

HUNTINGDON JOURNAL.

"ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION, ONE DESTINY."

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TERMS

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THE BASTILLE.

BY JOHN INMAN.

The history of man affords, probably, no more terrible and hideous exemplification of wanton cruelty—the savage ferocity of unchecked power—and of human insensibility to the rights and sufferings of humanity, than is presented even in the imperfect records of the Bastille. The oppression of which it was the instrument and the scene, has never been told in all its horrors, and probably never will be; for in the destruction of the edifice, there is no doubt that many writings perished, in which were preserved the names and partial histories of hundreds who, in the course of four centuries, were immured within its gloomy cells; and of those hundreds, but three or four have given to the world a narrative of what they suffered in their confinement. In some instances, a mystery as impenetrable as that of the grave, has continued even to this day, to envelope the history of the Bastille prisoners, as, for instance, in the case of the celebrated "Man in the Iron Mask," whose very name is still undiscovered, although many able writers have employed years in speculations and inquiries on the subject, in others, prisoners are known to have died in the Bastille, whose existence had been forgotten by the men who placed them there, and of the cause of whose imprisonment, resting, perhaps, in the mere caprice of some minister or court favorite, no hint has ever been discovered. Such was the case of Dussault, who was incarcerated by an order from the ambitious and sanguinary Richelieu, and who remained in the Bastille fifty years after that minister had gone to his account. Richelieu died in 1642, at which time Dussault had been eleven years a prisoner. The only knowledge of his offence that has come down to modern times, is in a letter that was found among the papers of the cardinal, after his death. It was written by Dussault, and is a moving appeal for mercy. "You are aware, my lord, that for eleven years you have subjected me to suffering, and to enduring a thousand deaths in the Bastille, where the most loyal subjects of the King would still be worthy of compassion. How much more, then, ought to be shown to me, whom you have doomed to rot there for having disobeyed your order, which, had I performed it, would have condemned my soul to eternal torment, and made me pass into eternity with blood stained hands." For this unknown act of disobedience to an injunction with which compliance would have been a crime, Dussault languished in the Bastille sixty-one years; and for the last fifty years of his incarceration, it is probable that no better reason was known to his oppressors, than the simple fact that he had been there eleven years already. The cause of his punishment had gone to the grave with Richelieu and the successors of that minister appear to have thought that, as they did not know why he was imprisoned so they did not know why he should be set at liberty.

But the story of Latude Masers exhibits, in its broadest and most revolting light, the atrocity of the political system under which this Bastille flourished. He is one of the few who have revealed the secrets of that prison house; and his narrative, although long since out of print, and forgotten in the multitude of more recent wonders, is one of the most painfully interesting that were ever put on record.

Latude Masers was the son of a nobleman; and was educated for the army; but the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle defeated his expectations of employment, and being in somewhat strained circumstances, he went to Paris at the age of twenty-five, in the hope of obtaining some place at court. By a silly device, the object of which was merely to gain the favor of the notorious Marchioness de Pompadour, he unfortunately gave offence to that royal harlot, and by a *lettre de cachet* which she obtained from Louis the Fifteenth, he

was thrown into the Bastille, and afterwards into other prisons, whence he was not released until he was sixty years of age.

It was on the first of May, 1749, that he was conveyed to the Bastille, confounded, indeed, at his arrest, but entertaining strong hopes that his confinement would be brief, as his offence was venial—hopes in which he was confirmed by the degree of attention paid to his comfort, and by the assurances of Monsieur Berryer, the lieutenant of police, who promised to intercede for him with the Marchioness, and made consoling predictions that her anger would quickly be appeased. He did not know the cruel and revengeful nature of the woman with whom he had to deal.

After four months confinement in the Bastille, Masers was transferred to the castle of Vincennes, whence, at the end of nine months, he contrived to make his escape, by a bold and ingenious effort. His first moments of liberty were employed in reflection upon his future course, the result of which was a romantic but unfortunate determination to throw himself upon the generosity of his persecutor. He addressed a letter to the king in which he confessed contrition for his offence, implored the clemency of her to whom it had been given, and concluded by naming the place of his concealment. His answer was an immediate arrest and reconveyance to the Bastille, with orders to cast him into the lowest and most unwholesome dungeon, and subject him to the harshest treatment.

