

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 03 eBook

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 03 by Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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CHAPTER XVIII

For the last two or three years the King of Spain had been in very weak health, and in danger of his life several times. He had no children, and no hope of having any. The question, therefore, of the succession to his vast empire began now to agitate every European Court. The King of England (William III.), who since his usurpation had much augmented his credit by the grand alliance he had formed against France, and of which he had been the soul and the chief up to the Peace of Ryswick, undertook to arrange this question in a manner that should prevent war when the King of Spain died. His plan was to give Spain, the Indies, the Low Countries, and the title of King of Spain to the Archduke, second son of the Emperor; Guipuscoa, Naples, Sicily, and Lorraine to France; and the Milanese to M. de Lorraine, as compensation for taking away from him his territory.

The King of England made this proposition first of all to our King; who, tired of war, and anxious for repose, as was natural at his age, made few difficulties, and soon accepted. M. de Lorraine was not in a position to refuse his consent to a change recommended by England, France, and Holland. Thus much being settled, the Emperor was next applied to. But he was not so easy to persuade: he wished to inherit the entire succession, and would not brook the idea of seeing the House of Austria driven from Italy, as it would have been if the King of England's proposal had been carried out. He therefore declared it was altogether unheard of and unnatural to divide a succession under such circumstances, and that he would hear nothing upon the subject until after the death of the King of Spain. The resistance he made caused the whole scheme to come to the ears of the King of Spain, instead of remaining a secret, as was intended.

The King of Spain made a great stir in consequence of what had taken place, as though the project had been formed to strip him, during his lifetime, of his realm. His ambassador in England spoke so insolently that he was ordered to leave the country by William, and retired to Flanders. The Emperor, who did not wish to quarrel with England, intervened at this point, and brought about a reconciliation between the two powers. The Spanish ambassador returned to London.

The Emperor next endeavoured to strengthen his party in Spain. The reigning Queen was his sister-in-law and was all-powerful. Such of the nobility and of the ministers who would not bend before her she caused to be dismissed; and none were favoured by her who were not partisans of the House of Austria. The Emperor had, therefore, a powerful ally at the Court of Madrid to aid him in carrying out his plans; and the King was so much in his favour, that he had made a will bequeathing his succession to the Archduke. Everything therefore seemed to promise success to the Emperor.



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But just at this time, a small party arose in Spain, equally opposed to the Emperor, and to the propositions of the King of England. This party consisted at first of only five persons: namely, Villafranca, Medina-Sidonia, Villagarcias, Villena, and San Estevan, all of them nobles, and well instructed in the affairs of government. Their wish was to prevent the dismemberment of the Spanish kingdom by conferring the whole succession upon the son of the only son of the Queen of France, Maria Theresa, sister of the King of Spain. There were, however, two great obstacles in their path. Maria Theresa, upon her marriage with our King, had solemnly renounced all claim to the Spanish throne, and these renunciations had been repeated at the Peace of the Pyrenees. The other obstacle was the affection the King of Spain bore to the House of Austria,—an affection which naturally would render him opposed to any project by which a rival house would be aggrandised at its expense.

As to the first obstacle, these politicians were of opinion that the renunciations made by Maria Theresa held good only as far as they applied to the object for which they were made. That object was to prevent the crowns of France and Spain from being united upon one head, as might have happened in the person of the Dauphin. But now that the Dauphin had three sons, the second of whom could be called to the throne of Spain, the renunciations of the Queen became of no import. As to the second obstacle, it was only to be removed by great perseverance and exertions; but they determined to leave no stone unturned to achieve their ends.

One of the first resolutions of this little party was to bind one another to secrecy. Their next was to admit into their confidence Cardinal Portocarrero, a determined enemy to the Queen. Then they commenced an attack upon the Queen in the council; and being supported by the popular voice, succeeded in driving out of the country Madame Berlips, a German favourite of hers, who was much hated on account of the undue influence she exerted, and the rapacity she displayed. The next measure was of equal importance. Madrid and its environs groaned under the weight of a regiment of Germans commanded by the Prince of Darmstadt. The council decreed that this regiment should be disbanded, and the Prince thanked for his assistance. These two blows following upon each other so closely, frightened the Queen, isolated her, and put it out of her power to act during the rest of the life of the King.

There was yet one of the preliminary steps to take, without which it was thought that success would not be certain. This was to dismiss the King's Confessor, who had been given to him by the Queen, and who was a zealous Austrian.



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Cardinal Portocarrero was charged with this duty, and he succeeded so well, that two birds were killed with one stone. The Confessor was dismissed, and another was put in his place, who could be relied upon to do and say exactly as he was requested. Thus, the King of Spain was influenced in his conscience, which had over him so much the more power, because he was beginning to look upon the things of this world by the glare of that terrible flambeau that is lighted for the dying. The Confessor and the Cardinal, after a short time, began unceasingly to attack the King upon the subject of the succession. The King, enfeebled by illness, and by a lifetime of weak health, had little power of resistance. Pressed by the many temporal, and affrighted by the many spiritual reasons which were brought forward by the two ecclesiastics, with no friend near whose opinion he could consult, no Austrian at hand to confer with, and no Spaniard who was not opposed to Austria;—the King fell into a profound perplexity, and in this strait, proposed to consult the Pope, as an authority whose decision would be infallible. The Cardinal, who felt persuaded that the Pope was sufficiently enlightened and sufficiently impartial to declare in favour of France, assented to this step; and the King of Spain accordingly wrote a long letter to Rome, feeling much relieved by the course he had adopted.

The Pope replied at once and in the most decided manner. He said he saw clearly that the children of the Dauphin were the next heirs to the Spanish throne, and that the House of Austria had not the smallest right to it. He recommended therefore the King of Spain to render justice to whom justice was due, and to assign the succession of his monarchy to a son of France. This reply, and the letter which had given rise to it, were kept so profoundly secret that they were not known in Spain until after the King's death.

Directly the Pope's answer had been received the King was pressed to make a fresh will, and to destroy that which he had previously made in favour of the Archduke. The new will accordingly was at once drawn up and signed; and the old one burned in the presence, of several witnesses. Matters having arrived at this point, it was thought opportune to admit others to the knowledge of what had taken place. The council of state, consisting of eight members, four of whom were already in the secret, was made acquainted with the movements of the new party; and, after a little hesitation, were gained over.

The King, meantime, was drawing near to his end. A few days after he had signed the new will he was at the last extremity, and in a few days more he died. In his last moments the Queen had been kept from him as much as possible, and was unable in any way to interfere with the plans that had been so deeply laid. As soon as the King was dead the first thing to be done was to open his will. The council of state assembled for that purpose, and all the grandees of

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Spain who were in the capital took part in it, The singularity and the importance of such an event, interesting many millions of men, drew all Madrid to the palace, and the rooms adjoining that in which the council assembled were filled to suffocation. All the foreign ministers besieged the door. Every one sought to be the first to know the choice of the King who had just died, in order to be the first to inform his court. Blecourt, our ambassador, was there with the others, without knowing more than they; and Count d'Harrach, ambassador from the Emperor, who counted upon the will in favour of the Archduke, was there also, with a triumphant look, just opposite the door, and close by it.

At last the door opened, and immediately closed again. The Duc d'Abrantes, a man of much wit and humour, but not to be trifled with, came out. He wished to have the pleasure of announcing upon whom the successorship had fallen, and was surrounded as soon as he appeared. Keeping silence, and turning his eyes on all sides, he fixed them for a moment on Blecourt, then looked in another direction, as if seeking some one else. Blecourt interpreted this action as a bad omen. The Duc d'Abrantes feigning at last to discover the Count d'Harrach, assumed a gratified look, flew to him, embraced him, and said aloud in Spanish, "Sir, it is with much pleasure;" then pausing, as though to embrace him better, he added: "Yes, sir, it is with an extreme joy that for all my life," here the embraces were redoubled as an excuse for a second pause, after which he went on—"and with the greatest contentment that I part from you, and take leave of the very august House of Austria." So saying he clove the crowd, and every one ran after him to know the name of the real heir.

The astonishment and indignation of Count d'Harrach disabled him from speaking, but showed themselves upon his face in all their extent. He remained motionless some moments, and then went away in the greatest confusion at the manner in which he had been duped.

Blecourt, on the other hand, ran home without asking other information, and at once despatched to the King a courier, who fell ill at Bayonne, and was replaced by one named by Harcourt, then at Bayonne getting ready for the occupation of Guipuscoa. The news arrived at Court (Fontainebleau) in the month of November. The King was going out shooting that day; but, upon learning what had taken place, at once countermanded the sport, announced the death of the King of Spain, and at three o'clock held a council of the ministers in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon. This council lasted until past seven o'clock in the evening. Monseigneur, who had been out wolf-hunting, returned in time to attend it. On the next morning, Wednesday, another council was held, and in the evening a third, in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon. However accustomed persons were at the Court to the favour Madame de Maintenon enjoyed there, they were extremely surprised to see two councils assembled in her rooms for the greatest and most important deliberation that had taken place during this long reign, or indeed during many others.



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The King, Monseigneur, the Chancellor, the Duc de Brinvilliers, Torcy, and Madame de Maintenon, were the only persons who deliberated upon this affair. Madame de Maintenon preserved at first a modest silence; but the King forced her to give her opinion after everybody had spoken except herself. The council was divided. Two were for keeping to the treaty that had been signed with King William, two for accepting the will. Monseigneur, drowned as he was in fat and sloth, appeared in quite another character from his usual ones at these councils. To the great surprise of the King and his assistants, when it was his turn to speak he expressed himself with force in favour of accepting the testament. Then, turning towards the King in a respectful but firm manner, he said that he took the liberty of asking for his inheritance, that the monarchy of Spain belonged to the Queen his mother, and consequently to him; that he surrendered it willingly to his second son for the tranquillity of Europe; but that to none other would he yield an inch of ground. These words, spoken with an inflamed countenance, caused excessive surprise, The King listened very attentively, and then said to Madame de Maintenon, "And you, Madame, what do you think upon all this?" She began by affecting modesty; but pressed, and even commanded to speak, she expressed herself with becoming confusion; briefly sang the praises of Monseigneur, whom she feared and liked but little—sentiments perfectly reciprocated—and at last was for accepting the will.

[Illustration: Madame Maintenon In Conferance—Painted by Sir John Gilbert—front1]

The King did not yet declare himself. He said that the affair might well be allowed to sleep for four-and-twenty hours, in order that they might ascertain if the Spaniards approved the choice of their King. He dismissed the council, but ordered it to meet again the next evening at the same hour and place. Next day, several couriers arrived from Spain, and the news they brought left no doubt upon the King's mind as to the wishes of the Spanish nobles and people upon the subject of the will. When therefore the council reassembled in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, the King, after fully discussing the matter, resolved to accept the will.

At the first receipt of the news the King and his ministers had been overwhelmed with a surprise that they could not recover from for several days. When the news was spread abroad, the Court was equally surprised. The foreign ministers passed whole nights deliberating upon the course the King would adopt. Nothing else was spoken of but this matter. The King one evening, to divert himself, asked the princesses their opinion. They replied that he should send M. le Duc d'Anjou (the second son of Monseigneur), into Spain, and that this was the general sentiment. "I am sure," replied the King, "that whatever course I adopt many people will condemn me."



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At last, on Tuesday, the 16th of November, the King publicly declared himself. The Spanish ambassador had received intelligence which proved the eagerness of Spain to welcome the Duc d'Anjou as its King. There seemed to be no doubt of the matter. The King, immediately after getting up, called the ambassador into his cabinet, where M. le Duc d'Anjou had already arrived. Then, pointing to the Duke, he told the ambassador he might salute him as King of Spain. The ambassador threw himself upon his knees after the fashion of his country, and addressed to the Duke a tolerably long compliment in the Spanish language. Immediately afterwards, the King, contrary to all custom, opened the two folding doors of his cabinet, and commanded everybody to enter. It was a very full Court that day. The King, majestically turning his eyes towards the numerous company, and showing them M. le Duc d'Anjou said—"Gentlemen, behold the King of Spain. His birth called him to that crown: the late King also has called him to it by his will; the whole nation wished for him, and has asked me for him eagerly; it is the will of heaven: I have obeyed it with pleasure." And then, turning towards his grandson, he said, "Be a good Spaniard, that is your first duty; but remember that you are a Frenchman born, in order that the union between the two nations may be preserved; it will be the means of rendering both happy, and of preserving the peace of Europe." Pointing afterwards with his finger to the Duc d'Anjou, to indicate him to the ambassador, the King added, "If he follows my counsels you will be a grandee, and soon; he cannot do better than follow your advice."

When the hubbub of the courtiers had subsided, the two other sons of France, brothers of M. d'Anjou, arrived, and all three embraced one another tenderly several times, with tears in their eyes. The ambassador of the Emperor immediately entered, little suspecting what had taken place, and was confounded when he learned the news. The King afterwards went to mass, during which at his right hand was the new King of Spain, who during the rest of his stay in France, was publicly treated in every respect as a sovereign, by the King and all the Court.

The joy of Monseigneur at all this was very great. He seemed beside himself, and continually repeated that no man had ever found himself in a condition to say as he could, "The King my father, and the King my son." If he had known the prophecy which from his birth had been said of him, "A King's son, a King's father, and never a King," which everybody had heard repeated a thousand times, I think he would not have so much rejoiced, however vain may be such prophecies. The King himself was so overcome, that at supper he turned to the Spanish ambassador and said that the whole affair seemed to him like a dream. In public, as I have observed, the new King of Spain was treated in every respect as a sovereign, but in private he was still the Duc d'Anjou. He passed his evenings in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, where he played at all sorts of children's games, scampering to and fro with Messieurs his brothers, with Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, and with the few ladies to whom access was permitted.



