

The king and queen, Mercy argued, had greatly underestimated the extent of popular support for the Revolution: “escape has become impossible at this time. Every village could be an insurmountable barrier to your passage. And I tremble to think of the catastrophe that would arise if the enterprise fails.” He understood that the situation was frustrating and unhappy and that the king had lost much of his former power. But the family would do far better, the Austrian diplomat argued, to wait out the storm. “If only you persist where you are, you can be certain that sooner or later the mad creations of the Revolutionaries will collapse by themselves”; in contrast, choosing “the extreme solution [of flight] will inevitably decide, for better or for worse, the fate of the king and the kingship.”⁶⁴

These, then, were the stakes, if Louis should attempt an escape. And the stakes were high indeed. Success could well mean civil war. Failure might bring “catastrophe” and perhaps the end of the monarchy.

CHAPTER 3

The King Takes Flight



THE ROYAL COUPLE’S CHALLENGE on that last day before their flight was clear and sobering; to extricate themselves and their entire family undetected from a palace staffed by no less than two thousand people—national guardsmen, domestics, and government workers—whose lives centered entirely on the presence of the king and queen. The task was all the more daunting in that rumors of just such an escape plan had been circulating in Paris for some time. Following the denunciation by the queen’s servingwoman, extra guards had been established in and around the Tuileries. Indeed, with suspicion in the air, it was particularly important that the royal family maintain their systematic deception to the final moment. Thus the queen scrupulously maintained her usual schedule throughout the day. She attended mass; she had her hair done; she went out for a drive with her children and several courtiers to the Tivoli palace; she dined with the family, including the king’s brother and sister, before retiring for the night. Yet her daughter, the twelve-year-old “Madame Royale”—as she was called—sensed that her parents were unusually tense. She was especially mystified when all her attendants, with the exception of the chief nurse, Madame Brunier, were sent away for the day on the pretense that the princess was sick.¹

In fact her parents were preoccupied with the myriad of last-minute arrangements that had to be made if the escape was actually to come off. One of their most pressing concerns was to brief the three professional soldiers who were to accompany the flight, take charge of the practical details, and provide some limited measure of protection. For this task the count d'Agoult, former commander of the now disbanded royal bodyguards, had recruited three of his best men. François-Florent de Valory, François-Melchoir de Moustier, and Jean-François Malden were obscure provincial nobles who had served in the same company of the king's guard for almost twenty years. All three had seen their regiment humiliated by the Paris crowds during the October Days, and they had since frequented the circle of reactionary nobles in Paris who had rushed to the king's defense on February 28—though they claimed not to have participated themselves. All had taken oaths of submission to the king, and they would maintain their loyalty to "their master" even under the harsh questioning of the Revolutionary interrogators after their arrest. "Entirely dedicated to my king," as Valory would tell them, "I would never have questioned his orders, having sworn to him my loyalty, my obedience, my respect, and my love." Louis himself first called in Moustier on June 17 and asked him to obtain the disguise of a private courier for himself and for the two others: short coats, suede knee breeches, and round-brimmed hats. Just before dinner on the evening of the escape, the king and queen had the men secretly led into their chambers through the back corridors of the Louvre. Here the king gave them their instructions in detail, instructions that had been worked out by Fersen and Bouillé over the previous months. The three always claimed, and there is no reason to disbelieve them, that they knew nothing of the escape before that night.²

In the meantime, Fersen was a whirlwind of activity, setting into motion a complex choreography of men, coaches, and horses. During the day of June 20 he visited his banker and the Swedish ambassador; he secretly passed through the Tuileries to pick up more packages for the berline; he saw to the last-minute purchase

of horses, saddles, and riding whips, and to the final movements of the various carriages—often in stages, to avoid arousing suspicion. About six that evening Fersen's German coachman, Balthasar Sapel, drove the large black escape coach from the carriagemaker's shop to the home of a wealthy Englishman on Rue de Clichy. Toward eight o'clock the two-wheeled cabriolet that was to carry the two nurses was parked on the Seine across the river from the palace. At about the same time an ordinary *fiacre*, or hackney cab, was left near the Tuileries gardens on the Champs-Elysées, where Fersen himself would pick it up later. At half past nine, Valory and Moustier met Sapel on Rue de Clichy, and they drove the berline together on a circuitous route through the western suburbs and then out around the new northern boulevards just beyond the city walls, positioning it near the Saint-Martin's customs gate at the northeast corner of Paris. Valory then rode off to the village of Bondy to prepare horses for the first relay stop.³

In the palace itself the first phase of the escape plan was launched at about three in the afternoon, when the duke de Choiseul, who had been sent to Paris with final messages from Bouillé, left by carriage for the relay post of Somme-Vesle, where he was to meet the advance detachment of cavalry sent out for the protection of the king. In his company was perhaps the most unlikely participant in the whole adventure, the queen's hairdresser, Jean-François Autié, known to all the world as "Monsieur Léonard." In the final days the queen had decided that it would be unthinkable to face the rigors of life in Montmédy without a proper coiffeur. Shortly before Choiseul's departure she had called in Léonard and asked him if he was ready to do anything she asked. When the hairdresser responded enthusiastically in the affirmative—and what else could one say to a queen?—she told him to leave with Monsieur de Choiseul and to follow his orders to the word. With no idea where he was going, with no change of clothes, without even the possibility of canceling his afternoon appointments, the thirty-three-year-old hairdresser, stunned and confused, left with Choiseul on the road east.⁴

The Great Escape

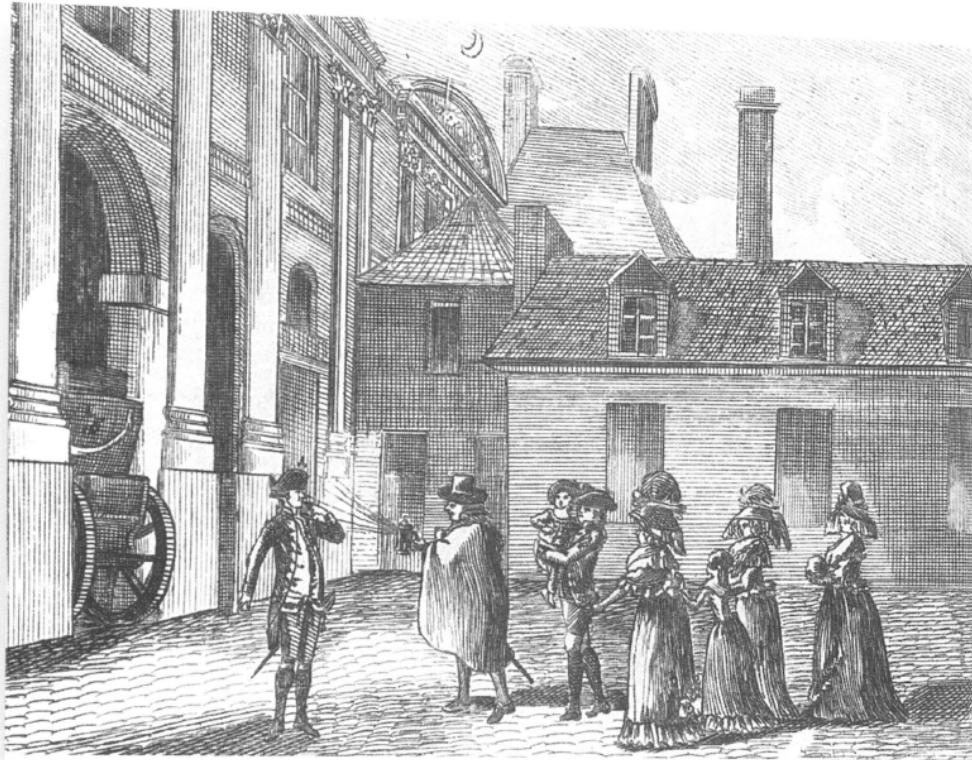
At about half past ten the escape of the royal family itself was set into motion. When dinner was finished, Louis embraced his younger brother, the count of Provence, and sent him off on his own successful escape northward to Brussels—the last time the two brothers would ever see each other. Then Marie-Antoinette and Madame de Tourzel slipped away to awaken the two royal children and to inform their nurses of the departure set for that evening. The two royal caretakers, Madame Brunier and Madame de Neuville, were scarcely less surprised than Monsieur Léonard. But they were utterly devoted to the royal family and prepared to follow them anywhere—indeed, it was Neuville who had rushed through the halls of Versailles with the dauphin in her arms during the October Days. The queen, Tourzel, and the nurses leading or carrying their royal charges went quietly down the back stairway to the ground floor and into the dark apartment abandoned by the king's first gentleman. The nurses quickly helped the children change into their disguises, with the dauphin and his sister both dressed as young girls. Once they had prepared the children, the nurses were led by the guard Malden back upstairs, out the main palace entrance, and across the Seine to the waiting carriage. A hired coachman drove them to the village of Claye, the second relay stop on the planned escape route, where they would wait anxiously through the night.⁵

