1791 - 1802

DIARY OF THE EXILE IN ITALY (1791-1802)[[1]](#footnote-1)

Vol XVI in Oblate Writings

Diary of the Exile in Italy

1782-1791

**I Family, childhood and early school days in Aix (1782-1791)**

1/ Family

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod was born in Aix on August 1, 1782. You know that his family held one of the foremost ranks in the magistracy. His grandfather,[[2]](#footnote-2) a lovable and cultivated man, had first served in the musketeers; when his health forbade him to continue in that service, he became President of the Court of Excise, Exchequer, etc. of Provence; his talents soon brought him to the summit of that College, whose complete confidence he enjoyed. He was dispatched to Paris to represent it in the endless disputes arising between it and the Parliament with which it was meant to work in harmony, and over which it would have had certain rights of precedence, as it had succeeded the former Court of Exchequer of Provence, well before the foundation of Parliament.[[3]](#footnote-3) On his trips to Paris he was admitted into the intimate counsels of His Royal Highness the Dauphin,[[4]](#footnote-4) the father of King Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X, along with President d’Eguilles,[[5]](#footnote-5) his relative and friend. When Parliament was reunited, in Provence, with the Court of Exchequer, something that should have been done everywhere, he not only maintained the same influence in his College whose second President he was, (Mr. D’Albertas[[6]](#footnote-6) was the first), but he exerted it throughout the province with that superiority that comes from giftedness joined with virtue: he was its model. His son,[[7]](#footnote-7) president at the same time as himself both in the Court of Exchequer and in Parliament, distinguished himself in like fashion by a lofty ability. The revolution interrupted his career. The last public act that testifies to the opinion the countryside had formed of him is his nomination by the Estates of Provence to the French National Assembly. It is of him that Eugene was born.

2/ Childhood: character, goodness and uprightness, piety.

It is impossible not to discern the future designs of Providence for this child, when one considers the qualities that developed early on in his soul. I have heard it told that while still in rompers the sure way to quieten him when he cried was to take him to the church; there he fell silent at once, and one could not help smiling when one saw him listening to the preacher, as if he understood what he was saying, and imitating with his tiny hands the gestures he saw him making.

When he started talking, he showed a strength of character rare in children of that age, which thrilled his maternal grandfather,[[8]](#footnote-8) who had a great fondness for him. He never sought anything by crying, and before he had learned how one ought to behave when one wanted something, in those early years when children show what they want by tears, he would say haughtily: “I want it”.

His family’s social position obliged it to have a large domestic staff: there were twelve in his father’s house, all anxious to serve him and anticipate his every desire; but foreshadowing that simple life-style he adopted later on, he used to slip way quietly and devote himself to certain good deeds, which his maternal grandfather decided he should be left free to do without anyone seeming to notice, happy to see the development so early in this young child, who was no more than five or six, of qualities that are often acquired only with a great deal of effort at a more advanced age. A thing that was noticed about him from this early age, with some wonder, was an unusual degree of affectivity that made him empathize, to the point of sharing their pain, with all the troubles of others. At such times he knew no peace until he had solaced in his fashion those he saw afflicted or suffering. His grandfather, a man of outstanding piety, encouraged his good tendencies by letting him have, small child though he was, a sum to give away as alms. He was once seen giving away his coat to a little charcoal-burner who had none, and when he was corrected by someone affecting to draw a comparison between his position and that of the little charcoal-burner, he answered cheerily: “What of it? I will be a charcoal-burner president.”

The whole family of Mr. Revest, the famous Parliamentary lawyer, cherished a strong affection for Eugene. This man of law, who assembled in his study the most brilliant members of the bar in Aix, allowed no one near him when he was busy in his office or dictating to his clerks, but little Eugene was the exception to the rule. As soon as he entered, Mr. Revest picked him up in his arms and went on with his dictation as he walked up and down holding this child, who listened attentively to his pronouncements.

One day Eugene went into the lawyer’s house and was surprised to see there was no fire: “Why, he said to the family, don’t you have any heating today, although it is really cold?” The ladies answered, teasing him, the child was not yet six: “Because we are poor and wood is expensive.” Eugene said goodbye and left: an hour later he is seen pushing along with some difficulty a little cart, loaded up with branches, that he drops briskly outside their door, saying: “Now then, here’s something to warm you up.” You can imagine the whole family’s feelings confronted with this sign of goodness. Several of its members used to tell it still thirty years later with tears in their eyes.

You will find it surprising that Eugene was able to do this kind of thing without interference, but you must not forget his maternal grandfather’s orders to let him be when his little heart inspired him to some good work. An eye was kept on him from a distance, he was observed without suspecting it, and Eugene told nothing to anyone, delighted to have done his bit without anyone knowing. So it was he was permitted on this occasion to do all this work that was really beyond his age, and he carried it out with an incredible vigour.

This sensitivity towards the troubles of others, along with a tender affection for all who loved him, has been one his distinctive characteristics all his life. At the age of ten, when he was in the college in Turin, he learnt of the death of his mother’s chambermaid’s daughter. The thought of the grief this young person’s mother must have felt and distress at the loss of someone devoted to him, had such a strong effect on him that they had to get him to lie down on his bed, where he wept hot tears and sobbed even though these people were not present to his sight.

It was the same thing in Venice when he witnessed the death in the Zinelli house, where he had been welcomed with such kindness, as we shall be narrating below, of the eldest brother of this respected family. He was then fourteen, but it was so touching to see him in the grief he felt and the evidence of concern he expressed both to the mother and the brothers of the deceased, that that family pledged him a paternal attachment that never flagged.

Another remarkable quality that developed in Eugene from his tenderest years was a great sense of justice and love for the truth that rendered him incapable of the least lie. So, when he was at fault, he never made excuses, still less did he conceal his wrongdoing. This frankness took its origin in the depths of that forceful character he bore from his birth.

We have said he did not cry for what he wanted; rather he showed himself to be wilful, but he would always respond to reason: he would have balked at punishment, especially if he did not think it deserved. Besides, he did not behave in such a way as to incur it. His sense of justice did not allow him to be passive when others were subject to the slightest unjustified accusation.

One day a child gave him something in exchange for a beautiful fan of his mother’s that Eugene thought he could give away. The child’s parents, seeing him come home with this expensive fan, were afraid he had stolen it, and when he told them how he had got it, he insisted little Eugene had given it him. They hurriedly went with their son to Madame De Mazenod’s to return this valuable object. The more they made excuses for their son’s foolishness, the more Eugene feared this child would be accused of having stolen the fan, and without hesitating to own his own culpability, he forcefully exclaimed: “Don’t accuse that child, he paid for the fan.” Eugene’s mother contented herself with telling her son he had done wrong to give away what did not belong to him, but in acknowledgment of the correct behaviour of the other child’s good parents, she nobly begged the mother to accept the fan as a gift.

He never liked children’s games, and was always seen to prefer the company of grown-ups. When the conversation turned to serious matters, he ran off for a stool and sat at the speakers’ feet, attentively listening to all they said without ever indulging himself in interruptions, unless these people, surprised at the interest shown by a child in a conversation that seemed beyond his years, saw fit to question him to hear the sensible answers he did not fail to give.

He liked certainly to play at a game of ‘chapel’,[[9]](#footnote-9) but it was in a serious way he played at representing the Church’s ceremonies, and those who served him would have very much displeased him if they had let slip a smile at his sermon, or if they had seemed distracted in the tasks he entrusted them with for the service of his chapel.

One would have said he prided himself on not being a child, but in his case it was something natural and due to precocious qualities that developed daily. So, when he had to leave France at the time of the Revolution, he was only nine.[[10]](#footnote-10) He was told the evening before that he would be leaving the next day. He asked earnestly if he might go and give a hug to his good friends in the Revest family, promising solemnly that he would not betray the secret that had just been confided to him. Sure enough, he had himself brought to the Revest home, and feeling the tears coming on at the thought that he was going to leave them behind he abruptly left the group with his heart bursting, wishing them all a curt good evening. The family, after being so good to this child, understood what it meant only when it learned the next day that Eugene had left for Nice.

**Nice and Turin (1791 - 1794)**

3/ Reasons for the departure

Here then are the reasons for that hasty departure, as they are given us in the account we have promised:

As he had been declared under arrest by the revolutionaries, on his return from his mission to the Estates General, my father left France and went to Nice[[11]](#footnote-11) and soon from there he sent me his brother to bring me to him. I left Aix with my uncle on April 20, 1791,[[12]](#footnote-12) and arrived in Nice on April 23, which was Holy Saturday. There really must have been a genuine fear of the threat made to do away with the children of the nobility, for my mother to have consented to let me undertake this journey even before I had quite got over an illness that had taken a lot out of me. My two grandparents, grandmother,[[13]](#footnote-13) my uncle the priest,[[14]](#footnote-14) my whole family together raised not a single objection to the prompt execution of my father’s orders. I was not yet nine years old. All I could do was to keep the secret as a grown-up would have done. This was enjoined upon me, and faithfully observed.

This departure interrupted the studies Eugene had begun in the Bourbon College, where he was in the sixth[[15]](#footnote-15) form with the success he always had in his classes. We have turned up a prize he was awarded that year, while some letters that his father wrote him from Nice,[[16]](#footnote-16) during the time Eugene was placed in the Turin college, prove he was consistently first in his class in that college, as his father advised him, on that occasion, not to be puffed up with pride at his success, and always to have for the competitors he was outstripping feelings of friendship and goodwill.

4/ Eugene’s short stay in Nice in 1791

Moreover, in the classes in the Turin college, there was a double merit in overcoming the difficulties, for teaching was done in Italian, and this was clearly not Eugene’s native tongue. His whole knowledge of it at that time consisted in what he had learned in the few months he had spent in Nice before going on to Turin. His father had him follow a course in the former of these cities. What a problem to compose his essay or translation in a foreign language! What did Eugene do? He called in aid all the passers-by. His family were living in the Sauvigne home, which gave onto the embankment, a public promenade beside the sea. Eugene was doing his work on the harbour and as soon as he was stuck for the meaning of an Italian word, he stopped the first pedestrian to come along, who was only too happy to explain it to him.

I stayed in Nice five months, the account continues. Meanwhile, my mother and aunt came to join us,[[17]](#footnote-17) their mother came too meaning to return soon to my grandfather’s side. This was a great joy for me. Believing the events in France did not permit of an early return, my parents got down to securing me the possibility of continuing my education. It was decided to place me in the College of Nobles, Turin.[[18]](#footnote-18) My mother and grandmother undertook to bring me. My mother at that time was scarcely thirty years old, and my grandmother just over fifty. Every reminder I have of that darling grandmother moves me deeply. I always loved her as dearly as my mother: which means as much as one can love here below.[[19]](#footnote-19)

5/ His education at the College of Nobles, Turin. His first communion.

We arrived at Turin by way of l’Escarene[[20]](#footnote-20) Sospel; we crossed the Col de Tende, came down by Limone, Cuneo, Savigliano, Racconigi, all places I have since seen again with different eyes and in different circumstances. I think that this was in September 1791.[[21]](#footnote-21)

The College of Nobles where I was placed had just been entrusted to the Barnabite Fathers by King Victor Amadeus. These religious devoted themselves to giving a polished education to the children of the distinguished families entrusted to them. I was among the first to enter this college, and Father Scati,[[22]](#footnote-22) who was rector, made me his great friend from that moment. He was a highly esteemed religious. He died as General of the Barnabites, after refusing a bishopric, which was offered him during the Revolution. If he had continued longer in his career, he would have been made cardinal. We owe him the complete edition of the works of Cardinal Gerdil[[23]](#footnote-23) his colleague and friend.

I stayed at the College just over three years. My teacher was Father Massimini, and at that time Father Cadolini,[[24]](#footnote-24) today bishop in the Marches of Ancona, was one of my masters. Mr. Tavenet, of St. Sulpice, was assistant of one of the dormitories I lived in, and I owe it to his severity that I studied properly, and was consistently at the top of my classes.

We have told above how Eugene acquitted himself of his homework. It seems his masters and in particular Father Scati were also happy with his good sense, for he was admitted to first communion before the age of ten. He had this joy on Holy Thursday in the year 1792.[[25]](#footnote-25) Prior to this, apparently finding him more sensible than his fellows, he was made prefect over his dormitory *(camerata*). His father, ever attentive to direct from a distance Eugene’s mental impressions, wrote him again on this subject to advise him to make use in a proper manner of this authority, and to make allowances for his companions’ weaknesses.

Father Rector and the other Fathers always held him in great affection, and held him up as a model. For this child was endowed with qualities rarely found in one of that age. He had the opportunity to exhibit them at various times when he was able to make use of his seniority in his dormitory to maintain the good spirit the Superiors wanted to see prevailing there.

This was the time that the Duke of Angouleme and the Duke of Berry,[[26]](#footnote-26) who were refugees in Turin and close to the King, their grandfather, came to visit the College of Nobles, accompanied by His Grace the Duke of Sorrent, their tutor. Eugene was presented to them, and the princes were invited to enter his little room as being the neatest in the whole dormitory. His Grace the Duke of Berry wanted to measure his height against Eugene’s, who, although younger by four years, was taller than he, which the prince remarked on with astonishment.

6/ Operation for a cyst. Confirmation.

In the interval between his first communion and his confirmation, namely, between Holy Thursday and Trinity 1792,[[27]](#footnote-27) Eugene gave fresh proof of the delicacy of his feelings and his strength of character. It is noteworthy on account of his age. The child had carried from birth a cyst in the inside corner of his left eye. His parents, fearful lest this cyst grow and disfigure him, decided to have it removed by a competent surgeon, such as was Doctor Pinchinati, first surgeon to the King. There was no trouble in getting the child’s consent, too reasonable to resist his family’s wishes. The day was fixed, and his mother was due to arrive from Nice the evening before to be present at this painful operation. Eugene wanted to spare her the pain of seeing him suffer. He insistently asked Reverend Father Rector to graciously allow the operation to be brought forward, so that his mother would find it already over when she arrived. The Reverend Father Rector was touched by this delicate thought, and gladly gave his consent.

Everything was got ready in the rooms of Father Rector who wished to be present at the operation. The first surgeon to the King arrives accompanied by his pupils; the child is praised for his courage, he was displaying a resolution that astonished everyone. It was here that God was waiting for him to give him a small humiliation that he drew down on himself perhaps by counting too much on his own strength. When all the instruments had been set out on a table which had been shut up in the doctor’s case, when the child saw the lancet, bistouri, hooked scissors, tongs, lint, etc., he thought they were going to cut off his head, and his courage deserted him; all those instruments of torture had to be put away again, and the surgeon and his pupils left.

Eugene went back to his room in total confusion, and with a movement of fervour he threw himself on his knees and invoked Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom it would seem he had not prayed to beforehand. We have heard him say he addressed himself to the Holy Spirit with a great confidence. This fervent prayer was agreeable to the Lord, for immediately the child rose with fresh courage, and going back into the room of Father Rector he asked him to recall the doctor, resolved that he would undergo the operation, however painful it might be. Father Rector, in wonder at this change, had Mr. Pinchinati recalled, and he immediately got ready to begin the operation. It was very long and painful, frightening even on account of the amount of blood that came from the vein that had to be severed to remove the cyst. The cyst could only be removed by repeatedly draining off the fatty matter that it contained, and cutting it each time with the hooked scissors, which considerably prolonged the operation. The supernatural strength that Eugene had obtained from the Holy Spirit by his prayer, did not show itself only in the resolution to undergo the operation, but in the courage which sustained him throughout: no cry came from him and he uttered not a single complaint. His mother arrived that very evening and was touched, as one can well imagine, by the thoughtfulness of her son who had wanted to spare her the pain of seeing him suffer.

The treatment was prolonged, so much so that the time for the general confirmation having arrived, there was a fear that Eugene would not be able to take part. His Eminence Cardinal Archbishop Costa, Archbishop of Turin, had the goodness to suggest confirming him in private. But it proved unnecessary to have resort to this kindness, and the child was confirmed with all the others on Trinity Sunday 1792, in the tiny church adjacent to the Archbishop’s palace.

Eugene’s attraction to piety sustained him throughout the time he spent in the college. It showed itself in the relish he always showed for religious ceremonies. During the whole time he spent in the dormitory called St. Anthony, the second he occupied during his stay in the college, he got up regularly nearly an hour before the rest to say Mass gravely in a little chapel he had got ready with his comrades, and which was furnished with all the necessary furnishings.

With the French patriots, the account says, threatening to overrun the whole of Piedmont, my father did not feel his family to be safe in Turin: he made the decision to leave this city to move to Venice, and take shelter in the lagoons of a republic which he thought would be respected by the French republicans.

**III. Venice (1794-1797)**

7/ Journey from Turin to Venice. Twelve days on a boat.

On May 2, 1794, my father hired a large boat on which he embarked with all his family, made up at that time of my father, Charles Antoine de Mazenod; my mother, Marie Rose Eugenie de Joannis; my great uncle Auguste André de Mazenod, archdeacon, vicar general of Marseilles; my uncle Charles Fortuné de Mazenod, sacristan, vicar general of Aix, since become Bishop of Marseilles; my uncle Charles Louis Eugene de Mazenod, Chevalier of St. Louis, then captain of the King’s fleet, since become rear-admiral; my aunt Elizabeth de Joannis, Marchioness of Dons Pierrefeu; my first cousin little Joseph Emile de Dons, Marquis of Pierrefeu; Nanon, chambermaid of my mother, along with my cousin’s nurse; my sister and myself. Many emigrés made the same decision, and asked my father permission to embark with us: among them were many priests. Among the lay folk we had the Colonia family, that of Durand-Dubraye, and the Marquis of Pontevès. Never was travel had so cheaply. Thanks to my father’s graciousness, to whom the boat was hired, it cost only 15 livres from Piedmont, and likewise only 12 livres for the priests, who were judged to be poorer than the lay folk. The journey was not without its light side; it lasted twelve days, for every evening we would stop somewhere for the night.

Everywhere we met with the most cordial hospitality. The patriots[[28]](#footnote-28) had not yet passed that way. It was a question of who could do the most for us! They came on board to take and lodge us comfortably in the town. The first evening we stopped at Casale Monferrato,[[29]](#footnote-29) capital of Montferrat. It was an honest lawyer who sought the privilege of having my father and mother. Not content with having us in his home for supper and to sleep, he and his wife accompanied us back to the boat, and forced us to accept some small provisions for the day’s journey. I deeply regret not keeping a record of the name of these fine people.

