

Chapter 1

The Allure of Aristocracy

“Je me rejouis bien sincerement de la naissance de votre petit Garçon,” wrote Marianna de Lamartine to her cousin Frances Jobert on December 8, 1829.¹ The two Englishwomen, both in their thirties, came from a prominent family. Marianna and Frances were granddaughters of William Birch, a London lawyer, and Sally Holwell, daughter of John Zephaniah Holwell (1711–1798), a survivor and memoirist of the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta. Both women married established Frenchmen: Marianna married the aristocrat, writer, and statesman Alphonse de Lamartine, and Frances wed Louis Edme Jobert, grandson of the Count d’Epineuil. Writing from Lamartine’s native Mâcon, France, Marianna’s letter conveyed the news of her mother-in-law’s death and alluded to Lamartine’s nomination to membership in the prestigious Académie Française. Yet in the opening sentence, after a reference to Alphonse’s mother, Marianna expressed her joy at the birth of her cousin’s first boy, Edme Lionel Holwell Jobert, born seven weeks earlier on October 20, in Caen, France.² The child’s family connections augured well for his future—a future that revolved around the Atlantic.

The Jobert clan’s roots in Caen went no deeper than Lionel’s paternal grandfather, Edme Pierre Jobert. He was born in the Parisian parish of St. Gervais in 1767, the son of a wine merchant and his wife, Catherine Claude Baroche. Pierre’s father, also named Edme Pierre, was a man of some distinction in the region of Burgundy. He represented the department of Tonnerre in the provincial assembly of L’Isle de France in 1787 before departments were reorganized during the French Revolution. The Burgundy hamlet of Epineuil, known for its wine production, lay just north of the town of Tonnerre, and the prestige-minded Monsieur Jobert

had purchased the title of Count d'Epineuil when his namesake son was still a youth. However, Edme Jobert—wine merchant, property owner, and *Seigneur d'Epineuil*—mismanaged his estate in pursuit of a life of luxury. His firstborn son, Edme Pierre, left behind the memory of family failure and moved northwest to the coastal department of Calvados in the region of Normandy, working as a purveyor of military supplies. In the city of Caen, his wife Marie Louise Olympie Turpin bore two sons: Louis Edme Jobert and Edme Charles Ambroise Jobert, born in 1795 and 1797, respectively.³

Louis Jobert did not use his grandfather's title of Count d'Epineuil among his fellow citizens in Caen, who knew him simply as St. Edme Jobert, businessman, civic leader, and lifetime resident. As a young man searching for his niche in life, St. Edme tried selling fire insurance, and even invented a shale pencil with superior qualities to that of existing leads. Then late in 1821, urged by Alexis Haudry, chief engineer of the port of Le Havre, located some ninety-eight kilometers (sixty miles) northeast of Caen—or half that distance as the crow flies—St. Edme Jobert began his career as a quarry master, extracting and shipping local Calvados stone. Less than two years later, St. Edme and his brother Charles teamed with Jacques Breard from March 1823 to April 1824, buying out their associate Breard at the end of the yearlong partnership. The Jobert brothers thenceforth built up their business in the ensuing years. Surveying seventy-four shipping entries in a local newspaper from 1825 to 1829 reveals that stone, predictably, was the company's main export, and plaster and boards the most common import. The firm did business mostly with the interior city of Rouen and at several ports along the northern coast of France. Jobert Frères had become a thriving concern, despite a rumor in 1828 that they sought to abandon their quarry. The brothers squelched that speculation, informing the public that “[n]ever have we had more zeal and more activity, and it is not at the point when we have just renewed all our markets and when we receive positive proof of public confidence that we would abandon an establishment we pride ourselves of having created.” Indeed, in addition to extracting stone in the department of Calvados, Jobert Frères also began operating a quarry in Sainte Honorine la Guillaume in the department of Orne, immediately south of Calvados. The granite supplied by Jobert Frères became such items as pedestals, pillars, sidewalks, steps, and troughs. Last (and perhaps least), they made pencils. Their enterprise opened new markets beyond French borders in Belgium, and eventually across the English Channel in England.⁴

