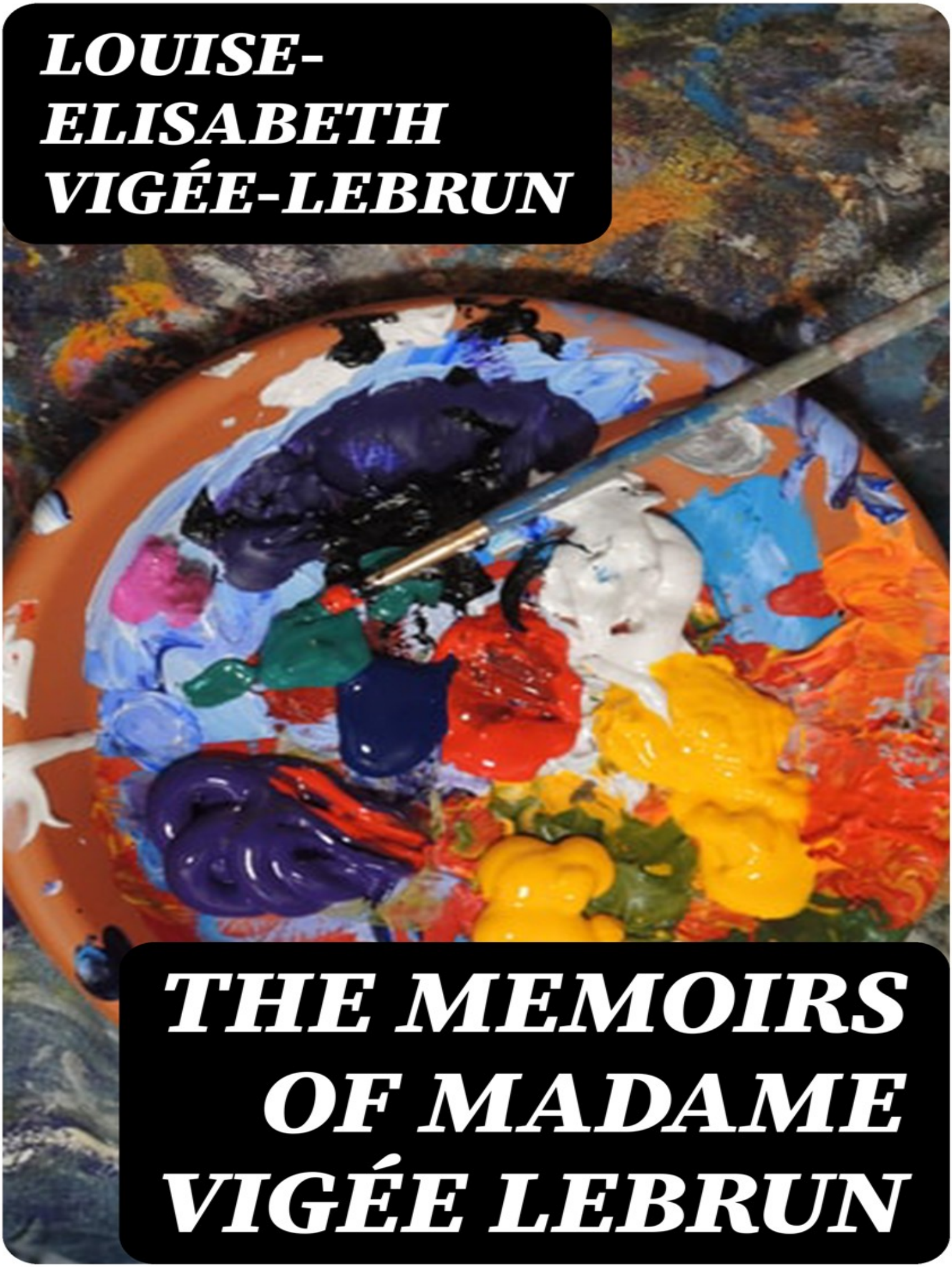
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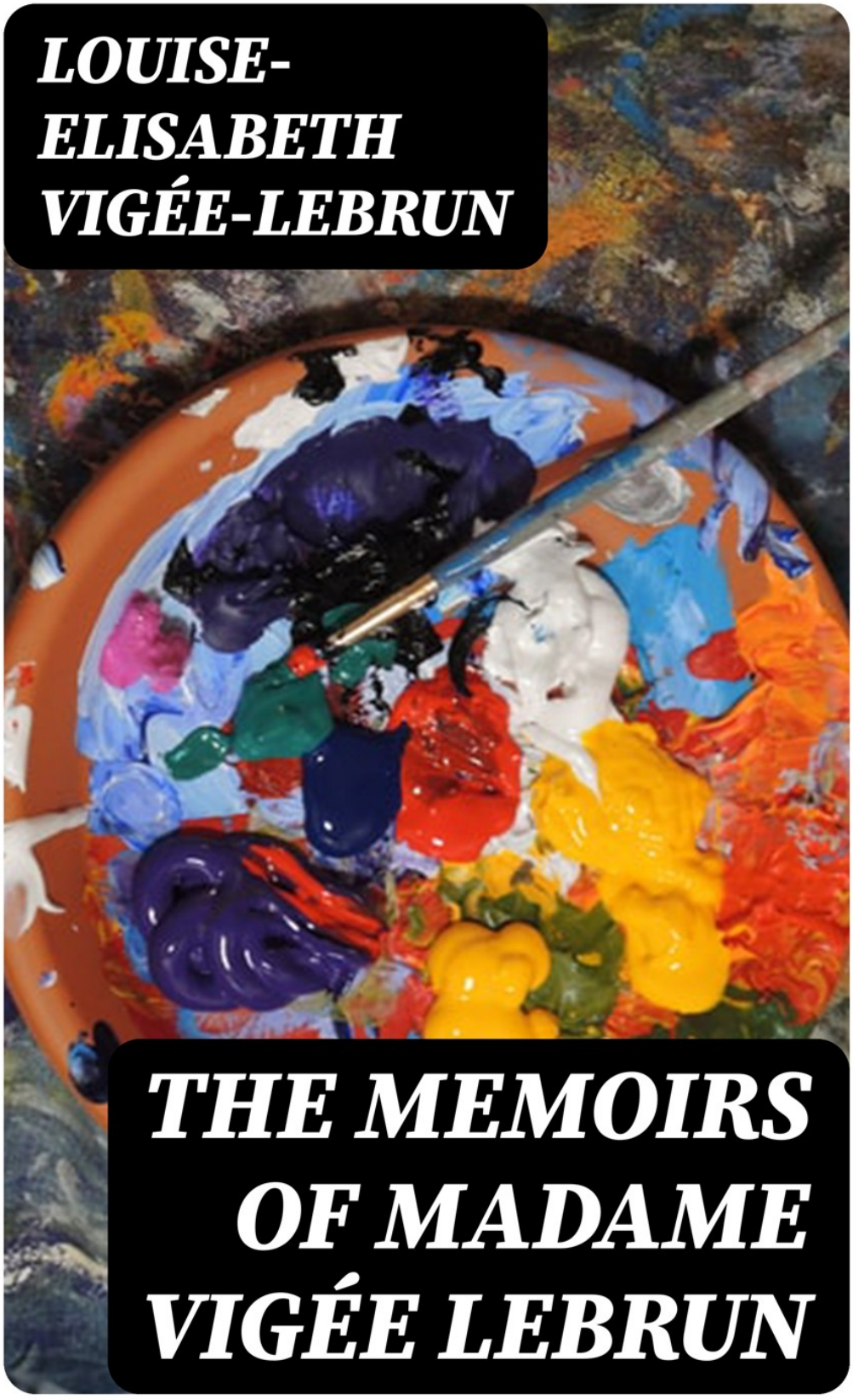
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**Louise-Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun**

