

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 11 eBook

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 11 by Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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CHAPTER LXXVIII

After having thus described with truth and the most exact fidelity all that has come to my knowledge through my own experience, or others qualified to speak of Louis XIV. during the last twenty-two years of his life: and after having shown him such as he was, without prejudice (although I have permitted myself to use the arguments naturally resulting from things), nothing remains but to describe the outside life of this monarch, during my residence at the Court.

However insipid and perhaps superfluous details so well known may appear after what has been already given, lessons will be found therein for kings who may wish to make themselves respected, and who may wish to respect themselves. What determines me still more is, that details wearying, nay annoying, to instructed readers, who had been witnesses of what I relate, soon escape the knowledge of posterity; and that experience shows us how much we regret that no one takes upon himself a labour, in his own time so ungrateful, but in future years so interesting, and by which princes, who have made quite as much stir as the one in question, are characterise. Although it may be difficult to steer clear of repetitions, I will do my best to avoid them.

I will not speak much of the King's manner of living when with the army. His hours were determined by what was to be done, though he held his councils regularly; I will simply say, that morning and evening he ate with people privileged to have that honour. When any one wished to claim it, the first gentleman of the chamber on duty was appealed to. He gave the answer, and if favourable you presented yourself the next day to the King, who said to you, "Monsieur, seat yourself at table." That being done, all was done. Ever afterwards you were at liberty to take a place at the King's table, but with discretion. The number of the persons from whom a choice was made was, however, very limited. Even very high military rank did not suffice. M. de Vauban, at the siege of Namur, was overwhelmed by the distinction. The King did the same honour at Namur to the Abbe de Grancey, who exposed himself everywhere to confess the wounded and encourage the troops. No other Abbe was ever so distinguished. All the clergy were excluded save the cardinals, and the bishops, piers, or the ecclesiastics who held the rank of foreign princes.

At these repasts everybody was covered; it would have been a want of respect, of which you would have been immediately informed, if you had not kept your hat on your head. The King alone was uncovered. When the King wished to speak to you, or you had occasion to speak to him, you uncovered. You uncovered, also, when Monseigneur or Monsieur spoke to you, or you to them. For Princes of the blood you merely put your hand to your hat. The King alone had an armchair. All the rest of the company, Monseigneur included, had seats, with backs of black morocco leather, which could be folded up to be carried, and which were called "parrots." Except at the army, the King

never ate with any man, under whatever circumstances; not even with the Princes of the Blood, save sometimes at their wedding feasts.

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Let us return now to the Court.

At eight o'clock the chief valet de chambre on duty, who alone had slept in the royal chamber, and who had dressed himself, awoke the King. The chief physician, the chief surgeon, and the nurse (as long as she lived), entered at the same time; the latter kissed the King; the others rubbed and often changed his shirt, because he was in the habit of sweating a great deal. At the quarter, the grand chamberlain was called (or, in his absence, the first gentleman of the chamber), and those who had what was called the 'grandes entrees'. The chamberlain (or chief gentleman) drew back the curtains which had been closed again; and presented the holy-water from the vase, at the head of the bed. These gentlemen stayed but a moment, and that was the time to speak to the King, if any one had anything to ask of him; in which case the rest stood aside. When, contrary to custom, nobody had ought to say, they were there but for a few moments. He who had opened the curtains and presented the holy-water, presented also a prayer-book. Then all passed into the cabinet of the council. A very short religious service being over, the King called, they re-entered, The same officer gave him his dressing-gown; immediately after, other privileged courtiers entered, and then everybody, in time to find the King putting on his shoes and stockings, for he did almost everything himself and with address and grace. Every other day we saw him shave himself; and he had a little short wig in which he always appeared, even in bed, and on medicine days. He often spoke of the chase, and sometimes said a-word to somebody. No toilette table was near him; he had simply a mirror held before him.

As soon as he was dressed, he prayed to God, at the side of his bed, where all the clergy present knelt, the cardinals without cushions, all the laity remaining standing; and the captain of the guards came to the balustrade during the prayer, after which the King passed into his cabinet.

He found there, or was followed by all who had the entree, a very numerous company, for it included everybody in any office. He gave orders to each for the day; thus within a half a quarter of an hour it was known what he meant to do; and then all this crowd left directly. The bastards, a few favourites; and the valets alone were left. It was then a good opportunity for talking with the King; for example, about plans of gardens and buildings; and conversation lasted more or less according to the person engaged in it.

All the Court meantime waited for the King in the gallery, the captain of the guard being alone in the chamber seated at the door of the cabinet. At morning the Court awaited in the saloon; at Trianon in the front rooms as at Meudon; at Fontainebleau in the chamber and ante-chamber. During this pause the King gave audiences when he wished to accord any; spoke with whoever he might wish to speak secretly to, and gave secret interviews to foreign ministers in presence of Torcy. They were called "secret" simply to distinguish them from the uncommon ones by the bedsides.

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The King went to mass, where his musicians always sang an anthem. He did not go below—except on grand fetes or at ceremonies. Whilst he was going to and returning from mass, everybody spoke to him who wished, after apprising the captain of the guard, if they were not distinguished; and he came and went by the door of the cabinet into the gallery. During the mass the ministers assembled in the King's chamber, where distinguished people could go and speak or chat with them. The King amused himself a little upon returning from mass and asked almost immediately for the council. Then the morning was finished.

On Sunday, and often on Monday, there was a council of state; on Tuesday a finance council; on Wednesday council of state; on Saturday finance council: rarely were two held in one day or any on Thursday or Friday. Once or twice a month there was a council of despatches on Monday morning; but the order that the Secretaries of State took every morning between the King's rising and his mass, much abridged this kind of business. All the ministers were seated accordingly to rank, except at the council of despatches, where all stood except the sons of France, the Chancellor, and the Duc de Beauvilliers.

Thursday morning was almost always blank. It was the day for audiences that the King wished to give—often unknown to any—back-stair audiences. It was also the grand day taken advantage of by the bastards, the valets, etc., because the King had nothing to do. On Friday after the mass the King was with his confessor, and the length of their audiences was limited by nothing, and might last until dinner. At Fontainebleau on the mornings when there was no council, the King usually passed from mass to Madame de Maintenon's, and so at Trianon and Marly. It was the time for their tete-a-tete without interruption. Often on the days when there was no council the dinner hour was advanced, more or less for the chase or the promenade. The ordinary hour was one o'clock; if the council still lasted, then the dinner waited and nothing was said to the King.

The dinner was always 'au petit couvert', that is, the King ate by himself in his chamber upon a square table in front of the middle window. It was more or less abundant, for he ordered in the morning whether it was to be "a little," or "very little" service. But even at this last, there were always many dishes, and three courses without counting the fruit. The dinner being ready, the principal courtiers entered; then all who were known; and the gentleman of the chamber on duty informed the King.

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I have seen, but very rarely, Monseigneur and his sons standing at their dinners, the King not offering them a seat. I have continually seen there the Princes of the blood and the cardinals. I have often seen there also Monsieur, either on arriving from Saint-Cloud to see the King, or arriving from the council of despatches (the only one he entered), give the King his napkin and remain standing. A little while afterwards, the King, seeing that he did not go away, asked him if he would not sit down; he bowed, and the King ordered a seat to be brought for him. A stool was put behind him. Some moments after the King said, "Nay then, sit down, my brother." Monsieur bowed and seated himself until the end of the dinner, when he presented the napkin.

At other times when he came from Saint-Cloud, the King, on arriving at the table, asked for a plate for Monsieur, or asked him if he would dine. If he refused, he went away a moment after, and there was no mention of a seat; if he accepted, the King asked for a plate for him. The table was square, he placed himself at one end, his back to the cabinet. Then the Grand Chamberlain (or the first gentleman of the chamber) gave him drink and plates, taking them from him as he finished with them, exactly as he served the King; but Monsieur received all this attention with strongly marked politeness. When he dined thus with the King he much enlivened the conversation. The King ordinarily spoke little at table unless some family favourite was near. It was the same at his rising. Ladies scarcely ever were seen at these little dinners.

I have, however, seen the Marechale de la Mothe, who came in because she had been used to do so as governess to the children of France, and who received a seat, because she was a Duchess. Grand dinners were very rare, and only took place on grand occasions, and then ladies were present.

Upon leaving the table the King immediately entered his cabinet. That was the time for distinguished people to speak to him. He stopped at the door a moment to listen, then entered; very rarely did any one follow him, never without asking him for permission to do so; and for this few had the courage. If followed he placed himself in the embrasure of the window nearest to the door of the cabinet, which immediately closed of itself, and which you were obliged to open yourself on quitting the King. This also was the time for the bastards and the valets.

The King amused himself by feeding his dogs, and remained with them more or less time, then asked for his wardrobe, changed before the very few distinguished people it pleased the first gentleman of the chamber to admit there, and immediately went out by the back stairs into the court of marble to get into his coach. From the bottom of that staircase to the coach, any one spoke to him who wished.

The King was fond of air, and when deprived of it his health suffered; he had headaches and vapours caused by the undue use he had formerly made of perfumes, so that for many years he could not endure any, except the odour of orange flowers; therefore if you had to approach anywhere near him you did well not to carry them.

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As he was but little sensitive to heat or cold, or even to rain, the weather was seldom sufficiently bad to prevent his going abroad. He went out for three objects: stag-hunting, once or more each week; shooting in his parks (and no man handled a gun with more grace or skill), once or twice each week; and walking in his gardens for exercise, and to see his workmen. Sometimes he made picnics with ladies, in the forest at Marly or at Fontainebleau, and in this last place, promenades with all the Court around the canal, which was a magnificent spectacle. Nobody followed him in his other promenades but those who held principal offices, except at Versailles or in the gardens of Trianon. Marly had a privilege unknown to the other places. On going out from the chateau, the King said aloud, "Your hats, gentlemen," and immediately courtiers, officers of the guard, everybody, in fact, covered their heads, as he would have been much displeased had they not done so; and this lasted all the promenade, that is four or five hours in summer, or in other seasons, when he dined early at Versailles to go and walk at Marly, and not sleep there.

The stag-hunting parties were on an extensive scale. At Fontainebleau every one went who wished; elsewhere only those were allowed to go who had obtained the permission once for all, and those who had obtained leave to wear the justau-corps, which was a blue uniform with silver and gold lace, lined with red. The King did not like too many people at these parties. He did not care for you to go if you were not fond of the chase. He thought that ridiculous, and never bore ill-will to those who stopped away altogether.

It was the same with the play-table, which he liked to see always well frequented—with high stakes—in the saloon at Marly, for lansquenet and other games. He amused himself at Fontainebleau during bad weather by seeing good players at tennis, in which he had formerly excelled; and at Marly by seeing mall played, in which he had also been skilful. Sometimes when there was no council, he would make presents of stuff, or of silverware, or jewels, to the ladies, by means of a lottery, for the tickets of which they paid nothing. Madame de Maintenon drew lots with the others, and almost always gave at once what she gained. The King took no ticket.

Upon returning home from walks or drives, anybody, as I have said, might speak to the King from the moment he left his coach till he reached the foot of his staircase. He changed his dress again, and rested in his cabinet an hour or more, then went to Madame de Maintenon's, and on the way any one who wished might speak to him.

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At ten o'clock his supper was served. The captain of the guard announced this to him. A quarter of an hour after the King came to supper, and from the antechamber of Madame de Maintenon to the table—again, any one spoke to him who wished. This supper was always on a grand scale, the royal household (that is, the sons and daughters of France) at table, and a large number of courtiers and ladies present, sitting or standing, and on the evening before the journey to Marly all those ladies who wished to take part in it. That was called presenting yourself for Marly. Men asked in the morning, simply saying to the King, "Sire, Marly." In later years the King grew tired of this, and a valet wrote up in the gallery the names of those who asked. The ladies continued to present themselves.

After supper the King stood some moments, his back to the balustrade of the foot of his bed, encircled by all his Court; then, with bows to the ladies, passed into his cabinet, where, on arriving, he gave his orders.

He passed a little less than an hour there, seated in an armchair, with his legitimate children and bastards, his grandchildren, legitimate and otherwise, and their husbands or wives. Monsieur in another armchair; the Princesses upon stools, Monseigneur and all the other Princes standing.

The King, wishing to retire, went and fed his dogs; then said good night, passed into his chamber to the 'ruelle' of his bed, where he said his prayers, as in the morning, then undressed. He said good night with an inclination of the head, and whilst everybody was leaving the room stood at the corner of the mantelpiece, where he gave the order to the colonel of the guards alone. Then commenced what was called the 'petit coucher', at which only the specially privileged remained. That was short. They did not leave until he got into bed. It was a moment to speak to him. Then all left if they saw any one buckle to the King. For ten or twelve years before he died the 'petit coucher' ceased, in consequence of a long attack of gout he had had; so that the Court was finished at the rising from supper.

On medicine days, which occurred about once a month, the King remained in bed, then heard mass. The royal household came to see him for a moment, and Madame de Maintenon seated herself in the armchair at the head of his bed. The King dined in bed about three o'clock, everybody being allowed to enter the room, then rose, and the privileged alone remained. He passed afterwards into his cabinet, where he held a council, and afterwards went, as usual, to Madame de Maintenon's and supped at ten o'clock, according to custom.

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During all his life, the King failed only once in his attendance at mass, It was with the army, during a forced march; he missed no fast day, unless really indisposed. Some days before Lent, he publicly declared that he should be very much displeased if any one ate meat or gave it to others, under any pretext. He ordered the grand prevot to look to this, and report all cases of disobedience. But no one dared to disobey his commands, for they would soon have found out the cost. They extended even to Paris, where the lieutenant of police kept watch and reported. For twelve or fifteen years he had himself not observed Lent, however. At church he was very respectful. During his mass everybody was obliged to kneel at the Sanctus, and to remain so until after the communion of the priest; and if he heard the least noise, or saw anybody talking during the mass, he was much displeased. He took the communion five times a year, in the collar of the Order, band, and cloak. On Holy Thursday, he served the poor at dinner; at the mass he said his chaplet (he knew no more), always kneeling, except at the Gospel.

He was always clad in dresses more or less brown, lightly embroidered, but never at the edges, sometimes with nothing but a gold button, sometimes black velvet. He wore always a vest of cloth, or of red, blue, or green satin, much embroidered. He used no ring; and no jewels, except in the buckles of his shoes, garters, and hat, the latter always trimmed with Spanish point, with a white feather. He had always the cordon bleu outside, except at fetes, when he wore it inside, with eight or ten millions of precious stones attached.

Rarely a fortnight passed that the King did not go to Saint-Germain, even after the death of King James the Second. The Court of Saint-Germain came also to Versailles, but oftener to Marly, and frequently to sup there; and no fete or ceremony took place to which they were not invited, and at which they were not received with all honours. Nothing could compare with the politeness of the King for this Court, or with the air of gallantry and of majesty with which he received it at any time. Birth days, or the fete days of the King and his family, so observed in the courts of Europe, were always unknown in that of the King; so that there never was the slightest mention of them, or any difference made on their account.

The King was but little regretted. His valets and a few other people felt his loss, scarcely anybody else. His successor was not yet old enough to feel anything. Madame entertained for him only fear and considerate respect. Madame la Duchesse de Berry did not like him, and counted now upon reigning undisturbed. M. le Duc d'Orleans could scarcely be expected to feel much grief for him. And those who may have been expected did not consider it necessary to do their duty. Madame de Maintenon was wearied with him ever since the death of the Dauphine;

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she knew not what to do, or with what to amuse him; her constraint was tripled because he was much more with her than before. She had often, too, experienced much ill-humour from him. She had attained all she wished, so whatever she might lose in losing him, she felt herself relieved, and was capable of no other sentiment at first. The ennui and emptiness of her life afterwards made her feel regret. As for M. du Maine, the barbarous indecency of his joy need not be dwelt upon. The icy tranquillity of his brother, the Comte de Toulouse, neither increased nor diminished. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans surprised me. I had expected some grief, I perceived only a few tears, which upon all occasions flowed very readily from her eyes, and which were soon dried up. Her bed, which she was very fond of, supplied what was wanting during several days, amidst obscurity which she by no means disliked.

But the window curtains were soon withdrawn and grief disappeared.

As for the Court, it was divided into two grand parties, the men hoping to figure, to obtain employ, to introduce themselves: and they were ravished to see the end of a reign under which they had nothing to hope for; the others; fatigued with a heavy yoke, always overwhelming, and of the ministers much more than of the King, were charmed to find themselves at liberty. Thus all, generally speaking, were glad to be delivered from continual restraint, and were eager for change.

Paris, tired of a dependence which had enslaved everything, breathed again in the hope of liberty, and with joy at seeing at an end the authority of so many people who abused it. The provinces in despair at their ruin and their annihilation breathed again and leaped for joy; and the Parliament and the robe destroyed by edicts and by revolutions, flattered themselves the first that they should figure, the other that they should find themselves free. The people ruined, overwhelmed, desperate, gave thanks to God, with a scandalous eclat, for a deliverance, their most ardent desires had not anticipated.

