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BARON DE ROLL.

By M. JOHNSON.

A SMALL faded oil painting represents a stout bald-headed veteran of 60 years or so, ruddy-faced and weather-beaten, known as the Baron De Roll.

On the back of the portrait is pasted a short obituary notice of this gentleman, taken from the Annual Register :¹

“ August 27th, 1813. At Tunbridge, in his 61st year, Baron de Roll, a native of the Canton of Soleure, in Switzerland. At the early age of 15 he entered the Swiss Guards of the King of France, and was a captain in that corps and Aide-de-Camp of the Comte d'Artois at the time of the Revolution. He afterwards resided at Berlin as the agent of the Bourbon family, where he raised the regiment bearing his name.”

BARON DE ROLL, 1752—1813.

The obituary notice contains the Baron's history, and what a history is contained in those few simple lines! The cadet of 15, heir of an ancient Swiss family which had given many stalwart sons to fight for France, arrived in Paris in 1767 to join his regiment.

His childhood had been passed in his ancestral château among the Swiss mountains; he was probably tutored by the family chaplain, and brought up very strictly in the Roman Catholic Faith, for they are all staunch Roman Catholics in Soleure. In winter he killed wolves with the family huntsman, who taught him all the secrets of the chase. Another old retainer made an expert swordsman of him, that would be quite certain.

But the quiet pastures and rugged mountains of his native land were no place for a spirited youth who inherited all the martial instincts of his forefathers; and whose broad shoulders still, even in his portrait, vouch for the truth of the statement that the King of France's Swiss regiments required several inches more actual space per man than his French ones.

And so, fresh from the country, and speaking French with a strong German accent, which he never lost, young de Roll came to Paris in the year 1767, and entered the historic Swiss Guards.

In his portrait he is represented wearing a plain dark coat in which he may have travelled about the Continent in troublous

¹ Obituary. Annual Register, Vol. 55, 1813.

times, and passed unobserved beneath the very noses of his greatest enemies. But "the uniform of the Gardes Suisses¹ was a scarlet coat with facings and revers of royal blue, laced with silver; white waistcoat and knee breeches and long white gaiters. The officers wore silver gorgets, with a gilt medallion in the centre on which the Royal Arms were enamelled; the plate of the waist-belt was of the same pattern. Field officers and captains had two silver epaulettes, subalterns one only. The three-cornered hat was bound with silver lace, and had cords and tassels of blue and gold. The sword knot was blue and gold."—Truly, between his old blue coat and this splendour of his youth there is the difference of night from day!

The King of France, when young de Roll first joined the Guards in 1767, was Louis Quinze; he was old, and was ruled by his beautiful favourite, Madame de Pompadour; afterwards, when she died in 1769, by Madame Du Barry. His only son, the Dauphin, died in 1765; and his orphan grandsons were mere boys like de Roll himself; the youngest, the Comte d'Artois, was only 11 years old.

The Court of Versailles was profligate and extravagant; not at all the best place for young boys; but it was the most polished Court in Europe. Young de Roll, therefore, being of good family and attached to a crack regiment, which was constantly on duty in the Royal Palaces, would have to acquire the fine manners and deportment necessary to his position.

"A young man's entry into society necessitated deep study in those days," wrote a contemporary Frenchman.² "It required no small skill to enter with assurance and grace into a drawing room, . . . to advance to the hostess and to retire with honour, whilst managing without awkwardness a dress-coat, lace, a head dressed with powdered curls, a hat under the arm, and a sword, the point of which reached to the heels," etc.

It must also be remembered that the ladies wore hoops and powder, and were formidable beings not easy to approach. Everyone moved slowly and with dignity, with stately bows and curtseys; and very much form and ceremony were observed.

Probably young de Roll took a course of lessons in deportment. At any rate, he learned to hold his own in society, or he never would have become, as he afterwards did, the constant companion and friend of the Royal Princes, and especially of the fascinating Comte d'Artois, whose manners were considered by some people to be even superior to those of the Prince Regent (George IV.) himself.³

In 1770 (in May) the eldest of the three Royal Princes was married at Versailles to Marie Antoinette of Austria; she was

¹ "Swiss Regiments à l'étranger." JOURNAL of the R.U.S.I., Vol. 41.

