



ROSE BERTIN

**THE CREATOR OF FASHION AT THE
COURT OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE**



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AT THE COURT OF MARIE-
ANTOINETTE

BY

ÉMILE LANGLADE

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

DR. ANGELO S. RAPPOPORT

AUTHOR OF "ROYAL LOVERS AND MISTRESSES," "MAD MAJESTIES,"
"LEOPOLD II." ETC.

WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE present work, which I have translated—and in many places adapted—from the French, is not a mere biographical account of Rose Bertin, the famous milliner of Marie-Antoinette. The author has made a minute study of the fashions of the day, and gives us a description of the eccentricities of the last days of the French monarchy as far as dress was concerned. He makes us acquainted with the peculiar tastes, and one may add the aberrations, of fashionable and aristocratic Versailles under Louis XV. and Louis XVI. But the author of the present work does more : he allows us here and there a peep into a private boudoir of a great lady of the period, and, above all, into the life and character of that unfortunate Queen, who, though wayward and petulant, proud and thoughtless, could be kind and generous and true to her friends.

Rose Bertin knew it. The Queen had admitted her to familiarity, and, although she often availed herself of this august friendship in her own interests and in those of her relations, she was grateful for it until her death. And when adversity had befallen the daughter of the Cæsars, the little milliner gave a

noble and unselfish proof of her attachment and devotion.

Rose Bertin had attained to European fame. The entire fashionable world were contending for caps of her making ; and in relating her history the author shows us what an importance was attached to fashion, and what esteem its creators enjoyed at the Court of Versailles. This book, therefore, is to some extent, not only the history of Rose Bertin, but of an entire period.

A. S. RAPPOPORT

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE - - - - -	v
<small>CHAPTER</small>	
I. THE BEGINNING OF A FAMOUS MILLINER—HER INFLUENCE AT COURT - - - - -	11
II. ROSE BERTIN AND THE CHEVALIER D'ÉON - - -	34
III. MME. DU BARRY—THE PILGRIMAGE TO MON- FLIÈRES—THE GREAT FASHION—A VERSAILLES SCANDAL - - - - -	87
IV. THE END OF ECCENTRICITIES—ROSE BERTIN, RUE DE RICHELIEU—HER PRETENDED BANKRUPTCY -	133
V. THE LAST YEARS OF THE MONARCHY—DECLINE OF BUSINESS—ROSE BERTIN'S HOUSE PROPERTY -	180
VI. ROSE BERTIN DURING THE REVOLUTION—JOURNEYS TO GERMANY AND ENGLAND - - - - -	211
VII. THE MASSACRE IN THE RUE DE LA LOI—LAST YEARS OF ROSE BERTIN - - - - -	274
VIII. THE HEIRS OF ROSE BERTIN—SAINTE-BEUVE'S OPINION ON THE MEMOIRS - - - - -	302
INDEX - - - - -	319

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Rose Bertin - - - - -	14
Princesse de Conti - - - - -	26
Marie-Antoinette - - - - -	32
Fashion in 1775 - - - - -	38
Duchesse de Chartres - - - - -	44
Fashion in 1776 : Bonnet called " Le Lever de la Reine "	44
Mlle. Rose in Morning Toilette - - - - -	56
Chapeau à la Grenade, 1779 - - - - -	66
Princesse de Lamballe - - - - -	76
Fashion in 1778 - - - - -	88
Mme. Du Barry - - - - -	94
Miss Coneingue out of Opera - - - - -	100
Polonoise à la Poulette, 1779 - - - - -	110
A Fashionable Dressmaker delivering her Work - - - - -	120
Dress à la Suzanne - - - - -	134
Marie-Antoinette - - - - -	154
Marie Adelaide de France - - - - -	166
Madame Royale - - - - -	180
Fashion in 1788 - - - - -	190

ROSE BERTIN

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF A FAMOUS MILLINER—HER INFLUENCE AT COURT

(1770-1774)

THE reign of Marie-Antoinette was one of futility and chiffon; and if the Queen did not create the office of a Minister of Fashion, the Court of Versailles was nevertheless always crowded with hairdressers, dressmakers, and milliners, who exercised more influence than the King's Councillors. Rose Bertin was one of their number. Her real name was Marie-Jeanne Bertin, and thus she figures in all biographical dictionaries. She was born at Amiens in 1744, but recent researches, made in the archives of Abbeville, have fixed July 2, 1747, as the exact date of her birth. This is confirmed by an extract from her birth certificate inserted in the register of the parish of St. Gilles, and signed by the curate, Falconnier. Her parents were people of very small means, and the earnings of the father

did not suffice to educate the two children, Marie-Jeanne and her brother, Jean-Laurent, two years younger than herself. To augment the budget of the family, the mother was obliged to exercise the profession of sick-nurse. Marie-Jeanne had thus received a very modest education, but sufficient to develop her sense of ambition. Nature had been kind to her ; she was beautiful, and she knew it—women are never unconscious of such things, and are always ready to profit by it—but Marie-Jeanne was also endowed with a great deal of intelligence, which enabled her to make her way in life.

She had faith in her star. One day a gipsy foretold her future. Rose was only a child when the gipsy was arrested and imprisoned. The cronies of the neighbourhood, talkative and superstitious, told wonderful things of the prisoner who had read the future in the palms of their hands. The child became curious, and longed to know what lay in store for her. But she had no money to pay the old woman for her prophecies, and neither father nor mother Bertin would ever consent to spend a trifle on such childish whims. Rose therefore starved herself, and carried her portion of food to the prisoner. Prisons in those days were not what they are now, and the girl easily obtained access to the imprisoned gipsy, who, in exchange for a succulent dish, consented to lift the mysterious veil of the future. Taking the white hand of the child between her own long, dirty fingers, she said sententiously : “ You will rise to great fortune, and will

one day wear a Court dress." Rose left the prison, her face beaming with joy.

But Nicholas Bertin, her father, who was seventy-two years old, died on January 24, 1754, leaving the burden of the family and the upbringing of the children to his widow. Rose loved her mother, and she was not a girl to allow the latter to work too much when she was in a position to come to her assistance. She was sixteen now, and one day she made up her mind to leave home, and mounted the coach which took her to Paris. Little did her people, who were sadly watching her departure, think that Rose was going to meet her fortune.

Rose Bertin was not awkward; they soon perceived it in the millinery shop kept by Mlle. Pagelle, under the name of the *Trait Galant*, where Rose had found a situation. And yet the *Trait Galant*—which furnished not only the Court of France, but also that of Spain—enjoyed, as far as morals were concerned, a most respectable reputation, a fact of somewhat rare occurrence among the ladies of the millinery profession. It was about that time, too, that Jeanne Bécu, who afterwards became the famous Mme. Du Barry, was apprenticed in the millinery shop of Labille, which was situated in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, near the Place des Victoires. Jeanne Bécu, who was known at that time by the name of Mlle. Lanson, justified the reputation of the ladies of her profession, and had many lovers. Mlle. Oliva, who was afterwards to play her part in the famous affair of the

necklace, was also a milliner, and was leading a life similar to that of Jeanne Bécu. Rose Bertin had been in the employ of Mlle. Pagelle for a short time, when an event occurred which was to decide her future.

Among the customers of the *Trait Galant* was Mme. de la Saune, formerly Mlle. Caron, and mistress of the Comte de Charolais, to whom she had borne two daughters. The Count having died, the Princesse de Conti obtained letters of legitimization for the two girls, who took the name of Mlles. de Bourbon. The elder soon married the Comte de Puget, whilst the younger became the wife of M. de Lowendal. The wedding dresses of the young ladies had been ordered at the *Trait Galant*, and the Princesse de Conti had asked to see the dresses herself.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when Mlle. Pagelle despatched Rose to the Hôtel de Conti with the dresses of the Demoiselles de Bourbon. It was bitter cold, and when the milliner arrived at the palace, and asked to see the Princess, she was shown into a room where a huge fire was blazing. In a corner near the fireplace an old woman—whom Rose took for a chamber maid—was seated. She got up as soon as the girl entered, exclaiming, "Ah, you have brought the dresses of the Demoiselles de Bourbon! let me see." Rose satisfied her curiosity, and the two soon began to chat amicably, when they were interrupted by a Lady-in-Waiting. "What," exclaimed the latter, "is your Highness here?" "Yes," replied the Princess, "and I have been enjoying myself



PRINCESSE DE CONTI

To face page 14

immensely." Rose Bertin was quite embarrassed; she threw herself at the feet of Her Highness and begged for forgiveness. But the Princess told her that she had committed no breach of etiquette in having been natural, especially as she was ignorant of the identity of her interlocutress. She assured the milliner of her good-will and protection for the future.

This event is related in the "Mémoires de Mlle. Bertin" and published in 1824. These *mémoires* are now proved to have been written by J. Penchet with the purpose of whitewashing the memory of Marie-Antoinette and exculpating her from certain accusations. It is, however, impossible that Penchet should have related certain anecdotes without having heard them from the people whom they concerned, and with whom he found himself in constant contact.

The Princesse de Conti had thus taken a decided fancy to Rose, and the latter soon received proofs of Her Highness's kindness.

The Duc de Chartres was going to marry Louise-Marie-Adélaïde de Bourbon, daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre, and the richest heiress in the kingdom, and, thanks to the Princesse de Conti, Rose had received the order to make the trousseau for the bride. Great was the pride of Rose Bertin when she announced the good news to her employer. Mlle. Pagelle, who had long ago ceased to consider Rose as a simple employée, opened her arms, and, embracing the little milliner, exclaimed: "Little one, from this moment you may consider yourself as my partner." And henceforth the

business of the *Trait Galant* had two heads, and the most turbulent partner, whose mind was constantly in search for new designs and models, was the little girl from Picardy, daring and ambitious, and who knew that she was going to make her fortune and a name famous in Europe.

The Duchesse de Chartres also became a protectress of Rose, and she soon found a third in Mme. de Lamballe. But Rose was beautiful, elegant, and graceful. She had above all an air of distinction, and attracted a great deal of attention. One day the Duc de Chartres noticed her in the apartments of his wife. She took his fancy. He spoke to her, and unhesitatingly made love to her. Would she become his mistress? He offered her diamonds, horses, a carriage, a fine furnished hotel, if she would only consent to listen to his impassioned declarations. But, to his utmost surprise, the little milliner would not listen to the proposals of the noble Duke. The latter was nonplussed, and the more obstinate Rose was, the more desperate the lover grew. He at last decided to carry the girl off to a little house in Neuilly, where he hoped to make her yield to his wishes. Rose was informed of the plan by a valet of the Duke, and she lived in constant fear of being kidnapped and carried off to the secluded house at Neuilly. She scarcely ventured to leave her house at night. She knew too well the life led by the noblemen of her time, who modelled their conduct upon that of the King himself, and the abduction of a little milliner in those days would pass absolutely un-

noticed. Every morning she went for her orders to the Duchesse de Chartres, and nothing had as yet happened, when one day she was called to the Comtesse d'Usson for an important order. Rose was conversing with the Comtesse, when the Duke was announced, and Mme. d'Usson rushed to meet His Highness. Rose was evidently being forgotten, and, noticing an easy-chair, she calmly sat down. The Comtesse looked surprised, and motioned to the girl to get up. The milliner took no notice of her hostess, who at last exclaimed :

“ Mlle. Rose, you evidently seem to forget that you are in the presence of His Highness.”

“ Not at all, madame,” replied Rose ; “ I am not forgetting it at all.”

“ Then, why are you behaving as you do ?”

“ Ah !” answered the little milliner, “ Mme. la Comtesse is evidently not aware of the fact that if I only wished it I could become Duchesse de Chartres to-night.”

The Duke changed colour, but said nothing, whilst the Comtesse looked surprised, with the air of someone who is waiting for the solution of a riddle.

“ Yes, madame,” continued Rose, “ I have been offered everything that can tempt a poor girl, and because I have refused I am now in danger of being kidnapped. If, therefore, one day your bonnets and dresses are not ready, and you are told that little Rose has disappeared, you will have to address yourself to His Highness, who will know of her whereabouts.”

“What do you say to this, monseigneur?” asked the Comtesse d’Usson.

“What can I say?” replied the latter. “All means are fair when it is a question of subduing a rebel, and I can surely not be blamed for having tried to obtain the favour of such an amiable and beautiful young lady.”

“Monseigneur is perfectly right to prefer a little milliner to his august wife the Princess, who possesses the highest qualities; but you will admit, madame, that I too may be allowed to treat familiarly one who is so anxious to make me his companion. If His Highness will only not forget his rank, I will certainly remember the extreme distance which separates us.” Thus spoke Rose, and making a low bow to the Duke, who was murmuring, “You are a little viper,” she left the room, leaving His Highness much perplexed. Henceforth, however, he ceased worrying the milliner with his assiduities.

Rose Bertin did not remain very long in partnership with Mlle. Pagelle. She soon established her own business, thanks to the help she had received from the Duchesse de Chartres. The latter was in the habit of thus helping poor girls and setting them up in business. Rose Bertin often met the protégées of the Duchess in the antechamber of the ducal palace. One of these protégées was Marie the flower-girl, whom the Duchess had once met in the street and taken a fancy to.

Not only had the Duchess provided the funds for

Rose's business, but she also recommended her to a fashionable clientèle. At that moment the talk of Court and town was the approaching marriage of the Dauphin with the daughter of Empress Maria-Theresa. In March, 1770, the Duchesse de Chartres went to see Mme. de Noailles, who had been appointed Lady-in-Waiting to the Dauphine, and Mme. de Misery, chosen to be First Chambermaid. She spoke highly of her protégée, praising not only her talents, but also her manners, and, supported by the Princesses de Conti and Lamballe, she procured for Rose the advantage of furnishing the dresses and finery which were to be offered to Marie-Antoinette at Strasburg on her arrival on French soil.

Milliners in the eighteenth century were not what they are nowadays ; they not only trimmed hats, but also arranged and ornamented dresses. There were a good many milliners in Paris in those days, and some of them exercised their trade on the Quai de Gèvres, where Rose Bertin is supposed to have kept a shop for some time. In any case, she remained there only a short time, and soon we find her established in the Rue de St. Honoré, which was the centre of commerce during the reign of Louis XVI. The signboard of her business contained the inscription " Au Grand Mogol." The houses in those days were not numbered, and the signboards were therefore very important, especially as far as the merchants were concerned. Each had his signboard with an inscription so as to avoid confusion. Thus

one could read in the Rue de St. Honoré, "Au Trait Galant," "Au Grand Mogol," "Au Bouquet Galant," "A la Corbeille Galante," and many others.

The reputation of Rose Bertin grew rapidly, and soon reached her native town. Among her customers she counted several inhabitants of Abbeville, a fact which was testified by her books of account.

In the meantime the new Dauphine, very fond of chiffon and ribbons and of all feminine finery, was going to introduce—or at least to augment—at the Court of Versailles the cult of fashion, which is often nothing but an insupportable slavery. When Rose Bertin had the honour of approaching Marie-Antoinette for the first time, she at once knew, thanks to her *flair* as a business woman and her subtlety as a native of Picardy, what benefit she could derive from her situation. She had only to flatter the Dauphine, which was not so very difficult, and by pleasing the latter vastly increase her own income.

According to the "Souvenirs" of Léonard, Rose Bertin is supposed to have been introduced to the Dauphine in 1772. The author of these "Souvenirs" is unknown, and the authenticity of the work has been contested; but it is one of the few writings which make allusion to Mlle. Bertin. This so-called Léonard not only pretends that he was the first to introduce Rose to Marie-Antoinette, but he even boasts of his intimate relations with the beautiful milliner. We shall quote the following passage from these "Souvenirs":

“One morning I was informed by my servant that a young lady wished to see me. I soon found myself in the presence of a young, beautiful, and very elegant person, whose manners were charming. Her manner was at first somewhat reserved. I at once thought that the charming person had come to solicit my influence at Court in her own favour or in favour of some relation. And, indeed, I was not mistaken. I made the young lady sit down near the fireplace, and I at once noticed that she often availed herself of the opportunity to show her beautifully-shaped foot; and a beautifully-shaped ankle always makes a man disposed to listen favourably to a woman.

“‘You will not be surprised at my visit, M. Léonard,’ said this seductive person, ‘if I tell you who I am. My name is Rose Bertin. The Princesse de Conti and the Duchesse de Chartres have kindly promised to introduce me to Her Royal Highness the Dauphine; but you know what these great ladies are—one must never press them. I have therefore come to you, M. Léonard, whose constant attendance upon Her Highness will give you ample opportunities to speak on my behalf. And you are constantly being consulted upon everything relating to dress—your recommendation will no doubt have a decisive effect.’”

M. Léonard promised his help. And, indeed, he kept his word, and at the very first opportunity he mentioned the name of Rose Bertin to the Dauphine.

“Mlle. Rose Bertin!” said Marie - Antoinette. “You are right to mention her to me, for I now remember that the Duchesse de Chartres and the Princesse de Conti have also spoken of her in very high terms. Comtesse de Misery,” continued the Dauphine, turning to her first Lady-in-Waiting, “will you please write to Mlle. Rose Bertin, and command her presence here to-morrow.”

Rose Bertin was punctual, and introduced to Marie-Antoinette according to all the rules of Court etiquette. Marie-Antoinette gave the young milliner an order of 20,000 livres. Thus, according to the author of the “Souvenirs,” Rose Bertin became Court milliner of the Dauphine in 1772. The dates are in all probability exact, but the details of the introduction and presentation of Rose Bertin to Marie-Antoinette as given by Léonard are pure invention. Léonard Antié, who enjoyed a considerable reputation, did not live in the Palace of Versailles, as the “Souvenirs” pretend. He was the hairdresser of Marie-Antoinette, but was in daily attendance upon her. His services were only required on gala-days and special occasions. The daily coiffeur of the Dauphine was Léonard’s brother, who was beheaded during the Terror, and consequently could not have written the “Souvenirs,” which were compiled at a much later period. Other dates tend to prove that the whole story of Rose’s introduction to the Dauphine by Léonard, who at that moment had absolutely no influence at the Court of Versailles, he having been

appointed only in 1779, is devoid of all truth. These "Souvenirs" contain numerous anecdotes and insinuations and allusions to the part played by Marie-Antoinette in various affairs. Rose Bertin is often mixed up with these affairs—as, for instance, that of the masked ball, where, at the suggestion of the Comte d'Artois, the Dauphine was present. According to the author of the "Souvenirs," Léonard was ordered to arrange this nocturnal expedition and to provide the costumes.

"I want to go to a masked ball," said Marie-Antoinette; "Léonard will help us. He will arrange with Mlle. Bertin about the costume, and we will dress at the Tuileries. We will leave here at midnight accompanied by the little Marquise de Langeac, and be at the Tuileries at twelve thirty-five. Rose Bertin will be waiting for us at the Pavillon de Flore; at one thirty we shall be at the ball, and leave at three o'clock; and before the clocks strike four we shall be asleep in our beds at Versailles."

"I arranged the costume of the Dauphine," adds the so-called Léonard, "together with Mlle. Rose Bertin. The Dauphine went disguised as a Swiss peasant woman. When the costume was finished and the disguise, we left in two carriages—the Dauphine, the Prince, and the Marquise, in one, and Léonard and Rose in another. I do not know whether during our ride from the Tuileries to the house of Dauberval Mme. de Langeac had noticed what degree of intimacy existed between Mlle. Rose and myself, but when

we arrived the malicious little gipsy (the Comtesse was disguised as such) pinched me cruelly, and whispered into my ear: 'I like the intrigues of a masked ball very much, but never in the capacity of a passive spectator.'"

There is no doubt a great deal of fatuity in all that the author of the "Souvenirs" relates; but the enemies of Marie-Antoinette did not hesitate afterwards to make use of them, and in their pamphlets introduced, without distinction of rank or sex, all those who were constantly in the entourage of the Queen, so as to give a greater semblance of truth to their accusations.

Indeed, Rose Bertin did not require the recommendations of Léonard to get on at Court. Were not the Duchesse de Chartres and the Princesse de Conti her patronesses? And in 1773 the little milliner made use of her influence on her relatives who had been imprisoned in the Bastille.

The relatives of Rose were booksellers established in the Rue de la Juiverie. In March, 1772, a perquisition had already been made in the shop in consequence of the publication of certain pamphlets directed against the "Parlements," and especially of a satirical work in which the Chancellor Maupeou was being attacked and criticized. And now the widow Méquignon, a relative of Rose's, was arrested on June 19, 1772, "and at once led away to be confined in the Bastille."*

* "Journal de Hardy," MS. 6681, in the Bibliotheque Nationale.

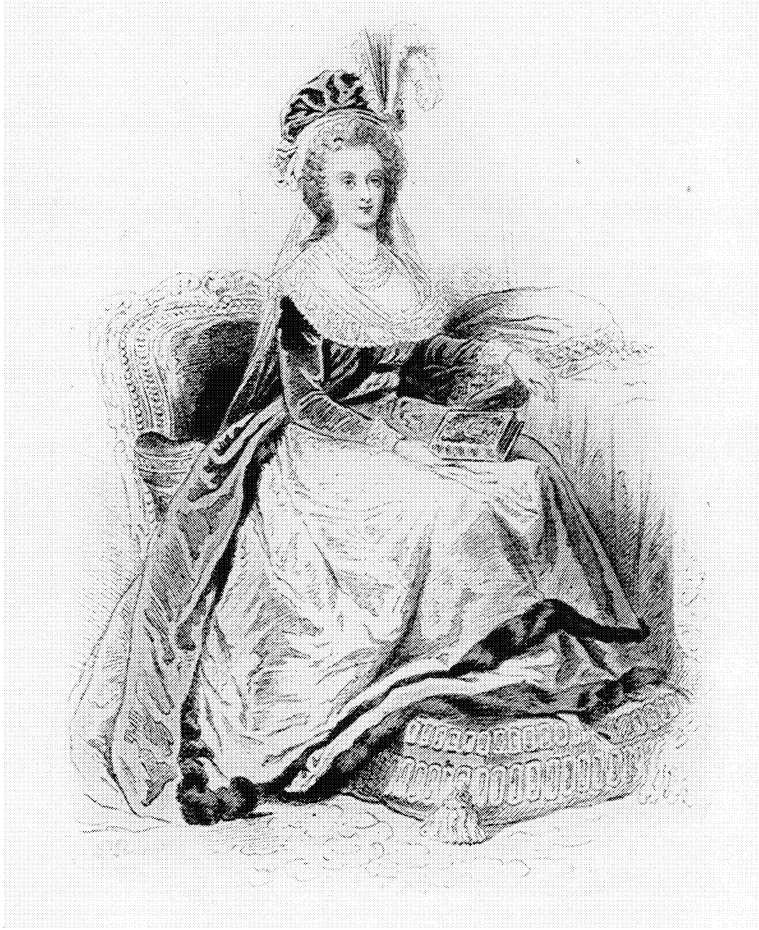
Rose made use of her influence at Court, and did her best to deliver the widow Méquignon and her son. She spared neither time nor trouble, and at last succeeded in interesting the Dauphine herself in the matter. On September 4, 1773, the two prisoners left the Bastille. Their freedom had been obtained not without some difficulty, for Marie-Antoinette had to do with Maupeou, who as a rule did not like to relinquish the prey he had got hold of. The widow Méquignon, although set free, was, however, not discharged, but sentenced, on January 22, 1774, to be exiled for five years from Paris. But Rose Bertin was tenacious, and therefore her protectresses, above all the Dauphine, opposed the Chancellor's decision. The "Journal de Hardy" gives some details with regard to this affair, adding that, thanks to the insistence of Rose Bertin, the Dauphine at last made Maupeou revoke the sentence against the widow Méquignon on February 21, 1774. Marie-Antoinette even expressed the wish to see that widow Méquignon on whose behalf she had so graciously intervened. On February 24, therefore, the lady had the honour of dining with the Dauphine, "who expressed her great satisfaction at having rendered such service to the respectable widow, and thus saved her and her family from the consequences of a severe sentence." This opinion on the character of the widow, expressed by her colleague the bookseller Hardy, whose veracity is above suspicion, only tends to justify the steps taken by the

milliner and the initiative of Marie-Antoinette. Maupeou and the Archbishop of Paris were both annoyed at the turn the matter had taken, and only reluctantly disarmed. Some time afterwards, therefore, the Archbishop of Paris, who never missed an opportunity of showing his antagonism towards the Jansenists, no matter to what sex or condition they belonged, accused the widow Méquignon of Jansenism. The magistrates, however, found it impossible to justify the accusations of the prelate.

Thus ended this matter, the result of which was a triumph of Rose Bertin.

But the widow Méquignon also derived considerable benefit from her temporary arrest, for she remained Court bookseller until the Revolution, and it was from her that Mme. de Tourzel bought the books required for the royal Princes, as is testified by the accounts of 1790-1792, kept at the Archives Nationales.

During all this time the workshops of Rose Bertin were producing bonnets *à la Chartres*—a creation expressing Rose's gratitude for her benefactress—bonnets *à la Sultane*, *au Trésor royal*, *à la Carmélite*, and were trimming dresses *à la Musulmane*. The prices of the bonnets *à la Chartres* varied from 7 to 14 livres, whilst the others amounted to about 30 livres. The trimmings of a robe *à la Musulmane* cost 136 livres. Ever since Rose had been appointed to furnish the bonnets and dresses of Marie-Antoinette her reputation had been rapidly increasing,



MARIE-ANTOINETTE

To face page 26

and she had been obliged to augment the number of her employées. But her real importance only dates from May, 1774, when Louis XVI. succeeded Louis XV. The first thing Rose did was to change the inscription on her signboard, and replace her Christian name by that of her family. At Court she was still known as Mlle. Rose, but in town her dignity of Milliner of the Queen required it that she should call herself Mlle. Bertin. Her success was great. The best families of the aristocracy were among her customers, such as the Marquise de Bouillé, the Comtesse de Duras, the Duchesse de la Vauguyon, the Princesse de Guéméné, etc.

The budget of the dress department of the Dauphine amounted in 1773 to 120,000 livres, and the expenses were regulated by the Duchesse de Cossé: 32,000 were spent on ordinary dresses, whilst 82,000 covered the extraordinary expenses. In 1774 the figures were the same, but they were soon to increase.

The winter of 1774 was approaching its end, when a new fashion of hairdress made its appearance, and was baptized the *Quès aco*. "It consisted of a panache in plumes, which the elegant ladies wore at the back of their heads." The name *Quès aco* is supposed to have been taken from a *mémoire* by Beaumarchais, directed against a certain Marin, whom the author had ridiculized. The *mémoire* of Beaumarchais had an enormous success, and the expression of *Quès aco* became very popular.

Marie-Antoinette had taken an interest in this event, the name of Beaumarchais being mentioned at Court very often, and she had asked for an explanation of the Provençal expression. When she understood it, she frequently happened to make use of it. Among her intimates, Rose Bertin, who was always *au courant* of big and little events, always in search of new ideas and new creations, and names by which to baptize the latter, was quick enough to make use of the incident, and soon imagined a new hairdress known as the *Quès aco*. Generally speaking, everything relating to fashion is of ephemeral character, but the headgears of those days were prodigiously so. A month after the introduction of the *Quès aco* a new invention took its place ; it was the famous *pouf aux sentiments*. "The *pouf aux sentiments*," writes the continuator of Bachaumont on April 26, 1774, "is a new hairdress which has succeeded the *Quès aco*, and is infinitely superior to the former, on account of the numerous things which were required for its composition, and the genius employed to vary it artistically. It is called *pouf* on account of the numerous objects which it can contain, and *aux sentiments* because these objects must have a certain relation to what one loves best, and express one's preferences. Every woman is madly anxious to have a *pouf*."

Léonard Antié is supposed to have excelled in the art of placing *poufs* of gauze, which were introduced between the locks, and one day he employed for that

purpose about 14 yards of gauze for *one* hairdress. But all these *poufs* differed greatly from the *pouf aux sentiments* owing to their simplicity ; they also required no assistance from the milliner. The *pouf aux sentiments* could contain such various objects as fruit, flowers, vegetables, stuffed birds, dolls, and many other things giving expression to the tastes, the preferences, and the sentiments, of the wearer.

The continuator of the *mémoires* of Bachaumont has left us a description of a *pouf aux sentiments* worn by the Duchesse de Chartres : “ In the background was the image of a woman carrying an infant in arms ; it referred to the Duc de Valois and his nurse. To the right was a parrot picking a cherry ; the parrot was the Duchess’s pet bird. To the left was a little nigger—the image of him whom she loved very much. All this was ornamented with locks from the hair of the Duc de Chartres, the husband, the Duc de Penthièvre, the father, and the Duc d’Orléans, the father-in-law, of the lady.”

This craze in hairdress, with its accumulation of family relics and souvenirs, may have been touching, but strikes one as rather ridiculous, more ridiculous than the landscapes in hair which enjoyed a certain vogue during the first half of the nineteenth century, and in the composition of which Frédéric Sauvage greatly excelled.

Another famous *pouf* was that of the Duchesse de Lauzun.* The Duchesse one day appeared at a

* Cf. Comtesse d’Adhémar (Lamothe-Langon), “ Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette,” t. ii., Paris, 1836.

reception of the Marquise du Deffant's wearing a most delicious *pouf*. It contained a stormy sea, ducks swimming near the shore, someone on the point of shooting one of them; on the top of the head there was a mill, the miller's wife being made love to by an *abbé*, whilst near the ear the miller could be seen leading a donkey.

It was also in consequence of one of these *poufs* that a stormy scene took place one day between Mlle. Rose Bertin and the famous Mlle. Quinault, who occupied an apartment in the Louvre, just underneath that of Sedaine, and where she had received the most distinguished people of the century.

Everybody was talking of the *poufs* created by the firm of Bertin, and Mlle. Quinault also wished to have one made in the famous workshop. She therefore simply sent her maid for Mlle. Bertin. The latter, however, took no notice of the message. Then Mlle. Duport, chambermaid and favourite of Mlle. Quinault, came in her mistress's carriage, and asked Mlle. Rose how she dared to disobey the order she had received. The milliner lost her temper, and a quarrel ensued. The chambermaid was surprised at the insolence of an ordinary milliner, to which Rose replied that a milliner who had the honour of being employed by Her Majesty the Queen was, anyhow, as good as a former opera actress. This was too much for the chambermaid. Mlle. Quinault was married to the Duc de Nevers, and the working woman had dared to insult a member of the highest aristocracy.

Several ladies secretly married to noblemen of the highest rank saw themselves offended in the person of the Duchess, and all unanimously demanded the punishment of Mlle. Bertin. The latter at first fought bravely against her enemies ; was she not sure of the friendship and affection of the Queen ? But the excitement caused by the incident was so great that Marie-Antoinette herself advised Rose to humiliate herself and to ask Mlle. Quinault's forgiveness. The Queen's wish was law to Rose. She went straight to the Louvre, and to the apartments of Mlle. Quinault, where she asked for *Mme. Duport*.

“ And what does the Bertin woman want ? ” asked the latter.

The Bertin woman ! To be called “ the Bertin woman ” by a chambermaid was a terrible insult, when ladies of the aristocracy addressed her as *Mademoiselle*, and often even as *Madame*. But Rose kept her temper, and simply asked to see Mlle. Quinault. “ *Mademoiselle* is unwell, and will not be able to see *her milliner*,” was the reply ; “ but we will inquire.” Rose was kept waiting for nearly an hour, and at last was admitted into the presence of the former actress. Mlle. Quinault at first took no notice whatever of Rose Bertin, and when the latter began to offer her excuses the offended Queen of the Stage listened calmly, without even raising her head. When Mlle. Bertin had finished, the offended Mlle. Quinault replied : “ My good woman, a creature of your position ought to learn to be polite to her betters,

and to obey the orders of those who pay her—you may go!”

These words are characteristic of the eighteenth century. It is astonishing that, with her character, her sense of independence, and her pride, Rose should have remained faithful to the past when the Revolution broke out. But she was very devoted to the Queen, and it was this devotion which prevented her from becoming an enemy of the Monarchy.

She left the apartment of Mlle. Quinault in such a state of rage that she was ill for more than six weeks. For more than a fortnight Paris talked of nothing but the incident of Quinault-Bertin, and ever afterwards Mlle. Bertin was exceedingly polite to all her customers. The death of the King put an end to the *pouf aux sentiments*.

“The mourning for the King,” writes the Baroness d’Oberkirch in her memoirs, “put an end to a very ridiculous fashion which usurped the place of the *Quès aco*. This was the *pouf aux sentiments*. It was a head-dress into which may be introduced the likeness of any person or thing for which one may feel affection, such as a miniature of one’s daughter or mother, a picture of a canary or a dog, etc., adorned with the hair of a father or of a beloved friend. It was a most incredible piece of extravagance. We were determined to follow the fashion, and the Princess Dorothea once amused herself for an entire day by wearing on her ear the picture of a woman holding a bunch of keys, and which, she declared, was Mme.



Musée Carnavalet

FASHION IN 1775

Quès a quo

To face page 32

Hendel. The *femme de charge* thought it a striking likeness, and was almost out of her senses with pride and joy." This Mme. Hendel was *femme de charge* of Princess Dorothea at the Castle of Montbéliard.

Thus, according to Mme. d'Oberkirch, who was herself one of Mlle. Bertin's customers, the fashion of the *pouf* was extremely ridiculous, and only suitable for a carnival. And yet, by some inexplicable aberration of good taste, this predilection for the ridiculous, as far as fashions are concerned, may be noticed at various epochs, and we have only to mention the crinoline, which hid the beautiful lines of the female body.

But there were still sensible women whom the eccentricities of fashion did not affect. And the Marquise de Créqui, who, as it appears, had never been one of Rose's customers, makes fun of the importance attached by the ladies to a new hat or a new hair-dress. "Neither Cæsar nor Epaminondas," writes the Marquise, "have spent so much thought upon the arrangement of their armies or the event of a battle, as is being spent by my contemporaries upon a *pouf*, or a well-adjusted ribbon, or a bouquet. Too much consideration is given to the inventors of fashion, whilst real merit is being neglected. We must be like the others, and avoid appearing peculiar and singular—this I admit. But we may at the same time try to be neat in our simplicity, noble in our tastes, and modest in our fashions. For fashion is a tyrant under whose rule only fools consent to bend."

CHAPTER II

ROSE BERTIN AND THE CHEVALIER D'EON

THE young Queen's dressmaker was celebrated above all for her creation of *poufs*; but as the novelty of the *pouf aux sentiments* had passed, it was imperative that a new style should be invented. Rose Bertin's genius rose to the occasion, and hats à *l'Iphigénie* and *poufs à la circonstance* (topical toques) made their appearance. The first style was well adapted to current events. The Court was in mourning for the King, and, according to the "Correspondance Secrète," hats à *l'Iphigénie* were made of a simple crown of black flowers, surmounted by a crescent of Diana, with a short veil falling at the back, partially covering the head.

Gluck's tragedy "Iphigénie en Aulide" was presented in Paris for the first time on April 19, 1774, and was the occasion of a great outcry which Marie-Antoinette was instrumental in appeasing, and in assuring the success of her favourite composer. The triumph of Gluck's opera was flattering to her claims as a musical critic.

The *pouf à la circonstance* was a flattering tribute to the new monarch. It was intended to represent the change of reign. Mlle. Bertin possessed all the qualities that make for success ; she brought to the profit of her trade the obsequiousness of the most assiduous courtier. The *pouf* was composed of a tall cypress ornamented with black marigolds, the roots being represented by a piece of crape ; on the right side a large sheaf of wheat was placed, leaning against a cornucopia from which peeped out an abundance of grapes, melons, figs, and other fruit, beautifully imitated ; white feathers were mixed with the fruit. The hat was a riddle ; the answer was as follows : While weeping the dead monarch, though the roots of sorrow reach to the hearts of his subjects, yet the riches of the new reign are already looming in view.

These *poufs* varied in style : some represented the sun rising over a wheat-field, where Hope was reaper, being the same riddle more briefly depicted. The *pouf à la circonstance* was short-lived, being quickly replaced by the *pouf à l'inoculation*, another of Mlle. Bertin's inventions. The King had been vaccinated on June 18, 1774. The custom of inoculation in use for centuries among the peoples in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea had been imported into England from Constantinople in 1738, and into France in 1755. The operation on the King gave Mlle. Bertin a new idea ; the *pouf à l'inoculation* celebrated the occasion. It represented a rising sun, and an olive-tree laden with fruit, round which a serpent was twisted, hold-

ing a flower-wreathed club. The classical serpent of Æsculapius represented medicine, and the club was the force which could overcome disease. The rising sun was the young King himself, great-grandson of the *Roi-Soleil*, to whom all eyes were turned. The olive-tree was the symbol of peace, and also of the tender affection with which all were penetrated at the news of the happy success of the operation which the King and the Royal Family had undergone.

As one may see, pastoral simplicity was not yet gaining adherents. The Royal Family went to Marly after their vaccination. In her memoirs, Mme. Campan states that it was then that Rose was presented to the Queen. In this she is at variance with the spurious "Souvenirs" of Léonard, and with the memoirs of the period from which the author of the "Souvenirs" borrowed his anecdotes. But Mme. Campan's criticism of the milliner's admission to the intimacy of the Queen is interesting :

"It was during this first visit to Marly that the Duchesse de Chartres, afterwards Duchesse d'Orléans, introduced Mlle. Bertin to the Queen. Mlle. Bertin was a milliner who had become famous at this period because of the transformation she had effected in French fashions.

"One may say that the admission of a dressmaker into the Queen's apartments had disastrous consequences. The admission of a person of her social class was contrary to all usage, and by her persuasive

tongue it became possible for her to induce the Queen to adopt some new style daily. Up to that time the Queen's taste in dress had been very simple, but thenceforward dress became her chief occupation, in which she was naturally imitated by all women.

"Each one immediately wished to wear the same things as the Queen, her feathers, her garlands of flowers, which charmingly became her beauty, then in all its splendour. The expenses of young women greatly increased, and mothers and husbands grumbled; some flighty individuals contracted debts, and deplorable family scenes ensued, several couples quarrelled or sulked, and it was generally rumoured that the Queen would ruin all the French ladies. . . . Innumerable caricatures of the fashions exhibited everywhere, and in which the Queen's portrait might be maliciously traced, were useless; the fashion changed, as it always does, only through the influence of time and fickleness.

"The admission of Mlle. Bertin to the Queen's apartments caused a small revolution in the palace, the Ladies-in-Waiting opposing it as far as they dared. When the Queen's hair was dressed," continues Mme. Campan, "she bowed to these ladies, and retired into her room accompanied only by her personal attendants. Mlle. Bertin awaited her in an adjoining room, as she was not allowed to enter the Queen's own apartment."

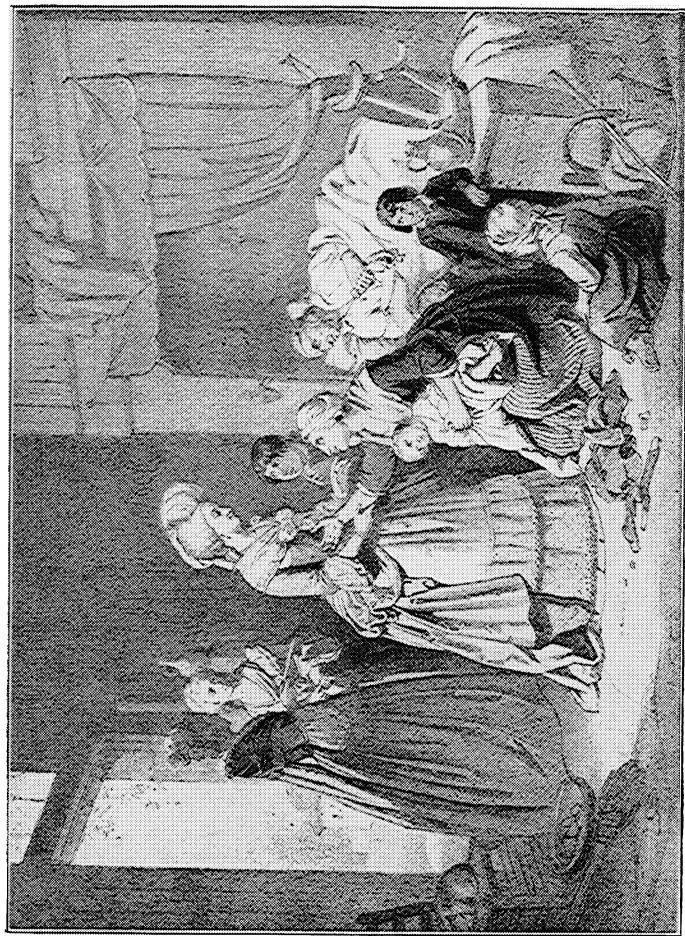
The Queen's ladies, jealous of their prerogative,

complained bitterly, and when one day during the course of 1774 Louis XVI. said to the Queen, "You like flowers; well, I have a bouquet to present to you—it is Trianon," her one wish was to take refuge there, in order to escape all the ceremonious regulations which were an annoyance to her. "She wished to be dressed by Mlle. Bertin in her own room, and not be condemned to take refuge in an inner cabinet, because her ladies refused to allow Mlle. Bertin to enter the rooms under their charge."

But the chief Lady-in-Waiting had to bow to the royal will, and endeavour to be as cordial as possible to the favourite milliner. The post of chief lady had been held by the Duchesse de Villars from Marie-Antoinette's arrival in France, in 1770, until September 15, 1771. After her death she was replaced by the Duchesse de Cossé until June, 1775, who was followed by the Princesse de Chimay. The latter only held the position until September of the same year, being then replaced by Mme. de Mailly, who in her turn was replaced by the Comtesse d'Ossun in 1781.

"The business of the chief Lady-in-Waiting was to see that the Queen was suitably dressed, and had all the dresses and clothes she required. She also paid the bills, an allowance of 100,000 francs being made for this purpose, which was supplemented when any extraordinary expenses were necessary, which frequently happened.

"Mme. Campan, who has given a detailed account



DUCHESS DE CHARTRES

To face page 38

of all these private matters, says that this lady used to sell dresses, muffs, laces, and cast-off finery, for her own profit, and the gain was very considerable.

“This lady,” says Mme. Campan, “had at her orders a head lady’s-maid to fold and iron the different articles of dress, two valets of the wardrobe, and a page of the wardrobe. The latter’s duty was to take to the Queen’s room baskets covered with green cloth, containing all the clothes the Queen would require for the day. He gave the head lady’s-maid a book containing patterns of dresses, state robes, simple dresses, etc., with a little piece of trimming of each. The lady’s-maid gave the book and pincushion to the Queen, when the latter awoke. The Queen then marked with pins the patterns of the dresses she wished to wear.”

One of these books of patterns is extant, and can be seen in the Archives Nationales ; it is for the year 1782.

“When the Queen’s toilette was completed, the valets and pages came in and took away all the superfluous articles to the wardrobe, where they were re-folded, hung up, and cleaned with such care that even the older dresses had all the brilliance of the new ones.

“Three rooms lined with cupboards, some with shelves, some to hang garments, were set aside for the Queen’s wardrobe ; large tables in these rooms served to lay the dresses on to be folded.

“The Queen usually had for winter twelve state

dresses, twelve simple dresses, and twelve rich dresses on panniers, which she used for card-parties or intimate supper-parties.

“Summer and spring toilettes served for autumn wear also. All these toilettes were remodelled at the end of each season, unless Her Majesty desired to keep some as they were. No mention is made of muslin and cotton, or other dresses of that kind; these had only recently come into fashion, and they were not renewed each season, but were made to serve for several years.”*

In the French Court everything was done according to tradition: “a certain stuff was worn in winter, another kind in summer. Fashion was carried to the extent of fixing certain colours for certain seasons, such as gold for frosty days, and silver for the dog-days. Anyone appearing in the gallery at Versailles attired in an unseasonable manner was looked upon as a person of bad style unused to the ways of society.”†

Was Mlle. Bertin presented to Marie-Antoinette whilst she was Dauphine, or not until 1774, after the death of Louis XV. ? It would seem at first that Mme. Campan, whose duties gave her the opportunity of learning the details of the Queen’s daily life, is probably in the right; at the same time we must remember that Mlle. Bertin may very well have been presented to Marie-Antoinette while she was yet Dauphine without being granted easy access to her

* Comtesse d’Adhémar, “Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette.”

† Rassel d’Epinal, “Le Château des Tuileries.”

apartments. In any case it is certain that from the year 1774 Rose Bertin came regularly twice a week to show her creations to the Queen. She continued to do so without interruption until after October 6, with the exception of the first month following on the death of the Empress Maria-Theresa.

This took up a great deal of Rose's time ; she therefore informed her clients that she was to be seen at her own residence on certain appointed days, but would be no longer able to go to her clients' houses. Her manner of announcing this was perhaps rather tactless ; she displayed, probably, some haughtiness, which exasperated all the fine ladies of Paris ; in fact, if her shop was not instantly deserted, it was merely because it was considered good style to patronize the same milliner as the Queen.

Although Rose had succeeded in pleasing Marie-Antoinette, the Duchesse de Chartres, and the Princesse de Conti, her manners were not to the taste of many of the ladies with whom she had dealings. The following is a criticism of her given in the Baroness d'Oberkirch's memoirs :

“ The jargon of mademoiselle was exceedingly amusing ; it was a singular mixture of haughtiness and cringing humility, and came very near impertinence if one did not hold her at arm's length, and degenerated into insolence when one did not nail her to her place.”

The Queen being the first to wear the *pouf à l'inoculation*, all the ladies of the Court immediately

followed suit. Mlle. Bertin was no longer able to cope with the work alone, and employed thirty work-girls, but each piece of headgear cost 10 louis, which was a pretty good price.

This eagerness to seize any topical event for a new creation was a special characteristic of the great milliner's genius, a characteristic which was mimicked by all her competitors of both sexes, amongst whom the celebrated Beaulard must be placed in the first rank. It was with great justice that a journal entitled the *Cabinet des Modes* could say in 1786: "Fashion, that has been called by her detractors 'light, fickle, flighty, and frivolous,' has, however, fixed principles. We see her constant in seizing and appropriating to herself every event of interest, consigning it to her annals, rendering it immortal in history. What great event, what signal deed of our warriors, or even of our magistrates, has she not published? If the D'Estaings and D'Orvilliers have conquered, did she not advertise their victory? Did she not decree that ladies should wear on their heads tributes to these deeds, so that, entering thus by the extremity of their bodies, these deeds should be engraved on their hearts? Did she not announce to the whole of Europe the success of Figaro? Under how many shapes did she not reproduce Janot? Did not even Cagliostro, more famous by his lawsuit than by his lying immortality, find that fashion had made his existence known from one hemisphere to the other? . . . We flatter ourselves that our assertion

that the *Cabinet des Modes* may be of use even to historians will not be denied."

The editor of this journal was in the right in singing the praises of fashion, which is not often appreciated in this way. The following lines written by Meister in his "Correspondance Littéraire" for November, 1774, are a proof: "If ever a book of morals is written for our young Parisian ladies, I beg the author to attack fiercely the extravagant head-dresses, and above all the bad taste of Beaulard, inventor of all these absurdities.

"This man racks his brains to represent on the heads of young women all the most important events recorded in the newspapers. One may see a bonnet portraying the opening of Parliament, another the Battle of Ivry and Henry IV., another an English garden—in fact, all historical events, ancient and modern. It so happens that head-dresses are no longer in keeping with the costumes of the day, and so more picturesque ones are being invented, and presently women will unconsciously find themselves dressing so theatrically that for ball dresses, which must differ from ordinary dress, there will be nothing left but nightcaps and bed-gowns."

These censures, however, did not interfere with Beaulard, nor with Mlle. Bertin, to whom they could be well applied, as she was capable of just such extravagant inventions.

Mlle. Bertin did not look with pleasure upon the fame of her rival Beaulard. She came to the Queen

one day, and complained, with tears in her eyes, of the favour shown him by certain great ladies. She had cause to be alarmed at his success ; he was a man of great imagination, and during the days of the *poufs aux sentiments* invented some very original ones, capable of rivalling the confections of the Rue Saint-Honoré. His fame was considerably increased by his invention of a curious bonnet called *à la bonne maman*—granny bonnets.