During the early years of the business, St. Edme and his English bride Frances Birch had married in the British embassy in Paris in October 1826,

and returned to Caen to start their family on Rue de la Fontaine in the heart of the city. Daughter Clémence entered the world in 1827, followed by Lionel in 1829, and another son, Edme Pierre Ambroise Jobert, early in 1832. The children grew up knowing their father not only as a quarry master, but also as a firefighter. In November 1830, St. Edme served as a first lieutenant in the local National Guard fire company. Soon rising to second captain, Jobert distinguished himself as a firefighter to such a degree that in 1837 the government awarded him a silver medal “for acts of courage and devotion.” St. Edme became the fire company’s commanding captain in November 1840 after a decade of service. When the Duke of Nemours, son of King Louis Philippe, reviewed the National Guard in Caen in the summer of 1843, it was Jobert who introduced the duke to a young orphaned boy whose father had died the previous year while fighting a blaze in Caen, and who the company of firefighters had adopted. That same summer also brought the highlight of Captain Jobert’s firefighting career: he became a chevalier in the Royal Order of the Legion of Honor.⁵

St. Edme’s wife matched her husband’s energy and ambition in her own way. Intelligent and cultivated, Frances surely served as the source of son Lionel’s English language proficiency. She undertook the daunting translation into English of cousin-in-law Alphonse de Lamartine’s lengthy and celebrated poem *Jocelyn*; her opus appeared the year after the French language publication of the 1836 original. Frances would receive criticism for her approach to the translation that she characterized as “a translation of a novel species, but which I recommend to my countrymen, as being peculiarly adapted, from its very great *literality* to give an idea of the beautiful poem of M. de Lamartine, of which it is a very *faithful* copy.” With evident relish, *Fraser’s Magazine* used the fourth installment of the serial offering “Our Club at Paris” to ridicule mercilessly Madame Jobert’s effort at a literal rendering of *Jocelyn* as, among other things, “arrant nonsense.”⁶ If her talents were not appreciated by some, Frances did not lack for friends in Caen. Among them was the chief engineer of Calvados, Jacques Pierre Guillaume Pattu, with whom St. Edme and Frances became well acquainted. After Monsieur Pattu died in 1839, Frances penned a detailed memorial that only one of his inner circle of friends could have written. “Modest, gentle and affable in his personal relationships,” wrote Madame Jobert in French, “Mr. Pattu was in intimate society more secure and more enjoyable. His great literary and scientific education gave his conversation a special charm to his few friends, who he was able to keep through the difficult phases of our political upheaval.”⁷

Thus, Lionel Jobert spent his youth in a prosperous household headed by accomplished parents. His native city of Caen had a population of just over 44,000 inhabitants in 1841, comparable in size to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1840, yet far smaller than New York City's nearly 313,000 people in that same year and the more than 935,000 Parisians in 1841.⁸ Bisected by the Orne River and surrounded by farmland, the city's built environment boasted centuries-old structures, including the castle erected and occupied in the eleventh century by the Norman Duke William, later known as the Conqueror; the men's and women's abbeys, also built by William (whose remains lie in the men's abbey); the Saint Pierre church; and on the opposite east side of the Orne, the Saint Michel church of Vaucelles. The busy trade conducted on the Orne and Caen's proximity to the sea—approximately fifteen kilometers from *la Manche*, or the English Channel—likely figured in the selection of a maritime career for both Lionel and his brother Pierre.

But the desire to train as a seaman may not have been Lionel's. In July 1844, when Lionel was fourteen years old, his parents sent him to the port city of Brest on the Atlantic Coast, where France had been operating a school for seafaring instruction since the 1830s. In Brest, Lionel began his preparation as a *mousse*, or ship's boy, the entry-level maritime position. However, on February 1, 1845, after six and a half months of training, school officials sent him back to his parents' home in Caen, now on Rue Guillbert. Lionel's *mousse* record gave "did not appear at the office" as the reason for his dismissal; apparently, he had not followed orders.⁹ Why he did not do as he was directed one can only guess, but Lionel may have been resisting a choice that his parents had made for him. The immediate result was that the Jobert home once again rang with the clatter of three teenagers: seventeen-year-old daughter Clémence, thirteen-year-old Pierre, and the returned Lionel, age fifteen.

