

Diary of **Uranie Tardent** (nee Suzanne Henriette Uranie Grandjean) (Born in Neuchatel, Switzerland, 1789 - died Chabag, Bessarabia, 1852), begun on the 9th July, 1822 when Uranie was 33 years of age. It has been translated from the original French, sadly now lost, and in some parts, abridged and edited. However, it is largely a direct translation.

Farewell to Vevey, farewell to my friends! In my leisure moments I shall no longer be able to visit you, and receive the expressions of affectionate friendship that you have never ceased to heap upon me. Alas! I am going very far away where I shall find only unresponsive hearts.

On arrival at Moudon, my courage almost deserted me. The day before I was surrounded with people who were interested in me; here I see only the interested face of an innkeeper and driving rain that has kept us here for the night.

The coming of dawn was the signal for us to depart, and it was a boisterous, uncomfortable day. The children are quite good. Antoinette is no trouble and amuses herself with the other two little girls. One thing that both amuses and annoys me is the amazement of the villagers when they see us passing in such a large party, for sometimes we all walk.

We stayed Sunday and Monday at Avanche, where I was affectionately welcomed by the worthy Berguer family, one of whose sons is going with us. When my husband joined us there, we departed.

Near Morat we saw some scaffolding in the distance. When we came nearer we discovered that it is a public building which is being erected in Ossuary Square, to perpetuate the memory of the victory, in 1476, of the brave Helvetians and the defeat of the Burgundian, Charles the Hardy.

Berne pleases me so much more, as I had formed a rather unfavourable notion of it, despite which, boredom overtook me, so I went and made a tour of the city. On my walk I learned that they had just brought a young man of thirty from prison, in order to take him to his own village to undergo the sentence that had just been passed on him for the brutal murder of his mistress, on the very day that he pretended that he wished to marry her. He is condemned to be broken on the wheel and hanged, and the execution is to take place tomorrow almost on our route.

From four o'clock next morning the road was packed with a huge crowd of people who were going to see this terrible spectacle.

And once again we are trailing from inn to inn, which are mostly not very comfortable.

This morning an hour after our departure from Lenzburg, I had a pleasant chance meeting with Cousin Jacques¹. After having embraced him, I had to bid him goodbye, and we went on to dine at Baden.

From there we continued on to sleep at Zurich, where we rearranged our belongings so that we could unload the wagon. That done, we made a tour of the city, which is much more tiring than Berne because of its bad street paving of cobblestones.

The entrance to the city is attractive. I had a brief view of the Deputies and their suite coming out of the building where the Diet meets. My husband was greeted by some of them, but I did not have the honour of knowing any of these gentlemen. My husband went to the embassies to have our passports stamped with visas.

1st August. We arrived very late at a bad innkeepers' that I was very glad to leave, to go on and dine at St Gall, a pretty little town. There the married ladies among us all had separate rooms. All kinds of muslin materials are on show here. What a pleasure it would be to cut them out for dressmaking!

2nd August. At eleven o'clock in the the morning we left Switzerland to cross the Rhine by boat, and enter the first Austrian land. There we were subjected to a customs inspection of everything that we had packed in the wagons. That was anything but pleasant. If we were spared that in Switzerland, we had to pay tolls and porterages three or four times, that were sometimes very costly. Thus one felt fleeced in one's native land

as elsewhere. Nevertheless I left Swiss territory with a pang in my heart, mixed with pleasure at being on our way.

The diversity of the costumes of the various cities and my care of the children, have helped to pass the time more quickly than I had expected. All our people are cheerful and in good health.

The first dinner we had in Austrian territory in the village of St Jean Hochst entertained me greatly. To begin with, we were served in spite of the general hilarity that was evident. And then I beheld the most grotesque figure that one could possibly see, a close-mouthed little man of almost gothic shape, dressed in red, topped by a three-pointed hat.

After dinner we set off again, so as to reach Barvaria, which had to be crossed before returning to Austria. We walked in order to keep close to the lovely shores of Lake Constance; I also preferred to walk in order to better enjoy the magnificent sight afforded by the setting sun. How that reminded me of our Lemane! We passed through the pretty little town of Bregent and arrived for the night at Gemund, the frontier of Bavaria. There we found a second customs house where we had to undergo the same trying formalities as at the Austrian frontier, but we also found a good clean inn there.