The Comtesse d'Adhémar, in her "Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette," relates the following anecdote of Beaulard : "A foreigner came to him. 'Monsieur,' she said, 'I wish you to invent a stylish hat for me. I am English, the widow of an Admiral ; I need say no more, your taste will do the rest.'

"The skilful milliner set to work after some meditation, and two days later he brought the haughty islander a bonnet that was truly divine. Billowy gauze represented a rough sea, and by means of ribbon and ornaments he had managed to portray a fleet carrying a mourning flag in sign of the widowhood of the lady. When she appeared with this marvellous work of art, just cries of admiration were heard on all sides ; but Beaulard's vogue was brought to its zenith by his creation of the bonnet *à la bonne maman*.

"To appreciate it, one must know that grandmothers, in fact all the old Court, disapproved of the height of the modern head-dress. Consequently bonnets *à la bonne maman* were raised to a fashion-



Musée Carnavalet

FASHION IN 1776

Bonnet called *Le Lever de la Reine*

To face page 44

able height by means of a spring, and lowered when a bad-tempered grandmamma appeared on the scene. All young women wished for one, and Mlle. Bertin never pardoned any of her clients for their temporary infidelity to her, caused by the rage for Beaulard's confections."

All these frivolities and various anecdotes that were spread abroad did harm to Marie-Antoinette, who was exposed to the most virulent criticism. In the first place, as Soulavie tells us: "The lady aunts who could not resign themselves to adopting these extravagant fashions, nor to model themselves daily on the Queen, called her feathers the trappings of a horse."* But this was just a saying; the Abbé Baudeau, in his "Chronique Secrète de Paris sous Louis XVI.," describes the state of things better. "The Queen is shot at with bullets of fire," he writes under date July 11, 1774; "there is no horror that is not told of her, and the most contradictory stories are believed by certain persons."

It would have been strange indeed if Rose had escaped malicious tales, which were the current coin of wit during that perverse, fickle, and depraved century. We are therefore not surprised to read in Soulavie's book these lines, "They accused her [Marie-Antoinette] of secret intrigues with Mlle. Bertin, dressmaker of the capital, and with the Misses Guimard, Renaud and Gentil," without counting the

* "Mémoires Historiques et Politiques du Règne de Louis XVI.," t. ii., Paris, an x.

others, of course. A joke, a mark of interest, a smile, a word of the Queen, sufficed to fire the imagination of the pamphleteers in the pay of Mme. Adélaïde in particular, to conceive the most incredible tales.

Rose Bertin, whose art, as we have seen, was not to the taste of the lady aunts, did not escape the arrows of the ungallant scribblers whose pens were hired by the anti-Austrian clique, at whose head the aunts had placed themselves. All the same, Mme. Adélaïde's ladies—amongst others Mme. de Béon—were Mlle. Bertin's clients.

It must be admitted, however, in excuse of her critics, that Marie - Antoinette gave a handle to criticism by her irresponsible and reprehensible conduct, and above all by her extravagance. In October, 1774, her allowance was raised from 96,000 to 200,000 livres, and it was not long before this was insufficient for her expensive tastes.

The tales spread abroad about the milliner did not injure her trade, and it was still considered good style to patronize her establishment.

Comte Auguste de la March, Prince d'Arenberg, having married Mlle. de Cernay on November 23, 1774, the latter ordered a Mohammedan dress in the following month, and shortly after a costume à *la Henri IV.* At the same period Rose Bertin executed orders for Princesse de Stolberg at Brussels.

The winter of 1774-75 was exceedingly brilliant ; the Queen gave various balls, which was good for trade. The balls of December 6 and January 9 were

particularly successful. On the latter date there were quadrilles of masks dressed in the Norwegian and Lapland costume. The Queen set the example, the nobles followed, and brilliant reunions were given. Mercy-Argenteau wrote on the subject to the Empress Maria-Theresa on February 20, 1775 : " Comtesse de Brionne having given a private ball at her residence at Versailles, after midnight, the Queen, Monsieur, and the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, wished to honour the reunion with their presence, and presented themselves without advising the Comtesse de Brionne."

Four quadrilles were given in their honour : the first in old French costumes ; the second represented mountebanks ; the third, which was the Queen's, was given in Tyrolean costume, and the fourth in Indian. The masquerade was so successful that the Queen desired it to be repeated the following week at a ball which was given at Versailles on January 23, in the little theatre.

To the era of eccentric *poufs* succeeded that of gigantic feathers, which began in 1775. The " Correspondance Secrète " says on January 9 of that year : " The Queen has invented for her sleigh drives a headgear which combines well with the *Quès aco*, but which brings into fashion a feminine head-dress of a prodigious height. These head-dresses represent high mountains, flowery meadows, silvery streams, forests, or an English garden. An immense crest of feathers supports the edifice at the back. These crests, which are renewed daily, called the King's

attention the other day ; and to show the Queen, as gallantly as possible, that they displeased him, he presented her with a diamond aigrette, saying : ‘ I beg you will limit yourself to this ornament, even of which your charms have no need. This present should please you the more that it has not increased my expenditure, since it is composed of diamonds I possessed when I was Dauphin.’ After this incident our women will no doubt modify their dress. We are compelled, however, to admit that these huge and costly head-dresses have greatly increased our commercial profits. Fashion becomes an industrial empire too profitable for France not to applaud it. A woman’s dress is in this country a political question, because of its influence on commerce and manufactures.”

These economic conclusions are interesting. We see how fashion, in which Rose Bertin played a far more important part than the Queen, had at the same time a happy and a disastrous effect. Commerce was naturally affected by it ; some industries profited, whilst bitter complaints were heard that others were ruined.

“ A milliner and dressmaker admitted to the private apartments of the Queen, to the stupefaction of all who held by etiquette, Rose Bertin became a historic personage. Her influence destroys our old industries by completing the revolution commenced by the Pompadour and Du Barry, substituting for the solid magnificence of old fashions a light, frivolous,

and fantastic style. At one time we see the Queen, and after her all our reigning beauties, affecting extreme simplicity, and borrowing the light white dresses of their lady's-maids ; now we find them swathed in theatrical costumes, with immense crests of feathers. They raise upon their heads a gigantic scaffolding of gauze, flowers, and feathers, so that, according to the caricatures of the period, a woman's head was in the middle of her body, and society had the appearance of an extravagant fancy ball.

“ The *salons* laugh at Fashion, but obey it. The workshops clamour that the Austrian is ruining the manufactures of Lyons—our beautiful silk trade—to enrich the lawn factories of Brabanzon and the subjects of her brother, Joseph II.”*

These censures are exaggerated, as lawn factories were not the monopoly of Brabanzon ; there were many important ones in French provinces, notably in Flanders, where there were various famous centres of the lawn trade.

Her great success was, naturally, not calculated to decrease the pride of the milliner of the Rue Saint-Honoré. She loved to say, “ I have just come from working with Her Majesty,” and was perpetually alluding to her interviews with the Queen. It is true that Marie-Antoinette treated her with the greatest familiarity, that her door always stood open for her dressmaker, and that the importance she attached to dress—at least, before the birth of her first

* Henri Martin, “ Histoire de France,” t. xvi., 1860.

son in 1781—lent a certain importance to her dress-maker. It is related that a lady of the highest rank of the aristocracy came to her on one occasion to inquire why a certain order had not been executed. Mlle. Bertin replied with comical majesty: "I cannot gratify you. In my last conference with the Queen we decided that that fashion should not appear until next month."

Another similar incident is also told of the Rue Saint-Honoré. One of Mlle. Bertin's permanent clients came one day to buy a hat for a provincial friend, who desired to have one from the celebrated milliner's shop. The client asked to see the milliner herself. After some delay she was ushered in, and found Rose Bertin lying on a couch in the most coquettish *négligé*. She greeted her client with a slight inclination of the head, and, having heard her request, rang the bell. "Mademoiselle Adélaïde," she said, as a young employée answered the summons, "show madam one of last month's hats." At that time, when hats changed from day to day for any reason or for none, a hat a month old might be absolutely old-fashioned, and the client, offended, protested that she desired the very newest style; but with the gesture of a deputy queen, which she humorously practised, Rose Bertin cut short her reproaches. "Madam," she said, "it is not possible. When I last worked with Her Majesty, we decreed that the new styles should not appear for another week."

It is not amazing that, as a result of these tales, which spread like wildfire round *salons* and *boudoirs*, Rose Bertin was nicknamed the "Minister of Fashion"; at the same time the Ministers of the period, who seemed to have no stable opinions, but were perpetually changing their views, were nicknamed "fashion-makers." Mlle. Bertin, Minister of Fashion, was more costly than a Secretary of State.

The influence she exercised over the Queen led the latter, from the first year of her reign, into expenses for dress which amounted speedily to a very considerable sum. That year, without the King's knowledge, she contracted debts to the incredible total of 300,000 livres. A large part of this sum, naturally, was owing to dressmakers, milliners, feather-merchants, perfumers, and other providers of feminine coqueties. But of all these there was no one so loved, or whose advice was more earnestly solicited, as that of little Bertin.

Although Rose was so free and easy with her clients, even the most aristocratic, she did not neglect her business and the interests of her establishment. Every month she despatched to the Northern Courts a model dressed in the latest French style. She traded with Spain and Portugal, and especially with Russia; and it was said of her that her fame was only bounded by the boundaries of Europe.

In his "Tableau de Paris," Mercier speaks of this model of the Rue Saint-Honoré in the following amusing sketch.

“Nothing,” he says, “equals the gravity of a milliner confectioning a *pouf*, and increasing a hundredfold the value of gauzes and flowers. Every week some new style of edifice is created in the world of hats. The inventor becomes famous; women have a profound and tender respect for the happy geniuses who vary the advantages of their beauty and face.

“The expenses of fashion now exceed those for the table and carriages. The unfortunate husband can never calculate the cost of these varying fantasies, and he requires ready resources to meet these capricious calls. He would be pointed at in the streets if he did not pay for these frivolities as punctually as he pays the butcher and baker.

“The profound inventors in this line lay down in Paris the laws that shall govern the universe. The famous model—the precious mannequin attired in the newest fashion—is despatched from Paris to London every month, and from thence is sent to shed its graces round the whole of Europe. It travels to the north and to the south; it goes to St. Petersburg and to Constantinople; and all nations, humbly bowing to the taste of the Rue Saint-Honoré, imitate the folds turned by a French hand.

“I met a foreigner who refused to believe in the *Poupée de la Rue Saint-Honoré*, which is despatched regularly to the north, to carry there the model of the new head-dress, while a second edition is de-

spatched to the heart of Italy, and from thence finds access to the seraglio. I led the unbeliever to the famous establishment, and there he saw with his eyes and felt with his hand, and in touching he seemed still to doubt, it all seemed so incredible to him."

Mercier is lacking in enthusiasm for the expenses into which his beautiful contemporaries were led; many persons of more simple and of good taste believed and said that these eccentricities were a temporary craze which would pass, and people would return to something more natural. It was an illusion. The "Correspondance Secrète" was greatly deceived when, in relating the anecdote of Louis XVI. and the diamond aigrette, it said: "No doubt women will modify their dress."

Nothing of the kind occurred; on the contrary, in the next month—February, 1775—the same paper admits that its prediction was incorrect:

"The head-dress of our women rises higher and higher; to-day a head-dress which a few months ago was considered ridiculously high would not be tolerated even by the *bourgeoisie*. Ladies of quality wear crests of feathers two or three feet high, and the Queen sets the example. On the 17th instant the Archduke Maximilien honoured the Opera with his presence, and must have been not a little astonished to find himself in a forest of feathers."

Caricaturists had a fine field. Songs were written ridiculing the absurd fashions and the rage for

feathers. Comte d'Adhémar, amongst others, composed the following song :

Air : " Pour la Baronne."

“ Je prends la plume
Pour célébrer les grands plumets.
Partage l'ardeur qui m'allume,
Muse, préside à mes couplets :
Je prends la plume.

“ C'est à la plume
Que la France doit sa grandeur.
Henri, dont c'était la coutume,
Criait dans le champ de l'honneur :
C'est à la plume.

“ C'est à la plume
Qu'on doit souvent tout son bonheur ;
Quand sur le feu qui nous consume
La bouche explique mal le cœur,
C'est à la plume.

“ Charmantes plumes
Couvrez les fronts, troublez les cœurs,
Malgré leurs froides amertumes,
Vous régnerez sur vos censeurs,
Charmantes plumes.

“ Toutes les plumes
Ramenant la fidélité ;
Amans volages que nous fûmes,
L'amour quitta pour la beauté
Toutes les plumes.

“ Dessus la plume,
Quoiqu'il soit doux de discourir,
Il est minuit, et je présume
Qu'il est plus doux de s'établir
Dessus la plume.”

Another song, given below, is more characteristic of the age. The author is unknown to us; it was sung to the tune, "Réveillez-vous, belle endormie":

"Oui, sur la tête de nos dames
Laissons les panaches flotter.
Ils sont analogues aux femmes,
Elles font bien de les porter.

"La femme se peint elle-même
Dans ce frivole ajustement ;
La plume vole, elle est l'emblème
De ce sexe trop inconstant.

"Des femmes on sait la coutume,
Vous font-elles quelque serment ?
Fiez-vous-y ; comme la plume,
Autant en emporte le vent.

"La femme aussi de haut plumage
Se pare au pays des Incas,
Mais là les beautés sont sauvages
Et les nôtres ne le sont pas.

"Tandis que d'un panache, en France,
Un époux orne sa moitié,
D'un autre, avec reconnaissance.
Par elle, il est gratifié."

Marie-Antoinette's intimacy with her dressmaker was the occasion of bitter censure. An amusing incident, which, however, justifies the critics, occurred during the early months of 1775 : Richard, President of the Parliament of Dijon, had a daughter, who in her character of Canoness was to receive a decoration, which the Queen had promised to confer on her

herself. It was a little ceremony to which Mme. Richard, the Canoness, attached the greatest importance. On the appointed day the Queen, having completely forgotten all about it, gave leave of absence to Mme. d'Ossun and Mme. de Misery, who were in attendance on her, and there was no one with her but Mlle. Bertin, who had come on business. Suddenly the Queen remembered that Mme. Richard was coming, and would soon arrive. What was to be done? Marie-Antoinette soon found a way out of the difficulty. Mme. Richard had never put her foot in the palace before, she probably never would again, and the ladies of the Court were quite unknown to her. The Queen took Rose into her room and made her put on one of her own dresses, at the same time teaching her the part she was to play in the ceremony. She had little to do; it was merely a question of holding a basin of water whilst the Queen placed the ribbon and cross round the new Abbess's neck. Needless to say, Rose's toilette was made amid great laughter; but when the Canoness was introduced both the Queen and her dressmaker had regained their composure, and the little ceremony was performed without Mme. Richard's suspicions being aroused as to the identity of the Maid of Honour.

It was about this time that the bonnets *à la révolte* made their appearance. At the beginning of May, 1775, the high price of flour had caused trouble, and bakers' shops were pillaged in Paris on the 3rd. The misfortunes of the people were made a pretext for a



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MADemoiselle ROSE IN MORNING TOILETTE IN THE
CHAMPS-ELYSÉES, 1787

To face page 56

new fashion. There were also hats *à la laitière*, ornamented with ribbons and wreaths of flowers, roses and acacias, and so on. The bonnet *négligé à la reine* and the bonnet *à la paysanne*, had great success.

On May 27, 1775, an event occurred which greatly grieved the famous milliner. The Princesse de Conti died in Paris at the age of eighty-one. One might almost say that she had led Rose by the hand from the door of the *Trait Galant* to the palace at Versailles. It was a great blow to Mlle. Bertin. She thought with affection of the day when, with hands and feet benumbed with the cold, she stood warming herself at the flaming fire of the drawing-room in the Conti Palace, chatting familiarly with the good dowager, never suspecting that she was talking to one of the most powerful Princesses in France.

There was no time, however, for grief; the whirlwind of life swept her onward. Orders poured into the shop of the Rue Saint-Honoré, and the consecration of the King had been fixed for June 10, which meant a surplus of work.

It is uncertain whether Rose did or did not follow the Queen to Rheims. The "Souvenirs" of Léonard state that she did; but, as we have seen, little faith can be put in that book. In any case, the ceremony occasioned but a very short break in the extravagant fashions, which revived again as soon as the Queen returned to Versailles. These eccentricities evoked the bitterest criticism, which was directed especially against the Queen. The editor of the *Cabinet*

des Modes was a true prophet of the future when he asserted that his paper would be of service to historians, because fashion was the cancer of the age—an age of luxury and folly, when ribbons and chiffons were the preoccupation of the wealthy, and while the masses were seething with pent-up anger, the anger of a people crushed by insolent luxury, enraged by the brazen dissoluteness of a heedless aristocracy, mad for pleasure, blind with pride and self-love, unconscious of the rising tide.

And yet in her distant capital, far from rumours and threats and from flattering courtiers, the Empress Maria-Theresa was conscious of the dangers which surrounded the French Queen—her clear-sightedness penetrated the future. This remarkable and wise woman, on receiving a portrait of her daughter bedizened in Rose Bertin's best style, returned it by her Ambassador, Comte Mercy-Argenteau, with the remark: "This is not the portrait of a Queen of France; there is some mistake, it is the portrait of an actress." It was a severe lesson, but surely not undeserved. The Empress of Austria, far from France, was more clear-sighted than her daughter or her son-in-law, and saw the dangers ahead. She had grasped that the late King's government had greatly compromised the monarchy, that the least thing would cause the cup of bitterness to overflow, and that a Queen of France succeeding to the costly reign of a Du Barry should by her economy, her simplicity, and her virtues, efface and pay the heavy

debts of the courtesan, which had fallen on the shoulders of the people instead of their King.

The lesson was of no avail; the "Mémoires Secrets," under the date August 19, 1775, tell us that "Her Majesty looked upon the reproof as futile and too severe, the result of ill-humour caused by age and illness; she did not think it necessary, therefore, to modify her dress, and the courtiers allege that the very next day the Queen was wearing a still higher crest of feathers. Her Majesty's weakness for this fragile ornament is such, that a young poet named Auguste, having sent a humorous poem to the *Mercur*, criticizing feathers, it was returned to him, as the editors feared to insert it, lest it might offend the Queen. All stylish women naturally followed their Sovereign's example. The feather trade, which was unimportant formerly in France, is now very considerable, and at one time the stock at Lyons was temporarily exhausted."

On September 18, 1775, the Princesse de Lamballe, one of Rose's chief clients and her protectress, was appointed Superintendent of the Queen's Household, which was greatly to Mlle. Bertin's advantage. She knew that the Princess would not oppose her interests, nor check an imagination given to perpetual change, which was profitable to her trade.

At this time people did not only trouble about the shape and the trimmings in fashion, for the colour of the fabrics used in making all kinds of costumes for men as well as for women changed just as fre-

quently. During the summer of 1775 the fashionable colour was a kind of chestnut brown, which the Queen had chosen for a dress. When the King saw it, he exclaimed, "That is puce!" (flea-coloured). So puce became the fashion, in the town as well as at Court. Men and women ordered puce-coloured clothes, and those who did not buy new cloth or taffetas sent their old clothes to the dyers. But the colour was not always exactly the same shade, so they made a difference between old and young flea, and then made subdivisions, and you could see clothes of the colour of the flea's "back," "head," or "thigh," and the whole country was covered with puce-coloured clothes, when (we may read this in the "Mémoires Secrets"), "the merchants having offered some satins to the Queen, Her Majesty chose an ash grey, and Monsieur exclaimed that it was the colour of the Queen's hair. From that moment puce was out of fashion, and valets were despatched from Fontainebleau to Paris to procure velvet, ratteen, and cloth, of that colour, and 86 livres the ell was the price for some of these just before the Feast of St. Martin; the usual price was from 40 to 42 livres. This anecdote, so frivolous on the surface, shows that, if the French monarch has a steady head, in spite of his youth, the courtiers are just as vain, thoughtless and petty as they were under the late King."

The Queen could in the matter of fashions allow herself certain fancies; she did them honour. Contemporaries are agreed in praising her air and the

wonderful elegance with which she wore her clothes. Horace Walpole—who had seen her at the wedding of Mme. Clothilde of France, who married in 1775 the future King of Sardinia, Charles Emanuel IV., then Prince of Piedmont—wrote to his friends in England: “One has eyes for the Queen only! The Hebes and Floras and Helens, and the Graces, are only street women compared with her. Seated or standing, she is the Statue of Beauty; when she moves she is Grace personified. She wore a silver brocade, flowered with pink laurels, but few diamonds and feathers. They say that she does not keep time when she dances—then the fault was in the time! Speaking of beauties, I have seen none, or else the Queen outshone them.”

The “Correspondance Secrète” gives us striking details of the impudence of feminine taste in the autumn of 1775. The hair was dressed so high that we read, October 14: “Women have to kneel in their carriages; you see their faces, as it were, in the middle of their bodies.” And November 7: “They are talking of substituting tufts of fur for plumes this winter. Women will then look like Pashas; and we believe they will be Pashas with more than three tails, and that they will lower their head-dresses, which really are now worn at such an extravagant height . . . I have already told you that they decorate their heads with imitations of all sorts of plants, and that by studying the caps of the past year you may become a fairly good botanist. After having exhausted the

greenhouses, they went to the kitchen-garden produce, and at last they sought models at the herbalist's. Yesterday at Court they wore caps trimmed with small trusses of couch-grass—a splendid imitation, of course. You will remark, monsieur, the skilful transition made use of to lead us to the branches of fur which are going to be the vogue this winter.” Finally, under the date December 9, we read again in this correspondence all about the fashionable colours, which in the autumn had been puce, and then the colour of the Queen's hair. Never has fashion shown so much extravagance; there are the singular colours of “stifled sighs” and caps of “bitter groans,” etc.

Nevertheless the fashion of feathers did not entirely go out with the winter of 1776, and Soulavie reports that some were sold at 50 livres apiece. Money was so easily earned by anything which had to do with woman's clothes that Mercier, indignant, wrote in his “Tableau de Paris”: “Tulle, gauze, and net, occupied a hundred thousand hands; and there were soldiers, whole and maimed, making net and offering it for sale themselves. Soldiers making net!”

“To-day,” Métra remarks, January 20, 1776, in his “Correspondance Secrète,” “caps take the shape of a pigeon, and certainly there is no woman decorated in that fashion who does not expect to hear the compliment that it is one of the doves from her car. Feathers are beginning to fall, and this moulting truly comes at the right time.”

Never in France have woman exhausted so much art to make themselves ridiculous. Hair dressers and milliners had to keep their ingenuity perpetually active to satisfy clients as frivolous as these with whom they dealt. As for the Queen, with the help of her hair dressers and Mlle. Bertin, she started most of the fashions. In 1775 she wore the first peacock's feathers in her hair, a fashion immediately copied by the whole Court. And here we find the reason and excuse of her perpetual changes. While feeding her vanity by influencing those who surrounded her by coquetry, Marie-Antoinette soon tired of a fashion which tended to become a uniform. And Mlle. Bertin had to foresee the moment when a fashion reached that degree of generalization which took away from the originality, and in consequence called for prompt modification.

However, in spite of what Métra wrote on January 20, plumes and immense head-dresses had not gone out of fashion. Woman still wore such scaffoldings of hair and trimmings that they could only kneel in their carriages. "They appeared," a contemporary tells us, "like busy people having let fall a bracelet, which they were always looking for among the cushions." Besides being obliged to hold themselves in a distorted, hampered, and inconvenient manner, they had to leave their curtains open, in order not to disturb the arrangement of their ribbons, which were blown by the wind like flags.

Mme. Campan says: "If the fashion of wearing

feathers and extravagant head-dresses had been prolonged, it would have brought about a revolution in architecture. The necessity of raising the doors and ceilings of the boxes at the theatre, and above all the roofs of carriages, would have been felt."

The caricaturists had no need to exaggerate ; they simply had to copy and paint their contemporaries as they saw them. Some of the feathers which went towards the making up of these immense plumes were three feet long ; and the madness lasted several years, but was at its height from 1776 to 1780.

A ball was given on Maundy Thursday in February, 1776, at the Palais-Royal, by the Duchesse de Chartres in honour of the Queen, who wore such a big head-dress that some of it had to be taken down, because she could not get into her carriage without crushing it, and put on again when she arrived at her Palais-Royal.

The King, a regular quiz at times, laughed at all these exaggerations. It happened one day, in the month of April of the same year, that the Queen, returning from the opera, and not seeming very pleased, the King asked her how she found it. "Cold," she replied. And when he insisted on being told what sort of a reception she had been given, and if she had had the usual cheers, she did not answer, the King, says Bachaumont, understanding what that meant, said, "Apparently, madame, you did not wear enough feathers."

That was a criticism of the skill of Mlle. Bertin,

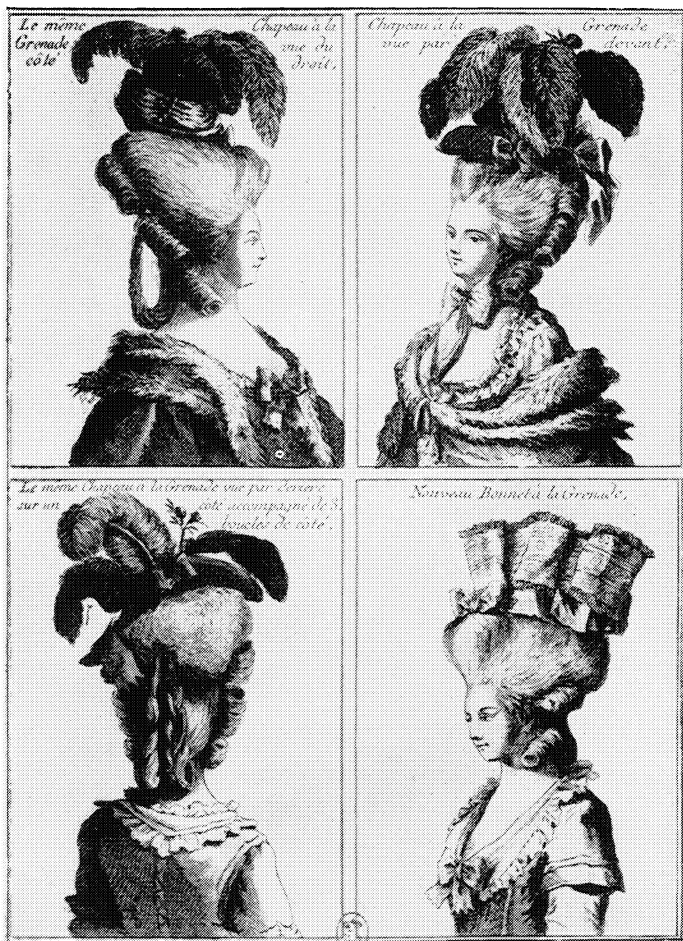
and of the continual outbidding of her inventions. All the husbands apparently were of the King's opinion, and not only in Paris or in France, but even in foreign countries, where the French fashions were copied with energy, as is proved by a letter from Genoa dated May 20, 1776, which relates an incident in the sojourn of the Duchesse de Chartres, who, as a client of Rose Bertin, increased by her presence and example the number of her orders. Woman in all countries of the world, having a little of the monkey, only thinks well of herself when she has imitated, at her best, the manners and clothes created, as freaks, by the futile and disordered brains of society women and professional beauties. "Madame la Duchesse de Chartres," this letter says, "at first grieved all the women here who pride themselves on dressing as Parisians; this Princess, who travels under the name of Princesse de Joinville, only appeared at first in a semi-large cap, which made the husbands rejoice, as they are the enemies of high head-dresses and plumes; they represented to their wives that they could not do better than conform to the fashion of dressing their hair like the first Princess of the blood royal. But when the Princess put on her 'house of cards'—as we say in familiar speech—and hoisted her plumes, great was the joy among women; and the next day the bankers had 50,000 livres commission for getting feathers from France. This anecdote, so futile in itself, proves the foreign taste for our fashions, and

that we are still the first in them, if we have fallen from our high position in politics.”

All the same, this magnificence continued to be the pretext for attacks from scribblers, who aimed more particularly at Marie-Antoinette, and whose work was preparing by degrees the middle class and the people to accept, as a deliverance, the fall of the monarchy which had made France the first country in the world, and was then crushing it with disastrous childishness. However, in spite of the libels and pamphlets which began to circulate among the people, the Queen had kept her prestige in the eyes of the great mass of the people. The Englishman William Wraxall, an impartial observer, said, in fact: “In the summer of 1776, when I left France, Marie-Antoinette had reached the height of her beauty and her popularity.”

Comte d'Allonville tells us in his “*Mémoires Secret*” that the Queen received only 400,000 francs for her personal expenditure, and that was little enough with her taste for dress, and love of play which ruined her, so that the King had often to pay her debts from his privy purse.

It was in this year, 1776, that Louis XVI., by an order dated February, suppressed the wardenships, guilds of commerce, arts, and trades. This measure caused at first the liveliest alarm among people interested. Different bodies and guilds printed pamphlets in which they showed the disorder which would follow—tailors would make carriage-wheels,



Musée Carnavalet

CHAPEAU À LA GRENADE, 1779

To face page 66

the pork-butcher would sell candles. They had meetings. On February 12 the Guild of Hosiery met in the cloister of Saint-Jacques-la-Boncherie; on the 15th the six merchant guilds met again. The Advocate-General Seguier, advising the re-formation of the guilds on a new basis, said that women belonging to certain trade guilds should be admitted to the mastership, and of this number he mentioned hairdressers, embroiderers, and the makers of fashions. "This would mean," he said, "preparing an asylum for virtue, which is often led by want to licentiousness."

The edict of February was followed by a fresh edict in August, 1776, which re-established on a new basis the six merchant guilds and the forty-four corporations of arts and trades. The fashion-makers and dealers in feathers were No. 18.

Henceforth, to carry on a trade, it was necessary to be entered on a special register which was kept by the Lieutenant-General of Police, and in which was written, with family name and Christian name, the age and domicile of the person entered. If he changed his domicile or altered the nature of his business, he had to be entered afresh on the register. Finally, admission to the mastership cost 300 livres, but, once admitted, no rights could be taken from anyone received into the guild.

Naturally, Mlle. Bertin belonged to the reconstituted guild of fashion-makers, which was called "The Guild of Makers and Dealers in Fashions—Feather-Dealers and Florists of the City and Suburbs of Paris," and

from the formation of this new guild she found herself invested with the functions of master, and placed for a year at the head of the guild, whose acting members were as follows :

Masters: Marie-Jeanne Bertin, Denise l'Étrier.

Assistants: Marguerite Danican Philidor, woman Fortin, Madeleine Darant, woman Robbin.

Entering into office October 1, 1776, she kept it until October 1, 1777. The choice that the guild made, of Rose Bertin for first master, was evident proof of her importance and of the position she held in Parisian trade. This first year the fees collected for the admittance of masters rose to 10,020 livres. They were 3,660 livres in 1777-78, and 2,580 livres in 1778-79.

In 1776 the head-dresses and caps were just as varied as in 1775. One of the styles was called "The Rising of the Queen"; they also wore hats in the style of Henri IV., which were hats with turned-up brims trimmed after the fashion of the legendary white plume. This had no bearing on the present time, but was purely reminiscent. The fashion lasted for some years with others more ephemeral. The Queen wore one on the day when Joseph II. arrived in Paris, April 18, 1777. The weather was fearful, rain and wind never ceased, and the carriages in which Marie-Antoinette with her suite crossed Paris to meet her brother were open. "All the Henri IV. hats," writes Bachaumont, "and the feathers were spoilt, ruined and broken. At this

the Queen laughed and was immensely amused." Sometimes one laughs at trifles ; it was not very witty, but it was childish.

Marie-Antoinette has left information on certain details relating to the fashions of 1776. We find it in a letter addressed to Maria-Theresa, June 13. "The same rule," she wrote, "applies to the head-dress for women of a certain age, as well as to the dresses and jewels, except the paint, which elderly people put on here, and they are perhaps even a little stronger in tone than those of the younger ones. For the rest, after reaching forty - five years of age, one wears less startling colours, and the dresses are cut less to the figure and are not so light, and the hair is not so curly nor the head-dress so high."

On February 17 the Queen went with Madame and the Princesse de Lamballe to the Comédie Française, where they saw the first performance of "Orédan," a tragedy by Fontanelle, the author of the "Life of Aretino," and a piece called "La Vestale," the performance of which was forbidden in 1768. "The Queen was not in full dress, with no diamonds or paint," Hardy says, "and looked in this garb quite pleasant and middle-class." This goes to prove that Mlle. Bertin could invent a style which was not eccentric. Marie-Antoinette's taste for elegance did not detract from her influence. If this Queen had dreamed for one moment of ruling, if she had had any of the love of Catherine de Medici or Anne of

Austria for governing, she could easily have satisfied her taste.

“The Queen is more powerful than ever, although she seems to pay attention only to amusement and jewels,” wrote the librarian Hardy. But she did not think much of authority. In the same way, they say, she did not like playing cards. “If the Queen did not like gambling, why did she play?” answered the Comtesse de Boigne. “Ah, she had quite a different passion: it was the passion of fashion. She dressed to be in the fashion, she made debts to be in the fashion, she played to be in the fashion, she was intellectual to be in the fashion. To be the prettiest woman in the fashion seemed to her very desirable; and this eccentricity, unworthy of a great Queen, was the only cause of the wrongs which have been so cruelly exaggerated.”

With such a mind, one can understand the empire which a woman like Mlle. Bertin could exercise over her.

When she was the Dauphine, Maria-Theresa wrote to Mercy: “Inclined as she is to spending money, she may go too far.” There was then only an allowance of 92,000 livres at her disposal, and she only disposed of a quarter of this amount, the rest “being averted by those who managed for her.” But since then the sum placed at her disposal had been considerably increased, and Rose Bertin could freely exploit this desire to be the most fashionable woman which Mme. de Boigne speaks of, and this taste for

spending remarked upon by Maria-Theresa. In 1707 Mercy wrote : " Her Royal Majesty is not dressed to advantage, but the fault is entirely due to her Lady of the Bedchamber, who does not thoroughly understand it, and who brings but little attention to bear on the subject." This Lady of the Bedchamber, the Duchesse de Villars, died September 15, 1771, and was replaced by the Duchesse de Cossé. Everything was changed : Rose Bertin became the regular milliner, and the chrysalis became a butterfly very quickly.

Rose Bertin in 1777 reckoned the Prince de Guéméné among her clients. The Prince and Princess were far from forming an ideal household. The Princess had an open liaison with the Duc de Coigny. The Prince on his side had another not less open, with Mme. Dillon, for whom he felt a real passion which ended only with his life. He endeavoured to make himself agreeable to the beautiful Mme. Dillon, and in order to court the mother he could think of nothing better than to spoil her daughter by ordering from Mlle. Bertin, for New Year's Day 1777, a wonderful doll with a complete trousseau, of which we have a full description in Mlle. Bertin's own books : " It was a big doll with springs, with a well-made foot and a very good wig ; a fine linen chemise and lace cuffs ; a pair of silk stocking with puce-coloured clocks ; a pair of pink satin shoes edged with puce ribbon, and high heels ; a petticoat trimmed with fine muslin embroidery ; a long and well-boned corset ;

a bodice of white taffetas quilted inside and out ; a ball dress ; a skirt of pink taffetas, a flounce all round of striped gauze, with chicory made of crape, and folds of pink taffetas for the head ; a second skirt of striped brocaded gauze, looped up, and fastened with bows of pink and puce-coloured ribbon ; bodice trimmings, the sleeves fastened with ribbon ; a collar and a front of blond lace ; a gauze apron trimmed with crape ; a Turkish cap ; a satin drapery ; foundation of Italian gauze ; stripes of pink ribbon bordered with black velvet ; a black heron and a plume ; a collarette made of lace in two rows, with a little branch of roses for a bouquet." The whole cost 300 livres. It was a very fine doll. Alas ! some years later the Prince was declared bankrupt. He owed money on all sides, and the beautiful doll had not been paid for—and never was.

On the other hand, the Princess, who was dressed by Mlle. Bertin, did not pay her debts either. The milliner lost more than 11,000 livres by the Prince, and more than 8,000 livres by the Princess. The great nobles then lived grandly, spending without counting, ordering and not paying, counting neither their debts nor their expenses. So Rose lost 11,000 livres by the Princesse de Montbazon, who was a daughter of the Princesse de Guéméné, and who had married the Prince de Rohan-Rochefort. The year 1777 began with a brilliant affair for Mlle. Bertin. The hereditary Prince of Portugal, Joseph François Xavier, Prince of Brazil, born August 21, 1761, married, February, 1777,

the Princess Marie-Françoise-Benedictine, the sister of his mother, born July 25, 1746. On this occasion M. de Souza, Portuguese Ambassador at the Court of France, mentioned the name of Rose Bertin, and obtained for her the order for the trousseau of the Princess, which represented a supply of 400,000 livres.

By way of compensation, she became the victim of roguery on the part of a certain Lady de Cahouet de Villers. Victoire Wallard, wife of Pierre-Louis-René Cahouet de Villers, General Treasurer of the King's Household, was twenty-eight years old. A notorious friend of Mme. Du Barry, she was "a gay and giddy woman," who twice imitated the handwriting and signature of the Queen at Mlle. Bertin's expense. The first time "Mme. Cahouet wrote a note to which she placed the signature 'Marie-Antoinette.' In this note she asked for a supply of things for her toilette. Mlle. Bertin was deceived by it. The Queen was informed of the use which had been made of her name: the Lady Cahouet got off with a reprimand and a pardon. The Queen would not allow the guilty party to suffer any other vengeance."

Marie-Antoinette, naturally, in forgiving the unfortunate woman who had used her name, could only indemnify the milliner, who actually lost nothing. The imprudent forger, with true audacity, did not stop there: "She wrote a second note to Mlle. Bertin. The writing and the signature of the Queen were again copied. This new crime was not allowed to remain secret, but they did not tell the Queen, who

would perhaps have forgiven her. M. de Maurepas, who was informed, sent the lady to the Bastille. She was lodged in the Comté Tower." Her incarceration took place March 13, 1777, as well as that of her husband, who was released August 21 ; the inquiry showed that he had nothing to do with his wife's swindling.

But the young woman, born for pleasure, was not long in falling into a state of languor and decline. Her husband refused to help her. For a long time he would not allow anyone to speak to him of a woman who had compromised him and exposed him to the danger of losing his position. After twenty months, her health getting worse and worse, they sent her from the Bastille to a convent in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. This was the Convent of the Cross. She entered it under the name of Mme. de Noyan. She went from there to the Community of the Daughters of St. Thomas, and died soon after. "*That Bastille,*" she often said, "has killed me."

It also became known that, by means of a letter in which she imitated the signature of Marie-Antoinette, she had cheated the treasurer of the Duc d'Orléans out of 100,000 crowns ; that was the principal reason of her arrest. However, feathers were still in fashion, and caricaturists went on to their hearts' content. The year 1777 saw the arrival of a new fashion—the Gabrielle de Vergy cap—so called in honour of the success of a tragedy written by de Belloy, and played July 12, at the Comédie Française.

Inspired by the play, the feathers inspired authors in their turn. A writer hitherto unknown wrote a comedy which appeared in 1778, under the title of "The Plumes," with the plan of founding an academy of fashion; it is only a satire of the deplorable taste of the period, where, under borrowed names, well-known milliners figured. Here are some extracts :

"MME. DUPPEFORT.—The Countess of *Cavecreuse* desires that you should supply her with a trimming of the garden of the Palais-Royal with the lake, the shape of the houses, and above all with the long avenue and the iron gate and the café.

"M. DUPPEFORT.—Really! Someone will soon want the Tuileries, the Luxemburg, the Boulevard; the market-garden women will want the Place Royale or the Hôtel Soubise.

"MME. DUPPEFORT.—That tall thin Marquise has been here again; they call her Mme. de la Braise. It is three months since her husband died. She wants you to put a raised platform for a coffin on her trimming. She is no longer in quite deep mourning. I do not know whether she wishes to express her joy or her grief.

"M. DUPPEFORT.—Yes, we can arrange some little Cupids gaily round a coffin, with hymeneal or funeral torches. There is no subject which cannot be made bright by a little wit. . . .

"MME. DUPPEFORT.—Mademoiselle Dubois-Commun has been again; she wishes to give us some wonder-

ful ideas, which have come to her in deep meditation. She has captivated an Englishman, who worships astronomy, and she wishes to wear on her head the sun, moon, and planets, the Pleiads and the Milky Way. She would like these stars to be moving, and, above all, you must have several comets, some with tails and some with manes, because her Englishman has given her the diamonds to mount them. . . . I forgot to tell you that Mlle. Fortendos has a lover who is mad on hunting. In her desire to make him a present, she would like to have a rich set which would represent the Bois de Boulogne or the Bois de Vincennes. The forest must be full of animals of all sorts. She has enough fur to make them, and you have only to supply the flying ones. But she wants a whole menagerie for St. Hubert's Day, when she is going with a large party to hunt the wild-boar."

Farther on there is a scene which is manifestly inspired by incidents which happened at Rose Bertin's, and of which we have already spoken :

"DUPPEFORT.—Montenlair !

"MONTENLAIR.—Here, sir !

"DUPPEFORT.—Put into a trunk all the caps of three weeks ago, and make a consignment for Bordeaux, addressed to Mme. Chiffonet (Disorder). With regard to those a fortnight old, address them to Mlle. de la Singerie (Monkey-tricks) at Lyons ; those of last week send to Lille, Rouen, Soissons, and to anywhere within a radius of thirty miles ; and those three days old we will not show until the day after



Bibliothèque Nationale

PRINCESSE DE LAMBAILLE

To face page 76

to-morrow. When you have finished, go and try to get some money from my customers. Nobody pays!"

And that was only too true. They ordered any novelty, but the tradespeople could not get paid. Bankruptcies were numerous in the trades which supplied luxuries to the Parisians. People of common sense bitterly deplored this excess of petty display. Some even feared consequences more fatal than the mere waste of money, or even a whole series of bankruptcies. The Author of the "Analectes," whom one believes to have been the advocate of the Cross, although he denied it, wrote in 1777 :

"We think we ought to point out the astonishing change which our century has seen in general manners as the effect of luxury, which makes the thought of Horace applicable to us.* This love of luxury which fills our towns with valets, drapers, jewellers, goldsmiths, looking-glass-makers, perfumers, tailors, fashion-mongers, bathing-house-keepers, wig-makers, a whole heap of professions, the names of which alone would fill a book, which spreads even to the country districts—this crowd of mercers who carry contagion into the rural districts is proper to the eighteenth century, and has brought forth a *luxury of imitation* which seems to have become throughout Europe, the fashion." Metternich, in a letter of January 27, 1779, also criticized the times :

* "Aetos parentum, pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.

“When some novelty comes over the sea or from America, be it cheap or unbecoming, everyone pays attention to it for a moment, and forgets it at once to take a more lively interest in an opera, to start a new fashion . . . All this touches our Parisian Court and people very closely;” and he draws a conclusion that this indifference seems to him a bad sign for the future.

That was very true. The future took care to prove it.

Joseph II. also criticized his sister sometimes about her jewels. One day when he was travelling under the name of Count of Falkenstein, and found himself at Versailles, Marie-Antoinette appeared in a superb and charming dress. “This stuff must have cost much,” said Joseph II. to her. “No, brother, since families live by it,” answered the Queen. “If I only chose simple dresses, two hundred trading houses would close their workshops to-morrow.” This might be quite true, for in those days artists themselves collaborated with the milliners for the good of trade, and it was in 1777 that the most wonderful collection of fashion engravings that has ever been published appeared. It was due to the talent of the younger Moreau, a well-known artist, and was quite remarkable. It was called “A Series of Prints with Text to illustrate the French Costume.” And this work was really very important, as throwing light on the luminous systems of Mlle. Bertin and Sieur Beaulard.

The year 1777 brought Rose Bertin an unexpected customer—a customer whose personality equally puzzled his contemporaries and posterity, and who was no other than the Knight, alias the Lady, of Eon. In consequence of disputes which the Chevalier d'Eon had had in London with the French Ambassador, the Comte de Guerchy, to whom the English Courts had not given satisfaction, the “Chargé d’Affaires” of King Louis XV. had an irreconcilable enemy in the Ambassador. When he died, his son inherited his hatred for the Chevalier d'Eon, so that after the death of Louis XV., when d'Eon wished to return to France, the younger de Guerchy declared that he would challenge him to fight to the death for having treated his father so impudently. The Comtesse de Guerchy was afraid; the Chevalier d'Eon had the reputation of being a remarkable fencer. She went to the King and begged him to intervene to save her from the misery she dreaded.

Louis XVI. did intervene, and, using Beaumarchais as an intermediary, made d'Eon sign a paper by which he undertook to wear only woman's clothes when he returned to France, and to acknowledge that they were the only clothes fit for him, and which, for some reason which cannot be explained, he had worn some years before at the Russian Court.

D'Eon left London August 13, 1777, and arrived at Versailles on the 17th. He still wore his uniform as a Captain of Dragoons. M. de Vergennes,

meeting him on the 27th of the same month, handed him the following peremptory order :

“ By Order of the King.

“ Charles Geneviève Louise Auguste André-Thimothée d’Eon de Beaumont is commanded to leave off the dragoon uniform he has been accustomed to wear, and to wear again the dress of his sex ; he must not appear in the kingdom in any dress not proper to women.

“(Signed) LOUIS.

“(Countersigned) GRAVIER DE VERGENNES.”

The Knight maintained that he had not the necessary funds to get a proper trousseau, and Marie-Antoinette interposed—“ I will undertake his trousseau ”—and immediately sent him a fan with a sum of 24,000 livres. “ Tell him,” she said to the messenger she sent with this present, “ that to replace his sword I arm him with a fan, and I make him a lady.”

D’Eon went to Rose Bertin, to whom the Queen had sent him. He was at once on the best terms with the famous woman, and wrote a letter to M. de Vergennes which bears the date August 29, 1777 :

“ SIR,

“ In order to obey the King’s orders, which you communicated to me, as well as the Count of

Maurepas, I have put off my journey to Burgundy. I could not possibly present myself at Versailles with the few woman's clothes I had left. I had to have new ones. Mlle. Bertin, in the Queen's service, will have the honour to tell you to-morrow that she has undertaken, not only to make them during my absence, but to make a passably modest and obedient girl of me. As to prudence, which is just as necessary in a girl as courage is in a Captain of dragoons, Heaven and necessity in the manifold habits of my life so cruelly agitated have given me visible habits which cost me nothing. It will be a hundred times more easy to be modest and obedient. After Heaven, the King and his Ministers, Mlle. Bertin will have the most merit in my miraculous conversion.

"I am, sir, with profound respect, your very humble and obedient servant,

"THE CHEVALIER D'EON
for a short while still."

The Knight, as is seen, got on well with the milliner from the first; and it is written in the "Mémoires Secret," under the date of September 7, 1777: "Two dresses are being trimmed for him by Mlle. Bertin, the Queen's dressmaker, and he has already had supper with her, once as a man and once dressed as a woman. In woman's dress he is very clumsy. Whatever may come of it, everything

seems to prove that his real name is the only feminine thing about him."

