

MEMOIRS OF JEAN ROHU,  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL OF THE DIVISION OF AURAY

FIRST CHAPTER

Being one of the superior officers who were involved in the civil wars of Morbihan during the Revolution, and desiring to give an idea of what happened in that country at that period of sorrowful memory, I undertake to make recital of what concerns me in particular and of what, to my knowledge, the men of this country did who more particularly devoted themselves to the cause of religion and the legitimacy (of Royalty).

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BORN the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1775 in the village of Pont-neuf in the commune of Plouharnel, canton of Quibéron, I was at the College of Vannes in 1789 when the King Louis XVI, led astray by imprudent and treacherous counsels, summoned the Estates General to Versailles on the 5<sup>th</sup> May. These Estates, proclaiming themselves a National Assembly, concerned themselves at first with political measures or reforms. The Treasury being found encumbered with debt, the clergy made generous offers, but the financial embarrassment was only a pretext: what was desired before all was the ruin of religion and they began by despoiling it. A decree of the second of November robbed it of all its properties to place them at the disposal of the nation. They adopted a civil constitution for the clergy which overthrew the Church of France and repudiated the most sacred rights and the most uncontested principles.

The National Assembly, by a decree of the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1790, determined to impose on the Bishops, on the Vicars General, on the Superiors of seminaries and on the Professors of these establishments as well as on those of the Colleges, on the priests and on the curates, the obligation to take the Oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, an oath contrary to the dogma and discipline of the Church, which they could not take without falling into schism: therefore they in great part refused it and were consequently exposed to persecution.

The Catholics were dismayed to see their faithful priests obliged to quit their parishes to yield place to schismatics; and on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1791, the peasants of the neighbourhood of Vannes gathered at Bandon, a place not far removed from the town, with the intention of proceeding to the Bishop's

palace in order to provide for the security of Monseigneur Amelot, Bishop of the Diocese who was threatened with imprisonment by the revolutionaries.

A certain Béranger of Quibéron, then domiciled at Vannes, invited me to accompany him to Bandon. I accepted this and he presided at the meeting but, fearing lest his people in their exasperation would commit excesses against the inhabitants, he strove to point out to them the danger to which they were going to expose themselves and succeeded in deciding them not to attempt to enter the town.

It was in the afternoon of this day that I left my studies to return to my family. On the following 21<sup>st</sup> May, le Masle, the intruding (i.e. Government puppet or usurping) Bishop imposed on Morbihan, arrived and on the morrow the ceremony of the “consecration” by the civil authority took place with the gathering of the soldiers and of the National Guard; but in the presence of so small a number of inhabitants that there were not 200 among a population of ten thousand souls, so much did the Catholics regard the schismatics with horror.

From my departure from Vannes till the 30<sup>th</sup> May, I busied myself in sending some priests to the Isle of Houat where they were gathering to pass from there into Spain and, not knowing what would become of me, I went on board with Vincent-Michel Rohu, my elder brother, who commanded a coasting lugger and with whom I remained two years – that is to say until the Revolution put the crowning touch to all its outrages in condemning to death the King of France, the best and most unfortunate of princes who had so much right to the love of his people through the gentleness of his character, his benevolence, his aversion to all harshness, and his constant desire to satisfy all wishes.

On entering the river of Bordeaux, the captain of an official vessel, which was there made us cast anchor and called our captain on board his vessel. I followed my brother and we were brought close by the corpse of a merchant captain guillotined for having transported some Catholic priests into Spain. They took care to tell us that the same fate awaited all who would do as he had. The sight of this object caused my brother such fear that, from that moment, he thereafter believed himself reserved to undergo the same treatment.

Upon returning from this voyage, our vessel was requisitioned for the service of the Republic and armed at the port of Lorient with two cannons of twelve, two of four, four perriers and a crew of thirty-six men. We were employed for five months to make the crossing between Belle-Ile and the river of Nantes. Bad weather having forced us to put in at Penerf, thirteen soldiers of our company who were leaving a regiment of the King's Guard went down into the store-room, filled their bags with biscuits, made the vessel put them ashore and went to join the Royalists of the Vendée, without their officer daring to oppose their departure.

During our crossing we had an engagement with two English privateers which we chased with loud cannon shots. After the expiration of the appointed time the old crew, of which I was part, remained on board and I found myself relieved of the service of the Republic.

Captain Alistair of Quibéron then asked me to serve him as first mate and I made a voyage with him from Bordeaux to Lorient in the winter of 1794. At this moment France was in such disorder that at Bordeaux we could only procure for ourselves half a pound of bread made with maize, per man per day, and some haricot beans. We would not have been able to continue our voyage had we not met Captain Toussaint du Diomedé from Plouharnel who was coming from the country and he consented to let us have a quintal (pre-metric quintal = 100 pounds – Ed.) of biscuits.

At Lorient and at Port-Louis, at the door of the baker's, people were in so great numbers and so packed that they shoved one another over to seize a loaf of bread coming out of the oven. The harshness of the winter and the presence of the English hindering us from taking to the sea, our Captain and part of the crew went to their respective families and I remained with two men to guard the vessel in the roadstead of Port-Louis.

As I was walking one day on the quays, I met an old acquaintance of the commune of Nostang, named Jacques Guigan, who had been a domestic to the Rector of the parish. At the sight of this man, I hurried to approach him for news of his country because, in our circumstances of going from port to port, we had only a confused knowledge of what was going on in the interior and the name of Chouan was completely new to us.

Guigan soon brought me up to date: he recounted to me that Georges Cadoudal, Joseph Bothrel of Kermelard (?) in Brandivy, Joach

Karmorvant of Brech, Thuriau Le Glouannic and Jean Bourdiac, both of Crach, and almost all of the young people I had known at the College were armed and were busying themselves in organising and arming the people for the defence of religion and the legitimacy.

After this recital, I told him to wait a while for me. I went to take my effects from on board, placed them in his cart and left the town with him to return to my mother's home (my father had already been dead 22 years).

I informed her of my intention of going to join the Chouans. She spoke to Bonaventure Marie, the second of my brothers, who also captained a lugger but who, at that moment, had received an order to go to the post of Lorient to serve as a pilot. They both approved my decision. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>. of February 1795, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, they placed me under the protection of God. I took a small basket and made pretence of going out to look for some things and returned to my older brother's house at Carnac to ask for his blessing also. There I left my basket having no further need of it. Following my enterprise, I went to the village of Rosmonel and, in that same commune, I found Jean Coriton with whom I had previously sailed, a very strong man and of great and proven courage but who, as a rebel, had been hiding for six months in the country. He took me straight away to Jaques Eveno of the village of Kergalen, Plomel.

After the usual greetings, Eveno, at that time Captain of his parish, told me that I had arrived at just the right time, considering that he intended to have an engagement with the Blues the following day. I accompanied him on his expedition and we went to place ourselves in ambush on the road from Auray to Landévant, near the village of Trezedic.

Soon we perceived a detachment of eleven soldiers heading for Auray. As soon as they were in range, although I had no weapon, I dashed on to the highway calling upon the troop to throw down their arms and, advancing upon them, I seized the gun of the first and was making ready to snatch it from him when he received a ball in the hand, with which he was holding the weapon, from one of our men.

Turning around to see who had fired at such a wrong time, I saw that I was alone in the presence of the detachment and that Eveno and his troop had not left their ambush. Exasperated by this circumstance, I called out to them in

Breton that, if they did not cease their fire, I was going to take the part of the enemy and fall upon them in their entrenchment. At this injunction they came to my aid. We disarmed the detachment and let them go.

My conduct made such an impression on Eveno that during that day he offered me the rank of Sub-Lieutenant in his company. To which I replied that, before enlisting with him, I would wish him to do me the kindness of having me brought before Georges: he therefore gave me a guide and in the night I met him at Gignello's in the village of Kerdoret in Locoal-Mendon.

He had with him a certain Mercier, called LaVendée (a nickname on account of his service in the Vendée War - Ed.); Le Biose, Captain of Pluvignier; and Joseph Crom who was charged with the manufacture of cartridges. All these gentlemen, except LaVendée, were our former schoolfellows. On the morrow Georges told me to go with LaVendée who would give me the necessary instructions as to my further conduct. We left and betook ourselves to Moustoir in Mendon. LaVendée entrusted to me a letter addressed to Monsieur Glouahec, priest at Carnac.

I quite saw that I was not entirely trusted and that he was seeking some information about me.

At Moustoir, I met Jean Coriton, of whom I have already spoken, whose name will often come into my account because we hardly ever left each other. Monsieur Glouahec, having read the letter, presented it to me, saying, "There! Coriton is appointed Captain of Carnac". "But", said I to him "where are the soldiers"? "You will find some", he answered me. "The men are not lacking here. Coriton will help you to discover them."

In fact Coriton knew the hiding place of many resisters and deserters (from the Republican side – Ed.) who were in the country, and we left to make their acquaintance.

In passing through the country, a man who was a stranger to the locality was pointed out to me. He was making purchases of butter, so they said, to go and sell it in Bordeaux. I had him arrested and asked him for his papers. On his replying that he had none, I told him that I was going to have him brought to Pluvigner, where he said that he was domiciled, and that, if the

Royalist Captain of Pluvigner gave him a good certificate, he could return in all safety.

It was dark. He was walking in front of me and, crossing a rough cart track, he picked up a stone and threw it at my head. I fell from the blow and he ran away. It was on this occasion that a former customs officer who, not having wished to take the oath of loyalty to the Republic, was also prowling like us in the countryside, gave me the secret to preserve myself from the bullets of the enemy – a secret which I have since practised as punctiliously as possible and, as I believe it to be efficacious, I record it here: it is to recite each day a *de Profundis* for the souls in Purgatory.

Later, as Coriton and I were crossing the highway from the small market town of Carnac to La Trinité, we saw two soldiers advancing towards us with guns on their shoulders. Immediately we decided that they must be disarmed and, so as not to be seen by them, we placed ourselves behind a piece of wall and close to the bridge of Kervinec.

When they had arrived near us, the brave Coriton dashed forward upon the first who presented himself, but it was the assailant who was knocked over and the Blue held him on the ground. I had no weapons but, as the soldier held himself bent over my comrade, I pulled the bayonet from his equipment and threatened to plunge it into his body. This decided him to release Coriton who, getting up again, tore the gun from his hands.

The other soldier, instead of defending his comrade, had taken his flight. I ran after him and he allowed himself to be disarmed without resistance. The defeated were ashamed before their garrison comrades and we were so proud of our new guns and so filled with wonder at the capture which we had made, that we did not think to remove their cartridges from them. Our inexperience was so great that we stopped within a gunshot of the scene of action to explain our manoeuvre and receive the compliments of the villagers, who came running to congratulate and encourage us. So that, at one time, were near to being arrested by the detachment which had gone out of the town to pursue us and had passed by the gable of the house of Feterio where we were.

Having assembled some armed men and wishing to accustom them to war, I arranged to join Jacques Eveno and we were to attack together the armed vessel stationed at Etel.

It was night. We began by felling the Tree of Liberty (a token of the Revolution- Ed.), planted in front of Cordier's house, and then we exchanged gunshots with the stationary vessel which replied by cannon shots.

The next day, Hyacinthe le Doré, boatswain of this vessel, with his silver boatswain's pipe and accompanied by six sailors of his crew, deserted and came to put himself under my orders. My name and deeds were soon known to the Republicans and my mother and sister were then obliged to leave the house, not to return there until two years later. Our household goods were looted and our wardrobes were used as sentry-boxes for the town's garrison. The iron bars of the casement-windows, the doors, the windows and part of the rafters of the roof were taken away.

Having neither any more money, nor goods, nor change of clothes, I had to spend the rest of the winter in the same shirt and to walk bare-footed in iron-shod shoes, sleeping in barns and stables. It was not until after the raid made at Carnac that our leaders were able to maintain us. We did not, however, lack food because the inhabitants generally interested themselves in the success of the cause which we supported. The table of the labourer was nowhere refused to us and I will indicate at the end of these memoirs the families who made the greatest sacrifices as much for the royalists as for the faithful priests who remained among us.

However, the success of our first small attempts won us the approving testimony of our partisans and encouraged the defaulters and deserters from the Revolutionary side to join us. Yves Danic of the village of Keriaval, Corneil Erde of Kerogel, and Corneil Cailloce of le Punio, the three from the commune of Carnac, are those who rendered us the greatest services in sending to us all the small quantities of powder which they could discover in the different households of the country, removing the rust from the old batteries of guns and making stocks for those that lacked them. They procured for us also bullet moulds and, with the little lead we could find, we made bullets. These young people having all three become captains, continued to behave as gentlemen.

The sailors did not remain inactive either. When they saw some trading vessels anchored in the Bay of Quiberon, they went on board them by night and willy-nilly took possession of the powder and guns that they found

there. In a little time, we were able to gather some sixty armed men and give them a certain military form, with instruction by two soldiers who had deserted with the powder of the fort of Kernohaeste (?) in Locmariquier. I appointed both instructor-sergeants.

In the first days of March, I attacked a detachment of the garrison of Plouharnel which served as an escort for those inhabitants of that commune who upheld the cause of the Revolution. One girl and two soldiers were killed, a woman had her arm broken. We only had a piece of linen and other effects left. One of my men was also killed but practice gives experience and some days after, informed that the same garrison was taking supplies at the town of Auray, I resolved to attack it afresh and I took up a position which allowed me to attack it and defend myself with greater advantage than the first time.

I therefore placed a good trench at a distance of about a hundred and fifty paces between me and the highway but I did not have the time to fight for, at the order which I gave, the soldiers cut and ran and the peasants who were leading the horses relieved them of their charges and mounted them to flee more quickly. The commanding sergeant alone persisted in disputing the provisions with us and, helped by Francois Grouhél of the village of Kerbard, I succeeded in taking possession of them and he was shot. We found in the bags some bread, some meat and some clothing.

General Hoche, who was the general commanding in Brittany for the Republic, did not understand either our manner of making war or how he could defeat us by force of arms; for the other parish captains did as I did and, in combat after combat, trusted in the country folk. Hoche therefore took it into his head to offer us arrangements in order to deceive us.

A ceasefire took place and our superior officers betook themselves to the Chateau de la Prevalais near the town of Rennes to treat of peace with the men of the Revolution who were holding their conference at the Chateau de la Molilais(?) situated between La Prévalaye and Rennes. Georges, in parting, strongly advised me to stay on my guard; not to allow my men to frequent the enemy garrisons and to keep these men in their respective posts.

The market town of Carnac having been evacuated, Pierre-Marie le Toullec of Quibéron and myself went to sleep at his aunt's home in the town. Someone came to tell us first thing on the morning of the following day that



some soldiers from Locmariaquer, to the number of thirteen, were come to take salt at the salt pans of Beaumer. Immediately I sent to take the ferry boat of Korisper and, with the men that I could gather, I proceeded towards the salt collectors who did not try to defend themselves and gave me their arms. I had them brought to the market town of Grand-Champ, where Monsieur the Count of Silz, our General, had his quarters.

During this sort of pacification, we procured for ourselves some lead and some bullet moulds. With the fifteen barrels of powder which we received from England, we made cartridges. By the month of May I had a hundred and ten men armed with good guns and amply provided with munitions.

The Blues not being able to lure us among them to corrupt us, avenged themselves on those whom some clumsy louts reported to them as devoted to the cause of religion and legitimacy. Michel Chomalin(?) of the village of St. Guennahel in Plouharnel and Pierre-Marie Kersaho of Kerbachique (?) in the same commune – both heads of households and very inoffensive men – were murdered by the soldiers of the garrison. Kersaho was left on the road without burial and Chomalin, interred in the cliff, had been found the next day having an arm sticking out of the sand. This made us think that he had been buried alive.

Of all the parishes of Auray only Plouharnel had a sworn-in usurping priest, Yves Bolay by name, lodged on his arrival at the inn of the Widow Leport in the town. I cannot, however, affirm that the murder of these two men had taken place at his instigation, for he had the reputation of being a peaceable man and, some time after these events, wrote to me to ask the Catholic priests of the country to consent to receive him among them. This I refused for the reason that he had frequented the revolutionaries too long. Bolay left Plouharnel, went to settle down at the market town of Baud, and ended up by throwing himself out of a window on to the pavement where he died.

Georges on his return from La Molilais assembled the captains at the town of Mendon and proclaimed as canton chief of Pluvigner, Poral, a former usher (at court? – Ed.), Jacques Eveno of the canton of Belz, myself of the canton of Quibéron, Robert de Crach of the canton of Auray and Francois le Gouriff of Ste. Helene of the canton of Port Louis.

