According to his daughter-in-law, the duke had never been in good health. The Revolution in Paris and the blows to his fortune both there and in Burgundy had not improved it. In January, 1792, at the age of fifty-three, he died. His son, Charles-Marie-Casimir, was only twenty-three and knew almost nothing about estate administration. Outwardly at least, he and his young wife seemed scarcely aware of the Revolution. The new duchess described him on his arrival in Brussels at the end of 1791:

Monsieur de Tavanes, having taken his mother to Switzerland and made an excursion to Italy, came to join me [at Brussels]. I welcomed him with pleasure. He pleased everyone in our group, imparting affability and gaiety allied with a natural charm and wit.¹

A certain naïveté was to be expected in a couple so young and so sheltered from the world outside the high society of Paris. In her memoirs, the duchess herself admitted the frivolity of these early years. She recalled the moment of her marriage in 1786, when “birth, fortune, and youth” were joined with “all the pleasures the court could offer.”² The description of her presentation at Versailles was even more vivid:

I recognize the same leaves in the parquet floor I had counted so carefully to make the three prescribed bows. They were of great importance then and the subject of many lessons. ... Should I retrace the frivolous pleasures,

² Ibid., p. 146.
recalling that the diamonds mixed with roses on my dress also adorned the head of the Queen. . . . I can still see the room where the King, the Queen, Madame Elisabeth, the Duc de Brissac, and Madame d'Ossun were seated at the same table. . . .

Since their marriage, the couple had their own townhouse on the Rue de Choiseul. A dowry of 400,000 livres and the count's pension of 20,000 livres was apparently enough to maintain them in those years before the Revolution. Like his father, the young Tavanes knew the shops along the Rue de Richelieu. His recently purchased captaincy in the dragoons gave him an excuse to buy a number of fine rapiers and sabers, in addition to uniforms for himself and a splendid new outfit for his coachman. His purchases at Paris continued until the spring of 1792, when his acquisition of a brace of pistols, a horse, and a chest suggest preparations for emigration.

After paying his respects to the princes at Coblentz and visiting his wife in Brussels, Charles-Marie-Casimir returned to Paris for his father's funeral. Travel of this sort was apparently no problem before the declaration of war in April, 1792. If the second duke knew little about estate management, he learned something about inheritances. An investigation of his father's fortune had something to do with his new interest in the Comte de la Baume de Montrevel, last of his line and relative of the first duchess. In fact, Montrevel had already made a donation of 300,000 livres to Charles-Marie's sisters. As the duchess said quite blandly: "M. de Saulx was interested in cultivating the friendship of M. le comte de Montrevel whose fortune was destined for him." And it was not in vain that the young duke and duchess pursued this inheritance through the Revolution. A short time before Montrevel went to the guillotine in 1793, he summoned a notary to his prison cell and entrusted his fortune to the Tavanes. The duchess saw in this act a proof of "noble and generous sentiments."

Events moved very rapidly in the spring of 1792. Fénéon managed to

---

3 Ibid., p. 159.
4 A. D., E-1727, Contract of Marriage, April 9, 1786.
5 A. D., E-1728, Mémoire, June 7 and June 23, 1792.
6 A. D., E-1727, Gift of July 28, 1783. Each sister was to receive a rente of 7,500 livres after the death of Montrevel.
7 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, p. 32.
8 Ibid., p. 172.
EMIGRATION AND RETURN

send the second duke 14,788 livres during the first six months of 1792 before his final departure from Paris in July. This was a far cry from the receipts of 1790, but not so bad given the circumstances. With the outbreak of war, the new law on emigration, and the establishment of the Republic in August, it is not surprising that Fénéon remained as inconspicuous as possible. He held back his remittances to Paris, inflated the expenses, and paid off a few local creditors. In 1792, taxes totalled 11,489 livres, perhaps a quarter of the revenue of that year. There were 38 receipts, suggesting continuous government levies made necessary by the war. Until July, Charles-Marie had sent his certificates of residence as required by law to the local mayors, and it was not until the end of 1792 that his name appeared on the government list of émigrés. The second duke kept Fénéon informed of his whereabouts abroad and, in late 1792, the agent wrote to Tavanes at Maastricht, urging him to return before his absence was noticed. By a law passed in April, anyone who was absent from France after May, 1792 was liable to lose his property to the state. The sequestration of emigré lands had been deferred for the moment in Burgundy, but there was no time to lose.

Brussels in the winter of 1791–92 had none of the features of a modern refugee camp. It apparently served as a gathering place for noble families, while husbands consulted with the King’s brothers and cousins in the Rhineland. The young duchess found Brussels a convenient place for the regular winter season, the plaisirs d’hiver, as she put it. Nearby Spa had been frequented by the wealthy French nobility even before the Revolution. Chateaubriand described Brussels at this time as a small Versailles:

The most elegant women and most stylish men of Paris, all dressed as aides de camp, waited amidst their amusements for the moment of victory…. Considerable sums that would have permitted them to live a number of years were spent in a few days; it was not worth while to economize since they thought they would be back in Paris any day.
THE HOUSE OF SAULX-TAVANES

The high aristocracy was represented this winter by the Rohan-Chabot, Montmorency, Arenberg de la Marck, and various branches of the Choiseul family. Most of the noble families were accompanied by their complete households, chambermaids, lackeys, cooks, preceptors. There was nothing to suggest undignified flight or financial distress. The young duchess even enjoyed the excitement, a welcome change from the oppressive boredom of Versailles.

The outbreak of the war in April, 1792, and the new law regarding émigrés produced a wave of serious activity in this otherwise unaltered court society. A number of noble wives who enjoyed personal fortunes decided to return to France to protect them. They were confident that elderly women would be safe. The grandmother of the young duchess, Madame de Choiseul-Beaupré, answered the plea of her chargé d'affaires, returned to her estate, sold the silver, and sent the proceeds to her son abroad. There was complete confidence that the allied armies would soon restore “order” in France. In July, Charles-Marie went directly from Paris to join Condé's émigré army in the Rhineland. But the events of the summer and fall of 1792 came as a rude shock.

The first disillusion came with the disaster at Valmy in September. Among other aristocratic officers, the young duke rejoined his family at Maastricht. However, threatened by Dumouriez's advance into the Austrian Netherlands, they could not stay long. It was at this point in late 1792 that Fénéon’s letter arrived, informing the young duke that he might still return to Burgundy and save the estate from sequestration.

One can only speculate on why Charles-Marie declined the chance to return to France and decided to follow Artois to England. From his earliest youth, the second duke had been closely associated with the court noblesse, who considered loyalty to the princes a point of honor. Madame des Echerolles described it as a duty: “One must leave or lose status.”

I remember it perfectly—the agitation of our families, their secret meetings, the haste to pass on the news from beyond the Rhine. When are you...
EMIGRATION AND RETURN

leaving?, people asked. You will be too late. Hurry! They will come back without you. It is for such a short time. 15

Moreover, the duke was a captain in the dragoons and he was very young. His father had not given him any opportunity to administer the estate and he had never visited Dijon or the château at Lux. He seemed to have no interest in these matters. It is significant that, after the Revolution, the duke legally transferred all authority over the administration of the estate to his wife. 16 Furthermore, he was stubborn. He never admitted that the royalist cause had been defeated. His emigration was not simply a matter of waiting out a long storm; he revealed a constant desire to “disembark,” after Valmy, after Jemmapes, after Fleurus, even after the disaster at Quiberon in 1795. Finally, there was a wooden, shallow side to the second duke. It is curious that the duchess, in memoirs that are not devoid of intimacies and emotional expression, speaks only twice of her husband’s personality. She alluded to his “gaiety and wit” in Brussels and, later, to his interest in music and art stimulated by his stay in Germany. 17 But that is all. There is no evidence that he made a single speech as a member of the House of Peers from 1815 to 1820, when he was still in his forties. The one reference to him relates to his “indisposition” on November 23, 1815, during the trial of Ney. 18 If we can credit anecdotal testimony, the young duke’s outstanding trait was his good looks and his success with the ladies. 19 In short, Charles-Marie-Casimir de Saulx-Tavanes was not very farsighted or flexible, not to say worse of him. He did what his court milieu expected, and in this he was doggedly stubborn.

