

frequent occurrence in that beautiful island, whose history is too dark to dwell upon. Beyond this nothing can be found relating to the mother, whom Audubon lost before he was old enough to remember her, except that in 1822 one of the family Marigny told my father, John Woodhouse Audubon, then a boy of ten, who with his parents was living in New Orleans, that she was "*une dame d'une beauté incomparable et avec beaucoup de fierté.*" It may seem strange that nothing more can be found regarding this lady, but it is to be remembered these were troublous days, when stormy changes were the rule; and the roving and adventurous sailor did not, I presume, encumber himself with papers. To these circumstances also it is probably due that the date of Audubon's birth is not known, and must always remain an open question. In his journals and letters various allusions are made to his age, and many passages bearing on the matter are found, but with one exception no two agree; he may have been born anywhere between 1772 and 1783, and in the face of this uncertainty the date usually given, May 5, 1780, may be accepted, though the true one is no doubt earlier.

The attachment between Audubon and his father was of the strongest description, as the long and affectionate, if somewhat infrequent letters, still in the possession of the family, fully demonstrate. When the Admiral was retired from active service, he lived at La Gerbétière in France with his second wife, Anne Moynette, until his death, on February 19, 1818, at the great age of ninety-five.

In this home near the Loire, Audubon spent his happy boyhood and youth, dearly beloved and loving, and receiving the best education time and place afforded. As the boy grew older and more advantages were desired for him, came absences when he was at school in La Rochelle and Paris; but La Gerbétière was his home till in early manhood he returned to America, the land he loved above