Following this promotion, Georges asked me for vessels and coast pilots to go to England to look for a squadron, which should disembark troops at

Carnac. I turned to my eldest brother who had his vessel empty. I summoned my brother Bonaventure-Marie, who was at Lorient in the service of the Republic, and they spoke with Pierre Collet of Plouharnel and Bonaventure de Rouzic of Plouharnel of the village of Légenér in Carnac, all possessing a trading captain's certificate. This happened in the first days of May 1795.

The discussions of La Molilais having been broken off, the Republicans were waging war to the knife upon us. General de Silz was attacked in his position at Grand-champ, his troop were beaten, himself killed and the prisoners which he was holding there were freed. The same day we found ourselves to the number of five hundred under the orders of LaVendée at a distance of a league and a half (= 6 km: French league about 17% shorter than English – Ed.) from Grand-champ. We had passed the night at the Abbey of Lanvaux and at daylight we headed for the battle field but we only saw those of our men who were in full flight towards the copse of Kerret. We were made to take the same direction and we did not halt until we reached the market town of Bignan.

An extraordinary thing! Having lain down at night on a tiled floor of a room in the Abbey, on the eve of the combat of which I have just spoken, we had made a fire in the middle of the apartment and we were stretched out at the fire. Several of us were falling asleep when, suddenly, three guns placed against the chaise longue threw themselves into the fire without anyone having moved. A call to arms was heard in all the house, without anyone having been able to tell, either then or since, how these guns had been pushed into the fire, or who had raised the cry of alarm that made us descend in haste to the courtyard where we remained until daylight.

From Bignan we were made to set up camp at the Bois de Florence (now, apparently, the Forêt de Floranges in Pluvignier. Ed.) where we found ourselves joined with nearly three thousand men but, at the end of several days, those of the two other divisions were disbanded and there only remained five hundred of Georges' division. Forewarned by M. de Francheville that the troops from Vannes were to come to attack us, our colonel had us make arrangements for defence and, having placed us at various points leading to the camp, he charged me with defending the path which led there from the house of Cher, the forester. I consequently had some brushwood cut and placed across the passage and, backed up by the fifteen men who had been left to me, awaited the appearance of the enemy.

As we found ourselves behind a bend in the path, the enemy arrived quite near us before we could see them. At my command to fire, which was carried out by all the men at the post, the Blues let out a dreadful cry and several fell, among others the officer marching at their head. Their column made a movement to the rear and we lost sight of them for an instant; but instead of charging them, in view of our small number, we contented ourselves with guarding our position. They slid into the wood and from right and from left they encircled our brushwood defences and, after nine wounded and two killed of my fifteen men, I was constrained to withdraw. At the exit from the wood I met Georges who made me bring my wounded to the village of Ninoret in Pluvigner, where they were treated and cured by M. Coilan, a health officer, a native of Vannes.

We slept together in the open at the village of Fedordoué . Next morning I was awakened by my Colonel who shook me by the neck. I rolled over to sleep again, so deprived had I been of sleep. I then received the order to come to Carnac, to ascertain the direction that the Republican patrols were travelling and to bring news every day to Moustoir in Mendon, where Georges was staying and where M. d'Allegre of Saint Tronc had arrived from England with Joseph Loréal of Quibéron to whom the English minister had entrusted some funds for the Royal Army. This arrangement to watch the marches of the patrols of the Blues took place in order to find out if they seemed to be informed that the squadron was to disembark in the bay. They did not change their habits and even seemed not to have had any knowledge of the disembarkment until the arrival of the fleet in sight of Le Po.

It was then, at Moustoir, that I made the acquaintance of d'Allegre and he told me that, finding himself at Toulon at the time of its capture by General Catleau, he embarked on an English transport, was captured at sea by the French, and taken to the Castle of Brest, where Georges and LaVendée already were, and noticing Georges always walking apart, he suspected that this young man was of some importance and risked opening himself to him.

D'Allegre had a contact at Brest who was able to advance him some money. He had him come, arranged with him to procure them disguises, and they were able thus to recover their liberty and to return to Morbihan. D'Allegre was in command of the country of Hennebont and had for captains Francois le Gouriff of Ste. Helene and of Nostang, Le Prunigo, of the villages of Gueldro and of Plouhinec, Marc LeGuennec of Merlevenez, Le Bihan of the

villages of Brambis and Préantec; Jean le Lan of the villages of Locmaria and of Kervignion.

Marc Le Guennec having had both shoulders traversed by the one bullet in the Quibéron affair, the command of the company was given to Jean Le Bihan of Penher Aledeliné. Jean Le Bihan of Magourec, lieutenant of Le Gouriff, having been wounded at Auray was replaced by Le Boulard of Bondervo in Nostang. The men of this country claim for their fathers the honour of having, under the command of Le Gouriff, fought near Landévant, on the 13 February 1795, three hundred Republicans who were conducting a Chouen prisoner, Salomon Calan of Pluméleau. Le Gouriff repulsed them, took possession of the carriage, in which the prisoner was in chains, and guided him to the town of Landaul. There they counted on finding a blacksmith to break the chains, determined not to let their prize go. But Royalist cavalry, led by the Conventional (i.e. Member of the National Convention- Ed.) Bru, arrived, had Calan murdered and hung him on a tree in the same place.

## CHAPTER 2

On the 27<sup>th</sup> June, the English fleet carrying the troops for landing, having at last appeared in the Bay with Monsieur de Tintémac at its head, the market town of Carnac and the mound of St. Michel (the Tumulus St. Michel - Ed.) was occupied by the troops of the Republican General Aoman. General Tintémac led a column on this town and we marched with him towards St. Michel where the tricolour (of the Republic – Ed.) was flying. Our sailors, without any hesitation, climbed the mound under enemy fire and we were only outstripped by the General who ran with all his might.

Upon our arrival at the summit, the Blues descended rapidly by the opposite side, heading for the town. Immediately the insignia of the Revolution was lowered. Tintémac undressed, pulled off his shirt and attached it to the flagpole, thus improvising the white flag. (A white flag was to become the official flag of the Chouannerie Ed.). The General ordered me to pursue the Republican troops who fled in the direction of Plouharnel: he himself marched upon the coast to put himself in communication with the squadron. In their flight, twelve of Aoman's soldiers went towards le Po and found themselves cut off by the sea on one side and on the other by the sailors, who had overtaken them on the road for Plouharnel, and they were obliged to yield. These military were armed with carbines which were hammer operated. (Obviously an innovation at that time. The hammer is a small mechanism which activates when the trigger is pulled. The hammer strikes a percussion cap which ignites the gun powder charge. – Ed.)

After disarming them, I had them brought to the General: I continued the pursuit as far as the village of le Pont neuf in Plouharnel where, all panting and soaked in sweat, we halted for a rest and there I received the order to take up position at the village of Ste. Barbe opposite the Penthièvre fort. It was on this day that I found out how much my mother's village had been devastated.

The following day Georges sent me to bring a letter to General d'Horvily, the Commander in Chief of the troops who had been disembarked and who had established his camp at the town of Carnac. I received a good welcome from the General who had me proceed to the parlour where I was served with food and drink while awaiting the reply. Two men came into the parlour and, going round the table, one said to the other "what is that?" "It is a Chouan, apparently. One sees only those here" replied the other.

Rising from the table, I said to them “Have patience, Messieurs. Before long you will see it in a different light – more than you would wish.”

Thereupon they went out and I went upstairs again before the General to whom I recounted what had just happened. He appeared very displeased at the matters of which I had been put in possession and ordered his man to make inquiries about these persons. When leaving me, he prayed me forget this little unpleasant occurrence and to come boldly to find him when the requirements of the service necessitated it, assuring me that such a thing would not happen again.

Two days after the landing, my company and a company of exiles, men advanced in years and in great part decorated, were ordered to embark at La Gené in Carnac for the purpose of going to take Quibéron whose Republican garrison was of seven hundred men. As soon as we had disembarked, a company of English grenadiers came to place themselves on the left and, at the same time, an English ( ?Ed.) frigate near the fort of the Little Rohu (Little Rock in Breton Ed.) let fly a broadside which blew up nearly all the stones of this little fort.

The soldiers who were there, not knowing where to flee, some abandoned their hats; others their guns; and fled without knowing where they were going. They were so terrified that several of them came to take refuge in our ranks. While this was going on the army, disembarked at Carnac, was marching along the cliff on the Plenthievre fort and, as soon as they were within cannon range, the garrison capitulated. The white flag was raised, the company of English grenadiers re-embarked and I returned to take my post at Ste. Barbe in Plouharnel, without us being allowed to take any food at Quibéron, although we had not eaten anything since the previous evening and although the inhabitants, all of whom we knew, had consented to lodge us once in a while.

At the news of the landing, the people for several leagues around flocked to take arms and to enrol for the service of the King. In the parish of Carnac three companies were formed, including that of the sailors which I commanded. Joseph Le Madec had the command of a company of young peasants and Gilles Helz of Kerduol commanded a company of married men. Everywhere it was the same. The parish of Erdeven also furnished three companies, of which that of the elders were commanded by Ezano of

Kervarch. In the little parish of Merlorvezier they organised two companies, of which that of the elders had as chief Joseph Jacob of Kerzach. The enthusiasm was inexpressible – such was their haste to deliver themselves from the revolutionary yoke.

Some columns of Chouans were directed, one on Auray and two by way of Mendon on Landévant. These columns had been in various engagements with the Blues but we did not wish to support them yet, either with artillery or with troops of the line. Hoche was not slow to perceive that the Royalist movement was directed by men who knew the devotion of the Bretons to the cause of the legitimacy. If, at that moment, the emigrés had advanced into the interior, it would have been visible that Brittany was rising en masse, so great was the joy produced by the news of the arrival of a Royal army. The French Royalists had, without doubt, intelligence in the principal towns of the Province inasmuch as General de Kervilly, in my presence, gave a commission for Brest to M. Mauger of Port Louis who, undoubtedly, must have been the victim of his devotion seeing that no-one has ever had news of him since.

I was left at peace in my post at Ste. Barbe with my sailors who were, without contradiction, the best soldiers of Georges' Division and we remained there until we understood the Republican army was not giving any sign of retreat in the Quibéron Peninsula. We had the Republican troops always in sight. My Colonel ordered me to keep the rearguard and to protect the inhabitants who, from more than thirty parishes, were fleeing in front of the Blues. The sea was low and the Cove of Plouharnel was encumbered with women carrying and dragging their children, with carts loaded with all the grain that the owners had the time to put there in cloths, with men driving their cattle before them and imploring, with loud cries, our help to preserve them from the rage of the enemies who were shooting at them, and had already taken several carts. Many of these people were among our relatives, our friends or our acquaintances and, in place of joining in the retreat of our army, we began, in duty, to defend them and we pushed back the Blues as far as the outside of the Cove and held them there until the sea had sufficiently risen to prevent them from following.

The battalion of volunteers of the town of Auray lodged at the Chateau of Kergonnan, having been warned too late, were going to be cut off in their retreat so they made their way at a faster place towards the roadway of Le Moutes. But this road, having been previously cut by the sea, had become

impracticable; time was needed to repair the breach and the Republicans were continuing to come.

M. Glain, a notary at Auray who commanded this battalion, made a sign to me to wait for him and I halted. I was rallying my troop when Georges came, from General Tinténiac, to tell me that we must follow the retreating army and not to halt so; but, when I explained to him the dangers that the men and women who were running behind faced, and that they had rendered us service in the past, he did not insist and returned to the General. Immediately Tinténiac arrived at full gallop and ordered me to follow. In vain I spoke to him of those who were behind; he would not listen to reason and went back dissatisfied. It was in this battle, and only then, that I saw my mother with her wooden shoes in her hands. For two days she had been following me in all my movements without my noticing her, so great had my cares been.

The battalion of Auray having once disengaged, we continued all day to snipe at the Blues and entered the fort only at the setting of the sun. This day spent without drinking or eating was so tiring that I could not follow my company, so we bivouacked all night on the cliff. We spent two nights at Quibéron. The first, I slept on the sand in the open, the second, in a loggia made in a staircase on the outside of the house. The third day we embarked to land at Suscenio in the commune of Sarzeau. We were about three thousand men all Chouans, dressed in red. But since Georges had not taken any English clothes for himself, I did not take any for myself either.

The troop which was on the coast at Sarzeau, as also the troop of the town, offered little resistance and we marched without halting as far as the Chateau of Callou where we spent a night and a day, during which several men of the Regiment of Loyal Emigrés were placed in each company, some with the rank of officer, others as instructor-sergeants and, because I could not admit some of these brave men into my troop without displeasing my own men who all had several years of service in the military marine, General Tinténiac was even more displeased and consequently considered me as insubordinate. During this day, a certain Margadel came from the Royalist Committee of Paris to bring despatches to General Tinténiac and at the beginning of the night we left for Elven, near which we arrived at the peep of day. There André Guillemot, our divisional Major, came to take my company and we entered the town at the double. A sleepy sentry whom we encountered on the highway was taken by surprise and did not have the time



to give the alarm to the garrison, so that the soldiers, surprised in their sleep, came out of the houses having nothing on them but their shirts – they were thus defeated and dispersed without us having lost a single man.

We did not stay at Elven: the army took the road for Plaudren and came to a halt at Hermitage. We believed that we were going to get near to the Bay of Quiberon and attack Hoche from the rear. General Tinténiac decided otherwise and made us take the road for Josselin. During the journey, some young people of Guillemot's Division came to join us, but without their chief who was not yet healed of the burns which a powder explosion had inflicted on his hands and face. These young people, whose reputation for bravery was known to us, we considered a precious reinforcement but before the town of Josselin the General, who had not yet been able to stomach his resentment against me, made me enter by a narrow path opposite the tower where the garrison had retired and from whence the bullets were coming at us like hail. Obligated to cross a little bridge, we found it covered with the hats and sabots of those who had preceded us and, throwing them to the sides, we crossed it, weapons on our arms, without turning a hair or having received a single wound. Having reached a square in the centre of the town, we received a discharge of gunshots which wounded five men and killed two alongside me. None of these were my men. I had them break the doors and set fire to the house which was occupied by the Gendarmerie.

While I was then occupying myself with removing the wounded, I received the order to evacuate the town by the Ploermel road. Hardly were we outside, pursued by the garrison, than we were charged by sixty troopers who had come from the latter town.

Leaping to the charge, we lined the ditch and repulsed this cavalry, now having the bearing of tried men. While we were thus at grips with the enemy, our army exited the town of Josselin in disorder but reassembled in confusion at the top of a flat ridge and Georges, indignant that those engaged in combat had been left on their own, came running up crying: "Who loves me, follows me." and quickly came to our aid. He was proud of our conduct and the General condescended to tell me that it was good.

Two men, however, Yves Danic of Carnac and Pierre Lesneven of Auray, not having left the town at the same time as we, were cut off in their retreat and were not able to rejoin us until after our return to the area. We then

marched to the Chateau of Corlogen where the General Tinténiac, it was said, had to receive new instructions.

The day after our arrival, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, we were informed of thirteen hundred Blues who were coming to attack us. Georges, the sole divisional leader present, was charged with the preparations for defence and sent me to keep a lookout on a sandy moor on the left of the enemy. When he had made all his dispositions and the firing had already commenced, he came to find me and, drawing up a single rank of soldiers with one or two paces between each man, he made us to run, crying "Forward!" and making all those march who had kept behind the hedges. Our dash forward set all the army in motion and astounded the Blues, who ran away as quickly as possible, leaving us some dead, some wounded and some prisoners. We lost only our General, who imprudently advanced on a grenadier, who was creeping from tree to tree in the avenue and who at first took flight but, finding himself hard pressed, turned round and shot the General almost at point-blank range.

Julien Cadoudal, Georges' brother, took him in his arms and the grenadier was killed by Joseph Madec, Captain of the company of peasants of the Parish of Carnac. M. de Pont Ballanger immediately took command and led us towards Quintin, a wealthy enclosed town, which has a fort on the eastern side. It was in this fort that the small garrison provided for it was located. We halted on the main road, the army was formed into columns by platoons and my company was designated to be the first to enter the town.

Our major came to place himself at our head and, starting to run, we arrived at the fort as the Blues were abandoning it, having fired several shots at us to which we paid no attention.

We pursued them until their exit by the west gate outside which they halted behind a retrenchment that was there. We ourselves halted outside at a street-crossing near this gate and, finding myself at the door of an inn, I had each of my men given a bottle of cider while awaiting further orders.

Our army advanced by the main road, by the flank, a rank on each side along the houses to avoid the bullets which, through this side gate, enfiladed the whole street. M. de la Marche had just been wounded in the foot when Georges, arriving from the rear, told me that we must pass through this gate. At this juncture, I ran my eyes over my brave men to see what their frame

of mind was and, seeing them ready to throw themselves into the middle of this hail of bullets, I gave my order and dashed forward: I commanded men too attached to my person to content themselves, in such a danger, with following me but they all tried to outdo each other in overtaking me and the Blues, frightened, did not have either the time or the courage to fire a single shot at us. In the suburb, by this gate, I noticed a ground floor window and, approaching, I saw within several persons in tri-coloured sashes. They were the Mayor and his Council. At my suggestion, Georges entered. We soon broke off the pursuit. The Blues, in full retreat, instead of taking the main road, scattered across the fields and were lost to view.