Foreigners delighted to be at last, after so many years, quit of a monarch who had so long imposed his law upon them, and who had escaped from them by a species of miracle at the very moment in which they counted upon having subjugated him, contained themselves with much more decency than the French. The marvels of the first three quarters of this reign of more than seventy years, and the personal magnanimity of this King until then so successful, and so abandoned afterwards by fortune during the last quarter of his reign—had justly dazzled them. They made it a point of honour to render to him after his death what they had constantly refused him during life. No foreign Court exulted: all plumed themselves upon praising and honouring his memory. The Emperor wore mourning as for a father, and although four or five months elapsed between the death of the King and the Carnival, all kinds of amusements were

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prohibited at Vienna during the Carnival, and the prohibition was strictly observed. A monstrous fact was, that towards the end of this period there was a single ball and a kind of fete that the Comte du Luc our own ambassador, was not ashamed to give to the ladies, who seduced him by the ennui of so dull a Carnival. This complaisance did not raise him in estimation at Vienna or elsewhere. In France people were contented with ignoring it.

As for our ministry and the intendants of the provinces, the financiers and what may be called the canaille, they felt all the extent of their loss. We shall see if the realm was right or wrong in the sentiments it held, and whether it found soon after that it had gained or lost.

To finish at once all that regards the King, let me here say, that his entrails were taken to Notre Dame, on the 4th of September, without any ceremony, by two almoners of the King, without accompaniment. On Friday, the 6th of September, the Cardinal de Rohan carried the heart to the Grand Jesuits, with very little accompaniment or pomp. Except the persons necessary for the ceremony, not half a dozen courtiers were present. It is not for me to comment upon this prompt ingratitude, I, who for fifty-two years have never once missed going to Saint-Denis on the anniversary of the death of Louis XIII., and have never seen a single person there on the same errand. On the 9th of September, the body of the late King was buried at Saint-Denis. The Bishop of Aleth pronounced the oration. Very little expense was gone to; and nobody was found who cared sufficiently for the late King to murmur at the economy. On Friday, the 25th of October, his solemn obsequies took place at Saint-Denis in a confusion, as to rank and precedence, without example. On Thursday, the 28th of November, the solemn obsequies were again performed, this time at Notre Dame, and with the usual ceremonies.

CHAPTER LXXIX

The death of the King surprised M. le Duc d'Orleans in the midst of his idleness as though it had not been foreseen. He had made no progress in numberless arrangements, which I had suggested he should carry out; accordingly he was overwhelmed with orders to give, with things to settle, each more petty than the other, but all so provisional and so urgent that it happened as I had predicted, he had no time to think of anything important.

I learnt the death of the King upon awaking. Immediately after, I went to pay my respects to the new monarch. The first blood had already passed. I found myself almost alone. I went thence to M. le Duc d'Orleans, whom I found shut in, but all his apartments so full that a pin could not have fallen to the ground. I talked of the

Convocation of the States-General, and reminded him of a promise he had given me, that he would allow the Dukes to keep their hats on when their votes were asked for; and I also mentioned various other promises he had made. All I could obtain from him was another promise, that when the public affairs of pressing moment awaiting attention were disposed of, we should have all we required. Several of the Dukes who had been witnesses of the engagement M. le Duc d'Orleans had made, were much vexed at this; but ultimately it was agreed that for the moment we would sacrifice our own particular interests to those of the State.

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Between five and six the next morning a number of us met at the house of the Archbishop of Rheims at the end of the Pont Royal, behind the Hotel de Mailly, and there, in accordance with a resolution previously agreed upon, it was arranged that I should make a protest to the Parliament before the opening of the King's will there, against certain other usurpations, and state that it was solely because M. le Duc d'Orleans had given us his word that our complaints should be attended to as soon as the public affairs of the government were settled, that we postponed further measures upon this subject. It was past seven before our debate ended, and then we went straight to the Parliament.

We found it already assembled, and a few Dukes who had not attended our meeting, but had promised to be guided by us, were also present; and then a quarter of an hour after we were seated the bastards arrived. M. du Maine was bursting with joy; the term is strange, but his bearing cannot otherwise be described. The smiling and satisfied air prevailed over that of audacity and of confidence, which shone, nevertheless, and over politeness which seemed to struggle with them. He saluted right and left, and pierced everybody with his looks. His salutation to the Presidents had an air of rejoicing. To the peers he was serious, nay, respectful; the slowness, the lowness of his inclination, was eloquent. His head remained lowered even when he rose, so heavy is the weight of crime, even at the moment when nothing but triumph is expected. I rigidly followed him everywhere with my eyes, and I remarked that his salute was returned by the peers in a very dry and cold manner.

Scarcely were we re-seated than M. le Duc arrived, and the instant after M. le Duc d'Orleans. I allowed the stir that accompanied his appearance to subside a little, and then, seeing that the, Chief-President was about to speak, I forestalled him, uncovered my head, and then covered it, and made my speech in the terms agreed upon. I concluded by appealing to M. le Duc d'Orleans to verify the truth of what I had said, in so far as it affected him.

The profound silence with which I was listened to showed the surprise of all present. M. le Duc d'Orleans uncovered himself, and in a low tone, and with an embarrassed manner, confirmed what I had said, then covered himself again.

Immediately afterwards I looked at M. du Maine, who appeared, to be well content at being let off so easily, and who, my neighbours said to me, appeared much troubled at my commencement.

A very short silence followed my protest, after which I saw the Chief-President say something in a low tone to M. le Duc d'Orleans, then arrange a deputation of the Parliament to go in search of the King's will, and its codicil, which had been put in the same place. Silence continued during this great and short period of expectation; every one looked at his neighbour without stirring. We were all upon the lower seats, the doors were supposed to be closed, but the grand chamber was filled with a large and

inquisitive crowd. The regiment of guards had secretly occupied all the avenues, commanded by the Duc de Guiche, who got six hundred thousand francs out of the Duc d'Orleans for this service, which was quite unnecessary.

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The deputation was not long in returning. It placed the will and the codicil in the hands of the Chief-President, who presented them, without parting with them, to M. le Duc d'Orleans, then passed them from hand to hand to Dreux, 'conseiller' of the Parliament, and father of the grand master of the ceremonies, saying that he read well, and in a loud voice that would be well heard by everybody. It may be imagined with what silence he was listened to, and how all eyes? and ears were turned towards him. Through all this; joy the Duc du Maine showed that his soul was, troubled, as though about to undergo an operation that he must submit to. M. le Duc d'Orleans showed only a tranquil attention.

I will not dwell upon these two documents, in which nothing is provided but the grandeur and the power of the bastards, Madame de Maintenon and Saint-Cyr, the choice of the King's education and of the council of the regency, by which M. le Duc d'Orleans was to be shorn of all authority to the advantage of M. le Duc du Maine.

I remarked a sadness and a kind of indignation which were painted upon all cheeks, as the reading advanced, and which turned into a sort of tranquil fermentation at the reading of the codicil, which was entrusted to the Abbe Menguy, another conseiller. The Duc du Maine felt it and grew pale, for he was solely occupied in looking at every face, and I in following his looks, and in glancing occasionally at M. le Duc d'Orleans.

The reading being finished, that prince spoke, casting his eyes upon all the assembly, uncovering himself, and then covering himself again, and commencing by a word of praise and of regret for the late King; afterwards raising his voice, he declared that he had only to approve everything just read respecting the education of the King, and everything respecting an establishment so fine and so useful as that of Saint-Cyr; that with respect to the dispositions concerning the government of the state, he would speak separately of those in the will and those in the codicil; that he could with difficulty harmonise them with the assurances the King, during the last days of his life, had given him; that the King could not have understood the importance of what he had been made to do for the Duc du Maine since the council of the regency was chosen, and M. du Maine's authority so established by the will, that the Regent remained almost without power; that this injury done to the rights of his birth, to his attachment to the person of the King, to his love and fidelity for the state, could not be endured if he was to preserve his honour; and that he hoped sufficiently from the esteem of all present, to persuade himself that his regency would be declared as it ought to be, that is to say, complete, independent, and that he should be allowed to choose his own council, with the members of which he would not discuss public affairs, unless they were persons who, being approved by the public, might also have his confidence. This short speech appeared to make a great impression.

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The Duc du Maine wished to speak. As he was about to do so, M. le Duc d'Orleans put his head in front of M. le Duc and said, in a dry tone, "Monsieur, you will speak in your turn." In one moment the affair turned according to the desires of M. le Duc d'Orleans. The power of the council of the regency and its composition fell. The choice of the council was awarded to M. le Duc d'Orleans, with all the authority of the regency, and to the plurality of the votes of the council, the decision of affairs, the vote of the Regent to be counted as two in the event of an equal division. Thus all favours and all punishments remained in the hands of M. le Duc d'Orleans alone. The acclamation was such that the Duc du Maine did not dare to say a word. He reserved himself for the codicil, which, if adopted, would have annulled all that M. le Duc d'Orleans had just obtained.

After some few moments of silence, M. le Duc d'Orleans spoke again. He testified fresh surprise that the dispositions of the will had not been sufficient for those who had suggested them, and that, not content with having established themselves as masters of the state, they themselves should have thought those dispositions so strange that in order to reassure them, it had been thought necessary to make them masters of the person of the King, of the Regent, of the Court, and of Paris. He added, that if his honour and all law and rule had been wounded by the dispositions of the will, still more violated were they by those of the codicil, which left neither his life nor his liberty in safety, and placed the person of the King in the absolute dependence of those who had dared to profit by the feeble state of a dying monarch, to draw from him conditions he did not understand. He concluded by declaring that the regency was impossible under such conditions, and that he doubted not the wisdom of the assembly would annul a codicil which could not be sustained, and the regulations of which would plunge France into the greatest and most troublesome misfortune. Whilst this prince spoke a profound and sad silence applauded him without explaining itself.

The Duc du Maine became of all colours, and began to speak, this time being allowed to do so. He said that the education of the King, and consequently his person, being confided to him, as a natural result, entire authority over his civil and military household followed, without which he could not properly serve him or answer for his person. Then he vaunted his well-known attachment to the deceased King, who had put all confidence in him.

M. le Duc d'Orleans interrupted him at this word, and commented upon it. M. du Maine wished to calm him by praising the Marechal de Villeroy, who was to assist him in his charge. M. le Duc d'Orleans replied that it would be strange if the chief and most complete confidence were not placed in the Regent, and stranger still if he were obliged to live under the protection and authority of those who had rendered themselves the absolute masters within and without, and of Paris even, by the regiment of guards.

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The dispute grew warm, broken phrases were thrown from one to the other, when, troubled about the end of an altercation which became indecent and yielding to the proposal that the Duc de la Force had just made me in front of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who sat between us, I made a sign with my hand to M. le Duc d'Orleans to go out and finish this discussion in another room leading out of the grand chamber and where there was nobody. What led me to this action was that I perceived M. du Maine grew stronger, that confused murmurs for a division were heard, and that M. le Duc d'Orleans did not shine to the best advantage since he descended to plead his cause, so to speak, against that of the Duc du Maine.

M. le Duc d'Orleans was short-sighted. He was entirely absorbed in attacking and repelling; so that he did not see the sign I made. Some moments after I increased it, and meeting with no more success, rose, advanced some steps, and said to him, though rather distant, "Monsieur, if you passed into the fourth chamber with M. du Maine you could speak there more easily," and advancing nearer at the same time I pressed him by a sign of the head and the eyes that he could distinguish. He replied to me with another sign, and scarcely was I reseated than I saw him advance in front of M. le Duc to the Duc du Maine, and immediately after both rose and went into the chamber I had indicated. I could not see who of the scattered group around followed them, for all present rose at their departure, and seated themselves again directly in complete silence. Some time after, M. le Comte de Toulouse left his place and went into the Chamber. M. le Duc followed him in a little while soon again the Duc de la Force did the same.

He did not stay long. Returning to the assembly; he passed the Duc de la Rochefoucauld and me, put his head between that of the Duc de Sully and mine, because he did not wish to be heard by La Rochefoucauld, and said to me, "In the name of God go there; things are getting on badly. M. le Duc d'Orleans gives way; stop the dispute; make M. le Duc d'Orleans come back; and, as soon as he is in his place, let him say that it is too late to finish, that the company had better go to dinner, and return to finish afterwards, and during this interval," added La Force, "send the King's people to the Palais Royal, and let doubtful peers be spoken to, and the chiefs among other magistrates."

The advice appeared to me good and important. I left the assembly and went to the chamber. I found a large circle of spectators. M. le Duc d'Orleans and the Duc du Maine stood before the fireplace, looking both very excited. I looked at this spectacle some moments; then approached the mantelpiece like a man who wishes to speak. "What is this, Monsieur?" said M. le Duc d'Orleans to me, with an impatient manner. "A pressing word, Monsieur, that I have to say to you," said I. He continued speaking to the Duc du Maine, I being close by. I redoubled my instances; he lent me his ear. "No, no," said I, "not like that, come here," and I took him into a corner by the chimney. The Comte de Toulouse, who was there, drew completely back, and all the circle on that side. The Duc du Maine drew back also from where he was.

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I said to M. le Duc d'Orleans, in his ear, that he could not hope to gain anything from M. du Maine, who would not sacrifice the codicil to his reasonings; that the length of their conference became indecent, useless, dangerous; that he was making a sight of himself to all who entered; that the only thing to be done was to return to the assembly, and, when there, dissolve it. "You are right," said he, "I will do it."—"But," said I, "do it immediately, and do not allow yourself to be amused. It is to M. de la Force you owe this advice: he sent me to give it you." He quitted me without another word, went to M. du Maine, told him in two words that it was too late, and that the matter must be finished after dinner.

I had remained where he left me. I saw the Duc du Maine bow to him immediately, and the two separated, and retired at the same moment into the assembly.

The noise which always accompanies these entrances being appeased, M. le Duc d'Orleans said it was too late to abuse the patience of the company any longer; that dinner must be eaten, and the work finished afterwards. He immediately added, he believed it fitting that M. le Duc should enter the council of the regency as its chief; and that since the company had rendered the justice due to his birth and his position as Regent, he would explain what he thought upon the form to be given to the government, and that meanwhile he profited by the power he had to avail himself of the knowledge and the wisdom of the company, and restored to them from that time their former liberty of remonstrance. These words were followed by striking and general applause, and the assembly was immediately adjourned.

I was invited this day to dine with the Cardinal de Noailles, but I felt the importance of employing the time so precious and so short, of the interval of dinner, and of not quitting M. le Duc d'Orleans, according to a suggestion of M. le Duc de la Force. I approached M. le Duc d'Orleans, and said in his ear, "The moments are precious: I will follow you to the Palais Royal," and went back to my place among the peers. Jumping into my coach, I sent a gentleman with my excuses to the Cardinal de Noailles, saying, I would tell him the reason of my absence afterwards. Then I went to the Palais Royal, where curiosity had gathered together all who were not at the palace, and even some who had been there. All the acquaintances I met asked me the news with eagerness. I contented myself with replying that everything went well, and according to rule, but that all was not yet finished.

M. le Duc d'Orleans had passed into a cabinet, where I found him alone with Canillac, who had waited for him. We took our measures there, and M. le Duc d'Orleans sent for the Attorney-General, D'Aguesseau, afterwards Chancellor, and the chief Advocate-General, Joly de Fleury, since Attorney-General. It was nearly two o'clock. A little dinner was served, of which Canillac, Conflans, M. le Duc d'Orleans, and myself partook; and I will say this, by the way, I never dined with him but once since, namely, at Bagnolet.

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We returned to the Parliament a little before four o'clock. I arrived there alone in my carriage, a moment before M. le Duc d'Orleans, and found everybody assembled. I was looked at with much curiosity, as it seemed to me. I am not aware if it was known whence I came. I took care that my bearing should say nothing. I simply said to the Duc de la Force that his advice had been salutary, that I had reason to hope all success from it, and that I had told M. le Duc d'Orleans whence it came. That Prince arrived, and (the hubbub inseparable from such a numerous suite being appeased) he said that matters must be recommenced from the point where they had been broken off in the morning; that it was his duty to say to the Court that in nothing had he agreed with M. du Maine and to bring again before all eyes the monstrous clauses of a codicil, drawn from a dying prince; clauses much more strange than the dispositions of the testament that the Court had not deemed fit to be put in execution, and that the Court could not allow M. du Maine to be master of the person of the King, of the camp, of Paris, consequently of the State, of the person, life, and liberty of the Regent, whom he would be in a position to arrest at any moment as soon as he became the absolute and independent master of the civil and military household of the King; that the Court saw what must inevitably result from an unheard-of novelty, which placed everything in the hands of M. du Maine; and that he left it to the enlightenment, to the prudence, to the wisdom, to the equity of the company, and its love for the State, to declare what they thought on this subject.

