

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 09 eBook

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 09 by Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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CHAPTER LXI

Let me here relate an incident which should have found a place earlier, but which has been omitted in order that what has gone before might be uninterrupted. On the 16th of the previous July the King made a journey to Fontainebleau, where he remained until the 14th of September. I should suppress the bagatelle which happened on the occasion of this journey, if it did not serve more and more to characterize the King.

Madame la Duchesse de Berry was in the family way for the first time, had been so for nearly three months, was much inconvenienced, and had a pretty strong fever. M. Fagon, the doctor, thought it would be imprudent for her not to put off travelling for a day or two. Neither she nor M. d'Orleans dared to speak about it. M. le Duc de Berry timidly hazarded a word, and was ill received. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans more timid still, addressed herself to Madame, and to Madame de Maintenon, who, indifferent as they might be respecting Madame la Duchesse de Berry, thought her departure so hazardous that, supported by Fagon, they spoke of it to the King. It was useless. They were not daunted, however, and this dispute lasted three or four days. The end of it was, that the King grew thoroughly angry and agreed, by way of capitulation, that the journey should be performed in a boat instead of a coach.

It was arranged that Madame la Duchesse de Berry should leave Marly, where the King then was, on the 13th, sleep at the Palais Royal that night and repose herself there all the next day and night, that on the 15th she should set out for Petit-Bourg, where the King was to halt for the night, and arrive like him, on the 16th, at Fontainebleau, the whole journey to be by the river. M. le Duc de Berry had permission to accompany his wife; but during the two nights they were to rest in Paris the King angrily forbade them to go anywhere, even to the Opera, although that building joined the Palais Royal, and M. d'Orleans' box could be reached without going out of the palace.

On the 14th the King, under pretence of inquiry after them, repeated this prohibition to M. le Duc de Berry and Madame his wife, and also to M. d'Orleans and Madame d'Orleans, who had been included in it. He carried his caution so far as to enjoin Madame de Saint-Simon to see that Madame la Duchesse de Berry obeyed the instructions she had received. As may be believed, his orders were punctually obeyed. Madame de Saint-Simon could not refuse to remain and sleep in the Palais Royal, where the apartment of the queen-mother was given to her. All the while the party was shut up there was a good deal of gaming in order to console M. le Duc de Berry for his confinement.

The provost of the merchants had orders to prepare boats for the trip to Fontainebleau. He had so little time that they were ill chosen. Madame la Duchesse de Berry embarked, however, on the 15th, and arrived, with fever, at ten o'clock at night at Petit-Bourg, where the King appeared rejoiced by an obedience so exact.



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On the morrow the journey recommenced. In passing Melun, the boat of Madame la Duchesse de Berry struck against the bridge, was nearly capsized, and almost swamped, so that they were all in great danger. They got off, however, with fear and a delay. Disembarking in great disorder at Valvin, where their equipages were waiting for there, they arrived at Fontainebleau two hours after midnight. The King, pleased beyond measure, went the next morning to see Madame la Duchesse de Berry in the beautiful apartment of the queen-mother that had been given to her. From the moment of her arrival she had been forced to keep her bed, and at six o'clock in the morning of the 21st of July she miscarried and was delivered of a daughter, still-born. Madame de Saint-Simon ran to tell the King; he did not appear much moved; he had been obeyed! The Duchesse de Beauvilliers and the Marquise de Chatillon were named by the King to carry the embryo to Saint-Denis. As it was only a girl, and as the miscarriage had no ill effect, consolation soon came.

It was some little time after this occurrence, that we heard of the defeat of the Czar by the Grand Vizier upon the Pruth. The Czar, annoyed by the protection the Porte had accorded to the King of Sweden (in retirement at Bender), made an appeal to arms, and fell into the same error as that which had occasioned the defeat of the King of Sweden by him. The Turks drew him to the Pruth across deserts supplied with nothing; if he did not risk all, by a very unequal battle, he must perish. The Czar was at the head of sixty thousand men: he lost more than thirty thousand on the Pruth, the rest were dying of hunger and misery; and he, without any resources, could scarcely avoid surrendering himself and his forces to the Turks. In this pressing extremity, a common woman whom he had taken away from her husband, a drummer in the army, and whom he had publicly espoused after having repudiated and confined his own wife in a convent,—proposed that he should try by bribery to induce the Grand Vizier to allow him and the wreck of his forces to retreat. The Czar approved of the proposition, without hoping for success from it. He sent to the Grand Vizier and ordered him to be spoken to in secret. The Vizier was dazzled by the gold, the precious stones, and several valuable things that were offered to him. He accepted and received them; and signed a treaty by which the Czar was permitted to retire, with all who accompanied him, into his own states by the shortest road, the Turks to furnish him with provisions, with which he was entirely unprovided. The Czar, on his side, agreed to give up Azof as soon as he returned; destroy all the forts and burn all the vessels that he had upon the Black Sea; allow the King of Sweden to return by Pomerania; and to pay the Turks and their Prince all the expenses of the war.



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The Grand Vizier found such an opposition in the Divan to this treaty, and such boldness in the minister of the King of Sweden, who accompanied him, in exciting against him all the chiefs of the army, that it was within an ace of being broken; and the Czar, with every one left to him, of being made prisoner. The latter was in no condition to make even the least resistance. The Grand Vizier had only to will it, in order to execute it on the spot. In addition to the glory of leading captive to Constantinople the Czar, his Court, and his troops, there would have been his ransom, which must have cost not a little. But if he had been thus stripped of his riches, they would have been for the Sultan, and the Grand Vizier preferred having them for himself. He braved it then with authority and menaces, and hastened the Czar's departure and his own. The Swedish minister, charged with protests from the principal Turkish chiefs, hurried to Constantinople, where the Grand Vizier was strangled upon arriving.

The Czar never forgot this service of his wife, by whose courage and presence of mind he had been saved. The esteem he conceived for her, joined to his friendship, induced him to crown her Czarina, and to consult her upon all his affairs and all his schemes. Escaped from danger, he was a long time without giving up Azof, or demolishing his forts on the Black Sea. As for his vessels, he kept them nearly all, and would not allow the King of Sweden to return into Germany, as he had agreed, thus almost lighting up a fresh war with the Turk.

On the 6th of November, 1711, at about eight o'clock in the evening, the shock of an earthquake was felt in Paris and at Versailles; but it was so slight that few people perceived it. In several places towards Touraine and Poitou, in Saxony, and in some of the German towns near, it was very perceptible at the same day and hour. At this date a new tontine was established in Paris.

I have so often spoken of Marshal Catinat, of his virtue, wisdom, modesty, and disinterestedness; of the rare superiority of his sentiments, and of his great qualities as captain, that nothing remains for me to say except that he died at this time very advanced in years, at his little house of Saint-Gratien, near Saint-Denis, where he had retired, and which he seldom quitted, although receiving there but few friends. By his simplicity and frugality, his contempt for worldly distinction, and his uniformity of conduct, he recalled the memory of those great men who, after the best-merited triumphs, peacefully returned to the plough, still loving their country and but little offended by the ingratitude of the Rome they had so well served. Catinat placed his philosophy at the service of his piety. He had intelligence, good sense, ripe reflection; and he never forgot his origin; his dress, his equipages, his furniture, all were of the greatest simplicity. His air and his deportment were so also. He was tall, dark,



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and thin; had an aspect pensive, slow, and somewhat mean; with very fine and expressive eyes. He deplored the signal faults that he saw succeed each other unceasingly; the gradual extinction of all emulation; the luxury, the emptiness, the ignorance, the confusion of ranks; the inquisition in the place of the police: he saw all the signs of destruction, and he used to say it was only a climax of dangerous disorder that could restore order to the realm.

Vendome was one of the few to whom the death of the Dauphin and the Dauphine brought hope and joy. He had deemed himself expatriated for the rest of his life. He saw, now, good chances before him of returning to our Court, and of playing a part there again. He had obtained some honour in Spain; he aimed at others even higher, and hoped to return to France with all the honours of a Prince of the Blood. His idleness, his free living, his debauchery, had prolonged his stay upon the frontier, where he had more facilities for gratifying his tastes than at Madrid. In that city, it is true, he did not much constrain himself, but he was forced to do so to some extent by courtly usages. He was, then, quite at home on the frontier; there was nothing to do; for the Austrians, weakened by the departure of the English, were quite unable to attack; and Vendome, floating upon the delights of his new dignities, thought only of enjoying himself in the midst of profound idleness, under pretext that operations could not at once be commenced.

In order to be more at liberty he separated from the general officers, and established himself with his valets and two or three of his most familiar friends, cherished companions everywhere, at Vignarez, a little isolated hamlet, almost deserted, on the sea-shore and in the kingdom of Valencia. His object was to eat fish there to his heart's content. He carried out that object, and filled himself to repletion for nearly a month. He became unwell—his diet, as may be believed, was enough to cause this—but his illness increased so rapidly, and in so strange a manner, after having for a long time seemed nothing that the few around him suspected poison, and sent on all sides for assistance. But the malady would not wait; it augmented rapidly with strange symptoms. Vendome could not sign a will that was presented to him; nor a letter to the King, its which he asked that his brother might be permitted to return to Court. Everybody near fled from him and abandoned him, so that he remained in the hands of three or four of the meanest valets, whilst the rest robbed him of everything and decamped. He passed thus the last two or three days of his life, without a priest,—no mention even had been made of one,—without other help than that of a single surgeon. The three or four valets who remained near him, seeing him at his last extremity, seized hold of the few things he still possessed, and for want of better plunder, dragged off his bedclothes and the mattress from under him. He piteously cried to them at least not to leave him to die naked upon the bare bed. I know not whether they listened to him.



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Thus died on Friday, the 10th of June, 1712, the haughtiest of men; and the happiest, except in the later years of his life. After having been obliged to speak of him so often, I get rid of him now, once and for ever. He was fifty-eight years old; but in spite of the blind and prodigious favour he had enjoyed, that favour had never been able to make ought but a cabal hero out of a captain who was a very bad general, and a man whose vices were the shame of humanity. His death restored life and joy to all Spain.

Aguilar, a friend of the Duc de Noailles, was accused of having poisoned him; but took little pains to defend himself, inasmuch as little pains were taken to substantiate the accusation. The Princesse des Ursins, who had so well profited by his life in order to increase her own greatness, did not profit less by his death. She felt her deliverance from a new Don Juan of Spain who had ceased to be supple in her hands, and who might have revived, in the course of time, all the power and authority he had formerly enjoyed in France. She was not shocked them by the joy which burst out without constraint; nor by the free talk of the Court, the city, the army, of all Spain. But in order to sustain what she had done, and cheaply pay her court to M. du Maine, Madame de Maintenon, and even to the King, she ordered that the corpse of this hideous monster of greatness and of fortune should be carried to the Escorial. This was crowning the glory of M. de Vendome in good earnest; for no private persons are buried in the Escorial, although several are to be found in Saint-Denis. But meanwhile, until I speak of the visit I made to the Escorial—I shall do so if I live long enough to carry these memoirs up to the death of M. d'Orleans,—let me say something of that illustrious sepulchre.

The Pantheon is the place where only the bodies of kings and queens who have had posterity are admitted. In a separate place, near, though not on the same floor, and resembling a library, the bodies of children, and of queens who have had no posterity, are ranged. A third place, a sort of antechamber to the last named, is rightly called “the rotting room;” whilst the other improperly bears the same name. In whilst third room, there is nothing to be seen but four bare walls and a table in the middle. The walls being very thick, openings are made in them in which the bodies are placed. Each body has an opening to itself, which is afterwards walled up, so that nothing is seen. When it is thought that the corpse has been closed up sufficiently long to be free from odour the wall is opened, the body taken out, and put in a coffin which allows a portion of it to be seen towards the feet. This coffin is covered with a rich stuff and carried into an adjoining room.

The body of the Duc de Vendome had been walled up nine years when I entered the Escorial. I was shown the place it occupied, smooth like every part of the four walls and without mark. I gently asked the monks who did me the honours of the place, when the body would be removed to the other chamber. They would not satisfy my curiosity, showed some indignation, and plainly intimated that this removal was not dreamt of, and that as M. de Vendome had been so carefully walled up he might remain so!



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Harlay, formerly chief-president, of whom I have so often had occasion to speak, died a short time after M. de Vendome. I have already made him known. I will simply add an account of the humiliation to which this haughty cynic was reduced. He hired a house in the Rue de l'Universite with a partition wall between his garden and that of the Jacobins of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. The house did not belong to the Jacobins, like the houses of the Rue Saint-Dominique, and the Rue du Bac, which, in order that they might command higher rents, were put in connection with the convent garden. These mendicant Jacobins thus derive fifty thousand livres a-year. Harlay, accustomed to exercise authority, asked them for a door into their garden. He was refused. He insisted, had them spoken to, and succeeded no better. Nevertheless the Jacobins comprehended that although this magistrate, recently so powerful, was now nothing by himself, he had a son and a cousin, Councillors of State, whom they might some day have to do with, and who for pride's sake might make themselves very disagreeable. The argument of interest is the best of all with monks. The Jacobins changed their mind. The Prior, accompanied by some of the notabilities of the convent, went to Harlay with excuses, and said he was at liberty, if he liked, to make the door. Harlay, true to his character, looked at them askance, and replied, that he had changed his mind and would do without it. The monks, much troubled by his refusal, insisted; he interrupted them and said, "Look you, my fathers, I am grandson of Achille du Harlay, Chief-President of the Parliament, who so well served the State and the Kingdom, and who for his support of the public cause was dragged to the Bastille, where he expected to be hanged by those rascally Leaguers; it would ill become me, therefore, to enter the house, or pray to God there, of folks of the same stamp as that Jacques Clement." And he immediately turned his back upon them, leaving them confounded. This was his last act of vigour. He took it into his head afterwards to go out visiting a good deal, and as he preserved all his old unpleasant manners, he afflicted all he visited; he went even to persons who had often cooled their heels in his antechambers. By degrees, slight but frequent attacks of apoplexy troubled his speech, so that people had great difficulty in understanding him, and he in speaking. In this state he did not cease his visits and could not perceive that many doors were closed to him. He died in this misery, and this neglect, to the great relief of the few who by relationship were obliged to see him, above all of his son and his domestic.

On the 17th July, a truce between France and England was published in Flanders, at the head of the troops of the two crowns. The Emperor, however, was not yet inclined for peace and his forces under Prince Eugene continued to oppose us in Flanders, where, however, the tide at last turned in our favour. The King was so flattered by the overflow of joy that took place at Fontainebleau on account of our successes, that he thanked the country for it, for the first time in his life. Prince Eugene, in want of bread and of everything, raised the siege of Landrecies, which he had been conducting, and terrible desertion took place among his troops.



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About this time, there was an irruption of wolves, which caused great disorders in the Orleannais; the King's wolf-hunters were sent there, and the people were authorised to take arms and make a number of grand battues.

CHAPTER LXII.

Peace was now all but concluded between France and England. There was, however, one great obstacle still in its way. Queen Anne and her Council were stopped by the consideration that the king of Spain would claim to succeed to the Crown of France, if the little Dauphin should die. Neither England nor any of the other powers at war would consent to see the two principal crowns of Europe upon the same head. It was necessary, then, above all things to get rid of this difficulty, and so arrange the order of succession to our throne, that the case to be provided against could never happen. Treaties, renunciations, and oaths, all of which the King had already broken, appeared feeble guarantees in the eyes of Europe. Something stronger was sought for. It could not be found; because there is nothing more sacred among men than engagements which they consider binding on each other. What was wanting then in mere forms it was now thought could be supplied by giving to those forms the greatest possible solemnity.

It was a long time before we could get over the difficulty. The King would accord nothing except promises in order to guarantee to Europe that the two crowns should never be united upon the same head. His authority was wounded at the idea of being called upon to admit, as it were, a rival near it. Absolute without reply, as he had become, he had extinguished and absorbed even the minutest trace, idea, and recollection of all other authority, all other power in France except that which emanated from himself alone. The English, little accustomed to such maxims, proposed that the States-General should assemble in order to give weight to the renunciations to be made. They said, and with reason, that it was not enough that the King of Spain should renounce France unless France renounced Spain; and that this formality was necessary in order to break the double bonds which attached Spain to France, as France was attached to Spain. Accustomed to their parliaments, which are in effect their States-General, they believed ours preserved the same authority, and they thought such authority the greatest to be obtained and the best capable of solidly supporting that of the King.

The effect of this upon the mind of a Prince almost deified in his own eyes, and habituated to the most unlimited despotism, cannot be expressed. To show him that the authority of his subjects was thought necessary in order to confirm his own, wounded him in his most delicate part. The English were made to understand the weakness and the uselessness of what they asked; for the powerlessness of our States-General was explained to them, and they saw at once how vain their help would be, even if accorded.

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For a long time nothing was done; France saying that a treaty of renunciation and an express confirmatory declaration of the King, registered in the Parliament, were sufficient; the English replying by reference to the fate of past treaties. Peace meanwhile was arranged with the English, and much beyond our hopes remained undisturbed.

In due time matters were so far advanced in spite of obstacles thrown in the way by the allies, that the Duc d'Aumont was sent as ambassador into England; and the Duke of Hamilton was named as ambassador for France. This last, however, losing his life in a duel with Lord Mohun, the Duke of Shrewsbury was appointed in his stead.