For two years these orders were obeyed to the letter; but at the end of that time his friend the lieutenant came again to his relief, and removed him to a better apartment. He did more; availing himself at his entree at the court, he made frequent and earnest appeals to the marchioness in behalf of the poor captive, but only with the calamitous effect of irritating her ferocious temper, and causing her to make a vow that her vengeance should be eternal.

From this time Masers again revolved in his mind projects of escape, in which after nearly three years of patient, ingenious, and unremitting labor, and at the infinite peril of his life, he again succeeded, having no other implements than two iron hooks, which he wrenched from a folding table, a knife made from the steel of a tinder box, ropes constructed of thread drawn from his linen shirts, of which he had, fortunately, a very large supply, and the small billets of wood with which he was supplied for fuel. With these poor aids he removed the iron gratings of the chimney, although firmly imbedded in the solid wall, constructed rope ladders, one of which was a hundred and eighty feet long, and which altogether required fourteen hundred feet of rope, descended from the top of the chimney to the ground, a height of more than one hundred and fifty feet, swam the ditch, and finally broke through a wall four feet and a half in thickness, and at last had the felicity of finding himself once more at liberty, and beyond the walls of the hated prison in which he had so long languished.

By the assistance of a friend he succeeded in reaching the Netherlands; but even in that country he was not safe from the vengeance of the cruel woman who wielded the power of France, through the licentious attachment of a king. He was actually seized in Amsterdam, with the consent of the states General, to whom he was represented by the French ambassador as a desperate and atrocious malefactor; and it is pretty well ascertained that bribery on a large scale was employed, in addition to calumny, to secure the victim of the unrelenting Pompadour. The tenacity of purpose with which she pursued the unfortunate Masers, is strikingly exhibited in the fact that no less a sum than one hundred and eighty thousand francs was expended in his recapture.

The return of the prisoner to Paris was signalized by the most ingenious and tormenting ill usage; and on the sixteenth of June, 1755, he was again thrown into his old dungeon, where he remained for three years and a half. His bed was straw, and covering it had none. The only light admitted to his cell was through a loop hole five inches in diameter, and he had neither chair nor table. Here he was driven by the horrors of his solitude, to cultivate the friendship of the rats, by which his dungeon was infested, and with which he succeeded in establishing a degree of intimacy, so that they would come to his cell, and even learned to recognize the names by which he distinguished them. He contrived also, even with his fettered hands, to make a flageolet of a piece of elder, that he found among his straw—a performance that cost him the labor of many months, his only tool being the buckle at his waistband.

At length a fortunate overflowing of

the Seine, occasioned his removal to a room in one of the towers—not, however, through any consideration for him, but in consequence of the remonstrances of his jailer, who complained that he was obliged to wade through the water when he conveyed food to his prisoners. Although one of the worst apartments in the Bastille, the new abode of Masers was a palace to the dungeon he had left—yet he could not help regretting his separation from the friendly rats, by which his weary hours had been beguiled. As a substitute he succeeded in catching a pair of pigeons that sometimes perched on his window; but just as he had effected a good understanding between himself and his captives, his brutal turnkey insisted on killing them.

In April, 1764, the Marchioness de Pompadour died, but her death brought no mitigation to the sufferings of the unfortunate Masers. Her heirs had influence enough to continue his imprisonment, instigated by fear that if he should be released he would bring his action against them and recover damages for his wrongs. They found a willing instrument in Monsieur de Sartine, who was now the lieutenant of police, and the imprisonment of Masers continued as rigorous as ever.

In August, 1764, he was again conveyed to Vincennes and thence he again contrived to escape fifteen months afterwards. Within little more than two months he was again arrested, reconveyed to Vincennes, and there placed in a horrible dungeon, only six feet square, into which no ray of light entered, or breath of fresh air, save when the door was opened. He had no room for an account of the cruelties here practised upon him, and of his ingenious devices to mitigate their severity, the detail of which would fill a volume. It was not until after the lapse of eleven years that he was released, and even then he was conveyed to a lunatic asylum, his enemies having imposed on the benevolent Malesherbes, who was now minister, a false tale of his insanity.