After Charles-Marie’s decision to go to England, the travels of the duke and duchess became less of an emigration in lace—en dentelles. But, compensating for poor inns and crowded channel boats, the English reception was a warm one. Together with Londoners, the Tavanes were shocked at the news of the execution of Louis XVI. The modest pension granted to them by the English crown did not permit them to remain in

16 A. D., Q–1118, Procuration of June 2, 1810.
17 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, pp. 24, 159.
London. At the end of 1793, for reasons of economy, they moved to Swansea in Wales, where their first child was born. Here they stayed until the spring of 1795, when the failure of the émigré landing at Quiberon in Brittany dashed any immediate hope of a return to France. Among the émigré losses on the Breton beaches was Comte de Rieux, cousin of the second duke. Rieux’s incentive had not only been political. The duchess said he had debarked in Brittany in the hope of procuring money for his aged and needy father. Shot by Hoche’s troops at Vannes, he was the last of the house of Rieux. Dissension over family portions seemed far away then.

In the fall of 1795, the duke and duchess decided on a new voyage. The father of the duchess, former ambassador to Constantinople, had made his way to Saint Petersburg, where he had been pensioned by Empress Catharine. Financial considerations now took precedence over honor. With difficulty the duchess persuaded her husband to leave their English friends who, she observed, for all the differences in mores, habits, and language, were tied to them “by interest and rank.” After a long crossing of the Baltic, the duchess happily joined her father and his entire household at Cronstadt. The Tavanes reentered a familiar environment. So francophone was the Romanov court that the duchess found it odd that French was not the exclusive language of Moscow society. Here the emigration “in lace” could be resumed.

Yet court life no longer satisfied either the duke or the duchess. Once financially secured by his father-in-law and the Russian government, the duke was again off to England in the hope of participating in another

20 On the payments by the English government and by private charities see H. Weiner, *The French Exiles, 1789-1815* (London, 1960), pp. 141, 103, 169, 223–34. The subscriptions to Wilmont’s Committee totalled over three million pounds. The Duchess of York conducted a special subscription for noble ladies in distress, including the “Quiberon widows.” The English government paid an allowance to the Duc d’Artois of 500 pounds per month (120,000 livres per annum) and to the Princes-of-the-Blood in proportion. The lesser nobility, La Ferronays, for example, had to get along on about 3,600 livres, while servants of noble families received only a guinea a month. Of course many nobles lived with English friends.


22 J. Balteau, M. Barroux, M. Prévis, *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (Paris, 1936), “Choiseul-Gouffier.” See also *Archives Nationales*, T–153. As a diplomat abroad, Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier was not considered an “émigré.” His wife, the countess, effectively argued his case and that of her two sons before the Committee of General Security in May, 1793. She even regained possession of her property near Dieppe. See *A.N.*, T–153.
amphibious effort off the Breton coast. “He wanted to be at his post,” wrote the duchess. But she was happy to learn later that the expedition had been abandoned. At twenty-four, the duchess evinced considerably more perception concerning effective émigré military action than many others of her class. She observed that the presence of Artois as leader was not enough to assure success. Quiberon had proved that. Why should the royalists expect the Breton peasants to leave their homes and harvests for long? The miserable failure of the Vendée uprising had demonstrated to the peasants that even Republican conscription was preferable to joining the Princes in the future. As for the nobility, the duchess was especially acute:

The Breton and Poitevin noblemen, trained from youth in rough hunting, were the only ones capable of pursuing the kind of warfare which demands a robust body, a knowledge of the country, and a resistance to fatigue. . . . Besides, the royalists did not form a party. Having escaped the bloody regime of the Terror, each individual was afraid of the least disturbance. They did not think of the future. Their desires and needs were limited. They thought only of obtaining restitutions to guarantee their security.  

Indeed, it is hard to imagine the young duke de Tavanes as a partisan chief of the type described in Balzac’s Chouans.

The daughter of an amateur Hellenist of some repute, the duchess had been educated in the classics and was apparently well-read in other literature as well. Somehow, the emigration had not hindered her education. On the contrary, it seemed to broaden it. With the financial support of her father, she was able to travel to Poland and later to Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. It was not common for a Parisian noblewoman to conclude that there was more to literature than the elegance and refinement of the eighteenth-century masters.

There is a je ne sais quoi that awakened the genius of Chateaubriand and which has formed a talent here for his melancholy gravity. Imagination is stimulated by the stress of the times and has colored the stage with horizons much more vast than those of Versailles.  

There is little doubt that the duchess had imbibed something we call Romanticism. In Poland, she described the “vast deserted plains and

23 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, pp. 72–73; Castries, Emigrés, pp. 192–93.
THE HOUSE OF SAULX-TAVANES

somber forest" offset by her encounters with the descendants of another breed of French émigrés—those of 1685. Curiously, she referred to their "common disgrace," a consequence of the "ways of Providence and the unexpected in history."\textsuperscript{25} In retrospect at least, her travels offered her excitement, old friends rediscovered by chance, new liaisons easily contracted, and an independence that "brought movement and activity into my existence."\textsuperscript{26} The memoirs of the duchess leave the unmistakable impression that these years of exile marked the most stimulating time of her life. This response to a new experience demonstrates once again how difficult it is to predict human actions from social origins alone. New experiences and a changed environment count for something.

In the spring of 1797, with a new tsar in Saint Petersburg and with word of quieter times at home, the duchess decided to return to France. Her own mother had returned during the Terror and had regained her property in Normandy. In times less tense the duchess should do as well. For some reason, her name was not on the list of émigrés, and her passage from Switzerland to the Department of the Jura was not obstructed. The duchess reported that the country people were most cooperative. She had no difficulty obtaining a certificate of residence with the nine requisite witnesses.\textsuperscript{27} She was even able to get one for the duke stating his continuous residence in a local commune in the Jura since April, 1792. Apparently the departmental authorities were satisfied, though they found it curious that the name "Saulx-Tavanes" appeared on neither the national guard muster nor the tax roll of the commune.\textsuperscript{28} Near Dôle, thirty miles southeast of Dijon, the duchess found that "most of the administrators had been employed under the old regime and greeted us without any allusion to the emigration."\textsuperscript{29}

The duchess then proceeded directly to Paris in the hopes of removing her husband's name from the list of émigrés and securing the return of his unsold land. But the chance of quick success was shattered by the coup d'état of Fructidor in September, 1797, which annulled the royalist election victory. The Directory became suspicious of all émigrés, and the knowledge that the father of the duchess, a Choiseul-Gouffier, was still

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 325.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanès, Mémoires, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{28} A. D., Q-1118, List of Certificates of Residence.
\textsuperscript{29} Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanès, Mémoires, p. 122.
in Russia, did not strengthen her case. She was forced to go into hiding. She spent a few months in Normandy with her sister and husband "whom the Revolution had forced to become a commerçant." Later she found a more comfortable seclusion in her childhood convent at Bellechasse in the countryside outside of Paris. It was two years before Napoleon's seizure of power "reopened the gates of France to the nobility." In early 1800, both her husband and father returned from abroad.30

Almost immediately, the Saulx-Tavanes were joined by other returning noble émigrés, notably the families Choiseul, Narbonne, Luynes, and Montesson, who seemed to form an inner circle within a larger group of aristocrats. The duchess described this reentry into the old society years later with a certain reserve. Perhaps she felt it then.

Through Madame de Choiseul I met the old society which lived in the Faubourg St. Germain. It has since become a power even in the eyes of Bonaparte. Its members had kept the same language, the same formulas of civility, and a sort of exaggerated affability. They talked a great deal about the details of economy and the condition of their fortunes.... In their marriage projects they calculated the value of a title or a grandesse without realizing that their value had changed.31

Her views about the Marquis de Narbonne also suggested that the duchess could not return to the court mores of her youth.