² Recollections of Baron de Frénilly.

³ Madame De Boigne.

but 15, the Prince was 20. Four years later Louis Quinze died, and the young couple became King and Queen of France.

In 1775 King Louis XVI. and Queen Marie Antoinette made their entry into Paris; they were young and noble-looking, the Queen especially radiant and full of gaiety. "Dressed in white,¹ they sat in one of those magnificent carriages which were monuments of sculpture and chiselling. Everything was gay and enchanting; the ladies' dresses all beflowered and befeathered; the costumes of the men all silk and embroidery."

De Roll must have attended that wedding and Coronation in his gorgeous uniform of red and blue and gold, with lace ruffles at his wrists, and his hair well curled and powdered and tied in a queue behind. Later, no doubt, he witnessed the fêtes and frolics at the Queen's model village at Petit Trianon, where the Comte d'Artois took a prominent part in theatricals, etc.

So 25 years passed by.

De Roll was now a dashing captain, familiar from boyhood with Court etiquette and magnificence, an officer well known and trusted by every member of the Royal Family of France. He was also Aide-de-Camp to the Comte d'Artois, who had been appointed Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards, therefore it is fairly certain that he was Captain of No. 1 Company of the First Battalion, which was the Colonel-General's own company, and the strongest and most ancient in the regiment.

De Roll had seen his Princes grow up to manhood surrounded by flattering courtiers, and knowing absolutely nothing of the hard world outside until an unkind fate suddenly pitched them into it; therefore De Roll was able to sympathise with them thoroughly when the bad times came, and to understand their feelings when they had to "rough it." For the dreadful Revolution was at hand:—"There was a sound in France as of an awful storm, with a great sea rising."

The Comte d'Artois was one of the first to leave Paris after the taking of the Bastille in 1789; and de Roll must have found it somewhat of a puzzle to fit in his duties as captain of his regiment with his desire to follow the Prince as Aide-de-Camp. He seems to have managed to combine the two for a time, however, as he was sent by the Comte d'Artois to Berlin, to procure troops from the King of Prussia to aid in the re-establishment of order in France.²

His duties as captain of his regiment of Swiss Guards ceased for ever on August 10th, 1792, the awful day when the mob attacked the Tuileries Palace and the regiment came to an untimely end.

Many accounts have been written of that memorable 10th of August, when the Swiss Guards were butchered almost to a

¹ Baron de Frénilly.

² Lamartine Girondists, Vol. I., p. 196.

man in the defence of the Tuileries Palace. Early in the morning the Royal Family took refuge with the Legislative Assembly in the Manège, a large hall formerly the riding school. Perhaps de Roll's last duty among his old comrades of the Guard was to lead the faithful band who formed the escort.

All the rest of his life he must have remembered that sorrowful procession which silently descended the grand Escalier de l'Horloge lined with loyal Swiss troops whose old moustaches streamed with tears. And then across the beautiful gardens of the palace, where the hot sun lit up the chestnut trees and fell heavily on the mournful figures of the unfortunate King and Queen and the little Dauphin. It was the last time any of them saw that familiar garden! It was the last day of Court life for many another besides Captain de Roll!

Strong measures might have quelled the tumult. Had Henri of Navarre been King of France that day he might have driven back the mob that was like wild beasts let loose! But Louis XVI. inherited none of the valiant spirit of his great ancestor. The rabble attacked his palace, and the King, a hostage in the assembly, sent orders to his Guards that they were not to fire upon the people—alas, poor soldiers; The infuriated populace hunted every redcoat down, massacred them in cold blood, and hacked them in pieces! In the evening bonfires of charred furniture lit up the scene of havoc and desolation. The disfigured bodies of the soldiers lay in heaps, and here and there a brocaded waistcoat or lace ruffles showed that some brave gentleman attached to his sovereign, and knowing his danger, had joined the ranks of the Guards and put on a uniform coat.

All was over for the King, for his friends, for France. The only thing to do was to escape if possible, and somehow or other de Roll managed it. From those awful scenes, with the sound of screams and musketry and fiendish massacre in his ears, by some miracle de Roll got safely away.

