Envoy to the Terror

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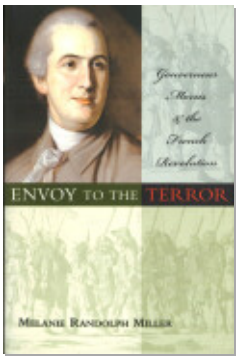

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Chapter Ten

The End of the Monarchy

Morris's tenure as minister—from April 1792 to July 1794—can fairly be broken down into two periods: before and after the fall of the king. The division is appropriate, for August 1792 appears to have marked the end of Morris's secret involvement in French affairs, and the start of a necessary dedication to American difficulties resulting from the new government and war between France and England. During the first period, the demands on him in his capacity as minister were few, for there was little he could do on behalf of American commercial interests while the French government was in upheaval. Nor did he do anything in the way of business, except for working on a land sales agreement with Constable and James LeRay de Chaumont.

He therefore had the time to follow a path into deepening entanglement in the king's concerns. The merits of his decision to continue his role as French advisor after his appointment as American minister raise interesting, if troubling, issues and once more demonstrate the complexity of this deep-thinking but also deep-feeling and thus not entirely consistent man. As described by Theodore Roosevelt, the belief "that his own exertions were all that lay between the two unfortunate sovereigns and their fate roused his gallantry and blinded him to the risk he himself ran, as well as to the hazard to which he put his country's interests." Whether one can conclude with Roosevelt that it is "impossible to blame Morris for what he did," it is hard to disagree with him that Morris believed "he could not honorably withdraw" from his efforts.[1]

Yet Morris was not simply trying to save the king; he was trying to steer France safely past what he called the Scylla and Charybdis of despotism and anarchy. Perhaps the greatest and most widely held misconception of Morris by historians is that he was an "anachronism" who wanted a return to prerevolutionary France.[2] He did not. Like Jefferson, he wanted France to have as "as full a portion of liberty dealt out to them as the nation can

bear,"[3] in the form of a monarchy with a functional constitution—a view Jefferson had at the outset, then discarded, and later readopted. He had no illusions about the capacity of Louis XVI, but believed him far preferable to a despot springing from one of the factions. He opposed a privileged aristocracy, and he despised the *ancien régime*—but he opposed establishment of a republic in France, not because he did not prize it above all other political forms, but because he was convinced (correctly) that it would not work in that country, a country he had quickly perceived was "not yet fitted by education and habit for the enjoyment of freedom."[4] "The true Object of a great Statesman," he wrote to William Carmichael, "is to give to any particular Nation the kind of Laws which is suitable to them, and the best Constitution which they are capable of."[5] This one statement, which echoes the philosophy of King Solon of Athens, expresses Morris's political philosophy more than any other. All of his actions hewed to that maxim, and it is evident that his conscience was clear. In the fall of 1792, after the monarchy was toppled, he wrote to Robert that "If I had foreseen the events of [August 10] I should have pursued the same conduct."[6] There is no question that he thought the matter through and believed that honor required him to continue; not only his own honor but what he considered to be his country's honor, in fulfilling its obligation to France.

During the thirty-two months starting from the time news of Morris's nomination arrived until the news of his recall, the French government experienced changes of power entailing eight different representatives of foreign affairs.[7] Six of them were condemned as traitors, one was murdered, one was guillotined, one was imprisoned, and one defected to the Austrians. Since each successive administration was the mortal enemy of its predecessors, the complaint that Morris was not on "good terms" with the French government is patently preposterous; as he pointed out repeatedly, "good terms" with any one ministry would have made him automatically suspect with the next. This is in fact precisely what happened: his good relations with the members of the last royal government, to which he was originally accredited, contaminated him for good.

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With the nominations confirmed, Jefferson sat down in late January 1792 and drafted his instructions to the three new ministers.[8] The tone of his letter to Morris was noticeably cooler than the one to Pinckney, but he

was civil. "To you it would be more than unnecessary to undertake a general delineation of the functions of the Office to which you are appointed," Jefferson wrote. "I shall therefore only express our desire, that they be constantly exercised in that spirit of sincere friendship and attachment which we bear to the French Nation; and that in all transactions with the Minister, his good dispositions be conciliated by whatever in language or attentions may tend to that effect." This was an undoubted reference to the negative reports he had been receiving from Short and others about Morris, and he added:

> With respect to their Government, we are under no call to express opinions which might please or offend any party; and therefore it will be best to avoid them on all occasions, public or private. Could any circumstances require unavoidably such expressions, they would naturally be in conformity with the sentiments of the great mass of our countrymen, who having first, in modern times, taken the ground of Government founded on the will of the people, cannot but be delighted on seeing so distinguished and so esteemed a Nation arrive on the same ground, and plant their standard by our side.

The most important of Morris's duties would be the "patronage of our Commerce and the extension of it's [*sic*] privileges, both in France and her Colonies," a goal Jefferson and Morris shared. He requested a twice monthly letter of "interesting occurrences in France, of the general affairs of Europe," newspapers, and "such other publications as may be important enough to be read by one who can spare little time to read anything." Morris should use the English packet, and "by those packets I would wish always to receive a letter from you by way of corrective to the farrago of news they generally bring." Secret communications were to be sent through the American consul at Le Havre.

From the time of his appointment, Morris's friendship with Jefferson, already impaired by Short and others, continued to decline, leaving for the most part only the cold ties of official communication.[9] On Jefferson's side, those communications were to be markedly infrequent, leaving Morris without direction for many months at a time in the midst of France's greatest upheaval—one gap, during the height of the Terror, was about nine months. Some of the problem was due to delays in delivery, but there was quite a bit of truth to Morris's wry comment to Pinckney that "[o]ur Secretary of State seems much attached to Brevity, and

reminds me of a Bromide of his Predecessor, that least said is soonest mended."[10]

When news of his nomination arrived, Morris was in London, winding up business matters before leaving for America. He had many reasons to return home, including Robert's worsening situation. He was particularly concerned for Robert's family: "[S]hould you fall during my Absence there is no Person I know of either able or willing to see that they have Justice done them," he wrote anxiously to his old friend.[11] Another worry was the continuing lack of profit from Morrisania, which he had left under the eye of his nephew, James Morris. James had written that winter to say that Gouverneur's "Farm looks well." Morris replied tartly, "I am glad of it for good Looks are good Things, but I should be glad to hear a little of some resulting Income to repay my great Advances." In the three years since he had left Morrisania, he told his nephew, he had received from it "just one Apple. I think you will agree with me that it ought to have been a golden one."[12]

Having told Short that he would "bett ten to one against my being appointed any where," Morris must have been stunned to find out otherwise, for his diary entry of February 6 records simply that he was told about his nomination by William Constable.[13] He also learned that it was hanging "by the Eyelids," and it was not until March 20 that he had word that he was confirmed; he did not receive his credentials until April 6.[14]

His appreciation of the honor was nearly submerged by his conviction that the assignment would be both arduous and thankless. He expressed his reluctance plainly to Robert. "The mission to France must be a stormy one, let it fall on whom it may," he told Robert unerringly. "To stand *well* with all Parties is impossible." He had thus hesitated. "Did I consult only my own Feelings and my own Interest I should certainly not accept it." However, Morris continued, "I shall endeavor by serving essentially the United States to justify the Opinion of the president and the Attachment of my Friends." His letter to Washington showed the same reserve, less forcefully expressed. "If I know my own Heart this Intelligence is far less agreable to me on my own Account than on that of the Public," he wrote. "I am sure that a Rejection [by the Senate], from whatever Cause it may have arisen, would have been attributed to Disunion in our Counsels."[15]

Having determined to accept, Morris did not leave London for another month. He wrapped up business (he "quitted business" except for land sales) and tried to settle accounts with the cagey Daniel Parker. He may have taken his time to allow the disappointed Short to stay in Paris as long as possible. "I am sure that the Interests of the United States cannot be in

better Hands than yours," he wrote the new minister to The Hague, a compliment that probably made Short angrier than ever.[16] He was allotted a year's salary ($9,000) for his "outfit," and he purchased new plate, horses, malmsey and Madeira, a coach, and books. He offered the job of secretary to Robert's son, who declined.[17]

He wrote to Oliver Ellsworth, Rufus King, and Hamilton, pressing them to send him "Intelligence Opinions *Advice*," because "a Minister who knows not those Affairs of his Country which are known to many others is placed in an awkward Situation; besides, there is always a Kind of Traffic in Articles of Intelligence among the Members of the diplomatic Body in which Beads and Wampum are sometimes given for Gold, to the Satisfaction of both Parties."[18]

"I cannot avoid expressing to you how much I am gratified by your good Opinion," Morris wrote to Ellsworth, indicating knowledge of the details of the Senate vote. At the same time, he was stung by the opposition. That spring his brother-in-law Samuel Ogden wrote him from New York that

