

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 14 eBook

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency — Volume 14 by Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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CHAPTER CV

For a long time a species of war had been declared between the King of England and his son, the Prince of Wales, which had caused much scandal; and which had enlisted the Court on one side, and made much stir in the Parliament. George had more than once broken out with indecency against his son; he had long since driven him from the palace, and would not see him. He had so cut down his income that he could scarcely subsist. The father never could endure this son, because he did not believe him to be his own. He had more than suspected the Duchess, his wife, to be in relations with Count Konigsmarck. He surprised him one morning leaving her chamber; threw him into a hot oven, and shut up his wife in a chateau for the rest of her days. The Prince of Wales, who found himself ill-treated for a cause of which he was personally innocent, had always borne with impatience the presence of his mother and the aversion of his father. The Princess of Wales, who had much sense, intelligence, grace, and art, had softened things as much as possible; and the King was unable to refuse her his esteem, or avoid loving her. She had conciliated all England; and her Court, always large, boasted of the presence of the most accredited and the most distinguished persons. The Prince of Wales feeling his strength, no longer studied his father, and blamed the ministers with words that at least alarmed them. They feared the credit of the Princess of Wales; feared lest they should be attacked by the Parliament, which often indulges in this pleasure. These considerations became more and more pressing as they discovered what was brewing against them; plans such as would necessarily have rebounded upon the King. They communicated their fears to him, and indeed tried to make it up with his son, on certain conditions, through the medium of the Princess of Wales, who, on her side, felt all the consciousness of sustaining a party against the King, and who always had sincerely desired peace in the royal family. She profited by this conjuncture; made use of the ascendancy she had over her husband, and the reconciliation was concluded. The King gave a large sum to the Prince of Wales, and consented to see him. The ministers were saved, and all appeared forgotten.

The excess to which things had been carried between father and son had not only kept the entire nation attentive to the intestine disorders ready to arise, but had made a great stir all over Europe; each power tried to blow this fire into a blaze, or to stifle it according as interest suggested. The Archbishop of Cambrai, whom I shall continue to call the Abbe Dubois, was just then very anxiously looking out for his cardinal's hat, which he was to obtain through the favour of England, acting upon that of the Emperor with the Court of Rome. Dubois, overjoyed at the reconciliation which had taken place, wished to show this in a striking manner, in order to pay his court to the King of England. He named, therefore, the Duc de la Force to go to England, and compliment King George on the happy event that had occurred.



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The demonstration of joy that had been resolved on in France was soon known in England. George, annoyed by the stir that his domestic squabbles had made throughout all Europe, did not wish to see it prolonged by the sensation that this solemn envoy would cause. He begged the Regent, therefore, not to send him one. As the scheme had been determined on only order to please him, the journey of the Duc de la Force was abandoned almost as soon as declared. Dubois had the double credit, with the King of England, of having arranged this demonstration of joy, and of giving it up; in both cases solely for the purpose of pleasing his Britannic Majesty.

Towards the end of this year, 1720, the Duc de Brissac married *Mlle. Pecoil*, a very rich heiress, whose father was a 'maitre des requetes', and whose mother was daughter of Le Gendre, a very wealthy merchant of Rouen. The father of *Mlle. Pecoil* was a citizen of Lyons, a wholesale dealer, and extremely avaricious. He had a large iron safe, or strong-box, filled with money, in a cellar, shut in by an iron door, with a secret lock, and to arrive at which other doors had to be passed through. He disappeared so long one day, that his wife and two or three valets or servants that he had sought him everywhere. They well knew that he had a hiding-place, because they had sometimes seen him descending into his cellar, flat-candlestick in hand, but no one had ever dared to follow him.

Wondering what had become of him, they descended to the cellar, broke open the doors, and found at last the iron one. They were obliged to send for workmen to break it open, by attacking the wall in which it was fixed. After much labour they entered, and found the old miser dead in his strong-box, the secret spring of which he had apparently not been able to find, after having locked himself in; a horrible end in every respect.

The Brissacs have not been very particular in their alliances for some time, and yet appear no richer. The gold flies away; the dross remains.

I had almost forgotten to say that in the last day of this year, 1720, a Prince of Wales was born at Rome.

The Prince was immediately baptised by the Bishop; of Montefiascone, and named Charles. The event caused a great stir in the Holy City. The Pope sent his compliments to their Britannic Majesties, and forwarded to the King of England (the Pretender) 10,000 Roman crowns, gave him, for his life, a country house at Albano, which until then, he had only lent him, and 2000 crowns to furnish it. A *Te Deum* was sung in the chapel of the Pope, in his presence, and there were rejoicings at Rome. When the Queen of England was able to see company, Cardinal Tanora came in state, as representative of the Sacred College, to congratulate her.

The birth of the Prince also made much stir at the Court of England, and among the priests and Jacobites of that country. For very different reasons, not only the Catholics and Protestants, enemies of the government, were ravished at it, but nearly all the three

realms showed as much joy as they dared; not from any attachment to the dethroned house, but for the satisfaction of seeing a line continue with which they could always menace and oppose their kings and the royal family.

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[Illustration: Jacobites Drinking To The Pretender—Painted by F. Willems—1208]

In France we were afraid to show any public feeling upon the event. We were too much in the hands of England; the Regent and Dubois too much the humble servants of the house of Hanover; Dubois especially, waiting, as he was, so anxiously for his cardinal's hat. He did not, as will be seen, have to wait much longer.

The new Pope had given, in writing, a promise to Dubois, that if elected to the chair of St. Peter he would make him cardinal. Time had flown, and the promise was not yet fulfilled. The impatience of Dubois increased with his hopes, and gave him no repose. He was much bewildered when he learnt that, on the 16th of June, 1721, the Pope had elevated to the cardinalship; his brother, who for ten years had been Bishop of Terracine and Benedictine monk of Mount Cassini. Dubois had expected that no promotion would be made in which he was not included. But here was a promotion of a single person only. He was furious; this fury did not last long, however; a month after, that is to say, on the 16th of July, the Pope made him cardinal with Dion Alexander Alboni, nephew of the deceased Pope, and brother of the Cardinal Camarlingue.

Dubois received the news and the compliment that followed with extreme joy, but managed to contain himself with some little decency, and to give all the honour of his nomination to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who, sooth to say, had had scarcely anything to do with it. But he could not prevent himself from saying to everybody that what honoured him more than the Roman purple was the unanimous eagerness of all the European powers to procure him this distinction; to press the Pope to award it; to desire that his promotion would be hastened without waiting for their nominations. He incessantly blew these reports about everywhere without ever being out of breath; but nobody was the dupe of them.

Shortly after this, that is, on the last day of July, the King, who had until then been in perfect health, woke with headache and pain in the throat; shivering followed, and towards afternoon, the pains in the head and throat being augmented, he went to bed. I repaired the next day about twelve to inquire after him. I found he had passed a bad night, and that within the last two hours he had grown worse. I saw everywhere consternation. I had the grandes entrees, therefore I went into his chamber. I found it very empty. M. le Duc d'Orleans, seated in the chimney corner, looked exceedingly downcast and solitary. I approached him for a moment, then I went to the King's bed. At this moment Boulduc, one of the apothecaries, gave him something to take. The Duchesse de la Ferme, who, through the Duchesse de Ventadour, her sister, had all the entrees as godmother to the King, was at the heels of Boulduc, and turning round to see who was approaching, saw me, and immediately said in a tone neither high nor low, "He is poisoned! he is poisoned!"



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“Hold your tongue, Madame,” said I. “This is terrible.”

But she kept on, and spoke so loudly that I feared the King would hear her. Boulduc and I looked at each other, and I immediately withdrew from the bed and from this mad woman, with whom I was in no way familiar. During this illness, which lasted only five days (but of which the first three were violent) I was much troubled, but at the same time I was exceedingly glad that I had refused to be the King’s governor, though the Regent had over and over again pressed me to accept the office. There were too many evil reports in circulation against M. le Duc d’Orleans for me to dream of filling this position. For was I not his bosom friend known to have been on the most intimate terms with him ever since his child hood—and if anything had happened to excite new suspicions against him, what would not have been said? The thought of this so troubled me during the King’s illness, that I used to wake in the night with a start, and, oh, what joy was mine when I remembered that I had not this duty on my head!

The malady, as I have said, was not long, and the convalescence was prompt, which restored tranquillity and joy, and caused an overflow of Te Deums and rejoicing. Helvetius had all the honour of the cure; the doctors had lost their heads, he preserved his, and obstinately proposed bleeding at the foot, at a consultation at which M. le Duc d’Orleans was present; his advice prevailed, change for the better immediately took place, cure soon after.

The Marechal de Villeroy (the King’s governor) did not let slip this occasion for showing all his venom and his baseness; he forgot nothing, left nothing undone in order to fix suspicion upon M. le Duc d’Orleans, and thus pay his court to the robe. No magistrate, however unimportant, could come to the Tuileries whom he did not himself go to with the news of the King and caresses; whilst to the first nobles he was inaccessible. The magistrates of higher standing he allowed to enter at all times into the King’s chamber, even to stand by his bed in order to see him, while they who had the ‘grandes entrees’ with difficulty enjoyed a similar privilege.

He did the same during the first days of convalescence, which he prolonged as much as possible, in order to give the same distinction to the magistrates, come at what time they might, and privately to the great people of the Court and the ambassadors. He fancied himself a tribune of the people, and aspired to their favour and their dangerous power. From this he turned to other affectations which had the same aim against M. le Duc d’Orleans. He multiplied the Te Deums that he induced the various ranks of petty officers of the King to have sung on different days and in different churches; he attended all, took with him as many people as he could, and for six weeks continued this game. A Te Deum was sung in every church in Paris. He spoke of nothing else, and above the real joy he felt at the King’s recovery, he put on a false one which had a party smell about it, and which avowed designs not to be mistaken.



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The King went in state to Notre Dame and Saint Genevieve to thank God. These mummeries, thus prolonged, extended to the end of August and the fete Saint-Louis. Each year there, is on that day a concert in the garden. The Marechal de Villeroy took care that on this occasion, the concert should become a species of fete, to which he added a display of fireworks. Less than this would have been enough to draw the crowd. It was so great that a pin could not have fallen to the ground through the mass of people wedged against each other in the garden. The windows of the Tuileries were ornamented, and were filled with people. All the roofs of the Carrousel, as well as the Place, were covered with spectators.

The Marechal de Villeroy was in; his element, and importuned the King, who tried to hide himself in the corners at every moment. The Marechal took him by the arm, and led him, now to the windows where he could see the Carrousel, and the houses covered with people; now to those which looked upon the garden, full of the innumerable crowd waiting for the fete. Everybody cried 'Vive le Roi!' when he appeared, but had not the Marechal detained him, he would have run away and hid himself.

"Look, my master," the Marechal would say, "all that crowd, all these people are yours, all belong to you; you are the master of them: look at them a little therefore, to please them, for they are all yours, they are all devoted to you."

A nice lesson this for a governor to give to a young King, repeating it every time he leads him to the windows, so fearful is he lest the boy-sovereign shall forget it! I do not know whether he received similar lessons from those who had the charge of his education. At last the Marechal led him upon the terrace, where, beneath a dais, he heard the end of the concert, and afterwards saw the fireworks. The lesson of the Marechal de Villeroy, so often and so publicly repeated, made much stir, and threw but little honour upon him. He himself experienced the first effect of his fine instruction.

M. le Duc d'Orleans conducted himself in a manner simple, so prudent, that he infinitely gained by it. His cares and his reasonable anxiety were measured; there was much reserve in his conversation, an exact and sustained attention in his language, and in his countenance, which allowed nothing to escape him, and which showed as little as possible that he was the successor to the crown; above all, he never gave cause for people to believe that he thought the King's illness more or less serious than it was, or that his hopes were stronger than his fears.

He could not but feel that in a conjuncture so critical, all eyes were fixed upon him, and as in truth he never wished for the crown (however unlikely the statement may seem), he had no need to constrain himself in any way, but simply to be measured in his bearing. His conduct was, in fact, much remarked, and the cabal opposed to him entirely reduced to silence. Nobody spoke to him upon the event that might happen, not even his most familiar friends and acquaintances, myself included; and at this he was much pleased. He acted entirely upon the suggestions of his own good sense.



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This was not the first time, let me add, that the Marechal de Villeroy, in his capacity of governor of the King, had tacitly insulted M. le Duc d'Orleans. He always, in fact, affected, in the discharge of his duties, a degree of care, vigilance, and scrutiny, the object of which was evident. He was particularly watchful of the food of the King, taking it up with his own hands, and making a great show of this precaution; as though the King could not have been poisoned a thousand times over in spite of such ridiculous care. 'Twas because M. le Duc d'Orleans was vexed with this childish behaviour, so calculated to do him great injury, that he wished me to supersede the Marechal de Villeroy as governor of the King. This, as before said, I would never consent to. As for the Marechal, his absurdities met with their just reward, but at a date I have not yet come to.

CHAPTER CVI

Before this illness of the King, that is to say, at the commencement of June, I went one day to work with M. le Duc d'Orleans, and found him alone, walking up and down the grand apartment.

"Holloa! there," said he, as soon as he saw me; then, taking me by the hand, "I cannot leave you in ignorance of a thing which I desire above all others, which is of the utmost importance to me, and which will cause you as much joy as me; but you must keep it profoundly secret." Then bursting out laughing, "If M. de Cambrai knew that I had told it to you, he would never pardon me." And he proceeded to state that perfect reconciliation had been established between himself and the King and Queen of Spain; that arrangements had been made by which our young King was to marry the Infanta of Spain, as soon as he should be old enough; and the Prince of the Asturias (the heir to the Spanish throne) was to marry Mademoiselle de Chartres, the Regent's daughter.

