

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 07 eBook

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 07 by Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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CHAPTER XLVII

The death of D'Avaux, who had formerly been our ambassador in Holland, occurred in the early part of this year (1709). D'Avaux was one of the first to hear of the project of William of Orange upon England, when that project was still only in embryo, and kept profoundly secret. He apprised the King (Louis XIV.) of it, but was laughed at. Barillon, then our ambassador in England, was listened to in preference. He, deceived by Sunderland and the other perfidious ministers of James II.; assured our Court that D'Avaux's reports were mere chimeras. It was not until it was impossible any longer to doubt that credit was given to them. The steps that we then took, instead of disconcerting all the measures of the conspirators, as we could have done, did not interfere with the working out of any one of their plans. All liberty was left, in fact, to William to carry out his scheme. The anecdote which explains how this happened is so curious, that it deserves to be mentioned here.

Louvois, who was then Minister of War, was also superintendent of the buildings. The King, who liked building, and who had cast off all his mistresses, had pulled down the little porcelain Trianon he had made for Madame de Montespan, and was rebuilding it in the form it still retains. One day he perceived, for his glance was most searching, that one window was a trifle narrower than the others. He showed it to Louvois, in order that it might be altered, which, as it was not then finished, was easy to do. Louvois sustained that the window was all right. The King insisted then, and on the morrow also, but Louvois, pigheaded and inflated with his authority, would not yield.

The next day the King saw Le Notre in the gallery. Although his trade was gardens rather than houses, the King did not fail to consult him upon the latter. He asked him if he had been to Trianon. Le Notre replied that he had not. The King ordered him to go. On the morrow he saw Le Notre again; same question, same answer. The King comprehended the reason of this, and a little annoyed, commanded him to be there that afternoon at a given time. Le Notre did not dare to disobey this time. The King arrived, and Louvois being present, they returned to the subject of the window, which Louvois obstinately said was as broad as the rest. The King wished Le Notre to measure it, for he knew that, upright and true, he would openly say what he found. Louvois, piqued, grew angry. The King, who was not less so, allowed him to say his say. Le Notre, meanwhile, did not stir. At last, the King made him go, Louvois still grumbling, and maintaining his assertion with audacity and little measure. Le Notre measured the window, and said that the King was right by several inches. Louvois still wished to argue, but the King silenced him, and commanded him to see that the window was altered at once, contrary to custom abusing him most harshly.

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What annoyed Louvois most was, that this scene passed not only before all the officers of the buildings, but in presence of all who followed the King in his promenades, nobles, courtiers, officers of the guard, and others, even all the rolete. The dressing given to Louvois was smart and long, mixed with reflections upon the fault of this window, which, not noticed so soon, might have spoiled all the facade, and compelled it to be re-built.

Louvois, who was not accustomed to be thus treated, returned home in fury, and like a man in despair. His familiars were frightened, and in their disquietude angled to learn what had happened. At last he told them, said he was lost, and that for a few inches the King forgot all his services, which had led to so many conquests; he declared that henceforth he would leave the trowel to the King, bring about a war, and so arrange matters that the King should have good need of him!

He soon kept his word. He caused a war to grow out of the affair of the double election of Cologne, of the Prince of Bavaria, and of the Cardinal of Furstenberg; he confirmed it in carrying the flames into the Palatinate, and in leaving, as I have said, all liberty to the project upon England; he put the finishing touch to his work by forcing the Duke of Savoy into the arms of his enemies, and making him become, by the position of his country, our enemy, the most difficult and the most ruinous. All that I have here related was clearly brought to light in due time.

Boisseuil died shortly after D'Avaux. He was a tall, big man, warm and violent, a great gambler, bad tempered,—who often treated M. le Grand and Madame d'Armagnac, great people as they were, so that the company were ashamed,—and who swore in the saloon of Marly as if he had been in a tap-room. He was feared; and he said to women whatever came uppermost when the fury of a cut-throat seized him. During a journey the King and Court made to Nancy, Boisseuil one evening sat down to play in the house of one of the courtiers. A player happened to be there who played very high. Boisseuil lost a good deal, and was very angry. He thought he perceived that this gentleman, who was only permitted on account of his play, was cheating, and made such good use of his eyes that he soon found this was the case, and all on a sudden stretched across the table and seized the gambler's hand, which he held upon the table, with the cards he was going to deal. The gentleman, very much astonished, wished to withdraw his hand, and was angry. Boisseuil, stronger than he, said that he was a rogue, and that the company should see it, and immediately shaking his hand with fury put in evidence his deceit. The player, confounded, rose and went away. The game went on, and lasted long into the night. When finished, Boisseuil went away. As he was leaving the door he found a man stuck against the wall—it was the player—who called him to account for the insult he had received. Boisseuil replied that he should give him no satisfaction, and that he was a rogue.

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"That may be," said the player, "but I don't like to be told so."

They went away directly and fought. Boisseuil received two wounds, from one of which he was like to die. The other escaped without injury.

I have said, that after the affair of M. de Cambrai, Madame de Maintenon had taken a rooted dislike to M. de Beauvilliers. She had become reconciled to him in appearance during the time that Monseigneur de Bourgogne was a victim to the calumnies of M. de Vendome, because she had need of him. Now that Monseigneur de Bourgogne was brought back to favour, and M. de Vendome was disgraced, her antipathy for M. de Beauvilliers burst out anew, and she set her wits to work to get rid of him from the Council of State, of which he was a member. The witch wished to introduce her favourite Harcourt there in his place, and worked so well to bring about this result that the King promised he should be received.

His word given, or rather snatched from him, the King was embarrassed as to how, to keep it, for he did not wish openly to proclaim Harcourt minister. It was agreed, therefore, that at the next Council Harcourt should be present, as though by accident, in the King's ante-chamber; that, Spanish matters being brought up, the King should propose to consult Harcourt, and immediately after should direct search to be made far him, to see if, by chance, he was close at hand; that upon finding him, he should be conducted to the Council, made to enter and seat himself, and ever afterwards be regarded as a Minister of State.

This arrangement was kept extremely secret, according to the express commands of the King: I knew it, however, just before it was to be executed, and I saw at once that the day of Harcourt's entry into the Council would be the day of M. de Beauvilliers' disgrace. I sent, therefore, at once for M. de Beauvilliers, begging him to come to my house immediately, and that I would then tell him why I could not come to him. Without great precaution everything becomes known at Court.

In less than half an hour M. de Beauvilliers arrived, tolerably disturbed at my message. I asked him if he knew anything, and I turned him about, less to pump him than to make him ashamed of his ignorance, and to persuade him the better afterwards to do what I wished. When I had well trotted out his ignorance, I apprised him of what I had just learnt. He was astounded; he so little expected it! I had not much trouble to persuade him that, although his expulsion might not yet be determined on, the intrusion of Harcourt must pave the way for it. He admitted to me that for some days he had found, the King cold and embarrassed with him, but that he had paid little attention to the circumstance, the reason of which was now clear. There was no time to lose. In twenty-four hours all would be over. I therefore took the liberty in the first instance of scolding him for his profound ignorance of what passed at the Court, and was bold enough to say to him that he had only to thank himself for the situation he found himself

in. He let me say to the end without growing angry, then smiled, and said, "Well! what do you think I ought to do?"

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That was just what I wanted. I replied that there was only one course open to him, and that was to have an interview with the King early the next morning; to say to him, that he had been informed Harcourt was about to enter the Council; that he thought the affairs of State would suffer rather than otherwise if Harcourt did so; and finally, to allude to the change that had taken place in the King's manner towards him lately, and to say, with all respect, affection, and submission, that he was equally ready to continue serving the King or to give up his appointments, as his Majesty might desire.

M. de Beauvilliers took pleasure in listening to me. He embraced me closely, and promised to follow the course I had marked out.

The next morning I went straight to him, and learned that he had perfectly succeeded. He had spoken exactly as I had suggested. The King appeared astonished and piqued that the secret of Harcourt's entry into the Council was discovered. He would not hear a word as to resignation of office on the part of M. de Beauvilliers, and appeared more satisfied with him than ever. Whether, without this interview, he would have been lost, I know not, but by the coldness and embarrassment of the King before that interview, and during the first part of it, I am nearly persuaded that he would. M. de Beauvilliers embraced me again very tenderly—more than once.

As for Harcourt, sure of his good fortune, and scarcely able to contain his joy, he arrived at the meeting place. Time ran on. During the Council there are only the most subaltern people in the antechambers and a few courtiers who pass that way to go from one wing to another. Each of these subalterns eagerly asked M. d'Harcourt what he wanted, if he wished for anything, and importuned him strongly. He was obliged to remain there, although he had no pretext. He went and came, limping with his stick, not knowing what to reply to the passers-by, or the attendants by whom he was remarked. At last, after waiting long, he returned as he came, much disturbed at not having been called. He sent word so to Madame de Maintenon, who, in her turn, was as much disturbed, the King not having said a word to her, and she not having dared to say a word to him. She consoled Harcourt, hoping that at the next Council he would be called. At her wish he waited again, as before, during another Council, but with as little success. He was very much annoyed, comprehending that the affair had fallen through.

Madame de Maintenon did not, however, like to be defeated in this way. After waiting some time she spoke to the King, reminding him what he had promised to do. The King replied in confusion that he had thought better of it; that Harcourt was on bad terms with all the Ministers, and might, if admitted to the Council, cause them much embarrassment; he preferred, therefore, things to remain as they were. This was said in a manner that admitted of no reply.

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Madame de Maintenon felt herself beaten; Harcourt was in despair. M. de Beauvilliers was quite reestablished in the favour of the King. I pretended to have known nothing of this affair, and innocent asked many questions about it when all was over. I was happy to the last degree that everything had turned out so well.

M. le Prince, who for more than two years had not appeared at the Court, died at Paris a little after midnight on the night between Easter Sunday and Monday, the last of March and first of April, and in his seventy-sixth year. No man had ever more ability of all kinds, extending even to the arts and mechanics more valour, and, when it pleased him, more discernment, grace, politeness, and nobility. But then no man had ever before so many useless talents, so much genius of no avail, or an imagination so calculated to be a bugbear to itself and a plague to others. Abjectly and vilely servile even to lackeys, he scrupled not to use the lowest and paltriest means to gain his ends. Unnatural son, cruel father, terrible husband, detestable master, pernicious neighbour; without friendship, without friends—incapable of having any jealous, suspicious, ever restless, full of slyness and artifices to discover and to scrutinise all, (in which he was unceasingly occupied, aided by an extreme vivacity and a surprising penetration,) choleric and headstrong to excess even for trifles, difficult of access, never in accord with himself, and keeping all around him in a tremble; to conclude, impetuosity and avarice were his masters, which monopolised him always. With all this he was a man difficult to be proof against when he put in play the pleasing qualities he possessed.

Madame la Princesse, his wife, was his continual victim. She was disgustingly ugly, virtuous, and foolish, a little humpbacked, and stunk like a skunk, even from a distance. All these things did not hinder M. le Prince from being jealous of her even to fury up to the very last. The piety, the indefatigable attention of Madame la Princesse, her sweetness, her novice-like submission, could not guarantee her from frequent injuries, or from kicks, and blows with the fist, which were not rare. She was not mistress even of the most trifling things; she did not dare to propose or ask anything. He made her set out from one place to another the moment the fancy took him. Often when seated in their coach he made her descend, or return from the end of the street, then recommence the journey after dinner, or the next day. This see-sawing lasted once fifteen days running, before a trip to Fontainebleau. At other times he sent for her from church, made her quit high mass, and sometimes sent for her the moment she was going to receive the sacrament; she was obliged to return at once and put off her communion to another occasion. It was not that he wanted her, but it was merely to gratify his whim that he thus troubled her.

He was always of, uncertain habits, and had four dinners ready for him every day; one at Paris, one at Ecouen, one at Chantilly, and one where the Court was. But the expense of this arrangement was not great; he dined on soup, and the half of a fowl roasted upon a crust of bread; the other half serving for the next day. He rarely invited anybody to dinner, but when he did, no man could be more polite or attentive to his guests.

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Formerly he had been in love with several ladies of the Court; then, nothing cost too much. He was grace, magnificence, gallantry in person— a Jupiter transformed into a shower of gold. Now he disguised himself as a lackey, another time as a female broker in articles for the toilette; and now in another fashion. He was the most ingenious man in the world. He once gave a grand fete solely for the purpose of retarding the journey into Italy of a lady with whom he was enamoured, with whom he was on good terms, and whose husband he amused by making verses. He hired all the houses on one side of a street near Saint Sulpice, furnished them, and pierced the connecting walls, in order to be able thus to reach the place of rendezvous without being suspected.

Jealous and cruel to his mistresses, he had, amongst others, the Marquise de Richelieu; whom I name, because she is not worth the trouble of being silent upon. He was hopelessly smitten and spent millions upon her and to learn her movements. He knew that the Comte de Roucy shared her favours (it was for her that sagacious Count proposed to put straw before the house in order to guarantee her against the sound of the church bells, of which she complained). M. le Prince reproached her for favouring the Count. She defended herself; but he watched her so closely, that he brought home the offence to her without her being able to deny it. The fear of losing a lover so rich as was M. le Prince furnished her on the spot with an excellent suggestion for putting him at ease. She proposed to make an appointment at her own house with the Comte de Roucy, M. le Prince's people to lie in wait, and when the Count appeared, to make away with him. Instead of the success she expected from a proposition so humane and ingenious, M. le Prince was so horror-struck, that he warned the Comte de Roucy, and never saw the Marquise de Richelieu again all his life.

The most surprising thing was, that with so much ability, penetration, activity, and valour, as had M. le Prince, with the desire to be as great a warrior as the Great Conde, his father, he could never succeed in understanding even the first elements of the military art. Instructed as he was by his father, he never acquired the least aptitude in war. It was a profession was not born for, and for which he could not qualify himself by study. During the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, he was accused of something more than fierceness and ferocity. Wanderings were noticed in his conduct, which were not exhibited in his own house alone. Entering one morning into the apartment of the Marechale de Noailles (she herself has related this to me) as her bed was being made, and there being only the counterpane to put on, he stopped short at the door, crying with transport, "Oh, the nice bed, the nice bed!" took a spring, leaped upon the bed, rolled himself upon it seven or eight times, then descended and made his

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excuses to the Marechale, saying that her bed was so clean and so well-made, that he could not hinder himself from jumping upon it; and this, although there had never been anything between them; and when the Marechale, who all her life had been above suspicion, was at an age at which she could not give birth to any. Her servants remained stupefied, and she as much as they. She got out of the difficulty by laughing and treating it as a joke. It was whispered that there were times when M. le Prince believed himself a dog, or some other beast, whose manners he imitated; and I have known people very worthy of faith who have assured me they have seen him at the going to bed of the King suddenly throw his head into the air several times running, and open his mouth quite wide, like a dog while barking, yet without making a noise. It is certain, that for a long time nobody saw him except a single valet, who had control over him, and who did not annoy him.

