

## CHAPTER 8

### THE GROUP OF SWEDENBORGIANS IN NANTES

In the year after Bernard's death, Mme de Saint-Amour, convinced that "Nantes was destined to become the birthplace of the New Church in France,"<sup>1</sup> took two steps to make her dream a reality: she first conducted a series of healings of the sick by prayers, then she opened the first Swedenborgian chapel in France.

Born in the Hague in 1786, Anne Françoise Jeanne Elisabeth de Fremery became an orphan at the age of six months, the daughter of one of the King of Holland's consulting barristers. She was reared by her stepfather, Baron Plunkett, colonel of the Soldiers of the Guard of the Gate, whom she accompanied on his assignments abroad. At the age of twenty-three she married an officer, Bernard de Saint-Amour. She had already been a somnambulist for several years<sup>2</sup> when she met Captain Bernard in Paris in 1821 and became converted to the doctrines of the New Church. Mme de Saint-Amour later proved to be one of Bernard's most ardent followers and was present with him when he died on February 23, 1828.

Bernard initiated her into religious magnetism as well as the doctrines of the New Church, although to Mme de Saint-Amour, the gift of healing was associated more with prayer than with practises of magnetism and somnambulism.<sup>3</sup> In May 1828, she effected her first cures by taking away

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<sup>†</sup>Continued from *The New Philosophy* 98 (July-December 1995): 179-227. See p. 427 (July-December 1994) in the first installment for copyright statement and acknowledgments.

<sup>\*</sup> Present address: 17 Rue Mozart, F-78330, Fontenay-le-Fleury, France.

<sup>1</sup> Auguste Viatte, *Les Swedenborgiens en France de 1820 à 1830*, in *Revue de de Littérature comparée*, 1931, p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Thirtieth letter from Bernard to J. A. Blanche: Paris, January 10, 1827 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>3</sup> Bernard in document no. 48 of his file in the *Chevrier Collection*.

fever from sick children.<sup>4</sup> After arriving in Nantes at the beginning of September 1828, she accomplished a series of spectacular cures: the crippled walked leaving their crutches behind, a blind man recovered his vision, etc. These happy results of her prayers drew so many of the sick that the narrow street where she had her home became completely blocked. However, after three days of triumph, the healing by the pious Mme de Saint-Amour did not last and her reputation as a saint soon changed to that of a witch.

The local press, especially *L'Ami de la Charte*, and the clergy most certainly had something to do with the sudden change of public opinion. When the Bishop of Nantes asked the curate of the parish in which Mme de Saint-Amour lived whether he had authorized her to work miracles and obtained a negative reply, he had an assembly of clergymen draft a protest against the cases of healing, which had not been done in the name of the Lord.<sup>5</sup> Was it not obvious that the cures were the work of the Devil? Since the "witch" also happened to be a "Swedenborgiste," it was not long before that term became an invective.

But this negative attitude was not confined to members of the clergy in Nantes. Dr. Brunet reported to Edouard Richer the reaction by Chambellan, a healer in Paris:

He also told me in a decisive manner that this lady must take care because she could be *punished* for her mental aberration; he claims that women cannot have the complete gift of healing because there are no women among Jesus Christ's apostles. This is his attitude concerning Mme de Saint-Amour.

In Chambellan's opinion, Mme de Saint-Amour had obtained no lasting results "because she had too much self-love, ostentation and publicity." He believed that:

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<sup>4</sup>Edouard Richer, *Des guérisons opérées par Mme de Saint-Amour* (On the cures made by Mme de Saint-Amour), in *Mélanges*, Vol. 2, Saint-Amand-Paris-London-New York, 1861, p. 351.

<sup>5</sup>*Mélanges*, Vol. 2, p. 341.

her return to Nantes could produce a very bad result, harmful to the good cause: the establishment of the New Church...in which he believes although not believing in everything Swedenborg wrote.<sup>6</sup>

Paul Flon, former President of the *Société Française de la Nouvelle Eglise*, gave me a dossier on the group of Swedenborgians in Nantes. This dossier contains Edouard Richer's pamphlet *Des guérisons opérées par Mme de Saint-Amour*, obviously favorable to his co-religionist, and also L. F. de Tollenare's *Point d'effet sans cause*, both of which I had previously heard of. In addition, the dossier also contains a :

True history of the miracles made by a saint, faithfully drawn from a book entitled *Des guérisons opérées par Mme de Saint-Amour* in order to serve as a commentary for this brochure; followed by some thoughts about a new work called *Point d'effet sans cause*.

In this document, the New Church is called "a Sect of fools, dreamers and enthusiasts." Furthermore, verses written by a "Friend of Light" ridicule Mme de Saint-Amour, her husband, Captain Bernard, and the members of the Academy of Nantes, into which Mme de Saint-Amour had just been received, and Edouard Richer:

Since he became  
     a good Swedenborgiste,  
 his heart is simpler,  
     he seems less sad.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the daring plan of action that Mme de Saint-Amour wished to undertake in favor of the New Church turned against her. However, as Edouard Richer stated in his pamphlet quoted above, there were many positive aspects to the cures by prayer. If the sick had experienced "re-

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<sup>6</sup>Letter from Dr. Brunet to Edouard Richer : Paris, December 23, 1828 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>7</sup>*Mme de Saint-Amour*. File of brochures belonging to Paul Flon. [Gift from Mr. Armynoet du Chatelet, Notary in Beauvoir-sur-Mer; Vendée, January 1927.]

lapses," that only proved that they had at least been healed. The cures, or miracles, as they were called at that time, were obtained only by means of prayers, and that while effecting her cures, Mme de Saint-Amour had recourse neither to magnetism nor to somnambulism. She appealed neither to the New Church nor to any other religion and addressed her prayers directly and solely to the Lord. Does it not follow that since the cures had no long-term results we must question the faith of the persons healed rather than that of Mme de Saint-Amour? Having stated the facts of this matter, could not the authorities have created a committee of scientific experts to examine the effects on the sick just as they did with the cures effected by the Prince of Hohenlohe in Germany as well as with the séances of animal magnetism that were held in Paris?<sup>8</sup>

In the *Globe*, dated January 9, 1830, Dr. Bertrand, using the signature M. B. D. M., acknowledges that while Mme de Saint-Amour's healing effects had been "real" according to the testimony of "two gentlemen of talent, Richer and de Tollenare, whose honesty could not be questioned," the healing:

should not be attributed to a supernatural influence attributed to her prayers, but to the moral effect produced on her sick thanks to her simple manners with unction, and the both gentle and strong emotions resulting from confidence in a powerful and mysterious strength whose assistance they evoke with faith.<sup>9</sup>

Given the fact that genuine healing had not actually occurred, its short duration combined with the ill-will of the population in Nantes towards Mme de Saint-Amour, obliged her to stop her activities as a healer. More convinced than ever of the importance of her mission, she then established a chapel in her quarters in Nantes dedicated to the worship of the New Church. The chapel in question was a very small room described by Richer in a phrase quoted in the American *New Jerusalem Magazine*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Mélanges*, Vol.2, p. 367 ff.

<sup>9</sup> F. Piet, *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages d'Edouard Richer*, Nantes-Paris, 1836, pp. 293-294.

<sup>10</sup> *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. III, 1829-1830, January 1830, p. 154.

The same source tells us that some friends of the New Church gathered together each Sunday in this temple to pray to God, to read Swedenborg's works and to "take Communion together." Who were these friends? The answer to this question may be found in my study *Le "Swedenborgisme" balzacien*. Let us note that among approximately ten people in the group, those present were mainly close to Edouard Richer: the editors Thomine and Mellinet, his friends L.F. de Tollenare and François Piet, his future biographer, who at that time was translating Clowes' *Dialogues*<sup>11</sup> into French, and Mme Mauclerc, Richer's landlady in Nantes.<sup>12</sup>

The group grew slowly until Richer's death in 1834, and then dwindled to the point that de Tollenare, in one of his first letters to Le Boys des Guays, noted that there was hardly anyone left with whom he could discuss the doctrines except Mme de Saint-Amour.<sup>13</sup> Mme de Saint-Amour also corresponded with Le Boys des Guays and paid a visit to him and his wife in Saint-Amand. In retrospect, Mme de Saint-Amour seems to have made more of an impression on the women than the men who belonged to groups in the New Church. Mme Gobert referred to her "as the person whose spiritual state and vocation was closest to hers."<sup>14</sup>

Some thirty years afterwards, Anna-Frederika Ehrenborg, a Swedish receiver of the New Church who visited France, discovered the portrait of Mme de Saint-Amour in Bayonne, in the bedroom of Mme Dupons, the wife of a retired colonel who had earlier been converted by Captain Fraiche.<sup>15</sup>

The central figure of the group of Swedenborgians in Nantes was the Breton writer, Edouard Richer. His biography was published two years after his death in 1836 by his longstanding friend, François Piet. In my judgment, the value of this biography has been very much underesti-

<sup>11</sup> Le Boys des Guays' *Revue La Nouvelle-Jérusalem* has an extract of this unpublished translation (June 1843, p. 101 et seq) whose manuscript is in the Library of Nantes: Manuscript 1032.

<sup>12</sup> See my *Remarques sur le "swedenborgisme" balzacien*, in the *Année balzacienne* 1966, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> L. F. de Tollenare to Le Boys des Guays: Nantes, March 25, 1837 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>14</sup> Bernard to J. A. Blanchet: Paris, January 14, 1827 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>15</sup> *Tjugufyra bref från Frankrike, Tyskland och Sweits* (Twenty-four letters from France, Germany and Switzerland) 1855-1856. First part. Eighteen letters. Upsala, Wahlström & C., 1856, p. 332.

mated,<sup>16</sup> undoubtedly because future commentators within the New Church have considered Piet to be too lukewarm a follower of the doctrines revealed by Swedenborg. These critics, however, do not seem to have completely read the full text of the work: *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages d'Edouard Richer*, partially written by Richer himself and also by F. Piet.<sup>17</sup> It is my personal opinion that Richer, as co-author of the biography, would have been very grateful for the homage his friend Piet paid him by publishing this work.

Edouard Richer was born on the Isle of Noirmoutier on June 12, 1792. A highly cultured writer, he had been the recent victim of a theft followed by the destruction of all his manuscripts when he became acquainted both with Bernard and with Swedenborg's Writings in 1824. He converted and subsequently decided to devote the rest of his lifetime to spreading the doctrines of the New Jerusalem.

Richer was not completely unwavering in his allegiance to Swedenborg, and it is probably due to the fact that he had expressed this so clearly that caused critics to reproach Piet's work. In his *Histoire sommaire de la Nouvelle Eglise Chrétienne*, Chevrier expresses the same opinion :

Richer avoided, so to speak, to mention Swedenborg's name in his work and also to confess the antagonism in his writings to the theology of the old Christian churches.<sup>18</sup>

The work in question was *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, Richer's monumental eight-volume work dedicated to the glory of the New Church revealed in Emanuel Swedenborg's Writings. Only the first volume, *La Religion du Bon Sens* (Religion of Common Sense), was published in Richer's lifetime.<sup>19</sup> The others were published later on by his friend Louis-François de

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<sup>16</sup>This critical attitude was certainly due to L. F. de Tollenare who, in his letter to Le Boys des Guays of July 25, 1836. (*Chevrier Collection*), stated that Piet while studying Swedenborg's writings had "remained under the influence of antireligious sensualism; he studied more with his brains than with his soul..."

<sup>17</sup>Nantes-Paris, 1836.

<sup>18</sup>*Histoire sommaire*, p. 90.

<sup>19</sup>*La religion du bon sens pour servir d'exposé préliminaire à la Doctrine de la Nouvelle Jérusalem*, Paris, Treuttel, 1833.

Tollenare, who spent the sum of 10,000 francs in currency of that time to pay for the printing.

Piet tells us that in order to undertake this long proof of “the verity of Swedenborg’s doctrines”<sup>20</sup> (“the religion of common sense”), Richer gave up work on his *Essai sur les progrès et les erreurs de l’esprit humain*, “just as he had given up his history of the rise of Christianity, whose outline he had also drafted.”<sup>21</sup> This provides us with information about the starting point for his vast Swedenborgian panorama. Piet briefly summarized Richer’s cultural and religious undertaking as follows:

He then conceived the idea for his work titled *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, which is the *history of modern religious thoughts connected with those of ancient times*.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, as far as Richer was concerned, Swedenborg’s importance consisted in his method of synthesizing all the sciences and all the branches of philosophy, all the religions and fine arts, in order to create a harmonious whole to insert into the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, “the religion of the 19th century.”<sup>23</sup>

Swedenborg thus became a turning point in the course of human history. Naturally such a key position was so tremendously significant that it resulted in making Richer’s dissertation vulnerable to criticism. Consequently, the Swedish revelator was no longer an instrument of God but merely a simple visionary:

It is in the role of an ecstatic that Swedenborg has the right to explain what other ecstasies have seen and said before him. I certainly give him my confidence, but this confidence is not of the sort that entails the assent of mind to everything that is associated with the thoughts of the visionary.