# The Memoirs of Madame Vigée Lebrun

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# CHAPTER I
## Youth

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I will begin by speaking of my childhood, which is the symbol, so to say, of my whole life, since my love for painting declared itself in my earliest youth. I was sent to a boarding-school at the age of six, and remained there until I was eleven. During that time I scrawled on everything at all seasons; my copy-books, and even my schoolmates', I decorated with marginal drawings of heads, some full-face, others in profile; on the walls of the dormitory I drew faces and landscapes with coloured chalks. So it may easily be imagined how often I was condemned to bread and water. I made use of my leisure moments outdoors in tracing any figures on the ground that happened to come into my head. At seven or eight, I remember, I made a picture by lamplight of a man with a beard, which I have kept until this very day. When my father saw it he went into transports of joy, exclaiming, "You will be a painter, child, if ever there was one!"

I mention these facts to show what an inborn passion for the art I possessed. Nor has that passion ever diminished; it seems to me that it has even gone on growing with time, for to-day I feel under the spell of it as much as ever, and shall, I hope, until the hour of death. It is, indeed, to this divine passion that I owe, not only my fortune, but my felicity, because it has always been the means of bringing me together with the most delightful and most distinguished men and women in Europe. The recollection of all the notable people I have known often cheers me in times of solitude.

As a schoolgirl my health was frail, and therefore my parents would frequently come for me to take me to spend a few days with them. This, of course, suited my taste exactly. My father, Louis Vigée, made very good pastel drawings; he did some which would have been worthy of the famous Latour. My father allowed me to do some heads in that style, and, in fact, let me mess with his crayons all day. He was so wrapt up in his art that he occasionally did queer things from sheer absent-mindedness. I remember how, one day, after dressing for a dinner in town, he went out and almost immediately came back, it having occurred to him that he would like to touch up a picture recently begun. He removed his wig, put on a nightcap, and went out again in this headgear, with his gilt-frogged coat, his sword, etc. Had not one of his neighbours stopped him, he would have exhibited himself in this costume all through the town.

He was a very witty man. His natural good spirits infected every one, and some came to be painted by him for the sake of his amusing conversation. Once, when he was

making a portrait of a rather pretty woman, my father observed, while he worked at her mouth, that she made all manner of grimaces in order to make that organ look smaller. Falling out of patience with all this maneuvering, my father quietly remarked:

"Please don't let me give you so much trouble. You have only to say the word and I will paint you without a mouth."

My mother was an extremely handsome woman. This may be judged from the pastel portrait made of her by my father, as well as from my own oil painting of a much later date. She carried her goodness to austerity, and my father worshipped her as though she had been divine. She was very pious, and, in heart, I was so, too. We always heard high mass together, and were regular attendants at the other church services. Especially in Lent did we never omit any of the prescribed devotions, evening prayer not excepted. I have always liked sacred singing, and in those days organ music would often move me to tears.

My father was in the habit of inviting various artists and men of letters to his house of an evening. At the head of them I must place Doyen, the historical painter, my father's most intimate and my first friend. Doyen was the nicest man in the world, so clever and so good; his views on persons and things were always exceedingly just, and moreover he talked about painting with such fervent enthusiasm that it made my heart beat fast to listen to him. Poinsinet was very clever, too, and gay. Perhaps his extraordinary credulity is generally known. As a consequence of it he was continually made game of in the most unheard-of ways. Some friends once told him that there was an office called the King's

Screen, and persuaded him to stand before a blazing fire so hot that it nearly roasted his calves. When he attempted to move away, he was told he must not stir, but that he must accustom himself to intense heat or he would not get the post. Poinsinet was, however, far from being a fool. Many of his works are still in favour, and he is the only author who ever gained three dramatic successes in one night: "Ermeline," at the Grand Opéra; "The Circle," at the Théâtre Française; "Tom Jones," at the Opéra Comique. Some one put it into his head that he had a taste for travel, so he began with Spain, and was drowned while crossing the Guadalquivir.

I may also mention Davesne, painter and poet. He was rather mediocre in both arts, but was bidden to my father's suppers because of his witty conversation.

Though nothing more than a child, the jollity of these suppers was a great source of pleasure to me. I was obliged to leave the table before dessert, but from my room I heard the laughter and the joking and the songs. These, I confess, I did not understand; nevertheless, they helped to make my holidays delightful. At eleven I left the boarding-school for good, after my first communion. Davesne, who painted in oils, sent his wife for me to teach me how to mix colours. Their poverty grieved me deeply. One day, when I wanted to finish a head I had begun, they made me remain to dinner. The dinner consisted of soup and baked apples.

