IN DECEMBER 1821, DOUGLAS CHARLES LOVEDAY, a Protestant Englishman who owned property in France, presented a petition to the French government protesting the conversion of his eldest daughter to Catholicism while she was in a boarding school in Paris.¹ Loveday’s private outrage over his daughter’s repudiation of her Protestant faith and her subsequent flight to a convent was soon transformed into international melodrama with far-reaching implications when 12,000 copies of his petition were printed in pamphlet form in January 1822 and when the French and British reading publics learned that he had accused the female head of the school of the crime of “rant de séduction,” or kidnapping by seduction. Until then, this charge had been exclusively reserved for the circumstances of an amorous elopement. By the spring of 1822, Loveday’s petition had become the subject of angry parliamentary invective, while Paris and London publishers stoked the fire that the political debates ignited by issuing pamphlet versions of his daughter’s response to the petition, the schoolteacher’s reply to his accusations, family letters, and readers’ commentaries on the affair.²

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¹ Pétition à la Chambre des Députés par M. Douglas Loveday, anglais et protestant, se plaignant du rapt de séduction opéré sur ses deux filles et sur sa nièce dans une maison d’éducation où il les avait placées à Paris (Paris, 1821); 2d edn. (Paris, 1822); and Pétition ampliative à la Chambre des Députés, par M. Douglas Loveday, anglais et protestant, avec les pièces justificatives de son contenu et des observations additionnelles (Paris, 1822).

² Douglas Loveday’s petition led to the publication of no fewer than twenty pamphlets on the affair in France, some of which went through several editions; some pamphlets were translated into Alsatian. Bittschrift an den Deputierten-Kammer von Herrn. Douglas Loveday (Strasbourg, 1822); Réponse à la pétition de M. Loveday par un des rédacteurs de “La Quotidienne” (Paris, 1822); Réflexions sur la réponse d’un rédacteur de “La Quotidienne” à la pétition de M. Douglas Loveday (Paris, 1822); Lettre du majeur Loveday, gouverneur de Benarès, à son frère Douglas Loveday (Paris, 1822); Lettre de Sir Williams C . . . à M.
The defenders and detractors of Douglas Loveday and his daughter drew battle lines that were in large part political. Clerical monarchists intent on restoring the authority of the Catholic church in the aftermath of the French Revolution championed his daughter’s right to convert to Catholicism, while a growing anticlerical liberal opposition rallied to Douglas Loveday’s cause in order to stem the ominous counterrevolutionary tide that swept the country in the early 1820s. Indeed, trouble in the Loveday family erupted in the midst of a clerical backlash and on the eve of a political debacle over the reestablishment of female religious communities, which had been abolished during the French Revolution. Like the tragic and far more celebrated Calas Affair of 1762, the private drama of the Loveday family placed the political power of the Catholic church at center stage.

The case of Loveday and his daughter was not an isolated one. The archives of the legal courts as well as of the Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs are replete with complaints and petitions concerning the spiritual seduction, flight, and sequestration of women in religious convents between the 1820s and 1880s. The long-term implications of such cases must not be underestimated. The nineteenth century witnessed a veritable explosion in the numbers of women who entered religious life—a “feminization of religion,” as historians have come to describe it. The numbers of these women increased from 12,300 in 1808 to 135,000 in 1878 (excluding Alsace-Lorraine). The many cases involving women who entered religious communities without parental consent resulted in demands for legislation limiting the property rights of “women religious,” who had the right to equal inheritance under the Napoleonic Civil Code, and fanned the flames of anticlericalism throughout the nineteenth century.

While the Loveday family drama provides a fascinating prism through which to examine patterns of national stereotyping, the narrative strategies of the affair’s

Loveday (Paris, 1822); Lettre d’un ministre protestant à un ministre de la même religion habitant en France, à l’occasion de la pétition de M. Loveday (Paris, 1822); Examen d’une pétition présentée aux Chambres par M. Loveday (Paris, 1st, 2d, 3d edns., 1822); Considerations à l’appui de la pétition présentée à la Chambre des Pairs par M. Douglas Loveday, par Michel (du Var) (Paris, 1822); Beweistücher und Bermerkungen zur Bitschrift (Paris, 1822); Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday à la pétition présentée au nom de son père, à la Chambre des Pairs (Paris, 1822); Réponse de Mlle. Reboul aux imputations dirigées contre elle dans une pétition présentée aux deux Chambres par M. Loveday (Paris, 1822); Réfutation du mémoire justificatif de Mlle. Ernestine Reboul, suivie de considérations sur l’abus du prosélytisme par M. Ferdinand X. . . (Paris, 1822); Le bon sens, ou entretiens d’un fermier avec ses enfants, sur Miss Emily Loveday par M. Ferdinand S. L. (Paris, 1822); Instruction paternelle du docteur Dxxx, ministre de la religion anglicane (Paris, 1822); Réflexions préjudiciables sur la pétition du sieur Loveday, par M. de Bonald (Paris, 1822); Réponse des ministres de la religion catholique à la pétition améliorative de M. Douglas Loveday à la Chambre des Députés (Paris, 1822); Nouvelle réponse de Mlle. Reboul, provoquée par la pétition améliorative de M. Loveday (Paris, 1822); Quelques mots clairs et distincts adressés à Mlle. Reboul par M. Loveday fils, protestant éclairé à l’âge de dix-sept ans (Paris, 1822); Lettre d’une mère qui pardonne à sa fille (Paris, 1822).

The parlement of Languedoc sentenced Jean Calas, a Protestant from Toulouse, to a gruesome death for allegedly murdering his son in order to prevent him from converting to Catholicism. Calas’s name was ultimately rehabilitated in 1765 after Voltaire took up his cause. See Marc Chassagne, L’affaire Calas (Paris, 1929); David Bien, The Calas Affair: Persecution, Tolerance and Heresy in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse (Princeton, N.J., 1960); and Edna Dixon, Voltaire and the Calas Case (New York, 1961).

participants, the role of the state in adjudicating family conflict, and the civil status
of women in postrevolutionary France, this essay focuses on the ideological
contradictions that the affair created for the Right and the Left in the immediate
postrevolutionary period; on why these contradictions emerged in discussions of
gender and religion; and on the significance of these contradictions for the
principles of paternal authority and public order, which were embodied in
postrevolutionary French law.

The Loveday Affair would normally have been a matter for the law courts, since
it centered on a legal dispute over child custody and the civil rights of a foreign
subject residing in France. However, the case was never given formal legal
consideration because the child in question, Emily Loveday, was twenty-one years
old and had therefore reached the age of majority as defined by France’s civil
code. The legal issues that the case broached nonetheless presented a conundrum
for both the critics and supporters of Emily Loveday because all shared a
fundamental belief in the principle of paternal authority as a basis for political
and social order.