On our return to the town, we found our billets ready and some provisions were distributed to us. After two days rest we left for Chalet Audren, reinforced by a cannon mounted on a cart. The garrison did not do us the honour of waiting for us and we spent the night there and, on the following day, we learnt of the capture of Quibéron by General Hoche.

At the news of this catastrophe General Ballanger who, up to now had deluded us with the hope of a landing of arms, munitions and funds on the shores of Brittany, found himself completely bewildered. Not knowing what course of action to take, he had us return to Quintin where 6,000 Republicans were arriving at nearly the same time as ourselves; but, not daring to attack us at nightfall, they entrenched themselves on a mountain to the east of the town from whence they intended to fire cannon balls at us the next day.

M. de Pont Ballanger gave some money to his officers. For my part, I received one hundred francs. One hundred francs to distribute between the hundred and twenty men whom I commanded. It was certainly not a great deal, but it was still one hundred francs.

After this distribution, at the approach of night, he had us leave for La Corlay by the worst path on earth. I commanded the rearguard and, towards midnight, Coriton, whom I had detached on my left with a patrol, came back quickly announcing the march of a mounted troop heading towards us.

I made a halt. Upon my “Who goes there?”, the reply came “It is I, mes enfants, fear nothing. The enemy is not making any move”. It was actually M. de Pont Ballanger, our General who, without halting, crossed the

highway behind us and disappeared with his Staff, abandoning us in the presence of the enemy.

At sunrise the following day, we found ourselves all gathered in La Corlay where Georges, having announced to the army the disappearance of the General and his Staff, took command and, encouraging us not to let ourselves be disconcerted, assured us that he would bring us back into our country. This he carried through in three days and without encountering any obstacles. Having arrived in the parish of Deguerec, he encouraged those of us who, during the march, would find themselves near their residence, to return to their homes and, from the next day on, our column would find itself much diminished; but it was not permanently disbanded until we reached Moutoir-Locminé.

Those who could not return home – either because they had no means of support, or because the place of their domicile was occupied by Republican troops – were authorised to remain gathered under my command. We lived by means of vouchers payable when money would be available, and this currency did not fail to be accepted among a population so devoted to the cause of religion and legitimate royalty. We were, however, quite anxious about the means of procuring the funds needed for the settlement of these debts when Joseph Botherel, of whom I have already spoken, rising from a sickness which had prevented him from campaigning with us, came to tell me that a sum of four thousand five hundred francs (4,500), deposited with him before the landing of the emigrés, remained in his hands and belonged to Georges, who had completely forgotten to whom he had entrusted it.

The first among us who had tried to return to their homes soon came back to us and recounted to us the results of the taking of Quiberon. They told us that all the men who had taken refuge in this peninsula had been buried or taken into the towns of Auray, Port Louis and Vannes; that at Auray they were crammed into the churches, at Vannes into a meadow and at Port Louis on to the glacis where, exposed to the heat of the day, to the dew of the night and to the infection caused by the gathering of so many men, they all fell ill and a part of them succumbed.

They also appraised us that all the households within two hours (on foot or on horseback ?- Ed.) of the coast had been so pillaged and devastated that there remained some women and children without food and in the most complete consternation.

After six weeks they were prepared to set all these peasants at liberty when Le Floch of Auray and L'Estrohan of Port Louis betook themselves to the Department and advised them to demand of these people, in order to obtain their liberty, the payment of an amount of grain proportionate to the means of each one of them. This advice was welcomed and the prisoners only obtained their release as and when their ransom was paid.

The intervention of these two men was differently interpreted: to Le Floch was attributed the ill intention of wishing to reduce the inhabitants of Auray, so that for a long time to come they would no longer be able to accord us aid of any kind. His intervention nearly cost him his life because, several days later, someone fired a pistol shot at him in his house at Auray from so close range that he was fortunate to get off with a bruise and a fright. L'Estrohan, as a lawyer, was regarded, on my part also, as kindly disposed towards the inhabitants of his canton, nearly all of whom were his clients.

The nobles, the priests and the military, of whatever rank, who were taken at Quibéron, were all shot: some at the Meadow of the Martyrs, as it is called, near Auray, the others on the Garenne (i.e. the Promenade de la Garenne in Vannes Ed.), and at the Armor near Vannes and that, it was said, contrary to a surrender offered by General Hoche and accepted by the Royal Army, according to which they should all have been considered prisoners of war.

(According to Michelin Guide to Brittany -3<sup>rd</sup>. English Edition p. 154- "Hoche tried to save them (the royalists who had escaped to England during the French Revolution and who had returned with English backing to oppose Napoleon). The Convention refused to pardon them. Some were shot at Quibéron and others were taken to Auray and Vannes and shot there" – Ed.)

### CHAPTER 3

We remained for some time at the village of Kerninéne at Moustoir-Locminé and in that of the granite country of Plumelin without any encounter with the enemy, but not knowing what would become of us. However d'Allegre of St. Tronc had been sent to England and LaVendée to l'île Dieu (sic. - now L'île D'Yeu off the Vendée coast.Ed.) to His Royal Highness, the Count of Artois, brother of King Louis 16<sup>th</sup> who, having arrived with reinforcements

only after the capture of Quibéron, had disembarked on this isle awaiting fresh orders.

Georges, approaching me one day, asked me what I intended to do in this circumstance. I naively replied that I would rather go to serve the Republic than to put myself henceforth under the orders of men such as those who had just now abandoned us in such a cowardly way. He then told me that he had just received a commission as Marshal and the command of the Département of Morbihan. To restore my morale, he began to recount that, after the death of the King (presumably Louis XVII, who died in prison in 1795, and whom Royalists recognised after the execution of his father Louis XVI in 1793.Ed.) he, Georges, left for LaVendée with Le Bedesque, Le Bourbis of Auray and four others, that after a thousand dangers they reached the rebel country, that he put himself under the orders of General Stofflet, who promoted him to the rank of Captain of Cavalry, and that he had taken part in all the Vendée war. He was present at all of the great battles, followed and harassed the Grande Armée (Napoleon's Army.Ed.) from the time of the passage of the Loire until Grenville and, on the return, as far as Savenaye. It was only after the dispersion or destruction of the Vendéens in this latter town that he regained Morbihan with Mercier (nicknamed La Vendée – Ed.) and that both of them were busying themselves in making cartridges at his father's place in Kerléano when they were denounced, arrested and taken to the Chateau of Brest before escaping from that prison.

His paternal uncle, who was detained there, told him of the place in the house at Kerléano where he had deposited a sum of three hundred écus or 3900 francs and authorised him to make use of it, if he could reach the country, and that this sum had been his sole resource up until the return of d'Allegre from England in June 1795.

“You see indeed” he added, “That what has happened is nothing beside what I have seen” and, perceiving that his recital rekindled my courage which had been crushed by the latest event, Georges continued thus: “During my absence several persons such as M. de la Bourdonnaye of Coecandre, Pierre Guillemot, de Bignan, Joseph Botherel of Plumergat, Bonfils of St. Loup, Jean Jan of Baud, Lantivy of le Reste, the Count and Chevalier of Sitz arrived.”

Vincent Vervé of Plougoumelen, the Count of Sol de Grisolles, the two from Cécilion and others worked to dispose the people to rise against the

Revolution and recognised the Count de la Bourdonnaye as General. Upon my return, I persuaded him to complete the organisation of the country and he invited the most influential men of each arrondissement (sub-division of a département or administrative area into which France is divided.- Ed.), to meet to appoint the Colonel of Division. “I had for competitors,” said Georges, “Bonfils de St. Loup and Lantivy du Reste, but the peasants, being in the majority in the meeting and having heard tell of my campaigns of Encu and of Outre-Loire (the country beyond the Loiral), gave me the preference and I was proclaimed Colonel Commanding of the Division of Hennebont and of Auray”.

Immediately after this promotion, the Count de la Bourdonnaye declared to the officers present that he was unskilled in the arrangements necessary to command in such circumstances, advised these gentlemen to choose the Count of Sitz to replace him, and gave in his resignation.

Georges told me “Returning from Brest, we passed not far from the Bridge of Buis, where we manufactured some powder, which then gave me the idea to send La Vendée to stock up with supplies from there with thirty armed men equipped with bandoliers, who surprised the few soldiers who were there, disarmed them, took possession of the cash-box and seized all the powder they could carry. As they were returning, they passed through the town of Guinieme whence they carried off two cannons engraved with the arms of the Prince”.

This conversation, having revived my courage, re-ignited in me the fire of my zeal for the cause of God and the King.

Soon afterwards, La Vendée, having returned from the L'île Dieu (sic) announced to me that I was promoted to the rank of Lieut. Colonel Major of the Division and that His Royal Highness was to send me the Commission immediately. He also gave me news of my two older brothers, one of whom – Vincent Michel, commander of all the French vessels gathered at L'île Dieu – was named Admiral by the Count of Artois, and the White flag flew only aboard his vessel.

The Count Joseph of Puisaye who, at Quiberon, got away on board the English squadron, came back and Georges had him arrested on suspicion of having betrayed the King's cause and held him prisoner until he received the order to let him go to London to justify himself, if he had good grounds for

so doing. Puisaye, still retaining the title of Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief of Brittany, was most pleased to leave us a reminder of his arrest. Accordingly he ordered Georges to take possession of the market town of Elven, where there was a strong garrison lodged partly in the church and partly in a barrack situated to the north of the Church. We left with four hundred men and entered the town, but this time the soldiers did not run away in their shirts: they defended themselves stubbornly and when we thought we had gained control of the church, we found we could not do so because the soldiers had taken refuge in the church tower. Those in the barrack were still defending themselves on the ground floor when one of them advanced into the crossroads to shoot at us. One of our men tore the rifle from his hands.

Then they went up to the first floor and still defended themselves when the Commander, hearing us threaten to set the place on fire if they did not give up, determined to make a sortie and appeared at the threshold of the door where he received a bullet which made him fall backwards with his feet outside and his body inside. At that instant, a Royalist seized hold of his foot and dragged him fully out into the street. The others did not wish to follow but continued to defend themselves from within. The General, believing that he had sufficiently proven his obedience to Puisaye, and not wishing to sacrifice us in order to seize a town whose possession would not be of any use to us, gave the order to retreat and we left without being followed, carrying our wounded. Since that day, we did not receive any order from the Count of Puisaye, who probably never cleared himself of the accusation of treason which hung over him seeing that, at the Restoration (of the Monarchy – Ed.), he was not based in France.

General Georges, by orders from above, appointed himself a Council of which he had no need and of which Messrs. Gllain, a lawyer at Auray, the Abbé Guillivin, Rector of Plemeur and Mercier of Grandchamp formed part. There was also a committee for each Division, of which the Chief was an ex-officio member, and a Captain was appointed for each parish. These are the names for the Division of Auray: Athanas Guillivin at Quibéron; Francois Thoumelin at Plouharnel; Joseph Mader at Carnac; Joseph Monfort at Erdeven, in replacement for Jules-Marie Rohu, my brother, killed at the village of Kergoite in that parish in an encounter with the Blues; Grégoire Eveno at Belz; Jean Bourdier at Crach; Pierre Crabot at Locmariaquer; Nicolas Le Lorer at Ploruel; Vincent Guyonvarh at Mendon; Jean Louis Le Bourdiec of Reclus; Paul Aury at Plouvignier; Mar le Galludec at Landaul;



Albir Jouannic at Camors; Jacques Le Béour and Toussaint Perron at Languédic; Jean Lehan at Kerviac; Joachim Jégo at Alantec; Pierre Le Carrour at Plouhihec; Jean Bernard at Morlevenez; there was in addition a company of hunters commanded by my faithful Coriton under the orders of Troujoly of Rennes.

The Council was charged with caring for the munitions and funds of the Army and it was to it that M.. Carés de Grandchamp, Commissar General for Supply, addressed himself to obtain the necessary amounts to make payments. The Council was authorised to have a guard which was commanded by Jean Francois de Alanea, a village of Locenique in Alantec. The Divisional Committees had by them one or two messengers according to need for correspondence.

The peasants made prisoner at Quibéron, being at last set free after having paid their ransom in grain, the countryside began to recover from the stupor into which it had been thrown by the capture of this Peninsula and the massacres which had followed it, which had brought such horror to all those who had kept some feeling of humanity. A Captain of the garrison at Auray and the Brigadier of the gendarmerie began correspondence with us. The Brigadier, always informed of the direction of the columns in which he had to take part, took care to warn us of this which enabled us the better to avoid meeting them. The Captain warned us of the different convoys which would pass through the country.

Two hundred sailors were being brought from Brest and, having arrived at Auray and being due to continue on their way from Rochefort, we went to await them at the edge of the territory of Plasene beside Vannes. Commanded by the General in person, we took and killed a part of their escort, dispersed the rest and allowed the sailors to go where they wished. It was in this affair that Julien Madrion and Kobb, called Le Bloux, both cavalymen of the General's escort, arrested and disarmed eight soldiers by themselves; it was also the same day that we met, by the highway, Jean Louis Cordin of Éthel (? – Ed) who had just done a year in prison at Bordeaux as a Royalist suspect.

After this expedition, we were coming quietly and joyfully towards Pluvignier to supply ourselves with cartridges when, on the land to the east of the Chateau de la Grandville and at the edge of the coppice of Rohu, we found ourselves facing a flying column which we still had to combat. Our

munitions being in great part exhausted, we had to pay for our audacity. The General threw his coat far from him and gave the command "Forward!". We charged the enemy, but they were more numerous than we and we were obliged to yield. The Blues re-entered Auray with the General's coat.

The Captain of the Blues whom I mentioned above, finding that he was to command the post at Pont-Salle, made an appointment with us one evening at Ste. Anne and told us that he had become suspect of being in collusion with us and that the only solution he saw was to have an engagement with us, in which we would yield to him in the field of battle. This was accepted. On the very next day we met near and to the south of Meriadec, where the Captain had seen a Corporal killed near him. We began to retreat when André Guillemot, our Divisional Chief, fired with his rifle and the barrel fragmented and cut off his thumb. This caused him since to be called Guillemot the Thumbless. We knew that the same flying column with which we had had an engagement at the Chateau de la Grandeville was still in the vicinity of Grandeville and, resolved to rout it, we marched to meet it. We arrived at the bridge of the Moulin de Collené when it appeared on the other side. They did not know that we were awaiting them and they were still advancing so that, crossing diametrically a field which bordered the path to go to take the company of Landaul which was arriving from the left, I received the discharge of the whole column at ten and fifteen paces without being injured. Since that day I have believed that the secret that one had given me to protect me from the bullets of this enemy is well and truly preservative, and the Blues themselves were astonished to see me escape so fortunately. We pursued them until beyond Ste. Anne, that is to say, during more than two hours and they left us several of their dead and many wounded.

The garrison of Locminé, coming to relieve that of Ste. Anne, found it more convenient to make their way there by the shortcut of Colpeau; it passed by Locperhot (? – Ed.) and was arriving at Ploumergot when we attacked it before it might gain the town. It entrenched itself in the presbytery and defended itself obstinately. M(aitr)e Pie de la Mirandole, commanding the company of emigrés who had escaped at Quibéron, wished with his braves to carry the position by bayonets, but he was killed at the entrance of the gate and his friends, disconcerted, retired carrying their Captain. We had a cannon and we could have knocked down the presbytery but, in consideration of the damage which we would cause to the parish, we

preferred to postpone to another time the avenging of the brave man we had just lost.

M. Pie de la Mirandole was a former officer of cavalry of unfailing devotion to duty and bravery and so was regretted by the entire army. The Revolutionaries of Brest, with their patience utterly strained by hearing unceasing reports of our unending combats, wished to have done with us. They formed a corps of a hundred and twenty of the bravest men that were in the town, among whose number was specially reported to be a negro who, it was said, ate little children whole. They entrusted the command to a Captain worthy of this elite corps, who betook himself to Morbihan in order to purge that country of all the royalists that were in it. They made a great noise, travelled through the towns and villages, plundered, insulted, beat, lived at the expense of the inhabitants and brought terror, especially among the women who feared they would see their little children devoured by the negro. Georges, wishing to see these men close up, took the company of Plumeret, marched to meet them, and encountered them at the Mont Gudhenno. They made a discharge at him before he noticed them, but without losing countenance, all the Brestois were taken and shot in expiation of their conduct. The Captain, before dying, said to the General that he regretted letting himself be taken by peasants.

