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From the (Boston) Columbian Centinel.

SIR SIDNEY SMITH.

[The following interesting account of the escape of this officer is extracted from a late publication, entitled "Secret Anecdotes of the 18th Fructidor, (Sep. 4, 1797,) and New Memoirs of the Persons deported to Guiana, written by themselves."]

"When I was taken at sea" said the gallant Commodore, "I was accompanied by my secretary and M. de Tr—, a French gentleman who had emigrated from his country, and who it had been agreed was to pass for my servant, in the hope of saving his life by that disguise. Nor were our expectations frustrated; for John (as I called him) was lucky enough to escape all suspicion.

"On my arrival in France, I was treated at first with unexampled rigour, and was told that I ought to be tried under a military commission, and shut as a spy. The Government, however, gave orders for my removal to Paris, where I was sent to the Abbaye, and together with my two companions in misfortune, was kept a close prisoner.

"Meanwhile the means of escape were the constant object on which we employed our minds. The window of our prison was toward the street; and from this circumstance we derived a hope sooner or later to effect our object. We already contrived to carry on a tacit and regular correspondence, by means of signs, with some women, who could see us from their apartments, and who seemed to take the most lively interest in our fate. They proposed themselves to assist in facilitating my liberation; an offer which I accepted with great pleasure; and it is my duty to confess, that notwithstanding the enormous expences occasioned by their fruitless attempts, they have not less claim to my gratitude. Till the time of my departure, in which however they had no share, their whole employment was endeavouring to save me; and they had the address at all times to deceive the vigilance of my keepers. On both sides we used borrowed names, under which we corresponded, theirs being taken from the ancient mythology; so that I had now direct communication with Thalia, Melpomene, and Clio.

"At length I was removed to the Temple, where my three Meses soon contrived means of intelligence, and every day offered me new schemes for effecting my escape.—At first I eagerly accepted them all, though reflection soon destroyed the hopes to which the love of liberty had given birth. I was also resolved not to leave my Secretary in prison, and still less poor John, whose safety was more dear to me than my own emancipation.

"In the Temple, John was allowed to enjoy a considerable degree of liberty. He was lightly dressed like an English jockey, and knew how to assume the manners that corresponded with that character. Every one was fond of John, who drank and fraternized with the turnkeys, and made love to the keeper's daughter, who was persuaded that he would marry her; and as the little English jockey was not supposed to have received a very brilliant education, he had learnt, by means of study, sufficient to mutilate his native tongue.

"John appeared very attentive and eager in my service, and always spoke to his master in a very respectful manner. I scolded him from time to time with much gravity; and he played his part so well, that I frequently surprised myself forgetting the friend and seriously giving orders to the valet. At length John's wife, Madame de Tr—, a very interesting lady, arrived at Paris and made the most uncommon exertions to free us from our captivity. She dared not come, however, to the Temple through fear of discovery; but from a neighbouring house she daily beheld her husband, who, as he walked to and fro, enjoyed alike in secret the pleasure of contemplating the friend of his bosom. Madame de Tr—, now communicated a plan for delivering us from prison to a sensible and courageous young man of her acquaintance, who immediately acceded to it without hesitation. This Frenchman, who was sincerely attached to his country, said to Madame Tr—, I will serve Sidney Smith with pleasure, because I believe the English government intend to restore Louis XVIII. to the throne but if the Commodore is to fight against France, and not for the King of France, Heaven forbid I should assist him!"

"Ch. L'Oiseau (for that was the name our young friend assumed) was connected with the Agents of the King, then confined to the Temple, and for whom he was also contriving the means of escape. It was intended we should all get off together. M. La Vilhaineis being condemned only to a years imprisonment, was resolved not to quit his present situation; but Brothier and Duverne de Preele were to follow our example. Had our scheme succeeded this Duverne

would not perhaps have ceased to be an honest man; for until then he had conducted himself as such. His condition must now be truly deplorable for I do not think him formed by nature for the commission of crimes.

"Every thing was now prepared for the execution of our project. The means proposed by Ch. L'Oiseau appeared practicable, and we resolved to adopt them. A hole twenty feet long was to be made in a cellar adjoining to the prison, and the apartments of which the cellar belonged were at our disposal, Madameoiselle D—, rejecting every prudential consideration, generously came there to reside for a week, and being young the other lodgers attributed to her alone the frequent visits of Ch. L'Oiseau. Thus every thing seemed to favour our wishes. No one in the house in question had any suspicions; and the amiable little child Madameoiselle D—, had with her, and who was only 7 years old, was so far from betraying our secret, that she always beat a little drum, and made a noise, while the work was going on in the cellar.

"Meanwhile L'Oiseau had continued his labours a considerable time without any appearance of day light, and he was apprehensive he had attempted the opening considerably too low. It was necessary therefore, that the wall should be founded, and for this purpose a mason was required. Madame de Tr— recommended one, and Ch. L'Oiseau undertook to bring him, and to detain him in the cellar until we had escaped, which was to take place that very day. The worthy mason perceived the object was to save some of the victims of misfortune, and came without hesitation. He only said, "If I am arrested take care of my poor children."

"But what a misfortune now frustrated all our hopes! Though the wall was founded with the greatest precaution, the last stone fell out, and rolled into the garden of the Temple. The sentinel perceived it; the alarm was given; the guard arrived; and all was discovered. Fortunately, however, our friends had time to make their escape, and none of them were taken.

"They had, indeed taken their measures with the greatest care; and when the Commissioners of the Bureau Central came to examine the cellar and apartment, they found only a few pieces of furniture, trunks filled with logs of wood and hay, and the mats with tricoloured cockades provided for our flight, as those we wore were black.