M. du Maine appeared then as contemptible in the broad open daylight as he had appeared redoubtable in the obscurity of the cabinets. He had the look of one condemned, and his face, generally so fresh-coloured, was now as pale as death. He replied in a very low and scarcely intelligible voice, and with an air as respectful and as humble as it had been audacious in the morning.

People opined without listening to him; and tumultuously, but with one voice, the entire abrogation of the codicil was passed. This was premature, as the abrogation of the testament had been in the morning— both caused by sudden indignation. D'Aguesseau and Fleury both spoke, the first in a few words, the other at greater length, making a very good speech. As it exists, in the libraries, I will only say that the conclusions of both orators were in everything favourable to M. le Duc d'Orleans.

After they had spoken, the Duc du Maine, seeing himself totally shorn, tried a last resource. He represented, with more force than could have been expected from his demeanour at this second sitting, but yet with measure, that since he had been stripped of the authority confided to him by the codicil, he asked to be discharged from the responsibility of answering for the person of the King, and to be allowed simply to preserve

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the superintendence of his education. M, le Duc d'Orleans replied, "With all my heart, Monsieur; nothing more is wanted." Thereupon the Chief. President formally put the question to the vote. A decree was passed by which all power was taken from the hands of M. du Maine and placed in those of the Regent, with the right of placing whom he pleased in the council; of dismissing anybody as it should seem good to him; and of doing all he might think fit respecting the form to be given to the government; authority over public affairs, nevertheless, to remain with the council, and decision to be taken by the plurality of votes, the vote of the Regent to count double in case of equal division; M. le Duc to be chief of the council under him, with the right to enter it at once and opine there.

During all this time, and until the end of the sitting, M. du Maine had his eyes always cast down, looked more dead than alive, and appeared motionless. His son and his brother gave no sign of taking interest in anything.

The decree was followed by loud acclamations of the crowd scattered outside, and that which filled the rest of the palace replied as soon as they learnt what had been decided.

This noise, which lasted some time, being appeased, the Regent thanked the company in brief, polished, and majestic terms; declared with what care he would employ for the good of the state, the authority with which he was invested; then said it was time he should inform them what he judged ought to be established in order to aid him in the administration of affairs. He added that he did so with the more confidence, because what he proposed was exactly what M. le Duc de Bourgogne ('twas thus he named him) had resolved, as shown by papers found in his bureau. He passed a short and graceful eulogy upon the enlightenment and intentions of that prince; then declared that, besides the council of the regency, which would be the supreme centre from which all the affairs of the government would spring, he proposed to establish a council for foreign affairs, one for war, one for the navy, one for finance, one for ecclesiastical matters, and one for home affairs and to choose some of the magistrates of the company to enter these last two councils, and aid them by their knowledge upon the police of the realm, the jurisprudence, and what related to the liberties of the Gallican church.

The applause of the magistrates burst out at this, and all the crowd replied to it. The Chief-President concluded the sitting by a very short compliment to the Regent, who rose, and at the same time all the assembly, which then broke up.

On Friday, the 6th of September, 1715, the Regent performed an action of most exquisite merit, if it had been actuated by the love of God, but which was of the utmost meanness, religion having no connection with it. He went at eight o'clock in the morning to see Madame de Maintenon at Saint-Cyr. He was nearly an hour with this enemy, who had wished to cut off his head, and who quite recently had sought to deliver him,

tied hand and foot, to M. du Maine, by the monstrous dispositions of the King's will and codicil.

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The Regent assured her during this visit that the four thousand livres the King had given her every month should be continued, and should be brought to her the first day of every month by the Duc de Noailles, who had apparently induced the Prince to pay this visit, and promise this present. He said to Madame de Maintenon that if she wished for more she had only to speak, and assured her he would protect Saint-Cyr. In leaving he was shown the young girls, all together in classes.

It must be remembered, that besides the estate of Maintenon, and the other property of this famous and fatal witch, the establishment of Saint-Cyr, which had more than four hundred thousand livres yearly income, and much money in reserve, was obliged by the rules which founded it, to receive Madame de Maintenon, if she wished to retire there; to obey her in all things, as the absolute and sole superior; to keep her and everybody connected with her, her domestics, her equipages, as she wished, her table, *etc.*, at the expense of the house, all of which was very punctually done until her death. Thus she needed not this generous liberality, by which her pension of forty-eight thousand livres was continued to her. It would have been quite enough if M. le Duc d'Orleans had forgotten that she was in existence, and had simply left her untroubled in Saint-Cyr.

The Regent took good care not to inform me of his visit, before or after; and I took good care not to reproach him with it, or make him ashamed of it. It made much noise, and was not approved of. The Spanish affair was not yet forgotten, and the will and codicil furnished other matter for all conversations.

CHAPTER LXXX

Saturday, the 7th of September, was the day fixed for the first Bed of Justice of the King (Louis XV.); but he caught a cold during the night, and suffered a good deal. The Regent came alone to Paris. The Parliament had assembled, and I went to a door of the palace, where I was informed of the countermand which had just arrived. The Chief-President and the King's people were at once sent for to the Palais Royal, and the Parliament, which was about to adjourn, was continued for all the rest of the month for general business. On the morrow, the Regent, who was wearied with Versailles,—for he liked to live in Paris, where all his pleasures were within easy reach,—and who met with opposition from the Court doctors, all comfortably lodged at Versailles, to the removal of the person of the King to Vincennes, under pretext of a slight cold, fetched other doctors from Paris, who had been sent for to see the deceased King. These practitioners, who had nothing to gain by recommending Versailles, laughed at the Court doctors, and upon their opinion it was resolved to take the King to Vincennes, where all was ready for him on the morrow.

He set out, then, that day from Versailles, at about two o'clock in the day, in company with the Regent, the Duchesse de Ventadour, the Duc du Maine, and the Marechal de Villeroy, passed round the ramparts of Paris, without entering the city, and arrived at

Vincennes about five o'clock, many people and carriages having come out along the road to see him.

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On the day after the arrival of the King at Vincennes, the Regent worked all the morning with all the Secretaries of State separately, whom he had charged to bring him the list of all the 'lettres de cachet' issued from their bureaux, and a statement of the reasons for which they were delivered, as such oftentimes were slight. The majority of the 'lettres de cachet' of exile and of imprisonment had been drawn up against Jansenists, and people who had opposed the constitution; numbers the reasons of which were known only to the deceased King, and to those who had induced him to grant them; others were of the time of previous ministers, and among them were many which had been long forgotten and unknown. The Regent restored everybody to liberty, exiles and prisoners, except those whom he knew to have been arrested for grave crimes, or affairs of State; and brought down infinite benedictions upon himself by this act of justice and humanity.

Many very singular and strange stories were then circulated, which showed the tyranny of the last reign, and of its ministers, and caused the misfortunes of the prisoners to be deplored. Among those in the Bastille was a man who had been imprisoned thirty-five years. Arrested the day he arrived in Paris, on a journey from Italy, to which country he belonged. It has never been known why he was arrested, and he had never been examined, as was the case with the majority of the others: people were persuaded a mistake had been made. When his liberty was announced to him, he sadly asked what it was expected he could do with it. He said he had not a farthing; that he did not know a soul in Paris, not even a single street, or a person in all France; that his relatives in Italy had, doubtless, died since he left; that his property, doubtless, had been divided, so many years having elapsed during which no news had been received from him; that he knew not what to do. He asked to be allowed to remain in the Bastille for the rest of his days, with food and lodging. This was granted, with as much liberty as he wished.

As for those who were taken from the dungeons where the hatred of the ministers; of the Jesuits; and of the Constitution chiefs, had cast them, the horrible state they appeared in terrified everybody, and rendered credible all the cruel stories which, as soon as they were fully at liberty, they revealed.

The same day on which this merciful decision was come to, died Madame de la Vieuville, not old, of a cancer in the breast, the existence of which she had concealed until two days before her death, and thus deprived herself of help.

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A few days after, the finances being in such a bad state, the Regent made Crosat treasurer of the order, in return for which he obtained from him a loan of a million, in bars of silver, and the promise of another two million. Previous to this, the hunting establishments of the King had been much reduced. Now another retrenchment was made. There were seven intendants of the finances, who, for six hundred thousand livres, which their places had cost them, enjoyed eighty thousand livres each per annum. They were all suppressed, and simply the interest of their purchase-money paid to them; that is to say, thirty thousand livres each, until that purchase-money could be paid. It was found that there were sixteen hundred thousand francs owing to our ambassadors, and to our agents in foreign countries, the majority of whom literally had not enough to pay the postage of their letters, having spent all they possessed. This was a cruel discredit to us, all over Europe. I might fill a volume in treating upon the state and the arrangements of our finances. But this labour is above my strength, and contrary to my taste. I will simply say that as soon as money could be spared it was sent to our ambassadors abroad. They were dying of hunger, were over head and ears in debt, had fallen into utter contempt, and our affairs were suffering accordingly.

The council of the regency, let me say here, was composed of the following persons: M. le Duc d'Orleans, M. le Duc, the Duc du Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, Voysin the Chancellor, myself—since I must name myself,—Marechal de Villeroy, Marechal d'Harcourt, Marechal de Besons, the Late Bishop of Troyes, and Torcy, with a right to vote; with La Vrilliere, who kept the register, and Pontchartrain, both without the right to vote.

I have already alluded to the presence of Lord Stair at this time in our Court, as ambassador from England. By means of intrigues he had succeeded in ingratiating himself into the favour of the Regent, and in convincing him that the interests of France and England were identical. One of the reasons—the main one—which he brought forward to show this, was that King George was an usurper; and that if anything happened to our King, M. le Duc d'Orleans would become, in mounting the throne of France, an usurper also, the King of Spain being the real heir to the French monarchy; that, in consequence of this, France and England ought to march together, protect each other; France assisting England against the Pretender, and England assisting France, if need be, against the King of Spain. M. le Duc d'Orleans had too much penetration not to see this snare; but, marvellous as it may seem, the crookedness of this policy, and not the desire of reigning, seduced him. I am quite prepared, if ever these memoirs see the day, to find that this statement will be laughed at; that it will throw discredit on others, and cause me to be regarded as a great ass, if I think to make my readers, believe it; or

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for an idiot, if I have believed it myself. Nevertheless, such is the pure truth, to which I sacrifice all, in despite of what my readers may think of me. However incredible it may be, it is, as I say, the exact verity; and I do not hesitate to advance, that there are many such facts, unknown to history, which would much surprise if known; and which are unknown, only because scarcely any history has been written at first hand.

Stair wished, above all, to hinder the Regent from giving any assistance to the Pretender, and to prevent him passing through the realm in order to reach a seaport. Now the Regent was between two stools, for he had promised the Pretender to wink at his doings, and to favour his passage through France, if it were made secretly, and at the same time he had assented to the demand of Stair. Things had arrived at this pass when the troubles increased in England, and the Earl of Mar obtained some success in Scotland. Soon after news came that the Pretender had departed from Bar, and was making his way to the coast. Thereupon Stair ran in hot haste to M. le Duc d'Orleans to ask him to keep his promise, and hinder the Pretender's journey. The Regent immediately sent off Contade, major in the guards, very intelligent, and in whom he could trust, with his brother, a lieutenant in the same regiment, and two sergeants of their choice, to go to Chateau-Thierry, and wait for the Pretender, Stair having sure information that he would pass there. Contade set out at night on the 9th of November, well resolved and instructed to miss the person he was to seek. Stair, who expected as much, took also his measures, which were within an inch of succeeding; for this is what happened.

The Pretender set out disguised from Bar, accompanied by only three or four persons, and came to Chaillot, where M. de Lauzun had a little house, which he never visited, and which he had kept for mere fancy, although he had a house at Passy, of which he made much use. It was in this, Chaillot's house, that the Pretender put up, and where he saw the Queen, his mother, who often stopped at the Convent of the Filles de Sainte Marie-Therese. Thence he set out in a post-chaise of Torcy's, by way of Alencon, for Brittany, where he meant to embark.

Stair discovered this scheme, and resolved to leave nothing undone in order to deliver his party of this, the last of the Stuarts. He quietly despatched different people by different roads, especially by that from Paris to Alencon. He charged with this duty Colonel Douglas (who belonged to the Irish (regiments) in the pay of France), who, under the protection of his name, and by his wit and his intrigues, had insinuated himself into many places in Paris since the commencement of the regency; had placed himself on a footing of consideration and of familiarity with the Regent; and often came to my house. He was good company; had married upon the frontier of Metz; was very poor; had politeness and much experience of the world; the reputation of distinguished valour; and nothing which could render him suspected of being capable of a crime.

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Douglas got into a post-chaise, accompanied by two horsemen; all three were well armed, and posted leisurely along this road. Nonancourt is a kind of little village upon this route, at nineteen leagues from Paris; between Dreux, three leagues further, and Verneuil au Perche, four leagues this side. It was at Nonancourt that he alighted, ate a morsel at the post-house, inquired with extreme solicitude after a post-chaise which he described, as well as the manner in which it would be accompanied, expressed fear lest it had already passed, and lest he had not been answered truly. After infinite inquiries, he left a third horseman, who had just reached him, on guard, with orders to inform him when the chaise he was in search of appeared; and added menaces and promises of recompense to the post people, so as not to be deceived by their negligence.

The post-master was named L'Hospital; he was absent, but his wife was in the house, and she fortunately was a very honest woman, who had wit, sense, and courage. Nonancourt is only five leagues from La Ferme, and when, to save distance, you do not pass there, they send you relays upon the road. Thus I knew very well this post-mistress, who mixed herself more in the business than her husband, and who has herself related to me this adventure more than once. She did all she could, uselessly, to obtain some explanation upon these alarms. All that she could unravel was that the strangers were Englishmen, and in a violent excitement about something, that something very important was at stake,—and that they meditated mischief. She fancied thereupon that the Pretender was in question; resolved to save him; mentally arranged her plans, and fortunately enough executed them.

In order to succeed she devoted herself to the service of these gentlemen, refused them nothing, appeared quite satisfied, and promised that they should infallibly be informed. She persuaded them of this so thoroughly, that Douglas went away without saying where, except to this third horseman just arrived, but it was close at hand; so that he might be warned in time. He took one of his valets with him; the other remained with the horseman to wait and watch.

Another man much embarrassed the post-mistress; nevertheless, she laid her plans. She proposed to the horseman to drink something, because when he arrived Douglas had left the table. She served him in her best manner, and with her best wine, and kept him at table as long as she could, anticipating all his orders. She had placed a valet, in whom she could trust, as guard, with orders simply to appear, without a word, if he saw a chaise; and her resolution was to lock up the Englishman and his servant, and to give their horses to the chaise if it came. But it came not, and the Englishman grew tired of stopping at table. Then she manoeuvred so well that she persuaded him to go and lie down, and to count upon her, her people, and upon the valet Douglas had left. The Englishman

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told this valet not to quit the threshold of the house, and to inform him as soon as the chaise appeared. He then suffered himself to be led to the back of the house, in order to lie down. The post-mistress, immediately after, goes to one of her friends in a by-street, relates her adventure and her suspicions, makes the friend agree to receive and secrete in her dwelling the person she expected, sends for an ecclesiastic, a relative of them both, and in whom she could repose confidence, who came and lent an Abbe's dress and wig to match. This done, Madame L'Hospital returns to her home, finds the English valet at the door, talks with him, pities his ennui, says he is a good fellow to be so particular, says that from the door to the house there is but one step, promises him that he shall be as well informed as by his own eyes, presses him to drink something, and tips the wink to a trusty postilion, who makes him drink until he rolls dead drunk under the table. During this performance, the wary mistress listens at the door of the English gentleman's room, gently turns the key and locks him in, and then establishes herself upon the threshold of her door.

Half an hour after comes the trusty valet whom she had put on guard: it was the expected chaise, which, as well as the three men who accompanied it, were made, without knowing why, to slacken speed. It was King James. Madame L'Hospital accosts him, says he is expected, and lost if he does not take care; but that he may trust in her and follow her. At once they both go to her friends. There he learns all that has happened, and they hide him, and the three men of his suite as well as they could. Madame L'Hospital returns home, sends for the officers of justice, and in consequence of her suspicions she causes the English gentleman and the English valet, the one drunk, the other asleep, locked in the room where she had left him, to be arrested, and immediately after despatches a postilion to Torcy. The officers of justice act, and send their deposition to the Court.

The rage of the English gentleman on finding himself arrested, and unable to execute the duty which led him there, and his fury against the valet who had allowed himself to be intoxicated, cannot be expressed. As for Madame L'Hospital he would have strangled her if he could; and she for a long time was afraid of her life.