The importance of M. de Narbonne in society resided primarily in the empire that French frivolity accords to elegance, good taste, and a certain success founded on the reciprocal pleasures of vanity.... Something about him recalled the mores attributed to the former courtiers at a time when one was proud of his debts, mocked his creditors, and paid them with pretty words.... 32

But if the duchess of Saulx had some doubts about the authenticity of the new "court," she was not above taking advantage of old friends. If Madame de Montesson exhibited an excessive vanity and love of luxury, she nonetheless entertained influential members of the new government.33 If the duke and duchess of Luynes had unfortunate political views, their kindness to returning émigrés helped one forget them. Moreover, some

30 Ibid., pp. 122-46. See also Pingaud, Saulx-Tavanes, p. 328.
31 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, p. 143. The duke pursued the "Grandesse d'Espagne" until 1819 when it was finally refused. A. D., E-1678 (1724-1819).
32 Ibid., pp. 168-69.
33 Ibid., p. 156.
allowance must be made for release after almost a decade of absence from Paris. At twenty-seven, the duchess may be forgiven her momentary enthusiasm for balls, concerts, theatre, and the outdoor fêtes at the Tivoli and Elysée palaces.34

The Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, ex-ambassador to the Porte, was well received by Talleyrand, and his daughter apparently impressed the vivacious Madame Bonaparte. Both connections were extremely helpful to the family.

My father was pleased to meet the members of the diplomatic corps again and the foreigners he had known in Russia at M. de Talleyrand's.... He had lent considerable sums of money to the Austrian prisoners taken by the Turks when he was ambassador at Constantinople.35

The new regime, anxious to end the war with Austria, might find experienced diplomats such as Choiseul-Gouffier useful. Despite certain faults in the eyes of the duchess, Talleyrand was not without virtue. He had respect for his relatives, affection for his brothers, devotion to the interests of his family. "He valued domestic virtues regarding those with whom he shared an ancestor."36 Clearly he was not the most disagreeable of the new men in high places.

The duchess could stoop to conquer. Her contacts with Madame Bonaparte during the "visits of winter" had been profitable. Despite Napoleon's express order that his wife stay out of émigré affairs, Josephine was very susceptible to entreaties by old noble families. It had not been easy for the duchess. The best she could say for the wife of the new First Consul was that, despite her frivolity and neglected education, she had a certain dignity and tact. Of course, one must avoid her "motley company"—société bigarrée. Most disagreeable had been the duchess's encounter with Fouche, new Minister of Interior. "It was not without a certain repugnance that I sat beside this minister at dinner at Malmaison."37

Patience, persistence, and diplomacy were finally rewarded. With the help of these "friends" and the intercession of the Russian and Austrian ambassadors, the father and husband of the duchess were removed from

34 Ibid., pp. 157, 138-39.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 155.
the dreaded "list of émigrés." One can not but wonder what the ambas-
dadors said to recommend the two men to Bonaparte—or was Talley-
rand's approval sufficient? In any case, Charles-Marie-Casimir, Citizen
Saulx-Tavanes was "definitively erased" in November, 1802. "The judg-
ment of the Consuls declares that he will regain possession of his lands
that have not been sold ... without any claim to an indemnity for prop-
serty alienated."\(^{38}\) How many émigrés read these words in 1802? How
oddly neutral the word "alienated" must have seemed to them!

* 

It had been ten years since Fénéon, the estate agent, had received word
that the second duke would not return to France. What had happened to
the estate in Burgundy during that time? Loyal to the family through
during four difficult years, Fénéon was alone to face the Year I of "Liberty" as
an agent of the "former Duke de Saulx-Tavanes, émigré." This was not
a popular professional title in 1793. To be remembered in the local com-
unity as a ci-devant feudiste could not have made his task easier. Yet
he was determined to demonstrate his administrative competence to his
new master, the French Republic. His tone toward the local administra-
ion had changed since 1791. His report to the district in January, 1793,
suggested a busy and cooperative civil servant.

... I must go to Châlon-sur-Saône to submit my accounts to the municipal
administration for the property of M. de Tessé, so that I can not make the
declaration necessitated by the absence of the son of M. de Saulx until my
return. ... I am responsible for the receipts and expenses of the revenues of
the inheritance of the late Citizen Saulx-Tavanes, the elder, and I assure
you that no circumstance can make me deviate from the openness and
exactitude that have always characterized my conduct.\(^{39}\)

Citizen Fénéon now submitted monthly reports to the district. He
took pride, as always, in arranging leases favorable to the proprietor,
noble seigneur or French government. In September, 1792, he had
negotiated a new lease for Beaumont, stipulating that the rent be paid
in kind, no doubt to mitigate the effects of inflation. The grain rent
claimed a good third of the gross harvest which assured the district a re-

\(^{38}\) A. D., Q-1118, Radiation de la liste des émigrés. 12 Brumaire, An X.
\(^{39}\) A. D., Q-876, Fénéon to Citizens Administrators of the District of Is-sur-Tille,
January 10, 1793.
turn at least equal to the money rents paid in the 1780s. The mills were leased separately with the proviso that the tenant make all the repairs and even construct a second mill by 1794. He continued to contest the claims of the local communes to the wood and even resumed his effort to claim arrears in seigneurial dues dating from before 1789. Among these was a claim to the droit d'indire at Blagny for 1787. After all, for a conscientious estate manager, an obligation was an obligation, regardless of the fact that it was no longer legally operative.

On the debit side of the ledger, Fénéon recorded taxes of 11,489 livres paid from October, 1791, to December, 1792—close to one-fourth of the gross revenue. He also deducted larger sums for repairs than had ever appeared on his accounts to the duke. True, there was some damage to the forge at Tilchatel and to the mill at Arc-sur-Tille, possibly due to local disorders in 1789 and 1791. But this does not account for over 12,000 livres spent for construction of two large barns for cattle and forage at Arc-sur-Tille, which proved an excellent selling point later. Was Fénéon taking advantage of a more indulgent public proprietor, or was Calignon, the tenant at Arc, now able to have his way? Mayor of Arc, Calignon had already taken advantage of the Revolution to reduce his rent by overestimating the dîme and to sell the duke's wood without authorization. All indications are that Calignon was a strong and shrewd personality who knew how to organize local public opinion and intimidate his rivals. In 1793, men like Calignon had a command over the local community that Fénéon could no longer contest. After the Revolution, Fénéon attempted to collect from Calignon, but without written evidence, the agent was at a distinct disadvantage.

Of Fénéon's "exactitude" there could be little doubt; his "openness" and charitable inclinations were another matter. He informed the public authorities that the establishment of five doctors in 10 parishes was his

41 A. D., Q–1117, Report of May 18, 1793.
43 A. D., Q–1117, Inventaire des titres et papiers de Régie (Tilchâtel and Arc-sur-Tille).
44 A. D., Q–193, Ventes (Arc-sur-Tille).
45 A. D., Q–1117, Etat des dettes passives (Arc-sur-Tille).
46 A. D., E–1744, Letters of May 8, 1813 and February 11, 1818.
idea in 1789. He was quite willing to continue to pay them at 150 livres per year, but when Citizen Dr. Normand refused to work at such a low salary, Fénéon made no effort to raise it. He disagreed with the district about using an annuity of 36 livres established by a Tavanes three generations ago for a public granary (grenier d’abondance). He also argued against the administration of this charity by the municipalities. From this correspondence in early 1793 it appears that Fénéon was not anxious to use the estate revenues to increase rural charity, especially under the auspices of the local communes. Was he protecting the duke’s revenues or simply expressing his own views on such matters? That the government made inquiries into an annuity of only 36 livres gives some idea of its limited resources in that desperate year. It also suggests that the Republic’s failure to help the rural poor in this instance was not a result of callousness.

In April, 1793, the “movables” of the château of Lux were sequestered and sold at auction. Fénéon’s inventory preserves the record. Some 931 articles were sold, bringing in 24,483 livres, a substantial sum by provincial standards. The best prices were bid for the beds and mirrors; chairs, buffets, armoires, linen, and kitchen ware sold very poorly, while the books brought rather better prices than might be expected in a rural community. The library varied in quality from Raynal’s History of the Indies to Theatre of the Boulevards, but the books sold almost invariably at one livre each, suggesting that the discrimination of the buyers was not much different from the duke’s. The inventory notes that the billiard table was “completely worn,” implying that the steward at Lux, the chief warden, or perhaps even Fénéon did not spend all their time arranging accounts or inspecting the property. Fénéon managed to salvage the duke’s cabriolet for himself. Two paintings, one of the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI, and the other of Jacques de Saulx, family ancestor, found their way to the Dijon public museum. The duchess attempted in vain to get them back in 1816.

