SOME NEW BOOKS.

The Barras Memoirs.

It has long been known that the Vicomte DE BARRAS, better known as the successful opponent of Robespierre, and most influential member of the Directorate, left memoirs, or the material for memoirs, which was wrought by a friend into consecutive and readable form. It is certain that these memoirs were seen in manuscript by Laufrey, and we may take for granted that they were also seen by Taine, for he would never have rested until he had ransacked every source of information which he knew to have been inspected by any of his predecessors. If these memoirs have remained unpublished for some sixty years, it is because they contained matter obviously libellous and which almost certainly would have subjected the publishers to criminal prosecution. At the present time they may escape punishment, for it is clearly the interest of every one concerned in upholding the third republic, to quench the revival of the Napoleonic legend in a flood of ridicule and obloquy. Such was unquestionably the aim of the author of these memoirs, and we cannot comprehend how their editor, M. George Duruy, can reconcile their publication with his professed, nay, apparently sincere, devotion to the memory of the great Emperor. It is true that in two prefaces and an introduction the editor attacks with fervor, and, in our opinion, manages to demolish the two main theses which Barras strove to establish: first, that Bonaparte was deserving of no particular credit in connection with the siege of Toulon, or with the successful struggle of the Convention against the Paris sections on the 13th Vendémiaire; and secondly, that Bonaparte was guilty of incredible baseness in condoning at the time of his marriage with Josephine her preceding relations with Barras, and even conniving at the subsequent continuation of the liaison. If the editor was convinced that the charges made by the ex-Director were gross slanders, without any foundation in fact, he would have done better, one may think, to suppress the calumnies, as they had already been suppressed for two generations. As he has chosen to publish them, however, and consquently they have passed into the current material of history, to receive such weight and value as the individual judgment may affix, it is needful to notice them, and we shall, accordingly, proceed to outline what Barras has to say in support of the two main theses above mentioned.

I.

One preliminary word about the author of these memoirs, the first two volumes of which are now published in an English translation by the Harpers. There were many self-styled nobles of dubious pedigree, even under the ancient régime, but the Vicomte Paul de Barras was not one of them. His family was one of the oldest and most honored in the Department of the Var, where he was born on June 30, 1755. "Noble as the Barras, who are coeval with our rocks," was a Provençal proverb. One of his ancestors commanded an important corps in one of the Crusades. Two of them were Grand Commanders of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. One was Grand Seneschal of Provence, another, Grand Chamberlain to Charles VIII. The author's uncle, Rear Admiral de Barras, commanded a squadron during our Revolutionary war, and, by his timely arrival, gave the Comte De Grasse the command of Chesapeake Bay, and thus enabled him to assure the capture of Cornwallis. The author's father served in the Corsican war under M. de Marbeuf, and the record of the fact in these memoirs is accompanied with the statement that "the General-in-Chief was charged with grave neglect of his military duties and improper attentions to a woman at that time unknown to fame, but who has since acquired it as the mother of a personage (Napoleon) who subsequently became too famous." Obtaining a commission in the army, Paul de Barras twice served in India, and, returning to Paris in 1783, witnessed the last days of the ancien régime, and, from the outset of the revolution, became a Jacobin of Jacobins, sagely perceiving that in that way only was an ex-noble likely to keep his head. All that part of his memoirs which precede the first mention of Bonaparte we had intended to pass over, but we ought at least to mention his clear and emphatic testimony to the innocence of Marie Antoinette in the matter of the diamond necklace. He knew well the Lamottes and Cagliostro, by whom the intrigue was devised and carried out, but he avers that his exceptional opportunities of information justify him in averring that the Queen was entirely a stranger to it. "Odious swindlers," he says, "not less guilt than assassins, conceived the idea of dragging her name and person into the affair with unexampled audacity. It is quite true that my loyalty went in those days the length of ingenuousness, and that, while I had made the discovery that Mme. de Lamotte was a woman of easy virtue, I was far from suspecting her of being so clever a plotter, and I would never have guessed that the genuine ignobleness and apparent stillness of her husband screened so deep, and, I may say, such rabid rascality." Later on was to be seen the horrible triumph of the animosity of this man, who from that time attached himself to the unfortunate Queen as it to a prey.

II.