In abolishing the corporate order of the Old Regime, the French Revolution
created a state that was infinitely more powerful than its prerevolutionary
predecessor. But the sources and loci of the state’s authority remained bitterly
contested throughout the nineteenth century. While the Right claimed that this
authority resided in religion and in France’s monarchical past, the Left claimed
that it resided in the principles of the revolution itself. Both viewed the family as
a microcosm of the state and argued that paternal authority served as a
foundation for social and political order. The ultraroyalist comte de Bonald, who
had defended the inviolability of the family while a vituperative opponent of
revolutionary divorce laws in 1816, summarized the consensus on this matter
when he declared before the Chamber of Peers, “Divided on political questions,
we are unanimous in our feelings of respect for our families and of tenderness for
our children, and what kind of person is he among us who would have the
unfortunate daring to come immolate the Loveday family at our tribunal and
entertain all of Europe with this scandalous debate.” While Catholic royalists
claimed that paternal authority, which provided the basis for public order in
society, was established by God, liberals argued that that same authority was
derived from nature. Ultraroyalists upheld the sanctity of the patriarchal family
as a means of reconstituting the prerevolutionary social order, whereas liberals
saw it as “the protector of private property” and as “the guarantor of a barrier
against the encroachments of the state.” Both the Left and the Right supported

5 Lynn Hunt has recently argued that in eighteenth-century France, political societies were viewed
as “families writ large” and that French political culture was “structured by narratives of family
relations.” Hunt, The Family Romance of the French Revolution (Berkeley, Calif., 1992), xiii–xv. This was
no less true of the early nineteenth century, when family relations remained a keystone of political
theory among figures as diverse as Bonald and Proudhon.
6 M. de Bonald, Réflexion préjudicielle sur la pétition du sieur Loveday (Paris, 1822), 12.
7 M. A. T. Desquiron wrote in 1821, for example, that paternal authority was derived from nature
itself, and that nature, “stronger than law,” would maintain this authority in spite of all efforts to get
rid of it. Desquiron, La puissance paternelle en France mise en rapport avec les intérêts de la société (Paris,
1821), 14.
the principle of paternal authority but for different reasons. Throughout the nineteenth century, the bitterest of political enemies defended the principle of paternal authority over both public and private life, whether it was founded in religion or in natural law, by arguing that the “good order of families” was “the first condition and the surest guarantee of good order in the state.”

During debates over the affair, ultraroyalists, who ardently defended the principle of paternal authority and the patriarchal family, ironically relinquished that principle because the interests of the Catholic church were at stake, and they paradoxically used a liberal language of individual rights to justify that sacrifice. The comte de Bonald argued during the debates in the Chamber of Deputies that Emily Loveday was no longer a minor and was “in consequence, mistress of her religious beliefs as well as her civil actions.”10 Although religion provided the basis for a stable social order and the justification for paternal authority for the Right, in the context of the feminization of Catholicism in nineteenth-century France, the Loveday Affair revealed how difficult it was to argue that paternal authority was grounded in religion. Moreover, liberals like Benjamin Constant, though passionate defenders of individual rights and liberties, were ready to put their most cherished principles aside when the power of the Catholic church was at issue. In essence, while all sides agreed on the fundamental social and political importance of the principle of paternal authority, the Loveday Affair tested the coherence of the political ideology of liberals and ultraroyalists by raising uncomfortable questions about the limits of that authority, the civil rights of women, and the autonomy of daughters, wives, mothers, and sisters in postrevolutionary French law.

Postrevolutionary law was a product of new inventions and reinvented traditions. It fulfilled some of the fundamental demands of the French Revolution by establishing a single uniform legal code and the principle of juridical equality. When it came to women, however, particularly those who were married, France’s civil and penal codes roundly dismissed that principle of equality.11 Paternal authority was strengthened immeasurably in postrevolutionary civil and criminal jurisprudence. Although women were accorded a civil status, it was unequal, and they were denied any political rights, in spite of the universalistic political language of the French Revolution. Indeed, that very language ironically supplied the basis for the exclusion of women from the public space of politics and bolstered the legal authority of husbands and fathers in the name of virtue and public order.12 Although historians have explored the paradoxes of liberal theory

9 Philippe-Auguste Paget, De la puissance paternelle dans le droit romain et le droit français (Paris, 1869), 144.
10 Bonald, Réflexion préjudicielle, 10.
12 “Women’s personal virtue (virtue = chastity) is equated with political virtue (virtue = putting state above personal interests), like Brutus, who executed his sons when they attempted to betray the Roman republic. The continuum between the two senses carries a whole series of messages: that female chastity is the prerequisite for political innovation undertaken in the name of universal will . . . ‘Virtue’ was in fact a two-edged word, which bisected the apparently universalistic terminology of le souverain [souverain] into two distinct political destinies, one male and the other female.” Dorinda Outram, “Le langage mâle de la vertu,” in The Social History of Language, Peter Burke and Roy Porter, eds. (Cambridge, 1987), 125. See Joan Landes, Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution (Ithaca, N.Y., 1988); Joan Wallach Scott, “French Feminists and the Rights of ‘Man’:
in this regard in order to illuminate the history of women's demands for political rights, women's civil and property rights in postrevolutionary France have not received the same close attention.\textsuperscript{13} The Loveday Affair brings into bold relief one significant dimension of women's civil status: the rights of women in the domain of religious expression, vocation, and conscience. Although the Civil Code sharply curtailed women's rights, in successfully winning her case, Emily Loveday and the many young women who fled "la maison paternelle" without parental consent in the nineteenth century inadvertently challenged the juridical construction of paternal authority that the Napoleonic Civil Code enshrined.

"I AM A FOREIGNER," Douglas Loveday began his 1821 petition to the Chamber of Peers, "I came to France on the faith of treaties, and under the protection of the law of nations. I have faithfully observed the laws of the country; and yet my most sacred rights and dearest affections have been violated: and amidst this misfortune that overwhelms me, I find no authority to which I can turn for protection. I am reduced to the necessity of appealing to the first body of the State—to the Deputies of the French nation—to obtain the satisfaction to which I am entitled."\textsuperscript{14}

Douglas Loveday was an Englishman who, in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, bought property in Auteuil, a fashionable town on the outskirts of Paris. Although Loveday retained his British citizenship, Louis XVIII, king of the newly established Restoration monarchy, granted him civil rights as a Frenchman by royal decree on December 3, 1817. Loveday's troubles in France began two years later, in the summer of 1819, when he placed his two daughters and his niece in a Parisian boarding school run by Ernestine Reboul, an unmarried secular schoolteacher. His eldest daughter, Emily-Mary, was nineteen years of age, her sister Matilda-Susan was eighteen, and his young niece Mary was twelve. Loveday alleged that one of the conditions of the boarding arrangement was that his daughters and niece, who were minors, would only be instructed in the arts of music, sewing, and etiquette and would not participate in the religious activities of the house. After the young charges were delivered to Reboul's care, Douglas Loveday and his wife made their way back to Britain. While we know that, two years later, all three girls converted to Catholicism, that they were returned to Loveday, that Emily Loveday fled her father's house, and that she took refuge in a convent, the circumstances of the girls' conversion and the


\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Pétition à la Chambre des Pairs par M. Douglas Loveday}, 1.
motives and reasons for her flight were bitterly contested by the affair's principal protagonists, the press, and by the reading public.

Loveday attributed no formal blame or responsibility to his daughter, whose agency he denied, arguing that she had fallen prey to a seductive plot perpetrated by Reboul, the owner and director of the boarding establishment. Not only had she stolen his daughter, but Reboul had corrupted her morals by teaching her the art of dissimulation through which Emily Loveday initially concealed her new-fangled religious beliefs. In short, to hear Douglas Loveday tell it, Reboul “seduced my family, usurped the rights that religion, nature and law gave me over it . . . shocking me at the idea of so cruel a violation” of one's most sacred rights.15 For Douglas Loveday, the seduction of his daughters was evidence of a larger problem of fanaticism in France, the cause of much domestic strife and discord.