I was overjoyed at not having to leave my parents again. My brother, three years younger than I, was as lovely as an angel. I was not nearly so lively as he, and far from being so clever or so pretty. In fact, at that time of my life I was very

plain. I had an enormous forehead, and eyes far too deep-set; my nose was the only good feature of my pale, skinny face. Besides, I was growing so fast that I could not hold myself up straight, and I bent like a willow. These defects were the despair of my mother. I fancy she had a weakness for my brother. At any rate, she spoiled him and forgave him his youthful sins, whereas she was very severe toward myself. To make up for it, my father overwhelmed me with kindness and indulgence. His tender love endeared him more and more to my heart; and so my good father is ever present to me, and I believe I have not forgotten a word he uttered in my hearing. How often, during 1789, did I think of something in sort prophetic which he said. He had come home from a philosophers' dinner where he had met Diderot, Helvetius and d'Alembert. He was so thoroughly dejected that my mother asked him what the matter was. "All I have heard to-night, my dear," he replied, "makes me believe that the world will soon be turned upside down."

I had spent one happy year at home when my father fell ill. After two months of suffering all hope of his recovery was abandoned. When he felt his last moments approaching, he declared a wish to see my brother and myself. We went close to his bedside, weeping bitterly. His face was terribly altered; his eyes and his features, usually so full of animation, were quite without expression, for the pallor and the chill of death were already upon him. We took his icy hand and covered it with kisses and tears. He made a last effort and sat up to give us his blessing. "Be happy, my children," was all he said. An hour later our poor father had ceased to live.

So heartbroken was I that it was long before I felt able to take to my crayons again. Doyen came to see us sometimes, and as he had been my father's best friend his visits were a great consolation. He it was who urged me to resume the occupation I loved, and in which, to speak truth, I found the only solace for my woe. It was then that I began to paint from nature. I accomplished several portraits—pastels and oils. I also drew from nature and from casts, often working by lamplight with Mlle. Boquet, with whom I was closely acquainted. I went to her house in the evenings; she lived in the Rue Saint Denis, where her father had a bric-à-brac shop. It was a long way off, since we lodged in the Rue de Cléry, opposite the Lubert mansion. My mother, therefore, insisted on my being escorted whenever I went. We likewise frequently repaired, Mlle. Boquet and I, to Briard's, a painter, who lent us his etchings and his classical busts. Briard was but a moderate painter, although he did some ceilings of rather unusual conception. On the other hand, he could draw admirably, which was the reason why several young people went to him for lessons. His rooms were in the Louvre, and each of us brought her little dinner, carried in a basket by a nurse, in order that we might make a long day of it.

Mlle. Boquet was fifteen years old and I fourteen. We were rival beauties. I had changed completely and had become good looking. Her artistic abilities were considerable; as for mine, I made such speedy progress that I soon was talked about, and this resulted in my making the gratifying acquaintance of Joseph Vernet. That famous painter gave me cordial encouragement and much

invaluable advice. I also got to know the Abbé Arnault, of the French Academy. He was a man of strong imaginative gifts, with a passion for literature and the arts. His conversation enriched me with ideas, if I may thus express myself. He would talk of music and painting with the most inspiring ardour. The Abbé was a warm partisan of Gluck, and at a later date brought the great composer to see me, for I, too, was passionately fond of music.

My mother was now proud of my face and figure; I was growing stouter, and presented the fresh appearance proper to youth. On Sundays she took me to the Tuileries. She was still handsome herself, and after the lapse of all these years I am free to confess that the manner in which we were so often followed by men embarrassed more than it flattered me. Seeing me so irremediably affected by our cruel loss, my mother deemed it best to take me out of myself by showing me pictures. Thus we went to the Luxembourg Palace, the gallery of which then contained some of Rubens's masterpieces, as well as numerous works by the greatest painters. At present nothing is to be seen there but pictures of the modern French school. I am the only painter of that class not represented. The old masters have since been removed to the Louvre. Rubens has lost much by the change: the difference between well or badly lighted pictures is the same as between well or badly played pieces of music.