Toward the close of 1793, Barras, who was in high favor with the Jacobins, then dominant in Paris, Robespierre alone distrusting the sincerity of his sentiments and despising his corruption, was sent as a representative of the Convention to the republican army then besieging Toulon, which was defended by a British fleet and a land force mainly composed of Englishmen and Spaniards. Barras tells us that, engrossed as he was with everything demanded by such a serious undertaking as the capture of Toulon, he thought that careful attention should in the first place be paid to those points on the coast of Provence where the enemy might effect further landings. He needed an officer who understood reconnoitring and how to place batteries; for such work an intelligent Lieutenant would suffice. "I intrusted it," he says, "to one of the youngest, who came to me to receive instructions. He fulfilled his mission promptly and punctually. Well pleased with the report he handed me on my return, I said to him. 'I thank you, Captain.' He replied to me most respectfully, 'I beg pardon, I am only a Lieutenant.' 'You are a Captain,' was my rejoinder, 'because you deserve to be one, and I have the power to confer that rank on you.'" Such was Bonaparte's first interview with Barras. Subsequently the latter, finding himself unable to obtain any satisfactory information from Carteaux, then the commanding General, visited the outposts, taking with him as his companion the young artillery officer who had followed him about ever since his arrival. "Everything," said young Bonaparte to Barras, "is in bad shape; it is my duty, Citizen Representative, to place before you the true state of affairs; your uprightness and military rank are to me a guarantee that you will give an ear to my remarks. I am," he went on to say, "the butt of the Corsican faction, as well as subjected to the arrogance of Carteaux and his wife. I think I may claim to know something about artillery matters. I appeal to your better judgment, as any useful measure I suggest is contemptuously rejected. I have received orders to suspend the erection of a battery I was erecting on an eminence the enemy was unable to occupy, and which would enable us to close this passage commanded by Victor, and protect it against a surprise. In addition, this eminence is so situated that a fire erected on its summit would plunge into the enemy's intrenchments. I beg you will support me; my zeal will show you that I am worthy of your protection when you shall have looked into all these matters." Barras adds that, while speaking in these terms, Bonaparte offered him a few copies of a pamphlet recently written by him, and which he had printed at Avignon, at the same time begging permission to distribute a few among the officers and privates of the Republican army. This screed was his fulsome *Souper de Beaucaire*. Carrying about with him a huge bundle of copies, he remarked while handing them around: "This will show you whether or not I am a patriot. Can any man be too much of a revolutionist? Marat and Robespierre are my saints." Elsewhere we learn that, at the very time Bonaparte was giving such fine proofs of his civism, his brother Lucien, keeper of stores at Saint Maximin, which name he had caused to be altered to Marathon, was playing the same comedy as his elder, in that town, where everybody stood in awe of him, and where he was a constant speaker at the meetings of the local popular society. He would, it seems, in one and the same speech, express the desire of seeing every aristocrat and priest hanged, and pursue with his invective even God, whom he braved, defied, and unceasingly denied. According to Barras, he actually perpetrated the crime with which the most frenzied demagogues were charged in those terrible days. The reference is to the profanation of the elements of holy communion, and the infamous desecration to which the holy vessels were subjected.

III.

Returning from Lucien to Napoleon Bonaparte, the author recalls that he was struck with the latter's activity from the time they first came together at Toulon, while his attention to his military duties impressed the representative of the Convention favorably. The two had many conversations during the preparations for the siege, and, presently admitted to the table of Barras, the young artillery officer was always placed at the host's side. The attraction which the author felt for him is attributed to the amazing physical resemblance which Bonaparte at this time bore to Marat. That such a likeness existed will be new to many persons, and we accordingly quote the passage which relates to it: "The world in general is inclined to kindliness, and even to a certain admiration for a man of frail physique who displays more strength than nature seems to have granted him. His soul appears superior to his body, and one feels that he ought to have credit for a double triumph. Independently of this reason, there was another about which I do not wish to make any mystery, but which attracted me toward this young Lieutenant of artillery. It was not merely the merit of courageous activity, the perpetual motion and physical agitation which, replete with energy, began with the head, never to end, even at the extremities, in that little man of low stature. It was rather in all this ensemble, a striking resemblance to one of the famous, not to say the most famous of the men who flitted by on the stage of the Revolution. This Revolutionist whose name the reader is anxiously awaiting I do not hesitate to name in the naïve expression of the frankness dictating my memoirs. Well, then, this physical double of Bonaparte was Marat. I had seen a good deal of the latter on the benches of the Convention, and even previously. I could assuredly not have felt any more attraction toward him than that allowed by his perpetual violence and appeals to slaughter; still, without seeking to justify and defend his system as a political writer, I was far from believing Marat as monstrous a fiend as he was, and ever will be considered."

Barras goes on to give some reasons for his belief that the philosophy of Marat, though more violent in its expression, was less personal and more disinterested than Bonaparte's. He asserts that no consideration could make Marat swerve from his course when what he considered the interests of the republic were at stake. From the tribune and in his writings he inveighed against the most intimate of his friends if, in their acts or speeches, he detected anything contrary to the principles of equality; and, on the other hand, he would sustain his personal enemies if he thought them sincerely attached to the cause of liberty. Such was his line of conduct toward Robespierre, Danton, and all his colleagues of the National Convention. For instance, while Louvet was delivering his attack against Robespierre, Marat, who had been sitting with folded arms at the foot of the tribune, began speaking on the assailed man's behalf, gesticulating wildly. "I do not," he said, "like Robespierre; he is a vain man, ambitious of domination, but he is a genuine republican, and, on that account, I consider it my duty to give him my support. Nor am I the friend of Danton." The fact is recalled that Marat twice saved alleged aristocrats from death at the hands of the populace, and that his very death was due to an impulse of generosity. "Charlotte Corday went to his residence and asked to speak to him. She was told that he was ill and taking a bath. She thereupon sent word to him that a woman in distress had come to claim his protection and humanity. It was on this message being transmitted to Marat that he gave orders that she should be admitted to his presence. 'Misfortune, citoyenne,' he said, on seeing her, 'enjoys rights which I have never disregarded. Be seated.' Then did Charlotte Corday draw her dagger and end the existence of a man whom illness might have carried off a few days later. How different might have been the course of events had Charlotte Corday given the preference to Robespierre." It is noted finally that Marat was in the habit of giving to the poor everything he possessed. He died in insolvency, having exhausted all the profit derived from his works and his newspapers, which had enjoyed a great boom.