Here he remained two years, and was then released, on condition that he should immediately leave Paris and take up his abode at Montagnac, his native place. Unfortunately his compliance with this condition was not so prompt as it should have been. He lingered in Paris to present a memorial to the king, soliciting some compensation for his sufferings, and the consequence was that he was again arrested, and confined to the Bicetre, the vilest of all the criminal prisons in Paris, where he remained nearly four years, suffering dreadfully from disease, vermin and filth, and reduced to such a state that he courted death as a release from torment.

At length the time of his emancipation arrived—and it was to the generous zeal and perseverance of a noble hearted woman that he owed it. A memorial which Masers had written, at the suggestion of one of the judges who had become interested in his story, was dropped in the street by a careless messenger to whom it had been entrusted, and was picked up by a young female, Madame Legros, the wife of a teacher, and herself carrying on business in a small way as a mercer. The envelope was torn by lying in the wet, and Madame Legros read the paper, in which the sufferings of Masers were briefly set forth. Her feelings were strongly excited by the narrative, and from that moment she devoted herself, with an enthusiasm of benevolence that wears the character of sublimity, to the task of rescuing the unhappy prisoner from his dungeon. For three years she persisted, in the face of discouragement such as might well overcome even a resolute spirit. She had to endure privations, losses, and atrocious calumnies—was reduced to sell her ornaments and part of her furniture; and to subsist on hard and scanty fare; yet she never paused for a moment from the pursuit of her object, nor was ever heard to utter a regret that she had engaged in it. Without relations, friends, fortune or assistance, she undertook every thing, and shrank from no danger or fatigue. She forced her way to the levees of ministers, who alternately excited and extinguished her hopes—received her kindly and drove her away with rudeness—yet she never faltered, and at each repulse renewed her efforts with additional vigor. When within two months of her confinement, she went from Paris to Versailles on foot, in the depth of winter—returned exhausted with fatigue, and worn out with disappointment—worked more than half the night to gain the means of subsistence for the following day, and then repaired again to Versailles with a fortitude that no toil could weaken and no denial overcome.

At length her noble efforts were rewarded with success. After thirty five years of imprisonment, Latude Masers, at the age of sixty, broken in health and spirits, was set at liberty, and compensated for his sufferings by a pension of eighty dollars per annum! Nine years afterwards,

1793, he recovered heavy damages from the heirs of Madame de Pompadour, and notwithstanding the severe trials his frame had undergone, lived until 1805, attaining the age of eighty years, the best of which were wasted in the Bastille and other prisons, to appease the angry spirit of a profligate and vindictive woman.

It is pleasing to know that the heroism of Madame Legros was not altogether unrewarded. Subscriptions were raised of sufficient amount to purchase annuities for her life, amounting to some fifteen hundred francs per annum, and the Montyon gold medal, annually given at the prize of virtue, was unanimously awarded to her by the French Academy. But her richest reward was in her own bosom, and in the admiration and respect of her contemporaries throughout the civilized world, wherever the story of Masers became known.

A COUPLE OF STRAY LEAVES.

LEAF THE FIRST—SIX MONTHS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Well my dear will you go to the party to-night? you know we have a very polite invitation,

Why my love, just as you please, you know I always wish to consult your pleasure.

Well then Harriet suppose we go, that is if you are perfectly willing; now don't say yes because I do, for you know that where you are there I am perfectly happy.

Why my love you would enjoy yourself there I am sure, and whenever you are happy I shall be of course. What dress shall I wear William?—my white satin with blood or my ashes of roses or my laventine or my white lace you always know better than I about such things.

Harriet dearest you look beautiful in any thing now take your choice tonight—but I think you look very well in the white satin.

There William dear; I knew you would think just as I did—oh! how happy we shall be there to night, and you must promise not to leave me for a moment for I shall be so sad if you do.

"Leave thee dearest, leave thee,
No, by yonder star I swear."

Oh William dearest William, how beautiful that is, you are always learning poetry to make me happy.

And Harriet, my own prized Harriet would I not do anything in the world to give you one moment's happiness? Oh now you are so very dear to me, it seems at times almost to much happiness to last.

Oh do not say so dear William, it will last—and we shall see many years even happier than this, for will not our love be stronger and deeper every year, and now dearest, I will be back in one moment, and then we will go.