The author of the forged "Mémoires de Léonard," who spied into all the stories and memoirs of the time, to find any anecdotes, relates the fact, altering it to suit his purpose, and mixing his personality in it. His want of authenticity is proved in this business; for the hairdresser-wigmaker who was ordered to supply a wig "in three stories" was not the celebrated Léonard, but another hairdresser not so well known, M. Brunet, who plied his trade at Versailles, where he lived in the Rue de la Paroisse. Anyhow, the author of the memoirs makes the story about the reception of the Chevalier d'Eon by the Queen's dressmaker very amusing:

"In the last days of August Mlle. Bertin invited me to sup with her on the morrow, warning me that I should find another guest. I went on the following day, and found there in fact a dragoon officer, ugly enough in the face, but well made, and whose conversation, so easy and brilliant, showed him to be a man of great merit. . . . I believed that the dragoon had asked the dressmaker for her hand, and that she was inclined to allow herself to be led to the altar. Several times in the scraps of conversation while the servants were waiting at table I asked her why the gentleman was there. Mlle. Bertin, answering my question by another, asked me why I said that. I answered stupidly: 'Nothing.' Then the mysterious dressmaker said: 'To-morrow,

M. Léonard, you will understand the enigma. I shall expect you to supper.' The following day I went to Mlle. Bertin's. This time the captain of dragoons was not the guest, but a large, fat, ugly lady, who nevertheless was very like the officer. So said I to myself: 'This is the mother of the future husband.'

"Well, M. Léonard,' said Mlle. Bertin, smiling, 'will you not tell me the reason of your pre-occupation?'

"I presume, mademoiselle, that you perhaps suspect it.'

"Doubtless ; but, my friend, for a man at Court you know but little, if you do not know that last Thursday the Chevalier d'Eon was presented to the King, and I have been obliged by the King's order to make a woman of him—at least, in his dress. When yesterday morning, in walking through my shop, you asked me for whom were the dresses that my girls were trimming with so much skill, I could have answered, "For a captain of dragoons"; and the lady has just put on for the first time the clothes of her sex.'"

There is certainly some imagination in this story, and one inexactitude—the Chevalier had not been presented to the King ; but it is a fact that he had accepted the dressmaker's invitations, whose conversation he seemed to enjoy, without attaching any further importance to the story. This man was not of the stuff that Don Juans are made of, and he

had adventures which certainly he was the last to seek.

But if he was satisfied with the dressmaker, he certainly was not satisfied to be obliged to accept her offices, and not pleased to wear feminine clothes which Rose's girls made so hurriedly for him. "It is mourning that I am going to wear, and not clothes for a feast," he wrote to the Comte de Vergennes. "I will give myself up to misfortune," he said, "but not to ridicule."

He left Paris, and went to spend some time at Tonnerre, where his old mother lived, and where he arrived September 2, and stayed six weeks. During this time Mme. Barmant boned stays for him, and Rose Bertin superintended the making of his costume. But as he was long in returning, she told him that his presence was indispensable for trying on, and he decided to return to Versailles. That was, as he wrote in the papers which have been preserved, October 22, 1777, that he "put on his robe of innocence to appear at Versailles, as he had been ordered by the King and his Ministers" a week after his return from Burgundy. The dress he wore was a black dress, "a mourning robe," as he wrote to the Comte de Vergennes, and as the editor of the *English Spy* agrees: "She was dressed in black, as a widow of the secret of Louis XV. . . . Her throat was covered up to her chin, so that no one should remark on it."

It was on November 23 that he appeared at

Versailles. He did not easily accustom himself to the new costume, as a letter to his old Colonel, Marquis d'Autichamp, proves: "The loss of my leathern breeches is grievous to me. Never will silk skirt or gold or silver thread, although made by Mlle. Bertin, console me." Mlle. Bertin, however, did not remain the regular costumier of the Chevalier, who, with rather a modest income, found it better to employ a person with more reasonable prices, known as Antoinette Maillot, whose address in Rue Saint Paul, Paris, was given to him by the wife of one of his old friends, M. Falconnet, a lawyer.

D'Eon, who was not elegant, preferred low prices to the reputation of the Queen's great dressmaker. He only followed the fashions at a distance; he was not the person to change his dress perpetually, and new inventions interested him but little. At the end of 1777 the hair was dressed in the fashion called "The Insurgents." "It was," says the author of the "Mémoires Secret," "an allegory, made up of the disturbances between England and America. The first was a snake, so perfectly imitated that in a committee meeting held at the house of Mme. la Marquise de Narbonne, Lady of the Bedchamber to Mme. Adélaïde, it was decided not to adopt this ornament, as it was likely to upset people's nerves. The maker then decided to sell it to foreigners only, who were anxious to obtain our novelties; it had been proposed to advertise it in the papers, but the

Government, prudent and circumspect, forbade it. Crowds went to see it out of curiosity."

Caps *a la Hedgehog* were also made. Rose Bertin sent one to Stockholm, to the address of Desland, valet, and hairdresser to the Queen of Sweden. It cost 72 livres.

CHAPTER III

MME. DU BARRY—THE PILGRIMAGE TO MONFLIÈRES— THE GREAT FASHION—A VERSAILLES SCANDAL

ROSE BERTIN continued to enjoy the Queen's confidence, and worked in her rooms sometimes for two or three hours at a stretch. And Marie-Antoinette's confidence was a better advertisement for her than the dolls dressed in the newest fashions which she sent out to foreign cities. "Who loves me follows me, and rallies round my white plume," remains still the best of politics—as many women have understood. That is why Mme. Du Barry at the end of her reign—that is to say, during the last years of the reign of Louis XV.—dealt with Mlle. Pagelle, former employer of Rose Bertin, and whose last papers, drawn up by M. de Beaujon by the King's order, ended with the figure of 23,777 livres 19s. 6d. for a period of seven months from October 1, 1773, to May 27, 1774. That is why Mme. Du Barry, having been dressed for some time by Beaulard, turns to the Queen's dressmaker.

There is still in the Bibliothèque Nationale, as well as in the Bibliothèque de Versailles, a series of official returns drawn up by the Maison Bertin for

the favourite's account. They begin on February 4, 1778, and go on to 1792. Mme. Du Barry was a faithful customer.

However, although the first of the papers bears the date February 4, 1778, it is probable that Mme. Du Barry was dressed by Rose Bertin as soon as she was allowed to return to Paris. Mme. Du Barry had been exiled to Pont-aux-Dames from May 10, 1774, to March 25, 1775; then she withdrew to Saint-Vrain, near Monthléry, and it was in October, 1776, that she was permitted to return to Paris. It is then evident that Mme. Du Barry found it well to seek the favour of Rose Bertin, whom everyone knew to be on such good terms with the Queen. In a note of things supplied by Le Normand et Cie. of Paris to Mme. Du Barry under the date of 1777 we read:

SENT TO M^LLE. BERTIN.

Oct. 15. 16½ ells of Indian material, straw-coloured, striped with white satin	...	...	165 livres.
Oct. 16. 2 ells of Genoa velvet, sky blue,	64 livres	}	73 livres.
1 ell of English green Italian taffetas, at 9 livres	...		
Oct. 25. 22 ells English mauve satin, tinted with white and green, very strong, at 14 livres	...	...	308 livres
18 ells nut-coloured satin, English, very strong, at 15 livres	...	...	252 livres
18 ells of blue English satin, at 14 livres	...	...	252 livres
			812 livres.

And farther on, on the same memorandum, we find the following curious entry:



Musée Carnavalet

FASHION IN 1778

To face page 88

FOR PRESENT TO MLE. BERTIN.

Dec. 19. 20 ells of mauve satin at 14 livres	}	385 livres.	
			280 livres
14 ells of white taffetas, at 8.15 livres			105 livres

SENT TO MLE. BERTIN.

10 ells of strong white satin, at 13 livres ... 130 livres.

So Mme. Du Barry paid by little presents for the favours of the great dressmaker. The visits she paid to the Rue Saint-Honoré made her feel young again, taking her back to her early days, to the time when, before she had gained the favour of a King by a life of adventure, she was a simple employée in the firm of a dressmaker of the period.

The bills presented by Rose Bertin to Mme. Du Barry in the years which followed, according to the entries which we still possess, amount to the following sums :

	Livres.	s.
From February 4, 1778 to October 24, 1779 ...	11,438	9
To the end of 1779	231	5
For the year 1780	3,211	11
„ 1781	2,386	6
„ 1782	6,598	2
„ 1783	7,840	10
„ 1784	8,519	1
„ 1785	7,756	10
„ 1786	6,912	10
„ 1787	7,011	10
„ 1788	8,034	12
„ 1789	5,370	4
„ 1790	1,264	8
„ 1791	2,354	16
„ 1792	713	6

Rose Bertin did not have a bad customer in Mme. Du Barry. We find, in fact, in a memorandum of the things supplied by Le Normand et Cie. of Paris to the Countess, the following entry:

Paid to Mlle. Bertin, according to the acknowledgment of Mme. la Comtesse, from
 March 24, 1779 9,837 livres.

This goes to prove that the memorandum beginning February 4, 1778, was not the first debt contracted by Du Barry with the dressmaker of the Rue Saint-Honoré. At the head of the memorandum is written:

Supplied to the Countess Du Barry by Bertin, "of the Great Mogul."

	Livres.	s.
Deferred, a memorandum beginning February 4, 1778, and ending October 24, 1779—total	11,438	9
Received on account, April 12, 1779	5,837	6
Balance due	5,601	3

It is very evident that the 9,837 livres paid by the agency of Le Normand et Cie. have nothing to do with this memorandum.

In glancing through these notes, it will not be uninteresting to notice some of the articles which are designated therein, and which will give us the price-list, as it were, of the first dressmaker of the time.

First of all we find, on October 25, 1779, a large hat of white straw, with brim turned up on both sides and bound with blue and white fluted ribbon

spotted with black, a large plume of black and white feathers supplied by the Countess herself, 24 livres. That is really not very dear ; what do our society ladies think ?

On December 25, 1779, a large cloak of two taffetas, white half-sarcenet, a trimming of striped English gauze, brocaded in chenille, 42 livres. Things had not yet become a madness.

On January 5, 1780, a large hat of white straw, turned up with nut coloured ribbon, a bow of the same spotted ribbon, a plume of seven fine white feathers with fine aigrette in the middle, 120 livres. Here the price has gone up, but the feathers and the aigrette had to be found. It is also remarkable that the hat was straw, and supplied in the depth of winter. The milliner also supplied toilette accessories. On February 2, 1780, she sent, for a " head-band," one ell and a half of wide pink and white spotted satin ribbon at 3 livres for 4.10 livres, which almost shows us Du Barry *en déshabillé*.

At the same date she supplied for a sword bow two ells and a half of wide English ribbon, mauve and white spotted with black, at 2 livres = 5 livres.

And among details of a present made to Mme. la Vicomtesse Du Barry are the following articles :

A very large branch of cotton lilac with three sprays, 36 livres.

A head-dress trimmed with crape and spotted with puce velvet, two rows of pleats of fine silk lace, high with straight border and ribbon behind, 72 livres.

A cap trimmed with fine blond and Italian gauze, a butterfly with large wings, long feathers, bordered with blonde lace falling behind, and white ribbon, 48 livres.

The relatively low price asked for "a large cloak of black taffetas, lined and trimmed with wide lace on spotted tulle with straight edge," is astonishing. This was delivered December 6, 1780, and cost 192 livres. Also English straw hats sold June 30, 1781, at 8 livres each.

But here is the description of a costume delivered January 20, 1782, and the price of which is very much higher, we find in the first memorandum kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale :

"The trimming of a blue and silver dress, large puffed pleats all down the front in Italian gauze, edged with big ruchings of cut crape, a garland of silver rope placed over the puffs, each separated by bunches of golden wheat-ears, and fastenings, in catkins of blue stones mixed with white pearls, placed each side of the drapery ; the front of the petticoat entirely covered with Italian gauze, a large founce at the bottom, a foundation of silver lined with plain crape and edged with fringe, a large garland of gold corn-ears placed over the founce in shape of shells tied by silver ropes, and by a double acorn of gold and silver, the heads set in stones ; trimmed with fringe cuffs, 900 livres.

"A founce of pleated blonde, 8 livres.

“A piece of five bands of catkins in blue stones mixed with white pearls, 78 livres.

“An ornament of three bows in crape, edged with blonde lace, two double blades of gold at the edge, and a gold braid in the middle and embroidered with stones and sequins.

“A flounce in the Provençal fashion, a fine blonde very wide, on Alençon lace with shells, a fine lining of pleated Alençon above, 84 livres.

“A collar of fine blonde lace with straight edge, and a fine plain tulle pleated underneath, 24 livres.”

That was what may be called an important order. But Du Barry also economically made use of dresses already worn, which she had altered, and we read in Mlle. Bertin's notes: “For mending two hats, flowers, and plume, furnished the straw and white satin ribbon and velvet, 15 livres—December 7, 1782.”

Independently of anything she paid for with ready money in the milliner's shops, some things, entered wrongly on the bills presented to the Countess, bear these words in the margin, “Nothing,” or “Sold”—for example, a supply of goods for 733 livres of August 27, 1787, was annotated in this manner, “All these things have been sold,” and a hat of 144 livres “sold,” February 20, 1788. Independently, we say, of these things and of former deliveries, the account of Mme. Du Barry with Rose Bertin from February 4, 1778, to September 12, 1792, deduction on the account of 5,837 livres 6s. paid on April 12,

1779, rose to 73,605 livres 4s., as proved by the entry of payments preserved in the Bibliothèque de Versailles. Here is a copy of what Mme. la Comtesse Du Barry owes to Bertin, merchant :

		Livres.	s.
Memorandum up to February 26, 1782	...	13,148	9
" " July 19, 1784	... ..	18,835	19
" " March 12, 1790	... ..	37,797	0
" " September 12, 1792	... ..	3,823	16
		<u>73,605</u>	4

			Livres.
Received by M. Buffault	1,300	} 33,300 livres.
May 2, 1782	... ..	5,000
February 4, 1785, in Bochmer's notes	17,000		
December 18, 1786	... ..	3,000
February 5, 1789	... ..	3,000
May 30, 1789	... ..	3,000
May 17, 1792	... ..	1,000

It seems that Rose Bertin was not able to clear off her account with the celebrated Countess, and the Revolution following, the knife of the guillotine which took the head of her customer cost her 40,000 francs, and besides the payments mentioned above we find no proofs of any other payments made by Mme. Du Barry.

But it is interesting to acknowledge that we find no trace of this credit among the papers arranged after the death of Rose Bertin by Grangeret, the lawyer to her heirs, whose collection of unpaid accounts in the possession of M. J. Doucet has been placed courteously at our disposition. It is, then, likely that Rose Bertin in her lifetime was



MADAME DU BARRY

To face page 94

able to recover the balance of 40,305 livres, or that her heirs were able to recover it, and that then the papers concerning Mme. Du Barry were suppressed after payment by the lawyer prosecuting.

We wished to give an idea of the expenditure of Mme. Du Barry in the years succeeding her splendour, after the death of Louis XV. had rung the hour of her downfall. We will now take up our subject where we left it—that is to say, in the year 1778.

The sea-victories of 1778 and 1779 caused the head-dresses to be called Boston, Philadelphia, Grenada, d'Estaing, and Belle-Poule. The fight in which this ship distinguished herself under the command of Chaudeau de la Clochette was on June 17. There were *Te Deums*, feasts, a most extraordinary enthusiasm, above all, at the taking of Grenada on July 4, 1779. The fashions changed incessantly; that was the feature of the eighteenth century. La Bruyère wrote: "One fashion no sooner destroys another fashion than it is abolished by a newer one, which in turn gives place to one which will not be the last; such is our frivolity." One of the most elegant of the Queen's head-dresses was the one called "The Queen." This head-dress, which did not attain the exaggerated dimensions of so many others, and which suited the figure and carriage of the Queen admirably, has been drawn by Le Clerc, engraved by Patas for the "Gallerie des Modes et Costumes Français," drawn from nature, published in Paris, 1778, and

represented the Queen herself. It is composed of an ostrich feather with an aigrette of diamonds placed on the left side of the head, a cerise satin ribbon in the hair, with a pearl ornament falling as a drop on the forehead.

This same work contains also a print engraved by Dupin after the drawing by Le Clerc, and representing a "dressmaker carrying goods to the town." Although the garb which the picture shows us was certainly not worn by Rose Bertin at the period of her wealth, it will not be uninteresting, perhaps, after having spoken of the head-dresses she designed for her customers, to describe the costume of the work-girls who frequented the workshops in the early days of Louis XVI., of whom she employed about thirty—a costume which probably did not differ much from that which she had worn herself a few years before, at the time she worked for Mlle. Pagelle. We will borrow the description from the "Gallerie des Modes":

"A large hood of black taffetas with brim turned back, trimmed with gauze, covers her head, and hides a part of her charms from the greedy eyes of passers-by; but her cloak is arranged to show her figure to the best advantage. She is clad in a simple dress trimmed with the same material, of which the flounce is also made, and lifted up behind in the shape of a polonaise. Open-work silk mittens, showing the bracelet; green paper fan; 'content' in her bosom: the little goose wants nothing." "Content" was

a little trimming after the manner of a collar which finished off the top of the bodice. This amusing definition gives some idea of what distinguished the milliner in the eighteenth century. But Rose Bertin having become celebrated was certainly not dressed in such a modest fashion. They say that when she was at the height of her celebrity the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X., looked with favour on the Queen's milliner ; he is also said to have courted her slightly, but without success. After her adventure with the Duc de Chartres, it is not astonishing that the haughty milliner sent the Comte d'Artois back to his stables. However, this succession of Princes of the blood all interested in the beauty of Rose Bertin permits us to believe that, perhaps for a kind word spoken one day by the Prince who had easy manners, Rose boasted more than she ought. There are so many ways of cultivating the little flower of vanity.

In any case she was at the height of her influence and reputation at the Court, and she was careful to compromise neither, which were certain to satisfy the passing fancy of the Princess, whose conquests did not pass for virtue. She knew the value of her credit. Speculating on the influence which she had with the Queen, it often happened that people addressed the milliner to beg her to place the favour desired before the Queen ; and she agreed willingly, very happy, in reality, to be thought important.

In 1778 Marie-Antoinette, expecting her confinement, ordered a kind of loose dress called "Lévite."

This dress in the time of Louis XV. hung in the same way as a dressing-gown, and was cut short halfway down the leg, and this fashion was modified to suit the Queen's figure. The skirt was lengthened, and a belt was formed by a draped scarf.

Rose Bertin was able to get a sensation of satisfaction from the feeling of authority she had acquired over the Queen. She had long and frequent conversations with the Queen, who gladly consulted her, and confided in her even in matters quite foreign to dress. Marie-Antoinette awaited her confinement with apprehension, and told her fears to Mlle. Bertin, who informed her that in the neighbourhood of Abbeville was a miraculous statue of the Virgin, which enjoyed a great reputation and attracted a great crowd of people to the Chapel of Monfières, that numerous pilgrimages came from all parts to implore her protection, and that many sick people were cured at the foot of the altar.

“Certain documents,” wrote the Abbé Mille, “affirm that from the year 1559 a pilgrimage went to Monfières on the Sunday preceding the Assumption, to fulfil a vow made in consequence of the cessation of a plague which had killed 4,000 persons in the town of Abbeville, and 8,000 in the surrounding country; this pilgrimage was conducted by a confraternity established in honour of Notre Dame de Monfières under the title of the Confraternity of King David's Quarter, and which continued to exist until after the death of Louis XVI., as the last

report of the confraternity, dated August 11, 1793, proves."

Rose Bertin persuaded Marie - Antoinette to recommend herself to the good Virgin of Monfières, and succeeded so well in convincing her that she was charged by the Queen to go herself to carry an offering of a robe of gold brocade to the Madonna. This was a delightful journey for Rose, this return to Picardy, which she had left with so much goodwill and courage and uncertainty fifteen years ago.

The office where places could be booked for the coach was at Huet's, Rue Saint-Denis, opposite the Filles-Dieu. The journey to Abbeville cost 36 livres ; the coach left every Friday at half-past eleven at night. Rose, having retained her place in the coach, set out from Paris. We may believe that she slept the first hours of the journey, well protected from the night air, and soothed to sleep by the rhythmic sound of the horses' hoofs and the tinkling of their harness bells. The coach left Paris by the gate of la Chapelle, passed Saint-Denis and Luzarches, and on summer nights reached Chantilly as the first streaks of dawn appeared in the sky. Now and again, as the driver stopped to change horses, the weary passengers could get down to walk about, or repose themselves in the guest-room of some inn, the White Horse, of the Golden Sun, and admire the fantastic wall-paper and hundred knick-knacks.

The fresh horses would start off at a grand trot, and as the coach dashed through some village the

driver would crack his whip furiously, while frightened hens ran helplessly backwards and forwards, and small boys followed behind shouting till the coach was lost to view in a cloud of dust. Then, as it passed along the country road bordered by trees, Rose closed her eyes: her mind went back fifteen years, to the day when she had passed along this same road, and a fugitive smile of pleasure played upon her lips.

On the top of the coach the case containing the precious dress was safely stowed away, with the rest of the great dressmaker's luggage, who thought of the time when, on leaving Abbeville, all her worldly goods could be packed into a narrow cheap little trunk and a modest cardboard box which she carefully held on her knees. The coach reached Clermont at midday, where the travellers dined, and then went on to Amiens, passing through Breteuil. At Amiens the passengers passed the night at Berny's, Rue de Beauvais, and the coach restarted next day for Abbeville, passing through Picquigny and Flixecourt in the Somme Valley. The terminus was in the Rue Saint-Gilles, so full of souvenirs for the young Abbeilloise, and the office being in charge of the same Mlle. Tévenart who was there when Rose left the country.

The dress which the Queen had sent her to fit on the Madonna at Monfières was valued at 500 livres. According to the manuscripts of M. Siffait, preserved at Abbeville, the lace was given by an Abbeville lady,



Bibliothèque Nationale

MISS CONEINGUE OUT OF OPERA

To face page 100

whose name is unknown to us. The dress was used for the first time on March 25, 1779, titular feast of the Chapel of Monfières. Marie-Antoinette's prayer had been heard : she had been happily delivered of a daughter, on December 19, 1778. This was Madame Royale, the future Duchess of Angoulême. Marie-Françoise Bertin-Havard, a relative of Rose's, was chosen to superintend the wet-nurses who had been engaged.

Having accomplished her mission, Rose left Abbeville, and returned in haste to Paris, where her presence was indispensable to the interests of her establishment. The return journey was similar to the outward one : the coach left Saint-Gilles on Sunday at midday, and reached Paris, Rue Saint-Denis, on the morrow at six o'clock at night. Though the statue of the Virgin of Monfières was saved from the fury of the Revolution, being hidden away in an oven, the dress made for it by Mlle. Bertin, as an offering from Marie-Antoinette, has unfortunately disappeared, and cannot be traced.

At the close of the year 1778, lawn bonnets, called *bonnets picards*, were sold in the Rue Saint-Honoré. Did the idea come from this journey, we wonder ? The Comtesse de Salles ordered one on November 24, at the moderate price of 9 livres. The gift of a bonnet or hat bearing the mark "Grand-Mogol" was a welcome and gracious present. Thus, on one occasion the Marquise de Tonnerre made a present to the Marquise de Bouzol of a white hat, turned up at the back, lined with taffeta, edged with white and green

ribbon, and with large bows of the same, which cost 18 livres, and gave the Comtesse d'Equilly a *demi-bonnet* of gauze and blonde lace, worth 36 livres.

Rose Bertin was also employed to make presentation costumes, which cost a considerable sum of money ; that of the Comtesse de Montréal, delivered on May 10, 1778, amounted to 2,417 livres.

We have seen how the Queen of France listened to the advice of the great milliner, and how her reputation and influence at the Court were great ; if further proof of it is needed, we have but to read what Bachaumont, in his "Mémoires Secrets," has to say on the subject, when giving an account of the journey of the King and Queen to Paris on the occasion of the marriage of a hundred young girls whom the King had dowered in honour of the birth of Madame Royale.

The ceremony took place at Notre Dame, and the cortège of twenty-eight carriages coming from la Muette, where the Court then was, passed along the Rue Saint-Honoré, to reach the Pont-Neuf, by the streets du Roule, la Monnaie, and the *carrefour* of the Trois-Maries. It was February 8, and great crowds filled the streets to see the King and Queen pass ; but there was very little applause, as the police had omitted to station *aboyeurs*, or persons to start the cheering, as they usually did, which greatly annoyed Marie-Antoinette, who returned to la Muette in a very bad temper. "We have spoken on various occasions of Mlle. Bertin, the Queen's milliner," says the "Mémoires Secrets," March 5, 1779, "who has

the honour to work under Her Majesty's personal direction in what concerns that part of her wardrobe. Her shop gives on to the Rue Saint-Honoré. The day that the Queen made her entrance, the milliner at the head of her thirty work-girls took up her post on her balcony. Her Majesty caught sight of her in passing, and said, 'Ah! there is Mlle. Bertin,' and at the same time made her a sign, to which Mlle. Bertin replied by a profound curtsy. The King rose and clapped his hands—another curtsy; all the Royal Family did the same, and the courtiers, aping their masters, did not fail to bow as they passed. So many curtsies fatigued her, but the distinction was a marvellous comfort, and greatly increased the reputation she already enjoyed."

There was a good deal of mimicry in this little demonstration. No doubt the King himself was not altogether sincere, being chiefly anxious to please the Queen, and perhaps anxious to turn her thoughts to Mlle. Bertin's art, less costly than gambling, to which she was too much given. Nothing but frivolous subjects appealed to the Queen's childlike brain. The same memoirs for May 31, 1779, speak again of the favour the dressmaker of the Rue Saint-Honoré enjoyed. "The Queen continues to show Mlle. Bertin, her dressmaker, special favour. At Marly lately she ordered the Duc de Duras to find her a place at the theatre, and this nobleman acquitted himself of the order in a way calculated to excite the jealousy of other women."

Does not this completely prove the importance she had acquired at Court ?

It is true that the Queen, who enjoyed acting, but who acted very badly, had great trouble in getting an audience, as everyone tried to find an excuse—so much so that on one occasion she ordered the Swiss guards to attend, and to take their place during the play.

This unfortunate taste of the Queen's was pleasing to her household at least, as it entailed continual changes of dress, disguises, hats and head-gear, of which everyone came in for a share.

Rose Bertin, indeed, considered herself indispensable. Her shop was also always full, and the most brilliant clientèle flocked to it. All the nobility of France and all the members of the diplomatic service were among her customers. The wife of the Russian Plenipotentiary, Princess Baratinsky, among others, dealt with her, and was one of those whose bills were not paid. She owed about 15,000 livres, and Rose received 1,000 on account from Prince Baratinsky. The balance for which she held the Princess's note of hand was lost ; according to Russian law, debts of more than ten years' standing cannot be recovered legally, and the bill was never paid.

On all sides customers flocked to her, and even the name of Vestris, the famous dancer, surnamed the God of Dance, who was still at the Opera, is to be seen in her books. The Marquis de Boisgelin gave his niece a Devonshire hat worth 120 livres ; the Baronne de

la House ordered a Circassian dress, usually made of gauze. The Baronne de Montviller, daughter of Mme. de Misery ; the Marquis de Marbœuf, whose immense grounds of the Champs-Élysées constituted one of the finest estates in Paris ; Viscomtesse Périgord, the Marquis de Chabillant, were to be seen in her shop, and a long line of carriages with armorial bearings stood at the door.

Her work at Court became more and more absorbing, and at the instigation of Mme. Campan the famous Beaulard, who for a long time had been skilfully manœuvring to gain favour with the Queen and her suite, was made her official collaborator. Beaulard, her active and redoubtable competitor, was Rose's nightmare, to whom nevertheless she had to be agreeable. Rose certainly had done all she could to get the better of this enterprising competitor, and was very mortified that she did not succeed. Nevertheless she was sufficiently diplomatic to disguise her displeasure from Mme. Campan, who had to be skilfully managed. Mme. Campan had become one of the four first ladies of the bedchamber of the Queen. There was no end to the ever-changing toilettes, and the Queen and Mme. Campan really thought that Mlle. Bertin might one day find that she was unable to cope with the orders given, and prepared in fevered haste in the Rue Saint-Honoré, and dresses expected on a certain day would not be delivered. Mlle. Bertin knew that Beaulard was a protégé of Mme. de Lamballe, "and her anger was without

bounds when she heard that he had been presented by her to the Queen. He brought Her Majesty an artificial rose, a perfect imitation, which exhaled a delicious perfume. The Queen was delightedly looking at it, when Beaulard called her attention to a spring hidden in the calyx. The Queen pressed it, and immediately the half-blown rose opened, disclosing a miniature portrait of His Majesty."* The dressmaker conceived a violent resentment towards the Princess, whom she promptly sent to Coventry, the latter being greatly concerned, as she professed to wear nothing but hats and bonnets of the best style, and at Court the best style was Rose Bertin's. The Queen took upon herself to effect a reconciliation; the matter became as important as an international case of arbitration. After lecturing her dressmaker, and representing that the incident had not been in any way prejudicial to her, since she kept her title of "dressmaker to the Queen," and that her orders had not decreased, she succeeded in convincing Mlle. Rose, who consented to make her peace with the Princesse de Lamballe and to renew business relations with her.

The era of eccentricities, however, was nearing its end. Without losing her taste for dress, the Queen modified the fashion of her toilettes. It was an abrupt change. It has been said that as the woman gave place to the mother her taste became more simple. This may have been the reason for the change, of which we find mention in Mme. Campan's memoirs.

* Comtesse d'Adhémar, "Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette."

“The taste for dress to which the Queen was addicted during the first years of the reign gave place to a love for simplicity which she carried to an unwise degree, the splendour and magnificence of the throne being to a certain point inseparable in France from the nation’s interests.

“Excepting on days when great receptions were held at Court, such as January 1 and February 2 devoted to the procession of the Order of the Holy Ghost, and at Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, the Queen wore nothing but print dresses or dresses of white taffeta of Florence. She wore the simplest of hats, and her diamonds were never taken out of their cases save on the days I have mentioned. The Queen was not yet twenty-five, and began to fear already that she would be made to wear unwisely flowers and ornaments, which at that time were left to the very youthful.

“Mlle. Bertin having brought her a wreath and necklet of roses, the Queen tried it on, and expressed a fear that the bloom of the rose would be trying to her complexion. She was in truth too severe on herself, as her beauty had suffered no change, and one may easily imagine the concert of praise and compliments with which her fears were answered. Approaching me, the Queen said she would rely on my judgment as to when the time was come to refrain from wearing flowers. ‘Think of it well,’ she said; ‘I charge you from this day to warn me frankly when flowers no longer suit me.’ ‘I shall do

nothing of the kind, madame,' I replied ; ' I have not read " Gil Blas " in vain, and I find too much resemblance in your Majesty's order to that given to him by the Archbishop of Toledo, to warn him when he was deteriorating in his homilies.' ' Ah,' said the Queen, ' you are less sincere than " Gil Blas," and I should have been more generous than the Archbishop of Toledo.' "

In spite of the Queen's simplicity, Rose Bertin's visits to Versailles, to the Tuileries, to Saint-Cloud, wherever the Court happened to be, were none the less frequent.

It was at Versailles that was realized one day the gipsy's prediction that Rose's train would be carried at Court. It was realized, however, in a very comical fashion. Rose's footman who usually accompanied her to the palace had left, his place being filled by an honest country fellow, recommended to her by a friend, a certain M. Moreau Desjardins, a lace-merchant of Chantilly, who had the man's brother in his employ. The poor man straight from the country was quite lost in Paris, and, on being told that he was to accompany mademoiselle to Court, was completely overwhelmed, and felt twice as awkward as he really was. He confided his fears to the lady's-maid, who had other fish to fry than to offer consolation to a provincial footman. " But what shall I do," he said in despair, " when I am at the palace ? " " Do as the rest do," she replied mockingly. He did it. There were other carriages at the palace when Mlle.

Bertin's arrived. He watched the other footmen; great ladies got down from their carriages, he saw the noblest ladies in France pass before him, followed by the most elegant of footmen. When Rose's turn arrived, she jumped lightly to the ground and began to go up the staircase. She quickly noticed that she was attracting a good deal of unusual attention; people looked at each other in amazement, and some seemed on the verge of uncontrollable laughter, and they were not the most impertinent. Astounded, Rose stopped, realizing that she was being laughed at, and, on turning round, found that her rustic footman was carrying the train of her dress as the footmen of Duchesses and Marchionesses had done for their mistresses.

Smiles and laughter wounded her self-love, but at the same time there was satisfaction in remembering that the gipsy's prediction had come true. She saw herself again on a winter's day in her black dress, unpacking the ornaments of the Demoiselles de Bourbon, and warming her feet at the fireplace of the Princesse de Conti, and then glanced at herself in the mirrors of the great gallery of Versailles, where the most secret apartments were open to her, and where she could cross without delay the antechambers where great ladies waited their turn for an audience.

It was therefore not without a certain pleasure that a few minutes later, in the Queen's cabinet, she told the tale of the prediction of her childhood at Abbeville, and its realization; the Queen laughed

heartily, and on the King's entrance, having heard the tale, he joined in the mirth. Rose could not only admire herself in the mirrors of the great gallery, she could also admire her handiwork in the paintings on the walls, as, for example, when she passed before the portrait of the Queen painted by Mme. Vigée-Lebrun in 1799, in which the great painter had immortalized some of the creations of the Rue Saint-Honoré. This portrait was the first of the Queen painted by the celebrated artist ; there are two copies, as Mme. Vigée-Lebrun tells us in her souvenirs, one of which is still at Versailles.

“It was in the year 1799,” she says, “that I first painted the Queen's portrait. She was then in all the splendour of her youth and beauty. . . . It was then that I painted the portrait of her with a large basket, dressed in a satin dress, and holding a rose in her hand. The portrait was intended for her brother, the Emperor Joseph II., and the Queen ordered two copies—one for the Empress of Russia, the other for her apartments at Versailles or Fontainebleau.”

The Queen's head-dress is not very exaggerated, being composed of a light puff of greenish-white silk gauze, with ostrich feathers. The “*Correspondance Littéraire*,” June, 1780, speaks of the change in fashion and of the abandoning of the high coiffure, which gave way to a simpler style, a simplicity which extended to the whole costume. Rose Bertin, however, lost nothing of her reputation, and was still



Bibliothèque Nationale

POLONNOISE À LA POULETTE, 1779

To face page 110

in favour at Court. One summer day in 1780, when the Court was at Marly, she was present in the theatre when the Queen noticed that she had not a very good place, whereupon she sent for Marshal Duras, who was Master of Ceremonies, and told him to find her dressmaker a better place, which he did with great eagerness and gallantry. This was the second time this honour had been shown to Rose; but although it caused a good deal of chatter on the first occasion, people were getting used to such things, and little notice was taken of it the second time. Comtesse de Fars speaks of the incident, however, with a certain bitterness: "The appearance of that woman at the castle was an event. The best place at the theatre was reserved for this *grisette*, who was conducted to it by the Duc de Duras, Master of Ceremonies, who led her by the hand."

Grisette! the leading dressmaker of Paris, and of the whole world! The subject of the remark would have died of rage had she heard it.

Marie-Antoinette had returned to her passion for acting. Wherever the Court happened to be, plays by Favart and Rousseau were given, or comic operas by Monsigny: "L'Anglais à Bordeaux," "Le Devin de Village," "Rose et Colas," etc.

All the actresses in these plays were Rose Bertin's clients: The Comtesse de Châlons, Mme. de Coligny, the Duchesse Diane de Polignac, the Duchesse de Guiche, and "that amiable statue of Melancholy, that pale and languishing person whose head drooped to

her shoulder, the Comtesse de Polastron." * Marie-Antoinette for good reasons had definitely abandoned the idea of again appearing herself in her theatre.

The year 1780 closed with the death of the Empress Maria-Theresa (November 29). The Court naturally went into mourning, which occasioned a great deal of work to the Queen's outfitters.

Rose Bertin's character was not calculated to please her exacting clients. Even the persons of the Queen's own household had difficulty in bearing with her. Mme. Campan severely criticizes her in her memoirs. "Mlle. Bertin," she says, "took advantage of the Queen's kindness to display great pride. One day a lady went to her establishment to buy certain articles of apparel for the Court mourning for the Empress. Several things were shown her, which she refused. Mlle. Bertin exclaimed thereupon, in a tone of anger and self-sufficiency: 'Show madam the last samples of my work with Her Majesty.' The remark is silly enough to have been really uttered." Mme. Campan's criticism is harsh, but well deserved. The anecdote went the round, several writers speak of it, and we find it given by the writer who continued Bachaumont's "Mémoires Secrets," under the date January 4, 1781. In fact, Rose could speak of nothing but her collaboration with the Queen. She spoke of it to all comers boastingly; people laughed, but she gave little heed to that.

* "Le Théâtre à Trianon."

She had nothing to complain of as to the progress of her establishment; things were going very well, and the cost of the Queen's toilettes grew more and more considerable. In a statement of expenses drawn up for the years 1777 and 1781 by Randon de la Tour, Treasurer of the Households of the King and Queen, we find the following note appended :

“The supplementary expenses of the wardrobe, which in 1777 amounted to 37,106 livres, amount in 1781 to 84,000 livres, an increase of 46,894 livres.”*

The statement of expenses of the Queen's Household † shows us that the extraordinary expenses for the wardrobe amount respectively to 194,118 livres 17 sols in 1780, 151,290 livres 3 sols in 1781, 199,509 livres 4 sols in 1782.

The Marchioness of Grammont, Comtesse d'Ossun, who had been Lady-in-Waiting since 1781, explains this increase in a letter dated from Versailles : ‡

“I have, sir, the honour of sending you a statement of the expenses for the Queen's wardrobe during last year, 1782. The sum is considerably higher than I could wish; but the feasts given for the Count du Nord, and the arrangements I had made for the visit to Marly, which was to have taken place last autumn, compelled me to exceed the limits I had laid down. I am hoping that this present year may be less costly, as I have in reserve articles which I had selected for Marly, and which

* Archives Nationales, Série O¹, 3,793.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

may be used this spring. I beg you will please to inform the King of these details, when requesting his orders for the payment to me of a supplementary sum of 111,509 livres, which I require to pay this year's bills."

We learn from the above that Louis XVI. was comptroller of these expenses, although he did not check them.

Overwhelmed as she was by work for the Queen, Rose was necessarily compelled to neglect sometimes other clients, and her arrogance when reproached caused her to lose more than the customer.

"Flattery and attention had turned poor Mlle. Bertin's head," writes the Vicomtesse de Fars, who was one of those who had little love for the dress-maker. "A lady of my acquaintance went to her shop in her absence to order a hat *à la Bertoniennne* for the wife of a lawyer of Bordeaux." Pierre Montan Berton was the director of the Opera, under whose administration the fame of that house spread abroad from the works of the two rival composers, Gluck and Piccini, presented there. He died in 1780, and his name was the pretext for a new style of hat. "The price," adds Mme. de Fars, "was settled by Mlle. Picot, first workwoman of the establishment, and paid in advance by my friend, who left giving her address. Two hours later a servant dressed in green livery with gold braid brought back the money left for the hat, with a note from Mlle. Bertin, worded in a ridiculous fashion, stating that it was impossible

for her to work for the wife of a lawyer, as all her time and that of her workers was employed in carrying out the orders of Her Majesty and the Court."

Charlotte Picot realized the advantage she might derive from the situation ; her conduct, in fact, differed in no way from that of Rose Bertin herself with respect to her employer, Mlle. Pagelle. Charlotte was "a very skilful, intelligent, and, above all, enterprising worker," says the "Mémoires Secrets," "who, realizing her talent, set up for herself, and soon robbed her former mistress of the majority of her clients." Which is perhaps somewhat exaggerated.

"Besides her intelligence," says the Comtesse de Fars, "she had a pretty face and great tact ; she left Mlle. Bertin, therefore, and raised an altar against her altar."

This was quite sufficient to arouse the anger of a person as quick-tempered as Rose Bertin ; but there was perhaps another motive more serious still—that is, if the statement in the "Souvenirs de Léonard" is correct. It is related in this book that Mlle. Picot circulated a story among the scandal-loving ladies who frequented her shop, that "Mlle. Bertin, at the time when the King's Household had been dismissed by the Comte de Saint-Germain, had not troubled to reform a grey musketeer, whose maintenance had already been very costly, not only because of his five feet seven and a half inches, but also because of his habit of losing eight or ten louis every evening at faro, to which habit he added that of beating Mlle.

Bertin whenever he was unable to satisfy this fatal passion."

That Mlle. Bertin had been the subject of scandal-mongering tongues is not surprising; the contrary would have been surprising at a time when loose morals were general, and when pamphleteers spared neither the Queen nor any prominent person. But it is quite incredible that the arrogant milliner would have tolerated such treatment as is described by the author of the "Souvenirs de Léonard."

Fate decreed that, at the moment when Mlle. Bertin was most exasperated with Mlle. Picot, they should meet in the gallery at Versailles. The "Mémoires Secrets" tells us that in a moment of anger Mlle. Bertin spat in her enemy's face and insulted her. A lawsuit followed, and on Monday, September 3, judgment was given against Rose Bertin, who was sentenced to pay 20 livres as alms and all the costs. "Considering the place where the insult was committed, the punishment is regarded as insufficient."

In view of Rose Bertin's pride, the sentence was pleasing to many who had suffered from her impertinence. The "Mémoires Secrets" goes on to say, after reporting the incident under date September 8, 1781, that Rose Bertin appealed to the Grand Conseil: "The case was to have been heard on Wednesday—that is to say, to-day—but the Queen, whose kindness to Mlle. Bertin, her dressmaker, is well known, caused a letter to be written to M. de Nicolai, President of the Court, asking him to come to report the state of the case to

her before proceeding farther. The case has been, therefore, remanded for a week." The documents relating to the case are preserved in the archives of Seine-et-Oise.*

The following is the complaint of Mlle. Picot :

"To the Lieutenant-General of the Police for Civil and Criminal Matters, etc., at Versailles. Humbly sheweth, that Charlotte Picot, spinster of age, dress-maker, residing in Paris, Rue Saint-Honoré, at the 'Corbeille Galante,' parish of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, having furnished dresses to the ladies Vassy who were presented at Court on the 15th of this month of April, Easter Day, petitioner went on the morning of the said day to Versailles on business. After dinner the petitioner went into the gallery of the castle to walk about and see the effect of the dresses.

"Towards half-past six, petitioner being in the Queen's card-room, awaiting the King and Royal Family, who were in the chapel, she perceived Mlle. Bertin, dressmaker of Paris, Rue Saint-Honoré, facing Saint-Honoré, accompanied by two young ladies, walking in the gallery. Mlle. Bertin, in passing before petitioner, stopped, gazed at her attentively, and continued her walk, but returned a moment later, stopped in front of the petitioner, and fixed her eyes on her

* Serie B, Prévôté de l'Hôtel. Procédures de 1782 et Registre des Audiences de 1781-82. See also "Un Moment d'Humeur de Mlle. Rose Bertin," par E. Conard, Versailles, 1891.

for two or three minutes; which perceiving, petitioner turned her head away, whereupon Mlle. Bertin, seeking an opportunity of insulting her, seized that moment to spit in petitioner's face.

“Such a grave insult is infinitely reprehensible in every point of view. It was committed in the Castle of Versailles, in the room facing the Queen's apartments—that is to say, at a spot where everything brings the Royal Family, and the respect due to them, to one's mind; for which reason it is absolutely necessary that measures should be adopted to prevent a recurrence of such a scandal, which can only be effected by imposing a severe penalty. On the other hand, to spit in a person's face is to show the greatest contempt for that person. The petitioner, who did not expect such an insult, fainted and lost consciousness, and would have perished but for the ready assistance of persons near her. It was not, indeed, until half an hour later that she recovered consciousness, and was able to leave the gallery of the castle, and to return to her carriage, and thus to Paris.

“The petitioner, jealous of her honour and reputation, is anxious to obtain legal reparation for the insult given her by Mlle. Bertin, for which reason she has recourse to your authority.

“Having considered which, sir, may it please you to give petitioner satisfaction for the insult given her by Mlle. Bertin as related above, and permit petitioner in your presence to bring evidence of the matter, according to the facts communicated to the King's

Attorney, in conjunction with whom you, sir, may come to some fitting decision. . . .

“CHARLOTTE PICOT.”

We learn from the above the exact site of Rose Bertin's establishment, “facing Saint-Honoré”; no trace of this church remains, nor of the house where the dressmaker resided, the Louvre being built upon the site. In answer to Mlle. Picot, Rose's counsel produced his defence, of which the “Correspondance Littéraire” gives certain extracts, as follows :

“ Mlle. Picot desires to cover with shame her to whom she owes her existence and position. How shall I find words to express the horror such an action inspires ? I will not try—I pity her ; but I owe it to justice, to the public who esteem me, to the great who honour me with their protection and kindness, and above all to myself, to defend myself from an accusation so atrocious, so false, and, I dare to say it, so incredible.

“ Without following in detail the history of all the services rendered by Mlle. Bertin to Mlle. Picot, a history unimportant in itself, but throughout which the greatest names in France have a place, we will limit ourselves to the principal fact and defence.

“ I never have, and I never shall, do harm to anyone, not even to Mlle. Picot. But who would say that it is criminal for me to look with contempt upon a person who should be deeply grateful to me,

and instead has deceived me so cruelly? I despise her absolutely, I admit it—it is but what she deserves. I met her about six o'clock in the evening of the 15th of last April, in the room giving on to the gallery at Versailles. I did not see her; the persons who accompanied me mentioned her name. The sight of her revolted me, my stomach turned, the horror she inspired me with caused my gorge to rise, and no doubt the involuntary contraction of the muscles of my face made apparent the disgust and repulsion I felt at the sight of her; but I did not spit, I could not have done so, I was petrified, and the persons who accompanied me, and who never lost sight of me, can bear me witness of this, and I desire to give evidence of this and all the facts of which I have spoken, if it is thought fit. . . .

“I am ignorant of what lies Mlle. Picot's friends may have told . . . but I am morally certain none of them can have said that they saw me spit in her face. I commit such an outrage, and in the King's palace, close to the apartments of the Queen, who is so good as to sometimes stoop to show me kindness—I dare to say no one will believe it. My Judge did not believe it, and referred the case to the Civil Court, but my counsel will explain all this.”

The hearing of the witnesses brought by Mlle. Picot was fixed for April 23. They were five in number.

Jean-Baptiste de Gumin, gentleman, native of Dauphiny, a stockbroker of Lyons, declared that he



Bibliothèque Nationale

A FASHIONABLE DRESSMAKER DELIVERING HER WORK

After Le Clerc del., Dupuis sc., 1779

To face page 120

was with his party, composed of M. Thon, cloth-merchant of Paris, Mme. de Gumin, his wife, and her lady's-maid, "in the room at the entrance of the gallery, on the side of the chapel and facing the Queen's apartments." This witness's deposition confirms the facts of the plaintiff's case, but does not agree with it as to the spot where the insult occurred, as, indeed, none of the witnesses do. "In the Queen's card-room," says Mlle. Picot. Well, the latter room was at the extreme south end of the gallery, and is known as the Peace Room, while the room facing it is called the War Room. Charlotte Picot's fainting fit must have affected her memory, or she did not know the palace, otherwise she could not have mistaken the two rooms; but we confess that we are a little sceptical as to the importance of the outrage which the girl, who thought she would die on the spot, is alleged to have suffered. We are more inclined than Rose Bertin's contemporaries to diminish her guilt, as it seems probable that Charlotte Picot was a hypocrite only too glad to seize the occasion as an advertisement, at a time when sandwich men had not been imported from England to promenade in single file in the gallery of the Palais-Royal, the centre then of the Parisian world, as the boulevards which stretch from Saint-Denis to the Madeleine are now. The second witness was Mme. de Gumin, whose maiden name was Catherine Thon, who also says that the incident took place "in the room before the gallery of the castle," where she was standing

“to see the Royal Family coming from Benediction in the chapel.” Aimé Thon says the same. Madeleine Bailly, Mme. de Gumin’s lady’s-maid, is of the same opinion, so we may conclude that it was in the War Room that the insult offered by the warlike Mlle. Bertin to her ex-employé took place. The deposition of Pierre Guertin, employé of Messrs. Thon, Joly and Co., is identical with that of his employer.

