

POSTHUMOUS CORRESPONDANCE
(VOLUME 3)

Letter CXCVI

F.m.T. 4 September.

“I quit Mars,” Multipliandre continued, “when I had annoyed my wife too much.

“Julie and her companions had carefully conserved my body. As soon they saw that my soul had reentered it, they excited it gently, and I was able to move my limbs without pain, for the soul of the butterfly had scarcely given my organs the strength to swallow the jelly that they made me take every day.

“As soon as I had sufficient vigor, I embraced Julie tenderly. Then, having taken my cordials and drunk my bottles, I found myself too vigorous, for I possessed Julie to the point of fatiguing her. She was obliged to give me her two acolytes successively, until I had calmed down. It had been a terrible eruption.

“When my senses were peaceful, I gave her a thousand caresses. I had found her more virginal than ever; I rendered that quality to her, as well as to her companions.

“It is impossible to express,” Multipliandre continued, “how happy I was! So I could not bring myself to return immediately to the difficult visit to the planets. I introduced an intermission into it, during which I examined, at hundred-year intervals, the changes that overtook the surface of the terrestrial globe. They were prodigious, and the months had been centuries. Even the language had changed. I was obliged to relearn it.

I entered for that purpose into the body of a young speculator of the House of Equality, who was not named Marquis, as people once had been, but Tournesol. I made the soul of my Julie enter into a young and pretty woman that I saw in Lorient, for the city of Lorient had become the capital of the Republic, and it was no longer called Lorient but Surmer. I made the souls of Serafine and Rosaliette enter the bodies of relatives of Julie’s new body. As for our four bodies, I placed them, wrapped in furs and garnished with the souls of four marmots, on one of the summits of the Alps, where I was quite sure of having another body to revive them as and when I wanted.

Paris was no longer anything but a village, and its sandy territory was covered by a forest. I wanted to see all of that by virtue of my prevision, and I cried: *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

To get back to the city of Surmer, the new capital, I was told that it was not that of the Republic of France, but of the Republic of Virginie, which name had replaced the barbaric and insignificant name of France, and that it was in honor of my Julie, forever virginal, that that name had been given to the country.

Virginie had two capitals, a summer one, which was Surmer, and a winter one, located in the far south, in the place of Bordeaux, named Oceanie.

Response to Letter CCXVI

17 September.

That new arrangement, of having two capitals, appears to me to be well planned, especially if Multipliandre has anticipated the inconveniences. For you know, good husband, as a minister sent to another power, that it needs a unity at the head to regulate a body. But you predict a very disastrous fate for the city of Paris!

It is true that all the philosophers here are sure that it has been a blunder to conserve as a capital a city in the interior of the land, since the system of power has changed absolutely in Europe and over the entire globe, which is the sole reason why a more powerful nation such as France has been oppressed by a less powerful one, as England is. For a nation really to be a maritime power, it is necessary for it to have a marine heart or head, and not only the extremity of its hands and feet.

“It is by virtue of such causes,” says Monsieur Cazotte, “that Nations are weakened and sometimes doomed. If we were sage, our capital would be Brest, because of the English. But,” he adds, “it is necessary that a marine nation be very populous because of the number of men that the sea devours. We would all need two wives and a nation that authorized it.”

Letter CCXVII

F.m.T. 5 September.

“The winter capital, therefore, was Oceanie, but there was another where there was a month’s sojourn, and that was Hyères, facing the islands of the same name, Porquerolles, Portecroz and Titan, which, with the ancient locale of Hyères, formed a vast city, where all the commerce of the Mediterranean took place. The intermediate channels were the port, sheltered by the height of buildings. Channels had been excavated to produce basins capable of containing all the warships belonging to Toulon. The isles were enchanted gardens, all planted with orange-trees, olive-trees, pineapples, Maltese melons, etc. It was a terrestrial paradise.

“The summer capital of Surmer had Brest for a supplement. There were other beauties, other advantages, that I shall not amuse myself by describing to you. Each of the two capitals had the Government, the Supreme Court, etc., for six months, from one equinox to the other, but Hyères had the coldest month of the winter during the Bordeaux semester. The departure for Surmer took place a fortnight before the spring equinox; the journey lasted a week; there was an interval, or vacation, of two weeks, in two seasons, during which all public affairs were suspended, but on the ninth day everything resumed.