Back in the darkened ground-floor room, the queen quietly unlocked the exterior door of the apartment with a key she had obtained through a ruse some weeks earlier. A gibbous moon was low on the horizon and probably covered in clouds. The queen had carefully timed their exit to correspond with the moment when large numbers of servants left the palace to return to their homes.⁶ In the considerable nightly exodus of men and women, the exterior guards seem never to have noticed the departure of the disguised escapees. Trembling, Madame de Tourzel gathered up the sleepy prince, took the older girl by the hand, and walked casually across

the somber outside courtyard toward the line of carriages with their lanterns lit in the street just east of the palace—where they commonly waited at this time of night to pick up those leaving the Tuileries. Fersen himself, dressed as a common driver, was waiting in his hackney cab. They then took a short drive around the city until it was time for the rest of the family to leave, returning about eleven to the same spot. Tourzel was amazed at the Swede's imitation of a Parisian coachman, his whistling, his stopping to chat and exchange tobacco with the other drivers. The princess remembered only that "never had time seemed so long."⁷

Soon after Fersen had returned, the king's sister, Elizabeth, who had donned her own disguise and slipped out of her room through a secret door built into the apartment's woodwork, made her way out of the palace to the waiting hackney cab, where Fersen directed her to the correct door. The king was supposed to leave next, but at the last minute General Lafayette and Bailly, the mayor of Paris, arrived unannounced at the palace, and Louis was obliged to speak with them. Only at about half past eleven, when the two Parisian leaders had left, could he pretend to go to bed, dismiss his servants, and then get up, put on his own disguise, and walk cane in hand with Malden to the waiting carriage. With his usual phlegm, he even stopped to buckle his shoe as he crossed the courtyard. Last to depart was the queen herself. By some accounts she nearly collided with Lafayette who was also just leaving the palace. But dazzled by the torches held around him and preoccupied with other matters, the general took no notice of the lone woman walking in the shadows, and after an anxious moment she, too, climbed into the cab.⁸

It was now about half past twelve, an hour later than planned. As the family embraced one another and settled into the small carriage, Fersen drove across Paris, with Malden at the back as footman, advancing slowly for fear of attracting attention. Rather than taking the most direct route to the Saint-Martin's tollgate, he drove first to the northwest along Rue de Clichy, where he verified that the berline had been removed. He was also anxious to avoid the popular northeastern neighborhoods of Paris, where suspicions were always



Departure of Louis XVI from the Tuileries palace at 12:30 A.M. on June 21, 1791.
The king, holding a lantern, leads the escape party across the Tuileries courtyard to meet Fersen and the waiting hackney cab. In reality, most of the party left one at a time.

high and where activity in the streets continued well into the night. When he finally arrived at the gate, he spent several anxious minutes looking for Moustier, Sapel, and the berline, which had been parked in the dark much farther away than he had expected. Once he had located it, Fersen and the two bodyguards quickly transferred the travelers into the larger coach, pushed the smaller cab into a ditch, and set off along the main eastbound road out of Paris. The various delays had put them two hours behind schedule. It was the shortest night of the year, and the first signs of dawn were al-

ready appearing. Fersen shouted to his coachman to drive at full speed: "Come now, Balthasar," he said, as Sapel himself remembered it; "be bold, be quick! Your horses can't be tired, push them faster!" Half an hour later the berline arrived at the first relay post of Bondy, where Valory was waiting with a change of horses.⁹

Here Fersen left the party. He had brought off his part of the conspiracy with aplomb and audacity, engineering an almost miraculous escape from the Tuileries and from Paris. He planned now to travel separately on horseback, northward into the Austrian Netherlands and then along the border just outside the kingdom, meeting the family again in Montmédy. "Goodbye, Madame Korff," he said simply, addressing the disguised queen. And he rode off toward Le Bourget as the family headed east.¹⁰

At their next relay stop, in Claye, the travelers completed their party, picking up the cabriolet containing the two nurses. As the sun rose—somewhat after four—the caravan headed across the rolling plains of Ile-de-France and Champagne. They were hardly an inconspicuous ensemble. The yellow cabriolet, the large black berline with its yellow frame, and the three bodyguards in bright yellow coats—Valory leading on horseback, Malden atop the larger coach, and Moustier on horseback bringing up the rear—attracted the attention of countrypeople and townsmen wherever they passed.¹¹ To be sure, this was the main road from Paris to Germany, and the passage of wealthy travelers in luxurious vehicles was by no means unprecedented. But as they advanced farther toward Lorraine, observers focused in particular on the three guards. Apparently Moustier had chosen yellow uniforms quite by accident. For the local people, however, they seemed remarkably similar to the livery of the prince de Condé, the detested emigrant leader of a counterrevolutionary army and seigneurial lord of numerous territories in this region of France.¹²

The route followed was one of the major highways of the kingdom, broad, straight and well maintained, lined with trees for the most part and with a roadbed—paved with stones for about half the journey and thereafter covered in gravel—raised well above



the fields. Portions of the road had been completed only in 1785. Like many other wealthy long-distance travelers, the king's party changed both horses and drivers at each of the royal relay posts along the way. Valory generally rode well ahead of the others to rouse the "post-master" at the next stop and have the horses prepared, ready to be hitched to the arriving carriages. At each post they requested ten or eleven fresh horses—six for the berline, two or three for the cabriolet, and two mounts for Valory and Moustier. Each team was accompanied by one or two "drivers" or "guides," who usually rode astride one of the carriage horses, directing the party to the next relay station and then returning the teams to their home post. Louis carried a sack of gold coins that he periodically distributed to Valory to pay and tip the drivers.¹³ They normally made about nine or ten miles per hour on the road, although if one also takes into account the fifteen to twenty minutes spent at each of

the nineteen relay stops, the average for the trip was closer to seven miles per hour.¹⁴

As the day warmed and the carriages moved steadily across the countryside, the horses changed regularly and without difficulties, the travelers felt a sense of liberation and euphoria. The weather was hot and humid, but they encountered no rain. At one point, probably near Etoges, one of the berline's wheels hit a stone road marker, and four of the horses stumbled, breaking their traces. The thirty- or forty-five-minute repair job put the party even further behind schedule.¹⁵ But otherwise the drive itself went without a hitch. The most dangerous part of the trip seemed to lie behind them, and now it was simply a question of arriving at Somme-Vesle, where they would be watched over and taken in care, if necessary, by Choiseul's cavalry.

Inside the coach, the family ate a pleasant picnic breakfast with their fingers, "like hunters or third-class travelers," as Moustier described it. They shared accounts of their experiences in leaving the Tuilleries. The queen commented on how Lafayette must be embarrassed and squirming now that the royal departure had been discovered. The king took out his maps and the itinerary he had carefully prepared in advance, announcing each village or relay post as they passed by. It was only his third trip outside the region of Paris, the first since his glorious journey to Cherbourg in 1786, and he indulged his passion for geography and detailed lists. The queen took charge of assigning the roles they would all assume—as she had once delighted in doing with her courtiers in the Petit Trianon palace near Versailles. Madame de Tourzel would be the baroness de Korff, the dauphin and the princess would be the baroness' two children, and Madame Elizabeth and Marie-Antoinette would be her servingwomen. The queen and the king's sister were appropriately attired for such roles in simple "morning gowns," short capes, and matching hats. As for the king, dressed in his commoner's frock coat with a brown vest and a small round hat, he would be Monsieur Durand, the baroness' business agent.¹⁶

But the travelers soon tired of their role-playing and the rigors

of guarding a strict incognito. Louis in particular had never been adept at pretending to be someone he was not. In any case, he was convinced that with Paris behind them, with its Jacobin club and fanatical newspapers and wild-eyed mobs, everything would be different; the king and queen would now be properly respected. As the heat increased, they lowered the blinds, took off their hats and veils, and watched the peasants laboring in the fields. And the peasants watched back, wondering at the identity of these wealthy aristocrats in their curious yellow and black caravan. At the long uphill grades, like the one ascending from the Marne Valley after La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, most of the party got out and walked along behind while the horses labored up the hill. Later in the day the king began stepping out at the relay stops, relieving himself at the "necessary shed," and even stopping to chat with the people gathered around, asking about the weather and the crops, as he had talked in his youth with the laborers outside Versailles. The bodyguards and the two nurses worried at first about the king's insouciance, and Moustier tried to shield him from a group of gaping countrypeople at one of the rest stops. However, Louis told the guard "not to worry; that he no longer felt that such precautions were necessary; and that the trip now seemed to be free of all uncertainty." In the end, the bodyguards concluded that the royal members knew what they were doing and that they themselves need not be concerned.¹⁷