"This first attempt, though extremely well conducted, having failed, "I wrote," continued Sir Sidney, to Madame de Tr—, both to console her and our young friend, who was miserable at having founded just as he was going into port. We were so far, however, from suffering ourselves to be discouraged, that we still continued to form new schemes for our deliverance, the keeper perceived it, and I was frequently so open as to acknowledge the fact. "Commodore," said he, "your friends are desirous of liberating you, and they only discharge their duty. I am also doing mine in watching you still more narrowly. Though this keeper was a man of unparalleled severity, yet he never departed from the rules of civility, and politeness.—He treated all the prisoners with kindness, and even risked himself on his generosity. Various proposals were made to him, but he rejected them all, watched us the more closely, and preserved the profoundest silence. One day when I dined with him, he perceived that I fixed my attention on a window then partly open, and which looked upon the street. I saw his uneasiness, and it amused me; however, to put an end to it, I said to him laughing, "I know what you are thinking of; but fear not. It is now 3 o'clock, I will make a truce with you until midnight; and I give you my word of honor that until that time even, were the doors open I would not escape. When that hour is passed, my promise is at end, and we are enemies again." "Sir," replied he, "your word is a safer bond than my bars and bolts; until midnight, therefore, I am perfectly easy."

"When we rose from the table, the keeper took me aside, and speaking with warmth, said, "Commodore, the Boulevard is not far, if you are inclined to take the air here, I will conduct you." My astonishment was extreme; nor could I conceive how this man, who appeared so severe, and so uneasy, should thus suddenly persuade himself to make me such a proposal. I accepted however, and in the evening we went out. From that time forward, this confidence always continued. Whenever I was desirous to enjoy perfect liberty, I offered him a suspension of arms until a certain hour.—This my generous enemy never refused; but when the armistice was at an end, his vigilance was unbounded.—Every post was examined; and if the government ordered that I should be kept close, the order was enforced with the greatest care. Thus I was again free to contrive and prepare for my escape, and he to treat me with the utmost rigor,

"This man had a very accurate idea of the obligations of honor. He often said to me, "Were you even under sentence of death, I would permit you to go upon your parole, because I should be certain of your return. Many very honest prisoners, and I myself among the rest, would not return in the like case; but an officer, and especially an officer of distinction, holds his honor dearer than his life. I know it to be a fact, Commodore, and therefore I should be less uneasy if he desired the gates to be always open."

"My keeper was right. While I enjoyed my liberty, I endeavored even to lose sight of the idea of escape; and I should have been averse to employ for that object, means that had occurred to my imagination during my hours of liberty. One day I received a letter containing matter of great importance, which I had the strongest desire immediately to read; but as its contents related to my intended deliverance, I asked to return to my room and break off the truce. The keeper however, refused saying, with a laugh, that he wanted to take some sleep. Accordingly he lay down, and I postponed the perusal of my letter until the evening.

"Meanwhile no opportunity of flight offered; but, on the contrary, the Directory ordered me to be treated with rigour. The keeper punctually obeyed all orders he received; and he, who, the preceding evening, had granted me the greatest liberty, now doubled my guard, in order to exercise a more perfect vigilance.

"Among the prisoners was a man condemned for certain political offences to ten years confinement, and whom all the other prisoners suspected of acting in the detestable capacity of a spy upon his companions. Their suspicions indeed appeared to have some foundation, and I felt the greatest anxiety on account of my friend John. I was, however, fortunate enough soon after to obtain his liberty. An exchange of prisoners being about to take place, I applied to have my servant included in the cartel; and though this request might have easily been refused, fortunately no difficulty arose, and it was granted.

"When the day of his departure arrived, my kind and affectionate friend could scarcely be prevailed on to leave me; until at length he yielded to my most earnest entreaties. We parted with tears in our eyes which to me were the tears of pleasure, because my friend was leaving a situation of the greatest danger. The amiable jockey was regretted by every one; our turnkeys drank a good journey to him, nor could the girl he courted, help weeping for his departure; while her mother who thought John a very good youth, hoped she should one day call him son in law.

"I was soon informed of his arrival in London; and this circumstance rendered my own captivity less painful. I should have been happy to have also exchanged my secretary—but as he had no other dangers to encounter than those which were common to us both, he always regretted the idea, considering it as a violation of that friendship, of which he has given me so many proofs.

"On the 4th September (28th Fructidor) the rigour of my confinement was still further increased.—The keeper whose name was Lafus, was displaced; I was again kept close prisoner; and, together with my liberty, lost the hopes of a peace, which I had then approaching, and which this event must contribute to postpone.

"At this time a proposal was made to me for my escape, which I adopted as my last resource. The plan was, to have forged orders drawn up for my removal to another prison, and thus carry me off. A French Gentleman, M. de Phelipeaux, a man of equal intrepidity and generosity, offered to execute this enterprise. The order then being accurately imitated, and, by means of a bribe, the real stamp of the Minister's signature procured, nothing remained but to find men sufficiently bold to put the plan in execution. Phelipeaux and Ch. L'Oiseau would have eagerly undertaken it; but both being known, and even notorious at the temple, it was absolutely necessary to employ others. Messrs. B—, and L—, therefore, both men of tried courage, accepted this office with pleasure and alacrity.

"With this order then they came to the Temple; M. B— in the dress of an Adjutant, M. L— as an officer. The keeper having perused the order, and attentively examined the minister's signature, went into another room, leaving my two deliverers for some time in the cruellest uncertainty and suspense. At length he returned, accompanied by the Register (and Greffier) of the prison, and ordered me to be called. When the Register informed me of the orders of the Directory, I pretended to be very much concerned at it; but the Adjutant assured me, in the most serious manner, that the Government were very far from intending to aggravate my misfortune, and that I should be very comfortable at the place whither he was