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On Friday, the 19th of November, the new King of Spain put on mourning. Two days after, the King did the same. On Monday, the 22nd, letters were received from the Elector of Bavaria, stating that the King of Spain had been proclaimed at Brussels with much rejoicing and illuminations. On Sunday, the 28th, M. Vaudemont, governor of the Milanese, sent word that he had been proclaimed in that territory, and with the same demonstrations of joy as at Brussels.

On Saturday, the 4th of December, the King of Spain set out for his dominions. The King rode with him in his coach as far as Sceaux, surrounded in pomp by many more guards than usual, gendarmes and light horse, all the road covered with coaches and people; and Sceaux, where they arrived a little after midday, full of ladies and courtiers, guarded by two companies of Musketeers. There was a good deal of leave-taking, and all the family was collected alone in the last room of the apartment; but as the doors were left open, the tears they shed so bitterly could be seen. In presenting the King of Spain to the Princes of the blood, the King said—"Behold the Princes of my blood and of yours; the two nations from this time ought to regard themselves as one nation; they ought to have the same interests; therefore I wish these Princes to be attached to you as to me; you cannot have friends more faithful or more certain." All this lasted a good hour and a half. But the time of separation at last came. The King conducted the King of Spain to the end of the apartment, and embraced him several times, holding him a long while in his arms. Monseigneur did the same. The spectacle was extremely touching.

The King returned into the palace for some time, in order to recover himself. Monseigneur got into a caleche alone, and went to Meudon; and the King of Spain, with his brother, M. de Noailles, and a large number of courtiers, set out on his journey. The King gave to his grandson twenty-one purses of a thousand louis each, for pocket-money, and much money besides for presents. Let us leave them on their journey, and admire the Providence which sports with the thoughts of men and disposes of states. What would have said Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V. and Philip II., who so many times attempted to conquer France, and who have been so frequently accused of aspiring to universal monarchy, and Philip IV., even, with all his precautions at the marriage of the King and at the Peace of the Pyrenees,—what would they have said, to see a son of France become King of Spain, by the will and testament of the last of their blood in Spain, and by the universal wish of all the Spaniards— without plot, without intrigue, without a shot being fired on our part, and without the sanction of our King, nay even to his extreme surprise and that of all his ministers, who had only the trouble of making up their minds and of accepting? What great and wise reflections might be made thereon! But they would be out of place in these Memoirs.

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The King of Spain arrived in Madrid on the 19th February. From his first entrance into the country he had everywhere been most warmly welcomed. Acclamations were uttered when he appeared; fetes and bull-fights were given in his honour; the nobles and ladies pressed around him. He had been proclaimed in Madrid some time before, in the midst of demonstrations of joy. Now that he had arrived among his subjects there, that joy burst out anew. There was such a crowd in the streets that sixty people were stifled! All along the line of route were an infinity of coaches filled with ladies richly decked. The streets through which he passed were hung in the Spanish fashion; stands were placed, adorned with fine pictures and a vast number of silver vessels; triumphal arches were built from side to side. It is impossible to conceive a greater or more general demonstration of joy. The Buen-Retiro, where the new King took up his quarters, was filled with the Court and the nobility. The junta and a number of great men received him at the door, and the Cardinal Portocarrero, who was there, threw himself on his knees, and wished to kiss the King's hand. But the King would not permit this; raised the Cardinal, embraced him, and treated him as his father. The Cardinal wept with joy, and could not take his eyes off the King. He was just then in the flower of his first youth—fair like the late King Charles, and the Queen his grandmother; grave, silent, measured, self-contained, formed exactly to live among Spaniards. With all this, very attentive in his demeanour, and paying everybody the attention due to him, having taken lessons from d'Harcourt on the way. Indeed he took off his hat or raised it to nearly everybody, so that the Spaniards spoke on the subject to the Duc d'Harcourt, who replied to them that the King in all essential things would conform himself to usage, but that in others he must be allowed to act according to French politeness. It cannot be imagined how much these trifling external attentions attached all hearts to this Prince.

He was, indeed, completely triumphant in Spain, and the Austrian party as completely routed. The Queen of Spain was sent away from Madrid, and banished to Toledo, where she remained with but a small suite, and still less consideration. Each day the nobles, the citizens, and the people had given fresh proof of their hatred against the Germans and against the Queen. She had been almost entirely abandoned, and was refused the most ordinary necessaries of her state.

CHAPTER XIX



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Shortly after his arrival in Madrid, the new King of Spain began to look about him for a wife, and his marriage with the second daughter of M. de Savoie (younger sister of Madame de Bourgogne) was decided upon as an alliance of much honour and importance to M. de Savoie, and, by binding him to her interest, of much utility to France. An extraordinary ambassador (Homodei, brother of the Cardinal of that name) was sent to Turin to sign the contract of marriage, and bring back the new Queen into Spain. He was also appointed her Ecuyer, and the Princesse des Ursins was selected as her 'Camarera Mayor', a very important office. The Princesse des Ursins seemed just adapted for it. A Spanish lady could not have been relied upon: a lady of our court would not have been fit for the post. The Princesse des Ursins was, as it were, both French and Spanish—French by birth, Spanish by marriage. She had passed the greater part of her life in Rome and Italy, and was a widow without children. I shall have more hereafter to say of this celebrated woman, who so long and so publicly governed the Court and Crown of Spain, and who has made so much stir in the world by her reign and by her fall; at present let me finish with the new Queen of Spain.

She was married, then, at Turin, on the 11th of September, with but little display, the King being represented by procuracy, and set out on the 13th for Nice, where she was to embark on board the Spanish galleys for Barcelona. The King of Spain, meanwhile, after hearing news that he had been proclaimed with much unanimity and rejoicing in Peru and Mexico, left Madrid on the 5th of September, to journey through Aragon and Catalonia to Barcelona to meet his wife. He was much welcomed on his route, above all by Saragossa, which received him magnificently.

The new Queen of Spain, brought by the French galleys to Nice, was so fatigued with the sea when she arrived there, that she determined to finish the rest of the journey by land, through Provence and Languedoc. Her graces, her presence of mind, the aptness and the politeness of her short replies, and her judicious curiosity, remarkable at her age, surprised everybody, and gave great hopes to the Princesse des Ursins.

When within two days' journey of Barcelona, the Queen was met by a messenger, bearing presents and compliments from the King. All her household joined her at the same time, being sent on in advance for that purpose, and her Piedmontese attendants were dismissed. She appeared more affected by this separation than Madame de Bourgogne had been when parting from her attendants. She wept bitterly, and seemed quite lost in the midst of so many new faces, the most familiar of which (that of Madame des Ursins) was quite fresh to her. Upon arriving at Figueras, the King, impatient to see her, went on before on horseback. In this first embarrassment Madame des Ursins, although completely unknown to the King, and but little known to the Queen, was of great service to both.



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Upon arriving at Figueras, the bishop diocesan married them anew, with little ceremony, and soon after they sat down to supper, waited upon by the Princesse des Ursins and the ladies of the palace, half the dishes being French, half Spanish. This mixture displeased the ladies of the palace and several of the Spanish grandees, who plotted with the ladies openly to mark their displeasure; and they did so in a scandalous manner. Under one pretext or another—such as the weight or heat of the dishes— not one of the French dishes arrived upon the table; all were upset; while the Spanish dishes, on the contrary, were served without any accident. The affectation and air of chagrin, to say the least of it, of the ladies of the palace, were too visible not to be perceived. But the King and Queen were wise enough to appear not to notice this; and Madame des Ursins, much astonished, said not a word.

After a long and disagreeable supper, the King and Queen withdrew. Then feelings which had been kept in during supper overflowed. The Queen wept for her Piedmontese women. Like a child, as she was, she thought herself lost in the hands of ladies so insolent; and when it was time to go to bed, she said flatly that she would not go, and that she wished to return home. Everything was done to console her; but the astonishment and embarrassment were great indeed when it was found that all was of no avail. The King had undressed, and was awaiting her. Madame des Ursins was at length obliged to go and tell him the resolution the Queen had taken. He was piqued and annoyed. He had until that time lived with the completest regularity; which had contributed to make him find the Princess more to his taste than he might otherwise have done. He was therefore affected by her 'fantaisie', and by the same reason easily persuaded that she would not keep to it beyond the first night. They did not see each other therefore until the morrow, and after they were dressed. It was lucky that by the Spanish custom no one was permitted to be present when the newly-married pair went to bed; or this affair, which went no further than the young couple, Madame des Ursins, and one or two domestics, might have made a very unpleasant noise.

Madame des Ursins consulted with two of the courtiers, as to the best measures to be adopted with a child who showed so much force and resolution. The night was passed in exhortations and in promises upon what had occurred at the supper; and the Queen consented at last to remain Queen. The Duke of Medina-Sidonia and Count San Estevan were consulted on the morrow. They were of opinion that in his turn the King, in order to mortify her and reduce her to terms, should not visit the Queen on the following night. This opinion was acted upon. The King and Queen did not see each other in private that day. In the evening the Queen was very sorry. Her pride and her little vanity were wounded; perhaps also she had found the King to her taste.



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The ladies and the grand seigneurs who had attended at the supper were lectured for what had occurred there. Excuses, promises, demands for pardon, followed; all was put right; the third day was tranquil, and the third night still more agreeable to the young people. On the fourth day they went to Barcelona, where only fetes and pleasures awaited them. Soon after they set out for Madrid.

At the commencement of the following year (1702), it was resolved, after much debate, at our court, that Philip V. should make a journey to Italy, and on Easter-day he set out. He went to Naples, Leghorn, Milan, and Alessandria. While at the first-named place a conspiracy which had been hatching against his life was discovered, and put down. But other things which previously occurred in Italy ought to have been related before. I must therefore return to them now.

From the moment that Philip V. ascended the Spanish throne it was seen that a war was certain. England maintained for some time an obstinate silence, refusing to acknowledge the new King; the Dutch secretly murmured against him, and the Emperor openly prepared for battle. Italy, it was evident at once, would be the spot on which hostilities would commence, and our King lost no time in taking measures to be ready for events. By land and by sea every preparation was made for the struggle about to take place.

After some time the war, waited for and expected by all Europe, at last broke out, by some Imperialist troops firing upon a handful of men near Albaredo. One Spaniard was killed, and all the rest of the men were taken prisoners. The Imperialists would not give them up until a cartel was arranged. The King, upon hearing this, at once despatched the general officers to Italy. Our troops were to be commanded by Catinat, under M. de Savoie; and the Spanish troops by Vaudemont, who was Governor-General of the Milanese, and to whom, and his dislike to our King, I have before alluded.

Vaudemont at once began to plot to overthrow Catinat, in conjunction with Tesse, who had expected the command, and who was irritated because it had not been given to him. They were in communication with Chamillart, Minister of War, who aided them, as did other friends at Court, to be hereafter named, in carrying out their object. It was all the more easy because they had to do with a man who depended for support solely upon his own talent, and whose virtue and simplicity raised him above all intrigue and scheming; and who, with much ability and intelligence, was severe in command, very laconic, disinterested, and of exceeding pure life.

Prince Eugene commanded the army of the Emperor in Italy. The first two generals under him, in order of rank, were allied with Vaudemont: one, in fact, was his only son; the other was the son of a friend of his. The least reflection ought to have opened all eyes to the conduct of Vaudemont, and to have discerned it to be more than suspicious. Catinat soon found it out. He could plan nothing against the enemy that

they did not learn immediately; and he never attempted any movement without finding himself opposed by a force more than double his own; so gross was this treachery.

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Catinat often complained of this: he sent word of it to the Court, but without daring to draw any conclusion from what happened. Nobody sustained him at Court, for Vaudemont had everybody in his favour. He captured our general officers by his politeness, his magnificence, and, above all, by presenting them with abundant supplies. All the useful, and the agreeable, came from his side; all the dryness, all the exactitude, came from Catinat. It need not be asked which of the two had all hearts. In fine, Tesse and Vaudemont carried out their schemes so well that Catinat could do nothing.

While these schemes were going on, the Imperialists were enabled to gain time, to strengthen themselves, to cross the rivers without obstacle, to, approach us; and, acquainted with everything as they were, to attack a portion of our army on the 9th July, at Capri, with five regiments of cavalry and dragoons. Prince Eugene led this attack without his coming being in the least degree suspected, and fell suddenly upon our troops. Tesse, who was in the immediate neighbourhood with some dragoons, advanced rapidly upon hearing this, but only with a few dragoons. A long resistance was made, but at last retreat became necessary. It was accomplished in excellent order, and without disturbance from the enemy; but our loss was very great, many officers of rank being among the dead.

Such was our first exploit in Italy; all the fault of which was attributed to Catinat. Tesse and Vaudemont did everything in their power to secure his disgrace. The King, indeed, thus prejudiced against Catinat, determined to take from him the command, and appointed the Marechal de Villeroy as his successor. The surprise of everybody at this was very great, for no one expected that the Marechal de Villeroy would repair the fault of Catinat. On the evening of his appointment, this general was exposed in a very straightforward and public manner by M. de Duras. He did not like the Marechal de Villeroy; and, while everybody else was applauding, took the Marechal by the arm, and said, "Monsieur le Marechal, everybody is paying you compliments upon your departure to Italy, I keep mine until you return;" and then, bursting out laughing, he looked round upon the company. Villeroy remained confounded, without offering a word. Everybody smiled and looked down. The King took no notice.