"The brilliant Court of poor Marie Antoinette has melted away, like snow-wreaths in autumn," wrote an English lady at this time (Lady Elliott) to her sister, "and Baron de Roll nobly maintained a soldier's honour, nor sheathed his sword until his sovereigns had been made captive and their last defenders had perished."¹

From that day the Baron's life was one of wandering and hardship. That first hairbreadth escape was but the first of many another; but he had a genius for escaping, and never was captured.

There were no longer any Swiss Guards, but there still remained the Comte d'Artois, to whom he was Aide-de-Camp and faithful friend to the end of his life; and from the Tuileries he seems to have made his way to Berlin, where he was the

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliott."

accredited agent of the Bourbons, and where he set to work to raise a new regiment for their service.¹

Lamartine asserts that "Baron de Roll, in the name of the Comte d'Artois, and the Viscount de Caraman, in the name of Louis XVI., had possessed themselves of all the avenues to this Cabinet (Prussia). They defeated the plans of M. de Ségur, sent by the French Republican Party to Berlin to arrange an alliance."² It is hinted that bribery was used to gain access to the King of Prussia, and also that feminine influence played a part—what could a Republican do in such a case against two experienced courtiers of Versailles?

Meanwhile the French Princes and the exiled nobility were collecting an army to attack the Republic and restore the "ancien régime." These poor French gentlemen were most of them in a sad state of utter destitution, and suffered hardships of every description in the campaigns upon the Rhine. The sympathy of Europe drew to their aid (especially after the cruel murders of their King and Queen) allies from Austria, Prussia, England and other countries.

We can imagine the grief and horror of de Roll and the Comte d'Artois, and the whole emigrant army, at the appalling news that reached them of their friends and acquaintances, and even their King and Queen, who went in one long procession to the scaffold. Presently the King's valet, Cléry, made his way to them, with all the details of the last days of his Royal Master in prison in the Temple.

Well did they know that grim fortress with its pepper-pot towers! The Comte d'Artois, when in Paris, resided at the Temple Palace, which adjoined the fortress, in his capacity as Grand-Prior of the Knights of Malta.

Cléry states in his diary that when the Royal Family were taken to the fortress as prisoners in 1792, some furniture was brought for their use from the Temple Palace. The green damask bed for the King was taken from the apartments of the Comte d'Artois, Captain of the Guard. De Roll's bed! evidently a four-poster with green hangings. How interested he must have been to learn that his unfortunate King slept in it during the last sad weeks of his life.

The Baron de Roll, not being a Frenchman, was not in the ruined condition to which most of his companions were reduced at this time. His estates in Soleure remained safe and quiet, and no doubt he was able to render some assistance to old comrades in distress. Perhaps he entertained some of them at his château among the Swiss mountains; but the emigrants were most of them in Holland with the army.

In February, 1793, an English force under the command of the Duke of York was sent to Holland, where the troops of the

¹ Gent. Mag., 1813, obituary.

² Girondists, Vol. I., p. 208.

French Republic under General Pichegru were carrying all before them. The emigrants swarmed at the Duke of York's headquarters, among them the Comte d'Artois, with Baron de Roll in attendance.

Mr. Windham, the English Secretary for War, went over to visit the camp at Bois-le-duc, and mentions meeting him there; he describes him as "the Baron Roll, a quasi French."¹ The Baron is also alluded to in letters written home from Holland by General Calvert, then on the staff of the Duke of York, who adds that he will "with much pleasure show him every civility and attention in his power."²

The Comte d'Artois arrived in September at Wichen, a village near Bois-le-duc, and used to send bits of information to headquarters. "Baron de Roll called this morning," writes General Calvert, "and informed me that he has it from very good authority that the garrison of Graave, on being bombarded, would surrender." The Baron did not lead his own regiment to victory on this occasion. Unfortunately the Regiment de Roll was as yet in its infancy, and it was a long and arduous business to collect and equip the men. Perhaps this was pointed out to Mr. Windham while he was visiting the English camp in Holland.

The English Army were suffering reverses, and after a terribly severe winter were driven out of the Low Countries by Pichegru and his Republican soldiers. The hard frost had turned the canals with which Holland is intersected into solid ice, and transformed them from natural defences and barriers into excellent roads, which made the conquest of the country astonishingly easy. Conscription had also been introduced by the French Republican Government, and swelled the numbers of its Army.