St. Edme Jobert bore his paternal responsibility into the next—and his most trying—year, 1846. On March 21, laborers were busy working in one of the Jobert brothers' quarries in Allemagne (now Fleury-sur-Orne), a commune adjacent to Caen. The workers had left unsecured wooden rollers on the rim of the quarry overhead. One of the rollers fell down into the quarry, striking a worker in the head and killing him. Already shaken by this tragedy, in May the company lost a legal decision stemming from an earlier contract to construct and maintain sidewalks in Paris. Jobert Frères had eyed the capital's market as the company expanded in the 1830s. In 1837, a group of associates received legal permission to form the *Compagnie des Berlines de Caen* in order to operate a transportation network that would

carry passengers and merchandise between Caen and Paris. St. Edme Jobert served on the Berlines company board in Caen, while brother Charles served on the board in Paris. The Jobert brothers also established their own office in the French capital, and in 1841 reached an agreement with that city to build sidewalks using Normandy stone. The following year, likely for cost effectiveness and to avoid exhausting their quarries in Calvados, Jobert Frères secured authorization from the prefect of the Nièvre department to extract stone from Clamecy, well to the southeast of Paris; the French minister of public works also approved the plan. However, Monsieur Lemoyne, the owner of the land in Clamecy from where the stone was to be extracted, took Jobert Brothers to court, arguing the company had no right to take stone from his private property without his consent. The court ruled in favor of Lemoyne in 1843, annulled the authorizations unduly granted by the Nièvre prefect and the minister of public works (the latter defending his decision, unsuccessfully, to the court), and ordered Jobert Frères to pay costs. In May 1846, in order to avoid potential additional expenditures, Jobert Brothers challenged the authority of the Seine prefecture council to assign costs at their discretion, but the Joberts lost that challenge.¹⁰

The lone bright spot of 1846 for St. Edme Jobert came in midsummer when he was reelected to the Caen municipal council. But that celebration was short-lived, as less than two weeks later the most devastating event of the year befell Monsieur Jobert. Frances, St. Edme's wife of nearly twenty years, died on August 20 at age fifty-two, two months before son Lionel's seventeenth birthday. The elder Jobert now found himself juggling workplace headaches, his town council responsibilities, and providing for his three teenage children on his own. It was in this context that in March 1847, Lionel Jobert felt obliged to sign up as a novice seaman, a position that would last the better part of four years and take him around the world.¹¹

Lionel thus embarked on a circumnavigation of the globe, learning the craft of seamanship and expanding his horizons while maturing from age seventeen to twenty-one, the transition from adolescence to young manhood. The newly constructed sailing corvette *La Bayonnaise* served as the vessel that carried Lionel on this voyage. Commissioned for the French Navy, the warship *La Bayonnaise* bore twenty-eight cannons of thirty caliber, and carried a crew of 240 men. Among Captain Edmond Jurien de la Gravière's principal responsibilities was to transport Alexandre Forth-Rouen to his new position as French charge d'affaires in distant China. The long journey began on April 24, 1847, when *La Bayonnaise* set sail from Cherbourg, a port on Normandy's Cotentin Peninsula that juts out into the English Channel. The

ship reached Falmouth in Cornwall, England four days later, staying another four days in that British port. After a sojourn in Lisbon lasting the better part of three weeks, *La Bayonnaise* sailed down the Atlantic coast of North Africa to Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands. From Santa Cruz on June 14, the corvette began its twenty-three-day Atlantic crossing, reaching Bahia, Brazil on July 7. The voyage resumed sixteen days later, leaving South America and navigating the South Atlantic to Simon's Town, a port near Cape Town, resting there for two and a half weeks before rounding Africa's Cape of Good Hope and venturing across the Indian Ocean.¹²

Lionel Jobert's education abroad was just beginning. Six months and one week removed from his native Normandy, *La Bayonnaise* reached Timor in the Indonesian archipelago. Captain Jurien de la Gravière's description of the island, equal parts travel account and botany lesson, conveys the lure of an exotic realm far from Caen.