If my joy at this was great, my astonishment was even greater; M. le Duc d'Orleans embraced me, and the first surprise over, I asked him how he had contrived to bring about these marriages; above all, that of his daughter. He replied that it had all been done in a trice by the Abbe Dubois, who was a regular devil when once he had set his mind upon anything; that the King of Spain had been transported at the idea of the King of France marrying the Infanta; and that the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias had been the 'sine qua non' of the other.

After we had well talked over the matter and rejoiced thereon, I said to the Regent that the proposed marriage of his daughter must be kept profoundly secret until the moment of her departure for Spain; and that of the King also, until the time for their execution arrived; so as to prevent the jealousy of all Europe. At this union, so grand and so intimate, of the two branches of the royal family, such a union having always been the terror of Europe and disunion the object of all its policy—this policy having only

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too well succeeded—I urged that the sovereigns must be left as long as possible in the confidence they had acquired, the Infanta above all, being but three years old (she was born at Madrid on the morning of the 30th of March, 1718), by which means the fears of Europe upon the marriage of Mademoiselle de Chartres with the Prince of the Asturias would be coloured—the Prince could wait, he having been born in August, 1707, and being accordingly only fourteen years of age. “You are quite right,” replied M. le Duc d’Orleans, “but this can’t be, because in Spain they wish to make public the declarations of marriage at once, indeed, as soon as the demand is made and the declaration can be signed.”

“What madness!” cried I; “what end can this tocsin have except to arouse all Europe and put it in movement! They must be made to understand this, and we must stick to it; nothing is so important.”

“All this is true,” said M. le Duc d’Orleans. “I think exactly like you, but they are obstinate in Spain; they have wished matters to be arranged thus, and their wishes have been agreed to. Everything is arranged, fixed, finished. I am so much interested in the matter that you surely would not have advised me to break off for this condition.”

I said of course not, shrugging my shoulders at his unseasonable impatience.

During the discussion which followed, I did not forget to think of myself, the occasion being so opportune for making the fortunes of my second son. I remembered then, that as matters were advanced to this point, a special ambassador must be sent to Spain, to ask the hand of the Infanta for the King, and to sign the compact of marriage; that the ambassador must be a nobleman of mark and title, and thus I begged the Duke to give me this commission, with a recommendation to the King of Spain, so as to make my second son, the Marquis of Ruffec, grandee of Spain.

M. le Duc d’Orleans scarcely allowed me to finish, immediately accorded me what I had asked, promised me the recommendation with many expressions of friendship, and asked me to keep the whole matter secret, and make no preparation that would disclose it.

I knew well enough why he enjoined me to secrecy. He wished to have the time to make Dubois swallow this pill. My thanks expressed, I asked him two favours; first, not to pay me as an ambassador, but to give me a round sum sufficient to provide for all my expenses without ruining myself; second, not to entrust any business to me which might necessitate a long stay in Spain, inasmuch as I did not wish to quit him, and wanted to go to Spain simply for the purpose of obtaining the honour above alluded to for my second son. The fact is, I feared that Dubois, not being able to hinder my embassy,

might keep me in Spain in a sort of exile, under pretence of business, in order to get rid of me altogether. Events proved that my precaution was not altogether useless.



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M. le Duc d'Orleans accorded both the favours I asked, with many obliging remarks, and a hope that my absence would not be long. I thought I had then done great things for my family, and went home much pleased. But, mon Dieu! what are the projects and the successes of men!

Dubois, as I expected, was vexed beyond measure at my embassy, and resolved to ruin me and throw me into disgrace. I was prepared for this, and I soon saw it was so. At first, I received from him nothing but professions of friendship and of attachment for me, congratulations that M. le Duc d'Orleans had accorded to me an embassy my merit deserved, and which would be productive of such useful results for my children. He took care, however, in the midst of these fine phrases, to introduce not one word upon my arrangements, so that he might be able to drive me into a corner at the last moment, and cause me all the inconvenience possible. He slipped through my hands like an eel until the moment for my departure drew near. As he saw it approach, he began to preach to me of magnificence, and wished to enter into details respecting my suite. I described it to him, and everybody else would have been satisfied, but as his design was to ruin me, he cried out against it, and augmented it by a third. I represented to him the excessive expense this augmentation would cause, the state of the finances, the loss upon the exchange: his sole reply was that the dignity of the King necessitated this expense and show; and that his Majesty would bear the charge. I spoke to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who listened to me with attention, but being persuaded by the Cardinal, held the same language.

This point settled, the Cardinal must needs know how many coats I should take, and how many I should give to my sons.—in a word, there was not a single detail of table or stable that he did not enter into, and that he did not double. My friends exhorted me not to be obstinate with a man so impetuous, so dangerous, so completely in possession of M. le Duc d'Orleans, pointing out to me that when once I was away he might profit by my absence, and that, meanwhile, everything relating to my embassy must pass through his hands. All this was only too true. I was obliged, therefore, to yield, although I felt that, once embarked, the King's purse would be spared at the expense of mine.

As soon as the marriages were declared, I asked to be declared as ambassador, so that I might openly make my preparations, which, it will be remembered, I had been forbidden to do. Now that there was no secret about the marriage, I fancied there need be no secret as to the ambassador by whom they were to be conducted. I was deceived: Whatever I might allege, the prohibition remained. The Cardinal wished to put me to double the necessary expense, by compelling me to have my liveries, dresses, *etc.*, made in the utmost precipitation; and this happened. He thought, too, I should not be able to provide myself with everything in time; and that he might represent this to M. le Duc d'Orleans, and in Spain, as a fault, and excite envious cries against me.



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Nevertheless, I did not choose to press him: to announce my embassy, at the same time trying to obtain from him the instructions I was to receive, and which, passing through him and the Regent done, told nothing to the public, as my preparations would have done. But I could not obtain them. Dubois carelessly replied to me, that in one or two conversations the matter would be exhausted. He wished me to know nothing, except vaguely; to leave no time for reflection, for questions, for explanations; and to throw me thus into embarrassments, and to cause me to commit blunders which he intended to make the most of.

At last, tired of so many and such dangerous postponements, I went on Tuesday, the 23rd of September, to M. le Duc d'Orleans, arranging my visit so that it took place when he was in his apartments at the Tuileries; there I spoke with such effect, that he said I had only to show myself to the King. He led me to his Majesty at once, and there and then my embassy was announced. Upon leaving the King's cabinet, M. le Duc d'Orleans made me jump into his coach, which was waiting for him, and took me to the Palais Royal, where we began to speak seriously upon the affairs of my embassy.

I fancy that Cardinal Dubois was much annoyed at what had been done, and that he would have liked to postpone the declaration yet a little longer. But this now was impossible. The next day people were sent to work upon my equipments, the Cardinal showing as much eagerness and impatience respecting them, as he had before shown apathy and indifference. He urged on the workmen; must needs see each livery and each coat as it was finished; increased the magnificence of each; and had all my coats and those of my children sent to him. At last, the hurry to make me set out was so great, that such of the things as were ready he sent on by rapid conveyance to Bayonne, at a cost by no means trifling to me.

The Cardinal next examined the list of persons I intended to have with me, and approved it. To my extreme surprise he said, however, that I must add forty officers of cavalry and infantry, from the regiments of my sons. I cried out against the madness and the expense of such a numerous military accompaniment. I represented that it was not usual for ambassadors, with a peaceful mission, to take with them such an imposing force by way of escort; I showed that these officers, being necessarily gay men, might be led away into indiscreet gallantries, which would give me more trouble than all the business of my embassy. Nothing could be more evident, true, and reasonable than my representations, nothing more useless or worse received.

The Cardinal had resolved to ruin me, and to leave me in Spain with all the embarrassment, business, and annoyances he could. He rightly thought that nothing was more likely to make him succeed than to charge me with forty officers. Not finding them, I took only twenty-nine, and if the Cardinal succeeded as far as concerned my purse, I was so fortunate, and these gentlemen were so discreet, that he succeeded in no other way.



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Let me add here, before I give the details of my journey to Spain, in what manner the announcement of these two marriages was received by the King and the public.

His Majesty was by no means gratified when he heard that a wife had been provided for him. At the first mention of marriage he burst out crying. The Regent, M. le Duc, and M. de Frejus, had all the trouble in the world to extract a “yes” from him, and to induce him to attend the Regency Council, in which it was necessary that he should announce his consent to the proposed union, or be present while it was announced for him. The council was held, and the King came to it, his eyes swollen and red, and his look very serious.

Some moments of silence passed, during which M. le Duc d’Orleans threw his eyes over all the company (who appeared deeply expectant), and then fixed them on the King, and asked if he might announce to the council the marriage of his Majesty. The King replied by a dry “yes,” and in a rather low tone, but which was heard by the four or five people on each side of him, and the Regent immediately announced the marriage. Then, after taking the opinions of the council, which were for the most part favorable, he turned towards the King with a smiling air, as though inviting him to assume the same, and said, “There, then, Sire, your marriage is approved and passed, and a grand and fortunate matter finished.” The council then broke up.

The news of what had taken place immediately ran over all Paris. The Tuileries and the Palais Royal were soon filled with people who came to present themselves before the King to compliment him and the Regent on the conclusion of this grand marriage, and the crowd continued the following days. The King had much difficulty in assuming some little gaiety the first day, but on the morrow he was less sombre, and by degrees he quite recovered himself.

M. le Duc d’Orleans took care not to announce the marriage of his daughter with the Prince of the Asturias at the same time that the other marriage was announced. He declared it, however, the next day, and the news was received with the utmost internal vexation by the cabal opposed to him. Men, women, people of all conditions who belonged to that cabal, lost all countenance. It was a pleasure to me, I admit, to look upon them. They were utterly disconcerted. Nevertheless, after the first few days of overthrow, they regained courage, and set to work in order to break off both the marriages.

CHAPTER CVII

I have already said that Dubois looked most unfavourably upon my embassy to Spain, and that I saw he was determined to do all in his power to throw obstacles in its way. I had fresh proofs of this. First, before my departure: when he gave me my written instructions, he told me that in Spain I must take precedence of everybody during the

signing of the King's contract of marriage, and at the chapel, at the two ceremonies of the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias, allowing no one to be before me!



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I represented to him that the Pope's nuncio would be present, and that to him the ambassadors of France gave place everywhere, and even the ambassadors of the Emperor also, who, without opposition, preceded those of the King. He replied that that was true, except in special cases like the present, and that his instructions must be obeyed: My surprise was great at so strange an order. I tried to move him by appealing to his pride; asking him how I should manage with a cardinal, if one happened to be present, and with the majordomo-major, who corresponds, but in a very superior degree, with our grand master of France. He flew in a rage, and declared that I must precede the majordomo-major also; that there would be no difficulty in doing so; and that, as to the cardinals, I should find none. I shrugged my shoulders, and begged him to think of the matter. Instead of replying, to me, he said he had forgotten to acquaint me with a most essential particular: it was, that I must take care not to visit anybody until I had been first visited.

I replied that the visiting question had not been forgotten in my instructions, and that those instructions were to the effect that I should act in this respect as the Duc de Saint-Aignan had acted, and that the usage he had followed was to pay the first visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to the Councillors of State (when there were any), who are the same as are known here under the name of ministers. Thereupon he broke out afresh, prated, talked about the dignity of the King, and did not allow me the opportunity of saying another word. I abridged my visit, therefore, and went away.

However strange might appear to me these verbal orders of such a new kind, I thought it best to speak to the Duc de Saint-Aignan and Amelot on the subject, so as to convince myself of their novelty. Both these ambassadors, as well as those who had preceded them, had visited in an exactly opposite manner; and they thought it extravagant that I should precede the nuncio, no matter where. Amelot told me, moreover, that I should suffer all sorts of annoyances, and succeed in nothing, if I refused the first visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; that as for the Councillors of State, they existed only in name, the office having fallen into desuetude; and that I must pay other visits to certain officers he named (three in number), who would be justly offended and piqued if I refused them what every one who had preceded me had rendered them. He added that I had better take good care to do so, unless I wished to remain alone in my house, and have the cold shoulder turned upon me by every principal person of the Court.



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By this explanation of Amelot I easily comprehended the reason of these singular verbal orders. The Cardinal wished to secure my failure in Spain, and my disgrace in France: in Spain by making me offend at the outset all the greatest people and the minister through whose hands all my business would pass; draw upon myself thus complaints here, which, as I had no written orders to justify my conduct, he (Dubois) would completely admit the justice of, and then disavow me, declaring he had given me exactly opposite orders. If I did not execute what he had told me, I felt that he would accuse me of sacrificing the King's honour and the dignity of the Crown, in order to please in Spain, and obtain thus honours for myself and my sons, and that he would prohibit the latter to accept them. There would have been less uproar respecting the nuncio; but if I preceded him, Dubois felt persuaded that the Court of Rome would demand justice; and this justice in his hands would have been a shameful recall.

My position appeared so difficult, that I resolved to leave nothing undone in order to change it. I thought M. le Duc d'Orleans would not resist the evidence I should bring forward, in order to show the extraordinary nature of Dubois' verbal instructions: I deceived myself. It was in vain that I spoke to M. le Duc d'Orleans. I found nothing but feebleness under the yoke of a master; by which I judged how much I could hope for during my absence. Several times I argued with him and the Cardinal; but in vain. They both declared that if preceding ambassadors had paid the first visits, that was no example for me, in an embassy so solemn and distinguished as that I was about to execute. I represented that, however solemn and however distinguished might be my embassy, it gave me no rank superior to that of extraordinary ambassadors, and that I could claim none. Useless! useless! To my arguments there was no reply, but obstinacy prevailed; and I clearly saw the extreme malignity of the valet, and the unspeakable weakness of the master. It was for me to manage as I could.