Catinat, when the command was taken out of his hands by the Marechal de Villeroy, made himself admired on every side by the moderation and tranquillity with which he conducted himself. If Vaudemont was satisfied with the success of his schemes, it was far otherwise with Tesse, who had merely intrigued against Catinat for the purpose of obtaining the command of the army. He did all in his power to ingratiate himself into the favour of the Marechal de Villeroy; but the Marechal received these advances very coldly. Tesse's schemes against Catinat were beginning



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to be scented out; he was accused of having wished the Imperialists to succeed at Capri, and of indirectly aiding them by keeping back his troops; his tirades against Catinat, too, made him suspected. The Marechal de Villeroy would have nothing to do with him. His conduct was contrasted with that of Catinat, who, free after his fall to retire from the army, continued to remain there, with rare modesty, interfering in nothing.

The first campaign passed without notable incident, except an unsuccessful attack upon Chiari, by our troops on the 1st of September. M. de Savoie led the attack; but was so firmly met by Prince Eugene, who was in an excellent position for defence, that he could do nothing, and in the end was compelled to retire disgracefully. We lost five or six colonels and many men, and had a large number wounded. This action much astonished our army, and encouraged that of the enemy, who did almost as they wished during the rest of the campaign.

Towards the end of this campaign, the grand airs of familiarity which the Marechal de Villeroy gave himself with M. de Savoie drew upon him a cruel rebuke, not to say an affront. M. de Savoie being in the midst of all the generals and of the flower of the army, opened, while talking, his snuff-box, and was about to take a pinch of snuff, when M. de Villeroy, who was standing near, stretched out his hand and put it into the box without saying a word. M. de Savoie flushed up, and instantly threw all the snuff upon the ground, gave the box to one of his attendants, and told him to fill it again. The Marechal, not knowing what to do with himself, swallowed his shame without daring to say a word, M. de Savoie continuing the conversation that he had not interrupted, except to ask for the fresh snuff.

The campaign passed away, our troops always retreating, the Imperialists always gaining ground; they continually increasing in numbers; we diminishing little by little every day. The Marechal de Villeroy and Prince Eugene each took up his winter quarters and crossed the frontier: M. de Savoie returned to Turin, and Catinat went to Paris. The King received him well, but spoke of nothing but unimportant matters, and gave him no private audience, nor did he ask for one.

Prince Eugene, who was more knowing than the Marechal de Villeroy, had obliged him to winter in the midst of the Milanese, and kept him closely pressed there, while his own troops enjoyed perfect liberty, by means of which they much disturbed ours. In this advantageous situation, Prince Eugene conceived the design of surprising the centre of our quarters, and by that blow to make himself master of our positions, and afterwards of Milan, and other places of the country, all in very bad order; thus finishing effectively and suddenly his conquest.



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Cremona was our centre, and it was defended by a strong garrison. Prince Eugene ascertained that there was at Cremona an ancient aqueduct which extended far out into the country, and which started from the town in the vault of a house occupied by a priest. He also learnt that this aqueduct had been recently cleaned, but that it carried very little water, and that in former times the town had been surprised by means of it. He caused the entrance of the aqueduct, in the country, to be reconnoitred, he gained over the priest in whose vault it ended, and who lived close to one of the gates of the city, which was walled up and but little guarded; he sent into Cremona as many chosen soldiers as he could, disguised as priests or peasants, and these hiding themselves in the house of the friendly priest, obtained secretly as many axes as they could. Then the Prince despatched five hundred picked men and officers to march by the aqueduct to the priest's vault; he put Thomas de Vaudemont, son of the Governor General of the Milanese, at the head of a large detachment of troops, with orders to occupy a redoubt that defended the Po, and to come by the bridge to his assistance, when the struggle commenced in the town; and he charged the soldiers secreted in the priest's house to break down the walled-up gate, so as to admit the troops whom he would lead there.

Everything, thus concerted with exactness, was executed with precision, and with all possible secrecy and success. It was on the 1st of February, 1702, at break of day, that the surprise was attempted. The Marechal de Villeroy had only arrived in the town on the previous night. The first person who got scent of what was going forward was the cook of the Lieutenant-General Crenan, who going out in the early morning to buy provisions, saw the streets full of soldiers, whose uniforms were unknown to him. He ran back and awakened his master. Neither he nor his valets would believe what the cook said, but nevertheless Crenan hurriedly dressed himself, went out, and was only too soon convinced that it was true.

At the same time, by a piece of good luck, which proved the saving of Cremona, a regiment under the command of D'Entragues, drew up in battle array in one of the public places. D'Entragues was a bold and skilful soldier, with a great desire to distinguish himself. He wished to review this regiment, and had commenced business before the dawn. While the light was still uncertain and feeble, and his battalions were under arms, he indistinctly perceived infantry troops forming at the end of the street, in front of him. He knew by the order's given on the previous evening that no other review was to take place except his own. He immediately feared, therefore, some surprise, marched at once to these troops, whom he found to be Imperialists, charged them, overthrew them, sustained the shock of the fresh troops which arrived, and kept up a defence so obstinate, that he gave time to all the town to awake, and to the majority of the troops to take up arms. Without him, all would have been slaughtered as they slept.



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Just at dawn the Marechal de Villeroy, already up and dressed, was writing in his chamber. He heard a noise, called for a horse, and followed by a single aide-de-camp and a page, threaded his way through the streets to the grand place, which is always the rendezvous in case of alarm. At the turning of one of the streets he fell into the midst of an Imperialist corps de garde, who surrounded him and arrested him. Feeling that it was impossible to defend himself, the Marechal de Villeroy whispered his name to the officer, and promised him ten thousand pistoles, a regiment, and the grandest recompenses from the King, to be allowed to escape. The officer was, however, above all bribes, said he had not served the Emperor so long in order to end by betraying him, and conducted the Marechal de Villeroy to Prince Eugene, who did not receive him so well as he himself would have been received, under similar circumstances, by the Marechal. While in the suite of Prince Eugene, Villeroy saw Crenan led in prisoner, and wounded to the death, and exclaimed that he should like to be in his place. A moment after they were both sent out of the town, and passed the day, guarded, in the coach of Prince Eugene.

Revel, become commander-in-chief by the capture of the Marechal de Villeroy, tried to rally the troops. There was a fight in every street; the troops dispersed about, some in detachments, several scarcely armed; some only in their shirts fought with the greatest bravery. They were driven at last to the ramparts, where they had time to look about them, to rally and form themselves. If the enemy had not allowed our troops time to gain the ramparts, or if they had driven them beyond this position, when they reached it, the town could never have held out. But the imperialists kept themselves entirely towards the centre of the town, and made no effort to fall upon our men, or to drive them from the ramparts.

Praslin, who had the command of our cavalry, put himself at the head of some Irish battalions which under him did wonders. Although continually occupied in defending and attacking, Praslin conceived the idea that the safety of Cremona depended upon the destruction of the bridge of the Po, so that the Imperialists could not receive reinforcements from that point. He repeated this so many times, that Revel was informed of it, and ordered Praslin to do what he thought most advisable in the matter. Thereupon, Praslin instantly commanded the bridge to be broken down: There was not a moment to lose. Thomas de Vaudemont was already approaching the bridge at the head of his troops. But the bridge, nevertheless, was destroyed before his eyes, and with all his musketeers he was not able to prevent it.



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It was now three o'clock in the afternoon. Prince Eugene was at the Hotel de Ville, swearing in the magistrates. Leaving that place, and finding that his troops were giving way, he ascended the cathedral steeple to see what was passing in different parts of the town, and to discover why the troops of Thomas de Vaudemont did not arrive. He had scarcely reached the top of the steeple, when he saw his detachments on the banks of the Po, and the bridge broken, thus rendering their assistance useless. He was not more satisfied with what he discovered in every other direction. Furious at seeing his enterprise in such bad case, after having been so nearly successful, he descended, tearing his hair and yelling. From that time, although superior in force, he thought of nothing but retreat.

Revel, who saw that his troops were overwhelmed by hunger, fatigue, and wounds, for since the break of day they had had no repose or leisure, thought on his side of withdrawing his men into the castle of Cremona, in order, at least, to defend himself under cover, and to obtain a capitulation. So that the two opposing chiefs each thought at one and the same time of retreat.

Towards the evening therefore the combat slackened on both sides, until our troops made a last effort to drive the enemy from one of the gates of the town; so as to have that gate free and open during the night to let in assistance. The Irish seconded so well this attack, that it was at length successful. A tolerably long calm succeeded this last struggle. Revel, nevertheless, thought of withdrawing his troops to the castle, when Mahony, an Irish officer who had fought bravely as a lion all day, proposed to go and see what was passing all around. It was already growing dark; the reconnoiterers profited by this. They saw that everything was tranquil, and understood that the enemy had retreated. This grand news was carried to Revel, who, with many around him, was a long time in believing it. Persuaded at last, he left everything as it was then, until broad daylight, when he found that the enemy had gone, and that the streets and public places were filled with the wounded, the dying, and the dead. He made arrangements for everything, and dispatched Mahony to the King.

Prince Eugene retreated all that night with the detachment he had led, and made the Marechal de Villeroy, disarmed and badly mounted, follow him, very indecently. The Marechal was afterwards sent to Gratz in Styria. Crenan died in the coach of the Marechal de Villeroy. D'Entragues, to whose valour the safety of Cremona was owing, did not survive this glorious day. Our loss was great; that of the enemy greater.



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The news of this, the most surprising event that has been heard of in recent ages, was brought to the King at Marly on the 9th of February, 1702, by Mahony. Soon after it arrived I heard of it, and at once hastened to the chateau, where I found a great buzzing and several groups of people talking. Mahony was closeted a long time with the King. At the end of an hour the King came out of his cabinet, and spoke strongly in praise of what had occurred. He took pleasure in dwelling at great length upon Mahony, and declared that he had never heard anybody give such a clear and good account of an occurrence as he. The King kindly added that he should bestow a thousand francs a year upon Mahony, and a brevet of Colonel.

In the evening M. le Prince de Conti told me that the King had decorated Revel, and made Praslin Lieutenant-General. As the latter was one of my particular friends, this intelligence gave me much joy. I asked again to be more sure of the news. The other principal officers were advanced in proportion to their grades, and many received pensions.

As for the Marechal de Villeroy he was treated as those who excite envy and then become unfortunate are always treated. The King, however, openly took his part; and in truth it was no fault of the Marechal, who had arrived at Cremona the day before the surprise, that he was taken prisoner directly he set his foot in the street.—How could he know of the aqueduct, the barred-up gate, and the concealed soldiers? Nevertheless, his friends were plunged into the greatest grief, and his wife, who had not been duped by the eclat which accompanied her husband upon his departure for Italy, but who feared for the result, was completely overwhelmed, and for a long time could not be prevailed upon to see anybody.

M. de Vendome was appointed successor to M. de Villeroy, in command of the army in Italy.

CHAPTER XX

But it is time now for me to go back to other matters, and to start again from the commencement of 1701, from which I have been led by reciting, in a continuous story, the particulars of our first campaign in Italy.

Barbezieux had viewed with discontent the elevation of Chamillart. His pride and presumption rose in arms against it; but as there was no remedy he gave himself up to debauch, to dissipate his annoyance. He had built between Versailles and Vaucresson, at the end of the park of Saint Cloud, a house in the open fields, called l'Etang, which though in the dismalest position in the world had cost him millions. He went there to feast and riot with his friends; and committing excesses above his strength, was seized with a fever, and died in a few days, looking death steadily in the face. He was told of his approaching end by the Archbishop of Rheims; for he would not believe Fagon.



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He was thirty-three years of age, with a striking and expressive countenance, and much wit and aptitude for labour. He was remarkable for grace, fine manners, and winning ways; but his pride and ambition were excessive, and when his fits of ill-temper came, nothing could repress them. Resistance always excited and irritated him. He had accustomed the King—whenever he had drunk too much, or when a party of pleasure was toward—to put off work to another time. It was a great question, whether the State gained or lost most by his death?

As soon as he was dead, Saint-Pouange went to Marly to tell the news to the King, who was so prepared for it that two hours before, starting from Versailles, he had left La Vrilliere behind to put the seals everywhere. Fagon, who had condemned him at once, had never loved him or his father, and was accused of over-bleeding him on purpose. At any rate he allowed, at one of his last visits, expressions of joy to escape him because recovery was impossible. Barbezieux used to annoy people very much by answering aloud when they spoke to him in whispers, and by keeping visitors waiting whilst he was playing with his dogs or some base parasite.

Many people, especially divers beautiful ladies, lost much by his death. Some of the latter looked very disconsolate in the salon at Marly; but when they had gone to table, and the cake had been cut (it was Twelfth Night), the King manifested a joy which seemed to command imitation. He was not content with exclaiming “The Queen drinks,” but as in a common wine-shop, he clattered his spoon and fork on his plate, and made others do so likewise, which caused a strange din, that lasted at intervals all through the supper. The snivellers made more noise than the others, and uttered louder screams of laughter; and the nearest relatives and best friends were still more riotous. On the morrow all signs of grief had disappeared.