> Some damned scoundrel has lately published a pamphlet under the signature of "massachusettensie" [illegible] [which] called stricture on the great departments—every body is abused but Hamilton—You are lashed with a degree of bitterness your friends are suprized at. I think it written in Philadelphia by one of your *Old Friends*.[19]

Morris responded that he could not

> but suffer when I hear that I am traduc'd altho it has so often happen'd that I ought to be callous. If the Consciousness of Integrity be a sufficient Shield the Darts of Malice can never touch my Bosom for I can fairly stand forth and challenge the World to produce against me a single Instance of mean or cruel or dishonest or dishonorable Conduct. . . . The best Reply which I can make is faithfully to serve my Country whenever called on and in whatever Way.[20]

Of course, Morris was well aware of antagonism in Paris, exemplified by publications in Brissot's paper *Le Patriote Français*, calling Morris an "American intriguer" with the "enemy of our liberty."[21] James Swan was uneasy about these attacks, probably because he hoped to exploit Morris's new position. He went to see Brissot, and reported to Morris on the conversation:

> [Brissot] introduced the subject himself, and observed that he was sure of the facts, & knew your intimacy with the Royal party, & your sentiments on the Constitution. I mention'd many faults in that [constitution] which were too striking not to meet his ideas, & were too great not to receive the disapprobation of you & every sensible person. He concluded that he who was friend to the aristocrates, or were intimate with the present [illegible] of the executive, must be enemies to the opinions of the majority of the people, for that majority was opposed to the present Ministry—& therefore the greatest part of the nation could have no confidance in you.

Brissot acknowledged Morris's "personal abilities," but declared

> [O]ne could not have confidance in a declared enemy to the Const'n.—He observed slightly on S——'s [Short's] abilities, that altho' not great, yet were equal to the services that might be required—& that he had lately prudently kept silence on the Constitn.

Swan then "insidiously" informed Brissot that Short had passed him over in choosing an agent to represent American interests in Assembly committee discussions. Brissot was "mortified into a rage," and promptly denounced Short. Nonetheless, said Swan,

> On the whole I found an uncommon rancour against you, & which I suspect is fed by some interest concealed, & a fear that your influence might operate against his plans on the appropriation of the balance due by the U.S. to France. This I could soon arrange with him.[22]

Swan's comment in this last paragraph is striking, in view of the difficulties Morris would run into with Brissot's associates concerning the debt.

Morris was sufficiently concerned to write to Chaumont about the newspaper attacks,

> the Object of which is doubtless to injure me in America. If my Appointment be disagreable to good Men with you I certainly ought not to accept it, but if it be agreable I ought not to be traduced. . . . Let me bear what Blame I may deserve but no more.[23]

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Shortly after the start of the year 1792, Morris was asked at a social gathering to cast a horoscope for France and answered "that it might be done in three words *Guerre Famine Peste*." Eighteen months later he would remember that grim prediction, and would "pray God" that while part of it had been fulfilled, the rest of it would "be not fully accomplished."[24]

Morris no longer advocated war, but he knew that France, goaded by Brissot and the Girondins, was proceeding rapidly toward it. The Assembly had issued an ultimatum to Austria in January, requiring the emperor to declare by March 1 whether Austria would stay out of a European concert of powers against France. Emperor Leopold died in early March, to be replaced by the less moderate Francis II. Meanwhile, Talleyrand's mission to London—he went twice—did not go well. Morris, though he opposed the mission, had not neglected civility, introducing Talleyrand to the Churches, and visiting him while in London. He told the disapproving Duchess of Gordon that Talleyrand was a "sensible pleasant Man. His Morals not exemplary but that Matter much exagerated." Nonetheless, King George expressed the view of London society when he told Grenville that he was glad Talleyrand and his suite did not have letters of credence "and therefore may receive the contempt their characters entitle them to. I know I need not recommend the greatest caution to Lord Grenville in conversing with persons much fitter to be employed with the new club in St. James's Street than with any servants of the crown."[25]

According to the well-informed Count Woronzow, Talleyrand hurt himself by boasting of funds he carried for bribes, hobnobbing with the opposition (a familiar complaint to Morris!), and for bringing Stephen Sayre along.[26] He was also criticized in France. The *Gazette Universelle*, the *monarchien*[27] paper that had gone after Morris the previous fall, poked fun at the erstwhile bishop's mission. No one knows the progress of Talleyrand's negotiations, it reported. "[H]e has actually seen M. Burke. It is said he has made a conquest of this last. If he were able to achieve his conversion, it would be an even greater miracle than obtaining what he went over there for." In May, the English gave assurances of neutrality, which Talleyrand described as a success, though Morris believed it was as meaningless as it later proved.[28]

In March, the French ministry changed again. "The Ministerial Seats resemble electrical Chairs," Morris wrote to Short, "which give every Occupant a kick in the Breeches." Bertrand de Moleville (a key supporter of the king who was minister of the marine [navy]) broke off with Lafayette and Narbonne over Austria, and the king dismissed Narbonne amid allegations of "notorious Peculation."[29] In retaliation, impeachment charges for the crime of *lèse-nation* (treason) were brought against the hap-

less foreign minister Delessart at the behest of Brissot and Narbonne's supporters. This episode was an excellent example of the constitutional defects criticized by Morris: while the constitution purported to give the king power over foreign affairs, it effectively denied him that power by making his ministers subject to Assembly impeachment. Brissot privately admitted the charges against Delessart were unfounded but would keep Delessart out of the ministry for some months—indeed, it was long enough for him to be killed in the September Massacres. "Brissot was faithful to his party," observed Dumont, "but a traitor to integrity."[30]

Moleville was also targeted by Brissot and the Girondins. The Assembly adopted a vote of no confidence against him (Louis rejected it), and on March 9, the same day Narbonne was dismissed, Moleville resigned. This was a blow to Swan's hopes for provisioning the French navy. He told Morris that "the minister who shall succeed him will be of the enraged party, & I shall find it very difficult to get his ear, without sacrificing half to the Creatures whose influence shall have named him, & which will be lost, as it is impossible, under the terrible situation under which this country is, that that party can long exist."[31]

In mid-March, still in London, Morris received a letter from Terrier de Monciel and Brémond, and a visit from their associate Jaubert, asking for advice. Monciel, a long-time associate of Théodore Lameth (brother of Alexander Lameth and now a supporter of the king), had worked with Morris the previous spring to repeal the Assembly's four-year exclusionary decree.[32] It is another mark of Morris's influence that he obtained the king's approval, through Moleville, to have Monciel send the king "direct Intelligence," and Monciel—previously suspect because of his connection with the Lameths—thereafter became one of the inner circle. (Morris kept his association with Monciel hidden. When they encountered each other in public, they pretended not to know each other.)[33] Morris's trust was not misplaced. Though largely ignored in recent works, at least two historians of the nineteenth century concluded that Monciel deserves recognition as a man of energy and intelligence, and a devoted friend of the doomed king.[34]

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Despite Morris's recommendations, it was Dumouriez's influence that produced the first Girondin ministry. Dumouriez, whom Adèle called a "great Rascal," was a veteran of the Seven Years' War. He had cultivated both the Girondins and the court, through his friend de Laporte, keeper of the Civil List.[35] Morris was nonplussed by Dumouriez's appointment as

foreign minister, because although he was told it was a "Sacrifice to the Jacobins," he knew that Dumouriez had been previously determined, if appointed, to "destroy at the Peril of his Life the Jacobin and all other Clubs and to effect a Change in the Government."[36] Morris's information was correct; while Dumouriez publicly backed Brissot's call for war with Austria, he secretly hoped for a short war that would restore royal authority. At his direction, as a concession to the Girondins, one of their associates, Roland de La Platière, was chosen for the interior and Étienne Clavière was appointed head of finances. The king replaced Narbonne with de Grave, a career soldier, whom Morris considered ineffective; evidently Roland's politically powerful wife agreed, for in early May she succeeded in having de Grave replaced by a staunch Girondin, Servan de Gerbey, heightening tension in the cabinet.[37]

The new ministers claimed an interest in promoting commerce with the United States. This news was immensely gratifying to Jefferson, not just on its own merits but because "notwithstanding the very general abuse of the Jacobins [Jefferson, out of date on the French factions, meant the Girondins, not the "new" Jacobins such as Robespierre], I begin to consider them as representing the true revolution-spirit of the whole nation, and as carrying the nation with them," he told Madison. "The only things wanting with them is more experience in business, and a little more conformity to the established style of communication with foreign powers." Jefferson made a telling addition: "I sincerely wish our new minister may not spoil our chance of extracting good from the present situation of things."[38] The Girondins did not make good on their assurances until the following February, in the exigencies of war, when they opened up the French West Indies to American ships. News of the decree arrived in America in May 1793, just before the Girondins Jefferson admired were ousted and imprisoned.