The second halting-place was in Plaisance. This town is not on the river. We had to make quite a journey to get there. We were lodged in a hotel, and I remember that we bought some excellent strawberries in the market. This whole countryside is magnificent.

The next day we continued our journey as far as a village situated opposite Cremona. A lot of our fellow travellers went to visit that town, where the Marchioness of Colonia met a generous person who, out of pity for the ill fortune of this numerous group of emigrés, obliged to flee so far from home, adroitly slipped into her hand a purse of gold pieces which the lady declined.

The following day our boat stopped about midday in a lovely spot that the whole group of travellers wanted to enjoy. There we rested in the shade of thick foliage, and judging from the gaiety everybody showed both in lively banter and in song and laughter, no one would have dreamt that here were a group of émigrés fleeing from tyrants who sought their lives, and who had been stripped of all their goods.

Passing through these charming localities, we came upon a pretty house occupied by a venerable old man who invited us in to rest. He immediately put all he had at our disposal, and distressed at our refusal, we could console him only by accepting at least a glass of coffee that he had served to us with a generous heart. He kept showering us with blessings, and made us promise to get in touch with him whenever we thought he might help. We came close that very evening to being obliged to have recourse to his generosity.

After taking our leave of the old man, we went to rejoin our joyful group, which we found considerably augmented. A boat filled like ours with émigrés and priests was following apparently close on our heels, it halted in the same place, and my parents had the consolation of greeting several of their friends, such as Bishop de Bausset[[30]](#footnote-30), Bishop of Fréjus, and His Lordship the Marquis of Grimaldi. They shed tears together over their situation, did their best to console one another, and the signal was given to cast off to go in convoy to Ostiglia, a place it is odious to recall, where all our poor émigrés were treated like suspicious characters, people to be sent packing. The local authorities placed guards on board the two boats, and no one was allowed to land except those chosen to go and do the shopping; the precaution was taken too of placing them under military escort. This barbarous treatment astonished everyone, it was like nothing we had experienced up till then, and happily it was not repeated elsewhere.

When day came, we put that inhospitable place behind us, and in the evening we were amply compensated for the previous evening’s maltreatment by the prompt, generous and touching welcome we were given in Sermide, where we stopped for the night. Sermide is not situated quite on the Po, you get there by a fine tree-lined way that shelters the traveller from the hot rays of the sun.

Scarcely had we arrived when the municipal authority came to welcome us. He undertook to give lodgings to all the lay folk; the archpriest, who had come with him to meet us, undertook to put up the priests in comfort.

My father, mother, and all my family received hospitality in the house of the leading person of the locality; he treated us magnificently. The municipal authority had such respect for and trust in my father that for a long time he kept up a correspondence with him. He it was who informed us of the death of our excellent host some months after we were set up in Venice. The Marquis of Montgrand, still a young man, was numbered among the guests the evening of our passing by Sermide. So many were we that there was only one bed between two. I remember I was so overcome with sleepiness that I slept right through supper; clearly I can’t have been much trouble to my companion. If anyone one had told us that we would meet again forty and forty five years later , the one as mayor, and the other first vicar general and then Bishop of Marseilles,[[31]](#footnote-31) we would have said they were dreaming. That however is how it turned out.

In the evening of this memorable day, we halted at Borgoforte to spend the night. There it was that our fellow travellers, who were bound for Verona, separated from us. In particular our boat was relieved of the burden of an émigré who had the talent of making himself detested by everyone. There was one time when he could have ended up overboard. A person who was not thrown, but who fell overboard, was our poor Nanon. She would undoubtedly have perished had it not been for the skill and courage of one of our sailors. By way of exchange, one day we were saved by the professional observation of my uncle, the chevalier, who steered our boat away just at the moment it was going to be dragged into a millstream. It would have been smashed.

We continued our journey as far as Ponte Lagoscuro, where all the priests with us left to enter the Papal States. My family and a small number of others including the Chevalier of Montgrand, who threw in his lot with us until his departure from Venice, where he was lodged and ate with us, not letting ourselves be intimidated by the false rumour that was circulating that no foreigners were being allowed to enter Venice, changed boats at the expense of our companion, and entered by the Polesine into the Venetian States.

This is a very interesting passage. As the bed of the Po is much higher than the countryside it has to cross, there was a series of locks that serve to make the descent to the places where one wishes to stop, and to bring the boats back up to the level of the river. So we went down the Polesine without getting out of our *burciello*; that is what they call the very comfortable boats that are in service for this passage. By way of this canal one has access to the different rivers that meander through this beautiful country. One crosses the Tartaro, the Adigetto and the Adige, and one arrives at Chiozza or Chioggia, where we lay up to await the boats that were to tow our *burciello* into the lagoons that separate the mainland from the beautiful city of Venice.

A few hours sufficed for us to reach that queen of the seas majestically enthroned amidst her waters, whence in times past she exacted tribute from the trade of every nation. The ancient republic that counted so many centuries of life was still in existence, but it was on the decline, and was soon to expire before our very eyes. One might say that she existed in a way only in people’s minds by the time we came to take refuge in her domain. Visitors were still pouring in to enjoy the freedom and diversions that Venice offered especially at Ascension time,[[32]](#footnote-32) a day fixed for the marriage of the Doge, representing the republic, and the sea. The feast lasts more than eight days, and comes around each year. We were not in a state to take much part or much pleasure in it. On the contrary, we were annoyed to arrive so inopportunely, not being able to find lodgings anywhere.

We spent one or two nights again in our boat, while waiting until a noble trickster[[33]](#footnote-33) we had picked up on the journey, and who had held himself out as being an Austrian officer, while he and his wife were in fact only street singers, had found us a place to stay, pitiful though it was. This was not the only service this noble trickster, called I believe Montecatini, rendered us out of gratitude for the kindness we had shown in letting him onto our boat free of charge, for him to go to Venice with his wife whither the gathering of visitors on the occasion of the Ascension Fair attracted him. Seeing two priests in our family he thought we might like to make the acquaintance of an *abbatino,* one of his friends. He was, I think, quite frankly a writer for the stage, but it was enough for Montecatini to know that he was a priest to suggest he be introduced to my uncles, and invite him to help them. This perfumed[[34]](#footnote-34) priest, who was no longer in his first youth, was named Zerbini; he undertook to present my uncles to the parish priest of the parish where he said Mass, it was the church of Saint Fantin, opposite the theatre, where I believe he actually suggested we go. My uncles continued to frequent the church and cultivate the acquaintance of the respectable *pievan* or parish priest, who received them with honour. Zerbini also introduced us to theFathers Coletti, really respectable people; one of them was a former Jesuit, very old, the other continued to visit us as long as we stayed in Venice, and was always glad to be of service.

8/ Lodgings on the Grand Canal. Life of study and prayer with the Zinelli family.

Montecatini had got for us, from the second day of our arrival, a little apartment, composed of two rooms, where the eleven people who made up our family, including masters, children and servants, had to be housed. We patiently survived a month in this sad dwelling, where we were crowded together; finally the visitors, drawn by the Ascension celebrations, went their way and we were able to find on the Grand Canal, opposite the beautiful Grimani palace, a pretty lodging that we kept until we left. It was Divine Providence who chose it for us in his merciful designs on me, for I owe to our stay in this house all the good I have been able to do in my life, if I have done some small thing with God’s grace. This house, situated in the parish of Saint Sylvester, which had as parish priest or *pievan* Father Milesi,[[35]](#footnote-35)vicar general of Murano, later Bishop of Vigevano, and ultimately Patriarch of Venice, was separated by no more than a very small street from that of the Zinelli family, a patriarchal family, composed of a respectable old mother, Dona Camilla Brighenti, and six sons. Two were clerics, one still a deacon and the other a priest, called D. Bartolo,[[36]](#footnote-36) the others were rich Venetian business men. It was this priest D. Bartolo, who died later in the odour of sanctity, who instructed me in religion and inspired in me the sentiments of piety which preserved me from the youthful aberrations so many others have lived to regret, for want of meeting with similar help.

This phase of my life bears too clearly the stamp of the divine goodness towards me for me to pass it over without recalling every circumstance in all its details, if only to awaken in me the gratitude I shall owe God as long as I live, and to arouse praise of God in everyone whose life touches mine or who indirectly have in their turn derived some benefit for it.

I said that on arriving in Venice my uncles were introduced to the parish priest of Saint Fantin by the *abbate* Zerbini. They said their Mass in the church of Saint Fantin, all the time we lived in the apartment we had stumbled on upon our arrival, but when we changed our apartment, and found ourselves some distance away from this church, my great uncle preferred the parish church of our new dwelling. My uncle, pushing politeness to excess, did not want to leave Saint Fantin, where he had been as well received as his uncle. Our new parish was that of Saint Sylvester, which I spoke of above.

From the very first days my great uncle was the object of the parish priest’s veneration and that of all his clergy, and he had endless and very moving demonstrations of it up to his death. He went every day to say Mass at the time he was free to choose, and I went faithfully to serve it for him. This was how I got to be known particularly by the parish priest Milesi. He was a man of acknowledged merit, a good shepherd in every sense of the term. In easy circumstances financially, he made the best use of his income, and being endowed with a fine talent for teaching, he distributed every Sunday the bread of the Word to his people, who were joined by a large number of people from neighbouring parishes who always filled his church. He was assiduous in the confessional, and refused his ministry to no one; he was, in a word, the very model of a good shepherd.

Father Milesi formed a great affection for me, and having recognized some good disposition in the frequent dealings he had with me, he formed the plan, unknown to me, of helping me. The position of my family did not permit it to get me the teachers necessary for me to continue my studies; Father Milesi decided to make good the deficiency, and God blessed his charitable intention. He had in his parish, as I have already said, the respectable Zinelli family, one of whose members, a holy priest, went every day to the church to celebrate the holy mysteries. The *pievan*, Father Milesi, got together with him, and it was not difficult to get him to come to the aid of my youth. This is how their charitable hearts inspired them to achieve their end.

One day I was amusing myself at the window that gave on to the house of the Zinelli family opposite. D. Bartolo appeared on his side, and addressing me said: “Master Eugene, aren’t you afraid of wasting your time in idleness in this way at the window?” - “Alas, sir, I replied, it is indeed a pity, but what can I do? You know I am a foreigner, and I haven’t any books at my disposition.” That was the opening he wanted: “That’s no problem, my dear child, you see me here actually in my library, where there are many books in Latin, Italian, French even, if you want them.”

“There is nothing I would like better”, I answered. Immediately D. Bartolo undid the bar that held the shutters of the window, and placing on it a book, passed it over to me across the little street that separated us. The book was soon read, for I was always an avid reader, and next day my father advised me to go and take it back and thank D. Bartolo. This was all planned.

D. Bartolo received me with the greatest kindness; he gave me the run of his library, and from there I had access to the study where he studied around a large table with his brother, D. Pietro, who was still only a deacon. “All our books are at your disposition”, D. Bartolo told me. Then he added: “This is where my brother and I study: you see over there the place that was occupied by one of my brothers whom God in his goodness has called to himself. If you would like to take his place, you have only to say the word, it will be a real pleasure for us to have you continue with your studies, which clearly you have not yet finished.” You can imagine my surprise and joy. “I shall be overjoyed, sir, and my father will happily give his consent.” - “Very well, come from tomorrow, and we will make a beginning.”

My parents thanked God for having obtained for me so great a benefit.

From this time on, every day over a period of four years, I went after Mass to be with these most benevolent teachers who put me to work until midday. After dinner, D. Bartolo, whose health required a lot of attention, would come to find me at home to go for a walk, which had in view a visit of some church where were would stop to pray. On our return, I got back to work, which lasted until evening. Some priests got together at that time to say the office in common. Then we would come down to the drawing room, where some family friends entered into some wholesome recreation. We had coffee and went away, except for myself who already in a way formed part of the family, and stayed for supper and to say the rosary and pray with them following the holy custom of that country, that was at that time so good. Afterwards I went off, in the company of a family servant. At home everybody had long gone to bed, for in Venice, where they turn night into day, it was always nearly midnight before supper was over. Sundays and Thursdays I was also kept back, as a rule,[[37]](#footnote-37) for dinner. Four years passed by in this way: the affection of everyone in this very worthy family that had adopted me grew in proportion to the attachment I experienced myself in its regard. Father Milesi enjoyed, in his turn, success in his charitable schemes. How could I fail to make progress in such a good school? The family in whose bosom I lived was outstandingly Christian, and D. Bartolo, who was chiefly responsible for me, was really canonizable as a saint. You will find among my papers a summary of his life that Bishop de la Gaude,[[38]](#footnote-38) Bishop of Vence, and later of Namur, got for me on his return from Rome a little after the happy death of my saintly teacher. Can I ever thank God sufficiently for getting for me, out of his infinite goodness, help such as this precisely at the most difficult time of life, a decisive time for me, in which were planted by a man of God, in my soul prepared by his skilful hand and the grace of the Holy Spirit whose instrument he was, the fundamentals of religion and piety on which the mercy of God has built the edifice of my spiritual life? It was in the school of this holy priest that I learnt to despise worldly vanities, to taste the things of God: far removed from all dissipation, from every contact with young people of my age, I did not even give a thought to what constitutes the object of their desires. I went to confession every Saturday, to communion every Sunday. The reading of good books and prayer were the only distractions I allowed from the careful pursuit of my studies. I heard and served Mass every day, and every day too I recited the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I had derived from my pious reading a certain attraction for mortification, and child as I still was, I made it a rule to fast every Friday, and in Lent on three days in the week; my parents did not notice. I often placed planks under my blankets, and on Saturdays, so as to be more sure of waking early so as to spend more time in church, I slept quite simply on the ground on a simple blanket. My health came to no harm at all from it, and I persevered with this regime for as long as I lived in Venice.

If I have related these facts, it is only to highlight the graces I was blessed with from my tenderest childhood, and how deeply I must humble myself for not having derived greater benefit from them. It is from then that I date my vocation to the clerical state, and perhaps to a more perfect state, and certainly if we had stayed only one year more in Venice, I would have followed my saintly director and his brother, now a priest, into the religious Congregation they chose,[[39]](#footnote-39) and in which they both died in the exercise of an heroic zeal.

This disposition towards entry into the clerical state, is behind an anecdote I would like to tell: One day my venerable uncle, after my reading him a chapter of the New Testament out of my little Elzevir that I still have, said in a serious tone, as it seemed to me: “Is it true, Eugene, that you wish to enter the clerical state?” - “But yes, uncle”, I replied without hesitation. - “My child, how could you take a decision like that? Don’t you know that you are the only descendant of our family which will thus become extinct?” Astonished at seeing a consideration like that come forth from the mouth of so venerable a man, I replied hotly: “What of it, uncle, wouldn’t it be a great honour for our family to finish up with a priest?” My uncle was teasing. Delighted to hear a child of thirteen years of age reply in this fashion, he put his arms around me and gave me his blessing. This precocious vocation was able to come to fruition only much later. I had to undergo further trials. We were in full flight, and my exile was to go on still for many more years.

This vocation of Eugene showed itself in fact by unequivocal signs. D. Bartolo fulfilled like a saint the duties he had assumed in his regard: his aim was not only to have him continue on with his Latin classes, but to form the youthful heart of his pupil in the love of God and his mind in the knowledge of religion. How many times haven’t we heard Eugene now a priest say that he owed to this holy teacher all he had acquired of solid principles in this area. Religious instruction did not limit itself to the catechism. And so Eugene progressed in such a way as to astound all who knew him, and the dispositions he had promised from his college days developed to the point that his strong attraction to the clerical state became evident to his family. Thus he could be seen happily dressing up in a cloak that resembled a soutane; he drew in the folds with a cincture, and with a square bonnet on his head, he used to parade in the big salon called in Venice the Portico, devoutly saying his Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that he said in its entirety every day. He often did his spiritual reading out loud in a preaching voice; for this he used to seat himself down on a wide stool that served him for a pulpit.

We have seen his punctiliousness as to his weekly confession and communions. From that time too became apparent his taste for bodily mortifications, especially fasting. He easily succeeded in hiding from his family and friends the practices he undertook. When he was absent for a meal at home, his parents thought he was eating with the Zinellis, as was usually the case; and if he did not eat with the Zinellis, they thought he had taken something at home. This attraction for fasting was kept up in Eugene’s case up to the time when his forcible exile obliged him to suspend everything which he had imposed on himself extraordinarily, with the exception of that of Fridays, which he was never willing to renounce.

However, the deacon Zinelli, who often amused himself by teasing him, led him one day in this matter to a discovery that saddened him. So Eugene gave in only after a long argument, and when the case had been well and truly demonstrated to him by arguments, namely, that whoever fasts before the prescribed age has less merit than he who fasts to obey the precept of the Church.[[40]](#footnote-40) He was not discouraged by his defeat, and he continued his holy practice as before.

9/ 1795: Madame de Mazenod’s departure. Death of Canon Charles Auguste André de Mazenod.

In 1795, Eugene had the opportunity to take a little trip into Tuscany to accompany his mother, whom family interests were summoning back to France. Already the Marchioness of Dons, her sister, had returned with her son; Eugene’s mother would have lost all her rights of inheritance from her father, if she had prolonged her stay abroad. So this sad parting had to take place, she brought her daughter with her: Charlotte Césarie Antoinette Eugénie de Mazenod, later to become the Marchioness de Boisgelin.

During this journey, Eugene demonstrated what grace had worked in him. First he provided himself with a large crucifix which he hung around his neck as a sign of his faith and of the public profession of it that he was prepared to make, if needs must be. The occasion presented itself at the first inn where they stopped. Although the crucifix was fastened under Eugene’s waistcoat, it was big enough to be seen; it became a subject of malicious pleasantries on the part of the inn’s servants, but Eugene, far from blushing, replied to these insolent people with a truly Christian courage, something these impious people were not expecting from a child of thirteen.

On arriving at Livorno, the family stopped a few days in that town. When Eugene observed that the house domestic where they resided was extremely ignorant in religious matters, his chief occupation was to explain this woman the catechism, which he did in so interesting a manner that the mistress of the house was pleased to join in and, from what she said, to her great profit. Zeal was one of the distinctive traits of Eugene’s piety, and foreshadowed the ministry he was one day to exercise towards the most abandoned souls.