At the commencement of the new year [1713] the Duke and Duchess of Shrewsbury arrived in Paris. The Duchess was a great fat masculine creature, more than past the meridian, who had been beautiful and who affected to be so still; bare bosomed; her hair behind her ears; covered with rouge and patches, and full of finicking ways. All her manners were that of a mad thing, but her play, her taste, her magnificence, even her general familiarity, made her the fashion. She soon declared the women's head-dresses ridiculous, as indeed they were. They were edifices of brass wire, ribbons, hair, and all sorts of tawdry rubbish more than two feet high, making women's faces seem in the middle of their bodies. The old ladies wore the same, but made of black gauze. If they moved ever so lightly the edifice trembled and the inconvenience was extreme. The King could not endure them, but master as he was of everything was unable to banish them. They lasted for ten years and more, despite all he could say and do. What this monarch had been unable to perform, the taste and example of a silly foreigner accomplished with the most surprising rapidity. From extreme height, the ladies descended to extreme lowness, and these head-dresses, more simple; more convenient, and more becoming, last even now. Reasonable people wait with impatience for some other mad stranger who will strip our dames of these immense baskets, thoroughly insupportable to themselves and to others.

Shortly after the Duke of Shrewsbury arrived in Paris, the Hotel de Powis in London, occupied by our ambassador the Duc d'Aumont, was burnt to the ground. A neighbouring house was pulled down to prevent others catching fire. The plate of M. d'Aumont was saved. He pretended to have lost everything else. He pretended also to have received several warnings that his house was to be burnt and himself assassinated, and that the Queen, to whom he had mentioned these warnings, offered to give him a guard. People judged otherwise in London and Paris, and felt persuaded he himself had been the incendiary in order to draw money from the King and also to conceal some monstrous smuggling operations, by which he gained enormously, and which the English had complained of ever since his arrival. This is at least what was publicly said in the two courts and cities, and nearly everybody believed it.

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But to return to the peace. The renunciations were ready, towards the middle of March, and were agreed upon. The King was invited to sign them by his own most pressing interest; and the Court of England, to which we owed all, was not less interested in consummating this grand work, so as to enjoy, with the glory of having imposed it upon all the powers, that domestic repose which was unceasingly disturbed by the party opposed to the government, which party, excited by the enemies of peace abroad, could not cease to cause inquiet to the Queen's minister, while, by delay in signing, vain hopes of disturbing the peace or hindering its ratification existed in people's minds. The King of Spain had made his renunciations with all the solidity and solemnity which could be desired from the laws, customs, and usages of Spain. It only remained for France to imitate him.

For the ceremony that was to take place, all that could be obtained in order to render it more solemn was the presence of the peers. But the King was so jealous of his authority, and so little inclined to pay attention to that of others, that he wished to content himself with merely saying in a general way that he hoped to find all the peers at the Parliament when the renunciations were made. I told M. d'Orleans that if the King thought such an announcement as this was enough he might rely upon finding not a single peer at the Parliament. I added, that if the King did not himself invite each peer, the master of the ceremonies ought to do so for him, according to the custom always followed. This warning had its effect. We all received written invitations, immediately. Wednesday, the 18th of May, was fixed for the ceremony.

At six o'clock on the morning of that day I went to the apartments of M. le Duc de Berry, in parliamentary dress, and shortly afterwards M. d'Orleans came there also, with a grand suite. It had been arranged that the ceremony was to commence by a compliment from the Chief-President de Mesmes to M. le Duc de Berry, who was to reply to it. He was much troubled at this. Madame de Saint-Simon, to whom he unbosomed himself; found means, through a subaltern, to obtain the discourse of the Chief-President, and gave it to M. le Duc de Berry, to regulate his reply by. This, however, seemed too much for him; he admitted so to Madame de Saint-Simon, and that he knew not what to do. She proposed that I should take the work off his hands; and he was delighted with the expedient. I wrote, therefore, a page and a half full of common-sized paper in an ordinary handwriting. M. le Duc de Berry liked it, but thought it too long to be learnt. I abridged it; he wished it to be still shorter, so that at last there was not more than three-quarters of a page. He had learned it by heart, and repeated it in his cabinet the night before the ceremony to Madame de Saint-Simon, who encouraged him as much as she could.

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At about half-past six o'clock we set out—M. le Duc d'Orleans, M. le Duc de Berry, myself, and M. le Duc de Saint-Aignan, in one coach, several other coaches following. M. le Duc de Berry was very silent all the journey, appearing to be much occupied with the speech he had learned by heart. M. d'Orleans, on the contrary, was full of gaiety, and related some of his youthful adventures, and his wild doings by night in the streets of Paris. We arrived gently at the Porte de la Conference, that is to say—for it is now pulled down—at the end of the terrace, and of the Quai of the Tuileries.

We found there the trumpeters and drummers of M. le Duc de Berry's guard, who made a great noise all the rest of our journey, which ended at the Palais de justice. Thence we went to the Sainte-Chapelle to hear mass. The Chapelle was filled with company, among which were many people of quality. The crowd of people from this building to the grand chamber was so great that a pin could not have fallen to the ground. On all sides, too, folks had climbed up to see what passed.

All the Princes of the blood, the bastards, the peers and the parliament, were assembled in the palace. When M. le Duc de Berry entered, everything was ready. Silence having with difficulty been obtained, the Chief-President paid his compliment to the Prince. When he had finished, it was for M. le Duc de Berry to reply. He half took off his hat, immediately put it back again, looked at the Chief-President, and said, "Monsieur;" after a moment's pause he repeated "Monsieur." Then he looked at the assembly, and again said, "Monsieur." Afterwards he turned towards M. d'Orleans, who, like himself, was as red as fire, next to the Chief-President, and finally stopped short, nothing else than "Monsieur" having been able to issue from his mouth.

I saw distinctly the confusion of M. le Duc de Berry, and sweated at it; but what could be done? The Duke turned again towards M. d'Orleans, who lowered his head. Both were dismayed. At last the Chief-President, seeing there was no other resource, finished this cruel scene by taking off his cap to M. le Duc de Berry, and inclining himself very low, as if the response was finished. Immediately afterwards he told the King's people to begin. The embarrassment of all the courtiers and the surprise of the magistracy may be imagined.

The renunciations were then read; and by these the King of Spain and his posterity gave up all claim to the throne of France, and M. le Duc d'Orleans, and M. le Duc de Berry to succeed to that of Spain. These and other forms occupied a long time. The chamber was all the while crowded to excess. There was not room for a single other person to enter. It was very late when all was over.



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When everything was at an end M. de Saint-Aignan and I accompanied M. le Duc de Berry and M. le Duc d'Orleans in a coach to the Palais Royal. On the way the conversation was very quiet. M. le Duc de Berry appeared dispirited, embarrassed, and vexed. Even after we had partaken of a splendid and delicate dinner, to which an immense number of other guests sat down, he did not improve. We were conducted to the Porte Saint-Honore with the same pomp as that in the midst, of which we had entered Paris. During the rest of the journey to Versailles M. le Duc de Berry was as silent as ever.

To add to his vexation, as soon as he arrived at Versailles the Princesse de Montauban, without knowing a word of what had passed, set herself to exclaim, with her usual flattery, that she was charmed with the grace and the appropriate eloquence with which he had spoken at the Parliament, and paraphrased this theme with all the praises of which it was susceptible. M. le Duc de Berry blushed with vexation without saying a word; she recommenced extolling his modesty, he blushing the more, and saying nothing. When at last he had got rid of her, he went to his own apartments, said not a word to the persons he found there, scarcely one to Madame his wife, but taking Madame de Saint-Simon with him, went into his library, and shut himself up alone there with her.

Throwing himself into an armchair he cried out that he was dishonoured, and wept scalding tears. Then he related to Madame de Saint-Simon, in the midst of sobs, how he had stuck fast at the Parliament, without being able to utter a word, said that he should everywhere be regarded as an ass and a blockhead, and repeated the compliments he had received from Madame de Montauban, who, he said, had laughed at and insulted him, knowing well what had happened; then, infuriated against her to the last degree, he called her by all sorts of names. Madame de Saint-Simon spared no exertion in order to calm M. de Berry, assuring him that it was impossible Madame de Montauban could know what had taken place at the Parliament, the news not having then reached Versailles, and that she had had no other object than flattery in addressing him. Nothing availed. Complaints and silence succeeded each other in the midst of tears. Then, suddenly falling upon the Duc de Beauvilliers and the King, and accusing the defects of his education: "They thought only;" he exclaimed, "of making me stupid, and of stifling all my powers. I was a younger son. I coped with my brother. They feared the consequences; they annihilated me. I was taught only to play and to hunt, and they have succeeded in making me a fool and an ass, incapable of anything, the laughing-stock and disdain of everybody." Madame de Saint-Simon was overpowered with compassion, and did everything to calm M. de Berry. Their strange *tete-a-tete* lasted nearly two hours, and resumed the next day but with less violence. By degrees M. le Duc de Berry became consoled, but never afterwards did any one dare to speak to him of his misadventure at the peace ceremony.

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Let me here say that, the ceremony over, peace was signed at Utrecht on the 20th April, 1713, at a late hour of the night. It was published in Paris with great solemnity on the 22nd. Monsieur and Madame du Maine, who wished to render themselves popular, came from Sceaux to see the ceremony in the Place Royale, showed themselves on a balcony to the people, to whom they threw some money—a liberality that the King would not have permitted in anybody else. At night fires were lighted before the houses, several of which were illuminated: On the 25th a Te Deum was sung at Notre Dame, and in the evening there was a grand display of fireworks at the Grave, which was followed by a superb banquet given at the Hotel de Ville by the Duc de Tresmes, the Governor of Paris, to a large number of distinguished persons of both sexes of the Court and the city, twenty-four violins playing during the repast.

I have omitted to mention the death of M. de Chevreise, which took place between seven and eight o'clock in the morning on Saturday, the 5th of November; of the previous year (1712). I have so often alluded to M. de Chevreuse in the course of these pages, that I will content myself with relating here two anecdotes of him, which serve to paint a part of his character.

He was very forgetful, and adventures often happened to him in consequence, which diverted us amazingly. Sometimes his horses were put to and kept waiting for him twelve or fifteen hours at a time. Upon one occasion in summer this happened at Vaucresson, whence he was going to dine at Dampierre. The coachman, first, then the postilion, grew tired of looking after the horses, and left them. Towards six o'clock at night the horses themselves were in their turn worn out, bolted, and a din was heard which shook the house. Everybody ran out, the coach was found smashed, the large door shivered in pieces; the garden railings, which enclosed both sides of the court, broken down; the gates in pieces; in short, damage was done that took a long time to repair. M. de Chevreuse, who had not been disturbed by this uproar even for an instant, was quite astonished when he heard of it. M. de Beauvilliers amused himself for a long time by reproaching him with it, and by asking the expense.

Another adventure happened to him also at Vaucresson, and covered him with real confusion, comical to see, every time it was mentioned. About ten o'clock one morning a M. Sconin, who had formerly been his steward, was announced. "Let him take a turn in the garden," said M. de Chevreuse, "and come back in half an hour." He continued what he was doing, and completely forgot his man. Towards seven o'clock in the evening Sconin was again announced. "In a moment," replied M. de Chevreuse, without disturbing himself. A quarter of an hour afterwards he called Sconin, and admitted him. "Ah, my poor Sconin!" said he, "I must offer you a thousand excuses for having caused you to lose your day."



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“Not at all, Monseigneur,” replied Sconin. “As I have had the honour of knowing you for many years, I comprehended this morning that the half-hour might be long, so I went to Paris, did some business there, before and after dinner, and here I am again.”

M. de Chevreuse was confounded. Sconin did not keep silence, nor did the servants of the house. M. de Beauvilliers made merry with the adventure when he heard of it, and accustomed as M. de Chevreuse might be to his raillery, he could not bear to have this subject alluded to. I have selected two anecdotes out of a hundred others of the same kind, because they characterise the man.

The liberality of M. du Maine which we have related on the occasion of the proclamation of peace at Paris, and which was so popular, and so surprising when viewed in connection with the disposition of the King, soon took new development. The Jesuits, so skilful in detecting the foibles of monarchs, and so clever in seizing hold of everything which can protect themselves and answer their ends, showed to what extent they were masters of these arts. A new and assuredly a very original History of France, in three large folio volumes, appeared under the name of Father Daniel, who lived at Paris in the establishment of the Jesuits. The paper and the printing of the work were excellent; the style was admirable. Never was French so clear, so pure, so flowing, with such happy transitions; in a word, everything to charm and entice the reader; admirable preface, magnificent promises, short, learned dissertations, a pomp, an authority of the most seductive kind. As for the history, there was much romance in the first race, much in the second, and much mistiness in the early times of the third. In a word, all the work evidently appeared composed in order to persuade people—under the simple air of a man who set aside prejudices with discernment, and who only seeks the truth—that the majority of the Kings of the first race, several of the second, some even of the third, were, bastards, whom this defect did not exclude from the throne, or affect in any way.

I say bluntly here what was very delicately veiled in the work, and yet plainly seen. The effect of the book was great; its vogue such, that everybody, even women, asked for it. The King spoke of it to several of his Court, asked if they had read it; the most sagacious early saw how much it was protected; it was the sole historical book the King and Madame de Maintenon had ever spoken of. Thus the work appeared at Versailles upon every table, nothing else was talked about, marvellous eulogies were lavished upon it, which were sometimes comical in the mouths of persons either very ignorant, or who, incapable of reading, pretended to read and relish this book.



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But this surprising success did not last. People perceived that this history, which so cleverly unravelled the remote part, gave but a meagre account of modern days, except in so far as their military operations were concerned; of which even the minutest details were recorded. Of negotiations, cabals, Court intrigues, portraits, elevations, falls, and the main springs of events, there was not a word in all the work, except briefly, dryly, and with precision as in the gazettes, often more superficially. Upon legal matters, public ceremonies, fetes of different times, there was also silence at the best, the same laconism; and when we come to the affairs of Rome and of the League, it is a pleasure to see the author glide over that dangerous ice on his Jesuit skates!

In due time critics condemned the work which, after so much applause, was recognised as a very wretched history, which had very industriously and very fraudulently answered the purpose for which it was written. It fell to the ground then; learned men wrote against it; but the principal and delicate point of the work was scarcely touched in France with the pen, so great was the danger.

Father Daniel obtained two thousand francs' pension for his history,— a prodigious recompense,—with a title of Historiographer of France. He enjoyed the fruits of his falsehood, and laughed at those who attacked him. Foreign countries did not swallow quite so readily these stories that declared such a number of our early kings bastards; but great care was taken not to let France be infected by the disagreeable truths therein published.

CHAPTER LXIII

It is now time that I should say something of the infamous bull 'Unigenitus', which by the unsurpassed audacity and scheming of Father Le Tellier and his friends was forced upon the Pope and the world.

I need not enter into a very lengthy account of the celebrated Papal decree which has made so many martyrs, depopulated our schools, introduced ignorance, fanaticism, and misrule, rewarded vice, thrown the whole community into the greatest confusion, caused disorder everywhere, and established the most arbitrary and the most barbarous inquisition; evils which have doubled within the last thirty years. I will content myself with a word or two, and will not blacken further the pages of my Memoirs. Many pens have been occupied, and will be occupied, with this subject. It is not the apostleship of Jesus Christ that is in question, but that of the reverend fathers and their ambitious clients.

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It is enough to say that the new bull condemned in set terms the doctrines of Saint-Paul (respected like oracles of the Holy Spirit ever since the time of our Saviour), and also those of Saint-Augustin, and of other fathers; doctrines which have always been adopted by the Popes, by the Councils, and by the Church itself. The bull, as soon as published, met with a violent opposition in Rome from the cardinals there, who went by sixes, by eights, and by tens, to complain of it to the Pope. They might well do so, for they had not been consulted in any way upon this new constitution. Father Tellier and his friends had had the art and the audacity to obtain the publication of it without submitting it to them. The Pope, as I have said, had been forced into acquiescence, and now, all confused, knew not what to say. He protested, however, that the publication had been made without his knowledge, and put off the cardinals with compliments, excuses, and tears, which last he could always command.

The constitution had the same fate in France as in Rome. The cry against it was universal. The cardinals protested that it would never be received. They were shocked by its condemnation of the doctrines of Saint-Augustin and of the other fathers; terrified at its condemnation of Saint-Paul. There were not two opinions upon this terrible constitution. The Court, the city, and the provinces, as soon as they knew the nature of it, rose against it like one man.

In addition to the articles of this constitution which I have already named, there was one which excited infinite alarm and indignation, for it rendered the Pope master of every crown! As is well known, there is a doctrine of the Church, which says:

“An unjust excommunication ought not to hinder [us] from doing our duty.”

The new constitution condemned this doctrine, and consequently proclaimed that:

“An unjust excommunication ought to hinder [us] from doing our duty.”

The enormity of this last is more striking than the simple truth of the proposition condemned. The second is a shadow which better throws up the light of the first. The results and the frightful consequences of the condemnation are as clear as day.

I think I have before said that Father Tellier, without any advances on my part, without, in fact, encouragement of any kind, insisted upon keeping up an intimacy with me, which I could not well repel, for it came from a man whom it would have been very dangerous indeed to have for an-enemy. As soon as this matter of the constitution was in the wind, he came to me to talk about it. I did not disguise my opinion from him, nor did he disguise in any way from me the unscrupulous means he meant to employ in order to get this bull accepted by the clergy. Indeed, he was so free with me, showed me so plainly his knavery and cunning, that I was, as it were, transformed with astonishment and fright. I never could comprehend this openness in a man so false, so artificial, so profound, or see in what manner it could be useful to him.