A magical spectacle is offered to the sight. The banyan figs, jackfruit with digitated leaves, the cassia with pink clusters and monstrous pods, lining the edge of the forest and mixing various shades, the odd cut of their dark mass of foliage and uniform cut of the lataniers or the cycas [species of palm tree]. The yellow-crested cockatoos inhabit the dense shelter of the tamarind and at the tops gigantic canaries; pigeons frolic amid the wild nutmeg; the lorries, of carmine and azure plumage, gently lull themselves on the long petioles of the palm trees, while around emerging bunches flit numerous swarms of bee-eaters and sunbirds, living jewels that insert their beaks bent to the bottom of the tubular corolla to seek insects and the nectar of flowers.

Ambon, the next island port of call where *La Bayonnaise* spent eight days in November, provided another lesson. "On all the points where our corvette was previously stopped," the captain noted, "in Lisbon, in Tenerife, in Bahia, the Cape of Good Hope, our foreign quality was enough to ensure an eager and sympathetic reception. In Ambon, it was not as strangers, it was as compatriots that one greeted us."¹³ Lionel Jobert would make effective use of his distinction as a foreigner in the future.

La Bayonnaise finally reached Macau in China just after the new year dawned, on January 4, 1848. Macau's Portuguese governor invited the impressive warship into the port's inner harbor on one of its visits early that year, but the vessel could not enter because, laden as it was with its weighty

cannons, it could not pass the bar into the harbor, and the captain thought it imprudent for a warship to remove its guns to lighten the craft even for a short while. Nevertheless, during the next two years, the well-armed *La Bayonnaise* made multiple stops in the harbors at Macau, Hong Kong, and Manila; it called at Singapore and Guam;¹⁴ and everywhere it went in Asian waters the ship advertised French power and global reach. Even for a novice seaman like Lionel Jobert, the various encounters over the course of the long voyage must have reinforced in his mind the widely held continental sense of superiority over the inhabitants of the non-European world.

The Pacific crossing of *La Bayonnaise* began with its departure from Macau for the last time on May 4, 1850. The ship paused in Honolulu for a few days at midyear, leaving Hawaii on July 4 en route to French Polynesia, where it stayed for the first three weeks of August. From there, Captain Jurien de la Gravière set a course for Rio de Janeiro, where he arrived in mid-October. On December 6, 1850, after more than forty-four months away from France, *La Bayonnaise* returned to Cherbourg where the odyssey had begun in the spring of 1847.¹⁵ Now a young man of twenty-one, Lionel Jobert stood five feet, eight-and-a-half inches tall (1.74 meters), with brown hair, brown eyes, and a large mouth. While Lionel grew into adulthood aboard *La Bayonnaise*, life for his family in Caen likewise progressed. Clémence, Lionel's older sister, married in November 1847 at age twenty to Edmond Breuil, a twenty-seven-year-old native of Amiens with a law degree to his credit and a career as a diplomat in front of him. Breuil received the post of second secretary of the French Legation in London the following April, where he and Clémence resided for most of the next three years. Pierre Jobert followed in his older brother Lionel's footsteps, becoming a novice seaman in December of 1848, one month short of his seventeenth birthday. At six feet, two inches (1.88 meters), the chestnut-haired, brown-eyed Pierre already stood half a foot taller than Lionel. Aboard the commercial vessel *Myosotis*, Pierre arrived in New York City in early March 1849, returning to Havre in mid-May. Later that same year, Pierre gained further practical experience on the *Myosotis*, this time sailing to Martinique in the Caribbean.¹⁶

France had changed, too. While Lionel Jobert and *La Bayonnaise* were halfway around the world in Hong Kong at the end of February 1848, France's King Louis Philippe bowed to mounting discord and abdicated the throne. None other than French Foreign Minister Alphonse de Lamartine declared the advent of the Second Republic. As Lamartine strove to fashion a new political regime for France, life continued apace for his cousin-in-law St.