Upon learning of their conversion, Douglas Loveday brought the children home and claimed that he succeeded in winning back the souls of the younger, Matilda, who was now twenty, and his niece, who was fourteen. Emily, his eldest daughter, remained steadfast in her newfound faith, however, and one week later she secretly left her father's house. Soon after, Douglas Loveday claimed to have received a letter postmarked from Amiens indicating that Emily had allegedly taken refuge in La Maternité, a foundling institution run by a religious community. Emily Loveday confessed in her response to her father's petition that she stayed in Amiens a month to await documentation from England that would prove her majority (in order to be free from parental control).16

In the meantime, Douglas Loveday appealed to the police and the English ambassador to intervene on his behalf and soon learned that his daughter had moved into the house of an English Catholic gentleman by the name of Jerningham and that she was still in contact with her former teacher, Ernestine Reboul. Jerningham ultimately turned Emily over to her father, but in less than twenty-four hours she again fled Douglas Loveday's house. Although her father claimed that he knew that she had taken refuge with the nuns of the Notre Dame community at Number 106, rue de Sèvres in Paris, according to Douglas Loveday's account, the nuns belonging to this establishment initially denied her existence. Loveday then made several unsuccessful attempts to regain custody of his daughter. On one highly publicized occasion, he tried to force her into a hired carriage with the help of another man while she was out for a walk near Montparnasse with two nuns of Notre Dame.

After having entreated the public authorities and the English ambassador in France to aid him in his efforts to regain his daughter, Douglas Loveday took the unusual step of petitioning the Chamber of Peers on December 28, 1821. According to the Civil Code, children remained under their parents' formal authority until the age of majority or emancipation. While Matilda and Mary had not reached the age of majority, Emily had just turned twenty-one and was therefore not legally bound to submit to all of her father's commands under the

15 Pétition à la Chambre des Pairs par M. Douglas Loveday, 4.
16 This explanation was provided by the duc de Saint-Aignan in his review of the case before the Chamber of Peers. Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des chambres françaises, 2ème série (1800–1860), vol. 34, January 26, 1822 (Paris, 1876), 209.
Civil Code. Douglas Loveday, however, attempted to get around this fact by arguing that Emily had converted to Catholicism before she had reached the age of majority and that her conversion had been the result of “rapt de séduction,” a criminal act perpetrated by Ernestine Reboul.

Although Loveday’s petition resembled many of the diverse pleas (for pensions, pardon, or property) that have found their way into the dusty corners of governmental archives, it bore a greater similarity to the mémoire judiciaire, the published version of a lawyer’s defense of his client, which was originally intended for the eyes of judges alone.17 During the eighteenth century, such mémoires were increasingly published in celebrated cases, particularly after the Calas Affair, and thus became the “main bridge between the courtroom and the street.”18 Their often sensational and titillating content soon made them into a popular form of pamphlet literature by the beginning of the French Revolution. During the early Restoration, mémoires judiciaires reappeared, galvanizing public opinion on behalf of either plaintiff or defendant, and were soon supplemented by the Gazette des Tribunaux, a newspaper that reported on cases and court decisions throughout France for the legal community and general public.

The author of Loveday’s petition was none other than the renowned Restoration jurist, André Dupin (1783–1865), who worked to narrate the “circumstances and feelings of Mr. Loveday in a manner calculated to produce the strongest sensation, especially as the Princes of the Blood and the Archbishop of Paris are charged with being parties to the abduction.”19 As a supporter of constitutional monarchy who also came to play a prominent role in the Revolution of 1830, which toppled the Restoration regime, Dupin often defended liberal causes.20

Douglas Loveday’s petition and charge soon brought responses from Emily


19 The only record of Dupin’s authorship is contained in the English translation of Loveday’s pamphlet that was published in London in 1822. The anonymous introductory note to the translation claims that Loveday “caused M. Dupin, a celebrated French advocate, to draw up a petition, stating the case to the French Chamber of Deputies”; Miraculous Host Tortured by the Jew, 17. Born in a well-to-do legal family six years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, Dupin had clients who included figures as diverse as the executors of Napoleon’s will in 1821 and the duc d’Orléans in the affair of the Théâtre-Français in 1818. The elder brother of social statistician Charles Dupin, he was a respected member of the bar and no stranger to political controversy. Dupin pleaded 4,000 civil cases between the time he was admitted to the bar and the time he entered political life as a deputy following the July Revolution of 1830. André Dupin, Mémoires, Vol. 1: Souvenirs du barreau (Paris, 1855), 247–48. Also see Donald R. Kelley, Historians and the Law in Postrevolutionary France (Princeton, N.J., 1984), 56–60.

20 On a number of occasions, Dupin acted as lawyer on behalf of Le constitutionnel, which took Douglas Loveday’s side, against the attempts of the monarchy to shut down political opposition by muzzling the press. See, for example, André Dupin, Mémoire pour les rédacteurs du Constitutionnel, en réponse de l’acte d’accusation en tendance sur la question de savoir si les ordres religieux peuvent s’introduire ou se maintenir sans loi qui les institue (Paris, 1825); and Dupin, Défense du Constitutionnel prononcé à l’audience de la cour royale, du 17 juillet 1827 (Paris, 1827).
Loveday and the schoolteacher whom he accused of "rapt de séduction." Like the original petition to the Chamber of Peers, these responses resembled mémoires judiciaires. Reboul's was signed by Reboul herself and by two lawyers, Billecocq and Hennequin. Since Emily Loveday's statement was written in the third person, she evidently received similar, albeit anonymous, help.

Ernestine Reboul and Emily Loveday refuted Douglas Loveday's representation of fact and intention in their telling of the story of Emily's conversion. These refutations focused on three issues: the nature of Emily's conversion, her motives in fleeing her father's house, and Reboul's role in the conversion. Both women contended that the conversion was made freely, that Emily Loveday had not been the object of any form of coercion, and that, as she was over the age of twenty-one, she was responsible for her actions. Both portrayed her flight from her father's house as an act of fear (that Douglas Loveday would return her to England and forbid her from practicing her faith) rather than one of insubordination.

Voice and the appearance of authenticity were central to the narrative strategies of father, daughter, and teacher. For this reason, like many of the eighteenth-century mémoires judiciaires, Douglas Loveday's December 1821 petition and his expanded version of February 1822 were written in the first person, as were Reboul's first and second responses. The first-person voice lent their stories an immediacy and personal pathos that a third-person account lacked. The participants allegedly spoke in their own words, without any formal mediation that would temper the emotion that they evidently felt. Lawyers involved in the case were well aware of the power of the first-person account. Indeed, the question of authorship in the petition and the responses to it was repeatedly raised in order to cast doubt on the veracity of the conflicting accounts of the conversion. For example, Douglas Loveday faulted Reboul for having had to resort to legal counsel to draft her response and suggested that she was in need of the artifice of lawyers, while he was not.²¹ On the other hand, Emily Loveday and Reboul claimed that Douglas Loveday's petition was "written for him" and suggested that his was more polemic than truth.²²

In making their cases, Ernestine Reboul and Emily Loveday had to be wary of appearing too independent. The voice that each assumed was inevitably shaped by their vulnerable legal status as women under postrevolutionary law. Unable to bear witness and afforded none of the rights that the head of a family could claim, each made strategic use of her vulnerability by appealing to truth, virtue, and nature, rather than law in making her case. Reboul admitted that the "contest" between herself and Douglas Loveday was "unequal": "I do not challenge the authority of the head of a family who asks for an account of his children. I also quite understand that in this sad debate, the contest is unequal" because "M. Loveday is a father, I am a schoolteacher. Trust must privilege him . . . but

²¹ "Par prudence, elle s'est associé deux jurisconsultes, elle eût eu trop de peine à répondre elle-même. Il fallait un certain art: elle a eu recours à ceux qui le possédaient." Pétition ampliative à la Chambre des Députés, par M. Douglas Loveday, 48.
²² Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday à la pétition présentée, au nom de son père, à la Chambre des Pairs, 5.
“Portrait de Miss Emily Loveday,” a frontispiece to one of the many pamphlets published at the time of the Loveday Affair. This pamphlet was titled *Le bon sens ou entretien d’un fermier avec ses enfants sur Miss Emily Loveday*, par Ferdinand S.-L. (Paris, 1822). She is shown reading “Oeuvres de Bossuet.” Courtesy of the Service Photographique, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
there is something more commanding and even more respectable: that is the truth!"