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One day he came to me by appointment, with a copy of the constitution in his hand in order that we might thoroughly discuss it. I was at Versailles. In order to understand what I am going to relate, I must give some account of my apartments there. Let me say, then, that I had a little back cabinet, leading out of another cabinet, but so arranged that you would not have thought it was there. It received no light except from the outer cabinet, its own windows being boarded up. In this back cabinet I had a bureau, some chairs, books, and all I needed; my friends called it my “shop,” and in truth it did not ill resemble one.

Father Tellier came at the hour he had fixed. As chance would have it, M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse de Berry had invited themselves to a collation with Madame de Saint-Simon that morning. I knew that when they arrived I should no longer be master of my chamber or of my cabinet. I told Father Tellier this, and he was much vexed. He begged me so hard to find some place where we might be inaccessible to the company, that at last, pressed by him to excess, I said I knew of only one expedient by which we might become free: and I told him that he must dismiss his ‘vatble’ (as the brother who always accompanies a monk is called), and that then, furnished with candles, we would go and shut ourselves up in my back cabinet, where we could neither be seen nor heard, if we took care not to speak loud when anybody approached. He thought the expedient admirable, dismissed his companion, and we sat down opposite each other, the bureau between us, with two candles alight upon it.

He immediately began to sing the praises of the Constitution Unigenitus, a copy of which he placed on the table. I interrupted him so as to come at once to the excommunication proposition. We discussed it with much politeness, but with little accord. I shall not pretend to report our dispute. It was warm and long. I pointed out to Father Tellier, that supposing the King and the little Dauphin were both to die, and this was a misfortune which might happen, the crown of France would by right of birth belong to the King of Spain; but according to the renunciation just made, it would belong to M. le Duc de Berry and his branch, or in default to M. le Duc d’Orleans. “Now,” said I, “if the two brothers dispute the crown, and the Pope favouring the one should excommunicate the other, it follows, according to our new constitution, that the excommunicated must abandon all his claims, all his partisans, all his forces, and go over to the other side. For you say, an unjust excommunication ought to hinder us from doing our duty. So that in one fashion or another the Pope is master of all the crowns in his communion, is at liberty to take them away or to give them as he pleases, a liberty so many Popes have claimed and so many have tried to put in action.”



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My argument was simple, applicable, natural, and pressing: it offered itself, of itself. Wherefore, the confessor was amazed by it; he blushed, he beat about the bush, he could not collect himself. By degrees he did so, and replied to me in a manner that he doubtless thought would convince me at once. "If the case you suggest were to happen," he said, "and the Pope declaring for one disputant were to excommunicate the other and all his followers, such excommunication would not merely be unjust, it would be false; and it has never been decided that a false excommunication should hinder us from doing our duty."

"Ah! my father," I said, "your distinction is subtle and clever, I admit. I admit, too, I did not expect it, but permit me some few more objections, I beseech you. Will the Ultramontanes admit the nullity of the excommunication? Is it not null as soon as it is unjust? If the Pope has the power to excommunicate unjustly, and to enforce obedience to his excommunication, who can limit power so unlimited, and why should not his false (or nullified) excommunication be as much obeyed and respected as his unjust excommunication? Suppose the case I have imagined were to happen. Suppose the Pope were to excommunicate one of the two brothers. Do you think it would be easy to make your subtle distinction between a false and an unjust excommunication understood by the people, the soldiers, the bourgeois, the officers, the lords, the women, at the very moment when they would be preparing to act and to take up arms? You see I point out great inconveniences that may arise if the new doctrine be accepted, and if the Pope should claim the power of deposing kings, disposing of their crowns, and releasing their subjects from the oath of fidelity in opposition to the formal words of Jesus Christ and of all the Scripture."

My words transported the Jesuit, for I had touched the right spring in spite of his effort to hide it. He said nothing personal to me, but he fumed. The more he restrained himself for me the less he did so for the matter in hand. As though to indemnify himself for his moderation on my account, he launched out the more, upon the subject we were discussing. In his heat, no longer master of himself, many things escaped him, silence upon which I am sure he would afterwards have bought very dearly. He told me so many things of the violence that would be used to make his constitution accepted, things so monstrous, so atrocious, so terrible, and with such extreme passion that I fell into a veritable syncope. I saw him right in front of me between two candles, only the width of the table between us (I have described elsewhere his horrible physiognomy). My hearing and my sight became bewildered. I was seized, while he was speaking, with the full idea of what a Jesuit was. Here was a man who, by his state and his vows, could hope for nothing for his family or for himself; who could not expect an apple or a glass of wine more than his brethren; who was approaching an age when he would have to render account of all things to God, and who, with studied deliberation and mighty artifice, was going to throw the state and religion into the most terrible flames, and commence a most frightful persecution for questions which affected him in nothing, nor touched in any way the honour of the School of Molina!



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His profundities, the violence he spoke of—all this together, threw me into such an ecstasy, that suddenly I interrupted him by saying:

“My father, how old are you?”

The extreme surprise which painted itself upon his face as I looked at him with all my eyes, fetched back my senses, and his reply brought me completely to myself. “Why do you ask?” he replied, smiling. The effort that I made over myself to escape such a unique ‘proposito’, the terrible value of which I fully appreciated, furnished me an issue. “Because,” said I, “never have I looked at you so long as I have now, you in front of me, these two candles between us, and your face is so fresh and so healthy, with all your labours, that I am surprised at it.”

He swallowed the answer, or so well pretended to do so, that he said nothing of it then nor since, never ceasing when he met me to speak to me as openly, and as frequently as before, I seeking him as little as ever. He replied at that time that he was seventy-four years old; that in truth he was very well; that he had accustomed himself, from his earliest years, to a hard life and to labour; and then went back to the point at which I had interrupted him. We were compelled, however, to be silent for a time, because people came into my cabinet, and Madame de Saint-Simon, who knew of our interview, had some difficulty to keep the coast clear.

For more than two hours we continued our discussion, he trying to put me off with his subtleties and authoritativeness, I offering but little opposition to him, feeling that opposition was of no use, all his plans being already decided. We separated without having persuaded each other, he with many flatteries upon my intelligence, praying me to reflect well upon the matter; I replying that my reflections were all made, and that my capacity could not go farther. I let him out by the little back door of my cabinet, so that nobody perceived him, and as soon as I had closed it, I threw myself into a chair like a man out of breath, and I remained there a long time alone, reflecting upon the strange kind of ecstasy I had been in, and the horror it had caused me.

The results of this constitution were, as I have said, terrible to the last degree; every artifice, every cruelty was used, in order to force it down the throats of the clergy; and hence the confusion and sore trouble which arose all over the realm. But it is time now for me to touch upon other matters.

Towards the close of this year, 1713, peace with the Emperor seemed so certain, that the King disbanded sixty Battalions and eighteen men per company of the regiment of the guards, and one hundred and six squadrons; of which squadrons twenty-seven were dragoons. At peace now with the rest of Europe he had no need of so many troops, even although the war Against the Empire had continued; fortunately, however it did not. Negotiations were set on foot, and on the 6th of March of the following year, 1714, after much debate, they ended successfully. On that day, in fact, peace was

signed at Rastadt. It was shortly afterwards published at Paris, a Te Deum sung, and bonfires lighted at night; a grand collation was given at the Hotel de Ville by the Duc de Tresmes, who at midnight also gave, in his own house, a splendid banquet, at which were present many ladies, foreigners, and courtiers.



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This winter was fertile in balls at the Court; there were several, fancy-dress and masked, given by M. le Duc de Berry, by Madame la Duchesse de Berry, M. le Duc, and others. There were some also at Paris, and at Sceaux, where Madame du Maine gave many fetes and played many comedies, everybody going there from Paris and the Court—M. du Maine doing the Honours. Madame la Duchesse de Berry was in the family way, and went to no dances out of her own house. The King permitted her, on account of her condition, to sup with him in a robe de chambre, as under similar circumstances he had permitted the two Dauphines to do.

At the opera, one night this winter, the Abbe Servien, not liking certain praises of the King contained in a Prologue, let slip a bitter joke in ridicule of them. The pit took it up, repeated it, and applauded it. Two days afterwards, the Abbe Servien was arrested and taken to Vincennes, forbidden to speak to anybody and allowed no servant to wait upon him. For form's sake seals were put upon his papers, but he was not a man likely to have any fit for aught else than to light the fire. Though more than sixty-five years old, he was strangely debauched.

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld died on Thursday, the 11th of January, at Versailles, seventy-nine years of age, and blind. I have spoken of him so frequently in the course of these memoirs, that I will do nothing more now than relate a few particulars respecting him, which will serve in some sort to form his portrait.

He had much honour, worth, and probity. He was noble, good, magnificent, ever willing to serve his friends; a little too much so, for he oftentimes wearied the King with importunities on their behalf. Without any intellect or discernment he was proud to excess, coarse and rough in his manners—disagreeable even, and embarrassed with all except his flatterers; like a man who does not know how to receive a visit, enter or leave a room. He scarcely went anywhere except to pay the indispensable compliments demanded by marriage, death, *etc.*, and even then as little as he could. He lived in his own house so shut up that no one went to see him except on these same occasions. He gave himself up almost entirely to his valets, who mixed themselves in the conversation; and you were obliged to treat them with all sorts of attentions if you wished to become a frequenter of the house.

I shall never forget what happened to us at the death of the Prince of Vaudemont's son, by which M. de la Rochefoucauld's family came in for a good inheritance. We were at Marly. The King had been stag-hunting. M. de Chevreuse, whom I found when the King was being unbooted, proposed that we should go and pay our compliments to M. de la Rochefoucauld. We went. Upon entering, what was our surprise, nay, our shame, to find M. de la Rochefoucauld playing at chess with one of his servants in livery, seated opposite to him! Speech failed us. M. de la Rochefoucauld perceived

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it, and remained confounded himself. He stammered, he grew confused, he tried to excuse what we had seen, saying that this lackey played very well, and that chess-players played with everybody. M. de Chevreuse had not come to contradict him; neither had I; we turned the conversation, therefore, and left as soon as possible. As soon as we were outside we opened our minds to each other, and said what we thought of this rare meeting, which, however, we did not make public.

M. de Rochefoucauld, towards the end of his career at Court, became so importunate, as I have said, for his friends, that the King was much relieved by his death. Such have been his sentiments at the death of nearly all those whom he had liked and favoured.

Of the courage of M. de la Rochefoucauld, courtier as he was, in speaking to the King, I will relate an instance. It was during one of the visits at Marly, in the gardens of which the King was amusing himself with a fountain that he set at work. I know not what led to it, but the King, usually so reserved, spoke with him of the bishop of Saint-Pons, then in disgrace on account of the affairs of Port Royal. M. de la Rochefoucauld let him speak on to the end, and then began to praise the bishop. The discouraging silence of the King warned him; he persisted, however, and related how the bishop, mounted upon a mule, and visiting one day his diocese, found himself in a path which grew narrower at every step; and which ended in a precipice. There were no means of getting out of it except by going back, but this was impossible, there not being enough space to turn round or to alight. The holy bishop (for such was his term as I well remarked) lifted his eyes to Heaven, let go the bridle, and abandoned himself to Providence. Immediately his mule rose up upon its hind legs, and thus upright, the bishop still astride, turned round until its head was where its tail had been. The beast thereupon returned along the path until it found an opening into a good road. Everybody around the King imitated his silence, which excited the Duke to comment upon what he had just related. This generosity charmed me, and surprised all who were witness of it.

The day after the death of M. de la Rochefoucauld, the Chancellor took part in a very tragic scene. A Vice-bailli of Alencon had just lost a trial, in which, apparently, his honour, or his property, was much interested. He came to Pontchartrain's, where the Chancellor was at the moment, and waited until he came out into the court to get into his carriage. The Vice-bailli then asked him for a revision of the verdict. The Chancellor, with much gentleness and goodness represented to the man that the law courts were open to him if he insisted to appeal, but that as to a revision of the verdict; it was contrary to usage; and turned to get into his coach. While he was getting in; the unhappy bailli said there was a shorter way of escaping from trouble, and stabbed himself twice with a poniard. At the dies of the domestics the Chancellor descended from the coach, had the man carried into a room, and sent for a doctor, and a confessor. The bailli made confession very peacefully, and died an hour afterwards.



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I have spoken in its time of the exile of Charmel and its causes, of which the chief was his obstinate refusal to present himself before the King. The vexation of the King against people who withdrew from him was always very great. In this case, it never passed away, but hardened into a strange cruelty, to speak within limits. Charmel, attacked with the stone, asked permission to come to Paris to undergo an operation. The permission was positively refused. Time pressed. The operation was obliged to be done in the country. It was so severe, and perhaps so badly done, that Charmel died three days afterwards full of penitence and piety. He had led a life remarkable for its goodness, was without education, but had religious fervour that supplied the want of it. He was sixty-eight years of age.

The Marechale de la Ferme died at Paris, at the same time, more than eighty years old. She was sister of the Comtesse d'Olonne, very rich and a widow. The beauty of the two sisters, and the excesses of their lives, made a great stir. No women, not even those most stigmatized for their gallantry, dared to see them, or to be seen anywhere with them. That was the way then; the fashion has changed since. When they were old and nobody cared for them, they tried to become devout. They lodged together, and one Ash Wednesday went and heard a sermon. This sermon, which was upon fasting and penitence, terrified them.

"My sister," they said to each other on their return, "it was all true; there was no joke about it; we must do penance, or we are lost. But, my sister, what shall we do?" After having well turned it over: "My sister," said Madame d'Olonne, "this is what we must do; we must make our servants fast." Madame d'Olonne thought she had very well met the difficulty. However, at last she set herself to work in earnest, at piety and penitence, and died three months after her sister, the Marechale de la Ferme. It will not be forgotten, that it was under cover of the Marechale that a natural child was first legitimated without naming the mother, in order that by this example, the King's natural children might be similarly honoured, without naming Madame de Montespan, as I have related in its place.

CHAPTER LXIV

The Queen of Spain, for a long time violently attacked with the king's evil around the face and neck, was just now at the point of death. Obtaining no relief from the Spanish doctors, she wished to have Helvetius, and begged the King by an express command to send him to her. Helvetius, much inconvenienced, and knowing besides the condition of the Princess, did not wish to go, but the King expressly commanded him. He set out then in a postchaise, followed by another in case his own should break down, and arrived thus at Madrid on the 11th of February, 1714. As soon as he had seen the Queen, he said there was nothing but a miracle could save her. The King of Spain did not discontinue sleeping with her until the 9th. On the 14th she died, with much courage, consciousness, and piety.

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Despair was general in Spain, where this Queen was universally adored. There was not a family which did not lament her, not a person who has since been consoled. The King of Spain was extremely touched, but somewhat in a royal manner. Thus, when out shooting one day, he came close to the convoy by which the body of his queen was being conveyed to the Escorial; he looked at it, followed it with his eyes, and continued his sport! Are these princes made like other human beings?

The death of the Queen led to amazing changes, such as the most prophetic could not have foreseen. Let me here, then, relate the events that followed this misfortune.

I must commence by saying, that the principal cause which had so long and scandalously hindered us from making peace with the Emperor, was a condition, which Madame des Ursins wished to insert in the treaty, (and which the King of Spain supported through thick and thin) to the effect that she should be invested with a bona fide sovereignty. She had set her heart upon this, and the king of Spain was a long time before he would consent to any terms of peace that did not concede it to her. It was not until the King had uttered threats against him that he would give way. As for Madame des Ursins, she had counted upon this sovereignty, with as much certainty as though it were already between her fingers. She had counted, too, with equal certainty upon exchanging it with our King, for the sovereignty of Touraine and the Amboise country; and had actually charged her faithful Aubigny to buy her some land near Amboise to build her there a vast palace, with courts and outbuildings; to furnish it with magnificence, to spare neither gilding nor paintings, and to surround the whole with the most beautiful gardens. She meant to live there as sovereign lady of the country. Aubigny had at once set about the work to the surprise of everybody: for no one could imagine for whom such a grand building could be designed. He kept the secret, pretended he was building a house for himself and pushed on the work so rapidly that just as peace was concluded without the stipulation respecting Madame des Ursins being inserted in the treaty, nearly all was finished. Her sovereignty scheme thoroughly failed; and to finish at once with that mad idea, I may as well state that, ashamed of her failure, she gave this palace to Aubigny, who lived there all the rest of his life: Chanteloup, for so it was called, has since passed into the hands of Madame d'Armantieres, his daughter. It is one of the most beautiful and most singular places in all France, and the most superbly furnished.

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This sovereignty, coveted by Madame des Ursins, exceedingly offended Madame de Maintenon and wounded her pride. She felt, with jealousy, that the grand airs Madame des Ursins gave herself were solely the effect of the protection she had accorded her. She could not bear to be outstripped in importance by the woman she herself had elevated. The King, too, was much vexed with Madame des Ursins; vexed also to see peace delayed; and to be obliged to speak with authority and menace to the King of Spain, in order to compel him to give up the idea of this precious sovereignty. The King of Spain did not yield until he was threatened with abandonment by France. It may be imagined what was the rage of Madame des Ursins upon missing her mark after having, before the eyes of all Europe, fired at it with so much perseverance; nay, with such unmeasured obstinacy. From this time there was no longer the same concert between Madame de Maintenon and Madame des Ursins that had formerly existed. But the latter had reached such a point in Spain, that she thought this was of no consequence.