On being separated from his mother and sister, he returned with his father to Venice to go on with his studies and tasks with the Zinellis, with whom he stayed until the time of his family’s departure for Naples.

That year - 1795 - did not come to an end without bringing fresh sorrow to Eugene. The narration tells us: My great uncle, Bishop de Belloy’s venerable friend and vicar general, as he had been vicar general of the celebrated Belzunce, brought his holy life to a close on November 22, 1795. He was buried in that same church of St. Sylvester in which he had celebrated daily Mass. While on this subject, I cannot pass over in silence the gracious conduct of the respected parish priest, Father Milesi, later, as I have said, to become Bishop of Vigevano, and ultimately the Patriarch of Venice, this same Father Milesi who had conceived such a lively and paternal affection in my regard, and to whom I owe all the good that my saintly teacher and true friend D. Bartolo Zinelli did for me. When my uncle died, my father sent me to the parish priest to ask him to take charge of the funeral arrangements, fully intending it to be understood however that we were exiles and, notwithstanding my uncle’s dignity, we had to stay within the limits of the strictest simplicity. The parish priest replied that he understood perfectly, and that we might leave it with him. He was as good as his word, but what did he do? Magnificent funeral arrangements: sodalities, a host of clergy, the finest candles, the most beautiful catafalque in the church, decorated with countless tapers, and everything to match. What could we say? Everything was done on the parish priest’s orders. But when the time came to ask for the bill for all this magnificent display, the parish priest replied that, having good reason to share the all-too-justified sorrow of my family, he thought himself fortunate, with this solemn funeral, to have rendered to so holy a person the homage that was due his virtues and dignity, that so far as he was concerned in this he was discharging a duty, and that in consequence we had nothing to pay! This is the man God placed on my path in this foreign land to be the first instrument of his mercies towards me!

I did not see him again until 1811,[[41]](#footnote-41) when we met in Paris at the time of the National Council to which he was called as Bishop of Vigevano.[[42]](#footnote-42) Our meeting happened right in the choir of Notre Dame, when the bishops were going to their places. It was a touching sight. I was acting as master of ceremonies under Fathers de Quélen and de Sambucy. Seeing Bishop Milesi arrive, whom I had not found at home the previous evening, I accosted him mentioning my name. The good bishop was beside himself with joy at finding again his adopted child now twenty-eight years old, a deacon, and, unmindful of where he was and the occasion, he fell on my neck and drew me tenderly against his breast. I was as moved as he, and everyone asked what it could mean. Ah! had they but been able to understand, more than one would have mingled his tears with ours!

With the French advancing on Venice, it was time to thing of decamping. We were present at the ignoble and wretched finale of that worm-eaten republic that crumbled as it were in on itself. It was no doubt difficult to resist the star or, if you prefer, the genius of Bonaparte, but at least there could have been some show of energy and not an actual flight into the arms of shame and self-abasement[[43]](#footnote-43) as was the case.

Between the end of this ancient republic and the entry of the French into the city, there was a time of anarchy that gave rise to a highly dangerous clash between the Slavonic troops[[44]](#footnote-44) returning from the mainland, from which they had been pushed back on Venice, and the local patriots who were seizing control of the government. We were mere spectators of these tumultuous scenes, but we could very easily have become victims in that short interval. The Venetians very easily confused the exiles with those French whose approach they were fearing, and who were shortly going to overwhelm them completely. God watched over us, and we were not harmed.

I do not know how it happened that shortly before this Admiral Brueys[[45]](#footnote-45) turned up in the Adriatic. I was too young to have known or remembered him. The fact is that the happy memory that he cherished of my uncle the chevalier, his old comrade, came close to costing us our lives. We saw him arrive one day in his admiral’s barge and knock at our door that gave on to the Grand Canal. He had learned that my uncle was in Venice, and he wanted to greet him. It was close to the fall of the old republic. From then on we were a suspect family, and it took every bit of the good opinion that had been formed of my father and uncles as trustworthy men, with whom they had rubbed shoulders for the four years they had lived in the country, to neutralize the bad effect this purely social and certainly not political visit of the admiral, my uncle’s friend, produced.

10/ Festivities in Venice: regattas, the Ascension.

I find in my notes an account of certain feasts and ceremonies peculiar to Venice, which was not at that time a country like any other. Shall I say something about them? I hesitate, for their story must have been told in many works that are accessible to everyone.

In Venice it is the regattas that are the most popular spectacle. They take place only very rarely on big occasions, like the visit of a foreign prince, or on the occasion of some big event. The *regatta* is a boat race on the Grand Canal that crosses Venice. Once the day is published, everyone gets ready to make her more magnificent. The whole city gets down to it, visitors flock in from all parts, especially what are called the inhabitants of the mainland. It reaches the point that food prices rocket, and the streets are blocked by this swelling in the population. All the houses overlooking the Grand Canal display tapestries on the balcony, and all the householders consider it their duty to invite as many of their relatives as their houses will hold; on every side refreshments are available, there is no stinting them in Venice. The inflow of the curious, the windows not just of the houses fronting on the Grand Canal, but of all the houses that, from whatever angle it may be, afford a view of the canal, a multitude of boats filled with people that so block the Grand Canal along its whole length that there scarcely remains the space necessary for the boats that have to engage in the race to get by, the congestion of this crowd, this atmosphere of feast and general jubilation produce an effect impossible to describe.

It is always after dinner that these races take place. The first is made up of single sculls. These boats are so light and tiny that it would be perilous to put a second person on board; anyway, it is never permissible to do so. The oarsmen steering them are very elegantly turned out: they are dressed in white with silk sashes of different colours. When the signal is given, the boats leave from the mouth of the Grand Canal. The first to arrive before the Forcari palace, where a lovely antique-style temple has been erected, wins first prize for the race. He is handed an elegant flag that he proudly raises on his tiny boat. The second receives another flag of a different colour, which he likewise raises on his boat. The third too receives a flag, but on its fabric is painted a pig. It is the last prize, the boats coming afterwards don’t get anything.

The first race gives way to the second. The boats entering the lists are for two oarsmen, turned out as elegantly as the first; they get the same signs of their victory, and prizes in proportion to their places. Then come the races for boats with four oarsmen, those with eight, who win their victory on the same conditions.

The races concluded to the acclamations of the crowd, the innumerable craft that are stationed along the Grand Canal or various little adjacent canals cast off from every side, and cover the surface of the Canal as they skilfully streak it with furrows. The laureates make their way amidst this immense multitude of craft, and humbly hold out their hats for the tribute that no one denies is due their valour, such is the enthusiasm in Venice for these kinds of entertainments! This abundant collection, along with the amount of the prizes that is faithfully paid them the next day, lightens the lot of these good sailors whom everybody takes an interest in, as they are really fine fellows.

One of these great Venetian festivals was the Ascension of Our Lord. I’m sorry to say I am not referring to the religious festival. It went by unnoticed in this huge crowd that arrived at the republic’s capital from every part of what they call the mainland and the neighbouring countries, like Milan, Ferrara, Bologna, etc. A full fortnight’s fair is devoted to the most ridiculous dissipation. The city heaves with visitors, to the point that it is only with the greatest difficulty traffic can circulated in the streets, which are in all truth very narrow.

St. Mark’s Square becomes a kind of universal bazaar; they set up another square with the square so to speak. There are porticos beneath which one passes, the shops and especially the cafés are wonderfully got up; a number of rows of seats are taken by the promenaders who take their seats to enjoy the spectacle that they themselves are part of. Joy radiates on every countenance, for they only come here to enjoy themselves; musical instruments entertain the crowd with their melodies; they excel in Italy in this kind of music. The *bautes,* a kind of domino costume that serves for mask in this city and beneath which without a false face, one wears it like a hat, one is very free, mingle in the crowd with its elegant women and fashionable[[46]](#footnote-46) men, each group prolonging its ridiculous dissipation the whole day through. And this goes on for the whole fortnight the fair lasts. I hardly need to add that during this time all the theatres are open, the cafés are never empty of men and women who have come to spend their money, that people find their amusement too in the casinos and everywhere in the city and on the water; the canal of the Giudecca and the Grand Canal, the Esclavons Quay and the gulf of St. George are furrowed with boats and gondolas, with other craft in attendance filled with musicians who make the air resound with their instruments.

What a place of dissipation Venice was in those days! A thousand blessings would not suffice to bless the Lord for keeping me safe with all my youthful inexperience from all these dangers, for placing me under the tutelary care of the Zinelli family and my saintly master D. Bartolo.

I continue with my tale, especially because what remains for me to tell about this festival will not recur in the future, this ceremony having ceased with the republic of that time, which lived only on its traditions.

The day of the festival of the Ascension was fixed for the so-called solemn marriage ceremony between the Magistracy and the sea. I do not know how far back the beginnings of this singular function[[47]](#footnote-47) go. I write from memory, and I do not any book to hand to verify the fact. It probably dates to the period of Venice’s great maritime ascendancy, when this republic together with that of Genoa carried on the commerce of the entire known world. Who really would have dared to dispute with her imperial sway over the sea, when it was proved, by the marriage renewed every year on Ascension Day, that the sea must be subjected to the Venetian Republic as a wife is to her husband?

From daybreak on this great day, the entire population was in a state of expectancy. There was a scramble for boats, gondolas or other craft to accompany the *Bucentaure* on its nuptial voyage. The *Bucentaure* exists no longer, it was set on fire by the Vandals of the time, who, following in the footsteps of our own, made it their business to destroy anything that might remind people of better times. It was a magnificent vessel, gilded from stem to stern, and on the bridge crimson velvet tapestries bordered with superb golden braids; its sculpture work are likewise gilded and represent various aspects of the hours of the day and the seasons, pagan deities and other features. The great standard of the republic, the winged lion of St. Mark, flew on the vessel’s poop and dominated the canopy that was to shade the magistracy from the heat of the sun. At the oars are the men of the Arsenal, with the Admiral at the tiller: he answers with his head for the safety of the crossing. That is why, if the weather is not good on the feast day, they wait until another day to be sure of the weather. At the appointed time, the Doge, accompanied by the magistracy, six canons in cope and all the chief functionaries of the State, exits on foot from the palace to take himself to the Piazzetta where the *Bucentaure* has been waiting for him since the previous evening. When the whole cortège is aboard, the ship gets majestically under way to go to the Lido, one of the outlets by which the high seas communicate with and feed the lagoons. Immediately all the vessels decked with flags make a salute with artillery fire, the bells ring out, the immense crowd makes the air resound with its cries, the péottes,[[48]](#footnote-48) the gondolas, all the craft row flat out and cover the sea with their awnings. It is a race to get closest to the *Bucentaure*, which can be likened to a huge hen surrounded by its innumerable chicks. The lagoons now present a ravishing sight, a unique spectacle, never to be seen again.

The Patriarch is waiting for the Doge’s passing on an island called St. Helena, occupied by the Olivetan Fathers. These Fathers have to serve him chestnuts and a flask of water, a frugal breakfast that the Patriarch declines with the excuse that he has to say Mass and so cannot accept their kind offer, the *Bucentaure* arrives, the Patriarch gets into his boat to go and meet her and accompany her. While the voyage continues, the Patriarch blesses the water that is to be thrown into the sea.

Once arrived at the Lido, the vessel is free of the lagoons, and the Doge, while pronouncing a form of words that express his supreme authority and dominion over the sea, throws into the water a golden ring. Immediately a mass of sailors make a dash and it is rare that they do not recover the precious trinket. That is truly a moment of joyful cries as so many capable divers dispute the fate of that honourable prize. The *Bucentaure* returns immediately to the Lido and the Doge, followed by his numerous cortège, disembarks to hear Mass in the church of Saint Nicholas. The Patriarch is the one who celebrates this Mass, after which comes the return to Venice, amid the same throng, and the Doge invites to a great public feast everyone who has had the honour of accompanying him in this ceremony.

You must not think that with the *Ascenca* over, that’s what they call the Ascension, there is an end to the pleasures of Venice. They have many carnivals in that place, soirées, or to be more exact, night balls, the nocturnal walks called *I freschi*, serenades etc., the season of the Brensa, and as well as that the natural good humour of the Venetians that unfailingly adds spice to all these different amusements, and makes of this all-too-famous place the rendezvous of all pleasure seekers and lovers of dissipation.

11/ His fondness for the Zinellis. Diverse facts: tender-hearted, strong in character.

In the midst of this foolishness, one would even so come across some families who held back from taking part. I give as proof the Zinelli family, but there was a little group of them. There were found the traditions of true piety and ancient simplicity of manners, love of study and work, benevolent charity and suave urbanity, and it in this atmosphere I lived four years of my life, from twelve to sixteen years of age.

When the time came to leave, the separation was really cruel. D. Bartolo wrote me when I arrived in Naples, that he had been able to find consolation only at the altar, where no doubt he had offered the holy sacrifice for me, that God might watch over me in my youthfulness as I was going to be exposed to so many dangers, far from him and in places so corrupted. This holy priest was heard, for, thanks be to God, deprived though I was, I have to say, of every help, I was no different in Naples than I had been in Venice.

One readily understands all the suffering involved in the separation of the master and the disciple, who owed everything to D. Bartolo and was so tenderly fond of him: that of the master who was seeing the departure of one he had cared for so generously over a number of years, whom he had so to speak fashioned with his hands, directed and instructed, and it must be said, who had been capable of benefiting from the efforts that the worthy master had taken over him, for Eugene’s mind, that had been developing from his tenderest years, had acquired under the direction of the holy priest a remarkable solidity.

We find fresh proof of it in a letter Mr. Lourdet, the former royal censor, sent by the king to the Mékhitaristes[[49]](#footnote-49) in Venice to work on an Armenian-French dictionary, wrote him at that time. Mr. Lourdet had the occasion to come to know Eugene, and wrote him from Tuscany, where he had gone with the intention of returning to France, a charming letter that demonstrates the opinion this famous man had of the young Eugene, then fourteen years of age.

The habitual relations Eugene enjoyed not only with his master D. Bartolo, but with D. Bartolo’s brother, who had been ordained priest, and with several respected priests, Italian and French, for whom the Zinelli household was a rendezvous, had acquainted him with all the affairs of the Church. His natural curiosity and the attraction that drew him towards the knowledge of ecclesiastical science, had placed him in possession of a fairly extended number of theological ideas, to the extent that he could give his opinion, even on the question of grace and the famous question of the four articles.[[50]](#footnote-50) It can be said that he was an ultramontane from very early on, for, in the middle of these gatherings of French and Italian priests, he always sided with the latter, whose teaching was more satisfying to his good sense and intelligence.

Bishop de Montagnac[[51]](#footnote-51) Bishop of Tarbes, was able to pay homage to the precocious knowledge of this little theologian. Eugene had among his books the *Ami de la jeunesse*, by Father Filassier, which he had read with great pleasure, but having noticed in this author a certain veneer of suspect teachings, or perhaps after being forewarned by his uncle, who had no fear of letting him have it, that the author had a tendency towards Jansenism, Eugene felt obliged to write on the flyleaf an anti-Jansenist profession of faith, so as to save from any scandal those who noticed the work in his little library. The Bishop of Tarbes, having entered one day into Eugene’s room, who was then in Naples, as we believe, opened by chance the book in question and read the profession of faith that Eugene had made. This prelate was so astonished that he could not be persuaded that it was the work of a child.[[52]](#footnote-52)

We must not pass over in silence the protection that Providence showed with regard to Eugene, in a danger that he ran of losing his life when he was still in Venice. One summer’s day, after dinner, Eugene was taking his recreation in the doorway of the house; we have mentioned that it was situated beside the Grand Canal, it was the time of high tide. All of a sudden his foot seemed to slip under him and Eugene found himself fallen into the water, - the canal is ten or twelve feet deep, - and not a soul at hand to give him the least help; but his guardian angel, who was watching over him, saved him miraculously, for without knowing how, he made his way through the water and was able to lift himself onto the steps and from there he got back to the house safe and sound.

All that Eugene could say about this event was that he did not know how he had fallen, nor even if he had fallen, but that he found himself certainly as it were in the middle of a storm, not knowing where he was, with a frightful noise inside his head produced by the water that was entering his ears and mouth, and that on opening his eyes to the light he saw he was in the middle of the water and able to hang on to the long pole with which he was playing, and that he made use of it to get to the steps of the house.

Saved from this peril, he did not know how to act to appear before his parents, soaked as he was from head to toe; he was afraid that his mother whom he loved tenderly would receive a false impression. Before opening the door of his apartment, Eugene let her know that he had something unusual to show her, and when he had given her assurance by this conversation, he let her see him. This precaution, that shows the delicacy of the affection that this child of thirteen had for his parents, spared his mother a nasty surprise that could have had a bad effect on her in the state of suffering she habitually endured.

Tender-heartedness did not do any harm to Eugene’s strength of character; we have proof of this in the following fact; to appreciate it, one has only to reflect on the daily manifested power of human respect over the most solidly principled of men.

Having been invited to a great dinner at the Spanish ambassador’s house, all took their places at table without saying the prayer known as the *Benedicite*. Eugene, seeing that no one was fulfilling this duty, hesitated for one moment. That moment of hesitation allowed everyone time to get seated, so that Eugene was left standing there all by himself: all eyes were on him. Then, with an effort that one can only call heroic for one of his age, angry with himself for his hesitation he made the sign of the cross and said the prayer, without being put out of countenance and paying no heed to what would be said of him.

It has been said of Eugene that every time he overcame human respect he was interiorly rewarded for it by the Lord, and this happened often. He loved religion with his whole being, and he would have been guilty of betraying himself if he had brought himself for a single moment to disavow holy practices, especially in the company of people who had no use for them or made fun of them.

12/ Eugene the adolescent - testimonials of esteem

So it was he was much loved by all the good folk who had the occasion to get to know him. We have seen the proofs of affection that Bishop Milesi poured out on him. That venerable priest did not cease a single day to demonstrate the same sentiments towards him. Eugene had the greatest trust in him, and when he could not go to his ordinary confessor, old Father Zauli, an ex-Jesuit, who lived at the outer limits of the town, he went to Bishop Milesi for confession, which he did punctiliously once a week, so as to receive communion every Sunday.

