

in their appeal to the Royal Husband. She had there also a powerful advocate in the love he bore her, and nothing could remove her from the strong hold she had taken on the hearts of all by whom she was surrounded and whose idol she was.

Far from me to deny, that perhaps the exuberant spirits of the young Princess did not lead her to that degree of levity deserving of censure in her elevated station. On the contrary, that removal of every kind of that restraint which keeps the subject at a proper distance from the Sovereign, and prevents that familiarity too easily leading to a want of due respect has perhaps, hastened the French Revolution. After all, Sovereigns are mere men, liable like others to the infirmities of human nature. The nearer they suffer themselves to be approached and to be pryed into in their unguarded moments, the more the illusion of their superiority weakens; the Royal mask falls off and the supernatural being sinks to the level of his fellow creatures. But let the degree of censure which perhaps that amiable and captivating Princess has deserved, be attenuated by the circumstances in which she found herself at once situated, in the gayest and most gallant of all the Courts, and which for several years past having been bereft of those pleasures promoted and courted by youth was sunk into the gloom of old age and concomitant rigidity of manners. We shall therefore pass over that portion of the life of Maria Antoinette in which she may have erred but not sinned. We must however not omit to say here, that her whole time was not so engrossed by pleasurable pursuits as to preclude her from dedicating part of it to less dazzling but more lasting enjoyments, namely those of relieving distress. She did not wait to be sought by the sufferer, but often laying aside all the trappings of state she has been seen entering the humble cot and administering relief and comfort to its destitute inmates. Let us now consider that august Princess in her capacity of wife, mother and queen.

It would perhaps have been advantageous for Maria Antoinette if she had had children soon after her marriage. At least we may conjecture so from the alteration in her manners from the moment she became a mother. It is generally known and acknowledged