On April 20, 1792, France declared war on Austria, on the grounds that its ultimatum had not been met. Dumouriez planned to seize Belgium, but the Flemish failed to respond to the French invitation to revolt. The first maneuvers turned out badly for France, and there was trouble between *ci-devant* (formerly noble) officers and the troops. When a general was murdered by his men in retaliation for a defeat, many other officers resigned, including the comte de Rochambeau, the experienced general who headed the Army of the North and whose help had been indispensable to the success of the American Revolution. "[T]he Troops are every where in Mutiny and La Fayette's Army without Necessaries of

every Kind," Morris recorded grimly in mid-May. "The Horses dead, the Soldiers sick and weary, and the Officers apprehensive and discontented."[39] The remaining generals met at Valenciennes, and declared jointly that an offensive attack was impracticable, recommending that the king ask for peace. In some of the provinces, counterrevolutionaries prepared to welcome invaders.

Morris had returned to Paris on May 6. In spite of the threat of invasion, he selected and began furnishing his official residence, on rue de la Planche on the Left Bank, at 3,500 *livres* in annual rent. He had not seen Adèle since January. After they "celebrated" their reunion in the usual style, Adèle begged Morris's "Permission and Approbation" to join Talleyrand in London. Annoyed, Morris gave her "the former but tell her that the Latter is impossible."[40] It appears that she did not go. She told Morris that St. John de Crèvecoeur (formerly French consul at New York) had told her that Dumouriez would refuse to receive Morris; Crèvecoeur confirmed it the next day. "We shall see," was Morris's only remark, but he asked Monciel and Jaubert to look into the matter. He did not record what they found out, and Short, despite his lengthy account to Jefferson, said nothing; as previously noted, Morris dismissed the idea that Short was responsible. On May 15, Short grudgingly took Morris to meet Dumouriez :

> I tell him that I have a small favor to ask of the king, which is that he will receive me without a Sword because of my wooden Leg. He says there will be no Difficulty as to that Matter and adds that I am already acquainted with the king. I reply that I never saw his Majesty but in public nor ever exchanged a Word with him in my life, altho some of their Gazettes have made of me one of his Ministers; and that I am perswaded he would not know me if he should see me.[41]

Dumouriez pointed out that there was a "general Idea" that Morris was close to the king. A remarkable declaration followed:

> I tell him that I am naturally frank and open and therefore do not hesitate to say that in the Time of the Constituent Assembly I endeavor'd, being then a private Individual and prompted by my Regard for this Nation, to effect certain Changes in the Constitution which appear'd to me essential to its' [*sic*] Existence. That I was not successful, and being at present a public man I consider it as my Duty not to meddle with their Affairs.

When he reported the meeting to Jefferson, Morris repeated these words nearly verbatim.[42]

In view of Morris's conduct during the decisive summer of 1792, the avowal that he was now, as he told Jefferson, a "meer Spectator," is strange, if not downright misleading. If he genuinely intended to keep out of French affairs, however, it did not last. The princesse de Tarente, one of the queen's ladies, asked him for advice for the queen, and he recommended she "march in the Line of the constitution." On the very day Morris saw Dumouriez, Montmorin asked him for a draft constitution, which he apparently provided. He also reviewed a defense Montmorin was making to the Assembly in connection with an attack by Brissot's paper.[43]

Prussia now announced plans to join Austria's side; it would formally enter the war on July 3. Morris's informants reported that the foreign and émigré troops were massing in great strength. Throughout the kingdom there were incidents of violence, fueled by fears of famine and of invasion. In January and February, there had been riots in Paris due to lack of sugar and soap; grain shipments were stopped by mobs in Dunkirk and Noyon. Food requisitioned for the army drove up prices, and by June there were calls for the death penalty against hoarders.

Morris was not optimistic about what he considered to be the anarchy convulsing France—the French term was *fermentation*—and the threat from foreign powers. His June 10 letter, "No. 1" of his dispatches to Jefferson, catalogued the terrible problems he perceived. He believed bankruptcy was imminent:

> The Estate of the Clergy is consumed and the Debt is as great as at the Opening of the States General. . . . The Abolition of Tithes, of feudal Rights, and burthensome Taxes, was so pleasant that a cold Examination of Consequences could not be admitted; still less an Enquiry into the strict Measure of Justice. Next to the Abolition came on those philosophical and mathematical Arraignments of the Fisc which are very beautiful and satisfactory, and to which there lies but one Objection of any Consequence which is that they are inexecutable.[44]

As a result, "[t]he Dilapidation in every Department is unexampled," he wrote. He had heard that l80,000 foreign troops were mobilized (the number was actually 100,000).[45]

The foreign monarchs intended to install either a military government or an absolute monarchy, believing these alternatives more acceptable to

the French than a restoration of the vengeful émigrés, who sought what Morris described contemptuously as a "kind of Monarchy whose only Limits were found in those noble, legal and clerical Corps by which the People were alternately oppressed and insulted." However, neither did the allied monarchs want establishment of a "free and well poiz'd System"—a constitutional monarchy—that would "inevitably extend itself, and force the neighboring Powers to relax from their Tyranny." This is one of many times that Morris expressed the wish that France could be the means of extending reform throughout Europe, and he blamed the "inconsiderate Partizans of Liberty" for the failure. "In their Eagerness to abolish antient Institutions they forgot that a *Monarchy* without intermediate Ranks is but another name for Anarchy or Despotism. The first, unhappily, exists to a Degree scarcely to be paralleled," and might drive the French to embrace "Despotism as a Blessing, if accompanied with Security to Person and Property, such as is experienced under the worst Governments of Europe."

"The best Picture I can give of the French nation is that of Cattle before a Thunder Storm," he told Jefferson, and "every Member of [the Government] is engaged in the Defence of himself or the Attack of his Neighbor."[46]

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As the Girondins fanned fears that the court was plotting with foreign courts, a suspicion well-founded with respect to Marie-Antoinette, who was trying to sabotage the war effort, there were concerted efforts to strip the king of any remaining power.[47] At the end of May, the Assembly decreed dissolution of the king's constitutional guard of eighteen hundred men. Servan then proposed establishing an army of twenty thousand men from around the country, the *fédérés*, ostensibly to protect Paris from invading troops but in reality to back the Assembly against the court and possibly to force the king to abandon Paris with the Assembly should attack become imminent.[48] Over Dumouriez's opposition, the decree was passed on June 6.

As noted previously, Dumouriez, who allegedly wanted to deny Morris for daring to criticize the constitution, was himself seeking a counterrevolution. According to Lord Gower, Dumouriez hoped to prove that Servan and Roland had conspired to abduct Louis, and that Clavière had tried to appropriate 6 million *livres* of "secret service money" to cover private speculation debts.[49] A few days after he heard this story, Morris went to Dumouriez's ("The Society is noisy and in a bad Style. The Dinner is still Worse"), to present Washington's letter felicitating the king on the new

constitution and to talk about French-American commercial relations. The foreign minister told him there was "no Danger to the Constitution at present, that it will triumph over every Obstacle and must amend itself. I think," said the informed and thus skeptical Morris, "he cannot believe one Half of what he says."[50]

At about this time, Louis fell into a deep depression and spoke very little. Probably as a result, Morris, when he presented his credentials at court on June 3, was unimpressed, commenting that the king's "Tone of Voice and his Embarrassment mark well the Feebleness of his Disposition." Yet Louis would soon show that he had no shortage of passive courage, or what Morris called "an uncommon firmness in suffering."[51]

Morris persisted some while longer in the view that the monarchs should take no action. Events were swiftly overtaking that strategy, yet as late as June 10, the same day he wrote to Jefferson about the dismal state of affairs, he told the distressed Vicq d'Azyr that the king and queen "must perswade themselves they are out of danger," for "the present Troubles are but the Corruscations which succeed a Storm." Morris would soon realize he was wrong: Louis was in an increasingly vulnerable position. He agreed to the decree dissolving his constitutional guard, a move that Morris for some reason recommended,[52] but refused to sanction the *fédérés* and another decree permitting deportation of nonjuring priests, and on June 13 the protesting Roland, Servan, and Clavière were dismissed. The result was a groundswell of outrage against the king, which the Brissotins fed by extolling the dismissed ministers. When Dumouriez, taken aback by the protest, was unable to change Louis's decision, he resigned and went to command the Army of the North.[53] Monciel replaced Roland as minister of the interior, despite Morris's urging to take foreign affairs, a position in which he could have been helpful to American interests. De Lajard, "a Creature of Monsieur de Lafayette," replaced Servan as minister of war, and Chambonas replaced Dumouriez in foreign affairs.[54]

Morris had no faith that the new ministry would hold in the face of Girondin opposition. On June 17, he heard that the Jacobins had presented a petition to the Assembly for suspending the king. "On the whole, Sir, we stand on a vast Volcano," Morris wrote to Jefferson. "We feel it tremble and we hear it roar but how and when and where it will burst and who may be destroy'd by its Eruptions is beyond the Ken of mortal Foresight to discover." Moleville had told him in early June that Lafayette might march on Paris to rout out the Girondins, hoping to change the constitution by what George Lefebvre calls a "military coup d'état." Morris was appalled: "If this is true he will ruin himself and injure the royal Family,"[55]

In mid-June, this report was confirmed, and he repeated it to Jefferson, adding that he was "not sanguine as to the Success." The country's political situation was critical:

> [W]hile a great Part of the Nation is desirous of overturning the present Government in order to restore the antient Form, and while another Part still more dangerous from Position and Numbers are desirous of introducing the Form of a federal Republic, the moderate Men, attack'd on all Sides, have to contend alone against an immense Force.