Bishop Gioivanelli,[[53]](#footnote-53) Patriarch of Venice at that time, also gave him indications of good will on the occasion of a number of meetings. Quite blind though he was, he loved to provoke Eugene whose turn of humour he liked. He liked to get him going on the subject of national pride. And on this topic, he used to tell him, alluding to Eugene’s first name, that he well knew what saint he had most devotion to, since he bore his name, namely, Prince Eugene of Savoy. The child would then protest: and from that came a little tussle that amused everyone and gave the good Patriarch a laugh.

Bishop de Bausset, Bishop of Fréjus, Bishop Pisani de la Gaude, Bishop of Venice, who died the Bishop of Namur, several other saintly personages likewise gave proof of a special esteem, a remarkable thing with respect to a child of that age; but his piety, good behaviour, precocious learning stood out in a way that drew down on him the general goodwill.

Eugene’s character was taking on a particular temper. Habitual living with intelligent and specially distinguished people, without ever the opportunity to meet a single child nor of learning any amusement of even the slightest worldliness, formed him early in serious tastes and in thoughts of a high order. He owes to that formation to have been preserved all his life from all the weaknesses so common to young people. His soul was so penetrated with the love of certain virtues, that he even developed a kind of excessive distance from persons of the opposite sex. This strong cast of his first years sheltered him from the faults that young people pride themselves on in the world, and yet at the same time a greater liberty and an infinite number of seducing attractions that he will encounter on his journey might have left him more open to yield in some aberration.

At the point of time we are dealing with in Eugene’s life, namely, from twelve to sixteen years of age, his distancing from persons of the opposite sex had in it a savage aspect. One day, a French gentleman, seeing him leave the house with a simple wave to his aunt, allowed himself to make the observation that he had not kissed her hand. Eugene, surprised by this remark, dryly replied that it was not his habit. At that, the officer insisted and wanted to prove to him that he should be more gallant with the ladies and that it was a sign of gallantry to kiss their hand. Eugene’s masculine pride was revolted by this idea, and he maintained haughtily that he would think it lowering to man’s dignity to submit to this effeminate mannerism, and that he would never lower himself so far as to kiss the hand of a lady. The soldier, seeing our young man so decided, gave up forming him in the ways of worldly gallantry, and Eugene’s aunt, who knew his principles and character, had a good laugh at this sally.

The time had come however to leave Venice. The French had taken over that city, and the harassment the émigrés were subject to made this stay formerly so peaceful highly disagreeable for Eugene’s parents, who made the decision to move on to Naples. This determination deeply saddened Eugene, who was going to be deprived of the happiness he had enjoyed over several years by the side of his master D. Bartolo Zinelli and his respected family. He did not anticipate the change of position that this move was going to cause him without dread. Of all the many family members with whom he had arrived in Venice, there remained with him only his father and his uncle the chevalier; his mother, sister, aunt, half-cousin and his uncle the priest, later Bishop of Marseilles, one by one left; his venerable great-uncle died there; the thought of his good parents, joined with the prospect of leaving behind for ever the Zinellis and Bishop Milesi whom he loved so tenderly, aroused a very lively grief in his soul; this departure, in a word, was for Eugene a real desolation. He had no choice however but to resign himself to it. His grief was shared by his good Venetian friends who look upon Eugene as their child. The separation was destined to be for life.[[54]](#footnote-54)

**IV Naples (January 1, 1798 - January 3, 1799)**

13) Journey by sea from Venice to Manfredonia

In the same year as the death of my great uncle, 1795, first my aunt, the Marquise Dedons and her son, and a little later on my mother and sister, had left Venice to go to France. They were summoned there by our families’ interests. It was in the hope of saving their marriage dowry from the wreckage that would swallow up the fortunes of all the émigrés. They were successful, but this was at the price of the painful sacrifice of a separation that was to last for seven years. My uncle the priest left in his turn to take advantage of the permission allowed exiled priests to return to their homes.[[55]](#footnote-55) This respite was of short duration; the iniquitous law of 18 Fructidor soon retracted this concession, and he had once again to go into exile so as not to risk losing his life. In any case, when we left Venice, there were only my father, my uncle the chevalier and myself.[[56]](#footnote-56) We wanted to go to Naples, on the invitation of the family of Baron de Talleyrand,[[57]](#footnote-57) which we had got to know well in Venice. But we had little money left from the diamonds my darling mother had left for us; so it was a matter of seeking out the cheapest form of transport; the journey by land would have been too expensive; and so the only course was to go by sea. But what vessel were we to choose? A wretched *manzera*, so-called because she served to carry cattle (*manzi*) from Istria and Dalmatia to Venice. It was on this miserable boat, after several days wait at Chioggia, that we were to travel the length of the Adriatic to get us to Manfredonia at which point we were to cross Italy and get to Naples, from the spur in that town. But what trials we would have to pass through before reaching harbour! The favourable wind blew all the while we were in Chioggia waiting while our sad *manzera* got ready; the moment we left, the wind became unfavourable and pushed us back from Carnaro,[[58]](#footnote-58) that we should have cleared, upon Istria, where we had no business. We lay off Rovigno, but we were not allowed to land. We were banished to *Lo Scoglio*, a little island two gunshots from the town, where boats were usually quarantined. Rovigno is sixty miles from the gulf called Carnaro, which the contrary winds prevented us crossing. It would have been a lot simpler to rest up in a little inhabited harbour a short distance from Pola, where we could have waited for the favourable wind, which was not long in coming, but our captain was ill, and he wanted to find a doctor: this is why we were subjected to a fierce storm in the night. It was not without its danger, to judge from the attitude of the sailors, whom I heard complaining and cursing the hour they came on board.

We had left Venice on November 11 and Chioggia on the 15th in the year 1797. Others besides ourselves had spent time on this rock; we put together the well-nigh fabulous story. This *Scoglio*, this island, has but one resident, a worthy cobbler, and caretaker of the chapel, where my father summoned a priest to say Mass; he lived there with his wife and little daughter, who charmed us on account of her perfect resemblance to my sister, whom at that time we were well justified in calling our little Eugenie, since she was then only twelve. This is what those good folk told us in the long hours of boredom we had to spend on their island. Shortly before ourselves, they had played host to a personage who said he was a Bishop, they had held him in the highest esteem, and it seemed to them that he deserved it: “But, would you believe it? We have since learned that it was a woman in disguise who was on her way to Pola to have her baby”.

This alleged woman was none other than Bishop de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes. I gave him a good laugh when, seeing him again in Naples, I told him this story.

These good folk of Rovigno were unfortunate in their conjectures. Here is another example. On this same *Scoglio* where we were languishing, they saw in transit a community of religious on their way to Fiume. They were actually Visitation Nuns,[[59]](#footnote-59) who had to leave Modena where they had settled when they left France, and who had chosen the town of Fiume as a shelter from fresh vexations. The Rovigno authorities had assigned them the *Scoglio* to rest up for a few days. At first people were delighted to see them and even brought them alms, but all at once their good dispositions gave way to suspicions: people began to think they were French spies disguised as religious, and they were ordered to leave. It is hard to believe. So the little daughter of the shoemaker, the caretaker of the island, told us: “I can definitely assure you they were women, for I kissed them all, and the skin on their faces was so smooth, smooth, that no one in this place ever had skin like it.”

In the end, my father and uncle, seeing that our captain was not making any use of the favourable winds that would let him put to sea, asserted themselves and forced him to leave. When we reached the latitude of Carnaro, we again encountered the head wind, but this time we put in at the neighbouring port of Pola from which the fine ancient amphitheatre that is outside its walls is plainly visible. After a two-day wait we crossed the gulf and beyond it we had to go into what is called the Narrows, namely the arm of the sea that lies between the shores of Dalmatia and a number of islands which skirt it practically to Zara. The drawback of this course is that one can only go by day and has to stop each evening so as not to run aground on the islands. The channel is so narrow that in some places two ships could not possibly pass abreast.

There was no way to relieve the boredom of this tedious voyage. On Sunday we stopped in front of a country chapel, no more than a shanty, to hear Mass. The priest my father arranged to come from some neighbouring village looked like a beggar: he was practically barefoot, and the torn soutane that scarcely covered him was in tatters. I served this Mass and the priest went away very contented with the stipend my father gave him, rather bigger clearly than he was used to receiving. A strange thing was that we saw not a single man along this whole shore. It is the women who do the farm work on the rocky slopes, the men go to sea or stay further inland. It is to be supposed, as reports have it, that further inland the land is good; but, if it is fertile, would we have seen those poor women coming and asking insistently for the powder that lies at the bottom of the sacks of biscuits of the sailors to make soup for their sick people? Bread was nowhere available.

At last, on the forty-third day of our crossing, we arrived at Zara, capital of Dalmatia. The Austrian commander, on reading our passports, offered us his services; my father insisted on not disembarking so as not to risk having to go into quarantine on our arrival in Manfredonia. We were still only half-way there after such a long voyage. Luckily the following wind freshened and we were able to put out into the open sea. We went so briskly that in two days we arrived off the shore of Manfredonia, where we wanted to disembark. Delighted to have escaped the Algerian pirates who infested those waters, we were thanking God for reaching land when we were informed that his excellency the governor was not prepared to let us land. My father brushed this aside and we disembarked, really, notwithstanding the governor. We stayed eight whole days in this sad town. This was for the Christmas holidays. I remember that after the Midnight Mass everyone is invited to kiss a little Child Jesus; I kissed him like the others, I will not say with more devotion, but with more respect, for it is a real scrimmage. The canons perform the liturgy in mitre: they do not enhance its dignity by so doing, judging by the one I saw officiate in the cathedral. I do not know if the impression I got on the matter left me with an unfavourable prejudice, but I have never been able to accept this privilege granted to many chapters in Italy and elsewhere. In general, all these encroachments on the vestments reserved to bishops do not add much to canons, whom one knows after all to be nothing but simple priests, and tend to over-familiarize people with vestments whose only purpose moreover is to enhance in their eyes the great and lofty dignity of pontiffs.

After the holidays we headed for Naples passing by Foggia, Ariano and Avellino. Foggia is famous for the death of Charles I of Aragon. You see there immense granaries constructed underground. Ariano, situated on the height, reminded us of the title once borne by one of the most illustrious families of Provence with which we are connected, the Sabran family, counts of Ariano under the prince of the house of Aragon. And Avellino, situated in country covered with hazels called in Italian *avellane*, from which clearly the town took its name, is known for being the place of St. Andrea Avellino, of the Theatine order[[60]](#footnote-60). Everywhere in this countryside we were crossing we were struck by the beauty of the vegetation; the land is cultivated right to the top of the highest mountains. We arrived in Naples on the evening of January 1, 1798. We had left Venice on November 11. So we came to the end of a journey of fifty one days. Travel is different today. Our entrance by the Capuan Gate was anything but triumphal. We were packed into a miserable carriage that was not designed to attract the attention of onlookers, and we got down at a hotel to match. It was the Hotel of the Red Hat, but it was not a cardinal’s hat.

So we found ourselves in Naples for a stay of barely a year. This was to verify the prediction of General Baraguay[[61]](#footnote-61) d’Hilliers, who said to my father when he signed his passport: “What are you going to Naples for? We will be there within the year.”

It was the same general who, arriving in Venice to take command temporarily of the French troops, called the émigrés together at his quarters to give them a good dressing-down, with the object clearly of intimidating them. After these official and quite harsh words, he bent over to my father’s ear and said in a whisper: “If I can be of any service to you, let me know.”

I have no intention in writing these notes of describing the countries I passed through, but merely of retracing after a fashion the itinerary of my travels and the memory of the events that are of interest to me and mine. So just as in talking of Venice I left out all mention of the magnificent churches, fine palaces and innumerable paintings of the great masters of the Venetian school which foreigners come there to admire, similarly I will say nothing, in my stay in Naples, of all the things that go reported with justifiable enthusiasm by every author who writes about this town and its environs.

14/ Sad monotony of Eugene’s life in Naples. The English presence.

Eugene spent the whole of this year in Naples in gloomy fashion. We gather from the surviving letters of Don Bartolo Zinelli to his cherished pupil, that he suffered much from living away from so good a master. His life was very withdrawn in that capital where he had no desire at all to strike up acquaintanceships. It seems, from the letters just mentioned, that he applied himself to study assiduously enough, and chose a confessor from among the Fathers of *Santa Maria in Portico*, a religious house situated close by that where he and his family lived with the Marquis de Sabran, his father’s friend. The only distraction he allowed himself was to accompany his father, uncle and the Marquis de Sabran to Baron de Talleyrand’s place, the former French ambassador, where they went usually to spend the evening. The society of those solemn gentlemen cannot have been very amusing for a young man of sixteen, but at least it sheltered him in his youth from many a danger.

We know nothing, in the area of piety, concerning the whole time Eugene spent in Naples save that he had so little sense of shame about displaying his Christianity that, grown boy and fine young man as he was, he did not hesitate to go and serve every day the Mass of his uncle, later Bishop of Marseilles. My stay in Naples, the account continues, was for me an oppressive year of very gloomy monotony. I did not have any more my good friends the Zinellis, I no longer had a fixed task, relationships suited to my tastes and inclination. I can say I wasted my time there. Was it my fault? I do not think so. I learned German for three months. In so short a time I made such great progress in that difficult language that my teacher led me to hope I would soon master it; but he fell ill and died, and with him went what I knew. He was a minor official in the King of Naples’ service; clearly he was happy with very little. The destitution of the emigrant’s lot barred my father from giving me another teacher; we had to be patient. I have regretted all my life not having been able to foster the facility I had then for learning languages and pronouncing them well. I would have done some additional good in my ministry. What a sad existence for a young man of sixteen, to have nothing to do, no idea what to fill his time with, know no one, be unable to see anything, except the church, where I went to serve my uncle’s Mass! The explanation lies in the sad situation to which so many years of emigration had brought us. The money my mother’s diamonds had furnished us with had to be eked out. Hence, no teacher. I was too young to be left alone in a town like Naples, and my father and uncles had so little curiosity that they left Naples, after a stay of a year, without having seen anything or visited any of its environs. We went to spend the evening at the Baron de Talleyrand’s place, where some acquaintances of this former ambassador used to meet, and my whole recreation, as I did not play whist[[62]](#footnote-62) like my father, was to chat a little or listen to others chatting. In this context I will tell a story that does no credit to my humility. One evening I had had a long chat with a Marquis whose family claims to go back to St. Januarius. This gentleman, clearly because of the attention that youth attracts when it speaks some sense, seemed entranced by my conversation. At least he expressed himself in that sense to my father, who answered him: “You can have no idea how young my son is whom you seem so pleased with: he is still only sixteen.” The Marquis Aoleta was too polite to reply other than with a compliment. But I remember, I say it to my shame, I was very upset over the disclosure which harmless paternal pride had led my father to make, and that evening I ventured to complain about it to him, telling him he should not treat me any longer as a child whose opinions do not count.

It is not surprising that people mistook my age; although very young, I already had the height and figure of a man of twenty, and the fact of my having lived habitually only with men of mature sense had given me a certain aplomb and a rectitude of judgment that was a little precocious. I showed it in that same house one evening, when I was obliged to react to a rather tasteless remark and a stupid joke from a Parisian canon who made fun of the fact that the Pope was having triduums of prayers said in Rome to defend himself from the French invasion, instead of devoting himself to the drafting of decent soldiers. I was the youngest of the group, and, if one consulted only the practices of the world, I should have held my silence and been satisfied with silent disapproval of the canon’s silly remark; but seeing that, so far from reacting to this remark, which I found shameful, a number of those who heard it were smiling and seemed to accept it, I could not control myself, and, paying no heed to human respect, I raised my voice in reprimand of such misplaced remarks. My reply must have been a fitting one, for, the next day, the Count of Chastellux,[[63]](#footnote-63) Knight of Honour of Madame Victoire de France, who was present, reported the incident to the Princesses Royal,[[64]](#footnote-64) in Caserta, lauding the young de Mazenod, who had spoken better than the old canon and had politely put him right. Who would have said at that time that one of the daughters of this respected gentleman was to become the mother-in-law of my own niece! I also used to see in that company Count Roger de Damas, general in the service of the King of Naples. It is his son whom my niece married. I remember embracing him when he left to place himself at the head of his division; but neither he nor I imagined that the day would come when our blood would mingle in a union which would make of my niece the wife of his only son and his grandchildren my grandnephews. The Count later married Miss Pauline de Chastellux whose son Charles de Damas married my niece Césarie de Boisgelin.[[65]](#footnote-65) See how amusing it would be to reading the decrees of God if it pleased Him to reveal the future to us. That future was not exactly a smiling one just then. If Count Roger de Damas was leaving for the army, it was because the French were getting close, and they lost no time as it turned out to invade the whole country, both the Papal States, whose help was the objective, and the Kingdom of Naples, which soon had to be abandoned to their triumphant armies.

Before recounting that catastrophe, I will say a word about my trip to Vesuvius and about the great event that occurred that same year, 1798. I mean the all too famous Battle of Aboukir[[66]](#footnote-66) (August 3, 1798), in which the French navy suffered a reverse from which it never recovered. When the news reached Naples, my uncle the chevalier, a rear-admiral at his death, who was a fine naval officer, refused to believe it. He insisted, on the basis of his professional knowledge, that it was impossible for an admiral to have moored in such a way as to leave a passage between the land and his fleet.

I do not know what other reason he gave as well to prove the falsehood of the account which was however coming in from everywhere. The English legation was triumphant: it was when Sir Hamilton[[67]](#footnote-67) was minister, and his wife, who needs no introduction from me, carried fanaticism to the point of extravagance. She adorned her head with an anchor of gold on a background of a metal band that bore the names of all the captains of the vessels of the victorious squadron; her gown was hemmed with another metal band on which were engraved the names of the ships: her whole costume was in the national colours. She insisted that all the French ladies belonging to the émigré families from Toulon, who were receiving help from England, wear also on their dresses indications of the victory won. I do not know if the Neapolitans shared sincerely in this great joy; as for those of us who had no acquaintance with the English legation, I frankly admit we were humiliated rather than pleased. No more, a little later, did the sight of this famous admiral, who came to Naples to receive the plaudits of his fellow-countrymen, impress us. We saw him closer-up in Palermo, at the Russian ambassador’s, when he came, in pursuit of Lady Hamilton, to play *quarante-et-un*[[68]](#footnote-68) for fine guineas, which he lost with *sang-froid*, and we were in a position to form a judgment that if he was a great sailor, which no one could deny, he was neither handsome nor very nice. His appearance was very commonplace.