It has been seen with what art Madame des Ursins had unceasingly isolated the King of Spain; in what manner she had shut him up with the Queen, and rendered him inaccessible, not only to his Court but to his grand officers, his ministers, even his valets, so that he was served by only three or four attendants, all French, and entirely under her thumb. At the death of the Queen this solitude continued. Under the pretext that his grief demanded privacy, she persuaded the King to leave his palace and to instal himself in a quiet retreat, the Palace of Medina-Celi, near the Buen-Retiro, at the other end of the city. She preferred this because it was infinitely smaller than the Royal Palace, and because few people, in consequence, could approach the King. She herself took the Queen's place; and in order to have a sort of pretext for being near the King, in the same solitude, she caused herself to be named governess of his children. But in order to be always there, and so that nobody should know when they were together, she had a large wooden corridor made from the cabinet of the King to the apartment of his children, in which she lodged. By this means they could pass from one to the other without being perceived, and without traversing the long suite of rooms, filled with courtiers, that were between the two apartments. In this manner it was never known whether the King was alone or with Madame des Ursins; or which of the two was in the apartments of the other. When they were together or how long is equally unknown. This corridor, roofed and glazed, was proceeded with in so much haste, that the work went on, in spite of the King's devotion, on fete days and Sundays. The whole Court, which perfectly well knew for what use this corridor was intended, was much displeased. Those who directed the work were the same. Of this good proof was given. One day, the Comptroller



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of the royal buildings, who had been ordered to keep the men hard at it, Sundays and fete days, asked the Pere Robinet, the King's confessor, and the only good one he ever had; he asked, I say, in one of those rooms Madame des Ursins was so anxious to avoid, and in the presence of various courtiers, if the work was to be continued on the morrow, a Sunday, and the next day, the Fete of the Virgin. Robinet replied, that the King had said nothing to the contrary; and met a second appeal with the same answer. At the third, he added, that before saying anything he would wait till the King spoke on the subject. At the fourth appeal, he lost patience, and said that if for the purpose of destroying what had been commenced, he believed work might be done even on Easter-day itself; but if for the purpose of continuing the corridor, he did not think a Sunday or a fete day was a fitting time. All the Court applauded; but Madame des Ursins, to whom this sally was soon carried, was much irritated.

It was suspected that she thought of becoming something more than the mere companion of the King. There were several princes. Reports were spread which appeared equivocal and which terrified. It was said that the King had no need of posterity, with all the children it had pleased God to bless him with; but now he only needed a wife who could take charge of those children. Not content with passing all her days with the King, and allowing him, like the deceased Queen, to work with his ministers only in her presence, the Princesse des Ursins felt that to render this habit lasting she must assure herself of him at all moments. He was accustomed to take the air, and he was in want of it all the more now because he had been much shut up during the last days of the Queen's illness, and the first which followed her death. Madame des Ursins chose four or five gentlemen to accompany him, to the exclusion of all others, even his chief officers, and people still more necessary. These gentlemen charged with the amusement of the King, were called recreadores. With so much circumspection, importunity, preparation, and rumour carefully circulated, it was not doubted that Madame des Ursins intended to marry him; and the opinion, as well as the fear, became general. The King (Louis XIV.), was infinitely alarmed; and Madame de Maintenon, who had twice tried to be proclaimed Queen and twice failed, was distracted with jealousy. However, if Madame des Ursins flattered herself then, it was not for long.

The King of Spain, always curious to learn the news from France, often demanded them of his confessor, the only man to whom he could speak who was not under the thumb of Madame des Ursins. The clever and courageous Robinet, as disturbed as others at the progress of the design, which nobody in the two Courts of France and Spain doubted was in execution, allowed himself to be pressed by questions—in an embrasure where the King had drawn him—played the reserved and the mysterious in order to excite curiosity more. When he saw it was sufficiently excited, he said that since he was forced to speak, his news from France was the same as that at Madrid, where no one doubted that the King would do the Princesse des Ursins the honour to espouse her. The King blushed and hastily replied, "Marry her! oh no! not that!" and quitted him.

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Whether the Princesse des Ursins was informed of this sharp repartee, or whether she despaired already of success, she changed about; and judging that this interregnum in the Palace of Medina-Celi could not last for ever, resolved to assure herself of the King by a Queen who should owe to her such a grand marriage, and who, having no other support, would throw herself into her arms by gratitude and necessity. With this view she explained herself to Alberoni, who, since the death of the Duc de Vendome, had remained at Madrid charged with the affairs of Parma; and proposed to him the marriage of the Princess of Parma, daughter of the Duchess and of the late Duke of Parma, who had married the widow of his brother.

Alberoni could with difficulty believe his ears. An alliance so disproportioned appeared to him so much the more incredible, because he thought the Court of France would never consent to it, and that without its consent the marriage could not be concluded. The Princess in question was the issue of double illegitimacy; by her father descended from a pope, by her mother from a natural daughter of Charles Quint. She was daughter of a petty Duke of Parma, and of a mother, entirely Austrian, sister of the Dowager Empress and of the Dowager Queen of Spain (whose acts had excited such disapproval that she was sent from her exile at Toledo to Bayonne), sister too of the Queen of Portugal, who had induced the King, her husband, to receive the Archduke at Lisbon, and to carry the war into Spain. It did not seem reasonable, therefore, that such a Princess would be accepted as a wife for the King of Spain.

Nothing of all this, however, stopped the Princesse des Ursins; her own interest was the most pressing consideration with her; the will of the King of Spain was entirely subject to her; she felt all the change towards her of our King and of Madame de Maintenon; she no longer hoped for a return of their favour; she believed that she must look around for support against the very authority which had established her so powerfully, and which could destroy her; and occupied herself solely in pushing forward a marriage from which she expected everything by making the same use of the new queen as she had made of the one just dead. The King of Spain was devout, he absolutely wanted a wife, the Princesse des Ursins was of an age when her charms were but the charms, of art; in a word, she set Alberoni to work, and it may be believed she was not scrupulous as to her means as soon as they were persuaded at Parma that she was serious and not joking. Orry, always united with Madame des Ursins, and all-powerful, by her means, was her sole confidant in this important affair.

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At that time the Marquis de Brancas was French ambassador at Madrid. He had flattered himself that Madame des Ursins would make him one of the *grandees* of Spain. Instead of doing so she simply bestowed upon him the order of the Golden Fleece. He had never pardoned her for this. Entirely devoted to Madame de Maintenon, he became on that very account an object of suspicion to Madame des Ursins, who did not doubt that he cherished a grudge against her, on account of the favour he had missed. She allowed him no access to her, and had her eyes open upon all he did. Brancas in like manner watched all her doings. The confessor, Robinet, confided to him his fears respecting Madame des Ursins, and the chiefs of a court universally discontented went and opened their hearts to him, thinking it was France alone which could set to rights the situation of Spain.

Brancas appreciated all the importance of what was told him, but warned by the fate of the Abbe d'Estrees, fearing even for his couriers, he took the precaution of sending word to the King that he had pressing business to acquaint him with, which he could not trust to paper, and that he wished to be allowed to come to Versailles for a fortnight. The reply was the permission asked for, accompanied, however, with an order to communicate en route with the Duc de Berwick, who was about to pass to Barcelona.

Madame des Ursins, who always found means to be informed of everything, immediately knew of Brancas's projected journey, and determined to get the start of him. At once she had sixteen relays of mules provided upon the Bayonne road, and suddenly sent off to France, on Holy Thursday, Cardinal del Giudice, grand inquisitor and minister of state, who had this mean complaisance for her. She thus struck two blows at once; she got rid, at least for a time, of a Cardinal minister who troubled her, and anticipated Brancas, which in our Court was no small point.

Brancas, who felt all the importance of arriving first, followed the Cardinal on Good Friday, and moved so well that he overtook him at Bayonne, at night while he was asleep; Brancas passed straight on, charging the Commandant to amuse and to delay the Cardinal as long as possible on the morrow; gained ground, and arrived at Bordeaux with twenty-eight post-horses that he had carried off with him from various stations, to keep them from the Cardinal. He arrived in Paris in this manner two days before the other, and went straight to Marly where the King was, to explain the business that had led him there. He had a long audience with the King, and received a lodging for the rest of the visit.

The Cardinal del Giudice rested four or five days at Paris, and then came to Marly, where he was introduced to the King. The Cardinal was somewhat embarrassed; he was charged with no business; all his mission was to praise Madame des Ursins, and complain of the Marquis de Brancas. These praises of Madame des Ursins were but vague; she had not sufficient confidence in the Cardinal to admit to him her real position in our Court, and to give him instructions accordingly, so that what he had to say was



soon all said; against the Marquis de Brancas he had really no fact to allege, his sole crime that he was too sharp-sighted and not sufficiently devoted to the Princess.



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The Cardinal was a courtier, a man of talent, of business, of intrigue, who felt, with annoyance, that for a person of his condition and weight, such a commission as he bore was very empty. He appeared exceedingly agreeable in conversation, of pleasant manners, and was much liked in good society. He was assiduous in his attentions to the King, without importuning him for audiences that were unnecessary; and by all his conduct, he gave reason for believing that he suspected Madame des Ursins' decadence in our Court, and sought to gain esteem and confidence, so as to become by the support of the King, prime minister in Spain; but as we shall soon see, his ultramontane hobbies hindered the accomplishment of his measures. All the success of his journey consisted in hindering Brancas from returning to Spain. This was no great punishment, for Brancas had nothing more to hope for from Madame des Ursins, and was not a man to lose his time for nothing.

Up to this period not a word had been said to the King (Louis XIV.) by the King of Spain upon the subject of his marriage; not a hint had been given that he meant to remarry, much less with a Parma princess. This proceeding, grafted upon the sovereignty claimed by the Princesse des Ursine, and all her conduct with the King of Spain since the death of the Queen, resolved our King to disgrace her without appeal.

A remark upon Madame des Ursins, accompanied by a smile, escaped from the King, generally so complete a master of himself, and appeared enigmatical to such an extent, although striking, that Torcy, to whom it was addressed, understood nothing. In his surprise, he related to Castries what the King had said; Castries told it to Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, who reported it to M. d'Orleans and to me. We racked our brains to comprehend it, but in vain; nevertheless such an unintelligible remark upon a person like Madame des Ursins, who up to this time had been on such good terms with the King and Madame de Maintenon, did not appear to me to be favourable. I was confirmed in this view by what had just happened with regard to her sovereignty; but I was a thousand leagues from the thunderbolt which this lightning announced, and which only declared itself to us by its fall.

It was not until the 27th of June that the King was made acquainted by the King of Spain with his approaching marriage. Of course, through other channels, he had not failed to hear of it long before. He passed in the lightest and gentlest manner in the world over this project, and the mystery so long and so complete! with which it had been kept from him, stranger, if possible, than the marriage itself. He could not hinder it; but from this moment he was sure of his vengeance against her who had arranged and brought it about in this manner. The disgrace of Madame des Ursine was in fact determined on between the King and Madame de Maintenon, but in a manner a secret before and since, that I know nobody who has found out by whom or how it was carried out. It is good to admit our ignorance, and not to give fictions and inventions in place of what we are unacquainted with.



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I know not why, but a short time after this, the Princesse des Ursine conceived such strong suspicion of the lofty and enterprising spirit of the Princess of Parma that she repented having made this marriage; and wished to break it off. She brought forward; therefore, I know not what difficulties, and despatched a courier to Rome to Cardinal Acquaviva, who did the King of Spain's business there, ordering him to delay his journey to Parma, where he had been commanded to ask the hand of the Princess, and to see her provisionally espoused. But Madame des Ursins had changed her mind too late. The courier did not find Acquaviva at Rome. That Cardinal was already far away on the road to Parma, so that there were no means of retreat.

Acquaviva was received with great honour and much magnificence; he made his demand, but delayed the espousals as long as he could, and this caused much remark. The marriage, which was to have been celebrated on the 25th of August, did not take place until the 15th of September. Immediately after the ceremony the new Queen set out for Spain.

An envoy from Parma, with news of the marriage of the Princess, arrived at Fontainebleau on the 11th October, and had an audience with the King. This was rather late in the day: For dowry she had one hundred thousand pistoles, and three hundred thousand livres' worth of jewels. She had embarked for Alicante at Sestri di Levante. A violent tempest sickened her of the sea. She landed, therefore, at Monaco, in order to traverse by land Provence, Languedoc, and Guienne, so as to reach Bayonne, and see there the Queen Dowager of Spain; sister of her mother, and widow of Charles II. Desgranges, master of the ceremonies, was to meet her in Provence, with orders to follow her, and to command the governors, lieutenants-general, and intendants to follow her also, and serve her, though she travelled incognito.

The new Queen of Spain, on arriving at Pau, found the Queen Dowager, her aunt, had come expressly from Bayonne to meet her. As they approached each other, they both descended at the same time, and after saluting, mounted alone into a beautiful caleche that the Queen Dowager had brought with her, and that she presented to her niece. They supped together alone. The Queen Dowager conducted her to Saint-Jean Pied-de-Port (for in that country, as in Spain, the entrances to mountain passes are called ports). They separated there, the Queen Dowager making the Queen many presents, among others a garniture of diamonds. The Duc de Saint-Aignan joined the Queen of Spain at Pau, and accompanied her by command of the King to Madrid. She sent Grillo, a Genoese noble, whom she has since made grandee of Spain, to thank the King for sending her the Duc de Saint-Aignan, and for the present he brought with him. The officers of her household had been named by Madame des Ursins.



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The Queen of Spain advanced towards Madrid with the attendants sent to accompany her. She was to be met by the King of Spain at Guadalaxara, which is about the same distance from Madrid as Paris is from Fontainebleau. He arrived there, accompanied by the attendants that the Princesse des Ursins had placed near him, to keep him company, and to allow no one else to approach him. She followed in her coach, so as to arrive at the same time, and immediately afterwards he shut himself up alone with her, and saw nobody until he went to bed. This was on the 22nd of December. The next day the Princesse des Ursins set out with a small suite for a little place, seven leagues further, called Quadraque, where the Queen was to sleep that night. Madame des Ursins counted upon enjoying all the gratitude that the queen would feel for the un hoped-for grandeur she had obtained by her means; counted upon passing the evening with her, and upon accompanying her next day to Guadalaxara. She found, upon arriving at Quadraque, that the Queen had already reached there. She at once entered into a lodging that had been prepared for her, opposite that of the Queen. She was in a full Court dress. After adjusting it in a hurried manner, she went to the Queen. The coldness and stiffness of her reception surprised her extremely. She attributed it in the first place to the embarrassment of the Queen, and tried to melt this ice. Everybody withdrew, in order to leave the two alone.

Then the conversation commenced. The Queen would not long allow Madame des Ursins to continue it; but burst out into reproaches against her for her manners, and for appearing there in a dress that showed want of respect for the company she was in. Madame des Ursins, whose dress was proper, and who, on account of her respectful manners and her discourse, calculated to win the Queen, believed herself to be far from meriting this treatment, was strangely surprised, and wished to excuse herself; but the Queen immediately began to utter offensive words, to cry out, to call aloud, to demand the officers of the guard, and sharply to; command Madame des Ursins to leave her presence. The latter wished to speak and defend herself against the reproaches she heard; but the Queen, increasing her fury and her menaces, cried out to her people to drive this mad woman from her presence and from the house; and absolutely had her turned out by the shoulders. Immediately afterwards, she called Amenzaga, lieutenant of the body-guard, and at the same time the ecuyer who had the control of her equipages. She ordered the first to arrest Madame des Ursins, and not quit her until he had placed her in a coach, with two sure officers of the guard and fifteen soldiers as sentinels over her; the second she commanded to provide instantly a coach and six, with two or three footmen, and send off in it the Princesse des Ursins towards Burgos and Bayonne, without once stopping on the road. Amenzago tried to represent to the Queen that the King of Spain alone had the power to give such commands; but she haughtily asked him if he had not received an order from the King of Spain to obey her in everything, without reserve and without comment. It was true he had received such an order, though nobody knew a word about it.



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Madame des Ursins was then immediately arrested, and put into a coach with one of her waiting-women, without having had time to change her costume or her head-dress, to take any precaution against the cold, to provide herself with any money or other things, and without any kind of refreshment in the coach, or a chemise; nothing, in fact, to change or to sleep in! She was shipped off thus (with two officers of the guard; who were ready as soon as the coach), in full Court dress, just as she left the Queen. In the very short and tumultuous interval which elapsed, she sent a message to the Queen, who flew into a fresh passion upon not being obeyed, and made her set out immediately.

It was then nearly seven o'clock in the evening, two days before Christmas, the ground all covered with snow and ice, and the cold extreme and very sharp and bitter, as it always is in Spain. As soon as the Queen learned that the Princesse des Ursins was out of Quadraque, she wrote to the King of Spain, by an officer of the guards whom she despatched to Guadalaxara. The night was so dark that it was only by means of the snow that anything could be seen.