The five witnesses were agreed in putting the blame on Mlle. Bertin ; but were they not exaggerating the incident, had they no interest in the matter ? I consider one witness at least suspect—that is, Pierre Guertin ; what was he doing at Versailles that day, and how came he to be in Charlotte Picot’s company ? It is evident from M. Thon’s deposition, given below, that all these people were acquainted with each other. M. Thon deposes that “on Easter Day last, 15th instant, having come to Versailles to see the Court, and being, about six or half-past six in the evening, in company with M. and Mme. Gumin, deponent’s brother-in-law and sister, in His Majesty’s palace, in the room called the War Room, giving on to the gallery on the side of the chapel, having taken up position near the windows leading to the terrace to see the Court on their way from Benediction, Mlle. Picot, accompanied by M. Guertin, deponent’s employé, approached the party, and placed themselves by deponent’s side ; at the same moment he saw Mlle. Bertin, also a dressmaker of Paris, coming from the gallery, Mlle. Picot being at the time in

conversation with deponent. The said Mlle. Bertin approached the said Mlle. Picot, and, gazing on her fixedly with a look of contempt, spat upon her neck on the left side, saying, 'I promised you this—I have kept my word,' and then went on her way. Immediately the said Mlle. Picot felt unwell, and they were obliged to lean her against one of the windows and apply eau de Cologne to relieve her. A little later deponent saw the said Mlle. Bertin return, while deponent's sister was still endeavouring to revive the said Mlle. Picot from her fainting fit, upon whom the said Mlle. Bertin cast a look of contempt and disdain. After the said Mlle. Picot came to herself, deponent and his party left her."

We trust that Pierre Guertin did not do the same, that he bid good-bye to his employer, M. Thon, and remained behind to render further assistance to the wretched Charlotte. In any case, the return from Versailles after such a scene, in company with a woman still nervous and trembling from the effects of it, cannot have presented the same charm as the journey there, with the young green of the trees to brighten the route, and the indescribable joy of April to lend enhanced beauty to the luxurious carriages bearing the noblest in France to the Palace of Versailles.

The text of the sentences pronounced against Rose Bertin on August 18 and September 1 bear witness that though the Court considered a certain censure necessary, yet, like us, they considered that the wit-

nesses were not entirely reliable, and that a nominal fine would meet the case.

The sentence of August 18 prohibits the defendant from spitting again in the plaintiff's face, and condemns her to pay a fine of 20 livres, applicable, with plaintiff's consent, to the poor of the parish of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. The sentence of September 1 merely confirms the first.

Rose Bertin was not a woman to capitulate without fighting. At the news that the first sentence had been confirmed, no doubt doors were slammed in the privacy of the Rue Saint-Honoré ; but at Versailles, or anywhere else where her business with the Queen took her, she presented a serene countenance and succeeded in interesting Her Majesty in her case. "The amusing part of the adventure," says the Vicomtesse de Fars in her memoirs, "was that Mlle. Bertin, pending judgment, solicited the Queen to interpose her authority in the matter, assuring her that her royal dignity would be compromised in the affront which she who worked with her might receive ; and when sentence was passed, Mlle. Bertin replied to all who came with sympathy : "Alas ! it is not I who am offended in all this, but her Majesty herself."

She then appealed to the Grand Conseil. Sentence was about to be pronounced, when the Queen sent for M. de Nicolai, President of the Court, to confer with him upon the point, and the case was remanded for eight days. Judgment was finally passed on

December 19, and the sentence may be seen in the Archives Nationales (vol. v., p. 894).

“Between Mlle. Bertin, dressmaker to the Queen . . . the appellant, according to her petition presented to the Council on December 11 . . . begs that her appeal be granted, and the sentence and proceedings of the Prévôté de l’Hôtel be declared null, and the said Mlle. Picot be condemned in such damages as the Council shall think fit . . . the appellant denies formally all the facts set forth in Mlle. Picot’s complaint of April 18, 1781, and, on the contrary, is ready to bring evidence in proof of the following facts :

“1. That at the hour appellant is accused of spitting in Mlle. Picot’s face she was in the Queen’s apartments, having received instructions to await Her Majesty there on her return from Benediction, on Easter Day, 15th of last April ; and that she remained there until seven o’clock in the evening.

“2. That when appellant passed and repassed through the gallery and in the War Room it was not more than a quarter after five, and that she passed and repassed without spitting in Mlle. Picot’s face, nor on her, nor on any person whatsoever.

“3. That at the moment she passed, one of the young ladies who work in her shop, and who accompanied her, called her attention to Mlle. Picot, near to one of the Swiss guards of the castle, who was there to keep back the crowd and leave a free passage ; nearly hidden by the Suisse, appellant was more than

six feet from Mlle. Picot, so that even had she had a tube in her mouth she could not have spat such a distance, and still less take aim at the face of the said Mlle. Picot ; and had she spat, and if the spittle had reached as far as Mlle. Picot the Suisse and other persons standing near would have been spattered and would have complained, and appellant would have been arrested on the spot.

“4. That Mlle. Picot was standing with her right shoulder to the people passing to the chapel, and not the left, as her witnesses have stated.

“5. That there were more than sixty persons in the War Room when appellant passed and repassed on April 15, 1781, being Easter Day, at about a quarter past five in the evening, so that if the appellant had really spat in Mlle. Picot’s face, and if the alleged insult had caused the commotion she has depicted in her complaint, and had she fainted, and been carried half dead to the window, while smelling salts were used to revive her and restore her from her fainting condition, she might have had sixty witnesses ready to depose to the truth of so scandalous and notorious an outrage, which had aroused the attention of all the spectators ; and had she not delayed three days in bringing a charge, she would not have been reduced to the four or five persons whom she thought fit to choose from her own party, and who during the three days she had made accomplices of her little plot.

“The appellant begs leave to bring evidence in

contradiction of the facts set forth in Mlle. Picot's complaint. . . .

"And the said Mlle. Picot, appellant, presents petition dated December 17, 1781, begging that the Council may be pleased to disregard the appeal of the said Mlle. Bertin. . . .

"After Desnos, counsel for Mlle. Bertin, assisted by Carteron his attorney, had concluded his speech, and Mitte, counsel for Mlle. Picot, assisted by his attorney Maillon, had concluded his speech, and after De Vaucresson, for the King's Attorney-General, had likewise been heard, and the case had been heard in two sittings—

"The Council finds that the appeal of the party represented by Desnos, against the sentences in question, is well founded, and, in accordance with the King's Attorney-General, declares the sentence given at the Prévôté de l'Hôtel, May 12, 1781, null and void, as also all proceedings connected with it . . . and condemns the party represented by Mitte to pay the costs of appeal.

"Given in Paris, by the Council, December 19, 1781."

The Queen's influence had perhaps something to do with the sentence, which was nevertheless justified by the insufficient evidence brought by Charlotte Picot.

A new case was brought, however, and for six months the litigation was continued, to the profit and amusement of magistrates, lawyers, and public.

The jurisdiction of the Prévôté de l'Hôtel had been already turned into ridicule, notably by Cochu, lawyer of the Council. The Provost of the Hôtel was nicknamed "Roi des Ribauds," it being alleged that his chief duty was to watch over the gay ladies who followed the Court. The lawsuit of the two dress-makers was well calculated to provoke public laughter anew.

A new case was opened in January, 1782, and the appeal was heard in April before Claude-Joseph Clos, King's Counsel, Lieutenant-General of the Police for Civil and Criminal Causes. A complete inquiry was made and new witnesses heard. Petitions and objections were multiplied on both sides, and the case dragged on until 1784—that is, more than three years, during which time, no doubt, the work-girls and clients of the Rue Saint-Honoré suffered greatly at the hands of the irritable Rose.

Various events which happened during the course of 1781 diverted public attention from lawsuits and minor incidents. The Opera-house took fire. Rose Bertin's establishment in the Rue Saint-Honoré was situated between the Rue Champfleuri and Rue du Chantre, both of which have disappeared; in fact, it was built almost on the spot where now stands the entrance to the Louvre, called the Saint-Honoré Door. The Opera was at the corner of the Rue de Valois, quite near to Rose Bertin's shop.

The fire was very considerable, and there were various victims; but the number would have been

much greater but for the presence of mind of the ballet-master, who was on the stage when the fire broke out. It was on the night of June 8. The air was heavy and stormy, and rain had begun to fall. The ballet "Orpheus" was being given, when the ballet-master gave an abrupt order for the dancing to cease, which caused a certain amount of murmuring among the audience; the curtain was instantly dropped. Order was then given to cut the ropes which held the piece of burning scenery; the order was clumsily carried out, the ropes being cut on one side only. Hanging in this way the scenery burnt more quickly, and soon the whole theatre was in flames. The smoke had already driven the audience out, their cries awakening the whole district. People crowded to their windows, and the street filled quickly. A fire in the Paris of olden days, with its narrow streets, was a terrible business. People could still remember the fire which consumed the Hôtel Dieu on December 30, 1772, and cries of alarm arose as a column of flame more than 200 feet high shot into the air, "tinged with many colours, an effect due to the burning oil-painted scenery and gilded boxes." The Palais-Royal was in great danger; the roof several times caught fire, but was speedily extinguished. Not only the Palais-Royal but, indeed, the whole district, was in danger from the continual shower of burning sparks and splinters which fell on the adjoining roofs. The reservoirs, which should have been full, were absolutely empty. Anxiety was at its height

during the whole of that night, the panic being considerably increased about half-past nine by the falling in of the rafters, which caused a great shower of sparks.

Happily there was no wind, and, as rain continued to fall, the fire was confined to the theatre, which was completely burnt; it had been burnt before in 1773, and rebuilt on the same site. On June 15, a week after it had broken out, the fire was still burning in the foundations of the theatre.

There were, unfortunately, various victims, amongst whom were several of the dancers. Eleven corpses were found in the first instance, and taken to the Morgue. M. de Caumartin, Provost of Merchants, and Le Noir, Chief of the Police, were on the spot from the beginning, endeavouring to organize willing helpers in order to save what was possible; "but the firemen's efforts," says Mercier, "were powerless to save anything but the façade on the Rue Saint-Honoré."

Rose Bertin might have watched from her windows the sad cortège which bore the bodies of the victims to the Church Saint-Honoré, facing her shop; and as the search in the ruins of the theatre continued some days, she was an eyewitness of the heart-rending scenes, no one being better able than she to carry news of the search to the Queen, who was at Marly expecting her second child. The fire at the Opera-house, of all theatrical fires in Paris, has only been surpassed in horror by that which consumed the

Opéra Comique in 1887, when there was a holocaust of more than 200 victims.

In spite of the Queen's condition, the inventive genius of milliners continued to design new fashions. The Dauphin was born on October 22, 1781, and this event also helped to divert public attention from the Bertin lawsuit. The birth was the occasion, too, of new styles of hats; bonnets à la *Henri IV.*, à la *Gertrude*, aux *Cerises*, à la *Fanfan*, aux *Sentiments repliés*, à l'*Esclavage brisé*, à *Colin-Maillard*, gave place to hats au *Dauphin*, and then to hats in honour of the churching of the Queen.

Louise Fusil has told us in her "Souvenirs d'une Actrice" how a society woman spent her day at this time. On rising she would put on a dressing-gown and receive a few intimate friends, change this for a morning cloak to go into her oratory, and the cloak for a light peignoir to retire into her cabinet. 'The pretty boudoir, with its favourite ornaments; the walls covered with engravings of past fashions, which look so ridiculous when they have passed. One says to oneself: 'Great God! did I wear that?' 'Yes, madam, and very charming you looked in that hat.' 'It is not possible.' To go out one wore a long cloak with blonde lace, and veil, and in winter white hood and wadded satin cloak. For dinner, if one was alone, a *négligé* toilette was permissible, unless there was a ball or visits to follow. Dresses and coiffures were similar to the style often to be

seen at our theatres, with the exception of the hats *à la Henri IV.*, which have not yet been adopted.

“One may suppose, considering the taste for luxury, that it was above all at Longchamps that the greatest display was made. Long beforehand ladies could think of nothing but how to invent some fashion no one else had thought of. . . . Milliners and costumiers were worth their weight in gold, and came to assist in planning the attack.”

CHAPTER IV

THE END OF ECCENTRICITIES—ROSE BERTIN, RUE DE
RICHELIEU—HER PRETENDED BANKRUPTCY

(1782-1787)

IN 1782 Marie-Antoinette discovered a new amusement. As little girls play at keeping shop, the Queen took to playing at being a milkmaid and a shepherdess, with the whole village of Trianon for her playground. But she was a clean shepherdess, a coquettish milkmaid, a village maiden in silk attire, after Watteau; and consequently hats and dresses were required to suit the part.

White became her favourite colour. The creoles of St. Domingo had introduced it into Bordeaux, where it had become very fashionable. Linen, linon, cotton, and calico, pure white or striped with pale colours, supplanted all other kinds of material, to the great advantage of the manufactory of figured cottons established by Oberkampf at Jouy in 1750.

Fichus were discarded in favour of swansdown *palatines* called *chats*.

The two most fashionable types of dress were the

polonaise and the *anglaise*. The *polonaise* was an open overdress, above a rather short skirt, with three breadths raised and draped, one on each side and one at the back. The sleeves stopped short above the elbow ; a hood was sometimes adapted to the bodice. The *anglaise* was a kind of coat generally worn for walking.

Rose kept her monopoly and her notoriety ; nothing so stimulates the latter as caricature and satire. The obscure are not made fun of, nor do they appear upon the stage in a transparent disguise. Not everyone can be the theme of a popular song ; still less is it given to many people to see themselves in a theatrical representation. Rose had that unheard-of stroke of luck, an advertisement quite unique at that date. On April 9, 1782, a comedy-vaudeville by Prévôt, an advocate of Parliament, was produced at the Théâtre Italien. This comedy was a sort of allegorical *revue*, at first presented without a title, and afterwards called "Le Public Vengé."

We read in "Correspondance Littéraire" : "The background of the scene represents a desert. Truth appears asleep in the arms of Time. . . . Opinion and Caprice twist and twirl, holding the portfolio of the Public. Amphigouri and her troupe, consisting of Cabal, Paradox, Nycticorax, Dramomane, and Harmoniche, had long endeavoured to keep the public beyond the reach of Truth. The national Genius, exiled by bad taste, returns to his native France after long travels. He puts to flight all the ridiculous



Musée Carnavalet

DRESS À LA SUZANNE IN THE PLAY "LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO"

Designed by Watteau, engraved by Bacquay

To face page 134

phantoms which had taken possession of the Public, breaks the bonds with which they had bound him, and reconciles him with Truth, Laughter, and the Graces."

This is surely a transparent satire upon past eccentricities, given at a moment when the public taste showed a reaction towards simplicity. The "Correspondance Littéraire" continues: "The part of Mme. du Costume, or Mlle. Bertin, who comes forward, of course, to give the Public an account of her success, contains a rather agreeably rhymed madrigal, but it is introduced so awkwardly that it produced very little effect :

Sur l'air de "La Baronne."

"C'est un mystère :

Trop tard vos cartons sont venus.

C'est un mystère

Sur une Grâce je voulus

Épuiser tous les dons de plaire

Elle avait tout pris chez Vénus,

C'est un mystère."

Prévôt was not a great poet, and these verses are very mediocre. It is not surprising that they got rather a cold reception. The mystery enwraps the author's meaning so delicately that it renders it a trifle obscure.

"At my place," says Mme. Costume elsewhere, "you will find jointed dolls, representing the manners, morals, and characteristics, of our time, and in six séances, at the very most, you will get a complete description of the whole nation."

The character of Mme. de Costume was used as a pretext for a panegyric of the new spirit which seemed destined to rule the world of dress.

The fashions, indeed, appeared much simpler; but Mlle. Bertin worked as hard as ever, and Marie-Antoinette's expenditure was not in the least diminished.

The Queen had not willingly abandoned the fashion of dressing the hair in huge erections, and pyramids surmounted by flowers, feathers, etc. Her hair began to fall out in 1778 after the birth of Madame Royale, and none of the remedies she essayed was successful in stopping it. Then she adopted the coiffure called *à l'enfant*, which consisted of a flat chignon and a long floating curl, like the peruke of an abbé. This had taught her that some advantage may be drawn from the fashion even by following it with simplicity.

A picture in the galleries of Versailles gives some idea of the fashions of that time. It represents Mme. de Lamballe, one of Rose's titled customers. Though it was painted by Rioult in 1843, there is every indication that it is only a reproduction or enlargement of an early miniature painted from life. In this picture, Mme. de Lamballe wears a straw hat covered with white gauze, and trimmed with a wreath of roses, myosotis, and jasmine. This is certainly the most elegant head-dress designed in the workshops of the Rue Saint-Honoré; and not only the most elegant, but one of those which most nearly approaches the present fashions, and perhaps the only one in really good taste.

At that time flowers and rustic fancies were all the rage ; a breath of spring had inspired the fashion, which was, indeed, sorely in need of rejuvenation and deliverance from the increasingly cumbersome and heavy extravagances of the last ten years. It was a complete transformation, but, as we have said, it did not cost a penny the less.

In May and June of 1781 the Grand-Duke of Russia, afterwards Paul I., made a journey to Paris with his wife, under the name of the Comte and Comtesse du Nord, and their visit offered a pretext for holding festivities at Court in their honour.

The Grand-Duchess ordered her dresses from Mlle. Rose, and commissioned the Baroness Oberkirch to superintend their making. She alludes to this in the following passage of her memoirs, in which we find once more the impression made by Mlle. Bertin upon those who visited her establishment, and one of those repartees so characteristic of the proprietress of the "Grand-Mogol." Mme. Oberkirch writes on May 17 : "According to the orders of the Grand-Duchess, I called on Mlle. Rose Bertin, the Queen's celebrated dressmaker, to inquire if her dresses were ready. The whole establishment was at work upon them ; damasks, dauphines, figured satins, brocades, and lace, were scattered in every direction. The Court ladies came to inspect them out of curiosity, but it was forbidden to imitate any of the models until they had been worn by the Princess. Mlle. Bertin seemed to me an extraordinary person, full of

her own importance, and treating Princesses as her equals.

“A story is told that a lady from the provinces came to order a head-dress for her presentation ; she wanted something new. Mlle. Bertin looked her coolly up and down, and, apparently satisfied with this scrutiny, turned to one of her young ladies, and said majestically : ‘ Show madam the result of my last collaboration with Her Majesty.’ ”

The ball in honour of the Grand-Duchess of Russia was given on June 8, but the presentation took place on May 20. Mme. Oberkirch tells us that “the Grand-Duchess was very richly dressed that day in a state costume of brocade bordered with pearls, over a pannier six yards wide. She wore the most beautiful jewels that can be imagined.”

The description of the dress worn by Marie-Antoinette on the day of the ball is preserved for us by the Marquis de Valfons who says in his “Souvenirs” :

“The Queen was dressed in the costume of Gabrielle d’Estrée—a black hat with white feathers, a mass of heron’s plumes held by four diamonds and a diamond band, fastened with the diamond called Pitt, worth two millions ; a stomacher of diamonds, and a diamond belt over a dress of white silver gauze, powdered with *paillettes*, and ruchings of gold studded with diamonds.”

Mme. Oberkirch tells us that two days before she tried on, meaning to wear it at the ball, “something very fashionable, but rather uncomfortable : little flat bottles curved to the shape of the head, holding a drop

of water to moisten the stalks of the natural flowers and keep them fresh in the coiffure. It was not always successful, but when it could be managed it was charming. Spring on the head in the midst of snow-white powder produced an unequalled effect."

The effect must indeed have been very graceful; flowers being the fashion, some ingenious device was necessary to keep them fresh, when the flowers of Joseph Wengel were not used.

A certain Joseph Wengel had lately put artificial flowers on the market; he had first got the idea from Italy, where they were made by the nuns for the decoration of the altar. Until that time natural flowers had been almost solely used for the adornment of ladies. It was therefore an innovation of which Rose and her rivals hastened to take advantage.

A very curious collection of patterns of the dresses worn by the Queen in the year 1782 is preserved in the National Archives. The brothers Goncourt speak of it as follows in their "Histoire de Marie-Antoinette."

"The Archives of the Empire possess a curious volume bearing the following inscription upon its cover of green parchment: 'Mme. la Comtesse d'Ossun : Garde-robe des Atours de la Reine. Gazette pour l'Année 1782.' It contains patterns of the dresses worn by the Queen from 1782 to 1784 stuck on white paper with red wafers. It is like a palette of pale colours youthful and gay; their brightness, youth, and gaiety, are all the more noticeable when we

compare them with the dead leaf, carmelite brown, and other almost Jansenistic colours of the dresses worn by Mme. Elizabeth, which we find in another register. Dainty relics, appealing to the eye, in which a painter might find enough to reconstruct the Queen's costume on any given day, or even at any given hour of her life! He would only have to glance through the divisions of the book : *Dresses on the large pannier*, *Dresses on the small pannier*, *Turkish dresses*, *Lévites*, *English dresses*, and state dress of taffeta ; chief provinces of the kingdom divided between Mme. Bertin, trimming the costumes of ceremony for Easter ; Mme. Lenormand, trimming the Turkish dresses of the shade called *Paris mud* with embroideries of Spanish jasmine ; and Romand, and Barbier, and Pompée, working and manipulating in blue, white, pink, and pearl-grey, sometimes powered with gold sequins, the costumes for Versailles and Marly, which were brought to the Queen every morning in great wrappings of taffeta."

We have tried to discover what was the exact share of Mlle. Bertin in this collection, which mentions ninety-seven costumes, and consisted of eighty-nine patterns, of which seventy-eight have been preserved. The last mentioned belonged to the summer of 1784. But the way in which the register was kept is rather unsatisfactory, and is lacking in method. The name of the dressmaker is mentioned in most cases, but that of the modiste less frequently ; only occasionally is there any indication that such

and such a costume was trimmed by Mme. Pompée or Mlle. Bertin. The name of the former is mentioned once, and that of the latter six times ; but this does not mean that Rose Bertin only trimmed six dresses for the royal wardrobe in two years, namely : a state dress for Easter in white satin ; a brown silk lévite embroidered with small flowers ; a dress on the small pannier of white silk gauze ; a white state dress trimmed with sweet peas ; a white Turkish dress trimmed with sweet peas ; and coat of wine-coloured silk.

This register seems to us like a herbal, and the patterns like pressed flowers which have kept their fresh colouring in despite of time. By its aid we can evoke an image of the Queen in the days of her happiness, surrounded by affection and admiration, happy in the luxury of Versailles and the charm of Trianon, her hands stroking the soft texture of these delicate fabrics, and an image of other industrious hands fixing, with skilful needle, flowers, ruchings, garlands, pearls, and embroideries, upon all these shimmering stuffs, in the disorder of a busy workroom from which dazzling marvels will presently emerge.

No wearer of a crown or bearer of an illustrious name could escape a visit to Mlle. Rose.

The voyage of the Comtesse du Nord to Paris, and her visits to the Rue Saint-Honoré, made Mlle. Bertin the fashion in Russian society. Princess Tcherbinine, Princess Baratinsky, wife of the Ambassador, and Baroness Benekendorf sent her orders. Among those

of the latter were two Russian costumes, one of blue satin worth 240 livres, and the other of blue and silver cloth worth 420 livres.

These Russian costumes were cheap compared with the presentation robes which Rose Bertin supplied to the great ladies who were to appear before the Royal Family for the first time. One of these dresses made for the Vicomtesse de Polastron, on December 2, 1780, cost 3,090 livres. Towards the end of August, 1782, Rose delivered to her the costume of a priestess which cost 2,434 livres, and certain alterations made a few days later to the same dress cost 1,150 livres.

In this year of 1782 the modistes, always on the watch for topical novelties to retain their importance and their profitable influence over women, could think of nothing better than to start a fashion for the *chapeau à la Marlborough*, because the Queen was heard one day singing the popular song of Marlborough. At that time bonnets *à la Religieuse* were still in fashion, and one of these cost 18 livres.

In the year 1783 experiments in aeronautics brought in the fashions in hairdressing called the *Ballon, à la Mongolfier, au Globe de Paphos*, and *au Globe de Robert*. The success of the "Mariage de Figaro" gave rise to fashions *à la Chérubin, à la Suzanne*, and *à la Basile*.

Rulers of fashions are always eager to avail themselves of successful plays in naming their novelties. Thus, "La Veuve du Malabar," by Lemierre, in 1780; "Les Amours," by Bayard de Monvel, in 1786; "La

Brouette du Vinaigrier," by Mercier, in 1787; and "Tartare," by Beaumarchais, all stood sponsors to the novelties of the season.

On October 13, 1783, it is reported in the "Mémoires Secrets": "Hats à la Caisse d'Escompte are already on the market. These hats have no crowns. All the women have hastened to adopt this new fashion, which is a cruel pun against the directors." ("Crowns of hats" happen to be synonymous with "funds" in French, hence the pun.)

A few years ago, after a celebrated *krach*, these hats reappeared. They were called *chapeaux Comptoir d'Escompte*. Several of our contemporaries have worn them. Indeed, nothing is new under the sun, in fashions as in other things; it is but the turn of the wheel. "New things are only those which have been forgotten," as Rose Bertin said very truly one day to Marie-Antoinette.

This fashion had only a relatively small and restricted vogue. That which made the most sensation outside France was the fashion à la *Marlborough*.

"The Duchess of Marlborough, granddaughter of the famous General of that name, which was adopted by her husband . . . made a collection of all the songs, plays, farces, puns, and epigrams, relating to him."* But she was not satisfied with this. "At the same time she commissioned Mlle. Bertin to send her samples of all the fashions à la *Marlborough*, both for men and women."†

* Bachaumont, "Mémoires Secrets," 1783 (August 14).

† *Ibid.*

The King rarely paid attention to the Queen's costumes, but one day in May, 1783, he could not refrain from making fun of an innovation which seemed to him more ridiculous than usual. The anecdote is told as follows: "Within the last few days, on returning from the chase, the King had his hair dressed in a chignon, such as women wear, and went to visit the Queen. Her Majesty burst out laughing, and asked the meaning of this masquerade, and whether the carnival had come again. 'Do you think it ugly?' asked her royal husband. 'It is a fashion I wish to set; I have never started one yet.' 'Ah, Sire, beware of that one—it is frightful!' replied Her Majesty. 'But, madam,' he replied, 'we men must find some way of doing our hair to distinguish us from women; you have robbed us of the *plumet*, the *chapeau*, the *cadennette*, the *queue*, and now you have taken the *cadogan*, which was all we had left, and which I think very unbecoming to women.' The Queen grasped his meaning, and, being always anxious to please the King above all things, immediately gave orders that her *cadogans* should be unplaited, and had her hair dressed in a chignon. It is probable that this really ridiculous fashion, which has become the rage in Paris, will be banished by the King's joke."*

This was a defeat for Léonard, and not for Rose Bertin. It is, however, rather difficult to realize that Louis XVI. can have driven side by side with the

* Bachaumont, "Mémoires Secrets," 1783 (August 14).

Abbé Edgeworth with his hair dressed in a chignon like a woman. Yet it is a positive fact, and well in keeping with the character of the King, who did not like to thwart the Queen even in her most regrettable whims and wildest extravagance.

The cost of dress had, indeed, become so excessive that it caused what has since been called *krachs* in the best-known families and among merchants whose credit appeared to be most solid. The "Correspondance Littéraire" tells us that in September, 1782, "a dealer in fashions, who was supposed to have an income of 50,000 or 60,000 livres, risks losing 30,000 by the bankruptcy of the Prince de Guéméné." We learn from the same source that, in relating this disaster to his friends of the Palais-Royal, he said: "Here am I reduced to living like a private gentleman."

The bankruptcy of the Prince de Guéméné caused a great sensation. It is said to have amounted to more than 35,000,000 livres. Rose Bertin lost by it, but not so heavily as her unfortunate colleague. "Three thousand creditors appeared upon the list of the 'Most Serene Swindler,' as the Marquis de la Valette called him."*

There were husbands who paid and said nothing, and husbands who said nothing and did not pay, which was most disastrous for the dealers. But as ever since the world began there have been husbands of all kinds, there were some who paid but grumbled

* "Mémoires de la Vicomtesse de Fars.

and argued over the bills. M. de Toulangeon was one of these.* This M. de Toulangeon had married a Mlle. d'Aubigné, who wished to be in the swim, and had her clothes made by the most fashionable dressmakers in Paris. When he remarked that the bill was—well, a bit stiff, Mlle. Bertin replied: “Oh! is Vernet paid only according to the cost of his canvas and colours?”

Such a comparison might serve to justify any extortion. At that time pictures by the masters had their value and fetched the highest prices. A well-known Greuze, “L'Accordée de Village,” was sold in 1782 for 16,650 livres. Two pictures by the said Vernet at the same sale, that of the Marquis de Menar, “A Storm on the Seashore,” and a landscape embellished by architecture, mountains, distant horizons, etc., fetched 6,621 livres. Greuze led the market, but Vernet fetched a very good price.

The establishment in the Rue Saint-Honoré had no real branches, but the fashion-dealers in the provinces bought novelties from Mlle. Bertin to display in their showrooms. Among her customers was a certain Thévenard, who had a shop at Dijon. Thévenard had a friend called Bardel, who was a wholesale ribbon-dealer in the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, and one of those who supplied Rose Bertin. This Thévenard ended his life as an *émigré*. He had enlisted in Condé's army, and died in the field-hospital of Schifferstadt on August 20, 1793.

* “Mélanges de Mme. Necker.”

The fashion then inclined to *moyens bonnets en prêtresse*, hats *boue de Paris*, and dresses *à la Religieuse*, but many other articles are mentioned in the ledgers of the Maison Bertin in 1783. Rose Bertin delivered to the Princesse de Rochefort "painted Chinese fans of sandalwood"; to the Comtesse de Vergennes "a sword-knot of a Maréchal de France" and "a sword-knot in dark blue stones inlaid with silver." Such things especially were to be found in the fashion shops. The name of a celebrated actress, Mlle. Sinvalle, of the Comédie Française, also appears in these ledgers. It will perhaps be interesting to note what a great actress of that time spent on her hats. The price of a straw hat *à la Religieuse* which she chose in Mlle. Bertin's showroom cost 33 livres; a *pouf* of embroidered silk gauze cost 42 livres; and a *pouf* trimmed with a wreath of pink larkspur, certainly not the least charming of the three, cost 54 livres.

The Chevalier de Boufflers, wishing to buy a present for New Year's Day in 1784, purchased a rather curious basket from Mlle. Bertin, a description of which is found in her writings; the price of it was 360 livres. It was "a basket *au globe** in blue and white striped pekin, tied at the base with black and pink ribbon, a second row of ribbon trimmed with blonde on one side closing with a ribbon drawstring; the said basket trimmed inside with five bouquets of

* Globes, or aerostats, were used as *motifs* in decoration. It was the fashion of the day. They were to be found everywhere, on fans, snuff-boxes, etc.

different flowers and wreaths ; a wax baby dressed in a chemise of gauze trimmed with blonde lace and a wreath of pomegranate blossom"—360 livres for a few flowers and a wax doll in a basket ! Perhaps people did not haggle over the price because they did not pay ; this bill for 360 livres was still due to the estate of Rose Bertin in 1813.

The winter of 1784 was extremely severe. The ground was covered with snow for four months, and the people suffered indescribable misery. The King and Queen set an example of charity which was followed by all. People economized on luxuries to help those who suffered most from the cold. In that time of distress, furbelows, huge hats, and flowing ribbons, would have been in bad taste. Rose invented more sober head-gear than usual ; she created the *bonnet en sœur grise*, which seems to have sold very well ; she charged 27 livres for it, and it was a success in the provinces as well as in Paris.

Rose had now reached the summit of her career ; her success was undisputed and indisputable.

Mme. de Campels, daughter of Mme. de Montalembert, mentions in her correspondence that once in her childhood she went with her mother to Mlle. Bertin's establishment, and that in 1784 she was in a most "flourishing" condition and quite wealthy.

Rose Bertin had left the Rue Saint-Honoré for the Rue de Richelieu, a house belonging to M. de Maussion, as appears from the interminable proceedings against the demoiselle Picot, upon which is written : " The

year 1784, ninth day, at the request of the demoiselle Marie-Jeanne Bertin, spinster, dealer in fashions in Paris, residing Rue de Richelieu, who appeals against a sentence given in favour of Mlle. Picot on January 7.”*

This house in the Rue Richelieu stood upon the site where No. 10 now stands.

In the month of May, 1784, the Baroness Oberkirch required a dress for her presentation to the Queen, and naturally went to Mlle. Rose, whom she used formerly to visit with Princess Dorothy of Würtemberg. Her account will give us some idea of the business done by our modiste, now at the height of her reputation :

“I had not been to Mlle. Bertin since my return, and everyone was talking of her marvels. She was more the rage than ever. There was a rush for her bonnets. She showed me thirty at least that day, all different, attending to me herself, which was no small favour. There was a little Bohemian hat, turned up in a way which was simply perfect, copied from a model given by a lady of that nationality ; all Paris had gone mad over it. It had an aigrette and embroidery, like the Steinkerque of our forefathers. The effect was really very uncommon and original. But the Queen would have none of it ; she said she was not young enough to wear it, thus setting a premature example to all the superannuated coquettes who persist in suppressing the almanac, but forget

* Archives Nationales, Serie V³. Grande Chancellerie et Conseil. Prévôté de l'Hôtel.

that they cannot suppress their faces, which are often indiscreet"—a very judicious reflection which proves the good sense of Baroness Oberkirch.

"I owed the favours of Mlle. Bertin," she continues, "to the memory of Mme. la Comtesse du Nord, whose custom she had kept. She had her own portrait in her showroom besides that of the Queen and other royalties who honoured her with their protection. The lady's chatter was very amusing; it was a mixture of hauteur and baseness which bordered on impertinence if one gave her an inch, and became insolent unless she was kept strictly in her place. The Queen, with her usual kindness, allowed her a familiarity of which she took advantage, and which, she thought, gave her a right to assume airs of importance."

It is evident that, in spite of her efforts to please, Rose Bertin was not much of a favourite with Baroness Oberkirch. On leaving Rose the latter called "at Baulard's, dealer in fashions and finery. He and Alexandrine used to be the most celebrated, but Mlle. Bertin has dethroned them. She came from the Quai de Gesores, where she had dwelt so long in obscurity, to triumph over her rivals and make them all play second fiddle. Yet Baulard had the best name for mantles; he trimmed them with exquisite taste. He kept me for more than an hour while he held forth against Mlle. Bertin, who put on the airs of a Duchess, and was not even a *bourgeoise*."

Baulard triumphed over Mlle. Bertin on that

occasion, for the Baroness ordered her presentation dress from him because his rival had kept her waiting too long.

There is a portrait of Rose Bertin at that date, engraved in colours, by Jainnet, from a picture by L. Trinquesse, an artist who had a certain celebrity. This portrait has become rather rare; the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque d'Abbeville, and the Musée des Arts, have each a copy. A proof without the engraver's signature was sold in February, 1881, for 351 francs. It represents Mlle. Bertin nearly full-face, wearing a cap, her shoulders covered with a fichu knotted in front. In this portrait Mlle. Bertin appears to be about forty; the date might therefore be 1784 or 1785. She has a look of determination which is not surprising, but we look in vain for the beauty sometimes attributed to her. Rose may have been pretty at sixteen, when she used to take home the goods supplied by Mlle. Pagelle to the great ladies of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; but increasing stoutness had effaced what graceful lines she may have possessed.

As to the engraver, he had attained celebrity, not only in his profession, but also by an unfortunate attempt at aeronautics which he made with Abbé Miollan in the Jardin du Luxembourg on July 11, 1784. On that day he was almost torn to pieces by the furious mob, which had waited in the broiling sun for the ascent of the balloon, which had been widely advertised. It rose about half an inch, and finally split

and had to be abandoned. After this fiasco Miollan and Jainnet became the laughing-stock of the public, and had "constantly to see themselves hooted and jeered at in the cruellest way in the booths of every fair, in songs and caricatures of all kinds."*

For all that, Jainnet was an engraver of great talent, worthy to popularize the work of the painter Trinquesse.

We have seen how the Queen refused the little Bohemian hat made for her by Mlle. Rose, on the pretext that it was too young for her. She was then twenty-nine, and the idea that her youth was over took possession of her mind. She sent for Rose Bertin on purpose to tell her "that she would be thirty in November ; and, though no one was likely to remind her of it, she was determined to exclude from her dress such ornaments as were only suitable to extreme youth, and therefore she would no longer wear feathers or flowers."

"It is known also that the etiquette of dress is changed : the Queen will have no more *pierrots*, *chemises*, *redingotes*, *polonaises*, or *lévites*, Turkish or Circassian dresses ; sober dresses with pleats are now to be worn ; the Princesses have been requested to discard all others for visits of ceremony, and the Maid of Honour is to inform all ladies presenting themselves in any other costume, that they cannot be admitted thus without a special permission from Her Highness, which she will go and ask for."†

* "Correspondance Littéraire," t. xiv.

† "Correspondance Secrète," 27 Février, 1785.

Did all this diminish the expense? Certainly not. The Queen and all the ladies of her suite were swept away by the current.

Though Marie-Antoinette economized for a brief space in the severe winter of 1784 in order to relieve the poor, who suffered excessively from the cold, following the example of Louis XVI., to whom a pyramid of snow was raised before the gate of the Louvre, with inscriptions celebrating his "august benevolence," she soon resumed her luxurious tastes, with all the necessary expenditure.

From the time of Calonne's entrance into office the budget for the Queen's dress increased. In 1785 she overstepped her allowance of 120,000 livres to the extent of 138,000 livres, for which the Comtesse d'Ossun, her Lady of the Wardrobe, had to request a special grant.* In the previous year the supplementary grant had been only 97,652 livres.

In 1785 Rose Bertin's share was 27,597 livres as a dealer in fashions, and 4,350 livres for supplying lace. But though she had the largest share, she was not without competitors: Dame Pompée carried off 5,527 livres, Demoiselle Mouillard 885 livres, and Dame Noel 604 livres. There was another creditor who supplied English riding habits; he was a specialist, a tailor called Smith; in 1785 the bill he presented amounted to 4,097 livres.†

All this did not escape the attention of agitators and pamphleteers on the watch for anything which

* Archives Nationales, O¹, 3,792.

† *Ibid.*

could help to undermine an order rather worn out than intrinsically bad.

Théveneau de Morande, among others, does not hide his feelings upon the pernicious influence of Rose Bertin, in relating an incident which occurred at the time when Calonne was Minister of Finance, an office which he held from November 3, 1783 until April, 1787.

“We have another Minister,” he says, “who will not yield to Calonne nor to the Baron de Breteuil, if not in administrative capacity, at least in obstinacy with regard to the affairs of her ministry, in which this high official in petticoats will never suffer any contradiction.

“This minister is Mlle. Bertin, the leading fashion-dealer in Paris, who has written up over her establishment, in huge letters, that she has the honour of providing the Court with hats and dresses, especially Marie-Antoinette. Nothing can equal the impertinence and arrogance of this lady since she has been admitted to intimacy with the Queen, to whom she lays down the law . . . in the name of Fashion, whose most fervent priestess she proclaims herself.

“The extravagant notions and far-fetched combinations of Mlle. Bertin have been the cause of enormous expenses, which Marie-Antoinette has not succeeded in concealing, and which the King has questioned and blamed with all the vehemence of a good husband, careful of his revenues, and by no means anxious to see them squandered on frills and feathers. The Queen, advised by Mme. de Polignac and the Prin-



MARIE - ANTOINETTE

To face page 154

cesse Lamballe, held out for the payment of Mlle. Bertin's bills, but she had great difficulty in obtaining it. Calonne was employed in these great negotiations, and as his devotion to Marie-Antoinette is well known, when he urged the necessity of paying Mlle. Bertin's bill, the King replied :

“ ‘Parbleu! why don't you pay them out of your funds? Worthy Minister of our Finances, the silly details of the Queen's dressmaker's bill would look well in the archives of your Ministry!’

“ This ironical answer was misunderstood, or purposely misinterpreted, by Calonne, who immediately gave the Queen an order for 50,000 livres upon the collectors of the salt-tax. Mlle. Bertin has been paid for her important labours, and her visits to Trianon and Versailles have become more frequent than ever.”

It is interesting to note that, if the cost of Mlle. Bertin's ministrations at Court amounted to fabulous sums, her prices were not always so exaggerated. Though we have seen the price of a head-dress amount to 200 livres, Mlle. Bertin had other customers, not disdained, to whom she presented more modest accounts. The Baron Tillette de Clermont-Tonnerre has found the bill of a certain Pecquerie, a carrier between Abbeville and Paris, which furnishes conclusive proof of this. The daughter of the gendarme Nicolas Bertin had, indeed, a faithful customer in her native town, called Mlle. de Villerre.

It was evidently impossible to follow the fashion

and be well dressed in a small town like the capital of Ponthieu at the end of the eighteenth century ; the forty-two miles which separated it from Paris were not so easily covered as they are to-day. But people in the provinces were just as anxious as anywhere else to cut a good figure in the society which they frequented ; every lady wished to be as well dressed as her neighbours, and feared the tattle of idle tongues eager to criticize and talk scandal to pass away the time. Nothing could prevent them from wagging, but let it be out of jealousy rather than contempt. That at least is a kind of triumph. As they could not come to Paris several times a year to renew their wardrobes, at the beginning of each season, our grandmothers had recourse to the services of a carrier whose cart came and went regularly upon the royal highway of Calais, between Abbeville and the capital, and this important person was charged with the most various, and sometimes the most unexpected, commissions. But generally, as we shall see by the account rendered to Mlle. de Villerre by Pecquerie, which we think curious enough to be given in full, the demand was for feminine articles of toilette :

ACCOUNT OF COMMISSIONS DONE FOR MLLE. DE VILLERRE
IN PARIS.

	Livres.	s.
Two pots of rouge	6	0
Bill paid to Mlle. Bertin	9	0
Ointment from M. Cadet	2	16
Bill paid to M. Thiercelin... ..	57	9
A pair of shoes at the Cadran Bleu	5	10

	Livres	s.
Twelve boxes of <i>grainne de vie</i>	12	0
A hair-net	2	15
A pair of shoes from M. Degousse	8	0
Two yards and a half of taffeta at 7 l. 10 s. ...	18	15
For a case	3	0
Franking a letter	0	6
Carriage of letter	0	12
Carriage of case to the stage-coach from Mlle.		
Bertin's	0	6
One pound of brown paste	6	0
Bill paid to Mlle. Bertin	10	0
A pair of sabots from the Cadran Bleu	5	10
Two sticks of pomade at 12 s.	1	4
A needle-case with silver top	5	0
A piece of <i>armoisin</i>	60	0
Bill paid to Mlle. Paris	28	0
Given to the maid at the Cadran Bleu	0	12
For dyeing of two mantles	6	0
Tinder	2	5
	<hr/>	
	251	0
A muslin fichu	12	0
	<hr/>	
	263	0
Six pairs of stockings owing from me	24	0
	<hr/>	
Balance	239	0

I acknowledge receipt of the above sum at Abbeville, October 8, 1784.

(Signed) PECQUERIE.

The things made in Rose's workshops were only destined to live a day. Fashion was so fickle that scarcely were they put on before a new invention made them out of date, and they would soon have

been buried in oblivion if painting had not preserved some of these ephemeral works, and immortalized these frivolous and fragile creations. The Musée de Versailles in particular contains several portraits of ladies who were Rose Bertin's customers, and who were painted in dresses and head-dresses made in her workrooms.

The fancy *pouf* worn by Louise-Marie-Adélaïde de Bourbon, Duchesse d'Orleans, in the picture painted by Mme. Vigée-Lebrun in 1779, is not to be attributed to Rose Bertin. It is the artist's own arrangement, for she preferred to pose her models according to her own taste and pleasure—that is, unaffectedly and without cosmetics, as naturally and with as much truth to life as the vanity and exigence of her clients would permit, princely clients who may have made her fortune, though she would certainly have made her reputation without their aid.

Besides this portrait of a faithful customer of Rose Bertin, which does not enlighten us much upon her handiwork, the galleries of Versailles contain several portraits of Marie-Antoinette which show us head-dresses and costumes worn by the Queen, which came from the workrooms of Mlle. Rose.

One of these was painted in 1785 by the Swedish painter Wertmuller ; it was reproduced by Battaille. It cannot be said to flatter the Queen ; her head-dress of blue ribbons and feathers is too heavy for her face, and the Swedish artist has posed her most ungracefully between her two children, whose attitudes make them

look like little puppets. In spite of the background showing the leafy shades of Versailles and the Temple of Love, Marie-Antoinette does not appear in that frame of light and grace with which it pleases our imagination to surround her; Wertmuller's work is heavy, and so is that of Rose Bertin which he reproduces.

The painting was severely judged by the Queen herself when it was exhibited in the Salon in 1785. "Is it possible," we read in the "Mémoires Secrets," "that a man of such talent as M. Wertmuller, destined to take the place of first painter to the King of Sweden, should be so lacking in grace and majesty? They say that when the Queen entered the Salon she did not recognize herself, and exclaimed: 'What! is that really meant for me?'"

There was such a constant demand for novelty that it was inevitable that, among such quantities, some of the modiste's creations should be less original than others, or, worse still, unbecoming to her customers. But Marie-Antoinette was faithful to her, and it was the order of the day to admire her inventions at all costs. Without this powerful protection she might have learnt that fashion is inconstant, and though it may be the thing to get one's clothes from one place one year, some other place will be just as fashionable the year after; and the Queen's modiste had certainly no lack of rivals in the town. The names of some of them have come down to us. In 1785 the best known were Mlle. Fredin, who had

a shop in the Rue de la Ferronnerie, with a sign "l'Echarpe d'Or"; and Mlle. Quentin, whose establishment was in the Rue de Clery. From 1784 and onwards the Princesse de Conti dealt with Richard, Rue du Bac, who kept her custom for many years. It seems strange that the daughter-in-law of the Dowager Princesse de Conti should not have patronized the modiste whose initial success was certainly due to the kindness of her mother-in-law. Mlle. Bertin's character had something to do with it, and the cavalier manner in which she treated a certain very great lady, whose name is not mentioned in the memoirs of that day, though they speak of the sensation caused by the incident, leads us to believe that the lady in question was the Princess.

Besides the great fashion-dealers Beaulard, Richard, Fredin, Quentin, Picot—Rose's famous enemy—and the Demoiselle Mouillard, *femme Angier*, who supplied the royal children,* for whom Mlle. Bertin only worked occasionally, there were numerous fashion shops in the Palais-Royal quarter, and some in the Palais-Royal itself.

In 1789 two ladies, Aymez and Degouste, had a shop in the wooden gallery No. 199, and having quarrelled—tempers were bad in the world of fashion plates—the Demoiselle Degouste left Dame Aymez, and took up her quarters at No. 220 in the same gallery. She was still there two years later, when her former partner brought proceedings against

* Archives Nationales, Series R³ 105; KK. 378; K. 529.

her for throwing ink at her shop and window display. But in spite of all this rivalry business flourished with the Queen's modiste, and her establishment was always the most crowded in Paris.

At the beginning of the year 1785 she had a great stroke of luck. One day the Spanish Ambassador's carriage stopped before her door, and the Comte de Aranda in person alighted. He had come to give her the order for the entire trousseau of the Princess of Portugal. The *Journal Politique*, or *Gazette des Gazettes*, published at Bouillon, gave the following information in the issue of February 21 :

“There is now on view at the King's goldsmith's, in the Carrousel, the silver-gilt toilette set destined for the Princess of Portugal, who is about to marry the Infante Dom Gabriel ; it is extremely rich and in exquisite taste. We may judge of the number and beauty of the dresses and ornaments for the same Princess which Mlle. Bertin has been commissioned to make, and which it is said will cost more than 100,000 livres. This magnificent wedding outfit and the toilette set have been ordered by the Comte de Aranda, who has himself superintended the carrying out of his orders.”

“Do you see ? Do you understand ?” said the Comte de Aranda to Rose Bertin, as he gave her the necessary explanations. “Do you see ? Do you understand ?” he repeated every moment. The unfortunate Ambassador had contracted the aggravating habit of planting his everlasting “Do you

see? Do you understand?" at the end of every phrase.