The Cardinal now began ardently to press my departure; and, in fact, there was no more time to lose. He unceasingly hurried on the workmen who were making all that I required,—vexed, perhaps, that being in such prodigious number, he could not augment them. There was nothing more for him to do but to give me the letters with which I was to be charged. He delayed writing them until the last moment previous to my departure, that is to say; the very evening before I started; the reason will soon be seen. The letters were for their Catholic Majesties, for the Queen Dowager at Bayonne, and for the Prince of the Asturias; letters from the King and from the Duc d'Orleans. But before giving them to me, the Regent said he would write two letters to the Prince of the Asturias, both alike, except in this respect, that in the one he would address the Prince as “nephew,” and in the other as “brother and nephew,” and that I was to try and deliver the latter, which he passionately wished; but that if I found too much difficulty in doing so, I must not persevere but deliver the former instead.



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I had reason to believe that here was another plot of Dubois, to cause me trouble by embroiling me with M. le Duc d'Orleans. The Regent was the last man in the world to care for these formalities. The Prince of the Asturias was son of the King and heir to the Crown, and, in consequence, of the rank of a son of France. In whatever way regarded, M. le Duc d'Orleans was extremely inferior in rank to him; and it was something new and adventurous to treat him on terms of equality. This, however, is what I was charged with, and I believe, in the firm hope of Cardinal Dubois that I should fail, and that he might profit by my failure.

Finally, on the morning of the day before my departure, all the papers with which I was to be charged were brought to me. I will not give the list of them. But among these letters there was none from the King to the Infanta! I thought they had forgotten to put it with the others. I said so to the persons who brought them to me. What was my surprise when they told me that the letter was not written, but that I would have it in the course of the day.

This appeared so strange to me, that my mind was filled with suspicion. I spoke of the letter to the Cardinal and to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who assured me that I should have it in the evening. At midnight it had not arrived. I wrote to the Cardinal. Finally I set out without it. He wrote to me, saying I should receive it before arriving at Bayonne; but nothing less. I wrote him anew. He replied to me, saying that I should have it before I arrived at Madrid. A letter from the King to the Infanta was not difficult to write; I could not doubt, therefore, that there was some design in this delay. Whatever it might be, I could not understand it, unless the intention was to send the letter afterwards, and make me pass for a heedless fellow who had lost the first.

Dubois served me another most impudent turn, seven or eight days before my departure. He sent word to me, by his two devoted slaves, Le Blanc and Belleisle, that as he had the foreign affairs under his charge, he must have the post, which he would not and could not any longer do without; that he knew I was the intimate friend of Torcy (who had the post in his department), whose resignation he desired; that he begged me to write to Torcy, and send my letter to him by an express courier to Sable (where he had gone on an excursion); that he should see by my conduct on this occasion, and its success, in what manner he could count upon me, and that he should act towards me accordingly. To this his two slaves added all they could to persuade me to comply, assuring me that Dubois would break off my embassy if I did not do as he wished. I did not for a moment doubt, after what I had seen of the inconceivable feebleness of M. le Duc d'Orleans, that Dubois was really capable of thus affronting and thwarting me, or that I should have no aid from the Regent. At the same time I resolved to run all hazards rather than lend myself to an act of violence against a friend, so sure; so sage, and so virtuous, and who had served the state with such reputation, and deserved so well of it.



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I replied therefore to these gentlemen that I thought the commission very strange, and much more so their reasoning of it; that Torcy was not a man from whom an office of this importance could be taken unless he wished to give it up; that all I could do was to ask him if he wished to resign, and if so, on what conditions; that as to exhorting him to resign, I could do nothing of the kind, although I was not ignorant of what this refusal might cost me and my embassy. They tried in vain to reason with me; all they could obtain was this firm resolution.

Castries and his brother, the Archbishop, were intimate friends of Torcy and of myself. I sent for them to come to me in the midst of the tumult of my departure. They immediately came, and I related to them what had just happened. They were more indignant at the manner and the moment, than at the thing itself; for Torcy knew that sooner or later the Cardinal would strip him of the post for his own benefit. They extremely praised my reply, exhorted me to send word to Torcy, who was on the point of departing from Sable, or had departed, and who would make his own terms with M. le Duc d'Orleans much more advantageously, present, than absent. I read to them the letter I had written to Torcy, while waiting for them, which they much approved, and which I at once despatched.

Torcy of himself, had hastened his return. My courier found him with his wife in the Parc of Versailles, having passed by the Chartres route. He read my letter, charged the courier with many compliments for me (his wife did likewise), and told me to say he would see me the next day. I informed M. Castries of his arrival. We all four met the next day. Torcy warmly appreciated my conduct, and, to his death, we lived on terms of the greatest intimacy, as may be imagined when I say that he committed to me his memoirs (these he did not write until long after the death of M. le Duc d'Orleans), with which I have connected mine. He did not seem to care for the post, if assured of an honourable pension.

I announced then his return to Dubois, saying it would be for him and M. le Duc d'Orleans to make their own terms with him, and get out of the matter in this way. Dubois, content at seeing by this that Torcy consented to resign the post, cared not how, so that the latter made his own arrangements, and all passed off with the best grace on both sides. Torcy had some money and 60,000 livres pension during life, and 20,000 for his wife after him. This was arranged before my departure and was very well carried out afterwards.

A little while after the declaration of the marriage, the Duchesse de Ventadour and Madame de Soubise, her granddaughter, had been named, the one governess of the Infanta, the other successor to the office; and they were both to go and meet her at the frontier, and bring her to Paris to the Louvre, where she was to be lodged a little while after the declaration of my embassy: the Prince de Rohan, her son-in-law, had orders to go and make the exchange of the Princesses upon the frontier, with the people sent by the King of Spain to perform the same function. I had never had any intimacy with

them, though we were not on bad terms. But these Spanish commissions caused us to visit each other with proper politeness. I forgot to say so earlier and in the proper place.



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At last, viz., on the 23rd of October, 1721, I set out, having with me the Comte de Lorge, my children, the Abbe de Saint-Simon, and his brother, and many others. The rest of the company joined me at Blaye. We slept at Orleans, at Montrichard; and at Poitiers. On arriving at Conte my berline broke down. This caused a delay of three hours, and I did not arrive at Ruffec until nearly midnight. Many noblemen of the neighbourhood were waiting for me there, and I entertained them at dinner and supper during the two days I stayed. I experienced real pleasure in embracing Puy-Robert, who was lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Roussillon Regiment when I was captain.

From Ruffec I went in two days to La Cassine, a small house at four leagues from Blaye, which my father had built on the borders of his marshes of Blaye, and which I felt much pleasure in visiting; I stopped there during All Saints' Day and the evening before, and the next day I early betook myself to Blaye again, where I sojourned two days. I found several persons of quality there, many of the nobility of the country and of the adjoining provinces, and Boucher, Intendant of Bordeaux, brother-in-law of Le Blanc, who was waiting for me, and whom I entertained with good cheer morning and evening during this short stay.

We crossed to Bordeaux in the midst of such bad weather that everybody pressed me to delay the trip; but I had so few, days at my command that I did not accede to their representations. Boucher had brought his brigantine magnificently equipped, and boats enough to carry over all my company, most of whom went with us. The view of the port and the town of Bordeaux surprised me, with more than three hundred ships of all nations ranged in two lines upon my passage, decked out in all their finery, and with a great noise from their cannons and those of the Chateau Trompette.

Bordeaux is too well known to need description at my hands: I will simply say that after Constantinople it presents the finest view of any other port. Upon landing we received many compliments, and found many carriages, which conducted us to the Intendant's house, where the Jurats came to compliment me in state dress. I invited them to supper with me, a politeness they did not expect, and which they appeared to highly appreciate. I insisted upon going to see the Hotel de Ville, which is amazingly ugly, saying to the Jurats that it was not to satisfy my curiosity, but in order to pay a visit to them, that I went. This extremely pleased.

After thanking M. and Madame Boucher for their attention, we set out again, traversed the great Landes, and reached in due time Bayonne. The day after my arrival there, I had an audience with the Queen Dowager of Spain. I was astonished upon arriving at her house. It had only two windows in front, looked upon a little court, and had but trifling depth. The room I entered was very plainly furnished. I found the Queen, who was waiting for me, accompanied by the Duchesse de Linorez and very few other persons. I complimented her in the name of the King, and presented to her his letter. Nothing could be more polite than her bearing towards me.

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Passing the Pyrenees, I quitted with France, rain and bad weather, and found a clear sky, a charming temperature, with views and perspectives which changed at each moment, and which were not less charming. We were all mounted upon mules, the pace of which is good but easy. I turned a little out of my way to visit Loyola, famous by the birth of Saint Ignatius, and situated all alone in a narrow valley. We found there four or five Jesuits, very polite and instructed, who took care of the prodigious building erected there for more than a hundred Jesuits and numberless scholars. A church was there nearly finished, of rotunda shape, of a grandeur and size which surprised me. Gold, painting, sculpture, the richest ornaments of all kinds, are distributed everywhere with prodigality but taste. The architecture is correct and admirable, the marble is most exquisite; jasper, porphyry, lapis, polished, wreathed, and fluted columns, with their capitals and their ornaments of gilded bronze, a row of balconies between each altar with little steps of marble to ascend them, and the cage encrusted; the altars and that which accompanied them admirable. In a word, the church was one of the most superb edifices in Europe, the best kept up, and the most magnificently adorned. We took there the best chocolate I ever tasted, and, after some hours of curiosity and admiration, we regained our road.

On the 15th, we arrived at Vittoria, where I found a deputation of the province, whom I invited to supper, and the next day to breakfast. They spoke French and I was surprised to see Spaniards so gay and such good company at table. Joy on account of my journey burst out in every place through which I passed in France and Spain, and obtained for me a good reception. At Salinas, among other towns which I passed through without stopping, ladies, who, to judge by their houses and by themselves, appeared to me to be quality folks, asked me with such good grace to let them see the man who was bringing happiness to Spain, that I thought it would only be proper gallantry to enter their dwellings. They appeared ravished, and I had all the trouble in the world to get rid of them, and to continue my road.

I arrived on the 18th at Burgos, where I meant to stay at least one day, to see what turn would take a rather strong fever which had seized my eldest son; but I was so pressed to hasten on that I was obliged to leave my son behind with nearly all his attendants.

I left Burgos therefore on the 19th. We found but few relays, and those ill-established. We travelled night and day without going to bed, until we reached Madrid, using such vehicles as we could obtain. I performed the last twelve leagues on a posthorse, which cost twice as much as in France. In this manner we arrived in Madrid on Friday, the 21st, at eleven o'clock at night.

We found at the entrance of the town (which has neither gates nor walls, neither barriers nor faubourgs,) people on guard, who asked us who we were, and whence we came. They had been placed there expressly so as to know the moment of my arrival. As I was much fatigued by travelling incessantly from Burgos without stopping, I replied that we were the people of the Ambassador of France, who would arrive the next day.



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I learnt afterwards, that the minister had calculated that I could not reach Madrid before the 22d.

CHAPTER CVIII

Early the next morning I received a visit from Grimaldo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, overjoyed at my arrival, had announced it to their Catholic Majesties before coming to me. Upon his example, apparently, the three other ministers, whom, according to usage, I ought to have visited first, came also; so that one infamous difficulty which Cardinal Dubois had placed in my path was happily overcome without effort on my part.

Grimaldo at once conducted me to the palace, and introduced me to the King. I made a profound reverence to him; he testified to me his joy at my arrival, and asked me for news of the King, of M. le Duc d'Orleans, of my journey, and of my eldest son, whom, as he knew, I had left behind at Burgos. He then entered alone into the Cabinet of the Mirrors. I was instantly surrounded by all the Court with compliments and indications of joy at the marriages and union of the crowns. Nearly all the seigneurs spoke French, and I had great difficulty in replying to their numberless compliments.

A half quarter of an hour after the King had entered his cabinet, he sent for me. I entered alone into the Hall of Mirrors, which is very vast, but much less wide than long. The King, with the Queen on his left, was nearly at the bottom of the salon, both their Majesties standing and touching each other. I approached with three profound reverences, and I will remark, once for all, that the King never covers himself except at public audiences, and when he goes to and comes from his mass. The audience lasted half an hour, and was principally occupied, on the part of the King and Queen, with compliments and expressions of joy at the marriages that were to take place. At its close, the Queen asked me if I would like to see the children, and conducted me to them.

I never saw prettier boys than Don Carlos and Don Ferdinand, nor a prettier babe than Don Philip. The King and Queen took pleasure in making me look at them, and in making them turn and walk before me with very good grace. Their Majesties entered afterwards into the Infanta's chamber, where I tried to exhibit as much gallantry as possible. In fact, the Infanta was charming-like a little woman—and not at all embarrassed. The Queen said to me that she already had begun to learn French, and the King that she would soon forget Spain.

“Oh!” cried the Queen, “not only Spain, but the King and me, so as to attach herself to the King, her husband, alone.” Upon this I tried not to remain dumb, and to say what was appropriate. Their Majesties dismissed me with much goodness, and I was again encircled by the crowd with many compliments.



A few moments after the King recalled me, in order to see the Prince of the Asturias, who was with their Majesties in the same Hall of Mirrors. I found him tall, and really made to be painted; fine light-brown hair, light fresh-coloured complexion, long face, but agreeable; good eyes, but too near the nose. I found in him also much grace and politeness. He particularly asked after the King, M. le Duc d'Orleans, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier, to whom he was to be betrothed.



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Their Catholic Majesties testified much satisfaction to me at the diligence I had used; said that a single day would be sufficient for the ceremonies that had to be gone through (demanding the hand of the Infanta, according it, and signing the marriage contract). Afterwards they asked me when all would be ready. I replied it would be any day they pleased; because, as they wished to go into the country, I thought it would be best to throw no delay in their path. They appeared much pleased at this reply, but would not fix the day, upon which I proposed the following Tuesday. Overjoyed at this promptness, they fixed the Thursday for their departure, and left me with the best possible grace.