Like her teacher, Emily Loveday and her lawyers were careful not to repudiate the claims of paternal authority. She declared in the opening lines of her response that she was "torn between two sacred obligations," that of the "free exercise of religion" and "a father's will." "Ignorant of the law," she declined to discuss legal considerations, "which appalled her filial piety." Instead, she only sought to "reestablish factual truth distorted [dénaturalé] in the petition of her father." Representing herself as submissive, she claimed not to respond to her father but to speak in the name of her religion and, like Reboul, "to avenge innocence and calumniated virtue."

The different stories told by Douglas Loveday, Ernestine Reboul, and Emily Loveday all revealed a family gone awry. Douglas Loveday portrayed a daughter whose natural filial affection had been so corrupted that she willfully ignored the claims of paternal authority. He told the peers and deputies that when police officials expelled him from the convent of Notre Dame as he tried to gain access to his daughter, Emily had smiled with malevolent satisfaction. In contrast, Emily Loveday painted a picture of a violent father, duped by "perfidious counselors," who used his expression of "paternal grief" to launch a political diatribe. Reboul saw in Mr. and Mrs. Loveday absent or despotic parents and a family in which discord reigned. She went so far as to assert that the disorder in the Loveday family was the root cause of their children's conversion. In so doing, she turned the tables and put Douglas Loveday under attack.

Reboul cast herself in the role of a virtuous daughter and sister, rather than an independent, unmarried schoolteacher. Her indictment of the Lovedays as parents was preceded by a short autobiographical statement written, according to her lawyers, by her alone, to emphasize the veracity of her account. It began, "Raised by a father whose memory will always be venerated by his family, and whose solicitude was seconded by the most virtuous mother, I have never left the [paternal] family home." She tended her sick father, who later died, and established a school to provide for her mother as well as for her married sister, who had two children and who had been suddenly left without means of support by an accident. She asked the readers of her response to consider why she would "unnecessarily compromise the growing prosperity of our establishment" (and her livelihood) by effecting the conversion in the circumstances Douglas Loveday described.

In contrast to her family's loyalty and affection, Reboul asserted that the relationships between parents and children in the Loveday family were strained and that Douglas Loveday concealed important facts in making his case. It was Mrs. Loveday, she claimed (who appeared in none of the three editions of

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23 Réponse de Mlle. Reboul, 3.
24 Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday, 5.
25 Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday, 7.
26 Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday, 6.
28 Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday, 5.
29 Nouvelle réponse de Mlle. Reboul provoquée par la pétition ampliative de M. Loveday, 18, 21.
Loveday’s petition), and not Mr. Loveday who first placed Emily, Matilda, and Mary in her boarding school. Mrs. Loveday then allegedly lived in a pavilion attached to the school for some time afterward and had ample opportunity to observe the establishment.

Reboul claimed to have been struck by Emily Loveday’s sad and sickly demeanor as well as by her distinguished manner. When Emily and her sisters first arrived at the school, Emily was in a state of suffering, requiring a great deal of attention. Reboul worried about her health and came to observe an unhappy relationship between mother and daughters that ultimately resulted in Mrs. Loveday moving out of the pavilion, with the full knowledge and approbation of Mr. Loveday.

According to Reboul, the Lovedays were, moreover, indifferent to the religious education of their daughters. Reboul claimed that she hesitated to admit the Loveday sisters to her establishment because of their religion but that Douglas Loveday had insisted on his belief that one religion was as good as another. On one occasion, Reboul noted, he gave her a painting entitled “Christ on the Cross” for her chapel, whose existence he now denied. When Douglas Loveday did see his daughters on Sunday outings, Reboul claimed, he preferred to take them to the Tuileries rather than to a Protestant service held at the residence of the British ambassador.

Reboul asserted that the Lovedays were largely absent from their daughters’ lives for three years, and she soon suspected deeper familial problems on learning of “the pain and worries that the two unhappy daughters of Mrs. Loveday experienced.” For example, when Douglas Loveday took his daughters to see the festivities in honor of the birth of the duc de Bordeaux (in 1820), they returned in a “state of affliction,” confiding their “secret” as to the cause and repeating “a thousand times that they had no one but us [the Reboul sisters] in the world.”

Ernestine Reboul did not reveal the young girls’ “secret” but suggested that it was sufficiently troubling to cause her concern. Ultimately, Reboul attested, she and her sister, who lived at the school, came to be the “veritable mothers” of the children, who shied away from the conflict and disorder of their real family. After Emily Loveday was returned to her father following her conversion, Reboul allegedly received letters from Emily’s seventeen-year-old brother which disclosed that Emily had been repeatedly assailed by verbal abuse. Reboul thus concluded her response to Douglas Loveday’s allegation by asserting that the conversion of the Loveday sisters was the direct result of parental neglect and domestic strife: “Undoubtedly, before comparing the catechisms of her beliefs, Emily compared the calm that she enjoyed in my house with the storms of the paternal home! Yes . . . Mr. and Mrs. Loveday are the true authors of their daughters’ conversion . . . If the two sisters had found in their parents the examples and consolations that they had a right to expect, they might never have thought of this change in religion.”

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30 Nouvelle réponse de Mlle. Reboul, 12–13.
31 Nouvelle réponse de Mlle. Reboul, 13.
While protagonists in the Loveday Affair gave different accounts and interpretations of the circumstances of Emily Loveday's conversion, the French public asked, more specifically, whether she had the right to renounce her Protestant faith, convert to Catholicism, and leave her father's house. For the historian, however, the Loveday Affair raises questions about the nature and limits of paternal authority in postrevolutionary French society. The Loveday Affair captured the imagination of contemporaries because of the large number of petitions and cases that surfaced involving the conversion and abduction of children in Protestant and Jewish communities between the Old Regime and the Restoration. One of the most celebrated prerevolutionary cases was that of a young Protestant man in 1762, the son of Jean Calas. The most highly publicized case of the early nineteenth century was that of a young woman, Emily Loveday.

When the Loveday case came before the Chamber of Peers, the duc de Saint-Aignan first presented a report of a committee's investigation into the affair. He concluded the report with the recommendation that it be rejected. The duc de Saint-Aignan reasoned that Douglas Loveday had willingly placed his daughters in a Catholic establishment and cited Loveday's unruly behavior to illustrate his bad faith. He recalled Loveday's actions in the convent and on the rue de Montparnasse, where he tried to force his daughter into a carriage. Despite protests by the liberal peers, the ultraroyalist Chamber of Peers voted 80 to 57 to reject the claim.