We have seen that at that date Rose Bertin's business premises were in the Rue Saint-Honoré. A judgment given at the Châtelet, April 21, 1785, ordering the estate d'Escars to pay a considerable sum which was due to Rose Bertin, specifies that on March 21, 1785, she was carrying on her business in the Rue de Richelieu.

Among other things, Quaker bonnets came into fashion at that time, and had a great success towards the end of that year. Rose Bertin had sold Quaker bonnets to the Marquise de Praidel, Mme. de Dampierre, and to a Spaniard, the Marquesa de Palacios. That year she also made the entire trousseau of the Infanta Doña Carlotta Joaquina, who married Dom Juan of Portugal on June 6. After these two royal marriages Rose's reputation was unrivalled in Spain and Portugal, as we have seen that it was in France, Russia, Sweden, etc. Therefore the authors of that time did not exaggerate when they said that her reputation was European.

The year 1785 also saw the triumph of the dress *à la Suzanne*. The part of Suzanne in the "Mariage de Figaro" had been played with great success by Mlle. Contat, and the costume which she wore was immediately popularized by fashion. Beaumarchais has given a description of it in the edition of his play: "Her dress in the four first acts was a white

juste with basques, very elegant, a skirt of the same, and a toque which our fashion-dealers afterwards called *à la Suzanne*." Add to this an apron and a fichu, replace the toque by a hat *à la Figaro*, trimmed with flowers, and we have the description of a drawing by Watteau of an unknown lady dressed in the fashion of 1785.

Dresses *à la Comtesse* and hair done *à la Cherubin* were also inventions inspired by Beaumarchais' play.

If the Queen's age and the birth of the Dauphin on March 25, 1785, induced her to reform her dress, yet the expense was not diminished, for at that time Calonne had to advance 900,000 livres to pay her debts, part of this sum being destined to pay dress-makers' bills.

Yet we have seen that at the end of the year 1785 the Queen had made up her mind to reform her style of dress. The beplumed portrait by Wertmuller was therefore the last one painted before she came to this decision. We must not suppose that a radical transformation took place from one day to another, nor that all these fine plans were put into execution. Plumes were admitted, but they did not appear in such profusion as before; luxury was not attacked, but the absurdity of exaggerated fashions. From that time head-dresses *à la Belle Poule, en Moulin à Vent*, or *à la Minerve*, were seen no more. This was a distinct change, a step towards reason, while waiting for the linen bonnets of the Reign of Terror.

After the treaty of commerce with England

English fashions grew popular in Paris, and dresses *en redingote* had a great vogue.

The reforms introduced by Marie-Antoinette were the subject of all conversation. They were discussed in the Palais-Royal, at Versailles—everywhere. They were looked upon as an event. “Women of thirty are now obliged to renounce plumes, flowers, and pink,” writes Mme. Oberkirch in her journal on February 3, 1786. She had just been present at a conversation in the Duchess of Orleans’s house, where the Queen’s reforms had been the only topic.

From that date velvet *poufs* were Marie-Antoinette’s habitual head-dress. They varied in shape and in colour to match her dresses. The pictures of Mme. Vigée-Lebrun have preserved their image for us. That artist can have had no love for Mlle. Bertin’s art; she was much too fond of simple draperies and graceful negligence, and it must have been against her will that she painted the Queen thus decked out instead of bareheaded and according to her own taste. She succeeded in doing this in the case of the Duchesse d’Orleans, but not with Marie-Antoinette.

We find the following lines in her memoirs: “I could not bear powder—I persuaded the beautiful Duchesse de Grammont-Caderousse to let me paint her without it (portrait of 1789); her hair was as black as ebony; I parted it on the forehead and arranged it in irregular curls. After the sitting, which lasted till dinner-time, she went to the theatre

as she was. Such a pretty woman ought to set the fashion ; it spread slowly, but at last became general. This reminds me that, when I painted the Queen in 1786, I begged her to dispense with powder and part her hair on the forehead. ‘I shall be the last to adopt that fashion,’ said the Queen, laughing ; ‘I will not have it said that I invented it to hide my high forehead.’ ”*

The result may have been very displeasing to Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, but it is not so to us. The will of Marie-Antoinette forced Mme. Vigée-Lebrun to paint, not fancy portraits, but historical portraits, and to depict with her brush the official fashions and velvet *poufs* of the Rue de Richelieu. What remarkable documents Mme. Vigée-Lebrun would have left to posterity if she had sacrificed her artistic tastes, and always represented her sitters in their customary habiliments ! If, for example, instead of arranging the head-dress of the Duchesse d’Orleans to please herself, she had painted her with the erection we have described, which included a nurse, a parrot, and a little negro.

However, the great artist was obliged to bow to the Queen’s wishes in spite of her own taste, and thus painting was forced to do homage to the talent of Rose Bertin, celebrated at the same time by the poet Delille in his poem “L’Imagination,” the opening verses of which are also dated 1786.

The following passage in Canto III. has a thinly

* “Souvenirs de Mme. Vigée-Lebrun,” t. i., p. 37.

veiled allusion to the modiste herself, when, in speaking of the fashion, the poet exclaims :

“ La baguette à la main, voyez-la dans Paris,
 Arbitre des succès, des mœurs et des écrits,
 Exercer son empire élégamment futile;
 Et, tandis qu’oubliant leur rudesse indocile,
 Les métaux les plus durs, l’acier, l’or et l’argent,
 Sous mille aspects divers suivent son goût changeant,
 Et la gaze, et le lin, plus fragile merveille,
 Dédaigneux aujourd’ hui des formes de la veille,
 Inconstants comme l’air, et comme lui légers,
 Vont mêler notre luxe aux luxes étrangers ;
 Ainsi, de la parure, aimable souveraine,
 Par la mode du moins, la France est encore reine ;
 Et jusqu’au fond du nord portant nos goûts divers,
 Le mannequin despote asservit l’univers.”

The allusion is transparent. It points to the famous doll which Rose Bertin dressed and sent to Paris, St. Petersburg, and other towns, to demonstrate the latest novelties of her establishment.

But another passage of Delille’s poem more particularly celebrates the talents of Mlle. Bertin :

“ Dans un amas de tissus précieux
 Quand Bertin fait briller son goût industriel,
 L’étoffe obéissante en cent formes se joue,
 Se développe en schall, en ceinture se noue ;
 Du pinceau son aiguille emprunte les couleurs,
 Brille de diamants, se nuance de fleurs,
 En longs replis flottants fait ondoyer sa moire,
 Donne un voile à l’amour, un écharpe à la gloire,
 Ou, plus ambitieuse en son brillant essor,
 Sur l’aimable Vaudchamp va s’embellir encore.”



MARIE ADELAIDE DE FRANCE
(Madame Adélaïde, 1800)

To face page 166

Delille, while singing the praises of Mlle. Bertin, finds occasion at the same time of praising the charms of the lady whom he had taken for companion, and in whom we recognize one of the modiste's new clients, whom the chances of a rather stormy life had brought from Lorraine.

This Jeanne Vaudchamp was born at Saint-Dié about 1765. She left that town and came to Paris, where she found it difficult to gain a living, having no other means of earning her bread than by playing the guitar.

"She was doing this one day," says Michaud, "adding a doubtless seductive dance to her music, between the columns of the Louvre and the façade of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, when Delille happened to pass that way. It was in 1786. He spoke to her, and the next day Jeanne Vaudchamp crossed the threshold of the Collège de France to finish at her leisure the conversation with the Academician begun the evening before. The conversation was renewed before the end of the week. A few days later the indefatigable conversationalist returned once more, and never came out again, except from time to time as from her own house. In that short space she had won the freedom of the college: the poet had obtained permission to engage her as his house-keeper, for he was fairly well off."

Such was the customer whose name the poet, who was called the French Virgil, put side by side with that of the modiste of the Rue Richelieu.

About that time (1786) Mlle. Bertin took a journey to Brittany, or, at least, she went as far as Rennes.

Nothing particular occurred upon the journey, but on her way back she had a travelling companion, a young man who had just been appointed sub-lieutenant in the army of Navarre, then in garrison at Cambrai.

This young man, just beginning his career, and on his way to join his regiment, was the Chevalier de Chateaubriand; he relates himself how he journeyed from Rennes to Paris *tête-à-tête* with Rose Bertin. He had just arrived from Combourg, and put up at the house of a relation at Rennes. "He announced joyfully," says Chateaubriand, "that a lady of his acquaintance on her way to Paris had a vacant place in her carriage, and that he was sure he could persuade her to let me travel with her." The young man had never taken any notice of a woman, except his fourth sister, Lucile, of whom he was very fond. He painted this sister in a timid attitude, dressed in an ill-fitting dress, an iron necklace threaded with brown velvet round her neck, and a very dowdy black toque on her head. He must have felt extremely awkward when he found himself in the company of the smart Parisian modiste; indeed, he tells us as much. "I accepted," he says, "cursing the officiousness of my kinsman. He arranged the matter, and introduced me to my travelling companion, a dealer in fashions, very sprightly and free-and-easy, who burst out

laughing when she saw me. The carriage came at midnight, and we set out.

“ I now found myself in a post-chaise alone with a woman at dead of night. I who had never looked at a woman without blushing, how could I descend from the height of my dreams to this frightful reality ? I did not know where I was ; I squeezed myself into the corner of the carriage for fear of touching Mlle. Rose’s dress. When she spoke to me, I stammered in confusion and could make no answer ; she was obliged to pay the postilion and see to everything, for I was perfectly useless. At daybreak she stared in fresh amazement at the idiot whom she had suffered to be foisted upon her.

“ As the aspect of the landscape changed, and I could no longer recognize the dress and accent of the Breton peasant, I fell into the deepest dejection, which increased the contempt of Mlle. Rose. I perceived her opinion of me, and this first contact with the world made an impression upon me which time has never quite effaced. I was born shy, but unashamed ; I had the modesty of my age, but not its embarrassment. When I perceived that my best side made me ridiculous, my shyness became an insurmountable timidity. I could not say one word ; I felt that I had something to hide, and that that something was a virtue ; I made up my mind to hide my true self, so as to carry my innocence in peace.

“ We were approaching Paris. Coming down from Saint-Cyr, I was struck by the width of the roads

and the regularity of the plantations. Soon we reached Versailles; the orangery with its marble staircases filled me with wonder. The success of the American War had brought back the triumphs of the château of Louis XIV., the Queen reigned there in the splendour of her youth and beauty; the throne, so near its downfall, had never seemed so firm, and I, an obscure wayfarer, was destined to outlive this pomp, and to see the woods of Trianon as deserted as the forests I had just left behind."

Some day in her retreat at Epinay, Mlle. Rose may have been forced, in regretful melancholy, to make the same reflections as this young man who once rode with her along the highways of Brittany. Is not all this worthy to be repeated here? It is simple, beautiful, and full of poetry. That young man in his sensitive soul must have brooded long before he wrote these lines in which he analyzes himself with as much frankness as there is truth and feeling in his description of what he saw; truly this was a marvellous idiot!

"At last we entered Paris," he continues. "I saw mockery on every face, and, like the gentleman from Périgord, I thought that everyone was looking at me to make fun of me. Mlle. Rose drove to the Hôtel de l'Europe in the Rue du Mail, and made haste to get rid of her idiot. I had scarcely got out of the carriage, when she said to the porter: 'Give this gentleman a room—your servant,' she added, and

made me an abrupt curtsy. I never saw Mlle. Rose again."

Rose Bertin, with her abrupt curtsy, little thought that she was taking leave of a future Minister of State, Ambassador, and peer of France. However, she showed some pity for the young provincial, and did not forsake him on the spot. "Yet Mlle. Rose had pity on the idiot; she had procured my brother's address in Rennes, and let him know that I had arrived in Paris," says Chateaubriand.

It must be admitted that Mlle. Rose was well calculated to overwhelm a young provincial of eighteen with shyness. She was born bold and Parisian in her wicker cradle at Abbeville. Yet the young man just arriving in the capital, with his shy and awkward manner, was the rising star still hidden in the mists of the horizon, and Rose's star, which had dazzled the world from Spain to Russia and from France to Portugal, and still shed upon her the light of an undisputed reputation, was in the spring of 1783 on the eve of eclipse and very near its fall.

Rose Bertin began to experience commercial misfortunes. Mlle. Picot had robbed her of some of her customers; yet the Queen still patronized her, and it was still the correct thing to employ Her Majesty's modiste. Her custom was still large enough to enable her to carry on her business with brilliance, if other causes had not increased her business difficulties. There was still the same coming and going before her door, carriages of great ladies still streamed along the

Rue de Richelieu, and waited long in the neighbourhood of her shop. Mme. Oberkirch writes on March 20, 1786: "We saw Mlle. Bertin, who *condescended*"—the word is underlined—"to receive us herself. She *consented* to make a bonnet of a new fashion for the Duchesse de Bourbon, on condition that she would not lend it to anyone." Rose Bertin *condescended* and *consented*, because she knew very well that in the moments of difficulty which lay before her it was necessary to show herself amiable and obliging to good clients, and the Duchesse de Bourbon was one who paid well.

But though Rose Bertin kept her accounts with great care, she was not so vigilant in defending her own interests, and took no trouble to recover what was due to her.* We find a proof of her negligence in the report† of a judgment given in favour of a certain Sieur Boullan, a merchant of Brussels, who claimed 876 livres 15 s. from Mlle. Bertin for imitation pearls supplied to her.

She pleaded that she had only ordered samples, and that the goods had only been sent on approval, but could not produce the letter which would have proved her statement. Yet the case was not unfavourable for her, and her opponent defended himself very feebly. The Judges perceived that there had been negligence

* Collection de M. J. Doucet. Dossier de la succession de Rose Bertin (No. 9) ; lettre de Grangeret avocat.

† Archives Municipales de Paris: Rapports d'Arbitres, carton 15.

on both sides, and several times summoned the parties to appear before them for conciliation. The Sieur Bouvier, representing Boullan, did not fail to put in an appearance; but, says the report, "whether Mlle. Bertin has business which prevents her from sparing a few moments to attend to the interests of her creditors, or whether she has private reasons into which we cannot and need not inquire, she has constantly refused to appear (*sic*)." The result was that the report advised the Judges to give judgment against her for 700 livres, in favour of Boullan, the amount of his claim being reduced on account of the defective quality of the pearls supplied by him.

It was certainly negligent on the part of Mlle. Bertin not to defend herself better in a case which, at first sight, seemed likely to go against her opponent.

Moreover, as we have been able to prove, she took no steps to recover what was due to her, and let debts accumulate for years, so that many were lost to her for ever.

Thus, on the one hand she kept up an establishment which she could not bring herself to curtail. She thought herself obliged to keep up a certain appearance at Court. The Queen's modiste could not carry her own cardboard boxes, nor go to Versailles in a hired carriage; she kept a numerous staff, which with her workwomen brought the general expenses of her business to a high sum. On the other hand the great ladies overwhelmed her with orders, which

swallowed up her working capital, and paid her badly after endless annoyance and applications, and sometimes did not pay at all.

This was a dangerous situation, which might well have led straight to the Court of Bankruptcy. However this may be, it is certain that in January, 1787, a rumour spread everywhere that she had sent in her bankruptcy papers. The news was received with taunts and jeers, to which she was very sensitive. People revenged themselves for the snubs and rebuffs they had suffered, and, to speak truly, the insolence which she had shown on many occasions. Baroness Oberkirch heard of it as she was passing through Strasburg, and wrote these lines in her memoirs : “ Mlle. Bertin, so haughty, arrogant, and even insolent, who *collaborated* with Her Majesty ; Mlle. Bertin, who headed her bills in large type : *Supplier of Fashions to the Queen*—Mlle. Bertin has just gone bankrupt. It is true that this is no plebeian bankruptcy : it is the bankruptcy of a great lady—two millions ! That is something for a dealer in chiffons. The *petites mattresses* are in despair ; who can they turn to now ? Who will twist a *pouf* ? Who will drape a toque ? Who will invent a new *juste* ? We are assured that Mlle. Bertin will yield to these tears, and will continue her business. They say also that she has been ungrateful to the Queen, and that otherwise Her Majesty would not have forsaken her in her misfortune, although she is occupied with sad things and more important interests.”

Well, really ! Mme. Oberkirch did not love Rose Bertin ; her manners and absurdities had annoyed her, as we know, but certainly the total of her bills had something to do with it. Mme. Oberkirch was half German, and not exactly prodigal with her money.

As to what the Baroness says of Rose's ingratitude to the Queen, it is not to be explained, and difficult to understand what can have occasioned it. The Queen may have been "occupied with sad things and more important interests" ; the painful business of the necklace, still quite recent, may well have caused her much anxiety ; but Rose Bertin was much too politic and too wide-awake to offend such a client, to whom she owed all her other custom.

Rose Bertin had too often cavalierly treated clients whom it would have been wiser to receive with deference and thought of the morrow. She had offended too many people for her disaster not to be a signal for the vengeance of many tongues, only too eager to wag at her expense.

The report of her bankruptcy spread quickly ; as we have just seen, it was the theme of gossip in Strasburg society, where Mme. Oberkirch happened to be at the time. But it is worthy of note that Mme. de Campan does not mention it in her memoirs, and she had a better opportunity than anyone of being the first to hear of it.

On Sunday, January 28, Rose went to Versailles, and was not admitted to the Queen's presence.

Such a piece of news at such a moment was, as

we may well imagine, immediately spread abroad and commented upon. The author of the "Mémoires Secrets" echoes the popular rumours when he writes : "Her Majesty would not see her, and she was refused admittance to the royal apartments, which puts the last touch to her downfall."

If Rose Bertin at the beginning of 1787 had some trouble in extricating herself from her difficulties, and if the rumour spread that she was bankrupt, it is not surprising that it should have been considered quite a natural thing. Had not the greatest names in Parisian commerce been in the same uncomfortable position ? Had not Pagelle, the fashionable modiste at the end of the reign of Louis XV., in whose establishment Rose had made her début, and Gouttière—the famous Gouttière—both gone bankrupt ? Sensational bankruptcies occurred every moment, both in the business world and among the nobility. Besides the Prince de Guéméné, whom we have already mentioned, the Sieur Bourboulon, treasurer to the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, went bankrupt in March, 1787, for a sum of five millions. The bankruptcy of the Sieur de Villerange, Intendant of Posts and Relays, occurred about the same time ; and bankruptcies great and small took place every day. Yet in the Archives de la Seine, where all the papers relating to the bankruptcies of that time are preserved, there is not a single document or the slightest trace of the bankruptcy of Rose Bertin.

What, then, is the meaning of all the fuss about

the bankruptcy of the great modiste? Was it a trick? Some of her contemporaries believed that it was originated by Rose herself, and that she skilfully spread the report in order to draw the public attention and recover the sums due to her from the Court.

The Parisian bookseller, I. P. Hardy, who kept a journal of the events of the day, wrote on January 31, 1787, under the title of "Pretended Bankruptcy of Mlle. Bertin, Dealer in Fashions":

"We heard to-day that Mlle. Bertin, fashion-dealer to the Queen, having a great vogue in the Rue Saint-Honoré where she occupied a magnificent shop under the sign of 'La Corbeille Galante,' had given in her statement of bankruptcy, according to which, if public rumour is to be believed, her debts amounted to three millions, two millions of which, it was alleged were due to her from a person whom she could not name for some indefinite period. It was said that this Mlle. Bertin was in the habit of making some sort of scandal when the credit given by her to the Court had reached a certain sum, in order to recover some of her money, and that on this particular occasion she immediately received an order for 400,000 livres upon the Royal Treasury."

We remark that the bookseller, who probably took no interest in chiffons, did not know that Rose Bertin had left the Rue Saint-Honoré more than three years before, and that her sign had never been the "Corbeille Galante," but the "Grand-Mogol."

This bankruptcy, therefore, was only a comedy which Rose Bertin was quite clever enough to carry out. We have just seen that many strongly suspected her of it. As to her alleged allusion to the person who owed her two millions, given her title of "modiste to the Queen," and the magnitude of the debt, it was so transparent that it could not fail to cause the public to accuse Marie-Antoinette of having once more fallen into wild extravagance. This report, reaching the ears of the Queen, explains the other report of Rose's disgrace, and why she was refused admittance.

Rose was quite capable of defending herself, and would not fear to seek an explanation. Such an underhand plot against the Queen would have been very risky, and the least the modiste could have got out of it would have been the payment and definite closing of her account.

Yet we have proof that she continued to supply Marie-Antoinette. She must therefore have succeeded in persuading her that she had nothing to do with the sensation caused by this affair, and that it must have been the work of those whose one aim was to discredit the Queen, and from whom she had suffered so much already.

If Rose Bertin had really been treated by Marie-Antoinette as was reported, there can be no doubt that her shop would immediately have been deserted by all who had even the most distant connection with the Court.

Yet here are the names of some of the customers who frequented it in 1787, with the dates on which goods were delivered to them : Baron de Rozay and Comtesse de Caradeus, March 13 ; Mme. Augier, March 20. It must be noted that Mme. Augier, sister of Mme. Campan, was personally attached to the Court as Gentlewoman-in-Waiting. This was the same Mme. Augier who threw herself out of window in the Tuileries, and was killed, on August 20, 1792. She had two daughters, afterwards the Maréchale Ney and Mme. de Broc.

We may also mention the Vicomtesse de Boulainvilliers, April 7, and M. des Entelles, April 16. On May 5 Rose delivered a presentation dress for the Marquise de Nesles to the Baronne de Serant, at the Palais-Bourbon, the price of which was 2,000 livres. On May 20 she supplied Mlle. Dillon with a wedding-bonnet costing 39 livres.

The Marquise de Guitry, June 15 ; the Marquise d'Agoult, June 29 ; Comte de Custine, July 22 ; and Comtesse de Laage, who was Maid of Honour to the Princesse de Lamballe, August 10, also appear on Rose's books in 1787. Also the Comtesse de Sparre, for whom she made a presentation dress on September 12, which cost 3,000 livres.

Finally we will mention an order for a christening outfit costing 1,200 livres, given by the Baron de Staël, on behalf of the Queen of Sweden.

Nevertheless her best days were over.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST YEARS OF THE MONARCHY—DECLINE OF BUSINESS—ROSE BERTIN'S HOUSE PROPERTY

(1787-1792)

THE public Exchequer was in such a state, owing to the bad administration of Calonne, that he received orders to resign on April 8, 1787. When Marie-Antoinette grasped the situation, she expressed "her regret that she had not known earlier of the disastrous state of the finances of the kingdom, for then she would not have indulged her taste for acquisitions and expenditure which she had thought permissible."*

Her economies in dress began to make themselves felt in 1788. In 1787 the Comtesse d'Ossun had been obliged to ask for an order of 97,187 livres "to add to the sum of 120,000 livres taken from the sum allowed for the upkeep of the Queen's Household, to make up the sum of 217,187 livres to which the expense of the Queen's wardrobe had amounted during the year."†

In 1788 the supplementary credit required for the

* "Mémoires Secrets."

† Archives Nationales, O¹, 3,792.



MARIE-THÉRÈSE-CHARLOTTE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVI.
(Madame Royale)

To face page 180

purpose was no more than 70,721 livres, and the total expenditure on that score was 190,721 livres.

On August 9 an edict was issued concerning the economies to be effected in the expenses of the Crown. Article 7 stated: "The reform operated in the Queen's Household amounts to 900,000 livres."

The situation being thus, it is evident that Rose could not continue to draw the same profit from the Court as in preceding years. She had to think of modifying her own expenditure, though she did not immediately feel the consequences of these new measures.

The dealers of Paris vied with each other in ingenuity to attract custom. Not only did they allow unlimited credit—often finding to their cost what this led to—but they were at their wits' end to invent ways of displaying their goods, and tempting customers to spend. The shops, formerly dark and badly lighted, had become little *salons*, with looking-glasses reflecting a profusion of lights, and decorated with panels rich with gilding. All this might seem little enough to us nowadays, with our modern progress, but we must not forget that in the days of Louis XVI. the world had not got beyond candles, and that a shop in the Rue Richelieu or Saint-Honoré represented at that time all that commercial luxury could provide in order to dazzle customers.

But Rose Bertin did not leave the neighbourhood of the Palais-Royal, which was the centre of Parisian life; and in spite of her reverses, and in spite of all

gossip to the contrary, she still had the custom of Marie-Antoinette.

A portrait of the Queen painted in this very year of 1787, by Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, represents her in a *pouf* of red velvet trimmed with fur in Rose's style, a scarf of gauze edged with lace, and a bunch of white feathers. Mme. Vigée-Lebrun in her "Souvenirs" gives the following details concerning this portrait, which is now in the Palace of Versailles :

"The last sitting which I had from Her Majesty was at Trianon, when I painted her head for my large picture of her and her children. I remember that the Baron de Breteuil, then in the Ministry, was present during the sitting, and never ceased talking scandal about all the Court ladies. . . . After I had painted the head, and made separate studies of the first Dauphin, Madame Royale, and the Duc de Normandie, I set about painting my picture, to which I attached great importance, and I finished it in time for the Salon of 1787. After the Salon my picture was placed in one of the rooms in the Château de Versailles, and the Queen had always to pass it in going to Mass and in returning. When the Dauphin died in 1789, the sight of the picture reminded her so vividly of her cruel loss that she could not pass through that room without shedding tears. She gave an order to M. d'Angevilliers (Minister of Arts and Director of the Royal Buildings) to have the picture removed; but, with^r her usual graciousness, she was careful to let me know of it at once, and

to explain the reason for this removal. I owe the preservation of my picture to this feeling of the Queen's, for when the fish-wives and roughs came to Versailles shortly afterwards, in search of Their Majesties, they would certainly have cut it to pieces, as they did the Queen's bed, which was pierced through and through."

It is also thanks to this that one of Mlle. Bertin's creations remains to us, and it is one of peculiar interest. We know that, though Rose was chiefly celebrated for hats and bonnets, complete costumes were also made in her workrooms. There is no need to examine Mme. Vigée-Lebrun's picture very closely to see that the style of the Queen's dress and bodice is the same as that of the *pouf* which she wears.

Marie-Antoinette had definitely adopted that style of head-dress. "It was her favourite diadem," says Bouilly, who, relating his presentation to the Queen, tells us that she wore a black velvet *pouf* on that occasion. It was one of the last fashions which she adopted before a prisoner's cap became her only wear.

It was still Rose Bertin who made some of the head-dresses with which the Queen covered the hair whitened by the anguish of her royal agony.

No, the Queen had not withdrawn her confidence from her modiste; and if on one occasion she may have suspected her intentions and appeared to distrust her, owing to some popular gossip, this is quite

understandable at a time when her heart was wounded by the perfidious insinuations and continual outrages with which her enemies pursued her. These had gradually made her so unpopular that the famous picture above mentioned, in which Mme. Vigée-Lebrun has depicted her surrounded by her children, was not exhibited at the opening of the Salon in August, 1787, but only a few days later, so great was the fear that it might be outraged by the populace.

In 1788 Mme. Vigée-Lebrun painted a last portrait of the Queen for the Baron de Breteuil. As we learn from the preceding paragraphs, the Queen did not sit for this portrait, and the artist used drawings which she had by her. The bodice and *pouf*, which are of blue velvet, are very much of the same cut as those in the large portrait exhibited in the Salon of 1787, but the *pouf* is not trimmed with fur.

The Queen was now disheartened, and her outlook on life was changed. In this year of 1787 everything conspired to make her forget pleasure and renounce those things which had formerly occupied her mind. In July, when she lost her youngest daughter, little Princesse Marie-Sophie-Hélène-Beatrix, at the age of eleven months, she hastened to take refuge in the peace of Trianon, calling Mme. Elizabeth to her side in a letter full of grief. "We will weep together," she says, "over the death of my little angel. I need all your heart to comfort mine."

The reign of frills and futility was at an end, and

the star of Mlle. Bertin was on the wane. She was a victim of circumstances, like many others.

Trade felt the effects of the events of the last few years. We may get some idea of this from the following extract from the *Journal Politique* or *Gazette des Gazettes* published at Bouillon in the last fortnight of September, 1789 :

“The dealers of Paris are beginning to complain that they have no sale for their goods, and can get no credit from the manufacturers. This is, unfortunately, but too true. Another no less regrettable fact is that many noblemen are reducing their households ; some have dismissed as many as forty of their servants.”

At such a time, when the noble and wealthy were reducing their expenditure on every side, dealers in luxuries, such as our modiste, could not hope to prosper.

She seemed, moreover, to be pursued by the malice of the public, which could not fail to excite her natural irritability to the highest pitch.

As she was returning from England, where she went fairly often, and where she possessed a *piéd à terre*, a report was circulated that she had been arrested and taken to the Bastille. The bookseller Hardy reports this rumour on January 24, 1788, under the following title : “Mlles. Bertin and Lenoir said to be taken to the Bastille. Why ?” which shows that he had not much faith in this fresh adventure attributed to Rose, and he contents himself with commenting on it as follows :

“ A report was current that Mlles. Bertin and Lenoir, fashion-dealers to the Queen, had been arrested and taken to the Bastille, the former on her way back from London, where she had ostensibly been to purchase ribbons, gauzes, and other material of her trade, but that she had brought back with them a number of copies of certain publications containing fierce attacks upon Her Majesty, which she had been requested in England to take charge of by Mme. de Lamotte, with whom she had been imprudent enough to have an interview, in order to smuggle them into France and distribute them there. Secret denunciation before her arrival in the capital had caused the complete collapse of this plan. It was also alleged that the detention of a bookseller lately arrested in the Rue de la Barillerie had some connection with this affair of Mlles. Bertin and Lenoir ”*

Hardy again calls Mlle. Bertin “ fashion-dealer to the Queen,” a proof that the incidents of a year ago, with regard to her pretended bankruptcy, had not altered her position of official modiste to the Court.

The story of Mlle. Bertin’s arrest was nothing but pure invention. Yet there is no smoke without fire. The clandestine importation of Mme. de Lamotte’s memoir had actually occurred. The police had really laid hands upon the person who had undertaken to smuggle it into France. But that person was neither Mlle. Bertin nor Mlle. Lenoir, but another fashion-dealer called Henriette Sando, who

* Bibl. Nat., MS. Français 6,686.

lived at No. 5, Rue des Haudriettes, at the sign of *Au Goût de la Cour*. She was arrested under the name of Comtesse Anselme. She was on good terms with several ladies of the Court. The author of "La Bastille dévoilé" says: "Many letters from these ladies were found among her papers, full of expressions of affection: 'Come and see me, dear heart; I will send you my carriage. Would you like to go to the theatre? I will lend you my box.' The motive of these little attentions was the amount due to her, which they endeavoured to pay with compliments rather than money." A person called Mangin who was imprisoned with her was only her lady's-maid. They were both released three months after their arrest, on April, 8, 1788.

The memoir of Mme. de Lamotte, the cause of all this commotion, was very rare at that time, but has become common enough since. Mme. Campan says that she saw a copy in the Queen's possession, in manuscript, which had been brought from London, with corrections in the handwriting of M. de Calonne, in the places where Mme. de Lamotte's ignorance of Court usages had led her into the grossest errors.

All this time the Queen continued her efforts to reduce her expenditure. On January 16, 1788, an edict was issued retrenching 1,206,600 livres in the expenses of her household. It was remarked that Marie-Antoinette inclined more and more to simplicity. On June 23, on the occasion of a visit to the Invalides, it was reported that her extremely

modest costume had formed a striking contrast with those of Madame Royale, and Mme. Elizabeth, who wore costumes of ceremony, as the bookseller Hardy does not fail to relate in his memoirs.

However, Rose still had business in nearly every part of Europe, though on a lesser scale than before. She sent a bonnet à l'ordre de la Jarretière to an English customer. She made the dresses of the Duchess Würtemberg, who had been the Duke's mistress, under the name of Countess Hohenheim, for many years before the Duke married her in 1786. Marie-Antoinette mentions her in a letter to Marie-Theresa of February 27, 1776, saying that the Duke "drags his mistress everywhere, a not very presentable Countess." Rose also supplied the wedding outfit of Mlle. de Luxembourg when she married M. de Cadaval, as well as Mme. de Luxembourg's dress for the ceremony. Mlle. de Luxembourg's robe d'accord cost 1,359 livres; the wedding dress (a Turkish robe) cost 4,556 livres, of which 980 fell to the dressmaker; the robe de lendemain cost 1,593 livres, of which the dressmaker had 84; and poufs, toquets, and straw hats, ranging from 39 to 200 livres.

And as receptions were still held in high society, the modiste had still to supply ball dresses. A ball dress for Mme. de Rochefort delivered in February cost 637 livres.

Mlle. Rose's financial situation, though evidently not so brilliant as it had been, must still have been fairly good at this time, for in the course of the years

1788 and 1789 she invested a considerable amount of capital in house property in Paris.

On February 23, 1788, she bought a house in the Rue du Mail for a sum of 287,700 livres.* This house was No. 43, situated towards the middle of the street, now No. 27, and was occupied by the Bureau Général de Transport, and was known as the Hôtel des Chiens. This Bureau de Transport was a company authorized to transport bales, packets, furniture, and merchandise, from one part of Paris to another, something like the parcel delivery service of our own days. The "Guide des Amateurs et des Étrangers Voyageurs à Paris," published in 1787, gives the following information concerning this agency :

"Foreigners and provincials sending their luggage or merchandise in advance, if they have not decided where they will lodge, may, if they send a letter of advice, address their packages direct to M. V. de Vallon, General Director of the Bureau de Transport Intérieur de Paris, Rue du Mail, No. 43."

This explains why Rose Bertin, hampered by the shy and awkward young provincial Chateaubriand, when she arrived with him from Rennes, took him straight to the Rue du Mail; she could show him the place where he had to apply for his luggage, within a stone's throw of his hotel.

The next year Rose bought another important piece of house property in the Rue de Richelieu.

* Archives de la Seine: Minutes des Lettres de Ratifications, No. 2,369.

On January 27, 1789, M. Bochart de Saron was appointed first President of the Parliament, and in virtue of that office was entitled to a lodging in the palace. He left his house in the Rue de Richelieu, therefore, and put it up for sale. This house was built about 1640 by Charles de Pradine ; it is now No. 26. In 1825 it was purchased by the celebrated actor Charles Gabriel Potier, who gave his name to the Passage Potier which runs through the house, and gives access to the Rue de Montpensier from the Rue de Richelieu.* Rose Bertin bought this house on April 24, 1789, for the sum of 180,000 livres. The deed of sale runs :

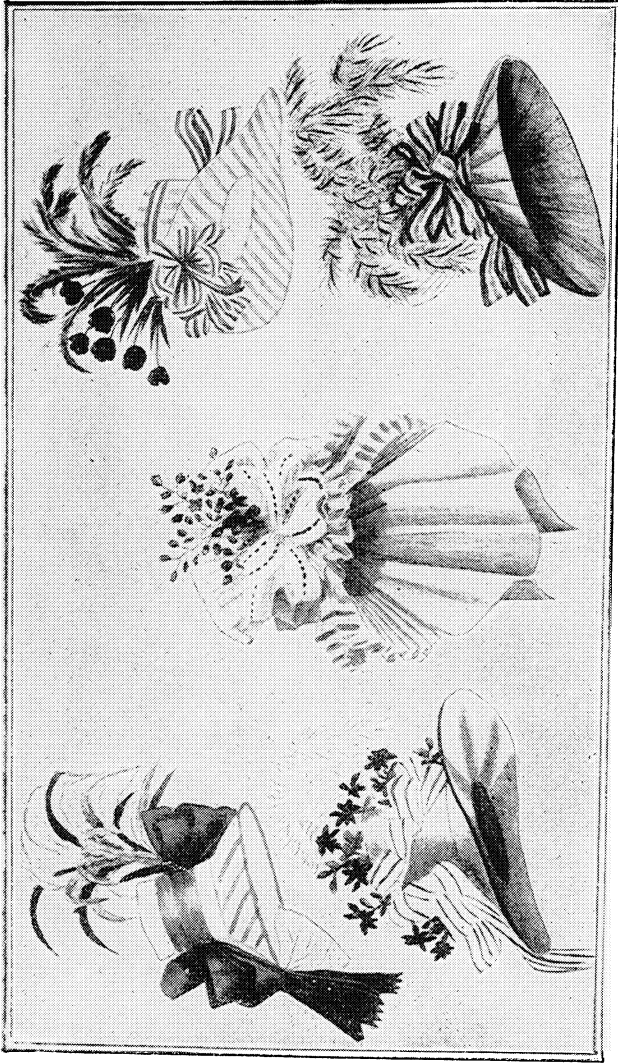
“ Sale before Maître De la Cour, notary of Paris, April 24, 1789.

“ By Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste-Gaspard-Bochart de Saron, first President of the Parliament of Paris, residing in the hotel of the First Presidency, in the enclosure of the palace.

“ To Demoiselle Marie-Jeanne Bertin, fashion-dealer to the Queen, residing in Paris, Rue de Richelieu . . .”

This official document again uses the title “ fashion-dealer to the Queen,” claimed by the purchaser. This alone, if we had no other proofs, should be sufficient

* Potier made his début at the theatre founded by Beau-rivage in the Boulevard du Temple, under the name of Théâtre des Associés, and which was afterwards called the Théâtre sans Prétention under Prévost's management in 1799.



FASHION IN 1788

After a print in the Musée Carnavalet

to invalidate the malicious rumours on the subject which had been current for two years.

Thus Rose Bertin moved once more, and transferred her business premises from M. de Maussion's house to that which she had just purchased from President Bochart de Saron.

“The frontage of her shop, with its three Roman arcades in the Louis XVI. style, have been preserved for us by the engraver's art, although there was nothing remarkable about it.”*

In the month of August following she was finally settled in the house; but the purchase-money was not paid immediately, and when the property of Bochart de Saron was sequestrated in 1793, she was still his debtor for about 100,000 livres. To free herself from this debt she executed a deed which is mentioned in the *dossier* of the sequestration preserved in the Archives,† the terms of which are as follows :

“I the undersigned, Director of the Agence des Droits d'Enregistrement et Domaines Nationaux et Réunis, charged with the collection of the debts due to *émigrés*, acknowledge receipt from Citizen Duchatel, head of the Bureau de l'Actif et du Passif des Émigrés, of a contract of sale by Jean-Baptiste-Gaspard Bochart de Saron, dead by the last law in Paris, Rue ———, Section———, to Marie-Jeanne Bertin,

* Vitu, “La Maison Mortuaire de Molière,” Paris, 1880.

† Archives Nationales, Série T, 1,604, No. 53.

of a house situated in Rue de la Loi, charged with a perpetual annuity of 4,400 livres to the said Bochart, for the rest of the purchase-money of the said house.

“Paris, the 28th Prairial in the year II. of the one and indivisible French Republic.

“(Signed) GENTIL.”

Events moved quickly at that time. Yet in the first months of 1789 there was nothing to indicate the magnitude of the impending changes. “Yet for several months past flashes of lightning had been seen, which were the precursors of the storm,” writes Comte Louis-Philippe de Segur, “but no one foresaw it. It was thought that salutary reforms would put an end to the temporary difficulties of our government. It was an epoch of illusions.” However, several foreigners thought it prudent to leave France, as appears from the following lines of a letter which Countess Razoumowsky wrote to Rose Bertin from Geneva on January 10, 1789: “Your troubles in Paris have cruelly driven me from your kingdom, for which I am sorry, but I hope that I shall soon be able to return.”* The Countess ends with friendly messages from her husband to Mlle. Bertin. The troubles were not serious as yet.

So far there was no change in the routine of the Court, where all the usual ceremonies were still observed. Thus on January 20, 1789, Rose supplied the Dowager Duchess of Harcourt with a Court dress

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier No. 529 bis.

for the Duchesse de Croye, who was to be presented to the Queen.*

Such was the heedlessness in certain circles that people went on laughing and enjoying themselves as if no danger menaced them, in spite of the daily warnings of political events, newspapers, and popular rumours. "One of the most fashionable *salons* in which the young women most delighted was that of Lady Kerry," writes Mme. de Laage in her memoirs; "the merry band made it their rendezvous twice a week to play at *creps and cavagnole*." These were some of the customers who were still faithful to Rose Bertin—Lady Kerry was one and so was the Comtesse de Laage—and between the games they still discussed the novelties of fashion, and planned pretty or daring hats to deck heads which were soon to be severed by the axe of the dawning Revolution.

There were balls and entertainments on every side. At the beginning of April the Marquise de Menou gave a brilliant ball. The Comtesse de Laage, whose taste inclined to simplicity, asks herself whether she can pass unnoticed, "among ladies in diamond necklaces and dresses wreathed with garlands of flowers, in a simple white dress, a string of pearls, a single large white plume, and a neckband of black velvet." A week later the Duke of Dorset gave a ball to celebrate the recovery of George III., King of England,†

* Collection Doucet, Dossier No. 208.

† George III. suffered the first attack of the mental affliction, which continued to the end of his life, in the

and Mme. de Laage appeared in the same costume with two additional plumes on her head.

Finally the States-General were convoked, and the procession of the Three Orders took place at Versailles on May 4. Mme. de Laage had lent her presentation dress to Mme. de Polastron; she writes that it "shone" that day as good as new among the state dresses made for the occasion, many of which had also been made in Rose's workrooms.

She gives us also a brief description of the costume worn by Marie-Antoinette on the morrow (May 5): "The Queen was beautifully dressed: a single band of diamonds, with her fine heron's plume, a violet dress, and white skirt in silver tissue. The King wore the *Regent* in his hat."

The fall of the Bastille really marked the beginning of a new era for politics and fashions. All was over with *poufs* and bonnets *à la lever de la Reine*, with luxury and originality in dress. Bonnets *à la Bastille* were worn adorned with the national cockade, and bonnets *à la Citoyenne* in white gauze of an antique simplicity. The linen of Jouy reigned in triumph over silks, not by a royal caprice, but by the will of the people.

The sceptre of fashion fell from the hands which had held it so long, and Mlle. Bertin saw, with horror,

spring of 1788. The crisis passed, and he was able to resume his royal functions in March, 1789. The Duke of Dorset, English Ambassador in France from 1783 to 1789, gave a ball to celebrate this event.

her debts growing larger day by day. The *petites bourgeoises* and women of the people would not venture into shops notorious for high prices. We have seen that many great ladies of foreign nationality had already left Paris; whether out of prudence or cowardice, the French nobility were not long in following their example. The Duchesse de Polignac, yielding to the persuasions of the Queen, emigrated to Germany in the night of July 16. On August 8 Princesse Louise de Condé, with the Princesse de Monaco and the Marquise d'Autichamp, went to Bonn *en route* for Coblenz. On September 5 the Comtesse d'Artois set out for Turin. The nobility of France were scattered to the four corners of Europe; London, Brussels, Worms, Mannheim, Strasburg, and other towns, were invaded by *émigrés*; the royal pair were left in an anxious isolation, upon which history can scarcely pass too severe a judgment.

How could a dealer in luxuries prosper under such conditions? In her deserted shop, before which few carriages ever stopped now, the energetic dressmaker, for the first time in her life, found time to go through her books and discover bills due to her for years, most of which there was now no means of taking steps to recover. Rose Bertin, like a lady of leisure, could now waste an hour sitting at the window watching the rain.

A Royalist by conviction as well as by interest, the Queen's modiste could no longer follow the fantasies which the tragedies of a day introduced into

the fashions of the morrow. She could not have displayed in her windows such ribbons as were sold by one of her neighbours the day after the murder of Foulon, whose head was carried through the streets of Paris. We read in the "Souvenirs" of the Comtesse d'Adhémar upon this subject: "A fashion-dealer of good taste (I have heard her called so, whose shop was at the corner of the Rues Neuve-des-Petits-Champs and Richelieu; her name was Gautier) displayed ribbons *sang de Foulon*. They created a *furor*; the word is an apt one."

"After the taking of the Bastille, ladies wore earrings and rings made of bits of stone set in gold. These were called jewels *à la Constitution*."*

"Palloy, to whom the demolition of the Bastille was entrusted, had little Bastilles sculptured on its stones which he sent to the chief towns of every department."† For more than a year all the arts celebrated the fall of the Bastille.

The situation of Rose Bertin, though it grew less brilliant every day, was not yet hopeless. She still had her foreign custom. In 1790 we find on her books the names of the Marquise de Castel-Fuerte, a Sicilian, that of the Russian Princess Lubomirska, then at Geneva, etc. She had still some customers in France who had not emigrated. At Abbeville, for example, the Marquise de Crecy, the Baronne Duploux, and Mme. de Hautcourt, were still faithful

* Roussel d'Épinal, "Le Château des Tuileries," t. ii.

† *Ibid.*, note.

to her. Great ladies, such as the Presidente d'Ormesson, were still in Paris. On July 5, 1790, Rose made a Court dress for the Vicomtesse de Preissac, who was about to be presented to Marie-Antoinette. The Vicomtesse de Preissac emigrated to England the following year, and died there, leaving her presentation dress not paid for. It cost 1,218 livres, a sum which, like many others, Rose was never able to recover.

This was the last presentation at Court, and Mme. de Preissac's dress was the last of the kind made in the workrooms of the Rue de Richelieu. They twisted "national cockades" instead. A good trade was done in these that year, 1790, and the following years.

The *Cabinet des Modes* of November 5, 1790, states, not without a tinge of melancholy: "Our customs are growing better; luxury is dying out." The editor realized the excesses into which eighteenth-century society had been drawn by Fashion, and in this he shows a judicious and far-seeing spirit; but this discarding of luxury could not fail to be prejudicial to a trade which gave employment to innumerable women, kept capital in circulation, and justified the existence of such newspapers as the *Cabinet des Modes*.

In March, 1790, the King and Queen, seeing that the gravity of the situation was increasing, thought it would be good policy to interest some of the leading deputies of the States-General in the cause

of monarchy, especially Mirabeau. Steps were taken in which Comte de la Marck and the Ambassador of Austria, Mercy-Argenteau, were closely concerned. If we may believe the author of "Souvenirs de Léonard," he and Rose Bertin were employed in these negotiations. We know how much faith we can put in all the stories contained in these soi-disant "Souvenirs" of the Queen's hairdresser; yet we must admit that Mme. Campan, Rose Bertin, and Léonard himself, as he boasts, if they could not have played a leading part in this affair, may yet have had an opportunity of enlightening the Queen upon the political situation, upon the town gossip, and all the public rumours, which could not reach the ears of the Sovereigns, because there were too many people about them whose interest it was to hush them up. "The Queen," we read in the "Souvenirs," "had heard certain details of Mirabeau's intimacy with the Duc d'Orléans from Mme. Campan, Mlle. Bertin, and myself." Mlle. Bertin's share in this business can only have consisted in enlightening the Queen, to whom she had such easy access, upon what was going on. She often conversed familiarly with the Queen, and she had too much good sense not to have taken the opportunity, while trying on, or adjusting a ribbon, to express her anxiety, and repeat what she heard upon all points. Her confidences and conversations must have had at least some share in the Queen's decision to seek support for monarchy in the tribune, who then seemed all-powerful.

There were interviews between Mercy and Mirabeau at La Marck's house, the Hôtel Charost, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Marie-Antoinette used to receive La Marck in the apartments of Mme. Thibaut, her chief lady's-maid. "Mme. Thibaut," writes La Marck, "was a dear old woman, dressed like any ordinary lady's-maid. When she spoke of the Queen, she used to say 'my mistress.'" She was with her on the journey to Varennes, and helped to plan the escape from the Temple. She was a devoted woman, and a modest customer of Rose Bertin's. It must certainly have been through her that Rose had anything to do with any confidential measures on the subject of these delicate negotiations. But that was all; the part played by the modiste went no farther.

In the course of the summer of 1790 the Queen made an excursion to Bellevue. She had an escort of the Garde Nationale. The Comtesse de Boigne tells us that "she wore a pierrot of white linon embroidered with bunches of mauve lilac, a full fichu, and a large straw hat with wide mauve ribbons tied in a large bow where the fichu was crossed on her bosom."