15/ Outing to Vesuvius

What will I say about Naples that you will not read in all the published ‘Travels’? No need to recall the beauty of its position, the grandeur of the town, the number of its inhabitants, and the customs and manners of this very well-known people. I do not claim to be writing a history or composing a new Travel Book. I simply trace, for the amusement of my friends, who have manifested a desire to hear about the adventures of my exile, some events that are personal to me and which have no interest beyond what the friendship they bear me bestows on them. They will have been moved by this year of my youth spent so gloomily in Naples. Thanks to the sedentary habits of my family and their excessive solicitude for my health, I would have left Naples like them, without seeing anything whether of the town or of its environs, if an émigré of our acquaintance, Sir de Galembert,[[69]](#footnote-69) with whom I formed a bond of friendship based on esteem and gratitude, had not prevailed on my father to let me be his companion on some trips he planned to make in the neighbouring countryside. But when he announced that we would begin with a visit to Vesuvius, the permission was almost withdrawn, so strong was the impression that this was a dangerous trip, arousing clearly in the mind of my dear family memories of the fate of Empedocles. However, I was entrusted to the Chevalier; but my uncle the priest could only find reassurance by going off to say his Mass for me, which I was unable to serve on that particular day as we had to leave too early in the morning.

On the appointed day, Mr. Galembert came to fetch me, and we set out for Vesuvius, which was not at all in menacing mood. We went by *ralesse*, a small carriage used thereabouts, as far as Resina, where we took on what is called a *cicerone*, a name very inappropriately applied to these talkative guides which thinks to compare them with the great Roman orator, a two-fold injustice that would tend to suggest that this prince of eloquence talks more than he might and is a mere patron of chatterboxes. We set out immediately, and, directed by our guide, we clambered courageously to the top of the mountain; but what it cost us to get there! First one has to cross a large space bristling with uneven and sharp stretches of lava, over which one can walk only gingerly. When one has traversed these jagged undulations one finds oneself at the foot of a very steep cone, which one must somehow take by assault taking one step forward and two steps back, so slippery are the cinders which cover it from top to bottom. However great our ardour, we had to give in to fatigue, and half-way up the cone, running with perspiration and exhausted, we lay out on the cinders to have a little rest. We were parched with thirst and it was well for us that, when leaving Naples, we had yielded to the concern of my uncle, who insisted we put some oranges in our pockets. Never did fruit seem more delicious; by refreshing our palates, it gave us back our faculty of speech and strength to continue our painful ascent. What struck me as very funny at that moment was the moral my travelling companion chose to draw from it. Even as he ate his orange, he told me in all seriousness how good for one it was to learn to bear with hunger and thirst. I agreed even as I thanked God and my good uncle for having provided me with the means of hearing and understanding the lesson, which would certainly not have been appreciated in the state we were in before we got our faculties back thanks to eating our fruit. However, our journey beckoned. This rest gave us the needed strength. Our exertions brought us finally to the top of the mountain, that is to say, to the huge crater that crowns everything. This enormous cavity, at a rough estimate about a mile in circumference, is of unplumbed depth. It is beyond my understanding how people who claim to have gone down into it went about it. I presume, if they are telling the truth, they did not penetrate very far into this abyss, out of which smoke is pouring continually, in small quantities clearly, but still enough so that from the foot of the mountain, the sea and all round about, one sees it rising above the crater as an indication of the underground fires that are feeding it.

It was in the eruption of June 1794 that the cone at the top of the mountain gave place to this enormous abyss. On our climb up we visited the part of the mountain where the lava issued on the occasion of this eruption. It was on the flank that it came out, through an orifice much smaller than that of the principal crater that is at the top of Vesuvius. The ground we were walking on at the edge of this new abyss was hot; but we did not see any smoke coming out from the hole, whose depth our eye could not measure. I wanted to throw a stone down it, but, when I pulled it out of the ground, I was dazzled by the beauty of this type of mineral which had for me the shape of a cauliflower made of lava, sulphur, crystal and limestone. It was a prized possession, especially as the hermit brother whom we visited shortly afterwards swore that he had never seen one so beautiful, and offered me his entire collection of stones if I would surrender it to him. I would have none of it; but that curious stone got lost in one or other of our moves.

The descent of the cone was quicker than going up, we did in a quarter of an hour what had taken us more than an hour of cruel effort. But one did not have to set about it as I did, to get down quicker. All one had to do on the descent, according to our guide’s advice, was to slide on one’s heels while striving to keep one’s balance. To avoid bumping into my travelling companion who was sliding in front of me, I tried to swerve without coming to a stop, but pulled by the slope I could no longer check myself; I had sufficient presence of mind to realize that I was going to be precipitated onto the lava that one comes to as soon as the cinders finish, and, without further hesitation, I let myself fall on the cinders, giving my companion a bad fright, but without doing myself any injury. By way of a rest, our guide led us by a little valley between the Somma and Vesuvius, in the direction of the hermit’s house, who expects the visit of travellers, and offers them wine which those who partake of it declare palatable; one acknowledges the hospitality received with a payment that the hermit does not ask for but which he accepts with thanks. We were soon back in Naples, where my family were very glad to welcome me back.

16/ Visit to Pozzuoli, Portici, Herculaneum, Pompeii and Caserta.

As that outing went so well, we soon embarked on another. This time our destination was Pozzuoli.[[70]](#footnote-70) We left on foot early in the morning, and arrived at Pozzuoli quite early without overtiring ourselves. Mr. de Galembert was a hard walker, and I was young enough to keep pace with him. We visited the cathedral, which contains some remarkable antiquities, such as some well-preserved pedestals. We also visited the underground gallery where St. Januarius was exposed to the beasts without being devoured by them. From there we went on to the famous temple of Serapis, which authors describe, and we returned to Naples by the Solfatara. This is an extinct volcano which travellers do not neglect to visit. The place is deserted and uninhabited. One finds, on the level ground situated at the top of this not very high mountain, the remains of a sulphur factory, which serves as a landmark for the traveller who wishes to go down into the shaft worked to extract this sulphur; but however strong the curiosity that drives him, he will not venture far in this underground area. Scarcely has he gone down a few paces than he is obliged to climb back up as quickly as possible so as not to be asphyxiated. Inevitably I tried it out for myself, and since, despite the protests of the *cicerone*, I decided to go down some paces more than he allowed, I almost met my end there. Straight away a profuse perspiration drenched me, and, on the point of feeling ill, with difficulty I got back up to get some air and a scolding from the stern guide. It would seem that the mountain is hollow. The *cicerone* never omits hurling a big stone with both hands on to the ground which immediately resounds with a dull thump. They show you a hole where a noise is emitted like a smithy; when a stone is placed in front of this hole, it is blown away by the wind which comes out violently from it. We returned to Naples going along Lake Agnano and were back home well before nightfall.

It was only by chance so to speak that I was able to visit the environs of Naples, my father and uncles being firmly decided not to budge. So I took advantage of the generous offer to join a party of compatriots who were going to visit Portici, Herculanum and Pompeii. Portici is an extension of Naples. One gets there by a fine way lined with country houses. A fine street it would seem. In Portici there is a royal palace where the court takes up residence sometimes. It was there that Pius IX was received at the time of his stay in Naples.[[71]](#footnote-71) There was to be seen there, at the time I am describing, a museum which has since been moved to Naples; it held at that time some very interesting items: namely, everything found in the excavations of Pompeii.[[72]](#footnote-72) It is there I saw for the first time, making use of a wonderful technique, the unravelling of the calcinated leaves of papyrus from which emerged very legibly the letters, words and sentences of works that had originally been written on these leaves.

Beneath Portici is Herculanum,[[73]](#footnote-73) formerly buried beneath the lava of Vesuvius. I do not know what has happened since, but at that time they abstained from doing a lot of excavating, partly because of the difficulty of breaking up this lava that is as hard as stone, partly so as not to risk bringing down all the houses of Portici built on this lava. However they point out an underground theatre where they bring visitors with outdoor torches. I remember I did not take a great liking to this underground descent. The darkness of the place, which was lit only by the *cicerone’*s dismal and spluttering torch, the rumbling sound of the carriages passing overhead, and which seemed to threaten in a voice of thunder to loosen some portions of these suspended masses and obliterate us, put to flight our curiosity which was soon satisfied, and we exited from this cavern to go to Pompeii, where we were able to take our frugal meal seasoned by our hunger.

Pompeii was not then as one sees it today, far from it. There had so far been uncovered under the ashes that had engulfed it only a very small part of that quite large town. I find in my notes that they still knew of only one street, a theatre and a country house. The street was lined with houses and shops; it was paved with wide stones on which are scored quite deeply the grooves of wheels. I recognized later the house in which our *cicerone* made some very pretty pictures come out by throwing water on the walls. But what is that in comparison with what one admires today?[[74]](#footnote-74) It is not the intention of these notes to enter into a description of them. Plenty of modern books are available to satisfy curiosity on the subject: I have only to report what I find in my old manuscript. It was on the ruins of the theatre that we took our snack gaily enough, according to the text, but we did not leave without visiting the country house; there are still to be seen there in the cellars big amphoras for keeping wine in. We were shown some of this petrified wine in the Portici Museum.

I also find in my notes an excursion to Caserta, the royal residence built by King Charles III,[[75]](#footnote-75) which foreigners visit to admire the magnificent stair case by which one ascends to the beautiful apartments of this truly royal palace; the chapel matches the magnificence of this whole beautiful building. The gardens are immense and well-kept. One does not go to Caserta without extending one’s journey as far as the great aqueduct which brings abundant water to the palace and the town. It has three tiers of arcades, but what is that now that today we have so close to us the aqueduct of Roquefavour?[[76]](#footnote-76)

Caserta brings back a little deed that does honour to my youth - my exchange with the Parisian canon. I refer the glory to the saintly teacher who laid down in my heart the religious principles that have been the consolation of my life.

17/ Departure from Naples. Danger run by Eugene on December 21, 1798.

The year’s respite promised by General Baraguay-d’Hilliers was rolling by: the French armies were advancing on Naples. Despite the King’s efforts to defend himself from the invasion that threatened, his troops yielded, and General Championnet advanced swiftly in the conquest of this beautiful kingdom. The danger was imminent; it was decided that the King would withdraw to Palermo with the Queen and the Royal Family. Admiral Nelson was to receive them on board his ship. Everything was ready for embarkation when the people, finding out, rose as one to prevent it. On December 21, 1798, a memorable date, the immense populace came out from every section of the town, headed noisily in the direction of the royal palace, and packed the square and all its surrounds. All these bands of angry men carried at their head banners of saints and cried: *Viva san Gennaro!* The King was obliged to show himself on the balcony to reassure this multitude that had no wish to be abandoned by its king. I do not know if any promises were given to appease it. But what I cannot forget is that I found myself in the middle of that rumpus. This is how it came about:

Warned by the Queen[[77]](#footnote-77) of the hasty departure of the court to save itself in the face of the French army, whose entry into Naples was now inevitable, my father too turned his thoughts to flight. The Queen, ever thoughtful of the good of my family, had made sure of places for us on one of the transport vessels, but my father decided we would be better served by the kind offer of Count de Puységur, my uncle’s comrade, who was in command of the Portuguese flagship, in convoy with Nelson in the roadstead off Naples. This good friend proposed taking us on board his ship when the time came to flee before our redoubtable enemy. When the time came, he sent his sailors with a handcart; this was precisely the night leading up to the morning of December 21. Before our packages had been made ready and our trunks were placed on the cart, dawn broke. Naturally I was charged to accompany our effects, and that was when, all unsuspecting, having in order to get to the harbour to pass close to the Palace square and go along by the St. Charles Theatre and the castle, I found myself surrounded on all sides by the throngs which flooded out from all the streets which led to the palace. There was no way back. I had to brazen my way through if I were not to suffer the fate of other French émigrés who like myself were bringing their belongings to the harbour where they intended to put them on board ship. Seized and pinioned by the people, they had to abandon their carts in the street and suffer being dragged to a guardroom that served as their prison all that day. Luckier than they, thanks to the Portuguese sailors by whom I was accompanied and to the ruse I adopted of shouting just the words: “Portuguese flagship”, I saved myself from this danger, but once arrived at the harbour, it was impossible to get anyone to let us through to the quay side. The admiral’s boat, where our effects were to be placed, was not there. The tumult was growing all the time. I saw in the distance some sabres drawn from their scabbards. That is perhaps when the Russian consul was stabbed, and a courier of the Royal Cabinet massacred. The danger was growing ever more pressing. I stuck to making no reply to the insults and the affront of “Jacobin”[[78]](#footnote-78) that emanated from the mouths of these people roused to fury except my magic words: “Portuguese flagship”. In this way I outfaced them, and they let me retrace my steps as far as the gateway of the Arsenal. In the sight of that gateway I saw salvation, although it was closed. I went boldly up to the sentry and ordered him to let me in to save the effects I was charged to carry on board the Portuguese flagship. The look on my face intimidated this good soldier whom I held responsible for the loss of the effects, and he let me pass. Scarcely had I entered the Arsenal when the officer of the guard came running to countermand this flagrant breech of orders, but I calmly made him listen to reason. At the same time he saw the admiral’s boat taking on my effects; it was thus evident to him that I had not deceived him, and he altogether calmed down. I was to discover on board, once I got there, what had been happening in the town.

During the long duration of this riot, a friend of my father’s betook himself to his house to let him know what was happening. In his account, clearly exaggerated, he told how at the height of the confusion, a young man accompanying a cart loaded with effects had been assassinated. This was a terrible moment for my father and uncles; they were convinced this young man was none other than myself. Luckily I arrived at that moment, coming home by way of the Arsenal, returning from my dangerous mission. My presence allayed the fears of my good relatives, and my uncle the priest reminded me that I was in time to hear Mass in the nearby church, where I went immediately, both to satisfy the precept of the day, and to thank God for keeping me safe from all the dangers I had just run. It was the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21, 1798. It was on that very day, thirteen years later, I had the signal happiness of being raised to the priesthood in Amiens.

The riot had died down, and a sort of stupor had succeeded all that energy of the morning; the rest of day went by in a state of great anxiety. In the evening, at eight o’clock, we learned that the Court had gone on board. Mr. de Puységur sent word that he would come to fetch us during the night, which he duly did, like the good comrade-in-arms of my uncle that he was. At the mole we found the boat and clambered on to it to proceed aboard the Portuguese flagship that Mr. de Puységur commanded. He gave up his cabin for us, and the Marquis de Nizza entertained us, and all the numerous company that had taken refuge on board, with the magnificence of a true aristocrat.

The King, the Queen and the Royal Family had gone on board the flagship commanded by Nelson. They left before us to proceed to Palermo; but they were assailed in the course of the crossing by a terrible storm. The danger was so great that they made ready to cut the masts. Prince Albert, the King’s young son, died during this short crossing. It goes without saying that all the ships that went in convoy with the flagship suffered dreadfully.

Our Portuguese vessel had received the order not to leave Naples until later. We rode out the storm in the roadstead; we lost an anchor, another Portuguese vessel lost three, a brig was driven ashore. This gave us an idea of what those who were on the high seas must have suffered.

Our delay was longer than we expected.

In the period of eight or ten days that the Portuguese admiral still stayed in the roadstead, Eugene went ashore to wind up some affairs with the owner of the house the family occupied, and sell the effects that had been left behind. When it was time to return on board, on being warned by Baron de Talleyrand that the vessel was making ready for sea during the night, Eugene showed his mettle and ran enormous risks to rejoin the ship in the teeth of a raging wind and in black darkness. The boat’s sailors were already at their ropes; the chambermaid they were bringing on board had covered her head with her apron so as not to see the danger; Eugene shouted words of encouragement to the sailors, baled out the water that was filling the boat. Finally, after tremendous exertions, the vessel was reached, which, by its sweeping movements threatened to bear down on the boat at any moment. Eugene leapt on the band that encircled the vessel; his guardian angel was with him, for it is inconceivable how, in so great a roll, he could hang on to the ledge. The woman had to be hoisted with pulleys and heartfelt thanks were offered afterwards to God for not having perished ten times over. Eugene escaped with the loss of his voice in the middle of the fracas, the movements and cries that were needed to emerge from this danger. We see that, when the need arose, he was able to assume initiative and commit himself personally, although normally he led a very tranquil and sedentary life.

One day when Eugene was walking on the upper deck, an English doctor, struck by his appearance, asked someone he knew how old the young man was: he received the reply that he was only eighteen. “What a pity, said the doctor: he will not live long: that young man is too precocious, too mature, morally and physically, to last very long in his career.” Eugene heard of the sentence and gave himself leave to appeal it, protesting to the doctor that he was in very good health.

We only left Naples, the account continues on January 3, 1799, after setting fire to all the gunboat launches that had been constructed for coastal defence. On one occasion we saw on board Cardinal Braschi Onesti, Pope Pius VI’s nephew, and Bishop Galeffi, well-known to the French priests who had lived in Rome. They did not stay long; but Bishop de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes, came with us as far as Palermo, where we arrived on the 6th in the evening, the holiday of Epiphany, with calm weather and quite without incident.

**V Palermo (January 6, 1799 - October 11, 1802)**

18/ Arrival in Palermo. Trip to the Temple of Segesta.

So there we were in Palermo, happy to have come through so much; but we were blissfully unaware that once we had landed in that beautiful and great town, we would be at a loss for somewhere to stay. Who would believe it? There was not a single hotel in this the capital of Sicily, and the foreigners who were all arriving at the same time would find themselves literally on the streets. We were lucky enough to meet up with a friend who had got there before us and had got himself lodgings. He let us have his bedroom where we lay our mattresses on the floor, very content to have a roof over our heads.

The Queen, immediately she arrived, was so kind as to inquire after us, being anxious over us, knowing that our finances were very low. She sent 25 ounces to my uncle, along with a request to say a Mass for her. It was a delicate way to see there were the basic necessities she assumed we lacked. We lost no time in going to look for a place to stay among the decent folk of the tanning community, and we had nothing but pleasant memories of our treatment among these fine people. The colony took shape and we soon found our bearings in familiar territory, there were so many Frenchmen crowding into Palermo.