In the latter part of his life he attended in a ridiculously minute manner to his diet and its results, and entered into discussions which drove his doctors to despair. Fever and gout at last attacked him, and he augmented them by the course he pursued. Finot, our physician and his, at times knew not what to do with him. What embarrassed Finot most, as he related to us more than once, was that M. le Prince would eat nothing, for the simple reason, as he alleged, that he was dead, and that dead men did not eat! It was necessary, however, that he should take something, or he would have really died. Finot, and another doctor who attended him, determined to agree with him that he was dead, but to maintain that dead men sometimes eat. They offered to produce dead men of this kind; and, in point of fact, led to M. le Prince some persons unknown to him, who pretended to be dead, but who ate nevertheless. This trick succeeded, but he would never eat except with these men and Finot. On that condition he ate well, and this jealousy lasted a long time, and drove Finot to despair by its duration; who, nevertheless, sometimes nearly died of laughter in relating to us what passed at these repasts, and the conversation from the other world heard there.

M. le Prince's malady augmenting, Madame la Princesse grew bold enough to ask him if he did not wish to think of his conscience, and to see a confessor. He amused himself tolerably long in refusing to do so. Some months before he had seen in secret Pere de la Tour. He had sent to the reverend father asking him to, come by night and disguised. Pere de la Tour, surprised to the last degree at so wild a proposition, replied that the respect he owed to the cloth would prevent him visiting M. le Prince in disguise; but that he would come in his ordinary attire. M. le Prince agreed to this last imposed condition. He made the Pere de la Tour enter at night by a little back door, at which an attendant was in waiting to receive him. He was led by this attendant, who had a lantern in one hand and a key in the other, through many long and obscure passages; and through many doors, which were opened and closed upon him as he passed. Having arrived at last at the sick-chamber, he confessed M. le Prince, and was conducted out of the

house in the same manner and by the same way as before. These visits were repeated during several months.

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The Prince's malady rapidly increased and became extreme. The doctors found him so ill on the night of Easter Sunday that they proposed to him the sacrament for the next day. He disputed with them, and said that if he was so very bad it would be better to take the sacraments at once, and have done with them. They in their turn opposed this, saying there was no need of so much hurry. At last, for fear of incensing him, they consented, and he received all hurriedly the last sacraments. A little while after he called M. le Duc to him, and spoke of the honours he wished at his funeral, mentioning those which had been omitted at the funeral of his father, but which he did not wish to be omitted from his. He talked of nothing but this and of the sums he had spent at Chantilly, until his reason began to wander.

Not a soul regretted him; neither servants, nor friends, neither child nor wife. Indeed the Princess was so ashamed of her tears that she made excuses for them. This was scarcely to be wondered at.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

It is time now that I should speak of our military operations this year and of the progress of the war. Let me commence by stating the disposition of our armies at the beginning of the campaign.

Marechal Boufflers, having become dangerously ill, was unable to take command in Flanders. Marechal de Villars was accordingly appointed in his stead under Monseigneur, and with him served the King of England, under his incognito of the previous year, and M. le Duc de Berry, as volunteers. The Marechal d'Harcourt was appointed to command upon the Rhine under Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne. M. d'Orleans commanded in Spain; Marechal Berwick in Dauphiny; and the Duc de Noailles in Roussillon, as usual. The generals went to their destinations, but the Princes remained at the Court.

Before I relate what we did in war, let me here state the strange opposition of our ministers in their attempts to bring about peace. Since Villars had introduced Chamillart to Court, he had heard it said that M. de Louvois did everybody's business as much as he could; and took it into his head that having succeeded to M. de Louvois he ought to act exactly like him. For some time past, accordingly, Chamillart, with the knowledge of the King, had sent people to Holland and elsewhere to negotiate for peace, although he had no right to do so, Torcy being the minister to whose department this business belonged. Torcy likewise sent people to Holland and elsewhere with a similar object, and these ambassadors of the two ministers, instead of working in common, did all in their power thwart each other. They succeeded so well that it was said they seemed in foreign countries ministers of different powers, whose interests were quite opposed. This manner of conducting business gave a most injurious idea of our government, and tended very much to bring it into ridicule. Those who sincerely wished to treat with us,

found themselves so embarrassed between the rival factions, that they did not know what to do; and others made our disagreements a plausible pretext for not listening to our propositions.

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At last Torcy was so annoyed with the interference of Chamillart, that he called the latter to account for it, and made him sign an agreement by which he bound himself to enter into no negotiations for peace and to mix himself in no foreign affairs; and so this absurdity came to an end.

In Italy, early this year, we received a check of no small importance. I have mentioned that we were invited to join in an Italian league, having for its object to oppose the Emperor. We joined this league, but not before its existence had been noised abroad, and put the allies on their guard as to the danger they ran of losing Italy. Therefore the Imperialists entered the Papal States, laid them under contribution, ravaged them, lived there in true Tartar style, and snapped their fingers at the Pope, who cried aloud as he could obtain no redress and no assistance. Pushed at last to extremity by the military occupation which desolated his States, he yielded to all the wishes of the Emperor, and recognised the Archduke as King of Spain. Philip V. immediately ceased all intercourse with Rome, and dismissed the nuncio from Madrid. The Imperialists, even after the Pope had ceded to their wishes, treated him with the utmost disdain, and continued to ravage his territories. The Imperialist minister at Rome actually gave a comedy and a ball in his palace there, contrary to the express orders of the Pope, who had forbidden all kinds of amusement in this period of calamity. When remonstrated with by the Pope, this minister said that he had promised a fete to the ladies, and could not break his word. The strangest thing is, that after this public instance of contempt the nephews of the Pope went to the fete, and the Pope had the weakness to suffer it.

In Spain, everything went wrong, and people began to think it would be best to give up that country to the house of Austria, under the hope that by this means the war would be terminated. It was therefore seriously resolved to recall all our troops from Spain, and to give orders to Madame des Ursins to quit the country. Instructions were accordingly sent to this effect. The King and Queen of Spain, in the greatest alarm at such a violent determination, cried aloud against it, and begged that the execution of it might at least be suspended for a while.

At this, our King paused and called a Council to discuss the subject. It was ultimately agreed to leave sixty-six battalions of our troops to the King of Spain, but to withdraw all the rest. This compromise satisfied nobody. Those who wished to support Spain said this assistance was not enough. The other party said it was too much.

This determination being arrived at, it seemed as though the only thing to be done was to send M. d'Orleans to Spain to take command there. But now will be seen the effect of that mischievous pleasantry of his upon Madame de Maintenon and Madame des Ursins, the "she-captain," and the "she-lieutenant"—as he called them, in the gross language to which I have before alluded. Those two ladies had not forgiven him his witticism, and had determined to accomplish his disgrace. His own thoughtless conduct assisted them in bringing about this result.

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The King one day asked him if he had much desire to return into Spain. He replied in a manner evidencing his willingness to serve, marking no eagerness. He did not notice that there might be a secret meaning, hidden under this question. When he related to me what had passed between him and the King, I blamed the feebleness of his reply, and represented to him the ill effect it would create if at such a time he evinced any desire to keep out of the campaign. He appeared convinced by my arguments, and to wish with more eagerness than before to return to Spain.

A few days after, the King asked him, on what terms he believed himself with the Princesse des Ursins; and when M. d'Orleans replied that he believed himself to be on good terms with her, as he had done all in his power to be so, the King said that he feared it was not thus, since she had asked that he should not be again sent to Spain, saying that he had leagued himself with all her enemies there, and that a secretary of his, named Renaut, whom he had left behind him, kept up such strict and secret intercourse with those enemies, that she was obliged to demand his recall lest he might do wrong to the name of his master.

Upon this, M. d'Orleans replied that he was infinitely surprised at these complaints of Madame des Ursins, since he had done nothing to deserve them. The King, after reflecting for a moment, said he thought, all things considered, that M. d'Orleans had better not return to Spain. In a few days it was publicly known that he would not go. The withdrawal of so many of our troops from Spain was the reason alleged. At the same time the King gave orders to M. d'Orleans to send for his equipages from Spain, and added in his ear, that he had better send some one of sense for them, who might be the bearer of a protest, if Philip V. quitted his throne. At least this is what M. d'Orleans told me, although few people believed him in the end.

M. d'Orleans chose for this errand a man named Flotte, very skilful in intrigue, in which he had, so to speak, been always brought up. He went straight to Madrid, and one of his first employments when he arrived there was to look for Renaut, the secretary just alluded to. But Renaut was nowhere to be found, nor could any news be heard of him. Flotte stayed some time in Madrid, and then went to the army, which was still in quarters. He remained there three weeks, idling from quarter to quarter, saluting the Marechal in command, who was much surprised at his long stay, and who pressed him to return into France. At last Flotte took leave of the Marechal, asking him for an escort for himself and a commissary, with whom he meant to go in company across the Pyrenees. Twenty dragoons were given him as escort, and he and the commissary set out in a chaise.

They had not proceeded far before Flotte perceived that they were followed by other troops besides those guarding them. Flotte fearing that something was meant by this, slipped a pocket-book into the hands of the commissary, requesting him to take care of it. Shortly afterwards the chaise was surrounded by troops, and stopped; the two travellers were made to alight. The commissary was ordered to give up the pocket-

book, an order that he complied with very rapidly, and Flotte was made prisoner, and escorted back to the spot he had just left.

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The news of this occurrence reached the King on the 12th of July, by the ordinary courier from Madrid.

The King informed M. d'Orleans of it, who, having learnt it by a private courier six days before, affected nevertheless surprise, and said it was strange that one of his people should have been thus arrested, and that as his Majesty was concerned, it was for him to demand the reason. The King replied, that in fact the injury regarded him more than M. d'Orleans, and that he would give orders to Torcy to write as was necessary to Spain.

It is not difficult to believe that such an explosion made a great noise, both in France and Spain; but the noise it made at first was nothing to that which followed. A cabal was formed against Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans. It was said that he had plotted to place himself upon the Spanish throne, by driving out Philip V., under pretext of his incapacity, of the domination of Madame des Ursins, and of the abandonment of the country by France; that he had treated with Stanhope, commander of the English troops in Spain, and with whom he was known to be on friendly terms, in order to be protected by the Archduke. This was the report most widely spread. Others went further. In these M. d'Orleans was accused of nothing less than of intending to divorce himself from Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, as having been married to her by force; of intending to marry the sister of the Empress (widow of Charles II.), and of mounting with her upon the Spanish throne; to marry Madame d'Argenton, as the Queen Dowager was sure to have no children, and finally, to poison Madame d'Orleans.

Meanwhile the reply from Spain came not. The King and Monseigneur treated M. d'Orleans with a coldness which made him sorely ill at ease; the majority of the courtiers, following this example, withdrew from him. He was left almost alone.

I learnt at last from M. d'Orleans how far he was deserving of public censure, and what had given colouring to the reports spread against him. He admitted to me, that several of the Spanish grandees had persuaded him that it was not possible the King of Spain could stand, and had proposed to him to hasten his fall, and take his place; that he had rejected this proposition with indignation, but had been induced to promise, that if Philip V. fell of himself, without hope of rising, he would not object to mounting the vacant throne, believing that by so doing he would be doing good to our King, by preserving Spain to his house.

As soon as I heard this, I advised him to make a clean breast of it to the King, and to ask his pardon for having acted in this matter without his orders and without his knowledge. He thought my advice good, and acted upon it. But the King was too much under the influence of the enemies of M. d'Orleans, to listen favourably to what was said to him. The facts of the case, too, were much against M. d'Orleans. Both Renaut and Flotte had been entrusted with his

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secret. The former had openly leagued himself with the enemies of Madame des Ursins, and acted with the utmost imprudence. He had been privately arrested just before the arrival of Flotte. When this latter was arrested, papers were found upon him which brought everything to light. The views of M. d'Orleans and of those who supported him were clearly shown. The King would not listen to anything in favour of his nephew.

The whole Court cried out against M. d'Orleans; never was such an uproar heard. He was accused of plotting to overthrow the King of Spain, he, a Prince of the blood, and so closely allied to the two crowns! Monseigneur, usually so plunged in apathy, roused himself to fury against M. d'Orleans, and insisted upon nothing less than a criminal prosecution. He insisted so strongly upon this, that the King at last consented that it should take place, and gave orders to the chancellor to examine the forms requisite in such a case. While the chancellor was about this work, I went to see him one day, and represented to him so strongly, that M. d'Orleans' misdemeanour did not concern us at all, and could only be judged before a Spanish tribunal, that the idea of a criminal trial was altogether abandoned almost immediately after. M. d'Orleans was allowed to remain in peace.

Madame des Ursins and Madame de Maintenon had so far triumphed, however, that M. d'Orleans found himself plunged in the deepest disgrace. He was universally shunned. Whenever he appeared, people flew away, so that they might not be seen in communication with him. His solitude was so great, that for a whole month only one friend entered his house. In the midst of this desertion, he had no resource but debauchery, and the society of his mistress, Madame d'Argenton. The disorder and scandal of his life had for a long time offended the King, the Court, and the public. They now unhappily confirmed everybody in the bad opinion they had formed of him. That the long disgrace he suffered continued to confirm him in his bad habits, and that it explains to some extent his after-conduct, there can be no doubt. But I must leave him now, and return to other matters.

CHAPTER XLIX

But, meanwhile, a great change had taken place at Court. Chamillart had committed the mistake of allowing the advancement of D'Harcourt to the head of an army. The poor man did not see the danger; and when warned of it, thought his cleverness would preserve him. Reports of his fall had already begun to circulate, and D'Antin had been spoken of in his place. I warned his daughter Dreux, the only one of the family to whom it was possible to speak with profit. The mother, with little wit and knowledge of the Court, full of apparent confidence and sham cunning, received all advice ill. The,

brothers were imbecile, the son was a child and a simpleton, the two other daughters too light-headed.