The number of those who paid court to the Queen daily grew less. Showing oneself at the Tuileries was a thing to be avoided; the sentinels who kept the gates of the garden had orders to refuse admission to anyone not wearing the national cockade—"the national cockade which was sometimes so small that

it escaped observation, and sometimes hidden contemptuously under another bow of ribbon," says the Englishwoman Helen Williams. Then the guard would cry gruffly: "Citoyenne, your cockade!" and if the cockade could not be produced entrance to the Tuileries was refused. The trade in cockades was the only one which current events made flourishing, but the profit it yielded was small.

It is true that there were many who did not hide their cockades—quite the contrary. In April, 1791, we read in the *Journal de la Cour de la Ville*:

"It is impossible to understand the vanity of certain aristocrats who order national cockades of such exaggerated size and price that some are as big as cabbages, and cost 18 livres apiece."

Those sold by Rose Bertin were not all so expensive as this. On March 24, 1790, the Comtesse de Conway bought one for 7 livres; on February 19, 1791, the Comtesse Gentinne ordered one at 6 livres; and the Comtesse Gouvernet paid 9 livres for hers. On March 14, 1792, the famous Vestris, of the Opera, ordered rather a fancy one of violet, pink, and white satin ribbon.

Many women who had no political convictions wore the cockade out of vanity, the three colours looked so pretty in the sunshine; for the spring of 1791 was remarkable for perfect weather: "in the first days of April, 1791, the weather was superb and warm,"*

* Comtesse d'Adhémar, "Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette," t. iv.

and all the favourite promenades in the Champs-Élysées and the Tuileries were crowded.

At that time the Queen was occupied with serious matters which made her neglect the things in which she had so long found pleasure and amusement. She still gave orders to Demoiselle Noël, Demoiselle Mouillard, Dame Pompée,* and Dame Éloffé, but they do not seem to have supplied her with anything more than ribbons, fichus, scarfs, and a few bonnets. These modistes were generally employed in remodelling and unimportant work ; Rose Bertin and Sarrazin, the King's tailor, were still the official suppliers of the Court, and orders of any importance were reserved for them.

The Queen had not yet abandoned Rose Bertin. All the stories told and rumours circulated were nothing but pure invention. We repeat this once more because we have had in our hands the "Memorandum of goods supplied to H.M. Queen Marie-Antoinette by Mlle. Bertin from January 1, 1791, to August 12, 1792."† The existence of this memorandum is an irrefutable proof that the story of her disgrace had no foundation. Maître Grangeret, lawyer for the heirs of Rose Bertin, supplied a list of goods and payments received from the year 1788 to August 10, 1792, which gives us an exact knowledge of the Queen's expenditure during that time.

* Mme. Pompey, Rue de l'Orangerie at Versailles, was already a supplier of fashions to the Queen in 1784 (Arch. Nat., Prévôté de l'Hôtel, Série O¹, 3,704).

† Collection J. Doucet, Dossier 596.

The following document seems to us of interest for that reason :

THE QUEEN'S WARDROBE.

	Livres.	s.	Livres.	s.
Sum of goods supplied in the year				
1788			68,992	10
Paid in various instalments up to				
November 30, 1789	46,389	0		
Received on March 25, 1792, from				
the Caisse de l'Extraordinaire ...	22,603	10		
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: 0;"/>		68,992	10
Sum of goods supplied in the year				
1789			46,072	8
Received on March 25 from the				
Caisse de l'Extraordinaire ...	38,000	0		
Discount for 1788 and 1789 ...	8,072	8		
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: 0;"/>		46,072	8
Sum of goods supplied in the year				
1790			42,736	18
<i>Payments.</i>				
Received in different instalments				
from February 27 to November 8,				
inclusive, in money, from whom				
not indicated			42,736	18
Sum of goods supplied in 1791, with				
interest for arrears in 1788 and				
1789, to January 1, 1792 ...	44,077	4		
Sum of goods supplied up to				
April 10	17,120	0		
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: 0;"/>		61,197	4

LAST YEARS OF THE MONARCHY 203

	Livres.	s.	Livres.	s.
Sum of goods supplied (as detailed on p. 202)			61,197	4

Payments on Account.

September 7, 1791, in money, on account for 1791	3,000	0		
November 8, 1791, on account for 1791, in money	3,319	0		
December 21, on account for 1791, in money	6,000	0		
February 23, 1792, in money, on account	6,000	0		
March 15, 1792, in money, on account	5,000	0		
May 18, 1792, in money, on account	2,000	0		
			25,319	0
			35,878	4

The last account of January 1, 1791, to August 10, 1792, was made out by the Duchesse de Grammout d'Ossun, Lady of the Wardrobe, and handed to Henry, the Intendant of the Civil List. It was as follows :

JANUARY QUARTER, 1791.

	Livres.	s.	Livres.	s.
Materials	484	0		
Dresses	1,705	0		
Trimmings, etc.	3,814	8		
			6,003	8

APRIL QUARTER, 1791.

Materials	90	0		
Dresses	3,973	0		
Trimmings, etc.	5,241	0		
			9,304	0

JULY QUARTER, 1791.

				Livres.	s.	Livres.	s.
Materials	...	...	...	1,186	0		
Trimmings, etc.	...	...	...	4,673	0		
				<hr/>		5,859	0

OCTOBER QUARTER, 1791.

Materials	...	...	...	405	0		
Dresses	...	...	...	6,859	0		
Trimmings, etc.	...	...	...	7,656	16		
				<hr/>		14,920	16
Interest on the years 1788 and 1789	...	...	...	7,990	0		
January quarter, 1792	...	...	...	4,824	2		
April quarter, 1792	...	...	...	7,535	18		
July quarter to August 10, 1792	...	...	...	4,760	0		
				<hr/>		61,197	4

It will be noticed that in these last five years the Queen's expenditure diminished steadily. The total of 68,992 livres 10 sols for the year 1788, a slight increase on that of the year 1787, which was 61,545 livres,* is reduced to 46,072 livres 8 sols in 1789, and to 42,736 livres 18 sols in 1790; and after deducting 7,990 livres for interest on arrears, to 36,087 livres 4 sols in 1791. Finally the expenditure for seven months and ten days in 1792, was 17,119 livres, an average of about 28,000 livres per annum.

* Archives Nationales, O¹, 3,792. This dossier gives the figures 61,992 livres for 1788, instead of 68,992, the figures given in M. J. Doucet's collection of extracts.

We have extracted the following prices from the items of the last bill :

DRESSES.

	Livres.	s.
January 8, 1791 : Retrimming state robe of orange velvet	215	0
January 14, 1791 : Trimming Turkish dress of green satin	621	0
February 2, 1791 : Trimming a striped state robe with plumage of foreign birds	669	0
April 24, 1791 : Trimming state robe for Easter Sunday, ground of white <i>gros de Naples</i> , embroidered with Reine-Marguerites in silk ...	795	0
May 1, 1791 : A skirt of very fine white gauze ...	216	0
A violet Turkish dress with violet stripes ...	615	0
Crêpe skirt to wear with it	244	0
June 1, 1791 : Trimming Turkish dress of pink taffeta	684	0
Trimming another Turkish dress of striped blue gauze	496	0
June 12, 1791 : Trimming a state robe of violet taffeta	405	0
June 18, 1791 : Trimming a Turkish dress of blue and black shot taffeta	518	0
September 20, 1791 : Trimming a <i>redingote</i> of brown moiré striped with blue	678	0
Trimming a Turkish dress of striped moiré ...	618	0
October 2, 1791 : Trimming state robe of lilac <i>gourgourant</i>	457	0
Supplying skirt of striped crêpe	300	0
Trimming a dress	618	0
October 28, 1791 : Turkish dress of blue and white striped satin	678	0
November 2, 1791 : State dress of brown satin for All Saints' Day	1,430	0
November 6, 1791 : Turkish dress of blue and brown satin	918	0

	Livres.	s.
November 20, 1791 : Turkish dress of Indian satin painted white and pink	618	0
December 4, 1791 : State dress of violet satin ...	721	0
December 20, 1791 : Turkish dress of satin-faced cloth, with lace belonging to the Queen ...	24	0
December 24, 1791 : Trimming a state dress of orange velvet with marten, the hem of the dress trimmed with same fur, belonging to the Queen	24	0
December 29, 1791 : State dress for New Year's Day, of blue embroidered satin	978	0
April 1, 1792 : Trimming crêpe dress	78	0
April 13, 1792 : Trimming state dress of black striped with black	192	0
May 13, 1792 : Trimming state dress of blue and violet glacé taffeta	51	0
May 19, 1792 : Trimming a <i>redingote</i> of brown taffeta with Alençon	668	0
May 26, 1792 : Trimming state dress of embroidered <i>gourgourant</i> with white ground ...	898	0
July 11, 1792 : Trimming a white gauze dress ...	285	0
July 28, 1792 : Trimming a state dress of blue taffeta	959	10

TRIMMINGS, ETC.

January 8, 1791 : A mantilla in blonde	200	0
A <i>pouf</i> of puce-coloured velvet draped with white satin	80	0
January 29, 1791 : Six large fichus of <i>gaze de Chambéry</i> , at 12 livres	72	0
February 27, 1791 : Changing gauze of a fichu and putting lace border	10	0
A hat with fine yellow straw crown, trimmed with white satin to form turban, a flat blue feather round the shape, a panache of two blue feathers at the side	72	0

LAST YEARS OF THE MONARCHY 207

	Livres.	s.
April 10, 1791: A mantle of white Florence taffeta	48	0
May 18, 1791: A black taffeta shawl	216	0
June 24, 1791: A mantle of black taffeta	280	0
Another mantle of black taffeta	400	0
August 4, 1791: For a present—		
A hat of fine yellow straw, trimmed with a profusion of blue taffeta ribbon, and strings of same to tie under the chin	48	0
Three yards of wide sash ribbon to match, at 4 livres	12	0
August 27, 1791: Mantle of black taffeta trimmed with <i>Angleterre</i>	316	0
September 6, 1791: A <i>pouf</i> of blue crêpe	48	0
A hat <i>en bonnette</i> of batiste, edged with wide linen lace a third of the height, draped with a fichu of fine organdie	280	0
A <i>pouf</i> made from a fichu of organdie	48	0
A white straw hat	66	0
A hat of English beaver, chocolate colour	66	0
September 20, 1791: For Madame Royale—		
A wreath of scabious	18	0
Ditto of white musk roses	18	0
Ditto of pink musk roses	18	0
Ditto of corn-flowers	18	0
Ditto of field-flowers	18	0
October 2, 1791: A mantilla of blonde and Alençon	200	0
January 20, 1792: Mantle of black taffeta trimmed with <i>Angleterre</i>	300	0
Another mantle of black taffeta trimmed with Alençon	410	0
Third mantle of black taffeta trimmed with Alençon	420	0
A fourth mantle of white Florence, with trimmings made by Le Normand	33	0

	Livres. s.
May 15, 1792 : For Madame—	
A <i>pouf</i> of wreath of mauve lilac, ribbon of white frivolité and gauze à vermicelle ...	78 0
A second <i>pouf</i> of a wreath of roses and white striped gauze ribbons, a beautiful white feather at the side	90 0
May 28, 1792 : Two bonnets, deep mourning, in white crêpe, a coiffe of gauze, one of black wool, at 51 livres	102 0

We give the last lines of the account verbatim :

FOR MADAME.

August 7 : A <i>pouf</i> of violet crêpe with green corn-ears, a panache of three feathers and blonde ...	90 0
A <i>pouf</i> of blue crêpe and pearls, wide blonde with ground of Alençon, and blue-and-white feather	110 0
A <i>pouf</i> of striped gauze with almonds, a wreath of roses and bunch of the same roses	98 0
Two boxes at 3 livres	6 0

The account ends here.

Three days later the Tuileries were besieged, bombarded, and taken by assault. That day the mob pillaged the Queen's wardrobe, and divided the garments which appear in Rose Bertin's last account. The following is the description of the scene given by Roussel d'Épinal*:

“The entrance to the Queen's apartments is blocked with dead bodies wrapped in blankets. Except the

* “Le Château des Tuileries,” par P. J. A. R. D. T.

hangings, chairs, sofas, and bed, everything is sacked. Not a looking-glass intact; they are ground to powder. How many women rummaged curiously in her wardrobe! How many bonnets, elegant hats, pink skirts, white petticoats and blue petticoats, are scattered about the room!" However, everything did not disappear; thieves were expected, and guards were sent. In 1793 the furniture of the Tuileries was sold. The sale was not very brilliant. A fine auction was expected, but there was nothing of the sort. There came only second-hand dealers, and the curious who bought nothing. However, the wardrobes of Marie-Antoinette and Mme. Elizabeth sold a little better than that of Louis XVI., which fetched ludicrous prices.

The Revolutionary Government now undertook the maintenance of the Royal Family out of the 500,000 livres voted for that purpose by the Convention. But they did not pay the debts still due by the prisoners in the Temple on August 10, 1792. We have seen that the total of the Queen's bill amounted to 35,878 livres 4 sols, including goods supplied to Madame Royale. To these must be added 400 livres due by Mme. Elizabeth, and 184 livres for the Dauphin's clothes, a total of 36,462 livres 4 sols for ever lost to Rose Bertin.

In the extracts which we have given, we have included the dresses trimmed for Marie-Antoinette, and the principal items of the account. It may be observed that, with a few exceptions, the

prices are not very extraordinary. Mantles at 48 livres and fichus at 12 livres are not at all excessive ; these would even be modest prices in the catalogues sent out nowadays by our great shops. Our *élegantes* would laugh at the idea of paying 80 or 90 livres for a velvet toque bearing the name of the leading *maison de modes* in the whole world. But that is what Rose Bertin charged the Queen of France. On the other hand, Marie-Antoinette ordered forty *poufs* and hats and fifty bonnets in nineteen months.

Among the bonnets are two in deep mourning. The date of their delivery, May 28, 1792, shows that the Queen ordered them upon the death of Leopold II., her brother Emperor of Germany, which took place a few weeks before.

At the beginning of this year 1792, when Rose Bertin went to the Tuileries one day upon her usual business, Marie-Antoinette said to her as she came in : “ I dreamed of you last night, my dear Rose ; I thought you brought me a lot of coloured ribbons, and that I chose several, but they all turned black as soon as I took them in my hands.”



MADAME ELISABETH, SISTER OF LOUIS XVI.

CHAPTER VI

ROSE BERTIN DURING THE REVOLUTION—JOURNEYS TO GERMANY AND ENGLAND—LIST OF EMIGRANTS— THE HOUSE AT ÉPINAY

ACCORDING to the memoirs which appeared in her name, Rose Bertin probably went on a voyage to Germany and England in 1791-92. It is not improbable that she was in England in 1791. We know, at least, that the Queen received no dresses from her between June 18 and September 20, 1791, nor any trimmings from June 24 to August 4, and Marie-Antoinette enjoyed discussing her toilettes with her dressmaker in person.

Rose must therefore have been absent from Paris ; it has, in fact, been proved that she was in Germany in July, 1791.

Parties and merry gatherings succeeded each other at Coblenz, as in the happy days at Trianon, so that we read in the memoirs of the Marquise de Laage, that " Mlle. Bertin, the Queen's dressmaker, has followed her clients, and is exercising her talents in the new Court . . . the Court of Coblenz is not a whit less elegant than the Court of Versailles."

Those were the joyous days of the Emigration. The Royal Family had taken up their residence at the Castle of Schoenbornhut, and their suite at the Deutsche-Haus. Meanwhile, certain of their followers viewed with anxiety the gaiety of their surroundings. "There are too many women at Coblentz," said the Chevalier Du Bray sadly. Mme. de Caylus, Mme. d'Autichamp, the Duchesse de Guiche, Mme. de Polastron, Mme. de Poulpry, Mme. de Valicourt, the Princesse de Monaco, held their *salon* there, and rivalled each other with the brilliance of their toilettes. "We ride or walk along the Bonn Road, and forgather at the Savage Café or the Three Crowns." In fact, to all appearance, it might have been a pleasant holiday spent at a fashionable watering-place.

Rose did not, however, remain at Coblentz, but returned to Paris for the winter.

Peuchet, the recognized author of Mlle. Bertin's memoirs, says, in speaking of a journey she took to Germany, that she had been sent on a mission by the Queen. Of this there is no proof, but the fact that Peuchet says it shows once more that even in his time it was well known that the Queen's dress-maker had not fallen into disfavour. Peuchet affirms that while in Vienna she obtained an audience of the Emperor Francis II., during which she described to him the real political situation of France, the fears entertained at Court, and the perils to which Marie-Antoinette, her relatives, and her followers, were exposed. Peucher adds that she succeeded in

overcoming Francis II.'s prejudices against the Queen, his aunt.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Queen should employ persons not holding any official or diplomatic post upon missions to foreign countries; it was the surest way of communicating with the outside world, without fear of her correspondence being intercepted. In this way her hairdresser Léonard was despatched beforehand to the Marquis de Bouillé on occasion of the journey to Varennes, and that upon the accession of Francis II., according to Mme. Campan, Marie-Antoinette found means of communicating her private feelings to the Emperor, and sent a letter of condolence upon Leopold II.'s death in the ordinary way, it being understood that Barnave should read all her correspondence.

We have ample proof that at this period different people, having no connection whatever with the diplomatic service, were charged with certain missions, or acted as intermediaries in carrying confidential reports.

Thus, M. Genet, who was expecting to be expelled from Russia, where he had been acting as French Chargé d'Affaires since 1789, had drawn up instructions for M. Patot d'Orflans, Chargé d'Affaires of the General Consulate of France, dated July 24, 1792, recommending him to send his reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs through the post in the shape of invoices or bills, of which the figures would stand for a code of words agreed upon. The Minister, on

his side, was to send his correspondence to the imaginary address of M. Laurent, care of Mme. de Monzouvre, a costumier.*

There is therefore nothing astonishing in the fact that Marie-Antoinette should have employed a person whose loyalty was above suspicion, and sent her upon a mission to the Austrian Court. Rose Bertin's trade with foreign countries, and the voyages which were the outcome of that trade, saved her from suspicion ; given the fact that she was in need of a devoted messenger, it is impossible to suppose that the Queen would not have thought of her.

In any case, if the journey to Vienna is not proved, there is irrefutable proof that she was in Germany in 1792, and that she left Paris on July 1, 1792. Among the National Archives there exist two copies of "An Account of Certain Sums of Money remitted by Citizeness Bertin to her Paris Establishment, since her Departure on July 1, 1792." By these documents we learn that she was in Frankfort in August and in September, 1792—thus :

	Livres.
August 1, 1792: From Frankfort, by Citizen	
Messin, Rue de la Loi	9,140
By Citizen Ibert, Place de l'Égalité	15,394
September 21, 1792: From Frankfort, by Citizen	
Prevost	1,000†

* "Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France, Russie," t. ii., par Alfred Rambaud.

† Archives Nationales, Comité de Sûreté Générale, Série F⁷, 4,596 et Émigration (Seine), Police Générale, Série F⁷, 5,612.

Citizen Ibert was a relation of Rose's. Therefore Rose Bertin was not in Paris during the massacres of September ; she was not an eyewitness, in the Rue Richelieu, of the scenes of blood enacted in Paris on that tragic date, though she might perhaps have heard from her shop the distant murmur of the howling mob, as they promenaded the town, bearing aloft the pale, blood-stained head of the Princesse de Lamballe. From the moment when, on the threshold of her prison, she was felled to the ground by a heavy blow, Mme. de Lamballe became the prey of the populace. Her head, severed from its trunk, was placed all bleeding on a pike, and escorted through the town by a degraded mob of tipsy harpies and drunken, brutal-faced men. Shouting obscene songs, they proceeded from the Rue des Ballets to the Temple, where the Royal Family was confined ; and from the Temple to the Palais-Royal, where the Duc d'Orléans hearing the noise, and wishing to learn the cause, suddenly saw the ghastly thing appear close to his balcony, and fell back shuddering. Finally, the head which Rose Bertin had crowned ten years previously with the charming flowered hat which figures in Rioult's painting was borne from the Palais-Royal to the Place du Châtelet, where a number of corpses were thrown that day, through the Rue Saint-Honoré, past Rose Bertin's former house. With what a grief-stricken face would she not have listened to the cries of the mob as they crowded howling round the Duc d'Orléan's house!

All the costumiers of Paris, however, did not share her feelings. The following is an extract from a letter sent to the army of the King of Prussia, addressed to the Marquise de Bressan : " Here is an anecdote which your brother would do well to tell the Duke of Brunswick. On the famous 10th, Mme. de Gemstorche, one of Mme. de Lamballe's ladies, threw herself, panic-stricken, into the arms of a Sans-Culotte, and begged him to spare her life. As he dragged her out of the crowd, with his blood-stained hands, she asked him to take her to his house. What was her astonishment to find that the wife of the ragamuffin was a dressmaker, and his mother a linen-draper! She spent the night with them, and they were most attentive ; but that is not the point—the point is that our friends the ' bourgeois ' are Sans-Culottes : drive it home, my dear. The next day they escorted her to the address she gave, after she had told them who she was. They limited themselves to making horrible remarks about the Queen and Mme. Lamballe."*

The news of the massacres and the names of the chief victims were speedily retailed throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Rose Bertin could then think with sorrow of the temporary misunderstanding that had clouded her relations with this same Princess ; how long ago it seemed, and yet how near ! Perhaps her headstrong and haughty character had caused her to play an unworthy part in that

* " Correspondance Originale des Émigrés, 1793," Paris.



PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

To face page 216

quarrel ; with what remorse, then, would she listen to the horrible details of the death of that woman, so joyous, elegant, amiable, full of vivacity, swept away in a whirlwind of confusion and terror on that terrible day ! It is notable that Rose Bertin's absence in 1792 aroused the suspicions of the municipality of Épinay-sur-Seine.

She owned a house at Épinay in the Rue du Bord de l'Eau, which she had acquired in 1782. Until then she had owned a country-house at Cires-les-Millo, on the road between Senlis and Beauvais, which she sold when she decided to remove to Épinay. Busy as she always was, it was infinitely more convenient to have a country-house nearer to her place of business than as far out as Cires-les-Mello, fifteen miles distant.

The register of taxation for house property for Épinay in the year 1792 gives, in the paragraph relating to Mlle. Bertin, a total of 112 livres 8 sols, and in the margin against her name is written : "Emigrated." At that period absence, however short, caused a rumour of emigration to be spread abroad. It is true that the rumour was often justified, and a dressmaker to the Queen, above all, might well be suspected of having taken refuge abroad, especially by the authorities of a little country town, where the importance of her position must necessarily have been considerably exaggerated. There were, however, means of ascertaining ; it was simple enough to obtain news from Paris. The Bertin establish-

ment was well known to the police of the Palais-Royal District. But the police investigation had been too hasty and too superficial. Informed of Mlle. Bertin's departure, they had jumped to the conclusion that she had joined her refugee clients abroad, and the word "Emigrated" had been prematurely written against her name. Later a note was added to the effect that the statement should be verified ; consequently Mlle. Bertin's name appears on the register of 1793, and she is no longer considered as having emigrated.

This register of taxes gives us some idea of the style in which Mlle. Bertin lived in her country-house—"my Épinay," as she loved to call it. According to the register, she was served by a "male servant and a female servant." The man was employed to drive a trap (cabriolet), for which she paid a tax of 20 livres.* And we learn, further, that she paid 18 livres 15 sols for the six chimneys with which her country-house was furnished.

In those days one was taxed for chimneys, in these for doors and windows ; there has been no great change—the exchequer is ever with us. In the question of taxes, to-day is as yesterday, to-morrow as to-day ; the sauce is more or less salted, that is all.

In 1793, upon an income estimated at 1,814 livres 16 sols, Mlle. Bertin paid in taxes the exorbitant sum

* "Registre de Contribution Mobilière et somptuaire d'Épinay, 1793."

of 596 livres 4 sols. In truth, some Governments were not cheap ; they did not last long, it is true, but during the time they did last they ruined or terribly impoverished the nation.

How Rose loved her country-house ! it was her miniature Trianon. There, in the shade of the trees, she could breathe pure air on Sundays, during the summer months, after the fevered rush of the week. On week-days she knew no idle moment ; from town she would hasten to the Court at Versailles, to La Muette, to Marly, to Fontainebleau ; then back to her establishment in the Rue de Richelieu, there to receive a crowd of great ladies, the majority of whom were most exacting ; then to attend to her foreign correspondence, whether with Spain, or Sweden, England, Russia, Austria, Portugal, and so on. This concluded, there were still her orders for Le Normand, Ventzel, all the great Parisian houses ; there was the work of her ladies to be supervised, Mention, Sagedieu, and others ; and if there was still time, there were her accounts to be looked into. According to Maître Grangeret, lawyer to her heirs, her account-books were in perfect order, but this appears to us to be greatly exaggerated.

Her country-house was comfortable, but could scarcely be called luxurious. A three-storied house, containing a bath-room, which had been formerly a chapel, a billiard-room, stables, coach-house, a dovecot, a terrace, and a wood which extended to the river. It did not cost an exorbitant sum of money,

far from it ; Rose Bertin, who then lived in the Rue Saint-Honoré, had bought it on March 2, 1782, for about 13,000 livres, from Jean-Jacques Gilbert de Fraigne, Plenipotentiary for Germany. She liked the property and increased it. On June 30, 1792, when the property which the Mathurins d'Émile (Montmorency) held at Épinay was put up for sale, she bought part of it, paying a sum of 46,075 livres, which, allowing for depreciation in assignats, amounted to 24,000 livres ; devoting to this purpose the money she had received from the sale of the Hôtel des Chiens, which had just taken place.

She was always happy to receive visitors at Épinay, and the Russian Princes, her clients, did not disdain to spend a few hours there. The Count Razoumowsky, amongst others, was a welcome visitor. "Deprived of the pleasure of the visit you promised to pay me at my Épinay," she writes to him in 1793, "judge of my surprise when I learnt from His Excellency the Ambassador that you had left for Germany. I was thus prevented from showing you at least twelve letters from the Countess, each one more amiable than the last, letters which are most dear to me. I am persuaded that we should both have wept over them, but one can but submit to the decree of Providence ; and I must be resigned to the grief I still feel at having been unable to take leave of you."

These Russians of high rank did not treat the Queen's dressmaker as an ordinary tradeswoman.

They frequently visited her, and sometimes made her presents.

“I offer you a thousand thanks for the charming engraving you had the kindness to send me,” writes Rose Bertin on December 4, 1794, to Countess Skavronsky, niece of Prince Potemkin, then at Naples, and who sent the souvenir referred to and a sum of money by the same post.

“It is a real present for me, and I look upon it, and shall keep it, as the most precious gift I have ever received,” adds Rose, doubtless with exaggerated fervour. The sum of 2,512 livres 10 sols which accompanied the gift must have been more pleasing to receive, as Rose’s position was becoming more and more difficult, and to meet the calls upon her she had already been compelled to sell some of her jewellery. Thus the account-book of the aforesaid Countess Skavronsky states that she had bought from Rose Bertin in 1791, amongst other things, a gold chain, value 112 livres; a painted bracelet mounted in gold, value 400 livres; and a necklace of gold and pearls, value 388 livres. It was due time to call in old debts, and no easy matter to do so in the general confusion, when relations with foreign countries were becoming ever more strained, rendering communication difficult, and correspondence with the refugees dangerous. It was this which made Rose decide to go to Germany in July, 1792, which journey was the cause of her being entered on the list of *émigrés*.

In 1792 Rose Bertin was still supplying Mme. Du

Barry with toilettes. The last article was supplied to her on September 12 of that year, and consisted of a bonnet "edged with a double pleating of fine tulle, on a foundation of satin and gauze, and white satin ribbon," value 42 livres. A few days later Mme. Du Barry left for London, where a case was to be heard in the courts respecting a theft of diamonds which were stolen from her at Louveciennes. She remained there from October, 1792, to March 1, 1793, and would have shown wisdom in not returning to France, but was back in Louveciennes on March 23. From that day to June 2, the date of her arrest, we can find no trace of any new purchase at the dress-maker of Rue de la Loi. The better-known ladies of fashion learnt to forget the way to the shops where tempting articles waited them, and where in happier days they had loved to while away the hours fingering chiffons and discussing new fashions. From the most virtuous bourgeoisie to the most dissolute courtesan, of all who had been known to the public or who possessed a title, none dared be seen in the streets of Paris, where the vengeance of a people long oppressed by the luxury of the great, a blind and brutal vengeance, made the gutters run with blood.

The Royal Family was imprisoned; but even in the Temple the Queen remained faithful to her ordinary tradespeople. Thus in Mme. Éloffe's journal we find a note to the effect that Marie-Antoinette owed her a sum amounting to 34 livres

4 sols for goods supplied on August 18, 1792. In the Archives Nationales there exists a bill of Mme. Pompey for 115 livres 17 sols, dated August 12, 1792,* and another of Mlle. Bertin's, dated March 4, 1793, amounting to 602 livres, for goods delivered at the Temple in August and September, 1792.† A decree from the Council-General is annexed ordering that the said bills be paid. Therefore, though Rose was absent, her Paris establishment was not closed.

But what a meagre sum these 602 livres seem to be, after the fortune which Marie-Antoinette used formerly to spend ! And yet the prisoners of the Temple had been brought there almost, one might say, devoid of clothes, and the costume of blue taffeta which Rose had made for the Queen a few days previously, and which cost 959 livres 10 sols, was too elegant for the dreary rooms of the Temple, where luxury was out of place, a sad contrast to the flowery surroundings of Trianon.

During her confinement in the Temple, Marie-Antoinette wore a morning gown of white dimity, and a lawn cap ; at midday she changed this for a brown linen gown with a small flowered pattern. These were her only dresses until the day that the King was taken to the scaffold. Meanwhile Rose Bertin, while losing her old clients, found no new ones ; but inactive she could not remain, and turned her energies to the recovery of debts which hundreds of persons owed her. Thus she obtained from the

* Archives Nationales, F⁴, 1,311. † *Ibid.*

Countess Skavronsky the sum referred to above, and despatched piteous letters on all sides.

On December 1, 1792, she wrote to Count Czernicheff : " My actual position compels me to beg the Count Czernicheff to come to my assistance." To Count Razoumowsky she wrote : " I beg you, Count, to take into consideration my total ruin."

Among these debts were some important ones ; during her absence in 1792, Martincourt, a business man who had charge of her affairs, wrote on November 12 of that year to the Duke of Sudermaine, Regent of Sweden, as follows : " Circumstances having compelled Mlle. Bertin to go abroad to attend to her business, her creditors have found among her accounts a bill against her deceased majesty the Queen of Sweden, amounting to 48,674 livres 14 sols.*

The Queen had many times begged her to go abroad, representing the danger to which she exposed herself by remaining in Paris. Rose arranged matters very skilfully ; on one side she bought the confiscated lands of the Mathurins de Montmorency for a handful of crowns, and on the other, under an assumed name, sold her property in the Rue du Mail for 320,000 livres. She made thus a profit of 36,000 livres on the purchase price, and, using the deal at Épinay as a blind to the patriots, she was able without arousing suspicion to go abroad to place in safety the sum realized by the sale of her houses in

* Collection de M. J. Doucet, Dossier 595.

the Rue du Mail, in virtue of a deed set forth in the "Minutes des Lettres de Ratification".*

"Anne-Suzanne-Françoise Gobelin, whose property is separated from that of her husband, Adrien-Nicolas de la Salle, Field-Marshal, represented by Louis-René Philippe, her lawyer, states that by a contract drawn up in the presence of Havard and his colleague, notaries of Paris, on October 16, 1792, registered in this town on the 19th of the same month by Guesnier, she acquired from Joseph Perrat, formerly army surgeon, residing in Paris, Cour de l'Arsenal, in the name of, and as procurator of, Marie-Jeanne Bertin, adult, in trade, usually residing in Paris, Rue de Richelieu, ward of the Butte-des-Moulins, two houses known by the name of the large and small *Hôtel des Chiens*, situated in Paris, Rue du Mail, with all their appurtenances and tenements, without reserve, the said sale being made for the sum of 320,000 livres, upon the ordinary and customary charges. . . .

"The said houses and hotels belonging to the said seller in virtue of a declaration made by Étienne-Louis Bonnard, lawyer, by a deed drawn up in the presence of Maulard, notary of Paris, on February 23, 1788, who had become owner thereof in virtue of a lawsuit, preceded by the customary legal publications, made before Moreau, notary of Paris, on the said

* "Minutes des Lettres de Ratification," No. 2,369, Archives de la Seine.

day, February 23, 1788, at the request of Pierre Roger, citizen of Paris, and of Marie Piery his wife, proprietors of the said houses, having become owners thereof by judgment of the Commission established at Châtelet to judge of the respective claims of Dame Ressons, Robiche, Villars, and others, dated November 26, 1776, followed by letters ratifying the same, published the following July.

“ Given at Paris, January 16, 1793, second year of the Republic.

“(Signed) MONNOT.”

Rose nevertheless kept herself well informed of the general situation of affairs. She learnt, therefore, that in the provinces as well as in Paris the gaps in the ranks of the nobility who patronized her grew ever more numerous, especially in Abbeville, where she had always had many clients. Already in June, 1792, she had despatched goods to M. de Selincourt, who had taken refuge in Liége; Baron Duploux, who had always been on friendly terms with her, had also left Abbeville and fled to Boulogne, from whence he took ship for England, and settled in Canterbury.

All this did not tend to increase Rose Bertin's profits; she wrote on the subject to her agent Martincourt, who devoted himself energetically to her creditors in Abbeville. The Republic confiscated the property of the *émigrés*, but paid their debts, while there was any capital to do so. There was no time to be lost. As a result of his efforts,

Martincourt received the following circular, summing up his client's position :

“ *The Administrators of the Department of la Somme to Citizen Martincourt, Abbeville.*

“CITIZEN,—Respecting merchandise and goods supplied to *émigrés*, the law of the 1st Floréal allows payment to be made of such bills only of merchants and tradesmen as have been verified. This verification, according to the law of the 18th Pluviôse last past, must be made by the central administration ; but when the creditors do not reside in the chief town, the municipal administrations of their respective towns are responsible.”

The closing of Duploux's account was entered on the register of the secretary's office of the Abbeville District on December 23, 1792, first year of the French Republic.*

Rose Bertin, however, had not lost hope of returning to France ; and hearing that her name had been placed on the list of *émigrés*, she spared no effort to to have it removed.

Her representatives at Paris procured a certificate from the Commissioner of Police of the district Butte-des-Moulins, certifying that he had supplied Citizeness Bertin with a passport, dated June 28, 1792 ; and that Charles - Jean Soldato, restaurant

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 240.

proprietor, 1,241 Rue de la Loi, and Luc-Joseph-Charles Corazza, proprietor of a coffee-house, No. 12, Maison Égalité, had been witnesses.* Rose's friends then prepared their case, and laid her claims before the authorities, receiving from them the following decree, dated November 27, 1792, first year of the Republic :

“ Having considered the memorial of Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin, dressmaker of the Rue de Richelieu, by which she requests that the seals placed on her country-house at Épinay be removed ; having considered also the papers annexed to her memorial : (1) A statement of merchandise which she has despatched to Frankfort ; (2) a certificate from Citizen Chevy le Chesnes, dated November 16, 1792, testifying, in his capacity as carrier of Paris, that he despatched fifteen cases to Frankfort on the part of Citizeness Bertin ; (3) a note from Citizen Bocqueaux, dated September 10, 1792, announcing that he has despatched to Frankfort a box of feathers and silk ribbon in the name of Mlle. Bertin ; (4) a certificate from Citizen Messin, merchant of Paris, dated July 26, 1792, stating that, being in Frankfort on business last July, Citizeness Bertin entrusted to him, as a private matter, the sum of 9,140 livres, to be remitted to her establishment on his return to Paris ; (5) a letter from Citizen Ibert, dated from Mayence, July 22, 1792, giving no address, which shows

* Archives Nationales, Émigration (Seine), Police Générale, Série F⁷, 5,612.

that he has business relations with Mlle. Bertin ; (6) three other letters written by Citizeness Bertin to her establishment in Paris, only one of which is dated from Brussels, August 24, which give an account of her transactions abroad, and of the sums of money she is sending to meet her expenses in Paris ; (7) a receipt given to Citizen Ibert, for the sum of 15,394 livres 16 sols 8 deniers, dated Paris, July 31, 1792, and signed by Omont for Mlle. Bertin ; (8) a certificate from the Commissioner of Police of the district of Butte-des-Moulins, dated October 26, 1792, showing that he delivered a passport, dated 28th of the previous June, to Citizeness Bertin, who has taken with her to Frankfort four dressmakers to assist her in her business, according to her declaration ; (9) finally an acknowledgment, signed by two administrators of the Department of Paris, dated Épinay, October 26, 1792, stating that they have received from Citizen Nicolas Bertin a certificate of the district of Butte-des-Moulins, testifying to the non-emigration of his aunt, bourgeoisie of Épinay, residing in Paris, Rue de Richelieu ;

“ The Procurator-General being advised—

“ The Directoire, considering that Citizeness Bertin has merely absented herself from France upon business, Decrees, in conformity with Article 6 of the law of April 8 last, that the seals placed upon the house belonging to Citizeness Bertin, situated at Épinay, shall be removed, and that she shall be reinstated in possession of all the furniture and effects of the said

house. Power is given to the Council of the district of Saint-Denis to carry the present decree into execution."

No further obstacle remained to Mlle. Bertin's return to France.

On December 5, 1792, she reappeared in Paris, and hastened to set about the settlement of certain matters—made appointments, sent out bills, wrote letter upon letter; her days were passed in a fever of haste. She lived in anxious impatience of a morrow which might be charged with fear, and which would infallibly be disastrous; thus the dark December days were to her mind both too long and too short—too short for all she had to settle, too long for her burning desire to have done.

On December 5 she wrote to a certain Thomassiny of Saint-Germain, asking whether he had received instructions to pay the sum of 9,996 livres upon a bill signed by the Portuguese Minister at Stockholm, Fernando Correa, payable on January 1, 1793. On December 24 she again wrote to Thomassiny, stating that she had waited a week for his answer, and requesting him to remit the money during the course of the following week. He did not comply with her request, and on January 11, 1793, Rose wrote again, pressing for an appointment, but Thomassiny still continued to evade her.

Rose Bertin's importunate letters suddenly ceased, and on February 15, 1793, Martincourt took the matter up and wrote for an appointment. It was



DUCHESSE D'ANGOULÊME

To face page 230

Martincourt again who, on February 12, sent in a list in Mlle. Bertin's name of the principal debts due to her from the *émigrés*, to the office for the liquidation of the debts of the *émigrés*.

What had taken place between January 11 and February 12? Rose Bertin had again left Paris. The condemnation and execution of Louis XVI. (January 15-21) were connected with this sudden decision. Rose had understood that the Queen's fears were not groundless, that she had clearly seen the position, and had been right in advising her to leave France. Rose had grasped the fact that she was no longer safe, that she, too, had exercised a certain royal power, costly and frivolous, and that the debts of the Queen's household might rise against and crush her. Did not the brother of the celebrated Léonard fall a victim to the Terror?

Besides, she had a retreat already prepared in London, where she had stayed on several occasions, and from whence she would be free to superintend her foreign commerce. We learn from a letter of Martincourt's, dated March 14, 1793, that Rose had indeed taken refuge in London. "Mlle. Bertin left me in charge of her affairs before her departure for London, where she now is,"* he wrote to the Marquise de Mesmes, who owed the Bertin establishment a sum of 482 livres 5 sols for orders carried out between 1777 and 1786.

She left without advertising the fact, telling merely

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 482.

a few well-trying friends of her intention, being particularly careful not to let it be suspected in Abbeville, her native town, where she was well known, the danger being even greater there than elsewhere. The worthies who ruled the town were, according to Count Alexandre de Tilly, the "most arrant demagogues," though they were far from being equal to those who terrorized Arras, Cambrai, and other provincial towns. But Rose considered it prudent, and she was no doubt right, to preserve the strictest incognito in passing through.

Nevertheless, she let even her own household believe that, as on the previous occasion, the journey was undertaken for business purposes. We learn this from a letter which her servant Colin wrote her on March 19, communicating the result of a lawsuit between herself and a certain Constard de Villiers which had been settled the previous day: "I am delighted, mademoiselle, to give you satisfactory news of a country where your presence is expected and desired by all those who, like myself, are devoted to you."

"During my stay in Brussels" (August, 1792), writes the Countess of Dantzic, Ambassadress of Prussia, "Mlle. Bertin undertook various orders for me, which she finally caused to be executed by a dressmaker of Paris, informing me that pressing business had compelled her to leave that night for London, from whence she hoped to return shortly."*

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier, 178 bis.

occur which would facilitate her return, and that her exile would be a short one, instead of which this voluntary exile became a compulsory one."

Her enemies, perhaps those whose envy she had aroused, or even perhaps her debtors, denounced her, accused her of having emigrated. In virtue of the law of March 28, 1793, she was again entered on the list of refugees, and seals replaced on her property. She could no longer think of returning to France until her position had been again explained and recognized; she was under the rigour of the law, and we know what such rigour could mean.

All she could do was to keep up her establishment in Paris, by remitting such sums of money as she was able to collect abroad upon the numerous sums owing to her.

Thus the establishment of the Rue de Richelieu seems to have resisted the storm more or less, which the following lines, written by Martincourt to the Countess Jules de Rochecouart on August 17, 1793, seem to prove :

"The persons who have the management of Mlle. Bertin's shop forgot to mention, when you were there, a bill of 1,561 livres 2 sols. . . ."

The persons who had the management of Mlle. Bertin's shop must have found time hang heavily on their hands, when most of the great

* Collection J. Doucet, Dossier 609.

milliners and costumiers had been compelled to close their doors, having nothing to do !

An Englishwoman, Helen Mary Williams, has given an able description of the state of mind of the women of that period—a state of mind which amply explains the paralysis of all trade in articles of dress.

“Frenchwomen,” she says, “cherish the glory of their country as much as women of other nations ; and if our Englishwomen deck themselves with Duncan dresses, Prince of Orange ribbons, in honour of valiant leaders, Frenchwomen wore Belle Poule bonnets or hats *à la Grenade, à la d’Estaing, à la Fayette*, or even to the honour of M. Necker—an unmistakable proof of their devotion to the heroes and statesmen of their nation. It is true that there have been no fashions in honour of the new régime, but the Revolution, in their eyes, was an event of which the success was doubtful and the result to be feared. The Republic which has been the outcome of it has often worn a severe and threatening aspect, which has filled men with awe ; is it surprising that my sex has repulsed its fraternal embrace ?”

A few customers came now and again to make modest purchases. Thus the establishment supplied Mme. d’Epréménil, on April 25, 1793, with a bridal hat of the value of 3 livres. What irony ! After decking all the nobility of Versailles and Europe in brocade, silk, and jewels, to be reduced to receiving mediocre customers and supplying them with cheap

little bridal hats, at a price which fishwives would have mocked at!

In fact, the establishment was only kept up to enable Martincourt to liquidate the property.

Shortly after the execution of the King, the Commune of Paris, in virtue of the law of August 12, 1792, settled all bills for goods supplied to the Temple during the last four months of 1792. The bills presented by Rose Bertin, who was instructed to send them to the Temple, and of which we have already spoken, form part of a packet preserved among the Archives Nationales.*

The first is a document which runs as follows :

“LAW OF AUGUST 12, 1792.

“*Statement of Sums to be paid to the following Persons for Certain Outlays for the Service of the Tower of the Temple :*

Item : To Citizens	Livres	s.	d.
Bertin (citizenship), dressmaker	602	0	0
Bosquet, tailor	1,427	5	7
Boulangier-Blet, grocer	300	0	0
Destrumel, glass-seller	600	0	0
Durand junior, locksmith	1,445	12	0
Gatineau, coal-merchant	305	0	0
Giot, shoemaker	48	0	0
Laboullée, perfumer	144	17	0
Lefebvre and Thoret, linen-drapers	1,392	0	0
Le Roy, fruiterer	680	0	0

* Archives Nationales, F⁴, 1,311. Signature du 7 Avril, 1793.

	Livres	s.	d.
Mulard, proprietor of a restaurant	960	11	0
Pazzy, tailor	144	0	0
Piquet, porter of the stable of the mounted guard	109	4	0
Rassé, formerly chef of the kitchen, for nineteen days' wages	211	2	0
Simon, laundryman	14	11	0
Wolff, shoemaker	169	0	0
Total	8,533	2	7

“ In name of the Republic Commissaries, etc., cause payment to be made, in accordance with the decrees of the Council-General of the Commune of Paris of November 18, 1792, January 10 and March 4 last, of the sum of 8,533 livres 2 sols 7 deniers, to the persons named in the above, according to the sum due to each respectively, for work done and goods supplied for the service of the Tower of the Temple during the four last months of 1792 ; the said sum of 8,533 livres 2 sols 7 deniers to be paid from the 500,000 livres which, by the law of August 12, 1792, were allotted for the expenses of the ex-King and his family.

“ Given at Paris, April 7, 1793, in the second year of the Republic.”

This account is followed by another for goods supplied during the first two months of 1793, but only Boulanger, Gatineau, Le Roy, and Mulard are named therein.

The same packet further contains the following decree:

“ *Commune of Paris, March 4, 1793, second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible. Extract from the Registers of the Deliberations of the Council-General.*

“ The Council-General, having considered the report of the commission charged with the examination of the accounts of the Temple,

“ Decrees that the Minister of the Interior shall pay, from the 500,000 livres allotted for the maintenance of the family of Louis Capet, to Citizen (*sic*) Bertin, merchant, the sum of 602 livres in payment of the annexed bills, which shall be left annexed to these presents. For articles supplied in August, 602 livres.

“ (Signed) PACHE, *Mayor, President.*

“ Extract in conformity with the original.

“ COULOMBEAU, *Town Clerk.*”

The annexed bills are those which were presented by Rose Bertin's establishment, amounting, one to 806 livres, the other to 55, making a total of 861 livres, reduced by Verdier, appointed to verify the accounts of the Tower of the Temple, to 570 livres for the first, and 32 for the second—that is, the above total of 602 livres. We give them on the next page :

First Bill : No. 16, furnished by Bertin, Dressmaker

Item :	Livres.	
August 12, 1792: A gauze bonnet with blonde lace and pink ribbon	27	42
A gauze bonnet with tulle and white gauze ribbon	30	44
Three fichus of English gauze at 16 livres...	36	48
Two wide demi-fichus of gauze of Chamberry at 10 livres	14	20
Four large demi-fichus of embroidered Organdy at 27 livres	84	108
A skirt of very fine open-work embroidered Indian muslin, containing five breadths ...	170	240
One piece of wide white ribbon	24	36
One piece of narrow ditto	20	30
One white favour	5	8
One short cambric cloak trimmed with stitched bands	85	100
Two cardboard boxes	3	6
August 19, 1792: A short cloak of black taffeta with trimming of the same	40	54
August 29, 1792: One shape for a Malines bonnet, lined with lawn	16	30
September 5, 1792: One shape for a Malines bonnet, lined with lawn, and fichu	16	30
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	570	806

Seen and verified by us, Commissioner of the Accounts of the Temple.

	Livres.
	806
	570
	<hr/>
Reduction ...	236

—VERDIER.

Second Bill: Furnished by Bertin, Dressmaker.

Item :	Livres.
September 13, 1792: Shape and trimming of a bonnet with lawn fichu	5 9
A fichu of 1½ ells of black taffeta with black satin border	12 19
September 20, 1792: Shape and trimming for a bonnet with lawn fichu	5 9
September 30, 1792: Shape and trimming for lawn bonnet	5 9
September 5, 1792: Shape and trimming for lawn bonnet	5 9
	<hr/>
	32 55

This bill was omitted from the memoradum of C. Cleri, and should follow No. 16 of said memorandum.

	Livres.
	55
	32
	<hr/>
Reduction ...	23

—VERDIER.