The British War Office was in dire need of recruits, and now engaged Baron de Roll to collect a Swiss Regiment of two battalions for them. Nothing could have pleased him better. In fact it seems highly probable that he may have suggested it himself to Mr. Windham. Next year we find him in his native country, Switzerland, spending all his energies and all his money upon the regiment, and aided by the British Minister there with advice and subsidies from England.

It was not by any means the first time that a member of the Baron's family had been so engaged. For centuries the good old name of de Roll recurs in the muster lists of the Swiss Regiments.³ There was a Walter de Roll who commanded a Swiss Regiment fighting in the Netherlands for Philip of Spain as far back as 1574; and again in 1686 a Baron

¹ Windham's Diary, 1794.

² Correspondence of General Sir Harry Calvert.

³ JOURNAL of the R.U.S.I., Vol. 41.

de Roll of Soleure carried a regiment to fight the Turks, under the flag of the Lion of St. Mark.

The Canton of Soleure had always been the chief recruiting ground for the King of France's Swiss Guards; but now, when the French Republic discovered that men were being enlisted there for the service of England, strict measures were put in force to prevent it. Mr. Wickham, H.B.M. Minister in Switzerland, was heart and soul in the cause. He devotes three pages of his Correspondence to a description of the Regiment de Roll in 1795. "The regiment at this moment consists of 1,200 effective men. How it has ever proceeded so far towards its completion is more than I can undertake to explain. . . . Whatever the raising this regiment may have cost to His Majesty, more than double that sum has been expended in opposing it." (By the French Republic.) "I should mention also that the Baron de Roll has to my own knowledge expended a very considerable sum in gaining over the leading persons in some of the lesser Cantons."¹ Etc., etc.

It is evident that the old soldiers of the King of France, who had been disbanded by the Republic and were unwilling to join its Colours, flocked with alacrity to their former captain, as soon as there was a prospect of getting their pay. "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse*" is a well-known saying; but now that Great Britain stood behind the Baron, he soon saw before him a fine body of stalwart mountaineers.

"They were dressed like the British Infantry of the Line, in scarlet; their lace was silver, except for one company of chasseurs in each battalion, who were dressed in green and armed with rifles. The colours were red, with a white Swiss cross, and were a gift to the regiment from the noble ladies of Soleure."²

The regiment being now ready for action it was decided that it should be sent to Corsica, which at this time was occupied by the British. They accordingly marched from Switzerland and through Northern Italy in the early spring of 1796, and arrived in due course at their destination.

After the death of the poor little Dauphin in 1795, the eldest of the exiled Princes had proclaimed his right to the throne of France, and assumed the title of Louis XVIII. He was then at Verona, and the English Government had sent Lord Macartney on a mission to him there. His lordship writes thus of the regiment in February to Mr. Wickham: "The Regiment de Roll . . . crossed through this territory to Mantua in the course of last week without any unpleasant occurrence. . . . They must now proceed to Civita Vecchia, unless the Grand

¹ Correspondence of Rt. Hon. Wm. Wickham, p. 64.

² Their second set of colours, of which Milne gives an illustration, were quite different.

Duke of Tuscany can be prevailed upon to grant, or connive at, their going directly to take shipping at Leghorn. The whole number of effectives does not exceed 1,800 men, but the number of women accompanying them is much beyond the usual proportion."¹ Etc., etc.

Lord Macartney does not say whether Louis XVIII. reviewed the regiment while it was in his neighbourhood. But even if this were not considered prudent in such critical times, it must have greatly cheered the exiled King to see Baron de Roll, and to know that so many staunch friends were near. He was now obliged to quit Verona, and hardly knew where to find shelter.

