

vate life, and easily accommodating itself to its gay good nature, though from taste, fond of magnificence and all which belonged to grandeur, he preserved that noble politeness, those exterior deferences for rank and place, which in his youth were the manners of cultivated society.

In 1752, he married Mademoiselle Saint Belin, whose birth, personal attractions, and solid virtues, compensated, in his eyes, for want of fortune. Age had deprived Buffon of part of the charms of youth; but he still possessed an elegant form, a majestic air, a handsome figure, and a physiognomy at once sweet and lofty. Enthusiasm for talent, made the disparity of age vanish from the eyes of the lady, and at this period of life, when felicity seems to confine itself to friendship, and the reminiscence of a happiness which has escaped, Buffon was lucky enough to inspire a tender constant passion, unspotted by a cloud of infelicity; these sentiments were evident in the looks, manners, and discourse of his wife, and filled to the period of her life, her heart. Each new work of her husband, each new ray of added glory, was for her a source of happiness, so much the more sweet as it was without any reference to herself, without any mixture of pride arising from the consideration of sharing the name and affection of Buffon: she was happy in the simple pleasure of love: her heart was closed to every personal vanity. Buffon had by her but one son, M. le Comte de Buffon, major in the regiment of Angoumois, who bears with honor, in another career, a name for ever celebrated in sciences, letters, and philosophy.*

Buffon was for a long time exempt from those losses which follow in the train of age; he preserved all his vigour of mind and body; always full of ardour for study, always uniform in his manner of living, and in his recreations, age seemed to be prolonged, for him, beyond its ordinary bounds. A painful disease accelerated the termination of his noble career; it was the stone: he opposed it with patience, he endeavoured to forget it by vigorous study, but he never would consent to be rid of it by a dangerous operation. Labour, enjoyment of fame, the pleasure of following his projects for the aggrandisement of the garden and cabinet of the king, were sufficient to attach

* This son fell a victim to the atrocious villainy of Robespierre, during his sanguinary tyranny.