

## *Talleyrand in Philadelphia,* *1794-1796*

ON Tuesday, January 28, 1794, at five in the evening, two men came to a small house on Woodstock Street in London's Kensington Square, a fashionable residential section near Hyde Park; and one, declaring himself as a "Messenger of State," informed Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord that he had but five days to leave the country or be deported to France.

For Talleyrand, this ended a two-year stay in England which had been necessitated by the radical turn of events in the French Revolution in the summer of 1792; and thus began a second period of exile, an episode in the life of the famous French diplomat that has been slighted by most historians and biographers.

Talleyrand immediately protested his expulsion but to no avail. He soon realized that he had no choice but to submit. The circumstances of the time dictated his future haven. A return to France meant certain death, and most of the other countries of Europe were openly hostile to him for the part he had played in the early days of the Revolution. In mid-February, 1794, he booked passage on the American ship *William Penn*. He had made up his mind; the United States would be his refuge until such time as France returned to a normal, stable, and reasonable condition.

On March 2, the *William Penn*, commanded by Captain Richard Dale, set sail for America. Delayed by a storm in the English Channel, which forced her to seek repairs in Falmouth,<sup>1</sup> the vessel resumed its westward voyage on March 20, and, after a pleasant and

<sup>1</sup> Duc de Broglie, ed., *Memoirs of the Prince de Talleyrand* (New York and London, 1891-1892), I, 174, hereinafter cited as *Memoirs*. An interesting sidelight to this three-week delay in Falmouth is that, while dining at a nearby inn, Talleyrand chanced upon an American and requested letters of introduction to some of his friends in the United States. The reply was an abrupt "no," for the man was Gen. Benedict Arnold.

uneventful crossing of thirty-eight days, docked in the port of Philadelphia on April 28, 1794.<sup>2</sup>

The city which Talleyrand had chosen as his new home was the capital and largest metropolis of the United States. The seat of the federal republic, Philadelphia was the political center of the country, the core of its social life, and in trade and commerce its pre-eminent city. Not large by European standards, Penn's "Greene Country Towne" was a model of simplicity, a fine city in the opinion of many foreign travelers of the period, who commented on its lovely appearance. Many people thought it the most beautiful city in the United States, and compared it favorably with Old World capitals.<sup>3</sup>

Philadelphia was not only a haven for Talleyrand but also for many other French *émigrés*. In fact, the entire United States had become a refuge for the exiles of a revolutionary and war-torn world, especially for those from France and her possessions in the Caribbean. Gallic colonies could be found in Boston, New York, Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans. Though the French tended to cluster in the larger cities, some lived on farms in the wilderness of New York, Maine, and Pennsylvania, and in the small villages of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

But Philadelphia, as the federal capital, and the most cosmopolitan, tolerant, and enlightened city of the New World, as the center of commerce and communication, constantly in contact with Europe, best suited the needs and desires of the French exiles and thus be-

<sup>2</sup> *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia), Apr 29, 1794 Seven of the *William Penn's* passengers were listed by name. It is my assumption that the name of one Mr. Toleroun is that of the former Bishop of Autun If pronounced phonetically it is similar to the French pronunciation of Talleyrand, but spelled the way an American would probably write it.

<sup>3</sup> Several primary works offer descriptions of Philadelphia in the Federalist period Thomas Twining, *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago with a Visit to the United States* (London, 1893), 362-372; Henry Wansey, *An Excursion to the United States of North America, in the Summer of 1794* (Salisbury, 1798), 173; François Alexandre Frédéric, Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyage dans Les Etats Unis d'Amérique fait en 1795, 1796, et 1797* (Paris, 1799), VI, 244-321; Jacques P. Brissot de Warville, *New Travels in The United States of America, Performed in 1788* (Dublin, 1792), 312; Kenneth and Anna M. Roberts, *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey 1793-1798* (Garden City, N. Y., 1947), hereinafter cited as *American Journey* Some excellent secondary works are Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia, A History of the City and its People* (Philadelphia, 1912), I, 382; Charles H. Sherrill, *French Memorials of Eighteenth-Century America* (New York, 1915), 137

came the heart of the immigration. At times the movement was massive. Exact figures are impossible to find since the flight to the United States started after the census of 1790 and the return to Europe was nearly complete by 1800. However, the number of Frenchmen in the United States during the decade of the 1790's has been estimated at as low as ten thousand and as high as twenty-five thousand;<sup>4</sup> approximately one out of every ten Philadelphians was French.<sup>5</sup> No wonder the Comte de Moré aptly named it "the French Noah's Ark."<sup>6</sup>

The effect of this immigration on Philadelphia and its people was great; in fact, the city went mad in its enthusiasm for French ways. Women began to assume French manners and young men astonished their sweethearts with poses, graces, and flatteries hitherto unknown in America. The French themselves could be seen everywhere, sipping wines and liquors at sidewalk cafes or on balconies, in the city's inns and its coffee houses.