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<sup>20</sup> Edouard Richer to L. Servier : Nantes, December 1, 1826 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>21</sup> F. Piet, pp. 210-211.

<sup>22</sup> F. Piet, p. 325.

<sup>23</sup> See Note 20, cf Piet, p. 236: “The draft for his *Nouvelle Jérusalem*, to which he first gave the title *Examen critique de la Doctrine de la Nouvelle Jérusalem*.”

In the same paragraph, he continues:

The philosopher's principles are, on the contrary, well-suited to everything and it is on these principles that I have invariably based my literary and scientific opinions, as well as my religious and moral convictions. I do not suppose that these principles, clearly stated and well understood, could draw the blame of scholars and honest people...<sup>24</sup>

Emile Broussais reacted as violently to this as he was to react five years later when he learned of the beginning of New Church services in Saint-Amand by Le Boys des Guays. In May 1833, after the publication of the first volume: *La Religion du Bon Sens*, he sent an ungracious letter to Edouard Richer with the hope of persuading him to renounce his plans for publishing the subsequent volumes of his work. He was of the opinion:

that it is not allowed to any adventurous *oza* (Sic!) to support the Sacred Arch by propping it up with his own force; that at this time it was more advantageous to limit oneself to preaching in order to avoid the free expression of contradictory analogies.

Piet describes Richer's reaction after reading the letter from Broussais:

Struck by admiration for some of the truths pronounced by Swedenborg, I set out to prove them. That scarcely bothered him. Such was the origin of my book. They think it could be harmful to *the work*, well! let us leave it like that.<sup>25</sup>

There is bitterness in this reflection. On one hand, Richer certainly was disappointed by Broussais' attitude. At that time Broussais was the leader of the group of Swedenborgians in Paris and was also trying to spread the New Church throughout France by using a certain number of priests devoted to the good cause. On the other hand, Richer had no money for

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<sup>24</sup>F. Piet, p. 317.

<sup>25</sup>F. Piet, p. 319.

publishing the other volumes of his work. These were printed after his death, as was previously mentioned.

Curiously, in that same year, Edouard Richer had as much success as a Swedenborgian author abroad as he had in France. A Mr. Sims in Belfast translated *La Religion du bon sens* (The Religion of Common Sense) into English, as well as *La clé du mystère* (The Key to the Mystery) published posthumously as the first volume of *La Nouvelle Jérusalem* in the edition prepared and paid for by de Tollenare.<sup>26</sup> Also in the same year *Le livre de l'homme de bien* (The Book of the Upright Man) was published simultaneously in Nantes and also in Tübingen, Germany in a translation by Dr. Hofaker.<sup>27</sup>

All of this international success drew the attention of the Catholic clergy to Richer's work. Although his *Invocations à l'usage des vrais chrétiens* (Invocations for the Use of True Christians) were of such a pure and beautiful inspiration that they called to mind the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, they were placed on the *Index*. When Richer was on his death bed in 1834, he was denied the rites of the Church and died a "heretic." Like his friend, Louis-François de Tollenare, he never wanted to completely sever his ties with the Roman Catholic Church. Edouard Richer could very well have written the following sentence taken from a letter sent to Le Boys des Guays by de Tollenare:

To those who want to see us only as heretics, I think I can demonstrate that the New Jerusalem is the call for unity, a true Catholicism of all religions.<sup>28</sup>

Born in 1780, Louis-François de Tollenare was a close friend of Edouard Richer for about the last fifteen years of Richer's life. At his own expense, he published Richer's eight volumes of *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*. I found a manuscript in the Library of Nantes bearing the title *Notice biographique sur L. F. de Tollenare*.<sup>29</sup> The author, Lidener (=Lubin Impost), maintains

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<sup>26</sup> The Rev. Dr. Bayley, *Early New Church Worthies*, London, James Speirs, 1884, p.186

<sup>27</sup> German title: *Sittengesetz und Offenbarung* (Morality and Revelation).

<sup>28</sup> Quoted from Chevrier: *Histoire sommaire*, p. 95.

<sup>29</sup> Manuscript 2054.

Tollenare's affection for the Catholic Church for a total of eighty-nine pages, and also mentions how brief and superficial an interest he held in Swedenborg and the New Church. However, certain facts prove the contrary. This wealthy former shipowner<sup>30</sup> became manager of the hospitals of the city of Nantes. He supported his friend Richer even before his "conversion" to the doctrines of the New Church which took place in 1826 and was due to the joint efforts of Bernard and Richer. In 1823, de Tollenare was one of the founders of the *Lycée armoricain*, primarily a Breton institution, but one which had also attracted some well-known contributors—Victor Hugo, among others.<sup>31</sup> As the Chairman of the *Academic Society of Nantes* beginning in 1825, he continued to work together with Richer, whom he defended in a pamphlet titled *Des recherches sur le spiritualisme*. Like his friend Richer, de Tollenare put pen to paper in order to lend support to Mme de Saint-Amour<sup>32</sup> and also made arrangements for her to join the Academy. He participated in the services in the temple she had in her lodgings, went to London to make contact with the English Swedenborgians, sent letters to the New Church journal in Great Britain, *The Intellectual Repository*, which often reappeared in the American review, *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, and also paid the publication costs of Richer's *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*.

When Le Boys des Guays eventually located J. F. de Tollenare's address, he wrote his first letter to him on May 20, 1835. This event initiated a continuous correspondence between the two men that lasted for more than fifteen years. The part played by Louis-Francois de Tollenare in the history of French Swedenborgianism was particularly important between the years 1835 and 1837. During this time Le Boys des Guays was preparing himself for his role as the founder of the New Church in Saint-Amand-Mont-Rond as well as in the rest of France, for the job of editor of the journal, *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, and also for the task of translating Swedenborg's religious words into French. Above all, L. F. de Tollenare

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<sup>30</sup> According to the Rev. Dr. Bayley, op.cit., p. 187, de Tollenare was said to have made his fortune by selling arms to buccaneers.

<sup>31</sup> Lidener, ms mentioned, p.22; included among Richer's articles in this review are: Voltaire, J. J. Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Mme de Staël, as well as Linné and Swedenborg, all of them reprinted in the first volume of *Mélanges*.

<sup>32</sup> Lidener, ms mentioned, p. 27.

dissuaded Le Boys des Guays from taking too great an interest in magnetism and somnambulism. Like de Tollenare, Le Boys des Guays, was much fascinated by these phenomena, as his long letter on the *Extase religieuse*<sup>33</sup> proves, yet he followed the advice that was given to him by Tollenare on this matter. In very little time, his own Swedenborgian orthodoxy was to supplant that of Louis-François de Tollenare.

Despite his incontestable affection for the doctrines of the New Jerusalem and especially for Swedenborg's philosophy concerning the importance of prayer and "good uses," de Tollenare continued to hear mass, to confess his sins and to receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church. Above all, he feared disturbing his wife's faith in Catholicism.<sup>34</sup> On his death bed he was obliged to recant his faith in the doctrine of the New Church. News of this incident reached Le Boys des Guays in a letter from Mme de Saint-Amour, who had just written to de Tollenare of her daughter's death. After having received his condolences and assurance that her daughter was "attended to in her last moments by the Lord Bishop of Alger" (!) and "was to become an angel in heaven," de Tollenare continues:

I must tell you that while preparing to leave earth, I returned to the Religion of my fathers, to the Catholic, apostolic and Roman Church, without any outside influence, with the assurance that it contains nothing that cannot be reconciled with the Doctrines we have loved so much, having probed their depths I feel comforted since I made this decision.

You can communicate my new decision to Mr. Leboys who may, and I want him to do so, inform our friends in London, Manchester, Philadelphia and Tübingen. I pray to God, by means of the Catholic Church, to give me the grace to renounce everything the Church does not approve of in the one I have just left.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> L. F. de Tollenare to Le Boys des Guays : Nantes, March 31, 1837 (16 pages, in *Chevrier Collection*) See extract in Note 6 of my chapter on Le Boys des Guays.

<sup>34</sup> See my article in the *Année balzacienne* 1966, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Mme de Saint-Amour to Le Boys des Guays: place unknown, September 1, 1852 (*Chevrier Collection*).

Edmond Chevrier slightly "altered" (so as not to say falsified), his copy of Louis-François de Tollenare's letter, as well as the accompanying letter from Mme de Saint-Amour, by adding the words "his confessor," to the family which had asked the "dying" man to write the letter to Mme de Saint-Amour. We have the following account from Chevrier concerning L. F. de Tollenare's retraction of faith:

During a visit I paid to Mr. Leboys, he showed me Mr. de Tollenare's letter, which I took with me on a walk in July. Rereading it under brilliant sunshine, I suddenly perceived other letters written with invisible ink which appeared when the paper became quite warm. In this other letter, the poor dying man said that he had been obliged to write a letter of abjuration but that he hoped that his friends would perceive other signs he used as proof that he maintained his belief in the New Church.<sup>36</sup>

When I had the opportunity to personally hold this letter of abjuration in my own hands, I tried to reheat it out of curiosity to see if the letters written in invisible ink would perhaps reappear. But after one hundred and twenty years, the results were negative. Despite this, there is no valid reason to doubt Chevrier's sincerity. There is even less reason to question the matter knowing that Mme de Saint-Amour drew his attention to it by stating in a letter to Le Boys des Guays, "there are pencil marks that reassure me a bit." Is it not possible that Mme de Saint-Amour herself was the author of the message between the lines of the letter? This hypothesis is supported by a letter from Mme de Saint-Amour to Le Boys des Guays some eighteen months later:

...in order to transcribe for you an infamous article against Swedenborg and his doctrines; here it is: *Journal magnétique* par Dupotet, 10th year, volume XIII, no 182,; February 25, 1854:

Without paying attention to the contradictory ideas abounding in the works of the prophet from Upsala, we must mention a prin-

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<sup>36</sup>*Histoire sommaire*, pp. 99-100.

ple shocking even to those with easily alarmed consciences and whose justification we find with sectarian followers of quietism and martinism. According to these sects man can lead a disorderly life, etc., with impunity. This justification of debauchery does surprise us, etc.

You can judge, dear Friend, how furious I am against the author; I could not help writing in the margin: "*Mensonge infame* " (Infamous lie) although this document does not belong to me.<sup>37</sup>

Is it not likely that, in the autumn of 1852, Mme de Saint-Amour "could not but help" softening the tone of Louis-François de Tollenare's sorrowful letter of abjuration by adding her own message with invisible ink? Personally I do not believe de Tollenare could have used such a method himself.

Chevrier states that de Tollenare wrote the letter on "the day before his death, on August 29, 1832 [a mistake for 1852]."<sup>38</sup> How could a dying man have been able to find invisible ink and also have the strength to write a message between the lines, especially since, according to his biographer Lidener, he had suffered for some time from a "softening of the brain"?<sup>39</sup>

As a point of fact, the date of Louis-François de Tollenare's death was not August 29, 1852 but rather December 20, 1853, as Lidener states in his *Notice biographique*.<sup>40</sup> Therefore the date of his letter of abjuration was fifteen months later, a time during which "the poor Monsieur de Tollenare," as Le Boys des Guays called him,<sup>41</sup> refrained from practising the religion he had loved so much for a quarter of a century and to whose growth he had contributed so much, despite his timorousness and his fear of "weakening the sense of religion among the Catholics by controversy."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Mme de Saint-Amour to Le Boys des Guays: place unknown April 9, 1854 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>38</sup> *Histoire sommaire*, p. 99.

<sup>39</sup> Lidener, ms. mentioned, p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> Lidener, ms. mentioned, p. 89.

<sup>41</sup> Le Boys des Guays in a letter to the Englishman Hughes: Saint-Amand, August 14, 1852 (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted from Chevrier, *Histoire sommaire*, p. 94.

CHAPTER 9

J. F. E. LE BOYS DES GUAYS AND THE NEW CHURCH CENTER  
IN SAINT-AMAND-MONT-ROND

Jacques-François-Etienne Le Boys des Guays was born in Chatillon-sur-Loing on October 18, 1794. He was appointed judge for the Court of Justice in Saint-Amand in 1827 and was married to Louise Clotilde Rollet in that same year. Three years later he was appointed to the post of sub-prefect, but had to resign from it in 1831 because of his political opinions. Since his wife possessed a certain amount of wealth, Le Boys des Guays was not obliged to earn a living. Moreover, the couple was childless. Both these facts should be taken into account when studying the history of the New Church in France; for without these conditions it would have been impossible for Le Boys des Guays to accomplish his work.