"I cannot go on with the Picture," Morris concluded, "for my Heart bleeds when I reflect that the finest Opportunity which ever presented itself for establishing the Rights of Mankind throughout the civilized World is perhaps lost and forever." This description is echoed by the French Revolution historian Michel Reinhard: "The Assembly, profoundly divided, oscillated further to the right and further to the left, while the center, intimidated, found it preferable to throw the ballast overboard than to save the constitution."[56]

Lafayette did not march, but sent a letter to the Assembly denouncing the Jacobins, published on June 18. It was applauded in the Assembly, but the popular political societies and the Paris sections[57] rejected it vehemently, and Robespierre and Danton called Lafayette a traitor. The following day, Brémond told Morris that there was "to be a Sort of Riot Tomorrow about fixing a Maypole before the Château [the Tuileries Palace]." This referred to a celebration of the anniversary of the Tennis Court Oath, but there was also a plan to petition the king to retract his veto against the *fédérés*. On June 20, radical members of the sections of Paris entered and occupied the palace. For four long hours, Hardman writes, the king "stood on a window seat with nothing between him and the mob but a table and a handful of grenadiers"; among those "grenadiers" were his minister of the interior, Monciel, and his minister of war, de Lajard. It would have "taken only one treacherous citizen, one wretched soul, to plunge France into everlasting mourning," Monciel told the muttering Assembly the next day. At the mob's insistence, Louis donned a phrygian cap and toasted the nation, but refused to sanction the decrees. Pétion, the mayor of Paris, who had demonstrated his prudence and principles when he told Talleyrand that he would "not fall out with the *Fous & enragées* because it is they and not the reasonable People who support Revolutions," did not arrive to disperse the mob until six o'clock.[58]

Morris was shocked. "The Constitution has this Day I think given its last Groan," he observed. He recommended to Monciel that Pétion be suspended and the other "Ringleaders" of June 20 be prosecuted; the *département* of Paris did suspend Pétion, but it did not last.[59] On June 25, the "Pomp of War was parading under my Window," Morris wrote. "The Chateau was to have been attacked again but apprehending opposition the plan was abandoned."[60]

On June 28, Lafayette came to the Assembly to denounce the events of June 20. Morris predicted correctly that Lafayette's "Visit can produce Nothing"; though Lafayette was applauded, he was unable to rally the National Guard, and returned to his troops on June 29.[61] Morris saw him at court before he departed and his old friend spoke to him "on the Ton of antient Familiarity." Morris spoke forcefully, telling the discouraged general that if he did not return to his troops soon he would be imprisoned and tried as a traitor; and "that he must determine to fight for a good Constitution or for that wretched Piece of Paper which bears the Name. That in six weeks"—Morris had it down to the very day—"it will be too late." They argued a bit more about the proper form of a legislature, and with that stalemate, "[h]ere ends our Colloquy." They would not see each other again for more than five years.[62]

Morris's efforts that summer had the same goal he had always sought: a workable constitution. The only available instrument, in his view, was the king, and he resumed dictating memoires to Brémond, delivered to the king by Monciel, sometimes as Morris's advice, sometimes as Monciel's. They came up with several projects to exploit the popular indignation roused by the invasion of the Tuileries. A statement by the king was sent to the armies, and Monciel ordered it recorded in the municipal registers. The statement, which at least one historian believes was written by Monciel (and thus Morris was at least a coauthor), was apparently well written, and enhanced sympathies already aroused by the king's courage.[63] Monciel also ordered the *départements* (the country's new administration subdivisions) to block the *fédérés* from marching toward Paris, on the grounds that the decree for their creation had been vetoed. The *directoire* (administrators) of the *département* of the Somme sent an address to Louis pledging its loyalty, and Monciel sent a copy to all the *départements*, with an account of June 20.[64]

The hope was to provoke demonstrations against the Assembly, leading to its dissolution and a new constitution. These efforts were apparently well received in some larger towns, and in Paris thousands signed a petition demanding that the ringleaders of June 20 be punished. The

Girondins were alarmed, and on July 2, in front of the Assembly, the fiery Girondin deputy Isnard attacked Monciel for acting without authority. "They ask where are the traitors! Eh bien! There is one!" cried Isnard, pointing at Monciel. Monciel demanded the right to respond in writing, and attempted to leave the shouting Assembly, but his way was blocked, and a guard had to clear a way out. The incident must have been terrifying, but that day Morris recorded only that Monciel told him that the French were "too rotten for a free Government."[65]

THE FIRST ESCAPE PLAN: COMPIÈGNE.

Morris was now convinced that the king should leave Paris. On June 23, he took what may have been his first conspiratorial stroll in the garden with Montmorin, Bertrand de Moleville, and Malouet (a moderate constitutionalist). Morris, as always, advocated forceful action, and "in order to see what Stuff they are made of I tell them what Measures would put an End to all Troubles; but these Measures are deep and dangerous and when we go into M. de Montmorin's Closet he sickens." In fact, Montmorin was involved, undoubtedly more than Morris knew, with the queen's dealings with the allies, and wrote regularly to his royalist friend the comte de la Marck; Montmorin would later tell la Marck that he felt all the escape plans were too dangerous.[66] He continued to resist the thought of escape, but Moleville, along with the marquis de Lally-Tolendal (a former *monarchien* deputy who had returned from Switzerland to help the king) and the comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, another *monarchien*, had already concocted a plan for the king to escape with Lafayette's help.[67]

Moleville apparently took the American into his confidence, and thereafter Morris and Monciel worked with him.[68] On June 28, Morris and Monciel discussed using Lafayette to cover the king's "*Sortie* from Paris." On June 29, after completing another "Counsel to be given by Monciel to the king," Morris wrote in his diary that "[t]he principal Object is to get a Decision"—presumably from the king.[69]

The escape plots of that summer were many and complicated and are difficult to perfectly reconstruct because of the inconsistencies inherent in the records, which reflect incomplete recollections and deliberate omissions, as well as personal prejudices and outright denials.[70] These records include the memoirs of several of the principals, as well as a memorandum written in haste by Morris in 1796 in Vienna for Mme Royale (the king's surviving child), a document in many respects inconsistent with

Morris's diary entries and the other memoires.[71] However, studying these documents together permits a general picture of the course of events to emerge.

Moleville initially recoiled from relying on Lafayette. "La Fayette! La Fayette!" the councilor reported protesting when it was proposed by Clermont-Tonnerre. "[I]s it possible you can depend on such a man after all we have seen of his conduct?" Yet there appeared to be no alternative, and Moleville transmitted the "first" plan—for Lafayette to rally the National Guard and destroy the Jacobins—to the king before Lafayette's arrival in Paris in late June. When the Guard did not respond to Lafayette's call, Lafayette gave Lally-Tolendal another escape plan, which Monciel or Moleville passed on to Louis on July 9.[72]

The king was to be brought out under the cover of apparently legitimate troop movements. Lafayette's Army of the Rhine and General Luckner's Army of Flanders would exchange positions, which meant that at one point, Lafayette's army would be near the royal château at Compiègne, within twenty leagues of Paris. (The constitution prohibited Louis from going farther than this distance from Paris, and he was determined to obey this restriction.)[73] The generals would inform the Assembly that Louis intended to exercise his right to travel, and escort the king.[74] Louis would then publicly forbid his brothers and the allied forces from further advance into France. The escape was by most accounts to take place on July 15.[75]

The royal family itself was divided both as to goals and means. The king supported a constitutional monarchy, but the queen wanted her husband restored to supremacy, by foreign intervention. Although she feared that a victorious Austria would partition France, she thought Prussia's entry into the war would forestall this. She resisted escape, pinning her hopes on what would be the Brunswick Manifesto, in the fatally misguided belief that this official threat of invasion by Austria and Prussia, joined with the demand for restoration of Louis's authority, would convince the French of Louis's good intentions.[76]

In the meantime, the *fermentation* continued. In early July, Isnard suggested that Lafayette had committed treason by leaving his troops to come to Paris. The Assembly sidestepped the king's veto of the *fédérés* by inviting them to Paris for the July 14 celebrations. Vergniaud delivered an incendiary address that effectively accused Louis of treason, placing responsibility for the military reverses on the king, and asking rhetorically whether the court sought the blood of the émigré troops or of its own troops. Duranthon resigned as minister of justice, citing nervous strain, and was replaced by de Joly, a Girondin and a friend of Lafayette. (There may have

been more to Duranthon's resignation than nerves. Two days earlier, Morris recorded that the queen and Mme Elisabeth (Louis's sister) had sent Monciel "a Hint to beware of Duranthon").[77] On July 6, Morris heard that Danton had made a chilling announcement that "they would get Rid of" the "Intrigues of the Court" on July 14.