48 A. D., Q–1117, Report of May 18, 1793 (Chapter 10); A. D., Q–8762, Oeuvres de bienfaisance: Beaumont-sur-Vingeanne, 1792–An II.
50 A. D., Q–1117, Sequestrer mobilier et archives, 1793–An III; A. D., Q–1118, Petition to Prefect, August 9, 1816.
The following month, Fénéon submitted a long report, summarizing the financial condition of the estate, payments made to creditors, and litigation in progress with tenants, communes, and other parties. He also listed the wages he had paid from the receipts to the steward, the forest guards, and the doctors serving the poor. Administrative expenses included his own salary of 2,400 livres and special outlays for the inventories at Lux of 4,729 livres more. Anticipating the sale of the Tavanes estate as National Property, Fénéon ended his report with appropriate deference:

Such is the report of my administration. The details are long. Perhaps the reader will find them fastidious, but I cannot make them more lively. My purpose has been to bring the Citizens Administrators up to date on all aspects of this administration. If I have not included everything, they are indulgent enough to know that I have tried my best. If during the short time that I will remain in the district, you need further clarification, I beg you to address yourselves to me with confidence.

Three days later, Fénéon deposited all the titles and estate papers with the District authorities.

A look at sectional maps of the Tavanes holdings makes it easy to see how the pattern of ownership facilitated sale in small lots. Aside from the wood, the duke’s property was already divided into tiny scraps, rarely over an acre and interspersed with the strips of peasant holdings. This checker-board pattern was especially marked at Lux and Beaumont, but only slightly less so at Arc-sur-Tille. An obvious impediment to rationalized grain production, this pattern was ideal for redistribution among many small holders.

The sales began in the spring of 1794 and continued through the summer and fall. Thermidor apparently made no difference. Altogether 2,780 acres of grain and meadow land were sold in 864 lots. The domain at Arc-sur-Tille fell from 1,955 to 631 acres, the one at Beaumont from 971 to 647, while the smaller domains at Bourberain, Spoy, Champagne, Blagny, Bessey disappeared almost entirely. At Lux, for example, only the château and two acres remained unsold. In the following winter

52 A. D., Q-1117, Report of May 15, 1793.
53 See Documents VII and VIII; also, see maps of Lux (A. D., E-1916), Beaumont (A. D., E-1781), and Arc-sur-Tille (A. D., E-1762); G. Roupnel, La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle ... (Paris, 1955).
EMISSION AND RETURN

(1795–96) the forge at Tilchâtel (now Mont-sur-Tille) was sold, so that by mid-1796 the forests were the only substantial properties left. It was patently impractical to divide forest into small lots, so the woodland of the duke was held as a national domain. Judging from the number of lots sold, the Saulx-Tavanes were among the heaviest losers in the department, equalled only by such rich noble families as Bouhier and Legoux, both former presidents at the Parlement of Dijon.54

Who were the buyers of the Tavanes land? The question of who bought national property, despite a prodigious historical literature, has not yet been answered with statistical precision.55 The answer requires a study, not only of transfers of land at the moment of sale of émigré properties, but also of subsequent transfers. No doubt, men of larger means bought out smaller buyers, and émigré agents, acting as “straw men,” repurchased their masters’ land, sometimes keeping it for themselves.56 Even when these obstacles are overcome, it will still be difficult to identify precisely who “profited” from the sales. Loutchisky and his many disciples have reduced the issue to a choice between “peasants” and “bourgeois.” The actualities of rural existence make such a simplification unhelpful. If the sales at Beaumont cannot resolve all the issues, they can at least emphasize the complexity of the problem and suggest that all elements of the local society “profited” in some degree from the land sales.57

54 A. D., Q-28, Tableau des Ventes; Q-403, Liste alphabétique des différents propriétaires déposés (246 names). See also A. D., Q-1118, Indemnisation, 1825–29. The departmental summary of sales indicates only the number of ventes, not the areas. The district summaries, unfortunately incomplete, indicate that the sales were in lots of two to three acres in the vast majority of cases. The author is well aware of the imprecision of this remark. Hopefully the research project of Marc Bouloiseau on the transfer of émigré land will produce exact figures.

55 For a brief review of this literature, see R. Forster, “The Survival of the Nobility during the French Revolution,” Past and Present (July, 1967), 71–86. Lefebvre’s work on the department of the Nord was a model of precision on this point but it was not followed rigorously by his successors.


57 J. Loutchisky, “De la petite propriété en France avant le Révolution,” Revue historique LIX (1895), 71. Among his disciples one might include Lefebvre, Marion, Bouloiseau, and Soboul. Lefebvre, of course, was well aware of the nuances in the rural community; they were more important to him than the bourgeois-peasant dichotomy. Loutchisky himself asked if both peasant and bourgeois may have benefited from the land transfers of the Revolution.
The House of Saulx-Tavanes

Table V.1  Buyers of the Land of Saulx-Tavanes at Beaumont

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession or métier</th>
<th>Area Purchased (in Journaux—0.8 Acres)</th>
<th>Revenue of Acquisition (Government Estimate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>Meadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Cultivateur</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Id.</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Id.</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Id.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Id.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Id.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Id.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Id.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Id.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Id.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Artisan (blacksmith)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Id. (blacksmith)</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Id. (wheelwright)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Id. (stonemason)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Id. (wheelwright)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Id. (mason)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Id. (mason)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Id. (mason)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Id. (mason)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Id. (miller)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Id. (stonemason)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Id. (weaver)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Winegrower</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Id.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Teacher</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Id.</td>
<td>0.1 (and one house)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Manouvrier</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Id.</td>
<td>0.1 (and one house)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Id.</td>
<td>0.5 (and 0.2 vineyard)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Gardener</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Widow</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Bourgeois of Dijon</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Avoué of Dijon</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Unidentified</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. The Commune of Beaumont</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 224.2  36.8  2,731.—4

Source: A. D., Q-1117, List of 34 new proprietors for the Contribution foncière of 1793; A. D., L-838, Contribution foncière of 1791 with amendments. Taxes in 1793 were raised to 6 sous, 7 deniers to the livre or one-third of revenue.

The three largest buyers acquired about half of the arable land (115.5 journaux) and a third of the meadow (11.8 journaux) put on sale. Moniotte, the former tenant of the duke at Beaumont, added 64 acres (80 journaux) to his holdings, plus the mill worth an additional 600
livres revenue.\(^{58}\) He increased his landed income from 441 to 1,913 livres. Perhaps more important than the added income was the fact that he was now the third largest propriétaire in the commune.\(^{59}\) He was no longer primarily a fermier or sous-fermier. The two other largest buyers were Sieurs Petitjean and Bonnard, both Bourgeois residing in Dijon. Petitjean had been resident steward in Beaumont in 1792.\(^{60}\) These two men bought 36 acres (45 journaux) of the duke's land par moitié, that is, as a single acquirer. The tax roll indicates that both Moniotte and Petitjean subsequently made other purchases and exchanges in the commune, apparently at the expense of a number of winegrowers. There is no evidence that any of these men played any political role during the Revolution in the commune or at Dijon, but they clearly "profited" from it. Perhaps they can be labelled "rural bourgeois," but more precisely, Moniotte was an agriculturalist (a farmer in the American sense), Bonnard a lawyer, and Petitjean an ex-administrator and non-resident landowner. Gueulaud, former tenant at Blagny and active in communal government, made more modest gains, buying four acres to become a propriétaire for the first time.\(^{61}\) The plot was too small to live on and Gueulaud still needed land to rent. But his relation to the land was changing, just as Moniotte's was.

The other half of the land placed on sale at Beaumont was bought by thirty-one local residents, all living within a five mile radius of the commune. There were at least twenty buyers from Beaumont itself, a village of 94 households in 1789.\(^{62}\) There were an equal number of new owners, men who had never owned any land before. The table indicates the distribution among social groups. The number of small buyers, some purchasing only a tenth of an acre, was facilitated by national legislation

\(^{58}\) A. D., L–838, Article 20. Moniotte must have owned at least 200 acres.

