



PAINTED BY GÉRARD. ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.
FROM COPY, IN POSSESSION OF GEORGE CLINTON GENET, OF PORTRAIT BELONGING TO THE PRINCE DE LA MOSKOWA, GRANDSON OF NEY.

MARÉCHAL MICHEL NEY, DUC D'ELCHINGEN, PRINCE DE LA MOSKOWA.

A FAMILY RECORD OF NEY'S EXECUTION.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THESE extracts from an unpublished memoir of the Genet family, written by Mme. Campan, author of memoirs of Marie Antoinette, and lady of the bedchamber to the queen, are in the possession of Mr. George Clinton Genet, of Greenbush, near Albany, New York, the youngest and sole surviving son of «Citizen» Edmond-Charles Genet, to whom they were sent by Mme. Campan, his sister. The narrative was written for the author's nephews and nieces in America, children of Edmond-Charles Genet. He was minister of France to the United States in 1793, but became an American citizen, and settled in the State

of New York, where he married a daughter of George Clinton, Governor of New York, and Vice-President of the United States. After the death of his wife he married a daughter of Samuel Osgood, Postmaster-General under Washington. He had escaped the guillotine of Robespierre, and incurred the undying hate and calumnies of the French Jacobins, of the French émigrés, and, for his course while minister, of the British faction in America. He died and was buried at Greenbush in 1834.

These extracts have a special and timely interest from the fact that an absurd at-



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tempt has been made recently to prove in a published volume that Ney was not shot in 1815, but escaped to America, and became a schoolmaster in North Carolina, where he lately died. An alleged facsimile of his writing is given in the book, as well as one of the writing of the old French cavalryman who, it is alleged, when drunk on a certain occasion, declared himself to be the Duke of Elchingen. The writing which it is claimed is the genuine writing of the marshal seems doubtful when compared with that known to be his, and the assumed similarity between that and the writing of the old French soldier of North Carolina is inconceivable. It is absurd to suppose that Ney should have proclaimed himself to be the Duke of Elchingen, since at the time of his execution he was Prince of Moskowa, and no longer Duke of Elchingen. It is impossible that, as is asserted in the book referred to, Ney should have consented to

the subterfuge of being shot at by muskets charged with powder alone, and after falling and pretending to be dead, should have suffered himself to be carried into exile in a strange land. At the battle of Waterloo Ney vainly sought death wherever the battle was fiercest. With an army of sixty thousand men still left, he capitulated under the walls of Paris, upon condition of general amnesty of offenses both civil and military. These terms were basely violated, and to satisfy the clamor of the returned aristocrats of the old régime, Ney was executed. Wellington could have prevented this crime after the condemnation by the chamber of peers, but did not, for reasons best known to himself. Ney was offered an opportunity to escape, but refused. He asked the soldiers to fire at his heart, and they did. Moreover, at the time when it is claimed that Ney was concealing himself in North Carolina, Joseph Bonaparte

was living at Bordentown, and his house and his fortune would have been at Ney's disposal. Moreover, after the fall of the Bourbons there would have been no reason why Ney should not have returned to France. In 1832 Eugène Ney, his third son, visited the United States, and went to the house of his kinsman Genet, who resided on the Hudson, near Albany, but never heard of this alleged Duke of Elchingen. It is useless to follow these absurdities further. Ney is buried in Père la Chaise at Paris, with two of his sons and his brother-in-law Gamot. A plain slab marks the place. On the spot where he was executed stands a monument erected by the French government.

George Clinton Genet.

MME. CAMPAN'S CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT.

[Translated from the manuscript of Jeanne-Louise-Henriette Genet Campan.]

THE AUGUIÉ FAMILY.

THE third daughter of my father was Adelaide Genet. She was one of the handsomest and most charming women of Paris. Being a young girl, she often came to see me at the palace of Versailles, when my duties at court required me to sojourn there. The young queen [Marie Antoinette] saw her; her beauty and, above all, her graceful and modest air pleased her exceedingly. Finally one day she summoned me and told me to see M. Genet on her behalf, and to ask him if it would be agreeable to him to have his daughter placed among the young persons who composed her circle; that she would take upon herself with all her heart, if that proposition suited him, an engagement to marry Adelaide, and to assure to whomever should ask her hand the first vacant farmer-generalship. I started at once to announce to my father an event that filled him with joy. It was a third daughter provided for and married, and his patrimony being partly dissipated, the establishing of his children in life gave him proper anxiety.