IV.

We have said that the editor of these memoirs, M. George Duruy, in a preface, demonstrates to his own satisfaction, and to that, as we think, of the reader, that the credit of devising and, to a large extent, of executing the plan of operations which resulted in the taking of Toulon was due to young Bonaparte. Barras will not admit this. He avers, on page 147, that "the real conqueror of the coalesced forces of Toulon, the actual captor of the town, if one may use the word, is no other than Gen. Dugommier, and to him belongs the immortal glory of the deed." He goes on to say that "the taking prisoner of Gen. O'Hara, attributed to Bonaparte, the British ship he is alleged to have sunk, the plan of campaign in which he is said to have participated, are so many mendacious assertions drawn from the imagination of the man who later was to fabricate still other statements, to be repeated by his flatterers when the day dawned upon which he had money wherewith to buy them. Bonaparte gave proofs of his military talent, then beginning to develop itself, but he played only a secondary part on this occasion. The actual captor of Toulon, I say it once more, was Dugommier." In the same chapter it is recounted that Bonaparte, after the siege of Toulon, was appointed Brigadier-General, with orders to join the army of Italy, under Gen. Dumerbion. "It was due to the patronage of Arena that he became intimate with Robespierre the younger, and with Ricord and his wife, afterward his protectors. From the time Bonaparte joined the first Army of Italy, holding very low rank, he desired and systematically sought to get to the top of the ladder by all possible means. Fully convinced that women constituted a powerful aid, he assiduously paid court to the wife of Ricord, knowing that she exercised great influence over Robespierre the younger, her husband's colleague. He pursued Mme. Ricord with all kinds of attention, picking up her gloves, handing her her fan, holding with profound respect her bridle and stirrup when she mounted her horse, accompanying her in her walk, hat in hand, and seeming to tremble continually lest some accident should befall her." The malice of this reminiscence is visible enough, and the same thing may be said of the subsequent description of Bonaparte's appearance at a banquet given in Toulon to the Republican Generals and representatives of the people. It seems that the young artillery officer "was in tatters, and as noticeable by his sans-culottism as he had seemed to me to be by his precocity in the art of war." The representatives of the people dined apart from the rest of the guests. Barras recalls that he "received a most respectful salute from the young Captain, who, while quite ready to sit down to table with the sans-culottes, showed me by his looks and his civility, closely akin to genuflexion, his desire to join the company of the representatives of the people, and to enjoy a privilege even at so early a date. I said to him, 'Captain, you are invited to dine with the representatives.' As Bonaparte thanked me he called my attention to the state of his coat. 'Go and get a change,' I said to him, 'at the military stores, and tell the commissary he has my orders for it.' No sooner said than done. Bonaparte returned in a very short while, newly fitted out from the crown of his head to the soles of his boots, keeping himself at a respectful distance from the representatives of the people, hat ever in hand, as low as the length of his arms allowed him to hold it." On this curious passage of the memoirs the editor, in his preface, makes the following comment: "Barras has counted the holes in his coat; but how could Barras have divined and understood the heart beating under the ragged garb?"

V.