It is not easy to represent the state of Madame des Ursins in the coach. An excess of astonishment and bewilderment prevailed at first, and suspended all other sentiment; but grief, vexation, rage, and despair, soon followed. In their turn succeeded sad and profound reflections upon a step so violent, so unheard-of, and so unjustifiable as she thought. Then she hoped everything from the friendship of the King of Spain and his confidence in her; pictured his anger and surprise, and those of the group of attached servitors, by whom she had surrounded him, and who would be so interested in exciting the King in her favour. The long winter's night passed thus; the cold was, terrible, there was nothing to ward it off; the coachman actually lost the use of one hand. The morning advanced; a halt was necessary in order to bait the horses; as for the travellers there is nothing for them ever in the Spanish inns. You are simply told where each thing you want is sold. The meat is ordinarily alive; the wine, thick, flat, and strong; the bread bad; the water is often worthless; as to beds, there are some, but only for the mule-drivers, so that you must carry everything with you, and neither Madame des Ursins nor those with her had anything whatever. Eggs, where they could find any, were their sole resource; and these, fresh or not, simply boiled, supported them during all the journey.

Until this halt for the horses, silence had been profound and uninterrupted; now it was broken. During all this long night the Princesse des Ursins had had leisure to think upon the course she should adopt, and to compose her face. She spoke of her extreme surprise, and of the little that had passed between her and the Queen. In like manner the two officers of the guard accustomed, as was all Spain, to fear



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and respect her more than their King, replied to her from the bottom of that abyss of astonishment from which they had not yet arisen. The horses being put to, the coach soon started again. Soon, too, the Princesse des Ursins found that the assistance she expected from the King did not arrive. No rest, no provisions, nothing to put on, until Saint-Jean de Luz was reached. As she went further on, as time passed and no news came, she felt she had nothing more to hope for. It may be imagined what rage succeeded in a woman so ambitious, so accustomed to publicly reign, so rapidly and shamefully precipitated from the summit of power by the hand that she herself had chosen as the most solid support of her grandeur. The Queen had not replied to the last two letters Madame des Ursins had written to her. This studied negligence was of bad augury, but who would have imagined treatment so strange and so unheard of?

Her nephews, Lanti and Chalais, who had permission to join her, completed her dejection. Yet she was faithful to herself. Neither tears nor regrets, neither reproaches nor the slightest weakness escaped her; not a complaint even of the excessive cold, of the deprivation of all things, or of the extreme fatigue of such a journey. The two officers who guarded her could not contain their admiration.

At Saint-Jean de Luz, where she arrived on the 14th of January, 1715, she found at last her corporeal ills at an end. She obtained a bed, change of dress, food, and her liberty. The guards, their officers, and the coach which had brought her, returned; she remained with her waiting-maid and her nephews. She had leisure to think what she might expect from Versailles. In spite of her mad sovereignty scheme so long maintained, and her hardihood in arranging the King of Spain's marriage without consulting our King, she flattered herself she should find resources in a Court she had so long governed. It was from Saint-Jean de Luz that she despatched a courier charged with letters for the King, for Madame de Maintenon, and for her friends. She briefly gave us an account in those letters of the thunderbolt which had fallen on her, and asked permission to come to the Court to explain herself more in detail. She waited for the return of her courier in this her first place of liberty and repose, which of itself is very agreeable. But this first courier despatched, she sent off Lanti with letters written less hastily, and with instructions. Lanti saw the King in his cabinet on the last of January, and remained there some moments. From him it was known that as soon as Madame des Ursins despatched her first courier, she had sent her compliments to the Queen Dowager of Spain at Bayonne, who would not receive them. What cruel mortifications attend a fall from a throne! Let us now return to Guadalaxara.

CHAPTER LXV



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The officer of the guards, whom the Queen despatched with a letter for the King of Spain as soon as Madame des Ursins was out of Quadraque, found the King upon the point of going to bed. He appeared moved, sent a short reply to the Queen, and gave no orders. The officer returned immediately. What is singular is, that the secret was so well kept that it did not transpire until the next morning at ten o'clock. It may be imagined what emotion seized the whole Court, and what divers movements there were among all at Guadalaxara. However, nobody dared to speak to the King, and much expectation was built upon the reply he had sent to the Queen. The morning passed and nothing was said; the fate of Madame des Ursins then became pretty evident.

Chalais and Lanti made bold to ask the King for permission to go and join the Princess in her isolation. Not only he allowed them to do so, but charged them with a letter of simple civility, in which he told her he was very sorry for what had happened; that he had not been able to oppose the Queen's will; that he should continue to her her pensions, and see that they were punctually paid. He was as good as his word: as long as she lived she regularly received them.

The Queen arrived at Guadalaxara on the afternoon of the day before Christmas day, at the hour fixed, and as though nothing had occurred. The King received her in the same manner on the staircase, gave her his hand, and immediately led her to the chapel, where the marriage was at once celebrated; for in Spain the custom is to marry after dinner. After that he led her to her chamber, and straightway went to bed; it was before six o'clock in the evening, and both got up again for the midnight mass. What passed between them upon the event of the previous evening was entirely unknown, and has always remained so. The day after Christmas day the King and Queen alone together in a coach, and followed by all the Court, took the road for Madrid, where there was no more talk of Madame des Ursins than if the King had never known her. Our King showed not the least surprise at the news brought to him by a courier despatched from Guadalaxara by the Duc de Saint-Aignan, though all the Court was filled with emotion and affright after having seen Madame des Ursins so triumphant.

Let us now look about for some explanations that will enable us to pierce this mystery—that remark to Torcy which escaped the King, which Torcy could not comprehend, and which he related to Castries, who told it to Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, from whom I learned it! Can we imagine that a Parma princess brought up in a garret by an imperious mother, would have dared to take upon herself, while six leagues from the King of Spain whom she had never seen, a step so bold and unheard-of, when we consider against whom directed, a person possessing the entire confidence of that King and reigning openly? The thing is explained by the order, so unusual and so secret, that Amenzago had from the King of Spain to obey the Queen in everything, without reserve and without comment; an order that became known only at the moment when she gave orders to arrest Madame des Ursins and take her away.



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Let us remark, too, the tranquillity with which our King and the King of Spain received the first intelligence of this event; the inactivity of the latter, the coldness of his letters to Madame des Ursins, and his perfect indifference what became of a person who was so cherished the day before, and who yet was forced to travel deprived of everything, by roads full of ice and snow. We must recollect that when the King banished Madame des Ursins before, for opening the letter of the Abbe d'Estrees, and for the note she sent upon it, he did not dare to have his orders executed in the presence of the King of Spain. It was on the frontier of Portugal, where our King wished him to go for the express purpose, that the King of Spain signed the order by which the Princesse des Ursins was forced to withdraw from the country. Now we had a second edition of the same volume. Let me add what I learnt from the Marechal de Brancas, to whom Alberoni related, a long while after this disgrace, that one evening as the Queen was travelling from Parma to Spain, he found her pacing her chamber, with rapid step and in agitation muttering to herself, letting escape the name of the Princesse des Ursins, and then saying with heat, "I will drive her away, the first thing." He cried out to the Queen and sought to represent to her the danger, the madness, the inutility of the enterprise which overwhelmed him: "Keep all this quiet," said the Queen, "and never let what you have heard escape you. Not a word! I know what I am about."

All these things together threw much light upon a catastrophe equally astonishing in itself and in its execution, and clearly show our King to have been the author of it; the King of Spain a consenting party and assisting by the extraordinary order given to Amenzago; and the Queen the actress, charged in some manner by the two Kings to bring it about. The sequel in France confirmed this opinion.

The fall of the Princesse des Ursins caused great changes in Spain. The Comtesse d'Altamire was named Camarera Mayor, in her place. She was one of the greatest ladies in all Spain, and was hereditary Duchess of Cardonne. Cellamare, nephew of Cardinal del Giudice, was named her grand ecuyer; and the Cardinal himself soon returned to Madrid and to consideration. As a natural consequence, Macanas was disgraced. He and Orry had orders to leave Spain, the latter without seeing the King. He carried with him the maledictions of the public. Pompadour, who had been named Ambassador in Spain only to amuse Madame des Ursins, was dismissed, and the Duc de Saint-Aignan invested with that character, just as he was about to return after having conducted the Queen to Madrid.



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In due time the Princesse des Ursins arrived in Paris, and took up her quarters in the house of the Duc de Noirmoutiers, her brother, in the Rue Saint-Dominique, close to mine. This journey must have appeared to her very different from the last she had made in France, when she was Queen of the Court. Few people, except her former friends and those of her formal cabal, came to see her; yet, nevertheless, some curious folks appeared, so that for the first few days there was company enough; but after that, solitude followed when the ill-success of her journey to Versailles became known. M. d'Orleans, reunited now with the King of Spain, felt that it was due to his interest even more than to his vengeance to show in a striking manner, that it was solely owing to the hatred and artifice of Madame des Ursins that he had fallen into such disfavour on account of Spain, and had been in danger of losing his head. Times had changed. Monseigneur was dead, the Meudon cabal annihilated; Madame de Maintenon had turned her back upon Madame des Ursins; thus M. d'Orleans was free to act as he pleased. Incited by Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, and more still by Madame, he begged the King to prohibit Madame des Ursins from appearing anywhere (Versailles not even excepted) where she might meet Madame la Duchesse de Berry, Madame, Monsieur le Duc, and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, who at the same time strictly forbade their households to see her, and asked the persons to whom they were particularly attached to hold no intercourse with her. This made a great stir, openly showed that Madame des Ursins had utterly lost the support of Madame de Maintenon and the King, and much embarrassed her.

I could not feel that M. d'Orleans was acting wrong, in thus paying off his wrongs for the injuries she had heaped upon him, but I represented to him, that as I had always been an intimate friend of Madame des Ursins, putting aside her conduct towards him and making no comparison between my attachment for him and my friendship for her, I could not forget the marks of consideration she had always given me, particularly in her last triumphant journey (as I have already explained), and that it would be hard if I could not see her. We capitulated then, and M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans permitted me to see her twice—once immediately; once when she left—giving my word that I would not see her three times, and that Madame de Saint-Simon should not see her at all; which latter clause we agreed to very unwillingly, but there was no remedy. As I wished at least to profit by my chance, I sent word to Madame des Ursins, explaining the fetters that bound me, and saying that as I wished to see her at all events at my ease since I should see her so little, I would let pass the first few days and her first journey to Court, before asking her for an audience.

My message was very well received; she had known for many years the terms on which I was with M. d'Orleans; she was not surprised with these fetters, and was grateful to me for what I had obtained. Some days after she had been to Versailles, I went to her at two o'clock in the day. She at once closed the door to all comers, and I was tete-a-tete with her until ten o'clock at night.



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It may be imagined what a number of things were passed in review during this long discourse. Our eight hours of conversation appeared to me like eight moments. She related to me her catastrophe, without mixing up the King or the King of Spain, of whom she spoke well; but, without violently attacking the Queen, she predicted what since has occurred. We separated at supper time, with a thousand reciprocal protestations and regret that Madame de Saint-Simon could not see her. She promised to inform me of her departure early enough to allow us to pass another day together.

Her journey to Versailles did not pass off very pleasantly. She dined with the Duchesse de Luders, and then visited Madame de Maintenon; waited with her for the King, but when he came did not stop long, withdrawing to Madame Adam's, where she passed the night. The next day she dined with the Duchesse de Ventadour, and returned to Paris. She was allowed to give up the pension she received from the King, and in exchange to have her Hotel de Ville stock increased, so that it yielded forty thousand livres a-year. Her income, besides being doubled, was thus much more sure than would have been a pension from the King, which she doubted not M. d'Orleans, as soon as he became master, would take from her. She thought of retiring into Holland, but the States-General would have nothing to do with her, either at the Hague, or at Amsterdam. She had reckoned upon the Hague. She next thought of Utrecht, but was soon out of conceit with it, and turned her regards towards Italy.

The health of the King, meanwhile, visibly declining, Madame des Ursins feared lest she should entirely fall into the clutches of M. d'Orleans. She fully resolved, therefore, to make off, without knowing, however, where to fix herself; and asked permission of the King to come and take leave of him at Marly. She came there from Paris on Tuesday, the 6th of August, so as to arrive as he left dinner, that is, about ten o'clock. She was immediately admitted into the cabinet of the King, with whom she remained tete-a-tete full half an hour. She passed immediately to the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, with whom she remained an hour; and then got into her coach and returned to Paris. I only knew of this leave-taking by her arrival at Marly, where I had some trouble in meeting her. As chance would have it, I went in search of her coach to ask her people what had become of her, and was speaking to them when, to and behold! she herself arrived. She seemed very glad to see me, and made me mount with her into her coach, where for little less than an hour we discoursed very freely. She did not dissimulate from me her fears; the coldness the King and Madame de Maintenon had testified for her through all their politeness; the isolation she found herself in at the Court, even in Paris; and the uncertainty in which she was as to the choice of a retreat; all this in detail, and nevertheless without complaint,

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without regret, without weakness; always reassured and superior to events, as though some one else were in question. She touched lightly upon Spain, upon the ascendancy the Queen was acquiring already over the King, giving me to understand that it could not be otherwise; running lightly and modestly over the Queen, and always praising the goodness of the King of Spain. Fear, on account of the passers-by, put an end to our conversation. She was very gracious to me; expressed regret that we must part; proceeded to tell me when she should start in time for us to have another day together; sent many compliments to Madame de Saint-Simon; and declared herself sensible of the mark of friendship I had given her, in spite of my engagement with M. d'Orleans. As soon as I had seen her off, I went to M. d'Orleans, to whom I related what I had just done; said I had not paid a visit, but had had simply a meeting; that it was true I could not hinder myself from seeking it, without prejudice to the final visit he had allowed me. Neither he nor Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans complained. They had fully triumphed over their enemy, and were on the point of seeing her leave France for ever, without hope in Spain.

Until now, Madame des Ursins amused by a residue of friends, increased by those of M. de Noirmoutiers with whom she lodged and who had money, had gently occupied herself with the arrangement of her affairs, changed as they were, and in withdrawing her effects from Spain. The fear lest she should find herself in the power of a Prince whom she had so cruelly offended, and who showed, since her arrival in France, that he felt it, hurried all her measures. Her terror augmented by the change in the King that she found at this last audience had taken place since her first. She no longer doubted that his end was very near; and all her attention was directed to the means by which she might anticipate it, and be well informed of his health; this she believed her sole security in France. Terrified anew by the accounts she received of it, she no longer gave herself time for anything, but precipitately set out on the 14th August, accompanied as far as Essonne by her two nephews. She had no time to inform me, so that I have never seen her since the day of our conversation at Marly in her coach. She did not breathe until she arrived at Lyons.

She had abandoned the project of retiring into Holland, where the States-General would not have her. She herself, too, was disgusted with the equality of a republic, which counterbalanced in her mind the pleasure of the liberty enjoyed there. But she could not resolve to return to Rome, the theatre of her former reign, and appear there proscribed and old, as in an asylum. She feared, too, a bad reception, remembering the quarrels that had taken place between the Courts of Rome and Spain. She had lost many friends and acquaintances; in fifteen years of absence all had passed away, and she felt the trouble she might be subjected to by the ministers of the Emperor, and by those of the two Crowns, with their partisans. Turin was not a Court worthy of her; the King of Sardinia had not always been pleased with her, and they knew too much for each other. At Venice she would have been out of her element.

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Whilst agitated in this manner, without being able to make up her mind, she learned that the King was in extreme danger, a danger exaggerated by rumour. Fear seized her lest he should die whilst she was in his realm. She set off immediately, therefore, without knowing where to go; and solely to leave France went to Chambery, as the nearest place of safety, arriving there out of breath, so to say.

Every place being well examined, she preferred Genoa; its liberty pleased her; there was intercourse there with a rich and numerous nobility; the climate and the city were beautiful; the place was in some sort a centre and halting-point between Madrid, Paris, and Rome, with which places she was always in communication, and always hungered after all that passed there. Genoa determined on, she went there. She was well received, hoped to fix her tabernacle there, and indeed stayed some years. But at last ennui seized her; perhaps vexation at not being made enough of. She could not exist without meddling, and what is there for a superannuated woman to meddle with at Genoa? She turned her thoughts, therefore, towards Rome. Then, on sounding, found her course clear, quitted Genoa, and returned to her nest.

She was not long there before she attached herself to the King and Queen of England (the Pretender and his wife), and soon governed them openly. What a poor resource! But it was courtly and had a flavour of occupation for a woman who could not exist without movement. She finished her life there remarkably healthy in mind and body, and in a prodigious opulence, which was not without its use in that deplorable Court. For the rest, Madame des Ursins was in mediocre estimation at Rome, was deserted by the Spanish, little visited by the French, but always faithfully paid by France and Spain, and unmolested by the Regent. She was always occupied with the world, and with what she had been, but was no longer; yet without meanness, nay, with courage and dignity.

The loss she experienced in January, 1720, of the Cardinal de la Tremoille, although there was no real friendship between them, did not fail, to create a void in her. She survived him three years, preserved all her health, her strength, her mind until death, and was carried off, more than eighty years of age, at Rome, on the 5th of December, 1722, after a very short illness.

She had the pleasure of seeing Madame de Maintenon forgotten and annihilated in Saint-Cyr, of surviving her, of seeing at Rome her two enemies, Giudice and Alberoni, as profoundly disgraced as she,—one falling from the same height, and of relishing the forgetfulness, not to say contempt, into which they both sank. Her death, which, a few years before, would have resounded throughout all Europe, made not the least sensation. The little English Court regretted her, and some private friends also, of whom I was one. I did not hide this, although,—on account of M. le Duc d'Orleans, I had kept up



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no intercourse with her; for the rest, nobody seemed to perceive she had disappeared. She was, nevertheless, so extraordinary a person, during all the course of her long life, everywhere, and had so grandly figured, although in various ways; had such rare intellect, courage, industry, and resources; reigned so publicly and so absolutely in Spain; and had a character so sustained and so unique, that her life deserves to be written, and would take a place among the most curious fragments of the history of the times in which she lived.