On July 7, the famous "Lamourette's Kiss" took place in the fractious Assembly: for a heartbeat of time, at the behest of Lamourette, the bishop of Lyon, the members put aside their differences and when he asked "those who abjure and execrate both a republic and two chambers" to rise, they stood as one. The king hurried over to add his support, the queen appeared ecstatic, and Brissot quietly pocketed the inflammatory speech he had planned to deliver.[78] Morris disapproved of the monarchs' apparent naïveté, but took advantage of the momentary truce to present a formal request for a commercial treaty with America. He also asked for rescission of recent decrees adverse to American commercial interests, decrees resulting from what historian Lawrence Kaplan calls the "revolutionary renascence of French mercantilism," a phenomenon Morris had long anticipated but which utterly dismayed Jefferson.[79]

While Morris noted sourly that he was "not pleas'd" with the queen's seeming embrace of Lamourette's Kiss, she did not really believe that the court and the Assembly were reconciled. Within days, she wrote again asking the foreign powers to publish a manifesto. Montmorin probably informed Morris of its proposed contents, for he reported to Jefferson that it would "disavow the Constitution and claim for the King (what it calls) his Rights . . . these broad Terms will mean whatever Power may chuse to explain them."[80]

The queen's mistrust was justified: only two days after the tearful embraces in the Convention, Brissot delivered "a fiery Discourse against the king," naming the court as the center of a traitorous conspiracy and denouncing Monciel's effort to rally the country's *départements*. He demanded that the Assembly declare *la patrie est en danger* (the country is in danger) and pointed to the constitutional provision that "if the king does not formally oppose factions formed in his name against the constitution, he will be considered to have abdicated."[81]

The next day was July 10, the day the king was to make his decision about Lafayette's proposal for escape. It was a very hot day. In the morning, Morris wrote to Jefferson of his expectation that "[t]his Day the King will commence a new Career"—a reference so oblique the otherwise uninformed Jefferson could not possibly understand it—but the day passed and he heard nothing. He went to look for the minister of the navy

to discuss the American debt, but he had gone to court. That evening, Morris learned that Louis's ministers had resigned because, as Brémond told him the following morning, "their Majesties flash'd in the Pan."[82]

The king had wanted to proceed, but the queen refused to rely on Lafayette. "[I]t would be too appalling to owe our lives to that man twice," she is recorded to have said, in a reference to the humiliation of the October Days. The king acquiesced, and gave Moleville his refusal, instructing him to thank Lafayette for his willingness "to incur so much danger."[83]

Morris told Jefferson that the ministers resigned because they "found themselves seriously compromised" by the king's refusal. They continued to serve *par interim*, reluctantly; later that month, Monciel implored the king to announce his replacement as minister. Otherwise, he told Louis, Brissot was about to have him impeached for treason. Monciel continued in the inner circle of the king's counselors, however. Since he was not well known, he could pass by unnoticed, and often visited the king late in the evening, to brief him about the council's meetings.[84]

On July 11, the Assembly adopted the *patrie en danger* decree, transferring yet more power to the Assembly from the already feeble executive, encouraging those who hoped to overturn the monarchy (*déchéance*), and marking the defeat of the *Feuillants*.[85] Yet the king's supporters had not abandoned hope. On the twelfth, Monciel met with Louis's secretary Pellinc who, he reported to Morris, "says that Things may yet be arranged." Morris ate dinner with his landlord, M. Perregaux, who told him that Lafayette and Luckner were expected in town the following day, indicating that the escape might still take place. Morris, clearly very tense, drank too much and "return[ed] Home much heated." He did not sleep that night.[86]

The rumor of the generals' arrival spread rapidly through the nervous city. Yet nothing happened. Though "tormented with nervous Heaviness" for lack of sleep, Morris went forward with one of his first dinner parties at his new residence, a small and probably strained group under the circumstances, with the Flahauts, Moleville, Adèle's niece Mlle Duplessis, and M. Saint-Pardoux.[87]

After dinner, he was visited by his friend Mme d'Albani, widow of the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Stuart. Morris saw her and his friend Mme du Bourg so frequently during this period that it permits speculation that they, too, were in on the escape plot. However, he recorded no news of the day, other than the fact that Mayor Pétion had been restored by the Assembly. On the following day, July 14, Pétion was the hero of the Champ-de-Mars fête, while the queen, depressed, listened to shouts of

"*Vive Pétion, le vertueux Pétion*!" and "*À bas le veto*!" below her window.[88] On Sunday, July 15, the date fixed for the escape, Morris went to court for the weekly *lever du roi*. "Nothing new," he recorded.[89]

THE SECOND ESCAPE PLAN: ROUEN.

Morris was dismayed but not surprised by the king's change of heart. "I think there is a Want of Mettle which will ever prevent them from being truly royal," he commented, and promptly embarked on drafting a "Discourse" for Monciel, "in the View, if their Majesties come round, to strike a still more important Stroke." The "Stroke" is unexplained, but according to his 1796 memorandum as well as Moleville's *Memoires*, the king's refusal to escape led his supporters to take steps to try to assure that the king could defeat any attack against him "as soon as the conspirators found themselves in force." The group began efforts to raise what Morris called a "sort of royal army, an extremely delicate proceeding which could not fail to compromise those mixed up with it if the enemies of the King were to get the upper hand."[90]

One of the agents mentioned in Morris's 1796 memorandum was David d'Angremont, secretary of the administration of the National Guard.[91] Moleville also employed a loyal ex-Guardsman to recruit agents, and established a safe house for those loyal to Louis. To finance these secret activities, the king needed money, since his civil list was exhausted; he apparently had only 5,000 *louis d'or* (worth about 450,000 livres) and 600,000 to 700,000 *assignats.*[92] Some time in July, Moleville obtained another 600,000 *livres,* allegedly using his own money in part, and about another 1.5 million *livres* from another friend of the king. It is a powerful testimony to the strength of the connection between the desperate monarch and the American minister that the king thereafter sent word through Monciel asking Morris to "supervise what was being done in his service and to become guardian of his papers and of his money." According to Morris, he told the king that "his house did not strike him as any safer than the palace," since he had "long been an object of hatred to the conspirators," but he agreed. On July 24, Monciel brought him "the King's Money at his Majesty's Request, who tells him at the same Time that I have always given him good Advice and he has the greatest Confidence in me." The amount received was 547,000 *livres*.[93] By August 2, "539,005 *livres* were already being used according to the orders of the King"; specifically, for distribution to "counter-conspirators."

On July 17, Brémond had given Morris "a melancholy Account of the Situation," and Morris told Montmorin bluntly that the king should get out of Paris. The ex-minister and loyal old friend of Louis was seemingly seized by the same paralysis that gripped the king, for he "thinks otherwise and fosters a thousand empty Hopes and vain Expectations," Morris recorded. Morris was definitely not optimistic. The day before, he had written to Short that a "new Form of Government" would probably soon be established in France and it is obvious that he did not think it would be a monarchy.[94]

His diary entries in these weeks as the noose tightened around the court are brief, but the reader can clearly detect the escalating tension. On July 19, two days after he spoke to Montmorin about the king's need to escape, Morris asked Montmorin for a passport "for the Interior of the Kingdom."[95] Just what he had in mind is frustratingly uncertain: perhaps he planned to follow the king if an escape took place; perhaps he intended to place himself in advance at the proposed retreat. His memorandum of 1796 gives no clue.