I had got over one difficulty, as I have shown, that connected with the first visits, but I had others yet to grapple with. And first, there was my embarrassment at finding no letter for the Infanta. I confided this fact to Grimaldo, who burst out laughing, was to have my first audience with the Infanta the next day, and it was then that the letter ought to be produced. Grimaldo said he would arrange so that when I—went, the governess should come into the antechamber, and say that the Infanta was asleep, and upon offering to awake her, I should refuse to allow her, take my leave, and wait until the letter from the King arrived before I visited her again. Everything happened just as it had been planned, and thus the second obstacle which the crafty and malicious Cardinal had put in my path, for the sake of overturning me, was quietly got over. Grimaldo's kindness encouraged me to open my heart under its influence. I found that the Spanish minister knew, quite as, well as I did, what manner of person Dubois was.

On Sunday, the 23rd, I had in the morning my first private audience of the King and Queen, together, in the Hall of Mirrors, which is the place where they usually give it. I was accompanied by Maulevrier, our ambassador. I presented to their Catholic Majesties the Comte de Lorge, the Comte de Cereste, my second son, and the Abbe de Saint-Simon and his bother. I received many marks of goodness from the Queen in this audience.

On Tuesday, the 25th of November, I had my solemn audience. I went to the palace in a magnificent coach, belonging to the King, drawn by eight grey horses, admirably dappled. There were no postillions, and the coachman drove me, his hat under his arm. Five of my coaches filled with my suite followed, and about twenty others (belonging to noblemen of the Court, and sent by them in order to do me honour), with gentlemen in each. The King's coach was surrounded by my musicians, liveried servants on foot, and by officers of my household. On arriving at the open place in front of the palace, I thought myself at the Tuileries. The regiments of Spanish guards, clad, officers and soldiers, like the French guards, and the regiment of the Walloon guards, clad, officers and, soldiers, like the Swiss guards, were under arms; the flags waved, the drums beat, and the officers saluted with the half-pike. On the way, the streets were filled with people, the shops with dealers and artisans, all the windows were crowded. Joy showed itself on every face, and we heard nothing but benedictions.



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The audience passed off admirably. I asked the hand of the Infanta in marriage on the part of the King; my request was graciously complied with, compliments passed on both sides, and I returned to my house, well pleased with the reception I had met with from both their Catholic Majesties.

There was still the marriage contract to be signed, and this was to take place in the afternoon. Here was to be my great trial, for the majordomo-major and the nuncio of the Pope were to be present at the ceremony, and, according to the infamous and extraordinary instructions I had received from Dubois, I was to precede them! How was this to be done? I had to bring all my ingenuity to bear upon the subject in order to determine. In the embarrassment I felt upon this position, I was careful to affect the most marked attention to the nuncio and the majordomo-major every time I met them and visited them; so as to take from them all idea that I wished to precede them, when I should in reality do so.

The place the majordomo-major was to occupy at this ceremony was behind the King's armchair, a little to the right, so as to allow room for the captain of the guards on duty; to put myself there would be to take his place, and push the captain of the guards away, and those near him. The place of the nuncio was at the side of the King, his face to the armchair; to take it would have been to push him beyond the arm of the chair, which assuredly he would no more have submitted to than the majordomo-major on the other side. I resolved, therefore, to hazard a middle term; to try and introduce myself at the top of the right arm of the chair, a little sideways, so as to take the place of neither, entirely; but, nevertheless, to drive them out, and to cover this with an air of ignorance and of simplicity; and, at the same time, of eagerness, of joy, of curiosity, of courtier-like desire to speak to the King as much as possible: and all this I exactly executed, in appearance stupidly, and in reality very successfully!

When the time for the audience arrived, I took up my position, accordingly, in the manner I have indicated. The majordomo-major and the nuncio entered, and finding me thus placed, and speaking to the King, appeared much surprised. I heard Signor and Sefor repeated right and left of me, and addressed to me—for both expressed themselves with difficulty in French—and I replied with bows to one and to the other with the smiling air of a man entirely absorbed in joy at his functions, and who understands nothing of what is meant; then I recommenced my conversation with the King, with a sort of liberty and enthusiasm, so that the nuncio and majordomo-major: soon grew tired of appealing to a man whose spirit was so transported that he no longer knew where he was, or what was said to him. In this manner I defeated the craft, cunning, and maliciousness of Dubois. At the conclusion of the ceremony, I accompanied the King

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and Queen to the door of the Hall of Mirrors, taking good care then to show every deference to the majordomo-major and the nuncio, and yielding place to them, in order to remove any impression from their minds that I had just acted in a contrary manner from design. As soon as their Catholic Majesties had departed, and the door of the salon was closed upon them, I was encircled and, so to speak, almost stifled by the company present, who, one after the other, pressed upon me with the greatest demonstrations of joy and a thousand compliments. I returned home after the ceremony, which had lasted a long time. While I occupied my stolen position I was obliged, in order to maintain it, to keep up an incessant conversation with the King, and at last, no longer knowing what to talk about, I asked him for an audience the next day, which he readily accorded me. But this direct request was contrary to the usage of the Court, where the ambassadors, the other foreign ministers, and the subjects of the country of, whatever rank, address their requests to an officer who is appointed to receive them, who communicates with the King, and names the day and the hour when his Majesty will grant the interview.

Grimaldo, a little after the end of ceremony, had gone to work with the King and Queen, as was customary.—I was surprised, an hour after returning home, to receive a letter from this minister, asking me if I had anything to say to the King I did not wish the Queen to hear, referring to the audience I had asked of the King for the morrow, and begging me to tell him what it was for. I replied to him instantly, that having found the opportunity good I had asked for this audience; but if I had not mentioned the Queen, it was because I had imagined she was so accustomed to be present that there was no necessity to allude to her: but as to the rest, I had my thanks to offer to the King upon what had just passed, and nothing to say to him that I should not wish to say to the Queen, and that I should be very sorry if she were not present.

As I was writing this reply, Don Gaspard Giron invited me to go and see the illuminations of the Place Mayor. I quickly finished my letter; we jumped into a coach, and the principal people of my suite jumped into others. We were conducted by detours to avoid the light of the illuminations in approaching them, and we arrived at a fine house which looks upon the middle of the Place, and which is that where the King and Queen go to see the fetes that take place. We perceived no light in descending or in ascending the staircase. Everything had been closed, but on entering into the chamber which looks upon the Place, we were dazzled, and immediately we entered the balcony speech failed me, from surprise, for more than seven or eight minutes.



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This Place is superficially much vaster than any I had ever seen in Paris or elsewhere, and of greater length than breadth. The five stories of the houses which surround it are all of the same level; each has windows at equal distance, and of equal size, with balconies as deep as they are long, guarded by iron balustrades, exactly alike in every case. Upon each of these balconies two torches of white wax were placed, one at each end of the balcony, supported upon the balustrade, slightly leaning outwards, and attached to nothing. The light that this—gives is incredible; it has a splendour and a majesty about it that astonish you and impress you. The smallest type can be read in the middle of the Place, and all about, though the ground-floor is not illuminated.

As soon as I appeared upon the balcony, all the people beneath gathered round and began to cry, *Senor! tauro! tauro!* The people were asking me to obtain for them a bull-fight, which is what they like best in the world, and what the King had not permitted for several years from conscientious principles. Therefore I contented myself the next day with simply telling him of these cries, without asking any questions thereon, while expressing to him my astonishment at an illumination so surprising and so admirable.

Don Gaspard Giron and the Spaniards who were with me in the house from which I saw the illumination, charmed with the astonishment I had displayed at this spectacle, published it abroad with all the more pleasure because they were not accustomed to the admiration of the French, and many noblemen spoke of it to me with great pleasure. Scarcely had I time to return home and sup after this fine illumination than I was obliged to go to the palace for the ball that the King had prepared there, and which lasted until past two in the morning.

The salon was very vast and splendid; the dresses of the company were sumptuous; the appearance of our finest fancy-dress balls did not approach the appearance of this.

What seemed strange to me was to see three bishops in lawn sleeves and cloaks in the ball-room, remaining, too, all the evening, and to see the accoutrement of the camerar-major, who held exposed in her hand a great chaplet, and who, while talking and criticising the ball and the dancers, muttered her prayers, and continued to do so while the ball lasted. What I found very strange was, that none of the men present (except six special officers and Maulevrier and myself) were allowed to sit, not even the dancers; in fact, there was not a single seat in the whole salon, not even at the back, except those I have specified.

In Spain, men and women of all ages wear all sorts of colours, and dance if they like, even when more than sixty years old, without exciting the slightest ridicule or astonishment. I saw several examples of this among men and women.



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Amongst the company present was Madame Robecque, a Frenchwoman, one of the Queen's ladies, whom I had known before she went to Spain. In former days we had danced together at the Court. Apparently she said so to the Queen, for after having danced with one of the children, she traversed the whole length of the salon, made a fine curtsy to their Catholic Majesties, and came to dislodge me from my retreat, asking me with a curtsy and a smile to dance. I replied to her by saying she was laughing at me; dispute, gallantries; finally, she went to the Queen, who called me and told me that the King and she wished me to dance.

I took the liberty to represent to her that she wished to divert herself at my expense; that this order could not be serious; I alleged my age, my position, the number of years since I had danced; in a word, I did all I could to back out. But all was useless. The King mixed himself in the matter; both he and the Queen begged me to comply, tried to persuade me I danced very well; at last commanded me, and in such a manner that I was obliged to obey. I acquitted myself, therefore, as well as I could.

The ball being finished, the Marquis de Villagarcias, one of the majordomos, and one of the most honest and most gracious of men I ever saw (since appointed Viceroy of Peru), would not let me leave until I had rested in the refreshment-room, where he made me drink a glass of excellent neat wine, because I was all in a sweat from the minuets and quadrilles I had gone through, under a very heavy coat.

This same evening and the next I illuminated my house within and without, not having a moment's leisure to give any fete in the midst of the many functions I had been so precipitately called upon to fulfil.

CHAPTER CIX

On Thursday, the 27th of November, the King and Queen were to depart from Madrid to Lerma, a pretty hamlet six leagues from Burgos, where they had a palace. On the same day, very early in the morning, our ambassador, Maulevrier, came to me with despatches from Cardinal Dubois, announcing that the Regent's daughter, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, had departed on the 18th of November for Spain, and giving information as to the places she would stop at, the people she would be accompanied by, the day she would arrive at the frontier, and the persons charged with the exchange of the Princesses.

Maulevrier and I thought this news so important that we felt there was no time to lose, and at once hastened away to the palace to communicate it to their Majesties, who we knew were waiting for it most impatiently. We arrived at such an early hour that all was deserted in the palace, and when we reached the door of the Hall of Mirrors, we were obliged to knock loudly in order to be heard. A French valet opened the door, and told us that their Catholic Majesties were still in bed. We did not doubt it, and begged him to

advise them that we wished to have the honour of speaking to them. Such an honour was unheard of, except under extraordinary circumstances; nevertheless the valet quickly returned, saying that their Majesties would receive us, though it was against all rule and usage to do so while they were in bed.



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We traversed therefore the long and grand Hall of Mirrors, turned to the left at the end into a large and fine room, then short off to the left again into a very little chamber, portioned off from the other, and lighted by the door and by two little windows at the top of the partition wall. There was a bed of four feet and a half at most, of crimson damask, with gold fringe, four posts, the curtains open at the foot and at the side the King occupied. The King was almost stretched out upon pillows with a little bed-gown of white satin; the Queen sitting upright, a piece of tapestry in her hand, at the left of the King, some skeins of thread near her, papers scattered upon the rest of the bed and upon an armchair at the side of it. She was quite close to the King, who was in his night-cap, she also, and in her bed-gown, both between the sheets, which were only very imperfectly hidden by the papers.

They made us abridge our reverences, and the King, raising himself a little impatiently, asked us our business. We were alone, the valet having retired after showing us the door.

“Good news, Sire,” replied I. “Mademoiselle de Montpensier set out on the 18th; the courier has this instant brought us the news, and we have at once come to present ourselves to you and apprise your Majesties of it.”

Joy instantly painted itself on their faces, and immediately they began to question us at great length upon the details the courier had brought us. After an animated conversation, in which Maulevrier took but little part, their Catholic Majesties dismissed us, testifying to us the great pleasure we had caused them by not losing a minute in acquainting them with the departure of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, above all in not having been stopped by the hour, and by the fact that they were in bed.

We went back to my house to dine and returned to the palace in order to see the King and Queen depart. I again received from them a thousand marks of favour. Both the King and Queen, but especially the latter, several times insisted that I must not lose any time in following them to Lerma; upon which I assured them they would find me there as they alighted from their coach.

I set out, in fact, on the 2nd of December, from Madrid, to join the Court, and was to sleep at the Escorial, with the Comtes de Lorges and de Cereste, my second son, the Abbe de Saint-Simon and his brother, Pacquet, and two principal officers of the King's troops, who remained with me as long as I stayed in Spain. In addition to the orders of the King of Spain and the letters of the Marquis de Grimaldo, I was also furnished with those of the nuncio for the Prior of the Escorial, who is, at the same time, governor, in order that I might be shown the marvels of this superb and prodigious monastery, and that everything might be opened for me that I wished to visit; for I had been warned that, without the recommendation of the nuncio, neither that of the King and his minister, nor any official character, would have much served me. It will be seen that, after all, I did not fail to suffer from the churlishness and the superstition of these coarse Jeronimites.



