

MEMOIRS
OF THE
DUCHESS DE GONTAUT



Duchesse de Berry.

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OF THE
DUCHESS DE GONTAUT

GOUVERNANTE TO THE CHILDREN OF FRANCE DURING
THE RESTORATION, 1773-1836

Translated from the French

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IN 1853 I was at Courtalin with my excellent friends the Duc and Duchesse de Montmorency, enjoying the present, and frequently questioned concerning the past by Comte Georges Esterhazy, who had recently married my dear granddaughter, Louise de Chabot, and who desired to hear many details of my past life of which he was then ignorant. Wishing also to be able at some future day to impart what he had learned to his children, he begged me to write them down. Upon hearing this suggestion, all my friends surrounded me, even throwing themselves on their knees before me. I had not the courage to refuse these touching entreaties, and I gave my promise, though fearing even then that the undertaking would be beyond my powers.

January, 1853.

TO MADAME LA COMTESSE
AND MONSIEUR LE COMTE GEORGES ESTERHAZY.

My dear Children,

You have expressed a wish to know the events of my long life, in order to be able in turn to relate them to your children. I yield to this amiable and affectionate desire; although at the same time I promise to resist the too general temptation of mercilessly inflicting upon you the trifling details of my own life. I will endeavour to recall my memories of the revolutions in which I have often been involved, in order to give interest to my recital.

One can hardly be expected to write well at eighty; but at that age one has a right to expect the indulgence of devoted friends.

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