CHAPTER LVI

But I must return somewhat now, in order to make way for a crowd of events which have been pressing forward all this time, but which I have passed by, in going straightforward at once to the end of Madame des Ursins' history.

On Monday, the 30th April, 1714., the King took medicine, and worked after dinner with Pontchartrain. This was at Marly. About six o'clock, he went to M. le Duc de Berry, who had had fever all night. M. le Duc de Berry had risen without saying anything, had been with the King at the medicine-hour, and intended to go stag-hunting; but on leaving the King's chamber shivering seized him, and forced him to go back again. He was bled while the King was in his chamber, and the blood was found very bad; when the King went to bed the doctors told him the illness was of a nature to make them hope that it might be a case of contagion. M. le Duc de Berry had vomited a good deal—a black vomit. Fagon said, confidently, that it was from the blood; the other doctors fastened upon some chocolate he had taken on the Sunday. From this day forward I knew what was the matter. Boulduc, apothecary of the King, and extremely attached to Madame de Saint-Simon and to me, whispered in my ear that M. le Duc de Berry would not recover, and that, with some little difference, his malady was the same as that of which the Dauphin and Dauphine died. He repeated this the next day, and never once varied afterwards; saying to me on the third day, that none of the doctors who attended the Prince were of a different opinion, or hid from him what they thought.

On Tuesday, the 1st of May, the Prince was bled in the foot at seven o'clock in the morning, after a very bad night; took emetics twice, which had a good effect; then some manna; but still there were two accesses. The King went to the sick-room afterwards, held a finance council, would not go shooting, as he had arranged, but walked in his gardens. The doctors, contrary to their custom, never reassured him. The night was cruel. On Wednesday; the 2nd of May, the King went, after mass, to M. le Duc de Berry, who had been again bled in the foot. The King held the Council of State, as usual, dined in Madame de Maintenon's rooms, and afterwards reviewed his Guards. Coettenfao, chevalier d'honneur of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, came during the morning



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to beg the King, in her name, that Chirac, a famous doctor of M. d'Orleans, should be allowed to see M. le Duc de Berry. The King refused, on the ground that all the other doctors were in accord, and that Chirac, who might differ with them, would embarrass them. After dinner Mesdames de Pompadour and La Vieuville arrived, on the part of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, to beg the King that she might be allowed to come and see her husband, saying that she would come on foot rather than stay away. It would have been better, surely, for her to come in a coach, if she so much wished, and, before alighting, to send to the King for permission so to do. But the fact is, she had no more desire to come than M. de Berry had to see her. He never once mentioned her name, or spoke of her, even indirectly. The King replied to those ladies by saying that he would not close the door against Madame la Duchesse de Berry, but, considering the state she was in, he thought it would be very imprudent on her part to come. He afterwards told M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans to go to Versailles and hinder her from coming. Upon returning from the review the King went again to see M. le Duc de Berry. He had been once more bled in the arm, had vomited all day much blood too—and had taken some Robel water three times, in order to stop his sickness. This vomiting put off the communion. Pere de la Rue had been by his side ever since Tuesday morning, and found him very patient and resigned.

On Thursday, the 3rd, after a night worse than ever, the doctors said they did not doubt that a vein had been broken in the stomach. It was reported that this accident had happened by an effort M. de Berry made when out hunting on the previous Thursday, the day the Elector of Bavaria arrived. His horse slipped; in drawing the animal up, his body struck against the pommel of the saddle, so it was said, and ever since he had spit blood every day. The vomiting ceased at nine o'clock in the morning, but the patient was no better. The King, who was going stag-hunting, put it off. At six o'clock at night M. de Berry was so choked that he could no longer remain in bed; about eight o'clock he found himself so relieved that he said to Madame, he hoped he should not die; but soon after, the malady increased so much that Pere de la Rue said it was no longer time to think of anything but God, and of receiving the sacrament. The poor Prince himself seemed to desire it.

A little after ten o'clock at night the King went to the chapel, where a consecrated Host had been kept prepared ever since the commencement of the illness. M. le Duc de Berry received it, with extreme unction, in presence of the King, with much devotion and respect. The King remained nearly an hour in the chamber, supped alone in his own, did not receive the Princesses afterwards, but went to bed. M. le Duc d'Orleans, at ten o'clock in the morning, went again to Versailles, as Madame la Duchesse de Berry wished



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still to come to Marly. M. le Duc de Berry related to Pere de la Rue, who at least said so, the accident just spoken of; but, it was added, "his head was then beginning to wander." After losing the power of speech, he took the crucifix Pere de la Rue held, kissed it, and placed it upon his heart. He expired on Friday, the 4th of May, 1714, at four o'clock in the morning, in his twenty-eighth year, having been born at Versailles, the last day of August, 1686.

M. le Duc de Berry was of ordinary height, rather fat, of a beautiful blonde complexion, with a fresh, handsome face, indicating excellent health. He was made for society, and for pleasure, which he loved; the best, gentlest, most compassionate and accessible of men, without pride, and without vanity, but not without dignity or self-appreciation. He was of medium intellect, without ambition or desire, but had very good sense, and was capable of listening, of understanding, and of always taking the right side in preference to the wrong, however speciously put. He loved truth, justice, and reason; all that was contrary to religion pained him to excess, although he was not of marked piety. He was not without firmness, and hated constraint. This caused it to be feared that he was not supple enough for a younger son, and, indeed, in his early youth he could not understand that there was any difference between him and his eldest brother, and his boyish quarrels often caused alarm.

He was the most gay, the most frank, and consequently the most loved of the three brothers; in his youth nothing was spoken of but his smart replies to Madame and M. de la Rochefoucauld. He laughed at preceptors and at masters—often at punishment. He scarcely knew anything except how to read and write; and learned nothing after being freed from the necessity of learning. This ignorance so intimidated him, that he could scarcely open his mouth before strangers, or perform the most ordinary duties of his rank; he had persuaded himself that he was an ass and a fool; fit for nothing. He was so afraid of the King that he dared not approach him, and was so confused if the King looked hard at him, or spoke of other things than hunting, or gaming, that he scarcely understood a word, or could collect his thoughts. As may be imagined, such fear does not go hand in hand with deep affection.

He commenced life with Madame la Duchesse de Berry as do almost all those who marry very young and green. He became extremely amorous of her; this, joined to his gentleness and natural complaisance, had the usual effect, which was to thoroughly spoil her. He was not long in perceiving it; but love was too strong for him. He found a woman proud, haughty, passionate, incapable of forgiveness, who despised him, and who allowed him to see it, because he had infinitely less head than she; and because, moreover, she was supremely false and strongly determined. She piqued herself upon both these qualities, and



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on her contempt for religion, ridiculing M. le Duc de Berry for being devout; and all these things became insupportable to him. Her gallantries were so prompt, so rapid, so unmeasured, that he could not help seeing them. Her endless private interviews with M. le Duc d'Orleans, in which everything languished if he was present, made him furious. Violent scenes frequently took place between them; the last, which occurred at Rambouillet, went so far that Madame la Duchesse de Berry received a kick * * * * , and a menace that she should be shut up in a convent for the rest of her life; and when M. le Duc de Berry fell ill, he was thumbing his hat, like a child, before the King, relating all his grievances, and asking to be delivered from Madame la Duchesse de Berry. Hitherto I have only alluded to Madame la Duchesse de Berry, but, as will be seen, she became so singular a person when her father was Regent, that I will here make her known more completely than I have yet done.

She was tall, handsome, well made, with, however, but little grace, and had something in her, eyes which made you fear what she was. Like her father and mother, she spoke well and with facility. Timid in trifles, yet in other things terrifyingly bold,—foolishly haughty sometimes, and sometimes mean to the lowest degree,—it may be said that she was a model of all the vices, avarice excepted; and was all the more dangerous because she had art and talent. I am not accustomed to over-colour the picture I am obliged to present to render things understood, and it will easily be perceived how strictly I am reserved upon the ladies, and upon all gallantries, not intimately associated with what may be called important matters. I should be so here, more than in any other case, from self-love, if not from respect for the sex and dignity of the person. The considerable part I played in bringing about Madame la Duchesse de Berry's marriage, and the place that Madame de Saint-Simon, in spite of herself and of me, occupied in connection with her, would be for me reasons more than enough for silence, if I did not feel that silence would throw obscurity over all the sequel of this history. It is then to the truth that I sacrifice my self-love, and with the same truthfulness I will say that if I had known or merely suspected, that the Princess was so bad as she showed herself directly after her marriage, and always more and more since, she would never have become Duchesse de Berry.

I have already told how she annoyed M. le Duc de Berry by ridiculing his devotion. In other ways she put his patience to severe trials, and more than once was in danger of public exposure. She partook of few meals in private, at which she did not get so drunk as to lose consciousness, and to bring up all she had taken on every side. The presence of M. le Duc de Berry, of M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, of ladies with whom she was not on familiar terms, in no way restrained her. She complained even of M. le Duc de Berry for not doing as she did. She often treated her father with a haughtiness which was terrifying on all accounts.



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In her gallantries she was as unrestrained as in other things. After having had several favourites, she fixed herself upon La Haye, who from King's page had become private ecuyer of M. le Duc de Berry. The oglings in the Salon of Marly were perceived by everybody; nothing restrained them. At last, it must be said, for this fact encloses all the rest, she wished La Haye to run away with her from Versailles to the Low Countries, whilst M. le Duc de Berry and the King were both living. La Haye almost died with fright at this proposition, which she herself made to him. His refusal made her furious. From the most pressing entreaties she came to all the invectives that rage could suggest, and that torrents of tears allowed her to pronounce. La Haye had to suffer her attacks—now tender, now furious; he was in the most mortal embarrassment. It was a long time before she could be cured of her mad idea, and in the meanwhile she subjected the poor fellow to the most frightful persecution. Her passion for La Haye continued until the death of M. le Duc de Berry, and some time after.

M. le Duc de Berry was buried at Saint-Denis on Wednesday, the 16th of May; M. le Duc d'Orleans was to have headed the procession, but the same odious reports against him that had circulated at the death of the Dauphin had again appeared, and he begged to be let off. M. le Duc filled his place. Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who was in the family way, kept her bed; and in order that she should not be seen there when people came to pay her the usual visits of condolence, the room was kept quite dark. Many ridiculous scenes and much indecent laughter, that could not be restrained, thus arose. Persons accustomed to the room could see their way, but those unaccustomed stumbled at every step, and had need of guidance. For want of this, Pere du Trevoux, and Pere Tellier after him, both addressed their compliments to the wall; others to the foot of the bed. This became a secret amusement, but happily did not last long.

As may be imagined, the death of M. le Duc de Berry was a deliverance for Madame la Duchesse de Berry. She was, as I have said, in the family way; she hoped for a boy, and counted upon enjoying as a widow more liberty than she had been able to take as a wife. She had a miscarriage, however, on Saturday, the 16th of June, and was delivered of a daughter which lived only twelve hours. The little corpse was buried at Saint-Denis, Madame de Saint-Simon at the head of the procession. Madame la Duchesse de Berry, shortly before this event, received two hundred thousand livres income of pension; but the establishment she would have had if the child had been a boy was not allowed her.

CHAPTER LXVII.

It is time now that I should say something about an event that caused an immense stir throughout the land, and was much talked of even in foreign parts. I must first introduce, however, a sort of a personage whose intimacy was forced upon me at this period; for the two incidents are in a certain degree associated together.



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M. d'Orleans for some little time had continually represented to me, how desirous one of his acquaintances was to secure my friendship. This acquaintance was Maisons, president in the parliament, grandson of that superintendent of the finances who built the superb chateau of Maisons, and son of the man who had presided so unworthily at the judgment of our trial with M. de Luxembourg, which I have related in its place. Maisons was a person of much ambition, exceedingly anxious to make a name, gracious and flattering in manners to gain his ends, and amazingly fond of grand society.

The position of Maisons, where he lived, close to Marly, afforded him many opportunities of drawing there the principal people of the Court. It became quite the fashion to go from Marly to his chateau. The King grew accustomed to hear the place spoken of, and was in no way displeased. Maisons had managed to become very intimate with M. le Duc and M. le Prince de Conti. These two princes being dead, he turned his thoughts towards M. d'Orleans. He addressed himself to Canillac, who had always been an intimate friend of M. d'Orleans, and by him soon gained the intimacy of that prince. But he was not yet satisfied. He wished to circumvent M. d'Orleans more completely than he could by means of Canillac. He cast his eye, therefore, upon me. I think he was afraid of me on account of what I have related concerning his father. He had an only son about the same age as my children. For a long time he had made all kinds of advances, and visited them often. The son's intimacy did not, however, assist the father; so that at last Maisons made M. le Duc d'Orleans speak to me himself.

I was cold; tried to get out of the matter with compliments and excuses. M. d'Orleans, who believed he had found a treasure in his new acquaintance, returned to the charge; but I was not more docile. A few days after, I was surprised by an attack of the same kind from M. de Beauvilliers. How or when he had formed an intimacy with Maisons, I have never been able to unravel; but formed it, he had; and he importuned me so much, nay exerted his authority over me, that at last I found I must give way. Not to offend M. d'Orleans by yielding to another after having refused to yield to him, I waited until he should again speak to me on the subject, so that he might give himself the credit of vanquishing me. I did not wait long. The Prince attacked me anew, maintained that nothing would be more useful to him than an intimacy between myself and Maisons, who scarcely dared to see him, except in secret, and with whom he had not the same leisure or liberty for discussing many things that might present themselves. I had replied to all this before; but as I had resolved to surrender to the Prince (after the authority of the Duc de Beauvilliers had vanquished me), I complied with his wish.



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Maisons was soon informed of it, and did not let my resolution grow cold. M. le Duc d'Orleans urged me to go and sleep a night in Paris. Upon arriving there, I found a note from Maisons, who had already sent an ocean of compliments to me by the Prince and the Duke. This note, for reasons to be told me afterwards, appointed a meeting at eleven o'clock this night, in the plain behind the Invalides, in a very mysterious manner. I went there with an old coachman of my mother's and a lackey to put my people off the scent. There was a little moonlight. Maisons in a small carriage awaited me. We soon met. He mounted into my coach. I never could comprehend the mystery of this meeting. There was nothing on his part but advances, compliments, protestations, allusions to the former interview of our fathers; only such things, in fact, as a man of cleverness and breeding says when he wishes to form a close intimacy with any one. Not a word that he said was of importance or of a private nature.

I replied in the civillest manner possible to the abundance he bestowed upon me. I expected afterwards something that would justify the hour, the place, the mystery, in a word, of our interview. What was my surprise to hear no syllable upon these points. The only reason Maisons gave for our secret interview was that from that time he should be able to come and see me at Versailles with less inconvenience, and gradually increase the number and the length of his visits until people grew accustomed to see him there! He then begged me not to visit him in Paris, because his house was always too full of people. This interview lasted little less than half an hour. It was long indeed, considering what passed. We separated with much politeness, and the first time he went to Versailles he called upon me towards the middle of the day.

In a short time he visited me every Sunday. Our conversation by degrees became more serious. I did not fail to be on my guard, but drew him out upon various subjects; he being very willing.

We were on this footing when, returning to my room at Marly about midday on Sunday, the 29th of July, I found a lackey of Maisons with a note from him, in which he conjured me to quit all business and come immediately to his house at Paris, where he would wait for me alone, and where I should find that something was in question, that could not suffer the slightest delay, that could not even be named in writing, and which was of the most extreme importance. This lackey had long since arrived, and had sent my people everywhere in search of me. I was engaged that day to dine with M. and Madame de Lauzun. To have broken my engagement would have been to set the curiosity and the malignity of M. de Lauzun at work. I dared not disappear; therefore I gave orders to my coachman, and as soon as I had dined I vanished. Nobody saw me get into my chaise; and I quickly arrived at Paris, and immediately hastened to Maisons' with eagerness easy to imagine.



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I found him alone with the Duc de Noailles. At the first glance I saw two dismayed men, who said to me in an exhausted manner, but after a heated though short preface, that the King had declared his two bastards and their male posterity to all eternity, real princes of the blood, with full liberty to assume all their dignities, honours, and rank, and capacity to succeed to the throne in default of the others.

At this news, which I did not expect, and the secret of which had hitherto been preserved, without a particle of it transpiring, my arms fell. I lowered my head and remained profoundly silent, absorbed in my reflections. They were soon disturbed by cries which aroused me. These two men commenced pacing the chamber; stamped with their feet; pushed and struck the furniture; raged as though each wished to be louder than the other, and made the house echo with their noise. I avow that so much hubbub seemed suspicious to me on the part of two men, one so sage and so measured, and to whom this rank was of no consequence; the other always so tranquil, so crafty, so master of himself. I knew not why this sudden fury succeeded to such dejected oppression; and I was not without suspicion that their passion was put on merely to excite mine. If this was their design, it succeeded ill. I remained in my chair, and coldly asked them what was the matter. My tranquillity sharpened their fury. Never in my life have I seen anything so surprising.