\(^{59}\) A. D., L–838, Article 4 (Juillet—4,584 livres); Article 11 (Petitjean—2,518 livres).

\(^{60}\) The duke had no steward at Beaumont before the Revolution. Petitjean was probably employed by the government in 1792. A. D., Q–876 The administration of Issur-Tille to J-B. Petitjean, régisseur at Beaumont. Petitjean was a resident of Beaumont by the tax roll of 1791, but a resident of Dijon later.

\(^{61}\) A. D., L–838. See Sections K and J indicating land transfers subsequent to the sale of the Tavanes property. See Article 182 for Gueland. Article 47 indicates "Bartet, notary" with a revenue of 98 livres. Apparently he was not a buyer.

\(^{62}\) A. D., C–5927 (1789). See Source of Table of Buyers, above.
which had become increasingly favorable to the small proprietor. By the law of July 25, 1793, local administrations were encouraged to divide the farms (les corps de ferme) and arrange payment in ten annual installments at five per cent. It was not until March, 1795, that the Convention began to demand down-payments of a quarter of the price and six-year payment schedules. In addition to this favorable legal climate, the depreciation of the assignats, especially after Thermidor (July, 1794), must have aided anyone who could sell foodstuffs or even the wares of his shop or bench. It is still surprising to find twelve artisans, two wine-growers, and even three daylaborers with sufficient capital to buy land. One acre of grainland at 300 livres would cost 30 livres per annum, assuming no down-payment was required. This sum represented about thirty days’ wages. True, some of the buyers pooled their resources. Five of the artisans bore the same family name of Anselme. They may well have bid as a single buyer for the land and then divided it afterward.

What of the other villages? At Arc-sur-Tille, 388 “lots” were sold under the supervision of Pierre Jacquemard, “commissaire expert” and local notary. Jean Calignon, the duke’s former tenant and the new mayor of the commune, bought 39 of these “lots” or about 150 acres of land out of a total of 1,300 acres eventually sold. The purchase included the central corps of the farm, a fifty-acre piece containing the farm buildings—tenants’ lodging, two granges, stables for 36 cows and oxen, large storage sheds, kennels, and barns which the government report characterized as “beaux” and “considerables,” some built in “the last four years.”

Calignon had not permitted revolutionary politics to prevent him from making improvements. Could he possibly have anticipated in 1790 that the buildings would be his in September, 1794? Again like Moniotte at Beaumont, Calignon had become a propriétaire and cultivateur. Now at last he could fully exercise his talents as an agriculturalist. In 1801, Vaillant’s new statistical survey of the department contained this interesting passage:

64 A. D., Q-28. At Lux, prices varied from 200 to 300 livres per journal; A. D., Q-193. At Arc-sur-Tille, they ranged from 400 to 500 livres on good grainland.
65 A. D., Q-117, List of 34 new proprietors.
66 A. D., Q-193, ventes (Arc-sur-Tille).
In the last years M. Calignon, propriétaire at Arc-sur-Tille has cultivated *arujutus* (white oats). Sixty kilograms of this seed has been planted on 70 *ares* (two acres) bearing wheat the previous year. It produced 1,350 kilograms or about 23 to one. This yield is incomparably higher than the yield of ordinary oats which never exceeds seven to one. Moreover, the white oats weigh a quarter more than the other.67

Calignon had gained regional notoriety as an agricultural improver. Independent ownership of 150 acres had been a greater stimulus, perhaps, than leasing 1,500 acres from Duc de Saulx-Tavanès.

The rest of the duke’s arable and meadow land at Arc was sold to 80 buyers, 66 of whom became proprietors for the first time. As at Beaumont, they bought in lots of one to three acres; only Calignon’s pieces were large.68 At Lux, the largest buyer was one Claude Dugier of nearby Veronnes, who bought 112 acres of arable land and 21 acres of meadow, about forty per cent of the land sold in the commune. Here neither the tenant Jacotot nor the tenant at neighboring Tilchâtel bought any land. But Perriquet, the tenant at Orville, bought a few acres along with a half-dozen *laboureurs* and about sixty local artisans, winegrowers, and “little people” who purchased an average of one acre each.69 At Tilchâtel, one Jean Meurtot bought a large lot of 104 acres of the duke’s land, while the rest was sold in 52 “lots” of less than one acre each.70

There is no doubt that here were some large purchases, either by non-residents such as Petitjean or by former tenants such as Calignon. But it would be wrong to see these men as swallowing up all, or even most of the land placed on the market. There was also a swarm of very small buyers, many of whom now owned land for the first time. To be sure, Michelet’s utopia of small independent owners was not suddenly created out of the débris of noble estates like Tavanès’s. Independent ownership in the Dijon plain was already a fact before 1789. But the sales of national land did reinforce a sense of proprietorship at all levels of rural society, converting even the *fermiers* to the mystique of ownership.

69 A. D., Q–28, Articles 638–708.
70 A. D., Q–28, Articles 1152–1207; See also M. Balotte, *La baronie de Saint-Julien à travers les âges* (Dijon, 1961). The pattern of purchases, a few large, but a substantial number of small ones, was the same at Saint-Julien, five miles northwest of Arc-sur-Tille.
After 1800, the Napoleonic regime established a system of "electoral colleges" made up of local "notables," men chosen for life, who had a certain revenue and social standing in each canton and who could be relied upon to support the regime and serve as a pool of recruits for the imperial administration. The "colleges" had negligible political power, their deliberations were strictly circumscribed by the prefect.\(^{71}\) If it is too much to say that these lists present the men who "won" the Revolution, they clearly include those who did rather better than survive it.

The list for the Côte d’Or includes at least five of the Saulx-Tavanes’ former fermiers: the Rochet brothers, Calignon, Jacotot, and Marchand. All but Jacotot were among the 550 most heavily taxed people in the department in 1802. It is not altogether surprising that the ironmasters along the Tille River—Robert, the new owner of the forge at Tilchâtel, Lagnier at Tarsul, and Dubois at Diénay are also listed—were favored by a new regime that needed cannon, arms, and naval supplies. Their political activity was perhaps less expected. Jean-Baptiste Rochet, despite his difficulties with the Tavanes lease, took over another forge on the Tille, and drew an income of at least 3,000 francs in 1810. His political career since 1789 was even more impressive. Rochet became vice president of the departmental directorate, president of the administration of the district, of the civil tribunal, and of the municipal government at Is-sur-Tille, member of the General Council of the department, and president of the canton. Rochet’s older brother, Jean-Frédéric, was ironmaster and mayor at Bèze. Much less active politically, he was considered by the prefect, along with Robert of Tilchâtel, as among the six “most notable” ironmasters in the department in 1810. He and Robert had incomes of 10,000 and 12,000 francs respectively, and an annual production of iron valued at six times this amount. Rochet’s son-in-law and partner, M. Sirodot, was cited in a prefectoral report as especially “active” and intelligent, his service in the army as an artillery officer no doubt having contributed to his knowledge of ironmaking. Clearly, the imperial government encouraged men like Robert and Rochet much more than their noble landlord did twenty years before.

In 1810 Jacotot was a propriétaire with 1,200 francs revenue, modest in comparison with the ironmasters, but independent. Nicolas Marchand,

\(^{71}\) These “notables” appear as names on the electoral lists of 1802–10 and the most wealthy on the departmental lists of the 600 plus imposés (1802–7), A. N., F 1 C III. See the Bulletin des lois XXI, 535–50 for the law establishing the electoral colleges.
négociant and propriétaire became mayor of Arc-sur-Tille after Jean Calignon. Calignon himself probably died before 1810—his name disappears from the lists after 1802—but his son appears as a “notable” from Dijon. Having studied medicine before the Revolution, the young Jean Calignon served as army doctor during the war, to become a respectable surgeon in 1810 with an income of 3,000 francs. There was nothing unique about moving from the grain trade to medicine, but Calignon’s long struggles with both Tavanes and the villagers of Arc-sur-Tille may have encouraged his son to take up a more secure profession in town. It is also possible that the war had made the medical profession more respectable.

