STAAL, Marguerite Jeanne Cordier Delaunay, Baronne de (1684-1750)—often called in history and literature Madame de Staal-Delaunay, to distinguish her more completely from Madame de Stael-Holstein—was born at Paris on May 30, 1684. Her father was a painter named Cordier. He seems to have deserted her mother, whose name was Delaunay, and who made her daughter take that surname instead of Cordier. She was well- educated, and entered the household of the Duchesse du Maine at Sceaux, at first in no higher capacity than that of *femme de chambre.* She was, however, promoted before long to the office of amanuensis and (practically) companion to her mistress. Her literary talent soon manifested itself in the literary court of the duchess, who is said, but chiefly on the waiting lady’s own authority, to have been not a little jealous of her attendant. Enough, however, is known of the duchess’s imperious and capricious temper to make it improbable that her service was agreeable. Madame Delaunay, however, was a sufficiently devoted *suivante,* and in the affair of the Cellamare conspiracy had to endure a visit to the Bastille, where she remained for two years. Even here, however, she represents herself as having made conquests, though she was far from beautiful. She returned on her liberation to the service of the duchess, refused, it is said, Dacier, the widower of a wife more famous than himself, and in 1735, being then more than fifty, married the Baron de Staal. She continued, however, to form part of the duchess’s household. She died on June 16, 1750. Her *Memoirs* appeared about five years later, and have often been reprinted, both separately and in collections of the memoirs of the 17th and 18th centuries, to both of which the author belonged both in style and character. She has much of the frankness and seductive verve of Madame de Sévigné and her contemporaries, but a little alloyed with the *sensibilité* of a later time. It may be doubted whether she does not somewhat exaggerate the discomforts of her position and her sense of them. But her book is an ex­tremely amusing one to read, as well as not a little instruc­tive. The humours of the “ court of Sceaux” are depicted as hardly any other society of the kind has ever been. Besides her *Memoirs* Madame de Staal left two comedies and some letters, the answers to which are in some cases extant, and show, as well as the references of contemporaries, that the writer did not exaggerate her power of attracting men.

STADE, a small commercial town in the province of Hanover, Prussia, is situated on the navigable Schwinge, 31/2 miles above its confluence with the Elbe, and 20 miles to the north-west of Hamburg. It carries on a number of small manufactures and has some shipping trade, chiefly with Hamburg, but the rise of Harburg has deposed it from its former position as the chief port of Hanover. There are several brickfields in the neighbourhood, and deposits of gypsum and salt. The fortifications, erected in 1755 and strengthened in 1816, began to be demolished in 1882. Population in 1885, 10,003.

According to the legend, Stade was the oldest town of the Saxons and was built in 321 b.c. Historically it cannot be traced farther back than the 10th century, when it was the capital of a line of counts. In the 12th century it passed to the archbishopric of Bremen. Subsequently entering the Hanseatic League, it rose to some commercial importance.@@1 In 1648 Stade became the

capital of the principality of Bremen under the Swedes ; and in 1719 it was ceded to Hanover, the fate of which it has since shared. The Prussians occupied it without resistance in 1866.

STAEL, Madame de (by her proper name and title Anne Louise Germaine Necker, Baroness of Stael- Holstein), was born at Paris on April 22, 1766, and died there on July 14, 1817. Her father was the famous financier Necker, her mother Suzanne Curchod, who is almost equally famous as the early love of Gibbon, as the wife of Necker, as the mistress of one of the most popular salons of Paris, and as the mother of Madame de Stael. Between mother and daughter there was, however, little sympathy. Madame Necker, despite her talents, her beauty, and her fondness for *philosophe* society, was strictly decorous, somewhat reserved, and disposed to carry out in her daughter’s case the rigorous discipline of her own childhood. The future Madame de Stael was from her earliest years a romp, a coquette, and passionately desirous of prominence and attention. There seems more­over to have been a sort of rivalry between mother and daughter for the chief place in Necker’s affections, and it is not probable that the daughter’s love for her mother was increased by the consciousness of her own inferiority in personal charms. Madame Necker, if her portraits as well as verbal descriptions may be trusted, was of a most refined though somewhat lackadaisical style of beauty, while her daughter was a plain child and a plainer woman, whose sole attractions were large and striking eyes and a buxom figure. She was, however, a child of unusual intellectual power, and she began very early to write though not to publish. She is said to have written her father a letter on his famous *Compte-Rendu* and other matters when she was not fifteen, and to have injured her health by excessive study and intellectual excitement. But in reading all the accounts of Madame de Stael's life which come from herself or her intimate friends it must be carefully remembered that she was the most dis­tinguished and characteristic product of the period of *sensibilité—*the singular fashion of ultra-sentiment which required that both men and women, but especially women, should be always palpitating with excitement, steeped in melancholy, or dissolved in tears. Still, there is no doubt that her father’s dismissal from the ministry, which followed the presentation of the *Compte,* and the con­sequent removal of the family from the busy life of ' Paris, were beneficial to her. During part of the next few years they resided at Coppet, her father’s estate on the Lake of Geneva, which she herself made famous. But other parts were spent in travelling about, chiefly in the south of France. They returned to Paris, or at least to its neigh­bourhood, in 1785, and Mademoiselle Necker resumed literary work of a miscellaneous kind, including two plays, *Sophie* and *Jane Grey,* which were printed sooner or later. It became, however, a question of marrying her. Her want of beauty was compensated by her fortune, for she was the only child of one of the richest bankers in Europe. But her parents are said to have objected to her marrying a Roman Catholic, which, in France, consider­ably limited her choice. There is a legend that William Pitt the younger thought of her ; the somewhat notorious lover of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, Guibert, a cold- hearted coxcomb of some talent, certainly paid her addresses. But she finally married Eric Magnus, Baron of Stael-Holstein, who was first an attaché of the Swedish legation, and then minister. For a great heiress and a very ambitious girl the marriage scarcely seemed brilliant, for Stael had no fortune and no very great personal dis­tinction. A singular series of negotiations, however, secured from the king of Sweden a promise of the ambassadorship for twelve years and a pension in case of

@@@1 The Stade Elbe-dues (Stader Elbezoll) were an ancient impost upon all goods carried up the Elbe, and were levied at the village of Bruns­hausen, at the mouth of the Schwinge. The tax was abolished in 1267 by the Hanseatic League, but it was revived by the Swedes in 1688, and confirmed by Hanover. The dues were fostered by the growing trade of Hamburg, and in 1861, when they were redeemed (for £427,600) by the nations trading in the Elbe, the exchequer of Hanover was in the yearly receipt of about £45,000 from this source. Hamburg and Great Britain each paid more than a third of the redemp­tion money.