Among these Frenchmen there was one, belonging to a highly respectable family, with whom I formed a special bond: he was the eldest son of the Count de Chastellux. César de Chastellux was my elder by a few years; but the similarity of our religious principles and the regular tenor of life that he followed like myself formed the basis of our friendship, which was never to flounder. He later entered the service of the King of Naples, and did not cease from giving witness as a good Christian, soldier though he became. It was with him that I made the trip to the Temple of Segesta, in the interior of the Sicilian countryside. We set off from Palermo on horseback early in the morning, and we stopped to rest our horses in Partinico[[79]](#footnote-79), a small very badly built village. While they grazed, we strolled in the countryside, which we found to be as beautiful as the township was ugly. From there we went on to Valguarnera, a dreadful little village that I mention only to remark on the depravation of its inhabitants. We could judge of this from the sight of a dirty house that had had bestowed upon it the pompous name of *Home for Foundlings*. Imagine, a home for foundlings found in a miserable village of a few hundred people? Yes, we saw, not the home but the hole in which these poor victims of dissolute living were dumped. We counted ourselves lucky they did not find any on the day we passed through. From Valguarnera we arrived by impassable paths in Alcamo, quite a big town. It was from there we were to take our bearings for Segesta. We had an introduction to the Reverend Father Pastori, one of the most considerable men thereabouts. This cleric received us very politely and gave us hospitality. After a very light supper for young men of our age, overcome with the fatigue of an arduous journey, we asked leave to retire. We were brought to a quite nice bedroom with two beds; uncomfortable as they were, we slept soundly till dawn the next day, when we were to leave for Segesta, so as to be able to get back in time for dinner. We heard Mass before mounting and soon found ourselves going across country in the absence of any marked paths. That is how it is, for that matter, almost everywhere in Sicily. Leaving aside the arduous nature of a prolonged trek in ploughed or sown land, one cannot but admire the beauty of these hills. The perfume exhaled by the narcissi, thyme, rosemary, wormwood and all the aromatic plants trodden underfoot, the sight of the rose-laurels and so many other shrubs that in other places are kept carefully in conservatories, charm the senses of sight and smell. We were bewitched, my companion and I, when he, calling truce to our admiration, consumed by hunger, observed that man cannot live off perfumes and aromas, and that it was time to look for something to get our teeth into. How could we manage it in this desert? For we were not encountering anybody at all, and our guide no more than ourselves had thought of bringing along any provisions. “Friend, I said laughingly to him, what you say is too prosaic. What need of eating when, following in the footsteps of so many heroes who have gone before us, we journey, like Aeneas, Alcestis and good father Anchises, in search of the revered Temple of the people of Segesta? Who knows? Perhaps we will encounter at the approaches to the Temple some new Alcestis to quench our thirst, as once he did for Anchises and his companions, giving them some of that palatable wine that is mentioned in the story.” My friend burst out laughing and like a stout fellow resigned himself and possessed himself in patience like myself.

However, the sun, which was darting its burning rays right on our shoulders, was really troubling us; overcome by the heat, we ended up nodding off on our mounts who, like so many Rosinantes, would only go at walking speed, when all of a sudden our guide, letting out a great cry, woke us up with a start to show us the Temple, which appeared majestically before us. “There it is, there it is, we cried out to one another, the Temple revered for three thousand years, object of admiration for so many generations who have come since. How beautiful it is, rising majestic over the many surrounding ruins! What beautiful proportions! What an elegant construction!” In a bound we had gone to see it closer up. I am sorry now I could not measure its length: we did not have the instruments for that. It can easily be ascertained by consulting books by archaeologists that give dimensions. All I can say is that we counted thirty six columns of great height and placed quite a long way from one another, perfectly preserved, none having fallen out of plumb. The vault, if there ever was one, has collapsed; not a trace remains, which could suggest the Temple was not finished, especially as one cannot find the place of the altar and it has never been ascertained which god it was dedicated to. The steps are too high not to imply that every second one is missing. The pediment is supported by four columns that are matched on the rear of the Temple. Time, which has respected these beautiful columns, has even so decreed to leave on them the sign of its iron grip; they are all pitted some two inches deep as if they had been eaten up by innumerable insects; this gives rise to a roughed up layer that allows the profane, like myself admittedly, to break off some pieces to keep as a souvenir of this punishing pilgrimage.

A Temple of such a large size leads one to think there was once not far away a sizable population. We lost no time in discovering the site of the town, quite large indeed, which bore the name *Segesta*. It seems it took in within its perimeter two hills a short distance from that on which the Temple rises. What would not one find under these ruins, if one got down to excavating them! At every step one sees the trunks of columns, capitals and fragments of marble. It is on the site of the ancient amphitheatre especially that one encounters traces of the antique splendour of this town now vanished from the earth. It is beyond my powers to describe the impression made on us by the comparison of the sight of these ruins which attested to the existence of a large town and its many inhabitants, with the silence and solitude of these now deserted places, where we saw no living creatures save a few cows browsing in the neighbourhood and a herdsman sent, it seemed, by Providence to save us from dying of hunger; the pangs of thirst were making themselves felt even more perhaps. In actual fact, we had reached the end of our tether; my good companion, a man at that time blessed with a huge appetite, was flat out, in every sense of the words. We hollered out to this good herdsman and at our urging he hastened to milk a cow into an enormous receptacle that we filled with bread, and this gave us the most delicious meal we had ever had, coming as it did just in time to answer our extreme need.

Despite our enthusiasm for the beauty of these places, we had now to set our thoughts on the return journey, if we wanted to get back to Alcamo in time to dine with our host. We had ourselves convinced that this honest priest would have taken the necessary steps to give us a meal to make up for the poor supper of the evening before. Unfortunately, we reckoned, it must be said, without our host! Our dinner consisted of a plate of macaroni and a piece of boiled meat that we found impossible to chew, it was so tough and of so bad a quality. I looked over at my friend César with eyes of pity, understanding the torment he must be suffering, when there arrives on the table an enormous chicken. César jumps up immediately to carve it, in the hope of finding on it the wherewithal to satiate his hunger. But, cruel deception! For all his skill and, it must be said, his good will, he could not succeed in detaching a single member of that strange bird. He succeeded at last with great difficulty; but up against something that had so long resisted the edge of a well-sharpened knife, could we flatter ourselves it would yield to the pressure of our precious twenty-year-old teeth? Alas, no! and it was in vain that we put our jaws to the test. They would I believe have made dents in an iron bar, but it was beyond them to chew this old cock, which had no doubt greeted us with its song when we entered the house. “Poor César, I said to myself, what will become of you? We will both die of hunger: and so our story will end.” But no…see they are bringing us a cake and honey to flavour it: *Butyrum et mel comedet,* says our host*,* to excuse having no sugar to offer us. We were not so finicky, and this proved to be the best course of all, the one that saved our lives.

Shall I say something about the town of Alcamo, of which our host, Father Pastori, was governor? It is quite well situated, but badly built. Its population is upwards of 13,000 souls. There are a number of churches to be seen there, and convents of monks and religious. One admires, in the church of the Recollecti, a superb painting by Raphael: it is a seated Virgin, holding the Child Jesus on her knees; St. Joseph is on her left, and, with an anachronism quite common among painters, St. Francis has been placed on the right of the Blessed Virgin. In the foreground of the painting are depicted some men and women. What a pity such a beautiful painting is placed in so remote a church!

Our host wanted to bring us to visit the Capuchins, to whom clearly he extended his patronage, for he seemed very much at home among them. As we did not find the same attraction in being crowded together with eight or ten of these good Fathers in a confined cell, we made the visit brief and after a short walk we returned to our lodging, to prepare for our departure, which took place the next day very early. We went back over the route we had followed in coming by way of Portinico and Monreale, and from there we made the descent to Palermo, to get some rest in my friend’s house after the fatigues of the journey, and restore ourselves with a good dinner after the fasting and privations of the preceding days.

19/ Eugene’s welcome in the family of the Duke of Cannizzaro.

I have spoken of the French colony that took shape in Palermo on the arrival of the King of Naples and the Court. Apart from the two families de Chastellux and de Talleyrand, with whom I had very frequent contacts, I did not see much of the others. Providence, which has always watched over me since my tenderest years as an infant, gave me entry into a Sicilian family, in which I was accepted from the first as a child of the house. This was the family of the Duke of Cannizzaro.[[80]](#footnote-80) His wife, the Princess of Larderia, was a saint. Both the one and the other formed a strong affection for me, and it seems they considered themselves fortunate to give to their two sons, who were about my own age, although a little younger, a companion who could both become their friend and give them an example of good behaviour, a very rare commodity, practically a phenomenon, in a country like theirs. From this time until my return to France, I was one of the family: my place was always set at their table; I followed them to the country in the summer, and everything in the house was at my service as it was for their own children, who considered themselves my brothers. And this I did become, actually, in terms of affection, and their mother, who used to say that she had acquired a third son, drew me so close to her through her kindnesses, that her own children certainly did not love her more than I. I proved this when she died[[81]](#footnote-81) and everyone could see that my grief was incomparably more tender and profound than that of her children. The Princess, whom with every right I used to call my mother, was taken from us without warning: it was a cruel blow and a deep wound; it affected me for a long time; I even became ill over it. I was told that at the sight of her dead body I fell prostrate at the foot of her bed uttering repeatedly this lamentation: “I have lost my mother! I have lost my mother!” The ties of the closest friendship between father and children were drawn even tighter as a result of this appalling event. We became as it were inseparable until the day came I had to leave Sicily and return to France.

20/ Friendship with the Vintimilles.

Among the people I got to know, I would have to place among the foremost the Vintimille family, though our families were already very closely connected with the French branch, which formed a connection with that of Sicily by the marriage of the daughter of the Count de Vintimille, Knight of Honour of the Countess d’Anjou, with the Prince of Vintimille.[[82]](#footnote-82) The Prince’s home was like my own, and I will not have any self-reproaches for forgetting the kindness of either the Prince or the Princess, or the Countess of Vintimille, the Princess’s mother, or the Countess de Vérac, her other daughter, who had come to rejoin the family in the beautiful mansion that the Prince had had built in the outskirts of Palermo, on the slopes of the Arenella. Father Monti has sung the praises of this hillside in very beautiful Italian verses, wonderfully translated my father.

21/ Familiarity with the Duke de Berry. Eugene dislocates a shoulder while swimming..

I owed to this intimate liaison with the Vintimilles the honour and pleasure of spending practically every evening of my stay in Palermo in a measure of familiarity, respectful on my part, with the hapless Duke de Berry.[[83]](#footnote-83) The Prince, to relax after the day’s formality, used to come every evening to take tea at the Princess de Vintimille’s, accompanied by the Chevalier de Sourdis, his aide-de-camp. I was alone in being admitted into that élite group along with the Prince de Vintimille and the Countess his mother-in-law: Madame de Vérac had not yet arrived in Palermo. We used to go occasionally as a group for a walk in the outskirts of the town. On Saturdays, the Duke would laughingly give me an appointment for his revue the next day. It was the official reception he accorded on Sundays to all the French colony. He had come to Palermo to seek the hand of one of the princesses, the daughters of the King of Naples. The Prince told a good story of his meeting with the one whom they destined for him. The Queen, enchanted by this alliance, had them kneel before her holding hands, and she blessed them in that position, wishing them every happiness. The King for his part leafed through the drawings in the Prince’s album. One would have said that it was going to be all harmony between these two branches of the Bourbon family. But an old diplomat, who had clearly not been consulted in all these negotiations for the wedding, General Acton,[[84]](#footnote-84) was easily able to persuade the King that it would be foolish to adopt a hapless prince in this way, whose family would never re-ascend the throne of France, who would therefore be a heavy charge on the State, which would of necessity have to provide him with an *apanage*; that the best thing therefore was to go no further, to break off, quietly certainly, and to that end the Prince was let know that it was advisable for him to take a trip to Rome. That is what he did and no more was said. The Sicilian princess later married the King of Sardinia, and the Duke de Berry, after the Restoration, married, for his part, the grand daughter of that same king who, following the advice of his minister, had not wanted to have him for a son-in-law, namely, the daughter of King Francis, successor to Ferdinand, his father.

I do not say this to boast, but to edify any of mine who read this account: when in 1817 I went to Paris to bring to the attention of the *Grand Aumonerie*[[85]](#footnote-85)my uncle’s rights, I purposely abstained from presenting myself at the Tuileries,[[86]](#footnote-86) to this Duke de Berry, then a power in the land, out of a very justifiable fear that the memory of the kindnesses it would not be too much to describe as acts of friendship with which he had showered me in Palermo would lead him to exact my attaching myself to the Court. I deprived myself even of the pleasure of seeing him. The reason is I wanted to be and remain as the priest of the poor and of children, and not the chaplain of a great prince and a court bishop.

I fear that anything I might say further, following the notes that still remain to me about my stay in Sicily, lose their interest after the account I have just given of my relations with the heir apparent to the throne of France, this hapless Duke de Berry, who fell to the parricidal blade of the conspirators who were hoping by assassinating him, plunging the dagger into his heart, to cut short with him all his line.

Why indeed tell how one fine morning, July 7, on my way to Arenella to spend the day at the mansion of the Prince de Vintimille, I fell in with this Prince as he made his way towards the sea where his boat was awaiting him. He pressed me to go swimming with him. Once out at sea, he dived into the water before me. I dived in after him, but whether my foot slipped or for some other want of agility, I fell horizontally rather than cleaving into the water as one ought. The fact is that I put out my shoulder without even suspecting it. I did certainly feel a very bad pain that stopped me using my arm to swim, but I put it down to a very bad cramp. I was undeceived only when I arrived at the grotto we were heading for, and when I was getting out of the water, it was the Prince who exclaimed: “You have put out your shoulder.” A rueful smile came to my lips, I remember, at what had happened, when I saw the dislocated limb. The exertion I had had to expend had clearly aggravated the dislocation: my arm was completely twisted around. Great care was needed to get me dressed. It had to suffice just to cover the injured part, and the Prince’s boat brought me as far as the town gateway, called the Marina, where I got into a carriage, not to go home as my father and uncles would have been quite terrified to see me in that state, but to my adopted home, the Cannizzaro’s where everything possible was done for me on the spot. I only sent and adverted my relatives after the painful and long operation I was obliged to undergo so that the professionals might put the dislocated limb back in place. The leading surgeon in the town had been summoned. After working for close on half an hour, which made him perspire profusely, and the pressure of which I felt so much that I would have cried out in agony had I been made of softer stuff, the able surgeon had got the displaced bone as far as the cavity which he had to get it back into, but he confessed he was not strong enough to do that by himself. They immediately sent out for a young apprentice from the neighbouring hospital. They chose a good one, he was a colossus; with a single blow of his powerful hand, he got the bone back into its cavity and I no longer felt any pain. They nursed me, and I carried my arm in a sling for quite a long time, which did not stop me feeling it again over a period of more than thirty years, whenever my arm got a little tired.

I must not omit, as I bring the account of my mishap to a close, something I find in my notes, expressed with a profound feeling of gratitude and a very keen sensitivity. It is how the sight of the pitiful state in which I was brought to her home affected the person I used to call with every justification my second mother. Her splendid heart was dismayed. She it was who immediately sent out to find that famous surgeon and saw I had all the care and attention my plight demanded. The whole family shared her anxiety and, throughout the convalescence that followed my accident, the apartment I occupied was never empty of the choice society to which my relation with the Cannizzaros had introduced me. I will mention only the Prince and Princess of Granmonte, brother-in-law and sister of the Duchess of Cannizzaro, the Prince and Princess of Butera, their cousins, the Duchess S. Michele, her brother, the Prince of Cimina and the Princess of that name, who became in her widowhood the spouse of King Ferdinand, the Prince of Paterno, a gentleman as rich as the Prince of Butera but more balanced than he. He gathered an elite group in his home every Saturday evening, to sit them down to sup at midnight on rich fare. The Princess Malvagna, a friend worthy of the Duchess of Cannizzaro because of the conformity of their virtues and their exemplary behaviour, which was in strong contrast with the scarcely acceptable morals of the rest of the women of that country.

22/ High Society in Palermo - its morals. Feast of St. Rosalia.

There would be altogether too much to say about the depraved morals of Palermo’s high society: I shall not broach the subject. I want only to affirm the infinite goodness of God, who by his powerful grace preserved me constantly amid very real dangers by inspiring me not with a spirit of mere aloofness but with a kind of horror for every kind of dissipation that might result in the sort of aberrations I deplored with disgust in others: thanks be to God, I pushed delicacy in this sphere to the point of excess.

What would be the good of my dwelling on this country’s morals? I prefer to talk of the feasts that came one after the other and in which everybody took part. I begin with those that take place annually in honour of St. Rosalia, Palermo’s patroness. The solemnity is celebrated on July 15, the day of the finding of the saint’s body in the outskirts of the town. This solemnity is preceded by entertainments that begin on the 11th of this privileged month. In honour of the saint there is prepared a kind of mobile triumphal arch. It is an enormous float as high as the tallest houses, and on it is the statue of the saint. Into a first level of this enormous machine, far below the statue, which soars above everything, are inserted musicians who do their utmost to keep playing their noisy instruments throughout the float’s entire course. I saw them passing by from the lofty first floor balcony of the palace of the Prince Granmonte, and I noted the fact that they were moving along at the height of this storey. The float is drawn by twelve pairs of oxen, highly ornamented and dressed up somehow. Two hours before nightfall, the float starts to move, leaving from the Porta Felice, which is at the end of the long Via Cassero beside the sea; it proceeds along the whole length of this street, magnificently decked out with beautiful tapestries suspended from the windows of the houses and palaces which adorn this avenue, and arrives at nightfall at the Porta Nuova, situated at the other end of the Cassero. The crowd throngs the street and parts only to let the float pass. As night falls, the town lights up, and so that the promenaders who want to enjoy this beautiful display, which means the whole and entire population, may not be disturbed, vehicles are forbidden to drive on the street once the float has passed by. At two o’clock, night-time, that is two hours after sunset, they let off a huge fireworks display on the Marina, opposite the palace of the Prince of Butera. The King was invited to watch it from there, and he made his way there with the whole court. I too was there. It goes without saying that in these sort of gatherings, *i rinfreschi*, ices and biscuits are on offer in profusion. After the fireworks, the King sat down to play *faro,*[[87]](#footnote-87) and the dances were got going in the beautiful salons of this palace. I was far removed from sharing in these entertainments. On the contrary - and it is a strange thing - as I find myself caught up in this dissipation, with the noise of the instruments and that wholly mundane gaiety, now my heart feels a tug, a sadness comes over me, and I pick out a place apart where, separated from this whole world which seems madness to me, I give myself over to serious, even melancholy thoughts, to the point of being close to tears. A number of times people I knew came on me by surprise when I was in this mood, and they wanted to shake me out of it, as they did not understand it. The fact is I was not in my element. I found myself now willy-nilly in the world. It had no attraction at all for me. I condemned this dissipation of which I was the spectator; it went against all the feelings of my soul, which aspired to a quite different joy. The greater the others’ dissipation was, the more extreme was my reaction and the more it engaged the whole of my feelings. That is how I explain this strange phenomenon for myself.