I asked them if they had gone mad, and if instead of this tempest it would not be better to reason, and see whether something could not be done. They declared it was precisely because nothing could be done against a thing not only resolved on, but executed, declared, and sent to the Parliament, that they were so furious; that M. le Duc d'Orleans, on the terms he was with the King, would not dare even to whisper objections; that the Princes of the blood, mere children as they were, could only tremble; that the Dukes had no means of opposition, and that the Parliament was reduced to silence and slavery. Thereupon they set to work to see who could cry the louder and reviled again, sparing neither things nor persons.

I, also, was in anger, but this racket kept me cool and made me smile. I argued with them and said, that after all I preferred to see the bastards princes of the blood, capable of succeeding to the throne, than to see them in the intermediary rank they occupied. And it is true that as soon as I had cooled myself, I felt thus.

At last the storm grew calm, and they told me that the Chief-President and the Attorney-General—who, I knew, had been at Marly very early in the morning at the Chancellor's—had seen the King in his cabinet soon after he rose, and had brought back the declaration, all prepared. Maisons must, however, have known this earlier; because when the lackey he sent to me set out from Paris, those gentlemen could not have returned there. Our talk led to nothing, and I regained Marly in all haste, in order that my absence might not be remarked.



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Nevertheless it was towards the King's supper hour when I arrived. I went straight to the salon, and found it very dejected. People looked, but scarcely dared to approach each other; at the most, a sign or a whisper in the ear, as the courtiers brushed by one another, was ventured out. I saw the King sit down to table; he seemed to me more haughty than usual, and continually looked all around. The news had only been known one hour; everybody was still congealed and upon his guard.

As soon as the King was seated (he had looked very hard at me in passing) I went straight to M. du Maine's. Although the hour was unusual, the doors fell before me; I saw a man, who received me with joyful surprise, and who, as it were, moved through the air towards me, all lame that he was. I said that I came to offer him a sincere compliment, that we (the Dukes) claimed no precedence over the Princes of the blood; but what we claimed was, that there should be nobody between the Princes of the blood and us; that as this intermediary rank no longer existed, we had nothing more to say, but to rejoice that we had no longer to support what was insupportable. The joy of M. du Maine burst forth at my compliments, and he startled me with a politeness inspired by the transport of triumph.

But if he was delighted at the declaration of the King, it was far otherwise with the world. Foreign dukes and princes fumed, but uselessly. The Court uttered dull murmurs more than could have been expected. Paris and the provinces broke out; the Parliament did not keep silent. Madame de Maintenon, delighted with her work, received the adoration of her familiars.

As for me, I will content myself with but few reflections upon this most monstrous, astounding, and frightful determination of the King. I will simply say, that it is impossible not to see in it an attack upon the Crown; contempt for the entire nation, whose rights are trodden under foot by it; insult to all the Princes of the blood; in fact the crime of high treason in its most rash and most criminal extent. Yes! however venerable God may have rendered in the eyes of men the majesty of Kings and their sacred persons, which are his anointed; however execrable may be the crime known as high treason, of attempting their lives; however terrible and singular may be the punishments justly invented to prevent that crime, and to remove by their horror the most infamous from the infernal resolution of committing it, we cannot help finding in the crime in question a plenitude not in the other, however abominable it may be: Yes! to overthrow the most holy laws, that have existed ever since the establishment of monarchy; to extinguish a right the most sacred—the most important—the most inherent in the nation: to make succession to the throne, purely, supremely, and despotically arbitrary; in a word, to make of a bastard a crown prince, is a crime more black, more vast, more terrible, than that of high treason against the chief of the State.



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CHAPTER LXVIII

But let me now explain by what means the King was induced to arrive at, and publish this terrible determination.

He was growing old, and though no external change in him was visible, those near him had for some time begun to fear that he could not live long. This is not the place to descant upon a health hitherto so good and so even: suffice it to mention, that it silently began to give way. Overwhelmed by the most violent reverses of fortune after being so long accustomed to success, the King was even more overwhelmed by domestic misfortunes. All his children had disappeared before him, and left him abandoned to the most fatal reflections. At every moment he himself expected the same kind of death. Instead of finding relief from his anguish among those who surrounded him, and whom he saw most frequently, he met with nothing but fresh trouble there. Excepting Marechal, his chief surgeon, who laboured unceasingly to cure him of his suspicions, Madame de Maintenon, M. du Maine, Fagon, Bloin, the other principal valets sold to the bastard and his former governors,—all sought to augment these suspicions; and in truth it was not difficult to do so. Nobody doubted that poison had been used, nobody could seriously doubt it; and Marechal, who was as persuaded as the rest, held a different opinion before the King only to deliver him from a useless torment which could not but do him injury. But M. du Maine, and Madame de Maintenon also, had too much interest to maintain him in this fear, and by their art filled him with horror against M. d'Orleans, whom they named as the author of these crimes, so that the King with this prince before his eyes every day, was in a perpetual state of alarm.

With his children the King had lost, and by the same way, a princess, who in addition to being the soul and ornament of his court, was, moreover, all his amusement, all his joy, all his affection, in the hours when he was not in public. Never, since he entered the world, had he become really familiar with any one but her; it has been seen elsewhere to what extent. Nothing could fill up this great void: The bitterness of being deprived of her augmented, because he could find no diversion. This unfortunate state made him seek relief everywhere in abandoning himself more and more to Madame de Maintenon and M. du Maine.

They soon managed to obtain possession of him, as it were, entirely; leaving no art unexhausted in order to flatter, to amuse, to please, and to interest him. He was made to believe that M. du Maine was utterly without ambition; like a good father of a family, solely occupied with his children, touched with the grandeur of his nearness to the King, simple, frank, upright, and one who after working at his duties all day, and after giving himself time for prayer and piety, amused himself in hunting, and drew upon his natural gaiety and cheerfulness, without knowing anything of the Court, or of what was passing! Compare this portrait with his real character, and we shall feel with terror what a rattlesnake was introduced into the King's privacy.



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Established thus in the mind and heart of the King, the opportunity seemed ripe for profiting by precious time that could not last long. Everybody smiled upon the project of M. du Maine and Madame de Maintenon. They had rendered M. d'Orleans odious in the eyes of the King and of the whole country, by the most execrable calumnies. How could he defend himself? shut up as the King was, how oppose them? how interfere with their dark designs? M. du Maine wished not only to be made prince of the blood, but to be made guardian of the heir to the throne, so as to dwarf the power of the Regent as much as possible. He flattered himself that the feeling he had excited against M. d'Orleans in the Court, in Paris, and in the provinces would be powerfully strengthened by dispositions so dishonourable; that he should find himself received as the guardian and protector of the life of the royal infant, to whom was attached the salvation of France, of which he would then become the idol; that the independent possession of the young King, and of his military and civil households, would strengthen with the public applause the power with which he would be invested in the state by this testament; that the Regent, reviled and stripped in this manner, not only would be in no condition to dispute anything, but would be unable to defend himself from any attempts the bastard might afterwards make against him. M. du Maine wished in fact to take from M. d'Orleans everything, except the name of Regent, and to divide all the power between himself and his brother. Such was his scheme, that the King by incredible art was induced to sanction and approve.

But the schemers had tough work before they obtained this success. They found that the King would not consent to their wishes without much opposition. They hit upon a devilish plan to overpower his resistance. Hitherto, they had only been occupied in pleasing him, in amusing him, in anticipating his wishes, in praising him—let me say the word—in adoring him. They had redoubled their attention, since, by the Dauphine's death, they had become his sole resource.

Not being able now to lead him as they wished, but determined to do so at all cost, they adopted another system, certain as they were that they could do so with impunity. Both became serious, often times dejected, silent, furnishing nothing to the conversation, letting pass what the King forced himself to say, sometimes not even replying, if it was not a direct interrogation. In this manner all the leisure hours of the King were rendered dull and empty; his amusements and diversions were made fatiguing and sad and a weight was cast upon him, which he was the more unable to bear because it was quite new to him, and he was utterly without means to remove it. The few ladies who were admitted to the intimacy of the King knew not what to make of the change they saw in Madame de Maintenon. They were duped at first by the plea of illness; but seeing at last that its duration passed all bounds, that it had no intermission, that her face announced no malady, that her daily life was in no way deranged, that the King became as serious and as sad as she, they sounded each other to find out the cause. Fear, lest it should be something in which they, unknowingly, were concerned, troubled them; so that they became even worse company to the King than Madame de Maintenon.



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There was no relief for the King. All his resource was in the commonplace talk of the Comte de Toulouse, who was not amusing, although ignorant of the plot, and the stories of his valets, who lost tongue as soon as they perceived that they were not seconded by the Duc du Maine in his usual manner. Marechal and all the rest, astonished at the mysterious dejection of the Duc du Maine, looked at each other without being able to divine the cause. They saw that the King was sad and bored; they trembled for his health, but not one of them dared to do anything. Time ran on, and the dejection of M. du Maine and Madame de Maintenon increased. This is as far as the most instructed have ever been able to penetrate. To describe the interior scenes that doubtless passed during the long time this state of things lasted, would be to write romance. Truth demands that we should relate what we know, and admit what we are ignorant of. I cannot go farther, therefore, or pierce deeper into the density of these dark mysteries.

What is certain is, that cheerfulness came back all at once, with the same surprise to the witnesses of it, as the long-continued dejection had caused them, simply because they understood no more of the end than of the commencement. The double knowledge did not come to them until they heard the frightful crash of the thunderbolt which fell upon France, and astonished all Europe.

To give some idea of the opposition from the King, M. du Maine and Madame de Maintenon had to overcome, and to show how reluctantly he consented to their wishes, more than one incident may be brought forward. Some days before the news transpired, the King, full of the enormity of what he had just done for his bastards, looked at them in his cabinet, in presence of the valets, and of D'Antin and D'O, and in a sharp manner, that told of vexation, and with a severe glance, suddenly thus addressed himself to M. du Maine:

“You have wished it; but know that however great I may make you, and you may be in my lifetime, you are nothing after me; and it will be for you then to avail yourself of what I have done for you, if you can.”

Everybody present trembled at a thunder-clap so sudden, so little expected, so entirely removed from the character and custom of the King, and which showed so clearly the extreme ambition of the Duc du Maine, and the violence he had done to the weakness of the King, who seemed to reproach himself for it, and to reproach the bastard for his ambition and tyranny. The consternation of M. du Maine seemed extreme at this rough sally, which no previous remark had led to. The King had made a clean breast of it. Everybody fixed his eyes upon the floor and held his breath. The silence was profound for a considerable time: it finished only when the King passed into his wardrobe. In his absence everybody breathed again. The King's heart was full to bursting with what he had just been made to do; but like a woman who gives birth to two children, he had at present brought but one into the world, and bore a second of which he must be delivered, and of which he felt all the pangs without any relief from the suffering the first had caused him.



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Again, on Sunday, the 27th August, the Chief-President and the Attorney-General were sent for by the King. He was at Versailles. As soon as they were alone with him, he took from a drawer, which he unlocked, a large and thick packet, sealed with seven seals (I know not if by this M. du Maine wished to imitate the mysterious book with Seven Seals, of the Apocalypse, and so sanctify the packet). In handing it to them, the King said: "Gentlemen, this is my will. No one but myself knows its contents. I commit it to you to keep in the Parliament, to which I cannot give a greater testimony of my esteem and confidence than by rendering it the depository of it. The example of the Kings my predecessors, and that of the will of the King, my father, do not allow me to be ignorant of what may become of this; but they would have it; they have tormented me; they have left me no repose, whatever I might say. Very well! I have bought my repose. Here is the will; take it away: come what may of it, at least, I shall have rest, and shall hear no more about it."

At this last word, that he finished with a dry nod, he turned his back upon them, passed into another cabinet, and left them both nearly turned into statues. They looked at each other frozen by what they had just heard, and still more by what they had just seen in the eyes and the countenance of the King; and as soon as they had collected their senses, they retired, and went to Paris. It was not known until after dinner that the King had made a will and given it to them. In proportion as the news spread, consternation filled the Court, while the flatterers, at bottom as much alarmed as the rest, and as Paris was afterwards, exhausted themselves in praises and eulogies.

The next day, Monday, the 28th, the Queen of England came from Chaillot, where she almost always was, to Madame de Maintenon's. As soon as the King perceived her, "Madame," said he to her, like a man full of something and angry, "I have made my will; I have been tormented to do it;" then casting his eyes upon Madame de Maintenon, "I have bought repose; I know the powerlessness and inutility of it. We can do all we wish while we live; afterwards we are less than the meanest. You have only to see what became of my father's will immediately after his death, and the wills of so many other Kings. I know it well; but nevertheless they have wished it; they gave me no rest nor repose, no calm until it was done; ah, well! then, Madame, it is done; come what may of it, I shall be no longer tormented."

Words such as these so expressive of the extreme violence suffered by the King, of his long and obstinate battle before surrendering, of his vexation, and uneasiness, demand the clearest proofs. I had them from people who heard them, and would not advance them unless I were perfectly persuaded of their exactness.



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As soon as the Chief-President and the Attorney-General returned to Paris, they sent for some workmen, whom they led into a tower of the Palace of justice, behind the Buvette, or drinking-place of the grand chamber and the cabinet of the Chief-President. They had a big hole made in the wall of this tower, which is very thick, deposited the testament there, closed up the opening with an iron door, put an iron grating by way of second door, and then walled all up together. The door and the grating each had three locks, the same for both; and a different key for each of the three, which consequently opened each of the two locks, the one in the door and the one in the grating. The Chief-President kept one key, the Attorney-General another, and the Chief-Greffier of the Parliament the third. The Parliament was assembled and the Chief-President flattered the members as best he might upon the confidence shown them in entrusting them with this deposit.

At the same time was presented to the Parliament an edict that the Chief-President and the Attorney-General had received from the hand of the Chancellor at Versailles the same morning the King had given them his will, and the edict was registered. It was very short. It declared that the packet committed to the Chief-President and to the Attorney-General contained the will of the King, by which he had provided for the protection and guardianship of the young King, and had chosen a Regency council, the dispositions of which—for good reasons he had not wished to publish; that he wished this deposit should be preserved during his life in the registry of the Parliament, and that at the moment when it should please God to call him from the world, all the chambers of the Parliament, all the princes of the royal house, and all the peers who might be there, should assemble and open the will; and that after it was read, all its dispositions should be made public and executed, nobody to be permitted to oppose them in any way.

Notwithstanding all this secrecy, the terms of the will were pretty generally guessed, and as I have said, the consternation was general. It was the fate of M. du Maine to obtain what he wished; but always with the maledictions of the public. This fate did not abandon him now, and as soon as he felt it, he was overwhelmed, and Madame de Maintenon exasperated, and their attentions and their care redoubled, to shut up the King, so that the murmurs of the world should not reach him. They occupied themselves more than ever to amuse and to please him, and to fill the air around him with praises, joy, and public adoring at an act so generous and so grand, and at the same time so wise and so necessary to the maintenance of good order and tranquillity, which would cause him to reign so gloriously even after his reign.

This consternation was very natural, and is precisely why the Duc du Maine found himself deceived and troubled by it. He believed he had prepared everything, smoothed everything, in rendering M. d'Orleans so suspected and so odious; he had succeeded, but not so much as he imagined. His desires and his emissaries had exaggerated everything; and he found himself overwhelmed with astonishment, when instead of the public acclamations with which he had flattered himself the will would be accompanied, it was precisely the opposite.



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It was seen very clearly that the will assuredly could not have been made in favour of M. d'Orleans, and although public feeling against him had in no way changed, no one was so blind as not to see that he must be Regent by the incontestable right of his birth; that the dispositions of the testament could not weaken that right, except by establishing a power that should balance his; and that thus two parties would be formed in the state the chief of each of which would be interested in vanquishing the other, everybody being necessitated to join one side or other, thereby running a thousand risks without any advantage. The rights of the two disputants were compared. In the one they were found sacred, in the other they could not be found at all. The two persons were compared. Both were found odious, but M. d'Orleans was deemed superior to M. du Maine. I speak only of the mass of uninstructed people, and of what presented itself naturally and of itself. The better informed had even more cause to arrive at the same decision.

M. d'Orleans was stunned by the blow; he felt that it fell directly upon him, but during the lifetime of the King he saw no remedy for it. Silence respectful and profound appeared to him the sole course open; any other would only have led to an increase of precautions. The King avoided all discourse with him upon this matter; M. du Maine the same. M. d'Orleans was contented with a simple approving monosyllable to both, like a courtier who ought not to meddle with anything; and he avoided conversation upon this subject, even with Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, and with anybody else. I was the sole person to whom he dared to unbosom himself; with the rest of the world he had an open, an ordinary manner, was on his guard against any discontented sign, and against the curiosity of all eyes. The inexpressible abandonment in which he was, in the midst of the Court, guaranteed him at least from all remarks upon the will. It was not until the health of the King grew more menacing that he began to speak and be spoken to thereon.

As for M. du Maine, despite his good fortune, he was not to be envied At Sceaux, where he lived, the Duchesse du Maine, his wife, ruined him by her extravagance. Sceaux was more than ever the theatre of her follies, and of the shame and embarrassment of her husband, by the crowd from the Court and the town, which abounded there and laughed at them. She herself played there *Athalie* (assisted by actors and actresses) and other pieces several times a week. Whole nights were passed in coteries, games, fetes, illuminations, fireworks, in a word, fancies and fripperies of every kind and every day. She revelled in the joy of her new greatness—redoubled her follies; and the Duc du Maine, who always trembled before her, and who, moreover, feared that the slightest contradiction would entirely turn her brain, suffered all this, even piteously doing the honours as often as he could without ceasing in his conduct to the King.