There she is gone, bright and beautiful creature she is—Oh! how miserable I should be without her—she has indeed cast a strong spell around my heart and one that never, no never can be broken; she is the only star of my existence guiding on to virtue and happiness, and can I ever love her less than now?—can I ever desert her? can I speak of her in less than terms of praise? Oh no, it is impossible—she is too good, too pure—happy, happy man that I am.

LEAF THE SECOND—SIX YEARS AFTER MARRIAGE.

My dear, I would thank you to pass the sugar, you didn't give me but one lump.

Well Mr. Snooks, I declare you use sugar enough in your tea to sweeten a hog'shead of vinegar. James keep your fingers out of the sweet meats; Susan keeps still bawling; I declare it is enough to set one distracted; there, take that you little wretch.

Why Harriet, what has the child done? I declare you are too hasty.

I wish Mr. Snooks, you'd mind your own business, you're always meddling with what don't concern you.

Well Mrs. Snooks, I want to know who has a better right I have not—you are always fretting and fuming about nothing.

Pa. Thomas is tearing your newspapers all up.

Thomas, come here—how dare you abuse my papers; I'll teach you to tear it again; there sir, how does that feel; now go to bed!

Mr. Snooks; you horrid wretch; how can you strike a child of mine in that way

—Come here Thomas, poor fellow—did he get hurt—never mind; here's a lump of sugar; there that's a good boy.

Mrs. Snooks, let me tell you, will spoil the children; you know I never interfered when you see fit to punish a child, its strange a woman can never do any thing right.

Never do any thing right? faith Mr. Snooks, if no body did any thing right in this house but yourself, I wonder what would become of us.

Let me tell you ma'am, and I'll bear it no longer. You are as snappish and surly as—a—she dog—and if there is a divorce to be had in the land I'll have it you would wear out the patience of a Job.

O dear, how mad the poor man is, well good night my dear—pleasant dreams,

There she's gone. Thank heaven I'm alone once more. Oh! unhappy man that I am to be chained down to such a creature; she is the essence of all ugliness, a cross and peevish; O that I could once more be a bachelor; curse the day and hour that I saw the likeness of her. Yes I will get a divorce; I can't live with her any longer, it is utterly impossible.

HINTS ON FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

Family government should be strictly impartial.

Nothing can be more destructive of domestic harmony than paternal favoritism. So long as children of the same family differ especially in their characters & dispositions, [and this is often the case] so long as some are gentle, affectionate and obedient, and others stubborn and unfilial, it is impossible for any parent to regard them alike, and if he could, it would only show his own want of moral discrimination. He must approve and disapprove reward and punish, with a strict regard to personal character. This is the great principle on which every good government is administered. So far as parental love consists in complacency a father may certainly love a dutiful better than an undutiful child. Indeed he cannot help it, and there is no partiality in this. But if he indulges one child more than another, if he punishes this and lets that go free; if he is blind to the faults of one and severe to mark those of another; he is partial, and can never in this way govern his family well. His children will see and feel the wrong. If those who have reason to complain obey him, it will be from fear and not from affection; and he will be so far from securing the reverence and gratitude of his favorites, that they will be the first to despise his authority and "bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." If a perverse child will complain, because his privilege are abridged, and he is made to eat the bitter fruits of his own ways, there is no help for it. He might restore himself to the standing and affections which he has forfeited, if he would, and he has no more right to say, when he is punished and others are rewarded, that injustice is done him, than the thief has to complain, that he is imprisoned while his honest neighbors are unmolested. But while this is true on the one hand, let every parent guard as much as possible against all appearance of partiality or the other; and the moment the prodigal returns, and says, "father I have sinned," let him be received with open arms, however far he may have wandered, and whatever grief he may have occasioned.

DISCIPLINE—When Kleber was in Egypt, he sustained, during five hours, with only two thousand men, the united efforts of twenty thousand. He was nearly surrounded, was wounded and had only a narrow defile by which to escape. In this extremity he called to him a chief de battalion, named Chevarin, for whom he had particular regard. "Take," said he to him "a company of granadiers, and stop the enemy at the ravine; you will be killed, but you will save your comrades." "Yes, general," replied Chevarin. "See gave his watch and pocket book to his servant, executed the order, and his death in fact, arrested the enemy and saved the French.