M. Auguié, born at Figeac, in the south of France, belonged to one of the best families in his province. Already occupying the place of commissary-general of subsistence in the army, he presented himself to obtain the hand of my sister. He was amiable, gallant in society, good-looking, and did as much to please my sister as to be agreeable to my father. The queen endowed my sister with a pension of seven thousand francs, a beautiful present of diamonds, and besides gave her the assur-

ance of the minister of finance that M. Auguié should be provided with the first charge of receiver-general of finance that should become vacant. The marriage took place under the happiest auspices. Soon after he obtained the receiver-generalship of the duchy of Bar and of Lorraine, without losing his former place. This charge brought him in nearly a hundred thousand francs a year. M. Auguié has always made a good and honorable use of his riches, and has left little to his family, not through prodigality, but through losses that the Revolution has rendered inevitable.

Mme. Auguié had three daughters. Antoinette Auguié married M. Gamot; she was the goddaughter of Marie Antoinette and of the unfortunate Louis XVI. Eglé Auguié married Marshal Ney; Adèle Auguié married General de Broc. The attachment of Mme. Auguié for the queen was what your heart will tell you it should have been. As soon as the revolutionary furies brought danger to the royal family, my sister hastened from Paris to Versailles, remaining constantly with her unfortunate and august protectress, who for these proofs of devotion gave her the nickname of her «lioness.» She had the happiness on the terrible day of October 6, 1789, to save the life of the queen by throwing herself before the assassins who presented themselves in a crowd at a door that she had the courage to shut and barricade against their entering, which gave the queen time to flee half dressed to the apartment of the king.

In those times of political changes there was no wavering on our part; the feelings of devotion and gratitude formed for my sister and me the base of the most holy law. When we follow the dictates of these sentiments there is no danger of going astray. . . .

On August 10, 1792, the palace of the Tuileries was besieged and the throne of Louis XVI was overturned because it no longer rested on the ancient basis of the monarchy, and because that unfortunate monarch, in the hope of regaining his former rights, had hesitated to insure them with new constitutional laws. During that frightful and memorable day my sister and I many times ran the risk of perishing. The queen was for twenty-four hours a prisoner in the National Assembly. From there she sent for us to come to her. We hastened to her at the risk of our lives. During the passage the queen had to make from her apartments in the Tuileries to the Chamber of Deputies she had been so closely pressed by the crowd that she had been despoiled of her watch and her

Monsieur Edmont Genet. Chez le quai
Clinton Gouverneur des Etats unis de New York.

Je vous apprendrais sans doute Monsieur, avec quelque plaisir
l'aitiance que je s'en de Contracter dans votre Famille.
En Epousant l'aimable demoiselle Agl'oise Auguier
votre Niece. je desirerois que les Circonstances ne me
Permettent jamais, Monsieur, de faire personnellement
votre connaissance et d'admirer avec ses estimables et
vertueuses sœurs, la qualité rare qui vous distinguerent
sous tant de Rapports précieux dans votre Paysotry
en France. mais si dans l'absence de l'enfant Permettent
à l'Entreprendre le voyage de Paris. je m'improvisai
de les accueillir et de leur témoigner l'affection que j'ai
à juste titre, à l'égard de ces estimables parents.

Veuillez, Monsieur, l'expression de ma Continuelle
Distinction pour vous et mille baisers à vos Chers Enfants

Votre Nereu

de la division Ney

au Chateau de Jaignon le 20. Chervin
1793. de la Rep. fr.

Genet

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM NEY TO GENET ANNOUNCING HIS MARRIAGE TO THE LATTER'S NIECE.
OWNED BY GEORGE CLINTON GENET.

purse, and my sister lent her twenty-five louis. When the royal family was transferred to the Temple, Pétion, mayor of Paris, refused us permission to follow the queen thither.