Following this affair, we proceeded on the Ploermel road to Vannes between Elvan and the Pont Guillemot and there, taking an advanced guard of two hundred men for an isolated corps, we attacked them and dispersed them in a twinkling; but their regiment, arriving on our rear, repulsed us in our turn. This affair was, however, profitable for us because this regiment had many Bretons in its ranks and, when they arrived at Vannes, nearly all of them deserted and came to find us.

The General conceived the project of attacking a convoy, escorted by eight hundred men of infantry and around fifty of cavalry, which was coming from Pontivy to Vannes. He chose for the battle field that large moor which extends from Camazon to Colpeau on the road to Locminé. I was placed with one hundred sailors in the village to the east of the highway and about in the middle of this moor. Two corps were placed, one to the left, and the other to the right, of the road on the Camazon side and two others likewise on the Colpeau side. I had the order to repulse the scouts as soon as they appeared. We were carrying this out, with our usual vigour, when we

perceived the reinforcements being sent to them and the cavalry, coming out of the wood, tried to cut off our retreat.

Not seeing our men make any movement to come to our aid, I called my men back and we returned to the village from which we had just come. Having arrived in the plain on this side, the cavalry of the Blues drew themselves up in battle array a short distance from us, as if to charge us. I halted my half-company and formed it into three ranks in the face of the enemy, the first rank on their knees and forbidden to fire. This attitude impressed our adversaries so much that, after having gazed at us for an instant, they returned to their corps and gave me the time to gain the trenches. The convoy had almost passed over the plain before our men could appear. They sniped away then, just until they had gained the other side of Camazon, but it was too late. If, instead of placing me in the middle of the moor, I had been put below there, the convoy would have found itself in the middle and would have halted there, when I had repulsed the snipers. Then our four corps, advancing at the same time, could well have repulsed the inert mass and have taken possession of the vehicles. This would certainly have happened if the General had been there.

All the other Divisions of the Army acted with as much activity and, in every combat, trusted in the support of the country folk. The General liked to be found where there was risk to be run and, if it had been just a question of destroying men and if we had been given *carte blanche*, we could have – as he would say himself “killed at least ten thousand men per month on the Republican side without losing one hundred of ours”, we had so far improved in the different ways of surprising our enemy and of escaping their pursuit when we were not the strongest. There was no town in the Morbihan, even those of Port Louis and Lorient, which we could not have entered by night when we had wished, unknown to the garrisons, to take possession of the public funds and of a great part of the officers, without running almost any risk but, in every letter which the General received from the King and from His Royal Highness, he was enjoined to deal gently with His Majesty’s subjects. It was in order to conform himself to this prescription that he refused to obey the decision of the Council, who wished him to oppose the transport of all commodities in the towns occupied by the troops of the Republic.

Georges, realising that he would have need of all the resources of men which the country could offer to resist the forces with which he was opposed,

engaged the priests to reach an understanding with the superior officers of the Divisions to marry only those of the young people who would find themselves in absolute necessity, such as the older orphans and the eldest sons of widows, and everyone conformed to his wishes with such exactitude and eagerness that there were neither complaints nor murmurs, nor even any breach of the arrangement, so much did the General and the people identify themselves with the same sentiments.

Warned by Vincent Quer, of the village of la Trinité in Carnac, that a vessel sent by the port of Lorient with 32,000 francs to purchase wheat was to be found in the river of Crach, I resolved to take possession of it. The weather was bad, the wind blew violently, the rain fell in torrents, and the night was so dark that, before arriving at the river, we found ourselves in the middle of the garrison of Locmariacquer which was coming to replace that of Carnac. Their men and ours were unfit to shoot and we passed each other by in the dark without speaking to each other.

Having arrived at the village of La Trinité, I found at the inn the captain and the baker charged with the purchase of the grain. I took possession of it and, making them enter their dinghy, I ordered them to bring me on board where there were seventeen armed men. I was accompanied by only five of my own, because that was all the dinghy could contain, but I took care to declare to the Captain that he would answer with his head for any harm that could happen to me.

Having come on board, I began by having them deliver to me the funds and the vessel's munitions and, making them open the hatches, I demanded the arms of the crew who slept in the galley. In handing me their guns, they gave me two bayonet thrusts in the left thigh and in the ankle of the right foot, but I was so lively that I noticed none of these wounds until I began to cool off and I had already gone more than a league (4km. Ed.) from there. With this money, I was able to buy the most necessary clothing for a great number of my volunteers who found themselves in need.

A landing of arms and munitions was made in the summer of 1797 in the cove called Port Lineneu, near the village of Kerhillio, near Erdeven. On my way there, the General charged me with delivering a letter to the Republican commander of the village of Ste. Barbe in Plouharnel. Having arrived at the place called Croiseresane (? – Ed.) at the entrance to the village, the state official shouted to me “Who goes there?” Upon my reply

“An orderly”, he called the guard and I was led before the official Lagé in the room of Pierre Betz who was of the party opposed to ours. Having read the letter, the official raised his eyes to me saying “Alright” and, enjoined the corporal to lead me outside the sentry-post. Once free of these Blues, I thought that they could again change their mind and also pursue me: I was hurrying on when I heard a voice calling to me. At this shout, I lay flat on my stomach on the other side of a bramble bush. When he arrived where I was, I recognised it was the official who was running towards me. He charged me to tell the General that he need not worry and that he would see that his troop would tire so much, during the night, that it would not wish to be active the next day. Indeed, soon afterwards, I heard the Republican Generals were defeated. In the night, the captain of the English vessel came on shore to see for himself what had become of Georges, in whom his Government placed such confidence, and he found him in the water up to the hips, his shoulder under the edge of a boat which was completely aground and which we wished to refloat. The Englishman greatly wondered at finding the General in such a position and, having spoken with him aside for some time, he promised to help us by all means in his power.

The landing was well executed. All the vehicles were on their way when Messieurs LaVendée, Guillemot, Jean Louis Béchard and myself, having left the coast and having had the débris of the crates of arms removed, saw the Blues of Ste. Barbe heading for the place of the landing. The convoy slipped off quietly as far as the highway from Auray to Landevant, when a column from Auray came to attack the escort and another from Carnac came at us at the Moulin de Bosa(?) in Mendon, but both were driven back with advantage; we had, however, to regret the loss of Louis Le Cellier (?), Captain of Pluméleau (?), who was killed near the pond of Cranec. The same day, M. De Sol de Grisolles came with his Division to receive his part of the arms and munitions which had been landed. He was attacked at the Moulin de Beau Juste in Plumergot by a column which had come from Vannes, which he kept in check with his customary coolness although there were among this troop a company of Grenadiers, commanded by the Sieur Fosse (? – Ed) of Lorient whom we would meet again in the campaign of 1815.

Provided with all we needed, we were at last taking a commanding position when, arriving at the point of being able to increase the scale of our operations, when we learnt that England was ceasing its hostilities against the French Republic. We were therefore obliged to cease our own, because

we were placed directly under the orders of the foreign Powers who were helping His Majesty. Whether they made war or peace, we would receive an order to conform ourselves to their decisions. We were offered an amnesty for all who returned to their homes and presented themselves at the town hall of their commune. We accepted in order to pretend that we had surrendered weapons (though only some had been surrendered, as shown by subsequent fighting - Ed.)

I was sent to Auray with about sixty sailors who deposited their guns at the town hall. We were feted by the officers of this garrison, against whom we had often fought, and I was recognised by those of this flying column from the shootings that I had happily escaped at Coulue

In the middle of these disorders which existed in France, God-fearing men made efforts to bring the country back to a better state than that in which it found itself. They raised their voices to complain about the violence and the injustices which a tyrannical government carried on against the Catholic clergy, the Royalists and the people who were suffering because they were showing themselves disposed to help our efforts.

The year 1797 opened under favourable enough auspices, following the arrangements of the Constitution then in force. A third of the Legislative body were to be re-elected each year. Four départements of Brittany, that is to say, Les Cotes du Nord; L'ylle - et -Vilaine; La Loire Inférieure; and Morbihan, found themselves among the number of those who had to elect representatives that year. The first operation to attain this end was that of the primary assemblies where all the citizens voted and nominated electors who, having met at the Chief Place (county town. Ed.) of the Département, chose the Deputies destined to enter the Council of the Five Hundred and that of the Elders. The people whom we had made to realise that a good choice would have favourable consequences for France, left in a crowd for the primary assemblies and generally nominated men animated with the best intentions. The General also conveyed himself to Vannes, in the night which preceded the election of deputies, for a meeting which took place at the house of the lawyer, J. Olivet. It was decided that they would vote for the Royalists. The General especially supported the candidature of Monsieur Carriere, an engineer at Port Louis who was of the number of those chosen deputies, but some strong Republicans in the Chamber, perceiving that the greater part of the new members held views diametrically

opposed to theirs, caused General Angereau to be summoned to Paris. Subsequently, those of the Deputies who professed the better political principles were arrested and condemned to deportation. La Carriere, however, was able to escape and reach England, whence he returned to France two years later, but without being able to show himself in public.

The Directory of 1798 ( The leadership of the French Revolution, otherwise known as The First Republic.Ed.) wished to have the law, which it had invented, observed. This law fixed the rest days (The ‘Desode’ Ed.) on the tenth, the twentieth and the thirtieth of the new ‘months’. It was believed that this would thus succeed in causing Sunday to be forgotten. Work and public sales, were forbidden, and fairs and markets were prohibited on the day of Desode. That caused the greatest perturbation among the faithful, but the mob decided to work on Sunday and to observe the Decodi (the name of the new tenth day and holidays of the new regulation months – Ed.) and to go to fairs and markets on Sundays and Holy Days.

The General, having sent orders in all matters regarding the army and having given us instructions which he believed to be useful in the conduct which we should observe during his absence, left for London. The amnesty was observed in our regard inasmuch as they were not able to put their hands upon us save one, Bodec by name, of Auray and two others of the same town who were arrested at their homes and, under the pretext of taking them to Vannes, they were shot at Pont Salle.

Julien Cadoudal, brother of the General, was taken out of the prison of Auray to be, as they said, taken to Lorient and was shot near the Carthusian monastery. Moran of Auray, an artillery officer, crossing the road from Vannes to Locm.

iné, was noticed and killed by the Blues. Guillemot the Thumbless allowed himself to be surprised, was first of all lodged at Vannes and afterwards transferred to St. Brieuc. Thumbless was Georges’ old schoolfriend, a man full of bravery and devotion and it was decided to make every attempt to free him. Accordingly, some uniforms of Republican soldiers were procured and, in the month of June, we left Morbihan – forty in number – under the orders of General LaVendée; but two of these men remained behind ill, on the way. On the eve of St. Jean (St. John’s Eve, Midsummer Eve – Ed.) we presented ourselves at nightfall at the guardpost of the prison, asking to admit a prisoner whom we had brought and whom we said we had arrested in the course of the day; but the man within who came to speak to us told us,



through the grille, that for two days past he had been forbidden to open at night. This was confirmed to us by the soldiers of the guard corps who offered to keep the prisoner until the next day. We refused them, and with reason, since he was one of our men. The garrison being numerous, we did not risk forcing the doors of the prison and we went down to the street, crossing the whole town. The following day, around nine o'clock, we were skirting a small town on our right where the soldiers had gone up on the walls to see us pass. LaVendée pulled out his opera glasses and stopped to examine them.

Suddenly I noticed at the edge of the moor, at the end of the path we were following, thirty-two grenadiers and four mounted gendarmes under the command of a Captain. I informed LaVendée who told me "Take with you half the column by the field to the right. I will follow by the path with the other half and let us lay into them at a run". This was precisely put into action; we did not give them time for recognition. All of them were bayoneted with the exception of two (who took their flight at the beginning of the combat) and of the Captain. This Captain entered the house and wished to close the door when Pierre Vincent Rohu, my cousin, having thrown himself in, held it half-open.

I gave notice that, if they did not open, I would set fire to the place. They yielded and the officer was found in the house with two bayonet wounds, one in the side, the other in his hand. We would indeed have been willing to take care of him in order to exchange him for Sans Pouce (Thumbless), but two days later he died among us. One of our men called Salomon, a carpenter of St. Gonstant, also called the Wrist, was traversed by a bullet, but soon after passage was opened to us.

We marched without halting as far as the Forest of La Nouée, where we arrived at ten o'clock in the evening, still pursued by the different garrisons who were located in this direction. This pursuit was renewed the following morning as far as the parish of St. Jean where they killed one of our men, after which we dispersed to return each one to his own refuge. Guillemot the Thumbless was again taken to Vannes where he was brought to trial and shot on the Garenne to give us a fresh proof of the faith we should have in the amnesties accorded by the Republicans.

The same year, 1798, the European powers and their plenipotentiaries met at Rastadt (?) to make definite arrangements: the Chouans alone remained in

their customary attitude of hostility. The Directory also asked the English Government to hand us over at its discretion, which having been formally refused, they insisted that we should at least be removed far from France. King George the Third of England made us an offer of passage to Canada, assuring each one of us of one hundred guineas before leaving London and another one hundred guineas on arrival in Quebec, with woods to burn and land to reclaim for cultivation at will. Georges asked me to go and see the country in the company of the Count Joseph de Puisaye, who had not lost the good graces of the Cabinet of St. James, and under whose orders we should be placed: Upon my declaring that, according to the account of one of my brothers who had been at Québec and in the St. Laurence Estuary, I knew that the country was covered with woods and that the (? – Ed.) was of good report, but that one had to go one hundred league ( 100 French leagues = 400 km. only- Ed.) beyond, that is to say, to Chapeau Rouge, to work the products of the land. An officer from St. Malo was designated to make the voyage with Puisaye and returned at the end of six months much displeased with Monsieur le Comte de Puisaye who had wished to persuade him to urge Georges to go there with the colony. After that they proposed to us : L’Ile de France which we would have willingly accepted because, in a case where Louis XV<sup>III</sup> should lose hope of again ascending the throne of his ancestors, we would take possession of the country and proclaim him King of the Ile.

While they were thus feeling their way towards ridding themselves of us, we did not know what should be our future. The time was passing and we were coming to the last months of 1799, when two of the French plenipotentiaries sent to the Congress of Rastadt were assassinated on leaving the town. The breaking off of negotiations and also the resumption of hostilities between Austria and the Republic was the result.

From then on there was no further question of sending us far away: They had need of our hands and several days afterwards Georges, finding himself on the Bay of Quiberon on his return from England, had me told to be that evening with several men at a designated place on the coast at Locmariacquer. A Patrol of the Blues arrived unexpectedly, while we were carrying out the unloading of funds which the General was bringing, and as we were fighting with them one of the oxen of the vehicle was wounded . This obliged us to put the boxes of piastres back on board and to carry with us only those with the guineas, which were less bulky and very heavy and which we, each in turn, carried on his shoulders.

We crossed the river of Auray at Kerandré very tired and waited on the Baden side. It was my turn to carry one more box. I let it fall on the heath and it broke and the guineas spilt in the bushes. The General arrived unexpectedly and scolded us. We set ourselves to and gathered together these coins gropingly for it was not yet daylight: nevertheless, when we counted afterwards, only one coin was missing. This was found during the day by Jacques Jouanno de Plessisquer and delivered to the General who declared that he had not thought to have to do with men of such unselfishness.

The reorganisation of our Army took place; the Divisions took the name of Legions; I had command of the second which comprised all the country between the estuary of Hennébon and that of Auray and entitled the Legion of Auray. It extended as far as the bridge of Baud inclusively. They gave me Jacques Eveno as Lieutenant Colonel; my Legion was composed of three battalions of which the first was commanded by Glouannic of Craic; the second by Joachim Fiérmo (?) of Brech; Jean Marie Kermely, employed in the communications service, had the title of Chief of the Third Battalion, which was in reality commanded by Pierre le Carrou of the village of Quellerouse in Plouhinec. It was also then that I was named Chevalier of St. Louis by General Georges.

The exhortation of the General previously made to the youth not to get married was exactly followed and, the Republic not making any levy of men in the départements in revolt, our country found itself full of young people who were vigorous and filled with zeal. My first tour of the parishes in my arrondissement, to announce a fresh taking up of arms, was welcomed with joy by all the populations and, some days afterwards, I received the order to reassemble all my people; nine hundred came to the first call up of which the General made use to take possession of the town of Sarzeau, where he took two cannons. At the same time, Guillemot de Hignan attacked Locminé of which he was not able to take possession, in spite of the greatest efforts. General LaVendée and La Plaigne, known as de Bac (?), were more fortunate at St. Briec whence they brought the horses of the entire cavalry. During this time, I had orders to contain, with what men I had left, the garrisons of Baud, of Landevant, of Locoal, of Auray and of La Cote.

The first day, entering the town of Languedic, close to the presbytery, we found a column of Blues, arriving by the Baud road. It took up battle

formation near the church and, without inquiring how many there were, we threw ourselves upon it and dispersed it in the full sense of the term, for some fled towards Baud, and others towards Hennebont. Returning into the town, Madame Robinec prayed us to enter her house and presented to me her son Louis who took our side from that moment.