A number of village notaries also advanced their careers, thanks in part to the Revolution. Jean-Baptiste Petitjean became justice of the peace at Beaumont and a member of the municipal council and hospice at Dijon, with a revenue of 4,500 francs. Jean Bartet, the notary who kept the terrier of Beaumont for the villagers in their contest with the duke twenty-five years earlier became juge de paix and one of the fourteen “notables” of the canton. Jean-Baptiste Boniard, modest cultivateur with only 150 livres income, became president of the municipality of Beaumont and mayor of Champagne. With the possible exception of the hospice at Dijon, these were not important offices, but now there was a place for the village notary and small owner-occupier in a more elaborate local administration.

Land surveyors (arpenteurs) also “survived,” though perhaps less successfully than fermiers, notaries, and cultivateurs. Edme Morizot—perhaps the same maître Morizot the duke attempted to exile as a “troublemaker”—became justice of the peace and assistant to the mayor of Is-sur-Tille, the most important bourg in the district. On the other side of the department, in a village near Saulieu, the name of François Fénéon appears. He was 56 in 1810, identified as a “former commissioner of feudal rights” and manager (regisseur) of a private estate, with an estimated income of only 700 francs, the second lowest on a list of 21 “notables” from a completely rural canton. It is also worth noting that the name of Jacquemard does not appear on any of the electoral lists for 1810. Quite possibly, the Napoleonic prefect did not feel that Jacquemard should be recognized as a “notable.”

If these few examples suggest changes in social mobility, the release of certain entrepreneurial energies, and the arrival of “new men” in the local
government, there were continuities as well. At least nine former coun-
cilors of Parlement and four magistrates of the old Chamber of Accounts
appear on the list, with incomes ranging from five to 20,000 francs.
Louis Maulbon, former Trésorier de France and erstwhile helpful ac-
quaintance of the first duke, is listed as propriétaire with 6,500 francs
revenue. He was a member of the General Council of the department in
1810. Near the end of the list of the 550 "most heavily taxed" for the year
1802—but not among the "notables" of 1810—was Charles Saulx-Tavanes,
propriétaire at Lux.72

* * *

Although Fénéon stopped keeping the estate accounts at the end of
1793, he did not cease his efforts on behalf of the Saulx-Tavanes. His re-
port to the duchess in 1818 makes this clear. Accusing Calignon of not
honoring verbal agreements regarding wood sales, Fénéon sought out
one of the tenant’s factors in order to obtain written receipts that he
could later use in court. He found one of these intermediaries on his
deathbed, only to learn that he had transferred all the bills of sale and
the money to Calignon. But the agent did not give up hope of recovering
written evidence from other buyers.73

More important than Fénéon’s pursuit of old tenants was his effort to
repurchase at least a few pieces of the duke’s land. There is no evidence
that the duke left either instructions or the means for Fénéon to serve as
a straw man to repurchase large portions of the estate. But Fénéon was
able to buy scattered pieces, totalling 80 acres of grainland and meadow
worth over 100,000 francs and to resell some, making a profit of 40,000 in
the process.74 His greatest service, however, consisted of liquidating fam-
ily debts, presumably in assignats, at a considerable discount. In January,
1792, at the death of the first duke, the debts had attained the spectacular
figure of 1,622,553 livres, with annual interest charges of 84,160 livres, not
including obligations to artisans, merchants, and suppliers of all kinds.75
But after 1793, there were few creditors of the family who believed they

72 A. N., F1 C III (Côte d’Or), (3), (4). For the ironmasters, see A. N., F12937,
Liste des fabricants les plus notables des départements (1810).
73 A. D., E-1744, Letter of February 11, 1818.
74 A. D., E-1728, Etat des affaires faites pour Mme la duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes,
November 18, 1818.
75 A. D., E-1727, Etat général des créances, January 1, 1792.
would ever hear of the duke again, much less collect their money. Fénéon apparently chose the winter 1796–97, the height of the post-Thermidorian inflation, to begin liquidation. A portion of Fénéon’s report will give an idea of the type of operation he was conducting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit of M. Guershal</th>
<th>23,500 livres</th>
<th>28,200 livres (27,851 francs)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and five years’ interest—</td>
<td>28,200 livres</td>
<td>Profit 11,182 francs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquidated for 16,669 fr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit of Petitor</th>
<th>4,600 livres</th>
<th>5,520 livres (5,451 francs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and five years’ interest—</td>
<td>5,520 livres</td>
<td>Profit 861 francs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquidated for 4,590 fr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit of Villière</th>
<th>19,000 livres</th>
<th>22,800 livres (22,518 francs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and five years’ interest—</td>
<td>22,800 livres</td>
<td>Profit 3,753 francs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquidated for 18,765 fr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit of Duleu</th>
<th>8,000 livres</th>
<th>9,600 livres (9,481 francs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and five years’ interest—</td>
<td>9,600 livres</td>
<td>Profit 5,881 francs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquidated for 3,600 fr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The account indicates that the franc was slightly stronger than the livre.

Fénéon later claimed that he had saved the family 86,359 livres by his “acquisitions and negotiations” at Dijon and Paris. Even after the return of the duke and duchess, Fénéon was able to continue liquidating the family debts at substantial discounts. But where did he obtain the capital to pay off creditors in the 1790s? Was he in contact with the second duke after all? In any event, it is not surprising that after his return from abroad in 1799, the second duke continued to employ his father’s agent. Fénéon was still useful.

If defense lawyers in 1801 spoke of the “poor vestiges of an opulent succession,” the Tavanes properties were not all lost beyond recall. A great deal had been sold, but some 5,000 acres of woodland was in government hands and still unsold. Fortunately for the duke and duchess, the suggestion of the Department of Water and Forest that the Tavanes tracts be declared permanent national property or “Imperial Wood” was not followed through. If this forest could be restituted intact, the

76 A. D., E-1728, Etat, November 18, 1818. The precise date is not given. Fénéon’s accounts refer to five years’ interest in every case. I have identified one of the loans, originally contracted in December, 1791.

77 Ibid.

78 A. D., Q-1118, Restitutions, An XII–1821.
second duke could still hope to enjoy a landed income of near 30,000 francs, a third of the income in 1789, but a sum worth having. Unfortunately, the estate was now endangered not by direct public confiscation or sale, but by the inheritance claims of the duke’s two sisters and his uncle. They were not unaware of recent changes in the laws of inheritance. As early as April, 1793, before the sale of the properties in Burgundy, the countesses Castellane and Kercado renounced their rights under the new inheritance law to an equal share in the fortune of their father. Instead, they submitted claims to the full payment of their dowries to which they were entitled under a new decree in 1794. They thereby became privileged creditors of the inheritance of the amount of 200,000 livres each. Dangerous enough to a shrinking estate, the sisters were joined by their uncle, younger brother of the first duke, who claimed another 100,000 livres by his marriage contract in 1771. If family charges had been a threat before the Revolution, they were now a catastrophe. The entire estate was not worth much more than 500,000 livres in 1800.

The action of these close relatives is an interesting commentary on the breakdown of family solidarity during the Revolutionary decade. No doubt the second duke’s brother-in-law, Comte de Kercado, had his own family interests to consider and exerted pressure on his wife to assert her dowry claims. But the reputation of the two sisters as “Saulx-Républícaines” was not entirely unearned. For one thing, the Comtesse de Castellane had taken advantage of the new divorce law. For another, the sisters had not waited for the return of their brother from Russia to take matters into their own hands. In the summer of 1799, they had begun action in the courts of Dijon, and by the spring of 1800, they had surveyed and divided the wood into two lots of about 2,000 acres each. The second duke’s uncle, Charles-Dominique-Sulpice, was not far behind. By the fall of 1800, he had submitted a claim to 600 acres of wood at Arc-sur-Tille. In older aristocratic circles at least, such rapid conformity to the new laws of inheritance—indeed improving on equal divi-

---

80 A. D., Q-1118, Liquidation des créances, Claim of 3 Nivôse, An. VIII.
81 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, p. 154n.
82 A. D., Q-1118. The surveyor was one Jacques Fénelon of Saulieu.
83 Ibid.
EMIGRATION AND RETURN

sion by claiming strict enforcement of the marriage contract—smacked of Republicanism. Was it simply a case of every man for himself? The young Duchess de Saulx expressed it this way.