The Englishman could not be induced to confess what brought him there, or where was Douglas, whom he named in order to show his importance. He declared he had been sent by the English ambassador, though Stair had not yet officially assumed that title, and exclaimed that that minister would never suffer the affront he had received. They civilly replied to him, that there were no proofs he came from the English ambassador, —none that he was connected with the minister: that very suspicious designs against public safety on the highway alone were visible; that no harm or annoyance should be caused him, but that he must remain in safety until orders came, and there upon he was civilly led to prison, as well as the intoxicated valet.

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What became of Douglas at that time was never known, except that he was recognised in various places, running, inquiring, crying out with despair that he had escaped, without mentioning any name. Apparently news came to him, or he sought it, being tired of receiving none. The report of what had occurred in such a little place as Nonancourt would easily have reached him, close as he was to it; and perhaps it made him set out anew to try and catch his prey.

But he journeyed in vain. King James had remained hidden at Nonancourt, where, charmed with the attentions of his generous post-mistress, who had saved him from his assassins, he admitted to her who he was, and gave her a letter for the Queen, his mother. He remained there three days, to allow the hubbub to pass, and rob those who sought him of all hope; then, disguised as an Abbe, he jumped into a post-chaise that Madame L'Hospital had borrowed in the neighbourhood—to confound all identity—and continued his journey, during which he was always pursued, but happily was never recognised, and embarked in Brittany for Scotland.

Douglas, tired of useless searches, returned to Paris, where Stair kicked up a fine dust about the Nonancourt adventure. This he denominated nothing less than an infraction of the law of nations, with an extreme audacity and impudence, and Douglas, who could not be ignorant of what was said about him, had the hardihood to go about everywhere as usual; to show himself at the theatre; and to present himself before M. le Duc d'Orleans.

This Prince ignored as much as he could a plot so cowardly and so barbarous, and in respect to him so insolent. He kept silence, said to Stair what he judged fitting to make him be silent likewise, but gave liberty to his English assassins. Douglas, however, fell much in the favour of the Regent, and many considerable people closed their doors to him. He vainly tried to force mine. But as for me I was a perfect Jacobite, and quite persuaded that it was the interest of France to give England domestic occupation, which would long hinder her from thinking of foreign matters. I then, as may be supposed, could not look upon the odious enterprise with a favourable eye, or pardon its authors. Douglas complained to me of my disregard for him, but to no purpose. Soon after he disappeared from Paris. I know not what became of him afterwards. His wife and his children remained there living by charity. A long time after his death beyond the seas, the Abbe de Saint-Simon passed from Noyan to Metz, where he found his widow in great misery.

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The Queen of England sent for Madame L'Hospital to Saint-Germain, thanked her, caressed her, as she deserved, and gave her her portrait. This was all; the Regent gave her nothing; a long while after King James wrote to her, and sent her also his portrait. Conclusion: she remained post-mistress of Nonancourt as before, twenty or twenty-five years after, to her death; and her son and her daughter-in-law keep the post now. She was a true woman; estimated in her neighbourhood; not a single word that she uttered concerning this history has been contradicted by any one. What it cost her can never be said, but she never received a farthing. She never complained, but spoke as she found things, with modesty, and without seeking to speak. Such is the indigence of dethroned Kings, and their complete forgetfulness of the greatest perils and the most signal services.

Many honest people avoided Stair, whose insolent airs made others avoid him. He filled the cup by the insupportable manner in which he spoke upon that affair, never daring to admit he had directed it, or deigning to disculpate himself. The only annoyance he showed was about his ill-success.

CHAPTER LXXXI

I must say a few words now of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who, as may be imagined, began to hold her head very high indeed directly the regency of Monsieur her father was established. Despite the representations of Madame de Saint-Simon, she usurped all the honours of a queen; she went through Paris with kettle-drums beating, and all along the quay of the Tuileries where the King was. The Marechal de Villeroy complained of this next day to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who promised him that while the King remained in Paris no kettle-drums should be heard but his. Never afterwards did Madame la Duchesse de Berry have any, yet when she went to the theatre she sat upon a raised dais in her box, had four of her guards upon the stage, and others in the pit; the house was better lighted than usual, and before the commencement of the performance she was harangued by the players. This made a strange stir in Paris, and as she did not dare to continue it she gave up her usual place, and took at the opera a little box where she could scarcely be seen, and where she was almost incognito. As the comedy was played then upon the opera stage for Madame, this little box served for both entertainments.

The Duchess desired apparently to pass the summer nights in all liberty in the garden of the Luxembourg. She accordingly had all the gates walled up but one, by which the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which had always enjoyed the privilege of walking there, were much deprived. M. le Duc thereupon opened the Conti garden to make up to the public for their loss. As may be imagined, strange things were said about the motives which led to the walling up of the garden.



As the Princess found new lovers to replace the old ones, she tried to pension off the latter at the expense of the public. She had a place created expressly for La Haye. She bought, or rather the King for her, a little house at the entry of the Bois de Boulogne, which was pretty, with all the wood in front, and a fine garden behind. It was called La Muette.

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After many amours she had become smitten with Rion, a younger son of the house of Aydic. He was a fat, chubby, pale little fellow, who had so many pimples that he did not ill resemble an abscess. He had good teeth, but had no idea he should cause a passion which in less than no time became ungovernable, and which lasted a long while without however interfering with temporary and passing amours. He was not worth a penny, but had many brothers and sisters who had no more than he. He was a lieutenant of dragoons, relative of Madame Pons, dame d'atours of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who sent for him to try and do something for him. Scarcely had he arrived than the passion of the Duchess declared itself, and he became the master of the Luxembourg where she dwelt. M. de Lauzun, who was a distant relative, was delighted, and chuckled inwardly. He thought he saw a repetition of the old times, when Mademoiselle was in her glory; he vouchsafed his advice to Rion.

Rion was gentle and naturally polished and respectful, a good and honest fellow. He soon felt the power of his charms, which could only have captivated the incomprehensible and depraved fantasy of such a princess. He did not abuse this power; made himself liked by everybody; but he treated Madame la Duchesse de Berry as M. de Lauzun had treated Mademoiselle. He was soon decorated with the most beautiful lace and the richest clothes covered with silver, loaded with snuffboxes, jewels, and precious stones. He took pleasure in making the Princess long after him, and be jealous; affecting to be still more jealous of her. He often made her cry. Little by little, he obtained such authority over her that she did not dare to do anything without his permission, not even the most indifferent things. If she were ready to go to the opera, he made her stay away; at other times he made her go thither in spite of herself. He made her treat well many ladies she did not like, or of whom she was jealous, and treat ill persons who pleased her, but of whom he pretended to be jealous. Even in her finery she had not the slightest liberty. He amused himself by making her disarrange her head-dress, or change her clothes, when she was quite dressed; and that so often and so publicly, that he accustomed her at last to take over night his orders for her morning's dress and occupation, and on the morrow he would change everything, and the Princess wept as much as she could, and more. At last she actually sent messages to him by trusty valets,—for he lived close to the Luxembourg,—several times during her toilet, to know what ribbons she should wear; the same with her gown and other things; and nearly always he made her wear what she did not wish for. If ever she dared to do the least thing without his permission, he treated her like a serving-wench, and her tears lasted sometimes several days. This princess, so haughty, and so fond of showing and exercising the most unmeasured pride, disgraced herself by joining in repasts with him and obscure people; she, with whom no man could lawfully eat if he were not a prince of the blood!

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A Jesuit, named Pere Riglet, whom she had known as a child, and whose intimacy she had always cultivated since, was admitted to these private repasts, without being ashamed thereof, and without Madame la Duchesse de Berry being embarrassed. Madame de Mouchy was the confidante of all these strange parties she and Rion invited the guests, and chose the days. La Mouchy often reconciled the Princess to her lover, and was better treated by him than she, without her daring to take notice of it, for fear of an eclat which would have caused her to lose so dear a lover, and a confidante so necessary. This life was public; everybody at the Luxembourg paid court to M. de Rion, who, on his side, took care to be on good terms with all the world, nay, with an air of respect that he refused, even in public, to his princess. He often gave sharp replies to her in society, which made people lower their eyes, and brought blushes to the cheek of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who, nevertheless, did not attempt to conceal her submission and passionate manners, even before others. A remarkable fact is, that in the midst of this life, she took an apartment at the Convent of the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where she sometimes went in the afternoon, always slept there on grand religious fete days, and often remained there several days running. She took with her two ladies, rarely three, scarcely a single domestic; she ate with her ladies what the convent could supply for her table; attended the services, was sometimes long in prayer, and rigidly fasted on the appointed days.

Two Carmelites, of much talent, and who knew the world, were charged to receive her, and to be near her. One was very beautiful: the other had been so. They were rather young, especially the handsomer; but were very religious and holy, and performed the office entrusted to them much against their inclination. When they became more familiar they spoke freely to the Princess, and said to her that if they knew nothing of her but what they saw, they should admire her as a saint, but, elsewhere, they learnt that she led a strange life, and so public, that they could not comprehend why she came to their convent. Madame la Duchesse de Berry laughed at this, and was not angry. Sometimes they lectured her, called people and things by their names, and exhorted her to change so scandalous a life; but it was all in vain. She lived as before, both at the Luxembourg and at the Carmelites, and caused wonderment by this surprising conduct.

Madame la Duchesse de Berry returned with usury to her father, the severity and the domination she suffered at the hands of Rion—yet this prince, in his weakness, was not less submissive to her, attentive to her, or afraid of her. He was afflicted with the public reign of Rion, and the scandal of his daughter; but he did not dare to breathe a word, or if he did (after some scene, as ridiculous as it was violent, had passed between the lover and the Princess, and become public), he was treated like a negro, pouted at several days, and did not know how to make his peace.

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But it is time now to speak of the public and private occupations of the Regent himself, of his conduct, his pleasure parties, and the employment of his days.

Up to five o'clock in the evening he devoted himself exclusively to public business, reception of ministers, councils, *etc.*, never dining during the day, but taking chocolate between two and three o'clock, when everybody was allowed to enter his room. After the council of the day, that is to say, at about five o'clock, there was no more talk of business. It was now the time of the Opera or the Luxembourg (if he had not been to the latter place before his chocolate), or he went to Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans' apartments, or supped, or went out privately, or received company privately; or, in the fine season, he went to Saint-Cloud, or elsewhere out of town, now supping there, or at the Luxembourg, or at home. When Madame was at Paris, he spoke to her for a moment before his mass; and when she was at Saint-Cloud he went to see her there, and always paid her much attention and respect.

His suppers were always in very strange company. His mistresses, sometimes an opera girl, often Madame la Duchesse de Berry, and a dozen men whom he called his rows, formed the party. The requisite cheer was prepared in places made expressly, on the same floor, all the utensils were of silver; the company often lent a hand to the cooks. It was at these parties that the character of every one was passed in review, ministers and favourites like the rest, with a liberty which was unbridled license. The gallantries past and present of the Court and of the town; all old stories, disputes, jokes, absurdities were raked up; nobody was spared; M. le Duc d'Orleans had his say like the rest, but very rarely did these discourses make the slightest impression upon him. The company drank as much as they could, inflamed themselves, said the filthiest things without stint, uttered impieties with emulation, and when they had made a good deal of noise and were very drunk, they went to bed to recommence the same game the next day. From the moment when supper was ready, business, no matter of, what importance, no matter whether private or national, was entirely banished from view. Until the next morning everybody and everything were compelled to wait.

The Regent lost then an infinite amount of time in private, in amusements, and debauchery. He lost much also in audiences too long, too extended, too easily granted, and drowned himself in those same details which during the lifetime of the late King we had both so often reproached him with. Questions he might have decided in half an hour he prolonged, sometimes from weakness, sometimes from that miserable desire to set people at loggerheads, and that poisonous maxim which occasionally escaped him or his favourite, 'divide et impera'; often from his general mistrust of everybody and everything; nothings became hydras with which he himself afterwards was much embarrassed. His familiarity and his readiness of access extremely pleased people, but were much abused. Folks sometimes were even wanting in respect to him, which at last was an inconvenience all the more dangerous because he could not, when he wished, reprimand those who embarrassed him; insomuch as they themselves did not feel embarrassed.

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What is extraordinary is, neither his mistress nor Madame la Duchesse de Berry, nor his 'roues', could ever draw anything from him, even when drunk, concerning the affairs of the government, however important. He publicly lived with Madame de Parabere; he lived at the same time with others; he amused himself with the jealousy and vexation of these women; he was not the less on good terms with them all; and the scandal of this public seraglio, and that of the daily filthiness and impiety at his suppers, were extreme and spread everywhere.

Towards the end of the year (1715) the Chevalier de Bouillon, who since the death of the son of the Comte d'Auvergne had taken the name of the Prince d'Auvergne, proposed to the Regent that there should be a public ball, masked and unmasked, in the opera three times a week, people to pay upon entering, and the boxes to be thrown open to those who did not care to dance. It was believed that a public ball, guarded as is the opera on days of performance, would prevent those adventures which happened so often at the little obscure balls scattered throughout Paris; and indeed close them altogether. The opera balls were established on a grand scale, and with all possible effect. The proposer of the idea had for it six thousand livres pension; and a machine admirably invented and of easy and instantaneous application, was made to cover the orchestra, and put the stage and the pit on the same level. The misfortune was, that the opera was at the Palais Royal, and that M. le Duc d'Orleans had only one step to take to reach it after his suppers and show himself there, often in a state but little becoming. The Duc de Noailles, who strove to pay court to him, went there from the commencement so drunk that there was no indecency he did not commit.

CHAPTER LXXXII

Let me speak now of another matter.

A Scotchman, I do not know of what family, a great player and combiner, who had gained much in various countries he had been in, had come to Paris during the last days of the deceased King. His name was Law; but when he became more known, people grew so accustomed to call him Las, that his name of Law disappeared. He was spoken of to M. le Duc d'Orleans as a man deep in banking and commercial matters, in the movements of the precious metals, in monies and finance: the Regent, from this description, was desirous to see him. He conversed with Law some time, and was so pleased with him, that he spoke of him to Desmarets as a man from whom information was to be drawn. I recollect that the Prince spoke of him to me at the same time. Desmarets sent for Law, and was a long while with him several times; I know nothing of what passed between them or its results, except that Desmarets was pleased with Law, and formed some esteem for him.

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M. le Duc d'Orleans, after that, only saw him from time to time; but after the first rush of affairs, which followed the death of the King, Law, who had formed some subaltern acquaintances at the Palais Royal, and an intimacy with the Abbe Dubois, presented himself anew before M. le Duc d'Orleans, soon after conversed with him in private, and proposed some finance plans to him. The Regent made him work with the Duc de Noailles, with Rouille, with Amelot—this last for commercial matters. The first two were afraid of an intruder, favoured by the Regent, in their administration; so that Law was a long time tossed about, but was always backed by the Duc d'Orleans. At last, the bank project pleased that Prince so much that he wished to carry it out. He spoke in private to the heads of finance, in whom he found great opposition. He had often spoken to me of it, and I had contented myself with listening to him upon a matter I never liked, and which, consequently, I never well understood; and the carrying out of which appeared to me distant. When he had entirely formed his resolution, he summoned a financial and commercial assembly, in which Law explained the whole plan of the bank he wished to establish (this was on the 24th of October, 1715). He was listened to as long as he liked to talk. Some, who saw that the Regent was almost decided, acquiesced; but the majority opposed.

Law was not disheartened. The majority were spoken to privately in very good French. Nearly the same assembly was called, in which, the Regent being present, Law again explained his project. This time few opposed and feebly. The Duc de Noailles was obliged to give in. The bank being approved of in this manner, it had next to be proposed to the regency council.

M. le Duc d'Orleans took the trouble to speak in private to each member of the council, and gently to make them understand that he wished the bank to meet with no opposition. He spoke his mind to me thoroughly: therefore a reply was necessary. I said to him that I did not hide my ignorance or my disgust for all finance matters; that, nevertheless, what he had just explained to me appeared good in itself, that without any new tax, without expense, and without wronging or embarrassing anybody, money should double itself at once by means of the notes of this bank, and become transferable with the greatest facility. But along with this advantage I found two inconveniences, the first, how to govern the bank with sufficient foresight and wisdom, so as not to issue more notes than could be paid whenever presented: the second, that what is excellent in a republic, or in a monarchy where the finance is entirely popular, as in England, is of pernicious use in an absolute monarchy, such as France, where the necessities of a war badly undertaken and ill sustained, the avarice of a first minister, favourite, or mistress, the luxury, the wild expenses, the prodigality of a King, might

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soon exhaust a bank, and ruin all the holders of notes, that is to say, overthrow the realm. M. le Duc d'Orleans agreed to this; but at the same time maintained that a King would have so much interest in never meddling or allowing minister, mistress, or favourite to meddle with the bank, that this capital inconvenience was never to be feared. Upon that we for a long time disputed without convincing each other, so that when, some few days afterwards, he proposed the bank to the regency council, I gave my opinion as I have just explained it, but with more force and at length: and my conclusion was to reject the bank, as a bait the most fatal, in an absolute country, while in a free country it would be a very good and very wise establishment.

