

# **Memoirs of the Courts of Louis XV and XVI. Being secret memoirs of Madame Du Hausset, lady's maid to Madame de Pompadour, and of the Princess Lamballe — Volume 1 eBook**

## **Memoirs of the Courts of Louis XV and XVI. Being secret memoirs of Madame Du Hausset, lady's maid to Madame de Pompadour, and of the Princess Lamballe — Volume 1**

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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“It Was an Indigestion

Madame du Hausset

Madame de Pompadour

Madame Adelaide

Madame Sophie

Madame Elizabeth

Mirabeau and the Queen

Princess de Lamballe

Marie Antoinette in the Temple

Interviewing Little Louis

Marie Antoinette to the Guillotine

## ADVERTISEMENT.

[*From the London Magazine, no. III. New series P. 439.*]

We were obliged by circumstances, at one time, to read all the published memoirs relative to the reign of Louis XV., and had the opportunity of reading many others which may not see the light for a long time yet to come, as their publication at present would materially militate against the interest of the descendants of the writers; and we have no hesitation in saying that the Memoirs of Madame du Hausset are the only perfectly sincere ones amongst all those we know. Sometimes, Madame du Hausset mistakes, through ignorance, but never does she wilfully mislead, like Madame Campan, nor keep back a secret, like Madame Roland, and *mm.* Bezenval and Ferreires; nor is she ever betrayed by her vanity to invent, like the Due de Lauzun, *mm.* Talleyrand, Bertrand de Moleville, Marmontel, Madame d'Epinau, *etc.* When Madame du Hausset is found in contradiction with other memoirs of the same period, we should never hesitate to give her account the preference. Whoever is desirous of accurately knowing the reign of Louis XV. should run over the very wretched history of Lacreteille, merely for the, dates, and afterwards read the two hundred pages of the naive du Hausset, who, in every half



page, overturns half a dozen misstatements of this hollow rhetorician. Madame du Hausset was often separated from the little and obscure chamber in the Palace of Versailles, where resided the supreme power, only by a slight door or curtain, which permitted her to hear all that was said there. She had for a 'cher ami' the greatest practical philosopher of that period, Dr. Quesnay, the founder of political economy. He was physician to Madame de Pompadour, and one of the sincerest and most single-hearted of men probably in Paris at the time. He explained to Madame du Hausset many things that, but for his assistance, she would have witnessed without understanding.

## **INTRODUCTION.**

A friend of M. de Marigny (the brother of Madame de Pompadour) called on him one day and found him burning papers. Taking up a large packet which he was going to throw into the fire "This," said he, "is the journal of a waiting-woman of my sister's. She was a very estimable person, but it is all gossip; to the fire with it!" He stopped, and added, "Don't you think I am a little like the curate and the barber burning Don Quixote's romances?"—"I beg for mercy on this," said his friend. "I am fond of anecdotes, and I shall be sure to find some here which will interest me." "Take it, then," said M. de Marigny, and gave it him.



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The handwriting and the spelling of this journal are very bad. It abounds in tautology and repetitions. Facts are sometimes inverted in the order of time; but to remedy all these defects it would have been necessary to recast the whole, which would have completely changed the character of the work. The spelling and punctuation were, however, corrected in the original, and some explanatory notes added.

Madame de Pompadour had two waiting-women of good family. The one, Madame du Hausset, who did not change her name; and another, who assumed a name, and did not publicly announce her quality. This journal is evidently the production of the former.

The amours of Louis XV. were, for a long time, covered with the veil of mystery. The public talked of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, but were acquainted with none of its details. Louis XIV., who, in the early part of his reign, had endeavoured to conceal his attachments, towards the close of it gave them a publicity which in one way increased the scandal; but his mistresses were all women of quality, entitled by their birth to be received at Court. Nothing can better describe the spirit of the time and the character of the Monarch than these words of Madame de Montespan:

“He does not love me,” said she, “but he thinks he owes it to his subjects and to his own greatness to have the most beautiful woman in his kingdom as his mistress.”