I already had two horses and at Languedic I unhorsed a Hussar, a gendarme and an officer, This gave me five horses. The following day at daybreak, I entered the market town of Landévant to surprise its garrison but it had gone ahead and, during the night, it had withdrawn to Port Louis. From there we took the main road in the direction of Auray. I had then about one hundred men and, having arrived at Pont Cranic, we encountered the garrison of Locoal which had passed the night at Auray and was going to Hennebont. The Hussar unhorsed at Languidec, having protested that his intention was to remain with us, was given back his musketoone but, when the battle was engaged, he fired on me from behind and from so close that I was stunned from the blow. He fled without me being able to arrest him, for it was at the moment when I with my four horsemen was launching myself into the middle of the enemy column. They finished by ceding us the ground and returning to Auray to seek reinforcements. Jean Louis de Bourdieu du Reclus (at that time Captain of Brech) and Pierre Vincent Rohu distinguished themselves in this affair and the latter had his horse killed under him.

Three hours afterwards, we stopped at the village of Galane in Brech. There, we were attacked by the same men reinforced by the National Guard from Auray. Tired as we were, not having slept the previous night, we took the decision to retreat to prevent our men from dispersing from us. I placed Louis Josselin of the market town of Pluvigner at the head of my little column and, enjoining him to run with all his might towards the Chateau of Keranic, I held back in order to show the rest the way to follow. We disappeared in an instant. It was there that Jaques Drian of Locmariacquer was shot through by a bullet near the heart. He is still living in 1848.

During this time, Coriton, Jean Joseph le Lanié and Jean Bouard were surprised by a patrol of Blues and Coriton, who was steering the boat, was shot through the arm. The General, returning from his expedition to Sarzeau, ordered me to remain at Pluvigner with my Legion, where the young people of the town of Auary, commanded by M. Boran, came to join

me as well as fifty Hussars of the Garrison of Hennebont. This took place towards the end of December.

The Army concentrated itself in the parish of Plaudren and the surrounding area. On my way to the camp, I passed the town of Grand Champ where Le Mercier, the ex-member of the Council, was standing on the public road counting us and was writing to the Republican General commanding at Vannes that Rohu had passed there with about a thousand men. The General then delivered this letter to General Georges who had Le Mercier shot for this deed and for others which had been reported to him before. (It was not unusual that individual Republican Military were sympathetic to the Chouans. Ed.)

The entire army then received the order to present itself on the coasts between La Biliere and Plenerff to receive arms, munitions and funds. During our night march, hearing the sound of sabots (wooden shoes, clogs – Ed.) nearby, I asked to know who was making this noise and was told that it was M. Philippe, Parish Priest of Locmaiaquer, who was walking barefoot in his sabots. Dismounting immediately from my horse, I requested him to mount it but, while thanking me, he went off and I lost sight of him. The night was however so severe that, during the halt we made before daylight, two of our men died of the cold. At the coast, supported by imposing forces, I busied myself in the landing operations, while LaVendée with two thousand men protected the march of the convoy.

General Bonté, having come out from Vannes with artillery, came to attack us before we could arrive at Plaudren and placed himself in battle array on the heath. We deployed in a fairly extended line to prevent him from interfering with the progress of our vehicles. Guillemot de Bignan, who formed to our left, had to sustain several charges and Boujoly of Rennes, with his company of Grenadiers, maintained his position in the centre in spite of the efforts of the enemy. The right, where I was, had its back to a small wood near the village of Kergo, which hindered Bonté from knowing my strength. He contented himself with firing at us several rounds of cannonballs and grape-shot, when LaVendée sent the Count of St. Hilaire, his aide-de-camp, to tell me to retire from this position and follow the convoy. At the same instant, Bonté was rallying his people and disappearing on the road to Vannes. That took place because of General Georges who, hearing from the coast the sound of cannon fire, came running to defend the convoy, but arrived too late to cut off the retreat of the

Republicans. The unloading was carried out without hindrance and the different convoys went their way without being otherwise disturbed.

Several generals of the Royalist armies then came to take their share of the newly landed funds, arms and munitions, among whom the General introduced me to M. Bourmont. He was the one whom Georges held in the highest regard and in whom he had the greatest confidence.

In the first days of January 1800, four thousand of the garrison of Vannes came to Grand Champ to stock up on grain., They had their centre at Ponterloc on the main road, their left at Locquetter and their right at Locmaria. General Georges, seeing the whole of the garrison of Vannes in the countryside, conceived the project of fighting it to prevent them from re-entering the town. Consequently, he came with four Legions to place himself between Vannes and the Blues. Guillemot de Bignan was keeping the right of our army, my Legion and that of Vannes were in the centre, De Sol de Grisolle was to form the left; but, having received en route letters which announced the pacification of LaVendée, he did not wish to help. (La Vendée was a veteran of the Vendéean uprising against the Republic, hence his nickname and, perhaps, his feeling bound to observe the terms of the surrender of the Vendéans to the Directory of the First Republic - Ed.) He remained all day a spectator of our efforts. Gomez, a major of Guillemot's Legion, was placed with nine hundred men at Camezon on the rear of the enemy.

The Count of Saint Hilaire, at the head of twelve hundred Grenadiers, arrived before day on the main road. He encountered the grain convoy of the Blues who were moving towards Vannes and, in the darkness, he took the convoy for the entire army, attacked it and took possession. He still believed that the army was fleeing before him, as far as the outskirts of Vannes. That hindered him from being with us on the battle field, where his Grenadiers would have been so useful to us. Guillemot also, in his night march, encountered the enemy at the market town of Locquettar, fought it to the utmost and, of a single company, he killed forty and took forty-two; but it was not yet daybreak and he could not be effectively supported by his battalions who lost their way. He was obliged to yield. I saw him emerging from this *melée* and he appeared very angry.

I arrived by day in the centre, my previously designated battle position. Two cannons had just been placed as a battery. They were commanded by two

officers who had come out from the port of Lorient, one of whom came to ask me if I believed that our cannonballs had carried as far as the place where we saw the foe, and to whom I replied that, to assure ourselves, he had only to fire a shot. It was M. Breche, whom I was seeing for the first time, and who is to-day Maréchal de camp. M. Alano, chaplain of my Legion, gave the Benediction and, on the order of the General, I dismounted and advanced to the combat, directing my first battalion through the fields to the right of the main road and my second to the left. Hermily, as a simple volunteer, because his battalion was not there, appeared for an instant opposite me.

Arrived within range of the enemy, from whom we were separated only by a ditch, I heard a Blue officer give the command and I made a sign to my men to lower their heads. At this cry of "Fire!", I cried "Forward!" and, clearing the ditch, we found ourselves in the midst of the enemy who, not having had the time to reload their weapons, were thrown into such a rout that, an instant afterwards, I saw the main road covered with those who were fleeing before us. If Gomer had come at this moment against these fugitives, they might have been obliged to yield or to throw themselves into the marshes of Grand Champ. Near the inn, situated on this road, I was stopped by two companies marching against me. My battalion on the right was scattered in the pursuit. I was crossing the road to take the one on the left but it was not as far advanced as we and, while I was looking for it, the Blues who were still marching obliged us to return to our first position where we remained throughout the day until our adversaries, having received reinforcements, came to open themselves a passage towards Vannes.

The cavalry presented itself first, behind which we crossed from left to right of the road, the artillery very closely following, as well as the confounded infantry en masse. Having arrived on the heath, our Hussars, who had deserted from Hennebont, fought relentlessly against their former comrades; they knew each other and were heard provoking each other and calling one another by their names. Our men, having marched all the previous night, were so tired that we could not long pursue the enemy. We left four hundred dead on the battle field and, at the roll call; on the following day at Vannes, there were missing nine hundred of the Blues. Our General, when sending back the prisoners, gave each of them an écu of three pounds and some vehicles for those who were wounded.

General Bonaparte, having returned from Egypt to France in October 1799, overthrew the Directory, became head of the Republic under the name of First Consul and, perceiving that his government would only consolidate its position insofar as it had the support of religion, he thought to take the clergy under his protection. Abbot Bernier, he whom Bonaparte called the Sneak Bernier, without waiting for the decision of the emigré bishops, betook himself to Paris to make arrangements in this regard. The First Consul charged the General Hédouville, who was his Commander in Brittany, to publish a general amnesty in the province. It was promised that we would go to treat with Bonaparte. Some time after, he dismissed the Hussars, giving each of them a hundred piastres and they were to rejoin their men at Locminé

I returned to take up my quarters at the market town of Pluvigner. There I remained all the time necessary at the home of one Le Gougue of Crach, payments officer of my Legion, calculating the tokens and the outstanding balance, the expense of our campaign, after which the Army was disbanded. (The Chouans were often hampered for want of finance and issued 'tokens'-promissory notes-to those who were providing supplies to them on credit. Ed.) A commission of five members was formed in each Legion, of whom two indicated the duplicate supply vouchers which were signed by the three others and handed to each one, in replacement of the real supply vouchers which had been reimbursed to him. The total of all these vouchers had to approach two million francs in order to compensate the country for all these sacrifices which it had made. We needed to obtain from the First Consul the reimbursement of this sum, if an arrangement became possible between the two parties. The sequel proved to us that this could not be done.

Bonaparte was willing enough to treat with Georges in order to disgrace him if he could, but not for the re-establishment of legitimacy. Several of these duplicate supply vouchers still exist in the families and some wished to re-validate them at the time of the Restoration. Le Loreux, King's Commissar for the Royal Army of Morbihan, only left the country after the departure of Georges for Paris. I have to affirm that we could only praise the good conduct of M. Le Loreux during his stay among us and the testimonies of esteem which he has since given to me in particular.



## CHAPTER 4

Several young people who formed part of the army such as Chouarne de Languidie, Le Gougnée and Le Gouhannie of Crach, Philippe Jorby of Locmariaquer, (name unclear – Ed.), and Guhur of Pluvigner, whose studies had been interrupted by the dissolution of the College of Vannes in 1791, returned to their studies and were ordained priests. Le Glouhannie, the head of my first battalion, died as Rector at Bade. Le Gougnée, Rector at Plouharnel, and Jorby, Rector at Arzon. All these gentlemen were attached to the armed services beyond the writ of my Legion, apart from Le Glouhannie, Pierre Alano, chaplain of my Legion, who died and (word unclear – Ed.) of the Canton at Quibéron.

The General, not being able to find himself in accord with Bonaparte, escaped from the hands of this usurper, went over to England and returned the following autumn to Morbihan where he found his officers and many of the people still ready to engage in new battles, rejecting all arrangements with a government whose intentions appeared so much more suspect in that there was no question either of returning the King to his rights or of consulting the Catholic Bishops in religious affairs.

General Mercier, on a mission with which he was entrusted for the Cotes du Nord, was met and killed by the Blues. On that occasion and in speaking of this death I saw great tears fall from the eyes of Georges for these were two friends whom death alone could separate.

Georges did not see any more expeditious means of combating Bonaparte than fighting him hand to hand. To us, DeBar, Robinot de St. Régent, de Erecasson, and myself, he explained that he needed one of us to do an errand in Paris. De St. Régent, as the most senior ranking of the officers present, claimed the right to have preference. The General, in accepting the proposal, said to him: "I shall give you the means to reach the Capital and there you will make contact with persons whom I shall indicate to you and with whom you will come to an understanding for the purchase of the number of horses, uniforms and arms which I shall indicate to you and of which I shall wish to make use later."

When we learnt that the tiles of the roofs had fallen on the carriage of the First Consul (Napoleon – Ed.), following the explosion of the home-made device, he said to us: "it is a truly impulsive act of de St. Régent. He had

wanted to come to tell us how he had single-handedly done away with a man who had caused us so much trouble. He has upset my plan. Besides, we are not in a position to act.”

(FOOTNOTE) Fragment of letter written on 29<sup>TH</sup> December, 1800

(Two lines unclear – Ed.)

“I have not yet received anything, alas. This fortnight has passed. Events are progressing in a frightening manner. If the misfortunes continue, I do not know what will become of us all; in you alone is our confidence and our hope. Your friends recall themselves to your memory and commend their fate to you. Adieu, sincere friend Gedio, we await by every post good news”.

Saint Régent did not die instantly. He was only burnt by the explosion of his powder keg, to which he had fitted a fuse which did not communicate the fire quickly enough to the powder. He went out by an alley to blow upon it. He was even able to withdraw and it was the doctor who treated him who denounced him to the police. Under his pillow was found a letter addressed to Georges.

After the discovery of this unfortunate letter, Bonaparte waged war to the knife against us. Thirty thousand men destined for St. Domingue were sent into Brittany, while awaiting their embarkment, and pursued us unceasingly. Bonaparte, continuing the plan of consolidating the government of which he had taken control, had proposed a Concordat to His Holiness Pius VII who, on the advice of several of the cardinals and despite the contrary advice of the large majority of the Bishops, entered into an arrangement with this man (Napoleon – Ed.)who, five years previously, had contributed to the chasing of Pope Pius VI from the capital of the Christian world and who, two years before, had been calling himself a Mohammedan in Egypt. This condescension of the Holy Father suggested to him the idea of having himself crowned by the Sovereign Pontiff who, hesitating to proceed to France for fear of being obliged against his will to communicate with the intruding and schismatic Bishops of the revolutionaries of that country, transmitted his reasons for refusal to Paris; but the Consul hastened to give the most positive assurances that all his fears and apprehensions were ill-founded.

The proposition was accepted. Bonaparte, to underline the extreme precautions and security which he would take, began by abducting from a

foreign soil the Duke of Enghien, the little son of the Prince of Condé, and having him shot in the ditches of Vincennes without having any other crime to impute to him than being born of the blood of our legitimate Kings. He also had incarcerated all the men known to have fought to obtain the re-establishment of the Catholic religion. The Pope will thus come to France and, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1802, he will pour the holy oil on the forehead of the hypocrite, who will not delay to show his true nature and finish by persecuting the obliging Pontiff.

Georges, having returned to England, had written to me before leaving, that soon he would be in our midst. But, alas! he was leaving us never to see us again. Georges, the greatest man who was ever born in Brittany, the only confidence of the inhabitants of this province. He who sustained them in their tribulations during the persecution of the great Revolution, leaves this country to apply his efforts elsewhere. It is not because he doubts the attachment of his country to himself, or to the cause which he upholds. It is because he foresees that all the Breton blood spilt for the re-establishment of legitimacy and religion would not suffice to halt the terrible warrior who had taken power and his numerous armies, to which the powers bow respectfully. Bonaparte had just won the Battle of Marengo.

He knew that Bonaparte, in offering the Holy Father his co-operation in the re-establishment of Catholic worship in France, only had in view to add a greater force to his power by bringing the people to submit to his despotism and to become the passive instruments of his wishes. Georges wished to get near this great Captain and, to avoid the bloodshed of others, he wished to fight him face to face. He therefore returned to the plan for which he had committed the preparations to Robinot de St. Régent. He went to Paris in order to direct everything himself.

What tears aroused by friendship and gratitude have flowed from the eyes of the Breton Royalists since the departure of their General ! How they have delighted in recounting the high qualities of this great man! With what admiration they spoke and still speak of his morality, his goodness, his unselfishness, his obliging character. His habits were of an exemplary purity and his heart prompted him to share all with the companions of his labours. Thirty thousand francs of which Admiral Warren made him a gift were used by him in full to relieve the miseries and repair the losses suffered by his partisans. He made no distinction between his superior officers and himself: he treated them as comrades and shared with them even his shirts. He knew

at least three quarters of the men of the country, and spoke to them with great amiability. He enquired about their health and their business coming promptly to the help of those who were in need. I can affirm that since my separation from Georges until to-day, the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1848, not a day has passed that his remembrance has not renewed itself in my memory and not a single night that I have not had a dream in my sleep without this friend being the subject – so great was the impression that he made on me.

In the year 1800 the General, returning from England, brought with him a writ of Monseigneur Amelot, Bishop of Vannes, living as a refugee in London, in which this prelate laid down the obligation of subjects to be faithful to their legitimate Sovereign, relying for proof of his assertion on various passages of the Holy Scriptures, of the Fathers and of the Councils. I recalled the Fourth Council of Toledo which had excommunicated whosoever would violate his oath of loyalty or would hinder the King from reigning or would encroach upon the supreme rank of royalty. The Sixth Council of the same town declares stricken by God, with the greatest anathema, him who deprives the King of the administration of the kingdom and interferes in the governing of the state. He cites Bassuet and Pius VI, touching the obedience due to legitimate princes. “This new form of government bears on its face the imprint of iniquity, if only because it excludes the legitimate prince and this hateful sign strikes every attentive eye. It can only constitute a de facto power and not a de jure power. It has only the possession, or rather usurpation; but the sceptre continues to belong to the legitimate prince although the present exercise of authority is in other hands. The legitimate prince continues to preserve his rights although he is still forced to suspend their exercise.”