In November 1834, the Le Boys des Guays went together to Paris accompanied by a young shepherd, François, whom they wanted to show off to friends. François was a somnambulist whom Le Boys des Guays would often magnetize. During these sessions François would "visit heaven," thereby filling an audience with wonder. Since the boy was illiterate, Le Boys des Guays undertook the task of giving him an education. While in Paris the Le Boys des Guays met by accident a young templar, A. Caudron, who loaned them one of Swedenborg's works. Upon reading Swedenborg, Le Boys des Guays adopted the doctrines at once.

P. Edouard Brody de Lamotte has published an interesting study on *Le Culte de la Nouvelle Jérusalem à Saint-Amand* (New Jerusalem Divine Worship in Saint-Amand) which gives very precise information on Le Boys des Guays and his work.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Lamotte's study, we have two other main sources of information on Le Boys des Guays' period of initiation into the doctrines of the New Jerusalem; his letters to his brother-in-law Eugène Rollet while a student in Paris,<sup>2</sup> and his correspondence with L. F. de Tollenare in

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<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires du Centre 1936-1937*, Vol. XLVII (17th in the 2nd Series), Bourges, 1938, pp. 133-173.

<sup>2</sup> M. and Mme Charles Sainmont, (Le Boys des Guays' grandniece), were living in Menetou-sur-Cher at the time of my visit (1963) and were kind enough to allow me to go through this correspondence in their possession.

Nantes.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to this documentation, it is relatively easy to trace the evolution of Le Boys des Guays' religious ideas between the years 1834 and 1840.

Eugène Rollet's primary responsibility consisted in making contacts in Paris in order to locate Swedenborg's works in the bookshops and in finding the addresses of his followers, etc. Rollet was especially well-suited to undertaking these endeavors because upon his brother-in-law's advice he himself had recently begun to study Swedenborg. However, Swedenborg never proved to be the "touchstone" for Rollet that he was for Le Boys des Guays.<sup>4</sup> Rollet did in fact become a member of the New Jerusalem group in Saint-Amand, an event that was to cause some problems with his electors, eventually bringing an end to his career as a deputy. Brody de Lamotte informs us that Rollet ultimately lost interest in the New Jerusalem and requested to be buried according to the rites of the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

The role of Louis-François de Tollenare was a more significant one than that of Eugène Rollet. He was in contact with the Swedenborgians in London and also advised Le Boys des Guays not to mingle the doctrines of the New Jerusalem together with the practices of magnetism and somnambulism.<sup>6</sup> Le Boys des Guays eventually broke away from de Tollenare's

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<sup>3</sup>In the *Chevrier Collection*.

<sup>4</sup>Second letter from Le Boys des Guays to his brother-in-law Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, February 2, 1835.

So the study you made of the works of the new apostle during your holiday can be of great use to you; you know the basis of his doctrine, if it becomes a touchstone for you, you will not fail to make great progress. Each time you want to be sure that a proposition made by an author is true or false, try to put it into relationship with some analogous points from Swedenborg's doctrine, and then you will be able to resolve the question. This is the method I use, and it works well for me.

<sup>5</sup>Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned, p.164, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from L. F. de Tollenare to Le Boys des Guays, Nantes, May 24, 1835, (*Chevrier Collection*):

The phenomena of somnambulism, which gave you the opportunity to convince yourself that the *real* world is not the one felt by our external senses, and introduced you into the world we call the New Jerusalem, have also served as a similar introduction to several persons here. But you should consider this means as a secondary one, for you will soon verify that the views of the ecstasies of the spiritual world are susceptible to what is false or uncertain, as well as to what is true. Love of God, doing good in his sight, in a word, charity, are superior to satisfaction that the investigations of logic can provide; that is the essential thing. It is the state of good, says Swedenborg, (Continued)

influence and subsequently became a more orthodox Swedenborgian than L. F. de Tollenare himself. Nevertheless, de Tollenare was able to give him practical advice about the establishment of the Swedenborgian group in Saint-Amand, especially from a legal point of view.<sup>7</sup> This was rather remarkable due to the fact that de Tollenare succeeded in achieving in Saint-Amand what he had failed to achieve in his own city, Nantes. In addition, it must be added that Le Boys des Guays also had a practical nature that the pious Mme de Saint-Amour lacked.

As a former judge, Le Boys des Guays wished to officially announce the beginning of services of divine worship of the New Jerusalem in Saint-Amand, on November 18, 1837. On that same day he sent an announcement to the mayor which was reprinted in the *Annonciateur du Cher* of November 26, 1837:

Your Honor,

I have the pleasure of informing you that I have opened my home on Sundays to any reasonable person wanting to gain knowl-

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that we should try to consider in the true: Richer owes his successes to this very method. After having accompanied somnambulists myself from the courts of heaven to the shades of night; after having been amazed by the coincidence of their accounts with those we find in the new doctrine, which, they, however, did not recall when they were awake, I have given up using them as my starting point for acquiring enlightenment. In the field of divine things, you may assist yourself by somnambulism as an analytical means, but you must proceed only by synthesis when seeking the principle of all things. In the absence of a better theory of ecstasy, I have stopped supposing that by conversing with a somnambulist I came into contact with anyone else in the spiritual world than the medium, since he gave me answers related to the nature of his region or, most often, just my very own thoughts. That is an insufficient criterion. So I have not made any progress thanks to them, and I deal with somnambulism as a matter of more or less innocent curiosity. Prayers, reading the Holy Bible, and efforts to do good while acknowledging the Lord as the source of good; all this seems much more effective to me.

<sup>7</sup> Le Boys des Guays to Henry Bateman, Islington, London: Saint-Amand, May 11, 1839 (*Archives of the Swedenborg Society*: K/84):

For instance, our brethren in Tarbes near Orthez, after having discussed the matter in a meeting, suggested to me to make the *Journal* a shareholding, so that its existence should be sheltered from any unforeseen event and relieve me of any concern for its financial status. As I was a complete stranger to anything concerning this method of procedure, I asked Mr. de Tollenare to draw up a draft of a document which I sent to one of our brethren in Tarbes, who took it with his neighbors. This project was good because it obliged the shareholders in some cases, to provide for the needs of our *Society of Treatises*; but Mr. de Tollenare, limited by our laws, was obliged to give to the document a commercial form, although the purpose of it was entirely benevolent.

edge of the main religious principles professed by followers of the New Jerusalem.

I am entirely convinced that the exposition of these principles cannot but be very much suited to accelerating the prosperity of the town you administer with such praiseworthy and persevering zeal. The civil, moral and religious ideas, although they are mutually separate, bear real fruits only if they are connected in order to reach the same objective, the happiness of mankind, without being in mutual conflict in any way. A brief glance at some of our principles will convince you that the doctrine of the New Jerusalemites can meet this requirement and lead us to this end, which is the hope of every good man.

1. The religion we profess is not the result of human design, it is Christianity reduced to its primitive pureness and brought in touch with the progress of light; it is not new, for there were in England, before 1830, forty-four towns with temples, and, in 1827, there were more than sixty in the United States of America. Its doctrine began being professed publicly in England as early as in 1783; it has now spread to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, to the German states, Prussia, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, to the North of Russia and in fact everywhere where there is the slightest glimmer of freedom of conscience.

2. Our religion is a spiritual one and has absolutely nothing to do with the world or politics for, according to our principles a religion should in no way interfere in the affairs of governments, and from this, we draw the conclusion that if Christianity has been led out of its true path during the last fifteen centuries, it is because spiritual things were abused by applying them to worldly interests.

3. As a rule our religion allows the greatest tolerance and accordingly, it is in no way exclusive; in fact, we recognize that God is the common Father of all human beings, and that in being the very Justice, He makes no distinction between them, and thus, every man, be he a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Jew, a Hindu or an idolator, may be saved. It is sufficient that he has lived a good

life; for God cannot impute to man the errors into which he was born and educated.

4. Our religious practice does not consist in living in contemplation and mysticity, concerning ourselves only with our own salvation; this would, in fact, be a way of losing it. For acting in such a way is acting just for oneself, and selfishness is the original blemish that man ought to remove in order to return to the normal state in which he was primitively created; but the practice of our religion does consist in leading a full life of activity in the world. Continually praising and blessing God is not leading an active life; God, for his glory, does not need praise and blessings; he wants us to fulfill uses (works) and thus the goods of charity; he only requires us, and just for our own benefit, to once in seven days gather together a moment to consider spiritual matters, when we can do so. To us, to pray to God is to do good because it is good with no thought of gain for ourselves; to love God is, in all circumstances, to prefer all men or the whole of mankind over our country, our country over our family, and our family over ourself.

As you can see, Your Honor, according to our principles we will never concern ourselves with politics in our religious meetings, either directly or indirectly. This **announcement** is made to you in order to avoid any false interpretations of our intentions.

Yours sincerely,

Le Boys des Guays  
Town Councilor<sup>8</sup>

About this time Le Boys des Guays launched his *Prospectus* in order to find subscribers to his journal *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, a monthly publication whose first issue appeared in March, 1838. It is clear that all these activities concerned both the Catholics, who replied in the *Echo du Vatican*<sup>9</sup> in the form of an article called *Une nouvelle hérésie* and the Protestants, who, in

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<sup>8</sup>Quoted from Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned, pp. 136-138.

<sup>9</sup>March, 1838.

their journal *Le Semeur*, dealt with *La secte des swédenborgiens en France*.<sup>10</sup> These titles clearly reveal the extremely negative spirit in which those articles were drafted. Le Boys des Guays in replying in his *Journal*, stressed the fact that in order to be able to criticize a doctrine, it was necessary for one to have studied it. It was quite clear to him that the authors had not taken the trouble to read a single work by Swedenborg.

Although a critical reaction in the official publications of the two most influential religious bodies was inevitable, Le Boys des Guays did not expect at that time to be the target of an abusive tirade from Emile Broussais. After reading the following lines it should be easy to understand why Le Boys des Guays had found a mortal enemy once he opened his home for services of worship for the New Jerusalem in France.

To Monsieur Le Boys des Guays.

Hail!

Mr. de Fossa has just sent me notice of your decision and proclamation to open your home to the New Church of the Lord. *If you are wrong in taking this step, it is hardly the result of confusion or the glory of the Lord and the Holy Spirit, if you are doing so with His assistance.* As I view this matter, it is not in the name of the Lord that you are acting, but rather from a vain gesture of profane presumptuousness. The Lord has entrusted another with the organization of his Church and is leading that person to this end—a fact you are not unaware of. If you had preferred the Church to your own glory you would have found a well-traced path and a sure guide; but you wanted to elevate yourself, thus causing your going astray and your fall. Fool hardy man! You have no fear of imperilling the New Church which is coming with the Savior, and are not concerned with how to defend this august cause now that you have stirred it up. Neither are you concerned about exposing it to scorn and scandal in this great nation which was to know its existence only by an appropriate way filled with grandeur and solemnity! Who inspired you with this confidence of believing

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<sup>10</sup> March 28, 1838.

that the Lord needed you beyond the spheres of your private affections, and that he had not in reserve either a more opportune time for this or a herald of better countenance?<sup>11</sup>

Two regional newspapers, the *Gazette du Berri* and the *Journal du Cher* also plunged into the debate ridiculing the New Jerusalem. Le Boys des Guays replied in the *Annonciateur du Cher* of December 10, 1837, that he refused to engage in any further discussion of the matter unless it was based on the principles to be discussed. Brody de Lamotte states that the *Gazette du Berri* did not take the matter any further. This is not true because I found in an issue from Saturday, December 23, 1837 a "comedy with songs" several pages long bearing the title *La Jérusalémitomanie ou Gâchis s'il en fût jamais* (Jerusalmitomania or What a terrible mess!). Le Boys des Guays was depicted as the main character: "Mr. Rêvancreux, a first-class humbug filling the role as the great Pontifico-Lama-Brama of the new sect." Mme Le Boys des Guays appeared as Marjolaine Doucette, his wife. As far as the shepherd living with them was concerned, the author of the farce did not even take the trouble to disguise him. He appeared under his real name: "little François, a somnambulist."