And the king was in fact recognized. A wagon driver, François Picard, was convinced he had seen the monarch when the horses were changed outside the relay in Montmirail. Louis was recognized again three stops further, in Chaintrix, by the post-master, Jean-Baptiste de Lagny, and his son-in-law Gabriel Vallet, both of whom had attended the Festival of Federation in Paris in 1790. Here, as local memory would have it, the whole royal family got out and took refreshments at the inn attached to the relay, leaving two small silver bowls stamped with the royal insignia in appreciation. In any case, Lagny assigned Vallet to drive the berline on to Châlons-sur-Marne, and the son-in-law immediately whispered the news to the post-master there, a close friend of the family.¹⁸

As they drove into Châlons about four in the afternoon, the travelers might have had cause to be nervous. It was by far the largest town between Paris and Montmédy, and there were undoubtedly several local notables who had seen the royal couple in Versailles. Yet Louis seems to have taken no more care here than in the small rural posts he had just traversed. In addition to the post-master Viet, several other persons seem to have recognized them. "We were recognized by everybody," recalled Madame Royale. "Many people praised God to see the king and wished him well in his flight."¹⁹ Whether people were really pleased to see the king leave Paris, or were simply too shocked to know what to do, Viet and his stable hands quietly changed the horses and watched the carriages drive out of town. The mayor was informed almost immediately, but he, too, was uncertain what to do. Only several hours later, when messengers began arriving from Paris, confirming the news of the king's escape and sending the Assembly's decree to stop him, did the municipal government swing into action.²⁰

On leaving Châlons and heading east toward the border of Lorraine, the travelers were extremely optimistic, feeling they had crossed their last major obstacle and would soon be in the care of the duke de Choiseul and his loyal cavalry. With his detailed itinerary at hand, the king was aware that they had fallen nearly three hours behind, yet it probably never occurred to him that this could pose a problem. The mood shifted abruptly, however, as they came in sight of the small relay post at Somme-Vesle, isolated on the main road at some distance from the village. In the great expanse of openfield farmland surrounding them there were no troops in sight. Valory cautiously inquired and discovered that the cavalry had indeed been there, waiting across a small pond beyond the relay, but that the troops had been harassed by local peasants and had left an hour earlier. At first the travelers thought that Choiseul might simply have pulled back to a quieter spot farther down the road. Yet when they reached the next relay, he and his men were still nowhere to be seen. As the family drove in the early evening toward the town of Sainte-Menehould, framed against the dark band of the

Argonne Forest, they were beset, in Tourzel's words, by "terrible anxiety."²¹

The Debacle

Over the previous days, the organization of the king's escort had initially gone quite smoothly, despite the modifications caused by Louis' last-minute decision to delay his departure by one day. As Fersen and the royal family completed their preparations and launched the escape from Paris, General Bouillé had been activating a whole series of prearranged troop movements to prepare a reception for the king. The general himself had left his headquarters in Metz on June 16, informing local officials that he was off to inspect the frontiers for possible Austrian troop activities. Orders were given to begin concentrating soldiers and large quantities of food and supplies in Montmédy. On June 20 he had arrived in Stenay, the fortified town on the Meuse between Montmédy and Varennes. His youngest son and another officer, the count de Raigecourt, had been sent ahead to Varennes with a team of relay horses, joining some forty German troops already stationed there. To avoid suspicion, they were to keep the horses in the stables of an inn just east of the river, leading them to the southern edge of Varennes only when they were notified of the king's impending arrival. During the night of June 20–21 the elder Bouillé and a small group of officers had secretly ridden eight miles farther south to wait for the royal party in a secluded position just north of the small town of Dun. Meanwhile, other contingents of German cavalry were led from the south by commanders Damas and Andoins to take up positions in Clermont and Sainte-Menehould respectively. On the morning of June 21, François de Goguelat himself had led forty hussars from Sainte-Menehould to Somme-Vesle, arriving about noon to meet the duke de Choiseul—and the hairdresser Léonard—who were waiting at the relay post.²²

All these well-laid plans, however, were evolving not in a vacuum but in full view of a civilian population that was anything

but passive. The townspeople of Varennes were not alone in their growing apprehension about the unexplained troop movements throughout the region during the month of June. The pervasive suspicion of General Bouillé, the "butcher of Nancy," and of the aristocratic officers who commanded in the field was only intensified by the overwhelming presence of German-speaking mercenaries in all the contingents that people now saw passing. The tension was compounded by the army's failure to give ample advance warning of the arriving cavalrymen. Town leaders were notified at the last moment that the troops had been sent to protect money being shipped from Paris to pay the army guarding the frontier. But the story did little to allay local fears. Why were there so many cavalrymen, when a single escort from start to finish should have been sufficient? Why had the commanders dispatched only German-speaking troops? Was a war about to break out—always a critical question for this frontier region—and, if so, on which side would a German army led by aristocrats fight? Ironically, then, the very escorts sent to protect the king were arousing great suspicion among the population through which the king must travel.

In Montmédy the apparent preparation of a large military camp—and the order to bake 18,000 rations of bread—had also excited "mistrust and anxiety." "These extraordinary movements in a time of peace, aides-de-camp appearing on all the roads, sentinels positioned everywhere, had raised a general alarm among the population."²³ The people of Clermont, just south of Varennes, watched as 150 cavalry rode through one day and 180 more the next, the latter abruptly announcing their intention to stay the night. Few believed the story of the shipment of a strongbox, and rumors spread that the "treasure" in question was actually being smuggled out by the queen to her brother the Austrian emperor—or that maybe the treasure was the queen herself.²⁴ Likewise Sainte-Menehould, farther west, saw the sudden and unannounced appearance of two successive cavalry contingents. The second, a group of dragoons under the command of Andoins, dismounted at midmorning on June 21 in the town's large central square and waited there throughout the day

while their nervous commander paced the street and periodically rode out of town to watch the horizon. Whenever the officers were away, townspeople attempted to communicate with the foreign-tongued cavalrymen, plying them with drink and asking them their "real" purpose in the region. Many of the soldiers, mystified themselves by their strange assignment, began to wonder whether their officers could be trusted. By the end of the afternoon, suspicions had reached such a level that elements of the national guard began arming and preparing for an unidentified calamity.²⁵

In the meantime, even more disastrous events were unrolling at the critical forward position of Somme-Vesle, where the duke de Choiseul's hussars were waiting not in a town but in the open countryside. Here, as in so many rural regions of France after the Revolution began, the peasants had been recalcitrant about paying their seigneurial dues. When the cavalrymen arrived, splendid and frightening in their high plumed helmets, panic spread through the community that the men had come to seize the peasants' money or crops, and people arrived from every direction, pitchforks and sickles in hand, shouting and threatening the horsemen. In the mid-afternoon, having heard stories of the unrest from passing travelers, a delegation of national guardsmen came out from Châlons to investigate. Choiseul and Goguelat attempted to reason with everyone, telling them the story of the strongbox. Although the guardsmen were apparently pacified and returned home, the peasants remained unconvinced and continued to menace the detachment.²⁶

At the same time, Choiseul grew increasingly uneasy about the long-overdue arrival of the king. Goguelat had carefully timed the trip, and by his calculations the royal party should have arrived by two o'clock. In a letter to Bouillé, Fersen had even promised that the king would be in Somme-Vesle by half past two: "you can count on it." Finally, late in the afternoon the young duke made a series of poorly conceived decisions heavy with consequences for the whole plan of escape. Unnerved by the presence of the crowds, worried that the king had somehow failed to leave Paris, fearful that even if the king did arrive, the near-riot conditions at the relay post might

jeopardize his passage, Choiseul resolved to retreat, and to retreat not just a short way down the road, but all the way to Bouillé's headquarters in Stenay, some fifty miles distant. Perhaps even more fateful, he then sent word to the other contingents of cavalry waiting behind him: "It would appear that the treasure is not arriving today. I am leaving to rejoin General Bouillé. You will receive new orders tomorrow." Finally, to deliver the message he made the exceptionally strange choice of Monsieur Léonard, the queen's hairdresser.²⁷

For the next eight hours the duke and his small force would disappear to the northeast, traveling across country rather than following the main road, raising pandemonium as they galloped unannounced through village after village, before storming into the Argonne Forest and losing their way. In contrast, Monsieur Léonard in his small carriage, rapidly taking to his role as military courier, performed his task perfectly. Driving in succession through Sainte-Menehould, Clermont, and Varennes, he passed along the message implying that the king was not coming. In the first two towns, Andoins and Damas welcomed an excuse to have their men unsaddle and retire to their lodgings, to some extent reducing the fears of the townspeople. Both nevertheless remained at their posts with a few officers and soldiers, waiting to see what would happen. In Varennes both commander and cavalry retired for the night. Only Raigecourt and the younger Bouillé stood in readiness at their hotel window, waiting to see if the relay horses, below in the stables, might still be necessary.²⁸