Edme Jobert. In the wake of the demise of Louis Philippe's July Monarchy, Jobert Frères ceased payments they owed related to their Parisian sidewalks legal case, and ultimately liquidated the company. St. Edme, however, operated his own quarry business in Calvados, still employing fifty workers there in 1850 and another 150 workers in the neighboring department of La Manche. Monsieur Jobert continued to be a presence in community affairs in Caen as well. He was reelected to the municipal council's Committee on Public Works in May 1847, and the next year he earned reelection as first captain of the second battalion of the local National Guard firefighting company. In addition, both St. Edme and Charles Jobert numbered among the members of the local masonic lodge. Indeed, one can see the masonic influence in the former's signature—three dots arranged in a triangle to represent the period after “St”—as early as 1826 on his marriage record.¹⁷

The Jobert brothers also became theatrical impresarios. Both men had achieved local recognition in 1827 for their artistic energies that they channeled into managing the Caen entertainment hall (*salle de spectacle*) twenty years later.¹⁸ Nationally known performers such as actress Anaïs Fargueil and singer Sophie Méquillet graced the Caen stage during the Joberts' association with the local theater. Benefit performances were de rigueur, and these two ladies complied with the etiquette of the day. From the May 5, 1847 performance, for instance, the poor were the beneficiaries: “Before the last act of *Grâce de Dieu*, Mademoiselle Fargueil, accompanied by Mr. Jobert, municipal councilman, made, in all parts of the room, a collection that was quite abundant. Everybody paid his tribute. Some people even deposited gold coins in the alms collection.” Two years later, during the March 31, 1849 performance, Sophie Méquillet made the same gesture: “Mlle. Méquillet, accompanied by Mr. Jobert, venerable member of the Scottish lodge, made a collection for the poor.”¹⁹ For St. Edme Jobert, the camaraderie with the theater talent filled the void left by his departed wife, and he gave of himself to them. On behalf of young Mlle. Méquillet, Jobert penned a glowing letter of reference: “Sophie was divinely inspired to make use of her talent to achieve the sustenance of her family. Disdainful of the vain presumptions of the world concerning the ladies of the theater.” A thank-you note from Mlle. Fargueil to M. Jobert, on her departure from Caen in October 1847, conveyed respect and affection in a style lost today: “You will accept, my dear Mr. Jobert, my farewells and the most sincere vows that I will always retain for you the remembrance of your kindness.”²⁰

The theater, in time, also would become an emotional refuge for Lionel Jobert, but after his return to Cherbourg in December 1850, he had only

a brief period to reconnect with family before he set out again for another lengthy stint away from France. The Breuils in 1849 had christened a daughter, Marie, making St. Edme a grandfather and Lionel an uncle. In mid-January 1851, Lionel arrived in London, one week before his young niece, his sister, and her husband departed for the latter's new post as French consul second class in Danzig, then part of Prussia.²¹ Lionel did not see his brother Pierre, for Pierre had left Havre as a mate aboard the civilian trader *Zélie* in September 1850, bound for Trinidad. The ship called at Trinidad in mid-October and then sailed on to Martinique, arriving on November 1. Pierre checked in to a local hospital at St. Pierre a week later. The *Zélie* left Martinique and took on cotton at Mobile, Alabama before returning to Havre at the end of January 1851, without Pierre Jobert. Four days later, on February 4, 1851, Lionel, accompanied by his father, officially registered in Caen as a *matelot*, or mate. Lionel left Havre on the commercial vessel *Mont Béarn* on March 2, destined for St. Thomas in the Caribbean. Perhaps St. Edme Jobert had received word of his youngest son's hospitalization and urged Lionel to sign on for a Caribbean-bound ship in order to check on Pierre, and perhaps Lionel was able to see his brother. What is certain is that Pierre Jobert, age nineteen, died in St. Pierre, Martinique on July 19, 1851, the cause of death unrecorded.²² Pierre's death dealt St. Edme Jobert another severe blow. Six years earlier, St. Edme, his wife Frances, and their three children filled his Caen household. Now, in the summer of 1851, he was alone.