What part did Bonaparte play in the overthrow of the Paris sections by the Convention? According to Barras, "Bonaparte was neither more nor less than my aide-de-camp on the 13th Vendémiaire. I was mounted; he was afoot, and could consequently not follow me wherever I went. The only mission he received from me was to go to the Pont Royal and return and report to me what was going on there. He did not give, and had not the authority to give, any order on his own account; he was never at any point of attack except at the Carrousel, whence he did not stir after once going to it; Brune was in command there. I have not omitted the trait, however, which gave indication of a rather quick military perception, when, pulling me by the coat and drawing me a few paces away from a position exposing me to the first discharge, he had said to me, in an outburst of vivacity born of the circumstance: 'All would be lost were you killed; the drama hinges on you alone; there is no one who could take your place. What do you decide?' It was then that I ordered Brune to fire his cannon, and Bonaparte, pressing my hand, added: 'The republic is saved.' It was during this talk that, a few shots having been fired in our direction, Brune at my order responded by a volley of cannon, scattering in the twinkling of an eye those fine warriors of Le Pelletier and other 'sections,' advancing by the Rue Saint Honoré. Driven back by the runaways, they swelled the number of the retreating force." It seems singular that if the services of Bonaparte on the 13th Vendémiaire were so insignificant, he should have been made immediately afterward the virtual General of the Army of the Interior. It is well known that this occurred. How the appointment came to be made is explained by Barras as follows: "When I appeared before the Committee of Public Safety for the purpose of tendering my resignation of the post of Commander of the Army of the Interior, I noticed that several of its members, notably Carnot, listened with satisfaction to the intimation of my intention. Republican gratitude for services rendered is not of long endurance any more than is that of royalty when once the danger is past. In spite of a certain amount of gratitude which Carnot owed to the man styled the General of the 13th Vendémiaire, he felt no little embarrassment on seeing me, owing to the opposite paths we had respectively followed both before and after the 9th Thermidor, when I had come forward as a hater and destroyer of the tyrannical system in which Carnot had been a participant. He was, therefore, the first to open his lips, saying, 'Our colleague can be profitably replaced by Gen. Beaufort.' It was pointed out to Carnot that he had made happier military selections. Beaufort was admitted to be the most immoral and incapable man in the army. I opposed this improper choice by saying, 'As for myself, I propose the selection of my chief of staff, Bonaparte.' He had been nothing more than my aide-de-camp, and in investing him with this high function, for which he certainly held no brevet, I was seeking to enhance his position and pave the way, so to speak, for a transition to the highest rank. Hardly had I proposed this, when I heard whispered about me, 'Tis one of his henchmen.' I left the committee, and at once returned to the Convention, then in session. I began by announcing that calm reigned once more in Paris; that, invested with a dangerous dictatorship, I felt the desire and need of surrendering the fasces by handing in my resignation; I introduced to the Convention as my successor my first aide-de-camp, who had acted as my chief of staff, Bonaparte, and praised his military talents. The Convention, to whom the very name of the man I was proposing was unknown, hesitated. So I vouched for him personally, at the same time consenting not to sever my connection with the armed force, but to continue as representative of the people with the army. The Convention assented by a large majority to my two propositions. The title of General-in-Chief of the Army of the Interior was therefore retained by me. So it came to pass that Bonaparte, by a decree of the 18th Vendémiaire, was appointed General second in command of the Army of the Interior, in spite of the committees. He moved respectfully toward me in an attitude expressive of gratitude, saying, 'You overwhelm me; all my family were already loaded with your benefits.' Later on will be seen what the gratitude of Bonaparte and his family was worth."

VI.

The allusion made by Bonaparte to the assistance which Barras had enabled him to give his relatives, leads the author to touch on the position of the Bonaparte family at this time. They were then living in a state of great poverty. We proceed to quote: "Driven out of Corsica for reasons far less to their credit than they have since sought to allege, Mother Bonaparte, on their first landing, fixed their residence at Antibes, where they presented the spectacle of the most distressing poverty, living solely on borrowed money, hardly sufficient to provide them with a mattress they shared in common, and a cauldron wherein to boil vegetables, and out of which they all ate together. When the Bonaparte family had exhausted such resources as it had been able to obtain at Antibes, it moved to the house of a respected landowner of Saint Zacharie, a few leagues distant from Marseilles. This gentlemen, by name M. de Chateauneuf, whose income was of the smallest, welcomed them all, lodged and fed them generously, and with delicacy, during several months. When they had exhausted Saint-Zacharie, as they had Antibes, they proceeded to Marseilles, where being still destitute of means, they paraded as Corsican refugees, proscribed for the cause of liberty, and, as such, begged food and lodging. They excited the humanity of the commander of the garrison, who considered them as relations of soldiers, since one of them, an artillery officer, was in the service. He caused to be given to them military rations, consisting of bread, meat, vegetables, wood, and salt. This commander had written to me on the matter in order to obtain my permission. Not only had I granted it, but I had told him that if the relief he was giving these unfortunate people should cause him to be reprimanded, and the accountant's department of the Ministry of War should not approve, I would give him credit for it, and reimburse him." At this point, Barras goes so far as to assert that "no species of trade was repugnant to the Bonaparte family for the purpose of eking out a livelihood at Marseilles, not even the idea of trading in the budding allurements of the young ladies. The enforced interests of their position, however, did not prevent them from also indulging in pleasures whose disinterestedness did not prevent scandal, or tend to the exaltation of morality." Adverting subsequently to the same topic, the author says that "the daughters of the Bonaparte house were so fully appreciated for their lack of morality that they were on several occasions formally excluded from invitations to balls given at Marseilles, in spite of the requests preferred by members of their own sex whom they had begged to procure invitations for them."