AS THE ROYAL CARAVAN drove down the long main street of Sainte-Menehould and into the central square, the anxieties aroused by the failure to find Choiseul were scarcely allayed. They did now see cavalry, but the men seemed to be relaxing, dismounted and disarmed, some of them drinking in an inn. Even more worrisome were the groups of national guardsmen, many carrying muskets, milling about on the opposite side of the Place Royale in front of the elegant brick and limestone town hall. The travelers must have

felt as if they were stumbling by chance into a drama unrolling on the stage of the town square, where the entire citizenry seemed to be gathered. They must also have been aware that everyone had turned to watch them, staring in particular at the bodyguards, who looked for all the world like the men of the prince de Condé. A few buildings farther along, on a street that angled off to the right, the royal party found the relay post where Valory and the stablehands were already preparing the horses. The change of teams went smoothly and rapidly. While they were waiting, the queen, anxious to learn what was happening, called Andoins over to the berline. The officer tried to look casual as he walked up, but when he saw the king he instinctively saluted. He then whispered, "Plans have not worked out; I must leave for fear of raising suspicion." And he quickly walked away. "These few words," as Tourzel recalled, "pierced us to the heart."²⁹

The manager of the relay post, Jean-Baptiste Drouet, apparently arrived on the scene only after his stablehands had almost completed the change of horses. Twenty-eight years old, the younger of two brothers, he had served seven years in the cavalry before returning to his hometown to work in the family fields and operate the post owned by his widowed mother. He was ambitious and self-confident, but he found himself forced into the drudgery of farm work and manual labor, a considerable comedown from the glamorous career of his youth, and a source of much frustration.³⁰ Now, when he saw the berline and looked carefully at the passengers inside, he was stunned to recognize the queen of France, whom he had once seen while his company was stationed near Versailles. Although he had never before viewed the king, the face of the heavy-set man sitting next to her struck him as remarkably like the image of Louis XVI printed on the new paper money that had lately come into circulation. After watching the two carriages drive away, he began telling everyone around him that the king had just passed. At first, like the people in Chaintrix and in Châlons, no one knew what to do or what to think. But only a few minutes later Andoins had the bugle sounded, calling his dragoons to remount and prepare to



Drouet Recognizes the King in Sainte-Menehould. The royal family waits while Louis dines on pigs' feet, the culinary specialty of Sainte-Menehould, in an inn called Au Fuiard (The Runaway). Drouet identifies the monarch by comparing him with the portrait on a bill of paper money. In reality, the king never left the carriage while in Sainte-Menehould.

leave, and suddenly the scales fell from their eyes. It had all been a plot. The cavalry had come not to escort a strongbox, but to accompany the king, who either was fleeing or had been abducted.³¹

Thereafter the chronology of events in Sainte-Menehould is somewhat unclear. Almost immediately the local national guard, armed with muskets, drums beating, organized themselves and lined up across the street to block the passage of the cavalry. At the same time, other citizens began talking to the horsemen, encouraging them to disobey their officers. While Andoins tried to talk with the townspeople, one of his mounted officers fired a pistol into the air and made a run for it, breaking through the guardsmen and riding out of town, dodging the musket shots that were fired his way. With the church bells now ringing and riot conditions breaking out, Andoins and the remaining officers were disarmed and locked in the town jail for their own safety. Drouet was called into the municipal council, meeting in emergency session in their hall, directly adjoining the riot site. And after he had told his story, the town fathers, on their own initiative, made an extraordinary decision. If the king was leaving Paris, it could only mean that he was heading for the frontier, perhaps to return with a foreign army, to invade the country and end the Revolution. Other towns in the direction of the frontier must be warned and the king stopped. They asked Drouet himself, known as one of the best riders in town, to go after him. The postmaster quickly recruited his friend Jean Guillaume, another ex-cavalryman, and the two set off in pursuit of the royal family, by now a good hour and a half ahead of them. As they approached the town of Clermont, Drouet and Guillaume encountered the postmaster's driver bringing back the team, and he told them that the berline and the cabriolet had left the main road and turned north. The two horsemen then headed across country in the direction of Varennes.³²

About an hour earlier, around half past nine, after a slow climb over the hills of the Argonne, the royal caravan had pulled into the relay stop at Clermont. It was almost dark, and the post was on the near edge of town, so few people saw the travelers arrive, and

the change of horses went quickly. The count Damas, who had remained waiting nearby, cautiously spoke to the royal family and at greater length with Valory, warning them of the wide unrest in Clermont over the presence of troops, and promising to follow as soon as the two carriages had advanced some distance ahead—thus following Bouillé's orders to the letter. But the caravan was seen clearly as it passed through the middle of town and turned toward Varennes. The events that followed in Clermont were strangely similar to those in Sainte-Menehould. No one had recognized the royal couple, but everyone saw the prince de Condé's yellow livery and concluded there must be some connection with the soldiers who had been inexplicably billeted in their town the last two days. About an hour later, as national guardsmen put on their uniforms and assembled, the officer who had escaped Sainte-Menehould arrived and informed Damas that the king's party had been recognized and that a full-scale riot had broken out as soon as they had left. When the commander tried to rally his men, most of them, now drinking heavily and won over by the citizenry, refused to obey. He escaped with only a handful of cavalry, riding at full speed in an attempt to warn the king.³³

In the meantime the occupants of the berline were advancing steadily down the long valley of the Aire, exhausted by their trek and dozing in the darkness "despite their tension and anxiety."³⁴ Their tension would have been still greater if they had been aware of the waves of panic and insurrection rapidly approaching from the rear. There was the smaller local surge generated by the events in Sainte-Menehould and Clermont and by the duke de Choiseul's wild ride through the villages of the Argonne. Not far behind was an even greater wave of emotion spreading over the whole kingdom, as official couriers and private citizens rushed down the roads of France announcing the news of the king's disappearance.

The arrival in Varennes about eleven brought yet another jolt of uncertainty and disappointment. Bouillé and Choiseul had promised to position a new team of horses in the trees near the road just before the first houses. But although Valory and Moustier searched ev-

erywhere, riding into the sleeping settlement as far as the river, they found no sign of the expected relay team. They even knocked on a few doors close to the entrance of the town, yet they could obtain no assistance. The travelers then asked the drivers to skip the relay and continue on to Dun, but the men from Clermont had strict instructions from their post-master to go no farther than Varennes unless the horses were first fed and rested. A half-hour, perhaps forty minutes passed as they searched the town and argued with the drivers. And while they were still parked by the road, Drouet and Guillaume trotted past and into town.³⁵

Finally the drivers agreed to proceed to the center of Varennes while the party looked for more horses. They advanced slowly through the darkness, the street illuminated only by the lanterns of the cabriolet. They began to hear voices, shouts, someone crying, "Fire! Fire!" Madame de Tourzel remembered the moment vividly: "We thought we had been betrayed, and we drove down the street with a feeling of sadness and distress that can scarcely be described." They passed under the archway by the Inn of the Golden Arm. And there they were stopped.³⁶

Return to Paris

For the royal family and their supporters, the night in Varennes could only have been a prolonged agony, the stuff of their worst nightmares—those "eight deathly hours of waiting," as Madame de Tourzel described them. There were moments of hope: the seeming willingness of the town leaders to help them, the miraculous appearance first of Choiseul and Goguelat, and then of Damas and Deslon at the head of their cavalry units. To the last moment there was also the wishful assumption that General Bouillé was nearby, that he was on his way to deliver them. But Louis resolutely rejected his officers' proposals to extricate the family violently, lest harm befall his wife and children. The town council's change of heart soon thereafter, its refusal to allow them to continue their journey, was a bitter disappointment. The appearance of the couri-

ers from Paris, ordering their return to the capital, brought final humiliation and defeat.

For a time they tried to stall. They requested that the children be allowed to sleep longer, that they themselves be given time to rest. One of the nursemaids even feigned a violent stomachache. In the end, they asked and were granted a moment alone to gather their thoughts, time which they spent preparing a common story and burning the incriminating documents in their possession. Finally, at about half past seven in the morning, the royal party was led from Sauce's store and taken to the two carriages, which had now been turned around. The family was frightened by the great sea of people filling the street and the square beyond the river, jostling for a view of the king and queen, shouting continuously, "Long live the nation! Long live the king! Back to Paris!" The duke de Choiseul, ever gallant, helped the queen into the berline. She turned and asked him, "Do you think Monsieur Fersen has escaped?" The duke said that he believed he had. Soon afterward he was pulled away into the crowd, badly beaten, and eventually led away to prison in Verdun, along with Damas and several other officers. Only the wily Goguelat with his bandaged pistol wound somehow managed to slip out of town, to be captured several days later on the Austrian border. As the carriages moved slowly up the hill along the road back toward Paris, the family looked across the river, still wondering what had happened to Bouillé.³⁷

At that very moment, the general was a good hour and a half away. He had been told the disastrous news at a little after four that morning by his youngest son, who caught up with him as he and his officers had almost reached Stenay after abandoning their long wait outside Dun. It had taken another forty-five minutes to get the bulk of his royal German cavalry, three or four hundred strong, into the saddle and riding back toward Varennes. As they approached the town they encountered hundreds of peasants and guardsmen in full mobilization, marching in all directions with drums and flags, and on several occasions they were forced to draw their sabers and charge, threatening a fight before the crowds gave way. When they

finally arrived on the hill above Varennes, it was nine or half past. And they went no further.