As far as the rest of the characters are concerned, all the buffoonery seems to be pure fiction. Thus "the friend Drôlichon" probably did not represent the same character who was to reappear in another piece that appeared in the *Gazette du Berri*: "the Lapsus Calami, scenes with songs," published in the November 28, 1838 issue which ridiculed the editor, Edward Wallet, and his *Journal du Cher*: "the so-called writer and very real editor of the Patagonia Paper." The only reason at this point to mention the *Lapsus Calami*, is because some of the melodies of the *Jérusalémitomanie* reappeared in this new farce, and also because its first scene is completely analogous to the first scene in the parody of the Swedenborgian service of divine worship in Saint-Amand: the action takes place in a bedroom and the pasha in the *Lapsus calami*, is dressed exactly like Rêvancreux, wearing a yellow dressing gown and night-cap.

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<sup>11</sup> Anna-Frederika Ehrenborg, *Tjugofyra bref från Frankrike, Tyskland och Sweiz* (Twenty-four letters from France, Germany and Switzerland) 1855-1856. Second Part, Upsala, Wahlström & Cie, 1857, pp. 122-126: Copy of the letter de M.E. Broussais: Passy, near Paris, December 14, 1837.

The presence of numerous foreign characters (“Milord Dog, who loves beefsteaks, Lady Pembrock, his faithful wife, Crompir, a stubborn German, Yang-Pouf, a Chinaman, Cavalchini, an Italian mandolin-playing doctor, Baudah-Matta, a Hindu, and Rapax, a Jew by birth and state”) can be explained on one hand by the fact that Le Boys des Guays received foreign visitors, and on the other hand by the *Announcement* quoted above in which he expresses the Swedenborgian tolerance toward other religions:

As a rule, our religion admits the greatest tolerance...we recognize...that thus every man, be he a Christian, a Moham-medan, a Jew, a Hindu or an idolator, may be saved.

The *Gazette du Berri* pokes fun at this paragraph in its article of December 10, 1837.

“Father Dégommé, a Saint-Simonian,” owes his part in this play to the article that appeared in the December 2 issue of *Gazette du Berri* in which the author compared Swedenborgians with the Saint-Simonians. Le Boys des Guays protested against this comparison in the *Annonciateur du Cher* on December 10, but there was no reaction on the part of its author.

Should this silly buffoonery be taken seriously? Le Boys des Guays did give a brief response to it, especially in regard to his portrayal as the Pontifico-Lama-Brama:

The followers of the New Jerusalem do not acknowledge any pontiff. Their religion consists entirely in charity, that is to say, giving of oneself and neither does it accept “the first” or “the last” in the commonly understood sense of those words. The first among us will be he who, in giving of himself completely, will live only for his brethren; and the last will be the proud who believes he is above all others.<sup>12</sup>

In the end, Le Boys des Guays was not dissatisfied with the way the press dealt with the New Jerusalem, even if it was in an absurd fashion. After all, the curiosity of the inhabitants of Saint-Amand had been awakened. The “temple,” which Brody de Lamotte gives us detailed description

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<sup>12</sup> *Le Courrier Français* and *Le National* of December 28, 1837. American version in the *New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. XI (1837-38), p. 344.

of, as well as the development of the divine service,<sup>13</sup> met with increasing success: twelve people on the first Sunday, seventeen on the second, over forty on the third, and over one hundred and twenty on the fourth Sunday.<sup>14</sup> The number of the faithful attenders stabilized at around forty, later decreasing to about a dozen.

Nevertheless, this success concerned not only the two most important religious congregations in the region, but also the authorities. On Sunday, March 22, the inspector of police arrived in order to count the number of those in attendance, which happened to be thirty-two on that day. Le Boys des Guays, fearing that a prohibition of worship might ensue, decided to prevent such a measure from happening by sending the following letter directly to the Attorney General in the Royal Court of Bourges:

Saint-Amand, 27 March 1838.

Mr. Attorney General,

Last Sunday, the Police Inspector came to my house by order of your deputy, the King's district attorney in Saint-Amand, in order to verify the *number* of people gathered together in my living room, which serves as a provisional temple for the followers of the New Jerusalem in order to give to God worship from their hearts. I am unaware, and I have no right to ask and to find out what orders you have given, or to know how far they can go; but as a Christian and a Frenchman living in the guardianship of freedom of conscience inscribed in the Charter, I cannot but submit to you, with all the consideration for your dignity, the thoughts that this act quite naturally suggested to me:

On November 18, 1837, I made an *Announcement* to Mr. Mayor of Saint-Amand that my house would be open on Sundays to any reasonable person wanting to learn about the religious principles professed by the followers of the New Jerusalem. This announcement was transmitted to the Higher Authority and since that time, nothing has happened that could cause concern on the part of the Authorities for public peace; for there has been neither disorder

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<sup>13</sup> Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned, pp. 138-140.

<sup>14</sup> C.T. Odhner, *Annals*, Vol. I, p. 430, and the *New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. XI (1837-38), p. 344.

nor uproar; the doors of my house have always been open on Sundays at three o'clock to all those who wished to come, and all the agents of the Authority have had the liberty of exercising their surveillance; the Police Inspector may come whenever he wishes and may send his subordinates. They will always be well received, for all men are brethren; but the counting of the number of those present seemed to indicate that the Authority applied Article 291 of the Penal Code. I would therefore like to submit for your consideration some simple reflections on this very point.

Gathering together in the drawing-rooms of certain gentlemen to play cards occurs without the Authorities counting the number of those in attendance; and Christians whose reason rejects the dogmas of Roman Catholicism cannot gather together in numbers greater than 20 to pray together, and must remain deprived of worship because it pleases others to associate them with conspirators! It is not by reading the Holy Bible to assimilate divine truths contained in the Scriptures that one learns conspiracy.

On any given day organized balls are given in private rooms where great numbers of people gather together, and I am not allowed to unite more than twenty of my brethren, wives and children included, so that they may become imbued with the love of God and our neighbors! The law cannot be as immoral as that; its aim is to prohibit secret meetings which are dangerous to the peace of the State; but it was never intended to put constraints on the freedom of conscience when there is no association and all the inhabitants can participate in a divine service which excludes no one. Besides, you know, Mr. Attorney General, that you would have to delete the freedom of conscience article inscribed in the Charter of 1830 if you wanted to rigorously apply Article 291 of the Penal Code, and you also know to what degree the constitutional Charter of a new government overrides an article of the law of former government.

I can only attribute the extent of rigor exerted on us to the lack of knowledge of our religious principles. Now, our religion, which has been publicly professed for many years in England and the

United States of North America is based on two fundamental principles: the acknowledgement of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one God and living according to the precepts He gave in the *Decalogue*. Thus, there are no constraints of external formality for the followers of the New Jerusalem; it is enough to recognize that there is only one God and not three different persons in God, and to live according to the Decalogue, does not require a declaration, because words and promises are nothing in the eyes of God, who considers only how one lives one's life; therefore all those who live according to this belief are followers of the New Jerusalem, and not those who loudly proclaim their belief without putting it into practice.

If the Church of France, which denies the divine nature of Jesus Christ can preach such a dogma openly, it is very surprising that there would be an attempt to prohibit, or at least to constrain the practice of worship in the New Jerusalem: which, far from making a mere man of Jesus Christ, recognizes him, as I have just said, as the one true God of the universe.

I only dare hope, Mr. Attorney General, that these simple reflections can effect a change in the orders which you have given that place the followers of the New Jerusalem outside the common law; thereby avoiding my having to make official complaints which will be my only recourse, if I am so obliged.

Le Boys des Guays  
Former Judge  
Former Sub-Prefect.<sup>15</sup>

Having thus clarified this matter had an immediate effect; Le Boys des Guays no longer had to worry about the celebration of the divine service. However, this is not say that there was complete freedom of action.

Le Boys des Guays and his friends were staunch Republicans and for this reason Le Boys des Guays was forced to resign from his appointment as sub-prefect in 1831. In a letter sent to his brother-in-law, Eugène Rollet, he requested that he send him the sum of a "collection...for political

<sup>15</sup>Quoted from Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned, pp. 136-138.

prisoners" to an address in Paris.<sup>16</sup> Later, after the revolution in February 1848, Michel de Bourges recommended to Le Boys des Guays that he serve as a candidate at the parliamentary election. But by that time Le Boys des Guays considered that the mission of being the translator of Swedenborg's works was of far greater importance than a parliamentary mandate.<sup>17</sup>

Napoleon III's ascension to power was a real catastrophe for the followers of the New Jerusalem in Saint-Amand. Some had to go into exile

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<sup>16</sup> Fifteenth letter from Le Boys des Guays to Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, April 10, 1837:

I send you a packet of seventy-four pounds. It is the money collected for political prisoners. I ask you as soon as you have received this letter to give the bundle of seventy-four pounds to M. Perisul at the address I will give you.

<sup>17</sup> Allow me to quote from Edmond Chevrier (*Histoire sommaire*, pp. 207-208) the letter from Le Boys des Guays to Auguste Harlé:

Saint-Amand (Cher), March 10, 1848.

It has been impossible, dear brother, for me to answer your letter of second of this month, because I have been so upset. You certainly know that I was removed from my office as sub-Prefect in 1831 because of my republican ideas and that I have always remained unwavering in my principles, without ever asking for the slightest favor from the fallen government. Since I belong to the New Church, I have said, at all the opportunities I have had, that when the Republic was to be declared, I would accept only the favor of serving her as a simple citizen. My former political friends know my position very well, but they thought that considering the critical circumstances in our department, they could make me change my mind. They came to see me and to coerce me into accepting the function of Delegate to the provisional government; they fought against my often repeated refusal ultimately using arguments that threw me into uncertainty between my duties as a citizen and my duties as a Christian of the New Jerusalem. The temptation was very strong; but it became still stronger when they tried to convince me that I could reconcile these two sorts of duties by requiring only two hours a day of me and offering me a subcommittee of four or five members who would take orders from me and do all the other jobs. On the other hand, my consent would make certain my nomination to the Nationale, where, they said, I could be very useful to the New Church; this last argument carried more weight with me because my grandfather was the deputy of Montargis to the Constitutionalist House of Commons in '89. But in the middle of all these considerations pro and con, weighing constantly in my mind, I had recourse to the Lord ardently praying to him to resolve my uncertainty by giving to my internal man domination over my external man. When my prayers were at last answered, my decision was irrevocable, and I announced that I would persist in my resolve, and that I would continue to devote myself entirely to the religious work I began fourteen years ago; and this because I was convinced that I would be more useful to the true interests of the Republic by spreading the one religious doctrine that suited her, and accordingly make her more stable and prosperous, than if I accepted any important functions. So I have returned to my dear works; however, during this last two weeks, ... I did not abandon them, ... although I could only devote myself to translation, any other work being impossible for me.

With much love,

Your friend and brother  
LE BOYS DES GUAYS.

in England; Gilbert Porte, the founder of the New Jerusalem Bookshop and who was married to an Englishwoman, Eugène Rollet, Le Boys des Guays' own brother-in-law, who succeeded Porte as a teacher of French in Manchester but also had difficulty at first in becoming acclimatized to a new country,<sup>18</sup> and the former Catholic priest Bayot, who resided in London and later on became the minister of the New Church in Mauritius. In a letter to the Reverend Broadfield in Manchester, Le Boys des Guays raised the possibility of retreating to this city.<sup>19</sup>

The first issue of the *Nouvelle-Jérusalem, Revue Religieuse et Scientifique* was published in March, 1838. As I have already previously stated, in the chapter devoted to "Captain Bernard and his Friends," according to the proposal by Major Fossa, its launching occurred in a similar manner to *Die Frühe* (writings by Ludwig Hofaker which provided extracts of the best Swedenborgian works published in England, France, Sweden and America), in other words, in the form of a monthly periodical preceded by a *Prospectus*.

The first of the eight volumes to be published, covering the years 1838-1847, was composed mainly of texts by Edouard Richer. Before its publication ceased, the monthly was transformed into a quarterly. Richer's texts included *Analysis of Heaven and Hell*, *Analysis of Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Orpheus' Hymn*, *Cleanthes' Hymn*, *Exodus of Aratus' Poem*, *The Examination of Master Thomas or the Cause of the Cholera*, *The First Letter from Edouard Richer to M. Thomine*, President of the Academic Society of Nantes. As already noted, Edouard Richer's Swedenborgian orthodoxy was less than perfect, especially since he considered Swedenborg to be an ecstatic, like others, and that it was only because he was an ecstatic that he had been able to see things that ordinary people were incapable of seeing.

All during this time Le Boys des Guays continued to remain under the spell of little François. L. F. de Tollenare's advice had not yet freed him

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<sup>18</sup> But the thirty-second letter from Le Boys des Guays to Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, October 8, 1860, proves that, among the exiles from Saint-Amand, Eugène Rollet was to spend the longest time in England, because, he was still there at this time, and like Gilbert Porte, he married an Englishwoman.