Douglas Loveday did not stop there, however. He submitted a revised petition to the Chamber of Deputies, and the debate that took place there several months later became a public sensation. Its sessions, unlike those of the Peers, were open to the public, and reporters of all political stripes were on hand to observe the proceedings held on April 11, 1822. The Journal des débats reported that at dawn spectators were camped out on the steps leading to the public entrance to the gallery of the Chamber of Deputies and that crowds of people waited outside the reserved seating section. From nine in the morning, swarms of people filled the streets surrounding the Chamber of Deputies, and, when the doors of the gallery were opened at half past one in the afternoon, the room was immediately packed with spectators, among whom were foreign visitors, "some of the most distinguished ladies," and a larger number of deputies than was the norm, especially to the right of the chamber.32 As the available seats and standing area of the Chamber of Deputies filled, the previous day's proceedings were read but barely heard by a "public eager with emotion and [sensing] scandal."33

The debate over the rights of Douglas and Emily Loveday in the Chamber of Deputies was preceded by a discussion of two lesser-known cases, one of which concerned Claudine Salles, an artisan's daughter from Nîmes, and the other involving a silver thief's daughter from La Rochelle. The case of Claudine Salles was brought to the legislative chambers after her father had appealed to legal authorities. Although she had been returned to her father by magistrates, Claudine had repeatedly run away from home. Her father thus petitioned the

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32 Journal des débats politiques et littéraires, April 12, 1822, 1; and Gazette de France, April 12, 1822, 1. The debate was also reported in the clerical Tablettes du clergé et des amis de la religion (Paris, 1822), 310.
33 Journal des débats, April 12, 1822, 1.
state to protest the conversion of his eighteen-year-old daughter to Catholicism following a stay in a Catholic hospice and demanded that she be returned to her father’s house. Like Emily Loveday, Claudine Salles fled her father’s house several times, first taking refuge with the soeurs grises and then with a seamstress in Aix-en-Provence. Claudine Salles pleaded for the state’s protection, claiming that her parents had vowed to kill her and that they had physically abused her in the past. As a result of these circumstances, the chamber did not decide in favor of her father.34

In the Salles case, a father’s paternal authority was matched against a daughter’s freedom of conscience and right to protection from alleged physical abuse. Other issues, however, entered into the case of a silver thief from Bordeaux, who also petitioned for the return of his daughter. He alleged that his six-year-old daughter had been carried off by a Sister of Charity and claimed that the nun then refused to allow him to see her; he petitioned the peers for her release. Whereas the silver thief’s daughter had not formally converted to Catholicism, this case centered on the conditions under which a father might be deprived of his civil and paternal rights over his children. The peers were quick to point to the many dangers of restricting the authority of fathers in the domestic sphere. When the chamber refused to act on the silver thief’s case because of the father’s “paternité redoutable,”35 one deputy strenuously protested that a “father can have faults; these faults must be punished when they assume the form of crimes.”36 However, “as much as the law can occupy itself with these faults,” it was impossible to claim on the basis of this that a father be deprived of his paternal rights over his child. This deputy concluded by asking, “who is going to protect paternal power if it is not the legislator who instituted it?”37 General Maximilien Foy warned that one could go too far in arguing that a father’s delinquency removed his right to paternal authority. He asked, “And who is to say that there will not come a day when paternal authority would be removed from the hands of the political prisoner?”38

After voting against the silver thief’s petition, the deputies considered Douglas Loveday’s. When the deputies were asked to weigh a father’s authority against a daughter’s right to free conscience and the liberty to chose her domicile, their consideration of the problem was largely determined by party politics. Ultraroyalist conservatives defended the religious rights of Emily Loveday, and liberals championed the paternal claims of her father. But political divisions did not prevent opposing sides from stressing the importance of the principle of paternal authority for the maintenance of public order. In making their cases for and against Emily Loveday and her father, liberals and ultraroyalists frequently found themselves contradicting their most revered principles.39

34 Archives parlementaires, Chambre des Députés, April 11, 1822, vol. 36, 218–20. Also see AN, BB 194 for an investigation into the Salles case.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Crane Brinton has made a similar argument in his analysis of illegitimacy in revolutionary and Napoleonic law. Debates on illegitimacy soon revealed “the clash between competing ideas and emotions in the same set of men.” Brinton, French Revolutionary Legislation on Illegitimacy, 1789–1804 (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 4.
For Douglas Loveday and many of his supporters in the two chambers, what was at issue in the affair was the preeminence of paternal authority in face of the claims of religion. “If one could tolerate, in France, a violation as unworthy of all that men hold to be the dearest and most sacred, all foreigners will flee . . . [V]ainly would she [France] display before their eyes artistic marvels and all her titles for the admiration of nations; a man, understanding his dignity, would never stop in a land where the rights of paternal authority would be trampled under foot, where fanaticism would penetrate the bosom of families to disturb the peace, where conscience would have stopped being an inviolable sanctuary!”  
Paradoxically, Douglas Loveday and even his opponents argued that paternal authority was founded in religion. Loveday asserted that “the respect for paternal authority is linked to the respect for Divinity; filial piety is a cult . . . this language is that of all times, of all places, of all beliefs.”

Since the abolition of the revolutionary family tribunal and the introduction of the Napoleonic civil and criminal legal codes, the reassertion of the principle of paternal authority was a central concern in political, academic, and legal circles. In 1801, an essay competition sponsored by the Institut de France focused on “the extent and limits of paternal authority in a well-constituted republic,” and one of the successful aspirants argued that “paternal authority must be propagated” for reasons of state. Like the philosophe Montesquieu, a number of jurists argued that paternal authority was “of great use towards the preservation of morals,” and it was particularly important in life decisions taken by daughters and sons alike. The Napoleonic Civil Code stipulated that daughters required paternal consent to be married up to the end of their twenty-first year, counsel being required thereafter, and sons were bound to seek paternal consent up to the age of twenty-five, the age of majority notwithstanding. Because all male and female religious orders had been abolished in 1791 and had no legal status, the code was silent on the question of consent required for religious vows.

The comte Daru had claimed before the Chamber of Peers in January of 1822 that Emily’s actions thus posed a threat to public order, which provided the very basis of French civil law. Could a twenty-one-year-old girl, who required parental consent to be married, have the right to leave her paternal house to live where she wanted and how she wanted? The fact that Emily Loveday had been “seduced” by religion did not make her actions less serious an offense for her father’s

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43 Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, T. Nugent, trans. (New York, 1949), book 5, chap. 7, and book 23, chaps. 7 and 8. Montesquieu argued that paternal consent was probably more important in French law than in British law because children in Catholic France, particularly girls, could choose between marriage and a religious vocation.
supporters. It appeared to make them worse. If condoned, her actions suggested that women could behave independently in a variety of different contexts: "Take note that if she has the right to shut herself up in a religious house, she has the right to go anywhere."44 The social consequences of Emily's alleged insubordination were all too clear and summarized in an anonymous pamphlet: "If one tried to justify the behavior of Miss Loveday ... tomorrow, all [kinds of] romantic young women, urged by their desires, will listen to the voice of a seducer more than ready to give a false appearance to an escapade with fair words inspired by the heavens, the voice of God, whom none should resist."45 Fathers and families were warned to take heed. Emily Loveday may have been seduced by God, but an independent daughter could easily be seduced by a more tangible lover, which would inevitably destroy the honor of fathers and the fabric of society.

While it was not unexpected for an ultraroyalist political body to defend religion and the interests of the church, it was surprising to see an ultraroyalist such as Bonald appear to sacrifice the principle of paternal authority, which he had successfully used to attack the Civil Code's divorce law in 1816 and to which the interests of the Catholic church were closely linked. Bonald had argued in his Du divorce considéré au XIX siècle, relativement à l'état domestique et à l'état public de la société that "husband, wife, and children are indissolubly united ... because natural law makes it a duty, and because universal reason, from which it emanates, has founded society on a basis less fragile than the affections of man."46 In short, he held that "the child is minor or subject in the family even when he has reached majority" within the state because "public society" does not destroy or alter familial relationships.47

What made it possible for men like Bonald to defend Emily Loveday's right to independence in blatant contradiction with his most cherished principles and to stress the importance of paternal authority at one and the same time? A rather weak invocation of paternal responsibility. In this regard, Emily Loveday's defenders answered Douglas Loveday's claim of paternal authority with the charge that he had been delinquent in his paternal duty. They thus shifted the focus of the debate from a young woman and her schoolteacher to the alleged delinquency of her father. Bonald asked the Chamber of Peers, "If the father of a family complained to the Chamber of Deputies that, having placed his daughters in the Opera conservatory for lessons, [he learned] that they had acquired a taste for the theater, and that their teachers or companions seduced them and urged them to embrace the theatrical profession against their parents' will, with what contempt, or rather with what a sentiment of pity would the Chamber of Deputies rebuff such a foolish complaint?"48 Bonald emphasized the fact that Douglas Loveday had willingly and knowingly placed his daughters in Reboul's care. Although fathers had the right and duty of guardianship, surveil-