The French not only influenced Philadelphia society but also the Republic's politics. At times the American capital raged like Paris in political upheaval. The revolutionary fever that had overwhelmed France could be found in the streets of Philadelphia. Men, dressed in pantaloons, laced shoes, liberty caps and with cropped hair, exchanged fraternal embraces and greeted each other as "citizen." Day and night, French men and women would dance the *carmagnole* and sing *Ca Ira* and the *Marseillaise*. Pressure was brought on President Washington to enter the European war on the French side. Royalist *émigrés*, who continued to wear their knee breeches, cocked hats, and powdered wigs were often the object of scorn from their fellow, but Jacobin, countrymen. Excitement reached such a pitch that the old, relic medallion of King George II on the front of Christ Church was removed. Months before this it had been necessary to curtain the full-length portrait of the King and Queen of France in the Senate chamber.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Frances Sergeant Childs, *French Refugee Life in the United States, 1790-1800* (Baltimore, 1940), 63.

<sup>5</sup> Wansey, 175.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffroy de Grandmaison et le Cte. de Pontgibaud, *Mémoires du Comte de Moré, 1758-1837* (Paris, 1898), 147.

<sup>7</sup> Oberholtzer, I, 354-362.

However, when Talleyrand arrived in April, 1794, quiet had been restored. The Frenchman wrote to Madame de Staël on May 2 that he was happy to be in America because it was so peaceful; the people of Philadelphia, he added, had been very good to him.<sup>8</sup>

Talleyrand had left England with the Chevalier Bon Albert Briois Beaumetz, who had sworn to go to the ends of the world with him, and whose admiration for Talleyrand bordered on idolatry. On landing in Philadelphia, the Frenchmen soon met Theophile de Cazenove, who took them into his home for several weeks until they could become adjusted to their new surroundings.<sup>9</sup>

Cazenove, who had previously met Talleyrand in Paris, had been sent to America as a representative of a group of Dutch firms interested in speculating in state funds. He formed the Holland Land Company, invested generously in a variety of ventures, paid cash, and was popular. Though Cazenove opened his doors to the former cleric, Talleyrand did not think highly of him. He considered Cazenove slow-witted, timid, and careless. Yet it was just these qualities that "made him very useful to me."<sup>10</sup> When Talleyrand traveled about the United States, he constantly wrote Cazenove concerning possible land purchases.

Before leaving London, Talleyrand had remarked that he felt America was a land where he could perfect his political education.<sup>11</sup> In order to achieve this goal, the French exile hoped to meet all "the chief personages whose names the American Revolution had handed to history."<sup>12</sup> First and foremost of these "personages" was President George Washington, veritable symbol of American independence. Armed with a letter of introduction from the Marquis of Lansdowne, Talleyrand lost no time in presenting it so that he too could be ushered into the presence of the austere Virginian, as had been many of his French *émigré* friends before him. However, despite Lord

<sup>8</sup> "Lettres de M. de Talleyrand à Madame de Staël," *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, IV (1890), 210-211, hereinafter cited as *Revue*. It is interesting to note that some forty years later time had probably dulled Talleyrand's memory of his early impressions of America. In his *Memoirs* he stated that he was totally indifferent to the novelties that normally interested travelers. "I had the greatest trouble in rousing my curiosity." *Memoirs*, I, 173.

<sup>9</sup> George Barton, *Walks and Talks About Old Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1928), 99-100.

<sup>10</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 175.

<sup>11</sup> *Revue*, IV (1890), 91, 93.

<sup>12</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 181.

Lansdowne's letter, which was one of high praise for the former Bishop of Autun,<sup>13</sup> Washington refused to receive Talleyrand either publicly or privately.

Such historians as Whitelaw Reid and Joseph Jackson have suggested that Washington did not care to meet the Frenchman because of Talleyrand's past reputation. There is no doubt that Washington had some prior knowledge of Talleyrand and his past deeds, which included adultery, gambling, and stockjobbing. In February, 1792, Gouverneur Morris had written a letter to the President in which he discussed Talleyrand's character and the publicity and variety of his amours and economic speculations.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that such information could have influenced Washington's refusal, but the official reason given was one of diplomacy; and when examined in detail the diplomatic implications are predominate.