The night of the 11th passed after this fashion. The next day there was horse racing in this same Via Cassero that was so very straight and thus very suitable for this kind of race. The Prince of Vintimille had his palace on this street. His was the privilege of having the King for this day and the next. His Majesty was very fond of watching horse races; they are peculiar in Palermo in so far as the horses run without riders: they are made to go by means of prickly knobs attached on their backs which stick into them all the time they are running. As they go by, the animals are worked up by the actions and voices of the immense number of people who have come to Via Cassero to see them. When the races are over, the King sits down to play as on the previous evening, while waiting for the float, all lit up, to take again the route it followed the preceding day, and return to the place from which it started. As on the evening before, the musicians went on playing their symphonies non-stop, to the great delight of the all the people who continued to pass through Via Cassero, filling it up. At the palace of the Prince of Vintimille like that of the Prince Butera there were abundant *rinfreschi.* The King, as was his custom, left at midnight; now the crowd in the Via Cassero gave way to a procession of carriages that lasted more than an hour. It was time to retire and get some rest in expectation of the next day’s fresh delights.

It is the 13th. Again there was horse racing on the Via Cassero. The King returned to the Prince of Vintimille’s place; I was there too. One stayed at this prince’s place until it was time for the second fireworks display, again held at the Marina and which the King went to see at the place of the Prince of Butera, who, on this occasion, offered a second feast like the first, with games, refreshments and dancing till daylight. Again there is a brilliant display of lights both on the via Cassero and at the Marina, etc. It is, in short, a repetition of what took place the previous evening. On the 14th, more horse racing on the Via Cassero: the public is insatiable. Again the King is invited to the Prince of Vintimille’s place. He stays there this time only until 10 o’clock, and goes from there to the cathedral; we follow behind and assist at First Vespers of St. Rosalia. Nothing is so beautiful as the illumination of this church. It is lit up that evening by more than seven thousand candles that transform the temple into a vault of light. It is really beautiful! The King is so enchanted by it that he takes the President Paternó by the hand and highly compliments him - he had overseen the reconstruction of this church and was no doubt the director of the feast. These Vespers are set to music and therefore very long. The hubbub of the crowd scarcely allows of recollection; we therefore deemed we could withdraw and go for supper and come back later by carriage to join the promenade that takes place this evening like the others after midnight, in the bright glow of the illumination.

The 15th, the day of the feast, one had to get there early to get a decent place in the cathedral, where the *capella reale*[[88]](#footnote-88) would take place. This is the name given to the solemn assistance of the King at the High Mass of certain principal feast days, such as the feast of St. Rosalia. The King comes, on such a day, surrounded by the entire Court. When he is crowned, he wears the crown on his head, and is invested with the royal mantle. He ascends a throne raised higher than normal, and he makes the act of confession at the beginning of the Mass together with the officiating Bishop. He is incensed upon his throne, and he remains covered for this incensation; he remains covered too during the Gospel, apparently to demonstrate his readiness to defend it against all comers. I found the sight edifying and it brought to a pious close a series of rejoicings and feasts instituted more or less directly in honour of the people of Palermo’s patron saint.

One would be inclined to believe that after so many horse races, the King would have had enough? It took a good deal more in fact to satisfy his appetite for this form of amusement. He began by setting the example and organizing one at his own expense in the Via Nuova. It went as he had hoped, and he did not conceal the fact. Immediately his courtiers vied with one another to procure him this diversion. The Prince of Latrabia, his chief equerry, had four arranged on four successive Sundays in the Via Monreale. The King and the entire Court were invited to dinner; the rest made do with refreshments. The turn of the Prince of the Cattolica came on the feast of Holy Cross, the principal feast of Misilmeri, a fief belonging to his family. The King had to be invited to the horse races and to dinner. The Prince invited us to the feast and to the refreshments that always went with it. The King, with an insatiable appetite for this form of amusement, expressed a wish to assist at a race that took place a half-league outside Palermo, on the seashore, in a place called Romagnuolo or Mustarolo. The Princess of Larderia has a pretty little holiday house in this place. She had no choice but to invite His Majesty to come and watch the race go by from her place and to do her the honour of accepting to dine. The King did not need to be asked twice. He came with pleasure, and the Princess added to this delight some little games in the sea that gave him much pleasure. The Princess was 400 ounces out of pocket by way of expenses, close on 5000 francs. It was rather an expensive honour. The saintly lady would have preferred to spend this sum on good works.

I have said enough of horse races; so I will do no more than mention the races at Bagheria, Colli, Terre Rosse, that is enough…

23/ Feast of the Triumph of the Redemption in Monreale.

Let us say a word about Monreale. It is a little town some three miles outside Palermo, seat of the archdiocese with a cathedral that holds the entrails of our King St. Louis, who was embalmed here after the manner of the ancients. One finds there too the tombs of William the Good and William the Bad, and a gigantic mosaic portrait of Our Lord.

On September 8, they celebrate the Blessed Virgin’s feast with great solemnity. The town never fails to invite the King to the fireworks display and to the evening’s entertainment that it gives on this occasion: the King always accepts, and we were among those invited. The King leaves early, and we do not delay in following him, leaving the field free for the lovers of the dance, to devote themselves to this pleasure the whole night long if such be their wish. There is no shortage of refreshments at this feast.

I will conclude the lengthy account based on my notes, as I chose to write them down in all haste, with a picturesque description of the famous centenary procession of Monreale. This unique feast took place perhaps in this year 1800[[89]](#footnote-89) not just to be faithful to tradition but also because of a rather adroit calculation on the part of the neighbourhood’s administrators. During the time of shortages, they had laid by a very large store of grain in the hope of turning it to a profit. As the price of this commodity dropped each day, the town saw itself at risk of losing a considerable sum. To forestall this misfortune, the local inhabitants lit upon an expedient to dispose of their goods: they proposed to declare the great centenary feast, which lasts eight days and attracts a huge number of customers to Monreale. I cannot guarantee the truth of this story: it is what went around Palermo at the time. This much is certain: the feast took place and the whole of Palermo and its surrounds made the journey to Monreale to see it. I say “see”, because the central event of the feast consists in a procession whose description I am going to give. The King was invited and was present with the three princesses his daughters[[90]](#footnote-90), who were then young like myself and two of whom have since died, the youngest, Marie-Antoinette, Queen of Spain; the other, Maria Christina, who had been destined for the Duke de Berry, Queen of Sardinia, and the sole survivor, Maria Amelia, wife of Louis Philippe, King of the French. The last-named was exactly my own age born in the same year as myself. We were very near to one another when we saw this famous procession go by.

The feast is called the Triumph of the Redemption. It is for the Cross that it is held. The procession leaves from the church, each one assumes as he leaves the pose that he will maintain the whole time the procession is going on. First comes divine Justice preceded by several instruments of military music. She is followed by two Angels who precede Adam and Eve: Eve holding a fig leaf from India in her hand, Adam covering his face. Divine Mercy comes next. She is followed by two Genii. Then one sees the Redemption carrying a cardboard Cross; she is leading Death and Sin in chains, who make some gruesome contortions. Next comes an Angel, the Plague, Famine, War and Earthquake; Cain and Abel: Abel carrying a lamb, Cain a bloody club; Abraham and Isaac, Melchisedek, Moses with the tables of the law; Aaron, high priest. A serpent attached to a piece of wood; a number of Israelites who gaze at it, trembling all over; the great leader Joshua, Samson, King Solomon and his court. Judith with a drawn sword; the soldiers of Bethulia with the head of Holofernes. These follow the four major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah weeping, Ezekiel and Daniel; then Virginity, Humility, the Archangel Gabriel, the Blessed Virgin and the Child Jesus, the Angel who announces the birth of the Infant to the shepherds, the Blessed Virgin and the Child Jesus in a hand-sized crib, accompanied by St. Joseph; Joy and Peace, Iris, the appearance of the Star, the three Magi, two emblems, the Light of the Gospel torch in hand, idolatry with a broken censer and some little marionettes, the Flight into Egypt, the Blessed Virgin on a mare with St. Joseph and a number of children; the massacre of the Innocents, some women and tyrants, with cardboard children in their hands; Herod with his sceptre; Jesus Christ accompanied by the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph; Our Lord disputing with the Doctors; his baptism; St. John the Baptist clothed in skins; the Saviour at the moment of receiving baptism; an Angel; the miracles of Jesus Christ; a crowd of the blind, deaf, lame and lepers; the Saviour with the Samaritan Woman, the Resurrection of Lazarus, Martha, Mary Magdalene, Jesus Christ with the risen Lazarus; the Council of the Synagogue, two guards, the High Priest, the Elders, the Temple magistrates, the members of the Sanhedrin; the entry into Jerusalem, the Saviour seated on an ass, surrounded or better followed by his disciples, and preceded by a number of children. The Passion; soldiers and constables with Judas at their head; Ananias, Caiaphas, Herod; appearance before Pilate with scourges, a crown, a wash-basin and a water jar to wash the hands; soldiers with the instruments of crucifixion; a centurion on horseback, a soldier with a lance, a number of soldier converts; Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus with jars of perfumes, the Blessed Virgin, St. John, Mary Cleopas and Mary Magdalene, the four Evangelists pretending to write on a missal; the Human Race carrying a cross; the four quarters of the World; Sicily dressed as a queen, with a standard, mounted with the portrait of the King; the Val de Marrara, Palermo with the eagle, the serpent and the dog; the Val de Noto crowned with swords and carrying one in the hand; the Val de Demone crowned with flowers and oaks, Etna; Courage with the helmet, breastplate, lance and buckler; Strength as an Amazon; Constancy, Magnanimity holding a golden vase in the hand, Justice with scales and sword, Clemency with an olive branch, Security with the anchor, the whole followed by the Genius of Monreale, in hero’s garb, crowned with a golden star and holding a cornucopia; it holds in the hand a paper on which is written in large letters: Long live the King! The procession closes with a triumphal chariot on which is seated Religion on a globe and treading under foot a number of impious or heretical books. Incredulity, Heresy, Superstition and Libertinage with their followers are lead along behind the chariot; Incredulity with hands tied behind the back and a crossed sword in the mouth; the *brutissima*, the exceedingly ugly old Heresy crowned with serpents, a bit in the mouth and a pen; Superstition clad in Fury, Libertinage and several symbols; a troop of their followers: unbelievers, heretics, the superstitious, libertines. The march closes with music and a squadron of cavalry.

Here my notes come to an end, I find nothing in them of the origins of this unusual procession in which one sees passing before one so many extraordinary things. I have to say that the execution of this drama is very poor.

24/ Eugene’s tepidity in Palermo. Departure for France.

Eugene stayed in Palermo until October 1802. We know little by way of detail about how he spent his time in that town. We only know that, as we have just seen, he found there, as in Venice, a family that welcomed him into its bosom and treated him as their own child: the Duke and Duchess of Cannizzaro, who adopted him and treated him as a son. The Duchess especially, a lady of great piety, certainly the most pious person in high society, who communicated twice a week and led an exemplary life, - the Duchess was very happy to have found in Eugene a friend for her children, one who could lead them on the right path and steer them away from any other influence.

It seems that after the Princess’s death, Eugene’s piety diminished. No longer having before him the good example of this venerable woman who would often engage him in conversation on pious subjects, and who sustained him in the practice of virtue with her counsels, he neglected, not perhaps his religious duties, but those assiduous practices that are like bulwarks for the soul and the guardian of virtue. Even so he did have Bishop Bonnaro as his confessor, an Oratorian known for his virtue and his distinguished birth, and he frequented the house of the Olivella, where he got to know many other Oratorians[[91]](#footnote-91) who loved him and even cited him to other young people as a model; but he himself knew quite well that he was considerably lacking in the fervour he had felt previously. This tepidity is to be attributed to the more frequent contacts he had with high society where, despite oneself, a thousand ways to dissipate yourself bear down on you and turn you away from piety. Even so he always avoided the vices that others boasted of; not that there were not many occasions and dangers when anyone else perhaps would have succumbed, but the strength of his religious principles and the aversion he always had for certain vices, coupled with his habit of distancing himself from any relationship with persons of the opposite sex, preserved him from any aberration of that kind, an astonishing thing for someone of his age and personal attractiveness, given the seductive environment and the general morals of the country he was living in. He owed it to the Lord’s grace that he was able to bear the witness that we heard from him personally when he was older, when he was a priest, and in the intimacy of friendship, that he never had to accuse himself of the least fault with persons of the opposite sex, amid all the traps that were set for him with a greater or lesser degree of malice, but always with considerable artfulness. He was in the position a number of times of having to repulse even by force the advances that were made to him, and of having to resort on two occasions to flight to save himself.

He always retained in this respect such a strong sense of modesty that it gave rise to jokes at his expense on the part of people who did nevertheless think a lot of him. Finding himself one evening at the home of the old Countess of Vintimille, as he was about to leave, the Countess asked him to be so kind as to escort Miss de Puget, a young lady whose father and mother lived in the same house as Eugene’s relatives. This proposal, which gave proof of the trust Eugene inspired, visibly embarrassed him; there was some laughter over his embarrassment and they insisted. Eugene, unable to refuse, gave his arm to the young lady, but, moved by a feeling definitely rather rare at this age, he felt such confusion over walking alone in the streets of Palermo by night, escorting a young lady, that as each carriage passed with its lights and torches he made her get in under some gateway or entrance so as not to be seen, so much did he blush at even the mere appearance of gallantry. Miss de Puget could not help telling about it; Eugene’s father was critical of this excessive modesty, yet everybody supported the principles that underlay it.

Eugene’s relatives in France were continually urging his father to reach a decision to let him return to his native land. The country was in a state of tranquillity since Bonaparte had seized power. His mother, and specially his grandmother, feared the coming of death before they could embrace this child they loved so tenderly. Their dread was that in case of death their inheritance to him would be disputed. In short, they produced so many good reasons that his father made up his mind to let him leave.

It was on October 11, 1802, that Eugene embarked on the vessel that was to bring him to France. There is no need to recount the distress involved in that separation; Eugene’s father, uncles; his two faithful friends, the sons of the Duke of Cannizzaro; their tutor, Mr. de Galembert, and the maid Nanon whom he would never see again, all mingled their tears with his which flowed bitterly. The vessel set sail to go and complete its cargo in Cefalù. It continued on its way, but on Saturday the 16th in the afternoon, as the vessel’s position was between Sicily and Sardinia, a frightful storm got up which put it in peril for four whole hours. The seas were so strong they came into the vessel; all thought of steering was impossible, the wheel being completely submerged. Finally they managed to free it. Rain fell in torrents, thunder passed overhead and rumbled clap on clap, so as to make the vessel shudder; in the middle of this torment that left the sailors exhausted, pumping had to go on all the time as the bilges took in huge amounts of water. Captain Reynier was very afraid, as he was helpless to do anything. He wrote in his notes that the wind boxed the compass over the two-hour period the rain and thunder continued. Finally, the wind settled in a fixed direction and the peril passed. They sighted the isle of Elba only on the 20th; the shores of Bastia were sighted the same day. Finally, after fourteen days at sea, they entered the port of Marseilles. And so ended Eugene’s exile.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Profession of faith.[[93]](#footnote-93)

1:XIV in Oblate Writings

Profession of Faith

[Venice,

1794-1797]

I firmly believe everything the Church commands me to believe, and I detest the Jansenistic and other errors contained in this book. I am writing this so that it may be known that, although this book is in my possession, in no way do I adhere to any maxims contrary to the constant teaching of the holy, catholic, apostolic, Roman Church, which is one and indivisible, and will so be until the end of the world.

1802

Extracts from notes “On the book entitled *Reason, Folly, to Everyman his Opinion*,” 1802.[[94]](#footnote-94)

2:XIV in Oblate Writings

Critical reflections, of a religious and moral nature, on a work in which Eugene finds abundant evidence of “the very close links between antireligious bias and corruption of the heart” in philosophism.

Extracts from notes

Aix

1802

“Sacred chickens”

The second story is scarcely more interesting than the first. There is nothing amusing in it except the incident when the judges find themselves smothered in sacred feathers; and one has to laugh when one of the senators, wanting to intervene and bring the rumpus to an end, manages to get choked by one of the feathers that gets down his throat and so completes the defeat of his august body.

I am unable to see how he draws the conclusion from this story that there is more to be got out of changing one’s gods than one’s priests. It is not the only time he shows the latter his claws. But that is the vogue today. It provides an explanation for everything.

The third between Death A and B is a bitter piece of nonsense. It is true that in it he has found the way to show up a Jesuit to the least advantage. It was today’s vogue at work again: it brooks no contradiction. It was a case of making fun of the dead, so as to satisfy one’s rage against the living.

“What a day”

The fourth has its charm. The dialogues between Fabrice and the six ladies he meets in Paris are excellent, although they are not all equally apposite. The one on ambition is, in my opinion, pure padding. It is not the same way with this as it is with sensual pleasure that worms its way into a man’s heart without him realizing it. Unlike sensual pleasure, ambition cannot be the punishment a person incurs who surrenders himself to the perils of a corrupt city. A person surrenders to sensual pleasure little by little almost without realizing it; one only becomes ambitious through reflection and with a definite intention to become so. Thus, while it is very natural to make the young man who surrenders himself without thinking into the hands of sensual pleasure pay a ransom, it is unjust to make him give up several years of his life to ambition when he did not want to hearken to her counsels.

Nor is it very natural either to bring in gout, which is usually thought of as the result of a soft or evil life, as a means of getting at the poor young fellow who had led a blameless life until the fatal day of his 20th birthday, which on account of his foolishness and prodigality, was to be the last of his life.

I will also censure the author for some reflections of an irreligious nature that flow like a fountain from a pen inspired throughout by his crazy philosophism to scatter broadcast blasphemies against religion, insults, offensive remarks, calumnies against catholic ministers and forms of worship.

These considerable defects apart, that are quite beyond redemption, it is a charming story.