In the same packet (F⁴, 1,311) there is another statement for this period, in which figures a bill for 115 livres 17 sols owing to Mme. Pompey, milliner; the document gives the name as Lompey. Rose Bertin was therefore not the only milliner who was permitted to supply the needs of the ladies of the Temple. There was still another, a Mme. Augier, who gives her address as No. 22, Rue Saint-Nicaise, two of whose bills for articles supplied, one of August and September, 1792, the other of January,

1793, are also preserved among the National Archives (F⁴, 1,313). The first is for 518 livres 6 sols, the second for 49 livres.

After October 5, 1792, there is no further mention of any articles supplied to the Temple by the Bertin establishment. There may have been others, but the bills had not been presented when there was question of beginning proceedings against the Queen. It is related that the dressmaker, knowing that an inquiry was to be made, and being aware beforehand in what spirit the commissioners would carry out their inquiry, was known to have been greatly agitated one evening.

Her account-books still showed heavy sums due from Marie-Antoinette. To erase or write over these was an impossibility; the commissioners would have discovered the deception without difficulty, and the Queen be even more compromised in the eyes of Fouquier-Tinville. There was but one way of effacing the Queen's debts, and that was by destroying all proof of them; but to do this meant that all entries of sums due from other clients which figured in those books would be equally destroyed, and the loss was very considerable. Torn by personal interest and by gratitude towards Marie-Antoinette for the favours she had showered on her, for the fortune she had earned through her patronage, for the world-wide reputation she had acquired thanks to the Queen—a glory which, though dead, still flattered her pride—Rose Bertin never hesitated, her generous nature did

not shrink from this supreme effort, and with her own hands she burnt all account-books which contained sums of money still due from Marie-Antoinette. This, at least, is the story that was spread abroad, and which she was careful not to deny. The Marquise de Courtebourne alluded to it in 1817 when writing to Grangeret, lawyer for Rose Bertin's heirs :

“ Mlle. Bertin was the soul of delicacy and uprightness, according to what I have always heard. Her conduct towards our unfortunate Queen amply proved it.”

However, what she succeeded in hiding or destroying could not have been of any great importance. The Revolutionary Government could be advised of all the Queen's expenses up to August 10, 1792, the last unpaid bills of the two last years of Louis XVI.'s reign being in the hands of Henry, liquidator of the civil estate, and the expenses contracted in the Temple could be easily checked by the gaolers of the royal prison. All she could have done, therefore, would have been to come to an understanding with Henry not to produce the bills he held, which is perhaps what happened, as these unpaid bills cost the dressmaker more than 35,000 livres, still unrecovered at the time of her death.

But there was no question of a suit against the Queen when the dressmaker was in Paris in December, 1792, and January 1793; she could not, therefore, have burnt the books with her own hands at the time of the process, as she was then in London, and unable to

return to France, where new measures had been taken against all French subjects whose names were inscribed on the list of *émigrés*.

She had been already eight months in London, when on September 17, 1793, the law against suspects was passed, which law was directed against those citizens who had emigrated since July, 1789, and even against those who had returned to France within the term fixed by the law of April 8, 1793. A decree issued by the Council-General of the Commune on October 16, 1793, the very day of Marie-Antoinette's execution, increased the difficulty of the merchants of Paris who, like Rose, were abroad, by ordaining that every merchant, established at least a year, who left his business would be considered as a suspect, and arrested as such.*

How was it possible to return to France under such circumstances? How escape the vigilance of the police, who were already armed with the decree issued by the Assembly on March 29, 1793, ordaining that "all landlords and principal tenants of houses should be compelled to affix on the outside of their doors, in a prominent position and in legible letters, the names, surnames, ages, and professions, of all individuals actually or habitually residing on their premises."†

There was certainly no chance of slipping through the tight meshes of the net woven by the police of

* "Actes de la Commune."

† Dauban, "La Démagogie en 1793."



PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

To face page 242

the Revolution to catch all suspects. For the second time Rose's absence saved her from witnessing a tragic scene, which, like the murder of the Princesse de Lamballe, and even more so, would have cruelly pierced her heart, and which, from the route followed by the cortège which escorted Marie-Antoinette to the guillotine, she must inevitably have partly witnessed.

As the fatal car passed along the Rue Saint-Honoré the ex-Queen could see only strange faces at the window of Rose Bertin's old house. Perhaps she thought, however, of the day when, on her way to Notre Dame, she turned in her carriage to applaud her dressmaker.

Since then Rose Bertin had transferred her establishment to some distance ; but the whole route was full of painful memories for the Queen. At the corner of the Rue de Richelieu, thinking of the far-distant days of Trianon, perhaps she saw once more a young and pretty woman, followed by an elegant and joyous Court, walking in the shady alleys, letting the train of her flowered lawn dress sweep the first dead leaves strewn on the ground.

Where were the light dresses, the state costumes, puffs and feathers ? What had become of all the articles of clothing consigned to the Temple ? Into whose hands had they fallen ? The inventory of the Queen's effects after her execution mentions but one head-dress, a lawn one.

What remained of past elegance and luxury ?

What had become of that society which for so many years had besieged Mlle. Bertin's establishment, and made it possible for her to live in grand style? The guillotine had ruined her trade by decimating the remnant of her customers, already much diminished by emigration. She had lost large sums of money; the majority of the fugitives, in the hurry of flight, had no time or no means to pay their debts. The Princesse de Lamballe had been murdered; the Duchesse d'Orléans was prisoner; the guillotine had claimed Marie-Antoinette, Mme. Elizabeth, Mme. Du Barry, Général de Custine, President d'Ormesson, etc.; Mme. Auguier, Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen, had killed herself by jumping from a window of the Tuileries for fear of being arrested.

On the other hand, the list of *émigrés* grew daily longer. Amongst others the Bertin establishment could count the Countess Béon de Béarn, of the suite of Mme. Adélaïde; the Countess de Bercheny; the Marchioness and Duchess Choiseul; the Marchioness de Chabrillant; the Duchess d'Harcourt; Mlle. Dillon; Baron Duploux; Count and Countess de Durras; the Count de Thiard, first Equerry of the Duke d'Orléans; the Countess de Gonzague; the Countess de Laage; Count Auguste de Lamarck; the Duke and Duchess of Luxembourg; the Marchioness of Marbœuf; the Marchioness of Margency; the Marchioness and Countess de Menou; the Countess de Montalembert; Baron Nansouty; Viscountess de Polastron; the Marchioness de Pompignan;

Viscountess de Preissac; the Duchess de Polignac; Count d'Artois; the Princess de Rochefort; the Countess de Rochechouart; the Marchioness de Tonnerre; Countess de Vergennes; and even a costumier of Dijon named Thévenard, who died on August 20, 1793, in the hospital of the army of the Prince de Condé at Schifferstadt. He had figured among Rose Bertin's clients—at least since 1782.

Those who were not dead or who had not emigrated burrowed underground; there, in cardboard boxes covered with tissue paper, slept in dusty graves the last finery received from Rose Bertin.

Meanwhile the great dressmaker's agent carried on an active campaign in Paris for the recovery of sums of money still owing from *émigrés*, and produced his bills at the office for the liquidation of their estates; while Rose Bertin endeavoured as far as possible to collect debts owing to her in foreign countries.

Thus on February 13, 1793, she remitted from London the sum of 9,762 livres, and on May 23 of the same year 20,000 livres; on May 27 another 2,000 livres, and again on August 28 13,091 livres. Still another 14,000 livres was remitted by her, as is shown by a report preserved among the National Archives,* and a note is appended to the effect that "Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin has made payments in her Paris establishment, from July, 1792, to

* Archives Nationales, Comité de Sûreté Générale, Série F7, 4,596, et Émigration (Seine), Police Générale, Série F7, 5,612.

the close of December, 1793, Old Style, amounting to 475,343 livres 4 sols 8 deniers, to poor Sans-Culotte workmen, workers on gauze, ribbons, flowers, feathers, embroideries, workgirls, nearly all burdened with families."

Among the debts which Martincourt had to recover were some of very long standing. The Marquis de Chabillant had owed a sum of 378 livres since the year 1779. The Marquis, who was a favourite with women, frequented the wings, and had had for mistress successively Rosalie Loguerre and Mlle. Guinard, of the Opera. No doubt the article ordered in the Rue Saint-Honoré, and for which he forgot to pay, was for one of them. He was not the only one who suffered from forgetfulness of this kind.

The Marchioness de Bouillé, who died in 1803 without paying any part of her debt to Rose Bertin, had opened an account in 1774, which in 1786 stood at 6,791 livres. The Countess de Salles owed the sum of 1,148 for goods supplied between the years 1778 and 1781; the Count and Countess Duras owed 7,386 livres for articles supplied during the years 1774 to 1789; Count Auguste de Lamarck's bill stood at 1,558 for orders executed between 1774 and 1775; the Chevalier de Saint-Paul owed 1,343 livres for orders given for a friend of the Princess de Laval in 1778. Vicountess Polastron had left a balance of 19,960 livres owing; Princess de Rochefort, 10,904 livres; the Marchioness de

Tonnerre, a balance of 10,946 livres, part of which was for articles supplied on occasion of the journey of the Court to Fontainebleau in 1775.

It is obvious that the recovery of these debts, which had not been possible while the debtors enjoyed pensions and incomes, and occupied some of the most lucrative posts under the monarchy, now became very problematical, and in fact poor Rose drained a bitter draught.

After her death her heirs pursued her debtors, and succeeded in recovering part of the sums still owing in 1813, in spite of which the bad debts amounted to 490,000 francs.

The position of milliners and costumiers became steadily worse in Paris; one by one the shops of the great dressmakers and milliners closed their doors, as the orders they received did not even cover their rents.

Rose Bertin, however, was not easily discouraged, nor was she given to wasting time in vain lamentations. She had been bold and enterprising all her life long, and she remained active throughout the whole of that period in which people's true value was discovered. There was no further use for the mask imposed by worldly society, and souls were laid bare in all their strength or in all their weakness. The fogs of the Thames and the smoky atmosphere of London worked no change in Rose's character; and if she sometimes grieved at being far from the Rue de Richelieu, and deprived of the beautiful air of Épinay,

yet she had discovered a way of continuing the active life she had led in France.

On the one hand she continued to do business with her foreign clients, and on the other she devoted her energies to the recovery of debts owing in Russia, Sweden, Spain, and elsewhere. She was also in constant communication with Martincourt, but for this the greatest prudence was required. Thus "anyone arriving from a distant land, bearing a letter for the Rue Richelieu, had first to discover, before setting out in search of it, that it was now called Rue de la Loi; to ask for it by its former name laid one open to arrest, and aroused suspicion."*

Rose made use of a young Englishman, with whose mother she was living, as bearer to her agent of the bill owing by the Countess de Dantzic, Ambassadress of Prussia. We have already spoken of the letter in which the Countess says: "During my stay in Brussels, Mlle. Bertin undertook various orders for me, which she finally caused to be executed by a dressmaker of Paris, informing me that pressing business had compelled her to leave for London that very night, from whence she hoped shortly to return." These orders were given in August, 1792, when Rose passed through Brussels, and were delivered between October 25 and December 16, according to the date of the bill, which amounted to 2,581 livres, on which is written a note to the effect

* Duchesse d'Abrantès, "Histoire des Salons de Paris," etc., t. iii.

that it "is extracted from a little book brought by the son of a lady with whom Mlle. Bertin lived whilst in London."

She multiplied more and more her letters to clients in foreign countries, demanding payment of the moneys due to her. To Fernando Correa, Portuguese Ambassador at Stockholm, she wrote begging him to place the sum of 9,996 livres in the hands of M. de Chapeau-Rouge, banker of Hamburg, and stating that, as she was soon going to that town, she hoped to find that the sum had been deposited with her banker; otherwise she was determined to push on to Stockholm in order to obtain justice. In any case she did not find the money, which she greatly needed, at the Hamburg bank.

She was really pressed at this time, and used every endeavour to recover her money. M. des Entelles recalls her passing through Mannheim at this period, in a letter in which he says: "In exile I frequently met Mlle. Bertin at Mannheim, where we lived, and for a fortnight we took our meals together daily at the same inn."* He had been, besides, acquainted with her a long time, enjoyed her conversation, and remembered with pleasure the time he used to meet her with the Queen. He adds that later they frequently met at St. Petersburg.

Her business in Russia was very considerable, and her relations with Russian high society had been always peculiarly intimate.

* Collection J. Doucet, Dossier 196.

But before going to Russia, Rose Bertin had written letter upon letter to explain to her customers the position to which she had been brought by political events. In one of her letters of 1797, addressed to Princess Galitzin, sister of the General, she says: "The unfortunate circumstances in which I am placed compel me to profit by the departure of the Prince de Konrakin, to send you an account for which I have long waited."*

"Let me tell you in confidence," she wrote again to Princess Galitzin, "that I lent Count Schouvaloff 80,000 livres to prevent him from pawning that very day his medal, his epaulettes, and his crosses."†

This was Count André Schouvaloff, who died in 1789, and who was very well known in Paris, where he lived in great style—too great, as we may see. He frequented literary circles, and Marmontel, Helvétius, Chamfort, La Harpe, and Voltaire, were among his acquaintances, and he was an assiduous guest in Mme. du Deffant's *salon*. It was he who wrote the "Épître à Ninon," which was attributed to Voltaire. But he did not limit himself to these social visits, which would not have caused him to exceed his income to the extent of being compelled to pawn his most precious possessions. Thus, while the Russian nobles led a reckless life in Paris, leaving many of their feathers in places of pleasure where one is

* Collection J. Doucet, Dossier 592 bis.

† *Ibid.*, Dossier 649.

ruined and plucked, and making a display of luxury far beyond their means, they obtained financial support from the milliner, who was crazed on them, and whom they speedily forgot when her generosity had saved them from the shame of a public auction.

On June 12, 1793, she appealed to Count Czernitcheff to pay 8,800 livres, balance of a debt owed by his parents. The latter at least paid their debts; they had owed 21,000 livres, and death alone had prevented them from paying the balance. "The confidence which the Count and Countess did me the honour of bestowing on me during twenty years,"* she wrote to their heir in the hope of adding weight to her claim, but from that side she received nothing but disappointment.

Ill-fortune seemed to pursue her. On December 20, 1793, the bankers *Veuve Lelen et Cie.* paid to her agent in Paris, in payment of the Queen of Sweden's account, the sum of 20,105 livres; but the law was rigid, and *Martincourt* was compelled to deposit the money in the National Exchequer. This payment was the outcome of a claim forwarded to the King of Sweden, through *Lelen*, banker of the *Rue des Jeûneurs*, on the 17th of the previous February. The acknowledgment, signed by *Citizen Cornu*, is dated 16 Fructidor, year II. (September 2, 1794), and *Citizeness Bertin* figured then on the list of *émigrés*, as is shown by a letter dated May 27, 1795,

* Collection J. Doucet, Dossier 649.

which says, "Then inscribed on the list of *émigrés*," which proves, on the other hand, that at that date she had succeeded in getting her name removed from the list.

Nevertheless the administration continued its work of confiscation. We find proofs of this activity in the national records :

"Comité de Sûreté Générale, 14 Prairial, year II. of the French Republic, one and indivisible. To the Commissioners of National Revenues.

"CITIZEN L. AUMOND,—We learn that the person named Bertin, formerly Court dressmaker, owns a house near Franciade, independently of the one she owned at Paris. We call your attention to the measures it is necessary to adopt, in order to place this property at the disposal of the Republic.

"The two representatives of the people, members of the Comité de Sûreté Générale :

"(Signed) ÉLIE LACOSTE.
LOUIS (of the Lower Rhine).
DUBARRAN, AMAR, VOULLAND."*

The archives of the Seine tell us the result of this information, supplied by the Comité de Sûreté Générale :

* Archives Nationales, Comité de Sûreté Générale, Série F⁷, 4,596.

“EQUALITY, LIBERTY.

“*The Administrators of Registration and of National Estates. To Citizen Gentil, Director, Paris. Paris, 3 Messidor, year II. of the French Republic, one and indivisible.*

“The Commissioners of the National Revenues have informed us that they are advised by the Comité de Sûreté Générale that the woman Bertin, dressmaker, *émigrée*, possessed a house near Franciade independently of the one she owned in Paris ; that they have written to the department to discover whether both these properties are in the hands of the nation ; and if they are not, the commissioners recommend us to take such measures as are necessary to carry the matter into execution.

“You will please write to our agent at Franciade, to know whether the country-house owned by the dressmaker Bertin is in the hands of the Republic ; of what the house consists ; what use has been made of it ; whether it is furnished, and whether seals have been placed on it by the district ; in which case whether it is proposed to make an inventory and proceed with the sale thereof. You will instruct him to furnish this information as early as possible, and you will kindly forward it to us.

“We request you to report to us also the measures that have been taken with respect to the house in Paris.”

[Here the signatures follow.]

The Director of Registration, etc., forwarded the commissioners orders two days later :

“ Paris, 5 Messidor, year II. of the French Republic, one and indivisible. The Director, etc., to Citizen Bruté.

“ The Commissioners of National Revenues, having received information from the Comité de Sûreté Générale that the woman Bertin, dressmaker, owned a house near Franciade, wrote to the department to inquire whether this property is in the hands of the nation ; and in case it should not be, they recommend the National Agency to take such measures as may be necessary to carry the matter into execution.

“ In compliance with the desire of the commission, the administrators of the National Agency wish to know whether the house in question, which is situated at Épinay, is in the hands of the Republic ; of what it consists ; whether it is furnished ; whether the seals of the district have been placed thereon ; and, in the latter case, whether it is proposed to make an inventory of the effects, and to proceed with the sale thereof.

“ You will kindly procure this information and transmit it to me as early as possible.”*

The next day a more peremptory order was issued on the subject :

* Archives de la Seine, Carton 709.

“6 Messidor, year II.

“LE D. DE L'AD. AU C. SAPINANT.

“You will please to take the necessary proceedings against the *émigrée* Bertin, formerly dressmaker. You will report to me what you have done in this matter.”

Meanwhile Rose Bertin had opened a shop in London, very modest in comparison with her establishments of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue Richelieu. There she executed the orders of her foreign customers. “Despatched from London on June 25, 1794, to the Countess,” we read in a statement of articles supplied to the Countess de Razonmowsky. In any case Rose Bertin displayed an energy which might have served as an example to other *émigrés*.

But events succeeded events with lightning speed. The Revolutionary Tribunal had turned its blood-stained hand upon itself. It might still relentlessly pursue its accursed work, striking blindly, heaping up corpses; Death strode through the courts, threatening equally judges and accused. Carts might follow each other along the road to the scaffold, and 7 Thermidor might still sweep away more of Rose's old clients; indeed, the Count de Clermont-Tonnerre, the Count de Thiard, Princesse de Chimay, whom Rose used frequently to meet when she was Lady-in-Waiting to Marie-Antoinette, were among the last

batch of victims. Still, the Terror was over, Robespierre fell on the morrow, and France began once more to breathe, to hope, to live.

The news of the tyrant's death rejoiced Rose, who began to see some possibility of returning to Paris.

She redoubled her efforts to have her name struck off the list of *émigrés*. Claude Charlemagne, one of her nephews, and Martincourt, her devoted agent, showed praiseworthy energy in their endeavour to attain this object.

A first petition was drawn up and addressed to the Directoire of the Department of Paris :*

“Citizeness Bertin, dressmaker of Paris, owed considerable sums to workmen and artisans, true Sans-Culottes, whom she has employed over twenty years. Seeing that her trade in France was absolutely paralyzed, she procured a passport and went into foreign lands to sell the merchandise remaining to her, the sale of which was absolutely necessary in order to meet her liabilities.

“The events of the war prevented her from selling her merchandise as promptly as she desired, and she was face to face with the unhappy alternative of prolonging her stay in a foreign land or of failing her creditors.

“Some ill-disposed persons, no doubt her debtors, perhaps some *ci-devants*, denounced her as an *émigré*

* Archives Nationales, Comité de Sûreté Générale, Série F⁷, 4,596.



MADAME TALLIEN

To face page 256

in the month of October, 1792. She then had recourse to your justice, and after a thorough examination you decided, by a decree of November 27, 1792, that she was still entitled to her civil rights. Since that time she has continued to send remittances to her establishment in Paris, and by means of the persons in charge of her affairs she was able to pay 475,343 livres to her creditors, who were for the most part necessitous, and whom she would have brought to ruin with her, if she had not adopted the project of seeking in foreign lands a sale for her goods, which she could not hope to find in her own country.

“Nevertheless, certain insincere debtors refusing to pay her, supposing her to be an *émigrée*, in contempt of the decree of the Directoire, which declares her to be in possession of her estate, she thinks well to bring her case before the administration and again claim justice, petitioning that her name be struck off the list of *émigrés*, if it has been inscribed thereon through the denunciation of some malicious persons.

“The justice she solicits affects not only the numerous creditors she has still to satisfy, but also fourteen of fifteen relations, born like herself without means, and who have only been able to live these last twenty years through her help, a burden which, joined to the bad faith of her creditors, will leave her barely sufficient to live on.

“She appends a list of the sums she has remitted to her establishment in Paris since her departure,

and those which the persons who manage her affairs have paid.”

To this petition was annexed a statement of moneys remitted from Frankfort and London, of which we have spoken ; a note of sums paid to different work-people and tradesmen, amounting to a total of 73,503 livres 19 sols 3 deniers ; and another statement of payments made, from which we have extracted the following :

	Livres.
A receipt from Citizen Moreau, merchant, of blonde lace	66,625
Three receipts from the district of La Montagne— a voluntary gift	300
Two receipts from Épinay for the war fund ...	75
Three receipts for State lands	12,400
A receipt from a mason of Épinay for the boundaries of State lands	360
A receipt from the surveyor respecting the said lands	100
Gift of six new shirts to the Montagne district, 29 Brumaire.	

She did not forget, we see, to mention the divers patriotic gifts she had made, nor the purchase of lands at Épinay, confiscated from the Mathurins d'Émile (Montmorency). Were not these things proofs of a good citizen ?

Nevertheless, the first petition did not meet with the success its authors expected. The matter was referred to the Comité de Sûreté Générale.

The administrators of the Department of Paris

appointed to inquire into the merits of Rose Bertin's appeal, while recognizing the justice of it, dared not formally commit themselves.

The following letter reveals the motives of their hesitation :*

“ *Office of the Claims of Émigrés : Bertin, dressmaker. Department of Paris, Paris, 7 Fructidor, year II. of the French Republic, one and indivisible. The administrators of the Department of Paris to the citizens representing the people, composing the Comité de Sûreté Générale of the National Convention.*

“ CITIZENS,—A decree of the Directoire dated September 27, 1792, founded on Article 6 of the law of April 8, relating to merchants, ordered the removal of the sequestration from the property of Citizeness Bertin, formerly dressmaker to the Capets.

“ Since when, in virtue of the law of March 28, 1793, she was again entered on the list of *émigrés*, and the seals replaced on her estate.

“ She now demands their withdrawal and the removal of her name from the list, on the ground that she went abroad in July, 1792, with a passport, in order to recover immense sums of money due to her. She is still actually in England, from whence she has remitted nearly 500,000 livres to her business establishment, of which 80,000 appear to have been

* Archives Nationales, Émigrés, Série F⁷, 3,361.

paid to honest Sans-Culotte workmen, who have been in her employ for twenty years ; she declares that her prolonged and compulsory residence in England is entirely due to her desire to meet her liabilities, and to pay the necessitous workpeople to whom she still owes considerable sums.

“ We think, citizens, that the law of March 28 in no way touches the woman Bertin, since she left with a passport and for the purpose of commerce ; and that the desire she has manifested, of satisfying her creditors and necessitous workpeople, might be a reason for exempting her from the law of October 23, 1792 ; but as this woman by her profession was in touch with the Court and nobility, we have delayed our judgment until we learn your decision, and have ascertained whether there exists anything against her which might cause her to be suspected of conspiracy and counter-revolution.

“ Your answer will serve us as guide.

“ (Signed) GARNIER.
E. J. B. MAILLARD.
HOUZEAU.
DAMESME.”

The matter being thus referred to the Comité de Sûreté Générale, the petitioners drew up another memorandum, in which they said :*

* Archives Nationales, Comité de Sûreté Générale, Série F⁷, 4,596.

“The relations and creditors of Citizeness Bertin claim justice in her name from the Comité de Sûreté Générale.

“She left the country having complied with the legal formalities respecting merchants, has taken with her four work-girls, with passports from their district signed by the Municipality of Paris, being in the habit of sending employées abroad, as may be seen by her books.

“An error, no doubt, caused her name to be placed on the list of *émigrés*, although in September, 1792, the department issued a decree in her favour which restored her to her civil estate ; and but for the war, which prevented her disposing of her merchandise as soon as she desired, she would have already returned, bringing the greater part of such sums as were owing her abroad.

“The conspirator Momoro, enemy of the Republic, and opposed to all advantages which commerce would bring to it, made a statement to the department by which, although unable to denounce her as an *émigré*, since she had complied with all the formalities of the law respecting merchants, nevertheless, pursuing his infamous counter-revolutionary projects, he has caused the case to be transferred to the Comité de Sûreté Générale, which has delayed for three months the payment of a hundred fathers of families, creditors of this citizeness ; it was hoped that this would rouse them to discontent, but one cannot believe that the great principles which are the glory of the Comité de

Sûreté Générale, and the security of republicans, will allow an individual to be regarded as suspect, who by her talents has made the national commerce flourish, and has brought considerable sums into France, and who now, at the age of fifty, compels our enemies to be tributaries to our industry, and exchange their gold against the bullets the Republic fires upon them.

“ Her desire to return is a proof of her love of her country and of her civicism, since she might set up a profitable establishment with her merchandise and funds, did she not prefer above all a modest competence in her own country, where she has bought State lands, notably 23 acres in Épinay, on the eve of her departure, which, after paying her debts, will be all she possesses.

“ Her relations make no mention of all the gifts her establishment has made to her district, in money, shirts, and every kind of article for expenses of war.

“ The Committee will please observe that but for the latter event this citizen would have returned to France more than six months ago, with the greater part of the sums owing to her, which will be lost to the Republic if the Comité de Sûreté Générale does not render her justice according to the law.”

It will be noticed that the petitioners make no mention of Mlle. Bertin's reappearance in Paris during the winter of 1792-93, from which it appears probable that she did not get the passport issued in

June renewed before leaving for London ; that she left France, in fact, rather hastily, the events of January probably having some connection with her departure.

The inquiry was energetically pursued, with great circumspection on the part of the administration, as would appear from a note from the Committee of Legislation, as follows :

“N.B.—There exists in the foreign department of the Committee of Public Health a letter from an *émigré* in which there is some mention of Citizeness Bertin.

“It is of the greatest importance that no decision should be given without this letter being seen. The Committee of Public Health should be asked for a copy.”

The letter evidently contained nothing which might compromise the dressmaker, as on January 16, 1795, after two years' exile in England, she obtained the following decree :

“27 *Nivôse*, year III. of the French Republic.

“Having seen the memorial from Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin, dressmaker of Paris, requesting that her name be effaced from the list of *émigrés*, and the seals removed from her country-house at *Épinay* ; together with—(1) The decree of the Directoir, dated November 27, 1792, reinstating her in possession of her furniture at *Épinay*, and other property therein named ; (2) her account-book and a statement of

sums remitted to her establishment of Paris since her departure, amounting to nearly 500,000 livres ; (3) a statement of payments made to her workpeople and artisans, amounting to nearly 80,000 livres ; (4) a file of bills of exchange discharged since her absence ; (5) another file of receipts relating to State property which she has acquired ; (6) a file of receipts for patriotic gifts to the war fund ; (7) minute of a letter written on 7 Fructidor, addressed to the Comité de Sûreté Générale, to ascertain whether there was any suspicion of counter-revolution or conspiracy against Citizeness Bertin ; (8) the answer of the Comité, dated 19 Vendémiaire, stating that no denunciation had been made against her ; (9) a certificate from the district of Butte-des-Moulins dated 6 Nivôse, verified by the department on the 9th, showing that Citizeness Bertin is known to have been in the habit for twenty years of going abroad for business purposes ;

“ The Agent National having considered the above ;

“ The department, considering that the above documents prove that Citizeness Bertin is publicly known to have been in the habit for twenty years of going abroad to do business, that her absence has been already declared non-emigration, and that there does not exist against her any denunciation which might cause her to be suspect, Decrees that her name shall be effaced from Section 18 of the list of *émigrés* drawn up on August 29, 1793 (V.S.) ; and, respecting the request that the order for sequestration be

cancelled, refers her to the Office of National Estates of the Department of Paris, the execution of the present decree to be delayed, in conformity with Article 22 of Chapter 3 of the law of the 26th of last Brumaire, until the decision of the Committee of Legislation of the National Convention be given, to which purpose the said decree shall be remitted to the said Committee and to the Office of National Estates."

The certificate referred to above, given by the district of Butte-des-Moulins, dated 6 Nivôse, is signed by nine witnesses; amongst others, Roch Omont, employé of the Bertin establishment; Jean-Pierre Messin, jeweller; and Pierre-Joseph Richard, pensioner of the Republic, who resided in Rue de la Loi, No. 1,243—that is, the dressmaker's own house; and Luc-Joseph-Charles Corazza, a well-known proprietor of a café, who lived at No. 12, Maison Églité*—that is, in the Palais-Royal.

The decree of the Committee of Legislation which definitely removed Marie-Jeanne Bertin's name from the list of *émigrés* is dated 11 Pluviôse, year III. (January 31, 1795), and is signed by David de l'Aube, rapporteur, Eschasseriaux jeune, Pepin, Louvel, Duarand-Maillane.†

Rose Bertin therefore, being removed from the list of *émigrés*, very soon obtained the removal of the

* Archives Nationales, Émigration (Seine), Police Générale, Série F⁷, 5,612, et Série F⁷, 5,837.

† *Ibid.*

sequestration on her goods, as is shown by documents preserved among the records of the Seine, dated 7 and 19 Ventôse, year III. (February 26 and March 10, 1795), given below :

“ LIBERTY, EQUALITY.

“ *The Office of National Estates of the Department of Paris.*

“ Having seen (1) the petition of Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin, dressmaker of Paris, presented by Citizen Martincourt, her attorney, by which he demands that the sum of 3,744 livres 6 deniers should be placed in his hands, which sum was paid to Citizen Matagnon, Receiver of this office, by divers tenants of the said Citizeness Bertin, being the price of the rents of certain houses belonging to her ;

“ (2) Three receipts amounting together to a total of 3,744 livres 6 deniers, given by Citizen Matagnon, dated respectively, the first 17 Messidor, year II., for the sum of 150 livres, paid by Citizen Marion ; the second dated the 25th of the said month, for the sum of 3,431 livres 10 sols and 6 deniers, paid by Citizen Laurent ; and the third dated 26 Frimaire, year III., for the sum of 162 livres 10 sols, paid by the same—the said sums being the price of rents which had fallen due for houses belonging to the said Citizeness Bertin ;

“ (3) The copy of a decree of the Committee of Legislation of the National Convention, dated the

11th of last Pluviôse, ordering that the name of the said Marie-Jeanne Bertin be effaced from the list of *émigrés*, that the sequestration of her property be withdrawn, and that the sums proceeding from such sequestration as have perhaps been paid into the public exchequer be refunded to her :

“Decrees that Citizen Matagnon, Receiver of the said office, shall pay to Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin, or to Citizen Martincourt, her attorney, the sum of 3,744 livres, which have been paid to him by Citizens Laurent and Marion, debtors of Citizeness Bertin in respect of rents, in accordance with the receipts issued by the said Citizen Matagnon, as aforesaid. Which reimbursement will be placed to his account upon annexing a formal receipt to these presents, of which a copy will be despatched to the Director of Registration, for execution thereof.

“Given in Paris, 7 Ventôse, year III. of the French Republic.

“ True copy.—(Signed) GUILLOTIN, REMESVE.”

The reimbursement was ordered to be made under certain conditions a few days later :

“ *Paris, 19 Ventôse, year III. Citizen Gentil to Citizen Berthon, Receiver of the Office of National Estates.*

“In virtue of a decree of the Office of National Estates of the Department of Paris, bearing date

16 Ventôse, I beg you will pay to Citizeness Marie-Jeanne Bertin, or to Citizen Martincourt, her attorney, the sum of 3,744 livres, paid to you by the Citizens Laurent and Marion, debtors in respect of rents to Citizeness Bertin, in accordance with receipts bearing dates 17 and 25 Messidor, year II., and 26 Frimaire, year III., which reimbursement will be placed to your account upon annexing a formal receipt to the said decree.

“ You will advise me of the execution thereof, and, above all, of the receipt of this letter ; but I inform you that if there are any expenses either for repairs, painting, taxes, or any claims raised by the tenants, the same shall be deducted from the 3,744 livres, as also such money as is due to the Receiver.”

As soon as Rose Bertin heard of the success of the efforts of her relatives and friends, she began to make preparations for departure. She said farewell without regret to the hospitable town where she had taken refuge, and where she left a whole French colony of persons of the highest rank, amongst whom she had more than one customer. This colony led an extraordinary existence ; though they had barely any means of livelihood, yet they held receptions and made a great show of dress. How did they keep up appearance ? Rose Bertin could have given some explanation of her part in it. Countess de Boigne has given us a description of the life of the *émigrés* in London which throws some curious sidelights on

them, and shows to what shifts they were reduced. "I saw," she says, "the Duchess of Fitz-James, established in a house in the environs of London, inviting all her acquaintances to dinner, and retaining her grand society manner. It was understood that on leaving the table each guest should put three shillings in a cup on the mantelpiece. Not only were the three shillings collected when the company had left, but if among the guests there had been anyone who was believed to be in better circumstances, he was considered extremely mean if he had not deposited his half-guinea instead of three shillings, and the Duchess complained bitterly of it. Nevertheless there was a certain luxury about these houses."*

They had no means to hire carriages, and so in *grande toilette*, and all decked out, they braved the outside of public vehicles, to the amazement of the English public. Everything was sacrificed to appearance, to a show of fortune. No one admitted the possibility of this state of things lasting. Anyone renting apartments for more than a month was looked on askance ; it was better to take them by the week, as there was no doubt that one was on the eve of a counter-revolution which would recall each one to France."†

Rose Bertin at least saw her wish soon realized.

* "Récits d'une Tante : Mémoires de la Comtesse de Boigne," etc., t. i. Paris, 1907.

† Récits d'une Tante, *op. cit.*

Nevertheless her position was far from brilliant, and Martincourt, indefatigable in his endeavours to recover the sums due to her, could write to the Countess Skavronsky at Naples, on March 14, 1795, without lying, and even without exaggerating: "M. Perregaux, whom I saw two days ago, tells me that he has no funds belonging to you, and has received no order to pay me ; he also informed me of your loss, of which Mlle. Bertin will be sorry to hear. Circumstances have completely ruined that lady, who is overwhelmed with creditors."*

It would be a long time before commerce could recover from the crisis which had darkened so many fortunes, and ruined numberless enterprises, manufactures, and shops, that catered for the rich, and consequently suffered with the latter. Toilettes were very humble in the year III., from the accounts of Joséphine de Beauharnais, who was one of Rose's clients. We see that she bought a piece of muslin worth 500 livres, a shawl worth 270 livres, a large shawl 1,200 livres, 6 ells of taffeta of Florence grey at 1,320 livres, and two pairs of grey stockings with coloured clocks, worth 700 livres. But one must remember the current value of assignats, the depreciation of which was so considerable that in Messidor, year III. (July, 1795), the louis d'or of 24 livres was worth 808 livres in assignats. At this rate the stockings cost 10 livres 8 sols, which is not, it is true a bazaar price ; but the large shawl cost

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 646.

38 livres 12 sols, a ridiculous sum, and at such a rate no establishment could regain lost ground.

The depreciation of paper money continued to increase, so much so that in the year IV. in Paris the value of a louis in assignats was 18,000 livres.

This must be taken into account in considering the formidable sums entered in account-books of the time. What would have been the value of a hat made with all the elegance and art of the period of the unforgettable *poufs* when 50 livres was asked for the washing of a shirt, 250 livres for a pound of meat or tallow, 1,400 livres for a pound of sugar, 2,000 livres for a pair of shoes, 3,000 livres for a simple hat, 8,000 livres for an ell of Elbeuf cloth, and 50 livres for a pippin ?

Such was the position of trade when the former dressmaker to the Queen was about to return to her Parisian establishment. She left London without regret ; she could have felt no joy on returning to Paris.

Her route to the sea lay by Canterbury, where she broke her journey. Her reason for doing so was that Baron Duploux, with whom she continued to be on friendly terms, had taken refuge there. Baron Duploux, of an Abbeville family, was one of her oldest and most faithful clients, but, like so many other French *émigrés*, was in very straitened circumstances.

“ Mlle. Bertin,” he writes, “ on her return to France from London, passed through Canterbury,

where I was staying with my family, and bought of me 600 livres' worth of embroidery and other goods, in which I was trading in connection with a partner at Hamburg. She promised to pay me this sum immediately upon my arrival in Paris, from whence she intended to ask payment of what I owed her, unless she had been able to see my father-in-law, and mother-in-law on passing through Abbeville.

“Having succeeded in seeing Mme. de Belloy at Abbeville, that lady entrusted her with a sum of 100 louis d’or, which she promised to forward to me on the earliest possible occasion, and which she forgot to do, forgetting also the money for our merchandise.”

It is very improbable that Rose Bertin forgot. The fact is that Baron Duploux owed her a considerable sum, and she was waiting an opportunity of returning to England to settle the matter. Baron Duploux himself relates how the affair ended by Baroness Duploux’s paying 600 livres to Rose. “Having called on me in Paris with her eldest nephew, M. Bertin,” he says, “to ask for the payment of my account, allowing for the above-mentioned sums, which she acknowledged, my wife and I gave her 600 louis.”

Under those circumstances it was not surprising that Rose Bertin had delayed payment. Immediately on her return after her interview with Martincourt, she realized that her business could not prosper while the position of the country was so uncertain. She preferred therefore to postpone the re-opening of

her establishment, and during the summer of 1795 she went on a voyage through Europe, during which she visited Germany and Russia.

Did she or did she not serve as an intermediary between the *émigrés* and their relatives in France? It is impossible to speak with certainty, but that she gave several of them financial aid has been proved. Her generous nature, incapable of counting the cost, was unchanged. So soon as she had recovered some debt, so soon as she felt some money in her pocket, the love of spending seized her, the money ran through her fingers, very often to do good to those around her, to help some friend or some unfortunate client. There was no lack of them at this time.

The *émigrés*, as she had learnt by experience, had great trouble in making both ends meet. At Hamburg Mme. de Couchant had opened a dress-maker's establishment; a Mlle. de La Trémoille served in it. But all could not turn their hand to some trade—those who could were the exception—and Rose was sometimes moved to pity at the sight of these great ladies reduced to poverty, a poverty more striking because of the former luxury they had known.

CHAPTER VII

THE MASSACRE IN THE RUE DE LA LOI—LAST YEARS OF ROSE BERTIN

LITTLE by little life resumed its normal course. Towards the close of 1795 Rose re-opened her shop in the Rue de la Loi, but she never regained the fame, the immense fame, she had enjoyed under the *ancien régime*. To her the *ancien régime* represented all the enthusiasm of youth, all the flurry of success, all the happy past, which one does not enjoy as one might, and which one is powerless to prevent slipping by—days which leave the disillusioned mind a prey to indescribable sadness and profound bitterness.

To have started with nothing, to have juggled with millions, and on the verge of fifty to be reduced to counting her pence, did not tend to make Rose look on life with joyous eyes.

Her one consolation was her miniature Trianon that she had reconquered, her house at Épinay, which the Revolution had not had time to change, or which had been, perhaps, protected by local accomplices. In fact, in 1796 she came to reside

there more or less permanently, retaining merely a *pied-à-terre* in Paris, to enable her to give the necessary attention to her business, and where she only stayed in winter.

Souvenirs and relatives were not lacking in the native village of her mother, Marie-Marguerite Méquignon. The house where she passed the last years of her life was situated in a place known as the Village, in the parish of Épinay. It still exists, and forms part of a house called the Villa Beau-Séjour, the entrance of which is in the Rue du Bord de l'Eau, which descends from the high-road running from Paris to Havre through Pontoise, to the banks of the Seine, at a short distance from the castle where the King of Spain, Don François d'Assisi, resided, and which has been bought by the municipality of Épinay for an Hôtel de Ville.

From the windows the view stretches over the plain of Gennevilliers to Paris, which lies outlined in the distance.

The Seine runs at the bottom of the garden walls, and the neighbouring waters keep the air fresh and agreeable during the summer heats. Rose Bertin found here a comfortable, if not luxurious, retreat.

Épinay was then merely a little village; since those days the population has much increased. It was not a mere whim that had attracted Rose to the place. She knew that there she would not be isolated; she, who had lived in the bustle of the Court, whose

life had been one continual rush, could not be resigned to living in absolute solitude. On the other hand, after coming through all the tragedies of the Revolution, it must have been consoling to find herself safe and well amidst her own relations in the peace of the country.

Several of her relatives lived in Épinay. The name of Méquignon, her mother's maiden name, may still be seen on tombs in the existing cemetery. The cousins of the great dressmaker had remained faithful to the place. Besides these, one of her nephews, Claude - Charlemagne Bertin, also possessed a property which gave on to the Rue du Bord de l'Eau. The house, the entrance of which is at No. 1, Rue de Paris, is now much dilapidated, and is occupied by families of the working class.

Rose was therefore at very little distance from her nephew. She spent her days between Paris, where she superintended her business, and the country, where she rested.

In spite of all the events which had shaken public life, her name remained famous, and such was her fame that a young amorous poet, addressing some verses to a dressmaker of the Palais-Royal, compared her talent to that of Rose Bertin.

The verses, which appeared in the *Petite Poste de Paris* or the *Prompt Avertisseur* of 8 Pluviôse, year V. (January 27, 1797), were entitled "L'Esprit à la Mode," and run as follows :

“*To Mlle. Eulalie, fashionable dressmaker, Galerie de Bois du Palais-Royal, air of Pourriez-vous bien douter encore . . .*

“*Chez vous, où président les grâces,
Aimable émule de Bertin . . .*” etc.

The verses are signed “Marant Junior,” and contain a play of words. An *esprit* was a little feather which women then wore in their hair.

Rose Bertin regained some of her customers. Countess Dillon La Tour du Pin Gouvernet, whose husband had been Ambassador at the Hague under Louis XVI., and whose ordinary dressmaker was a Mlle. Gosset residing near the Odéon, but who used to go to Bertin’s for Court dresses, had occasion, about September, 1797, to come to her shop for some modest purchases. The conversation between the two women immediately turned to past days. Rose had known her client since the latter’s infancy. She spoke a good deal about her position and the precarious state of trade, a discreet hint as to the sum still owing her on the part of the Countess. She was much too diplomatic, however, to broach the subject brusquely ; she did not speak directly of the 2,500 livres, of which she nevertheless had great need. In these uncertain days clients were birds that were too rare to risk the danger of frightening them away at the outset.

Nevertheless very few of the great ladies, her former clients, returned to her shop. Her chief occupation was still the recovery of old debts, and

the days passed without bringing any great improvement.

The fashions of 1797, though still very different from those of the days when Rose was an inspirer of fashion, were none the less eccentric. After the restraint which women had been compelled to exercise during the Terror, it would almost seem that they were endeavouring to find compensation for a simplicity of which the souvenir recalled days that were for ever accursed.

In 1794 Vicomtesse de Fars said: "Poverty reigned among all persons of good birth; those who had preserved a few golden pieces wore the livery of indigence, every appearance of luxury which might arouse a suspicion of wealth had to be avoided."

In 1797, however, the style of dress was far from being simple, and the Parisian fashions were a source of amazement to those newly arrived from the provinces; they had great trouble in getting accustomed to them. "The buskins, short waists, low necks, short sleeves, Greek coiffure," says Mme. de Chastenay in her memoirs, "all seemed to me so theatrical that I could not imagine that Henriette [her young sister] would dare to appear dressed in this style. My brother, however, insisted upon my immediately adopting these fashions; and I was so provincial that I had great trouble in getting accustomed to them."

There occurred at this time, the beginning of 1798,

an astounding incident, the scene of which was Mlle. Bertin's own house.

A part of the house was let to a Neapolitan ice-vender named Garchi, whose shop was a fashionable resort. On January 15, 1798, the shop was invaded and sacked by a gang of villains, under circumstances so extraordinary that the tale sounds like a story of brigands, and shows how very unsafe Paris was at this time. A pamphlet published on the following day gives all the details of the drama of the Rue de la Loi. We cannot do better than to give it in full, as it is a faithful account of the police reports :*

“An Exact and Detailed Report of the Massacre which took place Last Night in Paris, No. 1,243, Rue de la Loi, District Butte-des-Moulins, at the House of Citizen Garchi, Confectioner and Ice-Merchant; the Number of Persons killed and Assassins arrested, their Names and Addresses. 26th of the present month of Nivôse.

“Towards ten o'clock last evening a party of ten men wearing long overcoats, some wearing grenadier caps, entered Citizen Garchi's shop, No. 1,243, Rue de la Loi, and sat down at one of the long tables of one of the rooms on the first-floor. They each took an ice and a small glass of liqueur, which they paid for at once. A minute later two men in uniform,

* Archives Nationales, Police Générale: Affaires Politiques, Série F⁷, A. 6,149.

wearing long coats, came in and sat down at a table close by.

“No sooner had the latter entered than one of the first band attacked and grossly insulted in loud tones one of the last comers. Citizen Garchi instantly begged the man to remember the respect due to a respectable establishment. Upon this the aggressor retired with the rest of his gang, and the two others adjourned to the billiard-room.

“Meanwhile twelve or fifteen men dressed in the same style came up the staircase just as Citizen Fournier, Aide-de-Camp of General Augereau, was leaving with three of his friends. One of the men who were coming up fixed his eyes on the group of four, and saying, ‘That face displeases me,’ struck one of them a blow on the head. Citizen Fournier and his friends, as astounded as they were angry, immediately put themselves on the defensive; but more than thirty men, dressed more or less in the same style, all armed with swords and sticks which had been hidden under their coats, fell with fierce blows upon the four men and all whom they found in the various rooms, about twenty in number, massacring all whom they came across, and smashing everything round them.

“Several unsuspecting spectators were the principal victims. Citizen Fournier and his friends are mutilated by sword-cuts; Citizen Colavier, merchant, residing in the Rue Mont Blanc, has a piece of his arm cut

away, his left side pierced, his face cut, and his head and thighs mutilated.

“ Citizen Fanatieu, residing at the Hôtel de la Souveraineté, Rue de la Loi, has the left thigh cut to the bone, and all his limbs gashed.

“ Citizens Faure, Lierval, Cantin, Chosy, and Lamotte, are seriously wounded.

“ Three other persons, names and whereabouts unknown, jumped out of the windows for safety, and although covered with wounds, as they left traces of blood behind, were attacked again in the streets by accomplices of the rest ; one ran down the Rue de la Loi, and the two others down Rue Montansier.

“ The citizeness who was at the desk in Citizeness Garchi’s absence was so hurt by the assassins who attacked her that she was covered with blood ; the white shawl she was wearing, now deposited with the justice of the peace, was dyed red.

“ Another citizeness, who was leaving the establishment, would also have fallen a prey to the assassins, who were threatening her with their swords, but for the intervention of one of them who took her under his protection.

“ Citizen Garchi, who had tried every means of conciliation, and who had already received a considerable number of blows, sought safety in flight, breaking a pane of glass and precipitating himself head foremost on to a balcony, and even then the assassins tried to cut off his legs as he fell.

“Citizeness Garchi was in bed in a room on the floor above, it being only six days since her confinement ; hearing the cries of the victims and the shouts of the assassins, she lost consciousness.

“While their accomplices were engaged in this wholesale butchery, some of the scoundrels entered the pantry near the billiard-room, and stole the silver spoons from the drawers which they rifled, while one of them held the kitchen boy, with a sword at his throat.

“A butcher from a neighbouring shop who had run out to lend assistance was struck down on the threshold of the house and disabled.