Our duties had come to an end. We retired to De Beauplan; afterward we hired together the Château de Coubertin, which is a mile from that of De Beauplan. Your father quitted France on January 23, 1793. He was denounced and removed from office, inevitable death awaiting him in France if he had left your protecting shores. The National Assembly believed for a moment that he had had the temerity to return to France, and had landed at Brest, and at once the gazettes announced his arrival and death.

That very day some business of imperious necessity forced me to go from the country to Paris, to stay several days. Disguised as a peasant, I gave my arm to my faithful and good Voisin, when I heard two men crying out in a loud voice the most important news in the gazette of the day. These men repeated alternately on each side of the street: «Arrival at Brest of M. Genet, minister of the Republic to the United States. This minister will at once make the perilous ascent of the guillotine.» Ah! my dear children, these few words, read after twenty-five years, and at a great distance from the place where they first struck my ear and tore my heart, will undoubtedly cause you a vivid

emotion. Judge what the most tender sister experienced at the moment. Mme. Voisin saw me grow pale, tremble, and about to fall in the street. I might be recognized and at once thrown into the fatal cart, which often carried people to the scaffold, without trial, for simple exclamations of fright or of public disapprobation. My faithful friend sustained me, and almost carried me into a shop, where some humane people restored me to consciousness. The same day I learned that my brother had not returned, and I went again to the country, to quit it no more.

. . . It tries my feelings to have to trace the deplorable end of your aunt, Mme. Auguié. It was occasioned by the trial of the queen, who thought it her duty to declare that the twenty-five louis, which were all she had in her pocket for spending-money, should be returned to Mme. Auguié, who had lent them to her while she was a prisoner in the National Assembly. Many months had passed between that declaration of the queen and the arrest of my sister and myself. We had been assured that the secretary of the tribunal of blood had written «Augal» in place of «Auguié,» with the intention, without knowing her, of saving a victim so innocently designated; for the poor queen could not suppose, in leaving a place where she had been deprived of all kinds of communication with men, that they had become so ferocious that so simple a matter would be transformed into a crime. Finally, nine months after, while we were still reassured by the name Augal printed in all the papers in place of the true name of my sister, an atrocious man of quality (whose name I will not mention, to avoid making family hatred hereditary) took up the frightful rôle of «lamb»¹ to Robespierre, and made a note that he signed and addressed to the Committee of Public Safety. This note read: «I have been through all the prisons of Paris. I am astonished not to find there Mme. Auguié, designated erroneously in the trial of Marie Antoinette as Mme. Augal. She and her sister, Mme. Campan, ought to be in prison long since.» At once a mandate to «fetch» was hurled against my sister, and one to «arrest by soldiers» against me. Four soldiers arrived at our country house. My sister, who was to be taken at once to the prison of the Conciergerie, where the victims remained only a day or two, did not wish to be arrested. She fled upon an ass across the fields, reached Paris, and from fright at her position lost her reason; but in her mad-

¹ This was the designation given to persons put into the prisons solely to serve as spies upon the prisoners.

ness she traced upon a piece of paper: «If I die on the scaffold, my husband, already a prisoner, will also perish; our property will be confiscated—my daughters, what will become of you! If I can escape the scaffold, I can save for you, perhaps, the property that is my own.» Still, signs of real alienation preceded the moment when she precipitated herself from the window of the furnished apartments where she was concealed. What despair reigned among us! Two days after, Robespierre and his frightful power were crushed, and the prisons were thrown open. M. Auguié came out, but found only despair in his house, and grief for a most justly cherished wife. Antoinette, his eldest daughter, almost died from grief; the gaiety of youth disappeared forever, and her misfortune developed in her a precocious intelligence that has always remained.

. . . It was at this period that I went to St. Germain. Antoinette followed her father to Paris. Eglé and poor Adèle came to take their place among my first pupils. Their eldest sister came to join them when M. Auguié was called to the service of the armies. Mme. de Beauharnais, since empress, also came out of the prison of Robespierre, who had executed her husband. She came at the same moment to confide to me her daughter and her niece. The most sincere and constant friendship was established between the amiable Hortense and my nieces; and that innocent intimacy of the class determined their destiny—a destiny brilliant and deceitful, with which they might justly be dazzled, but which conducted them, as well as her whom chance had given them as a support, toward new misfortunes.