Passing to Lucien Bonaparte, the author repeats that, at this time, he was a petty storekeeper of forage at Saint-Maximin, and in the enjoyment of a small salary paid in *assignats*. It seems that he, as well as his brother Napoleon, had appealed to Barras as early as the siege of Toulon, with the object of retaining his post, where he had already given proofs of rapacity. "He lay under the accusation of having diverted stores from his warehouse. My departure from Saint-Maximin prevented my investigating the case. He had the support of the local popular society, one of whose leading lights he was, wearing the Phrygian cap, and it is to his demagogic bawling that he owed being kept at his humble post, which, while adding considerably to his resources, considering he was in a state of indigence, did not respond to his expectations. He lodged with one Boyer, an innkeeper, who gave him credit; the seducer rather than the lover of the daughter of this worthy citizen, he succeeded in marrying her through his Jacobin influence." With regard to this marriage the author proceeds to refute the general belief that Lucien was forced into the union by his father-in-law. "This version," says Barras, "is a fable spread by the Bonapartes themselves in order to elevate their social status. The fact is that at the time Lucien married the daughter of the innkeeper Boyer it was she who was the match, and it was he, Lucien, who sued for her hand, which was only granted to him because she was about to become a mother by him. Napoleon himself, while blaming Lucien's marriage with the daughter of the Saint-Maximin innkeeper, has said that the wife was more respectable than the husband."

VII.

As to Joseph Bonaparte, we are told that he wormed his way into the office of the Intendant Commissary, Chauvet, whom he captivated by his flatteries, in spite of his laziness and his incapacity. Like Lucien, he eventually succeeded in becoming Assistant Commissary, then Commissary of War. Here was a position which, in the times whereof we speak, gave him rank, a uniform, and administrative and political power. It enabled him to set traps, catch victims, and make his fortune. It happened that just then one X., a very rich merchant of Marseilles, died, and his family, comprising three sons and as many daughters, became exposed to revolutionary proscription. One of the X. boys named Etienne, wishing to confer nobility on the paternal fortunes, accumulated from the sale of soap, conceived the idea of converting himself into an aristocrat; as the result of his pretension, he was incarcerated. His sisters, overwhelmed with grief, went the rounds of all the revolutionary matadors in order to obtain the liberty of their brother. "Joseph Bonaparte, Commissary of War and ardent Corsican revolutionary, was pointed out to them as one of the powers of the day. So the ladies called on him. Joseph, after having made them call on him several times and at all hours, even late at night, in order to enhance the value of his influence by a semblance of mystery, made sufficient progress in the intimacy of the ladies to ask the hand of one of them; it was the second, Mlle. Julie. She was small of stature, pimpled to a degree, as perfectly ugly and hideous as ever she could be, but she had a dowry and expectations in the shape of several legacies."

The marriage of Joseph with Mlle. Julie X. was crowned by the restoration to liberty of her brother Etienne. It is true enough, as Barras says, that Napoleon Bonaparte, on seeing this first success of his elder brother, desired to follow in his steps, and sued for the hand of the youngest of the three sisters, Désirée by name, afterward Mme. Bernadotte. The author reminds us that "it was she who was pleased to resign herself to endure the severe climate of Sweden to allow herself to be crowned in Stockholm, and to sit on the hyperborean throne, which may doubtless be considered a great immolation of this august Princess, after the sacrifice she had made of all the affairs of the heart she had entered into and been compelled to leave behind her in France. Napoleon had wheedled Mlle. Désirée X. with all the skill inherent in his character when he was desirous of attaining an object. Désirée, whom he had almost captivated, as has been revealed by many expressions of regret escaped from her lips since the elevation of Bonaparte, would have accepted him, but her guardian and relatives all said, 'One Corsican of that family is quite sufficient.' There was no anxiety to become connected with the little ultra-Revolutionary of Toulon and the rabid storekeeper of Saint-Maximin."

VIII.

It is unquestionably true that, if any man can be said to have made Napoleon, it was Barras. Not only did the Jacobin noble give the young Corsican his first noteworthy opportunities at Toulon and on the 13th Vendémiaire and see to it that he was properly rewarded for his services on those occasions, but he it was who gave to Bonaparte the command of the army of Italy as the marriage portion of Mme. de Beauharnais. An account of the latter incident will be found in the second of these volumes, and, while it reflects the utmost discredit on the author, it cannot be passed over, especially because it was, to some extent, confirmed by Josephine herself when she was desirous of proving that she owed nothing to Bonaparte, but that, on the contrary, he owed her everything.