More than others we have suffered the consequences of the emigration. At the very moment their brother returned, my sisters-in-law took possession of the wood he owned in Burgundy, the only property that had not been sold. Already, because of the consequences of revolutionary law and the cupidity of one of the sisters, the rich inheritance of M. de Montrevel escaped us. This dissension in the family and the countless negotiations either with business people or at the offices examining émigré claims caused a great deal of trouble after our return to France. 84

Though only twenty-eight in 1800, the duchess was not defenseless. More determined and intelligent than her husband, she had learned a great deal about money in her seven years abroad. But the negotiations were long. Although one sister-in-law proved reasonable, the other held out for full payment of her dowry and one third of her mother’s inheritance.

Our arrangements over money have ended with Madame de Castellane, the eldest of my sisters-in-law. Her sentiments were perfectly noble, and although subjected to many privations, she resisted the temptation to take possession of her brother’s land. Madame de Kercado, the younger sister, imposed conditions that scarcity of money made impossible to accept. 85

It was not until 1809 that an “arrangement” was made with Comtesse de Kercado. The duke and duchess had to pay her 290,000 francs in order to regain the forests and the remains of the maternal inheritance. 86 The family accounts, memoranda, and legal briefs in these years make it plain how long and difficult these negotiations were. Even after a sum had been agreed upon, the schedule of payments provided fresh problems for a much reduced income. Every possible resource had to be mustered.

Fénéon was again in the family employ. This time his services were not limited to Burgundy. In 1803 he went to Caen in Normandy to regain whatever properties had not been sold. The prefect proved cooperative and Fénéon regained 250 acres of wood that was sold a few years later to General Grouchy for 58,000 francs. He also tracked down a number of

84 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, p. 154.
85 Ibid., p. 172.
86 A. D., E-1728, Fénéon to Duchesse, February 6, 1809; Accounts 1806–1818.
purchasers of the duke's land in 1789, though it is not clear that he gained more than a promise to pay. Returning to Dijon, he had more success. He regained 400 acres of unsold woodland and some 80 acres of grain and meadow land. All this was not painless. In 1806, the second duke's uncle was still cutting wood on the estate and had to be stopped by a court order. It was not until 1811 that the state gave up its last claim to 500 acres of forest "withheld" in 1800. Nevertheless, a domain had been reconstituted. It consisted almost entirely of forest—5,000 acres of it. The wood was sold in much the same manner as before the Revolution, that is, as firewood for Dijon, as fuel for the ironmasters of the region, and as lumber for the navy. The new canal of Burgundy now made it possible to float logs from Dijon as well as from the river ports on the Saône. By 1812, Fénéon could promise the duchess important revenues from his wood contracts with local ironmasters who were now working for the war effort. Thanks to these contracts, Fénéon could assure his employer that the "affaire" with Madame de Kercado could be terminated.

In 1810, the duke gave his wife full power to administer all the property and business of the family by a special procuration. It had been clear for some time that the duchess was the financial manager of the family. Since her return to France, the duchess had used her influence with Talleyrand's circle to regain favor. She had not failed to cultivate such parvenus as Madame Bonaparte and even Fouche when necessary. But she was equally adept at the long, wearing financial negotiations with her in-laws and at poring over estate accounts. Her signature appears on a consignment of lumber from her wood at Arc-sur-Tille to the royal navy. Fénéon addressed his letters to the duchess rather than to

87 A. D., E-1728, Etat, November 18, 1818.
88 A. D., E-1727, Petition to halt Charles-Dominique-Sulpice de Saulx from cutting wood, by ten creditors of the Tavanes estate, An XIV (1806).
89 A. D., Q-1118, Prélèvement du 2 floréal An VIII (1800); Restitution of January 8, 1811.
90 A. D., E-1771, Sale of wood at Arc-sur-Tille "par port flottable de Dijon via le canal"—41 oaks for the royal navy, 1820.
92 A. D., E-1728, Letter of February 6, 1809.
93 A. D., Q-1118, Procuration of June 2, 1810.
94 See note 90 above.
the duke even before the official act of 1810. Moreover, the very absence of comment about him from any contemporary source suggests that the second duke was not a forceful personality. His five years of silence in the House of Peers after 1815 seems to confirm this impression.

In 1820, at the age of only fifty-one, the second duke died. The duchess was to outlive her husband by forty-one years. Her long life marks the last generation of the house of Tavanes. Her memoirs, written after 1830, trace a life of declining expectations, disappointments, and the final alienation from a society that was no longer hers. With due allowance for her peculiar inclination to romantic nostalgia, the impressions of the duchess in these last years suggest something of a more general significance—the sense of being left behind by a new society.

This is especially interesting since the duchess had demonstrated much greater will and adaptability than her husband on behalf of a family name that was hers by marriage only. In the first decades of the new century, she was still optimistic. Her return to Burgundy after the emigration made her feel that the old rural society was still there.

We left for Burgundy. I was so happy to see this province again. Tokens of affection preceded our arrival and even the Revolution had not destroyed those sentiments of which M. de Saulx continually received proof. ...The old ideas still had great power. One spoke with pride of the old Estates of the province and one often recalled M. de Tavanes who governed here for forty years and whose authority was equally approved by the court and by the people of all classes. At this time [ca. 1805] the idea of seigneurial power was still associated with the fall of revolutionary principles in the countryside. Men were proud to have held offices of seigneurial justice, and association with our family was remembered as a title of honor.95

That the local peasantry were making the best of the situation seems likely. Indeed, their alleged respect for the seigneurial system was pure hypocrisy. But the attitude, the wishful thinking of the duchess, was not feigned. She was touched by the poor sharecropper who saved the family three acres of land, by the “old race of the woodcutters,” and by the dialect of the modest villagers. She indulged a taste for gardening that she had “learned in a foreign land,” supervised the needed repairs of château and farm buildings, and interested herself “even in agriculture.”

95 Duchesse de Saulx-Tavanes, Mémoires, p. 173. (Italics mine.)
We were still young, and our efforts seemed to promise long years of happiness. The birth of our son fulfilled our deepest wishes.\footnote{Ibid.}

The struggle to reconstitute the family estate was time-consuming, but effort was slowly rewarded, at least in material terms. Fénéon was busy again, and there was much traveling between Paris and the château of Lux. By 1809, the receipts for six months exceeded 17,000 francs, and the duchess, at the age of thirty-seven, could afford a few \textit{foilies} in Paris—a set of porcelain china, a fur piece, and three elastic corsets.\footnote{A. D., E-1728, \textit{Mémoires}, 1806–1818.} The daughters could go to school in the capital and meet the right people. The Napoleonic regime, "checkered" though it might have seemed, had not been unkind to the duke and duchess.

The Restoration opened up even brighter prospects. Louis XVIII named the father of the duchess minister of State and peer of France. Equally loyal, if less accomplished aristocrats were not forgotten either. Duc de Saulx-Tavenes was given a seat in the House of Peers and a pension of 12,500 francs.\footnote{The pension was revoked in December, 1819, by the Decazes ministry. I wish to thank Mr. Gordon Anderson of Hamilton, Scotland, now doing research in France on the Restoration peerage, for drawing my attention to this information. See \textit{A. N.}, 51.AP.5. Papiers Gabriel Deville, Pensions of Peers. See also F. Ponteil, \textit{Les institutions de la France de 1814 à 1870} (Paris, 1966), pp. 20–21, 147–48.} And the reestablishment of the Bourbon government promised even more in the form of indemnification of the \textit{émigrés}. But like others of her class, the duchess had to wait ten years for legislation and four more for payment. Tenaciously, she carried on the correspondence necessary to substantiate her claims under the Indemnity Law of 1825. Shrewdly, she drew up the estimates of income in 1790 that served as the basis for indemnification. The seigneurial rights, so substantial in 1789, were now minimized, since they were excluded from the provisions of the new law. And since debts had to be deducted from the final claim, they too had to be played down.\footnote{A. D., Q-1118, \textit{Etat général des revenus pour biens-fonds alienés}, December 26, 1827.}