M. Auguié, provided with the place of administrator of the posts, enjoyed for a long time the elevation of his family. He finished his career at the age of seventy-six years, six months before the sad end of Marshal Ney. His remains are in the cemetery of Père la Chaise at Paris, in the same tomb with those of «the bravest of the brave.»

Eglé, the second daughter of Adelaide Genet and M. Auguié, passed many years with me at St. Germain after the tragic end of her mother. Witty, graceful, and with agreeable talents, her infancy and youth were easy to direct. Her character endeared her to all my pupils, and she, as well as her sister Adèle, became a particular friend of Hortense de Beauharnais, who then thought little of deceitful grandeurs, and less of the fatal honor of being seated on a throne. Hortense, whose strange destiny has been

so deeply connected with those of my nieces, was born with the simplest tastes. Agreeable without being handsome, capable of succeeding in the cultivation of all the fine arts, already tried by the terrible crisis of the Revolution, she had no ambition but for a retired and peaceful life, fearing the splendor of the great world; and she often said to me, after the sudden elevation of the general who had married her mother: «Alas! that man is a comet, and we are like the trains of light which involuntarily follow those stars. Where will he lead us?» Poor young girl! As events proved, she was led to an elevation above all ranks of society, to fall from the highest pinnacle that can be attained; and what was most afflicting to her truly pure soul, she was condemned to bear all the shafts of those greatly multiplied and virulent calumnies that accompany the contests of opposite parties.

Hortense contributed to the marriage of Eglé with General Ney. Eglé hesitated some time before giving her consent to this union, solely from the fear of being the companion of a warrior who would be so often exposed. Still, his great bravery, and the frank and open character which distinguished him, had inspired her with great esteem. The demand for her hand had been made, and Eglé had asked her father for eight days to consider it. He had consented, and was in doubt as to the determination of his daughter, when a very natural incident decided the question. A guest who was dining with M. Auguié spoke of the high promise of Ney, and referred to one engagement where this brave general had had seven horses killed under him. «What do you say, sir?» said Eglé, with vivacity. «He had thirteen.» M. Auguié asked his daughter if this exclamation was a consent; she blushed, and said nothing. The same evening he asked her if he could inform Mme. Bonaparte, who had been charged with the demand by the general, of her consent; she did not object, and their marriage was soon concluded. . . .

The marriage took place at the Château de Grignon. Only a few were invited: Hortense, then married to Louis Bonaparte, was the only lady present outside of the family. (Of the two witnesses for Eglé—two particular friends of her father—alas! one . . . voted for the death of the brave marshal.) The band of one of the regiments of the general was placed for a week at the Château de Grignon; the park was illuminated; all the inhabitants of the neighboring hamlets were admitted to enjoy the fête, which continued for two days. The general adored his pretty companion, and

joy gave him a radiant air; but how much we were touched when, upon the day the nuptial benediction was given in the chapel of the château, we saw him leading an old shepherd and his wife whom he had discovered on the farm of the château, and who at that time, according to Catholic usage, had to celebrate by a second marriage the fiftieth year of their union! He had had each completely dressed in the fashion of their province.

These details will no doubt interest you, my dear children. All that relates to the military life of the brave Ney belongs to history, but all that relates to his private life and to his truly patriotic services is the particular property of his family. Shortly after his marriage he was sent as ambassador to Switzerland; your cousin went with him. His elevation became greater when the First Consul placed the imperial crown on his own head. The general was made marshal of the empire, Duke of Elchingen, and afterward Prince of Moskowa. His wife was successively named lady of the palace to the two empresses. Great endowments were given to them, but this brilliant state required great expenditures, and immense revenues are used up quite as easily as small ones. Wars succeeded, and the campaigns of Spain and the fatal campaign of Russia cost the marshal 600,000 francs. The estate of Courdreaux, situated on the road to Tours, is the only estate that is left free to his children. They should cherish it, for their father never took real pleasure except in this retreat, and his memory is still adored there. An incident confirms this in the most unequivocal manner: On the departure of the Prussian troops who, in 1815, were in possession of the château of the marshal, the soldiers stripped the apartments of everything. Their wagons were loaded with the booty when they received orders from their chiefs to employ them for other purposes. The spoils, the whole of the furniture of twenty-four apartments, were put up for sale in the market-place of the town of Châteaudun, which is only two leagues from Courdreaux. The best beds were offered for one *écu*, and everything else at about the same low price, but no one in the whole population of that town would buy the least part of this immense quantity of furniture. A single caldron was sold, but the inhabitants of the place, by a public act, established the fact that the purchaser inhabited a region situated more than six leagues from the estate of the marshal. The troops having departed, the property was carefully collected, and sent back to the château. My

niece lost only a single volume of a very beautiful library. This incident does as much honor to the inhabitants of that French province as to the memory of the marshal.