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I had often warned Madame de Dreux of the enmity of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; and she had spoken to her on the subject. The Princess had answered very coldly that she was mistaken, that she had no such enmity. At last I succeeded, in this indirect way, in forcing Chamillart to speak to the King on the reports that were abroad; but he did so in a half-and-half way, and committed the capital mistake of not naming the successor which public rumour mentioned. The King appeared touched, and gave him all sorts of assurances of friendship, and made as if he liked him better than ever. I do not know if Chamillart was then near his destruction, and whether this conversation set him up again; but from the day it took place all reports died away, and the Court thought him perfectly re-established.

But his enemies continued to work against him. Madame de Maintenon and the Duchesse de Bourgogne abated not a jot in their enmity. The Marechal d'Harcourt lost no opportunity of pulling him to pieces. One day, among others, he was declaiming violently against him at Madame de Maintenon's, whom he knew he should thus please. She asked him whom he would put in his place. "M. Fagon, Madame," he replied coldly. She laughed, but said this was not a thing to joke about; but he maintained seriously that the old doctor would make a much better minister than Chamillart, for he had some intelligence, which would make up for his ignorance of many matters; but what could be expected of a man who was ignorant and stupid too? The cunning Norman knew well the effect this strange parallel would have; and it is indeed inconceivable how damaging his sarcasm proved. A short time afterwards, D'Antin, wishing also to please, but more imprudent, insulted the son of Chamillart so grossly, and abused the father so publicly, that he was obliged afterwards to excuse himself.

The King held, for the first time in his life, a real council of war. He told the Duc de Bourgogne of it, saying rather sharply: "Come, unless you prefer going to vespers." The council lasted nearly three hours; and was stormy. The Marechals were freer in their language than usual, and complained of the ministers. All fell upon Chamillart, who was accused, among other things, of matters that concerned Desmarets, on whom, he finished by turning off the King's anger. Chamillart defended himself with so much anger that his voice was heard by people outside.

But he had of late heaped fault on fault. Besides setting Madame de Maintenon and the Duchesse de Bourgogne against him, he rather wantonly irritated Monseigneur, at that time more than ever under the government of Mademoiselle Choin. The latter had asked him a favour, and had been refused even with contempt. Various advances at reconciliation she made were also repulsed with contumely. Yet every one, even the Duchesse de Bourgogne, crawled before this creature—the favourite of the heir to the throne. Madame de Maintenon actually caused the King to offer her apartments at Versailles, which she refused, for fear of losing the liberty she enjoyed at Meudon.

D'Antin, who saw all that was going on, became the soul of a conspiracy against Chamillart. It was infinitely well managed. Everything moved in order and harmony—always prudently, always knowingly.

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The King, quietly attacked on all hands, was shaken; but he had many reasons for sticking to Chamillart. He was his own choice. No minister had stood aside so completely, and allowed the King to receive all the praise of whatever was done. Though the King's reason way, therefore, soon influenced, his heart was not so easily. But Madame de Maintenon was not discouraged. Monseigneur, urged by Mademoiselle Choin, had already spoken out to the King. She laboured to make him speak again; for, on the previous occasion, he had been listened to attentively.

So many machines could not be set in motion without some noise being heard abroad. There rose in the Court, I know not what confused murmurs, the origin of which could not be pointed out, publishing that either the State or Chamillart must perish; that already his ignorance had brought the kingdom within an ace of destruction; that it was a miracle this destruction had not yet come to pass; and that it would be madness to tempt Providence any longer. Some did not blush to abuse him; others praised his intentions, and spoke with moderation of faults that many people reproached him bitterly with. All admitted his rectitude, but maintained that a successor of some kind or other was absolutely necessary. Some, believing or trying to persuade others that they carried friendship to as far a point as was possible, protested that they should ever preserve this friendship, and would never forget the pleasure and the services that they had received from Chamillart; but delicately confessed that they preferred the interests of the State to their own personal advantage and the support they would lose; that, even if Chamillart were their brother, they would sorrowfully admit the necessity of removing him! At last, nobody could understand either how such a man could ever have been chosen, or how he could have remained so long in his place! All his faults and all his ridicules formed the staple of Court conversation. If anybody referred to the great things he had done, to the rapid gathering of armies after our disasters, people turned on their heels and walked away. Such were the presages of the fall of Chamillart.

The Marechal de Boufflers, who had never forgiven the causes that led to the loss of Lille, joined in the attack on Chamillart; and assisted in exciting the King against him. Chamillart has since related to me that up to the last moment he had always been received equally graciously by the King—that is, up to two days before his fall. Then, indeed, he noticed that the King's countenance was embarrassed; and felt inclined to ask if he was displeasing to him, and to offer to retire. Had he done so, he might, if we may judge from what transpired subsequently, have remained in office. But now Madame de Maintenon had come personally into the field, and, believing herself sure of success, only attacked Chamillart. What passed between her and the King was quite private and never related; but there seems reason to believe that she did not succeed without difficulty.

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On Sunday morning, November 9, the King, on entering the Council of State, called the Duc de Beauvilliers to him, and requested him to go in the afternoon and tell Chamillart that he was obliged, for motives of public interest, to ask him to resign his office; but that, in order to give him a mark of his esteem and satisfaction with his services, he continued his pension of Minister—that is to say, twenty thousand francs—and added as much more, with one to his son of twenty thousand francs likewise. He added that he should have liked to see Chamillart, but that at first it would grieve him too much: he was not to come till sent for; he might live in Paris, and go where he liked. The Duc de Beauvilliers did all he could to escape from carrying so harsh a message, but could only obtain permission to let the Duc de Chevreuse accompany him.

They went to Chamillart, and found him alone, working in his cabinet. The air of consternation with which they entered, told the unfortunate Minister that something disagreeable had happened; and without giving them time to speak, he said, with a serene and tranquil countenance, “What is the matter, gentlemen? If what you have to say concerns only me, you may speak: I have long been prepared for everything.” This gentle firmness touched them still more. They could scarcely explain what they came about. Chamillart listened without any change of countenance, and said, with the same air and tone as at first: “The King is the master. I have endeavoured to serve him to the best of my ability. I hope some one else will please him better, and be more lucky.” He then asked if he had been forbidden to write to the King, and being told not, he wrote a letter of respect and thanks, and sent it by the two Dukes, with a memoir which he had just finished. He also wrote to Madame de Maintenon. He sent a verbal message to his wife; and, without complaint, murmur, or sighs, got into his carriage, and drove to L’Etang. Both then and afterwards he showed the greatest magnanimity. Every one went, from a sort of fashion, to visit him. When I went, the house looked as if a death had taken place; and it was frightful to see, in the midst of cries and tears, the dead man walking, speaking with a quiet, gentle air, and serene brow,—unconstrained, unaffected, attentive to every one, not at all or scarcely different from what he was accustomed to be.

Chamillart, as I have said, had received permission to live at Paris, if he liked; but soon afterwards he innocently gave umbrage to Madame de Maintenon, who was annoyed that his disgrace was not followed by general abandonment. She caused him to be threatened secretly, and he prudently left Paris, and went far away, under pretence of seeking for an estate to buy.

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Next day after the fall of Chamillart, it became known that the triumph of Madame de Maintenon was completed, and that Voysin, her creature, was the succeeding Secretary of State. This Voysin had the one indispensable quality for admission into the counsels of Louis XIV.—not a drop of noble blood in his veins. He had married, in 1683, the daughter of Trudaine. She had a very agreeable countenance, without any affectation. She appeared simple and modest, and occupied with her household and good works; but in reality, had sense, wit, cleverness, above all, a natural insinuation, and the art of bringing things to pass without being perceived. She kept with great tact a magnificent house. It was she who received Madame de Maintenon at Dinan, when the King was besieging Namur; and, as she had been instructed by M. de Luxembourg in the way to please that lady, succeeded most effectually. Among her arts was her modesty, which led her prudently to avoid pressing herself on Madame de Maintenon, or showing herself more than was absolutely necessary. She was sometimes two whole days without seeing her. A trifle, luckily contrived, finished the conquest of Madame de Maintenon. It happened that the weather passed suddenly from excessive heat to a damp cold, which lasted a long time. Immediately, an excellent dressing-gown, simple, and well lined, appeared in the corner of the chamber. This present, by so much the more agreeable, as Madame de Maintenon had not brought any warm clothing, touched her also by its suddenness, and by its simple appearance, as if of its own accord.

In this way, the taste of Madame de Maintenon for Madame Voysin was formed and increased. Madame Voysin obtained an appointment for her husband, and coming to Paris, at last grew extremely familiar with Madame de Maintenon. Voysin himself had much need of the wife that Providence had given him. He was perfectly ignorant of everything but the duties of an Intendant. He was, moreover, rough and uncivil, as the courtiers soon found. He was never unjust for the sake of being so, nor was he bad naturally; but he knew nothing but authority, the King and Madame de Maintenon, whose will was unanswerable—his sovereign law and reason. The choice was settled between the King and Madame de Maintenon after supper, the day of Chamillart's fall. Voysin was conducted to the King by Bloin, after having received the orders and instructions of his benefactress. In the evening of that day, the King found Madame Voysin with Madame de Maintenon, and kissed her several times to please his lady.

Voysin's first experience of the duties of his office was unpleasant. He was foolish enough, feeling his ignorance, to tell the King, that at the outset he should be obliged to leave everything to his Majesty, but that when he knew better, he would take more on himself. The King, to whom Chamillart used himself to leave everything, was much offended by this language; and drawing himself up, in the tone

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of a master, told Voysin to learn, once for all, that his duties were to receive, and expedite orders, nothing else. He then took the projects brought to him, examined them, prescribed the measures he thought fit, and very stiffly sent away Voysin, who did not know where he was, and had great want of his wife to set his head to rights, and of Madame de Maintenon to give him completer lessons than she had yet been able to do. Shortly afterwards he was forbidden to send any orders without submitting them to the Marechal de Boufflers. He was supple, and sure of Madame de Maintenon, and through her of the Marechal, waited for time to release him from this state of tutelage and showed nothing of his annoyance, especially to Boufflers himself.

Events soon happened to alter the position of the Marechal de Boufflers.

Flanders, ever since the opening of the campaign, had been the principal object of attention. Prince Eugene and Marlborough, joined together, continued their vast designs, and disdained to hide them. Their prodigious preparations spoke of sieges. Shall I say that we desired them, and that we thought of nothing but how to preserve, not use our army?

Tournai was the first place towards which the enemies directed their arms. After a short resistance it fell into their hands. Villars, as I have said, was coriander in Flanders. Boufflers feeling that, in the position of affairs, such a post must weigh very heavily upon one man, and that in case of his death there was no one to take his place, offered to go to assist him. The King, after some little hesitation, accepted this magnanimous offer, and Boufflers set out. I say magnanimous offer, because Boufflers, loaded with honours and glory, might well have hoped to pass the rest of his life in repose. It was hardly possible, do what he might, that he could add to his reputation; while, on the other hand, it was not unlikely that he might be made answerable for the faults or shortcomings of others, and return to Paris stripped of some of the laurels that adorned his brow. But he thought only of the welfare of the State, and pressed the King to allow him to depart to Flanders. The King, as I have said, at last consented.

The surprise was great in the army when he arrived there. The general impression was that he was the bearer of news of peace. Villars received him with an air of joy and respect, and at once showed every willingness to act in concert with him. The two generals accordingly worked harmoniously together, taking no steps without consulting each other, and showing great deference for each other's opinions. They were like one man.

[Illustration: Marlborough At Malplaquet—Painted by R. Canton Woodville—596]

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After the fall of Tournai, our army took up position at Malplaquet, the right and the left supported by two woods, with hedges and woods before the centre, so that the plain was, as it were, cut in two. Marlborough and Prince Eugene marched in their turn, fearing lest Villars should embarrass them as they went towards Mons, which place they had resolved to besiege. They sent on a large detachment of their army, under the command of the Prince of Hesse, to watch ours. He arrived in sight of the camp at Malpladuet at the same time that we entered it, and was quickly warned of our existence by, three cannon shots that Villars, out of braggadocio, fired by way of appeal to Marlborough and Prince Eugene. Some little firing took place this day and the next, the 10th of September, but without doing much harm on either side.

Marlborough and Prince Eugene, warned of the perilous state in which the Prince of Hesse was placed—he would have been lost if attacked hastened at once to join him, and arrived in the middle of the morning of the 10th. Their first care was to examine the position of our army, and to do so, while waiting for their rear-guard, they employed a stratagem which succeeded admirably.

They sent several officers, who had the look of subalterns, to our lines, and asked to be allowed to speak to our officers. Their request was granted. Albergotti came down to them, and discoursed with them a long time. They pretended they came to see whether peace could not be arranged, but they, in reality, spoke of little but compliments, which signified nothing. They stayed so long, under various pretexts, that at last we were obliged to threaten them in order to get rid of them. All this time a few of their best general officers on horseback, and a larger number of engineers and designers on foot, profited by these ridiculous colloquies to put upon paper drawings of our position, thus being able to see the best positions for their cannon, and the best mode, in fact, in which all their disposition might be made. We learnt this artifice afterwards from the prisoners.

It was decided that evening to give us battle on the morrow, although the deputies of the States-General, content with the advantages that had been already gained, and not liking to run the risk of failure, were, opposed to an action taking place. They were, however, persuaded to agree, and on the following morning the battle began.

The struggle lasted many hours. But our position had been badly chosen, and, in spite of every effort, we were unable to maintain it. Villars, in the early part of the action, received a wound which incapacitated him from duty. All the burden of command fell upon Boufflers. He bore it well; but after a time finding his army dispersed, his infantry overwhelmed, the ground slipping from under his feet, he thought only of beating a good and honourable retreat. He led away his army in such good order, that the

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enemy were unable to interfere with it in the slightest degree. During all the march, which lasted until night, we did not lose a hundred stragglers, and carried off all the cannon with the exception of a few pieces. The enemy passed the night upon the battle-field, in the midst of twenty-five thousand dead, and marched towards Mons the next evening. They frankly admitted that in men killed and wounded, in general officers and privates, in flags and standards, they had lost more than we. The battle cost them, in fact, seven lieutenant-generals, five other generals, about eighteen hundred officers killed or wounded, and more than fifteen thousand men killed or rendered unfit for service. They openly avowed, also, how much they had been surprised by the valour of the majority of our troops, above all of the cavalry, and did not dissimulate that we should have gained the day, had we been better led.

Why the Marechal Villars waited ten days to be attacked in a position so disadvantageous, instead of at once marching upon the enemies and overcoming, as he might at first easily have done, it is difficult to understand. He threw all the blame upon his wound, although it was well known that the fate of the day was decided long before he was hurt.