Few dared to be of this opinion: the bank passed. Duc d'Orleans cast upon me some little reproaches, but gentle, for having spoken at such length. I based my excuses upon my belief that by duty, honour, and conscience, I ought to speak according to my persuasion, after having well thought over the matter, and explained myself sufficiently to make my opinion well understood, and the reason I had for forming it. Immediately after, the edict was registered without difficulty at the Parliament. This assembly sometimes knew how to please the Regent with good grace in order to turn the cold shoulder to him afterwards with more efficacy.

Some time after, to relate all at once, M. le Duc d'Orleans wished me to see Law in order that he might explain to me his plans, and asked me to do so as a favour. I represented to him my unskilfulness in all finance matters; that Law would in vain speak a language to me of which I understood nothing, that we should both lose our time very uselessly. I tried to back out thus, as well as I could. The Regent several times reverted to the charge, and at last demanded my submission. Law came then to my house. Though there was much of the foreigner in his bearing, in his expressions, and in his accent, he expressed himself in very good terms, with much clearness and precision. He conversed with me a long while upon his bank, which, indeed, was an excellent thing in itself, but for another country rather than for France, and with a prince less easy than the Regent. Law had no other solutions to give me, of my two objections, than those the Regent himself had given, which did not satisfy me. But as the affair had passed, and there was nothing now to do but well direct it, principally upon that did our conversation turn. I made him feel as much as I could the importance of not showing such facility, that it might be abused, with a Regent so good, so easy, so open, so surrounded. I masked as well as I could what I wished to make him understand thereupon; and I dwelt especially upon the necessity of being prepared to satisfy instantly all bearers of notes, who should demand payment: for upon this depended the credit or the overthrow of the bank. Law, on going out, begged me to permit him to come sometimes and talk with me; we separated mutually satisfied, at which the Regent was still more so.

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Law came several other times to my house, and showed much desire to grow intimate with me. I kept to civilities, because finance entered not into my head, and I regarded as lost time all these conversations. Some time after, the Regent, who spoke to me tolerably often of Law with great prepossession, said that he had to ask of me, nay to demand of me, a favour; it was, to receive a visit from Law regularly every week. I represented to him the perfect inutility of these conversations, in which I was incapable of learning anything, and still more so of enlightening Law upon subjects he possessed, and of which I knew naught. It was in vain; the Regent wished it; obedience was necessary. Law, informed of this by the Regent, came then to my house. He admitted to me with good grace, that it was he who had asked the Regent to ask me, not daring to do so himself. Many compliments followed on both sides, and we agreed that he should come to my house every Tuesday morning about ten o'clock, and that my door should be closed to everybody while he remained. This first visit was not given to business. On the following Tuesday morning he came to keep his appointment, and punctually came until his discomfiture. An hour-and-a-half, very often two hours, was the ordinary time for our conversations. He always took care to inform me of the favour his bank was obtaining in France and foreign countries, of its products, of his views, of his conduct, of the opposition he met with from the heads of finance and the magistracy, of his reasons, and especially of his balance sheet, to convince me that he was more than prepared to face all holders of notes whatever sums they had to ask for.

I soon knew that if Law had desired these regular visits at my house, it was not because he expected to make me a skilful financier; but because, like a man of sense—and he had a good deal—he wished to draw near a servitor of the Regent who had the best post in his confidence, and who long since had been in a position to speak to him of everything and of everybody with the greatest freedom and the most complete liberty; to try by this frequent intercourse to gain my friendship; inform himself by me of the intrinsic qualities of those of whom he only saw the outside; and by degrees to come to the Council, through me, to represent the annoyances he experienced, the people with whom he had to do; and lastly, to profit by my dislike to the Duc de Noailles, who, whilst embracing him every day, was dying of jealousy and vexation, and raised in his path, under-hand, all the obstacles and embarrassments possible, and would have liked to stifle him. The bank being in action and flourishing, I believed it my duty to sustain it. I lent myself, therefore, to the instructions Law proposed, and soon we spoke to each other with a confidence I never have had reason to repent. I will not enter into the details of this bank, the other schemes which followed it, or the operations made in consequence. This subject of finance would fill several volumes. I will speak of it only as it affects the history of the time, or what concerns me in particular. It is the history of my time I have wished to write; I should have been too much turned from it had I entered into the immense details respecting finance. I might add here what Law was. I defer it to a time when this curiosity will be more in place.

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Arouet, son of a notary, who was employed by my father and me until his death, was exiled and sent to Tulle at this time (the early part of 1716), for some verses very satirical and very impudent.

I should not amuse myself by writing down such a trifle, if this same Arouet, having become a great poet and academician under the name of Voltaire, had not also become—after many tragical adventures—a manner of personage in the republic of letters, and even achieved a sort of importance among certain people.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

I have elsewhere alluded to Alberoni, and shown what filthy baseness he stooped to in order to curry favour with the infamous Duc de Vendome. I have also shown that he accompanied the new Queen of Spain from Parma to Madrid, after she had been married, by procuration, to Philip V. He arrived at the Court of Spain at a most opportune moment for his fortune. Madame des Ursins had just been disgraced; there was no one to take her place. Alberoni saw his opportunity and was not slow to avail himself of it. During the journey with the new Queen, he had contrived to ingratiate himself so completely into her favour, that she was, in a measure, prepared to see only with his eyes. The King had grown so accustomed to be shut out from all the world, and to be ruled by others, that he easily adapted himself to his new chains. The Queen and Alberoni, then, in a short time had him as completely under their thumb, as he had before been under that of Madame des Ursins.

Alberoni, unscrupulous and ambitious, stopped at nothing in order to consolidate his power and pave the way for his future greatness. Having become prime minister, he kept the King as completely inaccessible to the courtiers as to the world; would allow no one to approach him whose influence he had in any way feared. He had Philip completely in his own hands by means of the Queen, and was always on his guard to keep him there.

Ever since the Regent's accession to power an intimacy had gradually been growing up between the two governments of France and England. This was mainly owing to the intrigues of the Abbe Dubois, who had sold himself to the English Court, from which he secretly received an enormous pension. He was, therefore, devoted heart and soul—if such a despicable personage can be said to have the one or the other—to the interests of King George, and tried to serve them in every way. He had but little difficulty—comparatively speaking—in inducing M. le Duc d'Orleans to fall into his nets, and to declare himself in favour of an English alliance. Negotiations with this end in view were, in fact, set on foot, had been for some time; and about the month of September of this year (1716), assumed a more smiling face than they had yet displayed.

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Both France and England, from different motives, wished to draw Spain into this alliance. The Regent, therefore, in order to further this desire, obtained from England a promise that she would give up Gibraltar to its former owners, the Spaniards. The King of England consented to do so, but on one condition: it was, that in order not to expose himself to the cries of the party opposed to him, this arrangement should be kept profoundly secret until executed. In order that this secrecy might be secured, he stipulated that the negotiation should not in any way pass through the hands of Alberoni, or any Spanish minister, but be treated directly between the Regent and the King of Spain, through a confidential agent chosen by the former.

This confidential agent was to take a letter respecting the treaty to the King of Spain, a letter full of insignificant trifles, and at the same time a positive order from the King of England, written and signed by his hand, to the Governor of Gibraltar, commanding him to surrender the place to the King of Spain the very moment he received this order, and to retire with his garrison, *etc.*, to Tangiers. In order to execute this a Spanish general was suddenly to march to Gibraltar, under pretence of repressing the incursions of its garrison,—summon the Governor to appear, deliver to him the King of England's order, and enter into possession of the place. All this was very weakly contrived; but this concerned the King of England, not us.

I must not be proud; and must admit that I knew nothing of all this, save at second-hand. If I had, without pretending to be very clever, I must say that I should have mistrusted this fine scheme. The King of England could not be ignorant with what care and with what jealousy the Queen and Alberoni kept the King of Spain locked up, inaccessible to everybody—and that the certain way to fail, was to try to speak to him without their knowledge, in spite of them, or unaided by them. However, my opinion upon this point was not asked, and accordingly was not given.

Louville was the secret agent whom the Regent determined to send. He had already been in Spain, had gained the confidence of the King, and knew him better than any other person who could have been chosen. Precisely because of all these reasons, I thought him the most unfit person to be charged with this commission. The more intimate he had been with the King of Spain, the more firm in his confidence, the more would he be feared by the Queen and Alberoni; and the more would they do to cover his embassy with failure, so as to guard their credit and their authority. I represented my views on this subject to Louville, who acknowledged there was truth in them, but contented himself with saying, that he had not in his surprise dared to refuse the mission offered to him; and that if he succeeded in it, the restitution to Spain of such an important place as Gibraltar, would doubtless be the means of securing to him large arrears of pensions due to him from Philip the First: an object of no small importance in his eyes. Louville, therefore, in due time departed to Madrid, on his strange and secret embassy.

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Upon arriving he went straight to the house of the Duc de Saint-Aignan, our ambassador, and took up his quarters there. Saint-Aignan who had received not the slightest information of his arriving, was surprised beyond measure at it. Alberoni was something more than surprised. As fortune would have it, Louville when at some distance from Madrid was seen by a courier, who straightway told Alberoni of the circumstance. As may be imagined, tormented as Alberoni was by jealousy and suspicion, this caused him infinite alarm. He was quite aware who Louville was; the credit he had attained with the King of Spain; the trouble Madame des Ursins and the deceased Queen had had to get him out of their way; the fear, therefore, that he conceived on account of this unexpected arrival, was so great that he passed all bounds, in order to free himself from it.

He instantly despatched a courier to meet Louville with an order prohibiting him to approach any nearer to Madrid. The courier missed Louville, but a quarter of an hour after this latter had alighted at Saint-Aignan's, he received a note from Grimaldo inclosing an order from the King of Spain, commanding him to leave the city that instant! Louville replied that he was charged with a confidential letter from the King of France, and with another from M. le Duc d'Orleans, for the King of Spain; and with a commission for his Catholic Majesty which would not permit him to leave until he had executed it. In consequence of this reply, a courier was at once despatched to the Prince de Cellamare, Spanish ambassador at Paris, ordering him to ask for the recall of Louville, and to declare that the King of Spain so disliked his person that he would neither see him, nor allow him to treat with any of the ministers!

Meanwhile the fatigue of the journey followed by such a reception so affected Louville, that during the night he had an attack of a disease to which he was subject, so that he had a bath prepared for him, into which he got towards the end of the morning.

Alberoni, not satisfied with what he had already done, came himself to the Duc de Saint-Aignan's, in order to persuade Louville to depart at once. Despite the representations made to him, he insisted upon penetrating to the sick-chamber. There he saw Louville in his bath. Nothing could be more civil than the words of Alberoni, but nothing could be more dry, more negative, or more absolute than their signification. He pitied the other's illness and the fatigue of his journey; would have wished to have known of this journey beforehand, so as to have prevented it; and had hoped to be able to overcome the repugnance of the King of Spain to see him, or at least to obtain permission for him to remain some days in Madrid. He added that he had been unable to shake his Majesty in any way, or to avoid obeying the very express order he had received from him, to see that he (Louville) departed at once.

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Louville, however, was in a condition which rendered his departure impossible. Alberoni admitted this, but warned him that his stay must only last as long as his illness, and that the attack once over, he must away. Louville insisted upon the confidential letters, of which he was the bearer, and which gave him an official character, instructed as he was to execute an important commission from the King of France, nephew of the King of Spain, such as his Majesty could not refuse to hear direct from his mouth, and such as he would regret not having listened to. The dispute was long and warm, despite the illness of Louville, who could gain nothing. He did not fail to remain five or six days with the Duc de Saint-Aignan, and to make him act as ambassador in order to obtain an audience of the King, although Saint-Aignan was hurt at being kept ignorant of the object of the other's mission.

Louville did not dare to call upon a soul, for fear of committing himself, and nobody dared to call upon him. He hazarded, however, for curiosity, to go and see the King of Spain pass through a street, and ascertain if, on espying him, he would not be tempted to hear him, in case his arrival, as was very possible, had been kept a secret. But Alberoni had anticipated everything. Louville saw the King pass, certainly, but found it was impossible to make himself perceived by his Majesty. Grimaldo came afterwards to intimate to Louville an absolute order to depart, and to inform the Duc de Saint-Aignan that the King of Spain was so angry with the obstinacy of this delay, that he would not say what might happen if the stay of Louville was protracted; but that he feared the respect due to a representative minister, and above all an ambassador of France, would be disregarded.

Both Louville and Saint-Aignan clearly saw that all audience was impossible, and that in consequence a longer stay could only lead to disturbances which might embroil the two crowns; so that, at the end of seven or eight days, Louville departed, returning as he came. Alberoni began then to breathe again after the extreme fear he had had. He was consoled by this proof of his power, which showed he need no longer fear that any one could approach the King without his aid, or that any business could be conducted without him. Thus Spain lost Gibraltar, and she has never been able to recover it since.

Such is the utility of prime ministers!

Alberoni spread the report in Spain and in France, that Philip V. had taken a mortal aversion against Louville, since he had driven him out of the country for his insolence and his scheming; that he would never see him, and was offended because he had passed the Pyrenees; that Louville had no proposition to make, or commission to execute; that he had deceived the Regent, in making him believe that if once he found a pretext for appearing before the King of Spain, knowing him so well as he did, that prince would be ravished by the memory of his former affection, would reinstate him in his former credit, and thus France would be able to make Spain do all she wished. In a word, Alberoni declared that Louville had only come into the country to try and obtain

some of the pensions he had been promised on quitting the King of Spain, but that he had not gone the right way to work to be so soon paid.

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Nothing short of the effrontery of Alberoni would have been enough for the purpose of spreading these impostures. No one had forgotten in Spain what Madame des Ursins had done to get rid of Louville, how the King of Spain had resisted; that she was not able to succeed without the aid of France and her intrigues with Madame de Maintenon; and that the King, afflicted to the utmost, yielding to the orders given by France to Louville, had doubled the pensions which had for a long time been paid to him, given him a sum of money in addition, and the government of Courtray, which he lost only by the misfortune of the war that followed the loss of the battle of Ramillies. With respect to the commission, to deny it was an extreme piece of impudence, a man being concerned so well known as Louville, who descends at the house of the ambassador of France, says he has letters of trust from the King and the Regent, and an important mission which he can only confide to the King of Spain, the self-same ambassador striving to obtain an audience for him. Nothing was so easy as to cover Louville with confusion, if he had spoken falsely, by making him show his letters; if he had none he would have been struck dumb, and having no official character, Alberoni would have been free to punish him. Even if with confidential letters, he had only a complaint to utter in order to introduce himself and to solicit his pay, Alberoni would very easily have been able to dishonour him, because he had no commission after having roundly asserted that he was charged with one of great importance. But omnipotence says and does with impunity whatever it pleases.

Louville having returned, it was necessary to send word to the King of England of all he had done in Spain; and this business came to nothing, except that it set Alberoni against the Regent for trying to execute a secret commission without his knowledge; and that it set the Regent against Alberoni for frustrating a project so openly, and for showing the full force of his power. Neither of the two ever forgot this matter; and the dislike of Alberoni to the Regent led, as will be seen, to some strange results.

I will add here, that the treaty of alliance between France and England was signed a short time after this event. I did my utmost to prevent it, representing to the Regent that his best policy was to favour the cause of the Pretender, and thus by keeping the attention of Great Britain continually fixed upon her domestic concerns, he would effectually prevent her from influencing the affairs of the continent, and long were the conversations I had with him, insisting upon this point. But although, while he was with me, my arguments might appear to have some weight with him, they were forgotten, clean swept from his mind, directly the Abbe Dubois, who had begun to obtain a most complete and pernicious influence over him, brought his persuasiveness to bear. Dubois' palm had been so well greased by the

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English that he was afraid of nothing. He succeeded then in inducing the Regent to sign a treaty with England, in every way, it may safely be said, advantageous to that power, and in no way advantageous to France. Amongst other conditions, the Regent agreed to send the so-called Pretender out of the realm, and to force him to seek an asylum in Italy. This was, in fact, executed to the letter. King James, who for some time had retired to Avignon, crossed the Alps and settled in Rome, where he lived ever afterwards. I could not but deplore the adoption of a policy so contrary to the true interests of France; but the business being done I held my peace, and let matters take their course. It was the only course of conduct open to me.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

I have already shown in these memoirs, that the late King had made of the lieutenant of police a species of secret and confidential minister; a sort of inquisitor, with important powers that brought him in constant relation with the King. The Regent, with less authority than the deceased monarch, and with more reasons than he to be well informed of everything passing, intrigues included, found occupying this office of lieutenant of police, Argenson, who had gained his good graces chiefly, I fancy, when the affair of the cordelier was on the carpet, as shown in its place. Argenson, who had much intelligence, and who had desired this post as the entry, the basis, and the road of his fortune, filled it in a very superior manner, and the Regent made use of him with much liberty. The Parliament, very ready to show the extent of its authority everywhere, at the least as though in competition with that of the Regent, suffered impatiently what it called the encroachments of the Court. It wished to indemnify itself for the silence it had been compelled to keep thereon under the last reign, and to re-obtain at the expense of the Regent all it had lost of its authority over the police, of which it is the head. The lieutenant of police is answerable to this body—even receives his orders from it, and its reprimands (in public audiences, standing uncovered at the bar of the Parliament) from the mouth of the Chief-President, or of him who presides, and who calls him neither Master nor Monsieur, but nakedly by his name, although the lieutenant of police might have claimed these titles, being then Councillor of State.