<sup>19</sup> Saint-Amand, February 4, 1852 (*Chevrier Collection*):

If Jesuitism continues to prevail in France and if it becomes impossible for me to stay in France without impending danger, I will retire near you in Manchester, but as long as there is no impending danger, I shall remain at my post.

from this harmful influence. Consequently, we find in the entire first volume an apology for ecstasy which the Swedenborgians in London and Boston did not fail to detect. The editor of the *Intellectual Repository* expressed his reservations in a footnote when he presented the *Prospectus de la Nouvelle-Jérusalem* in the March 1838 issue. We find the following paragraph in the *New Jerusalem Magazine* of Boston:

Our reader will not understand that we approve of all the ideas advanced by the friends of the Church in France. We refer more particularly to the remarks concerning what they term a state of *extasy*. These we think are quite unsatisfactory, and even the exploratory Note of the Editors of the *Repository*, is not, we fear, sufficiently explicit.<sup>20</sup>

Le Boys des Guays soon realized that he had to free French Swedenborgianism from all that pertained to magic, magnetism and somnambulism in order to create a true society of the New Jerusalem. It is curious to note that the very man whose ideas on this subject had been questioned by the New Church members both in England and in the United States changed so radically that, twenty years later, he was the one who gave advice to his English brethren about the position to be taken towards Harris, an ecstatic. He composed a long letter on this subject which was subsequently published both in England and in Germany.<sup>21</sup> In his *Histoire sommaire de la Nouvelle Eglise Chrétienne*, Chevrier pays homage to Le Boys des Guays for having broken with the French ecstatics.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. XI (1837-38), pp. 341-342.

<sup>21</sup> Le Boys des Guays to Mr. Broadfield in Manchester: Saint-Amand, October 18, 1859. English title: *Swedenborg and Modern Spiritualism*, Manchester, 1860.

This is confirmed by Le Boys des Guays' letter to Mr. Broadfield of January 2, 1860:

The letter will begin like this: "You ask my opinion on modern ecstatics... The German translation is in progress; we are just waiting for yours so that the work can be delivered to the public."

<sup>22</sup> *Histoire sommaire.*, p. 199:

Mr. Leboys des Guays has rendered an enormous service to the New Church in France by strongly severing ties with all those who attempted communication with the spiritual world by spiritism, table turning, magnetism. Although he was brought to reading Swedenborg's writings by the study of magnetic somnambulism, he recognized, thanks to this reading, the dangers of magnetism and gave up dealing with those kinds of experiments. "I have thanked the Lord a thousand times for allowing me to avoid the pitfalls that have ensnared so many others," he used to say.

Moreover, the reservations expressed in the Swedenborgian publication mentioned above did not hinder his co-religionists in Great Britain and the United States from requesting his *La Nouvelle-Jérusalem* and it was not long before there were over two hundred subscribers. Thus, it proved to have been a good idea for Le Boys des Guays to have sent his *Prospectus* abroad. Furthermore, the journal contained a *Bulletin* with information on the life of the New Church followers in England, the United States, Germany, Switzerland, etc. The distribution centers listed on the back cover of the first volume were truly international; in addition to the seven French cities of Saint-Amand, Paris, Nantes, Strasbourg, Aurillac, Aix-en-Provence and Aubusson, were booksellers in Amsterdam, Athens, Baltimore, Brussels, Bucharest, Christiania, Chur, Geneva, Copenhagen, Lausanne, London, Neuchatel, Philadelphia, Rotterdam, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Tübingen, Uppsala and Utrecht. The extent of this internationalization is reminiscent of the work of the early Swedish followers. Interest in the New Church was not just confined to a single town, or even one country, but extended throughout the world.

Le Boys des Guays' work was well-suited to this international context. He was adopted immediately as the spiritual leader of the New Church in France. At the same time, Saint-Amand-Mont-Rond in Cher, became a place of pilgrimage for Swedenborgians from many countries. Beginning in 1838, Adam Hayworth, the Minister of the New Church in Manchester, paid a visit to Le Boys des Guays and assisted at the service celebrated according to the liturgy translated into French by François Ledru. Ledru was a former Catholic priest in the commune of Lèves, near Chartres, who, after having become acquainted with the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, broke with the Catholic Church in order to bring the New Church to his entire parish.

However, just like Abbé Pernety, who half a century earlier, had retained his faithfulness to Catholicism when translating *Heaven and Hell* into French, the former Abbé Ledru felt obliged to inject some characteristics of the religion of Rome into the liturgy of the New Church. He retained the worship of saints, especially the Virgin Mary, the Holy Communion in one kind, holy water, etc., in order not to frighten away his parishioners, who loyally guarded him against the soldiers who had come to expel him from his parish after he was removed from office by his bishop. With those

exceptions, Ledru was an excellent Swedenborgian fighting in the ranks of the New Church servants who were available to Emile Broussais at that time.

Even though François Ledru died in 1836 without leaving a spiritual heir and his whole parish returned to the Catholic Church,<sup>23</sup> his liturgy, his *Petit Cathéchisme*,<sup>24</sup> and some letters sent to Emile Broussais bear witness of the Swedenborgian hiatus that occurred in a French parish of the Roman Catholic Church. His liturgy proved to be extremely valuable because it was used by Le Boys des Guays prior to being used by the Swedenborgians in Paris.

However, the worship service as it was celebrated in Saint-Amand appeared dull to some visitors.<sup>25</sup> Everyone regretted the absence of singing and music. Despite all his fine qualities, I should state here that Le Boys des Guays was a rather poor preacher. Chevrier mentioned this in a note in the margin of a letter about Saint-Amand,<sup>26</sup> and Brody de Lamotte remarked that Le Boys des Guays did not know how to adapt his sermon to his congregation and had the habit of expressing himself in academic terms in addressing the simple craftsmen of Saint-Amand. Le Boys des Guays was certainly conscious of this weakness. In a letter to the French-American Reverend Chauvenet of May 3, 1851, he reported the arrival in Saint-Amand of a new brother, the former Catholic priest Bayot. He expressed the hope that Bayot would one day be the minister of the Saint-Amand Society, for until then, he himself would have to serve in the capacity of “a provisional pastor.” He would have been happy to give

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<sup>23</sup> Edmond Chevrier relates this in a long note (*Histoire sommaire*, pp. 102-104) on the history of Ledru’s Swedenborgian parish.

<sup>24</sup> François Ledru, *Liturgie de la Nouvelle Eglise annoncée et signifiée dans l’Apocalypse par la Nouvelle Jérusalem*, Chartres-Lèves-Paris, 1836 (free translation of the liturgy in use in the Islington Parish in London); *Petit Cathéchisme*, Librairie de la Nouvelle Jérusalem, Saint-Amand (announced in the Vol. VIII of the *Nouvelle-Jérusalem*, p. 13); *Adresse aux Habitants de la Commune de Lèves*, Chartres-Lèves, 1835 (the beginning of the Swedenborgian Parish).

<sup>25</sup> For example de Fossa, Blanchet, Anna-Frederika Ehrenborg.

<sup>26</sup> Second letter from Edmand Chevrier to Le Boys des Guays: Bourg, August 29, 1847 (*Chevrier Collection*):

Remember that what kept me aloof from the idea of the new worship was the suffering I experienced when I saw the divine service in Saint-Amand with Mr. Leboys’ boring manner, so incomprehensible to the brave people.

leadership of the Society over to a true professional, especially for marriages, burials and other ceremonies for which, according to Le Boys des Guays, "no one of our brethren would have consented to call upon a Catholic priest."<sup>27</sup>

In the autumn of 1838, Le Boys des Guays presided at the first burial of a member of the New Church. The deceased was Philippe Hauger, the illegitimate son of Mme de Krüdener, former friend of Emperor Alexander I of Russia. Hauger had settled in Saint-Amand with his family thinking he would find a Fourierist phalanstery. At that time, Le Boys des Guays was rather favorable to a union between the religion of the New Church and Charles Fourier's social system. He had already encouraged his brother-in-law Eugène to study Fourier's writings<sup>28</sup> and also exchanged letters and magazines<sup>29</sup> with Fourierists. I found in the *Chevrier Collection* four pages in Le Boys des Guays' handwriting about a *Projet d'association des travailleurs en ménages, capital, travail, talent. Considérations générales*.

But as far as Le Boys des Guays' personal interest in Charles Fourier's social system is concerned, the private archives of M. and Mme Charles Saintmont in Menetou-sur-Cher give us much more precise information than does the *Chevrier Collection*, notably the twenty-two page document titled *Fouriérisme et Phalange*. In addition to the *Extraits de la Phalange*, the document's subtitle, there are three pages handwritten by Le Boys des Guays concerning the *Concordance de la Nouvelle Eglise avec le Système Social de Charles Fourier*. The point of departure for this brief study includes both an article published in the issue of February 1, 1838 issue of the *Phalange* by

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<sup>27</sup> The letter mentioned from Le Boys des Guays to W. Chauvenet.

<sup>28</sup> Fourteenth letter from Le Boys des Guays to Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, March 24, 1837 (M. and Mme Charles Sainmont's private archives):

I was very satisfied to learn that you were involved in a study of Fourier's system. I have often heard people speak in praise of it: during one of my trips to Paris, I even read a pamphlet by one of his followers [probably Victor Considérant's *Destinée Sociale*, which Le Boys des Guays was to quote later on; I must add also that the *Phalange* and the *Democratie pacifique* could be acceptable to a Swedenborgian republican] but this study was insufficient to give me a complete idea of the whole system. In order to make extracts, we will study them together during your holidays. I presume that his system can contain something good in its practical aspect; but as far as its theoretical side is concerned, I doubt if it is often true. Besides, we can obtain verification by means of our usual criterion: Swedenborg.

<sup>29</sup> Exchange of the journals *La Nouvelle Jérusalem* and *La Phalange*, etc.

a Catholic author dealing with the fall of man and the desire for an agreement, a reconciliation between the Catholic faith and the true scientific and social ideas, and also an article in *Le Nouveau Monde*, a phalansterian magazine of the same period, accusing the followers of the New Jerusalem of being narrow-minded while staying aloof from the other rational and scientific trends. In Number 25 of Vol. IV of the *Phalange*, is a reply from Captain Fraiche addressed to the two authors, pointing out that the New Jerusalemites, while professing that:

the New Jerusalem being a Divine revelation and thus infallible...far from rejecting the ideas of reconciliation presented by enlightened social men and, in particular, by the Fourierists, would receive them in the best possible spirit.

After this article, one of Le Boys des Guays' correspondents, probably Monsieur de La Perrière in Lyon, undertook Fourier's defense accusing Captain Fraiche of "a partial ignorance of the social system he wants to battle with and a permanent confusion of the spiritual with the natural." Le Boys des Guays then drafted his *Concordance* concerning Swedenborg's religious system and Fourier's social system, giving particular emphasis to the agreement of the two reformers about the relationship between the physical and the spiritual:

What Fourier calls the *Analogie universelle* is nothing else than the *language of correspondences* whose lost grammar and dictionary Swedenborg has given us...

The time of words about death has passed, says Captain Fraiche; the lugubrious ideas making simple souls shiver will no longer make us tremble...

Thus, the Lord's New Dispensation destroys for ever the false and cruel ideas that Catholicism and all the past Religions have given about God. The New Religion has assumed a completely opposite character, but the social state still is prey to all the plagues that demand a radical transformation. Fourier has offered this change to the world by giving it his mathematical laws. May this take

place and may social harmony as well as religious harmony merge together. The first issues of the *Phalange* and the introduction at the beginning of Considérant's 2nd volume called *Destinée Sociale* present the same ideas from the social point of view as those expressed by Captain Fraiche from a religious perspective.<sup>30</sup>

At first Philippe Hauger's arrival in Saint-Amand further confirmed Le Boys des Guays in his conviction that an association between the two systems was desirable. This conviction was reinforced when Hauger, who had known Fourier personally, stated that Fourier had repeated Swedenborg's great ideas without actually having read them.<sup>31</sup>

Yet Philippe Hauger's ambiguous behavior, and still more that of his wife who formed a friendship with the parish priest and had their two children baptized in the Catholic Church after her husband's death, caused Le Boys des Guays to completely change his view on the matter. I must note here that it was the brochure by a very famous Fourierist, Mme

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<sup>30</sup> M. and Mme Charles Sainmont's private archives.

