

Marie-Thérèse was joined by two brothers and a sister, Louis Joseph Xavier François, Dauphin of France, in 1781, Louis-Charles de France, Duke of Normandy in 1785, and Sophie Hélène Béatrix, *Madame Sophie*, in 1786.

Life during the Revolution

As Marie-Thérèse was growing up, the march toward the French Revolution was gaining momentum. Social discontent mixed with a crippling budget deficit provoked an outburst of anti-absolutist sentiment. By 1789, France was hurtling toward revolt as the result of bankruptcy brought on by the country's support of the American Revolution and high food prices due to drought, all of which was exacerbated by propagandists whose central object of scorn and ridicule was Queen Marie Antoinette.

As the attacks upon the Queen grew ever more vicious, the popularity of the monarchy plummeted. Inside the Court at Versailles, jealousies and xenophobia were the principal causes of resentment and anger toward the Queen. Her unpopularity with certain powerful members of the Court, including the Duke of Orléans, led to the printing and distribution of scurrilous pamphlets which accused the Queen of a range of sexual depravities as well as of spending the country into financial ruin. While it is now generally agreed that the Queen's actions did little to provoke such animosity, the damage these pamphlets inflicted upon the monarchy proved to be a catalyst for the upheaval to come.

The worsening political situation however had little effect on Marie-Thérèse, as more immediate tragedies struck when her younger sister, Sophie, died in 1787, followed two years later by the Dauphin, Louis-Joseph, who died of tuberculosis, on 4 June 1789, one month after the opening of the Estates-General.

Move to the Tuileries

When the Bastille was stormed by an armed mob on 14 July 1789, the situation reached a climax. The life of the 11-year old Madame Royale began to be affected as several members of the royal household were sent abroad for their own safety. The comte d'Artois, her uncle, and the duchesse de Polignac, governess to the royal children, emigrated on the orders of Louis XVI.

The duchesse de Polignac was replaced by the marquise de Tourzel, whose daughter Pauline became a life-long friend of the Princess.

On 5 October, a mixed *cortège* of working women and armed men from Paris marched to Versailles, intent on acquiring food believed to be stored there. After the invasion of the palace in the early hours of 6 October had forced the family to take refuge in the king's apartment, the crowd demanded and obtained the move of the king and his family to the Tuileries Palace in Paris.

As the political situation deteriorated, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette realised that their lives were in danger, and went along with the plan of escape organised with the help of Count Axel von Fersen. The plan was for the royal family to flee to the northeastern fortress of Montmédy, a royalist stronghold, but the attempted flight was intercepted in Varennes, and the family escorted back to Paris.

The Temple

On 10 August 1792, after the royal family had taken refuge in the Legislative Assembly, Louis XVI was deposed, although the monarchy was not abolished before 21 September. On 13 August, the entire family was imprisoned in the Temple Tower,^[9] remains of a former medieval fortress. On 21 January 1793, Louis XVI was executed on the guillotine, at which time her young brother Louis Charles became King Louis XVII of France for the royalists.

Almost six months later, in the evening of 3 July 1793^[10], guards entered the royal family's apartment, forcibly took away the eight-year old Louis Charles, and entrusted him to the care of Antoine Simon, a cobbler, member of the Paris Commune. Remaining in their apartment in the Tower were Marie Antoinette, Marie-Thérèse and *Madame Élisabeth*, Louis XVI's youngest sister. When Marie Antoinette was taken to the *Conciergerie* one month later, in the night of 2 August, Marie-Thérèse was left in the care of her aunt Élisabeth who, in turn, was taken away on 9 May 1794 and executed the following day. Of the royal prisoners in the Temple, Marie-Thérèse Charlotte was the only one to survive the Reign of Terror.

During the remainder of her imprisonment in the Temple Tower, Marie-Thérèse was never told what had happened to her family. All she knew was that her father was dead, and she felt alone in the world. The following words were scratched on the wall of her room in the tower:

Marie-Thérèse Charlotte is the most unhappy person in the world. She can obtain no news of her mother; nor be reunited to her, though she has asked it a thousand times. Live, my good mother! whom I love well, but of whom I can hear no tidings. O my father! watch over me from heaven above, life was so cruel to her. O my God! forgive those who have made my parents suffer."

Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte est la plus malheureuse personne du monde. Elle ne peut obtenir de savoir des nouvelles de sa mère, pas même d'être réunie à elle quoiqu'elle l'ait demandé mille fois. Vive ma bonne mère que j'aime bien et dont je ne peux savoir des nouvelles. Ô mon père, veillez sur moi du haut du Ciel. Ô mon Dieu, pardonnez à ceux qui ont fait souffrir mes parents.

[3] (http://books.google.com/books?id=vXoaQAAlAAJ&pg=PA537&lpg=PA537&dq=Marie-Th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se+Charlotte+est+la+plus+malheureuse+personne+du+monde&source=bl&ots=W72T1-Hg2t&sig=rvU-Ald1pDCut5qLK49k_1mwRyQ&hl=fr&ei=d1mTTKOpLcL_lgfz-fCoCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CD0Q6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Marie-Th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se%20Charlotte%20est%20la%20plus%20malheureuse%20personne%20du%20monde&f=false)^[11]

On 11 May, Robespierre visited Marie-Thérèse, but there is no record of the conversation. It was only once the Terror was over that Marie-Thérèse was allowed to leave France. She was liberated on 18 December 1795, on the eve of her seventeenth birthday^[12], exchanged for Nicolas Marie Quinette,^[13] and taken to Vienna, the capital city of her cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor Francis II, and also her mother's birthplace.

Exile

Marie-Thérèse arrived in Vienna on 9 January 1796, in the evening, twenty-two days after she had left the Temple^[14].