In these regions they have a remarkable method of washing household utensils. They take sawdust and rub the metal articles with it, then brush it off. IN this way the pewter stays bright.

The unusual head-dress pleased me very much. This is a sort of black cap shaped like a wicker basket that fits on the back of the head. A large ribbon bow spreads over the collar, and the top of the head is bare, for these little baskets have no brims, are flat and have a white wing-shaped band like ours. It is a hat that is easily washed, and quite attractive.

In the mountains that we must cross at the entrance to the kingdom of Bavaria, one can scarcely distinguish the men from the women. They wear an apron so full that it is exactly like a skirt, and a short jacket without tails or which are hidden by the apron. They wear leather shorts and are mostly without stockings. The women look exactly like the men except for the shorts! They wear men's black hats, and their faces are as coarse and dark as the men's. IN fact I did not see one passable-looking woman.

The road hereabouts is very good but very hilly all the way. One place reminded me of Chateau-d'Oex; another of the Lower Ormonts farms. These valleys have many dwellings, some of which would do honour to any town. The inns are very good, some being richly appointed.

Yesterday (3rd August) we passed through pretty little Kempten, several buildings of which resemble palaces. We were stared at, because of the long line of wagons, plus so many adults and children, which had them guessing. After dinner we set off again and reached Kaufbeuren village on the 4th August. On Sunday morning we wrote letters to Vevey. It was hard to find bread and soup here because of a festival the previous day – the appetite of the crowd had not been lacking!

We arrived at the beautiful city of Munich on the evening of the 7th August, and there is a fine menagerie at the city's entrance. Next morning my husband and I made a tour of the city, and had the passports stamped. The cathedral is vast and beautiful, and though it is a Catholic church, I entered and said a little prayer. The facade of the royal palace is plain, but the interior, the hallways of paintings, and the gardens, are beautiful.

From Munich we left the mountains and travelled through the lovely plains that are well cultivated, but almost bare of fruit trees. Sometimes I could see eight to ten villages at the one time. All looked beautiful, but the inhabitants are far from handsome, and badly dressed; The women's hair-dos were surely not designed, and this applies to their clothes also, which

are not attractive.

We often passed through forests that interrupt the plains. Ladies don't let this word 'forest' make you see legions of bandits pointing pistols, for the roadway through them is very wide!

The other day, an accident to the wagons delayed my husband, so we walked on, but soon we were all on our way. I was also happy to walk without fear with two of my children right through a beautiful forest in lovely moonlight.

9th August. It is three weeks today since we left Vevey. We are travelling much faster now that we have a fourth horse. In one town through which we passed, all the houses in the main street were roofless. It seems that all the towns through which we are passing are sparsely populated, for one sees few inhabitants, and the streets are neglected, with grass growing in the pavement.

10th August. Today we reentered Austria a few hours after setting out, and we experienced a short but heavy rainstorm. We then reached Braunau, the first Austrian town, and were subjected to our most severe customs search. This put me in a bad mood, for it had also started to rain. But what could we do? We just had to go through with it!

12th August. Today is a tragic day for us. The Chevalley children are very troublesome and disobedient, and ignore repeated warnings to be careful of mishaps. The Chevalley wagon has a fifth (spare) wheel fastened under it, and their second son was sitting on it and playing about with his feet on the spokes, and they were going fairly fast. He fell off, and the back wheel went over one leg, breaking it and bruising the other. I was the first to see this, and jumped down, and everyone else did the same. We laid the little boy in the wagon and drove on, still a good league from the town where we were to sleep. My husband went on ahead to notify a surgeon and found a very gentle man who bound the boy's legs and gave orders as to what must be done through the night to reduce the swelling, so that he could set the leg in the morning. We spent the night in the room with the child, who was quiet enough. This morning after seven, the surgeon set the leg, helped by his assistant, the father and my husband. Fortunately the big bone was not broken, and we can continue our journey. The lad is comfortable on a bed in the wagon. Luckily we were on the plains and the road was good.