### SECRET MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XV., AND MEMOIRS OF MADAME DU HAUSSET.

An early friend of mine, who married well at Paris, and who has the reputation of being a very clever woman, has often asked me to write down what daily passed under my notice; to please her, I made little notes, of three or four lines each, to recall to my memory the most singular or interesting facts; as, for instance—attempt to assassinate the King; he orders Madame de Pompadour to leave the Court; M. de Machaudt’s ingratitude, *etc.*—I always promised my friend that I would, some time or other, reduce all these materials into the form of a regular narrative. She mentioned the “Recollections of Madame de Caylus,” which were, however, not then printed; and pressed me so much to produce a similar work, that I have taken advantage of a few leisure moments to write this, which I intend to give her, in order that she may arrange it and correct the style. I was for a long time about the person of Madame de Pompadour, and my birth procured for me respectful treatment from herself, and from some distinguished persons who conceived a regard for me. I soon became the intimate friend of Doctor Quesnay, who frequently came to pass two or three hours with me.

His house was frequented by people of all parties, but the number was small, and restricted to those who were on terms of greatest intimacy with him. All subjects were handled with the utmost freedom, and it is infinitely to his honour and theirs that nothing was ever repeated.



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The Countess D---- also visited me. She was a frank and lively woman, and much liked by Madame de Pompadour. The Baschi family paid me great attention. M. de Marigny had received some little services from me, in the course of the frequent quarrels between him and his sister, and he had a great friendship for me. The King was in the constant habit of seeing me; and an accident, which I shall have occasion to relate, rendered him very familiar with me. He talked without any constraint when I was in the room. During Madame de Pompadour's illness I scarcely ever left her chamber, and passed the night there. Sometimes, though rarely, I accompanied her in her carriage with Doctor Quesnay, to whom she scarcely spoke a word, though he was—a man of great talents. When I was alone with her, she talked of many affairs which nearly concerned her, and she once said to me, “The King and I have such implicit confidence in you, that we look upon you as a cat, or a dog, and go on talking as if you were not there.” There was a little nook, adjoining her chamber, which has since been altered, where she knew I usually sat when I was alone, and where I heard everything that was said in the room, unless it was spoken in a low voice. But when the King wanted to speak to her in private, or in the presence of any of his Ministers, he went with her into a closet, by the side of the chamber, whither she also retired when she had secret business with the Ministers, or with other important persons; as, for instance, the Lieutenant of Police, the Postmaster-General, *etc.* All these circumstances brought to my knowledge a great many things which probity will neither allow me to tell or to record. I generally wrote without order of time, so that a fact may be related before others which preceded it. Madame de Pompadour had a great friendship for three Ministers; the first was M. de Machault, to whom she was indebted for the regulation of her income, and the payment of her debts. She gave him the seals, and he retained the first place in her regard till the attempt to assassinate the King. Many people said that his conduct on that occasion was not attributable to bad intentions; that he thought it his duty to obey the King without making himself in any way a party to the affair, and that his cold manners gave him the appearance of an indifference which he did not feel. Madame de Pompadour regarded him in the light of a faithless friend; and, perhaps, there was some justice on both sides. But for the Abbe de Bernis; M. de Machault might, probably, have retained his place.



The second Minister, whom Madame de Pompadour liked, was the Abbe de Bernis. She was soon disgusted with him when she saw the absurdity of his conduct. He gave a singular specimen of this on the very day of his dismissal. He had invited a great many people of distinction to a splendid entertainment, which was to have taken place on the very day when he received his order of banishment, and had written in the notes of invitation—M. Le Comte de Lusace will be there. This Count was the brother of the Dauphine, and this mention of him was deservedly thought impertinent. The King said, wittily enough, “Lambert and Moliere will be there.” She scarcely ever spoke of the Cardinal de Bernis after his dismissal from the Court.