The French Minister to the United States was Joseph Fauchet. He had been sent to Philadelphia to replace Citizen Genêt and, while a successful diplomat, Fauchet had one major fault: either from inclination or fear, he lent himself completely to all the vile duties which the Committee of Public Safety exacted from its agents. Thus, as a spy and an informer, Fauchet saw plots and treason everywhere. The arrival of Talleyrand and Beaumetz was sufficient to arouse his suspicion.

The French Minister immediately wrote his superiors in Paris of "an infernal plan," and named Talleyrand and Beaumetz as its authors, and Alexander Hamilton as an accomplice. Fauchet noted that both *émigrés* had been dined and feted in the best homes, and that the Vice-President of the United States had even attempted to introduce these two traitors to him. The result was that Fauchet "withdrew abruptly." When informed of their desire to meet President Washington, Fauchet took steps to prevent it. By letter and in person, he convinced Washington that his reception, either publicly or, as Hamilton had suggested, privately, of enemies and proscribed traitors of the Republic of France could not be countenanced.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lord Lansdowne to Washington, Mar. 2, 1794, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

<sup>14</sup> Beatrix Cary Davenport, ed., *A Diary of the French Revolution by Gouverneur Morris* (Boston, 1939), II, 353.

<sup>15</sup> Frederick J. Turner, "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797," *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903* (Washington, D. C., 1904), II, 378-379.

Washington agreed with Fauchet's views on this matter. Although a refusal to meet the visitors might appear uncivil, the alternative would surely result in "unpleasant political consequences." The Chief Executive hoped that the two Frenchmen would understand his dilemma: "It is . . . my duty, as an officer of the Republic, to avoid offence to powers with which we are in friendship, by conduct towards their proscribed citizens which would be disagreeable to them. . . ." <sup>16</sup>

Thus Fauchet had won his point. Talleyrand was not received despite his warm letter of introduction to Washington from Lansdowne, and despite the efforts of Alexander Hamilton. Having won this success, the French Minister seemed to forget about Talleyrand, Beaumetz, and their "plot." But Talleyrand was not one to forget a hostile act, and, after the Minister was recalled, in June, 1795, Talleyrand found an opportunity for a small revenge. In August the Fauchet-Randolph Incident erupted on the diplomatic scene. As the story goes, a British warship intercepted some of Fauchet's papers which seemed to implicate Edmund Randolph, then Washington's Secretary of State, as a French agent. The acceptance of a possible bribe was noted and, though pleading his innocence, Randolph resigned his post. <sup>17</sup>

Talleyrand immediately rose to the defense, not of Randolph, but of the French Republic. He placed all the blame for the incident and the resultant strained relations between France and the United States on Fauchet, whom he felt had acted as an individual and not as a proper envoy of his government. Talleyrand hoped that the misunderstanding would be resolved and that relations would return to normal now that Fauchet had departed with his false communications and "pretended patriotism." <sup>18</sup>

Talleyrand was the type of person who remembered old sores and, if possible, repaid any hurt, even if it took years. This trait of his personality has led many a writer to assume that the Frenchman's answer to Washington's refusal to receive him was the XYZ Affair. Even Oliver Wolcott, John Adams' Secretary of State, in October,

<sup>16</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, D. C., 1931-1944), XXXIII, 353.

<sup>17</sup> For a good study of the Fauchet-Randolph Incident and all its ramifications, see John Alexander Carroll and Mary Wells Ashworth, *George Washington, First in Peace* (New York, 1957), VII, 279-288.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Hamilton Papers, XXV, 3424-3427, Library of Congress.

1797, suggested that Talleyrand's obstinacy and "haughty deportment" were caused by his "vindictive feelings" toward America because of Washington's rebuff.<sup>19</sup> However, President Adams did not believe this theory. As Vice-President at the time, Adams was familiar with the incident and felt that, since he knew Talleyrand to be "a reasonable man," he surely could not but approve of Washington's actions, forced upon him by diplomatic circumstances.<sup>20</sup> This assessment by Adams seems to be the true view when the XYZ Affair is examined. There were too many other reasons for the attempted extortion, certainly reasons more dominant than Talleyrand's pride.

In his dispatches to the French government, Fauchet had mentioned that Talleyrand had been received into the best homes and by some officials of government. President Washington wrote Lord Lansdowne on August 30, 1794, that Talleyrand had met with a good reception in general in Philadelphia social circles.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, even if Talleyrand could not be presented to the President of the United States, he was able to make the rounds of capital society.