“I shall not pause here to describe the advantages of that new disposition. All that I want to add is that the sinews of the Government were singularly fortified by it, that all the members composing it, as well as the Tribunals, were obliged to the expedition of affairs. There was a line of demarcation that separated the north of the state from the south; all the summer affairs are dealt with during the six months of summer and have to be concluded before the departure of the Tribunals, which was never delayed. It is the same for the winter affairs during the winter sojourn. Affairs never last longer than six months, for it is not permitted to leave any until the following year.

“General affairs are treated by the Government; all of them are expedited with extreme promptitude. Those who execute them are not all in the capital; only a quarter of them are there. The other three-quarters are in three central cities in the middle of the state, for affairs of the land, and in sea ports for maritime affairs. The agents in the capital do not travel; they send orders, according to the locality, to other agents who are in the relevant place or nearby.

“After a very agreeable sojourn in the winter capital,” Multipliandre said, “I left with my wife and her two charming acolytes and instead of going to the Pyrenees, to the highest summit of the Maladetta, we went in the direction of the Alps. I took all three of them to the summit of Mont Blanc, to a peak that Saussure never reached.

“There, I took off my wings and arranged them for Julie, so that she could take her two companions, which I made her try out in my presence. We then deposited my body in a fur-lined box that I had bought. I emerged from it in order to enter the body of an eagle. I had mine sealed, after which its mouth, ears and nose were filled, the eyes covered, the anus filled, and the head and virile member enveloped, with the jelly of health.

“I told Julie, Serafine and Rosaliette that I was going to take them home, to the village of Paris, as an eagle, and that when I returned, in order to reanimate my body, we would take it down in its box to the middle of the plain, where it would be gently warmed, and I would reenter it thereafter. I then pecked my wife and her two companions, who deposited an electric dragon on a peak facing my body in order to be surer of recognizing the place in case of snow, and I saw all three of them descend together. Then I rose up as high as an eagle can go.

“Then I disincorporated myself.”

Response to Letter CCXVII

18 September.

We don't know where he's going to go, good husband, but why has he put his body in a glacial location again?

These Messieurs say that it's because he expends less, that that time doesn't go by for him. But Multipliandre has the power of rejuvenation. It's true that that operation requires quite a long time!

You've finished the idea of the two maritime capitals and have added the three central cities, without telling us which they are. We think that they're Auxerre, Bourges, and Dijon. We can't help admiring what a vast state your Virginie is, from the Alps to the Pyrenees, from the Mediterranean to the Ocean, from the Rhine to the heaths of Gascony. What a superb basin, and what Empire, even more extensive, is comparable to it?¹

¹ Author's note: "Bonaparte has now executed that vast empire, predicted at least ten years ago."

Letter CCXVIII

F.m.T. 6 September.

“Discorporate, I rose upwards, aiming for Jupiter, which I discovered at that height, where its reflected light only reaches the Earth weakly. I had quit the latter, and the movement of Jupiter was very slight at first, relative to me. Having approached it for three hours, though, I was obliged to steer a new course in order to catch up with it, for it appeared to be moving away from me with a surprising velocity. The intentions of my soul, however, were even swifter. I had seen the Earth as a large luminous planet; then I saw it diminish as Jupiter grew; eventually, the Earth became a tiny planet and Jupiter a monstrous body. Finally, I arrived in its atmosphere, and then it hid the half of the universe that was behind it.

“I saw then that it was almost completely covered by seas, which were subject to fearful tides; it was an Ocean two thousand four hundred times more extensive than ours, immense even to the vision of a discorporate soul. I descended nevertheless, looking for a bird in order to enter its body. Thick and continuous clouds were obscuring my vision, with the result that Jupiter, seen at close range, is very dark.

“Those clouds were composed of vapors of every sort; they passed over three times every day—each of which is only six hours long—leaving clear spaces between them, and also changing places. I could not imagine the sort of beings that might inhabit such a stormy environment, but I could only get to know them by entering into the brain of one of them.