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They are black and white monks, whose dress resembles that of the Celestins; very idle, ignorant, and without austerity, who, by the number of their monasteries and their riches, are in Spain much about what the Benedictines are in France, and like them are a congregation. They elect also, like the Benedictines, their superiors, local and general, except the Prior of the Escorial, who is nominated by the King, remains in office as long as the King likes and no more, and who is yet better lodged at the Escorial than his Catholic Majesty. 'Tis a prodigy, this building, of extent, of structure, of every kind of magnificence, and contains an immense heap of riches, in pictures, in ornaments, in vases of all kinds, in precious stones, everywhere strewn about, and the description of which I will not undertake, since it does not belong to my subject. Suffice it to say that a curious connoisseur of all these different beauties might occupy himself there for three months without cessation, and then would not have examined all. The gridiron (its form, at least) has regulated all the ordonnance of this sumptuous edifice in honour of Saint-Laurent, and of the battle of Saint-Quentin, gained by Philippe II., who, seeing the action from a height, vowed he would erect this monastery if his troops obtained the victory, and asked his courtiers, if such were the pleasures of the Emperor, his father, who in fact did not go so far for them as that.

There is not a door, a lock, or utensil of any kind, or a piece of plate, that is not marked with a gridiron.

The distance from Madrid to the Escorial is much about the same as that from Paris to Fontainebleau. The country is very flat and becomes a wilderness on approaching the Escorial, which takes its name from a large village you pass, a league off. It is upon an eminence which you ascend imperceptibly, and upon which you see endless deserts on three sides; but it is backed, as it were, by the mountain of Guadarama, which encircles Madrid on three sides, at a distance of several leagues, more or less. There is no village at the Escorial; the lodging of their Catholic Majesties forms the handle of the gridiron. The principal grand officers, and those most necessary, are lodged, as well as the Queen's ladies, in the monastery; on the side by which you arrive all is very badly built.

The church, the grand staircase, and the grand cloister, surprised me. I admired the elegance of the surgery, and the pleasantness of the gardens, which, however, are only a long and wide terrace. The Pantheon frightened me by a sort of horror and majesty. The grand-altar and the sacristy wearied my eyes, by their immense opulence. The library did not satisfy me, and the librarians still less: I was received with much civility, and invited to a good supper in the Spanish style, at which the Prior and another monk did the honours. After this fast repast my people prepared my meals, but this fat monk always supplied one or two things that it would not have been civil to refuse, and always ate with me; for, in order that he might conduct us everywhere, he never quitted our sides. Bad Latin supplied the place of French, which he did not understand; nor even Spanish.



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In the sanctuary at the grand altar, there are windows behind the seats of the priest and his assistants, who celebrate the grand mass. These windows, which are nearly on a level with the sanctuary (very high), belong to the apartment that Philippe II. had built for himself, and in which he died. He heard service through these windows. I wished to see this apartment, which was entered from behind. I was refused. It was in vain that I insisted on the orders of the King and of the nuncio, authorising me to see all I wished. I disputed uselessly. They told me this apartment had been closed ever since the death of Philippe II., and that nobody had entered it. I maintained that King Philippe V. and his suite had seen it. They admitted the fact, but at the same time told me that he had entered by force as a master, threatening to break in the doors, that he was the only King who had entered since Philippe II., and that they would not open the apartment to anybody. I understood nothing of all this superstition, but I was forced to rest content in my ignorance. Louville, who had entered with the King, had told me that the place contained only five or six dark chambers, and some holes and corners with wainscots plastered with mud; without tapestry, when he saw it, or any kind of furniture; thus I did not lose much by not entering.

In the Rotting-Room, which I have elsewhere described, we read the inscriptions near us, and the monk read others as we asked him. We walked thus, all round, talking and discoursing thereon. Passing to the bottom of the room, the coffin of the unhappy Don Carlos offered itself to our sight.

“As for him,” said I, “it is well known why, and of what he died.” At this remark, the fat monk turned rusty, maintained he had died a natural death, and began to declaim against the stories which he said had been spread abroad about him. I smiled, saying, I admitted it was not true that his veins had been opened. This observation completed the irritation of the monk, who began to babble in a sort of fury. I diverted myself with it at first in silence; then I said to him, that the King, shortly after arriving in Spain; had had the curiosity to open the coffin of Don Carlos, and that I knew from a man who was present (’twas Louville), that his head had been found between his legs; that Philippe II., his father, had had it cut off before him in the prison.

“Very well!” cried the monk in fury, “apparently he had well deserved it; for Philippe II., had permission from the Pope to do so!” and, thereupon, he began to cry with all his might about the marvels of piety and of justice of Philippe II., and about the boundless power of the Pope, and to cry heresy against any one who doubted that he could not order, decide, and dispose of all.



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Such is the fanaticism of the countries of the Inquisition, where science is a crime, ignorance and superstition the first of virtues. Though my official character protected me, I did not care to dispute, and cause a ridiculous scene with this bigot of a monk. I contented myself with smiling, and by making a sign of silence as I did so to those who were with me. The monk, therefore, had full swing, and preached a long time without giving over. He perceived, perhaps, by our faces, that we were laughing at him, although without gestures or words. At last he showed us the rest of the chamber, still fuming; then we descended to the Pantheon. They did me the singular favour to light about two-thirds of the immense and admirable chandelier, suspended from the middle of the roof, the lights of which dazzled us, and enabled us to distinguish in every part of the Rotting-Room; not only the smallest details of the smallest letter, but the minutest features of the place.

I passed three days in the Escorial, lodged in a large and fine apartment, and all that were with me well lodged also. Our monk, who had always been in an ill-humour since the day of the Rotting-Room, did not recover himself until the parting breakfast came. We quitted him without regret, but not the Escorial, which would pleasantly occupy a curious connoisseur during more than a three months' stay. On the road we met the Marquis de Montalegre, who invited, us to dinner with him. The meal was so good that we little regretted the dinner my people had prepared for us.

At last we arrived on the 9th, at our village of Villahalmanzo, where I found most comfortable quarters for myself and all who were with me. I found there, also, my eldest son, still merely, convalescent, with the Abbe de Monthon, who came from Burgos. We supped very gaily, and I reckoned upon taking a good excursion the next day, and upon amusing myself in reconnoitring the village and the environs; but fever seized me during the night, augmented during the day, became violent the following night, so that there was no more talk of going on the 11th to meet the King and Queen at Lerma, as they alighted from their coach, according to arrangement.

The malady increased with such rapidity that I was found to be in great danger, and immediately after, on the point of death. I was bled shortly after. The small-pox, with which the whole country was filled, appeared. The climate was such this year that it froze hard twelve or fourteen hours every day, while from eleven o'clock in 'the morning till nearly four, the sun shone as brightly as possible, and it was too hot about mid-day for walking! Yet in the shade it did not thaw for an instant. This cold weather was all the more sharp because the air was purer and clearer, and the sky continually of the most perfect serenity.



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The King of Spain, who was dreadfully afraid of the small-pox, and who with reason had confidence only in his chief doctor, sent him to me as soon as he was informed of my illness, with orders not to quit me until I was cured. I had, therefore, five or six persons continually around me, in addition to the domestics who served me, one of the best and most skilful physicians in Europe, who, moreover, was capital company, and who did not quit me night or day, and three very good surgeons. The small-pox came out very abundantly all over me; it was of a good kind, and I had no dangerous accident. Every one who waited upon me, master or man, was cut off from all intercourse with the rest of the world; even those who cooked for us, from those who did not.

The chief physician nearly every day provided new remedies in case of need, and yet administered none to me, except in giving me, as my sole beverage, water, in which, according to its quantity, oranges were thrown, cut in two with their skins on, and which gently simmered before my fire; occasionally some spoonful of a gentle and agreeable cordial during the height of the suppuration, and afterwards a little Rota wine, and some broth, made of beef and partridge.

Nothing was wanting, then, on the part of those who had charge of me. I was their only patient, and they had orders not to quit me, and nothing was wanting for my amusement, when I was in a condition to take any, so much good company being around me, and that at a time when convalescents of this malady experience all the weariness and fretfulness of it. At the end of my illness I was bled and purged once, after which I lived as usual, but in a species of solitude.

During the long interval in which this illness shut me out from all intercourse with the world, the Abbe de Saint-Simon corresponded for me with Cardinal Dubois, Grimaldo, Sartine, and some others.

The King and Queen, not content with having sent me their chief physician, M. Hyghens, to be with me night and day, wished to hear how I was twice a day, and when I was better, unceasingly showed to me a thousand favours, in which they were imitated by all the Court.

But I was six weeks ill in all.

CHAPTER CX

Here I think will be the fitting place to introduce an account of the daily life of the King and Queen of Spain, which in many respects was entitled to be regarded as singular. During my stay at the Court I had plenty of opportunity to mark it well, so that what I relate may be said to have passed under my own eyes. This, then, was their daily life wherever they were, and in all times and seasons.



The King and Queen never had more than one apartment, and one bed between them, the latter exactly as I have described it when relating my visit with Maulevrier to their Catholic Majesties to carry to them the news of the departure from Paris of the future Princess of the Asturias. During fevers, illness, no matter of what kind, or on whose side, childbirth even,—never were they a single night apart, and even when the deceased Queen was eaten up with the scrofula, the King continued to sleep with her until a few nights before her death!



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About nine o'clock in the morning the curtains were drawn by the Asafeta, followed by a single valet carrying a basin full of caudle. Hyghens, during my convalescence, explained to me how this caudle was made, and in fact concocted some for me to taste. It is a light mixture of broth, milk, wine (which is in the largest quantity), one or two yolks of eggs, sugar, cinnamon, and a few cloves. It is white; has a very strong taste, not unmixed with softness. I should not like to take it habitually, nevertheless it is not disagreeable. You put in it, if you like, crusts of bread, or, at times, toast, and then it becomes a species of soup; otherwise it is drunk as broth; and, ordinarily, it was in this last fashion the King took it. It is unctuous, but very warm, a restorative singularly good for retrieving the past night, and, for preparing you for the next.

While the King partook of this brief breakfast, the Asafeta brought the Queen some tapestry to work at, passed bed-gowns to their Majesties, and put upon the bed some of the papers she found upon the adjoining seats, then withdrew with the valet and what he had brought. Their Majesties then said their morning prayers. Grimaldo afterwards entered. Sometimes they signalled to him to wait, as he came in, and called him when their prayer was over, for there was nobody else, and the bedroom was very small. Then Grimaldo displayed his papers, drew from his pocket an inkstand, and worked with the King; the Queen not being hindered by her tapestry from giving her opinion.

This work lasted more or less according to the business, or to the conversation. Grimaldo, upon leaving with his papers, found the adjoining room empty, and a valet in that beyond, who, seeing him pass, entered into the empty room, crossed it, and summoned the Asafeta, who immediately came and presented to the King his slippers and his dressing-gown; he at once passed across the empty room and entered into a cabinet, where he dressed himself, followed by three valets (never changed) and by the Duc del Arco, or the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and after by both, nobody else ever being present at the ceremony.

The Queen, as soon as the King had passed into his cabinet, put on her stockings and shoes alone with the Asafeta, who gave her her dressing-gown. It was the only moment in which this person could speak to the Queen, or the Queen to her; but this moment did not stretch at the most to more than half a quarter of an hour. Had they been longer together the King would have known it, and would have wanted to hear what kept them. The Queen passed through the empty chamber and entered into a fine large cabinet, where her toilette awaited her. When the King had dressed in his cabinet—where he often spoke to his confessor—he went to the Queen's toilette, followed by the two seigneurs just named. A few of the specially—privileged were also admitted there. This toilette lasted about three-quarters of an hour, the King and all the rest of the company standing.



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When it was over, the King half opened the door of the Hall of Mirrors, which leads into the salon where the Court assembled, and gave his orders; then rejoined the Queen in that room which I have so often called the empty room. There and then took place the private audiences of the foreign ministers, and of, the seigneurs, or other subjects who obtained them. Once a week, on Monday, there was a public audience, a practice which cannot be too much praised where it is not abused. The King, instead of half opening the door, threw it wide open, and admitted whoever liked to enter. People spoke to the King as much as they liked, how they liked, and gave him in writing what they liked. But the Spaniards resemble in nothing the French; they are measured, discreet, respectful, brief.

After the audiences, or after amusing himself with the Queen—if there are none, the King went to dress. The Queen accompanied him, and they took the communion together (never separately) about once a week, and then they heard a second mass. The confession of the King was said after he rose, and before he went to the Queen's toilette.

Upon returning from mass, or very shortly after, the dinner was served. It was always in the Queen's apartment, as well as the supper, but the King and Queen had each their dishes; the former, few, the latter, many, for she liked eating, and ate of everything; the King always kept to the same things—soup, capon, pigeons, boiled and roast, and always a roast loin of veal—no fruit; or salad, or cheese; pastry, rarely, never maigre; eggs, often cooked in various fashion; and he drank nothing but champagne; the Queen the same. When the dinner was finished, they prayed to God together. If anything pressing happened, Grimaldo came and gave them a brief account of it.

About an hour after dinner, they left the apartment by a short passage accessible to the court, and descended by a little staircase to their coach, returning by the same way. The seigneurs who frequented the court pretty constantly assembled, now one, now another, in this passage, or followed their Majesties to their coaches. Very often I saw them in this passage as they went or returned. The Queen always said something pleasant to whoever was there. I will speak elsewhere of the hunting-party their Majesties daily made.

Upon returning, the King gave his orders. If they had not partaken of a collation in the coach, they partook of one upon arriving. It was for the King, a morsel of bread, a big biscuit, some water and wine; and for the Queen, pastry and fruit in season, sometimes cheese. The Prince and the Princess of the Asturias, and the children, followed and waited for them in the inner apartment. This company withdrew in less than half a quarter of an hour. Grimaldo came and worked ordinarily for a long time; it was the time for the real work of the day. When the Queen went to confession this also was the



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time she selected. Except what related to the confession, she and her confessor had no time to say anything to each other. The cabinet in which she confessed to him was contiguous to the room occupied by the King, and when the latter thought the confession too long, he opened the door and called her. Grimaldo being gone, they prayed together, or sometimes occupied themselves with spiritual reading until supper. It was served like the dinner. At both meals there were more dishes in the French style than in the Spanish, or even the Italian.