In the fourth chapter of the second volume Barras begins his record of Bonaparte's relations with Josephine by recalling that the young officer had heard him say, "Women have their uses in this world: they are more obliging than men." Bonaparte had noticed among the ladies who called most frequently on Barras at the Luxembourg Palace the widow Beauharnais, who is here described as "a woman of rather gentle manners, most kindly, and who occasionally conversed with me in more private fashion than did others. Mme. de Beauharnais was reputed to have some influence with me; some there were who believed she had been my mistress; others that she still was. What is, however, certain, is that she had been the patient mistress, in the sight and with the knowledge of the whole world, of Gen. Hoche, *e di tutti quanti*." Barras proceeds to explain the slur conveyed in the Italian words by admitting that it is not to be inferred that she did not love Gen. Hoche more than the others. "He was our best soldier, and one of our handsomest men, and in build more like unto Hercules than Apollo. From motives of ambition rather than love, since she deceived him like the rest, Mme. Beauharnais had pushed her pretensions on Hoche so far as to wish that he should secure a divorce in order that she might marry him; but a feeling of tender esteem bound Hoche to his young and virtuous spouse; he had perhaps neglected her connubially, but he had not forsaken and forgotten her for the sake of a passing gallantry due to a chance meeting with Mme. Beauharnais in prison. He had, consequently, repulsed with horror the suggestion of divorce," although, as he told Barras, Mme. Beauharnais, in order to win him over, had spoken of interests of fortune and influence, assuring him that she could give him sure support with the new Government, particularly with one "over whom," she added, "she had a great ascendancy." Hoche had rejected all these overtures, being a proud man and desirous of owing his glory and his fortune to his own efforts. It is likewise asserted in these memoirs that long before these discussions Hoche had discovered that Mme. Beauharnais "did not even respect the sentiment with which she seemed most penetrated, and that passion did not prevent her from entering into all sorts of calculations, while, at the same time, not operating as a bar to any of the diversions of infidelity." According to Barras, Hoche had repeatedly acquired the certainty of this, and, in particular, from one of his aides-de-camp, who, on the occasion of his being the bearer of a letter from him to Mme. de Beauharnais, had been tempted by her just as Joseph was by Mrs. Potiphar, but, unlike Joseph, he had not left his garment in her hands. Gen. Hoche charged her with even less distinguished caprices, which Barras says he would not have believed, did not proof thereof lie in a letter written in Hoche's own hand, from which the following passage is quoted: "As to Rose," (Rose, one of the baptismal names of Mlle. Tascher de la Pagerie, was the one by which she was known to Barras and his friends; Bonaparte subsequently substituted for it that of Josephine.) "As to Rose," wrote Hoche, "she must cease troubling me henceforth. I relinquish all claims to her in favor of Vanakre, my hostler." This Vanakre was an Alsatian, who, intrusted with the care of the horses of the General-in-Chief, formed one of Hoche's escorts. A man of colossal size and proportionate strength, he had been, it is here alleged, the object of Mme. Beauharnais's special attention. She had even made him secret presents, such as her portrait encased in a chased medallion, and a chain of the same precious metal. Both indignant and humiliated at such a division of favors, Hoche, seeking to justify his connection with Mme. Beauharnais, said to Barras one day, not without a certain kindliness: "It is due to my having been in prison with her previous to the 9th Thermidor that I knew her so intimately; such an intimacy would be unpardonable in a man restored to liberty." We are told that the breaking off of Hoche's intercourse with Josephine and the cause thereof were, in those days, the talk of all Paris, and this is presumably one ground of the author's repeated assertions that they were well known to Bonaparte.

IX.

After this introductory reference to Josephine, the author digresses to compare her with Mme. Tallien, who, since the 9th Thermidor, had been the feminine dictator of republican society in Paris. It was, we are assured, impossible for Mme. de Beauharnais to enter into competition with Mme. Tallien in the matter of physical charms. We read that the latter was then in the height of her freshness, whereas the former was beginning to show the results of precocious decrepitude. Mme. de Beauharnais no longer derived any of her attractions from nature, but everything from art, the most refined, the most provident, the most improved art ever called into requisition. In a word, she is described as certainly invalided and retired when Mme. Tallien still reigned supreme. Barras does not rest until he has attributed also to Josephine a moral inferiority. "It was a known fact," he says, "that Mme. Tallien braved her husband, to a certain extent, whenever she wished to love another, but she preserved some decorum, and had not yet parted company with him. Mme. Beauharnais was more advanced. She claimed in those days to be the noble widow of the illustrious General Alexandre Beauharnais, who had been the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine. But the fact is that long before the death of the illustrious General, and even previous to the revolution, she had been separated from her husband, at whose hands she had incurred reproaches similar to those addressed to her subsequently by Gen. Hoche. It was even said that the infidelities of the creole had overstepped the bounds of propriety, and that, rising superior to the prejudice existing against the dark skin, she had had intercourse with negroes."