Philadelphia society was a brilliant one during the Federalist period. The Republican Court gathered around the nation's first family. Washington usually held bi-weekly receptions and occasional state dinners. These affairs were dignified, reserved, austere, and at times painfully solemn. In contrast to Washington's republican simplicity was a gay and charming clique of society made up of rich merchants, lawyers, and businessmen, the pseudo-nobility of the American Republic. Uncontested queen of this court was Mrs. Anne Bingham, wife of wealthy William Bingham. Her style, her beauty, her easy, sprightly manners captivated her guests. At her three-story mansion on Third Street above Spruce, Mrs. Bingham entertained in aristocratic splendor the foremost names of eighteenth-century America—federal, state, and local government leaders, envoys of the diplomatic corps, foreign visitors. A circle of reciprocal invitations added to the scope of Federalist society.

<sup>19</sup> George Gibbs, *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott* (New York, 1846), I, 571.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 573.

<sup>21</sup> Fitzpatrick, XXXIII, 482-483. This letter was actually drafted and written by Alexander Hamilton, by then a close friend of Talleyrand. In fact the handwriting is Hamilton's, with only the dateline and signature being Washington's. *Ibid.*, 483n.

The growing list of French *émigrés* was especially welcome in this milieu. As one Frenchman noted, it did not matter if you were a "philosopher, priest, man of letters, prince or tooth puller,"<sup>22</sup> all doors were open to the immigrant, and hostesses vied for their company.

Talleyrand arrived in the United States well recommended. Lord Lansdowne not only introduced him by letter to Washington but also to the Bingham.<sup>23</sup> John Vaughan received two letters from his brother Benjamin in London praising both Talleyrand and Beaumetz.<sup>24</sup> James Cuthbert asked Dr. Benjamin Rush to aid these "two unfortunate men."<sup>25</sup> The parents of Samuel Breck received a letter from Mrs. Angelica Church, daughter of General Schuyler and sister of Mrs. Alexander Hamilton.<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Church also wrote three times to her sister Elizabeth Hamilton praising Talleyrand and his abilities.<sup>27</sup>

These warm letters, together with his reputation, opened almost all drawing rooms to the French exile. From his April arrival until his visit to New York in June, 1794, Talleyrand was hardly ever without an invitation to dinner.<sup>28</sup> While the Frenchman did not detail these engagements in any of his writings, it is known that he dined at the Bingham,<sup>29</sup> was entertained by Aaron Burr and Robert Morris,<sup>30</sup> was received many times by Alexander Hamilton,<sup>31</sup> and also met William Loughton Smith of South Carolina.<sup>32</sup> Talleyrand was almost a constant visitor at the parental home of Samuel Breck.<sup>33</sup> Fauchet

<sup>22</sup> Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, VI, 327.

<sup>23</sup> Margaret L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham of Philadelphia. Rulers of the Republican Court," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI (1937), 311.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Vaughan to John Vaughan, Feb. 20, 1794, HSP; Feb. 20, 1794, American Philosophical Society (APS).

<sup>25</sup> Pennsylvania Writers' Program, "Paris in The Wilderness," *Pennsylvania Cavalcade, American Guide Series* (Philadelphia, 1942), 261.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel Breck, "Recollections of My Acquaintances and Association with Deceased Members of the American Philosophical Society, July, 1862," 1, APS, hereinafter cited as Breck Recollections.

<sup>27</sup> Allan McLane Hamilton, *The Intimate Life of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1910), 258-260.

<sup>28</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 180.

<sup>29</sup> Howard Mumford Jones, *America and French Culture, 1750-1848* (Chapel Hill, 1927), 240.

<sup>30</sup> James Parton, *The Life and Times of Aaron Burr* (New York, 1864), I, 204.

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton, 259.

<sup>32</sup> William Loughton Smith to Talleyrand, Nov. 8, 1797, Library of Congress.

<sup>33</sup> Breck Recollections, 2.



had been correct in his report to the Foreign Office: Talleyrand had indeed been received into "the best homes" of Philadelphia society.