In consequence, said he, to fulfil my duty as a Bishop and a subject, I declare:

- (1) that my very honoured Lord and rightful King Louis XVIII retains in all his integrity, the rights which come from God to the crown of France.
- (2) that nothing has been able to release the French, his subjects, from the loyalty which they owe to their prince by virtue of the law of God.

Copies of this document were sent to all the Chiefs of the Army and handed over to M. de Kerognan, Vicar General of Mgr. de Amelot, and (word unclear – Ed.) of Sarzeau. This document served to combat for us the

opinions of some priests returning from exile, who had the intention of submitting themselves to the new order of things.

During all our wars we had the good fortune to find a Catholic priest in almost every parish. These elect of the Lord, faithful to the sacred mission of their priesthood, did not fear to expose themselves to persecution and even to death in sharing the tribulations of their flock(s) and they were unsparing in the aid of their ministry. Locmariaquer had M. Philippe; (?) was at Kernillo; Le Guennec at Crach; Jobec at Plomel; Le Bodo at Mendon; Pierre-Marie Alano at Locoal; La Marée at Edeven; Offred at Brech; de Cadenet at Bodréhan and le Coulec at Quibéron. This last, condemned to deportation, died on board the prison ship at Rocheford. Mahéoét was at Pluvigner; Guillemot at Merlevenez; Kerneur and Stephane at Plouhinec; Le Calvé at Languédec and Le Glouahec at Carnac.

Carnac, which had rendered so great and good services to the cause of religion, had the misfortune to possess persons who had the impiety and barbarism to murder in 1800 M. Baron, their Rector, returned from Spain. A freestone cross was erected at the place where the blood of this martyr flowed. This monument to expiate a crime so terrible is situated between the Pont de la Salme and the village of Kervinio to the left of the path which leads to the market town of La Trinité.

All these ministers of the Lord were hidden until 1795, disguised as beggars, living in the crude lodgings of the labourer where the functions of their ministry called them. They had no fine residence and slept on straw in the wood. Since our taking arms, they were able to dress in the same manner as the better-off labourers of the parishes which they served, to attend to their functions in broad daylight, to have a fixed place where they took their meals and another where they retired at night. Their daytime residences were known to all the parishioners and the Baptisms, the First Communion, the Marriages and the other ceremonies of religion took place under our protection in complete safety.

It is true that the parish priest of Plomel was arrested in 1795, and that of Mendon in 1799, but the first was set free by Georges on the Landevant road, and the second was redeemed from the soldiers who had taken him for the sum of 800 francs which the inhabitants paid for him; for these gentlemen, resting themselves wholly on Divine Providence, demanded neither trade nor collection not yet perquisites (surplice fees – Ed.) but lived

solely on the liberality of the faithful. I am going to indicate the persons of each parish in the arrondissement over which my command extended who made the greatest sacrifices to protect and sustain the priests and the Royalists:

These are Pierre Danic of Keriavole; Joseph Erdeven of Kerogel; Jean Louis of Couet-a-Touse; Le Rolle of Kerbois; le Ker of Kermaux; René Baron of Couetquentin; Coriton of Nomanos; Le Bril of Lizo; Corneille Caillou of Poulblaye in Plomel; Le Lamez of St. Sauveur (St. Saviour) in Erdeven; the Eveno family of Belz; Nicolas du Mané Schoarne; Pierre Condon of Kerchire; Guyonvarh of Keroha Mendon; Marc le Vaillant of Kergo; Le Fur of Moustoir Guigner; Le Gohlese of Kerdo in Pluvigner; Jean Marie le Mané of Camord; le Réour of Kergohan; and Peron of Kergallewe in Languidec; Le Gouriff of Ste. Helene; Jean Bernard of Trévelzer; Jacob of Kerzouch; Albin l'Amourec of Le Bourg; Stephan de Perzaille in Merlevenez; Le Gléour de Locohi in Kervignac; Le Carrouer of Quelleroup; the widow Georgine le Brévelec of Kervrézec; Le Kerf of Kercade in Plouhinec; Veronique Rohu; the widow Scolan Jean Le Bihan ("bihan" is Breton for "small" – nickname or surname The Scolan family married twice into the Rohu family in 1600's. See Breton side of Family Tree – Ed.) of the two villages of Locmiquetter (word unclear – Ed.) in Riantec; Pierre Marie Coulec; Vincent Guégan of Quibéron; Youan of Ste. Barbe; Le Person of Kerloguen Plouharnel.

The small amount of funds which the General left me on parting was soon exhausted and I had still several officers who, like myself, could not go home. When we saw that we were going to lack all means of existence, we "decided" to re-enter under the laws of the Government. Le Floch, the magistrat at Auray, was willing enough to register our decision at the prefecture of Morbihan, where the only reply he obtained was that death awaited us wherever they could overtake us. Upon his transmitting this news to us, I requested him to deliver to the prefect an unsealed letter which I presented to him and in which I told this proconsul that, since such was the fate which awaited us, we would henceforth show no quarter to those far and nigh who favoured the Government and that he himself could expect a visit from me before long.

This letter having been read by the pastor, its contents soon became widely known and fright took hold of those who saw themselves as destined to fall beneath our blows. They flocked to the Prefecture and secured the acceptance of our submission. Joseph Le Crom (Breton "kromm" = "bent"

– Ed.) had been detained before this time and when I was asked to hand over the munitions which I possessed, I also asked that Le Crom should be set at liberty. This was granted. I then had transported to Auray three cartloads consisting of shoes, gaiters and ninety-six barrels of powder which were in the cache. This done, they left me in peace for some time but, one part of my officers not having consented to present themselves to the authorities, they came to tell me that I must choose between detention and exile and, if I chose the former option, I would not be able to go to England or any other kingdom in Europe but only to India or to America. My decision was soon taken and I returned to my invisibility.

While I was thus in hiding, Le Milloch of Hennebont, passing through Ste. Helene to rejoin those who were disposed to go over to England, tried to prevail on me to make me to take the same decision. He appeared so surprised that I was not making up my mind to accompany him, that I was obliged to reveal the reason for it. So I told him that the General, in his last letter, had revealed to me the general officer to whom I should address myself, during his absence, and had instructed me to go to see him often and to carry out whatever he ordered me. In conformity to this prescription, I was transported before the officer indicated who, on seeing me arrive, began by asking me what I wanted and ended his greeting by telling me that I had gone there to eat his bread. Le Milloch, on hearing this, did not insist. He could see that I could not reasonably place myself under the orders of a man who had so ill received me.

At the end of four months, tired with this position, I again requested Le Floch to carry a letter to the prefecture, in which I said that I was consenting to banish myself to any town whatever of the Kingdom; but that my means did not suffice for leaving France. The Prefect responded to me that if I wished to go to Nantes, for example, without returning to Morbihon, he would undertake to exempt me from expense. I betook myself to Vannes, where a passport was issued to me and a promise was made to recall me soon. In fact, after seven months, I was permitted to return to the département and directed to reside at Auray. During my stay at Nantes, I was obliged to present myself twice a day at the police office in the Town Hall and, on my return to Auray, I was subject to the same obligation. I was too well known at Auray for them not to recall that I had formerly served in the Navy. The Sub-Commissioner gave me the order to serve at the Port of Lorient, where I was embarked on Gunboat No. 71, under Captain Allard who put me in charge of the money. This task obliged me frequently to go

to him and one day, as I was returning on board, the notion came to me to go up to M. de Mormoran, Commissar in Chief of the armaments, to whom I frankly explained my position and the estrangement that I felt towards the Navy. Following his advice, I requested from the Auray office a certificate recording that I had long abandoned this speciality and he was quite willing to use it to discharge me.

I returned to Auray, where the Brothers Glain, notaries, had the kindness to give me deeds to copy and to take me with them both to survey and to value. In a short time I became a valuer and surveyor. Bonnaldunaire of this town was willing to excuse me the necessity of going every day to the Town Hall, requiring only that each Saturday I should give as many signatures as there are days in the week. One day, a young man in peasant clothing from Bignan or St. Jean came into my house and asked to speak to me in private. He told me that General Georges was at Paris and was requesting me to go there also. I did not know the man who was speaking to me and, fearing to have dealings with a traitor, I let him go without promising him anything. Some months after – it was at the beginning of March – the gendarmes arrested me and put me in prison at Auray. They were drawing up my committal to jail when, on the warning of my wife, Messrs. Bonnaldunaire and Le Floch intervened, cancelled the committal, and allowed me to return home. Two days after I was once more arrested and brought to Vannes and imprisoned at the tower. The following day a gendarme came to take me and bring me to the Prefecture. Prefect Julien only said to me these words: “Since it is only that, you may go off home.”

So I returned to Auray and the following day, 25<sup>th</sup> of March, being alone in my house and even still in bed, two gendarmes, on the order of the Prefect, came to inform me that a squadron chief of the Consul’s Guard, specially despatched from Paris, had arrived at Vannes with the express order to have me arrested. I was thus arrested and brought to the prison at Vannes. The gendarmes this time took possession of my Certificate of Chevalier of St. Louis and the latest letter from Georges. I was shut in a room full of political prisoners, all sleeping on the floor, among them M. Blouet, an apothecary of Vannes who had caused to be brought for himself a mattress and a feather bed with sheets and blankets, and who had the kindness to give me a place next to him. Also there was Jean-Marie Trébur of Vannes, my former fellow pupil, a battalion head in the Royal Army, as well as the young man who had informed me of the presence of Georges at Paris. It was also there that Blouet recounted to me that Querelle Sarzeau, his



brother-in-law, having come to Paris with the General, had written to him that things were going well, that he would tell him everything and that he had the hope to see him before long. Blouet had this letter in his waistcoat pocket when, while he was walking with a widow of the Rue, whom he was courting, the latter took it from him without his noticing and, having read it, brought it to the Prefect who transmitted it promptly to Paris and the arrest of Querelle took place. It is known that it is this Querelle who, having been condemned to death, denounced to the police not only the presence of Georges at Paris but even all that he knew of the men who had followed him there and of the business with which he was dealing in that city.

After thirty-four days stay in Vannes prison, Trébur and I were taken out and brought by three gendarmes as far as Paris and lodged, myself at the Prison of L'Abbaye, and Trébur, who was ill, at the conciergerie prison. On arrival, I was placed in solitary confinement which was only lifted after 77 days. I had a bad bed and a chair for which I paid fifteen francs every fortnight and always in advance. The cell was so small that there was only room for the chair between the door, which opened outwards, and the foot of the bed. I received light through an opening made about nine feet (nine "pied de Paris" = 9 feet 8 inches Imperial measure or 2.74m. – Ed.) above the floor and equipped with four large crossed iron bars. During this time General Moreau, arrested at the same time as Georges, was brought to trial. On the day when they should pronounce on his fate, the officer who was in command of the prison guard had all the detainees come down to the parlour and told us that, if Le Moreau was condemned to death, he would beg for the help of our arms so that the doors of all Paris state prisons would be opened and that the town should be put to fire and blood. Several men applauded at the proposition, all were happy to obtain their liberty, but the Imperial Government by exiling Moreau to America rendered all these measures unnecessary.

After the execution of General Georges and the departure of Moreau for exile, we were brought from the Abbaye to the Temple Tower. They made us get into a cab and M. the Count of Strasbourg, frightened at the sight of the soldiers who were escorting us, prayed me to take my place beside him and thus we arrived at our destination. I found there my friend Trébur and the General De Sol de Grisolles. Trébur had me climb 75 steps to get to the room where he was lodged with a German Colonel and Captain of Cavalry.

It was the room where the unhappy Louis XVI had been detained. The portrait of the martyr King was placed on the wallpaper in several places of the apartment and the floor was still all red with the blood of a young man who, not receiving the news that he wished of his father, had committed suicide with his razor.

I settled in with these gentlemen, well persuaded that there was no spy among them, but this German Colonel was the aide de camp of the Duke of Enghien – the very same man who had betrayed the Prince - who was only in prison for appearances sake and to avoid suspicion of the crime which he had committed. We did not then know anything of his treason which General de Sol only revealed to me at the Restoration – but what could he learn from us? In our position, we were not hatching any plot against the Government.

The Temple Tower was nothing else but an ancient fortress surrounded by a vast courtyard, to arrive at which there were another three courtyards to cross. The enclosing walls were very high and the doors were guarded by Grenadiers of the Guard. We could walk all day in the inner courtyard and communicate with the other persons, among whom were priests arrested with the Duc d'Enghien; a Russian Ambassador; two heads of Legation; one of whom, M. de Vernique, a French emigré and naturalised Russian, had been arrested at Rome. There were also some Generals; some Colonels - some legitimist Royalist and others Republican. Among the priests was l'Abbé David who had followed General Moreau in all his campaigns.

Every day a boy came with a bag of wholemeal loaves, weighing about two pounds each, of which we could partake freely. At mid-day we had soup with a slice of boiled beef. In the evening we received a kind of ragout made with vegetables which some ladies, detained like us, prepared - but in another prison. Each one of us had his bed and his chair. We were not more than four in each room: Our sheets were changed every month and shirts were available each Saturday for those who wished to take them. Trébur and myself had our underclothes laundered at Versailles due to the kindness of a young woman (next word unclear – Ed.), who arranged to have them taken every week and given to a Breton girl whom she had in her service. At the top of the house above us were the most compromised persons and every night, since the doors were made of iron, we heard the frightening noise which they made in opening and closing with a horrible

din, when these unfortunates were taken either to judgement or to be executed.

This German Colonel, whom I mentioned, spoke French but he did not write it: it was I who composed his letters when he made use of our language. His wife was said to be a relation of the King of Bavaria, the only potentate who had come to Bonaparte's coronation. When she came to look for the release of her husband, noticing that I was not looking very pleased, she told me to take courage and that on the next day she would mention me to her cousin the King of Bavaria who, in turn, would speak to His Majesty the Emperor (Napoleon – Ed.) in order to obtain my liberty. I thanked her but did not count on her promise. The following day, M. Le Comte de Toulouse Lautrec was given his liberty and exiled to Germany. The same day we read in the newspapers that the gates of the Temple Tower were open and all the prisoners free. Three days later they came to look for me to go to the police, where I received a passport to return to my Département. During my stay at the Temple I occupied myself by training my hand (i.e. improving my handwriting – Ed.). The Count of Toulouse had the kindness to give me lessons which was very useful to me subsequently for, having neither estate nor fortune, I could then make use of my handwriting to give lessons.

On my return to Auray, still under police surveillance, I once more took up my poor estate of copyist, valuer and surveyor. The persecutions which I experienced on the part of the usurping Government made me more loved by the legitimist people and I did not lack work: they came to me from all parts and in a single year I had up to 102 declarations of accounts (audits – Ed.) to do, along with twelve financial forecasts.

In 1801, I was at last permitted to return to Plouharnel, my birthplace, and to value my small properties which had long been abandoned, for my mother and my sisters were also obliged to flee to elude the police searches. They were successively obliged to take refuge with Le Lamer at St. Sauveur in Erdeven: from thence to the house of Pierre Le Lamer at Kerlescanton in Carnac, fleeing on to Le Floch at Kerlenhuint in Crach: from there to Plumergot and finally to Le Gouriff's at Ste.Helene, all the time dressing themselves according to the parishes where they were living, so that they would not be suspected of being from the Coast.

(Breton Women traditionally wear highly ornate costumes – nowadays only on special festivals – which vary greatly from one area to another. We have

previously seen that, after the landing at the Bay of Quiberon, many people had to flee that coastal area; - Ed.)

Before leaving Auray, there arrived in this town a certain Arteaud (spelt "Arbaud" in last paragraph of this chapter – Ed.) Jean-Francois, a wine merchant of the commune of Rézé on the left bank of the Loire, close to the bridges of Nantes. This man, having studied in the same class as myself in the college at Vannes and having been since April in correspondence between the English squadron and our Army, asked about my place of residence and came to find me.

The nature of his business brought him to ask me why I did not follow the same course and, upon my replying that I lacked money, he said that need not stop me: he would send me some wines and whiskey from Nantes and I could pay him when I had sold them. This proposition was accepted with gratitude.