After supper, conversation or prayers conducted them to the hour for bed, when nearly the same observances took place as in the morning. Finally, their Catholic Majesties everywhere had but one wardrobe between them, and were never in private one from another.

These uniform days were the same in all places, and even during the journeys taken by their Majesties, who were thus never separated, except for a few minutes at a time. They passed their lives in one long *tete-a-tete*. When they travelled it was at the merest snail's pace, and they slept on the road, night after night, in houses prepared for them. In their coach they were always alone; when in the palace it was the same.

The King had been accustomed to this monotonous life by his first queen, and he did not care for any other. The new Queen, upon arriving, soon found this out, and found also that if she wished to rule him, she must keep him in the same room, confined as he had been kept by her predecessor. Alberoni was the only person admitted to their privacy. This second marriage of the King of Spain, entirely brought about by Madame des Ursins, was very distasteful to the Spaniards, who detested that personage most warmly, and were in consequence predisposed to look unfavourably upon anyone she favoured. It is true, the new Queen, on arriving, drove out Madame des Ursins, but this showed her to be possessed of as much power as the woman she displaced, and when she began to exercise that power in other directions the popular dislike to her was increased. She made no effort to mitigate it—hating the Spaniards as much as they hated her—and it is incredible to what an extent this reciprocal aversion stretched.

When the Queen went out with the King to the chase or to the *atocha*, the people unceasingly cried, as well as the citizens in their shops, "Viva el Re y la Savoyana, y la Savoyana," and incessantly repeated, with all their lungs, "la Savoyana," which is the deceased Queen (I say this to prevent mistake), no voice ever crying "Viva la Reina." The Queen pretended to despise this, but inwardly raged (as people saw), she could not habituate herself to it. She has said to me very frequently and more than once: "The Spaniards do not like me, and in return I hate them," with an air of anger and of pique.



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These long details upon the daily life of the King and Queen may appear trivial, but they will not be judged so by those who know, as I do, what valuable information is to be gained from similar particulars. I will simply say in passing, that an experience of twenty years has convinced me that the knowledge of such details is the key to many others, and that it is always wanting in histories, often in memoirs the most interesting and instructive, but which would be much more so if they had not neglected this chapter, regarded by those who do not know its price, as a bagatelle unworthy of entering into a serious recital. Nevertheless, I am quite certain, that there is not a minister of state, a favourite, or a single person of whatever rank, initiated by his office into the domestic life of sovereigns, who will not echo my sentiments.

And now let me give a more distinct account of the King of Spain than I have yet written.

Philip V. was not gifted with superior understanding or with any stock of what is called imagination. He was cold, silent, sad, sober, fond of no pleasure except the chase, fearing society, fearing himself, unexpansive, a recluse by taste and habits, rarely touched by others, of good sense nevertheless, and upright, with a tolerably good knowledge of things, obstinate when he liked, and often then not to be moved; nevertheless, easy at other times to govern and influence.

He was cold. In his campaigns he allowed himself to be led into any position, even under a brisk fire, without budging in the slightest; nay, amusing himself by seeing whether anybody was afraid. Secured and removed from danger he was the same, without thinking that his glory could suffer by it. He liked to make war, but was indifferent whether he went there or not; and present or absent, left everything to the generals without doing anything himself.

He was extremely vain; could bear no opposition in any of his enterprises; and what made me judge he liked praise, was that the Queen invariably praised him—even his face; and asked me one day, at the end of an audience which had led us into conversation, if I did not think him very handsome, and more so than any one I knew?—His piety was only custom, scruples, fears, little observances, without knowing anything of religion: the Pope a divinity when not opposed to him; in fact he had the outside religion of the Jesuits, of whom he was passionately fond.

Although his health was very good, he always feared for it; he was always looking after it. A physician, such as the one Louis XI. enriched so much at the end of his life; a Maitre Coythier would have become a rich and powerful personage by his side; fortunately his physician was a thoroughly good and honourable man, and he who succeeded him devoted to the Queen. Philip V. could speak well—very well, but was often hindered by idleness and self-mistrust. To the audiences I had with him, however, he astonished



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me by the precision, the grace, the easiness of his words. He was good, easy to serve, familiar with a few. His love of France showed itself in everything. He preserved much gratitude and veneration for the deceased King, and tenderness for the late Monsieur; above all for the Dauphin, his brother, for whose loss he was never consoled. I noticed nothing in him towards any other of the royal family, except the King; and he never asked me concerning anybody in the Court, except, and then in a friendly manner, the Duchesse de Beauvilliers.

He had scruples respecting his crown, that can with difficulty be reconciled with the desire he had to return, in case of misfortune, to the throne of his fathers, which he had more than once so solemnly renounced. He believed himself an usurper! and in this idea nourished his desire to return to France, and abandon Spain and his scruples at one and the same time. It cannot be disguised that all this was very ill-arranged in his head, but there it was, and he would have abandoned Spain had it been possible, because he felt compelled by duty to do so. It was this feeling which principally induced him, after meditating upon it long before I arrived in Spain, to abdicate his throne in favour of his son. It was the same usurpation in his eyes, but not being able to obey his scruples, he contented himself by doing all he could in abdicating. It was still this feeling which, at the death of his son, troubled him so much, when he saw himself compelled to reascend the throne; though, during his abdication, that son had caused him not a little vexation. As may well be imagined, Philip V. never spoke of these delicate matters to me, but I was not less well informed of them elsewhere.

The Queen desired not less to abandon Spain, which she hated, and to return into France and reign, where she hoped to lead a life of less seclusion, and much more agreeable.

Notwithstanding all I have said, it is perfectly true that Philip V. was but little troubled by the wars he made, that he was fond of enterprises, and that his passion was to be respected and dreaded, and to figure grandly in Europe.

But let me now more particularly describe the Queen.

This princess had much intellect and natural graces, which she knew how to put to account. Her sense, her reflection, and her conduct, were guided by that intellect, from which she drew all the charms and, all the advantages possible. Whoever knew her was astonished to find how her intelligence and natural capacity supplied the place of her want of knowledge of the world, of persons, of affairs, upon all of which subjects, her garret life in Parma, and afterwards her secluded life with the King of Spain, hindered her from obtaining any real instruction. The perspicuity she possessed, which enabled her to see the right side of everything that came under her inspection, was undeniable, and this singular gift would have



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become developed in her to perfection if its growth had not been interrupted by the ill-humour she possessed; which it must be admitted the life she led was more than enough to give her. She felt her talent and her strength, but did not feel the fatuity and pride which weakened them and rendered them ridiculous. The current of her life was simple, smooth, with a natural gaiety even, which sparkled through the eternal restraint of her existence; and despite the ill-temper and the sharpness which this restraint without rest gave her, she was a woman ordinarily without pretension, and really charming.

When she arrived in Spain she was sure, in the first place, of driving away Madame des Ursins, and of filling-her place in the government at once. She seized that place, and took possession also of the King's mind, which she soon entirely ruled. As to public business, nothing could be hidden from her. The King always worked in her presence, never otherwise; all that he saw alone she read and discussed with him. She was always present at all the private audiences that he gave, whether to his subjects or to the foreign ministers; so that, as I have before remarked, nothing possibly could escape her.

As for the King, the eternal night and day tete-a-tete she had with him enabled her to sound him thoroughly, to know him by heart, so to speak. She knew perfectly the time for preparatory insinuations, their success; the resistance, when there was any, its course and how to overcome it; the moments for yielding, in order to return afterwards to the charge, and those for holding firm and carrying everything by force. She stood in need of all these intrigues, notwithstanding her credit with the King. If I may dare to say it, his temperament was her strong point, and she sometimes had recourse to it. Then her coldness excited tempests. The King cried and menaced; now and then went further; she held firm, wept, and sometimes defended herself. In the morning all was stormy. The immediate attendants acted towards King and Queen often without penetrating the cause of their quarrel. Peace was concluded at the first opportunity, rarely to the disadvantage of the Queen, who mostly had her own way.

A quarrel of this sort arose when I was at Madrid; and I was advised, after hearing details I will not repeat, to mix myself up in it, but I burst out laughing and took good care not to follow this counsel.

CHAPTER CXI.

The chase was every day the amusement of the King, and the Queen was obliged to make it hers. But it was always the same. Their Catholic Majesties did me the singular honour to invite me to it once, and I went in my coach. Thus I saw this pleasure well, and to see it once is to see it always. Animals to shoot are not met with in the plains.

They must be sought for among the mountains,—and there the ground is too rugged for hunting the stag,



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the wild boar, and other beasts as we hunt the hare,—and elsewhere. The plains even are so dry, so hard, so full of deep crevices (that are not perceived until their brink is reached), that the best hounds or harriers would soon be knocked up, and would have their feet blistered, nay lamed, for a long time. Besides, the ground is so thickly covered with sturdy vegetation that the hounds could not derive much help from their noses. Mere shooting on the wing the King had long since quitted, and he had ceased to mount his horse; thus the chase simply resolved itself into a battue.

The Duc del Orco, who, by his post of grand ecuyer, had the superintendence of all the hunting arrangements, chose the place where the King and Queen were to go. Two large arbours were erected there, the one against the other, entirely shut in, except where two large openings, like windows, were made, of breast-height. The King, the Queen, the captain of the guards, and the grand ecuyer were in the first arbour with about twenty guns and the wherewithal to load them. In the other arbour, the day I was present, were the Prince of the Asturias, who came in his coach with the Duc de Ponoli and the Marquis del Surco, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, the Duc Giovenazzo, majordomo, major and grand ecuyer to the Queen, Valouse, two or three officers of the body-guard, and I myself. We had a number of guns, and some men to load them. A single lady of the palace followed the Queen all alone, in another coach, which she did not quit; she carried with her, for her consolation, a book or some work, for no one approached her. Their Majesties and their suite went to the chase in hot haste with relays of guards and of coach horses, for the distance was at least three or four leagues; at the least double that from Paris to Versailles. The party alighted at the arbours, and immediately the carriages, the poor lady of the palace, and all the horses were led away far out of sight, lest they should frighten the beasts.

Two, three, four hundred peasants had early in the morning beaten the country round, with hue and cry, after having enclosed it and driven all the animals together as near these arbours as possible. When in the arbour you were not allowed to stir, or to make the slightest remarks, or to wear attractive colours; and everybody stood up in silence.

This period of expectation lasted an hour and a half, and did not appear to me very amusing. At last we heard loud cries from afar, and soon after we saw troops of animals pass and repass within shot and within half-shot of us; and then the King and the Queen banged away in good earnest. This diversion, or rather species of butchery, lasted more than half an hour, during which stags, hinds, roebucks, boars, hares, wolves, badgers, foxes, and numberless pole-cats passed; and were killed or lamed.



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We were obliged to let the King and Queen fire first, although pretty often they permitted the grand ecuyer and the captain of the guard to fire also; and as we did not know from whom came the report, we were obliged to wait until the King's arbour was perfectly silent; then let the Prince shoot, who very often had nothing to shoot at, and we still less. Nevertheless, I killed a fox, but a little before I ought to have done so, at which, somewhat ashamed, I made my excuses to the Prince of the Asturias, who burst out laughing, and the company also, I following their example and all passing very politely.

In proportion as the peasants approach and draw nearer each other, the sport advances, and it finishes when they all come close to the arbours, still shouting, and with nothing more behind them. Then the coaches return, the company quits the arbours, the beasts killed are laid before the King. They are placed afterwards behind the coaches. During all this, conversation respecting the sport rolls on. We carried away this day about a dozen or more beasts, some hares, foxes, and polecats. The night overtook us soon after we quitted the arbours.

And this is the daily diversion of their Catholic Majesties.

It is time now, however, to resume the thread of my narrative, from which these curious and little-known details have led me.

I have shown in its place the motive which made me desire my embassy; it was to obtain the 'grandesse' for my second son, and thus to "branch" my house. I also desired to obtain the Toison d'Or for my eldest son, that he might derive from this journey an ornament which, at his age, was a decoration. I had left Paris with full liberty to employ every aid, in order to obtain these things; I had, too, from M. le Duc d'Orleans, the promise that he would expressly ask the King of Spain for the former favour, employing the name of the King, and letters of the strongest kind from Cardinal Dubois to Grimaldo and Father Aubenton. In the midst of the turmoil of affairs I spoke to both of these persons, and was favourably attended to.

Grimaldo was upright and truthful. He conceived a real friendship for me, and gave me, during my stay at Madrid, all sorts of proofs of it. He said that this union of the two Courts by the two marriages might influence the ministers. His sole point of support, in order to maintain himself in the post he occupied, so brilliant and so envied, was the King of Spain. The Queen, he found, could never be a solid foundation on which to repose. He wished, then, to support himself upon France, or at least to have no opposition from it, and he perfectly well knew the duplicity and caprices of Cardinal Dubois. The Court of Spain, at all times so watchful over M. le Duc d'Orleans, in consequence of what had passed in the time of the Princesse des Ursins, and during the Regency, was not ignorant of the intimate and uninterrupted confidence of this prince in me,



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or of the terms on which I was with him. These sort of things appear larger than they are, when seen from afar, and the choice that had been made of me for this singular embassy confirmed it still more! Grimaldo, then, might have thought to assure my friendship in his behalf, and my influence with M. le Duc d'Orleans, occasion demanding it; and I don't think I am deceiving myself in attributing to him this policy while he aided me to obtain a favour, at bottom quite natural, and which could cause him no inconvenience.