Bouillé would later argue that the bridge had been dismantled and that they were unable to ford the river. But the commander of the Varennes cavalry had waded the river on horseback a few hours earlier, and the road actually crossed to the right bank of the Aire only a couple of miles farther south. More likely, the general had been informed that the king was now two hours away and that he was surrounded by several thousand armed guardsmen. Menaced from all sides by the local population, concerned about the condition of the horses after their long ride south, and perhaps nursing doubts about the reliability of his own cavalry—who would in fact go over to the patriots a few hours later—the general now turned and retreated to Stenay. He had a quick cup of coffee in his inn, gathered together his two sons and about twenty officers, and rode into exile in Austrian Belgium, a few miles away.³⁸ Two days later the baron Klinglin, one of the officers who had worked most closely with Bouillé over the previous months, wrote a letter to his sister. He lamented the failure of “our sublime conspiracy.” “How difficult it is to overcome fate! What a strange destiny that the leaders of an insignificant little town like Varennes should have halted the king. Oh my dear friend, how sweet it would have been to have died, if only we could have saved the king!”³⁹

By the time Bouillé had begun his retreat the royal cortège was just entering Clermont. Those in the king’s party would never forget the terrifying journey back to Paris. Compared with the race to Varennes on June 21, the return was ponderously tedious, dragging on for four long days. The hottest weather of the summer had now settled in, and the pace of the carriages was usually too slow to raise even a hint of a breeze. The enormous crowds of people tramping along outside raised great clouds of dust that only intensified the misery. Valory, who sat atop the berline with his hands tied, recalled the ordeal: “We were cooked by the sun and choked by the dust.”⁴⁰

When they first drove out of Varennes, they had been accompanied by some six thousand national guardsmen, marching in double

columns with some semblance of order, led by the Parisian guardsman and messenger Bayon. But as they made their way west, countrypeople converged from every direction: men, women, and children, often whole villages arriving en masse, in carts or on foot, carrying every conceivable weapon. Observers were staggered by the numbers of people, spilling off the road into the surrounding fields and following like a great swarm: this “countless multitude,” as the bodyguard Moustier remembered, “of every age and of both sexes, armed with muskets, sabers, pitchforks, pikes, axes, or sickles.” The deputy Pétion, who accompanied the family on the last half of their journey, said much the same: in addition to the guardsmen, there were “old men and women and children, some carrying sickles or long spits, others with clubs, swords or antique guns.”⁴¹ Many came simply to gawk at the king and the queen, whom they had never seen, never hoped to see. Others, members of their town or village militias, rushed to the defense of both the nation and the king—for at first there were rumors that the monarch had been kidnapped. Often it was their first chance to put to use their company flags and colorful new uniforms, previously worn only in parades around the town square. At times the crowds were in a celebratory mood, especially when the royal cortège crossed the communities touched by the previous night’s panic. People exalted at their victory sang and danced and drank to the health of the nation and the king. Mayors gave splendid speeches, patterned on the rhetoric they had read in accounts of National Assembly debates. The faithful Madame de Tourzel was shocked by the many harangues the king had to endure from local dignitaries, anxious to lecture him on his thoughtlessness in abandoning his people, in causing them such a fright—even if he had only been heeding the advice of treacherous councilors. Town officials, she felt, “had only one thought in mind: to glory in their own triumph and to humiliate the royal family. It was a joy for them to overwhelm the unfortunate monarchs with bitter invectives.”⁴²

Yet there was also a strong element of fear. General Bouillé and his four hundred cavalrymen, galloping down the road to Varennes,

had caused an enormous fright among the countrypeople, a fright that quickly spread from village to village and was magnified by the movement of other troops in the region. Soon reports began spreading of thousands of soldiers, perhaps the whole Austrian army, led by the villain general, arriving to punish the people of Lorraine and Champagne for capturing the king.⁴³ Among the crowds following the cortège, swept by ever-changing rumors, the festive mood could be rapidly transformed into anger and a desire for revenge. Usually the outrage was directed not toward the monarch—cries of “Long live the king!” could be heard throughout the journey—but toward those presumed to have influenced or kidnapped him. However, the crowds had few qualms about targeting the queen. There were the inevitable coarse references to Marie’s sex life, and snide remarks about the dauphin’s “real father.” When Marie offered a piece of chicken to a guardsman who had been particularly kind and obliging, a great roar rose up that it was poison, that the young man should not touch it. But hatreds were focused above all on the three bodyguards, seated prominently above on the driver’s seat, still dressed in their rich yellow livery coats, symbolic of all that was hateful under the Old Regime. Assumed by many to have been the instigators of the flight, they were continually threatened verbally and pelted with rocks or dung. On several occasions groups tried to approach the berline and attack them physically, before being pushed away by the national guardsmen.⁴⁴

Sauve himself accompanied the coaches as far as Clermont, before turning back to see to the defense of his town against a possible attack by Bouillé. The cortège then moved along the main post road to Sainte-Menehould, where the mayor gave another formal speech and Drouet and Guillaume—who had returned home during the night—ostentatiously joined in the march. West of the town a local noble, the count Dampierre, who had witnessed the mayor’s address in Sainte-Menehould, attempted to approach the berline on horseback and speak to the family. When the guards pushed him back, he shouted “Long live the king!,” fired his musket in the air, and rode off toward his chateau. The count was already widely hated by the

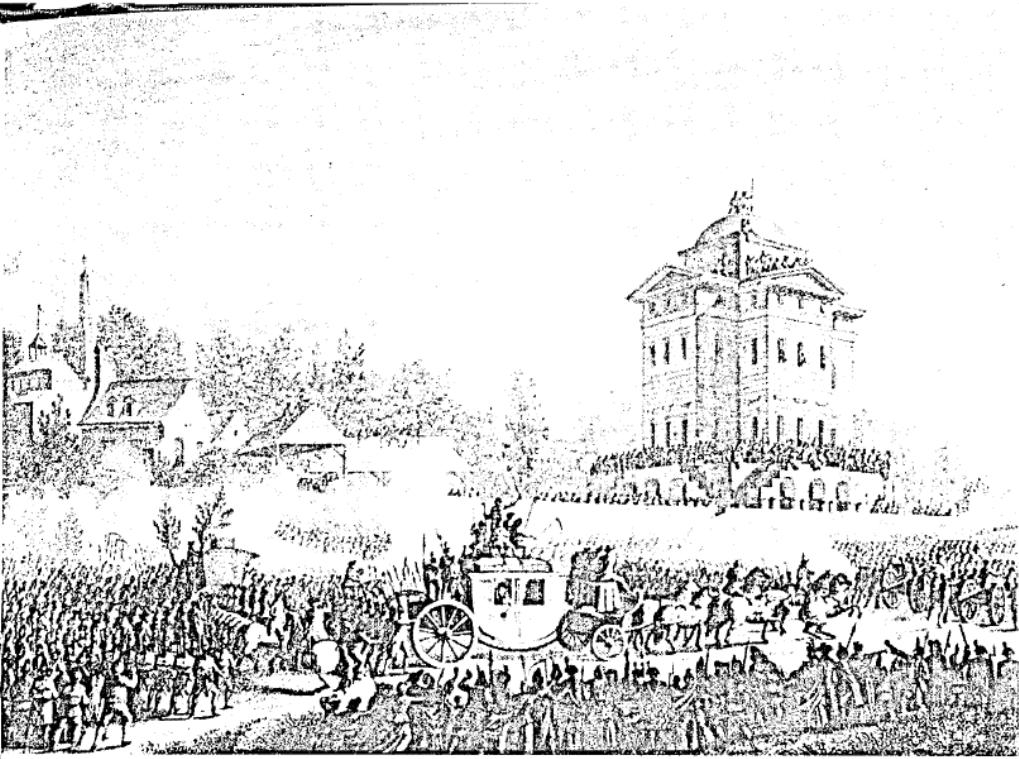
local population, and groups of people followed him, shot him off his horse, and killed him in the fields. It is unclear whether the king himself saw the massacre, but the bodyguards watched in horror from atop the carriage.⁴⁵

By the time the procession reached Châlons-sur-Marne at the end of the day, the royal family had been almost forty hours without sleep. “It is almost impossible,” as one witness put it, “to describe their state of exhaustion.”⁴⁶ But here they would know a few hours of respite from the tension and fatigue. They were feted by the mayor and the departmental leaders, who arrived to meet them at the gates of the city, and they were given accommodations in the palace of the former intendant. It was the very building where the young Marie-Antoinette had once spent the night on her trip to France from Austria, some twenty-one years earlier. Authorities here were clearly more sympathetic to the plight of the monarch. That night a small group of individuals even offered to help him escape, though Louis refused to consider leaving without his family, and the plan came to nothing. The next morning the king and queen attended Corpus Christi mass, but before the service was completed they were hustled away by another company of national guards just arrived from Reims. New stories were coming in that Varennes and Sainte-Menehould had been sacked and burned by marauding armies, and the guardsmen insisted on moving the king rapidly back toward Paris.⁴⁷