Also on July 19, Moleville learned of a plot to assassinate the king, to take place on July 29. "Three hundred men were to assemble at the mayor's hotel, on the pretense of guarding Pétion from a supposed plot against his life, but, in reality, to prevent him" from protecting the king, Moleville wrote later. Meanwhile, the *faubourgs*[96] were to attack the palace. Moleville once more urged Louis to leave Paris and, to defuse the immediate plot, printed up allegations of the conspiracy and had them posted around Paris.[97]

Meanwhile, Morris and Brémond had prepared a plan of action for Louis to follow should he triumph in Paris or escape to a location outside the capital. On July 20, "in Consequence of the Memoire," Morris wrote, "a Conversation has taken Place between him and Monsieur de Montmorin and M. de Bertrand." (Unfortunately, it is not clear from the context who "him" refers to, Monciel or Louis.) They apparently agreed to get the king to Rouen, for on that day Lord Gower, who had received a visit from Morris, wrote to Grenville that he would not "be surprized if I have to inform your Lordship of His Most Christian Majesty's arrival at Rouen where he will find a great majority of the inhabitants ready to support his cause."[98]

Yet once again their plans ran into the intransigence of the queen. On July 24, probably in response to the news of the planned assassination, Marie-Antoinette wrote her confidant, the Swedish count Fersen that she was in danger and that the manifesto must be published; she still preferred to rely on the foreign powers than take a chance on independent action. As

for Louis, he "hoped for little, but still he hoped; he believed to the last that it was a sacred duty for him to devote himself to the people confided to his care." Morris, Monciel, and Brémond met to "consider what is to be done in the case of a Suspension" of the king, and a few days later Lord Gower advised Grenville that "notwithstanding the opinion of his friends, at least many of them, His Majesty is determined to remain at Paris." Morris heard "fresh Accounts of Murders and Assassinations from the South of France," and that "the Austrians speak of spending their Winter at Paris with the utmost Confidence."[99]

On the evening of July 25, Santerre, head of the National Guard of the radical faubourg Saint-Antoine, and Westermann, a member of the central committee of the *fédérés*, met at a Paris restaurant to plan an immediate attack on the Tuileries. At two in the morning the tocsin rang to summon people to march. No one responded. The following afternoon, Morris ate lunch with Adèle, who "mentions a Conspiracy against the Life of the King but will not name her Informant. I talk to her very seriously and near to scolding."[100]

Morris was still working on a new constitution and a letter for the king to send to the Assembly, whenever the Brunswick Manifesto finally appeared.[101] Monciel delivered the letter to Louis on the thirtieth, the same day that a battalion of five hundred *fédérés* from Marseilles marched into town, singing the war song that would thereafter bear their name. That night there was a brawl between National Guard supporters of the king and the Marseillais, and a guardsman was killed. Morris found the company at Mme d'Albani's terrified by the news. When he met with Brémond and Monciel the next morning, Brémond called for bloody retribution, but after he left Morris and Monciel "agreed not to permit any of those horrible Things which his Indignation would lead him to."[102]

Events were accelerating. Rumors of the manifesto began to reach Paris on July 28. On July 31, the Paris section of Mauconseil declared that it did not recognize Louis as the king of the French.[103] The Girondins belatedly began to realize that their goal—a submissive king and a ministry under their control—was in serious danger, and secretly contacted the king through his *valet de chambre*, de Thierry, to negotiate a return of Clavière, Roland, and Servan to the ministry in exchange for preservation of the monarchy. Louis rejected the approach and rebuked de Thierry. "Tell your master," Vergniaud advised the valet frankly, "that we are not lying about the danger, but after this moment it will not be in our power to save them."[104] According to Moleville, the Girondins' demand was founded in peculation, or so he was informed by Malesherbes, who did not "doubt

but there is some dirty finance business under it, and that Clavière has promised a great deal of money to these gentlemen." (While Brissot's biographer roundly denounces Moleville's accusation that Brissot demanded 12 million *livres* to save the king, Clavière's venality is established.)[105] On July 27 and 29, de Joly suggested to the king several alternatives to restoring Roland and Servan, including Pétion and Camus (the deputy Morris had bribed the year before). Louis rejected the suggestions.[106]

The king's friends still hoped he would go to Rouen, and Morris and Monciel agreed on a message to go to Lafayette. Lafayette was again under attack by Robespierre and Brissot. On July 29 the journalist gave "evidence" to the Assembly of Lafayette's purported intention to march on Paris. "I verily believe that if Mr. de La Fayette were to appear just now in Paris unattended by his Army he would be torn to Pieces," Morris wrote to Jefferson on August 1. "Thank God we have no Populace in America and I hope the Education and Manners will long prevent that Evil."[107]

THE THIRD ESCAPE PLAN: GAILLON.

Time was running out, and the plan was apparently revised: the royal family was to go only as far as the castle of Gaillon in Normandy, en route to Rouen. Gaillon offered the advantage of being exactly twenty leagues from Paris and only thirty-six miles from the sea, should escape from France prove necessary. De Laporte would invite Montmorin and Clermont-Tonnere to dine, and they would hide the royal family in their coaches. A detachment of the Swiss Guard would be sent to divert the sentinel at the city barrier, and another fifteen hundred would depart Courbevoie (where they were stationed) to guard the king's escape route. On arrival at Gaillon, the king, probably using Morris's and Monciel's memorandum, would write to the "assembly, the municipality, and to all the départements, informing them of the circumstances and motives which have obliged him to withdraw from Paris," wrote Moleville.[108]

On August 1, the day that Lazare Carnot, a radical Montagnard deputy, decided that pikes should be fabricated and issued to all citizens, Morris wrote his fifth dispatch to Jefferson:

> In the present State of Things it seems evident that if the King be not destroy'd he must soon become absolute. I think the Prime-Movers of the Revolution [Morris's description of Lafayette and the *Feuillants*] . . . will therefore declare their Adherence to his Majesty grounded on the

> Abolition of the Constitution by the Assembly and their Masters the Jacobine Club.[109]

He told Jefferson that the king had not after all commenced "a new Career," but declined to explain or to describe the new "Plans in Agitation at present to establish a good Constitution" because

> should my Letter miscarry it would occasion much of that Noise and Nonsense in which it is unpleasant to find one's Name. And the wrongheaded People who get hold of such Things cannot distinguish between a Person who has obtain'd exact Information of what is doing and those who are Actors in the Business.

This jarring disclaimer of participation, though patently untrue, was logical: Morris had good reason to think his letters were not secure and it would have been extremely dangerous to describe his actions. He may also have hoped that this statement would help inoculate the American government against reproach should he be caught and denounced.[110] Morris then expressed his grave doubts of success for either the escape or a new constitution:

> I dare not say that I *hope* this will take Place. I ardently *wish* it but I have Doubts and Fears because I have no Confidence in the Morals of the People. The King is anxious to secure their permanent Happiness but Alas they are not in a State of Mind to receive Good from his Hands. Suspicion, that constant Companion of Vice and Weakness, has loosened every Band of social Union and blasts every honest Hope in the Moment of its budding.

Morris closed with an expression of faint hope that the king might still survive.

On August 2, Monciel told Morris that the Girondins were making another attempt to have him arrested and sent to Orléans. Unfazed, they discussed distribution of money to "counter-conspirators" who "were to repair to certain places and there to fight under these chiefs."[111] During the next few days, they prepared an "Address" to the Marseillais. Brémond, who did the footwork of buying specie, told them he could purchase the "correspondence of the Jacobins" for 1,000 *louis*.[112]

On August 3, the *Moniteur* published the Brunswick Manifesto. The declaration, Morris wrote later to Mme du Bourg, could be "rendered in a

few words. 'Be all against me, for I am opposed to you all; and make a good resistance, for there is no longer any hope.'" Morris was scornful. "As for me, I never had a very exalted idea of the effect which could be produced by manifestos," he told his friend.[113]

Yet the manifesto was worse than unhelpful to the court, for it played right into the hands of the king's opponents.[114] Although Louis sent a letter to the Assembly disavowing the manifesto—probably drafted by Morris and Monciel, for it reflected their view of the manifesto and their strategy for the king—it had no effect. Fear of invasion and suspicion of the king's complicity fueled a petition to the Assembly by forty-seven of the forty-eight Paris sections, denouncing the king. On August 4 the *fédérés* central committee met to plan an attack. Santerre pushed for August 5, but at Pétion's objection they changed it to August 9.[115] Lally-Tolendal's *Mémoire* contains minutes of a meeting that day at Montmorin's. Malouet had received an anonymous tip about the plan, and he, Moleville, Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally-Tolendal, and probably Morris met to hammer out the last details of a new effort at escape.[116] (Morris is not mentioned by Malouet but Morris recorded that he went to Montmorin's after dinner, "where I find a Family in deep Distress.")[117] They agreed that the duc de Liancourt would precede the royal family to Rouen, and that Lafayette would join them there.