We also saw some rich private collections, none of which, however, equalled that of the Palais Royal, made by the Regent and containing a conspicuous number of old Italian masters. As soon as I entered one of these galleries I at

once became exactly like a bee, so much useful knowledge did I eagerly gather while intoxicated with bliss in the contemplation of the great masters. Besides, in order to improve myself, I copied some of the pictures of Rubens, some of Rembrandt's and Van Dyck's heads, as well as several heads of girls by Greuze, because these last were a good lesson to me in the demi-tints to be found in delicate flesh colouring. Van Dyck shows them also, but more finely. It is to these studies that I owe my improvement in the very important science of degradation of light on the salient parts of a head, so admirably done by Raphael, whose heads, it is true, combine all the perfections. But it is only in Rome, under the bright Italian sky, that Raphael can be properly judged. When, after years, I was enabled to see some of his masterpieces, which had never left their native home, I recognised Raphael to be above his high renown.

My father had left us penniless. But I was earning a deal of money, as I was already painting many portraits. This, however, was insufficient for household expenses, seeing that in addition I had to pay for my brother's schooling, his clothes, his books, and so on. My mother, therefore, saw herself obliged to remarry. She took a rich jeweller, whom we never had suspected of avarice, but who directly after the marriage displayed his stinginess by limiting us to the absolute necessities of life, although I was good-natured enough to hand him over everything I earned. Joseph Vernet was greatly enraged; he counselled me to grant an annuity and to keep the rest for myself. But I did not comply with this advice. I was afraid my mother might suffer in consequence, with such a skinflint. I detested the man, the

more as he had appropriated my father's wardrobe and wore all the clothes just as they were, without having them altered to fit him.

My young reputation attracted a number of strangers to our house. Several distinguished personages came to see me, among them the notorious Count Orloff, one of Peter the Third's assassins. Count Orloff was a giant in stature, and I remember his wearing a diamond of enormous size in a ring.

About this time I painted a portrait of Count Schouvaloff, Grand Chamberlain, then, I believe, about sixty years old. He combined amiability with perfect manners, and, as he was an excellent man, was sought after by the best company.

One of my visitors of eminence was Mme. Geoffrin, the woman so famous for her brilliant social life. Mme. Geoffrin gathered at her house all the known men of talent in literature and the arts, all foreigners of note and the grandest gentlemen attached to the court. Being neither of good family nor endowed with unusual abilities, nor even possessing much money, she had nevertheless made a position for herself in Paris unique of its kind, and one that no woman could nowadays hope to achieve. Having heard me spoken of, she came to see me one morning and said the most flattering things about my person and my gifts. Although she was not very old, I should have put her down for a hundred, for not only was she rather bent, but her dress gave her an aged appearance. She was clad in an iron-gray gown, and on her head wore a large, winged cap, over which was a black shawl knotted under her chin. At

present, on the other hand, women of her years succeed in making themselves look much younger by the care they bestow on their toilet.

THE DUCHESS D'ANGOULÊME AND HER BROTHER, THE DAUPHIN.

Immediately after my mother's marriage we went to live at my stepfather's in the Rue Saint Honoré, opposite the terrace of the Palais Royal, which terrace our windows overlooked. I often saw the Duchess de Chartres walking in the garden with her ladies-in-waiting, and soon observed that she noticed me with kindly interest. I had recently finished a portrait of my mother which evoked a great deal of discussion at the time. The Duchess sent for me to come

and paint her. She most obligingly commended my young talents to her friends, so that it was not long before I received a visit from the stately, handsome Countess de Brionne and her lovely daughter, the Princess de Lorraine, who were followed by all the great ladies of the court and the Faubourg Saint Germain.

Since I have acknowledged that I was stared at in the streets—the same is true of the theatres and other public places—and that I was the object of many attentions, it may readily be guessed that some admirers of my face gave me commissions to paint theirs. They hoped to get into my good graces in this way. But I was so absorbed in my art that nothing could take me away from it. Then, besides, the moral and religious principles my mother had instilled me with were a strong protection against the seductions surrounding me. Happily I never as yet had read a single novel. The first I read, "Clarissa Harlowe," was only after my marriage, and it interested me prodigiously. Before my marriage I read nothing but sacred literature, such as the moral precepts of the Holy Fathers, which contained everything one needs to know, and some of my brother's class-books.