Imagine, ladies, how all this upset me, and emphasises the care I must take to prevent foolish acts, and to protect my own children, who so far, have been free of accident. They are all very well; the little girls are

growing plump, and the boys are not getting thin. They are so strong and healthy that I am amazed, and rejoice greatly.

After the leg had been dressed, I got down with the children to have lunch in the little town of Wels. A very friendly lady called at the inn to see us, speaks excellent French, and is obviously of high rank. She is a niece of Mr Cattoir of Frankfurt, with whom our cousin Jacques lives!

15th August. Four weeks ago today, on the eve of my departure, I had the pleasure of dining and taking tea with most of you, my dear loving friends. What a difference!

1. Jean Jacques Tardent of Frankfurt-am-Main (1799 – 1838), correspondent of Henry in composing his narrative

I have just dined in an inn, a day's walk from Vienna, surrounded by all sorts of faces, nearly all uglier one than the other. The inhabitants generally are ugly; one sees many important people of bad physique. Since we returned to Austria, the villages are not so attractive. Most of the houses are roofed with thatch, the rest with shingles. The numerous inns are quite passable; however it would not do to ask for too many courses!

17th August. Today we arrived at five o'clock in the little town of Moelck, situated on the banks of the Danube, and overlooked by a hill crowned with a majestic magnificent building. Told by the inn folk that we could visit it, I promptly set off with Marc and my two servants. We wandered about in the beautiful grounds, gardens and hallways of what was obviously once a fine castle with its own splendid church, all now occupied by Carthusian monks. They were nearly all in Vienna for the day, hence our freedom of inspection. I confess that I regretted that such a magnificent castle should be inhabited by priests. However, as we left we spoke to several venerable occupants, who were so polite that I forgave them for living in an edifice fit for kings. Some repairs to our wagons delayed our arrival in Vienna till Saturday night, 19th August.

20th and 21st August. On Sunday and Monday in Vienna, I kept on coming and going, sometimes on foot, sometimes by hire carriages which are as fine as our best in Vevey. There are hundreds of them in the streets of beautiful Vienna, but the surrounding countryside lacks freshness and has an arid appearance, the result of the great drought that occurred this year. I did not see a single commonplace house; all are superbly handsome and there are no dark dirty lanes. The Emperor's dwelling is naturally more spacious than the other palaces, but the exterior differs little. What makes it so impressive is the greater number of guards. Amongst others, a monument to Joseph II (1741 - 1790) in the city, attracted our attention, for this enlightened, if absolute ruler, was poisoned by a priest. As we passed the Cathedral on foot on Sunday, which we entered to the sound of the organ, I fancied I left Vienna and was back in Saint Martin. My heart throbbed so much with emotion that I crossed my arms on my breast, and I could hear the voice of my beloved and respected 'mother St Alme'. One good glance around me brought me back to reality! Though it was a Catholic service, the tune of the hymn was almost the same as ours.

After dinner we took a carriage to Schonbrunn Palace where the people are permitted to walk in the extensive, luxurious gardens on Sundayss. There were

many people of all classes of society there. The Palace is truly a dwelling fit for an Emperor; much better than the palace in the city. You could have no idea, ladies, of all the dress material and beautiful things to be seen here in Vienna. The hire carriages coming and going continually in the streets interested me so much that time flew by unnoticed.

ON Monday I made some small purchases and we had the passports stamped because everything is closed on Sundays. We are to leave again on Tuesday, in order to travel a long stage in our journey. From here we shall be travelling in countries where there are not likely to be beautiful things to see along the route.

Today, the 23rd, we left Brno behind us, the capital of Moravia. Here, little German is spoken. This is Bohemia, and the costume worn here, though different, is not attractive. The men wear very full red leather shorts with a coloured jacket and a large black-edged white overall. Their hair is fairly long and is topped with a round black felt hat trimmed with ribbons of different colours. They wear high-topped boots. IN contrast, the women nearly all go barefoot and wear a skirt and jacket, wide and long in cut, and wear big coloured or white kerchiefs on their heads, which hides their hair.

One Sunday evening (the 27th August) there was

dancing opposite our inn, and our hostess kindly took us to see it. Nearly all the dancers were in the costume I have just described. All danced very nimbly, never treading on the girls' bare feet! They had beer for refreshment. One of the gentlemen was courteous enough to ask me to dance, but I thanked him saying that I was too tired.