Chamillart was appointed in the place of Barbezieux, as Secretary of State; and wanted to give up the Finance, but the King, remembering the disputes of Louvois and Colbert, insisted on his occupying both posts. Chamillart was a very worthy man, with clean hands and the best intentions; polite, patient, obliging, a good friend, and a moderate enemy, loving his country, but his King better; and on very good terms with him and Madame de Maintenon. His mind was limited and; like all persons of little wit and knowledge, he was obstinate and pig-headed— smiling affectedly with a gentle compassion on whoever opposed reasons to his, but utterly incapable of understanding them—consequently a dupe in friendship, in business, in everything; governed by all who could manage to win his admiration, or on very slight grounds could claim his affection. His capacity was small, and yet he believed he knew everything, which was the more pitiable, as all this came to him with his places, and arose more from stupidity than presumption—not



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at all from vanity, of which he was divested. The most remarkable thing is that the chief origin of the King's tender regard for him was this very incapacity. He used to confess it to the King at every opportunity; and the King took pleasure in directing and instructing him, so that he was interested in his successes as if they had been his own, and always excused him. The world and the Court excused him also, charmed by the facility with which he received people, the pleasure he felt in granting requests and rendering services, the gentleness and regretfulness of his refusals, and his indefatigable patience as a listener. His memory was so great that he remembered all matters submitted to him, which gave pleasure to people who were afraid of being forgotten. He wrote excellently; and his clear, flowing, and precise style was extremely pleasing to the King and Madame de Maintenon, who were never weary of praising him, encouraging him, and congratulating themselves for having placed upon such weak shoulders two burdens, each of which was sufficient to overwhelm the most sturdy.

Rose, secretary in the King's cabinet, died, aged about eighty-six, at the commencement of the year 1701. For nearly fifty years he had held the office of the "pen," as it is called. To have the "pen," is to be a public forger, and to do what would cost anybody else his life. This office consists in imitating so exactly the handwriting of the King; that the real cannot be distinguished from the counterfeit. In this manner are written all the letters that the King ought or wishes to write with his own hand, but which, nevertheless, he will not take the trouble to write. Sovereigns and people of high rank, even generals and others of importance, employ a secretary of this kind. It is not possible to make a great King speak with more dignity than did Rose; nor with more fitness to each person, and upon every subject. The King signed all the letters Rose wrote, and the characters were so alike it was impossible to find the smallest difference. Many important things had passed through the hands of Rose: He was extremely faithful and secret, and the King put entire trust in him.

Rose was artful, scheming, adroit, and dangerous. There are stories without number of him; and I will relate one or two solely because they characterise him, and those to whom they also relate.

He had, near Chantilly, a nice house and grounds that he much liked, and that he often visited. This little property bordered the estate of M. le Prince, who, not liking so close a neighbour, wished to get rid of him. M. le Prince endeavoured to induce Rose to give up his house and grounds, but all to no effect; and at last tried to annoy him in various ways into acquiescence. Among other of his tricks, he put about four hundred foxes, old and young, into Rose's park. It may be imagined what disorder this company made there, and the surprise of Rose and his servants at an inexhaustible ant-hill of foxes come to one night!



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The worthy fellow, who was anger and vehemence itself, knew only too well who had treated him thus scurvily, and straightway went to the King, requesting to be allowed to ask him rather a rough question. The King, quite accustomed to him and to his jokes, —for he was pleasant and very witty, demanded what was the matter.

“What is the matter, Sire?” replied Rose, with a face all flushed. “Why, I beg you will tell me if we have two Kings in France?”

“What do you mean?” said the King, surprised, and flushing in his turn.

“What I mean, Sire, is, that if M. le Prince is King like you, folks must weep and lower their heads before that tyrant. If he is only Prince of the blood, I ask justice from you, Sire, for you owe it to all your subjects, and you ought not to suffer them to be the prey of M. le Prince,” said Rose; and he related everything that had taken place, concluding with the adventure of the foxes.

The King promised that he would speak to M. le Prince in a manner to insure the future repose of Rose; and, indeed, he ordered all the foxes to be removed from the worthy man’s park, all the damages they had made to be repaired, and all the expenses incurred to be paid by M. le Prince. M. le Prince was too good a courtier to fail in obeying this order, and never afterwards troubled Rose in the least thing; but, on the contrary, made all the advances towards a reconciliation. Rose was obliged to receive them, but held himself aloof, nevertheless, and continually let slip some raillery against M. le Prince. I and fifty others were one day witnesses of this.

M. le Prince was accustomed to pay his court to the ministers as they stood waiting to attend the council in the King’s chamber; and although he had nothing to say, spoke to them with the mien of a client obliged to fawn. One morning, when there was a large assembly of the Court in this chamber, and M. le Prince had been cajoling the ministers with much suppleness and flattery, Secretary Rose, who saw what had been going on, went up to him on a sudden, and said aloud, putting one finger under his closed eye, as was sometimes his habit, “Sir, I have seen your scheming here with all these gentlemen, and for several days; it is not for nothing. I have known the Court and mankind many years; and am not to be imposed upon: I see clearly where matters point:” and this with turns and inflections of voice which thoroughly embarrassed M. le Prince, who defended himself as he could. Every one crowded to hear what was going on; and at last Rose, taking M. le Prince respectfully by his arm, said, with a cunning and meaning smile; “Is it not that you wish to be made first Prince of the blood royal?” Then he turned on his heel, and slipped off. The Prince was stupefied; and all present tried in vain to restrain their laughter.



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Rose had never pardoned M. de Duras an ill turn the latter had served him. During one of the Court journeys, the carriage in which Rose was riding broke down. He took a horse; but, not being a good equestrian, was very soon pitched into a hole full of mud. While there M. de Duras passed, and Rose from the midst of the mire cried for help. But M. de Duras, instead of giving assistance, looked from his coach-window, burst out laughing, and cried out: "What a luxurious horse thus to roll upon Roses!"—and with this witticism passed gently on through the mud. The next comer, the Duc de Coislin, was more charitable; he picked up the worthy man, who was so furious, so carried away by anger, that it was some time before he could say who he was. But the worst was to come; for M. de Duras, who feared nobody, and whose tongue was accustomed to wag as freely as that of Rose, told the story to the King and to all the Court, who much laughed at it. This outraged Rose to such a point, that he never afterwards approached M. de Duras, and only spoke of him in fury. Whenever he hazarded some joke upon M. de Duras, the King began to laugh, and reminded him of the mud-ducking he had received.

Towards the end of his life, Rose married his granddaughter, who was to be his heiress, to Portail, since Chief President of the Parliament. The marriage was not a happy one; the young spouse despised her husband; and said that instead of entering into a good house, she had remained at the portal. At last her husband and his father complained to Rose. He paid no attention at first; but, tired out at last, said if his granddaughter persisted in her bad conduct, he would disinherit her. There were no complaints after this.

Rose was a little man, neither fat nor lean, with a tolerably handsome face, keen expression, piercing eyes sparkling with cleverness; a little cloak, a satin skull-cap over his grey hairs, a smooth collar, almost like an Abbe's, and his pocket-handkerchief always between his coat and his vest. He used to say that it was nearer his nose there. He had taken me into his friendship. He laughed very freely at the foreign princes; and always called the Dukes with whom he was familiar, "Your Ducal Highness," in ridicule of the sham Highnesses. He was extremely neat and brisk, and full of sense to the last; he was a sort of personage.

CHAPTER XXI

On Saturday, the 19th of March, in the evening, the King was about to undress himself, when he heard cries in his chamber, which was full of courtiers; everybody calling for Fagon and Felix. Monseigneur had been taken very ill. He had passed the day at Meudon, where he had eaten only a collation; at the King's supper he had made amends by gorging himself nigh to bursting with fish. He was a great eater, like the King, and like the Queens his mother and grandmother. He had not appeared after supper,



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but had just gone down to his own room from the King's cabinet, and was about to undress himself, when all at once he lost consciousness. His valets, frightened out of their wits, and some courtiers who were near, ran to the King's chambers, to his chief physician and his chief surgeon with the hubbub which I have mentioned above. The King, all unbuttoned, started to his feet immediately, and descended by a little dark, narrow, and steep staircase towards the chamber of Monseigneur. Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne arrived at the same time, and in an instant the chamber, which was vast, was filled.

They found Monseigneur half naked: his servants endeavouring to make him walk erect, and dragging rather than leading him about. He did not know the King, who spoke to him, nor anybody else; and defended himself as long as he could against Felix, who, in this pressing necessity, hazarded bleeding him, and succeeded. Consciousness returned. Monseigneur asked for a confessor; the King had already sent for, the cure. Many emetics were given to him: but two hours passed before they operated. At half-past two in the morning, no further danger appearing, the King, who had shed tears, went to bed, leaving orders that he was to be awakened if any fresh accident happened. At five o'clock, however, all the effect having passed, the doctors went away, and made everybody leave the sick chamber. During the night all Paris hastened hither. Monseigneur was compelled to keep his room for eight or ten days; and took care in future not to gorge himself so much with food. Had this accident happened a quarter of an hour later, the chief valet de chambre, who slept in his room, would have found him dead in his bed.

Paris loved Monseigneur, perhaps because he often went to the opera. The fish-fags of the Halles thought it would be proper to exhibit their affection, and deputed four stout gossips to wait upon him: they were admitted. One of them took him round the neck and kissed him on both cheeks; the others kissed his hand. They were all very well received. Bontems showed them over the apartments, and treated them to a dinner. Monseigneur gave them some money, and the King did so also. They determined not to remain in debt, and had a fine Te Deum sung at Saint Eustache, and then feasted.

For some time past Monsieur had been sorely grieved that his son, M. le Duc de Chartres, had not been appointed to the command of an army. When M. de Chartres married, the King, who had converted his nephew by force into a son-in-law, promised him all kinds of favours; but except those which were written down in black and white had not given him any. M. de Chartres, annoyed at this, and at the manner in which the illegitimate children were promoted over his head, had given himself up to all kinds of youthful follies and excesses. The King was surprised to find Monsieur agree with his son's ambition; but gave a flat refusal when overtures were made to



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him on the subject. All hope of rising to a high command was thus forbidden to the Duc de Chartres; so that Madame had a fine excuse for sneering at the weakness which had been shown by Monsieur, who, on his part, had long before repented of it. He winked, therefore, at all the escapades performed or threatened by his son, and said nothing, not being sorry that the King should become uneasy, which was soon the case.

The King at last spoke to Monsieur; and being coldly received, reproached him for not knowing how to exercise authority over his son. Upon this Monsieur fired up; and, quite as much from foregone decision as from anger, in his turn asked the King what was to be done with a son at such an age: who was sick of treading the galleries of Versailles and the pavement of the Court; of being married as he was, and of remaining, as it were, naked, whilst his brothers-in-law were clothed in dignities, governments, establishments, and offices,—against all policy and all example. His son, he said, was worse off than any one in the King's service, for all others could earn distinction; added, that idleness was the mother of all vice, and that it gave him much pain to see his only son abandon himself to debauchery and bad company; but that it would be cruel to blame a young man, forced as it were into these follies, and to say nothing against him by whom he was thus forced.

Who was astonished to hear this straightforward language? Why, the King. Monsieur had never let out to within a thousand leagues of this tone, which was only the more annoying because supported by unanswerable reasons that did not convince. Mastering his embarrassments however, the King answered as a brother rather than as a sovereign; endeavouring, by gentle words, to calm the excitement of Monsieur. But Monsieur was stung to the quick by the King's neglect of M. de Chartres, and would not be pacified; yet the real subject of the annoyance was never once alluded to, whilst the one kept it steadily in his mind; and the other was determined not to yield. The conversation lasted very long, and was pushed very far; Monsieur throughout taking the high tone, the King very gentle. They separated in this manner,—Monsieur frowning, but not daring to burst out; the King annoyed, but not wishing to estrange his brother, much less to let their squabble be known.

As Monsieur passed most of his summers at Saint Cloud, the separation which this occasioned put them at their ease whilst waiting for a reconciliation; and Monsieur came less often than before, but when he did filled all their private interviews with bitter talk. In public little or nothing appeared, except that familiar people remarked politeness and attention on the King's part, coldness on that of Monsieur—moods not common to either. Nevertheless, being advised not to push matters too far, he read a lecture to his son, and made him change his conduct by degrees. But Monsieur still remained irritated against the King; and this completely upset him, accustomed as he always had been to live on the best of terms with his brother, and to be treated by him in every

respect as such—except that the King would not allow Monsieur to become a great personage.



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Ordinarily, whenever Monsieur or Madame were unwell, even if their little finger ached, the King visited them at once; and continued his visits if the sickness lasted. But now, Madame had been laid up for six weeks with a tertian fever, for which she would do nothing, because she treated herself in her German fashion, and despised physic and doctors. The King, who, besides the affair of M. le Duc de Chartres, was secretly angered with her, as will presently be seen, had not been to see her, although Monsieur had urged him to do so during those flying visits which he made to Versailles without sleeping there. This was taken by Monsieur, who was ignorant of the private cause of indignation alluded to, for a public mark of extreme disrespect; and being proud and sensitive he was piqued thereby to the last degree.

He had other mental troubles to torment him. For some time past he had had a confessor who, although a Jesuit, kept as tight a hand over him as he could. He was a gentleman of good birth, and of Brittany, by name le Pere du Trevoux. He forbade Monsieur not only certain strange pleasures, but many which he thought he could innocently indulge in as a penance for his past life. He often told him that he had no mind to be damned on his account; and that if he was thought too harsh let another confessor be appointed. He also told him to take great care of himself, as he was old, worn out with debauchery, fat, short-necked, and, according to all appearance, likely to die soon of apoplexy. These were terrible words to a prince the most voluptuous and the most attached to life that had been seen for a long time; who had always passed his days in the most luxurious idleness and who was the most incapable by nature of all serious application, of all serious reading, and of all self-examination. He was afraid of the devil; and he remembered that his former confessor had resigned for similar reasons as this new one was actuated by. He was forced now, therefore, to look a little into himself, and to live in a manner that, for him, might be considered rigid. From time to time he said many prayers; he obeyed his confessor, and rendered an account to him of the conduct he had prescribed in respect to play and many other things, and patiently suffered his confessor's long discourses. He became sad, dejected, and spoke less than usual—that is to say, only about as much as three or four women—so that everybody soon saw this great change. It would have been strange if all these troubles together had not made a great revolution in a man like Monsieur, full-bodied, and a great eater, not only at meals, but all the day.