My mother had died the previous year. Vincent Michel, my elder brother had returned to France. Like all the other emigrés, he was arrested and put in prison in the Cotes du Nord, because he had been denounced as having fulfilled the function of Admiral under the orders of His Royal Highness "Monsieur" at the l'Île d'Yeu. Bonaventure Marie, since the return of Hoche to Quiberon, had been in England to make available his expertise to the English Admiral. He married in England, where he died during the Restoration, leaving four children: two boys and two girls. (I verified a 5<sup>th</sup> child who died in infancy – Ed.). Joseph, the second youngest, having served in the Royal Army with the rank of Warrant-Officer Major, was taken and imprisoned in Vannes. The Republicans embarked him on the vessel l'Algesiras and he found himself at the Battle of Trafalgar where his vessel was taken by the English, re-taken by the crew, and brought to Cadiz. At the time of the declaration of war between France and Spain, he was made prisoner by the Spaniards and sent to one of the Canaries where he remained until the Restoration. In 1812, after the retreat (Napoleon's. Ed.) from Moscow, I was staying with Arbaud, my wine merchant, who was at that time still living. We were invited to a dinner at Marguillier where M. le Comte de Rézé, newly arrived from Russia, learned what rank I had occupied in the Royal Army. He told us that he had been charged with announcing to the partisans of legitimacy that Louis XVIII would soon come to France and he requested me to spread this news to my country.

## CHAPTER 5

At last we arrived in 1814 and believed that we were going to enjoy a better future. Being at Quibéron one day on my business affairs, I met again Joseph Lainé, one of my former captains who was returning from England, where he had spent the twelve years elapsed since my return under the orders of the Imperial Government. What joy we felt on finding each other thus after so long a separation! Lainé having informed me that Messrs. Breche and Joseph Cadoudal were at Paris, I decided to go there to find them and, to save money, I went there on foot. (approx.350 miles ! Ed.) These gentlemen gave me the address of General De Sol de Grisolle who at last was coming out of the dungeons of the usurper, where he had been since 1803. He was so changed that I had great difficulty in recognising him. He could see almost nothing and I was obliged to tell him my name. De Sol continually urged me to return to Morbihan where, he said, they were all going to come forthwith.

I returned to my occupation and I was at Quibéron to take an oath for some sharing of quality buildings (meaning unclear – Ed.) when the news arrived of the return of Bonaparte to France. (Note : Napoleon had escaped from the island of Elba where the European Allies had exiled him. So began ‘The Hundred Days’ during which France again rallied to Napoleon. It all ended at the Battle of Waterloo, following which Napoleon was again exiled, this time o the distant island of St.Helena where he eventually died. France reinstated the Bourbon royal house in the person of Louis 18<sup>th</sup>. Ed.) At dinner we spoke much of Npoleon’s return, we drank copiously and, as we passed by the fort while returning home, the commandant approached us and was questioning us to know what each of us thought of this return which he had not been expecting. I invited him to come in with us into the canteen so that we could talk of it more at our ease.

We had hardly entered when a young officer, who had come from Belle Isle, came in as well and, hearing us talk long and loud, he asked the commandant if there was any danger for him in going from there to Port Louis. Without awaiting the response of this latter, I got up and, in the most reassuring manner, I said to this young man that he could travel in complete safety and that I would be responsible to see that no harm would happen to him en route. The reassuring tone which I assumed in expressing myself made all present think that I was more informed than they on what was happening in the country. The conversation ceased and we separated.

On my return home it was growing dark and I left immediately to get Yves Danic, who accompanied me to the rendezvous that Monsieur Joseph Cadoudal had given me in advance for that night. It was decided that I should go to find M. Josse, a lawyer at Lorient and Commander of the National Guard of that town to suggest to him that he should not go out against us with the citizens' militia and to assure him that our party would be duly grateful later on. The job was a ticklish one, because this gentleman was attached to the revolution.

However, two days later, early in the morning, I was ushered in to the presence of Josse, who was still in bed. Without preamble, I declared to him that we were in arms and that M. Cadoudal was sending me to propose giving him the assurance of which I have spoken. At this declaration he stared for some time as though astonished and not knowing what to reply. At last he said to me "How is it, Rohu, that you are still with those people?" "With whom do you expect me to be?" I answered him. "But how did you enter here and how will you leave Lorient?" he added. "By the gate, as usual" I replied and, believing that he had the intention of having me arrested, I said to him: "Moreover, M. Josse, if you think there is any danger for me, I think you will have the kindness to put me outside the gate." I do not know what was passing in his mind at this moment but, in the end, he said to me: "Tell M. Cadoudal that I shall defend the walls of this town and that I will not go out of it. I think that you can go out without me accompanying you. Go away!"

I left the town without anyone appearing to pay attention to me. I went by my house to take what was needed to enter upon a campaign and, that evening, I was at the mound of Locmaria in Ploermel before M. Cadoudal to whom I rendered an account on my mission.

At this taking up again of arms, it was M. Cadoudal who reorganised the Legion which I had commanded in the first wars. He had armed a core group at the head of which he launched the first attack, which served as a call to arms for all the Loyalist volunteers. He was Georges' brother, aged only thirty years, whereas Georges had been forty four.

The name of Cadoudal excited more widespread interest than that of Rohu and, because no ambition had sprung up in my heart, apart from that of fortune and that of honour, I put myself under the command of the brother of

my former General, Georges, whose memory was and will always be so dear to me. I declare that I have not had cause to repent of it, because we campaigned like two friends and in such accord that never one of us addressed a disagreeable word to the other. I was not alone in showing such devotion: M. le Comte de Penhouet, captain of a vessel, which gave him the rank of Colonel, also campaigned as Lieutenant Colonel under the orders of the Chevalier of Sécillon.

The Legion was composed, as previously, of three battalions, the first of which was commanded by M. Lainé of Crach and four parish captains: Le Moustre of Auray; Pierre Le Gallo of Crach; Le Bouédec of Locmariaquer; Jean Francois Le Rouzic and Louis Red of Carnac; Pierre Genom of Plouharnel; Collet of Quibéron; Squirio a lawyer of Erdeven; Le Maur of Belz; Jean Le Povedec of Mendon; Le Glouahec of Plomel. To this battalion was attached a company of Grenadiers, commanded by Yves Danic of Keriavel in Carnac: who had Corneille Erdeven of Kerogel as Lieutenant. The second battalion was commanded by Charles Le Heillon of Pluvigner: having as captains Paul Aurry and (illegible – Ed.) Le Moigné of Pluvigner, Albin Jouannic son of the Mayor of Camors, Le Réour of Languidic, Martin Borgne de Landevant, Le Galloudec of Landaul, Louis Le Borck of Brech. The third battalion, had for head M. de Langle of Hennebont who was killed in the Battle of Auray and had to be replaced by Julien Mouistral also of Hennebont. It had for captains Le Lan de Riantec, Phillippe Jubin fo Ste. Helene, Francois Le Floch of Nostang, Vincent Le Hirgouannic of Kervignac, Toussaint Jacob of Morlaveno, Vincent le Quer of Plouhinec, Jean Marie Cougoulat of Hennebont.

This time the revolutionaries could not say that we were roused to fanaticism by clergy, because a circular from the ecclesiastical superiors of the diocese said that there was nothing new under the sun and exhorted the parish priests to preach obedience to the usurper who had just broken his proclamation. The inhabitants of the countryside rose en masse and put to shame those who attempted to hold them back. The military, sent back to their homes the previous year, refused to respond to the appeal which was made to them by the usurper and joined our ranks, or rendered great service in giving the example of respect for discipline or in serving as instructors of the recruits.

The day of my meeting with M. Cadoudal, he had been at Étrel to disarm the customs officers, had passed through Plouharnel at the market town of

Carnac, and had continued on his way as far as La Trinité where the the Laveso, an armed vessel commanded by Allemon of Port Louis, was in dry dock. Patrolling outside, M. Cadoudal could have been taken and killed if the sailors had yet caught up with our men, tired as they were, from such a long run. He then rushed them on to the plateau of Locmaria.

Instead of being exposed to the cold of the night, which could have been hard for them, we had our men enter the houses and, before daybreak, we left the height where we could have been denounced during the night and were attacked in the morning by the garrisons of Quiberon, Vannes and Lorient. Having retired in the direction of St. Méen, we stopped under arms until they had lit up the country around us (meaning unclear – Ed.). Around eight o'clock, we entered Auray, M. Cadoudal near the barracks of St. Esprit and myself by the Landevant road. The gendarmes were disarmed, we had food given to our soldiers and we went to spend the night at Brech.

The following day we met Le Chréis and Gambert and we knew at the same time that the Garde Nationale of Lorient had arrived at Auray. It was resolved to attack it in the night by the Landevant and Pluvigner road, in the hope of causing it to leave by the road for Vannes where General De Sol de Grisolles had taken up position to greet it in his cunning way. However it had taken the initiative and, in its impatience to make our acquaintance, it had gone around by Pont Salle and Meridadec, heading for Ste. Anne, where we were busy making cartridges and distributing cider to our soldiers. As soon as it was announced, we took arms and marched to meet it. We had few good guns and still less ammunition and we were dealing with men provided with all that they needed. Having arrived at a small gorse bush near the Inn of the Cheval Blanc (= the White Horse Inn – Ed.) we received a discharge which wounded four of our men, among whom was Jean Cougoulat, Lieutenant of the Company of Mendon.

Immediately, crying "Forward!", we ran as far as the entry of the path where the enemy were, covered by high ditches at the entrance of this path on the right. There was no way to enter the field. It was there I remained during the whole action, preventing the Blues from advancing and allowing men to get to M. Cadoudal who was skirting a field of rye to the right, to make for their rear. As soon as the gunfire was heard on that side, their rout became complete. They had several wounded in the position where we had halted them and among them was Colombet, a customs officer of Auray, and a gendarme of the Plouharnel brigade. Pierre, a solicitor of Lorient, was killed



there as well as a man in peasant dress, who was probably acting as their guide. The runaways passed under the fire of Monsieur Cadoudal and the commander-in-chief Josse, lying on his horse, received a bullet in the bottom of the shoulder. Jégado, also a solicitor at Lorient, who had only come in spite of himself, received a wound in the stomach. They were made prisoners along with a number of others. We had no-one killed and none wounded other than the four I have mentioned.

During the pursuit I met Josse stopped on the side of the path and, upon my testifying to my astonishment at finding him there after his promise to me not to go out of Lorient, he began to implore grace, telling me “You know, Monsieur, that I have children who will be unhappy.” He was expecting to be shot. In order to comfort him and to console him, I told him that we were not fighting a war to the knife. Continuing to pursue, I told M. Cadoudal: “There’s Josse.”, for this latter was known to me alone. As I went off, I heard the first reproach the latter that he had broken his word which he had given two days previously. After this affair, we brought all the prisoners to Ste. Anne. We had all the doctors and surgeons of Auray dress the injuries of all the wounded impartially and treated those in good health to a fine meal at the Hotel du Lion d’Or. Then we let them go after they had promised not to serve against us again.

Having rid ourselves of these cares, we went to the church to thank God and the good Ste. Anne for all the graces received during the day and to pray them to consent to continue to protect us afterwards. On leaving Ste. Anne, we stayed at the village of Locmiquel, at Grand-Champ, on the edge of a small river. From there we went to Questembert where M. Cadoudal presented me to M. Le Comte de Flairac, Prefect of Morbihan, who had taken refuge there. After some days, we took the highway to Redon via Gacilly and everywhere on the way we saw the white flag (the Chouen flag – Ed.) flying on all the church towers apart from that of Gacily. Having arrived near the town, M. Gouvello, our Major General at this period, made the arrangements for attack. Nearly all the army marched by the main road. I had the order to take the right and followed by the company of students, we entered by the port road where we spent the night lying on the street.

Towards midnight, the General came to tell me to give my men something to eat, so I requested the inhabitants to open their doors and to give us what they had as a loan, promising them that no-one would enter their houses. This was exactly carried out and we were served quite eagerly. The day

having come without us having been able to force the garrison from the church tower, where it had taken refuge, we departed for Muzillac. We took with us our dead and wounded, for those who had entered by the main road were extremely ill-treated by the fire of the Blues who, however, did not pursue us. It was in this affair that M. de Langourla lost his life.

M. Le Marquis de Coelin, who had his troops on the left bank of the Vilaine, came to Redon to confer with de Sol. Our Major General, having left us, the General found himself having two places at his disposal, that of Lieutenant of the army and that of Major. The candidates were not lacking. M. Le Comte de Floirac and the Marquis de la Bouriere, commissary of the King, both newly arrived from Gand, were present. M. De Sol, who at all times had taken much interest in me, knew that I was the most senior in rank of all the Colonels of the Army and thought that, in thrusting me aside, he might be thought to bear prejudice against me, so had the kindness to speak to me. I put him at ease, telling him to satisfy the men as much as possible and not to worry himself about me.

(A critic of Jean Rohu, writing many years later, attributed the passing over of Jean Rohu for one of these appointments as a sign that Rohu was suspected of contacts with the enemy. – Ed.)

We had been occupying Musillac for two days when, on the third at daybreak, I requested M. Lainé to accompany me in visiting the guardposts, in order to assure myself of the manner in which we were guarded. We crossed the bridge and again went up the street of the suburb of Penoroluse. We met two of the troopers, halted at the door of the inn, who told us that they had just reconnoitred on the road for Vannes and that they had seen nothing.

Proceeding further we continued to go up the street and, several paces from there, we saw the guard established at the entrance to the suburb scatter and run away in all directions. It was the Blues who were coming upon them. On seeing this, we returned at a run towards the town crying “To arms!”. Arriving at the place where everyone was going pell-mell, I met M. Cadoudal who, having already gathered a certain number of volunteers, said to me: “I am going to the bridge. Remain here, collect Lainé’s battalion and come immediately.”

The light infantry of General Rousseau had already arrived on the bridge when M. Cadoudal, presenting himself at the other end, compelled them to

throw themselves into the river to hide under the arches where Lainé found them later and received their officer's sword.

On arriving on the bridge, I sent Captain Yves Danic, with his company of Grenadiers, into the redoubt on the left. Lainé placed himself on the right in the small gardens, where the wall served him for a rampart, and climbed up on the roof of a house from where he could see his own men and fire, without exposing himself to enemy fire. I again put some men in a garden over against the bridge, after having had the top of the wall demolished.

In this state of things, a man approached me asking if I wished him to go to warn Gambert, who was lying with his battalion a league (4 km. – Ed.) away from us. I first of all pointed out to him that the enemy was on the other side of the bridge: it was impossible for him to get over. "I know a crossing further up" he told me. "Well then, go" I replied and he departed at a run. M. Cadoudal, after having secured the positions taken by the other corps, came back towards me and, coming down together towards the bridge, I noticed that someone was going to fire at us from a window of a house. I told him abruptly "Duck to the left!" which he did well to do at the word, for the bullet shot past instantly at the height of his middle in the place he had just left.

In the afternoon, seeing that Gambert was not coming, I went up on a fairly high wall to let me discern the countryside above the suburb and to see the reinforcements which we awaited. Hardly was I thus positioned than I saw the Blues move back a cannon which they had moved forward towards the river and, from this elevation, I cried "There's Gambert." I did not however, see him but, from the manoeuvres of the enemy, I judged that it was his presence that was making them retreat and I announced it to encourage our own men. Coming down off the wall, I was going to rush headlong on to the bridge when the General had me told to take my time, fearing that this was only a trick on the part of Rousseau to make us come out of our positions and then to charge us. That is why the loss which he experienced was not so important as it could have been, for Gambert coming from the rear was in the middle of the Blues before they had noticed and was shooting them right and left, so that they withdrew in full flight, leaving the highway strewn with slain men and horses.

On this day, it was M. Cadoudal who made all the arrangements for defence, as in all those which we have had in this campaign. It was as if he had been

the Major General of the Army and almost all the soldiers gave him that title. The day following, when we had triumphed over eight hundred troops of the line with their cannons, our army came at last to Foleña on the right bank of the Vilaine, to receive a landing of arms and munitions, and I had orders to transport myself to the crossing at Roche-Bernard to protect the transport boats. The landing having been carried out, we came to Rochfort where the bad weather obliged us to stop with our convoy.

In the middle of a horrid night, when the rain was falling in torrents, I do not know who spread the rumour that the enemy was coming to attack us. The General summoned the superior officers to consult with them on the course to take.

There was, in the council chamber, a gentleman who was shouting and gesticulating that Rousseau was coming with the bayonet at the end of his gun to eviscerate us and take from us our vehicles and all they contained. I was seated at one end of the chamber and M. De Sol, who was standing at the other end, came to ask me my opinion. I answered him that it was not to be presupposed that a troop was on its way in that weather and, even supposing that it was, it would be impossible for it to keep its arms in fit condition to fire.

Thereupon, the General left me and, seating himself in an armchair which he had just left, he was soon heard snoring, so great was the need he had of rest, and I returned to my lodgings. The enemy also remained in his position. Having brought our convoy to a safe place, we made our way towards Ploermel where we arrived in broad daylight, as we had done at Redon. We arrived so unexpectedly that the garrison only knew of our march when it saw M. Cadoudal entering the town. Its flight was so hasty that their officers left their swords on a bed in the hotel room opposite, beyond the highway for Vannes.