I have just returned from a most romantic walk after arriving at an inn for lunch.. While it was being prepared, we climbed a hill and visited a nearby ruined castle. The enclosure and structures are vast, and show that it has been an important chateau- fort, affording magnificent views.

If Austria has no great mountains, that seem to menace the skies like ours, the roads, though good, are all mountainous enough to tire our horses! There have been no more plains and forests as in Bavaria, whilst the scenery is more varied, if the villages are less beautiful. The houses are of brick, roofed with thatch, but on the outside they are all very neat, and are generally white.

At an inn, as a crowning entertainment, we had the pleasure of taking coffee at the foot of an antique castle, and to enjoy the music of two bards.

Today is 30th August, and six weeks have passed since we left Vevey, as we entered Poland. What a country

for cleanliness and inns! Food is abundant, and the bedrooms could not be more attractive. How pleased I am to have our mattresses and bed-clothes, and our roomy wagons in which to transport them.

Tomorrow, we shall be passing a few leagues away from the famous rock-salt hillocks or mines of Viliska, that have underground dwellings within them, and some very interesting galleries or tunnels. I am very sorry not to see them, but that would detour us too much, and our good vigneron of the colony are not very curious about the beauties of Nature!

Up to the present we have found fruit for sale everywhere, even along the roads, and especially at Vienna and its neighbourhood. We have eaten good grapes, especially the reds, excellent sweet peaches and pears, but we have seen no green-gage plums at all.

We are all keeping very good health. The little Chevalley boy has got on very well, and he can now even get about by himself. What good luck for everyone that there were no bad complications.

1st September. I believe that today is a communion day, so I went into a church, and said a fervent prayer. How the beauties of Nature uplift the soul! The church that I entered was situated in a charming spot surrounded by villages whose inhabitants are exactly like their houses, and prove how happy a

man can be with little. The soil looks good, and everywhere are well-cultivated farms. The peasant, however, is very poor, since he is obliged to work three days per week for his lord, and again on top of that, pay taxes to the government. I do not believe there is a hardier, more rustic or more uneducated people. All that, mingled with Jews, makes for a dull populace in a good and beautiful country.

Limberg, or Leopold, is a large city, in which there are stately houses, but it is very ugly in the daytime, compared to the evening, when it is very beautiful, because the city is all lit up. Each house has its lantern outside, and many of the street crossings have mirrors which reflect the light, and create a pleasant sight. In all the streets, there are men with lanterns to light your way, and lead you where you wish. There are also a few fiacres (four wheeled horse cabs).

Very soon we shall be passing through Bukovnia, and entering Russia. How impatient I am getting, to arrive! An extraordinary thing here is that they make all the walls of their houses with rushes. The roofs are covered with thatch or shingles because they have no raw materials for making tiles. I greet you Dniester! You who fertilise our grasslands, and with your clear waters, form a beneficial lake, which recalls my lovely native land! We have just crossed this river by boat, and from there we went on to Chernovtsy, the capital

of Bukovnia, a pretty city on the river Pruth. There, we laid in some provisions, and left again in biting cold and rain, that made the road booggy, and delayed us, because here the earth roads are not paved with gravel.

Now we are at Novazelitz, on the frontier, where we were well received by all the Russian officials, who even offered us their personal assistance. No questions were asked about our waggons or their contents.

General Insof, Governor of the whole province of Bessarabia, and Biveroy of the Southern Provinces, having been advised of our arrival by a letter from my husband, had immediately given orders to the frontier officers to assist us if help was needed. We traversed the province from end to end. The two extremities are splendid plains, but the interior is nothing but a succession of mountains.

We are at present in Kishinev, which is the capital of Bessarabia, and is a town of 30,000 people, and very commercial, where one finds all that one could want. There are many noblemen here, especially Moldavian Boyards, and Wallachians who have taken refuge here. During the rebellion, they all went back to Jassy. 2. We are welcomed into the best houses in the city, amongst colonels and generals, all of whom are very friendly, and speak good French.