To return to those gentlemen. As soon as I observed any intention on their part of making sheep's eyes at me, I would paint them looking in another direction than mine, and then, at the least movement of the pupilla, would say, "I am doing the eyes now." This vexed them a little, of course, but my mother, who was always present, and whom I had taken into my confidence, was secretly amused.

On Sundays and saints' days, after hearing high mass, my mother and my stepfather took me to the Palais Royal for a walk. The gardens were then far more spacious and beautiful than they are now, strangled and straightened by the houses enclosing them. There was a very broad and long avenue on the left arched by gigantic trees, which formed a vault impenetrable to the rays of the sun. There good society assembled in its best clothes. The opera house was hard by the palace. In summer the performance ended at half-past eight, and all elegant people left even before it was over, in order to ramble in the garden. It was the fashion for the women to wear huge nosegays, which, added to the perfumed powder sprinkled in everybody's hair, really made the air one breathed quite fragrant. Later, yet still before the Revolution, I have known these assemblies to last until two in the morning. There was music by moonlight, out in the open; artists and amateurs sang songs; there was playing on the harp and the guitar; the celebrated Saint Georges often executed pieces on his violin. Crowds flocked to the spot.

We never entered this avenue, Mlle. Boquet and I, without attracting lively attention. We both were then between sixteen and seventeen years old, Mlle. Boquet being a great beauty. At nineteen she was taken with the smallpox, which called forth such general interest that numbers from all classes of society made anxious inquiries, and a string of carriages was constantly drawn up outside her door.

She had a remarkable talent for painting, but she gave up the pursuit almost immediately after her marriage with

M. Filleul, when the Queen made her Gatekeeper of the Castle of La Muette. Would that I could speak of the dear creature without calling her dreadful end to mind. Alas! how well I remember Mme. Filleul saying to me, on the eve of my departure from France, when I was to escape from the horrors I foresaw: "You are wrong to go. I intend to stay, because I believe in the happiness the Revolution is to bring us." And that Revolution took her to the scaffold! Before she quitted La Muette the Terror had begun. Mme. Chalgrin, a daughter of Joseph Vernet, and Mme. Filleul's bosom friend, came to the castle to celebrate her daughter's wedding—quietly, as a matter of course. However, the next day the Jacobins none the less proceeded to arrest Mme. Filleul and Mme. Chalgrin, who, they said, had wasted the candles of the nation. A few days later they were both guillotined.

Among the favourite walks were the Temple boulevards. Every day, though especially on Thursdays, hundreds of vehicles drove or stood in the roads where the cafés and shows still are. The young men on horseback caracoled about the carriages, as they did at Longchamps, for Longchamps was already in existence and even very brilliant. The side paths were full of immense throngs of pedestrians, enjoying the pastime of admiring or criticising all the lovely ladies, dressed in their best, who passed in fine carriages. At a certain spot, where the Café Turc now stands, a spectacle was to be seen which many a time made me burst into loud laughter. It was a long row of old women belonging to the Marais quarter, sitting gravely on chairs, their faces so thickly rouged that they looked precisely like dolls. As at that date the right to wear rouge

was only conceded to women of high rank, these worthy ladies thought they must take advantage of the privilege to its full limit. One of our friends, who knew most of them, told us that their only employment at home was to play lotto from morning till night. He also said that one day, after he had returned from Versailles, some of them had asked him the news, that he had replied M. de La Pérouse was to make a journey round the world, and that the hostess had thereupon exclaimed: "Gracious! What a lot of time the man must have on his hands!"

Years later, long after my marriage, I saw various little shows on this very boulevard. At one only did I attend often; that was Carlo Perico's "Fantoccini," which amused me vastly. These marionettes were so cleverly made, and their gestures were so natural, that the delusion sometimes succeeded. My little girl, six years old almost, did not at first suspect that the figures were not alive. I informed her as to the truth, and when, soon after, I took her to the Comédie Française, where my box was rather far from the stage, she asked me, "And those, mamma, are they alive?"

The Coliseum was another highly fashionable resort. It was established in one of the large squares of the Champs Élysées, in the form of a vast rotunda. In the middle was a lake of clear water, on which boatmen's races were held. You strolled round about in broad, gravelled avenues lined with benches. At nightfall every one left the garden to meet in a great hall where a full orchestra dispensed excellent music. At this period there also was on the Temple boulevard a place called the Summer Vauxhall, whose garden was simply a big space for walking in, bordered by

covered tiers of seats for the convenience of good society. People gathered there before dark in warm weather, and the diversions of the day closed with a grand display of fireworks.