The Republican troops entered Verona in May, under General Bonaparte, who had lately been appointed to the command of the Army in Italy, and "who announced that had Louis XVIII. not previously left the refuge of its walls he should have given the city to the flames."²

Meanwhile the Regiment de Roll had arrived safely in Corsica, then in occupation of the English and governed by Sir Gilbert Elliott. Lady Elliott was living there with her family, and was delighted to welcome and entertain the officers. She wrote to her sister³: "De Roll's Swiss Regiment is a prodigious fine one. The lieut.-colonel is a most charming man, and was captain of the Grenadier Guards on duty the famous, or rather infamous, 10th of August. He and three other officers were, I think, all that escaped, and 80 odd soldiers out of the whole regiment. He dined here yesterday, and gave me a full account of that horrid scene and his own miraculous escape, and is to give me a written history of all the various events that preceded that horrid day." De Roll must have enjoyed the parties in that wave-washed garden of Corsica, where he and his brother officers were sometimes joined by British officers from the Mediterranean Fleet, among whom Lady Elliott mentions "Commodore Nelson, with his shock head and simple manners, and a hero's heart."

These pleasant days were soon cut short, however. King Louis XVIII. was anxious to gain the allegiance of his cousin, Louis Philippe, the Duke of Orleans, and despatched Baron de Roll with a letter offering to give him a commission in the *émigré* Army. The young Duke, whose father (known as Philippe Egalité) had been guillotined in 1793, was at Hamburg, where de Roll had an interview with him.

Subsequent events proved that Louis Philippe of Orleans was never at heart a loyal adherent to the elder branch of his family. He proved unmanageable, refused all advances, and departed to America, where he arrived in October, 1796. The

¹ Wickham Correspondence, p. 263.

² "Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot."

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 337.

Baron crossed to England to rejoin the luckless Comte d'Artois, who (after playing a contemptible part in the dismal Quiberon Expedition, where so many brave men lost their lives for his sake) had taken refuge in England. The British Government was rather perplexed what to do with him, and he was sent to live at Holyrood House in Scotland, "in order to secure his person against arrest for debt."

To Holyrood, therefore, de Roll betook himself, and for the next few years was employed in carrying messages from this extremely dull and inconvenient spot to one exiled Prince or another in various parts of Europe.

Sometimes they had sufficient prudence not to put these dangerous communications into writing. "Baron de Roll will tell you," wrote the Comte d'Artois.¹ "You are too well aware of my confidence in the Baron de Roll for it to be necessary for me to add anything here to the verbal message with which I have charged him for you."

As the Baron passed through London he sometimes called to see Mr. Windham, the War Secretary, who notes the fact in his diary.² "Saw Baron de Roll, first time since his return from Verona."

"Baron de Roll, with communications of business from Monsieur."

"Baron de Roll, etc., at dinner at the Prince of Wales's." In spite of these excursions, however, the inaction of the life at Holyrood became intolerable; and in April, 1799, the Baron wrote to Mr. Wickham in Switzerland: "Monsieur wishes to be actively employed. . . . I flatter myself also, my dear Wickham, that you have not forgotten me, and that you will remember that the blood which runs in my veins is Swiss, good old Swiss."

He was longing to take part in the struggle which was taking place in his native country, and left Holyrood for Switzerland in July. We find him in September in the thick of the battle of Zurich, when he was sent post haste with Colonel Ramsay to fetch General Korsakoff and his Russians. Owing partly to the defection of the Austrians and partly to the late arrival of the Russians, the battle was lost, and Mr. Wickham's Correspondence contains a most exciting account of his wife's narrow escape from Zurich "in a travelling carriage, with eight or nine gentlemen going full gallop with their swords drawn, whilst the carriage with four horses puffing and snorting in full gallop also, made a tremendous cloud."

The Baron was in no hurry to return to Holyrood—and stagnation. He repaired to Augsburg, a far more congenial spot, which had been more than once a rallying ground for the

¹ Wickham Correspondence, Edinburgh, July, 1799.

² Windham Diary.

³ Wickham Correspondence, p. 238.

principal Swiss *émigrés*. At Augsburg, in the winter of 1799, was General Pichegru, recruiting his strength after his escape from Cayenne. He was now an ardent Royalist, and with him was Monsieur de Fauche-Borel, who relates a ridiculous story of the way these hardy adventurers amused themselves in their short intervals of holiday and freedom.¹

In the springtime of 1800 the Baron returned to England. At a levée in May he was presented at Court to King George III. How it must have recalled the old days to take part once more in a Court function after all those weary years. Did he perhaps put on his splendid trappings of the Gardes Suisses? More probably he wore the uniform of his own Regiment de Roll, which joined Sir Ralph Abercrombie's successful campaign in Egypt, and did very well.