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He was extremely ridiculous, but he was a good sort of man. Madame, the Infanta, died a little time before, and, by the way, of such a complication of putrid and malignant diseases, that the Capuchins who bore the body, and the men who committed it to the grave, were overcome by the effluvia. Her papers appeared no less impure in the eyes of the King. He discovered that the Abbe de Bernis had been intriguing with her, and that they had deceived him, and had obtained the Cardinal's hat by making use of his name. The King was so indignant that he was very near refusing him the barrette. He did grant it—but just as he would have thrown a bone to a dog. The Abbe had always the air of a protege when he was in the company of Madame de Pompadour. She had known him in positive distress. The Due de Choiseul was very differently situated; his birth, his air, his manners, gave him claims to consideration, and he far exceeded every other man in the art of ingratiating himself with Madame de Pompadour. She looked upon him as one of the most illustrious nobles of the Court, as the most able Minister, and the most agreeable man. M. de Choiseul had a sister and a wife, whom he had introduced to her, and who sedulously cultivated her favourable sentiments towards him. From the time he was Minister, she saw only with his eyes; he had the talent of amusing her, and his manners to women, generally, were extremely agreeable.

Two persons—the Lieutenant of Police and the Postmaster-General—were very much in Madame de Pompadour's confidence; the latter, however, became less necessary to her from the time that the King communicated to M. de Choiseul the secret of the post-office, that is to say, the system of opening letters and extracting matter from them: this had never been imparted to M. d'Argenson, in spite of the high favour he enjoyed. I have heard that M. de Choiseul abused the confidence reposed in him, and related to his friends the ludicrous stories, and the love affairs, contained in the letters which were broken open. The plan they pursued, as I have heard, was very simple. Six or seven clerks of the post-office picked out the letters they were ordered to break open, and took the impression of the seals with a ball of quicksilver. Then they put each letter, with the seal downwards, over a glass of hot water, which melted the wax without injuring the paper. It was then opened, the desired matter extracted, and it was sealed again, by means of the impression. This is the account of the matter I have heard. The Postmaster-General carried the extracts to the King on Sundays. He was seen coming and going on this noble errand as openly as the Ministers. Doctor Quesnay often, in my presence, flew in such a rage about that infamous Minister, as he called him, that he foamed at the mouth. "I would as soon dine with the hangman as with the Postmaster-General," said the Doctor. It must be acknowledged that this was astonishing language to be uttered in the apartments of the King's mistress; yet it went on for twenty years without being talked of. "It was probity speaking with earnestness," said M. de Marigny, "and not a mere burst of spite or malignity."



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The Duc de Gontaut was the brother-in-law and friend of M. de Choiseul, and was assiduous in his attendance on Madame de Pompadour. The sister of M. de Choiseul, Madame de Grammont, and his wife were equally constant in their attentions. This will sufficiently account for the ascendancy of M. de Choiseul, whom nobody would have ventured to attack. Chance, however, discovered to me a secret correspondence of the King, with a man in a very obscure station. This man, who had a place in the Farmers General, of from two to three hundred a year, was related to one of the young ladies of the Parc-aux-cerfs, by whom he was recommended to the King. He was also connected in some way with M. de Broglie, in whom the King placed great confidence. Wearied with finding that this correspondence procured him no advancement, he took the resolution of writing to me, and requesting an interview, which I granted, after acquainting Madame de Pompadour with the circumstance. After a great deal of preamble and of flattery, he said to me, "Can you give me your word of honour, and that of Madame de Pompadour, that no mention whatever of what I am going to tell you will be made to the King?"—"I think I can assure you that, if you require such a promise from Madame de Pompadour, and if it can produce no ill consequence to the King's service, she will give it you." He gave me his word that what he requested would have no bad effect; upon which I listened to what he had to say. He shewed me several memorials, containing accusations of M. de Choiseul, and revealed some curious circumstances relative to the secret functions of the Comte de Broglie. These, however, led rather to conjectures than to certainty, as to the nature of the services he rendered to the King. Lastly, he shewed me several letters in the King's handwriting. "I request," said he, "that the Marquise de Pompadour will procure for me the place of Receiver-General of Finances; I will give her information of whatever I send the King; I will write according to her instructions, and I will send her his answers." As I did not choose to take liberties with the King's papers, I only undertook to deliver the memorials. Madame de Pompadour having given me her word according to the conditions on which I had received the communication, I revealed to her everything I had heard. She sent the memorials to M. de Choiseul, who thought them very maliciously and very cleverly written. Madame de Pompadour and he had a long conference as to the reply that was to be given to the person by whom those disclosures were made. What I was commissioned to say was this: that the place of Receiver-General was at present too important, and would occasion too much surprise and speculation; that it would not do to go beyond a place worth fifteen thousand to twenty thousand francs a year; that they had no desire to pry into the King's secrets; and that his correspondence ought not to be communicated to any one; that this did not apply to papers like