But Federalist society at its best was not Versailles, Marly, Fontainebleau, or Paris. Despite its wealth and princely houses, Philadelphia did not compare favorably with the brilliant salons and regal chateau life of eighteenth-century France. Its upper class, which controlled capital society, was noted for its pride, haughtiness, and ostentation.<sup>34</sup> It was the vanity of these people which induced them to invite every newcomer from Europe to view and admire their possessions. Once seen, they preferred someone new to witness the magnificence of their furniture, glassware, and porcelains, and to praise their old Madeira. As one Frenchman noted, a new face was always better than an old one, especially "for someone who does not have much to say to either the one or the other."<sup>35</sup>

This was not the type of society that appealed to most Frenchmen, and certainly not to Talleyrand. To the man who had charmed the salons of Paris in pre-1789 France, and who would likewise dazzle Napoleonic court life with his manners and conversation, Philadelphia society was too provincial for his taste. There was a crudeness in the manner in which Americans conducted themselves, as he later noted: "To us, inhabitants of old Europe, there is something awkward in all the luxury displayed by Americans. I grant that our luxury often shows signs of improvidence and frivolousness, but in America, luxury only denotes defects which prove that refinement does not exist there, either in the conduct of life, or even in its trifles."<sup>36</sup>

Language was also a barrier to Talleyrand, who was a great conversationalist but did not speak English. Despite the fact that some French was used in Philadelphia drawing rooms, the Gallic tongue was not popular and many Frenchmen became annoyed that Americans didn't understand their language.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Isaac J. Weld, *Travels Through the States of North America, and The Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797* (London, 1800), 31.

<sup>35</sup> Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, VI, 326-327.

<sup>36</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 181.

<sup>37</sup> Hamilton, 259. Samuel Breck recalled that "Talleyrand's knowledge of our language was very imperfect." Breck Recollections, 2. It should also be noted that later, during the XYZ Affair, Talleyrand used an interpreter when with the American ministers. Albert J. Beveridge, *The Life of John Marshall* (New York, 1936), II, 295. However, Beveridge stated in a footnote, that Talleyrand's use of an interpreter was a ruse for he spoke English perfectly. Facts do not bear out this statement.

Talleyrand's personal conduct soon began to close the doors of polite society. Though he could be quite amiable and the grand seigneur of manners, exile seemed to change him. He laughed at everything and everybody, showed nothing but cynical contempt for the respect of others, and was heartless in regard to the sufferings of his fellow *émigrés*. While admired by Americans for his abilities, these attitudes soon excluded him from Philadelphia society. Even his French contemporaries complained that while Talleyrand had the right, if it pleased him, to pull off his clerical robes and drag them in the mud, he was at the same time casting a bad reflection on his fellow unfortunates and their chances of a welcome reception by the American people. Talleyrand's most grievous insult to the manners, customs, and polite conventions, which prevailed at that time, was his habit of walking the streets of Philadelphia with a Negro woman on his arm.<sup>38</sup>

The result of their dislike for American society, heightened by the vicissitudes of exile, was that the *émigrés* tended to turn inward and form their own cliques and salons. They settled in a compact group around Second, Third, and Fourth Streets, near the waterfront. Talleyrand and Beaumetz roomed together on South Second Street, at the corner of Spruce, and usually dined at Cazenove's house on Market Street.<sup>39</sup> Oeller's Hotel, at Sixth and Chestnut Streets, was a favorite gathering place for the French; the refugees often enjoyed meetings, banquets, balls, and concerts in its grand rooms. Talleyrand was noticed in Oeller's Assembly Room on a very hot June day in 1794 enjoying a cool drink.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Grandmaison and Pontgibaud, 155-156.

<sup>39</sup> *American Journey*, 178. Various secondary sources place Talleyrand's residence in Philadelphia at different addresses. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, *The Republican Court. American Society in the Days of Washington* (New York, 1856), 395, says that the former bishop lived in Oeller's Hotel. Joseph Jackson, *Encyclopedia of Philadelphia* (Harrisburg, 1931-1933), IV, 1128, gives two addresses, "at the corner of Drinker's Alley and Second Street" and "in Goddard's Alley above Vine Street." Charles K. McHarg, *Life of Prince Talleyrand* (New York, 1857), 126, is close to the last address, saying he resided "in a small attic room of a house in Goddard's Court, between Front and Second Streets." Bernard de La Combe, *Talleyrand The Man* (Boston, 1911), 76, noted that, on Talleyrand's return to the capital after his trip to New York, he took "a miserable house in the then fashionable quarter of Third Street North, but it was at the end of a wretched blind alley." Another source, in quoting a letter of the Frenchman, stated that the return address was, "N. 165 South Second Street." Georges Lacour-Gayet, *Talleyrand* (Paris, 1928-1934), IV, 41. The city directories of Philadelphia for the years of Talleyrand's exile do not list either his name or that of Beaumetz.

<sup>40</sup> Wansey, 118.