A position of the most fatal kind, and far beyond the political intelligence of the brave Ney, opened under his feet an abyss into which he fell; but his glory was not buried with him. He left Paris with the firm determination to drive Napoleon far from the soil of France, because he believed that his return would light up a civil war, the name of which alone filled the hero with terror. His activity, his expressions on receiving the orders of the king, were strong and sincere. Ney changed his opinion when he saw entire populations running after the footsteps of Napoleon, and when he learned that the brother of the king and Marshal Macdonald had left Lyons, as the army refused to obey either the prince or the general. His change of conduct was confirmed when the insurgent peasants took from him ten pieces of cannon, which were all the artillery his army corps possessed. Finally, when he learned that 20,000 soldiers had united themselves to the imperial eagles under the orders of Napoleon, who had already advanced forty leagues on the road to Paris, that same horror of civil war, that same love of country, and that opinion that it was his duty to defend his country by uniting himself to that one who was its chief by the will of the land or the voice of the people, decided him to follow Napoleon and to unite with him. He joined him at Auxerre, at the hotel of the prefecture where Gamot was. There he sent to Napoleon a declaration, the first words of which were: "I am your prisoner rather than your partisan. If you continue to govern tyrannically," etc. M. Gamot heard the marshal read that singular protest before sending it to Napoleon. Unfortunately, he kept neither a memorandum nor a copy of it. That paper would have figured nobly in the trial of the brave man. Napoleon read it, and with the calm air that supreme power taught him so well to adopt, tore the paper into small pieces, and said simply, "The brave Ney is deranged."

A sincerity, unwisely combined, directed all the actions of this brave man, so much to be regretted and so much regretted. His conduct would have deprived him of all favor with the emperor, and caused his fall under the Bourbons. A mind the first impulse of which had been for the republican virtues and the love of France could not bind itself to the political measures of the old government and

to the destruction of that national glory to which he had himself contributed.

These lines which I now trace have this much of interest, that they are a faithful recital of the interviews that I had with the marshal in his prison of the Conciergerie. He relied much upon the treaty of Paris, which gave pardon and immunity to military and civil misdemeanors. He deceived himself.

[In another place, after speaking of the sister of the wife of Ney, who was married to M. Charles Gamot, Mme. Campan says:]

At the first return of the king, he [Gamot] had been provided with the prefecture of the Department of Yonne, of which the residence is at Auxerre. Napoleon, upon his inconceivable and imposing return of March 20, 1815, passed through Auxerre. An aide-de-camp preceded him, and ordered the prefect Gamot to prepare everything in his residence to receive the emperor, which he did. When Louis XVIII returned to France, Gamot was removed, and came near being proscribed and deprived of the pension granted to all the reformed prefects. He distinguished himself in his misfortunes by the touching consolation he gave to his illustrious brother-in-law in his prison at the terrible moment that deprived France of a hero so much regretted. He hastened to the fatal spot and threw himself upon the sad remains of that brave man who had fallen while sending heavenward his last patriotic cry, "Vive la France!" Gamot himself washed the bloody wounds, and rendered Ney those last duties that France in tears should have bestowed upon a hero who had so gloriously served her.

ADDENDUM.

[From a recent volume entitled "Le Maréchal Ney, 1815," by Henri Melschinger, I have translated the following narrative of the execution of Ney.]