The duchess soon found herself dealing with one of the most tight-fisted accountants in France, Comte de Villèle.\footnote{J. Fourcassié, \textit{Villèle} (Paris, 1954). Villèle was a \textit{gentilhomme campagnard} from Toulouse; his frugality was legend. For him, the simplest domestic furnishings were \textit{fantaisies}.} Her efforts to maxi-
mize the claim did not pass the eyes of the alerted Ministry of Finance. The duchess could not have appreciated the following dispatch:

The Secretary-General of Finances observes that the debits applicable to M. Charles-Marie-Casimir Saulx-Tavanes must include 288,019 francs in addition to the debts already communicated.101

In February, 1828, the government suspended liquidation of the Saulx-Tavanes indemnity. But the duchess did not give way. How could a Tavanes née Choiseul surrender to a Villèle! For the next two years she persisted in writing to the prefect, protesting the interminable delay in payment. Her technical competence was reflected in the following passage:

I shall reiterate what I said in my letter of November 28, in which I requested that a distinction be made between the principal of each debt and the interest on capital and the rentes. My purpose is to oppose the deduction of these interests from the amount of the indemnity.102

It should be added that the prefect was one Marquis d'Arbaud, and that the duchess always employed his noble title rather than his official one. Her references to correspondence with the prefect's brother in Madrid were also helpful. But it was probably the change in ministers in Paris that aided the duchess most. In January, 1830, not six months before the July Revolution, the Polignac government awarded an indemnity of 279,194 francs to the Saulx-Tavanes, 120,000 francs more than the estimate of the Villèle ministry.103

What did the duchess do with this capital? Recall that the indemnity was paid in government bonds at three per cent and that the market for bonds had fallen since 1825. There was a temptation to hold them for the income. Moreover, the indemnity had to be divided among all the children under the provisions of the Napoleonic Code. The duchess, as

101 A. D., Q–1118, Letter from the Ministry of Finance, December 1, 1827.
102 A. D., Q–1118, Duchesse de Saulx to Prefect, March 16, 1826.
103 A. D., Q–1118, Indemnisation, 1825–29. The revenues of the lost properties in 1790 were estimated at 50,652 livres and the interest charges at 37,002 livres, leaving a net income of 13,650 livres. This figure was then multiplied by 18 to arrive at an indemnification of 245,700 livres. This was subsequently adjusted upward to 279,194 livres. But it was the deduction of debts that was such a serious blow to families like the Tavanes. See A. Gain, La Restauration et les biens des émigrés (Nancy, 1929), II, 249–50. "The administration assumed a clear position against the émigrés and in favor of their creditors." Ibid., II, 253.
guardian of her son, could claim only half of the sum.\(^{104}\) Two married daughters claimed the other half. The third daughter had forfeited her claim because of her marriage to a foreigner. Furthermore, the indemnity represented a final land settlement that reassured the Revolutionary buyers and made them less willing to sell out to the old owners. Land was still in great demand; population pressure in the department did not begin to recede much before 1830, and the new proprietors would hold on if possible.\(^{105}\) There is only one example of a purchase of land by the duchess. In 1826 she bought 53 acres of grain and meadow land near Beaumont for 25,000 francs in coin. The seller is identified as M. Bureau of Bèze, almost certainly the ironmaster and tenant at Tilchâtel in 1790, since then retired as propriétaire.\(^{106}\) That the duchess was interested in improving the estate is indicated by a royal ordinance in May, 1829, authorizing her to establish a blast furnace for smelting iron on the Bèze River near one of her mills.\(^{107}\) This was six months before the indemnity was awarded.

But if the duchess was unable to use the indemnity to buy much land, she nevertheless felt that the house of Tavanes still stood, its continuity assured by a son who would one day occupy Lux. Roger-Gaspard-Sidoine, third duke of Saulx-Tavanes, could scarcely have known his father. Born in 1806, he was educated by his mother. His sojourn in Vienna in 1823 and the marriage of his sister in Madrid to a diplomat supports the possibility that he was being groomed for a diplomatic career.\(^{108}\) Unfortunately, whatever hopes the duchess had placed in her son were not

\(^{104}\) *A. D.*, Q-1118. The indemnity reads that the young duke "is designated by the wish of his father for one-fourth and by the law for one-third of the remaining three-quarters." Thus the new inheritance law struck the family fortune again.

\(^{105}\) During the Restoration, the birth rate in the department was 26 and the death rate 30; by 1870, it had fallen to 24 and the mortality rate to 26. Rural depopulation was not marked until after 1850. G. Martin et P. Martenet, *La Côte d'Or: étude d'économie rurale* (Dijon, 1909), pp. 30-34, 112n. Modern demographers may rectify these estimates somewhat, but it is doubtful that the demand for land lessened before mid-century.

\(^{106}\) *A. D.*, E-1795, Contract of November 3, 1826.


\(^{108}\) *Ibid.* The land purchase of 1826 was made in the name of the young duke still in his minority and living in Vienna; *A. D.*, Q-1118, Letter of August 12, 1825, "Madame de Greppy married a foreigner after April 1, 1814 and by this marriage lost her French nationality."
EMIGRATION AND RETURN

to be fulfilled. What little we know about the third duke points to an unstable and sickly boy, faible d'esprit according to one authority, of a “bizarre character” according to another, and “melancholy” according to still another. Perhaps it is enough to know that he never married and that he committed suicide in 1845, at the age of thirty-nine. With him ended the long line of Saulx-Tavanes.

The duchess was to live for another twenty-six years. She died in 1861, at the age of eighty-nine. The Marquis de Valous tells us that, at the end of the last century, the old people of Lux still spoke of the dowager Duchesse de Saulx, who passed the belle saison at the old château. She could be remembered, dressed in white, meditating for long hours by the steps of the château or strolling along the paths of the park. As the years passed, she spent more time at Lux, attended by a small household staff and two lady companions. It was here that she wrote her memoirs. Most of her reflections on these last years have not been published. All we have are the following lines.

I lack strength to retrace the years which followed the happy moment of my return to Burgundy. If there have been happy times, there have also been troubles provoked by powerful interests which gave rise to watchfulness and even alarm....

I have known the illusion of hope for those whom I loved.... It has slipped away and nothing will replace it. All the ties which hold me to life have been successively broken. Only a few traces of what I have known remain. Ideas, opinions, mores have changed; and like the daughters of Jerusalem, I mourn the miseries of Zion in a strange land....

The allusion to fearfulness gives some substance to an anecdote allegedly told by the old woodcutters of the forest of Velours. The second duke, husband of the duchess, was said to have seduced his intendant’s wife, who bore him an illegitimate child. In revenge, the agent defrauded the dowager duchess by falsifying the accounts, especially those relating to the woodcutters’ cottages in the forest of Velours. The anecdote would have us believe that the agent’s efforts were so successful


111 Ibid., 174–75.
that, they led to the division and sale of the Forest of Velours in 1853.\footnote{S. de Montenay, "Comment la maison de Saulx-Tavanes fut ruinée en dernier lieu par son homme d'affaires", \textit{Pays de Bourgogne}, No. 45 (1964). The cottages still stand (1964) at "Etoile de la Duchesse," a curious little hamlet in the middle of the Forest of Velours about three miles east of Lux.}

The accuracy of the story is not important. But as a reflection of the local attitude toward an old noble family, the tale has significance. The tone is that of retributory justice if not spiteful revenge. If this was the way old aristocratic families were regarded in the nineteenth century, the "broken ties" about which the duchess spoke may not have been purely subjective, a sign of old age. What did the loyal and conscientious Fénéon mean at the end of his final report to the family in 1818 when he wrote that the duchess "will no longer be bothered hearing about me"?\footnote{After submitting a bill for 28,218 francs based on his services to the family since the Revolution, Fénéon wrote: "Elle \textit{[the duchess]} ne sera plus fatiguée d'entendre parler de moi. Dijon, 19 novembre, 1818."}

After thirty-seven years of service, had even Fénéon turned against the family? Between 1820 and 1860, the \textit{beau nom} of Saulx-Tavanes lost its luster.