Although forced to retire, our men burned with eagerness to engage the enemies again. Mons had been laid siege to. Boufflers tried to make the besiegers give up the undertaking. But his men were without bread and without pay: the subaltern officers were compelled to eat the regulation bread, the general-officers were reduced to the most miserable shifts, and were like the privates, without pay, oftentimes for seven or eight days running. There was no meat and no bread for the army. The common soldiers were reduced to herbs and roots for all sustenance. Under these circumstances it was found impossible to persevere in trying to save *Mons*. Nothing but subsistence could be thought of.

The Court had now become so accustomed to defeats that a battle lost as was Malplaquet seemed half a victory. Boufflers sent a courier to the King with an account of the event, and spoke so favourably of Villars, that all the blame of the defeat fell upon himself. Villars was everywhere pitied and applauded, although he had lost an important battle: when it was in his power to beat the enemies in detail, and render them unable to undertake the siege of Mons, or any other siege. If Boufflers was indignant at this, he was still more indignant at what happened afterwards. In the first dispatch he sent to the King he promised to send another as soon as possible giving full details, with propositions as to how the vacancies which had occurred in the army might be filled up. On the very evening he sent off his second dispatch, he received intelligence that the King had already taken his dispositions with respect to these vacancies, without having consulted him upon

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a single point. This was the first reward Boufflers received for the services he had just rendered, and that, too, from a King who had said in public that without Boufflers all was lost, and that assuredly it was God who had inspired him with the idea of going to the army. From that time Boufflers fell into a disgrace from which he never recovered. He had the courage to appear as usual at the Court; but a worm was gnawing him within and destroyed him. Oftentimes he opened his heart to me without rashness, and without passing the strict limits of his virtue; but the poniard was in his heart, and neither time nor reflection could dull its edge. He did nothing but languish afterwards, yet without being confined to his bed or to his chamber, but did not live more than two years. Villars, on the contrary, was in greater favour than ever. He arrived at Court triumphant. The King made him occupy an apartment at Versailles, so that his wound might be well attended to.

What a contrast! What a difference between the services, the merit, the condition, the virtue, the situation of these two men! What inexhaustible funds of reflection.

CHAPTER L

I have described in its proper place the profound fall of M. le Duc d'Orleans and the neglect in which he lived, out of all favour with the King, hated by Madame de Maintenon and Monseigneur, and regarded with an unfavourable eye by the public, on account of the scandals of his private life. I had long seen that the only way in which he could hope to recover his position would be to give up his mistress, Madame d'Argenton, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy for many years past, to the knowledge and the scandal of all the world. I knew it would be a bold and dangerous game to play, to try to persuade him to separate himself from a woman he had known and loved so long; but I determined to engage in it, nevertheless, and I looked about for some one to assist me in this enterprise. At once I cast my eyes upon the Marechal de Besons, who for many long years had been the bosom friend of M. d'Orleans. He applauded the undertaking, but doubted, he said, its success; nevertheless he promised to aid me to the utmost of his power, and, it will be seen, was as good as his word. For some time I had no opportunity of accosting M. d'Orleans, and was obliged to keep my project in abeyance, but I did not lose sight of it; and when I saw my way clear, I took the matter in hand, determined to strain every nerve in order to succeed.

It was just at the commencement of the year 1710, that I first spoke to M. d'Orleans. I began by extracting from him an admission of the neglect into which he had fallen—the dislike of the King, the hatred of Monseigneur, who accused him of wishing to replace his son in Spain; that of Madame de Maintenon, whom he had offended by his bon mot; the suspicions of the public, who talked of his chemical

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experiments—and then, throwing off all fear of consequences, I said that before he could hope to draw back his friends and the world to him, he must reinstate himself in the favour of the King. He appeared struck with what I had said, rose after a profound silence, paced to and fro, and then asked, “But how?” Seeing the opportunity so good, I replied in a firm and significant tone, “How? I know well enough, but I will never tell you; and yet it is the only thing to do.”—“Ah, I understand you,” said he, as though struck with a thunderbolt; “I understand you perfectly;” and he threw himself upon the chair at the end of the room. There he remained some time, without speaking a word, yet agitated and sighing, and with his eyes lowered. I broke silence at last, by saying that the state which he was in had touched me to the quick, and that I had determined in conjunction with the Marechal de Besons to speak to him upon the subject, and to propose the only means by which he could hope to bring about a change in his position. He considered some time, and then giving me encouragement to proceed, I entered at some length upon the proposal I had to make to him and left him evidently affected by what I had said, when I thought I had for the time gone far enough.

The next day, Thursday, January 2nd, Besons, to whom I had written, joined me; and after I had communicated to him what had passed the previous evening, we hastened to M. d’Orleans. He received us well, and we at once commenced an attack. In order to aid my purpose as much as possible, I repeated to M. d’Orleans, at this meeting, the odious reports that were in circulation against him, *viz.*, that he intended to repudiate his wife forced upon him by the King, in order to marry the Queen Dowager of Spain, and by means of her gold to open up a path for himself to the Spanish throne; that he intended to wait for his new wife’s death, and then marry Madame D’ARGENSON, to whom the genii had promised a throne; and I added, that it was very fortunate that the Duchesse d’Orleans had safely passed through the dangers of her confinement, for already some wretches had begun to spread the saying, that he was not the son of Monsieur for nothing. (An allusion to the death of Henriette d’Angleterre.)

On hearing these words, the Duke was seized with a terror that cannot be described, and at the same time with a grief that is above expression. I took advantage of the effect my discourse had had upon him to show how necessary it was he should make a great effort in order to win back the favour of the King and of the public. I represented to him that the only way to do this was to give up Madame d’Argenton, at once and for ever, and to announce to the King that he had done so. At first he would not hear of such a step, and I was obliged to employ all my eloquence, and all my firmness too, to make him listen to reason. One great obstacle in our way was the repugnance of M. d’Orleans for his wife.

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He had been married, as I have described in the early part of these memoirs, against his will, and with no sort of affection for the woman he was given to. It was natural that he should look upon her with dislike ever since she had become his wife. I did what I could to speak in praise of Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, and Besons aided me; but we did little else than waste our breath for sometime. Our praises in fact irritated M. d'Orleans, and to such a point, that no longer screening things or names, he told us what we should have wished not to hear, but what it was very lucky we did hear. He had suspicions, in fact, of his wife's honour; but fortunately I was able to prove clearly and decisively that those suspicions were unfounded, and I did so. The joy of M. d'Orleans upon finding he had been deceived was great indeed; and when we separated from him after mid-day, in order to go to dinner, I saw that a point was gained.

A little before three o'clock I returned to M. d'Orleans, whom I found alone in his cabinet with Besons. He received me with pleasure, and made me seat myself between him and the Marechal, whom he complimented upon his diligence. Our conversation recommenced. I returned to the attack with all the arguments I could muster, and the Marechal supported me; but I saw with affright that M. d'Orleans was less reduced than when we had quitted him in the morning, and that he had sadly taken breath during our short absence. I saw that, if we were to succeed, we must make the best use we could of our time, and accordingly I brought all my powers into play in order to gain over M. d'Orleans.

Feeling that everything was now to be lost or gained, I spoke out with all the force of which I was capable, surprising and terrifying Marechal Besons to such a point, with my hardihood, that he had not a word to say in order to aid me. When I had finished, M. d'Orleans thanked me in a piteous tone, by which I knew the profound impression I had made upon his mind. I proposed, while he was still shaken, that he should at once send to Madame de Maintenon, to know when she, would grant him an audience; for he had determined to speak to her first of his intention to give up Madame d'Argenton. Besons seconded me; and while we were talking together, not daring to push our point farther, M. d'Orleans much astonished us by rising, running with impetuosity to the door, and calling aloud for his servants. One ran to him, whom he ordered in a whisper to go to Madame de Maintenon, to ask at what hour she would see him on the morrow. He returned immediately, and threw himself into a chair like a man whose strength fails him and who is at his last gasp. Uncertain as to what he had just done, I asked him if he had sent to Madame de Maintenon. "Yes, Monsieur," said he, in a tone of despair. Instantly I started towards him, and thanked him with all the contentment and all the joy imaginable. This terrible interview, for the struggle we had all gone through was very great, was soon after brought to a close, and Besons and myself went our way, congratulating each other on the success of this day's labour.

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On the next day, Friday, the 3rd of January, I saw M. d'Orleans as he preceded the King to mass, and in my impatience I approached him, and speaking in a low tone, asked him if he had seen "that woman." I did not dare to mention names just then. He replied "yes," but in so lackadaisical a tone that I feared he had seen her to effect, and I asked him if he had spoken to her. Upon receiving another "yes," like the other, my emotion redoubled. "But have you told her all?" I said. "Yes," he replied, "I have told her all."—"And are you content?" said I. "Nobody could be more so," he replied; "I was nearly an hour with her, she was very much surprised and ravished."

I saw M. d'Orleans under better circumstances at another period of the day, and then I learnt from him that since meeting me he had spoken to the King also, and told him all. "Ah, Monsieur," cried I with transport, "how I love you!" and advancing warmly toward him, I added, "How glad I am to see you at last delivered; how did you bring this to pass?"—"I mistrusted myself so much," replied he, "and was so violently agitated after speaking to Madame de Maintenon, that I feared to run the risk of pausing all the morning; so, immediately after mass I spoke to the King, and—" here, overcome by his grief, his voice faltered, and he burst into sighs, into tears, and into sobs. I retired into a corner. A moment after Besons entered: the spectacle and the profound silence astonished him. He lowered his eyes, and advanced but little. At last we gently approached each other. I told him that M. d'Orleans had conquered himself, and had spoken to the King. The Marechal was so bewildered with surprise and joy that he remained for some moments speechless and motionless: then running towards M. d'Orleans, he thanked him, felicitated him, and wept for very joy. M. d'Orleans was cruelly agitated, now maintaining a ferocious silence, and now bursting into a torrent of sighs, sobs, and tears. He said at last that Madame de Maintenon had been extremely surprised with the resolution he had taken, and at the same time delighted. She assured him that it would put him on better terms than ever with the King, and that Madame d'Argenton should be treated with every consideration. I pressed M. d'Orleans to let us know how the King had received him. He replied that the King had appeared very much surprised, but had spoken coldly. I comforted him for this disappointment by assuring him that the King's coldness arose only from his astonishment, and that in the end all would be well.

It would be impossible to describe the joy felt by Besons and myself at seeing our labours brought to this satisfactory point. I knew I should make many enemies when the part I had taken in influencing M. d'Orleans to give up Madame d'Argenton came to be known, as it necessarily would; but I felt I had done rightly, and left the consequences to Providence. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans showed me the utmost

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gratitude for what I had done. She exhibited, too, so much intelligence, good sense, and ability, in the conversation I had with her, that I determined to spare no pains to unite her husband to her more closely; being firmly persuaded that he would nowhere find a better counsellor than in her. The surprise of the whole Court, when it became known that M. d'Orleans had at last separated himself from Madame d'Argenton, was great indeed. It was only equalled by the vexation of those who were opposed to him. Of course in this matter I was not spared. For several days nothing was spoken of but this rupture, and everywhere I was pointed out as the author of it,

Besons being scarcely alluded to. I parried the thrust made at me as well as I could, as much for the purpose of leaving all the honour to M. d'Orleans, as for the purpose of avoiding the anger of those who were annoyed with me; and also from a just fear of showing that I had too much influence over the mind of a Prince not without faults, and who could not always be led.

As for Madame d'Argenton, she received the news that her reign was over with all the consternation, rage, and despair that might have been expected. Mademoiselle de Chausseraye was sent by Madame de Maintenon to announce the ill news to her. When Mademoiselle de Chausseraye arrived at Madame l'Argenton's house, Madame d'Argenton was out she had gone to supper with the Princesse de Rohan. Mademoiselle de Chausseraye waited until she returned, and then broke the matter to her gently, and after much preamble and circumlocution, as though she were about to announce the death of some one.

The tears, the cries, the howlings of Madame d'Argenton filled the house, and announced to all the domestics that the reign of felicity was at an end there. After a long silence on the part of Mademoiselle de Chausseraye, she spoke her best in order to appease the poor lady. She represented to her the delicacy and liberality of the arrangements M. d'Orleans had made in her behalf. In the first place she was free to live in any part of the, realm except Paris and its appanages. In the next place he assured to her forty-five thousand livres a year, nearly all the capital of which would belong to the son he had had by her, whom he had recognised and made legitimate, and who has since become Grandee of Spain, Grand Prieur of France, and General of the Galleys (for the best of all conditions in France is to have none at all, and to be a bastard). Lastly he undertook to pay all her debts up to the day of the rupture, so that she should not be importuned by any creditor, and allowed her to retain her jewellery, her plate, her furniture—worth altogether about four hundred thousand livres. His liberality amounted to a total of about two million livres, which I thought prodigious.

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Madame d'Argenton, in despair at first, became more tractable as she learnt the provisions which had been made for her, and the delicacy with which she was treated. She remained four days in Paris, and then returned to her father's house near Port-Sainte-Maxence, the Chevalier d'Orleans, her son, remaining at the Palais Royal. The King after his first surprise had worn away, was in the greatest joy at the rupture; and testified his gratification to M. d'Orleans, whom he treated better and better every day. Madame de Maintenon did not dare not to contribute a little at first; and in this the Prince felt the friendship of the Jesuits, whom he had contrived to attach to him.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne did marvels of her own accord; and the Duc de Bourgogne, also, being urged by M. de Beauvilliers. Monseigneur alone remained irritated, on account of the Spanish affair.

I must here mention the death of M. le Duc. He was engaged in a trial which was just about to be pleaded. He had for some time suffered from a strange disease, a mixture of apoplexy and epilepsy, which he concealed so carefully, that he drove away one of his servants for speaking of it to his fellows.

For some time he had had a continual headache. This state troubled the gladness he felt at being delivered from his troublesome father and brother-in-law. One evening he was riding in his carriage, returning from a visit to the Hotel de Coislin, without torches, and with only one servant behind, when he felt so ill that he drew the string, and made his lackey get up to tell him whether his mouth was not all on one side. This was not the case, but he soon lost speech and consciousness after having requested to be taken in privately to the Hotel de Conde. They there put him in bed. Priests and doctors came. But he only made horrible faces, and died about four o'clock in the morning.