According to Malouet, Montmorin went to see the king and reported that he had agreed but told Montmorin to work with Monciel who was, he said, working on another escape plan with Sainte-Croix (minister of foreign affairs since August 2). This statement is confusing, because the preponderance of the evidence—Morris's entries regarding frequent visits to Montmorin, almost-daily meetings with Monciel, Moleville, and by now, Sainte-Croix, along with the outlines of the plan in Moleville and Malouet's memoires—strongly indicates that they were all working together.[118]

There is also persuasive evidence in Morris's diary that Lord Gower and Lady Sutherland were apprised of this plan, and may have been participants. Morris's regular visits to the British, often followed by dispatches from Gower to Grenville with information undoubtedly received from Morris, establish the degree of intimacy between the diplomats. After the meeting at Montmorin's on the night of August 4, Morris returned home to find Lady Sutherland at his door.

> [S]he comes to obtain an Interview between me and the Chevalier de Coigny. I tell her that I will be at Home if he will call on me tomor-

> row. He wishes to give my Ideas direct to the Queen without passing thro the Medium of Monsieur de Montmorin.[119]

"They all expect," Morris went on, "to be murdered this Evening at the Chateau."

Morris and Monciel met with Coigny two days later and "digest[ed] a Petition for the Marseillois calculated to make the King declare himself. Monsieur de Coigny is to push the same Point with the Queen."[120] This statement is cryptic; it may refer to a petition to the Assembly, written by Robespierre for the *fédérés*, denouncing the court and other internal enemies.[121] Alternatively, it could have been the "Address" Morris mentioned writing on August 3, prepared as a counterstroke, to be presented by the king and welcomed by paid loyalist agents who had infiltrated the Marseillais. The desire to have the king "declare himself" and to "push the same Point" with the queen reflects Morris's frustration with what he always saw as Montmorin's weak-kneed counsel. Malouet frankly admitted that Morris "gave His Majesty, although more fruitlessly than we did, much more vigorous advice," and Morris wrote later that

> the Court was involv'd in a Spirit of little paltry Intrigue unworthy of Anything above the Rank of Footmen and Chambermaids. Every one had his or her little project and every little Project had some Abettors. Strong manly Councils frightened the weak, alarmed the envious and wounded the enervate mind of the lazy and luxurious. Such counsels therefore (if perchance any appeared) were approved but not adopted, certainly not follow'd.[122]

Morris made his regular semiweekly visit to court to attend the royal *lever* on August 5. "Nothing remarkable, only that they were up all Night expecting to be murdered," he wrote dryly. Moleville, who was also present, was more eloquent:

> The court was never more brilliant . . . than on that day. . . . I left the palace, my eyes running over with tears; yet I was far from imagining, at that moment, that I had seen the royal family for the last time.

That night, at the Jacobin Club, Robespierre announced discovery of a "new plan" for the king's escape.[123]

Very early on August 6, Moleville was visited by an agent who had reconnoitered Gaillon and Rouen. The report was promising: Rouen was "entirely in favor of the King" and three thousand troops would be sufficient to guard the castle. Moleville promptly sent a message to the king recommending departure either that night or the next. He waited anxiously all day for a reply. Finally, at six o'clock, word came to "suspend the preparations for their departure until farther notice; as it was their majesties intentions to reserve that step for the last extremity."

> These fatal words were like a thunderbolt to me. "What do they mean by the last extremity?" cried I, with as much rage as despair. "Who can the idiots or traitors be, who have suggested such a pernicious resolution?"

He rushed over to see Montmorin. Montmorin agreed to write to the king, though he had no hopes of success

> because I am sure that they are swayed by different counsel than ours. The king is ruined, my friend, and so are we all. You laughed at me six months ago, when I told you it would come to a republic: you will find that I was not deceived; I believe it is at no great distance; perhaps it will not last long; but that will depend upon the fate of the king. If he is assassinated, the republic will certainly be of short duration; but if he shall be formally tried, and consequently condemned, you will not have the monarchy so soon re-established.

"As for me," the weary former minister told Moleville, "I shall never see it." Less than four weeks later, Montmorin was dead.

Moleville learned later that the queen opposed going to Gaillon, largely because it required relying on the duc de Liancourt. "Mr. Bertrand does not consider," he reported that she said, "that he is throwing us into the hands of constitutionalists."[124]

Morris's diary gives no indication whether he was privy to these events. The next day, August 7, Monciel told Morris that he had met with Louis, and apparently the stubborn king told him, "The public Mind is much better than it was and will mend."[125] Nonetheless, according to Malouet, the king's supporters had already met that morning to plan a new effort to use the Swiss Guard to get the king to Pontoise (about halfway to Gaillon, and a quarter of the way to Rouen). Montmorin wrote the king that he could delay no longer, and that the following morning before daylight

loyal members of the National Guard would escort the royal family from the Tuileries to a coach on the Champs-Élysées, where they would be met by four companies of Swiss Guards sent from Courbevoie.[126] The letter received no response, and this time Montmorin went to talk to Louis.

> Madame Elisabeth told him that the insurrection was not really close at hand; that Santerre and Petion had promised, and that they had received 750,000 livres to bring the Marseillais over to his Majesty's side. The King was no longer uneasy, but determined not to leave Paris. In spite of Montmorin's entreaties, the best he could obtain was designation of Maréchal de Mailly to command the Tuileries, and instructions for the commandant of the Swiss Guards and to brave Acloque to watch the moves of the Jacobins . . . It was obvious that these precautions were insufficient against a raging though undisciplined mob.[127]

Although Malouet does not say whether orders had already been given to go forward with the plan, it is a fact that on August 9, between two and three o'clock in the morning, two battalions of Swiss guardsmen lodged at Courbevoie left for Paris to go to the palace.[128]

The report that Santerre and Pétion had been bribed to bring the Marseillais over to the king's side is intriguing because of the sketchy indications in Morris's diary and 1796 memorandum that he was engaged in just such an effort using the king's money. However, there is no evidence that after June 20 Morris thought the king should stay in Paris; quite the contrary. Rather, his goal was to protect Louis if he hadn't escaped before the insurrection began. Malouet later severely criticized what he called a "miserable intrigue" of dealings with the most "furious Jacobins" and the plan to bribe Pétion and Santerre, efforts that he alleged created false hopes of a counterrevolution. Since it seems clear that Morris, Montmorin, and Moleville were engaged in some such effort, they must not have told Malouet. This conclusion is given support by an otherwise puzzling statement in Morris's entry of July 21. He went that day to Montmorin's, but finding Malouet present, "of course I do not as I intended confer with Montmorin and Bertrand [de Moleville]."[129]

Morris must have been aware of the escape plan of August 7; however, his diary says only "[t]his Morning I write." That night, after the king had rejected the plan, Malesherbes came to Montmorin's to join a final discussion, one at which Morris was apparently present. According to Malouet,

Malesherbes told the group that the only measure remaining, a desperate one, was that the king should offer to accept a regency. The group then received from the king a copy of a letter from the Girondins Vergniaud and Guadet proposing essentially the same thing.[130] "The coincidence stunned us. We found a great many problems with the proposal . . . the monarchy would be nullified," and "a council named by the republicans would make us responsible for any unpopular acts." They did not break up until late that night, in great anguish, never to be reunited. The next day Malouet advised de Laporte to burn his papers and to ask the king to burn any papers he had received from Malouet. "The good prince told me the next day through Monciel that he had burned them himself; and in fact they found nothing relating to me in his iron chest."

On the morning of Thursday, August 9, another hot day in a series of hot days—and the last full day of the monarchy—Monciel made his regular appearance at Morris's door, bringing 200,000 more *livres* from the king.[131] Morris dressed and went to court, and then to a meeting on land sales. From there he went to the Louvre where he passed what would be his last "happy Moment" with Adèle, and then dined with the British ambassador. "Afterwards call at Mon. Montmorin's and go thence to Madame d'Albani's, where I stay till near twelve. Paris is in great Agitation."

• • •

In the very early morning of August 10, 1792—probably not long after Morris arrived home from Mme d'Albani's—young Thomas Waters Griffith and another American disguised themselves as *fédérés* and wandered the streets of Paris, alive with curiosity. After visiting the Jacobin Club and listening to a debate regarding the proposed attack on the Tuileries, the two tourists, exhausted, went home to bed, convinced that the king's Guard could repulse any offensive. It was a short-lived belief. Roused out of bed a few hours later by the sound of firing—"the Cannon begin, and Musquetry mingled with them announce a warm Day," Morris recorded in his diary not far away—Griffith, still in disguise, hurried over to the quay opposite the Louvre, where he got an excellent view of the assault.[132]

At 7:30 that morning, Roederer, a *Feuillant* and an administrator of Paris, who had counseled the monarchs over the summer, had come to the palace to urge the monarchs to save their children and take sanctuary in the Assembly. Marie-Antoinette resisted to the last: "Are we alone, then, abandoned by all?" "Yes, Madame, you are alone," Roederer replied. The

loyal Swiss Guard remained to defend the château. Many of the National guardsmen who were with them tore off their crosses of Saint-Louis, broke their swords, and fled.[133]

The first cannon shots came at ten o'clock in the morning. The doors of the Tuileries had been forced half an hour before, and the crowds, led by Westermann, burst in. After a brief exchange of words, in which Westermann demanded that the defending troops "join *la Nation*," shots rang out from the defending side, infuriating the crowd. The slaughter began, and the Swiss Guards "wherever found are murder'd," Morris wrote.[134]

After watching this edifying scene for some hours, Griffith and his friend walked over to see the National Guard barracks at the Carrousel, which had also been attacked, on fire. They encountered patrols bearing heads on pikes, a grisly sight that led Griffith's friend to decide to leave Paris immediately, before the barriers were closed. Griffith made his way across the river and walked through the bloodstained palace, where many of the dead still lay. It was exceedingly hot, and the royal family was stifling in the Assembly.