Most of the *émigrés* in Federalist America had belonged to the upper classes of French society: the nobility, the church, the professional groups, the First and Second Estates of pre-1789 France. Their escape to the United States had brought them safety, but also humiliation. When Moreau de St. Méry was introduced to the Comte de Moré, he said: "You do not suspect, I suppose, who I am or what I have been?" When de Moré answered negatively, St. Méry continued: "Well, I was King of Paris for three days, and here I am selling ink, pens and paper to keep alive in Philadelphia."<sup>41</sup> The Comte de Moré later noted that the streets of the American capital were filled with "great men who had become small, ambitious men who had missed their ambitions, fools who had had their rewards, men of yesterday who today are nobodies, parvenus astonished that the wheel of fortune had not stood still for their benefit when their stars reached their zeniths."<sup>42</sup>

Many of the exiles were poverty stricken, lucky to have escaped France with their lives. Some were fortunate enough to be able to resume their professions of lawyer, doctor, or teacher. Others, not so trained, were forced to teach French, don the apron and cap of a cook, sell books or groceries in a small shop in order to exist in the New World, especially in Philadelphia where the cost of living was comparatively high.

Some of Talleyrand's detractors have said that he sold nightcaps in Philadelphia,<sup>43</sup> kept a shop for the sale of buttons in the capital,<sup>44</sup> and was so destitute as to be forced to pawn his watch at a shop on Second Street because he was starving and without heat.<sup>45</sup> However, the fact is that Talleyrand was not poor. Before he left England he sold his library for £750.<sup>46</sup> Also, it has been suggested that Talleyrand escaped from France with jewelry and other valuables.<sup>47</sup> The

<sup>41</sup> Grandmaison and Pontgibaud, 148. The "King of Paris" refers to St. Méry's position as President and leader of the Paris Commune during July 13-15, 1789.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-148.

<sup>43</sup> Sidney Dark, *Twelve Bad Men* (London, n.d.), 226.

<sup>44</sup> Jackson, IV, 1127-1128.

<sup>45</sup> Reprint of a newspaper article in Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord Manuscripts, HSP.

<sup>46</sup> Duff Cooper, *Talleyrand* (Ljus English Library, Vol. XLVII; Stockholm: A/B Förlag, 1946), 68.

<sup>47</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Lives of Talleyrand* (New York, 1936), 88-89.

Frenchman had many financial connections in England and soon met the leading capitalists in America. He could borrow from either and he certainly received some profitable advice and commissions in the course of his dealings in America.<sup>48</sup> In addition, in November, 1795, Talleyrand sold to the Spanish envoy in Philadelphia what the Frenchman said were British plans of attack on Spanish possessions in South America, documents he had secured while in England. For this transaction, Talleyrand received eight thousand dollars.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, it is doubtful that he was so destitute as to be forced to sell nightcaps and buttons.

In order to help each other and to pass the time of exile, the French *émigrés* formed several fraternal societies. The *Société Française de Bienfaisance de Philadelphie* was a truly charitable organization. The *Société des Grivois* was limited to refugees of position and was purely social. Little is known of two others, *La Parfaite Union* and *La Reconnaissance*, except that they were Masonic Lodges and opposed bigotry.

Not only did the exiles join fraternal clubs, they also created political groups and organizations. All shades of French political opinion could be found in the New World. Moderate and conservative elements centered around St. Méry's bookstore, where Talon, Noailles, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Beaumetz, and Talleyrand were welcomed. The anti-Brissot *Colons de Saint Dominique réfugiés Aux Etats-Unis* were led by Barrault de Naroy, Chotard, and Claussen, and represented the middle grouping of political thought. The radical Jacobin *Société Française des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Egalité* was active and troublesome.

In the propaganda war with England, French exiles of all political shadings turned to the use of a Franco-American press. From an inauspicious beginning in the 1780's, French newspapers mushroomed during the Federalist period. At least sixteen, perhaps as many as twenty, French newspapers could be found in America at one time or another. Between 1784 and 1798, Philadelphia alone had nine, Boston had three, and Newport, New York, Charleston, and New Orleans

<sup>48</sup> Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

<sup>49</sup> "Documents, Talleyrand and Jaudenes, 1795," *American Historical Review*, XXX (1925), 778-783. These documents are exact reprints of the originals in The Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid.

one each. In general, these covered the news of the revolutions in France and Santo Domingo and reflected the political views of their editors. The French press ended with the decade of the French exiles.<sup>50</sup>