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those of which I was the bearer, which might fall into his hands; that he would confer an obligation by communicating them, in order that blows aimed in the dark, and directed by malignity and imposture, might be parried. The answer was respectful and proper, in what related to the King; it was, however, calculated to counteract the schemes of the Comte de Broglie, by making M. de Choiseul acquainted with his attacks, and with the nature of the weapons he employed. It was from the Count that he received statements relating to the war and to the navy; but he had no communication with him concerning foreign affairs, which the Count, as it was said, transacted immediately with the King. The Duc de Choiseul got the man who spoke to me recommended to the Controller-General, without his appearing in the business; he had the place which was agreed upon, and the hope of a still better, and he entrusted to me the King's correspondence, which I told him I should not mention to Madame de Pompadour, according to her injunctions. He sent several memorials to M. de Choiseul, containing accusations of him, addressed to the King. This timely information enabled him to refute them triumphantly.

The King was very fond of having little private correspondences, very often unknown to Madame de Pompadour: she knew, however, of the existence of some, for he passed part of his mornings in writing to his family, to the King of Spain, to Cardinal Tencin, to the Abbe de Broglie, and also to some obscure persons. "It is, doubtless, from such people as these," said she to me, one day, "that the King learns expressions which perfectly surprise me. For instance, he said to me yesterday, when he saw a man pass with an old coat on, 'il y a la un habit bien examine.' He once said to me, when he meant to express that a thing was probable, 'il y a gros'; I am told this is a saying of the common people, meaning, 'il y a gros a parier'." I took the liberty to say, "But is it not more likely from his young ladies at the Parc, that he learns these elegant expressions?" "She laughed, and said, "You are right; 'il y a gros'." The King, however, used these expressions designedly, and with a laugh.

The King knew a great many anecdotes, and there were people enough who furnished him with such as were likely to mortify the self-love of others. One day, at Choisy, he went into a room where some people were employed about embroidered furniture, to see how they were going on; and looking out of the window, he saw at the end of a long avenue two men in the Choisy uniform. "Who are those two noblemen?" said he. Madame de Pompadour took up her glass, and said, "They are the Duc d'Aumont, and -----" "Ah!" said the King; "the Duc d'Aumont's grandfather would be greatly astonished if he could see his grandson arm in arm with the grandson of his valet de chambre, L-----, in a dress which may be called a patent of nobility!" He went on to tell Madame de Pompadour a long history,



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to prove the truth of what he said. The King went out to accompany her into the garden; and, soon after, Quesnay and M. de Marigny came in. I spoke with contempt of some one who was very fond of money. At this the Doctor laughed, and said, "I had a curious dream last night: I was in the country of the ancient Germans; I had a large house, stacks of corn, herds of cattle, a great number of horses, and huge barrels of ale; but I suffered dreadfully from rheumatism, and knew not how to manage to go to a fountain, at fifty leagues' distance, the waters of which would cure me. I was to go among a strange people. An enchanter appeared before me, and said to me, 'I pity your distress; here, I will give you a little packet of the powder of "prelinpinpin"; whoever receives a little of this from you will lodge you, feed you, and pay you all sorts of civilities.' I took the powder, and thanked him." "Ah!" said I, "how I should like to have some powder of prelinpinpin! I wish I had a chest full."—"Well," said the Doctor, "that powder is money, for which you have so great a contempt. Tell me who, of all the men who come hither, receives the greatest attentions?"—"I do not know," said I. "Why," said he, "it is M. de Monmartel, who comes four or five times a year."—"Why does he enjoy so much consideration?"—"Because his coffers are full of the powder of prelinpinpin. Everything in existence," said he, taking a handful of Louis from his pocket, "is contained in these little pieces of metal, which will convey you commodiously from one end of the world to the other. All men obey those who possess this powder, and eagerly tender them their services. To despise money, is to despise happiness, liberty, in short, enjoyments of every kind." A cordon bleu passed under the window. "That nobleman," said I, "is much more delighted with his cordon bleu than he would be with ten thousand of your pieces of metal."—"When I ask the King for a pension," replied Quesnay, "I say to him, 'Give me the means of having a better dinner, a warmer coat, a carriage to shelter me from the weather, and to transport me from place to place without fatigue.' But the man who asks him for that fine blue ribbon would say, if he had the courage and the honesty to speak as he feels, 'I am vain, and it will give me great satisfaction to see people look at me, as I pass, with an eye of stupid admiration, and make way, for me; I wish, when I enter a room, to produce an effect, and to excite the attention of those who may, perhaps, laugh at me when I am gone; I wish to be called Monseigneur by the multitude.' Is not all this mere empty air? In scarcely any country will this ribbon be of the slightest use to him; it will give him no power. My pieces of metal will give me the power of assisting the unfortunate everywhere. Long live the omnipotent powder of prelinpinpin!" At these last words, we heard a burst of laughter from the adjoining room, which was only separated by