“Milord”

‘“Milord Tow Pounder” is pleasant enough. The episode of the carriage with its pious lady passenger on whose skirt M. de Rutamcour leaves the imprint of the distinctive marks of his sex, is in execrable taste and fit only for a guardroom jest.

I observe, a propos of this, that it is rarely one sees so clearly the very close links there are between antireligious bias and corruption of the heart, and that the favourite weapon in philosophism to undermine and even destroy the faith is the propagation of licence and loose-living…

Chapter Eight is a real trap. How can a man sink so low and take advantage of a poor reader’s youth! What do I mean? After I have been busy all the morning in the laborious and often wearisome study of some diabolical subject, I take up my light reading for a moments relaxation. And lo and behold I find I have tumbled into an endless, moral-economic dissertation, dry, abstract, sovereignly boring. Was there any warning that this was coming after “the Courtesan”, “the Sacred Chickens,” “What a Day”, etc.? Can we then never be safe from shocks in this world below? Even so, if with an effort one could eventually come to understand what the author is trying to say, one could exercise patience. But how can one help thinking one is reading a fairytale when the author seriously asserts that a man, to whom he politely ascribes the title of “machine-worker”, is deprived *ipso facto* of the faculty of intelligence, for the simple reason that over a long period of year’s he has been engaged in the same mechanical work, as if the work of his hands denied his mind of any kind of activity beyond the thing he applied himself to manually. He spins, he spools, therefore he does not think. What logic! I have only to consult the evidence of my own experience to refute this absurd piece of reasoning. In various countries I have visited a truly prodigious number of factories of every kind. What has been my experience? A worker so accustomed to the work that he has been doing over a period of several year’s that he leaves it almost entirely to his hands to get his work done, while his mind, totally occupied elsewhere, applies itself to banter, backbiting, and all kinds of other things with his workmates, just as much and even more so than a labourer does, since the latter, constantly isolated as he is, can pass whole days busy at ploughing a furrow in a straight line and saying never a word to a living soul.

How does the author go about persuading us that the worker more than the labourer is under the servile dependence of a master? Is it because he sees himself as receiving his pay as a favour? Show me the worker who does not see, in the payment he receives, the just recompense for his time and work. And what master would claim etc. Would he be afraid of being dismissed and that, while the peasant cultivating the land is assured that he will never lack for anything, he, quite ignorant as he is of anything beyond the insignificant part that is all that has been entrusted to him up until this day, will see himself forced, if he leaves his first master, to die of hunger in abject poverty? This reasoning would have some semblance of solidity if there existed but one factory; but the worker who leaves one workshop will soon find the means of placing himself in another and will be employed at that only part that he knows etc.

It follows from what I have just said that everything that the author has to say on this matter is lacking in common sense.

The rest of the chapter I think is sound enough; but once more, all this fine and flowery language about the economy, repeated *ad nauseam,* gets us nowhere. Pass on your fine ideas to those in government; only they can carry them out, if they are reasonable; and leave people in peace who have no use for your reforms, which are usually nothing but wordy rhapsodies.

I was just congratulating myself on having finally got through the boring chapter on the economy, and I wanted to lay the book aside and seek relaxation elsewhere, when on turning over the page I saw in the title of the 8th story, chapter 9: “Truth, an Indian story”. This linking of truth and story struck me as odd and I decided to gratify my fancy and read it. I found plenty of insight there, although the author had not drawn from the topic as much as he could have done. The story would not have suffered had he spared himself the invective against the veritable truth itself towards the end of his tale. That is when the reader really comes to understand the truth as known to the author is indeed a story.

There are, in “My Trimmings”, some pretty things mingled with some boring dissertations. The arithmetic teachers way of calling his wife his half-portion, when she had only one lover, his third, when she had two, his quarter when she had three, etc., etc., because of the portion left to himself, is quite amusing. France playing at dressing up during the Revolution; one group have grabbed places for themselves and do not want to go on playing; others who did not have the same push, condemned to remain on their feet where, if they get tired of this role, they are quite at liberty to sit down on their claws, it is a charming pleasantry, that gives us a real idea of what went on in those unhappy times.

I will not set about refuting, in a short note like this, what the author proposes on the topic of man, the finest of the Creator’s works. Suffice it to say that his extreme corruption and the contradictions that he finds within himself, will always present an insoluble problem to anyone who does not have resort to original sin, which, in bringing about our fall from a state of perfection, threw us into such an abyss of evils that, while always desiring the good that was our portion, we are at the same time drawn to evil, which has become our punishment and from which we will be able to emerge only when we open the depths of our hearts to the Great Mediator who ransomed us and never ceases to offer us a helping hand.

1. Orig. disappeared. Copy in *Missions OMI* 1866, pp. 109-144, 265-304. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Charles Alexander de Mazenod (1718-1795) served in the first company of the mounted musketeers from 1735 to 1739. He then studied law and obtained by royal letters dated February 10, 1741, an appointment as president of the Court of Exchequer, Excises and Finances of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. On the debates between the Court of Exchequer and the Parliament of Provence, and the role played by Charles Alexander, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, (Tr. Francis D. Flanagan, omi) Vol. I:*The Steps of a vocation, 1782-1814*, Fordham University Press, New York, 1961, 37-40, 42-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Louis, son King Louis XV (1710-1774) and Queen Marie Leszczynska, born in 1729, and dying before his father in 1765. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Alexander Jean Baptiste Boyer, Marquis of Eguilles (+1783), related by marriage to Charles Alexander. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Jean Baptiste d’Albertas (+1790) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Charles Antoine (1745-1820), Eugene’s father, licensed *in utroque* in 1763 and 1764, and in 1771 President in the Court of Exchequer, Excise and Finances of Provence. On March 12, 1789, he was elected as deputy of Provence to the Estates General, convoked in Versailles for the following April 27. His election and that of his colleagues was not recognized as valid. Cf. J. Leflon, I, 59-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Joseph Thomas Joannis (1717-1795, Mrs. De Mazenod’s father. He was a medical doctor and royal professor in the faculty of Aix. Cf. J. Leflon, I, p. 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Imitating liturgical ceremonies, like a serious game. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. To be precise, eight years and eight months. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. President de Mazenod left Aix on December 13, 1790. Nice was then a part of the Kingdom of Sardinia. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In *Missions OMI 114* it is written: “March 31 1790, and I arrived in Nice on April 3”. These dates are erroneous, cf. J. Leflon I, pp. , note 1. Eugene left with his uncle Charles Louis Eugene (1750-1832), chevalier and naval captain. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Madame Joannis, née Catherine Elizabeth Bonnet (+1811). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Fortune de Mazenod (1749-1841). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “The sixth”, i.e., the beginning of the secondary course. The Mazenods and the Joannis withdrew Eugene from the Bourbon College no doubt a little after January 30, 1791. On that day, actually, the Doctrinaires, teachers in the College, had solemnly taken the constitutional oath prescribed on November 27, 1790, to all ecclesiastical functionaries. Cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. These letters have not been found. In a letter to his sister Eugenie, written from Palermo on March 12, 1802, Eugene confirms that he had received in Turin several letters from his father, carefully preserved. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Madame de Mazenod, her sister Madame Dedons de Pierrefeu and their mother, Madame Joannis. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. At that time Turin was the capital of the kingdom of Sardinia and hence the royal residence. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Eugene got to know and appreciate his grandmother especially after his return to Aix between 1802 and 1808. He wrote her several letters from the seminary of St. Sulpice. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. In *Missions* we find: Escarena, Sorpella, Limon, Coni, Savillan , Raconigi. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Written as: “September 1790”, in *Missions* 1866 *,*(p.116). Eugene made the same journey afterwards at least twice. He passed by Nice and Turin going to Rome for the approval of the Rules in November 1825. At the end of November 1830, he did it in the opposite direction when he left Switzerland where he had spent the summer. He passed by Turin to rejoin his uncle in Nice. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Father Leopoldo Scatgi (written as Scatti in *Missions*), who died on December 10, 1816, was not general but provincial of the Barnabites in Piedmont. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Jean-François Gerdil, Barnabite, was born in Samoëns in Savoy on June 23, 1718. He was appointed cardinal *in petto* on April 26, 1773. He was Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda and a member of several curial congregations. He died in Rome on August 12, 1802. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Antonio Maria Cadolini (1771-1851), Bishop of Cesena in 1822, transferred to Ancona in 1838. He was made cardinal in 1843. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. April 5, 1792. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Louis Antoine, Duke of Angouleme (1775-1884) and Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berry (1778-1820), son of the future King Charles X, married Marie Therese, daughter of the King of Sardinia. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Confirmation on June 3, 1792. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The Revolutionaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Wrongly written as “Casal Maggiore” in *Missions* 1866, p.120. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bishop François de Bausset, bishop of Fréjus from 1766 to 1801, uncle of His Grace Archbishop Ferdinand de Bausset-Roquefort, Archbishop of Aix from 1819 to 1829 and well known to Father de Mazenod. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. “Forty and forty five years later”, i.e., after 1794; this indicates that Bishop de Mazenod wrote this text between 1834 and 1839. The Marquis J.B. de Montgrand (1776-1847) was mayor of Marseilles from 1813 to 1829. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The feast of the Ascension fell on May 29 in 1794. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Someone who lives on his wits. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. “Musqué” [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. François Marie Milesi (1744-1819), named bishop of Vigevano in 1805, patriarch of Venice in 1815. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Bartolo Zinelli (1766-1802). He entered the Company of the Fathers of Faith in 1799. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. “de fondation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Bishop C.F. Joseph Pisani de la Gaude, Bishop of Vence from 1783 to 1801. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The Society of the Fathers of the Faith, founded in Rome in 1797. It proposed to revive in a certain way the Society of Jesus, suppressed by Clement XIV in 1773. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. That is what was usually thought at that time, giving exaggerated value to the merit of obedience. St. Thomas thought differently. In the *Summa Theologica* (IIa Iiae, q. 104, art. 1, ad 3), he raises the following difficulty: “Is not a service all the more acceptable the more it is spontaneous? In that case our works would be worth less, if they were done out of obedience and obedience were a duty.” He replies: “What renders an action virtuous, honourable and meritorious, is that it be intentional. So, although obedience as such is a duty, if the intention goes eagerly along with it, merit loses nothing, especially before God who sees not only the external action but the will within.” [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Wrongly transcribed as 1810 in *Missions* 1866, p.132. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Eugene met him in the church of Notre Dame de Paris, at the time of the inaugural session of the national Council, convoked by Napoleon in the Spring of 1811, cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 380-385. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. “This one-sided judgment, writes J. Leflon (I, 135), … hardly tallies with the facts of history or even with the later sentiments of the Bishop of Marseilles…It does, however, reflect exactly what the youth Eugene felt during those lamentable days.” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Mercenary soldiers under Esclavons (troops from Slovenia or Croatia in the service of the Venetian republic), whom Bonaparte had driven from the mainland and who were embarking to return to their homes, cf. J. Leflon I, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. François Paul Brueys d’Aiguilliers (1753-1798); written as *Brueix* in *Missions 1866*, p. 133. He was admiral of the French fleet under Bonaparte. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. In French: “Les fashionables”. Bishop de Mazenod probably means: fashionably dressed and devoted to pleasure. We saw in the introduction that he wrote this after 1850-1851, He went to England in 1850 and he became familiar with this word and uses it once when speaking of Father Daly’s lack of religious spirit “too much accustomed to ways that are fashionable in England”. Cf. OW 3, p.83, French text EO 3, p.88. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Using an Italianate expression Bishop de Mazenod gives this word a liturgical over-tone. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Italian: *peota*: large gondola [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Mékhitaristes: Catholic religious Armenians, founded by Pierre Manoug, called Mékhitar (1670-1749). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The four articles: a brief summation of the Gallican teachings, made by Bossuet in 1682, cf. Text in *Catholicisme hier, aujourd’hui, demain,* Letouzey et Ané, t.IV, col. 1737-1738. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. François de Gain de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes from 1782 to 1802. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. This profession of faith is published in *Oblate Writings*, Vol. 14, p.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Bishop F.M. Giovanelli, Patriarch of Venice from 1776 to 1800. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Here ends the first part of the text published in *Missions 1866*, pp. 109-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Taking advantage of a lull in the laws against priests, Fortuné returned to Aix in August 1797, purposing to recover the part of the inheritance that was coming to him from his uncle Canon Charles André, who had died in 1795. But a fresh decision of 18 fructidor (September 5, 1797) put an end to the suspension of the laws brought in against priests under the Convention. Fortuné risked being automatically deported to Guiana. He hurriedly rejoined his brothers in Naples. He arrived in February 1798. Cf. J. Leflon, I, 141ff. 154-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. On May 2, 1797, Bonaparte declared war on Venice. By May 11 the President de Mazenod had got himself passports for Naples. He left on November 11, with his brother the chevalier, his son and Nanon, the servant, cf. Leflon I, 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. The family of Baron Louis M. A. de Talleyrand, general and diplomat (1738-1799), named French ambassador to Naples in 1788. He had two sons: Auguste Louis (1770-1832) and Alexandre (1776-1839), a major in the Neapolitan army during the Revolution. The Baron was the uncle of C.M. de Tallerand-Périgord (1754-1838), the defrocked Bishop of Autun, and later a politician who was involved in the entire history of this period. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Gulf of Carnaro in Istria, modern Croatia. Written as Carnero in *Missions* 1866, p.266. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Visitandines. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. A religious order founded in 1524 by Gaetano da Thiene and Pietro Caraffa, the future Pope Paul IV. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Spelt “Baraguey” in *Missions* 1866, p.269. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Whist: a card game, the forerunner of bridge. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. H. G. César de Chastellux, agent of Louis XVIII in Naples, cf. J. Leflon, I. p. 188. In Palermo Eugene used to visit with this family and was a friend of the son, César-Laurent, born in 1780, cf. *infra*. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. The daughters of the royal family. Eugene is referring here to Victoria and Adelaide, daughters of King Louis XV, who emigrated to Italy during the Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. The marriage was solemnized by Bishop de Mazenod in Albano, near Rome, on July 16, 1845. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Naval battle north-east of Alexandria in Egypt where the English Admiral Nelson destroyed the French fleet commanded by Brueys. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 203-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Probably a card game. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Gaspard de Bodin de Galembert. He became the tutor of the sons of the Prince of Cannizzaro in Palermo. It was into this Cannizzaro family that Eugene was welcomed as a son, cf. *infra,* and J. Leflon, I, pp.191-197. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Pozzuoli, a small port on the Gulf of Naples. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Exiled first in Gaeta in 1848 and 1849, Pius IX lived in the royal mansion of Portici from September 4, 1849 to April 4, 1850. Clearly the Founder reworked this part of his Notes after 1850 and even after 1851, cf. *infra*, note 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Roman city buried in ash and lava at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Today ‘Ercolano’. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. When in Rome from the end of January to the beginning of April 1851, for the approval of changes in the Constitutions, the Founder and Father Tempier spent “five days” in Naples, cf. Rey II, 484. From this page of the Diary we can deduce that they visited Pompeii on that occasion. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Charles III (1716-1788), King of Spain, who reigned over Parma, then over Naples and Sicily. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. An aqueduct built over the period 1842 - 1847 and which crossed the Arc valley in the Bouches-des-Rhone, a dozen kilometres west of Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Queen Maria Carolina (1752-1814), an Austrian, wife of Ferdinand I, King of Naples. The Mazenods owed her a lot: it was she who gave them a stipend to live on in Naples and Palermo. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. The Jacobins were fanatical revolutionaries who met in the convent of St-Jacques in Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Spelt “Partenico” in *Missions* 1866, p. 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Always spelt “Cannizaro” in *Missions* 1866, p. 289ff.; the names of their sons were Francis and Michael. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Died April 29, 1802, cf. J. Leflon I, p.223, note 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. The Mazenods had already met Count Charles François de Vintimille in Turin, where he was the representative of the Count of Provence (future King Louis XVIII). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Charles-Ferdinand, Duke de Berry, son of Charles X, King of France from 1824 to 1830 and nephew of Louis XVIII, King from 1814 to 1824. He was assassinated on February 13, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Cf. J. Leflon I, pp.174 -5, 198. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. The Grand Aumonier (Chief Almoner) was the chief chaplain of the court of the Kings of France. His responsibilities were extensive, in particular in the choice of bishops. Eugene had recourse to the Grand Aumonier to have Fortuné named Bishop of Marseilles, in 1817, cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 68, 70-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Tuileries: the royal residence in Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. A kind of card game. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. A liturgical ceremony in the presence of the King. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. It was in 1800 or 1801 that Eugene was present at this celebration, as with that of St. Rosalia, since he never names Queen Maria Carolina. She was in fact in Austria in 1800 and 1801, cf. J. Leflon, I, p. 206, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. The daughters of Ferdinand I (1751-1825), King of Naples, were: Marie-Antoinette, married in 1802 to Ferdinand VIII of Spain and died in 1806; Maria Christina, Queen of Sardinia, died in 1849, and Maria Amelia (1782-1866), wife of Louis-Philippe, King of the French from 1830-1848. Bishop de Mazenod met the latter in Paris in 1835, on the occasion of his visit to bring to an end to the Icosia affair, cf. J. Leflon, II. p.500. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Religious of the Congregation of the Oratory, founded in Rome in 1564 by St. Philip Neri. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. It was on October 24, 1802, that Eugene went ashore in the port of Marseilles. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Orig.: Rome, Oblate library, I, 3. Note on the inside page of the book: *Eraste ou l’ami de la jeunesse ...* New edition by l’abbé Fillassier. Paris, Vincent, 1776, 876 pp. Cf. also Arch. de la Postulation. DM II-6a. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives DM II 5a. Two pages, written by Eugene in 1802, to convey (to his father) his impressions of the work of Pierre Edouard Lemontey (1763-1826), *Raison, folie, chacun son* *mot: petit cours de morale, mis à la* *portée des vieux enfants.* Paris. Year IX (1801), 282 pp.

According to the text itself. Eugene read this work as a distraction from other more serious studies. These notes were certainly written at Palermo, in the early months of 1802. In the period May-June, Eugene was at Colli at the home of the Cannizzaro family and subsequent to that the preparations for his return to France, the voyage, and the first months at Aix, must have been an obstacle to study.

We publish these extracts in which we can discern Eugene’s interest in religious and moral issues: these are always the focus of his critical observations. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)