the teacher of drawing to make an historical magical lantern, with pictures of sacred, ancient, and Roman history. . . . nothing was ever seen more beautiful than that magic lantern which was exhibited by my pupils, by turns, once a week. . . . I invented for them a kind of game which delighted them, and with which I have often been amused myself. I made them put in scenes and act in the garden the most celebrated voyages. . . . every person in the house took part in these representations; we had ponies for the processions, the fine river in the park represented the sea, and a set of pretty little boats formed our fleets. . . . the finest of the voyages we played were those of Vasco de Gama. I also caused a little portable stage to be erected, upon which we performed historic pictures.

In the above outline one can see how insistent was the appeal to the eye in this novel system of training.

All Madame de Genlis's other methods exhibit the same wisdom and common sense. "I was the first governess of princes in France, who adopted the custom of teaching children the living languages by means of talking them," she says. "I gave the young princess an English maid and another who understood Italian perfectly. . . the princes also had English, German, and Italian masters. . . . at St. Leu, a charming residence where we spent eight months of the year, I had a garden laid out. . . . a small garden for each of my pupils, which they planted and dug with their own hands. I engaged a German gardener who never spoke to them but in German. . . . in their evening walks they spoke in English as well as at dinner, and we *supped in Italian*. I attached to their list of teachers an apothecary who accompanied the princes on their walks to teach them botany; and every summer he gave a course of chemistry, at which I was always present." Nor was physical training forgotten. She took care, she says, "to fortify their bodies by gymnastic exercises proportioned to their strength."

Love was the ruling power in this miniature world. The Comtesse evidently understood how to win the hearts of children. Each of her royal pupils designed for her a posy ring on which with affecting simplicity they expressed their love. "*What should I have been but for you?*" said the young Duc de Chartres. "*To love you is my duty, to please you my delight*" was the Duc de Montpensier's device. "*I am your work, and I present you mine*" wrote the little Count de Beaujolais on the ring he had wrought himself. "*Is there anything I can prefer to the happiness of being with you?*" questioned Mademoiselle's gift. The unfortunate young Montpensier in his fragmentary memoirs of several years later alludes with yearning affection to this beloved governess who had been a mother to him. She was rarely obliged to resort to punishment in her little Commonwealth; rewards were given, "but only in cases which did not encourage their self-love; prizes for application, mildness, goodness, etc." A journal was kept for each child, which was read and signed by its owner, and in which praise or censure was impartially bestowed.

#### IV.

The Palais Royal had been one of the nurseries of the Revolution. Inspired by jealousy, hatred, a mad desire for power and for revenge, the Duc D'Orléans—Citizen Egalité to be—had en-

couraged the development of this awful cataclysm with absolutely no forebodings of the proportions it was to attain, or that he was himself to fall a victim to it at its climax. So little, indeed, was its real meaning understood that Madame de Genlis brought her pupils from St. Leu to the gardens of Beaumarchais, on that memorable July day, to see the destruction of the Bastille, much as she would have taken them to any great show. The carefully guarded little aristocrats gazed with wonder on the doings of the mob. "It would be impossible to give an idea of the sight," writes the Comtesse; "you must have seen it to conceive it as it was; this redoubtable fortress was covered with men, women, and children, working with unequalled ardour. . . . The astonishing number of these voluntary workmen, their activity, their enthusiasm, their pleasure at seeing the fall of that terrible monument of tyranny—all this spoke at once to the imagination and the heart. . . . no one has been more shocked than I at the excesses committed at the taking of the Bastille; but as I had also been witness, for twenty years, of many arbitrary imprisonments—as I had never cast my eyes without shuddering on that fortress—I acknowledge that its destruction caused me the highest pleasure."

There can be no doubt that Madame de Genlis's early friendliness to the Revolution was inspired by the purest motives. It was impossible for a clever and reflective woman not to perceive that there were grave wrongs existing in the State that cried aloud for remedy. "I was of no party," she says, "but that of religion. I desired to see the reformation of certain abuses, my indignation against which inspired me with a sort of enthusiasm for the beginning of a revolution, of which I saw not any of the remote consequences. . . . I saw with joy the abolition of *lettres de cachet* and of the rights of the chase; this was all I wished for; and my politics never went further." She proudly denies the reports that the Duc d'Orléans was under her influence. "He told me a thousand times," she says, "that I was worthy of being listened to and consulted on questions of history and literature, but that I knew nothing of politics." The fact is, the Comtesse remained faithful to the party of the Gironde, like La Fayette and Lally Tollendal, while the Duc pressed on to an alliance with the Jacobins.