I regarded the moment at which the marriage would be celebrated as that at which I stood most chance of obtaining what I desired, and I considered that if it passed over without result to me, all would grow cold, and become uncertain, and very disagreeable. I had forgotten nothing during this first stay in Madrid, in order to please everybody, and I make bold to say that I had all the better succeeded because I had tried to give weight and merit to my politeness, measuring it according to the persons I addressed, without prostitution and without avarice, and that's what made me hasten to learn all I could of the birth, of the dignities, of the posts, of the alliances, of the reputation of each, so as to play my cards well, and secure the game.

But still I needed the letters of M. le Duc d'Orleans, and of Cardinal Dubois. I did not doubt the willingness of the Regent, but I did doubt, and very much too, that of his minister. It has been seen what reason I had for this.

These letters ought to have arrived at Madrid at the same time that I did, but they had not come, and there seemed no prospect of their arriving. What redoubled my impatience was that I read them beforehand, and that I wished to have the time to reflect, and to turn round, in order to draw from them, in spite of them, all the help I could. I reckoned that these letters would be in a feeble spirit, and this opinion made me more desirous to fortify my batteries in Spain in order to render myself agreeable to the King and Queen, and to inspire them with the desire to grant me the favours I wished.

A few days before going to Lerma I received letters from Cardinal Dubois upon my affair. Nobody could be more eager or more earnest than the Cardinal, for he gave me advice how to arrive at my aim, and pressed me to look out for everything which could aid me; assuring me that his letters, and those of M. le Duc d'Orleans, would arrive in time. In the midst of the perfume of so many flowers, the odour of falsehood could nevertheless be smelt. I had reckoned upon this. I had done all in my power to supply the place of these letters. I received therefore not as gospel, all the marvels Dubois sent me, and I set out for Lerma fully resolved to more and more cultivate my affair without reckoning upon the letters promised me; but determined to draw as much advantage from them as I could.



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Upon arriving at Lerma I fell ill as I have described, and the small-pox kept me confined forty days: The letters so long promised and so long expected did not arrive until the end of my quarantine. They were just what I expected. Cardinal Dubois explained himself to Grimaldo in turns and circumlocution, and if one phrase displayed eagerness and desire, the next destroyed it by an air of respect and of discretion, protesting he wished simply what the King of Spain would himself wish, with all the seasoning necessary for the annihilation of his good offices under the pretence that he did not wish to press his Majesty to anything or to importune him.

This written stammering savoured of the bombast of a man who had no desire to serve me, but who, not daring to break his word, used all his wits to twist and overrate the little he could not hinder himself from saying. This letter was simply for Grimaldo, as the letter of M. le Duc d'Orleans was simply for the King of Spain. The last was even weaker than the first. It was like a design in pencil nearly effaced by the rain, and in which nothing, connected appeared. It scarcely touched upon the real point, but lost itself in respects, in reservations, in deference, and would propose nothing that was not according to the taste of the King! In a word, the letter withdrew rather than advanced, and was a sort of ease-conscience which could not be refused, and which did not promise much success.

It is easy to understand that these letters much displeased me. Although I had anticipated all the malice of Cardinal Dubois, I found it exceeded my calculations, and that it was more undisguised than I imagined it would be.

Such as the letters were I was obliged to make use of them. The Abbe de Saint-Simon wrote to Grimaldo and to Sartine, enclosing these letter, for I myself did not yet dare to write on account of the precautions I was obliged to use against the bad air. Sartine and Grimaldo, to whom I had not confided my suspicions that these recommendations would be in a very weak tone, were thrown into the utmost surprise on reading them.

They argued together, they were indignant, they searched for a bias to strengthen that which had so much need of strength, but this bias could not be found; they consulted together, and Grimaldo formed a bold resolution, which astonished me to the last degree, and much troubled me also.

He came to the conclusion that these letters would assuredly do me more harm than good; that they must be suppressed, never spoken of to the King, who must be confirmed without them in the belief that in according me these favours he would confer upon M. le Duc d'Orleans a pleasure, all the greater, because he saw to what point extended all his reserve in not speaking to him about this matter, and mine in not asking for these favours through his Royal Highness, as there was every reason to believe I should do. Grimaldo proposed to draw from these circumstances all the benefit he proposed to have drawn from the letters had they been written in a fitting spirit, and he said he would answer for it; I should have the 'grandesse' and the 'Toison d'Or' without

making the slightest allusion to the cold recommendations of M. le Duc d'Orleans to the King of Spain, and of Dubois to him.

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Sartine, by his order, made this known to the Abbe de Saint-Simon, who communicated it to me, and after having discussed together with Hyghens, who knew the ground as well as they, and who had really devoted himself to me, I blindly abandoned myself to the guidance and friendship of Grimaldo, with full success, as will be seen.

In relating here the very singular fashion by which my affair succeeded, I am far indeed from abstracting from M. le Duc d'Orleans all gratitude. If he had not confided to me the double marriage, without the knowledge of Dubois, and in spite of the secrecy that had been asked for, precisely on my account, I should not have been led to beg of him the embassy.

I instantly asked for it, declaring that my sole aim was the grandesse for my second son, and he certainly accorded it to me with this aim, and promised to aid me with his recommendation in order to arrive at it, but with the utmost secrecy on account of the vexation Dubois would feel, and in order to give himself time to arrange with the minister and induce him to swallow the pill.

If I had not had the embassy in this manner, it would certainly have escaped me; and thus would have been lost all hope of the grandesse, to obtain which there would have been no longer occasion, reason, or means.

The friendship and the confidence of this prince prevailed then over the witchery which his miserable preceptor had cast upon him, and if he afterwards yielded to the roguery, to the schemes, to the folly which Dubois employed in the course of this embassy to ruin and disgrace me, and to bring about the failure of the sole object which had made me desire it, we must only blame his villainy and the deplorable feebleness of M. le Duc d'Orleans, which caused me many sad embarrassments, and did so much harm, but which even did more harm to the state and to the prince himself.

It is with this sad but only too true reflection that I finish the year 1721.

CHAPTER CXII

The Regent's daughter arrived in Spain at the commencement of the year 1722, and it was arranged that her marriage with the Prince of the Asturias should be celebrated on the 30th of January at Lerma, where their Catholic Majesties were then staying. It was some little distance from my house. I was obliged therefore to start early in the morning in order to arrive in time. On the way I paid a visit of ceremony to the Princess, at Cogollos, ate a mouthful of something, and turned off to Lerma.

As soon as I arrived there, I went to the Marquis of Grimaldo's apartments. His chamber was at the end of a vast room, a piece of which had been portioned off, in order to serve as a chapel. Once again I had to meet the nuncio, and I feared lest he



should remember what had passed on a former occasion, and that I should give Dubois a handle for complaint. I saw, therefore, but very imperfectly, the reception of the Princess; to meet whom the King and Queen (who lodged below) and the Prince precipitated themselves, so to speak, almost to the steps of the coach. I quietly went up again to the chapel.



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The prie-dieu of the King was placed in front of the altar, a short distance from the steps, precisely as the King's prie-dieu is placed at Versailles, but closer to the altar, and with a cushion on each side of it. The chapel was void of courtiers. I placed myself to the right of the King's cushion just beyond the edge of the carpet, and amused myself there better than I had expected. Cardinal Borgia, pontifically clad, was in the corner, his face turned towards me, learning his lesson between two chaplains in surplices, who held a large book open in front of him. The good prelate did not know how to read; he tried, however, and read aloud, but inaccurately. The chaplains took him up, he grew angry, scolded them, recommenced, was again corrected, again grew angry, and to such an extent that he turned round upon them and shook them by their surplices. I laughed as much as I could; for he perceived nothing, so occupied and entangled was he with his lesson.

Marriages in Spain are performed in the afternoon, and commence at the door of the church, like baptisms. The King, the Queen, the Prince, and the Princess arrived with all the Court, and the King was announced. "Let them wait," said the Cardinal in choler, "I am not ready." They waited, in fact, and the Cardinal continued his lesson, redder than his hat, and still furious. At last he went to the door, at which a ceremony took place that lasted some time. Had I not been obliged to continue at my post, curiosity would have made me follow him. That I lost some amusement is certain, for I saw the King and Queen laughing and looking at their prie-dieu, and all the Court laughing also. The nuncio arriving and seeing by the position I had taken up that I was preceding him, again indicated his surprise to me by gestures, repeating, "Signor, signor;" but I had resolved to understand nothing, and laughingly pointed out the Cardinal to him, and reproached him for not having better instructed the worthy prelate for the honour of the Sacred College. The nuncio understood French very well, but spoke it very badly. This banter and the innocent air with which I gave it, without appearing to notice his demonstrations, created such a fortunate diversion, that nobody else was thought of; more especially as the poor cardinal more and more caused amusement while continuing the ceremony, during which he neither knew where he was nor what he was doing, being taken up and corrected every moment by his chaplains, and fuming against them so that neither the King nor the Queen could; contain themselves. It was the same with everybody else who witnessed the scene.

I could see nothing more than the back of the Prince and the Princess as they knelt each upon a cushion between the prie-dieu and the altar, the Cardinal in front making grimaces indicative of the utmost confusion. Happily all I had to think of was the nuncio, the King's majordomo-major having placed himself by the side of his son, captain of the guards. The grandees were crowded around with the most considerable people: the rest filled all the chapel so that there was no stirring.



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Amidst the amusement supplied to us by the poor Cardinal, I remarked extreme satisfaction in the King and Queen at seeing this grand marriage accomplished. The ceremony finished, as it was not long, only the King, the Queen, and, when necessary, the Prince and Princess kneeling, their Catholic Majesties rose and withdrew towards the left corner of their footcloth, talked together for a short time, after which the Queen remained where she was, and the King advanced to me, I being where I had been during all the ceremony.

The King did me the honour to say to me, "Monsieur, in every respect I am so pleased with you, and particularly for the manner in which you have acquitted yourself of your embassy, that I wish to give you some marks of my esteem, of my satisfaction; of my friendship. I make you Grandee of Spain of the first class; you, and, at the same time, whichever of your sons you may wish to have the same distinction; and your eldest son I will make chevalier of the Toison d'Or."

I immediately embraced his knees, and I tried to testify to him my gratitude and my extreme desire to render myself worthy of the favour he deigned to spread upon me, by my attachment, my very humble services, and my most profound respect. Then I kissed his hand, turned and sent for my children, employing the moments which had elapsed before they came in uttering fresh thanks. As soon as my sons appeared, I called the younger and told him, to embrace the knees of the King who overwhelmed us with favours, and made him grandee of Spain with me. He kissed the King's hand in rising, the King saying he was very glad of what he had just done. I presented the elder to him afterwards, to thank him for the Toison. He simply bent very low and kissed the King's hand. As soon as this was at an end, the King went towards the Queen, and I followed him with my children. I bent very low before the Queen, thanked her, then presented to her my children, the younger first, the elder afterwards. The Queen received us with much goodness, said a thousand civil things, then walked away with the King, followed by the Prince, having upon his arm the Princess, whom we saluted in passing; and they returned to their apartments. I wished to follow them, but was carried away, as it were, by the crowd which pressed eagerly around me to compliment me. I was very careful to reply in a fitting manner to each, and with the utmost politeness, and though I but little expected these favours at this moment, I found afterwards that all this numerous court was pleased with me.

A short time after the celebration of the marriage between the Regent's daughter and the Prince of the Asturias, the day came on which my eldest son was to receive the Toison d'Or. The Duc de Liria was to be his, godfather, and it was he who conducted us to the place of ceremony. His carriage was drawn by four perfectly beautiful Neapolitan horses; but these animals, which are often extremely fantastical,



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would not stir. The whip was vigorously applied; results—rearing, snorting, fury, the carriage in danger of being upset. Time was flying; I begged the Duc de Liria, therefore, to get into my carriage, so that we might not keep the King and the company waiting for us. It was in vain I represented to him that this function of godfather would in no way be affected by changing his own coach for mine, since it would be by necessity. He would not listen to me. The horses continued their game for a good half hour before they consented to start.

All my cortege followed us, for I wished by this display to show the King of Spain how highly I appreciated the honours of his Court. On the way the horses again commenced their pranks. I again pressed the Duc de Liria to change his coach, and he again refused. Fortunately the pause this time was much shorter than at first; but before we reached the end of our journey there came a message to say that the King was waiting for us. At last we arrived, and as soon as the King was informed of it he entered the room where the chapter of the order was assembled. He straightway sat himself down in an armchair, and while the rest of the company were placing themselves in position; the Queen, the Princess of the Asturias, and their suite, seated themselves as simple spectators at the end of the room.

All the chapter having arranged themselves in order, the door in front of the King, by which we had entered, was closed, my son remaining outside with a number of the courtiers. Then the King covered himself, and all the chevaliers at the same time, in the midst of a silence, without sign, which lasted as long as a little prayer. After this, the King very briefly proposed that the Vidame de Chartres should be received into the order. All the chevaliers uncovered themselves, made an inclination, without rising, and covered themselves again. After another silence, the King called the Duc de Liria, who uncovered himself, and with a reverence approached the King; by whom he was thus addressed: "Go and see if the Vidame de Chartres is not somewhere about here."

The Duc de Liria made another reverence to the King, but none to the chevaliers (who, nevertheless, were uncovered at the same time as he), went away, the door was closed upon him, and the chevaliers covered themselves again. The reverences just made, and those I shall have occasion to speak of in the course of my description, were the same as are seen at the receptions of the chevaliers of the Saint-Esprit, and in all grand ceremonies.

The Duc de Liria remained outside nearly a quarter of an hour, because it is assumed that the new chevalier is ignorant of the proposition made for him, and that it is only by chance he is found in the palace, time being needed in order to look for him. The Duc de Liria returned, and immediately after the door was again closed, and he advanced to the King, as before, saying that the Vidame de Chartres was in the other room.