Barras declares that Bonaparte was one of the most assiduous frequenters of the Luxembourg when it was occupied by the Director, and "knew of all these adventures just as well as we did, having often heard the story of them told in my presence. In consequence, however, of his intention, not to say his frenzy, to reach his goal by all possible means, he had looked upon the two gentlewomen whom I have mentioned as instruments he might turn to his advantage. Whether it was that Mme. Tallien's beauty had captivated him, or whether he believed the report that she possessed greater influence than Mme. Beauharnais, it was to the former that in the first place he addressed his vows and attentions. These were soon followed by a declaration of what he called his unconquerable passion." We are assured that Mme. Tallien replied to "the little enamored Corsican in a contemptuous fashion which left him no hope. She went so far as to say to him ironically that she believed that she had something better than him. After such a defeat Bonaparte considered that, beaten in one direction, he might do well in another. So he conceived the idea of paying his court to Mme. Beauharnais; and as he had some knowledge of her cupidity and interested motives, he began to make her presents of dress and jewelry." For a young man in his circumstances this would have been an act of madness had it not been one of speculation, and Barras, hearing of it, said to Bonaparte: "It seems that you have taken la Beauharnais for one of the soldiers of the 13th Vendémiaire, whom you should have included in the distribution of money. You would have done better to have sent this money to your family, which needs it, and to whom I have just rendered further assistance." We are told that Bonaparte blushed, but did not deny having made presents of considerable value, and, in response to further bantering on the part of Barras, said: "Well, then, in whatever state Mme. Beauharnais may be, if the relations between us were seriously meant, if the presents which you blame me for having made were wedding presents, what then would you have to find fault with, Citizen-Director? Were this woman to become mine, what would be the objection thereto?" To this question, Barras says that, after remaining silent for a while, he replied to Bonaparte, using the familiar thee and thou, "Is it seriously meant, what thou hast just told me? I have just thought over thy idea of marriage, and it seems less ridiculous to me than at first sight." "In the first place, Mme. Beauharnais is rich," rejoined Bonaparte with vehemence. On these words the author makes the comment that the young Corsican had been deceived by the lady's external luxuries, ignorant of the fact that the unfortunate woman depended for her existence on loans contracted in Paris on the imaginary credit of property in Martigny, from which she could derive no income as long as her mother lived. If we can trust these memoirs, the widow Beauharnais lived at Fontainebleau in a state bordering on indigence; "the greater part of the year she quartered herself on Mme. Doue, a creole like herself, without whose assistance she would have lacked the necessaries of life. She would come to Paris by the public stagecoach; her daughter Hortense was apprenticed to a dressmaker and her son to a carpenter; this was either very philosophical or very unmotherly of her, for she could find means for her toilette." Although these things passed through the Director's mind, he nevertheless said to Bonaparte: "Well, since you are seriously asking my advice, I will answer you in your own words, why should you not? Your brother Joseph has shown you the way to marriage; the dowry of Mlle. X. has put an end to his financial straits. You tell me you are at your wit's end for money, and that you cannot afford to lose any more time over the matter. Well, then, marry; a married man has a standing in society, and can better resist the attacks of his enemies."

X.

It seems that a few days later it was the turn of Mme. de Beauharnais to come and confide in Barras. We quote his description of the interview: "Actuated as she was by motives of interest, she did not display any reserve, and, confessing them to me at the very outset of her visit, she began by declaring in the plainest terms that no impulse of the heart was at the bottom of this new bond; that little 'puss-in-boots,' she said, was assuredly the very last man she could have dreamed of loving, as he had no expectations. He belongs to a family of beggars which has failed to win respect wherever it has dwelt. But he has a brother who has married well at Marseilles, and who promises to help the others, and particularly him. He seems enterprising, and guarantees that he will soon carve his fortune." Mme. de Beauharnais went on to confess to Barras that Bonaparte had made her presents of a magnificence which had led her to believe that he was possessed of greater means than people supposed. "As regards myself," she said, "I have not seen fit to inform him of my straitened circumstances; he believes I am now in the enjoyment of a certain fortune, and is under the impression that I have great expectations in Martinique. Do not impart to him anything you know, my good friend. You would be spoiling everything. Since I do not love him, you can understand my going into this business. It is you I shall ever love, you may depend upon it; Rose will always be yours, ever at your disposal; you have only to make a sign; but I know full well that you no longer love me," she proceeded, suddenly bursting into a flood of tears, which Barras insinuates she had the power of summoning at pleasure. "This is what grieves me most; never shall I console myself for it, do what I may. When one has loved a man like you, Barras, can one never know another attachment?" The author says that he replied with very little emotion, and almost laughing: "How about Hoche? You loved him above all others; and yet there was the aide-de-camp, Vanakre, *e tutti quanti!* Come, now, you are a mighty fine cajoler." Barras avers that "this answer took her breath away, and, unable to utter any response in the face of such positive facts, she contented herself with shedding some more tears, seizing my hands with all her might and carrying them to her eyes. I was getting tired of the thing, and not knowing how to put an end to it I adopted the course of ringing, so as to have my valet as a third party. This compelled her to cease; Mme. Beauharnais was a true actress, who knew how to play several parts at one and the same time. She told my valet that she had suddenly felt poorly, that her nerves troubled her, and that on such occasions she could not hold back her tears; that I had just ministered to her as a brother would to a sister, and that she now felt a great deal better. I took advantage of this improvement to order my carriage to send Mme. Beauharnais home in it, and thus I got rid of her. 'In your indisposed state,' I said to her, 'you cannot return home alone,' and I ordered one of my aides-de-camp to accompany her. Her tears had suddenly dried up; her features, so decomposed but a few moments ago, had resumed their placidity and their habitual coquettishness. On returning, my aide-de-camp had told me that the lady had reached her home in good health. A few sighs had escaped her during the journey homeward, but the only words spoken by her had been, 'Why do people have a heart over which they have no control? Why did I ever love a man like Barras? How can I cease loving him? How can I tear myself from him? How can I ever think of any other but him? Tell him for me I have told you how deeply I am devoted to him, and that I will never love but him whatever happens to me in this world.'" The aide-de-camp further informed Barras that, when the carriage reached Mme. de Beauharnais's house, they found Bonaparte waiting for her at the door. Embarrassed at being accompanied by the Director's aide-de-camp, Mme. de Beauharnais hurriedly stepped out of the carriage, asked Bonaparte to give her his arm, and told him hastily, in the presence of the aide-de-camp, that she had just "had a fainting fit at my house;" that she had so suffered that I would not hear of her returning home alone; that she had hardly recovered her strength. "Give Barras my best thanks," she added, on dismissing the aide-de-camp, "and tell him that you left me with his best friend."