An interesting note in Sir Walter Scott's "Life of Napoleon"² shows us the Baron on one of his errands in 1802.

"A remarkable letter from the Prince de Condé to the Comte d'Artois, dated January 24th, 1802, contains the following passage, which we translate literally:—'The Chevalier de Roll will give you an account of what passed here yesterday. A man of very simple and gentle exterior arrived the night before, and having travelled, as he affirmed, on foot from Paris to Calais, had an audience of me about eleven in the forenoon, and distinctly offered to rid us of the usurper by the shortest method possible. I did not give him time to finish the details of his project, but rejected the proposal with horror, assuring him that you, if present, would do the same. I told him we should always be the enemies of him who had arrogated to himself the power and the throne of our sovereign, until he should make restitution; that we had combated the usurper by open force, and would do so again if opportunity offered; but that we would never employ that species of means which only became the Jacobin party; and if that faction should meditate such a crime, assuredly we would not be their accomplices.' This discourse the Prince renewed to the secret agent, in the presence of the Chevalier de Roll, as a confidential friend of the Comte d'Artois, and finally advised the man instantly to leave England, as in case of his being arrested the Prince would afford him no countenance or protection. The person to whom the Prince de Condé addressed sentiments so worthy of himself and of his great ancestor, afterwards proved to be an agent of Bonaparte's, dispatched to sound the opinions of the Princes of the House of Bourbon, and if possible to implicate them in such a nefarious project as should justly excite public indignation against them."

Soon after this followed the Peace of Amiens, which brought about a short lull in the war between France and England. It has been said that it really never was a real peace, but rather

¹ Fauche Borel Memoirs, Vol. II., p. 340.

² "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte," by Sir Walter Scott.

an armed truce, for neither country trusted the other, and each kept a suspicious watch upon his neighbour's movements.

The English regarded Bonaparte with an extraordinary mixture of contempt and terror, and in spite of all that the authorities could do to prevent it, he was caricatured in the papers in a manner which raised his ire to the highest pitch. He, for his part, made what were considered impertinent demands upon the English Government, requiring that the French Princes should be turned out of the country whose hospitality they were enjoying, and mentioning Baron de Roll by name as specially obnoxious to him.

The English Ambassador, Lord Whitworth, found his position far from easy in Paris, and wrote in his despatches¹:—"He (the First Consul) told me that two men had within these few days been apprehended in Normandy, and were now on their way to Paris, who were hired assassins, and employed by the Bishop of Arras, by the Baron de Roll, by Georges and by Dutheil, as would be fully proved in a court of justice, and made known to the world."

It is certain that he wronged the Baron, who was no assassin. It is equally certain that it was not to the interest of the Bourbons and their adherents that Great Britain should be at peace with France, and they were heartily glad when the war was renewed. They had nothing to lose by war, but might eventually be considerable gainers. Meanwhile they rested secure in hospitable England, and the Baron's name figures in the list of guests at many dinners and receptions at great houses.

During the year 1804 he is frequently mentioned in Mr. Windham's diary, and must have known all about the conspiracy of Georges and Pichegru, which ended so tragically. He was undoubtedly a trusted confidential agent of the Bourbons.

In 1804 the Comte d'Artois was in London. Madame de Boigne² relates how he used to go every day to sit with the poor Countess Polastron, who was devoted to him and was dying. The Baron de Roll used to walk with him to her door, and go again to fetch him at the end of the day. According to Madame de Boigne it was the influence of Madame de Polastron that kept the Comte d'Artois from going to lead the Royalists of La Vendée. She died that same year, and was buried (temporarily) in Old St. Pancras Churchyard.

A piece of Madame de Boigne's gossip may be quoted here as showing us glimpses of our friend the Baron, and the sort of thing that was going on.

"M. de Frotté, the general's brother, came to London. His mission was to warn the Comte d'Artois that La Vendée

¹ Despatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, February, 1803, Paris.