They set out once again in late morning, advancing painfully slowly with their great escort, now estimated at 15,000 to 30,000 people, following the Marne Valley rather than the shorter route through Montmirail that they had used for their flight. They stopped briefly for dinner in Epernay, but a riot broke out in the streets, and Madame de Tourzel was nearly pulled away into the crowds before they were rushed onto the road once again.⁴⁸ Then toward half past seven in the evening, as the route skirted the river in the open countryside, the cortège suddenly came to a halt, and the crowds hushed and pulled aside from the road ahead. Three deputies sent by the National Assembly in Paris had arrived and

were approaching on foot, preceded by the Assembly's sergeant at arms. The representatives had learned that the king had been stopped in Varennes some twenty hours earlier, and they had immediately dispatched three of their members, carefully chosen to represent the diverse political groupings in the Assembly. Antoine Barnave led the way, a moderate Jacobin and gifted orator, only twenty-nine years old and looking even younger. He was followed by Jérôme Pétion, somewhat older, a fervent democrat and close associate of Maximilien Robespierre and the radical Jacobins; and by Marie-Charles de Latour-Maubourg, a monarchist and a friend of Lafayette. After the long hours of fear and uncertainty, the women in the carriage were overcome with emotion at the appearance of these men, men they had once so despised, but who now seemed to promise their safety. Madame Elizabeth took the deputies' hands and begged them to protect the three bodyguards, who had only recently been threatened with lynching. After a few words of comfort, Barnave formally read the decree of the Assembly, commissioning them to ensure the king's safe return to Paris. He then climbed atop the berline and, sharply illuminated by the setting sun, read out the decree a second time for the benefit of the crowd. It was another extraordinary moment in the Revolution, clearly marking the transfer of sovereignty from the king to the nation.⁴⁹

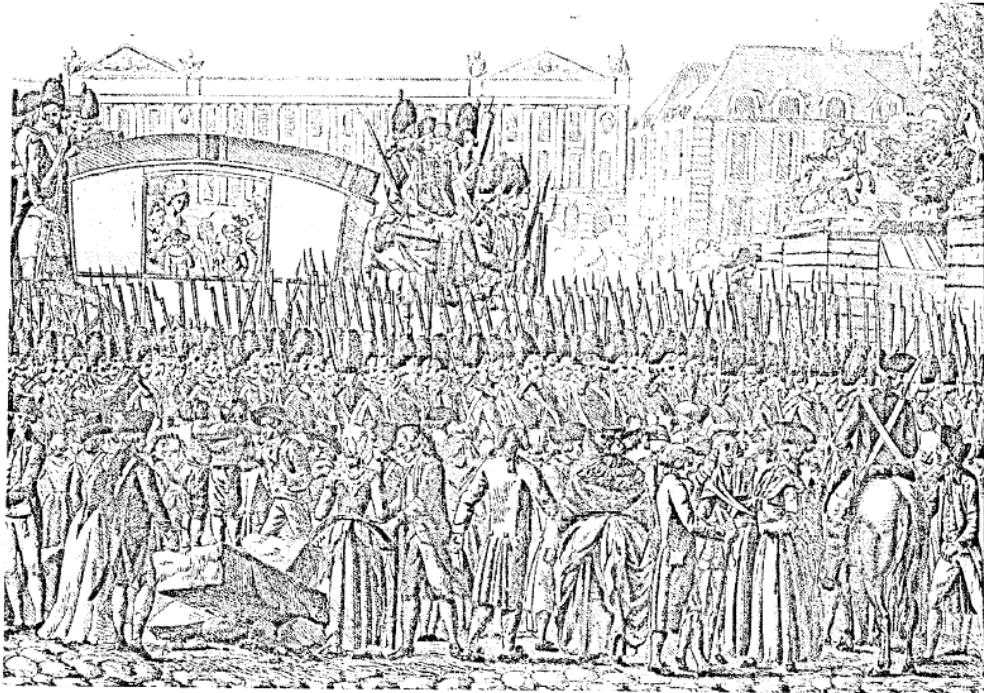
The deputies had been accompanied by the military officer Mathieu Dumas, a moderate patriot and veteran of the War of the American Revolution, and Dumas now took charge of the national guard contingents, reestablishing some semblance of order in the immense procession. Barnave and Pétion squeezed their way into the larger coach with the two children moved to the laps of the women, and the much taller Maubourg found a place with the nurses in the cabriolet. They spent that night in the small town of Dormans, getting to bed well after midnight. The next day, as they passed through the town of Château-Thierry, Dumas managed a maneuver at the bridge that cut them off from most of their amorphous popular escort, and they were able to proceed rapidly to Meaux, where they passed the night of June 24 in the bishop's



The Royal Family Approaches Paris. The king's berline and the smaller diligence holding the nurses pass below the customs gate of Le Roule just north of the entrance to the Champs-Elysées. The hill of Montmartre, exaggerated in height, is visible in the background.

residence. But more masses of people, guardsmen and spectators, converged on the town during the night, and the final drive to the capital through the summer heat was as slow and encumbered as before. "I have never experienced," wrote Pétion, "a longer and more exhausting day."⁵⁰

As the procession passed through the Paris suburbs, the mood grew decidedly more aggressive. There were several concerted attacks on the berline, probably aimed at the bodyguards. Barnave and Pétion began to fear for the safety of the passengers and shouted for protection from the guardsmen, some of whom had now arrived from Paris. Two officers were badly wounded, and



The Royal Family Returns to the Tuileries. The berline crosses the Place de Louis XV (today Place de la Concorde) and is about to enter the Tuileries gardens. Almost all the spectators have left on their hats and bonnets, an obvious snub to the king. Note the women confronting a man (right) who has taken off his hat.

Dumas was nearly pushed from his horse before they finally arrived at the city walls, where General Lafayette met them with a large contingent of cavalry.⁵¹ The cortège was then directed around the perimeter of the city, again avoiding the working-class neighborhoods and entering from the northwest via the Champs-Elysées. The whole of Paris had kept abreast of the king's progress, and tens of thousands of men, women, and children pressed to watch the slow advance down the avenue, with hundreds more clinging to trees and rooftops. The occupants of the carriage appeared exhausted, dirty, ruffled. There were a few cheers for the deputies, and for Drouet and Guillaume and the guardsmen from Varennes who had made the long trek, and who were positioned prominently at the front of the march. But for the most part the crowd remained

silent, refusing to remove their hats and their bonnets, in an obvious expression of disrespect for the monarch. As a similar sign of disapprobation, several companies of the national guardsmen lining the street held their muskets upside down, barrels pointed at the ground. In Paris, unlike in the provinces, the traditional salute of "Long live the king!" was not to be heard.⁵² For Louis, always so sensitive to the acclamations of the crowds, it could only have been a moment of great sadness.

At the end of the avenue they crossed the great square—known today as the Place de la Concorde—and entered the Tuileries gardens, coming to a halt near the entrance to the palace. Discipline almost broke down now, as people in the crowds rushed toward the coach and attempted to seize the bodyguards. Only with great difficulty were Dumas and Pétion and several other officers able to carry the three battered and bleeding men to safety. In the meantime the royal family had quickly descended and walked untouched into the Tuileries, the palace they had hoped to escape forever just five days earlier.⁵³

Postmortems

"What a strange destiny!" the baron Klinglin had exclaimed. Only fifteen more miles, one or two hours' drive to Dun through the dead of night, and the royal family could have been in the protective care of General Bouillé and his force of several hundred cavalry. From the very moment of the king's capture, participants in and witnesses of the flight to Varennes began asking themselves what had gone wrong, how they had failed, who was ultimately at fault. Even the patriots, for whom the flight's failure was a great victory, reflected at length on the strange workings of fate that had halted the king of France so close to his escape. Indeed, generations of historians have followed in their minds the divergent universes of "contrafactual history," meditating on how different everything might have been if Louis had succeeded in reaching Montmédy. What would have happened if the servingwoman in the palace had not become suspicious, compelling the royal family to postpone

their departure; if Lafayette had not come by the Tuileries for a late-night chat; if the duke de Choiseul had waited one more hour in the meadow near Somme-Vesle; if Drouet had remained in his fields a few minutes longer before returning to his post; if the drivers from Clermont had been convinced or bribed or coerced to continue beyond Varennes without a change of horses? The string of "ifs" is almost endless. For indeed, the "event" of Varennes—like almost any event in history—is constructed of a nearly infinite series of subevents, any one of which might have changed the outcome of that day.