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On Thursday, the 8th of June, he went from Saint Cloud to dine with the King at Marly; and, as was his custom, entered the cabinet as soon as the Council of State went out. He found the King angry with M. de Chartres for neglecting his wife, and allowing her to seek consolation for this neglect in the society of others. M. de Chartres was at that time enamoured of Mademoiselle de Sary, maid of honour to Madame, and carried on his suit in the most open and flagrant manner. The King took this for his theme, and very stiffly reproached Monsieur for the conduct of his son. Monsieur, who needed little to exasperate him, tartly replied, that fathers who had led certain lives had little authority over their children, and little right to blame them. The King, who felt the point of the answer, fell back on the patience of his daughter, and said that at least she ought not to be allowed to see the truth so clearly. But Monsieur was resolved to have his fling, and recalled, in the most aggravating manner, the conduct the King had adopted towards his Queen, with respect to his mistresses, even allowing the latter to accompany him in his journeys—the Queen at his side, and all in the same coach. This last remark drove the King beyond all patience, and he redoubled his reproaches, so that presently both were shouting to each other at the top of their voices. The door of the room in which they wrangled was open, and only covered by a curtain, as was the custom at Marly, and the adjoining room was full of courtiers, waiting to see the King go by to dinner. On the other side was a little salon, devoted to very private purposes, and filled with valets, who could hear distinctly every word of what passed. The attendant without, upon hearing this noise, entered, and told the King how many people were within hearing, and immediately retired. The conversation did not stop, however; it was simply carried on in a lower tone. Monsieur continued his reproaches; said that the King, in marrying his daughter to M. de Chartres, had promised marvels, and had done nothing; that for his part he had wished his son to serve, to keep him out of the way of these intrigues, but that his demands had been vain; that it was no wonder M. de Chartres amused himself, by way of consolation, for the neglect he had been treated with. Monsieur added, that he saw only too plainly the truth of what had been predicted, namely, that he would have all the shame and dishonour of the marriage without ever deriving any profit from it. The King, more and more carried away by anger, replied, that the war would soon oblige him to make some retrenchments, and that he would commence by cutting down the pensions of Monsieur, since he showed himself so little accommodating.



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At this moment the King was informed that his dinner was ready, and both he and Monsieur left the room and went to table, Monsieur, all fury, flushed, and with eyes inflamed by anger. His face thus crimsoned induced some ladies who were at table, and some courtiers behind—but more for the purpose of saying something than anything else—to make the remark, that Monsieur, by his appearance, had great need of bleeding. The same thing had been said some time before at Saint Cloud; he was absolutely too full; and, indeed, he had himself admitted that it was true. Even the King, in spite of their squabbles, had more than once pressed him to consent. But Tancrede, his head surgeon, was old, and an unskilful bleeder: he had missed fire once. Monsieur would not be bled by him; and not to vex him was good enough to refuse being bled by another, and to die in consequence.

Upon hearing this observation about bleeding, the King spoke to him again on the subject; and said that he did not know what prevented him from having him at once taken to his room, and bled by force. The dinner passed in the ordinary manner; and Monsieur ate extremely, as he did at all his meals, to say nothing of an abundant supply of chocolate in the morning, and what he swallowed all day in the shape of fruit, pastry, preserves, and every kind of dainties, with which indeed the tables of his cabinets and his pockets were always filled.

Upon rising from the table, the King, in his carriage, alone went to Saint Germain, to visit the King and Queen of England. Other members of the family went there likewise separately; and Monsieur, after going there also, returned to Saint Cloud.

In the evening, after supper, the King was in his cabinet, with Monseigneur and the Princesses, as at Versailles, when a messenger came from Saint Cloud, and asked to see the King in the name of the Duc de Chartres. He was admitted into the cabinet, and said that Monsieur had been taken very ill while at supper; that he had been bled, that he was better, but that an emetic had been given to him. The fact was, Monsieur had supped as usual with the ladies, who were at Saint Cloud. During the meal, as he poured out a glass of liqueur for Madame de Bouillon, it was perceived that he stammered, and pointed at something with his hand. As it was customary with him sometimes to speak Spanish, some of the ladies asked what he said, others cried aloud. All this was the work of an instant, and immediately afterwards Monsieur fell in a fit of apoplexy upon M. de Chartres, who supported him. He was taken into his room, shaken, moved about, bled considerably, and had strong emetics administered to him, but scarcely any signs of life did he show.



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Upon hearing this news, the King, who had been accustomed to fly to visit Monsieur for a mere nothing, went to Madame de Maintenon's, and had her waked up. He passed a quarter of an hour with her, and then, towards midnight, returning to his room, ordered his coach to be got ready, and sent the Marquis de Gesvres to Saint Cloud, to see if Monsieur was worse, in which case he was to return and wake him; and they went quickly to bed. Besides the particular relations in which they were at that time, I think that the King suspected some artifice; that he went in consequence to consult Madame de Maintenon, and preferred sinning against all laws of propriety to running the chance of being duped. Madame de Maintenon did not like Monsieur. She feared him. He paid her very little court, and despite all his timidity and his more than deference, observations escaped him at times, when he was with the King, which marked his disdain of her, and the shame that he felt of public opinion. She was not eager, therefore, to advise the King to go and visit him, still less to commence a journey by night, the loss of rest, and the witnessing a spectacle so sad, and so likely to touch him, and make him make reflections on himself; for she hoped that if things went quietly he might be spared the trouble altogether.

A moment after the King had got into bed, a page came to say that Monsieur was better, and that he had just asked for some Schaffhausen water, which is excellent for apoplexy. An hour and a half later, another messenger came, awakened the King, and told him that the emetic had no effect, and that Monsieur was very ill. At this the King rose and set out at once. On the way he met the Marquis de Gesvres, who was coming to fetch him, and brought similar news. It may be imagined what a hubbub and disorder there was this night at Marly, and what horror at Saint Cloud, that palace of delight! Everybody who was at Marly hastened as he was best able to Saint Cloud. Whoever was first ready started together. Men and women jostled each other, and then threw themselves into the coaches without order and without regard to etiquette. Monseigneur was with Madame la Duchesse. He was so struck by what had occurred, and its resemblance to what he himself had experienced, that he could scarcely stand, and was dragged, almost carried, to the carriage, all trembling.

The King arrived at Saint Cloud before three o'clock in the morning. Monsieur had not had a moment's consciousness since his attack. A ray of intelligence came to him for an instant, while his confessor, Pere du Trevoux, went to say mass, but it returned no more. The most horrible sights have often ridiculous contrasts. When the said confessor came back, he cried, "Monsieur, do you not know your confessor? Do you not know the good little Pere du Trevoux, who is speaking to you?" and thus caused the less afflicted to laugh indecently.

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The King appeared much moved; naturally he wept with great facility; he was, therefore, all tears. He had never had cause not to love his brother tenderly; although on bad terms with him for the last two months, these sad moments recalled all his tenderness; perhaps, too, he reproached himself for having hastened death by the scene of the morning. And finally, Monsieur was younger than he by two years, and all his life had enjoyed as good health as he, and better! The King heard mass at Saint Cloud; and, towards eight o'clock in the morning, Monsieur being past all hope, Madame de Maintenon and Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne persuaded the King to stay no longer, and accordingly returned with him in his carriage to Marly. As he was going out and was showing some sign of affection to M. de Chartres—both weeping very much—that young Prince did not fail to take advantage of the opportunity. “Oh Sire!” he exclaimed, embracing the King’s thighs, “what will become of me? I lose Monsieur, and I know that you do not like me.” The King, surprised and much touched, embraced him, and said all the tender things he could.

On arriving at Marly, the King went with the Duchesse de Bourgogne to Madame de Maintenon. Three hours after came M. Fagon, who had been ordered not to leave Monsieur until he was dead or better—which could not be but by miracle. The King said, as soon as he saw him: “Well! M. Fagon, my brother is dead?”—“Yes, Sire,” said Fagon, “no remedy has taken effect.”

The King wept a good deal. He was pressed to dine with Madame de Maintenon; but he would not do so, and had his dinner, as usual, with the ladies. The tears often ran down his cheek, during the meal, which was short. After this, he shut himself up in Madame de Maintenon’s rooms until seven o’clock, and then took a turn in his garden. Afterwards he worked with Chamillart and Pontchartrain; and arranged all the funeral ceremonies of Monsieur. He supped an hour before his customary time, and went to bed soon afterwards.

At the departure from St. Cloud of the King, all the crowd assembled there little by little withdrew, so that Monsieur dying, stretched upon a couch in his cabinet, remained exposed to the scullions and the lower officers of the household, the majority of whom, either by affection or interest, were much afflicted. The chief officers and others who lost posts and pensions filled the air with their cries; whilst all the women who were at Saint Cloud, and who lost their consideration and their amusement, ran here and there, crying, with dishevelled hair, like Bacchantes. The Duchesse de la Ferme, who had basely married her daughter to one of Monsieur’s minions, named La Carte, came into the cabinet; and, whilst gazing on the Prince, who still palpitated there, exclaimed, giving vent to her profound reflections, “Pardi! Here is a daughter well married!”

“A very important matter!” cried Chatillon, who himself lost everything by this death. “Is this a moment to consider whether your daughter is well married or not?”



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Madame, who had never had great affection or great esteem for Monsieur, but who felt her loss and her fall, meanwhile remained in her cabinet, and in the midst of her grief cried out, with all her might, "No convent! Let no one talk of a convent! I will have nothing to do with a convent!" The good Princess had not lost her judgment. She knew that, by her compact of marriage, she had to choose, on becoming a widow, between a convent and the chateau of Montargis. She liked neither alternative; but she had greater fear of the convent than of Montargis; and perhaps thought it would be easier to escape from the latter than the former. She knew she had much to fear from the King, although she did not yet know all, and although he had been properly polite to her, considering the occasion.

Next morning, Friday, M. de Chartres, came to the King, who was still in bed, and who spoke to him in a very friendly manner. He said that the Duke must for the future regard him as his father; that he would take care of his position and his interests; that he had forgotten all the little causes of anger he had had against him; that he hoped the Duke would also forget them; that he begged that the advances of friendship he made, might serve to attach him to him, and make their two hearts belong to one another again. It may easily be conceived how well M. de Chartres answered all this.

CHAPTER XXII

After such a frightful spectacle as had been witnessed, so many tears and so much tenderness, nobody doubted that the three, days which remained of the stay at Marly would be exceedingly sad. But, on the very morrow of the day on which Monsieur died, some ladies of the palace, upon entering the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, where was the King with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, about twelve o'clock, heard her from the chamber where they were, next to hers, singing opera tunes. A little while after, the King, seeing the Duchesse de Bourgogne very sad in a corner of the room, asked Madame de Maintenon, with surprise, why the said Duchess was so melancholy; set himself to work to rouse her; then played with her and some ladies of the palace he had called in to join in the sport. This was not all. Before rising from the dinner table, at a little after two o'clock, and twenty-six hours after the death of Monsieur, Monseigneur the Duc de Bourgogne asked the Duc de Montfort if he would play at brelan.

"At brelan!" cried Montfort, in extreme astonishment; "you cannot mean it! Monsieur is still warm."

"Pardon me," replied the Prince, "I do mean it though. The King does not wish that we should be dull here at Marly, and has ordered me to make everybody play; and, for fear that nobody should dare to begin, to set, myself, the example;" and with this he began to play at brelan; and the salon was soon filled with gaming tables.



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Such was the affection of the King: such that of Madame de Maintenon! She felt the loss of Monsieur as a deliverance, and could scarcely restrain her joy; and it was with the greatest difficulty she succeeded in putting on a mournful countenance. She saw that the King was already consoled; nothing could therefore be more becoming than for her to divert him, and nothing suited her better than to bring things back into their usual course, so that there might be no more talk of Monsieur nor of affliction. For propriety of appearance she cared nothing. The thing could not fail, however, to be scandalous; and in whispers was found so. Monseigneur, though he had appeared to like Monsieur, who had given him all sorts of balls and amusements, and shown him every kind of attention and complaisance, went out wolf hunting the very day after his death; and, upon his return, finding play going on in the salons, went without hesitation and played himself like the rest. Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne and M. le Duc de Berry only saw Monsieur on public occasions, and therefore could not be much moved by his loss. But Madame la Duchesse was extremely touched by this event. He was her grandfather; and she tenderly loved her mother, who loved Monsieur; and Monsieur had always been very kind to her, and provided all kinds of diversion for her. Although not very loving to anybody, she loved Monsieur; and was much affected not to dare to show her grief, which she indulged a long time in private. What the grief of Madame was has already been seen.

As for M. de Chartres, he was much affected by his loss. The father and son loved each other extremely. Monsieur was a gentle and indulgent parent, who had never constrained his son. But if the Duke's heart was touched, his reason also was. Besides the great assistance it was to him to have a father, brother of the King, that father was, as it were, a barrier between him and the King, under whose hand he now found himself directly placed. His greatness, his consideration, the comfort of his house and his life, would, therefore, depend on him alone. Assiduity, propriety of conduct, a certain manner, and, above all, a very different deportment towards his wife, would now become the price of everything he could expect to obtain from the King. Madame la Duchesse de Chartres, although well treated by Monsieur, was glad to be delivered from him; for he was a barrier betwixt her and the King, that left her at the mercy of her husband. She was charmed to be quit of the duty of following Monsieur to Paris or Saint Cloud, where she found herself, as it were, in a foreign country, with faces which she never saw anywhere else, which did not make her welcome; and where she was exposed to the contempt and humour of Madame, who little spared her. She expected for the future never to leave the Court, and to be not only exempt from paying her court to Monsieur, but that Madame and her husband would for the future be obliged to treat her in quite another manner.