<sup>31</sup> Le Boys des Guays to Abraham de La Perrière, Lyon: Saint-Amand, December 29, 1839 (*Chevrier Collection*):

At first, I was struck by Fourier's system. I found it to be far more exact, because I saw in it an application to the earth of the admirable harmony reigning in the angelic societies, a harmony that Swedenborg describes in such a delightful way in his treatise on *Heaven and Hell*. This was also the opinion of Fourier. At least, this is proved by the following anecdote that you may be aware of but that I will recount in case you are not. I heard it from Philippe Hauger, who often told us the story. As a follower and great admirer of Fourier's genius, Hauger lived on close terms with his master. One day, he went to see him and brought along one of Swedenborg's works. "Here," he said, "is an author that you will be pleased to get to know." Fourier promised to read and a few days afterwards, Hauger went to see his master again, with the firm conviction that he had provided him with a great pleasure by acquainting him with an author he would be so capable of appreciating. But how great was his disappointment when Fourier, catching sight of him, had one of his rather habitual fits of anger. "I am lost," he cried, "what will people think of me? They will say that I have stolen from Swedenborg. I, a thief! oh! my brother, you know that I did not even know the very name of Swedenborg when you brought me this work." Fourier's monologue lasted a rather long time; and his unrest did not die down until his disciple made him understand that the scene that had just occurred was sufficient to prove that he absolutely did not know Swedenborg and that, if the charge he feared was made, he, a follower of Swedenborg's, would be the first one to refute the accusation and report the scene that had just occurred.

Personally, I am convinced that Fourier told the truth and that he had not had any prior knowledge of Swedenborg's works.

Vidow Dalibert,<sup>32</sup> that opened his eyes on the subject. In the November and December issues of *La Nouvelle Jérusalem* of 1839, he severely criticized the author and the editors of the *Nouveau Monde*, emphasizing that Fourier's system could only provide a framework for living in society, while the respect for the Decalogue remained the sine-qua-non principle of the followers of the New Jerusalem. As far as Mme Dalibert was concerned, however, the followers were simple mystics with which all Fourierists should become associated, and vice-versa. As Le Boys des Guays states in a letter to Frédéric Portal: "Mme Dalibert and M. Mure misuse the names of followers of the New Jerusalem."<sup>33</sup> This breaking away from a social trend that had held a great appeal for him was a sad disappointment to Le Boys des Guays, who was in a period of optimism near the end of 1839, having been bolstered by the rapid success of his *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, and by his new position as the undisputed leader of the French Swedenborgians, and not only by his co-religionists in France but by American and English New Church ministers as well.

Le Boys des Guays was by no means the only Swedenborgian to feel drawn by Charles Fourier's social gospel. Edmond Chevrier's letters reveal that he underwent a similar temptation about 1840. Some ten years later, Mrs. Ehrenborg, a Swedish Swedenborgian visiting with co-religionists in France, acknowledged that she was favorable to the idea of phalansteries as collective lodgings of true Christians.<sup>34</sup> In Great Britain, Robert Owen was influenced by Fourier's ideas when he created his cooperative societies for production and consumption. In the United States, the mixing of Fourierism and Swedenborgianism preoccupied sincere New Church followers beginning in the eighteen-forties. I have proof of this in a paragraph of a letter sent to me in 1978 by Dr. Robert W. Gladish, former Dean of the Academy of the New Church College in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania:

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<sup>32</sup> Mme Vidow Dalibert, *La Nouvelle Jérusalem et le Phalanstère, ou De l'union de la Religion et de la Science*, at the Librairie Sociale, rue de la Seine No. 49, Paris 1839.

<sup>33</sup> Le Boys des Guays to F. Portal: Saint-Amand, December 26, 1839 (*Chevrier Collection*): Mure was a homeopath who had become enthusiastic about Swedenborg's religious ideas. He was one of Le Boys des Guays' correspondents (cf. Note 38).

<sup>34</sup> Anna-Frederika Ehrenborg, op.cit., First Part, p. 5.

The Archives here at the Academy have a letter written in 1843 from Richard De Charms to David Powell in which De Charms states his concern about the impact of Fourierism on the Swedenborgians here in the U.S.A. De Charms states flatly that he fears that Fourierism will “destroy our convention” just as it undercut those in France who were attracted to Swedenborg. He goes on: “These when they found that the New Jerusalem was not likely to come down soon with éclat in the eyes of mankind generally, turned their gaze with avidity to the splendid imaginations and promises of Charles Fourier, and became very severe in their opposition to the French Review and its editor because they did not enlist in Fourier’s cause and the propagation of his principles.”<sup>35</sup>

The denigration of the Saint-Amand society by the Fourierists, whose most striking expression of feeling seems to be an article in the *Nouveau Monde* of December 21, 1839, reviewed by Le Boys des Guays in his December 1839 issue of *La Nouvelle-Jérusalem*, was certainly less decisive for the evolution of the two religious and social systems in France than was the case in the United States, where the religious Fourierism was put in place in a whole series of Swedenborgian communities having at least some trace of Swedenborg’s religious ideas. Charles Jules Hempel, a Prussian immigrant who had studied in Paris at the beginning of the 1830s, and who had served as Michelet’s assistant for half a year,<sup>36</sup> attempted to reconcile the two systems in theory by publishing *The True Organization of the New Church* anonymously in 1848, and in practice, by creating a community of Swedenborgian phalansterians.<sup>37</sup> In his interesting doctoral

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<sup>35</sup>From my private archives.

<sup>36</sup>Scott Trego Swank, *The Unfettered Conscience. A Study of Sectarianism, Spiritualism, and Social Reform in the New Jerusalem Church, 1840-1870*. A doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pennsylvania in 1970, p. 370.

<sup>37</sup>New York, William Radde, 1848.

thesis, Scott Trego Swank reviews the different practical efforts to associate Fourier and Swedenborg in America between 1840 and 1870.<sup>38</sup>

In Saint-Amand, the burial service for Philippe Hauger showed the population of the town that the followers of the New Church were true Christians who read the *Bible*, complied with the *Decalogue*, and also made an effort to be of some use to their fellow citizens. However, Le Boys des Guays was soon to experience a bitter disappointment when construction on the New Jerusalem temple in Saint-Amand was interrupted. The temple was supposed to be mainly paid for by Hippolyte Constant Cheneau, a rich merchant in Menetou-sur-Cher. One of Cheneau's descendants, whom I have visited in person, was kind enough to give me her great-grandfather Cheneau's *Cahier de Correspondance*. Cheneau, "the good God in Menetou" or "God's link," as he liked to be called because he favored the thought that he was the link between God and mankind, wrote letters to the well-known European mystics of that time: Hofaker in Germany, Egger in France, and also to Victor Cousin and Le Boys des Guays.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> About the connection between European and American Fourierism, see also:

W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below. Utopian Experiments in England 1560-1960*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 194:

(Hugh) Doherty flirted with the Swedenborgianism of his new ally, James Garth Wilkinson, who wrote in 1846: "Dr. Hugh Doherty is merging Fourier with the New Church, giving the former, however, masculine character in the compact" ... In 1848 Doherty and Wilkinson went to Paris, where they met Brisbane (the American Fourierist), Dana and Robert Owen.

We know that Doherty was the main Fourierist in England. As far as Wilkinson is concerned, Armytage quotes Emerson's *English Traits*: "the editor of Swedenborg, the annotator of Fourier, and the champion of Hahnemann" (Armytage, op.cit., p. 195). In France, this combination of three elements existed especially with Dr. Mure, editor of the *Phalange*, who exchanged letters and documents with Le Boys des Guays and who, disappointed by his very negative reaction, sent him the following short letter:

If you turn down my offer, you will delay the arrival of good for several years. The blindness of the phalansterians, the *mysticism* of the followers of the New Jerusalem will be prolonged indefinitely, and you will take the responsibility of these fatal consequences. (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>39</sup> Together with his *Cahier de Correspondance*, 50 pages of 41x27 cm, Mrs. Martin also gave me the three following works by Constant Cheneau: *A mes Collaborateurs du 4e Arrondissement de la Ville de Paris, et, en général, à mes Frères de toute la Terre*, Paris, 1840; *La Volonté de Jéhova en Jésus le Christ, manifestée par son Serviteur Cheneau, Négociant*, Paris, 1841; *3e et dernière Alliance de Dieu avec sa Créature révélée à son Serviteur CHENEAU ou CHAINON*, Paris 1842, as well as a photograph of her great grandfather holding his right hand on his heart and, in his left hand, a list of quotations from the *Bible* on a background of three books with the inscriptions: BIBLE, GOSPEL, SWEDENBORG.

But Cheneau's best-known book, and the one most ridiculed by the journalists, is his *Instruction pour avoir des enfants sains d'esprit et de corps*, Paris, 1841.

Constant Cheneau, having experienced his first revelation at the age of 31 in 1837, had no doubts about his own mission as a mediator between God and mankind. When Le Boys des Guays launched his *Journal* in March, 1838, Cheneau got in touch with him and offered to finance the construction of a New Church temple in Saint-Amand. He bought the necessary land for 10,000 francs, and Auguste Harlé drew up a plan of the temple based on a premonitory dream of their co-religionist, Hartel, in Paris. This plan can be found in the 5th Issue of the 2nd Year (July 1839) together with a description of the future temple. The foundation stone was laid on March 20, 1840. Upon this occasion a simple ceremony brought together the leading New Church adherents in France. Those present signed the following manifest:

Today, on the twentieth of March, in one thousand eight-hundred and forty, and in the forty-fourth year of the new era, the foundation stone was laid of the Temple raised to the Lord-Jehovah-Jesus-Christ, the One God of Heaven and Earth, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Regenerator.

This Temple was founded by Mr. Hippolyte Constant Cheneau, born on April 25, 1806 in Menetou-sur-Cher, Department of Loir-et-Cher, according to the plans by Mr. Jean-Baptiste-Auguste Harlé in St. Quentin, Department of Aisne.

We, the undersigned followers of the New Jerusalem, gathered together at noon in the provisional Temple in Saint-Amand (Cher) opened on [blank] November 1837. At fifty minutes past noon, exactly at the spring equinox, the Divine service began by reading the Bible; then we went to the ground, where the crowd had gathered, and the foundation stone of the Temple was set by Messrs. Le Boys des Guays and Cheneau.

In witness, the present record was made in order that it be deposited and conserved in the archives of the New Church.

Le Boys des Guays	S. Paillard
Ct. Cheneau	Magnieux

Aug. Harlé	Collin, father
Delorme	Boutereuil
Collin, son	Laureau
Porte	Bayanourthe
Valette	Hardy
	Larue, Louis <sup>40</sup>

By this time Le Boys des Guays already began to have doubts about Cheneau's Swedenborgian orthodoxy. Some evidence of this may be found both in a letter he wrote on May 11, 1839 to his English co-religionist Henry Bateman,<sup>41</sup> and also from the fact that on the very day the foundation stone was laid for the temple he came up with a new idea: the founding of the *Librairie de la Nouvelle Jérusalem* in Saint-Amand.<sup>42</sup> This enterprise, whose purpose was to perpetuate Swedenborg's spiritual heritage, replaced the stone church that never was built. In exchange for his important financial investment in the church (estimated at 80,000 francs of the day), Cheneau had required that his name be written on an emblem to

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<sup>40</sup> *Chevrier Collection*.

<sup>41</sup> Le Boys des Guays to Henri Bateman: Saint-Amand, May 11-31, 1839 (*Swedenborg Society* K/84):

I am quite of the same opinion as you about the construction of the temple. If it had depended on me, I would have wanted the question of the temple to be put aside, in spite of the need felt in Saint-Amand for having a temple or chapel, and the funds used for the acquisition of the land and the construction be used partly for the printing of Swedenborg's treatises and short popular treatises; I even insisted on this point with Mr. Cheneau, who bought the land and who is willing to pay a great part of the construction; but I could not alter his resolve, and when I saw he would not yield in the point, I had to abandon discussion of the question of reprints and new translations; but I still regret that such considerable sums be used for material works, when we have such pressing needs for funds for devoting ourselves to works much more important to the spreading of the Holy doctrine and which we are obliged to defer; but we place all our hopes in the Lord, it is He who has sustained our works until now and freed us from all the embarrassments they have created for us each day; He will continue to send us fellow-workers and support to allow us to overcome the difficulties that can occur. Everything, dear Sir and Brother, seems to be in preparation for great events; it is important that the followers of the New Jerusalem in France be ready to profit from them and spread, in the middle of the decaying society, the only doctrine that can offer a haven of refuge to mankind, which, without it, will disappear in horrible convulsions.

<sup>42</sup> In the *Nouvelle-Jérusalem*, (Vol. 3, March 1840-March 1841, p. 64), the record of the laying of the foundation stone is immediately followed by the announcement of the new bookstore.

be placed on the main facade of the temple. As the members of the society found such a demand unacceptable, the first stone of the New Church temple in Saint-Amand turned out to be the last one.