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However great might be his joy, whatever the unimaginable greatness to which he had arrived, he was not tranquil. Like those tyrants who have usurped by their crimes the sovereign power, and who fear as so many conspiring enemies all their fallen citizens they have enslaved—he felt as though seated under that sword that Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, suspended by a hair over his table, above the head of a man whom he placed there because he believed him happy, and in this manner wished to make him feel what passed unceasingly in himself. M. du Maine, who willingly expressed in pleasantry the most serious things, frankly said to his familiars, that he was “like a louse between two fingernails” (the Princes of the blood and the peers), by which he could not fail to be cracked if he did not take care! This reflection troubled the excess of his pleasure, and that of the greatness and the power to which so many artifices had elevated him. He feared the Princes of the blood as soon as they should be of age to feel the infamy and the danger of the wound he had given them; he feared the Parliament, which even under his eyes had not been able to dissimulate its indignation at the violence he had committed against the most holy and the most inviolable laws; he even feared the Dukes so timid are injustice and tyranny!

CHAPTER LXIX

Let me return to Maisons. Five days after the King’s will had been walled up, in the manner I have described, he came to me and made a pathetic discourse upon the injustice done to M. le Duc d’Orleans by this testament, and did all he could to excite me by railing in good set terms against dispositions intended to add to the power and grandeur of the bastards.

When he had well harangued, I said he had told me nothing new; that I saw the same truths as he with the same evidence; that the worst thing I found was that there was no remedy.

“No remedy!” he exclaimed, interrupting me, with his sly and cunning laugh; “courage and ability can always find one for everything, and I am astonished that you, who have both, should have nothing to suggest while everybody is going to confusion.”

I asked him how it was possible to suppress a will registered by edict; a document solemn and public deposited with ceremony in the very depths of the palace, with precautions known to everybody—nature and art combining to keep it in safety?

“You are at a loss to know!” replied Maisons to me. “Have ready at the instant of the King’s death sure troops and sensible officers, all ready and well instructed; and with them, masons and lock-smiths—march to the palace, break open the doors and the wall, carry off the will, and let it never be seen.”



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In my extreme surprise I asked him, what he expected would be the fruit of such violence? I pointed out that to seize by force of arms a public and solemn document, in the midst of the capital, in despite of all—all law and order, would be to put weapons into the hands of the enemies of M. le Duc d'Orleans, who assuredly would be justified in crying out against this outrage, and who would find the whole country disposed to echo their cries. I said too, that if in the execution of such an odious scheme a sedition occurred, and blood were shed, universal hatred and opprobrium would fall upon the head of M. le Duc d'Orleans, and deservedly so.

We carried on our discussion a long time, but Maisons would in no way give up his scheme. After leaving me he went to M. le Duc d'Orleans and communicated it to him. Happily it met with no success with the Duke, indeed, he was extremely astonished at it; but what astonished us more was, that Maisons persisted in it up to his death, which preceded by some few days that of the King, and pressed it upon M. le Duc d'Orleans and myself till his importunity became persecution.

It was certainly not his fault that I over and over again refused to go to the Grand Chamber of the Parliament to examine the place, as Maisons wished me to do; I who never went to the Parliament except for the reception of the peers or when the King was there. Not being able to vanquish what he called my obstinacy, Maisons begged me at the least to go and fix myself upon the Quai de la Megisserie, where so much old iron is sold, and examine from that spot the tower where the will was; he pointed it out to me; it looked out upon the Quai des Morforidus, but was behind the buildings on the quai. What information could be obtained from such a point of view may be imagined. I promised to go there, not to stop, and thus awake the attention of the passers-by, but to pass along and see what was to be seen; adding, that it was simply out of complaisance to him, and not because I meant to agree in any way to his enterprise. What is incomprehensible is, that for a whole year Maisons pressed his charming project upon us. The worst enemy of M. le Duc d'Orleans could not have devised a more rash and ridiculous undertaking. I doubt whether many people would have been found in all Paris sufficiently deprived of sense to fall in with it. What are we to think then of a Parliamentary President of such consideration as Maisons had acquired at the Palace of justice, at the Court, in the town, where he had always passed for a man of intellect, prudent, circumspect, intelligent, capable, measured? Was he vile enough, in concert with M. du Maine, to open this gulf beneath our feet, to push us to our ruin, and by the fall of M. le Duc d'Orleans—the sole prince of the blood old enough to be Regent—to put M. le Duc du Maine in his place, from which to the crown there was only one step, as none are ignorant, left to be taken? It seems by no means impossible: M. du Maine, that son of darkness, was, judging him by what he had already done, quite capable of adding this new crime to his long list.



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The mystery was, however, never explained. Maisons died before its darkness could be penetrated. His end was terrible. He had no religion; his father had had none. He married a sister of the Marechal de Villars, who was in the same case. Their only son they specially educated in unbelief. Nevertheless, everything seemed to smile upon them. They had wealth, consideration, distinguished friends. But mark the end.

Maisons is slightly unwell. He takes rhubarb twice or thrice, unseasonably; more unseasonably comes Cardinal de Bissy to him, to talk upon the constitution, and thus hinder the operation of the rhubarb; his inside seems on fire, but he will not believe himself ill; the progress of his disease is great in a few hours; the doctors, though soon at their wits' ends, dare not say so; the malady visibly increases; his whole household is in confusion; he dies, forty-eight years of age, midst of a crowd of friends, of clients, without the power or leisure to think for a moment what is going to happen to his soul!

His wife survives him ten or twelve years, opulent, and in consideration, when suddenly she has an attack of apoplexy in her garden. Instead of thinking of her state, and profiting by leisure, she makes light of her illness, has another attack a few days after, and is carried off on the 5th of May, 1727, in her forty-sixth year, without having had a moment free.

Her son, for a long time much afflicted, seeks to distinguish himself and acquire friends. Taking no warning from what has occurred, he thinks only of running after the fortune of this world, and is surprised at Paris by the small-pox. He believes himself dead, thinks of what he has neglected all his life, but fear suddenly seizes him, and he dies in the midst of it, on the 13th of September, 1731, leaving an only son, who dies a year after him, eighteen months old, all the great wealth of the family going to collateral relatives.

These Memoirs are not essays on morality, therefore I have contented myself with the most simple and the most naked recital of facts; but I may, perhaps, be permitted to apply here those two verses of the 37th Psalm, which appear so expressly made for the purpose: "I have seen the impious exalted like the cedars of Lebanon: Yea, he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

But let me leave this subject now, to treat of other matters. On Friday, the last day of August, I lost one of the best and most revered of friends, the Duc de Beavilliers. He died at Vaucresson after an illness of about two months, his intellect clear to the last, aged sixty-six years, having been born on the 24th of Oct 1648.



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He was the son of M. de Saint-Aignan, who with honour and valour was truly romantic in gallantry, in belles-lettres, and in arms. He was Captain of the Guards of Gaston, and at the end of 1649 bought of the Duc de Liancourt the post of first-gentleman of the King's chamber. He commanded afterwards in Berry against the party of M. le Prince, and served elsewhere subsequently. In 1661 he was made Chevalier of the Order, and in 1661 Duke and Peer. His first wife he lost in 1679. At the end of a year he married one of her chambermaids, who had been first of all engaged to take care of her dogs. She was so modest, and he so shamefaced, that in despite of repeated pressing on the part of the King, she could not be induced to take her tabouret. She lived in much retirement, and had so many virtues that she made herself respected all her life, which was long. M. de Beauvilliers was one of the children of the first marriage. I know not what care M. and Madame de Saint-Aignan took of the others, but they left him, until he was six or seven years of age, to the mercy of their lodge-keeper. Then he was confided to the care of a canon of Notre Dame de Clery. The household of the canon consisted of one maid-servant, with whom the little boy slept; and they continued to sleep together until he was fourteen or fifteen years old, without either of them thinking of evil, or the canon remarking that the lad was growing into a man. The death of his eldest brother called M. de Beauvilliers home. He entered the army, served with distinction at the head of his regiment of cavalry, and was brigadier.

He was tall, thin, had a long and ruddy face, a large aquiline nose, a sunken mouth, expressive, piercing eyes, an agreeable smile, a very gentle manner but ordinarily retiring, serious, and concentrated. By disposition he was hasty, hot, passionate, fond of pleasure. Ever since God had touched him, which happened early in his life, he had become gentle, mildest, humble, kind, enlightened, charitable, and always full of real piety and goodness. In private, where he was free, he was gay, joked, and bantered pleasantly, and laughed with good heart. He liked to be made fun of there was only the story of his sleeping with the canon's servant that wounded his modesty, and I have seen him embarrassed when Madame de Beauvilliers has related it,—smiling, however, but praying her sometimes not to tell it. His piety, which, as I have said, commenced early in life, separated him from companions of his own age. At the army one day, during a promenade of the King, he walked alone, a little in front. Some one remarked it, and observed, sneeringly, that “he was meditating.” The King, who heard this, turned towards the speaker, and, looking at him, said, “Yes, 'tis M. de Beauvilliers, one of the best men of the Court, and of my realm.” This sudden and short apology caused silence, and food for reflection, so that the fault-finders remained in respect before his merit.

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The King must have entertained a high regard for him, to give him, in 1670, the very delicate commission he entrusted to him. Madame had just been so openly poisoned, the conviction was so complete and so general that it was very difficult to palliate it. Our King and the King of England, between whom she had just become a stronger bond, by the journey she had made into England, were penetrated by grief and indignation, and the English could not contain themselves. The King chose the Duc de Beauvilliers to carry his compliments of condolence to the King of England, and under this pretext to try to prevent this misfortune interfering with their friendship and their union, and to calm the fury of London and the nation. The King was not deceived: the prudent dexterity of the Duc de Beauvilliers brought round the King of England, and even appeased London and the nation.

M. de Beauvilliers had expressed a wish to be buried at Montargis, in the Benedictine monastery, where eight of his daughters had become nuns. Madame de Beauvilliers went there, and by an act of religion, terrible to think of, insisted upon being present at the interment. She retired to her house at Paris, where during the rest of her life she lived in complete solitude, without company or amusement of any kind. For nearly twenty years she remained there, and died in 1733, seventy-five years of age, infinitely rich in alms and all sorts of good works.

The King taxed the infantry regiments, which had risen to an excessive price. This venality of the only path by which the superior grades can be reached is a great blot upon the military system, and stops the career of many a man who would become an excellent soldier. It is a gangrene which for a long time has eaten into all the orders and all the parties of the state, and under which it will be odd if all do not succumb. Happily it is unknown, or little known, in all the other countries of Europe!

Towards the end of this year Cardinal d'Estrees died in Paris at his abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, nearly eighty-seven years of age, having always enjoyed perfect health of body and mind until this illness, which was very short, and which left his intellect clear to the last. It is proper and curious to pause for a moment upon a personage, all his life of importance, and who at his death was Cardinal, Bishop of Albano, Abbe of Longpont, of Mount Saint-Eloi, of Saint-Nichoas-aux-Bois, of La Staffarde in Piedmont (where Catinat gained a celebrated battle before being Marechal of France), of Saint-Claude in Franche-Comte, of Anchin in Flanders, and of Saint-Germain-des-Pres in Paris. He was also Commander of the Order of the promotion of 1688.



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Merit, aided by the chances of fortune, made out of an obscure family of the Boulonnais country, a singularly illustrious race in the fourth generation, of which Mademoiselle de Tourbes alone remains. The Cardinal, brother of the last Marechal d'Estrees, their uncle, used to say; that he knew his fathers as far as the one who had been page of Queen Anne, Duchess of Brittany; but beyond that he knew nothing, and it was not worth while searching. Gabrielle d'Estrees, mistress of Henry IV., whose beauty made her father's fortune, and whose history is too well known to be here alluded to, was sister of the Cardinal's father, but died thirty years before he was born. It was through her that the family became elevated. The father of Cardinal d'Estrees was distinguished all his life by his merit, his capacity, and the authority and elevated posts he held. He was made Marshal of France in 1626, and it is a thing unique that he, his son, and his grandson were not only Marshals of France, but all three were in succession seniors of that corps for a long time.

The Cardinal d'Estrees was born in 1627, and for forty years lived with his father, profiting by his lessons and his consideration. He was of the most agreeable manners, handsome, well made, full of humour, wit, and ability; in society the pleasantest person in the world, and yet well instructed; indeed, of rare erudition, generous, obliging, dignified, incapable of meanness, he was with so much talent and so many great and amiable qualities generally loved and respected, and deserved to be. He was made Cardinal in 1671, but was not declared until after many delays had occurred. These delays much disturbed him. It was customary, then, to pay more visits. One evening the Abbe de la Victoire, one of his friends, and very witty, arrived very late at a supper, in a house where he was expected. The company inopportunately asked him where he had been, and what had delayed him.

"Alas!" replied the Abbe, in a tone of sadness, "where have I been? I have been all day accompanying the body of poor M. de Laon." [The Cardinal d'Estrees was then Bishop and Duke of Laon.]

"M. de Laon!" cried everybody, "M. de Laon dead! Why, he was quite well yesterday. 'Tis dreadful. Tell us what has happened."

"What has happened?" replied the Abbe, still with the same tone. "Why, he took me with him when he paid his visits, and though his body was with me, his spirit was at Rome, so that I quitted him very wearied." At this recital grief changed into merriment.

That grand dinner at Fontainebleau for the Prince of Tuscany, at which the Prince was to be the only guest, and yet never received his invitation from the Cardinal, I have already mentioned. He was oftentimes thus absent, but never when business or serious matters were concerned, so that his forgetfulness was amusing. He never could bear to hear of his domestic affairs. Pressed and tormented by



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his steward and his maitre d'hotel to overlook their accounts, that he had not seen for many years, he appointed a day to be devoted to them. The two financiers demanded that he should close his door so as not to be interrupted; he consented with difficulty, then changed his mind, and said that if Cardinal Bonzi came he must be admitted, but that it was not likely he would come on that particular day. Directly afterwards he sent a trusty servant to Cardinal Bonzi, entreating him to come on such and such a day, between three and four o'clock, conjuring him not to fail, and begging him above all to come as of his own accord, the reason to be explained afterwards. On the appointed day Cardinal d'Estrees told his porter to let no one enter in the afternoon except Cardinal Bonzi, who assuredly was not likely to come, but who was not to be sent away if he did. His people, delighted at having their master to themselves all day without interruption, arrived about three o'clock; the Cardinal quitted his family and the few friends who had that day dined with him, and passed into a cabinet where his business people laid out their papers. He said a thousand absurdities to them upon his expenditure, of which he understood nothing, and unceasingly looked towards the window, without appearing to do so, secretly sighing for a prompt deliverance. A little before four o'clock, a coach arrived in the court-yard; his business people, enraged with the porter, exclaimed that there will then be no more opportunity for working. The Cardinal in delight referred to the orders he had given. "You will see," he added, "that it is Cardinal Bonzi, the only man I excepted, and who, of all days in the world, comes to-day."

Immediately afterwards, the Cardinal was announced, and the intendant and maitre d'hotel were forced to make off with their papers and their table. As soon as he was alone with Bonzi, he explained why he had requested this visit, and both laughed heartily. Since then his business people have never caught him again, never during the rest of his life would he hear speak of them.

He must have had honest people about him; for every day his table was magnificent, and filled at Paris and at the Court with the best company. His equipages were so, also; he had numberless domestics, many gentlemen, chaplains, and secretaries. He gave freely to the poor, and to his brother the Marechal and his children (who were not well off), and yet died without owing a crown to a living soul.

His death, for which he had been long prepared, was fine-edifying and very Christian-like. He was universally regretted. A joke of his with the King is still remembered. One day, at dinner, where he always paid much attention to the Cardinal, the King complained of the inconvenience he felt in no longer having teeth.

"Teeth, sire!" replied the Cardinal; "why, who has any teeth?"



The joke is that the Cardinal, though old, still had very white and very beautiful teeth, and that his mouth, large, but agreeable, was so shaped that it showed them plainly in speaking. Therefore the King burst out laughing at this reply, and all present also, including the Cardinal, who was not in the slightest degree embarrassed. I might go on forever telling about him, but enough, perhaps, has been already said.



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The commencement of the new year, 1715, was marked by the death of Fenelon, at Cambrai, where he had lived in disgrace so many years. I have already said something about him, so that I have now but little to add. His life at Cambrai was remarkable for the assiduity with which he attended to the spiritual and temporal wants of his flock. He was indefatigable in the discharge of his functions, and in endeavouring to gain all hearts. Cambrai is a place much frequented; through which many people pass. During the war the number of wounded soldiers he had received into his house or attended to in the hospitals passes all belief. He spared nothing for them, neither physical comforts nor spiritual consolations. Thus it is incredible to what an extent he became the idol of the whole army. His manners, to high and low, were most affable, yet everywhere he was the prelate, the gentleman, the author of "Telemachus." He ruled his diocese with a gentle hand, in no way meddled with the Jansenists; he left all untouched. Take him for all in all, he had a bright genius and was a great man. His admiration true or feigned for Madame Guyon remained to the last, yet always without suspicion of impropriety. He had so exactly arranged his affairs that he died without money, and yet without owing a sou to anybody.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Admit our ignorance, and not to give fictions and inventions
Arranged his affairs that he died without money
For penance: "we must make our servants fast"
The argument of interest is the best of all with monks