44 Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des chambres françaises, deuxième série (1800–1860), vol. 34 (Paris, 1876), 212.
45 Réfutation du mémoire justificatif de Mlle. Ernestine Reboul, suivie de considérations sur l'abus du prosélytisme ... par M. Ferdinand S ... L ... (Paris, 1822), 4.
46 Bonald, 3d edn. in Oeuvres de M. de Bonald, vol. 5 (Paris, 1818), 69.
47 Ibid., 96.
48 Bonald, Réflexions préjudicielles sur la pétition du sieur Loveday, 1.
lance, and education under the Civil Code, that duty in practice had been handed to Ernestine Reboul. Interestingly enough, an English reader who followed the affair in magazines and newspapers in London, and who made references to the much-maligned figure of the governess, concurred in this argument but drew different conclusions: "As a mother who values the immortal interests of her children above all other things, I declare that worlds should not tempt me to entrust the education of my daughters to a French governess." She went on to attribute the Loveday scandal not to Douglas Loveday's actions but to those of his wife, to the "present race of thoughtless and fashionable mothers, who in their imprudent zeal for insubstantial accomplishments sacrifice the best interests of their children."49

It is no accident that Douglas Loveday's petition became a major political scandal during a period marked by a clerical resurgence that culminated in the 1825 law of sacrilege. The growing power of the Catholic church could be seen everywhere. The amount of state money filling church coffers and feeding clerical vocations, immortalized in Stendhal's Restoration novel *Le rouge et le noir*, increased significantly. The Restoration monarchy had also put its political muscle behind a series of missions that targeted the provincial cities soon after the reestablishment of the monarchy, which generated strident opposition in liberal circles. While such initiatives encouraged the religious revivalism of the 1820s, they also spawned fears that the monarchy intended to return to the Old Regime. For a liberal minority within the Restoration chambers, the Loveday Affair was emblematic of the religious extremism that threatened to undermine the social and political gains of the French Revolution.50

The outcome of the Loveday Affair was largely shaped by this political context, but Emily Loveday's age, family relations, and the fact that she had taken refuge in a convent also influenced the final determination. It is hardly surprising, then, that the largely ultraroyalist Chamber of Deputies ultimately dismissed Douglas Loveday's claim, as did their counterparts in the Chamber of Peers, despite protests from liberals like Benjamin Constant. Douglas Loveday's request for the custody of his daughter was denied, and Emily Loveday was allowed to remain in the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Paris.51

49 *Gentleman's Magazine* (February 1822): 135. It is noteworthy that this English reader focused on the role of Emily Loveday's mother in the affair, when French commentators largely ignored the mother's existence. For a discussion of the unease that the nineteenth-century governess aroused in British society, see Mary Poovey, "The Governess and Jane Eyre," in her *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago, 1988), 126–63. The figure of the morally compromised governess reemerged in the scandal surrounding the murder of the duchess of Choiseul-Praslin by her husband in 1847. I wish to thank Jann Matlock, who is preparing a study of the Choiseul-Praslin Affair, for this observation.


51 While Emily Loveday disappeared from public record after 1821, her father became the center of considerable attention sixteen years later when the celebrated musician Nicolò Paganini threatened to sue Douglas Loveday for his failure to pay for piano lessons that Paganini allegedly gave another of Loveday's daughters, Clara Loveday. *Gazette des Salons, Journal des Dames et des Modes*, July 25, 1838, 641–44. The *Gazette des Salons* commented on the extraordinary talent of the eighteen-year-old girl, whom it compared to Chopin and Liszt. *Gazette des Salons*, March 10, 1838, 216–17. Also see *Lettres authentiques sur les différends entre Paganini et M. Loveday* (Paris, 1838).
Although a central issue that the Chambers of Peers and Deputies considered in the affair concerned paternal rights and responsibilities as weighed against the political power of the Catholic church—and, by implication, the state—Emily Loveday's conversion posed larger questions about the nature of women's civil rights and agency and about what a religious vocation might mean for family strategies and authority more generally in the postrevolutionary period. Emily resolutely declared that her conversion was free and voluntary and boldly argued that religion always took precedence over paternal authority: "Religion is a natural right that no law, that no power can touch, that all nations that are the least bit enlightened respect, and before which paternal authority, as powerful as it is through the natural sanction that God gave it, must bend." 52 She based her arguments against the omnipotence of paternal authority in both religion and natural law.

The question of agency and right to which Emily Loveday laid claim was the subject of intense discussion in the press and legislative chambers during the spring of 1822 because of the unusual nature of the criminal charge of "rapt de séduction" brought against Ernestine Reboul. In his 1782 dictionary of judicial terms, the jurist Guyot traced "rapt" to the Justinian code, and he defined it broadly as a crime committed by a man who abducts a woman or a girl to corrupt, rape, or marry her, or a combination of the three. 53 He also applied the term to the abduction of a minor (son or daughter) for the purposes of marriage without the consent of his or her family. 54 He went on to make a distinction between two forms of "rapt," one committed through violence and the other through seduction. While the former in effect constituted rape, the latter, "rapt de séduction," implied a degree of consent on the part of the victim and the removal of the victim from his or her family. According to another jurist, "rapt de séduction" was more dangerous because it was more difficult to resist, particularly when it was perpetrated by the "weaker sex." 55 Whereas Guyot drew a distinction between rape and seduction, Fournel in his 1781 Traité de la séduction, published ten years later, defined "rapt de séduction" more narrowly as a "crime against the authority of parents, which has as its object the contracting of a marriage advantageous [to the perpetrator] against the wishes of the family." 56 He also made a distinction between simple seduction and a "rapt de séduction": "seduction is an injury done to the person seduced, rather than to the family," but "rapt de séduction" is an injury that "strikes the family, whose authority it harms." 57 By implication, a child without a family is by definition not subject to the crime of "rapt de séduction," for

52 Réponse de Miss Emily Loveday, 6–7.
53 Guyot, Répertoire universel et raisonné de jurisprudence civile, criminelle, canonique et bénéficiale (Paris, 1782), 548.
54 Ibid. Fournel cites a 1602 case in which a woman was charged with "rapt de séduction" for marrying a minor without his family's consent. M. Fournel, Traité de la séduction considérée dans l'ordre judiciaire (Paris, 1781), 311. On "rapt," also see Claude-Joseph de Ferrière, Dictionnaire de droit et de politique (Toulouse, 1787), 2: 537–40.
55 Ferrière, Dictionnaire de droit, 540.
56 Fournel, Traité de la séduction, 305.
57 Fournel, Traité de la séduction, 306.
the only object of the law on this matter is “the chastity of women, the honor of families and the parent’s choice of marriage partners.”

During the Old Regime, “rapt de séduction” was a capital crime, although, in practice, the severity of punishments was determined by the social and corporate status of the perpetrator. The lower the station of the ravisseur and the higher the station of the victim of the crime, the harsher the punishment, since the intent of the law was to prevent “marriages rendered unworthy by the corruption of morals and even more so by the inequality of [social] conditions.” In short, while a rape or “simple seduction” was a crime committed against the individual, “rapt de séduction” was a crime against the family, state, and society as a whole, and its punishment was designed to protect the property and lineage of aristocratic families and to ensure the stability of the corporate order of a society predicated on privilege.