Madame la Duchesse did not lose her presence of mind, and, whilst her husband was dying, took steps to secure her future fortune. Meanwhile she managed to cry a little, but nobody believed in her grief. As for M. le Duc, I have already mentioned some anecdotes of him that exhibit his cruel character. He was a marvellously little man, short, without being fat. A dwarf of Madame la Princesse was said to be the cause. He was of a livid yellow, nearly always looked furious, and was ever so proud, so audacious, that it was difficult to get used to him. His cruelty and ferocity were so extreme that people avoided him, and his pretended friends would not invite him to join in any merriment. They avoided him: he ran after them to escape from solitude, and would sometimes burst upon them during their jovial repasts, reproach them with turning a cold shoulder to him, and change their merriment to desolation.

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After the death of M. le Duc, a grand discussion on precedence at the After-suppers, set on foot by the proud Duchesse d'Orleans, was,—after an elaborate examination by the King, brought to a close. The King ordered his determination to be kept secret until he formally declared it. It is necessary to set forth in a few words the mechanism of the After-suppers every day. The King, on leaving table, stopped less than a half-quarter of an hour with his back leaning against the balustrade of his chamber. He there found in a circle all the ladies who had been at his supper, and who came there to wait for him a little before he left table, except the ladies who sat, who came out after him, and who, in the suite of the Princes and the Princesses who had supped with him, advanced one by one and made him a courtesy, and filled up the remainder of the standing circle; for a space was always left for them by the other ladies. The men stood behind. The King amused himself by observing the dresses, the countenances, and the gracefulness of the ladies courtesies, said a word to the Princes and Princesses who had supped with him, and who closed the circle near him on either hand, then bowed to the ladies on right and left, bowed once or twice more as he went away, with a grace and majesty unparalleled, spoke sometimes, but very rarely, to some lady in passing, entered the first cabinet, where he gave the order, and then advanced to the second cabinet, the doors from the first to the second always remaining open. There he placed himself in a fauteuil, Monsieur, while he was there, in another; the Duchesse de Bourgogne, Madame (but only after the death of Monsieur), the Duchesse de Berry (after her marriage), the three bastard-daughters, and Madame du Maine (when she was at Versailles), on stools on each side. Monseigneur, the Duc de Bourgogne, the Duc de Berry, the Duc d'Orleans, the two bastards, M. le Duc (as the husband of Madame la Duchesse), and afterwards the two sons of M. du Maine, when they had grown a little, and D'Antin, came afterwards, all standing. It was the object of the Duchesse d'Orleans to change this order, and make her daughters take precedence of the wives of the Princes of the blood; but the King declared against her. When he made the public announcement of his decision, the Duc d'Orleans took the opportunity of alluding to a marriage which would console him for everything. "I should think so," replied the King, dryly, and with a bitter and mocking smile.

CHAPTER LI

It was the desire of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans to marry Mademoiselle (their daughter) to the Duc de Berry (third son of Monseigneur, and consequently brother of the Duc de Bourgogne and of the King of Spain). There were many obstacles in the way—partly the state of public affairs —partly the fact that the King, though seemingly, was not really quite reconciled—partly the recollection

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of that cruel 'bon mot' in Spain— partly the fact that Monseigneur would naturally object to marry his favourite son with the daughter of a man toward whom he always testified hatred in the most indecent manner. The recent union between Madame de Maintenon, Mademoiselle Choin, and Monseigneur was also a great obstacle. In fact after what M. le Duc d'Orleans had been accused of in Spain, with his abilities and talents it seemed dangerous to make him the father-in-law of M. le Duc de Berry.

For my part I passionately desired the marriage of Mademoiselle, although I saw that all tended to the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bourbon, daughter of Madame la Duchesse, in her place. I had many reasons, private and public, for acting against the latter marriage; but it was clear that unless very vigorous steps were taken it would fall like a mill-stone upon my head, crush me, and wound the persons to whom I was attached. M. le Duc d'Orleans and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans were immersed in the deepest indolence. They desired, but did not act. I went to them and explained the state of the case—pointed out the danger of Madame la Duchesse—excited their pride, their jealousy, their spite. Will it be believed that it was necessary to put all this machinery in motion? At last, by working on them by the most powerful motives, I made them attend to their own interests. The natural but extreme laziness of the Duchesse d'Orleans gave way this time, but less to ambition than to the desire of defeating a sister who was so inimical to her. We next concerted how we should make use of M. d'Orleans himself.

That Prince, with all his wit and his passion for Mademoiselle—which had never weakened since her birth—was like a motionless beam, which stirred only in obedience to our redoubled efforts, and who remained so to the conclusion of this great business. I often reflected on the causes of this incredible conduct, and was led to suppose that the knowledge of the irremediable nature of what had taken place in Spain was the rein that restrained him. However this may have been, I was throughout obliged to use main force to bring him to activity. I determined to form and direct a powerful cabal in order to bring my views to pass. The first person of whom it was necessary to make sure was the Duchesse de Bourgogne. That Princess had many reasons for the preference of Mademoiselle over Mademoiselle de Bourbon (daughter of Madame la Duchesse). She knew the King perfectly; and could not be ignorant of the power of novelty over his mind, of which power she had herself made a happy experiment. What she had to fear was another herself—I mean a Princess on the same terms with the King as she was, who, being younger than she, would amuse him by new childish playfulness no longer suited to her age, and yet which she (the Duchess) was still obliged to employ. The very contrast of her own untimely childishness, with a childishness so much more natural,

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would injure her. The new favourite would, moreover, not have a husband to support; for the Duc de Berry was already well liked. The Duc de Bourgogne, on the contrary, since the affair of Flanders, had fallen into disgrace with his father, Monseigneur; and his scruples, his preciseness, his retired life, devoted to literal compliance with the rules of devotion, contrasted unfavourably with the free life of his younger brother.

The present and the future—whatever was important in life—were therefore at stake with Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne; and yet her great duty to herself was perpetually in danger of being stifled by the fictitious and petty duties of daily life. It was necessary to stimulate her. She felt these things in general; and that it was necessary that her sister-in-law should be a Princess, neither able nor willing to give her umbrage, and over whom she should be mistress. But in spite of her wit and sense, she was not capable of feeling in a sufficiently lively manner of herself all the importance of these things, amidst the effervescence of her youth, the occupation of her successive duties, the private and general favour she seemed to enjoy, the greatness of a rank in expectation of a throne, the round of amusements which dissipated her mind and her days: gentle, light, easy—perhaps too easy. I felt, however, that from the effect of these considerations upon her I should derive the greatest assistance, on account of the influence she could exert upon the King, and still more on Madame de Maintenon, both of whom loved her exceedingly; and I felt also that the Duchesse d'Orleans would have neither the grace nor the fire necessary to stick it in deep enough —on account of her great interest in the matter.

I influenced the Duchesse de Villeroy and Madame de Levi, who could work on the Duchess, and also Madame d'O; obtained the indirect assistance of M. du Maine—and by representing to the Ducs de Chevreuse, and de Beauvilliers, that if M. de Berry married Mademoiselle de Bourbon, hatred would arise between him and his brother, and great danger to the state, enlisted them also on my side. I knew that the Joie de Berry was a fort that could only be carried by mine and assault. Working still further, I obtained the concurrence of the Jesuits; and made the Pere de Trevoux our partisan. Nothing is indifferent to the Jesuits. They became a powerful instrument. As a last ally I obtained the co-operation of the Marechal de Boufflers. Such were the machines that my friendship for those to whom I was attached, my hatred for Madame la Duchesse, my care of my present and future situation, enabled me to discover, to set going, with an exact and compassed movement, a precise agreement, and the strength of a lever—which the space of one Lent commenced and perfected—all whose movements, embarrassments, and progress in their divers lines I knew; and which I regularly wound up in reciprocal cadence every day!

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Towards the end of the Lent, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, having sounded the King and Madame de Maintenon, had found the latter well disposed, and the former without any particular objection. One day that Mademoiselle had been taken to see the King at the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, where Monseigneur happened to be, the Duchesse de Bourgogne praised her, and when she had gone away, ventured, with that freedom and that predetermined impulsiveness and gaiety which she sometimes made use of, to say: "What an excellent wife for M. le Duc de Berry!" This expression made Monseigneur redden with anger, and exclaim, "that would be an excellent method of recompensing the Duc d'Orleans for his conduct in Spain!" When he had said these words he hastily left the company, all very much astonished; for no one expected a person seemingly so indifferent and so measured to come out so strongly. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, who had only spoken so to feel the way with Monseigneur in presence of the King, was bold and clever to the end. Turning with a bewildered look towards Madame de Maintenon, "My Aunt," quoth she to her, "have I said something foolish?" the King, piqued, answered for Madame de Maintenon, and said, warmly, that if Madame la Duchesse was working upon Monseigneur she would have to deal with him. Madame de Maintenon adroitly envenomed the matter by wondering at a vivacity so uncommon with Monseigneur, and said that if Madame la Duchesse had that much of influence, she would soon make him do other things of more consequence. The conversation, interrupted in various ways and renewed, advanced with emotion, and in the midst of reflections that did more injury to Mademoiselle de Bourbon than the friendship of Monseigneur for Madame la Duchesse could serve her.

When I learned this adventure, I saw that it was necessary to attack Monseigneur by piquing the King against Madame la Duchesse, and making him fear the influence of that Princess on Monseigneur and through Monseigneur on himself; that no opportunity should be lost to impress on the King the fear of being governed and kept in pupillage by his children; that it was equally important to frighten Madame de Maintenon, and show her the danger she was in from the influence of Monseigneur. I worked on the fears of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, by Madame de Villeroy and de Levi; on the Duc de Bourgogne, by M. de Beauvilliers; on Madame de Maintenon, by the Marechal de Boufflers; on the King himself, by the Pere Tellier; and all these batteries succeeded.

In order not to hurry matters too much, I took a turn to La Ferme, and then came back to Marly just as the King arrived. Here I had a little alarm, which did not, however, discourage me. I learned, in fact, that one day the Duchesse de Bourgogne, urged perhaps rather too much on the subject of Mademoiselle by Madame d'O, and somewhat annoyed, had shown an inclination for a foreign marriage. Would to God that such a marriage could have been brought about! I should always have preferred it, but there were many reasons to render it impossible.

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On my arrival at Marly, I found everything in trouble there: the King so chagrined that he could not hide it—although usually a master of himself and of his face: the Court believing that some new disaster had happened which would unwillingly be declared. Four or five days passed in this way: at last it became known what was in the wind. The King, informed that Paris and all the public were murmuring loudly about the expenses of Marly—at a time when it was impossible to meet the most indispensable claims of a necessary and unfortunate war—was more annoyed this time than on any other occasion, although he had often received the same warnings. Madame de Maintenon had the greatest difficulty to hinder him from returning straight to Versailles. The upshot was that the King declared with a sort of bitter joy, that he would no longer feed the ladies at Marly; that for the future he would dine alone, simply, as at Versailles; that he would sup every day at a table for sixteen with his family, and that the spare places should be occupied by ladies invited in the morning; that the Princesses of his family should each have a table for the ladies they brought with them; and that Mesdames Voysin and Desmarets should each have one for the ladies who did not choose to eat in their own rooms. He added bitterly, that by making retrenchments at Marly he should not spend more there than at Versailles, so that he could go there when he pleased without being exposed to the blame of any one. He deceived himself from one end of this business to the other, but nobody but himself was deceived, if indeed he was in any other way but in expecting to deceive the world. The truth is, that no change was made at Marly, except in name. The same expenses went on. The enemies insultingly ridiculed these retrenchments. The King's subjects did not cease to complain.

About this time an invitation to Marly having been obtained by Madame la Duchesse for her daughters, Mademoiselles de Bourbon and de Charolois, the King offered one to Mademoiselle. This offer was discussed before the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans and me. We at last resolved to leave Mademoiselle at Versailles; and not to be troubled by seeing Mademoiselle de Bourbon passing her days in the same salon, often at the same play-table with the Duc de Berry, making herself admired by the Court, fluttering round Monseigneur, and accustoming the eye of the King to her. We knew that these trifles would not bring about a marriage; and it was still more important not to give up Mademoiselle to the malignity of the Court, to exposure, and complaints, from which it might not always be possible to protect her.

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But I had felt that it was necessary to act vigorously, and pressed the Duc d'Orleans to speak to the King. To my surprise he suddenly heaped up objections, derived from the public disasters, with which a princely marriage would contrast disagreeably. The Duchesse d'Orleans was strangely staggered by this admission; it only angered me. I answered by repeating all my arguments. At last he gave way, and agreed to write to the King. Here, again, I had many difficulties to overcome, and was obliged, in fact, to write the letter myself, and dictate it to him. He made one or two changes; and at last signed and sealed it. But I had the greatest difficulty yet in inciting him to give it to the King. I had to follow him, to urge him, to pique him, almost to push him into the presence. The King received the letter very graciously; it had its effect; and the marriage was resolved on.

When the preliminaries were settled, the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans began to show their desire that Madame de Saint-Simon should be lady of honour to their daughter when she had become the Duchesse de Berry. I was far from flattered by this distinction and refused as best I might. Madame de Saint-Simon went to have an audience of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and asked not to be appointed; but her objections were not listened to, or listened to with astonishment. Meanwhile I endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation of the Duc d'Orleans with La Choin; but utterly failed. La Choin positively refused to have anything to do with the Duke and Duchess. I was much embarrassed to communicate this news to them, to whom I was attached. It was necessary; however, to do so. I hastened to Saint-Cloud, and found the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans at table with Mademoiselle and some ladies in a most delightful menagerie, adjoining the railing of the avenue near the village, with a charming pleasure-garden attached to it. All this belonged, under the name of Mademoiselle, to Madame de Mare, her governess. I sat down and chatted with them; but the impatience of the Duc d'Orleans to learn the news could not be checked. He asked me if I was very satisfied. "Middling," I replied, not to spoil his dinner; but he rose at once and took me into the garden. He was much affected to hear of the ill-success of my negotiation; and returned downcast to table. I took the first opportunity to blame his impatience, and the facility with which he allowed the impressions he received to appear. Always in extreme, he said he cared not; and talked wildly of planting cabbages—talk in which he indulged often without meaning anything.

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Soon after, M. le Duc d'Orleans went aside with Mademoiselle, and I found myself placed accidentally near Madame de Fontaine-Martel. She was a great friend of mine, and much attached to M. d'Orleans; and it was by her means that I had become friendly with the Duke. She felt at once that something was going on; and did not doubt that the marriage of Mademoiselle was on the carpet. She said so, but I did not answer, yet without assuming an air of reserve that would have convinced her. Taking her text from the presence of M. le Duc d'Orleans with Mademoiselle, she said to me confidentially, that it would be well to hasten this marriage if it was possible, because all sorts of horrible things were invented to prevent it; and without waiting to be too much pressed, she told me that the most abominable stories were in circulation as to the friendship of father and daughter. The hair of my head stood on end. I now felt more heavily than ever with what demons we had to do; and how necessary it was to hurry on matters. For this reason, after we had walked about a good deal after dark, I again spoke with M. d'Orleans, and told him that if, before the end of this voyage to Marly, he did not carry the declaration of his daughter's marriage, it would never take place.