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The bulk of the Court regretted Monsieur, for it was he who set all pleasure a-going; and when he left it, life and merriment seemed to have disappeared likewise. Setting aside his obstinacy with regard to the Princes, he loved the order of rank; preferences, and distinctions: he caused them to be observed as much as possible, and himself set the example. He loved great people; and was so affable and polite, that crowds came to him. The difference which he knew how to make, and which he never failed to make, between every one according to his position, contributed greatly to his popularity. In his receptions, by his greater or less, or more neglectful attention, and by his words, he always marked in a flattering manner the differences made by birth and dignity, by age and merit, and by profession; and all this with a dignity natural to him, and a constant facility which he had acquired. His familiarity obliged, and yet no rash people ever ventured to take advantage of it. He visited or sent exactly when it was proper; and under his roof he allowed a complete liberty, without injury to the respect shown him, or to a perfect court air.

He had learned from the Queen his mother, and well remembered this art. The crowd, therefore, constantly flocked towards the Palais Royal.

At Saint Cloud, where all his numerous household used to assemble, there were many ladies who, to speak the truth, would scarcely have been received elsewhere, but many also of a higher set, and great store of gamblers. The pleasures of all kinds of games, and the singular beauty of the place, where a thousand caleches were always ready to whirl even the most lazy ladies through the walks, soft music and good cheer, made it a palace of delight, grace, and magnificence.

All this without any assistance from Madame, who dined and supped with the ladies and Monsieur, rode out sometimes in a caleche with one of them, often sulked with the company, made herself feared for her harsh and surly temper—frequently even for her words; and passed her days in a little cabinet she had chosen, where the windows were ten feet from the ground, gazing perpetually on the portraits of Paladins and other German princes, with which she had tapestried the walls; and writing every day with her own hand whole volumes of letters, of which she always kept autograph copies. Monsieur had never been able to bend her to a more human way of life; and lived decently with her, without caring for her person in any way.

For his part, Monsieur, who had very gallantly won the battle of Cassel, and who had always shown courage in the sieges where he had served, had only the bad qualities that distinguish women. With more knowledge of the world than wit, with no reading, though he had a vast and exact acquaintance with noble houses, their births and marriages, he was good for nothing. Nobody was so flabby in body and mind, no one so weak, so timid, so open to deception, so led by the nose,



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so despised by his favourites, often so roughly treated by them. He was quarrelsome in small matters, incapable of keeping any secret, suspicious, mistrustful; fond of spreading reports in his Court to make mischief, to learn what was really going on or just to amuse himself: he fetched and carried from one to the other. With so many defects, unrelated to any virtue, he had such an abominable taste, that his gifts and the fortunes that he gave to those he took into favour had rendered him publicly scandalous. He neither respected times nor places. His minions, who owed him everything, sometimes treated him most insolently; and he had often much to do to appease horrible jealousies. He lived in continual hot water with his favourites, to say nothing of the quarrels of that troop of ladies of a very decided character—many of whom were very malicious, and, most, more than malicious—with whom Monsieur used to divert himself, entering into all their wretched squabbles.

The Chevaliers de Lorraine and Chatillon had both made a large fortune by their good looks, with which he was more smitten than with those of any other of his favourites. Chatillon, who had neither head, nor sense, nor wit, got on in this way, and acquired fortune. The other behaved like a Guisard, who blushes at nothing provided he succeeds; and governed Monsieur with a high hand all his life, was overwhelmed with money and benefices, did what he liked for his family, lived always publicly as the master with Monsieur; and as he had, with the pride of the Guises, their art and cleverness, he contrived to get between the King and Monsieur, to be dealt with gingerly, if not feared by both, and was almost as important a man with the one as with the other. He had the finest apartments in the Palais Royal and Saint Cloud, and a pension of ten thousand crowns. He remained in his apartments after the death of Monsieur, but would not from pride continue to receive the pension, which from pride was offered him. Although it would have been difficult to be more timid and submissive than was Monsieur with the King—for he flattered both his ministers and his mistresses—he, nevertheless, mingled with his respectful demeanour the demeanour of a brother, and the free and easy ways of one. In private, he was yet more unconstrained; always taking an armed chair, and never waiting until the King told him to sit. In the Cabinet, after the King appeared, no other Prince sat besides him, not even Monseigneur. But in what regarded his service, and his manner of approaching and leaving the King, no private person could behave with more respect; and he naturally did everything with grace and dignity. He never, however, was able to bend to Madame de Maintenon completely, nor avoid making small attacks on her to the King, nor avoid satirising her pretty broadly in person. It was not her success that annoyed him; but simply the idea that La Scarron had become his sister-in-law; this



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was insupportable to him. Monsieur was extremely vain, but not haughty, very sensitive, and a great stickler for what was due to him. Upon one occasion he complained to the King that M. le Duc had for some time neglected to attend upon him, as he was bound, and had boasted that he would not do it. The King replied, that it was not a thing to be angry about, that he ought to seek an opportunity to be served by M. le Duc, and if he would not, to affront him. Accordingly, one morning at Marly, as he was dressing, seeing M. le Duc walking in the garden, Monsieur opened the window and called to him. Monsieur le Duc came up, and entered the room. Then, while one remark was leading to another, Monsieur slipped off his dressing-gown, and then his shirt. A valet de chambre standing by, at once slipped a clean shirt into the hands of M. le Duc, who, caught thus in a trap, was compelled to offer the garment to Monsieur, as it was his duty to do. As soon as Monsieur had received it, he burst out laughing, and said—"Good-bye, cousin, go away. I do not want to delay you longer." M. le Duc felt the point of this, and went away very angry, and continued so in consequence of the high tone Monsieur afterwards kept up on the subject.

Monsieur was a little round-bellied man, who wore such high-heeled shoes that he seemed mounted always upon stilts; was always decked out like a woman, covered everywhere with rings, bracelets, jewels; with a long black wig, powdered, and curled in front; with ribbons wherever he could put them; steeped in perfumes, and in fine a model of cleanliness. He was accused of putting on an imperceptible touch of rouge. He had a long nose, good eyes and mouth, a full but very long face. All his portraits resembled him. I was piqued to see that his features recalled those of Louis XIII., to whom; except in matters of courage, he was so completely dissimilar.

On Saturday, the 11th of June, the Court returned to Versailles. On arriving there the King went to visit Madame and her son and daughter-in-law separately. Madame, very much troubled by reflection on her position with regard to the King, had sent the Duchesse de Ventadour to Madame de Maintenon. The latter replied to the message only in general terms; said she would visit Madame after dinner, and requested that the Duchess might be present at the interview. It was Sunday, the morning after the return from Marly. After the first compliments, every one went out except Madame de Ventadour. Then Madame requested Madame de Maintenon to sit down; and she must have felt her position keenly to bring her to this.



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She began the conversation by complaining of the indifference with which the King had treated her during her illness. Madame de Maintenon allowed her to talk on; and when she had finished, said that the King had commanded her to say that their common loss effaced all the past, provided that he had reason to be better satisfied for the future, not only as regarded M. le Duc de Chartres, but other matters also. Upon this Madame exclaimed and protested that, except in as far as regarded her son, she had never given cause for displeasure; and went on alternating complaints and justifications. Precisely at the point when she was most emphatic, Madame de Maintenon drew forth a letter from her pocket and asked if the handwriting was known to her. It was a letter from Madame to the Duchess of Hanover, in which she said, after giving news of the Court, that no one knew what to say of the intercourse between the King and Madame de Maintenon, whether it was that of marriage or of concubinage; and then, touching upon other matters, launched out upon the misery of the realm: that, she said, was too great to be relieved. This letter had been opened at the post—as almost all letters were at that time, and are indeed still—and sent to the King. It may be imagined that this was a thunderstroke to Madame: it nearly killed her. She burst into tears; and Madame de Maintenon very quietly and demurely began to represent to her the contents of the letter in all its parts, especially as it was addressed to a foreign country. Madame de Ventadour interposed with some twaddle, to give Madame time to breathe and recover sufficiently to say something. The best excuse was the admission of what could not be denied, with supplications for pardon, expressions of repentance, prayers, promises. But Madame de Maintenon had not finished yet. Having got rid of the commission she had been charged with by the King, she next turned to her own business: she asked Madame how it was, that after being so friendly with her a long time ago, she had suddenly ceased to bestow any regard upon her, and had continued to treat her with coldness ever since. At this, Madame thinking herself quite safe, said that the coldness was on the part of Madame de Maintenon, who had all on a sudden discontinued the friendly intercourse which formerly existed between them. As before, Madame de Maintenon allowed Madame to talk her fill before she replied. She then said she was about to divulge a secret which had never escaped her mouth, although she had for ten years been at liberty to tell it; and she forthwith related a thousand most offensive things which had been uttered against her by Madame to the late Madame la Dauphine. This latter, falling out with Madame, had related all these things to Madame de Maintenon, who now brought them forward triumphantly.



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At this new blow, Madame was thunderstruck, and stood like a statue. There was nothing for it but to behave as before—that is to say, shed tears, cry, ask pardon, humble herself, and beg for mercy. Madame de Maintenon triumphed coldly over her for a long time,—allowing her to excite herself in talking, and weeping, and taking her hands, which she did with increasing energy and humility. This was a terrible humiliation for such a haughty German. Madame de Maintenon at last gave way, as she had always meant to do after having satiated her vengeance. They embraced, promised forgetfulness on both sides, and a new friendship from that time. The King, who was not ignorant of what had occurred, took back Madame into favour. She went neither to a convent nor to Montargis, but was allowed to remain in Paris, and her pension was augmented. As for M. le Duc de Chartres, he was prodigiously well treated. The King gave him all the pensions Monsieur had enjoyed, besides allowing him to retain his own; so that he had one million eight hundred thousand livres a year; added to the Palais Royal, Saint Cloud, and other mansions. He had a Swiss guard, which none but the sons of France had ever had before; in fact he retained all the privileges his father had enjoyed, and he took the name of Duc d'Orleans. The pensions of Madame de Chartres were augmented. All these honours so great and so unheard of bestowed on M. de Chartres, and an income of a hundred thousand crowns more than his father, were due solely to the quarrel which had recently taken place between Monsieur and the King, as to the marriage M. de Chartres had made. People accustom themselves to everything, but this prodigious good fortune infinitely surprised everybody. The Princes of the blood were extremely mortified. To console them, the King immediately gave to M. le Prince all the advantages of a first Prince of the blood, and added ten thousand crowns to his pension.

Madame wore deep mourning for forty days, after which she threw it almost entirely aside, with the King's permission. He did not like to see such sad-looking things before his eyes every day. Madame went about in public, and with the Court, in her half-mourning, under pretence that being with the King, and living under his roof, she was of the family. But her conduct was not the less thought strange in spite of this excuse. During the winter, as the King could not well go to the theatre, the theatre came to him, in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, where comedies with music were played. The King wore mourning for six months, and paid all the expenses of the superb funeral which took place on the 13th of June.



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While upon the subject of Monsieur, I will relate an anecdote known to but few people, concerning the death of his first wife, Henriette d'Angleterre, whom nobody doubts was poisoned. Her gallantries made Monsieur jealous; and his tastes made her furious. His favourites, whom she hated, did all in their power to sow discord between them, in order to dispose of Monsieur at their will. The Chevalier de Lorraine, then in the prime of his first youth (having been born in 1643) completely ruled over Monsieur, and made Madame feel that he had this power. She, charming and young, could not suffer this, and complained to the King, so that M. de Lorraine was exiled. When Monsieur heard this, he swooned, then melted into tears, and throwing himself at the feet of the King, implored him to recall M. de Lorraine. But his prayers were useless, and, rushing away in fury, he retired into the country and remained there until, ashamed of a thing so publicly disgraceful, he returned to Paris and lived with Madame as before.

Although M. de Lorraine was banished, two of his intimate friends, D'Effiat and the Count de Beuvron, remained in the household of Monsieur. The absence of M. de Lorraine nipped all their hopes of success, and made them fear that some other favourite might arrive from whom they could hope for nothing. They saw no chance that M. de Lorraine's exile would speedily terminate; for Madame (Henriette d'Angleterre) was in greater favour with the King than ever, and had just been sent by him into England on a mysterious errand in which she had perfectly succeeded. She returned triumphant and very well in health. This gave the last blow to the hopes of D'Effiat and Beuvron, as to the return of M. de Lorraine, who had gone to Italy to try to get rid of his vexation. I know not which of the three thought of it first, but the Chevalier de Lorraine sent a sure and rapid poison to his two friends by a messenger who did not probably know what he carried.

At Saint Cloud, Madame was in the habit of taking a glass of endive-water, at about seven o'clock in the evening. A servant of hers used to make it, and then put it away in a cupboard where there was some ordinary water for the use of Madame if she found the other too bitter. The cupboard was in an antechamber which served as the public passage by which the apartments of Madame were reached. D'Effiat took notice of all these things, and on the 29th of June, 1670, he went to the ante-chamber; saw that he was unobserved and that nobody was near, and threw the poison into the endive-water; then hearing some one approaching, he seized the jug of common water and feigned to be putting it back in its place just as the servant, before alluded to, entered and asked him sharply what he was doing in that cupboard. D'Effiat, without losing countenance, asked his pardon, and said, that being thirsty, and knowing there was some water in the cupboard, he could not resist drinking. The servant grumbled; and D'Effiat, trying to appease him, entered the apartments of Madame, like the other courtiers, and began talking without the slightest emotion.