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a door from the one we were in. The door opened, and in came the King, Madame de Pompadour, and M. de Gontaut. “Long live the powder of prelinpinpin!” said the King. “Doctor, can you get me any of it?” It happened that, when the King returned from his walk, he was struck with a fancy to listen to our conversation. Madame de Pompadour was extremely kind to the Doctor, and the King went out laughing, and talking with great admiration of the powder. I went away, and so did the Doctor. I immediately sat down to commit this conversation to writing. I was afterwards told that M. Quesnay was very learned in certain matters relating to finance, and that he was a great ‘economiste’. But I do not know very well what that means. What I do know for certain is, that he was very clever, very gay and witty, and a very able physician.

The illness of the little Duke of Burgundy, whose intelligence was much talked of, for a long time occupied the attention of the Court. Great endeavours were made to find out the cause of his malady, and ill-nature went so far as to assert that his nurse, who had an excellent situation at Versailles, had communicated to him a nasty disease. The King shewed Madame de Pompadour the information he had procured from the province she came from, as to her conduct. A silly Bishop thought proper to say she had been very licentious in her youth. The poor nurse was told of this, and begged that he might be made to explain himself. The Bishop replied, that she had been at several balls in the town in which she lived, and that she had gone with her neck uncovered. The poor man actually thought this the height of licentiousness. The King, who had been at first uneasy, when he came to this, called out, “What a fool!” After having long been a source of anxiety to the Court, the Duke died. Nothing produces a stronger impression upon Princes, than the spectacle of their equals dying. Everybody is occupied about them while ill—but as soon as they are dead, nobody mentions them. The King frequently talked about death—and about funerals, and places of burial. Nobody could be of a more melancholy temperament. Madame de Pompadour once told me that he experienced a painful sensation whenever he was forced to laugh, and that he had often begged her to break off a droll story. He smiled, and that was all. In general, he had the most gloomy ideas concerning almost all events. When there was a new Minister, he used to say, “He displays his wares like all the rest, and promises the finest things in the world, not one of which will be fulfilled. He does not know this country—he will see.” When new projects for reinforcing the navy were laid before him, he said, “This is the twentieth time I have heard this talked of—France never will have a navy, I think.” This I heard from M. de Marigny.

I never saw Madame de Pompadour so rejoiced as at the taking of Mahon. The King was very glad, too, but he had no belief in the merit of his courtiers—he looked upon their success as the effect of chance. Marechal Saxe was, as I have been told, the only man who inspired him with great esteem. But he had scarcely ever seen him in his closet, or playing the courtier.