“Marble-top tables, glasses, chairs, statues, and lamps were smashed, and the enraged monsters used so much force that a piece of sword-blade, all blood-stained, was found among the ruins, and it would be difficult to describe the frightful spectacle which the apartments presented. The furniture was thrown down and broken, floors, corridors, and balconies, were covered with blood, as were even the courtyard and pavement.

“It was an hour before an armed force strong enough to overcome the assassins appeared on the scene, and then only four were arrested and taken before the General of the Moulins Division, at his headquarters, Quai Malaquais. The arrest of these monsters was chiefly due to the courage of Citizens Benard and Guichard, adjutants, who, after calling on them to surrender, fell on them with drawn swords,

and, in spite of their fierce resistance, disarmed them ; the rest saved themselves by flight.

“ This armed force, which unfortunately arrived too late, was composed of three detachments—one of veterans, one of National Guards, and the third of paid troops, who were compelled to fix their bayonets to their guns.

“ An inspector of police could not at the moment be found, but Citizen Decourchant, Justice of the Peace for the Butte-des-Moulins District, came as soon as he was summoned. He found the victims stretched on the floor in different parts of the house, and four of the assassins in the hands of the armed force.

“ The head of the police, being immediately advised, despatched an armed force which remained in the vicinity of the house all night. General Bonaparte sent to ask for exact details at nine in the morning, and it is affirmed that he was as indignant as he was distressed at the calamity.

“ We will not permit ourselves any reflections on this event, but we are pleased to hope that the Government will seize this occasion to make an example, which may guarantee the people that their property will be protected for the future, by punishing these wicked men, who are undoubtedly guided by motives worthy of punishment.

“ We can assure our readers of the truth of these details, as they were furnished by eyewitnesses, and by Citizen Garchi himself.”

The affair caused considerable excitement, and Bérard (of the Rhone) moved the Council of the Five Hundred to send a message to the Directoire on the subject.

It was finally discovered that all the trouble was caused by political quarrels, of which the Garchi establishment was frequently the scene. Former *émigrés* and Royalists enjoyed meeting there. Garchi's café was one of the most fashionable rendezvous. "It is the school of good breeding and pretty manners," says the *Courrier Français*, of 4 Fructidor, year III. (August 21, 1795). "You should see how one flits and flutters about, it's the rage, and thanks to the fashion the industrious ice-cream merchant is making a fortune." And the same paper says a few days later: "He who has not taken an ice at Garchi's is an imbecile."

One can well imagine that such a tenant was a godsend to Mlle. Bertin.

In 1796 the Garchi establishment had already been the scene of a slight skirmish, which, though it had no immediate result, is worth relating. It was reported as follows in the *Ami des Lois* of 17 Brumaire, year V. (November 7, 1796): "A patriot in full dress recently entered Garchi's. He asked for news of the army; a charming young man replied: 'It is good; we have beaten the republicans on the Rhine.' The patriot was surprised. 'Have I the pleasure of speaking to an Austrian?' he inquired. This unexpected answer roused the frequenters of

the café to anger. ‘This is surely a traitor,’ they all cried ; ‘drive him out.’”

This no doubt was the origin of the skirmish of January 15, 1798. The antagonism between patriots and their opponents was no doubt the cause of it. The patriots wished to revenge themselves on the Royalist frequenters of the café for the attitude of the latter towards them ; and if some silver was stolen, and if Citizen Quentin was robbed of a silver watch and ten gold pieces, it was because several good-for-nothings had slipped in among the men hired to give the habitual customers of the café a lesson.

The police inquiry cleared up the mystery, and on the morrow the *Ami des Lois* published the following report :

“ We are assured that the motives of the scene which took place in the Garchi café, of which we spoke yesterday, was not theft, as we announced erroneously. . . . To-day another version of the affair, which appears to us plausible, presents the incident as the outcome of a political quarrel, between republicans and *émigrés* or their partisans ; and it is said that M. de Rochechouart, of whose emigration there is no doubt, took part in it, that he struck the first blow, and finally succumbed under the fire of those whom he had attacked. Augereau’s Aide-de-Camp, who found himself in this bad company, is a man named Fournier, known for his fatal skill in duels. His well-tryed patriotism would lead us to judge favourably of his companions, if his recklessness did

not destroy the conclusions one might draw from his political opinions. We are assured that Rochechouart has died of his wounds."

Director Rewbel's two sons had left a quarter of an hour before the trouble.

As to Garchi, he did not remain in Mlle. Bertin's house much longer, but soon transferred his shop and his fame to the corner of the Boulevard Montmartre and of the Rue de Richelieu, where he founded Frascati, an establishment which immediately became famous, and was more than ever the favoured rendezvous of all Royalists, who were ready to conspire against the Republic.

The *Almanach du Commerce de Paris*, published for the first time in 1797, under the direction of J. de Latyma, the precursor of the Bottin, gives in the list of merchants :

"Bertin, dressmaker, Rue de la Roi, 1,243, Butte-des-Moulins."

Butte-des-Moulins was one of the four districts which formed the second ward. The *Almanach du Commerce* published the following year does not give Mlle. Bertin's address.

She had not, however, retired, the proof of which is that in 1799 she sold a lace shawl, value 960 livres, to the Empress of Austria ; she also received various important orders from Spain, which were executed during the years 1799 to 1804. These orders were received in the name of Gamain, the Duchesse d'Ossuna's steward ; and in the names of



EMPRESS MARIA-THERESA

To face page 286

the Duchess of Infantado; of the Marchioness of Campo l'Angel, Spanish Ambassadors of Portugal; and of the Duchess of Berwick.

It would seem as though her former success might return, but unfortunately, if her name still carried weight in foreign lands, it was no longer the same in France, and Marie-Antoinette's great dressmaker witnessed the rise of a new star, a competitor whose ever-increasing fame was to make his name rival hers. We speak of Leroi, who was to become the official costumier of the ostentatious Court of Napoleon; of the Leroi who was to drape the Empress Josephine's shoulders with brocade, in place of the shawls which Rose Bertin sold to Mme. de Beauharnais.

Nevertheless she had not lost her reputation across the frontiers, and even supplied various merchants who offered her creations for sale. Among these was a certain Bernard, who had a shop in Madrid, and who—which was of no little interest to Rose—had entrance to the Spanish Court, having obtained for his daughter a post as a darner of lace at the palace.

On January 7, 1802, he announced that the Court was to go to meet the bride of the Prince of Asturias, that there would be holidays, and that he hoped to do some business.

Bernard was not merely on business terms with the establishment, and in his letters addressed to the "Rue de la Loi, formerly Richelieu, house of Beauvillier, restaurant proprietor," he never forgot to add a few amiable words for the employées:

“ Please convey many kind messages to Mlle. Pauline, including the young ladies and Mme. Bauché.” The number of persons employed by Rose was small indeed in comparison to those she employed during the reign of Louis XVI.

In the hope of increasing her business, she had opened a department for the sale of steel combs, fans, gold boxes, and jewellery.

Now and again Rose recovered some of the old debts, the recovery of which had been momentarily imperilled by the Revolution. In 1801 the Marchioness d'Harcourt and her daughter paid their account, long overdue. On her part, the dressmaker had difficulty in meeting her liabilities. She was more than a year in paying for certain articles of furniture which she bought from a man named Vogin, of Saint-Germain-en-Laye—a Chinese bed, a mahogany table, a lacquer screen, and a poor sort of painting representing “the donkey and the dairymaid,” the whole amounting to 471 francs, of which she had paid 48 francs. But with respect to Vogin, who owed her more than 5,000 francs, she was in a similar position as with Baron Duploux. The delay was probably intentional.

It is extraordinary that she should have allowed credit to Vogin, and proves how imprudent she sometimes was in business matters. Vogin, after being chef at M. de Livry's, and then at the Maréchal de Noailles's, had opened some baths at Pecq, where he had come to grief. Thanks to Rose Bertin, who

did not harass him when he was the most pressed, and almost on the verge of being arrested, he was able to recover his balance, and in 1805 opened an establishment in the Rue du Ponceau, No. 42, called the "Bon Gras-Double." Mlle. Bertin then, and then only, endeavoured to recover her money, and, as Vogin disputed part of her claim, they mutually agreed to elect Charles de Polignac as arbitrator, but the matter was not settled at the dressmaker's death.

The *Almanach du Commerce* for the year X., published in 1801, gives Mme. Bertin, Rue de la Loi, 1,243, Butte-des-Moulins, among the non-commercial citizens. This is reproduced in the *Almanach* of the year XI.; she does not appear at all in the year XII., but we find the name Bertin, linen-draper, at the same address. This does not mean that Rose had closed her shop in 1801; it is merely an omission, but that such an omission was possible shows that the reputation of the establishment had greatly dwindled.

As to the entry in the *Almanach* of the year XII., it refers to Rose's nephew, Louis-Nicolas Bertin, who had been established there since 1803, in the very shop which his aunt had occupied; he was in reality her employé, and Rose personally superintended a great deal of the business, as the papers of her heirs prove. Not linen only, but all kinds of fancy articles were sold. On January 1 (11 Nivôse, at Bertin, linen-drappers, year XI.) Princesse de Gargorowsky bought "a little chest in glass and

imitation Chinese lacquer with gold figures," value 600 livres; on February 11 the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, who was called the "Queen of London," and who had been particularly friendly to the French *émigrés*, bought "a basket in the shape of a straw vase, with landscapes, the whole made of straw," worth 144 livres, and a model of the Bastille in gilded metal, worth 240 livres. The shop had become a small bazaar; in the time of Marie-Antoinette it would have been known as a "Little Dunkerque."

Everything seemed to stand in Rose's light. It was not enough that she should suffer from the bad debtors of the *ancien régime* and the inevitable consequences of the Revolution; even the wars of the Empire were prejudicial to her, preventing in the first place her trade with the Courts and nobility of the countries at war with France, such as Spain, Austria, etc., who had always been faithful to her, and also preventing her from recovering moneys due to her in these countries. Thus on May 24, 1804, a M. de Lancry, a client in Vienna who owed her 7,350 livres, wrote: "We are sending by this post to the Abbé Daniel, our mutual friend, our accounts and a draft, begging him to pay you, not only the capital, but interest at 10 per cent. per ann., which we beg you to accept." Rose never saw the money. The letter was dated from St. Petersburg; war was raging in Hanover—in fact, there was latent, if not open, war throughout Germany. The money never reached its destination.

In spite of all her efforts, therefore, her position did not improve, and she appealed constantly, with cries of famine, not to the ant, her neighbour, but to the out-of-work nobles, who were unable to make headway themselves against the waves which had submerged them. Some of the more enterprising, however, spent their time in plotting against the Empire, to no purpose. Their agitation, directed from England by the Comte d'Artois, could not be anything but unpopular at the time of the field of Boulogne, and could only bring on them the suspicion, rightfully or wrongfully, of being financed with English money. It was thus that the Polignacs were imprisoned after the conspiracy of Pichegru.

Rose Bertin, having written to the Comtesse de Gouy O'Mahony, received a letter from her from Fontainebleau, where the Comte was in exile, dated June 21, 1805, saying :

“ I cannot express to you, mademoiselle, the grief your letter has caused me ; I have just received it, it having been forwarded to me from Paris. I lose no time in answering, to tell you how my heart bleeds to be unable to come to your assistanee in your cruel position, but, alas ! my own is no happier.”*

In the *Almanach du Commerce* for 1806 we find for the first time the address of Bertin, linen-draper and costumier, Rue de la Loi, 26. The shop, however, had not moved ; the numbers only had been changed. In 1787 the order followed in numbering the houses was different to that followed in 1805 and

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 1,780.

later. The first No. 1 was on the left side of the Rue de la Loi, formerly Rue Richelieu, at the corner of the Rue Saint-Honoré; the next house was No. 2, and so on to the end of the street, when the numbers continued on the opposite side, the last number facing the first. No. 26 therefore was formerly 1,243.

In 1807 the *Almanach du Commerce* still contains Bertin, costumier, 26, Rue de la Loi; but among the non-commercial residents it publishes Mlle. Bertin, Rue de Richelieu, 26. The street had been renamed by its former name, and continued to be so called in 1808 and the following years; Rose Bertin, old Royalist as she was, rejoiced at seeing her street resume the name it had borne under the *ancien régime*; and had she been one of those persons who are consoled with words, it would have been an innocent revenge for all the harm the Revolution had done her, by depriving her one by one of the heads she was wont to deck, with the assistance of Léonard, with flowers and gauzes, feathers, lawn, pearls, and powder. There was no great danger under the Empire, when one's name was Rose Bertin, in proclaiming oneself a Royalist, and the plots which she and Mme. d'Houdetot planned under the great trees of Épinay did not lead the conspirators to the trenches of Vincennes.

Épinay was the retreat chosen by that remarkable woman, Mme. d'Houdetot, remarkable for very different reasons than those which had brought fame to Rose Bertin. There, after the death of her faithful

companion, Saint-Lambert, she lived for ten years, saddened and with a grief-stricken heart, yet always playful, smiling, and amiable. Nevertheless, for different reasons, life held nothing for her but regret, and, like Rose, a whirlwind of dead leaves swept through the garden of her life.

In 1808 Rose Bertin, whose name was better known than any other among foreign Princes, sold to the Queen of Spain a fan worth 120 francs, and a dress of silver tissue and white silk worth 550 francs. Marie-Louise, Queen of Spain, was at the Castle of Compiègne with her husband, Charles IV., who had abdicated. It was the refuge offered by the Emperor to the King in accordance with the Treaty of Bayonne, Article 5 of which stipulated that—"The imperial palace of Compiègne, its parks and forests, should be placed at the disposition of King Charles during his lifetime." It was, all the same, little better than a gilded prison, over which the imperial police could easily keep vigilant watch.

"The Queen of Spain, Marie-Louise," writes M. J. Vatout, "had brains and character. She was small and lively, and had preserved all the fire of her glance; she loved dress, and it was apparent that she spared no means of fighting against the ravages of time." She was born in 1754, and was therefore fifty-four years of age, and the order for a white silk and silver tissue dress shows a certain coquetry, and proves her wish to appear young.

Rose sometimes received orders of this kind which

flattered her self-love : if Princes remembered her, time could not have quite obscured her fame.

She had other consolations besides these—the friendly intercourse she enjoyed with her nephews, one of whom lived a few steps from her house at Épinay, and the other superintended her business while she was in the country. She had also old well-tried friends such as Baron Duploux, who was very attentive to her. In a letter written in 1808, he expresses his regret at not finding her at home in Paris, and at being unable to go as far as Épinay, when he passed through the capital. In another letter of the same period he writes : “ Mlle. Vechard, to whom please give a friendly message, having told me that you are very fond of sassafras, I have had a little barrel put up for you at Saint-Valéry. I have sent it to Mme. Bertin, your niece, in case you should not be at your country-house when it arrives. Be careful to put a little vinegar now and again into the barrel, to keep it good.”*

Duploux might well send Rose Bertin a small barrel of sassafras, as he was still in her debt ; but on August 5, 1812, he proposed to pay off part of the debt by instalments, and offered for the rest State bonds to the amount of 150 francs.

Rose, however, never unduly pressed customers and friends to whom she had rendered service, and who owed her money. On the contrary, she sought whenever she could to help them as far as her means

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 240.

allowed. After her death this tribute was paid her unanimously. The Comtesse de la Tour, whose maiden name was Polastron, wrote in 1820 : " Mlle. Bertin before her death used sometimes to come to visit me ; and knowing my circumstances, so far from asking me for money, she volunteered to come to my assistance, an offer which I refused, not knowing when I should be able to repay her. Nevertheless I shall be eternally grateful to her, and I rejoice to be able to pay this homage to her memory."*

The last portrait we know of, of Mlle. Bertin, was painted towards the end of her life. We saw it in the attics of the Musée Carnavalet, where it still is.

Rose, with her original, complex, and eccentric character, posed for the artist, holding on her knees the helmet of a cavalry officer. She was not at the time of a romantic age, but the *Bulletin des Musées* for 1892 furnishes us with the explanation. It says, referring to this painting :

" Rose Bertin, dressmaker to the Queen. A large rather curious picture, belonging to the family. The famous dressmaker, who used to hold counsel with Marie-Antoinette upon chiffons and finery, was at the time about sixty years of age ; she lived in retreat at Épinay, where she played the part of Providence towards the poor. Being still something of a coquette, the strange fancy took her to be painted as Venus decorating the helmet of Mars with feathers.

" We have nothing to say of the white dress bedecked

* Collection J. Doucet, Rose Bertin, Dossier 401.

with gold and jewels, which leaves her arms and ample bosom bare—it was the fashion of 1803. But the helmet belongs to a fancy fireman. It is said that it belonged to her nephew, a cavalry officer. The red and green feather may serve to identify the corps. In spite of the ravages of time, which have left her faded, but no thinner, the ex-royal dressmaker still strikingly resembles the charming portrait painted by Janinet, during the days of her splendour, a little coloured engraving which the folly of auctions has raised to a price of 6 to 7,000 francs. The painting, which is unsigned, is passable. It is a precious document for popular history.”

It was not the fashion of 1803, but of 1810 to 1813. The helmet belongs to a carabineer, and gives us the approximate date of the portrait, since a decree of December 24, 1809, reforming the uniform of the carabineers, had laid down that they should wear a helmet and cuirass, which they had not done until then. Rose Bertin's great-nephew was an officer in the carabineers, a fact of which she was very proud, as this portrait amply proves.

Rose was nearing the end of her life. She very rarely went to Paris, and even in winter lived at the village of Épinay. In the course of 1813 the village lost both the Countess d'Houdetot, who died on January 28, having reached the advanced age of eighty-three, and Marie-Antoinette's dressmaker, who stood on the threshold only of old age.

Her death certificate, dated September 22, and

preserved at the Hôtel de Ville at Épinay, runs as follows :

“In the year one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, on September 22nd, at five o'clock in the afternoon, at the *Mairie*, before us, Jean-Louis-Antoine Gilbert, Deputy-Mayor of the village of Épinay-sur-Seine, Department of the Seine, borough of Saint-Denis, performing in the absence of the said Mayor the functions of a civil officer, there appeared Louis-Nicolas Bertin, forty-five years of age, costumier, residing in Paris, No. 26, Rue de Richelieu, nephew, and Claude-Charlemagne Bertin, forty-one years of age, landowner, residing at Épinay, also nephew, who declared that their aunt, Mlle. Marie-Jeanne Bertin, sixty-six years of age, landowner, residing in this parish, born at Abbeville, department of the Somme, on July 2nd, one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, daughter of Nicolas Bertin and of Marie-Marguerite Méquignon, died at her residence this morning at nine o'clock ; and the said witnesses signed with me these presents, after it had been read to them.

“(Signed) L. BERTIN. C. C. BERTIN.
GILBERT.”

Two days later the bells tolled at the Church of Saint-Médard of Épinay. The crowd that followed Rose's coffin was chiefly composed of the villagers amidst whom the last years of her life had been spent, and amongst whom, in spite of her abruptness

and brusque temper, her open and generous nature had won her more friends than enemies.

Although during the Revolution she had acquired Church property, having bought lands belonging to the Mathurins d'Émile (Montmorency), she was admitted to the privilege of Christian burial, as proved by the certificate furnished us by the actual Curé of Epinay, which runs as follows :

“In the year 1813, September 24, was buried by me, the undersigned, Marie-Jeanne Bertin, spinster, who died in this parish at the age of sixty-six, in presence of Louis-Nicolas Bertin, her nephew, residing in Paris, and Claude-Charlemagne Bertin, also a nephew, residing in this parish, who signed :

“BERTIN. BERTIN. PAUREZ, *Curé*.

“True copy, Épinay, October 30, 1908.—L. MIGNOT, *Curé*.”

Like all who had bought lands confiscated from the religious orders, Rose benefited by the article of the Concordat of 1801, by which the Catholic Church renounced all claim to the property of which she had been deprived, ratified the sale thereof, and *ipso facto* raised all excommunications incurred on that head.

Mlle. Bertin's death momentarily revived public interest in her. Several papers published obituary notices.

The following is an extract from the *Journal de l'Empire* of October 5, 1813 :

“Among the losses which have recently befallen the arts, we must count that of Mlle. Bertin, justly famous for the supremacy to which she raised French fashions, and for her services to commerce. She died on September 22 ult. at her house in Épinay. The good taste and talents of this ingenious dress-maker have been celebrated in verse by our poet Delisle. Her whole life was an example of benevolence and filial piety. Her private life affords numberless incidents which might profitably be recorded in the annals of virtue. Nor will they be lost, as a man of letters who can bear witness to them has taken upon himself the duty of recording them.”

There is every reason to suppose that this man of letters was no other than Penchet, who during the course of a public life somewhat agitated several times retired into private life, taking up his residence at a little estate, to which he was particularly attached, situated near Ecoeu. The latter place is not so far distant from Épinay as to prevent his occasionally calling there. Whatever duties he may have performed under the Revolution and the Empire as Administrator of the District of Gonesse, or archivist to the Police Department, Penchet at heart was to a certain extent faithful to the old monarchy. Upon this ground he must have been on marvellously good terms with the Queen's dressmaker.

The *Journal des Arts, des Sciences, et de la Littérature* of October 10, 1813, also mentions Mlle. Bertin's

death in the following terms: "The same paper [*Journal de l'Empire*] also announces the death of a former dressmaker named Mlle. Bertin, and assures us that a man of letters is already preparing her funeral oration. This obituary notice rightfully belonged to the *Journal des Dames*."

The editor does not seem to have grasped the identity of Mlle. Bertin. "A former dressmaker!" Fortunately, she was not there to be hurt by it.

But, in contradiction of the proverb that no one is a prophet in his own country, the *Journal d'Abbeville* of October 9, 1813, published a flattering obituary notice. "This notice in the *Journal d'Abbeville* is the more astonishing because it is the only one of the kind which appeared during the year 1813 in that paper, which was almost entirely devoted to legal advertisements."*

"Mlle. Bertin," says the notice, "was a native of Abbeville, born by chance in an obscure class. Are titles and noble birth necessary when one borrows nothing from one's ancestors, and, above all, when one has been made famous in verse by a disciple of Virgil? It is with feeling and with pleasure that we publish this funeral panegyric, which will be confirmed in Mlle. Bertin's own country as elsewhere, and more particularly in this town, by the compatriots whom she has served or honoured both in public and private in circumstances which should never be forgotten."

* Note de M. Delignières lue à la Séance de la Société d'Emulation d'Abbeville, 3 Mai, 1906.

Baron Duploux, whose friendship for Mlle. Bertin may have inspired the lines, could applaud these words of the editor of the *Journal d'Abbeville*.

But is it not curious what importance the publicists of the first Empire attach to the poetry of Abbé Delille, "the disciple of Virgil"!

It would seem that all Rose Bertin's fame came from the fact that she had inspired the poet Delille to write some verses. And yet, while her reign lasted, she had caused the greatest personages of France to bow to the frivolous yoke of fashion, a fashion of which she was the ingenious and lavish inspirer. In Abbeville she had acquired and retained numerous and faithful clients; and if she was celebrated, her reputation was due to the imagination she showed in the exercise of her profession, and not to the mediocre verses of the author of "Imagination."

Finally, the editor of the *Almanach des Modes* for 1814 added these few words to the article devoted to the dressmakers of the day: "We cannot conclude this article without speaking of Mlle. Bertin, formerly dressmaker to the Queen and Court, who retired a number of years ago, and who died about three months since at her country-house, situated a few miles from Paris. After being for many years the most celebrated dressmaker in Paris, she became one of the most generous of women. Her life was blessed by deeds of devotion, delicacy, and benevolence, which should be known, and the simple recital of which would tend more to her praise than anything we can say."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HEIRS OF ROSE—SAINTE-BEUVE'S OPINION ON THE "MEMOIRS"

ROSE BERTIN left two nephews—Claude-Charlemagne and Nicolas ; the family of the one was composed entirely of daughters, the family of the other entirely of sons. She left besides two nieces, who also had children.

Her heirs found that a number of debts were still owing her, and set about their recovery. Some of these debts were not liquidated until thirty years later. It was not until 1842 that the account of Comte and Comtesse de Gouy O'Mahony was paid ; and that of Comtesse de la Tour, which amounted to 1,329 livres, was not paid until 1843. The latter bill had been owing since 1789, and the Comtesse having died on July 9, 1842, her heirs came to an agreement with Rose Bertin's heirs, by which the latter accepted 675 francs in payment of the debt.

Charlemagne Bertin, assisted by the advice of the lawyer Petit d'Auterive, took upon himself most of the business connected with the estate. Grangeret was the official lawyer of the family. In the corre-

spondence relating to the estate, one finds on all sides flattering tributes to the great dressmaker's memory. In 1814 Charlemagne Bertin wrote to M. Lefebvre, Justice of the Peace for Abbeville, with respect to Baron Duploux : " I have no need to repeat here the services Mlle. Bertin rendered this family, and the noble devotion with which she seized every opportunity of assisting them "—a reference to the civility, not to use a stronger word, which Rose had shown them when they were in exile in England, and living in poverty at Canterbury.

The following letter is full of praise of Rose and her family :

*" The Justice of Peace of the Tenth Ward of Paris
to the Count de Lieautaud.*

" PARIS,

" July 26, 1816.

" SIR,—Mlle. Bertin and her family, of whom you ask me to give you some information, arouse my interest.

" Mlle. Bertin was dressmaker to the Queen and all the Royal Family ; she earned their esteem, and even their friendship, by her wit, and her life in the world. At the moment of the Revolution there was owing to her in Paris, from the Court and from the Powers, a sum amounting to over 1,500,000 francs. She owned several fine houses in Paris and in the country. There were 300,000 francs owing her in Russia ; and I have frequently seen her dining with Prince Konrakin, Russian Ambassador, and the Princesses of that

nation, who liked her, and used to dine with her at her country-house, situated near mine.

“Mlle. Bertin was dowered with a rare mind and talents out of the common ; she loved and idolized the Royal Family and all the Court, and her shop was daily open to them.

“She was the benefactress of her family, composed of two nephews and two nieces, who inherited, as she died intestate in 1814 (?).

“The first of these nieces died, leaving, by her marriage with a merchant, a daughter, who married M. Petit d’Auterive, a lawyer ; and a son, who is a Captain and Chevalier of the Légion d’Honneur : they form the first party.

“The second niece married M. Chasseriaux, landowner, whose castle is close to Sézanne-en-Brie. She died leaving a son, a minor, Lieutenant and Chevalier d’Honneur, like his cousin ; he is nineteen years of age, and is the second party.

“The first of the nephews is married, and is a landowner who resides at Épinay. He has two sons ; the eldest, eighteen or nineteen years of age, has presented himself for the Guards : he is gentle, well brought up, and of exemplary conduct ; he has a brother who also promises well—third party.

“The second nephew is also a landowner, married, and has four daughters—fourth party.

“This family has always conducted itself well.

“The father of the aspirant of the Guards is infirm, and can only drive about ; he is possessed of native

intellect, and is above all a most respectable man. His income allows him to keep his son in the service.

“ Finally, Mlle. Bertin being in exile rendered the greatest service to the *émigrés* with her money, her wit, her amiability, and the reputation she had acquired abroad, especially in England, where she invested money.

“ Louis XVIII. and the Royal Family, when they arrived in 1814, asked news of her, and, hearing that she had been dead for six months, publicly expressed their regret.

“ I have great pleasure, Count, in supplying these details concerning a woman, celebrated in her own way, who was my friend till death, and whom I honoured for her mind, her talents, and above all for a loyalty worthy of her great and benevolent soul.

“ I have the honour to remain, with respectful affection, your humble and very devoted servant,

“ GODARD.

“ Rue de l'Université,

“ No. 11, Hôtel de Luynes.”

According to the story told by contemporaries of Mlle. Bertin, her heirs should not have been able to make any claim against the State, since, out of devotion to Marie-Antoinette, Rose had burnt all her account-books and destroyed all trace of the sums owing to her, so that their magnitude might not constitute another charge against the Queen.

The fact is that the accounts had been produced,

and were in the hands of Citizen Henry ; there was therefore nothing to hide, and the heirs employed every possible means to recover the money owing from the Queen's estate, for which purpose they addressed themselves to the Duchess of Angoulême.

Their lawyer, Grangeret, transmitted to William, head of the King's Household, the following letter which Charlemagne Bertin had received on the subject :

“ The last letter received from Her Highness the Dauphine is dated December 6, 1824, and is as follows :

*“ The Secretary and General Treasurer of Her
Highness the Dauphine, to M. Bertin.*

“ SIR,—Her Royal Highness the Dauphine has read the petition you addressed to her, dated the 25th ultimo. I have the honour to inform you that, in compliance with her orders, I have forwarded it to the Minister of the King's Household. You must therefore, Sir, address yourself to His Excellency to learn the result of your request.

“ (Signed) TH. CHARLET.”

The Bertin heirs addressed a petition, dated September 11, 1828, to the Minister, and another on October 1, 1829, to Baron de la Bouillerie, Chief Steward of the King's Household.

They declared in particular that among the sums owing by the Royal Family was a bill for 3,016 livres, for articles supplied to the Comte d'Artois, afterwards King of France.

The events of 1830 interrupted Grangeret's efforts. The Minister of the King's Household had not, it is true, shown any anxiety to satisfy the claims of Mlle. Bertin's heirs. The Government of the Restoration was overwhelmed with claims from former *émigrés*, whose property had been sold by the revolutionists, too pressing to attach much importance to debts contracted with a person who had died leaving no children. And although Grangeret laid stress upon their unfortunate position, it was well known that the Bertin heirs were mostly in very comfortable, if not brilliant, circumstances.

Grangeret's efforts met with more success abroad ; and in writing in 1818 to the Count de San Martin, Master of the Household of the ex-King of Spain, Charles IV., claiming a sum of 4,500 francs owing by the Queen of Spain since 1808, when she was residing at Compiègne, he was able to state that the Empress of Russia had recently paid 20,000 francs which had been owing some thirty-five years. The Empress did not take advantage of the Russian law, which cancelled debts which had been owing more than ten years. She honestly acknowledged the debt and paid it, paying at the same time for a lace shawl, furnished to her by Rose Bertin in 1799, value 960 livres.

This information, taken from Grangeret's own papers, contradicts the statement he made in writing to the Marquis de Boisgelin, that " Mlle. Bertin was compelled to quit France in 1792, and did not return until 1813 " ; and to Adjutant-Major

de Caradeus, that she had been twenty-five years abroad.

It is certain that there was some confusion in the papers, and we think that the statement made by Comtesse de Laage must be accepted. The Comtesse, formerly Lady-in-Waiting to the Princesse de Lamballe, writes on July 9, 1820: "I paid all my creditors before emigrating, and notably Mlle. Bertin." She had received a letter from Grangeret claiming money owing for articles supplied between August 10, 1787, and July 25, 1791, and adds: "I thought the claim so extraordinary that I delayed answering, especially as one heard it publicly stated on all sides that the heirs of Mlle. Bertin brought forward unfounded claims. After her return to France, I frequently saw Mlle. Bertin, who always thanked me for having paid her."

It is possible that, in the days of feverish anxiety and trouble preceding her departure for England, Rose received payment of certain debts without entering in her books the money received. Martin-court relied on these books, and naturally made a full copy of all the debts entered therein, to present to the office for the liquidation of the *émigrés'* property, and Grangeret relied on Martin-court's statement in bringing forward his claims in later years.

It was not until some years after her death that Mlle. Bertin's memoirs appeared. The edition of 1824 was announced on October 30 of the same year in the *Journal de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie*

under the title of "Mémoires de Mlle. Bertin sur la Reine Marie-Antoinette," with notes and explanations. The work was published by Bossange Brothers, and the paper mentioned above had already declared it to be a forgery. The chief aim of the book seems to be an attempt to clear Marie-Antoinette from the charges brought against her, especially in the affair of the necklace. In any case, it seems evident that all the anecdotes concerning the Queen's dressmaker had been collected by the author from contemporary gazettes and memoirs, and perhaps even from Mlle. Bertin's own lips. Their authenticity alone might have caused the statements put forward by the author in defence of his case to pass without question. However, the anonymous writer who had adopted Rose's name as a *déguise* was compelled to unmask himself; scarcely had the memoirs been launched upon the public when Mlle. Bertin's family rejected them in a letter published by a literary paper called the *Semaine*. Several papers, notably the *Gazette de France* of November 29, 1824, in an article signed by Colnet, had given a criticism of the book, which they accepted as authentic, and had given it a famous advertisement. Sainte-Beuve's criticism appeared in the *Globe* of November 11, and has been reprinted by Jules Troubat in his work "Premiers Lundis," vol. i. (1874); it was not kindly, and was scarcely calculated to increase the sale of it, as the reader may judge from the following:

"That men who live during a revolution, and who

are either enlightened spectators or chief actors, should bequeath to posterity a faithful deposit of their souvenirs is a duty we expect of them; that those who play a secondary part, who have seen merely a small corner of the vast picture, and who have witnessed a few scenes only, should bring their small tribute of revelations—they will still be received benevolently; and, above all, if the writer depicts the interior of a Court during a time when public affairs were nothing but private affairs, if he shows us without disguise august personages in that cruel transition from extreme prosperity to extreme misery, our eager curiosity will pardon, will magnify, the smallest details; our author may with impunity speak to us of himself, if only he will speak of others; we will throw to Mme. Campan all the nothings of the antechamber and the boudoir, for one happy phrase. But that Mlle. Rose Bertin, dressmaker to the Queen, sign of the *Trait Galant*, should come towards us with measured step, papers and ribbons in hand, addressing her memoirs to the coming centuries, is too much for the reader's gravity, and for my part I am tempted to demand in the first place the *montant du mémoire*.

“The book is poor in facts in spite of her assiduity in matters of dress. The writer seems to know but little of Court matters; she gives us now and again sayings that have fallen from her mistress's lips; she justifies her for nicknaming the Duchesse de Noailles ‘Madame de l'Étiquette,’ and for calling *médailles*

women who have attained their fifth lustre. Once only Mlle. Rose informs us that the sort of misunderstanding which existed between the King and Queen was political; Mme. Adélaïde held by M. de Maurepas, the Queen by M. de Choiseul, *inde iræ*; we feel that these days are far distant. The affair of the necklace takes up the principal part of the book; the author was aware of certain details which may lend weight to her evidence, and now and again her tone is solemn, and it is here we find the appeal to coming centuries. Nevertheless we may praise her attachment to the unfortunate, and her efforts to avenge the memory of a calumniated Queen. . . .

"Mlle. Bertin is not always happy in her excuses. For example, the Count de Charolais was wont to amuse himself, as we know, by firing on the workmen mending the tiles, to make them fall off the roof; this was, according to her, merely the effect of violently heated blood, and the moment past, no one's honour was more unimpeachable. She is more severe as respects the Duke de Chartres, afterwards the monster Égalité; she also refused him her favours, though this piece of confidential news has no bearing on the history of the eighteenth century. There is also little importance, though more grace, in her account of the gipsy. This woman had predicted to her, when a child at Amiens, that she would become a great lady, and her train would be carried at Court. . . .

"On another occasion when she was in the Queen's

apartments, during less happy days, the Princess said to her : ‘ I dreamt of you last night, my dear Rose ; you came to me with your hands full of ribbons, and I chose some, but as I took hold of them they turned black.’

“ The editor realized that there was not enough material for a volume, and so he added notes to it respecting the Count de Charolais, the Duke d’Orléans, Messieurs Choiseul and Maurepas, which have no connection whatever with the text ; these persons are scarcely mentioned in the book, and all their public and private lives are retailed in notes. . . . Occasio.1 has been found of inserting an account, written by M. Garat, of the alleged Orleans conspiracy, though it has no connection with Mlle. Rose’s book.”

Evidently it was a matter that had been arranged between the publishers and M. Penchet, but it was unsuccessful.

Sainte-Beuve’s opinion, however, is open to criticism. He attaches little importance to Mlle. Bertin ; but it is probable that he forgets that small events have great results, that the Revolution was prepared as much by libels, pamphlets, and unfounded tales, spread among the people, as by any innate desire in the latter for reform. The Court, and the Queen especially, were the subject of violent and incessant attacks regarding their morals, their pleasures, and their extravagance. And the people, who had suffered without rebelling, though not without murmuring, the immorality of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and the

shame of the preceding reign, were unconsciously preparing to strike their reigning masters, reproaching them for faults which were peccadillos compared to the monstrosities they had suffered, to their shame, for so long.

But these apocryphal memoirs, against which Mlle. Bertin's heirs protested, are more or less a reproduction of a work entitled "Conversations recueillies à Londres pour servir à l'Histoire d'une Grande Renie par M. X.," which had been published in Paris during Mlle. Bertin's lifetime, in 1807, and to which she offered no objection.

The reason is that the author of the "Conversations" was a friend, and yet he makes some slight errors, such as calling Beaulard Boilard, and Mme. Pagelle of the *Trait Gallant* Forgel, and giving the date of Mlle. Bertin's birth as the year 1744, whereas she was born in 1747. But the following extract from the introduction shows that he held Mlle. Bertin in high esteem.

"I had conceived the idea," he writes, "some years ago of writing the history of the emigration . . . circumstances having changed I abandoned the project . . . but among my numerous notes upon the subject . . . I preserved those I had made from memory of the conversations between Charles and Mlle. Rose. . . . Nothing could induce me to destroy these proofs, which supply an answer to all that has been said with respect to the necklace. Everyone knows Mlle. Rose and her devotion to the

Queen, whose milliner she had been ever since Marie-Antoinette's arrival in France ; but few know to what extent Mlle. Rose enjoyed the Queen's confidence. . . . It is rare that Sovereigns, especially those who have lost their crowns, possess true friends ; and sensitive souls must rejoice at seeing that that unfortunate family had a real friend, even though it be Mlle. Rose, the frivolity of whose trade might have been an excuse for unstable feelings. But our good Rose had been dowered by Nature with a true heart and a level head, such as a business woman requires ; her conduct, which the conversations will describe better than any words of mine, always bore the stamp of that pride which is the outcome of self-respect. Virtuous by inclination, she knew no other desire than to please her mistress, and we shall see what a beautiful tribute the Queen paid her during her last days of power at the Tuileries. It was not only the Queen who loved Rose ; the Duchess d'Orléans, whose name is linked with all that is good and honourable, also gave her proofs of confidence and interest, as did, too, the Princesses de Lamballe and de Bourbon ; all the Court ladies spoke in praise of Rose's conduct. In leaving France she ceded to the Queen's will, who was convinced that if she remained she would fall a victim to the fury of the populace, who had been persuaded that the Queen's hats and bonnets only had caused the deficit in the finances, and that consequently the best remedy for the disorder was to cut the throat of the person who, by her skill and taste,

had excited or inspired in the Queen frivolous ideas. Immediately upon Rose's arrival in London, she was welcomed by all the ladies of the Court, who wished to know whether the Queen remembered them, and whether there was any chance of a speedy return to Versailles."

The writer who speaks so feelingly of the modiste's good qualities could scarcely be a stranger to her. He praises her, and excuses her for the indirect part she played in Marie-Antoinette's extravagance. This is not the conduct of a person who is indifferent, and if, while writing a book to defend the Queen with regard to the affair of the necklace, he retails various incidents of Mlle. Bertin's life, to which though living she made no objection, it must be that he had heard them from public rumour or from Bose herself, and that they made a fitting frame to his principal subject, and lent an air of sincerity and greater force to his arguments. But when he thought fit to republish his work, after some alterations, and audaciously gave it the title of "Mémoires de Mlle. Bertin," when she was no longer there to forbid or to permit it, then her nephews, through the medium of M. Petit d'Auterive, entered their protest. The latter says, in the letter that was published in the *Semaine*, that not only Mlle. Bertin had not left her memoirs, but that she had destroyed her account-books during the Terror, for the sake of prudence, so that her heirs had not been able after the Restoration to bring any claim against the State. We know

how much importance must be attached to this statement.

After this protest the publishers wrote a letter, which was inserted in the *Journal de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie* of January 25, 1825, as follows: "Messrs. Bossange Brothers, who published at the end of last year a volume in octavo entitled 'Mémoires de Mlle. Bertin,' having learnt that the work is apocryphal, have sent us the following letter:

" "PARIS,
" "January 2, 1825.

" "SIR,—We see by the rightful protest of the heirs of Mlle. Bertin, former dressmaker to the Queen, that we have been deceived by a person whom it would be ungenerous to name, since he admits his fault, respecting the authenticity of the book we published under the title of "Mémoires de Bertin sur la Reine Marie-Antoinette, avec des notes et éclaircissements." We owe it to truth, and to ourselves, to declare instantly that the book was published without the knowledge of any of her heirs, and to state that we have stopped the sale of the "Mémoires," and called in all the copies—in fact, nearly the whole edition. . . .

" "BOSSANGE BROTHERS.' "

This announcement in the *Journal de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie* did not arouse the same interest as the publication of the memoirs, and it escaped the notice of several writers who dealt with the subject.

M. Ch. Louandre wrote in his "Biographie d'Abbeville et de ses Environs," which appeared in 1829: "One would not have imagined that Mlle. Bertin would have turned her attention to the serious events of history, but this is what she has done in writing the 'Mémoires sur la Reine Marie-Antoinette,' published by Bossange Brothers in the 'Collection Contemporaine,' with notes and explanations, (Paris, 1824, one volume, in octavo).

"Mlle. Bertin begins by saying that she will speak very little about herself, and only say just what is necessary to make her subject clear. She then gives details of her parentage which lead one to suppose that she is anxious to hide her origin, or that the memoirs are not written by herself, and yet they appear to be authentic."

Nevertheless M. Louandre shows that his suspicions are aroused, because, as he points out, Rose Bertin in her memoirs speaks of herself as the daughter of small tradespeople, whereas we know that her father was a member of the mounted police, and her mother a nurse.

Ernest Prarond, though he is not aware of the existence of Messrs. Bossange's letter, knows, however, that the authenticity of the memoirs was questioned.

In "Les Hommes Utiles de l'Arrodissement d'Abbeville," 1858, he says: "Mlle. Rose-Marie-Jeanne did better than merely make the Queen's hats: she remained faithful to her royal protectress during her misfortune, and to the day of her martyrdom. . . .

She changed her needle for an ugly quill, ennobled by the use to which it was put. . . . We must say, however, to protect ourselves, that there has been some controversy respecting the authenticity of Mlle. Bertin's memoirs."

The memoirs are apocryphal, but Rose had seen enough to have written them. Her rôle was not without importance ; she was too near to the Queen not to have known in detail many of the incidents which are the subject of controversy. And had she written the souvenirs of her life, we should not have received them like Sainte-Beuve, with a mocking laugh ; on the contrary, with eager curiosity we should have allowed her to guide us through those past days, about whose faded finery there lingers the perfume of dead roses.

INDEX

- ALLONVILLE, Comte d', 67
 Almanach du Commerce, 291
 des Modes, 161
- Ballon, hairdress à la, 142
 Bastille, bonnets à la, 194
 Beaulard, 43
 Belle Poule, dress à la, 163
 Bertin, Rose, birth of, 11 ; Brittany,
 journey to, 168 ; Directoire, peti-
 tion to, 256 ; fashion supplier to
 Queen, 174 ; Germany, journey
 to, 211 ; heirs, 304 ; influence, 25,
 51 ; London, shop in, 254 ; mem-
 oirs, 309 ; parents, 13 ; portrait,
 295 ; by Jainnet, 151 ; Russia,
 business in, 249 ; St. Petersburg,
 dresses sent, 166 ; Spanish Court,
 suppliers, 287 ; train carried, 108
 Bertoniennne, hat à la, 114
 Bochart de Saron, 190
 Bonnets à la bonne maman, 46 ; à la
 Chartres, 26 ; à la Gertrude, 131 ;
 à la paysanne, 57 ; picards, 101 ;
 various, 194
 Boue de Paris, hats à la, 147
 Bouillé, Mme. de, 246
- Cabinet des Modes, 42, 58, 197
 Cadogan, 144
 Calonne, 153
 Campan, Mme., 36, 39, 64
 Caps à la hedgehog, 86
 Chartres, bonnets à la, 26 ; Duc de,
 15 ; Duchesse de, 16
 Chasseriaux, 304
 Chastenay, Mme. de, 278
 Chateaubriand, 168
 Chérubin, hats à la, 142
 Citoyenne, bonnets à la, 194
 Cockade, the, 200
 Colin-Maillard, bonnets à la, 131
 Colour, fashionable, 60
 Conti, Princesse, 14, 21
- Corazza, Charles, 228
 Corbeille Galante, la, 177
 Correspondance Littéraire, 43
 Costume, Mme. du, 135
- Dauphin, birth of, 131
 Dress à la Suzanne, 162
 Du Barry, Mme., 13, 87 ; bills pre-
 sented to by Bertin, 89
 Duploux, 227, 294
- Eccentricities, end of era, 106, 133
 Émigrés, list of, 244
 Entelles, M. des, 249
 Eon, Chevalier d', 79
 Épinay, Rose's house at, 217
 Esprit, à la mode, 276
- Falconnier, 11
 Fashion during Revolution, 234 ; in
 1797, 278 ; in 1798, 278 ; in 1810,
 278
 Fitz-James, Duchesse de, 269
- Gallerie des Modes, 96
 Garchi, 279
 "Grand-Mogol," 22, 137
 Grangeret, Maître, 201, 306
 Guertin, P., 123
- Hardy, J. P., 177
 Hats à la Henry IV., 69 ; à la laitière,
 57
 Head-dresses, 53, 95
 Hedgehog, caps à la, 86
 Henri IV., bonnets à la, 131 ; hats
 à la, 69
 Houdetot, Mme. d', 292, 296
- Jainnet, 152
- Kerry, Lady, 193
- Laage, Mme. de, 193

- Lamballe, Princesse, 60, 215
 Lamotte, Mme. de, 187
 Léonard, Souvenirs of, 20, 28, 82
 Leroi, costumier of Court of Napoleon,
 287
 Lever de la reine, bonnets à la, 194
 Lévité, la, 98
 Loi, rue de la, Massacre, 279
 Louis XVIII., 305
 Louise-Marie-Adélaïde, 158

 Madame Royale,
 Marie-Antoinette, 11, 22; accounts
 burnt by Bertin, 240, 305; Bertin,
 intimacy with, 56; dresses, 205;
 expenditure, 204; head-dresses,
 110, 164; portrait of, 258; in the
 Temple, 223; wardrobe, 202, 209
 Marlborough, hats à la, 142
 Meister, 43
 Memoirs of Rose Bertin, 315
 Méquignon, widow, 25
 Milliners in eighteenth century, 19;
 during Revolution, 247
 Minerve, dress à la, 163
 Monarchy, last years of, 180
 Monfières, pilgrimage to, 98
 Musulmane, dresses à la, 26

 Ninon, Épître à, 250

 Oberkirch, Mme. d', 33
 Oliva, Mlle., 13

 Pagelle, Mlle., 13, 18, 87
 Paris mud, 140

 Penchet, 212, 299, 312
 Picot, Mlle., 115, 117
 Pouf, 158; à la circonstance, 35; à
 l'inoculation, 35; aux sentiments,
 28, 32

 Quaker bonnets, 162
 Quès aco, 27
 Quinault, Mlle., 30

 Razomowsky, Count, 224
 Religieuse, bonnets à la, 142
 Royal Family in prison, 222
 Royale, Madame, birth of, 102

 Sainte-Beuve, criticism of, 309
 Semaine, la, 315
 Sultane, bonnets à la, 26
 Suzanne, dress à la, 162

 Tableau de Paris, 53
 Trait Galant, the, 13
 Tuileries, the siege of, 208
 Turkish dress, 140

 Versailles, fashion at, 20, 40
 Vigée-Lebrun, Mme., 165; portrait
 of Queen by, 184
 Villars, Duchesse de, 71
 Vogin, 288

 Walpole, Horace, 61
 Wengel, Joseph, 139
 Wertmuller, portrait by, 159
 Williams, Helen Mary, 234