Lionel's father turned to political engagement and a new relationship to help assuage his grief. In the same month that Pierre expired, the French Chamber of Deputies defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to allow Louis Napoleon to continue for a second term as the nation's president. As French citizens debated the direction the country should take, St. Edme and Charles Jobert signed their names to a ringing statement of pro-Republican ideals published in a Caen newspaper revealingly titled *Le Suffrage Universel*. Louis Napoleon, a proponent of universal manhood suffrage, took matters into his own hands on December 2, 1851 by staging a coup d'état and violently repressing dissidents. One year later, he became Napoleon III of the Second French Empire. Louis Napoleon's heavy-handed actions alienated many of his compatriots, including noted author Victor Hugo, who left France for exile in Belgium shortly after the December 1851 coup. In February 1852, in order to get a letter to his wife, Hugo relied on the kindness of a volunteer courier—St. Edme Jobert. Offering his assistance to a well-known political exile constituted more an act of compassion than a

political statement on the part of St. Edme, who did not overtly challenge the continued rule of Louis Napoleon. Indeed, St. Edme's new passion was entirely apolitical. Not two months after his encounter with the celebrated Victor Hugo, St. Edme Jobert, age fifty-six, married again, this time to twenty-year-old Emilie Ernestine Floreska Mathieu.²³

When his father got married in April 1852, Lionel Jobert was nearing the end of his voyage as a mate aboard the *Mont Béarn*. Lionel disembarked from that Marseille-bound ship at Rio de Janeiro and joined the Havre-bound *Ville de Rio*, serving as a lieutenant with the requisite boost in pay from a third-class mate's fifty francs up to eighty francs per month. The *Ville de Rio* returned to Havre at the end of spring. Lionel then received permission to make the short trip to London as a temporary second captain on the *Médicis* at the end of July where, for an undisclosed reason, he introduced himself at the residence of the French consul. Lionel returned to Caen two weeks later, now on leave from maritime service. In October, Lionel Jobert turned twenty-three years of age. He had spent nearly all of the last five and a half years at sea, and found himself at a crossroads. Clémence had her own family in Danzig, doubtless fulfilling the role of a diplomat's wife as she had done in London with frequent social gatherings among the well-placed and influential. St. Edme had a new wife, content to once again have companionship in the comforting surroundings of his native Caen where he had spent his life. What ought Lionel to do with his future? Should he be married to the sea? Should he pursue some other occupation while he was still young? He must have mulled over such questions in his year away from seafaring. With his mother and brother deceased, his sister living abroad with her family, his father focused on his new bride, and all his work experience having been at sea, there was little reason for Lionel to remain in Caen. His decision: at the end of November 1853 he formally declared his return to the maritime profession.²⁴

But his plans were quickly scuttled. While in Cherbourg in mid-February 1854, the local health council declared Lionel unfit for service. Given that there is no extant record of what ailed him, or if his affliction was related to his recently concluded leave from maritime service, one can only speculate as to what the health council had found. One can say, however, that Lionel's convalescence coincided fairly neatly with French participation in the Crimean War. At the end of March 1854, both France and Great Britain declared war on Russia in a conflict sparked by bickering between Catholic and Orthodox Christians over access to holy sites in the Muslim-controlled Ottoman Empire, but that equally involved a geopolitical power struggle

among the warring parties. France's war effort lasted two years; Lionel sat it out. The beginning of the end came when the yearlong siege of the Black Sea port city of Sevastopol finally ended with a Russian defeat in September 1855. By February 1856, hostilities had ceased. In that same month, Lionel got clearance for his remobilization from the health council at Cherbourg, having secured permission in January to take a course in hydrography at Dunkirk in preparation for taking the examination to earn the maritime rank of *capitaine au long cours*, or master mariner.²⁵

Had Lionel read the tea leaves, correctly sensing a pending military involvement by the French, and feigned illness a month before France declared war? What, if anything, is to be made of Lionel recovering his health in the same month as the armistice of February 1856? Did St. Edme, having lost one son, urge his remaining son to try to avoid military service? Based on the evidence in this case, it would do the Joberts a disservice to conclude anything other than Lionel's temporary infirmity was coincidental to the duration of the Crimean War. On May 20, 1856, he indeed took and passed the examination for becoming a *capitaine au long cours* and was elevated to that status one month later.²⁶ Now a master mariner, Lionel would have to match the energy of his father if he sought to enjoy the standard of living to which he had been accustomed as a youth. St. Edme Jobert set an impressive example. In 1856, his and Emilie's household included their two-year-old daughter Ernestine, a domestic servant, a chambermaid, and Emilie's parents, who both were younger than St. Edme. The Joberts gave Lionel another half-sister, Henriette, in October 1856. In his sixties, St. Edme stayed active with his business affairs. He owned one house in Caen and another on the Normandy coast in Beuzeval (now Houlgate). He possessed horses, a carriage, and watercraft—the sloops *Protégé de Dieu* and *La Risle*.²⁷ St. Edme Jobert was a success.