“The winds there are so terrible that nothing can remain very long in place. In my capacity as an unattached being, they had no grip on me, but it seemed to me that there could not be any birds there, in air so agitated. Nor could I discover any at first. As I approached the surface of the waters, however, I saw massive creatures there that seemed to me to be round. They watched what was happening above them with a sort of marked anxiety.

“I was about to decide to enter into one of these bodies when I saw a sort of square tub rising up towards the clouds. I observed that it was a waterspout that was lifting them up and carrying them over peaks that were not merely elevated above the water but the clouds too, covered with vegetable produce on which the square tubs appeared to be grazing. They remained there until another waterspout enveloped them and plunged them back into the Jovian sea.”

Response to Letter CXXVIII

19 September.

We can certainly imagine that the inhabitants of Jupiter will not resemble those of the Moon or those of Mars. It is, however, very pleasant to voyage thus among the planets in the wake of a man as enlightened as Multipliandre, for we presume that he places himself within each of the appropriate inhabitants according to the most exact principles of physics. That is what gives us confidence in him and amuses us all.

Letter CCXIX

F.m.T. 7 September.

“I was not sure whether I ought to take the body of one of these flying, swimming and waterspout-borne tubs, whatever they might be. I came to a decision, though, when, having gone to investigate the large masses that were immersed in the water, I perceived that they were anchored to the seabed. I dispossessed the soul of a tub and replaced it. I then attempted to follow the course of its ideas. I had a great deal of trouble. The tubs of Jupiter only think about two things: grazing and reproduction. Their language has but two words: *pupu*, eating; and *coco*, doing...*that*.

“I could not see that there was anything much from which to profit on Jupiter, where secondary nature was still in its infancy and brutal state. Everything there was very different, then, from things as they were on Mars, and infinitely far from Earthly existence. By virtue of what I had seen, I calculated that the inhabitants of Jupiter would require a further two hundred thousand years to reach the same level of development as us.

“I went down then in my fish-tub, wanting to see the large square masses that I had perceived in the watery depths, which I had taken for animals because they had eyes and were watching. I came very close to them. Their gazes turned towards me.

“*There is intention there*, I thought.

“Then, I was bold enough to quit my fish-tub and seek to enter the monstrous animal by way of the eyes. I succeeded in that. Lodged in its brain, my soul was able to act upon its organs freely, as usual. I found them torpid and obtuse; all its ideas were chaotic. I wanted to move, but to my astonishment I realized that I was attached to the crystallized seabed by an umbilical cord!

“By stirring myself, however, and by force of intention, I gave the heavy machine a few ideas, and I found that it was capable of containing a reasoning soul. I had an intuition that the animal, fixed in that manner to the ground at the bottom of the sea was the embryo of the animal that would one day seize the scepter of the animal kingdom on Jupiter.

“After these reflections I thought about leaving aqueous Jupiter, being eager to see Saturn—but then I thought that it might be appropriate to visit some of the Jovian satellites.

“I let myself down on the first of the four, and found that everything there was much more advanced than on Jupiter. It appeared that the satellites, although planetized later than the principal planets, crystallize much more rapidly, doubtless because, their axial rotation being much slower, centrifugal force there is much reduced; the centripetal, on the contrary, is very considerable and, in consequence, deposition or crystallization is more prompt.”

Response to Letter CCIX

20 September.

We have found the reason for the more rapid crystallization of satellites excellent! In fact, the slighter centrifugal force giving more repose, crystallization, which is only a deposition of matter dissolved in a fluid, must operate sooner there; and as soon as there is solidified matter, vegetables are born, and then animals. A satellite is, therefore, always much more advanced than its mistress planet. It is for that reason that our Moon, more solidified than the Earth, is as dry, and perhaps even drier, than Venus.

Those, husband, are the dissertations that your letters cause us to make. Our philosophers—which is to say, those of our society—claim that all satellites have an axial rotation as slow as our own, but I believe that they are only reasoning by analogy.

Letter CCXX

F.m.T. 8 September.

“I found on the first satellite of Jupiter the same beings that I had found on Jupiter itself, but more advanced. For example, my square tubs of Jupiter were really birds here. I lodged myself in one of the large animals of the depths; they were already amphibious, and, in consequence, no longer attached to the satellite-ground by the navel. They ate the square tubs, which they trapped, and vegetables and fish, the existence of which I had had no reason to suspect on Jupiter.