Monciel had called on Morris first thing in the morning as usual, and his report was "tranquilizing," but the American minister soon learned otherwise. Adèle sent her son to take refuge, and followed later in the day. Morris had previously invited "a Company" to dine, but few of his guests appeared. "Mr. Huskisson, the Secretary to the British Embassador, comes in the Evening. He gives a sad Account of Things."[135]

Elsewhere in Paris, suspected counterrevolutionaries were being hunted down. A crowd broke into Clermont-Tonnerre's house looking for hidden arms; he was taken to the section. As nothing suspicious was found, he was released, but he was recognized in the street and severely beaten. He staggered, dying, into the home of Mme de Brassac, and collapsed.[136] "Your friend is dead, murdered," wrote the count's wife in desperate haste to Malouet. "There is no longer any place in France for a virtuous man. Flee . . ." Malouet left his home that night and moved from one hiding place to another over the next few weeks. Morris's agent, d'Angremont, was captured. He had "the courage to be silent," but was quickly condemned and would be beheaded by the guillotine on August 22, one of its first political victims. De Laporte met the same fate on August 24.[137] Montmorin, who had joined Malesherbes and a number of other nobles in the defense of the Tuileries, was found hiding in the home of a laundress, arrested, and taken to prison.[138] Mme de Montmorin would later be guillotined. De Joly was also put under arrest, but was released a little over a week later.

On August 11, Morris wrote

> A sleepless Night renders me heavy during this Day. The King & Queen remain yet at the Assembly which goes on rapidly under the *Dictée* of the Tribunes. We are quiet here. Things are taking on their new Order. The Weather continues to be very hot. Mr. de St. Pardou calls in the Evening and seems to be torn to pieces by Affliction. I desire him, if he sees the royal Family, to tell them that Relief must soon arrive.

The "Relief" Morris spoke of was his fast-waning hope that Lafayette would come to the rescue; but, though he had the commissioners bearing the news of August 10 to his army arrested—which led to a decree of treason against him—Lafayette could not rally his troops. There would be no triumphant return for the general.

In the early morning of August 12, Monciel and his wife took refuge with Morris. That afternoon, Mme d'Albani came to visit. "She is violently affected and afflicted," he noted, and added inconsequentially, "[t]he Weather is very warm still and even oppressive. The State of the Air is evidenced by some Perch which, alive in the Morning at six oClock are spoil'd at Dinner. So rapid a State of putrefaction I never yet saw."[139]

Griffith was still in Paris, and on August 13 he watched the royal family being taken to the prison of the Temple. Afterward—perhaps the same day—he went to see the American minister. Griffith had met Morris that spring, when he and an acquaintance presented themselves with a request for introductions to Lafayette, for the two young American idealists hoped to serve under him. Morris had complied, but tactfully suggested they defer enlisting, "declaring prophetically that the Constitution would be crushed, and the marquis be overthrown with the king at the same time." They took his advice and were later extremely grateful.[140]

"I found at his house a number of gentlemen and ladies, who [Morris told him] from former intercourse with America, and in many cases services rendered to the United States, considered themselves entitled to protection in the hotel of the minister." Morris took Griffith aside, and called him "to witness" that

> if my protection of these persons should become a matter of reproach to me, here or at home (and I have reason to expect it will, from what I have already experienced), that I did not invite them to come, but

> that I will not put them out now that they are here, let the consequences be what they may.[141]

Just who these people were is uncertain. The Monciels, Mme de Flahaut, and later Sainte-Croix, are the only refugees we know of specifically, and they had not rendered any services to the United States. However, it is very likely that although Morris did not record their names in his diary, many other people came to seek sanctuary with him on any grounds available, including military service to the United States; for example, on August 14, General Duportail, former minister of war and a one-time strategist for Washington, came for help. Morris was besieged by requests for passports, from Americans and non-Americans. Mme d'Albani asked him to ask Lord Gower for a British passport; "he, as I expected, refuses to grant it." Nonetheless, she managed to escape to Ghent by the end of the month.[142]

Morris was on the right side of international law in this situation, for the people he harbored had not been formally identified as criminals. Moreover, there was and is a recognized exception to the rule that a minister cannot grant asylum to foreign nationals, if the asylum is a "temporary measure [to protect] individuals physically in danger from mob disorder or mob rule."[143] The chargé of Malta and the Swedish ambassador also harbored people, including Narbonne, and the Gowers hid a Swiss Guard.[144]

On August 16, one week after his last visit to the court of Louis XVI, Morris wrote to Jefferson. "[A]nother Revolution has been effected in this City. It was," he told the secretary of state simply, "bloody."[145]

Lafayette, he went on—the general would not flee for three more days—was the only hope for overturning the new regime, but he had no faith in him or in the other "moderate or middle men" who "hoped to ballance the two Extremes and govern the Kingdom by playing off one sett against the other." Of the moderates, only Lafayette had any force to call on, and "I rather think that the precious moment will be suffered to pass away. I have long been convinced that this middle party, who by the bye were the prime movers of the revolution, must fall to the Ground."

Morris viewed immediate action as essential. Otherwise,

> those who are now silent from fear, will habituate themselves by Degrees to speak favorably of the present Government, in order to lull Suspicion . . . and thus a public Opinion will appear . . . If by this means the new republic takes a little root, foreign powers will I believe find it a difficult matter to shake it to the ground, for the

> French Nation is an immense Mass which it is not easy either to move or to oppose.

With these remarks, Morris accurately pronounced the end of the hopes of the "moderate men," the idealistic group that had sat down in Jefferson's residence in August 1789 to demarcate the proper scope of the executive and legislative power in France. The events of August 10 were, to Morris, the inevitable result of those deliberations, and thus no surprise, horrifying though they were. He said as much to Thomas Pinckney:

> I foresaw not only a Struggle between the two Corps which the Constitution had organized viz. the Executive (so called) and the Legislative but I was convinced that the latter would get the better. . . . It is nevertheless a painful Reflection that one of the first Countries in the World should be so cruelly torn to Pieces.

Morris knew that the violence had just begun, and dreaded it:

> The Storm which lately raged is a little subsided but the Winds must soon rise again perhaps from the same perhaps from another Quarter but that is of little Consequence since in every Case we must expect a like Rape and Devastation. A Man attached to his fellow Men must see with the same Distress the Woes they suffer whether arising from an Army or from a Mob and whether those by whom they were inflicted speak french or german.

While Jefferson would rejoice at the news of the monarchy's overthrow, Morris could not. "An american," he told Pinckney,

> has a stronger Sympathy with this Country than any other Observer and nourished as he is in the very Bosom of Liberty he cannot but be deeply afflicted to see that in almost every Event this Struggle must terminate in Despotism. Yet such is the melancholy Spectacle which presents itself to my Mind and with which it has long been occupied. I earnestly wish and pray that Events may prove all my Reasonings to have been falacious and all my Apprehensions vain.[146]

The attempts to help the king had failed utterly. Among those who have meditated on that summer, there are some who argue

those efforts were counterproductive; that the suspicion that the king would try to escape was itself a principal cause of the attack of August 10; and that the secret efforts to counter the tide against the king lulled Louis and Marie-Antoinette into a dangerously false sense of security.[147] These comments have the benefit and thus the hollowness of being made after the fact. For those, like Morris, who hoped to salvage a constitutional monarchy and also to save the monarchs' lives, there were no other choices; the Girondins and the monarchs gave them none.

It is perhaps not well known that the British government, in the spring of 1792, was also trying to help the king escape.[148] Its activity raises the interesting question of what the United States might have done had it been in equally close proximity. In a way, Morris answered this question, even though he did not tell his government what he was doing. As America's sole official representative *in situ*, he acted on America's behalf in what he believed to be in France's best interests. This was certainly not in accordance with the ordinary definition of the role of a diplomat; but this was no ordinary situation. It would have been impossible to receive timely instructions from Jefferson and Washington, even if the mails had been secure. The fact that his efforts failed should not itself require a finding that his means were illegitimate, or obscure the uprightness of his intentions.