I persuaded him; and left him more animated and encouraged than I had seen him. He amused himself I know not in what other part of the house. I then talked a little with Madame de Mare, my relation and friend, until I was told that Madame de Fontaine-Martel wished to speak to me in the chateau. When I went there I was taken to the cabinet of the Duchesse d'Orleans, when I learnt that she had just been made acquainted with the abominable reports spread against her husband and daughter. We deplored together the misfortune of having to do with such furies. The Duchess protested that there was not even any seeming in favour of these calumnies. The Duke had ever tenderly loved his daughter from the age of two years, when he was nearly driven to despair by a serious illness she had, during which he watched her night and day; and this tenderness had gone on increasing day by day, so that he loved her more than his son. We agreed that it would be cruel, wicked, and dangerous to tell M. d'Orleans what was said.

At length the decisive blow was struck. The King had an interview with Monseigneur; and told him he had determined on the marriage, begging him to make up his mind as soon as possible. The declaration was soon made. What must have been the state of Madame la Duchesse! I never knew what took place in her house at this strange moment; and would have dearly paid for a hiding-place behind the tapestry. As for Monseigneur, as soon as his original repugnance was overcome, and he saw that it was necessary to comply, he behaved very well. He received the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans very well, and kissed her and drank their health and that of all the family cheerfully. They were extremely delighted and surprised.

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My next visit to Saint-Cloud was very different from that in which I reported the failure of my endeavours with Mademoiselle Choin. I was received in triumph before a large company. To my surprise, Mademoiselle, as soon as I appeared, ran towards me, kissed me on both cheeks, took me by the hand, and led me into the orangery. Then she thanked me, and admitted that her father had constantly kept her acquainted with all the negotiations as they went on. I could not help blaming his easiness and imprudence. She mingled all with testimonies of the most lively joy; and I was surprised by her grace, her eloquence, the dignity and the propriety of the terms she used. I learned an immense number of things in this half-hour's conversation. Afterwards Mademoiselle took the opportunity to say and do all manner of graceful things to Madame de Saint-Simon.

The Duchesse d'Orleans now returned once more to the charge, in order to persuade my wife to be dame d'honneur to her daughter. I refused as firmly as I could. But soon after the King himself named Madame de Saint-Simon; and when the Duchesse de Bourgogne suggested a doubt of her acceptance, exclaimed, almost piqued: "Refuse! O, no! not when she learns that it is my desire." In fact, I soon received so many menacing warnings that I was obliged to give in; and Madame de Saint-Simon received the appointment. This was made publicly known by the King, who up to that very morning remained doubtful whether he would be met by a refusal or not; and who, as he was about to speak, looked at me with a smile that was meant to please and warn me to be silent. Madame de Saint-Simon learned the news with tears. She was excellently well received by the King, and complimented agreeably by Madame de Maintenon.

The marriage took place with the usual ceremonies. The Duc de Beauvilliers and Madame de Saint-Simon drew the curtains of the couple when they went to bed; and laughed together at being thus employed. The King, who had given a very mediocre present of diamonds to the new Duchesse de Berry, gave nothing to the Duc de Berry. The latter had so little money that he could not play during the first days of the voyage to Marly. The Duchesse de Bourgogne told this to the King, who, feeling the state in which he himself was, said that he had only five hundred pistoles to give him. He gave them with an excuse on the misfortunes of the time, because the Duchesse de Bourgogne thought with reason that a little was better than nothing, and that it was insufferable not to be able to play.

Madame de Mare was now set at liberty. The place of Dame d'Atours was offered to her; but she advanced many reasons for not accepting it, and on being pressed, refused with an obstinacy that surprised every one. We were not long in finding out the cause of her obstinate unwillingness to remain with Madame la Duchesse de Berry. The more that Princess allowed people to see what she was—and she

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never concealed herself—the more we saw that Madame de Mare was in the right; and the more we admired the miracle of care and prudence which had prevented anything from coming to light; and the more we felt how blindly people act in what they desire with the most eagerness, and achieve with much trouble and much joy; and the more we deplored having succeeded in an affair which, so far from having undertaken and carried out as I did, I should have traversed with still greater zeal, even if Mademoiselle de Bourbon had profited thereby without knowing it, if I had known half a quarter—what do I say? the thousandth part—of what we unhappily witnessed! I shall say no more for the present; and as I go on, I shall only say what cannot be concealed; and I say thus much so soon merely because the strange things that soon happened began to develop themselves a little during this first voyage to Marly.

CHAPTER LII

On Saturday, the 15th of February, the King was waked up at seven o'clock in the morning, an hour earlier than usual, because Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne was in the pains of labour. He dressed himself diligently in order to go to her. She did not keep him waiting long. At three minutes and three seconds after eight o'clock, she brought into the world a Duc d'Anjou, who is the King Louis XV., at present reigning, which caused a great joy. This Prince was soon after sprinkled by Cardinal de Janson in the chamber where he was born, and then carried upon the knees of the Duchesse de Ventadour in the sedan chair of the King into the King's apartments, accompanied by the Marechal de Boufflers and by the body-guards with officers. A little while after La Villiere carried to him the cordon bleu, and all the Court went to see him, two things which much displeased his brother, who did not scruple to show it. Madame de Saint-Simon, who was in the chamber of Madame la Dauphine, was by chance one of the first who saw this new-born Prince. The accouchement passed over very well.

About this time died the Marechale de la Meilleraye, aged eighty-eight years. She was the paternal aunt of the Marechal de Villeroy and the Duc de Brissac, his brother-in-law. It was she who unwittingly put the cap on *mm.* de Brissac, which they have ever since worn in their arms, and which has been imitated. She was walking in a picture gallery of her ancestors one day with her niece, a lively, merry person, whom she obliged to salute and be polite to each portrait, and who in pleasant revenge persuaded her that one of the said portraits wore a cap which proved him to be an Italian Prince. She swallowed this, and had the cap introduced into her, arms, despite her family, who are now obliged to keep it, but who always call it, "My Aunt's cap." On another occasion, people were speaking in her presence of the death of the Chevalier de Savoie, brother of the Comte de Soissons, and of the famous

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Prince Eugene, who died very young, very suddenly, very debauched; and full of benefices. The talk became religious. She listened some time, and then, with a profound look of conviction, said: "For my part, I am persuaded that God will think twice about damning a man of such high birth as that!" This caused a burst of laughter, but nothing could make her change her opinion. Her vanity was cruelly punished. She used to affect to apologise for having married the Marechal de la Meilleraye. After his death, being in love with Saint-Ruth, her page, she married him; but took care not to disclose her marriage for fear of losing her distinction at Court. Saint-Ruth was a very honourable gentleman, very poor, tall, and well made, whom everybody knew; extremely ugly—I don't know whether he became so after his marriage. He was a worthy man and a good soldier. But he was also a rough customer, and when his distinguished wife annoyed him he twirled his cudgel and belaboured her soundly. This went so far that the Marechale, not being able to stand it any longer, demanded an audience of the King, admitted her weakness and her shame, and implored his protection. The King kindly promised to set matters to rights. He soundly rated Saint-Ruth in his cabinet, and forbade him to ill-treat the Marechale. But what is bred in the bone will never get out of the flesh. The Marechale came to make fresh complaints. The King grew angry in earnest, and threatened Saint-Ruth. This kept him quiet for some time. But the habit of the stick was too powerful; and he flourished it again. The Marechale flew as usual to the King, who, seeing that Saint-Ruth was incorrigible, was good enough to send him to Guyenne under pretence, of employment. Afterwards he was sent to Ireland; where he was killed.

The Marechale de la Meilleraye had been perfectly beautiful, and was full of wit. She so turned the head of the Cardinal de Retz, that he wanted to turn everything topsy-turvy in France, in order to make himself, a necessary man and force the King to use his influence at Rome in order to obtain a dispensation by which he (the Cardinal) should be allowed, though a priest—and a consecrated bishop, to marry the Marechale de la Meilleraye while her husband was alive and she on very good terms with him! This madness is inconceivable and yet existed.

I have described in its place the disgrace of Cardinal de Bouillon, and the banishment to which he was sentenced. Exile did not improve him. He languished in weariness and rage, and saw no hope that his position would ever change. Incapable of repose, he had passed all his long enforced leisure in a monastic war. The monks of Cluni were his antagonists. He was constantly bringing actions against them, which they as constantly defended. He accused them of revolt—they accused him of scheming. They profited by his disgrace, and omitted nothing to shake off the yoke which, when in favour, he had

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imposed on them. These broils went on, until at last a suit, which Cardinal de Bouillon had commenced against the refractory monks, and which had been carried into Grand Council of Paris, was decided against him, notwithstanding all the efforts he made to obtain a contrary verdict. This was the last drop which made the too full cup overflow, and which consummated the resolution that Cardinal had long since had in his head, and which he now executed.

By the terms of his exile, he was allowed to visit, without restraint, his various abbeys, situated in different parts of the realm. He took advantage of this privilege, gave out that he was going to Normandy, but instead of doing so, posted away to Picardy, stopped briefly at Abbeville, gained Arras, where he had the Abbey of Saint-Waast, thence feigning to go and see his abbey of Vigogne, he passed over into the camp of the enemy, and threw himself into the arms of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene. The Prince d'Auvergne, his nephew, had deserted from France in a similar manner some time before, as I have related in its place, and was in waiting to receive the Cardinal, who was also very graciously welcomed by Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, who introduced him to the heads of the army, and lavished upon him the greatest honours.

Such a change of condition appeared very sweet to this spirit so haughty and so ulcerated, and marvellously inflated the Cardinal's courage. He recompensed his dear hosts by discourses, which were the most agreeable to them, upon the misery of France (which his frequent journeys through the provinces had placed before his eyes), upon its powerlessness to sustain the war; upon the discontent which reigned among the people; upon the exhaustion of the finances; in fine, he spared nothing that perfidy or ingratitude could suggest to flatter them and gain their favour.

No sooner had the Cardinal had time to turn round among his new friends than he wrote a letter to the King announcing his flight—a letter which was such a monstrous production of insolence, of madness, of felony, and which was written in a style so extravagant and confused that it deserves to be thus specially alluded to. In this letter, as full of absurdities, impudence, and of madness, as of words, the Cardinal, while pretending much devotion for the King, and much submission to the Church, plainly intimated that he cared for neither. Although this was as the sting of a gnat upon an elephant, the King was horribly piqued at it. He received the letter on the 24th of May, gave it the next day to D'Aguesseau, attorney-general, and ordered him to commence a suit against Cardinal de Bouillon, as guilty of felony. At the same time the King wrote to Rome, enclosing a copy of Bouillon's letter, so that it might be laid before the Pope. This letter received little approbation. People considered that the King had forgotten his dignity in writing it, it seemed so much like a justification and so little worthy, of a great monarch. As for the Cardinal de Bouillon, he grew more haughty than ever. He wrote a letter upon the subject of this trial with which he was threatened, even more violent than

his previous letter, and proclaimed that cardinals were not in any way amenable to secular justice, and could not be judged except by the Pope and all the sacred college.

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So in fact it seemed to, be; for although the Parliament commenced the trial, and issued an order of arrest against the Cardinal, they soon found themselves stopped by difficulties which arose, and by this immunity of the cardinals, which was supported by many examples. After all the fuss made, therefore, this cause fell by its own weakness, and exhaled itself, so to speak, in insensible perspiration. A fine lesson this for the most powerful princes, and calculated to teach them that if they want to be served by Rome they should favour those that are there, instead of raising their own subjects, who, out of Rome, can be of no service to the State; and who are good only to seize three or four hundred thousand livres a year in benefices, with the quarter of which an Italian would be more than recompensed. A French cardinal in France is the friend of the Pope, but the enemy of the King, the Church, and the State; a tyrant very often to the clergy and the ministers, at liberty to do what he likes without ever being punished for anything.

As nothing could be done in this way against the Cardinal, other steps were taken. The fraudulent "Genealogical History of the House of Auvergne," which I have previously alluded to, was suppressed by royal edict, and orders given that all the copies of it should be seized. Baluze, who had written it, was deprived of his chair of Professor of the Royal College, and driven out of the realm. A large quantity of copies of this edict were printed and publicly distributed. The little patrimony that Cardinal de Bouillon had not been able to carry away, was immediately confiscated: the temporality of his benefices had been already seized, and on the 7th of July appeared a declaration from the King, which, depriving the Cardinal of all his advowsons, distributed them to the bishops of the dioceses in which those advowsons were situated.

These blows were very sensibly felt by the other Bouillons, but it was no time for complaint. The Cardinal himself became more enraged than ever. Even up to this time he had kept so little within bounds that he had pontifically officiated in the church of Tournai at the Te Deum for the taking of Douai (by the enemies); and from that town (Tournai), where he had fixed his residence, he wrote a long letter to M. de Beauvais,—bishop of the place, when it yielded, and who would not sing the Te Deum, exhorting him to return to Tournai and submit to the new rule. Some time after this, that is to say, towards the end of the year, he was guilty of even greater presumption. The Abbey of Saint-Arnaud, in Flanders, had just been given by the King to Cardinal La Tremoille, who had been confirmed in his possession by bulls from the Pope. Since then the abbey had fallen into the power of the enemy. Upon this, Cardinal de Bouillon caused himself to be elected Abbot by a minority of the monks and in spite of the opposition of the others. It was curious to see this dutiful son of Rome, who had declared in his letter to the King, that he thought of nothing except the dignity of the King, and how he could best. serve God and the Church, thus elect him self in spite of the bull of the Pope, in spite of the orders of the King, and enjoy by force the revenues of the abbey, protected solely by heretics!

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But I have in the above recital alluded to the taking of Douai: this reminds me that I have got to speak of our military movements, our losses, and our victories, of this year. In Flanders and in Spain they were of some importance, and had better, perhaps, have a chapter or more to themselves.