For this reason, it is perhaps not surprising that the charge of “rapt de séduction” disappeared from France’s criminal code during the French Revolution, which eradicated titles of nobility and the corporate society of the Old Regime. The charge was not resurrected in postrevolutionary law. It was replaced by a law governing the abduction and sexual abuse of minors. The Napoleonic penal code drew a distinction between abduction through the use of violence and through the use of fraud. Under revolutionary and postrevolutionary law, the severity of punishment was no longer determined by the social status of the victim and the accused but rather by the age and sex of the victim.

Although “rapt de séduction” was not a part of the postrevolutionary civil and penal codes in France, the term nonetheless continued to be used in legal treatises and commentaries. It gradually disappeared from legal commentary only toward the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas the 1845 edition of Dalloz’s Jurisprudence générale, table analytique des vingt-deux années du recueil périodique (1845–1867) contains references to “rapt,” which appear under entries devoted to the kidnapping of minors, such references cannot be found in the subsequent edition. Writing in 1869, one jurist maintained that the law did not “punish the act of what our older authors called rapt de séduction” if the victim of this offense was not a girl under the age of sixteen. In postrevolutionary France, gender and age replaced corporate privilege and social status as a basis for punishing such sexual crimes.

What was so extraordinary about the Loveday Affair was not that Douglas Loveday used the language of prerevolutionary law but that the abduction charge

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58 Fournel, Traité de la séduction, 335–36.
60 Code criminel et correctionnel ou recueil chronologique des lois . . . (Paris, 1805), 1: 66; and M. Carnot, Commentaire sur le code pénal, 2d edn. (Paris, 1836), 2: 162–63. According to Article 356 of the penal code, if the girl were under the age of sixteen and consented to her abduction and the accused had not reached the age of majority, the latter would be imprisoned for three to five years. If the accused were over the age of twenty-one, he would be subject to hard labor for life.
61 Dalloz, Jurisprudence générale (Paris, 1877).
62 Paget, De la puissance paternelle dans le droit romain et le droit français, 144, emphasis in the original.
did not involve a clandestine elopement or abduction for sexual purposes and the perpetrator of the alleged crime was not a man but rather an unmarried female schoolteacher. The charge "rapt de séduction" had effectively been transferred from the domain of sexual and marital relations to that of religious behavior, from the body to the spirit, and it is this transfer that in part contributed to the public sensation surrounding the affair.63

By January 1822, Douglas Loveday's petition and the responses that Emily Loveday and Ernestine Rebol made to the allegations therein had generated a lively public commentary in the Restoration's two principal opposition newspapers, La quotidienne and Le constitutionnel. This journalistic commentary was in turn followed by a spate of pamphlets on the subject, newly expanded and documented accounts by Douglas Loveday and Rebol of the events that led up to Emily Loveday's conversion, and reprinted family letters. These letters, some obviously fake, were published in pamphlet form and purchased for as little as 40 centimes.64 They included a letter to Emily Loveday from her mother, letters to her father from her uncle and her self-professed husband-to-be, and a letter to Rebol from her seventeen-year-old brother.

Readers who commented on the Loveday Affair supplied several competing explanations of Emily Loveday's conversion to Catholicism and ultimate flight to the Sisters of Notre Dame. Many of these melodramatic narratives were already inscribed in the rich claustral literature of eighteenth-century France, whose most celebrated example was Denis Diderot's novel La religieuse.65 Emily Loveday's

63 Carnot, for example, remarked on the unusual nature of this case in his 1836 commentary on crimes against children in the penal code. Carnot, Commentaire sur le code pénal, 2d edn., 2: 150–51.

64 For example, the letter allegedly written to Douglas Loveday by his brother (father of the young Mary) was obviously a fake. It consisted of a barely veiled attack on Douglas for exposing his family to publicity. See Lettre du majeur Loveday... à son frère (Paris, 1822).

65 For a discussion of the relationship between this claustral literature and the emergence of melodrama, see Peter Brooks' pathbreaking book on the functions of melodrama, The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess (New Haven, Conn., 1976); and Robert Shackelton, "The Cloister Theme in French Preromanticism," in The French Mind: Studies in Honor of Gustave Rudler, Will Moore, Rhoda Sutherland, and Enid Starkie, eds. (Oxford, 1952). Also see Jeanne Ponton, La religieuse dans la littérature française (Quebec, 1969), 382–86. During the French Revolution, a large number of plays were written on convent life. See, for example, Louis-Carrogis Carmontelle, Le couvent des religieuses, comédie en un acte, 1789. Ms. Bibliothèque Nationale, f.f. 9326; Maurin de Pompigny, La bonne sœur, ou elle en avait besoin (Paris, Ambigu-Comique, December 17, 1789); Anonymous, Le couvent, drame (Paris, Théâtre de la Nation, April 1790); Joseph Fiévée, Les rigueurs du cloître (Paris, Les comédiens italiens ordinaires du Roi, August 23, 1790); Olympe de Gouges, Le couvent, ou les vœux forcés (Paris, Théâtre Français, October 1790); and Pierre Laujon, Le couvent, ou les fruits du caractère et de l'éducation (Paris, Théâtre de la Nation, April 16, 1790); Anonymous, La religieuse danoise, ou la communauté de Copenhagen (Paris, Théâtre de Montansier, 1791); Bertin d'Antilly, La communauté de Copenhagen ou les religieuses danoises (1791); Boutet de Monvel, Les victimes cloitrées (Paris, Théâtre de la Nation, March 29, 1791); Carbon de Flins, Le mari directeur, ou le déménagement du couvent (Paris, Théâtre de la Nation, February 25, 1791); Pujoaux, Amélie, ou le couvent (Paris, Théâtre Feydeau, February 28, 1791); Jacques-Benoît Demauert, Le petit sacréiste (Paris, Théâtre de la Vaudeville, March 13, 1792); Desprez et Rouget de Lisle, Les deux couvents (Paris, Opéra-Comique, January 16, 1792); Louis-Benoît Picard, Les visitandines (Paris, Théâtre Feydeau, August 7, 1792); Prévost-Monfort, Les soeurs de pot, ou le double rendez-vous (Paris, Ambigu-Comique, September 30, 1792). Among the many works published on the subject between 1800 and 1821, see Baronne de Méré, L'abbaye de Saint-Rémy, ou la fille de l'abbesse, 4 vols. (Paris, 1807); Eusèbe Salvete, Nellé, ou les sermens, 2 vols. (Paris, 1812); Mme. Perin de Grandenstein, La dame grise, ou histoire de la maison de Beauchamp (Paris, 1816); Abel Dufresne, Le monde et la retraite, ou correspondance de deux jeunes amies, 2 vols. (Paris, 1817); Mme. de M... L'abbaye de Saint-Aure, ou encore victime de l'amour, 2 vols. (Paris, 1818); Baronne de Méré, La sœur grise, ou mémoires de Mme de Canèrs,
flight to a convent was turned into a story of abduction and incarceration. It is perhaps ironic that these narratives tended to focus on the cloistered convent, because the majority of women who entered religious life in the nineteenth century entered active congrégations that lived in secular society and provided social and medical services. Indeed, by 1880, the members of active congrégations comprised four-fifths of the female religious. According to the many commentators, Emily Loveday was not only being held against her father's will but also against her own. To this extent, the affair was portrayed by some observers less as seduction than as mental rape, which had profound consequences for Emily Loveday's role as a woman. Many readers suggested that this form of seduction or rape was all the more repugnant because it was religious and threatened to destroy her natural vocation as a future wife and mother. Many accounts of the affair made much of the fact that Emily Loveday was extraordinarily beautiful, which some commentators believed made her situation all the more tragic. One explicitly equated her departure from the family home to a decision to throw herself into the arms of a lover, even if that lover happened to be God. For a Protestant minister who had known Emily Loveday since childhood, her actions represented a renunciation of all possibility of enjoying the fruits of earthly life, particularly that of wife and mother: "Condemned by a deathly vow to an eternal celibacy, you will never be a wife or mother ... you will grow old before your time." Another commentator, who remarked on her beauty, suggested, in contrast, that impending motherhood drove her to the foundling hospital in Amiens, and this person held Rebul responsible for Emily Loveday's supposed plight. Douglas Loveday's claim that his daughter took refuge in La Maternité in Amiens gave rise to this speculation, and his allegation allowed Ernestine Rebul and her defenders to fault Douglas Loveday and his lawyer for encouraging such innuendo, exposing Emily Loveday to public scandal and destroying her reputation. While Douglas himself resolutely refused to support the suggestion that Emily was pregnant, his defenders used the language of courtship to explain her conversion: "It is not a question of marriage in the affair of Mademoiselle Loveday; but love often does not go with marriage ... here it is a question of love of God, it is true."