² Memoirs of Madame de Boigne, Vol. I., p. 104., *et seq.*

was lost unless some Prince appeared there. The Comte d'Artois received him surrounded by what he called his council: the Bishop of Arras, the Chevalier de Puysegur, the Baron de Roll, M. du Theil, and some others, eight or ten in all. It should be noted that the head of M. de Frotté, who was starting next day, depended upon their secrecy. He reported the state of La Vendée and the prospects it afforded. Everyone raised objections, to which he replied. It was admitted that the presence of the Comte d'Artois was necessary for success. The difficulties of the journey then came forward, and these he surmounted. The question then arose as to how many valets-de-chambre, how many cooks, physicians, etc., the Count should have. All was discussed and agreement was secured. The Comte d'Artois took no great part in the discussion and seemed ready to start. M. de Frotté said in conclusion: 'I may inform my brother then that my lord will be upon the coast at such and such a date.'

"'Excuse me,' said the Baron de Roll, with his German accent, 'excuse me. I am captain of the bodyguard of the Comte d'Artois, and am consequently responsible to the King for his safety. Can M. de Frotté assure us that the Comte will run no risk?'

"'I tell you that a hundred thousand of us would die before a hair should fall from his head, and I can say no more.'

"'I appeal to you, gentlemen, is that a sufficient security on which to stake the Comte's safety? Can I consent?' the Baron replied.

"All answered in the negative, asserting that it was impossible. The Comte d'Artois dismissed the meeting, wishing M. de Frotté a good journey, and regretting the necessity of renouncing an enterprise which he would himself recognize to be impracticable.

"M. de Frotté, stupified for the moment, banged the table with his fist and cried with an oath that they did not deserve that so many brave men should risk their lives for them.

"The Comte d'Artois undoubtedly was not one of those desperadoes who go in search of danger; but if those about him had encouraged him instead of checking him, he would have gone with M. de Frotté, instead of staying in London. Not one of the councillors in attendance upon the Comte d'Artois had any desire for an adventurous expedition, the prospects of which were wholly uncertain, while the fatigues and privations were guaranteed.

"The Baron de Roll was in this case the mouthpiece of Madame de Polastron. . . whose devotion to the Comte d'Artois inspired her with fears for his safety but not for his glory. . . At this time also the household income was very insufficient. M. du Theil, the major-domo of the Comte d'Artois had an inspiration. . . An enterprise was announced for the near future

in Normandy or Brittany, and by this means some thousands of pounds were obtained from the English Government. Two or three hundred were given to some poor wretch who went to meet his death on the coast, and the rest was swallowed up by the caprices of Madame de Polastron. It is not known if the Prince was a party to these swindles. At any rate, he tolerated them and must have known of their execution, for when the manoeuvre had been repeated thrice within a single month, Mr. Windham found it out, and expressed himself in energetic terms."¹

Perhaps the Baron de Roll was mistaken in keeping the Prince so carefully guarded. One is tempted to wish that the Comte d'Artois had been allowed to play a more heroic part, and to join in some of the efforts made by his brave and devoted adherents in La Vendée. They so often begged for a Prince to lead them, and he was a well-built handsome man, not so over-fed and unwieldy as his brothers, a keen sportsman and an excellent shot. "All is lost but honour," was a phrase the exiled Princes were fond of quoting; but if the gallant King Francis I., who uttered those words after a desperate personal encounter with his foes upon the field of battle, could have witnessed the conduct of his degenerate descendants, he might have been very justly indignant at being quoted by them.

In fact, there was but little honour gained by the Comte d'Artois during his long life. Surely it would have been more worthy of his name and race to die in a valiant struggle to regain his inheritance than to live as he did, ingloriously, to the age of 80, without having performed one deed of courage that can be recorded by the historian.

De Roll died at Bouds, near Tunbridge, in 1813. So he never saw the restoration of Louis XVIII. to the throne of France, for which he had worked so hard and risked so much. Nor the splendid monument which was raised at Lucerne to the memory of the faithful Swiss Guards who died at their post at the Tuileries in 1792.

The "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1819 adds a few details to the obituary notice copied from the Annual Register: "He was just returned from Colberg, where he had followed His Royal Highness, Monsieur (the Comte d'Artois), of whom he was the most devoted and most particular friend, having never left him since the fatal beginning of the French Revolution."²

"Monsieur will be much affected," wrote Lady Jerminham,³ "as the Baron de Roll was always in particular favour with him. He was always very gouty. They wrote up to London to consult Père Elisé, premising that I had been blooded to

¹ Boigne Memoirs.