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What followed an hour afterwards does not belong to my subject, and has made only too much stir throughout all Europe. Madame died on the morrow, June 30, at three o'clock in the morning; and the King was profoundly prostrated with grief. Apparently during the day, some indications showed him that Purnon, chief steward of Madame, was in the secret of her decease. Purnon was brought before him privately, and was threatened with instant death, unless he disclosed all; full pardon being on the contrary promised him if he did. Purnon, thus pressed, admitted that Madame had been poisoned, and under the circumstance I have just related. "And my brother," said the King, "did he know of this?"— "No, Sire, not one of us was stupid enough to tell him; he has no secrecy, he would have betrayed us." On hearing this answer the King uttered a great "ah!" like a man oppressed, who suddenly breathes again.

Purnon was immediately set at liberty; and years afterwards related this narrative to M. Joly de Fleury, procureur-general of the Parliament, by which magistrate it was related to me. From this same magistrate I learned that, a few days before the second marriage of Monsieur, the King took Madame aside and told her that circumstance, assuring her that he was too honest a man to wish her to marry his brother, if that brother could be capable of such a crime. Madame profited by what she heard. Purnon remained in her service; but after a time she pretended to find faults in him, and made him resign; he sold his post accordingly, towards the end of 1674, to Maurel de Vaullonne, and quitted her service.

CHAPTER XXIII

At the breaking out of the war in Italy this year Segur bought the government of the Foix country from Tallard, one of the generals called away to serve in that war. Segur had been in his youth a very handsome fellow; he was at that time in the Black Musketeers, and this company was always quartered at Nemours while the Court was at Fontainebleau. Segur played very well upon the lute; but found life dull, nevertheless, at Nemours, made the acquaintance of the Abbess de la Joye, a place hard by, and charmed her ears and eyes so much that she became with child by him. After some months the Abbess pleaded illness, left the convent, and set out for the waters, as she said. Putting off her journey too long, she was obliged to stop a night at Fontainebleau; and in consequence of the Court being there, could find no accommodation, except in a wretched little inn already full of company. She had delayed so long that the pangs of labour seized her in the night, and the cries she uttered brought all the house to her assistance. She was delivered of a child then and there; and the next morning this fact was the talk of the town.

The Duc de Saint Aignan, one of the first of the courtiers who learned it, went straight to the King, who was brisk and free enough in those days, and related to him what had occurred; the King laughed heartily at the poor Abbess, who, while trying to hide her shame, had come into the very midst of the Court. Nobody knew then that her abbey

was only four leagues distant, but everybody learned it soon, and the Duc de Saint Aignan among the first.



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When he returned to his house, he found long faces on every side. His servants made signs one to another, but nobody said a word. He perceived this, and asked what was the matter; but, for some time, no one dared to reply. At last a valet-de-chambre grew bold enough to say to Saint Aignan, that the Abbess, whose adventure had afforded so much mirth, was his own daughter; and that, after he had gone to the King, she had sent for assistance, in order to get out of the place where she was staying.

It was now the Duke's turn to be confused. After having made the King and all the Court laugh at this adventure, he became himself the laughing-stock of everybody. He bore the affair as well as he could; carried away the Abbess and her baggage; and, as the scandal was public, made her send in her resignation and hide herself in another convent, where she lived more than forty years.

That worthy man, Saint-Herem, died this year at his house in Auvergne, to which he had retired. Everybody liked him; and M. de Rochefoucauld had reproached the King for not making him Chevalier of the Order. The King had confounded him with Courtine, his brother-in-law, for they had married two sisters; but when put right had not given the favour.

Madame de Saint-Herem was the most singular creature in the world, not only in face but in manners. She half boiled her thigh one day in the Seine, near Fontainebleau, where she was bathing. The river was too cold; she wished to warm it, and had a quantity of water heated and thrown into the stream just above her. The water reaching her before it could grow cold, scalded her so much that she was forced to keep her bed.

When it thundered, she used to squat herself under a couch and make all her servants lie above, one upon the other, so that if the thunderbolt fell, it might have its effect upon them before penetrating to her. She had ruined herself and her husband, though they were rich, through sheer imbecility; and it is incredible the amount of money she spent in her absurdities.

The best adventure which happened to her, among a thousand others, was at her house in the Place Royale, where she was one day attacked by a madman, who, finding her alone in her chamber, was very enterprising. The good lady, hideous at eighteen, but who was at this time eighty and a widow, cried aloud as well as she could. Her servants heard her at last, ran to her assistance, and found her all disordered, struggling in the hands of this raging madman. The man was found to be really out of his senses when brought before the tribunal, and the story amused everybody.

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The health of the King of England (James II.), which had for some time been very languishing, grew weaker towards the middle of August of this year, and by the 8th of September completely gave way. There was no longer any hope. The King, Madame de Maintenon, and all the royal persons, visited him often. He received the last sacrament with a piety in keeping with his past life, and his death was expected every instant. In this conjuncture the King made a resolve more worthy of Louis XII., or Francis I., than of his own wisdom. On Tuesday, the 13th of September, he went from Marly to Saint Germain. The King of England was so ill that when the King was announced to him he scarcely opened his eyes for an instant. The King told him that he might die in peace respecting the Prince of Wales, whom he would recognise as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The few English who were there threw themselves upon their knees, but the King of England gave no signs of life. The gratitude of the Prince of Wales and of his mother, when they heard what the King had said, may be imagined. Returned to Marly, the King repeated to all the Court what he had said. Nothing was heard but praises and applause.

Yet reflections did not fail to be made promptly, if not publicly. It was seen, that to recognise the Prince of Wales was to act in direct opposition to the recognition of the Prince of Orange as King of England, that the King had declared at the Peace of Ryswick. It was to wound the Prince of Orange in the tenderest point, and to invite England and Holland to become allies of the Emperor against France. As for the Prince of Wales, this recognition was no solid advantage to him, but was calculated to make the party opposed to him in England only more bitter and vigilant in their opposition.

The King of England, in the few intervals of intelligence he had, appeared much impressed by what the King had done. He died about three o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th September of this year, 1701. He had requested that there might be no display at his funeral, and his wish was faithfully observed. He was buried on the Saturday, at seven o'clock in the evening, in the church of the English Benedictines at Paris, Rue St. Jacques, without pomp, and attended by but few mourners. His body rests in the chapel, like that of the simplest private person, until the time, apparently very distant, when it shall be transported to England. His heart is at the Filles de Sainte Marie, of Chaillot.

Immediately afterwards, the Prince of Wales was received by the King as King of England, with all the formalities and state with which his father before him had been received. Soon afterwards he was recognised by the new King of Spain.



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The Count of Manchester, English ambassador in France, ceased to appear at Versailles after this recognition of the Prince of Wales by the King, and immediately quitted his post and left the country without any leave-taking. King William heard, while in Holland, of the death of James II. and of this recognition. He was at table with some German princes and other lords when the news arrived; did not utter a word, except to announce the death; but blushed, pulled down his hat, and could not keep his countenance. He sent orders to London, to drive out Poussin, acting as French ambassador, immediately; and Poussin directly crossed the sea and arrived at Calais.

This event was itself followed by the signing of the great treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, against France and Spain, by Austria, England, and Holland; in which they afterwards succeeded in engaging other powers, which compelled the King to increase the number of his troops.

Just after the return of the Court from Fontainebleau, a strange scene happened at St. Maur, in a pretty house there which M. le Duc possessed. He was at this house one night with five or six intimate friends, whom he had invited to pass the night there. One of these friends was the Comte de Fiesque. At table, and before the wine had begun to circulate, a dispute upon some historical point arose between him and M. le Duc. The Comte de Fiesque, who had some intellect and learning, strongly sustained his opinion. M. le Duc sustained his; and for want of better reasons, threw a plate at the head of Fiesque, drove him from the table and out of the house. So sudden and strange a scene frightened the guests. The Comte de Fiesque, who had gone to M. le Duc's house with the intention of passing the night there, had not retained a carriage, went to ask shelter of the cure, and got back to Paris the next day as early in the morning as he could. It may be imagined that the rest of the supper and of the evening was terribly dull. M. le Duc remained fuming (perhaps against himself, but without saying so), and could not be induced to apologise for the affront. It made a great stir in society, and things remained thus several months. After a while, friends mixed themselves in the matter; M. le Duc, completely himself again, made all the advances towards a reconciliation. The Comte de Fiesque received them, and the reconciliation took place. The most surprising thing is, that after this they continued on as good terms as though nothing had passed between them.

The year 1702 commenced with balls at Versailles, many of which were masquerades. Madame du Maine gave several in her chamber, always keeping her bed because she was in the family-way; which made rather a singular spectacle. There were several balls at Marly, but the majority were not masquerades. The King often witnessed, but in strict privacy, and always in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, sacred



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dramas such as “Absalon,” “Athalie,” &c. Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, M. le Duc d’Orleans, the Comte and Comtesse d’Anjou, the young Comte de Noailles, Mademoiselle de Melun, urged by the Noailles, played the principal characters in very magnificent stage dresses. Baron, the excellent old actor, instructed them and played with them. M. de Noailles and his clever wife were the inventors and promoters of these interior pleasures, for the purpose of intruding themselves more and more into the society of the King, in support of the alliance of Madame de Maintenon.

Only forty spectators were admitted to the representations. Madame was sometimes invited by the King, because she liked plays. This favour was much sought after. Madame de Maintenon wished to show that she had forgotten the past.

Longepierre had written a very singular piece called “Electra,” which was played on a magnificent stage erected in Madame de Conti’s house, and all the Court flocked several times to see it. This piece was without love, but full of other passions and of most interesting situations. I think it had been written in the hopes that the King would go and see it. But he contented himself with hearing it talked about, and the representation was confined to the Hotel de Conti. Longepierre would not allow it to be given elsewhere. He was an intriguing fellow of much wit, gentle, insinuating, and who, under a tranquillity and indifference and a very deceitful philosophy, thrust himself everywhere, and meddled with everything in order to make his fortune. He succeeded in intruding himself into favour with the Duc d’Orleans, but behaved so badly that he was driven away.

The death of the Abbe de Vatteville occurred at the commencement of this year, and made some noise, on account of the prodigies of the Abbe’s life. This Vatteville was the younger son of a Franche-Comte family; early in life he joined the Order of the Chartreux monks, and was ordained priest. He had much intellect, but was of an impetuous spirit, and soon began to chafe under the yoke of a religious life. He determined, therefore, to set himself free from it, and procured some secular habits, pistols, and a horse. Just as he was about to escape over the walls of the monastery by means of a ladder, the prior entered his cell.

Vatteville made no to-do, but at once drew a pistol, shot the prior dead, and effected his escape.

Two or three days afterwards, travelling over the country and avoiding as much as possible the frequented places, he arrived at a wretched roadside inn, and asked what there was in the house. The landlord replied—“A leg of mutton and a capon.”—“Good!” replied our unfrocked monk; “put them down to roast.”

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The landlord replied that they were too much for a single person, and that he had nothing else for the whole house. The monk upon this flew into a passion, and declared that the least the landlord could do was to give him what he would pay for; and that he had sufficient appetite to eat both leg of mutton and capon. They were accordingly put down to the fire, the landlord not daring to say another word. While they were cooking, a traveller on horseback arrived at the inn, and learning that they were for one person, was much astonished. He offered to pay his share to be allowed to dine off them with the stranger who had ordered this dinner; but the landlord told him he was afraid the gentleman would not consent to the arrangement. Thereupon the traveller went upstairs, and civilly asked Vatteville if he might dine with him on paying half of the expense. Vatteville would not consent, and a dispute soon arose between the two; to be brief, the monk served this traveller as he had served the prior, killed him with a pistol shot. After this he went downstairs tranquilly, and in the midst of the fright of the landlord and of the whole house, had the leg of mutton and capon served up to him, picked both to the very bone, paid his score, remounted his horse, and went his way.

Not knowing what course to take, he went to Turkey, and in order to succeed there, had himself circumcised, put on the turban, and entered into the militia. His blasphemy advanced him, his talents and his colour distinguished him; he became Bacha, and the confidential man in the Morea, where the Turks were making war against the Venetians. He determined to make use of this position in order to advance his own interests, and entering into communication with the generalissimo of the Republic, promised to betray into his hands several secret places belonging to the Turks, but on certain conditions. These were, absolution from the Pope for all crimes of his life, his murders and his apostasy included; security against the Chartreux and against being placed in any other Order; full restitution of his civil rights, and liberty to exercise his profession of priest with the right of possessing all benefices of every kind. The Venetians thought the bargain too good to be refused, and the Pope, in the interest of the Church, accorded all the demands of the Bacha. When Vatteville was quite assured that his conditions would be complied with, he took his measures so well that he executed perfectly all he had undertaken. Immediately after he threw himself into the Venetian army, and passed into Italy. He was well received at Rome by the Pope, and returned to his family in Franche-Comte, and amused himself by braving the Chartreux.

At the first conquest of the Franche-Comte, he intrigued so well with the Queen-mother and the ministry, that he was promised the Archbishopric of Besancon; but the Pope cried out against this on account of his murders, circumcision, and apostasy. The King sided with the Pope, and Vatteville was obliged to be contented with the abbey of Baume, another good abbey in Picardy, and divers other advantages.