All these places were frequented much more than Tivoli is to-day. It is surprising, too, that the Parisians, who have nothing but the Tuileries and the Luxembourg, should have renounced those other resorts, which were half urban and half rural, where you went in the evening to get a breath of air and eat ices.

# CHAPTER II
## Up the Ladder of Fame

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TEDIOUS SOJOURN IN THE COUNTRY — SOCIAL AMENITIES IN PARIS — MLLE. VIGÉE BECOMES MME. LEBRUN — PROGNOSTICATIONS OF UNHAPPY WEDLOCK — ON THE LADDER OF FAME — SINGULARITIES OF ORIENTAL TASTE — MARIE ANTOINETTE AS A MODEL — PAINTING THE ROYAL FAMILY — HOW LOUIS XVIII. SANG — THE PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE.

My detestable stepfather, annoyed no doubt by the public admiration shown my mother, forbade us to go for any more walks, and informed us that he was about to take a place in the country. At this announcement my heart beat with joy, for I was passionately fond of the country. I had been sleeping near the foot of my mother's bedstead, in a dark corner where the light of day never penetrated. Every morning, whatever the weather might be, my first care was to open the window wide, such was my thirst for fresh air.

So my stepfather took a small cottage at Chaillot, and we went there on Saturday, spent Sunday there, and returned to Paris on Monday morning. Good heavens, what a country! Imagine a tiny vicarage garden, without a tree, without any shelter from the blazing sun but a little arbour, where my stepfather had planted some beans and nasturtium, which refused to grow. At that we only occupied a quarter of this delightful garden, for it was divided into four by slender railings, and the three other sections were let out to shopboys, who came every Sunday and amused themselves

by shooting at the birds. The incessant noise threw me into a desperate state of mind, besides which I was terribly afraid of being killed by these marksmen, so inaccurate was their aim. I could not understand why this stupid, ugly place, the very recollection of which makes me yawn as I write, was "the country." At last my good angel brought to my rescue a friend of my mother's, who one day came to dine with us at Chaillot with her husband. Both were sorry for me in my exile, and sometimes took me out for a charming drive.

MADAME VIGÉE LEBRUN

Marked: "Virginia Lebrun, St. Luke's Gallery, Rome".

We went to Marly-le-Roi, and there I found a more beautiful spot than any I had seen in my life. On each side of the magnificent palace were six summer-houses communicating with one another by walks embowered with jessamine and honeysuckle. Water fell in cascades from the top of a hill behind the castle, and formed a large channel on which a number of swans floated. The handsome trees, the carpets of green, the flowers, the fountains, one of which spouted up so high that it was lost from sight—it was all grand, all regal; it all spoke of Louis XIV. One morning I met Queen Marie Antoinette walking in the park with

several of the ladies of her court. They were all in white dresses, and so young and pretty that for a moment I thought I was in a dream. I was with my mother, and was turning away when the Queen was kind enough to stop me, and invited me to continue in any direction I might prefer. Alas! when I returned to France in 1802 I hastened to see my noble, smiling Marly. The palace, the trees, the cascades, and the fountains had all disappeared; scarcely a stone was left.

I found it very hard to quit those lovely gardens and go back to our hideous Chaillot. But we at last went back to Paris, and settled there for the winter. The time left over from my work I now spent in a most agreeable manner. From the age of fifteen I had been going out into the best society; and I knew all the celebrated artists, so that I received invitations from all sides. I very well remember the first time I dined in town with the sculptor Le Moine, who was then enjoying a great reputation. It was there I met the famous actor Lekain, who struck terror into my heart because of his wild and sinister appearance; his huge eyebrows only added to the fierce expression of his face. He scarcely talked at all, and ate enormously. At Le Moine's I made the acquaintance of Gerbier, the noted advocate, and of his daughter Mme. de Roissy, who was very beautiful, and one of the first women I made a portrait of. Grétry and Latour, an eminent pastellist, often came to these dinners at Le Moine's, which were highly convivial and amusing. It was then the custom to sing at dessert. When the turn of the young ladies came—to whom, I must admit, this custom was torture—they would turn pale and tremble all over, and

consequently often sing very much out of tune. In spite of these dissonances, the dinners ended pleasantly, and we always rose from the table with regret, although we did not immediately order our carriages, as the fashion is to-day.