Then we visited Josselin, Locminé and Baud which (towns) had no troops. Having returned to Auray, our volunteers asked and received permission to go home and fetch a change of clothes. On the very day following their departure we were informed that General Bigarré, in command of the 13<sup>th</sup> Military Division, was coming from Rennes to Ste. Anne, accompanied by General Rousseau who had been to meet him again and who was coming with him to attack us with 4000 men.

General De Sol de Grisolles had gone to confer with the English admiral in the Bay of Quiberon and only arrived in Auray the night which preceded the battle. Joseph Lainé was charged with defending the bridge of St. Gonstant with one part of his battalion. Charles le Neillou had the mission of placing himself and his men between Pluvigner and Brech, for the likely event of the enemy heading for Brech, and having to defend it from them and from Trenrouse. Gambert and Sécillon were on the mount of Kervaune opposite the bridge of Tréoret. The company of students was on the square of Auray to head away according to circumstances. Our two cannons were on the main highway; on the height in front of the Champs des Martyrs (the Martyrs' Field) opposite Tréoret. At nightfall, M. Cadoudal and myself, accompanied by Messrs. du Coudée and du Bot, advanced as far as the wood of Futaie situated to the west of the village of Ste. Anne.

From there, seeing fires and tents already laid out on the square, I moved on several steps and, putting my ear to the ground, detected footfalls of a troop that was making for Brech. We spread out with those of Sécillon and Gambert and made preparations. M. Cadoudal directed the Legion of Auray to scout the road to Brech and ordered me to march in the same direction from which rifle shots could be heard. Obeying that order, I gave a guide to Gambert, who was followed by Sécillon and I marched after them with about 200 men of the Plomel and Mendon Companies who were coming in from the main road. Sécillon's recent recruits, new men, had struck out for Auray despite efforts to restrain them. M. Cadoudal authorised me to shoot, if necessary, when M. de la Boiffiere and his servant came galloping at a great rate towards the outskirts of Brech. "Where are you going, General?" I shouted. "I am going to look for the canons", he replied. "We have them", I said, "My man and I are alone, you know", said he "and I intended to look for the cannons : I was going to come back".

(Jean Rohu's critic makes out that Rohu was mistaken, that La Boiffiere was not deserting and that Rohu's intervention threw the Chouan army into confusion. – Ed.)

We continued to march onwards in the same direction. On arriving at the moor called Lanne Poulte Naille or Lanne ar Reux, we found Gambert and Sécillon there with about 500 men on the left. The road turns right there. There were no entrenchments, just some bushes for cover. The enemy lost no time in appearing. M. Cadoudal had gone on ahead onto the plain without

the Auray Company in support. I noticed that he was in considerable danger from the enemy cavalry. Bigarre's troops, having been separated from their Division, reformed on the moor and marched on us in columns, by sections, without any warning. They had a slight rise to negotiate in order to come at us with their bayonets. My men moved into firing position but I withdrew them, ordering them not to fire. Just then, the first rank appeared, waist high to us. I barely discerned their plan in time and threw myself down in order to see through the smoke, so as to direct our fire. I saw their banner flying above their heads. That was a favourable moment for them to charge, for we could not have been above 700 men in all between Sécillon's, Gambert's and mine. Neillon had not stuck to the rear of the enemy as he had been told to do, so we were forced to remain in our position, firing all the time at those who presented themselves and especially at their snipers. We could not even take part in the retreat. It was every man for himself and we all wanted to kill Blues. Every ditch was disputed. Rendas took the cannons. Cougé had not captured them from the place where we had put them the day before.

I saw a company of the students arrive. They placed themselves on the left, sheltering from the bullets in a group of chestnut trees. They had with them some dead and many wounded. Congau of Livigner took a bullet in the coat but was not injured. Our gunners achieved some hits. The first passed over the ditch, just missing the head of Colonne de Bigarré. General de Sol arrived at that moment. Continuing to see to necessities, I noticed that de Battre was in retreat. De Sol then ordered me to go and find Lainé at the church of St. Gonstart. From that moment, I did not witness any more of what went on. I reached the village and went on to the Square in Auray with Lainé's men. When the General arrived, he ordered me to cover the retreat. We left by the bridge, passing again the church of St Gonstart. We got onto the St. Anne road and did not stop until we had reached the Chateau of Kerzo.

General de Sol then decided to counter-attack the Blues in Auray and took the Pluvignier road but, seeing how exhausted we were, gave up the project and told me to go across the river and send those of our men who were of the commune of Crach to Carnac.

On leaving the General, I met with two cannons of ours that were coming from St. Anne. I ordered Antoine le Rouzic of Plouharnel, one of the gunners, to look well after his 'toy' and asked him where he had thought he was going. "Nowhere in particular", he said. It appeared that some officer must have lost his head and hidden the cannons in a field of corn on the

Auray-Vannes road. Bigarré's troops found the abandoned guns on the following day.

The Blues suffered the loss of Aides-de-Camp: an Adjutant Major, a Colonel and General-in-Chief Chasse. They had treated us like novices.. Bigarré was taken from Auray to Vannes on a litter. We lost M.de Langle and M.du Couedic; Thomas and Bouly of Auray; Dagonne, Chief of Battalion and Bal de Bulion. M.de Mollien was taken to Auray hospital suffering from many bayonet wounds, together with many enemy wounded.

Following my mission, I took the du Bonno road and then on to Kerantré where I met M.Gouvello, ex Major General on horseback. He was going to Locmariaquer to join the English fleet where, no doubt, he would meet many comrades because many of our 'gentlemen', fearing our cause lost, as usual, had made off the day before.

At the town of Crach I found some of our men and busied myself detailing them for the overnight, telling them to reassemble the next day with all the young men whom they might meet. I was to seek for Lizo in Carnac at the home of the parents of Louis Prio, whose father he had accompanied from the the Chateau of Kerzo. The next day, before dawn, I awoke. Louis Cadoudal had arrived from England where he had been charged by the English Government to deliver 500,000 francs for the use of our army.

Le Ridon and I divided it up and set out separately to meet again at St.Jean Bievelay.

We had hardly returned from that mission when Rousseau arrived on our heels. We were too few to offer fight and we took the road to St.Anne Bouleon, from where we had received a newspaper announcing the arrival of His Majesty, Louis XVIII in Paris.

Some days after we went to Auray and we were sent from there to Pontivy. We were not allowed to be armed. I said to M.Cadoudal that I needed money. He said that it would have to be sought from M.du Manlay. Du Manlay was the Treasurer of the Army and he gave me 80 francs. I went to the officers who had been under my command and gave to each,in accordance with his rank,as had been the practice in the previous campaigns.

After some days, I returned to the Treasurer to ask him for a further payment. He appeared astonished, having given me what he had before. When I had explained to him the use that I had made of it, he said that was not good enough for him and that I would have to account properly for what he had given me. Poor fool ! I still believed up to that point that we who

were in the same struggle had all things in common ! I have ever since been reminded of the more than one occasion when I had made the same mistake. misjudgement. The campaign being over, it seemed everyone was considering his own affairs.

Some of the Legitimists, whom we had rejoined after some days, also went to tender their services to the Capital. As for me, trusting in the integrity of our leaders, I had not, for myself, made any demands. Meanwhile, M. Joseph Cadoudal of the Legion of Morbihan offered me the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on the condition that I would accept in the full knowledge that I was not really old enough. Already in my 45<sup>th</sup> year, I thought it was a little too late for me!

There are even today those people who are amazed, or pretend to be amazed at our persistence in opposing such considerable forces as the Republic was able to field. They ask us, very innocently, what result we hoped to achieve, fighting in this way. It must be that these gentry 'apprehend' what they do not understand. When we were 10,000 armed men in Morbihan, there were at least 10,000 others, comprising the Republican garrisons of the villages as well as other strongholds, to control us plus those who were in all the Departments of the West. This gave our enemy a force which I estimate at around two million men. Such a force would have served to control all of us together, with North and Central France as well had they so needed.

They simply did not understand us. It was the case that the spirit of those regions did not give them the same advantage as ours for a war about convictions. We accepted that the King of France (Louis XVI - Ed.) who was deprived of his kingdom still had (up to his execution on January 21<sup>st</sup>. 1793 – Ed.) all his rights and that the foreign powers who made war on the Usurper (Napoleon. Ed.) were His Majesty's allies. We believed it was proper to support him, a provision which he had the right to expect from his States ( the 'parliament' which Louis XVI had convened under pressure and which the Republic had infiltrated and overthrown at the start of the Revolution. Ed.). When Her Majesty (before her execution on October 16<sup>th</sup> 1793 – Ed. ) ordered her faithful subjects to take up arms we owed it, on pain of disobedience, to comply with her wishes.

We were not, of course, so small in numbers as some appear to think. No matter how powerful the factions which were part of the Terror (the regime of the Republican regicides. Ed.), the great majority of the French people had not expected a check, like that of Waterloo, to result in the restoration of the Legitimacy (Monarchy. Ed.). It was not foreseen that Grouchy, with 200,000 men would fail Napoleon, in spite of the fact that he should have



been able to attain his objective. (Napoleon had charged Grouchy with preventing the Prussians, under Blucher, from joining the battle at Waterloo. If he had succeeded, Napoleon might have won the battle. As it was, Blucher's arrival determined the victory of the Allies – Ed.)

In 1816, the Marquis de la Boissiere was promoted to the rank of Marshal with oversight of the Department of d'Iles and Vilaine. He was charged with the distribution of the compensation which the King accorded to the Royalist volunteers of Morbihan. A Commission of Enquiry was formed at Rennes. I took no part in it. M. Cadoudal was far off with his Legion. Our people were not the ones to make recommendations. Unease gripped our spirits. Officers were appointed to assess and to defray me for my services and I attended the Commission. That was the last day of its meeting. I was not able at that point to present my claim because the King's Commissioner, who was staying in the Hotel where I had attended, requested me to pass the following day in his chambers. There he would give me an account of the work done (by the Commission. Ed.). The list of names which had been left out at the first had been adjudicated and the number of those who had not been noted was increased and rewarded according to their ranks. The Commissioner asked me to note that my name was not on the list and that I would do well to wait for M. de la Boilliere, who was on his way from Waterloo. That man, however, knew nothing of our affairs. I replied that I had served under the Marquis and that it was up to him to evaluate my service, for I had received nothing. In the meantime he would not have forgotten. It would be easy for him to remedy affairs and if they were still intact, there were always the funds of the July revolution available for distribution.

In the year 1823, the Civil War was going on in Spain. I considered the cause of the Spanish Legitimacy to be just as sacred as the French. I was perfectly prepared, for my part, to die for it, so I decided to go and join the guerrillas in that Peninsula. For that reason, I went to M. le Comte de Chazelles, the Prefect of Morbihan in order to obtain a passport from him. This Magistrate opposed my decision and generously offered to defray my expenses if I were prepared to go to Paris where, he said, I would be properly pensioned. He gave me 300 francs and I went to the Capital where M. Cadoudal was. He made me weigh up the danger I would face amongst the Spaniards who did not like the French and pressed me to live in his own home for the three months I would be in Paris. He finally obtained for me a pension of 1000 francs, drawn on the Ministry of the Interior. This I enjoyed until 1830.

During my stay at Paris, their Royal Highnesses M. le Comte D'Artois and Mme. the Duchesse D'Angouleme cared for me by sending me funds from time to time. D'Artois was younger brother to Louis Duke D'Angouleme. The Duke succeeded Louis XVIII in 1824. The Duchesse D'Angouleme was the only daughter of Louis XVI.

On the departure of M.Cadoudal to cross the Spanish frontier, he suggested I should go with him but said he could not assign me any rank in his regiment. I declined and returned to my wife to enjoy the pension I had received, which had been withdrawn from me during the July revolution.

The reader may wonder what there is to corroborate the above account. The answer is that in his *Biographie Bretonne*, Volume 2, published by Cauderan, Vannes, 1852. Prosper Levot has a chapter devoted to Jean Rohu. There is further mention of Rohu in Volume 1, pp.247-248.

Another similar source is *Monographies Chouannes* by J. le Falher, published by Librairie Honoré Champion, Paris, 1911.

In the former of these two titles, the following chapters are particularly helpful :

Brittany in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The Chouans

Jean Rohu, Royalist and Chouan Chief

The Hundred days – Jean Rohu and the Little Chouannerie

Jean Rohu and the Restoration

A Royalist Family.

These chapters have been translated from the French by Harry Vincent Rohu in the 1920's and appear in his privately circulated book 'The Rohus Of Morbihan', a copy of which is in the family archive.

Also in the family archive:

Letters to Jean Rohu from the King's Commissioner, le Loureux.

Letter of appointment to the Legion of Honour by order of Charles 10<sup>th</sup>.

An account of the disastrous invasion of Quiberon, in which Bonaventure Rohu, ancestor of the Irish branch of the family, took part.

Also in the archive :

*Georges Cadoudal et la Chouannerie* by his nephew Georges Cadoudal, published by Éditions Saint-Michel (A reproduction offset of the original edition of 1887). This book of over 470 pages, in French, has some

30 various mentions of Jean Rohu and includes excerpts from Jean Rohu's Memoir.

Jean Rohu had a second Christian name : Pierre. The College he refers to was the College of St.Yves, at Vannes, where he met Georges Cadoudal. Jean married Anne le Gouriffe. He died in the village of Kerroué, Parish of Sainte-Helene, Canton of Port Louis, in 1849. He was conferred with the Order of St. Louis, was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and was Mayor of Plouharnel from 1815 to 1826.

There is, in Plouharnel, a road at one end of which is the house in which Jean Rohu lived before he moved, as an elderly man, to his last home at Kerroué.

The road is named after him and there is a plaque which reads Rue Jean Rohu, Chef Chouan (Jean Rohu Road, Chouan Chief.)

A personal description of Jean Rohu in police archives, dated 1806 reads : 30-38 years old, 5 ft.8ins, full figure, black eyes, very black hair, flat nose, knees a little turned in, a formidable man of great influence

I have visited all significant Rohu sites in Brittany including an unforgettable day at the cove called Port Lineneu, Kerhillio, near Erdeven where Jean and his brother supervised the unloading of arms and munitions from England to support the Chouan rising. The reader of the Memoir of Jean Rohu may read the first hand account of that event on page 30.

The Monarchy was overthrown in 1793 when Louis XVI was guillotined and the First Republic was declared by the leaders of the French Revolution. War with most of Europe ensued. Napoleon Bonaparte won battles in Italy, Egypt and Germany and was crowned Emperor of the French in 1804. The Napoleonic Wars followed up to 1815 and featured, amongst other things, the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805, and the French invasion of Russia which ended in his exile to Elba. He escaped, returned to France, reorganised the army and in, 1815, was defeated by an Anglo Prussian force at Waterloo. He was exiled to St. Helena and died there in 1831. The Restoration – reinstatement

of the French monarchy – took place in 1815 when Louis XVIII, younger brother of Louis 16<sup>th</sup> came to the throne.

The monarchy, under Louis XVIII, Charles 10<sup>th</sup> and Louis Philippe lasted only 23 years. It ended in the Revolution of 1848. France, thereafter, has been a Republic.

The Duke of Angouleme, Louis Antoine de Bourbon, was the eldest son of Count D'Artois (later Charles X). He was sent away by his father in 1789, followed military studies at Turin and commanded a small corps of emigrés in Condé's army.

In 1799, at Mittan, he married his cousin Maria-Thérèse, daughter of Louis XVI. He Duke Angouleme, Louis Antoine de Bourbon was the eldest son of the returned to France in 1814 and was welcomed with enthusiasm by the Bordeaux Royalists. In the following year, he vainly tried to oppose the progress of Napoleon when he returned from the island of Elba. Captured by General Grouchy, he was detained for six days and then released by order of the Emperor Napoleon. In 1823, he was entrusted with the army that successfully went to the aid of Ferdinand VII of Spain.

In the July 1830 Revolution, he renounced his rights in favour of his nephew, the Duke of Bordeaux and joined his father in exile to Holyrood (England), then Prague and, finally, to Gorizia.

Maria-Thérèse Charlotte, Duchesse d'Angouleme, was the only daughter of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. She was known as Madame Royale. She was imprisoned with her family in the Temple in 1792 and was released in 1795, the Revolution having decided to exchange her for some of the Commissioners of the Convention whom the Austrians were releasing.

Having rejoined her uncle, the Count of Provence (Louis XVIII), she married her cousin, the Duke D'Angouleme with whom she returned to France in 1814. From the time of the return of Napoleon from Elba, she organised the defence of Bordeaux, in the Royalist cause, with such energy that Napoleon said of her that she was the only man in the Bourbon family. She was not popular under the Restoration because she was thought to be inspiring clerical reaction. She went again into exile in July 1830 and gave her energies to the education and political advancement of her nephew, the Count of Chambord.