The Parliament wished, then, to humiliate Argenson (whom it hated during the time of the deceased King); to give a disagreeable lesson to the Regent; to prepare worse treatment still for his lieutenant of police; to make parade of its power, to terrify thus the public, and arrogate to itself the right of limiting the authority of the Regent.

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Argenson had often during the late reign, and sometimes since, made use of an intelligent and clever fellow, just suited to him, and named Pomereu, to make discoveries, arrest people, and occasionally keep them a short time in his own house. The Parliament believed, and rightly, that in arresting this man under other pretexts, it would find the thread of many curious and secret tortuosities, which would aid its design, and that it might plume itself upon protecting the public safety against the tyranny of secret arrests and private imprisonments. To carry out its aim it made use of the Chamber of justice, so as to appear as little as possible in the matter. This Chamber hastened on so well the proceedings, for fear of being stopped on the road, that the first hint people had of them was on learning that Pomereu was, by decree of this Chamber, in the prisons of the Conciergerie, which are those of the Parliament. Argenson, who was informed of this imprisonment immediately it took place, instantly went to the Regent, who that very moment sent a 'lettre de cachet', ordering Pomereu to be taken from prison by force if the gaoler made the slightest difficulty in giving him up to the bearers of the 'lettre de cachet'; but that gentleman did not dare to make any. The execution was so prompt that this man was not an hour in prison, and they who had sent him there had not time to seize upon a box of papers which had been transported with him to the Conciergerie, and which was very carefully carried away with him. At the same time, everything in any way bearing upon Pomereu, or upon the things in which he had been employed, was carefully removed and secreted.

The vexation of the Parliament upon seeing its prey, which it had reckoned upon making such a grand use of, carried off before its eyes, may be imagined. It left nothing undone in order to move the public by its complaints, and by its cries against such an attack upon law. The Chamber of justice sent a deputation to the Regent, who made, fun of it, by gravely giving permission to the deputies to re-take their prisoner, but without saying a single word to them upon his escape from gaol. He was in Paris, in a place where he feared nobody. The Chamber of justice felt the derisiveness of the Regent's permission, and ceased to transact business. It thought to embarrass the Regent thus, but 'twould have been at its own expense. This lasted only a day or two. The Duc de Noailles spoke to the Chamber; the members felt they could gain nothing by their strike, and that if they were obstinate they would be dispensed with, and others found to perform their duties. They recommenced their labours then, and the Parliament gained nothing by its attack, but only showed its ill-will, and at the same time its powerlessness.

I have forgotten something which, from its singularity, deserves recollection, and I will relate it now lest it should escape me again.

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One afternoon, as we were about to take our places at the regency council, the Marechal de Villars drew me aside and asked me if I knew that Marly was going to be destroyed. I replied, "No;" indeed, I had not heard speak of it; and I added that I could not believe it. "You do not approve of it?" said the Marechal. I assured him I was far from doing so. He repeated that the destruction was resolved on, that he knew it beyond all doubt, and that if I wished to hinder it, I had not a moment to lose. I replied that when we took our places I would speak to M. le Duc d'Orleans. "Immediately," quickly replied the Marechal; "speak to him this instant, for the order is perhaps already given."

As all the council were already seated I went behind to M. le Duc d'Orleans, and whispered in his ear what I had just learnt without naming from whom, and begged him, if my information was right, to suspend execution of his project until I had spoken to him, adding that I would join him at the Palais Royal after the council. He stammered a little, as if sorry at being discovered, but nevertheless agreed to wait for me: I said so in leaving to the Marechal de Villars, and went to the Palais Royal, where M. le Duc d'Orleans admitted the truth of the news I had heard. I said I would not ask who had given such a pernicious counsel. He tried to show it was good by pointing to the saving in keeping up that would be obtained; to the gain that would accrue from the sale of so many water-conduits and materials; to the unpleasant situation of a place to which the King would not be able to go for several years; and to the expense the King was put to in keeping up so many other beautiful houses, not one of which admitted of pulling down.

I replied to him, that these were the reasons of the guardian of a private gentleman that had been presented to him, the conduct of whom could in no way resemble that of the guardian of a King of France; that the expenses incurred in keeping up Marly were necessary, and that, compared with the total of those of the King, they were but as drops in the ocean. I begged him to get rid of the idea that the sale of the materials would yield any profit,—all the receipts would go in gifts and pillage, I said; and also that it was not these petty objects he ought to regard, but that he should consider how many millions had been buried in this ancient sewer, to transform it into a fairy palace, unique as to form in all Europe—unique by the beauty of its fountains, unique also by the reputation that the deceased King had given to it; and that it was an object of curiosity to strangers of every rank who came to France; that its destruction would resound throughout Europe with censure; that these mean reasons of petty economy would not prevent all France from being indignant at seeing so distinguished an ornament swept away; that although neither he nor I might be very delicate upon what had been the taste and the favourite work of the late King, the Regent

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ought to avoid wounding his memory,—which by such a long reign, so many brilliant years, so many grand reverses so heroically sustained, and escaped from in so unhopd-for a manner—had left the entire world in veneration of his person: in fine, that he might reckon all the discontented, all the neutral even, would join in chorus with the Ancient Court, and cry murder; that the Duc du Maine, Madame de Ventadour, the Marechal de Villeroy would not hesitate to look upon the destruction of Marly as a crime against the King,—a crime they would not fail to make the best of for their own purposes during all the regency, and even after it was at an end. I clearly saw that M. le Duc d'Orleans had not in the least reflected upon all this. He agreed that I was right: promised that Marly should not be touched, that it should continue to be kept up, and thanked me for preserving him from this fault.

When I was well assured of him, “Admit,” said I, “that the King, in the other world, would be much astonished if he could know that the Duc de Noailles had made you order the destruction of Marly, and that it was who hindered it.”

“Oh! as to that,” he quickly replied, “it is true he could not believe it.” In effect Marly was preserved and kept up; and it is the Cardinal Fleury, with his collegiate proctor's avarice, who has stripped it of its river, which was its most superb charm.

I hastened to relate this good resolve to the Marechal de Villars. The Duc de Noailles, who, for his own private reasons, had wished the destruction of Marly, was furious when he saw his proposal fail. To indemnify himself in some degree for his vexation, he made the Regent agree, in the utmost secrecy, for fear of another failure, that all the furniture, linen, *etc.*, should be sold. He persuaded M. le Duc d'Orleans that all these things would be spoiled and lost by the time the King was old enough to use them; that in selling them a large sum would be gained to relieve expenses; and that in future years the King could furnish Marly as he pleased. There was an immense quantity of things sold, but owing to favour and pillage they brought very little; and to replace them afterwards, millions were spent. I did not know of this sale, at which anybody bought who wished, and at very low prices, until it had commenced; therefore I was unable to hinder this very damaging parsimoniousness.

The Regent just about this time was bestowing his favours right and left with a very prodigal hand; I thought, therefore, I was fully entitled to ask him for one, which, during the previous reign, had been so rare, so useful, and accordingly so difficult to obtain; I mean the right of entering the King's room—the ‘grandes entrees’—as it was called, and I attained it at once.

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Since the occasion offers, I may as well explain what are the different sorts of entrees. The most precious are called the “grand,” which give the right to enter into all the retired places of the King’s apartments, whenever the grand chamberlain and the chief gentlemen of the chamber enter. The importance of this privilege under a King who grants audiences with difficulty, need not be insisted on. Enjoying it, you can speak with him, *tete-a-tete*, whenever you please, without asking his permission, and without the knowledge of others; you obtain a familiarity, too, with him by being able to see him thus in private.

The offices which give this right are, those of grand chamberlain, of first gentleman of the chamber, and of grand master of the wardrobe on annual duty; the children, legitimate and illegitimate, of the King, and the wives and husbands of the latter enjoy the same right. As for Monsieur and M. le Duc d’Orleans they always had these entrees, and as sons of France, were at liberty to enter and see the King at all hours, but they did not abuse this privilege. The Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse had the same, which they availed themselves of unceasingly, but by the back stairs.

The second entrees, simply called entrees, were purely personal; no appointment or change gave them. They conferred the right to see the King at his rising, after the *grandes*, and also to see him, but under difficulties, during all the day and evening.

The last entrees are those called chamber entrees. They also give the right to see the King at his rising, before the distinguished courtiers; but no other privilege except to be present at the booting of the King. This was the name employed when the King changed his coat, in going or returning from hunting or a walk. At Marly, all who were staying there by invitation, entered to see this ceremony without asking; elsewhere, those who had not the entree were excluded. The first gentleman of the chamber had the right, and used it sometimes, to admit four or five persons at the most, to the “booting,” if they asked, and provided they were people of quality, or of some distinction.

Lastly, there were the entrees of the cabinet which gave you the right to wait for the King there when he entered after rising, until he had given orders for the day, and to pay your court to him, and to enter there when he entered to change his coat. Beyond this, the privilege attached to these admissions did not extend. The Cardinals and the Princes of the blood had the entrees of the chamber and those of the cabinet, so had all the chief officials.

I was the first who had the ‘*grandes entrees*’ from the Regent. D’Antin asked for them next. Soon after, upon this example, they were accorded to D’O. M. le Prince de Conti, the sole prince of the blood who had them not, because he was the sole prince of the blood who did not come from Madame de Montespan, received them next, and little by little the privilege was completely prostituted as so many others were.

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By extremely rare good fortune a servant employed in the diamond mines of the Great Mogul found means to secrete about his person a diamond of prodigious size, and what is more marvellous, to gain the seashore and embark without being subjected to the rigid and not very delicate ordeal, that all persons not above suspicion by their name or their occupation, are compelled to submit to, ere leaving the country. He played his cards so well, apparently, that he was not suspected of having been near the mines, or of having had anything to do with the jewel trade. To complete his good fortune he safely arrived in Europe with his diamond. He showed it to several princes, none of whom were rich enough to buy, and carried it at last to England, where the King admired it, but could not resolve to purchase it. A model of it in crystal was made in England, and the man, the diamond, and the model (perfectly resembling the original) were introduced to Law, who proposed to the Regent that he should purchase the jewel for the King. The price dismayed the Regent, who refused to buy.

Law, who had in many things much grandour of sentiment, came dispirited to me, bringing the model. I thought, with him, that it was not consistent with the greatness of a King of France to be repelled from the purchase of an inestimable jewel, unique of its kind in the world, by the mere consideration of price, and that the greater the number of potentates who had not dared to think of it, the greater ought to be his care not to let it escape him. Law, ravished to find me think in this manner, begged me to speak to M. le Duc d'Orleans. The state of the finances was an obstacle upon which the Regent much insisted. He feared blame for making so considerable a purchase, while the most pressing necessities could only be provided for with much trouble, and so many people were of necessity kept in distress. I praised this sentiment, but I said that he ought not to regard the greatest King of Europe as he would a private gentleman, who would be very reprehensible if he threw away 100,000 livres upon a fine diamond, while he owed many debts which he could not pay: that he must consider the honour of the crown, and not lose the occasion of obtaining, a priceless diamond which would efface the lustre of all others in Europe: that it was a glory for his regency which would last for ever; that whatever might be the state of the finances the saving obtained by a refusal of the jewel would not much relieve them, for it would be scarcely perceptible; in fact I did not quit M. le Duc d'Orleans until he had promised that the diamond should be bought.

Law, before speaking to me, had so strongly represented to the dealer the impossibility of selling his diamond at the price he hoped for, and the loss he would suffer in cutting it into different pieces, that at last he made him reduce the price to two millions, with the scrapings, which must necessarily be made in polishing, given in. The bargain was concluded on these terms. The interest upon the two millions was paid to the dealer until the principal could be given to him, and in the meanwhile two millions' worth of jewels were handed to him as security.



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M. le Duc d'Orleans was agreeably deceived by the applause that the public gave to an acquisition so beautiful and so unique. This diamond was called the "Regent." It is of the size of a greengage plum, nearly round, of a thickness which corresponds with its volume, perfectly white, free from all spot, speck, or blemish, of admirable water, and weighs more than 500 grains. I much applauded myself for having induced the Regent to make so illustrious a purchase.

CHAPTER LXXXV

In 1716 the Duchesse de Lesdiguières died at Paris in her fine hotel. She was not old, but had been long a widow, and had lost her only son. She was the last relic of the Gondi who were brought into France by Catherine de' Medici, and who made so prodigious a fortune. She left great wealth. She was a sort of fairy, who, though endowed with much wit, would see scarcely anybody, still less give dinners to the few people she did see. She never went to Court, and seldom went out of her house. The door of her house was always thrown back, disclosing a grating, through which could be perceived a true fairy palace, such as is sometimes described in romances. Inside it was nearly desert, but of consummate magnificence, and all this confirmed the first impression, assisted by the singularity of everything, her followers, her livery, the yellow hangings of her carriage, and the two great Moors who always followed her. She left much to her servants, and for pious purposes, but nothing to her daughter-in-law, though poor and respectful to her. Others got magnificent legacies.

Cavoye died about the same time. I have said enough about him and his wife to have nothing to add. Cavoye, away from Court, was like a fish out of water; and he could not stand it long. If romances have rarely produced conduct like that of his wife towards him, they would with still greater difficulty describe the courage with which her lasting love for her husband sustained her in her attendance on his last illness, and the entombment to which she condemned herself afterwards. She preserved her first mourning all her life, never slept away from the house where he died, or went out, except to go twice a day to Saint-Sulpice to pray in the chapel where he was buried. She would never see any other persons besides those she had seen during the last moments of her husband, and occupied herself with good works also, consuming herself thus in a few years without a single sign of hesitation. A vehemence so equal and so maintained is perhaps an example, great, unique, and assuredly very respectable.

Peter I., Czar of Muscovy, has made for himself, and justly, such a great name, in his own country, in all Europe, and in Asia, that I will not undertake to describe so grand, so illustrious a prince—comparable to the greatest men of antiquity—who has been the admiration of his age, who will be that of years to come, and whom all Europe has been so much occupied in studying. The singularity of the journey into France of so extraordinary a prince, has appeared to me to deserve a complete description in an

unbroken narrative. It is for this reason that I place my account of it here a little late, according to the order of time, but with dates that will rectify this fault.

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Various things relating to this monarch have been seen in their place; his various journeys to Holland, Germany, Vienna, England, and to several parts of the North; the object of those journeys, with some account of his military actions, his policy, his family. It has been shown that he wished to come into France during the time of the late King, who civilly refused to receive him. There being no longer this obstacle, he wished to satisfy his curiosity, and he informed the Regent through Prince Kourakin, his ambassador at Paris, that he was going to quit the Low Countries, and come and see the King.

There was nothing for it but to appear very pleased, although the Regent would gladly have dispensed with this visit. The expenses to be defrayed were great; the trouble would be not less great with a prince so powerful and so clear-sighted, but full of whims, with a remnant of barbarous manners, and a grand suite of people, of behaviour very different from that common in these countries, full of caprices and of strange fashions, and both they and their master very touchy and very positive upon what they claimed to be due or permitted to them.

Moreover the Czar was at daggers drawn with the King of England, the enmity between them passing all decent limits, and being the more bitter because personal. This troubled not a little the Regent, whose intimacy with the King of England was public, the private interest of Dubois carrying it even to dependence. The dominant passion of the Czar was to render his territories flourishing by commerce; he had made a number of canals in order to facilitate it; there was one for which he needed the concurrence of the King of England, because it traversed a little corner of his German dominions. From jealousy George would not consent to it. Peter, engaged in the war with Poland, then in that of the North, in which George was also engaged, negotiated in vain. He was all the more irritated, because he was in no condition to employ force; and this canal, much advanced, could not be continued. Such was the source of that hatred which lasted all the lives of these monarchs, and with the utmost bitterness.