A NICE DISTINCTION.—Some English ladies bathing at Cape of Good Hope set one of the party to watch, in order to guard against intrusion. The sentinel gave the alarm of masculine footsteps, one of the fair bathers raised her head, but calmed the apprehensions of her companions, by exclaiming "It is only a Dutchman."

A young Amaranth at a political festival offered the following toast; "The Ladies—We admire them because of their beauty; respect them because of their virtue; adore them because of their intelligence; and love them because we can't help it.

COCKNEY CONUNDRUM—Has the following *Con.* been in print? Why is a puppy dog like a lover?—Because it *bows* and *wags*!

Outrage, Piracy and Murder on the Coast of Sumatra.

A SHOCKING NARRATIVE.

The following details of this dreadful scene are from the Salem Register.

The eclipse arrived at Tra Bangun from another part of the coast, on the 22d of August; and on the 24th preparations were made and every thing arranged for weighing pepper which was commenced on and carried through the following day. The chief mate and four men were engaged on shore in weighing, and while there, resided at the fort of the Rajah Tra Bangun. On the 26th the weighing was continued, and about sun down of that day, upwards of eleven Malays went on board the ship, having with them several bags of pepper. Two of these men, Ososo (the head man and brother of Sumat, whom Captain Perkins had hired as his assistant, according to the custom on that coast) and another went into the cabin to converse with the Captain on business, where they supped with him. At about eight o'clock they commenced weighing two bags at a draft, the Malays began the attack by stabbing the second mate and the boy Babage. The latter fell, but the mate, not being severely wounded, ran to seize something to defend himself with and in going aft he saw Ososo stab the Captain.

The Malays in the meantime had seized the muskets in the round house, with all the weapons within reach, and the crew, being overpowered, were obliged to save themselves as they best could, some of them jumping overboard and others retreating up the rigging. The pirates then commenced the plunder of the vessel the cook, William Reynolds, talking with and apparently assisting them. They left the ship between ten and twelve o'clock; taking with them \$26,000 or \$27,000 in specie, two chests of opium, two trunks of the Captain's best wearing apparel, two gold watches, a fowling piece and case, two spy-glasses, the ship's colors, all the canvass and cotton cloth that could be found, several muskets, some ammunition, the captain's writing desk containing the chief part of his papers and accounts, with several other articles.

After the pirates had left the ship, those of the crew who had remained in the vessel went on deck, and discovered that the cook had gone with them, and as was believed of his own accord. He had frequently been heard to say that he meant to go and live with the Malays, and for several days previous had often been seen in close conversation with Sumat, and they were apparently good friends. Before this he had been put in irons for making a disturbance on board and refusing duty, and had that day implored the captain on his knees to release him, which he promised to do as soon as the mate returned.

The remainder of the crew then lowered the boat and rowed to a French barque, lying about nine miles off, to procure assistance, as they feared another attack might be made on the ship by proas which were hovering near; and there, being unable to obtain immediate aid on account of sickness on board, they got their wounds dressed and remained until morning.

The chief mate, Mr. Whitmarsh, was first informed of the massacre on the morning of the 7th, by three of the crew who had jumped overboard during the attack and swam ashore, a distance of about two miles, through the surf. He immediately applied to the Rajah for assistance, who named and armed five of the boats, and himself, with some of his principal men, accompanied the crew to the ship for the purpose of retaking her if necessary. They, however, found no living soul on board, but discovered the mate of Captain Wilkins on the half deck, and Babage on the break of the half deck forward—every thing being in the utmost disorder. Three of those who had been on board the French barque returned about the same time.

After clearing the decks and getting the vessel in tolerable order, they slipped the cable and put to sea, and arrived at Muckie on the second of September, where they received all necessary assistance from Captains Peabody and Silver, of the ship *Bornco* and brig *Lucilla*, both of this port. On Monday, the 27th of August, the body of Babage was committed to the deep, and on the following day, Tuesday, that of Captain Wilkins. A request was forwarded from the Rajah that the body of the captain might be landed and buried at Tra Bangun, but it was deemed unsafe to comply, lest the ship should be again attacked and overpowered by the natives.