An incident that occurred in 1790 suddenly aroused Madame de Genlis, who had for some time been vaguely uneasy, to a full sense of the danger to which she and her young charges were exposed. It was a fair-day in Colombe, and the Comtesse with the three young girls and the little Comte de Beaujolais were driving in a barouche through the village. For some reason or other the as-

sembled crowds took it into their heads that here was the queen, who, along with Madame and the Dauphin, was fleeing from Paris. Forthwith the carriage was stopped, the frightened occupants roughly dragged out and imprisoned in a neighbouring house, amid wild shouts of "*A la lanterne.*" Presently the mob, beside itself with excitement, forced its way in after them. Hearing their approach the Comtesse, with admirable presence of mind, bade the children begin some game, and when the crowds surged in they were not a little disconcerted to find their captives cheerfully playing Puss-in-the-corner. As Madame harangued the ring-leaders, her open snuff-box in her hand, a burly citizen lurched up and coolly helped himself to a pinch. With a perfectly composed countenance the lady tossed away the dishonoured snuff, while she went on speaking. The people were visibly impressed. "Several of them said that if I were really the queen, I could not be so much at my ease." Fortunately an old gamekeeper of Sillery happened to be present, who—recognizing the Comtesse and bidding her quietly to fear nothing—tramped into Paris and obtained an order for their release. Henceforth Madame de Genlis's sole desire was to fly with her charges from her distracted country; and at last, in October 1791, she wrung permission from the Duc d'Orléans to visit England, taking with her his daughter, Mademoiselle, as well as her own niece and Pamela.

Her chief aim, for many months, seems to have been to conceal her identity. At first she conceived the notion of obtaining a situation in Holland as a housekeeper; but her son-in-law, to whom she applied for help in her plan, pooh-poohed it as "romantic foolery". She consoled herself for this disappointment by retiring to Altona, where she boarded at a quiet inn under the name of "Miss Clarke." Toward the end of her stay there it began to be whispered about that this quiet and mysterious lady was in reality Madame de Genlis, a famous authoress, but her fellow-boarders laughed the idea to scorn. "Miss Clarke an authoress?" cried one—"Depend upon it, that with the exception of her prayer-book, she never cast eyes on a book in her life!" It was an odd life for the aristocratic and dignified governess of princes—this travelling about in rude country waggons, and boarding at lower-class inns, and living on friendly, even intimate terms with kind-hearted rustics. But there must have been a streak of Bohemianism in her nature, for she accommodated herself very easily to her circumstances. Though often reduced to great poverty, she was always able to extricate herself from her money troubles by selling one of those novels which flowed with such incredible ease from her

busy pen. Her enemies never ceased to annoy her; they followed her to Berlin, where she had just established herself comfortably, and the King of Prussia ordered her from his dominions. She found a refuge in Holstein, where one of her friends provided her with a "real cottage of romance," in which she whiled away the long hours with writing and painting, and in imaginary conversations with her absent friends. There is a touch of real pathos in the picture of the lonely woman setting wide her drawing-room door for the shadowy company who never failed to come, and greeting them with joy:—"Sometimes, in my fancy, it was my daughter and Mademoiselle d'Orléans; sometimes Pamela, my brother, nephew or niece. I embraced them as they entered, took them by the hand, made them sit down beside my stove. I spoke to them of my plans, my hopes, my fears. . . . and it often occurred that I cried at these conversations, which at last did me great harm." A long and serious illness was the natural conclusion to this melancholy way of life. But kind friends nursed her tenderly back to health, and her niece, who came to care for her, insisted that she leave her seclusion and return to Hamburg with her.

In 1801 her sorrowful nine years of exile came to an end. A period of peace made it possible for her to return to her beloved France, and thither accordingly she hastened. "I shall not attempt," she cries, "to paint the emotions which I experienced in again passing the frontier, on entering France, on hearing the people talk French, on approaching Paris!"

The remaining years of Madame de Genlis's life contain no very remarkable event. At first she was sorely grieved by the changes brought about by the Revolution. Manners, customs, ideas, all had been altered, and as she thought for the worse. But time gradually reconciled her to these alterations; she thought that conditions improved; it is more probable that she grew accustomed to them. "I found everything changed, even the language," she complains, and then adds more cheerfully, "we speak now much better than on my first return to France." Strange to say, the great Emperor who abhorred Madame de Stael, condescended to patronize her sister of the pen. He bestowed a pension on the Comtesse, and, according to her own story, bade her write to him once a fortnight on "*politics, finances, literature, and morals.*" She modestly disclaimed any ability to deal with the first two subjects, but the last one afforded her an opportunity after her own heart, which she eagerly seized. "It was not my fault," she reflects with mild self-gratulation, "if he did not become religious!" Moral discourses are always prosy; and it is surely not being too severe

to say that Madame de Genlis's discourses to Napoleon were no livelier than others of their kind.

The restoration of the Bourbons brought back the survivors of the Comtesse's beloved Orleans family, Mademoiselle and the former Duc de Chartres, now become Duc d'Orléans. The old friendship still lived for her—time and separation had not cooled it. Happy in their constant affection and in the love and care of those dear to her, she passed her days in tranquillity until her death in 1830.

There is no doubt that Madame de Genlis was a highly gifted woman. Her *Memoirs*, much of which was written when she was over eighty, are sufficient to prove that she possessed exceptional talent. She was a prolific writer, and her books were much admired in their day. It was as a teacher, however, that she made her mark. One need not feel obliged to take her picture of herself as being absolutely accurate. Though the colouring may be correct enough, it is possible that the lights and shades are a trifle faulty. But when the results of her training are placed beside the account of her methods, the two seem to prove that as an educator at least she is not unworthy to be remembered.