Kourakin was of a branch of that ancient family of the Jagellons, which had long worn the crowns of Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. He was a tall, well-made man, who felt all the grandeur of his origin; had much intelligence, knowledge of the way of managing men, and instruction. He spoke French and several languages very fairly; he had travelled much, served in war, then been employed in different courts. He was Russian to the backbone, and his extreme avarice much damaged his talents. The Czar and he had married two sisters, and each had a son. The Czarina had been repudiated and put into a convent near Moscow; Kourakin in no way suffered from this disgrace; he perfectly knew his master, with whom he kept on very free terms, and by whom he was treated with confidence and consideration. His last mission had been to Rome, where he remained three years; thence he came as ambassador to Paris. At Rome he was without official character, and without business except a secret one, with which the Czar had entrusted him, as to a sure and enlightened man.

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This monarch, who wished to raise himself and his country from barbarism, and extend his power by conquests and treaties, had felt the necessity of marriages, in order to ally himself with the chief potentates of Europe. But to form such marriages he must be of the Catholic religion, from which the Greeks were separated by such a little distance, that he thought his project would easily be received in his dominions, if he allowed liberty of conscience there. But this prince was sufficiently sagacious to seek enlightenment beforehand upon Romish pretensions. He had sent for that purpose to Rome a man of no mark, but capable of well fulfilling his mission, who remained there five or six months, and who brought back no very satisfactory report. Later he opened his heart in Holland to King William, who dissuaded him from his design, and who counselled him even to imitate England, and to make himself the chief of his religion, without which he would never be really master in his own country. This counsel pleased the Czar all the more, because it was by the wealth and by the authority of the patriarchs of Moscow, his grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, that his father had attained the crown, although only of ordinary rank among the Russian nobility.

These patriarchs were dependent upon those of the Greek rite of Constantinople but very slightly. They had obtained such great power, and such prodigious rank, that at their entry into Moscow the Czar held their stirrups, and, on foot, led their horse by the bridle: Since the grandfather of Peter, there had been no patriarch at Moscow. Peter I., who had reigned some time with his elder brother, incapable of affairs, long since dead, leaving no son, had, like his father, never consented to have a patriarch there. The archbishops of Novgorod supplied their place in certain things, as occupying the chief see after that of Moscow, but with scarcely any authority that the Czar did not entirely usurp, and more carefully still after King William had given him the counsel before alluded to; so that by degrees he had become the real religious chief of his vast dominions.

Nevertheless, the passionate desire he had to give to his posterity the privilege of marrying with Catholic princes, the wish he had, above all, for the honour of alliances with the house of France, and that of Austria, made him return to his first project. He tried to persuade himself that the man whom he had secretly sent to Rome had not been well informed, or had ill understood; he resolved, therefore, to fathom his doubts, so that he should no longer have any as to the course he ought to adopt.

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It was with this design that he chose Prince Kourakin, whose knowledge and intelligence were known to him, and sent him to Rome under pretence of curiosity, feeling that a nobleman of his rank would find the best, the most important, and the most distinguished society there ready to receive him; and that by remaining there, under pretext of liking the life he led, and of wishing to see and admire at his ease all the marvels of so many different kinds collected there, he should have leisure and means to return perfectly instructed upon everything he wished to know. Kourakin, in fact, remained in Rome three years, associating with the savans on the one hand and the best company on the other, whence by degrees he obtained all he wished to know; all the more readily because this Court boasts of its temporal pretensions and of its conquests of this kind, instead of keeping them secret. In consequence of the long and faithful report that Kourakin made to the Czar, that prince heaved a sigh, saying that he must be master in his own country, and could not place there anybody greater than himself; and never afterwards did he think of turning Catholic.

This fact respecting the Czars and Rome, Prince Kourakin did not hide. Everybody who knew him has heard him relate it. I have eaten with him and he with me, and I have talked a good deal with him, and heard him talk, with pleasure, upon many things.

The Regent, informed by him of the forthcoming arrival in France of the Czar by sea, sent the King's equipages; horses, coaches, vehicles, waggons, and tables and chambers with Du Libois, one of the King's gentlemen in ordinary, to go and wait for the Czar at Dunkerque, pay the expenses incurred by him and his suite on the way to Paris, and everywhere render him the same honour as to the King. The Czar proposed to allot a hundred days to his journey. The apartment of the Queen-mother at the Louvre was furnished for him, the councils usually held there taking place in the houses of the chiefs of these councils.

M. le Duc d'Orleans discussing with me as to the nobleman best fitted to be appointed to wait upon the Czar during his stay, I recommended the Marechal de Tesse, as a man without occupation, who well knew the language and usages of society, who was accustomed to foreigners by his journeys and negotiations in Spain, Turin, Rome, and in other courts of Italy, and who, gentle and polite, was sure to perform his duties well. M. le Duc d'Orleans agreed with me, and the next day sent for him and gave him his orders.

When it was known that the Czar was near Dunkerque, the Regent sent the Marquis de Neelle to receive him at Calais, and accompany him until they met the Marechal de Tesse, who was not to go beyond Beaumont to wait for him. At the same time the Hotel de Lesdiguieres was prepared for the Czar and his suite, under the idea that he might prefer a private house, with all his people around him, to the Louvre. The Hotel

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de Lesdiguières was large and handsome, as I have said at the commencement of this chapter, adjoined the arsenal, and belonged by succession to the Marechal de Villeroy, who lodged at the Tuileries. Thus the house was empty, because the Duc de Villeroy, who was not a man fond of display, had found it too distant to live in. It was entirely refurnished, and very magnificently, with the furniture of the King.

The Czar arrived at Beaumont on Friday, the 7th of May, 1717, about mid-day. Tesse made his reverences to him as he descended from his coach, had the honour of dining with him, and of escorting him that very day to Paris.

The Czar entered the city in one of Tesse's coaches, with three of his suite with him, but not Tesse himself. The Marechal followed in another coach. The Czar alighted at nine o'clock in the evening at the Louvre, and walked all through the apartments of the Queen-mother. He considered them to be too magnificently hung and lighted, jumped into his coach again, and went to the Hotel de Lesdiguières, where he wished to lodge. He thought the apartment destined for him too fine also, and had his camp-bed immediately spread out in a wardrobe. The Marechal de Tesse, who was to do the honours of his house and of his table, to accompany him everywhere, and not quit the place where he might be, lodged in an apartment of the Hotel de Lesdiguières, and had enough to do in following and sometimes running after him. Verton, one of the King's maitres d'hotel, was charged with serving him and all the tables of the Czar and his suite. The suite consisted of forty persons of all sorts, twelve or fifteen of whom were considerable people in themselves, or by their appointments; they all ate with the Czar.

Verton was a clever lad, strong in certain company, fond of good cheer and of gaming, and served the Czar with so much order, and conducted himself so well, that this monarch and all the suite conceived a singular friendship for him.

The Czar excited admiration by his extreme curiosity, always bearing upon his views of government, trade, instruction, police, and this curiosity embraced everything, disdained nothing in the smallest degree useful; it was marked and enlightened, esteeming only what merited to be esteemed, and exhibited in a clear light the intelligence, justness, ready appreciation of his mind. Everything showed in the Czar the vast extent of his knowledge, and a sort of logical harmony of ideas. He allied in the most surprising manner the highest, the proudest, the most delicate, the most sustained, and at the same time the least embarrassing majesty, when he had established it in all its safety with a marked politeness. Yet he was always and with everybody the master everywhere, but with gradations, according to the persons he was with. He had a kind of familiarity which sprang from liberty, but he was not without a strong dash of that ancient barbarism of his country, which rendered all his actions

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rapid; nay, precipitous, his will uncertain, and not to be constrained or contradicted in anything. Often his table was but little decent, much less so were the attendants who served, often too with an openness of kingly audacity everywhere. What he proposed to see or do was entirely independent of means; they were to be bent to his pleasure and command. His desire for liberty, his dislike to be made a show of, his free and easy habits, often made him prefer hired coaches, common cabs even; nay, the first which he could lay his hands on, though belonging to people below him of whom he knew nothing. He jumped in, and had himself driven all over the city, and outside it. On one occasion he seized hold of the coach of Madame de Mattignon, who had come to gape at him, drove off with it to Boulogne and other country places near Paris. The owner was much astonished to find she must journey back on foot. On such occasions the Marechal de Tesse and his suite had often hard work to find the Czar, who had thus escaped them.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

The Czar was a very tall man, exceedingly well made; rather thin, his face somewhat round, a high forehead, good eyebrows, a rather short nose, but not too short, and large at the end, rather thick lips, complexion reddish brown, good black eyes, large, bright, piercing, and well open; his look majestic and gracious when he liked, but when otherwise, severe and stern, with a twitching of the face, not often occurring, but which appeared to contort his eyes and all his physiognomy, and was frightful to see; it lasted a moment, gave him a wild and terrible air, and passed away. All his bearing showed his intellect, his reflectiveness, and his greatness, and was not devoid of a certain grace. He wore a linen collar, a round-brown wig, as though without powder, and which did not reach to his shoulders; a brown coat tight to the body, even, and with gold buttons; vest, breeches, stockings, no gloves or ruffles, the star of his order over his coat, and the cordon under it, the coat itself being frequently quite unbuttoned, his hat upon the table, but never upon his head, even out of doors. With this simplicity ill-accompanied or ill mounted as he might be, the air of greatness natural to him could not be mistaken.

What he ate and drank at his two regular meals is inconceivable, without reckoning the beer, lemonade, and other drinks he swallowed between these repasts, his suite following his example; a bottle or two of beer, as many more of wine, and occasionally, liqueurs afterwards; at the end of the meal strong drinks, such as brandy, as much sometimes as a quart. This was about the usual quantity at each meal. His suite at his table drank more and ate in proportion, at eleven o'clock in the morning and at eight at night. There was a chaplain who ate at the table of the Czar, who consumed half as much again as the rest, and with whom the monarch, who was fond of him, much

amused himself. Prince Kourakin went every day to the Hotel de Lesdiguieres, but lodged elsewhere.

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The Czar well understood French, and I think could have spoken it, if he had wished, but for greatness' sake he always had an interpreter. Latin and many other languages he spoke very well. There was a detachment of guards in his house, but he would scarcely ever allow himself to be followed by them. He would not set foot outside the Hotel de Lesdiguieres, whatever curiosity he might feel, or give any signs of life, until he had received a visit from the King.

On Saturday, the day after his arrival, the Regent went in the morning to see the Czar. This monarch left his cabinet, advanced a few paces, embraced Monsieur d'Orleans with an air of great superiority, pointed to the door of the cabinet, and instantly turning on his heel, without the slightest compliment, entered there. The Regent followed, and Prince Kourakin after him to serve as interpreter. They found two armchairs facing each other, the Czar seated himself in the upper, the Regent in the other. The conversation lasted nearly an hour without public affairs being mentioned, after which the Czar left his cabinet; the Regent followed him, made him a profound reverence, but slightly returned, and left him in the same place as he had found him on entering.

On Monday, the 10th of May, the King went to see the Czar, who received him at the door, saw him alight from his coach, walked with him at his left into his chamber, where they found two armchairs equally placed. The King sat down in the right-hand one, the Czar in the other, Prince Kourakin served as interpreter. It was astonishing to see the Czar take the King under both arms, hoist him up to his level, embrace him thus in the air; and the King, young as he was, show no fear, although he could not possibly have been prepared for such a reception. It was striking, too, to see the grace which the Czar displayed before the King, the air of tenderness he assumed towards him, the politeness which flowed as it were naturally, and which nevertheless was mixed with greatness, with equality of rank, and slightly with superiority of age: for all these things made themselves felt. He praised the King, appeared charmed with him, and persuaded everybody he was. He embraced him again and again. The King paid his brief compliment very prettily; and M. du Maine, the Marechal de Villeroy, and the distinguished people present, filled up the conversation. The meeting lasted a short quarter of an hour. The Czar accompanied the King as he had received him, and saw him to his coach.

On Tuesday, the 11th of May, between four and five o'clock, the Czar went to see the King. He was received by the King at his carriage door, took up a position on his right, and was conducted within. All these ceremonies had been agreed on before the King went to see him. The Czar showed the same affection and the same attentions to the King as before; and his visit was not longer than the one he had received, but the crowd much surprised him.

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He had been at eight o'clock in the morning to see the Place Royal, the Place des Victoires, and the Place de Vendome, and the next day he went to the Observatoire, the Gobelins, and the King's Garden of Simples. Everywhere he amused himself in examining everything, and in asking many questions.

On Thursday, the 13th of May, he took medicine, but did not refrain after dinner from calling upon several celebrated artificers. On Friday, the 14th, he went at six o'clock in the morning into the grand gallery of the Louvre, to see the plans in relief of all the King's fortified places, Hasfield, with his engineers, doing the honours. The Czar examined all these plans for a long time; visited many other parts of the Louvre, and descended afterwards into the Tuileries garden, from which everybody had been excluded. They were working then upon the Pont Tournant. The Czar industriously examined this work, and remained there a long time. In the afternoon he went to see, at the Palais Royal, Madame, who had sent her compliments to him by her officer. The armchair excepted, she received him as she would have received the King. M. le Duc d'Orleans came afterwards and took him to the Opera, into his grand box, where they sat upon the front seat upon a splendid carpet. Sometime after, the Czar asked if there was no beer to be had. Immediately a large goblet of it was brought to him, on a salver. The Regent rose, took it, and presented it to the Czar, who with a smile and an inclination of politeness, received the goblet without any ceremony, drank, and put it back on the salver which the Regent still held. In handing it back, the Regent took a plate, in which was a napkin, presented it to the Czar, who without rising made use of it, at which the house appeared rather astonished. At the fourth act the Czar went away to supper, but did not wish the Regent to leave the box. The next morning he jumped into a hired coach, and went to see a number of curiosities among the workmen.

On the 16th of May, Whit Sunday, he went to the Invalides, where he wished to see and examine everything. At the refectory he tasted the soldiers' soup and their wine, drank to their healths, struck them on the shoulders, and called them comrades. He much admired the church, the dispensary, and the infirmary, and appeared much pleased with the order of the establishment. The Marechal de Villars did the honours; the Marechale went there to look on. The Czar was very civil to her.

On Monday, the 17th, he dined early with Prince Ragotzi, who had invited him, and afterwards went to Meudon, where he found some of the King's horses to enable him to see the gardens and the park at his ease. Prince Ragotzi accompanied him.

On Tuesday, the 18th, the Marechal d'Estrees took him, at eight o'clock in the morning, to his house at Issy, gave him a dinner, and much amused him during the day with many things shown to him relating to the navy.

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On Monday, the 24th, he went out early to the Tuileries, before the King was up. He entered the rooms of the Marechal de Villeroy, who showed him the crown jewels. They were more beautiful and more numerous than he suspected, but he said he was not much of a judge of such things. He stated that he cared but little for the beauties purely of wealth and imagination, above all for those he could not attain. Thence he wished to go and see the King, who spared him the trouble by coming. It had been expressly arranged thus, so that his visit should appear one of chance. They met each other in a cabinet, and remained there. The King, who held a roll of paper in his hand, gave it to him, and said it was the map of his territories. This compliment much pleased the Czar, whose politeness and friendly affectionate bearing were the same as before, with much grace and majesty.

In the afternoon he went to Versailles, where the Marechal de Tesse left him to the Duc d'Antin. The apartment of Madame la Dauphine was prepared for him, and he slept in the room of Monseigneur le Dauphin (the King's father), now made into a cabinet for the Queen.

On Tuesday, the 25th, he had traversed the gardens, and had been upon the canal early in the morning, before the hour of his appointment with D'Antin. He saw all Versailles, Trianon, and the menagerie. His principal suite was lodged at the chateau. They took ladies with them, and slept in the apartments Madame de Maintenon had occupied, quite close to that in which the Czar slept. Bloin, governor of Versailles, was extremely scandalised to see this temple of prudery thus profaned. Its goddess and he formerly would have been less shocked. The Czar and his people were not accustomed to restraint.

The expenses of this Prince amounted to six hundred crowns a day, though he had much diminished his table since the commencement.

On Sunday, the 30th of May, he set out with Bellegarde, and many relays, to dine at Petit Bourg, with D'Antin, who received him there, and took him in the afternoon to see Fontainebleau, where he slept, and the morrow there was a stag-hunt, at which the Comte de Toulouse did the honours. Fontainebleau did not much please the Czar, and the hunt did not please him at all; for he nearly fell off his horse, not being accustomed to this exercise, and finding it too violent. When he returned to Petit Bourg, the appearance of his carriage showed that he had eaten and drunk a good deal in it.

On Friday, the 11th of June, he went from Versailles to Saint-Cyr, where he saw all the household, and the girls in their classes. He was received there like the King. He wished to see Madame de Maintenon, who, expecting his curiosity, had buried herself in her bed, all the curtains closed, except one, which was half-open. The Czar entered her chamber, pulled back the window-curtains upon arriving, then the bed-curtains, took a good long stare at her, said not a word to her,—nor did she open her lips,—and, without making her any kind of reverence, went his way. I knew afterwards that she was much

astonished, and still more mortified at this; but the King was no more. The Czar returned on Saturday, the 12th of June, to Paris.