Other narratives suggested less visible reasons for Emily Loveday's conversion and flight in alluding vaguely to trysts, secret entanglements, and romantic attachments. The publication of a letter from Sir William C——, in particular, raised the question of whether Douglas Loveday's anger at Emily Loveday's

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66 Gibson, Social History of French Catholicism, 106-07.
67 Dulaure noted in his account of the affair that the eldest of the Loveday sisters was "strikingly beautiful." Dulaure, Histoire de la Restauration, 3: 187.
68 Réfutation du mémoire justificatif de Mlle. Ernestine Rebul, 3.
69 Instruction paternelle du docteur Doxx, ministre de la religion anglicane, 18. In trying to convince her to go back on her decision, he asked, "What rank would you hold in society where you would always be a stranger? You could not go back into the world [from the convent] despite your name's renown" (p. 17). Emily Loveday, however, never indicated her desire to assume the veil.
70 Réfutation du mémoire justificatif de Mlle. Ernestine Rebul, 3-4.
conversion and her hasty departures from her father’s home could be explained by her implicit repudiation of the marriage and future that her father appears to have planned for her. Alternatively, Reboul’s response to Douglas Loveday’s petition, in which she claimed that the Loveday daughters were unhappy and had returned from an outing with their father in a “state of affliction,” suggested troubling motives—possibly mental or physical abuse—for Emily Loveday’s attempt to escape her father.

Charges concerning the spiritual seduction of daughters, their entry into religious communities without parental consent, or their forced sequestration were not confined to the Loveday Affair or to the early years of the Restoration. They grew in number during the course of the nineteenth century, and many of them provide glimpses of poverty, parental discord, and physical violence from which young women fled. These petitions came from rich and poor alike, and although many of these cases found their way into the law courts, a large number of complaints were submitted to the state by plaintiffs who were unwilling or unable to seek formal legal action. While the circumstances and scripts of these cases were each unique, and the petitioners dealt with vastly different political bodies in a century that witnessed the rise and fall of six different political regimes, each case raised anew questions concerning agency, the civil rights of daughters, and the relationship between private lives and public order. They revealed telling contradictions in the ideology and practices of Left and Right alike. While the church was a bulwark of public order, the story of Emily Loveday’s seduction ironically revealed to many a commentator the danger that the church posed for good order in the family and for women’s “natural” role as wives and mothers.

Despite the vote by the Chamber of Deputies to reject Douglas Loveday’s claim, the larger issues of the Loveday Affair remained unresolved. Throughout the nineteenth century, it posed troubling questions for the politicians and legislators and gave rise to fears about the power that the church exercised over the minds of French women. These fears were given tangible form in the image of men deserting church pews in greater and greater numbers while women by and large remained loyal to the Catholic church. By 1820, France also began to witness the dramatic explosion in the number of women entering religious communities. The “feminization of religion” had important implications for politics, property, and family relationships, all of which were at the center of the Loveday scandal. Historians have argued that one of the most important consequences of this change was the perception of French women as a potential political threat to the revolutionary settlement. As they were increasingly subject to the influence of the priests, women were branded as the agents of counterrevolution. Indeed, historians have long argued that this was one of the reasons that women failed to win the vote in France until well after their West European counterparts.

71 A large sample of these petitions can be found in the archives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Paris.
The feminization of Catholicism also had consequences for the principles of paternal authority, patrimony, and the unity of the family. The debates in 1824 and 1825 over the legal reestablishment of female religious communities revealed significant opposition to the potential economic power that such communities might wield and the devastation that they could bring to family wealth. An 1825 law authorizing the establishment of female communities reflected these concerns but did not put an end to them. Throughout the nineteenth century, petitions continued to demand that the legal age of women entering religious communities without parental consent be raised, and legislatures continued to discuss laws that would limit the amount of property women could bring to them. Marriage vows were compared with religious vows.

The emotions that the Loveday Affair stirred in the French public reflected far deeper concerns, however, which were revealed in many of the narrative plots of Emily Loveday's conversion and flight. Postrevolutionary law and public order were predicated on the principle of paternal authority. That principle could be challenged by religion in the Loveday Affair, even though religion was invoked as a justification for paternal authority by the conservative Right. The larger implications of that challenge are perhaps best illustrated in a book by the historian Jules Michelet in 1845, *Le prêtre, la femme, et la famille*, or *The Priest, the Woman, and the Family*, which was reprinted at least eight times by 1875. It consisted of a diatribe against the institution of the confessional for sowing discord in the family and undermining the authority of husbands and fathers. The sexual language of seduction, which was an inherent part of the Loveday Affair, resurfaced in Michelet's prose, in which seduction did not assume the gentlest of forms: he argued that the priest "always has the stick of authority in his dealings with the woman, he beats her, submissive and docile, with spiritual rods. There is no seduction comparable to this." Michelet went on to assert that religion merely served to undermine the natural harmony of the family and to construct an invisible wall between husbands and wives, fathers and daughters. The Loveday Affair also revealed the extent to which religion could be a source of familial strife and conflict that challenged a father's as well as a husband's authority. Although Michelet (and many other anticlerical writers) lambasted the priest, particularly if he were a Jesuit in the confessional, he was far more wary of the mother superior in a religious community consisting of women. In a contest between the Jesuit confessor and the mother superior, Michelet declared himself to be on the side of the confessor: "Priest, monk, Jesuit, I am here, on his side," when faced with the "Jesuitess, a great converted lady, who believes herself born for government with a sword of Bonaparte among a troop of trembling women."

What was the significance of the charge of "rapt de séduction," which had disappeared from France's criminal code, and its transfer from the domain of marriage and the body to that of the spirit during the postrevolutionary period?

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75 Quoted in Zeldin, "Conflict of Moralities," 15.
The charge leveled against Ernestine Reboul by Douglas Loveday represented more than a sensational rhetorical device intended to attract the attention of the French public. The growing importance of religious vocations in the lives of French women during the nineteenth century was just as direct a danger to property, patrimony, and the principle of paternal authority as elopement and clandestine marriage among ruling elites—in whose interests the legal charge of "rapt de séduction" was written—during the Old Regime. Female religious communities potentially threatened family, state, and the principle of paternal authority, on which the postrevolutionary civil order was based. In contrast to Protestant Britain, women in Catholic France increasingly chose religious celibacy as a way of life, creating the possibility of a "separate identity and organization for women in religious life." A separate identity was championed in the private, familial sphere. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, anticlerical men sought or, in some cases, tolerated a religious education that inculcated or reinforced that identity in their daughters. While a separate identity and organization for women within the church certainly did not call existing gender roles into question, it implicitly undermined public order by destabilizing the juridical notion of paternal authority on which that order was based, until new laws governing female religious communities in 1880 and 1901 heralded their legal demise.

77 Natalie Zemon Davis, "City Women and Religious Change," in her Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford, Calif., 1975), 95.