Yet if one steps back from this sequence of circumstances, from the minutiae of individual actions and reactions, one might argue that two major factors shaped the experience of Varennes. The first was the personality and behavior of the central figure of the whole adventure, Louis XVI himself. The king's chronic indecision and unreliability had profoundly affected the origins and course of the entire Revolution. In the case at hand, an early and steadfast decision for flight would almost certainly have increased the chances of success. Even after April 1791, when Louis seems finally to have opted for escape, the act itself was postponed time after time, even though all the plans were in place by early May, if not before. Every day that the flight was delayed made it more likely that the complex conspiracy would be found out—as it was in fact found out by the queen's servingwoman sometime in early June. Every day that the flight was delayed made it more likely that French soldiers—under the ever-greater influence of the patriotic clubs—would refuse to obey their aristocratic commanders, would act aggressively to halt any action whose goals they rejected. During the months before the departure, General Bouillé had grown progressively more pessimistic about the reliability of his troops and the feasibility of the whole plan.⁵⁴ In the end, his decision to rely on foreign-born, German-speaking cavalry enormously raised the suspicions of the villagers and townspeople who would observe their movements. But even then the flight might have succeeded, if only the king had not tempted fate by riding in his carriage with the window shades down and by stepping outside and openly presenting himself to all by-

standers. Such actions were, of course, closely related to the king's failure to comprehend the real meaning and wide appeal of the Revolution, to his assumption that the Revolutionary changes he detested had been provoked by a few radicals in the National Assembly and their demagogic control of the Parisian "rabble."

But in this sense a second fundamental cause of the failure of Varennes was precisely the sweeping transformation in French attitudes and psychology engendered by the Revolution. A new sense of self-confidence, of self-reliance, of identity with the nation as a whole and not merely with the local community—the transformation that we observed in the small town of Varennes—had penetrated much of the French population. It was developments such as these that help explain the extraordinary initiatives taken by small-town officials in Sainte-Menehould and Varennes to halt the king. Although the individual actions of Drouet and Sauce should not be underestimated, those actions would scarcely have been possible without the support of the town councils and indeed of the whole citizenry. The readiness of support had been further activated by the unusual and unexplained movements of mercenary cavalrymen in the days before the escape and by the population's pervasive suspicion of the aristocratic officers who led those troops. Near-insurrectional conditions already existed in both Sainte-Menehould and Clermont before the arrival of the king's caravan. Mercy-Argenteuil had not been mistaken when he warned the royal couple that now, in the context of the new Revolutionary mentality, "Every village could be an insurmountable barrier to your passage."

Indeed, from one point of view, the real question is not why the flight failed, but how it came so close to succeeding. The family's spectacular achievements in exiting from the Tuileries palace undetected, escaping from the great wary and suspicious city of Paris, and traveling along the main post roads to within a few dozen miles of the Austrian border all underline the organizational talents of General Bouillé and, above all, of Axel von Fersen. Working together, they came close to pulling off what would certainly have ranked among the greatest escapes of all time.

44. Bouillé, 240; Fersen, 128; Bouillé fils, 39; Damas, 207.
45. Bouillé fils, 43; Tourzel, 193; Bimbenet, 36, 51; Choiseul-Stainville, 44.
46. E.g., Bimbenet, 44, 57–62; 65–82; Choiseul-Stainville, 75–77; Weber, 324–325.
47. Choiseul-Stainville, 50, 52; Tourzel, 190–92; Campan, 286–90; Feuillet de Conches, 2: 14, 127–128; Bimbenet, 26, 40–44.
48. AP 25: 201, 312–13; Fersen, 87; also Fersen, 108; Tourzel, 179; Arneth, 155; Feuillet de Conches, 2: 48–49.
49. Bouillé, 202, 226–233, 247–249, 215–216; Bouillé fils, 17–19, 21–22, 24–25, 56–59; Heidenstam, 44–45.
50. Bouillé, 219–220, 240, 255; Bouillé fils, 37–39, 44, 87; Fersen, 121.
51. Bouillé fils, 37–39; Fersen, 118, 121; Tourzel, 196.
52. Campan, 282; Fersen, 121; Bouillé, 251; Choiseul-Stainville, 55–56, 58; Bouillé fils, 70–71; Damas, 207.
53. Bouillé, 253; Damas, 205–206 and 208; Choiseul-Stainville, 63; Fersen, 130.
54. Bouillé fils, 72–73; Choiseul-Stainville, 49.
55. Fersen, 136; Bouillé fils, 70–71.
56. Bouillé, 243–246; Bouillé fils, 33–41, 62–63, 80.
57. Fersen, 130; Bouillé, 220–222, 242; Bouillé fils, 64–65; Damas, 203–205; Choiseul-Stainville, 37; Aimond, *Enigme*, 131.
58. Bouillé, 254–255, 252; Fischbach, 205–206.
59. Choiseul-Stainville, 38, 55; Bouillé, 222; Fersen, 101, 109, 128, 132, 136.
60. Fersen, 137; Bouillé fils, 77–79; Bouillé, 254–255; Choiseul-Stainville, 42–43; Damas, 208.
61. Bouillé, 223; Fersen, 110; Choiseul-Stainville, 34, 53, 55–56.
62. Feuillet de Conches, 2: 101–125; Lefebvre, *Recueil de documents*, 274–284; Fersen, 128; Choiseul-Stainville, 34; Bouillé, 223.
63. Bouillé, 200–201; Arneth, 152–154, 171; Feuillet de Conches, 2: 129–130; Campan, 290; Choiseul-Stainville, 53. Bouillé seems to have made preparations for the king's arrival in the Abbey of Orval, just across the frontier; AP 27: 558.
64. Arneth, 152–154; Feuillet de Conches, 2: 55–59, 127–128, 63.

3. The King Takes Flight

1. Madame Royale, in Weber, 313–314; AN D XXIX bis 38, dos. 389; Bimbenet, 44.
2. Valory, 257–259; Moustier, 4; Bimbenet, 92–128; Louis XVIII, 40–41.
3. Bimbenet, 28–29, 51, 57–62; Moustier, 6–7.
4. Choiseul-Stainville, 69–74; Aimond, *Enigme*, 56; Lenôtre, 270–276.
5. Bimbenet, 8–11, 65–82.

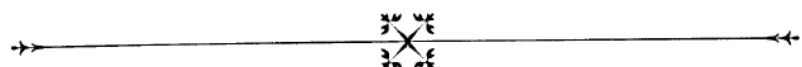
6. Aimond, *Enigme*, 57; Lafayette, 3: 77; Weber, 325; *Almanach de la ville de Lyon*, xix.
7. Tourzel, 191–192; Weber, 314–316. By some accounts Tourzel was accompanied out of the palace by Malden, or Fersen, or even the queen herself; Lenôtre, 41–42.
8. Choiseul-Stainville, 75–77; Bimbenet, 35–36, 92–103; Tourzel, 192; AP 27: 553; Aimond, *Enigme*, 56–57.
9. Tourzel, 193–194; Choiseul-Stainville, 78–79; Aimond, *Enigme*, 58; Bimbenet, 57–62.
10. Bimbenet, 61–62; Choiseul-Stainville, 78–79.
11. Bimbenet, 8–12, 36, 51.
12. Aimond, *Enigme*, 8–9.
13. Valory, 270; Bimbenet, 82–92; AP 27: 552–553; Vast, 15; Arbellot and Lepetit, 18.
14. Aimond, *Enigme*, 13. They traveled the 146 miles from Paris to Varennes in about 20.5 hours, or 7.1 miles per hour. With the nineteen relay stops subtracted, the road time was more like 9.2 miles per hour.
15. Fournel, 356; Lacroix, 128; Weber, 316. Others report that the accident was near Chaintrix: Vast, 24–25; Aimond, *Enigme*, 65–66, 74.
16. Tourzel, 193–195; Weber, 315; Moustier, 9–11; Vast, 1; Pétion, 194.
17. Bimbenet, 65–82, 92–103, 115–128; Moustier, 11; Aimond, *Enigme*, 64–65.
18. Aimond, *Enigme*, 64–65, 68–69; Vast, 16–19, 27, 39–41.
19. Weber, 316; Aimond, *Enigme*, 74–76; Vast, 41–43.
20. Vast, 62, 67–69, 72; Aimond, *Enigme*, 76–78; AN D XXIX bis 36 (1), dos. 370.
21. Tourzel, 195–197; Valory, 270; Vast, 97–99; Aimond, *Enigme*, 79.
22. Bouillé, 256–257; Damas, 209, 212–213; Bouillé fils, 79, 86, 122–129; Raigecourt, 187–195; Bimbenet, 238–239; Aimond, *Enigme*, 106–110.
23. Bimbenet, 177–178.
24. Damas, 107, 210, 214, 218; Vast, 175; Aimond, *Enigme*, 96.
25. Bimbenet, 183–185; Lagache, 449–453; Buirette, 546–550; Vast, 101–107; Aimond, *Enigme*, 33, 84–86.
26. Choiseul-Stainville, 80–84; Damas, 233–234; Aimond, *Enigme*, 80–81.
27. Fersen, 138; Choiseul-Stainville, 80–84, 109–110; Damas, 233–234; Bouillé fils, 95–98; Aimond, *Enigme*, 80–81.
28. Damas, 218–221; Bimbenet, 183–185; Raigecourt, 187–195; Aimond, *Enigme*, 108–110.
29. Tourzel, 197; Valory, 270–274; Moustier, 13; Lagache, 451; Fournel, 340–341; Buirette, 547–548; Vast, 107, 111–118; Aimond, *Enigme*, 84–87.
30. Laurent, 248–249.
31. AP 27: 508; Buirette, 547–548; Vast, 111–119; Aimond, *Enigme*, 87–91.