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On Tuesday, the 15th of June, he went early to D'Antin's Paris house. Working this day with M. le Duc d'Orleans, I finished in half an hour; he was surprised, and wished to detain me. I said, I could always have the honour of finding him, but not the Czar, who was going away; that I had not yet seen him, and was going to D'Antin's to stare at my ease. Nobody entered except those invited, and some ladies with Madame la Duchesse and the Princesses, her daughters, who wished to stare also. I entered the garden, where the Czar was walking. The Marechal de Tesse, seeing me at a distance, came up, wishing to present me to the Czar. I begged him to do nothing of the kind, not even to perceive me, but to let me gape at my ease, which I could not do if made known. I begged him also to tell this to D'Antin, and with these precautions I was enabled to satisfy my curiosity without interruption. I found that the Czar conversed tolerably freely, but always as the master everywhere. He retired into a cabinet, where D'Antin showed him various plans and several curiosities, upon which he asked several questions. It was there I saw the convulsion which I have noticed. I asked Tesse if it often happened; he replied, "several times a day, especially when he is not on his guard to prevent it." Returning afterwards into the garden, D'Antin made the Czar pass through the lower apartments, and informed him that Madame la Duchesse was there with some ladies, who had a great desire to see him. He made no reply, but allowed himself to be conducted. He walked more gently, turned his head towards the apartment where all the ladies were under arms to receive him; looked well at them all, made a slight inclination of the head to the whole company at once, and passed on haughtily. I think, by the manner in which he received other ladies, that he would have shown more politeness to these if Madame la Duchesse had not been there, making her visit too pretentious. He affected even not to inquire which she was, or to ask the name of any of the others. I was nearly an hour without quitting him, and unceasingly regarding him. At last I saw he remarked it. This rendered me more discreet, lest he should ask who I was. As he was returning, I walked away to the room where the table was laid. D'Antin, always the same, had found means to have a very good portrait of the Czarina placed upon the chimney-piece of this room, with verses in her praise, which much pleased and surprised the Czar. He and his suite thought the portrait very like.

The King gave the Czar two magnificent pieces of Gobelins tapestry. He wished to give him also a beautiful sword, ornamented with diamonds, but he excused himself from accepting it. The Czar, on his side, distributed 60,000 livres to the King's domestics, who had waited upon him; gave to D'Antin, Marechal d'Estrees, and Marechal Tesse, his portrait, adorned with diamonds, and five gold and eleven silver medals, representing the principal actions of his life. He made a friendly present to Verton, whom he begged the Regent to send to him as charge d'affaires of the King, which the Regent promised.

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On Wednesday, the 16th of June, he attended on horseback a review of the two regiments of the guards; gendarmes, light horse, and mousquetaires. There was only M. le Duc d'Orleans with him; the Czar scarcely looked at these troops, and they perceived it. He partook of a dinner-supper at Saint Ouen, at the Duc de Tresmes, where he said that the excessive heat and dust, together with the crowd on horseback and on foot, had made him quit the review sooner than he wished. The meal was magnificent; the Czar learnt that the Marquise de Bethune, who was looking on, was the daughter of the Duc de Tresriles; he begged her to sit at table; she was the only lady who did so, among a crowd of noblemen. Several other ladies came to look on, and to these he was very civil when he knew who they were.

On Thursday, the 17th, he went for the second time to the Observatoire, and there supped with the Marechal de Villars.

On Friday, the 18th of June, the Regent went early to the Hotel de Lesdiguieres, to say adieu to the Czar, remaining some time with him, with Prince Kourakin present. After this visit the Czar went to say goodbye to the King at the Tuileries. It had been agreed that there should be no more ceremonies between them. It was impossible to display more intelligence, grace, and tenderness towards the King than the Czar displayed on all these occasions; and again on the morrow, when the King came to the Hotel de Lesdiguieres to wish him a pleasant journey, no ceremony being observed.

On Sunday, the 20th of June, the Czar departed, and slept at Ivry, bound straight for Spa, where he was expected by the Czarina. He would be accompanied by nobody, not even on leaving Paris. The luxury he remarked much surprised him; he was moved in speaking upon the King and upon France, saying, he saw with sorrow that this luxury would soon ruin the country. He departed, charmed by the manner in which he had been received, by all he had seen, by the liberty that had been left to him, and extremely desirous to closely unite himself with the King; but the interests of the Abbe Dubois, and of England, were obstacles which have been much deplored since.

The Czar had an extreme desire to unite himself to France. Nothing would have been more advantageous to our commerce, to our importance in the north, in Germany, in all Europe. The Czar kept England in restraint as to her commerce, and King George in fear for his German states. He kept Holland respectful, and the Emperor measured. It cannot be denied that he made a grand figure in Europe and in Asia, or that France would have infinitely profited by close union with him. He did not like the Emperor; he wished to sever us from England, and it was England which rendered us deaf to his invitations, unbecomingly so, though they lasted after his departure. Often I vainly pressed the Regent upon this subject, and gave him reasons of which he felt all the force,

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and to which he could not reply. He was bewitched by Dubois, who panted to become Cardinal, and who built all his hopes of success upon England. The English saw his ambition, and took advantage of it for their own interests. Dubois' aim was to make use of the intimacy between the King of England and the Emperor, in order that the latter might be induced by the former to obtain a Cardinalship from the Pope, over whom he had great power. It will be seen, in due time, what success has attended the intrigues of the scheming and unscrupulous Abbe.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

Courson, Intendant, or rather King of Languedoc, exercised his authority there so tyrannically that the people suffered the most cruel oppressions at his hands. He had been Intendant of Rouen, and was so hated that more than once he thought himself in danger of having his brains beaten out with stones. He became at last so odious that he was removed; but the credit of his father saved him, and he was sent as Intendant to Bordeaux. He was internally and externally a very animal, extremely brutal, extremely insolent, his hands by no means clean, as was also the case with those of his secretaries, who did all his work for him, he being very idle and quite unfit for his post.

Amongst other tyrannic acts he levied very violent and heavy taxes in Perigueux, of his own good will and pleasure, without any edict or decree of the Council; and seeing that people were not eager to satisfy his demands, augmented them, multiplied the expenses, and at last threw into dungeons some sheriffs and other rich citizens. He became so tyrannical that they sent a deputation to Paris to complain of him. But the deputies went in vain the round of all the members of the council of the regency, after having for two months kicked their heels in the ante-chamber of the Duc de Noailles, the minister who ought to have attended to their representations.

The Comte de Toulouse, who was a very just man, and who had listened to them, was annoyed that they could obtain no hearing of the Duc de Noailles, and spoke to me on the subject. I was as indignant as he. I spoke to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who only knew the matter superficially. I showed him the necessity of thoroughly examining into complaints of this nature; the injustice of allowing these deputies to wear out hope, patience, and life, in the streets of Paris, without giving some audience; the cruelty of suffering honest citizens to languish in dungeons, without knowing why or by what authority they were there. He agreed with me, and promised to speak to the Duc de Noailles. At the first finance council after this, I apprised the Comte de Toulouse, and we both asked the Duc de Noailles when he meant to bring forward the affair of these Perigueux people.



He was utterly unprepared for this question, and wished to put us off. I said to him that for a long time some of these people had been in prison, and others had wandered the streets of Paris; that this was shameful, and could not be longer endured. The Comte de Toulouse spoke very firmly, in the same sense. M. le Duc d'Orleans arrived and took his place.

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As the Duc de Noailles opened his bag, I said very loudly to M. le Duc d'Orleans that M. le Comte de Toulouse and I had just asked M. de Noailles when he would bring forward the Perigueux affair; that these people, innocent or guilty, begged only to be heard and tried; and that it appeared to me the council was in honour bound to keep them in misery no longer. On finishing, I looked at the Comte de Toulouse, who also said something short but rather strong. M. le Duc d'Orleans replied that we could not have done better. The Duc de Noailles began muttering something about the press of business; that he had not time, and so forth. I interrupted him by saying that he must find time, and that he ought to have found it long before; that nothing was so important as to keep people from ruin, or to extricate others from dungeons they were remaining in without knowing why. M. le Duc d'Orleans said a word to the same effect, and ordered the Duc de Noailles to get himself ready to bring forward the case in a week.

From excuse to excuse, three weeks passed over. At last I said openly to M. le Duc d'Orleans that he was being laughed at, and that justice was being trodden under foot. At the next council it appeared that M. le Duc d'Orleans had already told the Duc de Noailles he would wait no longer. M. le Comte de Toulouse and I continued to ask him if at last he would bring forward the Perigueux affair. We doubted not that it would in the end be brought forward, but artifice was not yet at an end.

It was on a Tuesday afternoon, when M. le Duc d'Orleans often abridged the council to go to the opera. Knowing this, the Duc de Noailles kept all the council occupied with different matters. I was between him and the Comte de Toulouse. At the end of each matter I said to him, "And the Perigueux affair?"—"Directly," he replied, and at once commenced something else. At last I perceived his project, and whispered so to the Comte de Toulouse, who had already suspected it, and resolved not to be its dupe. When the Duc de Noailles had exhausted his bag, it was five o'clock. After putting back his papers he closed his bag, and said to M. le Duc d'Orleans that there was still the Perigueux affair which he had ordered him to bring forward, but that it would be long and detailed; that he doubtless wished to go to the opera; that it could be attended to next week; and at once, without waiting for a reply, he rises, pushes back his stool, and turns to go away. I took him by the arm.

"Gently," said I. "You must learn his highness's pleasure. Monsieur," said I to M. le Duc d'Orleans, still firmly holding the sleeve of the Duc de Noailles, "do you care much to-day for the opera?"

"No, no," replied he; "let us turn to the Perigueux affair."

"But without strangling it," replied I.

"Yes," said M. le Duc d'Orleans: then looking at M. le Duc, who smiled; "you don't care to go there?"

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"No, Monsieur, let us see this business," replied M. le Duc.

"Oh, sit down again then, Monsieur," said I to the Duc de Noailles in a very firm tone, pulling him sharply; "take your rest, and re-open your bag."

Without saying a word he drew forward his stool with a great noise, and threw himself upon it as though he would smash it. Rage beamed from his eyes. The Comte de Toulouse smiled; he had said his word, too, upon the opera, and all the company looked at us; nearly every one smiling, but astounded also.

The Duc de Noailles displayed his papers, and began reading them. As various documents were referred to, I turned them over, and now and then took him up and corrected him. He did not dare to show anger in his replies, yet he was foaming. He passed an eulogy upon Basville (father of the Intendant), talked of the consideration he merited; excused Courson, and babbled thereupon as much as he could to extenuate everything, and lose sight of the principal points at issue. Seeing that he did not finish, and that he wished to tire us, and to manage the affair in his own way, I interrupted him, saying that the father and the son were two people; that the case in point respected the son alone, and that he had to determine whether an Intendant was authorised or not, by his office, to tax people at will; to raise imposts in the towns and country places of his department, without edicts ordering them, without even a decree of council, solely by his own particular ordonnances, and to keep people in prison four or five months, without form or shadow of trial, because they refused to pay these heavy taxes, rendered still more heavy by expenses. Then, turning round so as to look hard at him, "It is upon that, Monsieur," added I, "that we must decide, since your report is over, and not amuse ourselves with a panegyric upon M. de Basville, who is not mixed up in the case."

The Duc de Noailles, all the more beside himself because he saw the Regent smile, and M. le Duc, who looked at me do the same, but more openly, began to speak, or rather to stammer. He did not dare, however, to decide against the release of the prisoners.

"And the expenses, and the ordonnance respecting these taxes, what do you do with them?"

"By setting the prisoners at liberty," he said, "the ordonnance falls to the ground."

I did not wish to push things further just then. The liberation of the prisoners, and the quashing of the ordonnance, were determined on: some voices were for the reimbursement of the charges at the expense of the Intendant, and for preventing him to do the like again.

When it was my turn to speak, I expressed the same opinions, but I added that it was not enough to recompense people so unjustly ill-treated; that I thought a sum of money, such as it should please the council to name, ought to be adjudged to them; and that as



to an Intendant who abused the authority of his office so much as to usurp that of the King and impose taxes, such as pleased him by his own ordinances, and who threw people into dungeons as he thought fit by his private authority, pillaging thus a province, I was of opinion that his Royal Highness should be asked to make such an example of him that all the other Intendants might profit by it.

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The majority of those who had spoken before me made signs that I was right, but did not speak again. Others were against me. M. le Duc d'Orleans promised the liberation of the prisoners, broke Courson's!, ordonnance, and all which had followed it; said that as for the rest, he would take care these people should be well recompensed, and Courson well blamed; that he merited worse, and, but for his father, would have received it. As we were about to rise, I said it would be as well to draw up the decree at once, and M. le Duc d'Orleans approved. Noailles pounced, like a bird of prey, upon paper and ink, and commenced writing. I bent down and read as he wrote. He stopped and boggled at the annulling of the ordonnance, and the prohibition against issuing one again without authorisation by edict or decree of council. I dictated the clause to him; he looked at the company as though questioning all eyes.

"Yes," said I, "it was passed like that—you have only to ask again." M. le Duc d'Orleans said, "Yes." Noailles wrote. I took the paper, and read what he had written. He received it back in fury, cast it among the papers pell-mell into his bag, then shoved his stool almost to the other end of the room, and went out, bristling like a wild boar, without looking at or saluting anybody—we all laughing. M. le Duc and several others came to me, and with M. le Comte de Toulouse, were much diverted. M. de Noailles had, in fact, so little command over himself, that, in turning to go out, he struck the table, swearing, and saying he could endure it no longer.

I learnt afterwards, by frequenters of the Hotel de Noailles, who told it to my friends, that when he reached home he went to bed: and would not see a soul; that fever seized him, that the next day he was of a frightful temper, and, that he had been heard to say he could no longer endure the annoyances I caused him. It may be imagined whether or not this softened me. The Duc de Noailles had, in fact, behaved towards me with such infamous treachery, and such unmasked impudence, that I took pleasure at all times and at all places in making him feel, and others see, the sovereign disdain I entertained for him. I did not allow my private feelings to sway my judgment when public interests were at stake, for when I thought the Duc de Noailles right, and this often occurred, I supported him; but when I knew him to be wrong, or when I caught him neglecting his duties, conniving at injustice, shirking inquiry, or evading the truth, I in no way spared him. The incident just related is an illustration of the treatment he often received at my hands. Fret, fume, stamp, storm, as he might, I cared nothing for him. His anger to me was as indifferent as his friendship. I despised both equally. Occasionally he would imagine, after there had been no storm between us for some time, that I had become reconciled to him, and would make advances to me. But the stern and terrible manner in which I met them, —or rather refused to meet them, taking no more notice of his politeness and his compliments, than as if they made no appeal whatever to my eyes or ears,—soon convinced him of the permanent nature of our quarrel, and drove him to the most violent rage and despair.

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The history of the affair was, apparently, revealed by somebody to the deputies of Perigueux (for this very evening it was talked of in Paris), who came and offered me many thanks. Noailles was so afraid of me, that he did not keep their business unsettled more than two days.

A few months afterwards Courson was recalled, amid the bonfires of his province. This did not improve him, or hinder him from obtaining afterwards one of the two places of councillor at the Royal Council of Finance, for he was already Councillor of State at the time of this affair of Perigueux.

An amusement, suited to the King's age, caused a serious quarrel. A sort of tent had been erected for him on the terrace of the Tuileries, before his apartments, and on the same level. The diversions of kings always have to do with distinction. He invented some medals to give to the courtiers of his own age, whom he wished to distinguish, and those medals, which were intended to be worn, conferred the right of entering this tent without being invited; thus was created the Order of the Pavilion. The Marechal de Villeroy gave orders to Lefevre to have the medals made. He obeyed, and brought them to the Marechal, who presented them to the King. Lefevre was silversmith to the King's household, and as such under the orders of the first gentleman of the chamber. The Duc de Mortemart, who had previously had some tiff with the Marechal de Villeroy, declared that it devolved upon him to order these medals and present them to the King. He flew into a passion because everything had been done without his knowledge; and complained to the Duc d'Orleans. It was a trifle not worth discussing, and in which the three other gentlemen of the chamber took no part. Thus the Duc de Mortemart, opposed alone to the Marechal de Villeroy, stood no chance. M. le Duc d'Orleans, with his usual love for mezzo termine, said that Lefevre had not made these medals, or brought them to the Marechal as silversmith, but as having received through the Marechal the King's order, and that nothing more must be said. The Duc de Mortemart was indignant, and did not spare the Marechal.

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Scarcely any history has been written at first hand