Cheneau took his revenge by taking under his protection the former shepherd, François, whom Le Boys des Guays had turned out of his home, and made tours with him for the purpose of charity. During one of these rounds of solicitation, he returned to Saint-Amand. I found in the *Chevrier Collection* the following notice to the public:

An important notice,

M. François Merlin, M. Le Boys des Guays' former pupil and presently in one of the largest firms in the Capital, will arrive today in this town, where he is to stay for several days. We have just learned from the authorities of the town of Vierzon that yesterday he made a large distribution of money to all the poor in Vierzon, and, independently of this, the authorities and above all M. Mayor certify that M. Merlin was not satisfied by just giving alms to all those who had been informed of the distribution but that he also gave money to the town upon leaving it; but he will not do the same as in Vierzon; and he will not give alms to each individual asking for them; for he has recognized that he has been taken in by some; but he will give money either to the almshouse or to the district visitors, or to the poor who have proved their poverty by a certificate signed by the proper authorities. Monsieur Merlin states that he will give only bread and no money.

He will reside at the Hotel de la Paix, where he reserved a suite last week.

St. Amand, February 13, 1841.

François was introduced as "M. Le Boys des Guays' former pupil" and the visit he paid became the subject of an article in the satirical paper *Le Corsaire*. The publication promised that "the new religion in Saint-Amand" would soon be discussed also. Le Boys des Guays tried to dissuade the

editors from doing this, both by means of a letter to this effect and through a visit paid by Eugène Rollet to the editors of *Le Corsaire*.<sup>43</sup>

Although he was ridiculed by the journalists, Cheneau continued his work as the mediator between Heaven and Earth, giving alms and effecting healing cures by prayers. He accomplished some successful results similar to those achieved by Mme de Saint-Amour in Nantes some fifteen years earlier. When the authorities intervened accusing Cheneau of illegal practice of medicine, he was acquitted due to the fact that his cures were free of charge and that he preached only the Gospel.<sup>44</sup>

In 1843, Cheneau tried to make his peace with Le Boys des Guays by offering to pay for the publication of the translation into French of Swedenborg's treatise on *Divine Love and Wisdom*,<sup>45</sup> but Le Boys des Guays did not trust his former co-religionist enough to take advantage of this opportunity. Cheneau did, however, finance in 1843 the publication in French of the *Hieroglyphic Key to the Natural and Spiritual Arcana* with the aid of a former Catholic priest, Lino de Zaroa, as the official translator.<sup>46</sup>

Le Boys des Guays once again turned his attention to his work as a translator and editor of *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*. In the second volume of his

<sup>43</sup> Le Boys des Guays to the editor of the *Corsaire*: Saint-Amand, February 20, 1841, between two "warnings" to Cheneau (February 17, 1841, describing "François' triumphant return," and Feb. 21, 1841: "Your visits to the *Corsaire* were the last straw," and before Le Boys des Guays' Twenty-eighth letter to Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, February 26, 1841.

You did very well, my dear Eugene, in going to see Audebrand at once, for the important thing in all this matter was to keep the name of the New Jerusalem from being mentioned, which could not have been avoided if the *Corsaire* had spoken again.

<sup>44</sup> *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. XXV, Oct. 1852, p. 447.

<sup>45</sup> Cheneau to Le Boys des Guays: January 24, 1843 (Cheneau's *Cahier de Correspondance*).

<sup>46</sup> Brody de Lamotte, in the article mentioned, devotes a note to Zaroa:

The Abbé Lino de Zaroa came as an exile after the Spanish war in 1823. He was highly cultured. He knew the *Vulgata* by heart. Although he was a New Church follower, he continued to practice his Catholic ministry; but, in 1849, he was dismissed by the Bishop of Bayonne. In 1851, when he was seventy-eight years old, he accompanied Le Boys des Guays to London to the New Jerusalem Conference. He died a few months later on [error: in 1855; see Anna Frederika Ehrenborg, op.cit., First Part, p. 331], faithful to the New Church despite all the efforts made by the Bishop of Bayonne to make him abjure his Swedenborgian religion.

(Lino de Zaroa retired to Orthez.) Article mentioned, p. 169.

*Journal*, Edouard Richer's presence decreased leaving room for contributors such as Frédéric Portal, Abbé Egger and Captain Fraiche. Frédéric Portal was a Counsellor of the State and was also fascinated by hieroglyphs and correspondences. Abbé Egger wrote essays on "the language of nature," that is to say, the science of correspondences founded by Swedenborg for the interpretation of the *Bible*. As for Captain Fraiche's role, he was the author of charming moral stories: *La petite pierre blanche sortie du torrent* (The little white stone taken out of the stream), *Une nuit au Camp Nesch-Meya*, etc. Le Boys des Guays also created a *Partie retrospective* (on Gobert and Bernard, Général de Bissy) which beginning with the last issue of the second volume, also included documents on Swedenborg and his first followers, Dr. Beyer in particular. Also included were, of course, translations of the Swedish revelator's treatises.

During the eighteen-forties, the initial success of the *Journal* vanished little by little. In 1844, Frédéric Portal states in a letter to the American Swedenborgian, Barrett,<sup>47</sup> that foreign subscribers were more numerous than the French. It was during that same year that Le Boys des Guays made the heroic decision "to translate all of Swedenborg." Chevrier tells us that:

Mr. Leboys calculated that if he could translate ten pages in-no.8 of the Latin text per day, he would be able to translate all of Swedenborg's writings in seven years.

To this Chevrier adds: "By 1850, he had accomplished his task."<sup>48</sup>

After fulfilling his mission, Le Boys des Guays took on other tasks, such as the drafting of the *Index général des passages de la Parole* and the *Index méthodique des Arcanes Célestes*. He corrected the last proofs of the

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<sup>47</sup>F. Portal to B. F. Barrett: Paris, June 27, 1844, a letter translated and published in the *New Jerusalem Magazine*, Boston, Vol. XVII (1844-1845).

<sup>48</sup>*Histoire sommaire*, p. 107.

*Arcana Coelestia* the day before his death, which occurred on December 18, 1864,<sup>49</sup> similar to Dr. Beyer who completed work on his *Index initialis in opera theologica Swedenborgii*, just prior to his own death.<sup>50</sup>

In my chapter about Moët's translations, I emphasize that Le Boys des Guays took great care to translate Swedenborg's Latin as faithfully as possible. This effort did not make his task an easy one, for Le Boys des Guays very much feared he might betray the original text. He explains his view on the matter in the First Year of *La Nouvelle-Jérusalem*:

As already announced, our second part will contain the translation of the *Arcana Coelestia*. This translation will be purely literal; we will make a point of accuracy neither to add nor delete the smallest word, as we are convinced that you will appreciate our sacrificing the style for the sake of rigorous accuracy.<sup>51</sup>

This method of translation did not, however, exclude the creation of neologisms such as *les vrais* for *vera* and *les faux* for *falsa*, which Le Boys des Guays justifies in a letter to his brother-in-law Eugène Rollet, stressing that Swedenborg made the distinction between *vera* and *veritates*, etc.<sup>52</sup>

It is curious to observe that this translator who was punctilious to the point to being pedantic, also used the French language in an authoritative manner both in his correspondence and in his works of fiction, as is

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<sup>49</sup> Telegram to Edmond Chevrier, dated December 19, 1864:

Mr. Le Roys (Sic!) died suddenly yesterday  
Come immediately  
burial tomorrow at 1 o'clock

Laureau Larue (*Chevrier Collection*)

We should add to the *Indexes* mentioned, his translation of the "short" treatises that Swedenborg published after his *Arcana Coelestia* done in order to find readers.

<sup>50</sup> Published in Amsterdam in 1779, and better known in France under the title *Dictionnaire des Correspondances*. R. L. Tafel, *Documents*, Vol. I, p. 626.

<sup>51</sup> The *Nouvelle-Jérusalem*, Vol. 1, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Le Boys des Guays to Eugène Rollet: Saint-Amand, May 30, 1843.

evident in his *Lettres d'un homme du monde qui voudrait croire* (Letters from a man of the world who would like to believe). These were published in *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, beginning in May 1841 and were translated twice into English<sup>53</sup> and once into German.<sup>54</sup> It may be said that these *Letters* were the same to Le Boys des Guays as *The Religion of Common Sense* had been to Edouard Richer.

Although Le Boys des Guays spent much time on abundant correspondence, he did so according to a calendar that he respected scrupulously. On the given day of each month, he would write a letter to a particular associate in France (in Paris, Orthez, etc.) or abroad. From 1846 on he was the French correspondent to the American *New Jerusalem Magazine*. I perused the French editions of Le Boys des Guays' contributions which are preserved in the *Chevrier Collection* and also their English translations. Reading them did not yield very much in the way of interesting information on the state of the New Church in France. What they do contain are Le Boys des Guays' observations on the political and religious situations in his country, to the best of his knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

Le Boys des Guays' problem was not in finding the time for producing his translations and manuscripts for *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*, but in finding the means to finance their publication. From March 1845 and afterwards, he was obliged to reduce the frequency of the issues of his journal, which then became a quarterly instead of a monthly until it finally ceased publication in 1847. Nevertheless, ten years of existence was a considerable length of time for the journal of a religious society as small as the one in

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<sup>53</sup> From Volume 3 on, the hyphen in the title of the *Journal* disappeared, so *La Nouvelle Jérusalem* should be written instead. *Letters to a Man of the World disposed to believe*. Translation from the French by J. Murdock. A new edition revised and corrected by George Bush, Late Professor of Hebrew in the New York University. London: James S. Hodson, Clifford's Inn Passage, Fleet Street; New York: John Allen, 139, Nassau Street, 1848.

<sup>54</sup> *Das wahre System der Religions-Philosophie in Briefen an einen Weltmann, der geneigt ist zu glauben*. Uebersetzt aus dem Französischen vom Prof. Rudolph Tafel. Herausgegeben von Arthur O. Brickman, Pastor der Neuen Kirche zu Baltimore, M's. Baltimore-Philadelphia, 1860.

<sup>55</sup> It is only from Vol. XXXI (1847-48) on that we find the title *From our French Correspondent*, but as Le Boys des Guays had so many other activities, the *New Jerusalem Magazine* continued to make use of extracts from his correspondence with English brethren published in the *Intellectual Repository*, and from December 1859 on Blanchet was to serve as the French correspondent of this American magazine.

Saint-Amand. Those who subscribed to the translations were even fewer in number than those who received *La Nouvelle Jérusalem*. In the *Chevrier Collection* I found the lists of subscribers. The numbers ranged from twenty-five for *Heaven and Hell* to three for the *Apocalypse Revealed*.

Fortunately, Le Boys des Guays had a provident man among his readers: Monsieur Dieudonné. Dieudonné, who entered into correspondence with the French translator of Swedenborg's Writings after having bought a certain number of them from Hartel, the depository of Swedenborg's works in Paris, was very generous to Le Boys des Guays both during his lifetime and following his death in 1854, bequeathing him 2,000 francs per year for ten years for the publication of the French translations. About that same time, the former priest, Lino des Zaroa, also gave a great deal of money for the same purpose. From 1857 on, Edmond de Chazal, the owner of a vast sugar plantation in Mauritius was to prove himself to be as equally generous as Monsieur Dieudonné, the pseudonym of Count de Las Cases, the nephew of the famous historian Emmanuel de Las Cases who had accompanied Napoleon to Saint Helena.

If we add to these gifts the important sums that the American and English brethren sent to Le Boys des Guays, especially after the General Conference of Swedenborgians took place in London in 1851, we can understand how the financial problems of the publication of the translations were resolved. In an outburst of bad temper, Edmond Chevrier once reproached Le Boys des Guays for his facility in managing to cover his expenses. This situation, however, did not hinder him from contributing regularly to Le Boys des Guay's work by sending him a banknote and then asking him for a receipt.<sup>56</sup>

Attending the International Conference of all the organized New Church societies which was held in London in 1851 brought Le Boys des Guays out of the deep pessimism into which, to use his own words, the "desert" of the New Jerusalem in France had thrown him. He went to the conference accompanied by Auguste Harlé, Lino de Zaroa, Edmond Chevrier, H. E. Moisson and Abbe Egger. For Le Boys des Guays, this event was a real triumph. The English and American brethren paid him

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<sup>56</sup> Note in Chevrier's handwriting (*Chevrier Collection*): "In time Mr. Leboys died in 1864, dominated by his ambition to become rich."

exceptional homage, as to the German, Immanuel Tafel. In the *Annals of the New Church*, there is a photograph taken on this occasion showing the four leading Swedenborgians working outside the British Isles and the United States at that time. The four men are the German professor Immanuel Tafel and Dr. Achatius Kahl from Lund, Sweden, as well as two Frenchmen: Le Boys des Guays and Auguste Harlé. Le Boys des Guays, who did not know a single word of English, gained a reputation through his arduous work as a translator and editor of his journal *La Nouvelle Jérusalem* as one of the great spiritual leaders of Swedenborgianism in the entire world. The fact that he was accompanied by his indefatigable collaborator, Auguste Harlé, bolstered his sense of having succeeded in his work despite the small number of fellow believers in France. Le Boys des Guays later returned to England in order to attend two other similar conferences: one in Manchester in 1857 upon the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Last Judgment according to Swedenborg's Writings, and the other in London, in 1862. His reception at these two conferences was no less enthusiastic than the one he had received in 1851.