CHAPTER LIII

The King, who had made numberless promotions, appointed this year the same generals to the same armies. Villars was chosen for Flanders, as before. Having, arrived at the very summit of favour, he thought he might venture, for the first time in his life, to bring a few truths before the King. He did nothing then but represent to the ministers, nay, even to the King and Madame de Maintenon themselves, the wretched state of our magazines and our garrisons; the utter absence of all provision for the campaign, and the piteous condition of the troops and their officers, without money and without pay. This was new language in the mouth of Villars, who hitherto had owed all his success to the smiling, rose-tinted account he had given of everything. It was the frequency and the hardihood of his falsehoods in this respect that made the King and Madame de Maintenon look upon him as their sole resource; for he never said anything disagreeable, and never found difficulties anywhere. Now that he had raised this fatal curtain, the aspect appeared so hideous to them, that they found it easier to fly into a rage than to reply. From that moment they began to regard Villars with other eyes. Finding that he spoke now the language which everybody spoke, they began to look upon him as the world had always looked upon him, to find him ridiculous, silly, impudent, lying, insupportable; to reproach themselves with having elevated him from nothing, so rapidly and so enormously; they began to shun him, to put him aside, to make him perceive what they thought, and to let others perceive it also.

Villars in his turn was frightened. He saw the prospect of losing what he had gained, and of sinking into hopeless disgrace. With the effrontery that was natural to him, he returned therefore to his usual flatteries, artifices, and deceits; laughed at all dangers and inconveniences, as having resources in himself against everything! The coarseness of this variation was as plain as possible; but the difficulty of choosing another general was equally plain, and Villars thus got out of the quagmire. He set forth for the frontier, therefore, in his coach, and travelling easy stages, on account of his wound, arrived in due time at the army.

Neither Prince Eugene nor the Duke of Marlborough wished for peace; their object was, the first, from personal vengeance against the King, and a desire to obtain a still greater reputation; the second, to get rich, for ambition was the prominent passion of one, and avarice of the other— their object was, I say, to enter France, and, profiting by the extreme weakness and straitened state of our troops and of our places, to push their conquests as far as possible.

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As for the King, stung by his continual losses, he wished passionately for nothing so much as a victory, which should disturb the plans of the enemies, and deliver him from the necessity of continuing the sad and shameful negotiations for peace he had set on foot at Gertruydemberg. But the enemies were well posted, and Villars had imprudently lost a good opportunity of engaging them. All the army had noticed this fault; he had been warned in time by several general officers, and by the Marechal de Montesquiou, but he would not believe them. He did not dare to attack the enemies, now, after having left them leisure to make all their dispositions. The army cried aloud against so capital a fault. Villars answered with his usual effrontery. He had quarrelled with his second in command, the Marechal de Montesquiou, and now knew not what to do.

In this crisis, no engagement taking place, the King thought it fitting to send Berwick into Flanders to act as mediator, even, to some extent, as dictator to the army. He was ordered to bring back an account of all things, so that it might be seen whether a battle could or could not be fought.

I think I have already stated who Berwick was; but I will here add a few more words about him to signalise his prodigious and rapid advancement.

We were in the golden age of bastards, and Berwick was a man who had reason to think so. Bastard of James II., of England, he had arrived in France, at the age of eighteen, with that monarch, after the Revolution of 1688. At twenty-two he was made lieutenant-general, and served as such in Flanders, without having passed through any other rank. At thirty-three he commanded in chief in Spain with a patent of general. At thirty-four he was made, on account of his victory at Almanza, Grandee of Spain, and Chevalier of the Golden Fleece. He continued to command in chief until February, 1706, when he was made Marshal of France, being then not more than thirty-six years old. He was an English Duke, and although as such he had no rank in France, the King had awarded it to him, as to all who came over with James. This was making a rapid fortune with a vengeance, under a King who regarded people of thirty-odd as children, but who thought no more of the ages of bastards than of those of the gods.

For more than a year past Berwick had coveted to be made Duke and Peer; But he could not obtain his wish. Now, however, that he was to be sent into Flanders for the purpose I have just described, it seemed a good opportunity to try again. He did try, and was successful. He was made Duke and Peer. He had been twice married. By his first wife he had had a son. By his second several sons and daughters. Will it be believed, that he was hardy enough to propose, and that we were weak enough to accord to him, that his son of the first bed should be formally excluded from the letters-patent of Duke and Peer, and that those of the second bed

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should alone be entered there? Yet so it was. Berwick was, in respect to England, like the Jews, who await the Messiah. He coaxed himself always with the hope of a revolution in England, which should put the Stuarts on the throne again, and reinstate him in his wealth and honours. He was son of the sister of the Duke of Marlborough, by which general he was much loved, and with whom, by permission of the King, and of King James, he kept up a secret intercourse, of which all three were the dupes, but which enabled Berwick to maintain other intercourses in England, and to establish his batteries there, hoping thus for his reinstatement even under the government established. This explains his motive for the arrangement he made in the letters-patent. He wished his eldest son to succeed to his English dukedom and his English estates; to make the second Duke and Peer of France, and the third Grandee of Spain. Three sons hereditarily elevated to the three chief dignities of the three, chief realms in Europe, it must be agreed was not bad work for a man to have achieved at fifty years of age! But Berwick failed in his English projects. Do what he could all his life to court the various ministers who came from England, he never could succeed in reestablishing himself.

The scandal was great at the complaisance of the King in consenting to a family arrangement, by which a cadet was put over the head of his elder brother; but the time of the monsters had arrived. Berwick bought an estate that he created under the name of Fitz-James. The King, who allowed him to do so, was shocked by the name; and, in my presence, asked Berwick the meaning of it; he, without any embarrassment, thus explained it.

The Kings of England, in legitimatising their children gave them a name and arms, which pass to their posterity. The name varies. Thus the Duke of Richmond, bastard of Charles II., had the name of "Lennox;" the Dukes of Cleveland and of Grafton, by the same king, that of "Fitz-Roi," which means "son of the king;" in fine, the Duke of Berwick had the name of "Fitz-James;" so that his family name for his posterity is thus "Son of James;" as a name, it is so ridiculous in French, that nobody could help laughing at it, or being astonished at the scandal of imposing it in English upon France.

Berwick having thus obtained his recompense beforehand, started off for Flanders, but not until he had seen everything signed and sealed and delivered in due form. He found the enemy so advantageously placed, and so well prepared, that he had no difficulty in subscribing to the common opinion of the general officers, that an attack could no longer be thought of. He gathered up all the opinions he could, and then returned to Court, having been only about three weeks absent. His report dismayed the King, and those who penetrated it. Letters from the army soon showed the fault of which Villars had been guilty, and everybody revolted against this wordy bully.

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He soon after was the subject of common talk at the Court, and in the army, in consequence of a ridiculous adventure, in which he was the hero. His wound, or the airs that he gave himself in consequence of it, often forced him to hold his leg upon the neck of his horse, almost in the same manner as ladies do. One day, he let slip the remark that he was sick to death of mounting on horseback like those “harlots” in the suite of Madame de Bourgogne. Those “harlots,” I will observe parenthetically, were all the young ladies of the Court, and the daughters of Madame la Duchesse! Such a remark uttered by a general not much loved, speedily flew from one end of the camp to the other, and was not long in making its way to the Court and to Paris. The young horsewomen alluded to were offended; their friends took up arms for them, and Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne could not help showing irritation, or avoid complaining.

Villars was apprised of all, and was much troubled by this increase of enemies so redoubtable, of whom just then he assuredly had no need. He took it into his head to try and discover who had blabbed; and found it was Heudicourt, whom Villars, to advance his own interests, by means of Heudicourt’s mother (who was the evil genius of Madame de Maintenon,) had protected; and to whom even, much against his custom, he had actually not lent, but given money.

This Heudicourt (whom I have previously alluded to, ‘a propos’ of a song he wrote) was a merry wag who excelled in making fun of people, in highly-seasoned pleasantry, and in comic songs. Spoiled by the favour which had always sustained him, he gave full licence to his tongue, and by this audacity had rendered himself redoubtable. He was a scurrilous wretch, a great drunkard, and a debauchee; not at all cowardly, and with a face hideous as that of an ugly satyr. He was not insensible to this; and so, unfitted for intrigues himself, he assisted others in them, and, by this honest trade, had acquired many friends amongst the flower of the courtiers of both sexes—above all with the ladies. By way of contrast to his wickedness, he was called “the good little fellow” and “the good little fellow” was mixed up in all intrigues; the ladies of the Court positively struggled for him; and not one of them, even of the highest ranks, would have dared to fall out with him. Thus protected, he was rather an embarrassing customer for Marechal de Villars, who, nevertheless, falling back as usual upon his effrontery, hit upon a bright project to bring home to Heudicourt the expedient he had against him.

He collected together about fifteen general officers, and Heudicourt with them. When they had all arrived, he left his chamber, and went to them. A number of loiterers had gathered round. This was just what Villars wanted. He asked all the officers in turn, if they remembered hearing him utter the expression attributed to him. Albergotti said he remembered to have heard Villars apply the

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term “harlots” to the sutlers and the camp creatures, but never to any other woman. All the rest followed in the same track. Then Villars, after letting out against this frightful calumny, and against the impostor who had written and sent it to the Court, addressed himself to Heudicourt, whom he treated in the most cruel fashion. “The good little fellow” was strangely taken aback, and wished to defend himself; but Villars produced proofs that could not be contradicted. Thereupon the ill-favoured dog avowed his turpitude, and had the audacity to approach Villars in order to speak low to him; but the Marechal, drawing back, and repelling him with an air of indignation, said to him, aloud, that with scoundrels like him he wished for no privacy. Gathering up, his pluck at this, Heudicourt gave rein to all his impudence, and declared that they who had been questioned had not dared to own the truth for fear of offending a Marechal; that as for himself he might have been wrong in speaking and writing about it, but he had not imagined that words said before such a numerous company; and in such a public place, could remain secret, or that he had done more harm in writing about them than so, many others who had acted likewise.

The Marechal, outraged upon hearing so bold and so truthful a reply, let out with, greater violence than ever against Heudicourt, accused him of ingratitude and villainy, drove him away, and a few minutes after had him arrested and conducted as a prisoner to the chateau at Calais. This violent scene made as much stir at the Court and in the army as that which had caused it. The consistent and public conduct of Villars was much approved. The King declared that he left Heudicourt in his hands: Madame de Maintenon and, Madame de Bourgogne, that they abandoned him; and his friends avowed that his fault was inexcusable. But the tide soon turned. After the first hubbub, the excuse of “the good little fellow” appeared excellent to the ladies who had their reasons for liking him and for fearing to irritate him; and also to the army, where the Marechal was not liked. Several of the officers who had been publicly interrogated by Villars, now admitted that they had been taken by surprise, and had not wished to compromise themselves. It was even, going into base details, argued that the Marechal’s expression could not apply to the vivandieres and the other camp women, as they always rode astride, one leg on this side one leg on the other, like men, a manner very different from that of the ladies of Madame de Bourgogne. People contested the power of a general to deal out justice upon his inferiors for personal matters in which the service was in nowise concerned; in a word, Heudicourt was soon let out of Calais, and remained “the good little fellow” in fashion in spite of the Marechal, who, tormented by so many things this campaign, sought for and obtained permission to go and take the waters; and did so. He was succeeded by Harcourt,

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who was himself in weak health. Thus one cripple replaced another. One began, the other ended, at Bourbonne. Douai, Saint-Venant, and Aire fell into the hands of the enemy during this 'campaign, who thus gained upon us more and more, while we did little or nothing. This was the last campaign in Flanders of the Duke of Marlborough. On the Rhine our troops observed and subsisted: nothing more; but in Spain there was more movement, and I will therefore turn my glances towards that country, and relate what took place there.

CHAPTER LIV

Before I commence speaking of the affairs of Spain, let me pass lightly over an event which, engrafted upon some others, made much noise, notwithstanding the care taken to stifle it.

Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne supped at Saint-Cloud one evening with Madame la Duchesse de Berry and others—Madame de Saint-Simon absenting herself from the party. Madame la Duchesse de Berry and M. d'Orleans— but she more than he—got so drunk, that Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, and the rest of the numerous company there assembled, knew not what to do. M. le Duc de Berry was there, and him they talked over as well as they could; and the numerous company was amused by the Grand Duchess as well as she was able. The effect of the wine, in more ways than one, was such, that people were troubled. In spite of all, the Duchesse de Berry could not be sobered, so that it became necessary to carry her, drunk as she was; to Versailles. All the servants saw her state, and did not keep it to themselves; nevertheless, it was hidden from the King, from Monseigneur, and from Madame de Maintenon.

And now, having related this incident, let me turn to Spain.

The events which took place in that country were so important, that I have thought it best to relate them in a continuous narrative without interruption. We must go back to the commencement of the year, and remember the dangerous state which Spain was thrown into, delivered up to her own weakness, France being too feeble to defend her; finding it difficult enough, in fact, to defend herself, and willing to abandon her ally entirely in the hope by this means to obtain peace.

Towards the end of March the King of Spain set out from Madrid to put himself at the head of his army in Aragon. Villadarias, one of his best and oldest general officers, was chosen to command under him. The King of Spain went from Saragossa to Lerida, where he was received with acclamations by the people and his army. He crossed the Segre on the 14th of May, and advanced towards Balaguier; designing to lay siege to it.



But heavy rains falling and causing the waters to rise, he was obliged to abandon his project. Joined a month afterwards by troops arrived from Flanders, he sought to attack the enemy, but was obliged to content himself for the moment by scouring the country, and taking some

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little towns where the Archduke had established stores. All this time the Count of Staremborg, who commanded the forces of the Archduke, was ill; this circumstance the King of Spain was profiting by. But the Count grew well again quicker than was expected; promptly assembled his forces; marched against the army of the King of Spain; engaged it, and obliged it, all astonished, to retire under Saragossa. This ill-success fell entirely on Villadarias, who was accused of imprudence and negligence. The King of Spain was desperately in want of generals, and M. de Vendome, knowing this, and sick to death of banishment, had asked some little time before to be allowed to offer his services. At first he was snubbed. But the King of Spain, who eagerly wished for M. de Vendome, despatched a courier, after this defeat, begging the King to allow him to come and take command. The King held out no longer.