“I passed from there to the second satellite. There was the same animal and vegetable genre, but the gross square mass of Jupiter and the much smaller amphibian of the first satellite were here a dry land animal, a well-proportioned quadruped. I entered into the brain of the most beautiful, and found ideas there, a way of acting and a language. It contained thirty words expressing thirty primitive ideas: being, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, touching, eating, drinking, sleeping, acting, loving, hating, chasing, fleeing, walking, resting, fighting, killing, defending oneself, daring, dreading, hiding, showing oneself, doing, undoing, possessing a female, giving birth or doubling—the same word—nourishing, enlightening.

“With the aid of those thirty words, the satellitarians made all their ideas known.

“I passed from the second satellite to the third, where everything was even more advanced. At least a third of the satellite’s surface was dry; it was considerably more crystallized than Mars.

The fourth and last satellite of Jupiter was in the same state as the Earth, half covered with water. It was also similar in size to the Earth, and perhaps the animals would have been the same if it had not had, in its quality as a satellite, like our Moon, a day as long as its year. That necessarily changes the animals that inhabit it, for the slightest change of that kind brings about a considerable one in the organization of the inhabiting beings. Thus, when I examined a little satellite that I had seen from Mars, I would surely find beings there very different from those on the principal planet.²

² Author’s note: “This satellite of Mars was not visible to Lalande.”

Response to Letter CCXX

21 September.

It appears, dear husband, that you are not saying that the animals of Jupiter have on its fourth satellite, with a few differences, all the perfection that they will one day have on Jupiter. It is a pity that that difference in the axial rotation of satellites prevents them from having the same inhabitants as their principal planet, for one could foresee by that means what would become of them. However, you have arranged many things very well—as, for example, giving a satellite to Mars; that would have given the greatest pleasure to Fontenelle, as well as his Marquise. I hope, and we all hope, that in your next letter you will tell us about Saturn, where your Multipliandre went on quitting the last satellite of Jupiter.

Letter CCXXI

F.m.T. 9 September.

“I rose up directly to Saturn,” Multipliandre continued. “What a vast planet!

“It is actually the case that what is called here its *ring*, forms part of it. The intermediary is not water but a kind of dense, albeit transparent, atmosphere, visible and palpable, and capable of sustaining, fifty leagues from the surface of the planet, a band or ring of ice divided into two semicircular parts, but which are in contact. I am sure that if I had had my body, in the dense atmosphere that is between Saturn and its ring, I would have been stifled by it. I was very surprised by that singularity!

“On examining Saturn with attention I seemed to glimpse that it was not yet decomposed; that it still had the organization, or the remains of the organization, of a living being....

“I then glimpsed a great, a vast and powerful verity, which is that vegetation, animality and even minerality, only begin to form, on a planetary individual, after its death.

“I understood that the individual died in passing from the state of a comet to that of a planet, and that it was in dying as a great particular individual that it lost the astonishing energy that causes comets to produce their enormous inhabitants...that it was then that the humors and its epidermis commenced the corruption and decomposition that formed, from the residues of life—its organic molecules, if you wish—minerals, vegetables and animals, which subsisted there until the component parts, destitute of soul, returned to the Being-Principle via the Sun.

“As long as the Sun, for its planets, still has the adherence and the tenacity to form a Whole, the vast individuals, Jupiter, Mars, the Earth, Mercury, etc., dead, but charged with living beings and vegetating, in the solar fluid, will always be drawing closer to the center, until it absorbs them and they dissolve therein; in the meantime, they only produce individuals in proportion to their quantity of life, which is not destroyed but divided.”

Response to Letter CCXXI

22 September.

Yesterday's letter, good husband, found many contradictors! The only ones who were persuaded and convinced by it were the Comtesse, the Marquises, Filète and me, who found it very analogous and very reasonable.

We are the debris of the life of our planet! It is dead individually, and we only live as long as we have not exhausted the animal and vegetable substance that covers it. One can see that those substances are already exhausted in many countries, and that they are visibly diminishing in others. Thus, the quantity of life is the same; all that of the planet is distributed to the individuals it alimets, after having formed them. I am—and all four of us are—astonished that that reasonable idea has not occurred to anyone; for our philosophers say that they have not heard mention of it before.