legation, and then minister. For a great heiress and a very ambitious girl the marriage scarcely seemed brilliant, for Staël had no fortune and no very great personal distinction. A singular scries of negotiations, however, secured from the king of Sweden a promise of the ambassadorship for twelve years and a pension in case of its withdrawal, and the marriage took place on the 14th of January 17S6. The husband was thirty-seven, the wife twenty. Mme de Staël was accused of extravagance, and latterly an amicable separation of goods had to be effected between the pair. But this was a mere legal formality, and on the whole the marriage seems to have met the views of both parties, neither of whom had any affection for the other. They had three children; there was no scandal between them; the baron obtained money and the lady obtained, as a guaranteed ambassadress of a foreign power of consideration, a much higher position at court and in society than she could have secured by marrying almost any Frenchman, without the inconveniences which might have been expected had she married a Frenchman superior to herself in rank. Mme de Staël was not a *persona grata* at court, but she seems to have played the part of ambassadress, as she played most parts, in a rather noisy and exaggerated manner, but not ill. Then in 1788 she appeared as an author under her own name *(Sophie* had been already published, but anonymously) with some *Lettres sur J. J. Rousseau,* a fervid panegyric showing a good deal of talent but no power of criticism. She was at this time, and indeed generally, enthusiastic for a mixture of Rousseauism and constitutionalism in politics. She exulted in the meeting of the states-general, and most of all when her father, after being driven to Brussels by a state intrigue, was once more recalled and triumphantly escorted into Paris. Every one knows what followed. Her first child, a boy, was born the week before Necker finally left France in unpopularity and disgrace; and the increasing disturbances of the Revolution made her privileges as ambassadress very important safeguards. She visited Coppet once or twice, but for the most part in the early days of the revolutionary period she was in Paris taking an interest and, as she thought, a part in the councils and efforts of the Moderates. At last, the day before the September massacres, she fled, befriended by Manuel and Tallien. Her own account of her escape is, as usual, so florid that it provokes the question whether she was really in any danger. Directly it does not seem that she was; but she had generously strained the privileges of the embassy to protect some threatened friends, and this was a serious matter.

She betook herself to Coppet, and there gathered round her a considerable number of friends and fellow-refugees, the beginning of the quasi-court which at intervals during the next five-and- twenty years made the place so famous. In 1793, however, she made a visit of some length to England, and established herself at Mickleham in Surrey as the centre of the Moderate Liberal emigrants—Talleyrand, Narbonne, Jaucourt and others. There was not a little scandal about her relations with Narbonne; and this Mickleham sojourn (the details of which are known from, among other sources, the letters of Fanny Burney) has never been altogether satisfactorily accounted for. In the summer she returned to Coppet and wrote a pamphlet *(Réflexions sur le procès de la reine)* on the queen’s execution. The next year her mother died, and the fall of Robespierre opened the way back to Paris. M de Staël (whose mission had been in abeyance and himself in Holland for three years) was accredited to the French republic by the regent of Sweden; his wife reopened her salon and for a time was conspicuous in the motley and eccentric society of the Directory. She also published several small works, the chief being an essay *De* *l*’*Influence des passions* (1796), and another *De la Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800). It was during these years that Mme de Staël was of chief political importance. Nar­bonne’s place had been supplied by Benjamin Constant, whom she first met at Coppet in 1794, and who had a very great influence over her, as in return she had over him. Both personal and political reasons threw her into opposition to Bonaparte. Her own preference for a moderate republic or a constitutional monarchy was quite sincere, and, even if it had not been so, her own character and Napoleon’s were too much alike in some points to admit of their getting on together. For some years, however, she was able to alternate between Coppet and Paris without difficulty, though not without knowing that the First Consul disliked her. In 1797 she, as above mentioned, separated formally from her husband. In 1799 he was recalled by the king of Sweden, and in 1802 he died, duly attended by her. Besides the eldest son Auguste Louis, they had two other children —a son Albert, and a daughter Albertine, who afterwards became the duchesse de Broglie.

The exact date of the beginning of what Mme de Stael’s admirers call her duel with Napoleon is not easy to determine. Judging from the title of her book *Dix années d'exil,* it should be put at 1804; judging from the time at which it became pretty clear that the first man in France and she who wished to be the first woman in France were not likely to get on together, it might be put several years earlier. The whole question of this duel, however, requires consideration from the point of view of common sense. It displeased Napoleon no doubt that Mme de Staël should show herself recalcitrant to his influence. But it probably pleased Mme de Staël to quite an equal degree that Napoleon should apparently put forth his power to crush her and fail. Both personages had a curious touch of *charlatanerie.* If Mme de Staël had really desired to take up her parable against Napoleon seriously, she need only have established herself in England at the peace of Amiens. But she lingered on at Coppet, constantly hankering after Paris, and acknowledging the hankering quite honestly. In 1802 she published the first of her really noteworthy books, the novel of *Delphine,* in which the “ femme incomprise ” was in a manner introduced to French literature, and in which she herself and not a few of her intimates appeared in transparent disguise. In the autumn of 1803 she returned to Paris. Whether, if she had not displayed such extraordinary anxiety not to be exiled, Napoleon would have exiled her remains a question; but, as she began at once appealing to all sorts of persons to protect her, he seems to have thought it better that she should not be protected. She was directed not to reside within forty leagues of Paris, and after considerable delay she determined to go to Germany. She journeyed, in company with Constant, by Metz and Frankfort to Weimar, and arrived there in December. There she stayed during the winter and then went to Berlin, where she made the acquaintance of August Wilhelm Schlegel, who afterwards became one of her intimates at Coppet. Thence she travelled to Vienna, where, in April, the news of her father’s dangerous illness and shortly of his death (April 8) reached her. She returned to Coppet, and found herself its wealthy and independent mistress, but her sorrow for her father was deep and certainly sincere. She spent the summer at the château with a brilliant company; in the autumn she journeyed to Italy accompanied by Schlegel and Sismondi, and there gathered the materials of her most famous work, *Corinne.* She returned in the summer of 1805, and spent nearly a year in writing *Corinne;* in 1806 she broke the decree of exile and lived for a time undisturbed near Paris. In 1807 *Corinne,* the first aesthetic romance not written in German, appeared. It is in fact, what it was described as being at the time of its appearance, "a picturesque tour couched in the form of a novel.” The publication was taken as a reminder of her existence, and the police of the empire .sent her back to Coppet. She stayed there as usual for the summer, and then set out once more for Germany, visiting Mainz, Frankfort, Berlin and Vienna. She was again at Coppet in the summer of 1808 (in which year Constant broke with her, subsequently marrying a German lady) and set to work at her book, *De l'Allemagne.* It took her nearly the whole of the next two years, during which she did not travel much or far from her own house. She had bought property in America and thought of moving thither, but chance or fatality made her determine to publish *De l'Allemagne* in Paris. The submission to censorship which this entailed was sufficiently inconsistent and she wrote to the emperor one of the unfortunate letters, at once undignified and provoking, of which she had the