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Except when he came to the Court, where he was always received with great distinction, he remained at his abbey of Baume, living there like a grand seigneur, keeping a fine pack of hounds, a good table, entertaining jovial company, keeping mistresses very freely; tyrannising over his tenants and his neighbours in the most absolute manner. The intendants gave way to him, and by express orders of the Court allowed him to act much as he pleased, even with the taxes, which he regulated at his will, and in his conduct was oftentimes very violent. With these manners and this bearing, which caused him to be both feared and respected, he would often amuse himself by going to see the Chartreux, in order to plume himself on having quitted their frock. He played much at *hombre*, and frequently gained 'codille' (a term of the game), so that the name of the Abbe Codille was given to him. He lived in this manner always with the same licence and in the same consideration, until nearly ninety years of age.

CHAPTER XXIV

The changes which took place in the army after the Peace of Ryswick, were very great and very strange. The excellence of the regiments, the merits of the officers, those who commanded, all were forgotten by Barbezieux, young and impetuous, whom the King allowed to act as he liked. My regiment was disbanded, and my company was incorporated with that of Count d'Uzes, brother-in-law of Duras, who looked well after the interests of his relative. I was thus deprived of command, without regiment, without company, and the only opportunity offered me was to serve in a regiment commanded by Saint Morris, where I should have been, as it were, at the lowest step of the ladder, with my whole military career to begin over again.

I had served at the head of my regiment during four campaigns, with applause and reputation, I am bold enough to say it. I thought therefore I was entitled to better treatment than this. Promotions were made; five officers, all my juniors, were placed over my head. I resolved then to leave the service, but not to take a rash step. I consulted first with several friends before sending in my resignation. All whom I consulted advised me to quit the service, but for a long time I could not resolve to do so. Nearly three months passed, during which I suffered cruel anguish of mind from my irresolution. I knew that if I left the army I should be certain to incur the anger of the King, and I do not hesitate to say that this was not a matter of indifference to me. The King was always annoyed when anybody ceased to serve; he called it "quitting him;" and made his anger felt for a long time. At last, however, I determined on my course of action.

I wrote a short letter to the King, in which, without making any complaints, I said that as my health was not good (it had given me some trouble on different occasions) I begged to be allowed to quit his service, and said that I hoped I should be permitted to console myself for leaving the army by assiduously attending upon him at the Court: After despatching this letter I went away immediately to Paris.



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I learnt afterwards from my friends, that upon receiving my letter the King called Chamillart to him, and said with emotion: “Well! Monsieur, here is another man who quits us!—” and he read my letter word for word. I did not learn that anything else escaped him.

As for me, I did not return to Versailles for a whole week, or see the King again until Easter Monday. After his supper that evening, and when about to undress himself, he paid me a distinction, a mere trifle I admit, and which I should be ashamed to mention if it did not under the circumstances serve as a characteristic of him.

Although the place he undressed in was very well illuminated, the chaplain at the evening prayers there held in his hand a lighted candle, which he gave afterwards to the chief valet-de-chambre, who carried it before the King until he reached his arm-chair, and then handed it to whomever the King ordered him to give it to. On this evening the King, glancing all around him, cast his eye upon me, and told the valet to give the candle to me. It was an honour which he bestowed sometimes upon one, sometimes upon another, according to his whim, but which, by his manner of bestowing it, was always coveted, as a great distinction. My surprise may be imagined when I heard myself named aloud for this office, not only on this but on many other occasions. It was not that there was any lack of people of consideration to hold the candle; but the King was sufficiently piqued by my retirement not to wish everybody to see that he was so.

For three years he failed not to make me feel to what extent he was angry with me. He spoke to me no longer; he scarcely bestowed a glance upon me, and never once alluded to my letter. To show that his annoyance did not extend to my wife, but that it was solely and wholly directed against me, he bestowed, about eight months after, several marks of favour upon Madame de Saint-Simon. She was continually invited to the suppers at Trianon—an honour which had never before been granted her. I only laughed at this. Madame de Saint-Simon was not invited to Marly; because the husbands always, by right, accompanied their wives there, apartments being given for both. At Trianon it was different. Nobody was allowed to sleep there except those absolutely in attendance. The King wished, therefore, the better to mark by this distinction that the exclusion was intended for me alone, and that my wife had no part in it.

Notwithstanding this; I persevered in my ordinary assiduity, without ever asking to be invited to Marly, and lived agreeably with my wife and my friends. I have thought it best to finish with this subject at once—now I must go back to my starting point.



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At the commencement of this year (1702) it seemed as though the flatterers of the King foresaw that the prosperity of his reign was at an end, and that henceforth they would only have to praise him for his constancy. The great number of medals that had been struck on all occasions—the most ordinary not having been forgotten—were collected, engraved, and destined for a medallic history. The Abbés Tallemant, Toureil, and Dacier, three learned members of the Academy, were charged with the explanation to be placed opposite each of these medals, in a large volume of the most magnificent impression of the Louvre. As the history commenced at the death of Louis XIII., his medal was placed at the head of the book, and thus it became necessary to say something of him in the preface.

As it was known that I had a correct knowledge of Louis XIII., I was asked to write that portion of the preface which related to him. I consented to this, but on condition that I should be spared the ridicule of it in society, and that the matter should be faithfully kept secret. I wrote my theme then, which cost me little more than a morning, being of small extent. I had the fate of authors: my writing was praised, and appeared to answer all expectations. I congratulated myself, delighted at having devoted two or three hours to a grateful duty—for so I considered it.

But when my essay was examined, the three gentlemen above-named were affrighted. There are truths the unstudied simplicity of which emits a lustre which obscures all the results of an eloquence which exaggerates or extenuates; Louis XIII. furnished such proofs in abundance. I had contented myself by showing them forth; but this picture tarnished those which followed—so at least it appeared to those who had gilded the latter. They applied themselves, therefore, to cut out, or weaken, everything that might, by comparison, obscure their hero. But as they found at last that it was not me they had to correct, but the thing itself, they gave up the task altogether, threw aside my writing, and printed the history without any notice whatever of Louis XIII. under his portrait—except to note that his death caused his son to ascend the throne.

Reflections upon this kind of iniquity would carry me too far.

In the early part of this year (1702), King William (of England), worn out before his time with labours and business, in which he had been engaged all his life, and which he had carried on with a capacity, an address, a superiority of genius that acquired for him supreme authority in Holland, the crown of England, the confidence, and, to speak the truth, the complete dictatorship of all Europe—except France;—King William, I say, had fallen into a wasting of strength and of health which, without attacking or diminishing his intellect, or causing him to relax the infinite labours of his cabinet, was accompanied by a deficiency of breath, which aggravated



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the asthma he had had for several years. He felt his condition, and his powerful genius did not disavow it. Under forged names he consulted the most eminent physicians of Europe, among others, Fagon; who, having to do, as he thought, with a cure, replied in all sincerity, and with out dissimulation, that he must prepare for a speedy death. His illness increasing, William consulted Fagon, anew, but this time openly. The physician recognised the malady of the cure—he did not change his opinion, but expressed it in a less decided manner, and prescribed with much feeling the remedies most likely if not to cure, at least to prolong. These remedies were followed and gave relief; but at last the time had arrived when William was to feel that the greatest men finish like the humblest and to see the nothingness of what the world calls great destinies.

He rode out as often as he could; but no longer having the strength to hold himself on horseback, received a fall, which hastened his end by the shock it gave him. He occupied himself with religion as little as he had all his life. He ordered everything, and spoke to his ministers and his familiars with a surprising tranquillity, which did not abandon him until the last moment. Although crushed with pain, he had the satisfaction of thinking that he had consummated a great alliance, which would last after his death, and that it would strike the great blow against France, which he had projected. This thought, which flattered him even in the hour of death, stood in place of all other consolation,—a consolation frivolous and cruelly deceitful, which left him soon the prey to eternal truths! For two days he was sustained by strong waters and spirituous liquors. His last nourishment was a cup of chocolate. He died the 19th March, 1702, at ten o'clock in the morning.

The Princess Anne, his sister-in-law, wife of Prince George of Denmark, was at the same time proclaimed queen. A few days after, she declared her husband Grand Admiral and Commander-in-Chief (generalissimo), recalled the Earl of Rochester, her maternal uncle, and the Earl of Sunderland, and sent the Count of Marlborough, afterwards so well known, to Holland to follow out there all the plans of his predecessor.

The King did not learn this death until the Saturday morning following, by a courier from Calais. A boat had escaped, in spite of the vigilance which had closed the ports. The King was silent upon the news, except to Monseigneur and to Madame de Maintenon. On the next day confirmation of the intelligence arrived from all parts. The King no longer made a secret of it, but spoke little on the subject, and affected much indifference respecting it. With the recollection of all the indecent follies committed in Paris during the last war, when it was believed that William had been killed at the battle of the Boyne in Ireland, the necessary precautions against falling into the same error were taken by the King's orders.



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The King simply declared that he would not wear mourning, and prohibited the Duc de Bouillon, the Marechal de Duras and the Marechal de Lorges, who were all related to William, from doing so—an act probably without example. Nearly all England and the United Provinces mourned the loss of William. Some good republicans alone breathed again with joy in secret, at having recovered their liberty. The grand alliance was very sensibly touched by this loss, but found itself so well cemented, that the spirit of William continued to animate it; and Heinsius, his confidant, perpetuated it, and inspired all the chiefs of the republic, their allies and their generals, with it, so that it scarcely appeared that William was no more.

I have related, in its proper place, all that happened to Catinat in Italy, when the schemes of Tesse and M. de Vaudemont caused him to be dismissed from the command of the army. After the signing of the alliance against France by the Emperor, England, and Holland, the war took a more extended field. It became necessary to send an army to the Rhine. There was nothing for it but to have recourse to Catinat.

Since his return from Italy, he had almost always lived at his little house of Saint Gratien, beyond Saint Denis, where he bore with wisdom the injury that had been done him and the neglect he had experienced upon his return, surrounded by his family and a small number of friends. Chamillart one day sent for him, saying that he had the King's order to talk with him. Catinat went accordingly to Chamillart, from whom he learned that he was destined for the Rhine; he refused the command, and only accepted it after a long dispute, by the necessity of obedience.

On the morrow, the 11th of March, the King called Catinat into his cabinet. The conversation was amiable on the part of the King, serious and respectful on the part of Catinat. The King, who perceived this, wished to make him speak about Italy, and pressed him to explain what had really passed there. Catinat excused himself, saying that everything belonged to the past, and that it was useless now to rake up matters which would give him a bad opinion of the people who served him, and nourish eternal enmity. The King admired the sagacity and virtue of Catinat, but, wishing to sound the depths of certain things, and discover who was really to blame, pressed him more and more to speak out; mentioning certain things which Catinat had not rendered an account of, and others he had been silent upon, all of which had come to him from other sources.

Catinat, who, by his conversation of the previous evening with Chamillart, suspected that the King would say something to him, had brought his papers to Versailles. Sure of his position, he declared that he had not in any way failed to render account to Chamillart or to the King, and detailed the very things that had just been mentioned to him. He begged that a messenger might be despatched in order to search his cassette, in which the proofs of what he had advanced could be seen, truths that Chamillart, if present, he said, would not dare to disavow. The King took him at his word, and sent in search of Chamillart.



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When he arrived, the King related to him the conversation that had just taken place. Chamillart replied with an embarrassed voice, that there was no necessity to wait for the cassette of Catinat, for he admitted that the accusation against him was true in every respect. The King, much astonished, reproved him for his infidelity in keeping silence upon these comments, whereby Catinat had lost his favour.

Chamillart, his eyes lowered, allowed the King to say on; but as he felt that his anger was rising; said. "Sire, you are right; but it is not my fault."

"And whose is it, then?" replied the King warmly. "Is it mine?"

"Certainly not, Sire," said Chamillart, trembling; "but I am bold enough to tell you, with the most exact truth, that it is not mine."

The King insisting, Chamillart was obliged to explain, that having shown the letters of Catinat to Madame de Maintenon, she had commanded him to keep them from his Majesty, and to say not a syllable about them. Chamillart added, that Madame de Maintenon was not far off, and supplicated the King to ask her the truth of this matter.

In his turn, the King was now more embarrassed than Chamillart; lowering his voice, he said that it was inconceivable how Madame de Maintenon felt interested in his comfort, and endeavoured to keep from him everything that might vex him, and without showing any more displeasure, turned to Marshal Catinat, said he was delighted with an explanation which showed that nobody was wrong; addressed several gracious remarks to the Marshal; begged him to remain on good terms with Chamillart, and hastened to quit them and enter into his private cabinet.

Catinat, more ashamed of what he had just heard and seen than pleased with a justification so complete, paid some compliments to Chamillart, who, out of his wits at the perilous explanation he had given, received them, and returned them as well as he could. They left the cabinet soon after, and the selection of Catinat by the King for the command of the army of the Rhine was declared.

Reflections upon this affair present themselves of their, own accord. The King verified what had been said that very evening with Madame de Maintenon. They were only on better terms than ever in consequence. She approved of Chamillart for avowing all; and this minister was only the better treated afterwards by the King and by Madame de Maintenon.

As for Catinat, he took the command he had been called to, but did not remain long in it. The explanations that had passed, all the more dangerous because in his favour, were not of a kind to prove otherwise than hurtful to him. He soon resigned his command, finding himself too much obstructed to do anything, and retired to his house of Saint Gratien, near Saint Denis, which he scarcely ever left, and where he saw only a

few private friends, sorry that he had ever left it, and that he had listened to the cajoleries of the King.



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ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A King's son, a King's father, and never a King
Capacity was small, and yet he believed he knew everything
He was accused of putting on an imperceptible touch of rouge
Monseigneur, who had been out wolf-hunting
Never been able to bend her to a more human way of life
Spoke only about as much as three or four women
Supported by unanswerable reasons that did not convince
The most horrible sights have often ridiculous contrasts
The nothingness of what the world calls great destinies
Whatever course I adopt many people will condemn me