² Gentleman's Magazine, 1813, p. 301.

³ Jerminham Letters, p. 36.

appease the fever. Père Elisé said : '*Il a été saigné? il est mort!*' and accordingly that was the next bulletin. His wife is inconsolable. M. de Montyon says : '*C'était un Honnête Homme, mais de toute Nullité.*' However, a sincerely attached friend to an unfortunate Prince is always of some consequence."

Society had been inclined to poke fun at the worthy Baron, and considered him henpecked. His qualities were evidently more solid than brilliant.

"They laugh unmercifully at the Baron," said Lady Granville, writing from Trentham, where there was a large house party, principally French. "And you should have heard the shout when he said by mistake : '*Monseigneur, si jamais j'ai le gouvernement d'une vicille,*' instead of *ville!*' They play at Quinze half the night, too deep, I think, as the Baron has lost £150. Monsieur is here and the Duke de Berri and Puységur. Lord help them! Their only *héros de roman* are the Baron de Roll and the Duc de Castries."¹

Tom Moore² tells another short anecdote of this visit at Trentham : "Lady Stafford wishing one day to get rid of him, pointed to a mountain at a distance, which she told him was very curious, and advised him to go and see it. '*Vous aurez un petit cabriolet, et cela sera fort agréable.*' 'Ah, milady,' replied de Roll, holding up his hands in a supplicatory posture : '*Je suis Suisse; j'ai tant vu de montagnes!*'"

The Baron was buried near Tunbridge, where he died. In a peaceful village churchyard, remote from Court and camp, and far from his native mountains, he lies forgotten. The inscription is fast fading upon his tomb :

Louis Robert Baron de Roll
Count of the Holy Roman Empire
Knight of the Military Order of St. Louis
Adjutant-General to
His Royal Highness Monsieur Comte d'Artois
Major-General and Colonel of De Roll's
Swiss Regiment in his Britannick Majesty's Service
Died at Bounds—Aug. 13—1813
Aged 64

"Why do we weep when those esteemed the best
Of human beings from their labours rest?
Why do we weep when freed from anguish here
They rise to Heaven eternal joys to share?
Is not the tear a selfish tear that flows
For friends beyond the reach of human woes?

¹ Letters of Lady Granville, October, 1811.

² Tom Moore's Diary, October, '33.

Such as the faithful, brave and good De Roll—
 Child of the land where Tell first saw the light,
 He loved Britannia and a Briton's right.
 Simple in heart, yet dignified in mind,
 Social in temper, as a husband kind;
 He stood unchanged at Fortune's bitter frown,
 That bore the royal house of Bourbon down;
 He cheered its exile, gained its just applause,
 And died at last a martyr to its cause;
 He died in bliss, for he had shown on earth
 All that can stamp a man a man of worth."

The Baron's regiment, the Regiment de Roll, distinguished itself in the British service by its fidelity, discipline and bravery, and was often complimented on its conduct in general orders by the commanders of the forces in which it served. For 20 years it was continuously employed in Mediterranean stations: at first in Sicily, when that island had to be defended against Murat, King of Naples. It took part in two expeditions to Egypt: Sir Ralph Abercrombie's successful one and the subsequent unfortunate one under General Fraser. In 1812 it was sent to Spain, and for its services there it was allowed to bear the word "Peninsula" on its colours and appointments.¹

Despatches in 1810, 1811 and 1812 mention a Baron Deroles fighting in Spain. The spelling is inaccurate, but this Deroles is probably a son of the old Baron.

"... Baron Deroles, a very active officer serving under General Lacy, made himself master of the College of Cervera, with a garrison of 350 men and a large magazine of wheat. He then marched to Puycerda, on the border of France, and fought two successful battles, and pushing his parties into the French territories he levied contributions at a considerable distance in Languedoc."² Etc., etc.

The Regiment de Roll was disbanded in 1816 after the close of the war. The men probably rejoined the Swiss Guards of Louis XVIII.

¹ Swiss Regiments à l'étranger. JOURNAL of the R.U.S.I., Vol. 41.

² Annual Register, 1811, p. 121.