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Upon this the King ordered him to go and ask the Vidame if he wished to accept the Order of the Toison d'Or, and be received into it, and undertake to observe its statutes, its duties, its ceremonies, take its oaths, promise to fulfil all the conditions submitted: to every one who is admitted into it, and agree to conduct himself in everything like a good, loyal, brave, and virtuous chevalier. The Duc de Liria withdrew as he had before withdrawn. The door was again closed. He returned after having been absent a shorter time than at first. The door was again closed, and he approached the King as before, and announced to him the consent and the thanks of the Vidame. "Very well," replied the King. "Go seek him, and bring him here."

The Duc de Liria withdrew, as on the previous occasions, and immediately returned, having my son on his left. The door being open, anybody was at liberty to enter, and see the ceremony.

The Duc de Liria conducted my son to the feet of the King, and then seated himself in his place. My son, in advancing, had lightly inclined himself to the chevaliers, right and left; and, after having made in the middle of the room a profound bow, knelt before the King, without quitting his sword, and having his hat under his arm, and no gloves on. The chevaliers, who had uncovered themselves at the entry of the Duc de Liria, covered themselves when he sat down; and the Prince of the Asturias acted precisely as they acted.

The King repeated to my son the same things, a little more lengthily, that had been said to him by the Duc de Liria, and received his promise upon each in succession. Afterwards, an attendant, who was standing in waiting behind the table, presented to the King, from between the table and the chair, a large book, open, and in which was a long oath, that my son repeated to the King, who had the book upon his knees, the oath in French, and on loose paper; being in it. This ceremony lasted rather a long time: Afterwards, my son kissed the King's hand, and the King made him rise and pass, without reverence; directly before the table, towards the middle of which he knelt, his back to the Prince of the Asturias, his face to the attendant, who showed him (the table being between them) what to do. There was upon this table a great crucifix of enamel upon a stand, with a missal open at the Canon, the Gospel of Saint-John, and forms, in French, of promises and oaths to be made, whilst putting the hand now upon the Canon, now upon the Gospel. The oath-making took up some time; after which my son came back and knelt before the King again as before.

Then, the Duc del Orco, grand ecuyer, and Valouse, premier ecuyer, who have had the Toison since, and who were near me, went away, the Duke first, Valouse behind him, carrying in his two hands, with marked care and respect, the sword of the Grand Captain, Don Gonzalvo de Cordova, who is never called otherwise. They walked, with measured step, outside the right-hand seats of the chevaliers, then entered the chapter, where the Duc de Liria had entered with my son, marched inside the left-hand seats of

the chevaliers, without reverence, but the Duke inclining himself; Valouse not doing so on account of the respect due to the sword; the grandees did not incline themselves.



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The Duke on arriving between the Prince of the Asturias and the King, knelt, and Valouse knelt behind him. Some moments after, the King made a sign to them; Valouse drew the sword from its sheath which he put under his arm, held the naked weapon by the middle of the blade, kissed the hilt, and presented it to the King, who, without uncovering himself, kissed the pommel, took the sword in both hands by the handle, held it upright some moments; then held it with one hand, but almost immediately with the other as well, and struck it three times upon each shoulder of my son, alternately, saying to him, "By Saint-George and Saint-Andrew I make you Chevalier." And the weight of the sword was so great that the blows did not fall lightly. While the King was striking them, the grand ecuyer and the premier remained in their places kneeling. The sword was returned as it had been presented, and kissed in the same manner. Valouse put it back into its sheath, after which the grand ecuyer and the premier ecuyer returned as they came.

This sword, handle included, was more than four feet long; the blade four good digits wide, thick in proportion, insensibly diminishing in thickness and width to the point, which was very small. The handle appeared to me of worked enamel, long and very large; as well as the pommel; the crossed piece long, and the two ends wide, even, worked, without branch. I examined it well, and I could not hold it in the air with one-hand, still less handle it with both hands except with much difficulty. It is pretended that this is the sword the Great Captain made use of, and with which he obtained so many victories.

I marvelled at the strength of the men in those days, with whom I believe early habits did much. I was touched by the grand honour rendered to the Great Captain's memory; his sword becoming the sword of the State, carried even by the King with great respect. I repeated, more than once, that if I were the Duc de Scose (who descends in a direct line from the Great Captain by the female branch, the male being extinct), I would leave nothing undone to obtain the Toison, in order to enjoy the honour and the sensible pleasure of being struck by this sword, and with such great respect for my ancestor. But to return to the ceremony from which this little digression has taken me.

The accolade being given by the King after the blows with the sword, fresh oaths being taken at his feet, then before the table as at first, and on this occasion at greater length, my son returned and knelt before the King, but without saying anything more. Then Grimaldo rose and, without reverence, left the chapter by the left, went behind the right-hand seats of the chevaliers, and took the collar of the Toison which was extended at the end of the table. At this moment the King told my son to rise, and so remain standing in the same place. The Prince of the Asturias, and the Marquis de Villena then rose also,



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end approached my son, both covered, all the other chevaliers remaining seated and covered. Then Grimaldo, passing between the table and the empty seat of the Prince of the Asturias, presented; standing, the collar to the King, who took it with both hands, and meanwhile Grimaldo, passing behind the Prince of the Asturias, went and placed himself behind my son. As soon as he was there, the King told my son to bend very low, but without kneeling, and then leaning forward, but without rising, placed the collar upon him, and made him immediately after stand upright. The King then took hold of the collar, simply holding the end of it in his hand. At the same time, the collar was attached to the left shoulder by the Prince of the Asturias, to the right shoulder by the Marquis de Villena, and behind by Grimaldo; the King still holding the end.

When the collar was attached, the Prince of the Asturias, the Marquis de Villena, and Grimaldo, without making a reverence and no chevalier uncovering himself, went back to their places, and sat down; at the same moment my son knelt before the King, and bared, his head. Then the Duc de Liria, without reverence, and uncovered (no chevalier uncovering himself), placed himself before the King at the left, by the side of my, son, and both made their reverences to the King; turned round to the Prince of the Asturias, did the same to him, he rising and doing my son the honour to embrace him, and as soon as he was reseated they made a reverence to him; then, turning to the King, made him one; afterwards they did the same to the Marquis de Villena, who rose and embraced my son. Then he reseated himself; upon which they made a reverence to him, then turning again towards the King, made another to him; and so an from right to left until every chevalier had been bowed to in a similar manner. Then my son sat down, and the Duc de Liria returned to his place.

After this long series of bows, so bewildering for those who play the chief part in it, the King remained a short time in his armchair, then rose, uncovered himself, and retired into his apartment as he came. I had instructed my son to hurry forward and arrive before him at the door of his inner apartment. He was in time, and I also, to kiss the hand of the King, and to express our thanks, which were well received. The Queen arrived and overwhelmed us with compliments. I must observe that the ceremony of the sword and the accolade are not performed at the reception of those who, having already another order, are supposed to have received them; like the chevaliers of the Saint-Esprit and of Saint-Michel, and the chevaliers of Saint-Louis.



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Their Catholic Majesties being gone, we withdrew to my house, where a very grand dinner was prepared. The usage is, before the reception, to visit all the chevaliers of the Toison, and when the day is fixed, to visit all those invited to dinner on the day of the ceremony; the godfather, with the other chevalier by whom he is accompanied, also invites them at the palace before they enter the chapter, and aids the new chevalier to do the honours of the repast. I had led my son with me to pay these visits. Nearly all the chevaliers came to dine with us, and many other nobles. The Duc d'Albuquerque, whom I met pretty often, and who had excused himself from attending a dinner I had previously given, on account of his stomach (ruined as he said in the Indies), said he, would not refuse me twice, on condition that I permitted him to take nothing but soup, because meat was too solid for him. He came, and partook of six sorts of soup, moderately of all; he afterwards lightly soaked his bread in such ragouts as were near him, eating only the end, and finding everything very good. He drank nothing but wine and water. The dinner was gay, in spite of the great number of guests. The Spaniards eat as much as, nay more than, we, and with taste, choice, and pleasure: as to drink, they are very modest.

On the 13th of March, 1722, their Catholic Majesties returned from their excursion to the Retiro. The hurried journey I had just made to the former place, immediately after the arrival of a courier, and in spite of most open prohibitions forbidding every one to go there, joined to the fashion, full of favour and goodness, with which I had been distinguished by their Majesties ever since my arrival in Spain, caused a most ridiculous rumour to obtain circulation, and which, to my great surprise, at once gained much belief.

It was reported there that I was going to quit my position of ambassador from France, and be declared prime minister of Spain! The people who had been pleased, apparently, with the expense I had kept up, and to whom not one of my suite had given the slightest cause of complaint, set to crying after me in the streets; announcing my promotion, displaying joy at it, and talking of it even in the shops. A number of persons even assembled round my house to testify to me their pleasure. I dispersed them as civilly and as quickly as possible, assuring them the report was not true, and that I was forthwith about to return to France.

This was nothing more than the truth. I had finished all my business. It was time to think about setting out. As soon, however, as I talked about going, there was nothing which the King and the Queen did not do to detain me. All the Court, too, did me the favour to express much friendship for me, and regret at my departure. I admit even that I could not easily make up my mind to quit a country where I had found nothing but fruits and flowers, and to which I was attached, as I shall ever be, by



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esteem and gratitude. I made at once a number of farewell visits among the friends I had been once acquainted with; and on the 21st of March I had my parting state audiences of the King and Queen separately. I was surprised with the dignity, the precision, and the measure of the King's expressions, as I had been surprised at my first audience. I received many marks of personal goodness, and of regret at my departure from his Catholic Majesty, and from the Queen even more; from the Prince of the Asturias a good many also. But in another direction I met with very different treatment, which I cannot refrain from describing, however ridiculous it may appear.

I went, of course, to say my adieux to the Princess of the Asturias, and I was accompanied by all my suite. I found the young lady standing under a dais, the ladies on one side, the grandees on the other; and I made my three reverences, then uttered my compliments. I waited in silence her reply, but 'twas in vain. She answered not one word.

After some moments of silence, I thought I would furnish her with matter for an answer; so I asked her what orders she had for the King; for the Infanta, for Madame, and for M. and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans. By way of reply, she looked at me and belched so loudly in my face, that the noise echoed throughout the chamber. My surprise was such that I was stupefied. A second belch followed as noisy as the first.

I lost countenance at this, and all power of hindering myself from laughing. Turning round, therefore, I saw everybody with their hands upon their mouths, and their shoulders in motion. At last a third belch, still louder than the two others, threw all present into confusion, and forced me to take flight, followed by all my suite, amid shouts of laughter, all the louder because they had previously been kept in. But all barriers of restraint were now thrown down; Spanish gravity was entirely disconcerted; all was deranged; no reverences; each person, bursting with laughter, escaped as he could, the Princess all the while maintaining her countenance. Her belches were the only answers she made me. In the adjoining room we all stopped to laugh at our ease, and express our astonishment afterwards more freely.

The King and Queen were soon informed of the success of this audience, and spoke of it to me after dinner at the Racket Court. They were the first to laugh at it, so as to leave others at liberty to do so too; a privilege that was largely made use of without pressing. I received and I paid numberless visits; and as it is easy to flatter one's self, I fancied I might flatter myself that I was regretted.



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I left Madrid on the 24th of March, after having had the honour of paying my court to their Catholic Majesties all the afternoon at the Racket Court, they overwhelming me with civilities, and begging me to take a final adieu of them in their apartments. I had devoted the last few days to the friends whom, during my short stay of six months, I had made. Whatever might be the joy and eagerness I felt at the prospect of seeing Madame de Saint-Simon and my Paris friends again, I could not quit Spain without feeling my heart moved, or without regretting persons from whom I had received so many marks of goodness, and for whom, all I had seen of the nation, had made me conceive esteem, respect, and gratitude. I kept up, for many years, a correspondence with Grimaldo, while he lived, in fact, and after his fall and disgrace, which occurred long after my departure, with more care and attention than formerly. My attachment, full of respect and gratitude for the King and Queen of Spain, induced me to do myself the honour of writing to them on all occasions. They often did me the honour to reply to me; and always charged their new ministers in France and the persons of consideration who came there, to convey to me the expression of their good feeling for me.

After a journey without particular incident, I embarked early one morning upon the Garonne, and soon arrived at Bordeaux. The jurats did me the honour to ask, through Segur, the under-mayor, at what time they might come and salute me. I invited them to supper, and said to Segur that compliments would be best uttered glass in hand. They came, therefore, to supper, and appeared to me much pleased with this civility: On the morrow, the tide early carried me to Blaye, the weather being most delightful. I slept only one night there, and to save time did not go to Ruffec.

On the 13th of April, I arrived, about five o'clock in the afternoon, at Loches. I slept there because I wished to write a volume of details to the Duchesse de Beauvilliers, who was six leagues off, at one of her estates. I sent my packet by an express, and in this manner I was able to say what I liked to her without fearing that the letter would be opened.

On the morrow, the 14th, I arrived at Etampes, where I slept, and the 15th, at ten o'clock in the morning, I reached Chartres, where Madame de Saint-Simon was to meet me, dine, and sleep, so that we might have the pleasure of opening our hearts to each other, and of finding ourselves together again in solitude and in liberty, greater than could be looked for in Paris during the first few days of my return. The Duc d'Humieres and Louville came with her. She arrived an hour after me, fixing herself in the little chateau of the Marquis d'Arpajan, who had lent it to her, and where the day appeared to us very short as well as the next morning, the 16th of April.

To conclude the account of my journey, let me say that I arrived in Paris shortly after, and at once made the best of my way to the Palais Royal, where M. le Duc d'Orleans gave me a sincere and friendly welcome.

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