Upon his return to Saint-Amand, Le Boys des Guays decided to take a bold step. He needed the support of a great author in order to accomplish this. Twenty years before, Balzac's "Swedenborgianism," which, according to Le Boys was merely an "unintelligible mysticism,"<sup>57</sup> had no *immediate* effect upon the development of the New Church. In the 1850s, Le Boys des Guays believed that George Sand, a novelist who shared his Republican ideas, might obtain a more positive result than Balzac's earlier efforts. Thus he got in touch with her. Although in the beginning, "la bonne dame de Nohant" did not seem indifferent to Swedenborg's thought, his correspondence to her produced no results. (See the chapter on George Sand.)

In order to celebrate the first century of the "new era" in a worthy manner, Le Boys des Guays decided in 1857, to give a complete collection of the French translations of Swedenborg's writings to a large number of public libraries in France and abroad. His wife, Clotilde, undertook the task of writing one hundred and fifty letters. The results turned out to be

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<sup>57</sup> See my paper presented to the *XVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises: Balzac et Swedenborg*, published in the XVth Cahier of the AIEF, March 1963, p. 300.

satisfactory since ninety-five libraries agreed to accept this gift, paying only the charges for postage.

Once again Le Boys des Guays had an excellent idea. These fifty-two volume collections of translations into French of Swedenborg's religious writings contributed much in the way of introducing many readers of philosophy to the beautiful religion of the New Jerusalem. Most of the remaining translations were placed in storage in the New Jerusalem Bookstore in Saint-Amand. Those volumes together with a very few others on sale throughout the world, exceeded in number the ninety-five sets that had been distributed free of charge to libraries.<sup>58</sup> They, too, had their story. After Le Boys des Guays' sudden death in December 1864, the volumes passed into the hands of a nephew. Contrary to what Edmond Chevrier thought,<sup>59</sup> Le Boys des Guays did not have time to leave the spiritual portion of his legacy to his co-religionists. It was Auguste Harlé who went into personal debt in order to re-purchase the stock of books for a sum of 10,000 francs of the day.<sup>60</sup>

By the time of the Second World War, most of these books were still in boxes in the beautiful villa in Meudon-Bellevue that served as the chapel to the New Jerusalem followers in France after the sale of the temple in Rue Thouin.<sup>61</sup> During the Occupation, the Germans requisitioned the villa and like many others who have mistaken Swedenborg's revealed religion for freemasonry, burned a certain number of boxes. Paul Flon, former President of the *Société Française de la Nouvelle Eglise*, feared that Le Boys des Guays' manuscripts and other documents on French Swedenborgianism were in one of those boxes. Fortunately, my discovery in 1964 that the *Chevrier Collection* was preserved in the vault of the *Swedenborg Society* in London, proved this not to be the case.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Le Boys des Guays' letter to Alexandre Dumas, reproduced in this chapter.

<sup>59</sup> *Histoire sommaire*, p. 237, Note 1. Cf Edmond Chevrier's letter to Auguste Harlé: Bourg, August 9, 1865: "I was extremely astonished that Le Boys des Guays did not leave the ownership of his translation work to you in his will." (*Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>60</sup> Five annual installments of 2,000 francs each (J. A. Blanchet to A. Harlé: Tarbes, July 12, 1865; *Chevrier Collection*).

<sup>61</sup> See my chapter on the *New Church in Paris*.

<sup>62</sup> See my lecture given in the *Cercle Swedenborg*, on December 7, 1974 on the occasion of the repatriation to France of this collection of manuscripts. English version in the *New Church Magazine*, Vol. 95, Number 675, January-April 1976. Swedish version in the *Nya Kyrkans Tidning*, 1977/3-4.

George Sand was not the only writer of that time who was approached by Le Boys des Guays. He also sent a letter to Alexandre Dumas senior, who was residing in Naples in 1860:

Saint-Amand (Cher), November 10, 1860.

M. Alexandre Dumas in Naples,

Dear Sir,

I pray you, as my compatriot, which I am convinced is all that is necessary, to kindly render me a service. As the translator and editor for several years of Swedenborg's numerous writings, I sent a circular in 1857 to the librarians of the main libraries in France and abroad offering them a free complete collection in French of these books (about fifty volumes) on the sole condition that I would not have to pay the freight; out of the 150 librarians to which this circular was sent, 95 accepted and 95 bundles were at once dispatched. I do not have to tell you that I received no answer from the Italian cities, except from Nice, which then did not yet belong to France. But because memorable events which have occurred since 1857 make me hope that I might be luckier in 1860, I pray you, dear Sir, not to take steps to assist me in my effort, for you are in charge of too many important works for that, but rather be so kind as to look among your many friends for an Italian knowing French who might get into contact with me.

Along with this letter you will receive two volumes which explain, to some extent, Swedenborg's philosophical and theosophical system; I send them to you without any hope that you will have time to peruse them, but ask you to pass them on to the friend that you are sure to find if you search a little; I would like the person to be, as much as possible, one of these men who are searching for the truth out of a love of truth, without yet having succeeded in creating his own system.

You, whose obligingness is proverbial, will, I hope, certainly be kind enough to receive my request favorably; although, in making it, I have no other claim than that of being one of the readers of your numerous and interesting works.

Le Boys des Guays  
Translator of Swedenborg

I do not have your address, but I am convinced that you are as well known in Naples as Voltaire was in Paris, and that my letter will reach you.

At the end of one of the two volumes (*The Religion of Common Sense*), there is a catalogue of the works of the collection that I offer gratis to each library on the only condition that the cost of mailing be paid.

This letter, of which I found a copy in Le Boys des Guays' own handwriting in the *Chevrier Collection*, took me by surprise because this sort of flattery is uncommon in Le Boys des Guays' correspondence. Moreover, the outcome of his request seems to have been very uncertain. The fact that the request was sent haphazardly, without knowing the address of the recipient, appears to be absolutely out of character to the methodical, time-saving habits of Le Boys des Guays. Alexandre Dumas had spoken of Swedenborg in his works,<sup>63</sup> but in a way that probably would have offended the orthodox Le Boys des Guays.

The fact remains that Le Boys des Guays wrote to Alexandre Dumas in 1860. At that time, the French translator of Swedenborg's writings undoubtedly felt capable of considerably enlarging his circle of readers. Thus, on November 13, 1860, he also sent a letter "to the Emir Abd-el-Kader, a Man Loved by God," which he signed "Le Boys des Guays, a Christian Philosopher," in which he enclosed *Heaven and Hell* and a copy of his *Letters to a Man of the World...* When Abd-el-Kader replied in Arabic,

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<sup>63</sup>See my chapter on the "Correspondence between Le Boys des Guays and George Sand."

Le Boys des Guays then wrote him a much longer letter dated January 24, 1861. His second letter maintains that Abd-el-Kader and he had the same "One God" and proposed a new mission to him: "God wants something new, because he wants his kingdom to descend at last on earth and brotherhood to reign among all people." Le Boys des Guays sent along other works as well. Abd-el-Kader responded once again "to the Gracious, Literate, Venerable and Sage Le Boys des Guays," regretting he did not know French himself and mentioning that he had been obliged to find a translator. His letter concludes: "Continue to let us hear from you and do not cease to inform us about your precious health. Hail!"<sup>64</sup>

Later on came the period of the *Mélanges*, texts reproduced mainly from *La Nouvelle Jerusalem*, first two volumes in-no.8 by Edoard Richer in 1861-62, then two further volumes by Le Boys des Guays in 1864-65. But on December 17, 1864, Le Boys des Guays died suddenly leaving behind him his wife and a handful of faithful followers. The principal New Church followers in France, such as Edmond Chevrier and Auguste Harlé, were notified by telegram to assist at his burial.<sup>65</sup>

Clotilde Le Boys des Guays survived her husband by twenty-two years. When she died, Charles Human travelled from Paris to Saint-Amand, and the drawing-room which had become the provisional temple of the New Church, was used for a beautiful ceremony for the last time.<sup>66</sup>

At the Seventh Synod of the *Fédération des Sociétés de Langue Française de la Nouvelle Eglise*, organized in Lausanne on Saturday July 30, 1927, the last Swedenborgian in Saint-Amand, François Daniel, the printer who succeeded Gilbert Porte, read a Memorial, stating among other things:

We have made searches in the churchyard of this town and found the grave in which this good man of genius has been resting in peace for three quarters of a century. Our brother, Mercanton,<sup>67</sup> is of the opinion that we must make an effort to preserve the

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted from Edmond Chevrier, who reprinted this correspondence in his *Histoire sommaire*, pp. 222-227.

<sup>65</sup> See Note 49.

<sup>66</sup> Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned, p. 171.

<sup>67</sup> See my chapter on the *New Church in Paris*.

memory of the man who devoted the greatest part of his life to the work of the New Church.

This effort consisted in collecting the money necessary for the placement of a simple monument over the tomb in memory of Le Boys des Guays and his wife. A ceremony took place on May 31, 1931, presided over by the Rev. Mercanton in Paris. The family was represented by Charles Sainmont and Brody de Lamotte.<sup>68</sup>

After the death of Clotilde Le Boys des Guays, the society founded by her husband continued to decline and finally disappeared after the death of François Daniel. Daniel's daughter adopted his religion and settled near Paris, where I had the pleasure of meeting with her several times. However, unlike Mme Coutureau who, as a small child had seen the followers of the New Jerusalem come to attend the worship services in the drawing-room of her aunt and uncle,<sup>69</sup> Mlle. Daniel was not very familiar with the history of the Saint-Amand Society.

Brody de Lamotte's excellent essay, *Le culte de la nouvelle Jérusalem* (New Jerusalem Worship in Saint-Amand),<sup>70</sup> was the subject of two articles by A. Autissier in the *Berri Républicain* on December 29 and 30 in 1977 titled: *Il y a 140 ans un ancien sous-préfet fondait à Saint-Amand une nouvelle religion* (140 years ago, a former sub-prefect founded a new religion in Saint-Amand). Autissier calls Le Boys des Guays "an extraordinary man," stressing that instead of the "temple begun, unachieved and disappeared," Le Boys des Guays elevated "another sort of a monument" by means of his work in translating Swedenborg's writings into French. This article states that Le Boys des Guays "owned a library of fifty thousand volumes." I saw a portion of this collection in the "Chatelette," Le Boys des Guays's summer residence a few kilometres from Saint-Amand. Its present proprietor, Mme Couëtdic, was kind enough to allow me to visit and even to work in

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<sup>68</sup> Brody de Lamotte, article mentioned.

<sup>69</sup> According to Mme Coutureau, Le Boys des Guays' niece, whom I saw in 1963 and who was then 103 years old, Le Boys des Guays, in accord with his last will and testament, was buried in a pauper's grave. This was confirmed to me by Mrs. Couëtdic, Le Boys des Guays' great grandniece, as well as by the Mayor of Saint-Amand-Montrond in a letter dated December 1977.

<sup>70</sup> Brody de Lamotte, *ibid.*

the very setting where Le Boys des Guays stayed during the summer months, as did Brody de Lamotte later on.

In the second part of his article, Autissier once again poses the question: "Did George Sand visit Le Boys des Guays?" I will answer this question in a later chapter. However, at this point I will quote Autissier's conclusion:

Any philosophical or religious consideration aside, we must not, however, forget that about the middle of the last century this man contributed to making Saint-Amand known practically throughout the entire world.

Without going as far as the lawyer Blanchet who said: "Saint-Amand is like a new Bethlehem,"<sup>71</sup> it must be said that the history of the New Church society founded by Le Boys des Guays went far beyond the confines of Saint-Amand.

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<sup>71</sup>J. A. Blanchet to Le Boys des Guays: Tarbes, December 2, 1837. (*Cheurier Collection*).

*(To be continued)*