32. Bimbenet, 183–185; Lagache, 452–453; AN D XXIX bis 37, dos. 386; report of municipality of Sainte-Menehould, July 28, 1791; Buirette, 547–553.
33. Damas, 221–229; Valory, 276–277; Tourzel, 196; Weber, 316; Bimbenet, 187–193; Lagache, 453–454; Aimond, *Enigme*, 103.
34. Weber, 316.
35. Valory, 258, 279–285; Moustier, 15–18; Weber, 316; AP 27: 508–509; Aimond, *Histoire de Varennes*, 317–318.
36. Tourzel, 198.
37. Choiseul-Stainville, 105–108; Damas, 239; Tourzel, 202; Campan, 298–299; AD Ardennes, L 12 and 78; AN D XXIX bis, dos. 385; Fournel, 326; Aimond, *Histoire de Varennes*, 328; Aimond, *Enigme*, 156–159.
38. Bouillé, 241–246; Bouillé fils, 122–135; Bimbenet, 238–239; Planta de Wildenberg, 444–446; Aimond, *Histoire de Varennes*, 328–329; Aimond, *Enigme*, 161–166.
39. Fischbach, 209.
40. Valory, 312; Pétion, 197; Tourzel, 209–210. On the weather: Guittard de Floriban, 64–66.
41. Moustier, 26; Pétion, 191–192; Buirette, 555–556.
42. Tourzel, 203; Aimond, *Enigme*, 167–168; Buirette, 555–556.
43. Buirette, 561–562; Nicolas, 60–61. See also Chapter 6 of this volume.
44. Valory, 295–296; Pétion, 194; Dumas, 1: 497–499; Nicolas, 61–62.
45. Fischbach, 87; Valory, 298–299; Buirette, 556–559; Lefebvre, “Le meurtre du comte de Dampierre,” 393–405.
46. AD Marne, 1 L 329: letter of municipality of Neuf-Bellay.
47. Tourzel, 204–205; Valory, 300–306; Nicolas, 60–62; Aimond, *Enigme*, 171–173.
48. Tourzel, 205–206; Gillet, 37–42; Aimond, *Enigme*, 173–175.
49. Dumas, 1: 489–490; Pétion, 192; AP 27: 428; Aimond, *Enigme*, 175–176.
50. Dumas, 1: 490–493; Pétion, 193, 201; Tourzel, 206–211; Aimond, *Enigme*, 177–179.
51. Dumas, 1: 500–502; Tourzel, 211; Pétion, 202.
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53. Valory, 315–323; Moustier, 52; Pétion, 203–204; Dumas, 1: 503; Tourzel, 212–215; AP 27: 527–528; Aimond, *Enigme*, 179–180.
54. Bouillé, 220–222, 225–226.
3. Thompson, 100–101, 118–119.
4. See esp. Censer, chap. 2.
5. Mercier, 70.
6. Short, 20: 585; Mercier, 402; Andress, 177.
7. Boutier and Bouthry, 40.
8. Mathiez, 4–10.
9. See in particular Mathiez; Bourdin; Monnier, 4–6.
10. See esp. Burstin, “Une Révolution à l’oeuvre,” parts 2 and 3; and Kaplan, *La fin des corporations*, chaps. 13–15.
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16. Gaultier de Biauzat, letter of January 29; *Ami du peuple*, February 14 and March 10 (kindly indicated to me by Jeremy Popkin); also Legendre, letter of February 2; Ruault, 221, 233–234; Vernier, letter of May 1; Colson, 192.
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18. AN D XXIX bis 38, dos. 389; Bimbenet, 14–15, 17, 35–36, 44.
19. Lacroix, 1–2; Leclercq, 582–583.
20. Leclercq, 581; Faulcon, 421; Thibaudeau, 139–140; Colson, 194; Ferrières, 360.
21. Bimbenet, 14, 35–36; Ruault, 246; Panon Desbassayns, 186; Leclercq, 581.
22. Lacroix, 4; Oelsner, 18; *Chronique de Paris*, no. 173, June 22; *Le babillard*, no. 18, June 22; Leclercq, 585.
23. Mousset, 273; Short, 20: 562; *Le babillard*, no. 18, June 22; Oelsner, 38.
24. Lacroix, 1–2, 5, 11.
25. Lacroix, 3, 14–15, 22, 25, 179; Bourdin, 241; Panon Desbassayns, 186.
26. Lacroix, 1–2, 5, 7, 13, 22, 53, 141–142, 185; Charavay, ix; Burstin, “La Révolution à l’oeuvre,” 256–257; Genty, 105; Bourdin, 241–244; *Le patriote français*, no. 683, June 22; Mathiez, 51, 64.
27. Bourdin, 235–237; Guittard de Floriban, 34; Short, 19: 635; Gower, 71; Censer, 111–115.
28. Oelsner, 21.
29. *Chronique de Paris*, no. 173, June 22; *Journal de Perlet*, no. 692, June 28.
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4. Our Good City of Paris

1. Mercier, 34, 108, 328. Much of the following is based on this source.
2. Mercier, 34; Tularde, 33–35, 44–49; Roche, chap. 1; Godechot, 67–70, 83.

Contents



Maps and Illustrations	ix
Acknowledgments	xiii
Prologue	i
1 Sire, You May Not Pass	3
2 The King of the French	26
3 The King Takes Flight	57
4 Our Good City of Paris	88
5 The Fathers of the Nation	119
6 Fear and Repression in the Provinces	151
7 To Judge a King	179
8 The Months and Years After	203
Conclusion: The Power of an Event	219
Abbreviations	227
Notes	229
Bibliography	247
Index	259

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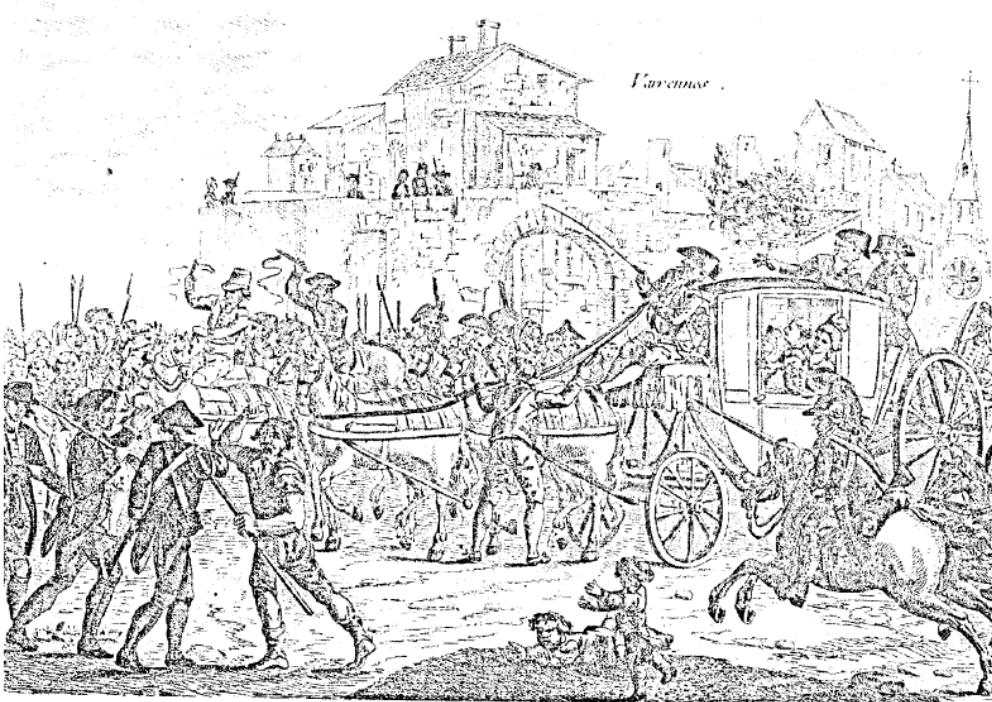
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Arrest of the King and His Family Deserting the Kingdom. Townspeople and national guardsmen in Varennes have halted the king's carriage below the archway of the upper town, as hussar and dragoon cavalrymen arrive to defend the royal family. Events occurring at different times during the night have been collapsed into a single scene.

WHEN THE KING TOOK FLIGHT

Timothy Tackett

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