I cannot, however, speak of the dinners of the present day excepting through hearsay, in view of the fact that soon after the time I have just mentioned I stopped dining in town for good. A slight adventure I had made me determine to go out only in the evening. I had accepted an invitation to dine with Princess Rohan-Rochefort. All dressed and ready to get into my carriage, I was seized with a sudden desire to take a look at a portrait that I had begun that same morning. I had on a white satin dress, which I was wearing for the first time. I sat down on my chair opposite my easel without noticing that my palette was lying on the chair. It may readily be conceived that the state of my gown was such as to compel me to remain at home, and I resolved thenceforth to accept no invitations excepting to supper.

The dinners of Princess Rohan-Rochefort were delightful. The nucleus of the society was composed of the handsome Countess de Brionne and her daughter the Princess Lorraine, the Duke de Choiseul, the Cardinal de Rohan, and M. de Rulhières, the author of the "Disputes"; but the most agreeable without question of all the guests was the Duke de Lauzun; no one could possibly have been cleverer or more entertaining; we were all fascinated by him. The evening was usually filled up with playing and singing, and I often sang to my own accompaniment on the guitar. Supper was at half-past ten; we were never more than ten or twelve at table. We all vied with one another in sociability and wit.

As for me, I was only a humble listener, and, although too young to appreciate the qualities of this conversation to the full, it spoiled me for ordinary conversation.

My life as a young girl was very unusual. Not only did my talent—feeble as it seemed to me when I thought of the great masters—cause me to be sought after and welcomed by society, but I sometimes was the object of attentions which I might call public, and of which, I avow, I was very proud. For example, I had made portraits of Cardinal Fleury and La Bruyère, copied from engravings of ancient date. I made a gift of them to the French Academy, which sent me a very flattering letter through the permanent secretary, d'Alembert. My presentation of these two portraits to the Academy also secured me the honour of a visit from d'Alembert, a dried up morsel of a man of exquisitely polished manners. He stayed a long time and looked my study all over, while he paid me a thousand compliments. After he had gone, a fine lady, who happened to be visiting me at the same time, asked me whether I had painted La Bruyère and Fleury from life. "I am a little too young for that," I answered, unable to refrain from a laugh, but very glad for the sake of the lady that the Academician had left before she put her funny question.

My stepfather having retired from business, we took up residence at the Lubert mansion, in the Rue de Cléry. M. Lebrun had just bought the house and lived there himself, and as soon as we were settled in it I began to examine the splendid masterpieces of all schools with which his lodgings were filled. I was enchanted at an opportunity of first-hand acquaintance with these works by great masters. M. Lebrun

was so obliging as to lend me, for purposes of copying, some of his handsomest and most valuable paintings. Thus I owed him the best lessons I could conceivably have obtained, when, after a lapse of six months, he asked my hand in marriage. I was far from wishing to become his wife, though he was very well built and had a pleasant face. I was then twenty years old, and was living without anxiety as to the future, since I was already earning a deal of money, so that I felt no manner of inclination for matrimony. But my mother, who believed M. Lebrun to be very rich, incessantly plied me with arguments in favour of accepting such an advantageous match. At last I decided in the affirmative, urged especially by the desire to escape from the torture of living with my stepfather, whose bad temper had increased day by day since he had relinquished active pursuits. So little, however, did I feel inclined to sacrifice my liberty that, even on my way to church, I kept saying to myself, "Shall I say yes, or shall I say no?" Alas! I said yes, and in so doing exchanged present troubles for others. Not that M. Lebrun was a cruel man: his character exhibited a mixture of gentleness and liveliness; he was extremely obliging to everybody, and, in a word, quite an agreeable person. But his furious passion for gambling was at the bottom of the ruin of his fortune and my own, of which he had the entire disposal, so that in 1789, when I quitted France, I had not an income of twenty francs, although I had earned more than a million. He had squandered it all.