The February 26, 1796, edition of St. Méry's *Courrier de la France et des Colonies* carried an article written by Talleyrand, "Réflexions sur Les Dernière Nouvelles reçues d' Europe particulièrement Sur Celles relatives à la France." It was primarily concerned with France's financial plight, expressed hope for international peace and economic co-operation, and is of special interest for it was written but a few months before Talleyrand's return to Europe.<sup>51</sup>

Some of the French *émigrés* who followed intellectual pursuits were welcomed by the American Philosophical Society. They considered election to the Society an honor. Men like Moreau de St. Méry, Brissot de Warville, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, E. I. du Pont de Nemours, Louis Philippe, future King of France, and others were sworn in as members. On April 15, 1796—two months before his departure for Europe—Talleyrand was elected to the Society and was present on that day for his induction, the only meeting he ever attended.<sup>52</sup>

Though exile had its moments of depression, life in America for most of the French was not as drab as has once been thought. Through fraternal, social, and political organizations, by dinners, concerts, and meetings, through travel, and in the solace of their diaries, journals, and newspapers, the *émigrés* made the best of their temporary haven. Naturally, small groups grew into closed circles. Those with similar religious, political, or social inclinations banded

<sup>50</sup> Allen J. Barthold, "French Journalists in The United States, 1780-1800," *Franco American Review*, I (1937), 215-230. He states that research on French newspapers will probably never achieve definitiveness as they had only momentary value and few files are even extant. Yet he believes there exist, in public and private places, twenty to twenty-five volumes containing ten thousand quarto and folio pages. See also Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers* (Worcester, Mass., 1947), II, 898-948.

<sup>51</sup> Ralph B. Yewdale, "An Unidentified Article by Talleyrand, 1796," *American Historical Review*, XXVIII (1922), 63-68.

<sup>52</sup> American Philosophical Society Minutes, APS. None of the minutes for the dates of Talleyrand's stay in America list his name except the one of Apr. 15, 1796. The other members present were St. Méry, McKean, Woodhouse, Coxe, Ellicot, Vaughan, Wheeler, Dr. Priestly, Peale, Dr. Magaw, Dr. Barton, Dr. Collin, Patterson, Parke, R. Smith, Ruston, and Deveze. No mention was made of the vote.

together. One such Gallic colony, as previously mentioned, was headed by St. Méry and was centered around his store at 80 Front Street, near Walnut. This former "King of Paris" had landed in Virginia in November, 1793, had lived for a time in New York, and then came to Philadelphia, where he operated a printing press and bookstore.

In May, 1794, a short time after their arrival in America, Talleyrand and Beaumetz chanced upon St. Méry and his son, who were returning from a session of Congress. They dined together that night and exchanged stories and views.<sup>53</sup> Soon a deep friendship was established between Talleyrand and St. Méry. The former bishop invariably addressed Moreau as "mon cher maître," wrote often to him when traveling, and took a sincere interest in the success of his endeavors, offering financial advice, proofreading articles for publication, and distributing for him letters, newspapers, and books. When Talleyrand returned to Europe, he took some three hundred copies of St. Méry's articles with him, hoping to sell them in Hamburg.<sup>54</sup> Years later, as Napoleon's foreign minister, he used his influence to secure a lucrative ambassadorial post for St. Méry in Italy.

While Talleyrand was the foremost member of the *émigré* "family" that gathered around the bookstore, others included Beaumetz, Talon, Blaçon, Noailles, Volney, Payen de Boisneuf, Demeunier, Boislandry, La Colombe, and the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. The Duc was critical of Talleyrand, not only because of their political differences but also because the former bishop jested at his writings. Talleyrand later described the nobleman as a bore because of his incessant importuning of everyone for help in the completing of his eight-volume work.<sup>55</sup>

This group of exiles often used St. Méry's store as a forum for discussion and debate. At times their uproar continued until daybreak and even into business hours. Moreau pleaded with his friends to be quiet, for their boisterousness was driving his customers away, but he enjoyed their company and often had them to dinner. As an habitué in the house, Talleyrand rarely took food, but he enjoyed his

<sup>53</sup> *American Journey*, 90-92.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 178, 181, 201-204, 207, 209, 216, 217.