The Duc de Vendome had prepared everything in advance; and having got over a slight attack of gout, hastened to Versailles. M. du Maine had negotiated with Madame de Maintenon to obtain permission to take Vendome to the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The opportunity seemed favourable to them. Vendome was going to Spain to serve the brother and sister of the Duchess; and his departure without seeing her would have had a very disagreeable effect. The Duc du Maine, followed by Vendome, came then that day to the toilette of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. There happened that there was a very large company of men and ladies. The Duchess rose for them, as she always did for the Princes of the blood and others, and for all the Dukes and Duchesses, and sat down again as usual; but after this first glance, which could not be refused, she, though usually very talkative and accustomed to look round, became for once attentive to her adornment, fixed her eyes on her mirror, and spoke no more to any one. M. du Maine, with M. de Vendome stuck by his side, remained very disconcerted; and M. du Maine, usually so free and easy, dared not utter a single word. Nobody went near them or spoke to them. They remained thus about half a quarter of an hour, with an universal silence throughout the chamber—all eyes being fixed on them; and not being able to stand this any longer, slunk away. This reception was not sufficiently agreeable to induce Vendome to pay his respects at parting; for it would have been more embarrassing still if, when according to custom he advanced to kiss the Duchesse de Bourgogne, she had given him the unheard-of affront of a refusal. As for the Duc de Bourgogne, he received Vendome tolerably politely, that is to say, much too well.

Staremborg meanwhile profited by the advantage he had gained; he attacked the Spanish army under Saragossa and totally defeated it. Artillery, baggage, all was lost; and the rout was complete. This misfortune happened on the 20th of August. The King, who had witnessed it from Saragossa, immediately afterwards took the road for Madrid. Bay, one of his generals, gathered together eighteen thousand men, with whom he retired to Tudela, without any impediment on the part of the enemy.

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M. de Vendome learnt the news of this defeat while on his way to Spain. Like a prudent man as he was, for his own interests, he stopped at once so as to see what turn affairs were taking, and to know how to act. He waited at Bayonne, gaining time there by sending a courier to the King for instructions how to act, and remaining until the reply came. After its arrival he set out to continue his journey, and joined the King of Spain at Valladolid.

Staremborg, after his victory, was joined by the Archduke, and a debate soon took place as to the steps next to be taken. Staremborg was for giving battle to the army of eighteen thousand men under Bay, which I have just alluded to, beating it, and then advancing little by little into Spain, to make head against the vanquished army of the King. Had this advice been acted on, it could scarcely have failed to ruin the King of Spain, and the whole country must have fallen into the hands of the enemy. But it was not acted on. Stanhope, who commanded the English and Dutch troops, said that his Queen had ordered him to march upon Madrid when possible, in preference to every other place. He therefore proposed that they should go straight to Madrid with the Archduke, proclaim him King there, and thus terrify all Spain by seizing the capital. Staremborg, who admitted that the project was dazzling, sustained, however, that it was of little use, and of great danger. He tried all in his power to shake the inflexibility of Stanhope, but in vain, and at last was obliged to yield as being the feeblest of the two. The time lost in this dispute saved the wreck of the army which had just been defeated. What was afterwards done saved the King of Spain.

When the plan of the allies became known, however, the consternation at Madrid, which was already great, was extreme. The King resolved to withdraw from a place which could not defend itself, and to carry away with him the Queen, the Prince, and the Councils. The grandees declared that they would follow the King and his fortune everywhere, and very few failed to do so; the departure succeeded the declaration in twenty-four hours. The Queen, holding the Prince in her arms, at a balcony of the palace, spoke to the people assembled beneath, with so much grace, force, and courage, that the success she had is incredible. The impression that the people received was communicated everywhere, and soon gained all the provinces. The Court thus left Madrid for the second time in the midst of the most lamentable cries, uttered from the bottom of their hearts, by people who came from town and country, and who so wished to follow the King and Queen that considerable effort was required in order to induce them to return, each one to his home.

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Valladolid was the retreat of this wretched Court, which in the most terrible trouble it had yet experienced, lost neither judgment nor courage. Meanwhile the grandest and rarest example of attachment and of courage that had ever been heard of or seen was seen in Spain. Prelates and the humblest of the clergy, noblemen and the poorest people, lawyers and artisans all bled themselves of the last drop of their substance, in order to form new troops and magazines, and to provide all kinds of provisions for the Court, and those who had followed it. Never nation made more efforts so surprising, with a unanimity and a concert which acted everywhere at once. The Queen sold off all she possessed, received with her own hands sometimes even as little as ten pistoles, in order to content the zeal of those; who brought, and thanked them with as much affection as they themselves displayed. She would continually say that she should like to put herself at the head of her troops, with her son in her arms. With this language and her conduct, she gained all hearts, and was very useful in such a strange extremity.

The Archduke meanwhile arrived in Madrid with his army. He entered there in triumph, and caused himself to be proclaimed King of Spain, by the violence of his troops, who dragged the trembling Corregidor through the streets, which for the most part were deserted, whilst the majority of the houses were without inhabitants, the few who remained having barricaded their doors and windows, and shut themselves up in the most remote places, where the troops did not dare to break in upon them, for fear of increasing the visible and general despair, and in the hope of gaining by gentleness. The entry of the Archduke was not less sad than his proclamation. A few scarcely audible and feeble acclamations were heard, but were so forced that the Archduke, sensibly astonished, made them cease of himself. He did not dare to lodge in the palace, or in the centre of Madrid, but slept at the extremity of the city, and even there only for two or three nights. Scarcely any damage was inflicted upon the town. Staremborg was careful to gain over the inhabitants by conciliation and clemency; yet his army perished of all kinds of misery.

Not a single person could be found to supply it with subsistence for man or beast—not even when offered money. Prayers, menaces, executions, all were perfectly useless. There was not a Castilian who would not have believed himself dishonourable in selling the least thing to the enemies, or in allowing them to take it. It is thus that this magnanimous people, without any other help than their courage and their fidelity, sustained themselves in the midst of their enemies, whose army they caused to perish; while at the same time; by inconceivable prodigies, they formed a new army for themselves, perfectly equipped and furnished, and put thus, by themselves; alone, and for the second time, the crown upon the head of their King; with a glory for ever an example to all the people of Europe; so true it is that nothing approaches the strength which is found in the heart of a nation for the succour and re-establishment of kings!

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Stanhope, who had not failed to see the excellence of Staremborg's advice from the first moment of their dispute, now said insolently, that having executed the orders of his Queen, it was for Staremborg to draw the army out of its embarrassment. As for himself, he had nothing more to do in the matter! When ten or twelve days had elapsed, it was resolved to remove from Madrid towards Toledo. From the former place nothing was taken away, except some of the king's tapestry; which Stanhope was not ashamed to carry off, but which he did not long keep. This act of meanness was blamed even by his own countrymen. Staremborg did not make a long stay at Toledo, but in quitting the town, burnt the superb palace in the Moorish style that Charles Quint had built there, and that, was called the Alcazar. This was an irreparable damage, which he made believe happened accidentally.

As nothing now hindered the King of Spain from going to see his faithful subjects at Madrid, he entered that city on the 2nd of December, in the midst of an infinite crowd and incredible acclamations. He descended at the church of Notre Dame d'Atocha, and was three hours in arriving at the palace, so prodigious was the crowd. The city made a present to him of twenty thousand pistoles. On the fourth day after his arrival at Madrid, the King left, in order to join M. de Vendome and his army.

But a little while before, this monarch was a fugitive wanderer, almost entirely destroyed, without troops, without money, and without subsistence. Now he found himself at the head of ten or fifteen thousand men well armed, well clad, well paid, with provisions, money, and ammunition in abundance; and this magical change was brought about by the sudden universal conspiracy of the unshakable fidelity and attachment— without example, of all the orders of his subjects; by their efforts and their industry, as prodigious the one as the other.

Vendome, in the utmost surprise at a change so little to be hoped for, wished to profit by it by joining the army under Bay, which was too weak itself to appear before Staremborg. Vendome accordingly set about making this junction, which Staremborg thought only how to hinder. He knew well the Duc de Vendome. In Savoy he had gained many a march upon him; had passed five rivers in front of him; and in spite of him had led his troops to M. de Savoie. Staremborg thought only therefore in what manner he could lay a trap for M. de Vendome, in which he, with his army, might fall and break his neck without hope of escape. With this view he put his army into quarters access to which was easy everywhere, which were near each other, and which could assist each other in case of need. He then placed all his English and Dutch, Stanhope at their head, in Brighuega, a little fortified town in good condition for defence. It was at the head of all the quarters of Staremborg's army, and at the entrance of a plain over which M. de Vendome had to pass to join Bay.

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Staremborg was on the point of being joined by his army of Estremadura, so that in the event of M. de Vendome attacking Brighuega, as he hoped, he had a large number of troops to depend upon.

Vendome, meanwhile, set out on his march. He was informed of Staremborg's position, but in a manner just such as Staremborg wished; that is to say, he was led to believe that Stanhope had made a wrong move in occupying Brighuega, that he was too far removed from Staremborg to receive any assistance from him, and that he could be easily overpowered. That is how matters appeared to Vendome. He hastened his march, therefore, made his dispositions, and on the 8th of December, after mid-day, approached Brighuega, called upon it to surrender, and upon its refusal, prepared to attack it.

Immediately afterwards his surprise was great, upon discovering that there were so many troops in the town, and that instead of having to do with a mere outpost, he was engaged against a place of some consequence. He did not wish to retire, and could not have done so with impunity. He set to therefore, storming in his usual manner, and did what he could to excite his troops to make short work, of a conquest so different from what he had imagined, and so dangerous to delay.

Nevertheless, the weight of his mistake pressed upon him as the hours passed and he saw fresh enemies arrive. Two of his assaults had failed: he determined to play at double or quits, and ordered a third assault. While the dispositions were being made, on the 9th of December he learnt that Staremborg was marching against him with four or five thousand men, that is to say, with just about half of what he really led. In this anguish, Vendome did not hesitate to stake even the Crown of Spain upon the hazard of the die. His third attack was made with all the force of which he was capable. Every one of the assailants knew the extremity of the danger, and behaved with so much valour and impetuosity, that the town was carried in spite of an obstinate resistance. The besieged were obliged to yield, and to the number of eight battalions and eight squadrons, surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and with them, Stanhope, their general, who, so triumphant in Madrid, was here obliged to disgorge the King's tapestries that he had taken from the palace.

While the capitulation was being made, various information came to Vendome of Staremborg's march, which it was necessary, above all, to hide from the prisoners, who, had they known their liberator was only a league and a half distant from them, as he was then, would have broken the capitulation; and defended themselves. M. de Vendome's embarrassment was great. He had, at the same time, to march out and meet Staremborg and to get rid of, his numerous prisoners. All was done, however, very successfully. Sufficient troops were left in Brighuega to attend to the evacuation, and when it was at an end, those troops left the place themselves and joined their comrades, who, with M. de Vendome, were waiting for Staremborg outside the town, at

Villaviciosa, a little place that afterwards gave its name to the battle. Only four hundred men were left in Brighuega.

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M. de Vendome arranged his army in order of battle in a tolerably open plain, but embarrassed by little knolls in several places; very disadvantageous for the cavalry. Immediately afterwards the cannon began to fire on both sides, and almost immediately the two links of the King of Spain prepared to charge. After the battle had proceeded some time, M. de Vendome perceived that his centre began to give way, and that the left of his cavalry could not break the right of the enemies. He thought all was lost, and gave orders accordingly to his men to retire towards Torija. Straightway, too, he directed himself in that direction, with the King of Spain and a good part of his troops. While thus retreating, he learnt that two of his officers had charged the enemy's infantry with the cavalry they had at their orders, had much knocked it about and had rendered themselves masters, on the field of battle, of a large number of prisoners, and of the artillery that the enemy had abandoned. News so agreeable and so little expected determined the Duc de Vendome and the King of Spain to return to the battle with the troops that had followed them. The day was, in fact, won just as night came on. The enemies abandoned twenty pieces of cannon, two mortars, their wounded and their equipages; and numbers of them were taken prisoners. But Staremborg, having all the night to himself, succeeded in retiring in good order with seven or eight thousand men. His baggage and the majority of his waggons fell a prey to the vanquisher. Counting the garrison of Brighuega, the loss to the enemy was eleven thousand men killed or taken, their ammunition, artillery, baggage, and a great number of flags and standards.

When we consider the extreme peril the Crown of Spain ran in these engagements, and that this time, if things had gone ill there was no resource, we tremble still. Had a catastrophe happened, there was nothing to hope from France. Its exhaustion and its losses would not have enabled it to lend aid. In its desire for peace, in fact, it would have hailed the loss of the Spanish Crown as a relief. The imprudence, therefore, of M. de Vendome in so readily falling into the snare laid for him, is all the more to be blamed. He takes no trouble to inform himself of the dispositions of the enemy; he comes upon a place which he believes a mere post, but soon sees it contains a numerous garrison, and finds that the principal part of the enemy's army is ready to fall upon him as he makes the attack. Then he begins to see in what ship he has embarked; he sees the double peril of a double action to sustain against Stanhope, whom he must overwhelm by furious assault, and against Staremborg, whom he must meet and defeat; or, leave to the enemies the Crown of Spain, and perhaps the person of Philip V., as price of his folly. Brighuega is gained, but it is without him. Villaviciosa is gained, but it is also without him. This hero is not sharp-sighted enough

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to see success when it comes. He thinks it defeat, and gives orders for retreat. When informed that the battle is gained, he returns to the field, and as daylight comes perceives the fact to be so. He is quite without shame for his stupid mistake, and cries out that he has vanquished, with an impudence to which the Spaniards were not accustomed; and, to conclude, he allows Staremborg's army to get clean off, instead of destroying it at once, as he might have done, and so finished the war. Such were the exploits of this great warrior, so desired in Spain to resuscitate it, and such, were the first proofs of his capacity upon arriving in that country!

At the moment that the King of Spain was led back to the battle-field by Vendome, and that they could no longer doubt their good fortune, he sent a courier to the Queen. Her mortal anguish was on the instant changed into so great a joy, that she went out immediately on foot into the streets of Vittoria, where all was delight; as it soon was over all Spain. The news of the victory was brought to the King (of France) by Don Gaspard de Zuniga, who gave an exact account of all that had occurred, hiding nothing respecting M. de Vendome, who was thus unmasked and disgraced, in spite of every effort on the part of his cabal to defend him.

Among the allies, all the blame, of this defeat fell upon Stanhope. Seven or eight hours more of resistance on his part at Brighuega would have enabled Staremborg to come up to his assistance, and all the resources of Spain would then have been annihilated. Staremborg, outraged at the ill-success of his undertaking, cried out loudly against Stanhope. Some of the principal officers who had been at Brighuega seconded these complaints. Stanhope even did not dare to deny his fault. He was allowed to demand leave of absence to go home and defend himself. He was badly received, stripped of all military rank in England and Holland, and (as well as the officers under him) was not without fear of his degradation, and was even in danger of his life.

This recital of the events that took place in Spain has led me away from other matters of earlier date. It is time now that I should return to them.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARK:

Found it easier to fly into a rage than to reply