Lionel's first turn as captain came in January 1857. He landed a job at the helm of the *Arche d'Alliance*, a brig built in 1851 in Dunkirk. Drawing a captain's salary of 150 francs per month, Lionel had to pilot the ship and its cargo of diverse merchandise from Dunkirk across the Atlantic to Martinique. The crew consisted of ten men: Captain Jobert; twenty-six-year-old Second Captain Jacques Mercier, who was one year younger than Lionel; a boatswain, Pierre Congueur, the oldest crew member at age fifty; six mates; and a ship's boy. Newly minted Captain Jobert managed to complete the ocean voyage, arriving in St. Pierre on February 25. With his position had come other responsibilities. One mate, sixteen years the captain's senior, received a ten-day suspension of pay for drunkenness and

indiscipline. Dealing with the deaths of crewmen was not uncommon on such voyages, and Lionel handled that obligation as well. While in Martinique, two mates, both in their twenties, died within three weeks of each other. Second Captain Jacques Mercier preceded them in death, expiring on March 7. These deaths had to remind Lionel of his brother's passing in St. Pierre less than six years earlier. Another issue for Captain Jobert was the desertion of the fourteen-year-old ship's boy. To replace him, Lionel took on a sixteen-year-old youth from Martinique named Louis. The boy had been born to enslaved parents—"Big" Jean and Manette—and gained freedom by France's abolition of slavery decree in 1848. The next year he received his new identity—Louis Galiby—in the presence of local officials. In mid-May 1857, a few days after Galiby joined the *Arche d'Alliance*, the ship departed Martinique bound for Havre, where it arrived on July 2.²⁸

The experience of commanding the *Arche d'Alliance* gave Lionel his first full opportunity to exercise authority, and in charge of the vessel he had successfully navigated two Atlantic crossings. Power and position fed his vanity. When called on to witness the death record of Jacques Mercier, Lionel Jobert added "d'E"—d'Epineuil—to his signature.²⁹ That choice revealed that Lionel embraced the idea of being from a noble lineage; that his self-perception and the identity he projected to others contained the notion of a distinction above the average individual; and suggested that he shared the same aspiration to status pursued by his great-grandfather, the first Jobert to be Count d'Epineuil. But that goal cost money. Two days before Christmas 1857, Lionel set out on his next foray across the Atlantic, this time as second captain aboard the South America-bound ship *Le Frédéric* under the captancy of Havre native Isidore Venard. The *Frédéric* reached port at Montevideo on February 12, 1858, staying two weeks before sailing to nearby Buenos Aires. The ship shuttled more cargo across the Río de la Plata back to Montevideo on March 22. After spending the month of April in Uruguay, the *Frédéric* prepared to return to France. Monsieur Maillefer, French charge d'affaires in Montevideo, jotted on the ship's record that Second Captain Jobert owed Captain Venard 143.20 francs.³⁰ Notations of money owed and pay advanced commonly appear on ships' records. For Lionel Jobert, however, this considerable debt was a harbinger of things to come.

The *Frédéric* returned to Havre on July 8, 1858. In the fall, Lionel signed on again as second in command of the *Frédéric* under Captain Venard, departing Havre on October 3, for Port-au-Prince, Haiti.³¹ To regard the receding French coastline while feeling the motion of the *Frédéric* was to contemplate the past while sensing the pull of the present. Lionel

Jobert in many ways had become what his father was not. St. Edme Jobert, the son of French parents, grew up in the era of the “Citizen Emperor” Napoleon Bonaparte and achieved financial success without employing his family’s noble title. Married at age thirty, St. Edme became a family man, a community leader, and a fixture in Caen. By contrast, Lionel’s mother was English, adding a bicultural component to his identity that his father did not share. Lionel fancied the status connoted by the surname d’Epineuil; he had not married; and his chosen career had made Caen a more temporary than permanent home. Seventeen days out of port on the *Frédéric*, Lionel Jobert marked the beginning of his thirtieth year. Was the life of a ship captain worthy of his ambition?