WHEN the Abbé de Pierre arrived, the marshal said to him: "Ah! M. le Curé, I understand you. I am ready." . . . The Count de Rochecouart and two lieutenants of gendarmes, preceded and followed by gendarmes and grenadiers, with the clerk Cauchy, left the chamber. . . . It was Tuesday. The day was gloomy; a light rain was falling from a dense gray mist. "An abominable day," said the marshal, with a natural smile. Then, as the Abbé de Pierre stepped aside to let him pass, "Get in, M. le Curé," said he, gaily; "presently I will get out first." The two lieutenants got into the carriage

with the priest and the condemned; the gendarmes and the grenadiers surrounded the carriage doors before and behind the wheels. Then there came with the Count de Rochechouart and the Marquis de la Rochejaquelin on horseback a company of veteran sub-officers, the platoon of execution, and a picket of the National Guard. A squadron of the National Guard closed the cortège. The carriage followed the alley that lies on the left side of the palace, and the alley of the large nurseries, to the gate of the Observatory. . . . Three hundred feet from the garden gate the carriage stopped. «What, arrived so soon!» observed the marshal, who believed the execution would take place, like that of Labédoyère, in the plain of Grenelle.

He descended first, as he had said; then, turning toward the Abbé de Pierre, who followed him, he gave him a gold box, his last souvenir to the maréchale, and for the poor of the parish of St. Sulpice some louis that he had left. The Abbé de Pierre embraced him, blessed him, threw himself on his knees some distance away, and remained there in prayer until all was over. The troops were formed in a hollow square. Ney advanced in front of the platoon of execution, who held their guns in the position of ready arms. He asked the adjutant Saint-Bias how he should place himself. In compliance with the orders of l'Espinois, Saint-Bias wished to bandage his eyes and place him on his knees. The marshal repelled this as a man who for twenty-eight years had seen bullets and balls flying toward him without flinching. «Do you not know, sir, that a soldier does not fear death?» he said. He then took four steps forward, «and there,» says Rochechouart, who watched the execution from the back of his horse, «in an attitude that I shall never forget, it was so noble, calm, and dignified, without any nervousness, he took off his hat, and, profiting by the moment that the adjutant gave him while stepping to one side and giving the signal to fire, he pronounced these few words, which I heard very distinctly: (Frenchmen, I protest against my condemnation. My honor—) At these last words, as he placed his hand on his heart, the shots were heard. He fell dead. He fell forward, having received eleven bullets out of the twelve: one in his right arm, one in his neck, three in his head, six in his stomach.» . . .

While the body of the marshal lay exposed

upon the ground, guarded by pickets of infantry and cavalry, the clerk Cauchy prepared the following report:

This seventh day of December, 1815, at twenty minutes past nine in the morning, the undersigned, Louis-François Cauchy, recording secretary of the Chamber of Peers, performing, in pursuance of an ordinance of the King of the 12th of November last, the functions of clerk of the said Chamber, went to the place of the Observatory designated for the execution of the sentence rendered yesterday by the Chamber of Peers against Michel Ney, marshal of France, ex-peer of France, more fully described in the said sentence by which he was condemned to the penalty of death applicable in the manner prescribed by the decree of May 12, 1793. The execution has taken place in our presence and in the form prescribed. In proof of which we have signed this at Paris, the day and year aforesaid.

CAUCHY.

According to an official report two hundred persons were present at the execution. The people kept a mournful silence, or broke out into murmurs. . . . A man came and dipped his handkerchief in the blood of the marshal.¹ The wall which was in course of construction and the débris were soon covered with his blood. The eager crowd pressed forward to obtain the least traces. . . .

After the execution the body of the marshal, by the order of General de l'Espinois, remained exposed on the ground during a quarter of an hour, while the Abbé de Pierre, still upon his knees at some paces distant, continued to pray. . . .

The quarter-hour of exposure being ended, the body was transported to the Hospital of the Maternity, the curé of St. Sulpice walking at the head of the procession. Sisters of charity watched all night over the marshal. A great number of people of mark, says a police report, came to see the body of the marshal—peers, generals, officers, ambassadors. These peers of France, his judges, dared to mingle with strangers and a crowd, curious to contemplate their victim, to assure themselves of his death, and to enjoy his punishment. More than five hundred Englishmen came to see the dead body, says another report. A soldier of the National Guard said to them, «But, gentlemen, you must have seen him in Spain.» A veteran added, «You did not look at him like that at Waterloo.»

¹ From the national archives, F.7 6683.