XI.

Why does the author cite on this occasion the evidence of two witnesses, a valet and an aide de camp? Because he wished to refute the version which Josephine chose to give of the same interview. "As a consequence of having told Bonaparte of her alleged indisposition, it was necessary to assign some reason for it to the man who was about to become her protector for life. I heard some time afterward of the story she had invented. According to her, I had, for a long while, courted her without success. She had constantly repulsed my advances, because I was not the man to appeal to her delicate soul. In consequence of her harsh treatment of me I had sought to console myself with Mme. Tallien, whom I had selected out of spite only, and for whom I had really cared so little that I had offered to give her up at once for Mme. Beauharnais if the latter would become my mistress. Were she to be believed, I had been more pressing than ever on this last occasion, and my violence had led to a struggle, during the course of which she had fainted; but the recollection of the one she loved, the mere thought of Bonaparte, she said, had restored all her strength to her, and she had come out of it well, desirous of bringing to the near bond, to which she had given her consent, all the purity of a widow faithful to the memory of her husband, and a virginity more precious than the first, since it represented the resolution of the heart and of the will."

The account of the manner in which Bonaparte received this story cannot easily be reconciled with the shocking charge that he was privy to the liaison of Barras with Josephine. The author says that he "listened with no small emotion to this lying concoction, worthy, indeed, of the most artful of women, but whom he, artful as he was himself, looked upon as an angel of candor and truth. All this made such an impression on him that he flew into a passion against me, ready in his fury to go to extremes, even to call me out for having attempted an assault on the virtue of his future wife. Mme. Beauharnais quieted him with caresses and words which plainly showed that she dreaded nothing so much as a scandal that would have revealed the secret of the comedy played by her, and would have proved besides that, far from seeking to do violence to Mme. Beauharnais, I was long since tired of and bored with her." It is admitted that what Bonaparte said to Josephine on this occasion was the following: "I am quite sure from what you tell me that Barras failed in his attempts on your virtue, madame, in spite of his not having the reputation of a sentimental lover in the habit of sighing at the feet of cruel beauties. But I have for so long seen you on a certain intimate footing with him that doubts might truly have arisen in any other mind but mine. You will acknowledge, madame, that it is allowable to think, without seeming too severe, that women seeking to hold him at arm's length should take earlier steps, so as not to be exposed to a scene like the one you have just told me of. There are accidents for which a woman is responsible when she has not taken means to prevent them." A very adroit reply is attributed to Josephine, but how could Barras have learned of it? Either he must have heard it repeated by her own lips, or he must have fabricated it. The words put in her mouth are these: "Why, had she not called at Barras's house, would she ever have been fortunate enough to meet Bonaparte? If she had of late gone there more frequently than before, had it not been from a desire to meet Bonaparte more often? If she had, perchance, overlooked many things repugnant to the elegance and delicacy of her morals, would she ever have done so, had it not been for the consideration ever present to her mind of rendering some service to her future husband? For, when all is said and done, if the manners of Barras are somewhat rough and outspoken, he is, on the other hand, a good sort of fellow and very obliging; he is a true friend, and, if once he takes an interest in you, you may feel sure he will not desert you, but give you a warm support. Let us, then, take men and things as we find them. Can Barras be useful to us in his position? Undoubtedly he can, and to good purpose. Let us, therefore, get all we can out of him, and never mind the rest." "Oh!" Bonaparte is said to have exclaimed with enthusiasm, "if he will but give me the command of the Army of Italy I will forgive everything. I will be the first to show myself the most grateful of men; I will do honor to the appointment, and our affairs will prosper. I guarantee that ere long we shall be rolling in gold." It is well known that Barras secured for Bonaparte the appointment that he desired.

XII.

Would it be believed that Barras, the descendant of crusaders, and originally steeped in the best as well as the worst traditions of the ancien régime, was capable of writing the following passage? "I have said as much as a Frenchman, brought up according to the principles of chivalry, may reveal of such matters, but I had certainly enjoyed intimate relations, bygone, it is true, but none the less most real, with Mme. Beauharnais. There is little pride on my part, some would say a great deal of modesty, in this revelation." This is bad enough, but he goes on to specify a particular occasion when Josephine, he said, persisted on going into his private office while Bonaparte waited for her in the salon: "Our interview las