<sup>55</sup> Stephanie Felicité Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, Comtesse de Genlis, *Mémoires* (Paris and London, 1825), V, 53.

host's Madeira. At such carefree gatherings, all amused themselves by playing jokes on one another. Blaçon especially enjoyed "Mon-seigneurizing" Talleyrand until the former bishop could stand it no more. When the hour grew late, St. Méry's wife often urged the group to leave. Many times Talleyrand would take his departure, only to steal back to prolong the party, capitulating finally when Mme. St. Méry announced: "Tomorrow you will play sluggard in your bed until noon; but promptly at seven o'clock in the morning your friend must get up and open his shop."<sup>56</sup>

From the winter of 1795, after Talleyrand's return to Philadelphia following his second visit to New York, until the summer of 1796, when he departed for Europe, the former cleric visited St. Méry in his private office almost every evening at eight o'clock. There, alone and without interruption, they opened their hearts to each other, pouring forth their feelings, revealing without exception their most intimate thoughts. Talleyrand and St. Méry "discussed the condition of France in the past, her present lot, and finally what would happen to her in the future." For some reason, the future consideration made them think of Louisiana, where they wished they could settle. Eventually, they determined to devote all their thoughts and energies in that direction, with Talleyrand deciding that they would end up by becoming its governors. Actually, neither had ever visited the territory, nor ever would. At all times and in every respect their affectionate agreement was unvarying. Moreau de St. Méry himself used the expression "joined Like Two fingers of a hand" to describe their relationship.<sup>57</sup>

Talleyrand's purpose in coming to America had been to escape the guillotine. His fondest wish was to return to France, and news of the Thermidorean reaction offered him a ray of hope. With Robespierre dead, a more moderate government gained control of the revolution. As news from Europe filtered into America bit by bit, Talleyrand learned that the Directory had effected many changes; the time seemed ripe for return. Still, he feared for his life and prudently refused to leave America until his name was removed from the published list of *émigrés*.

<sup>56</sup> *American Journey*, 214-217.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-216.

In June, 1795, Talleyrand petitioned the Convention for reinstatement as a free citizen of France. He enlisted the aid of Madame de Staël, the daughter of Necker, and of the Abbé des Renaudes, the ever-faithful former Grand Vicar of the Bishopric of Autun. The latter placed Talleyrand's petition before the Convention on August 30, 1795, and Madame de Staël used her charm to secure the help of Jean Lambert Tallien and Marie Joseph Chenier, both influential members of the Convention. After a stormy session, on September 4, 1795, it was finally decreed that the name of Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord be struck from the list of *émigrés*, and that he be permitted to re-enter the Republic.

Talleyrand received notification of this most welcome news in New York, sometime between November 3 and 14, 1795.<sup>58</sup> However, the exile decided to wait until the spring of 1796 before crossing the Atlantic. He hoped to sail in mid-April and to arrive at Hamburg in late May.<sup>59</sup> The decision to land in Hamburg was probably prompted by the lack of any firsthand knowledge of conditions in France. News of the disturbed and tentative policies of the Directory was outdated by the time it reached America, and no doubt Talleyrand wanted to be sure of his position before going to Paris: he was to linger a month in Hamburg before re-entering France.

On April 26, 1796, a Philadelphia newspaper began to print an advertisement on its front page of the sailing of a Danish brigantine, under the command of Captain Peter Hansen, bound for the German port of Hamburg.<sup>60</sup> This advertisement ran almost daily until June 10. On May 27, 1796, Talleyrand bade farewell to Beaumetz, his constant traveling companion in exile. Beaumetz was bound for Calcutta on board the ship *Asia*, in search of a fortune through land speculation on the sub-continent.<sup>61</sup> On June 3, 1796, Talleyrand paid a visit to the French Minister to the United States, Pierre Auguste Adet, and received his passport.<sup>62</sup> The last barrier had been hurdled. Four years of exile in England and America was to end in ten days.

<sup>58</sup> Talleyrand's Nov. 2, 1795, letter to St. Méry does not mention reception of his decree. *American Journey*, 207. A Nov. 14, 1795, letter to Madame de Staël does mention his reinstatement. *Revue*, IV (1890), 216.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>60</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, Apr. 26, 1796.

<sup>61</sup> *American Journey*, 214, 217-218. Beaumetz died in India.

<sup>62</sup> Lacour-Gayet, I, 205.



Talleyrand took his final dinner in America at the home of Moreau de St. Méry, whose wife packed food and jugs of water for Talleyrand's forty-day voyage.<sup>63</sup> Moreau accompanied him to the dock the next day, June 13, and watched him board the ship that would carry him homeward.<sup>64</sup> Behind Talleyrand lay the past; ahead his unknown destiny, toward which the Danish vessel *Den Nye Prove—The New Enterprise*—now bore him.

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<sup>63</sup> *American Journey*, 214, 223-224.

<sup>64</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, June 13, 1796.