2. Boyards were ancient Russian noblemen from

Transylvania and from the Danubian provinces. Jassy (Iasi) is about 60 miles to the west, today within Romania's border.

For a long time we travelled along the banks of the Pruth, and saw no troops at all. Peace reigned everywhere, and at this moment we are four leagues west from Moldavia, which was also enjoying peace, which has prevailed everywhere else on our route.

According to what the country people tell us, there have not usually been more troops on the frontier than at present. From what the newspapers say here, travellers from afar may speak with perfect freedom.

This is the manner in which the Russians receive you in their homes. On entering the room, the lady of the house embraces me and seats me, and the husband kisses my hand. Then a servant brings glasses of water on a tray, plus a jar of excellent jam and some coffee-spoons. He holds the tray before me, and I take and eat a spoonful of jam, then I drink some water, and the others do the same! On departing, I make a curtsy and my husband kisses the hand of the lady, who at the same moment returns his kiss on the cheek. Don't you think, ladies, that if the custom of treating ladies in this manner were to be established in Switzerland, that gentlemen would be guests more often?

Here we are at last, arrived at the end of our journey, Akkerman (on Sunday 29th October 1822). The cold

season is making itself felt early this year, and on the second day of our arrival, the cold was very noticeable. That lasted several days, and then we had much pleasanter weather. We have been allotted free lodgings by the poolice with the townspeople for all the time that we will be without houses of our own, since during the winter, we shall not be able to busy ourselves much with that.

This billting is a big advantage for us, since lodgings are so expensive. It is really amusing though, to see elegant carriages and ladies who yield nothing in politeness, as well as in dress, to our most elegant Swiss ladies, coming out from the courtyards of wretched-looking houses. For the most part, these houses have only two rooms, of which one is always used as a drawing room. Other better built houses have more rooms, but generally the exteriors are not at all attractive.

My husband introduced me into several homes where we have been very well received, and where it would be no disadvantage to have a pretty hand, which all the ladies here have, since kisses on them are by no means scarce! But you may well believe that I will not adopt the fashion of the country, of returning them on the cheek of the gallant involved, even if he is sometimes a most amiable general!

We have received many kindnesses and invitations to

gala evenings, which makes for a little diversion from the difficulties which the establishment of a new colony bring, especially for us with our large family. Several Moldavian Boyards or noblemen go to these soirees. It is amusing to see them dancing in their costume, that is so different from the rest of Europe. Their hair is shaved, and they wear a Jewish caftan which covers the whole head, and which they keep on in the drawing room. If they go out, they put on cpas (which are of an extraordinary shape and size), trousers, and over all this, a robe with very wide sleeves. The robe has a slit each side at the bottom such as we make in a man's shirt.

This robe is of a different colour, and according to the fancy of the wearer, a cashmere scarf is tied like a girdle in front. ON top of all that, they have a fur-lined cloak which they wear in all seasons, even when it is more or less warm, but they take it off to dance! The dances re the Anglaise, some Polonaises, and the Tempest, a very complicated but pretty dance. At a ball they dance only the waltz. They also have square dances or cotillions. Twelve is the smallest number of musicians who provide the dance music.

They do not have evening parties, as in Switzerland, but at every festival they give dinners and often balls in winter, and they are continually visiting. That is to say, those who wish to do so, and have the time.

But here, the better class people nearly always have time, for they do no work! The first visit that one makes must be returned promptly, sometimes on the same day. If this is done, it indicates that they will be pleased to cultivate your acquaintance!

The Greek Orthodox religion closely resembles the Catholic faith, but the Lenten fasts are much more frugal and demanding, for then they make almost no use of butter or eggs, and even less of meat. They eat nearly less than nothing, except in fact only boiled fish, oil, and pastries etc. At present, they are having seven weeks of Lent, which is their greatest fast of the year – the seven weeks before Easter. On Easter Day, they go to midnight mass, and come out at 5 a.m.. On returning home, they find the dining table piled high, in such abundance as to allow everyone to fully break the fast. After this first breakfast, they all go off to visit their relatives and acquaintances or

Here, Uranie's Diary terminates abruptly, no doubt she was overtaken by the hard work and pressing events of the establishment of the Swiss colony, with her husband, Louis Vincent, and all the other Swiss colonists.