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M. d'Argenson picked a quarrel with M. de Richelieu, after his victory, about his return to Paris. This was intended to prevent his coming to enjoy his triumph. He tried to throw the thing upon Madame de Pompadour, who was enthusiastic about him, and called him by no other name than the "Minorcan." The Chevalier de Montaign was the favourite of the Dauphin, and much beloved by him for his great devotion. He fell ill, and underwent an operation called 'l'empie', which is performed by making an incision between the ribs, in order to let out the pus; it had, to all appearance, a favourable result, but the patient grew worse, and could not breathe. His medical attendants could not conceive what occasioned this accident and retarded his cure. He died almost in the arms of the Dauphin, who went every day to see him. The singularity of his disease determined the surgeons to open the body, and they found, in his chest, part of the leaden syringe with which decoctions had, as was usual, been injected into the part in a state of suppuration. The surgeon, who committed this act of negligence, took care not to boast of his feat, and his patient was the victim. This incident was much talked of by the King, who related it, I believe, not less than thirty times, according to his custom; but what occasioned still more conversation about the Chevalier de Montaign, was a box, found by his bed's side, containing haircloths, and shirts, and whips, stained with blood. This circumstance was spoken of one evening at supper, at Madame de Pompadour's, and not one of the guests seemed at all tempted to imitate the Chevalier. Eight or ten days afterwards, the following tale was sent to the King, to Madame de Pompadour, to the Baschi, and to the Duc d'Ayen. At first nobody could understand to what it referred: at last, the Duc d'Ayen exclaimed, "How stupid we are; this is a joke on the austerities of the Chevalier de Montaign!" This appeared clear enough—so much the more so, as the copies were sent to the Dauphin, the Dauphine, the Abbe de St. Cyr, and to the Duc de V—. The latter had the character of a pretender to devotion, and, in his copy, there was this addition, "You would not be such a fool, my dear Duke, as to be a 'faquir'—confess that you would be very glad to be one of those good monks who lead such a jolly life." The Duc de Richelieu was suspected of having employed one of his wits to write the story. The King was scandalised at it, and ordered the Lieutenant of Police to endeavour to find out the author, but either he could not succeed or he would not betray him.

Japanese Tale.



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At a distance of three leagues from the capital of Japan, there is a temple celebrated for the concourse of persons, of both sexes, and of all ranks, who crowd thither to worship an idol believed to work miracles. Three hundred men consecrated to the service of religion, and who can give proofs of ancient and illustrious descent, serve this temple, and present to the idol the offerings which are brought from all the provinces of the empire. They inhabit a vast and magnificent edifice, belonging to the temple, and surrounded with gardens where art has combined with nature to produce enchantment. I obtained permission to see the temple, and to walk in the gardens. A monk advanced in years, but still full of vigour and vivacity, accompanied me. I saw several others, of different ages, who were walking there. But what surprised me was to see a great many of them amusing themselves by various agreeable and sportive games with young girls elegantly dressed, listening to their songs, and joining in their dances. The monk, who accompanied me, listened with great civility and kindness to the questions I put to him concerning his order. The following is the sum of his answers to my numerous interrogations. The God Faraki, whom we worship, is so called from a word which signifies the fabricator. He made all that we behold—the earth, the stars, the sun, *etc.* He has endowed men with senses, which are so many sources of pleasure, and we think the only way of shewing our gratitude is to use them. This opinion will, doubtless, appear to you much more rational than that of the faquirs of India, who pass their lives in thwarting nature, and who inflict upon themselves the most melancholy privations and the most severe sufferings.

As soon as the sun rises, we repair to the mountain you see before us, at the foot of which flows a stream of the most limpid water, which meanders in graceful windings through that meadow-enamelled with the loveliest flowers. We gather the most fragrant of them, which we carry and lay upon the altar, together with various fruits, which we receive from the bounty of Faraki. We then sing his praises, and execute dances expressive of our thankfulness, and of all the enjoyments we owe to this beneficent deity. The highest of these is that which love produces, and we testify our ardent gratitude by the manner in which we avail ourselves of this inestimable gift of Faraki. Having left the temple, we go into several shady thickets, where we take a light repast; after which, each of us employs himself in some unoppressive labour. Some embroider, others apply themselves to painting, others cultivate flowers or fruits, others turn little implements for our use. Many of these little works are sold to the people, who purchase them with eagerness. The money arising from this sale forms a considerable part of our revenue. Our morning is thus devoted to the worship of God and to the exercise of the sense of Sight, which begins



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with the first rays of the sun. The sense of Taste is gratified by our dinner, and we add to it the pleasure of Smell. The most delicious viands are spread for us in apartments strewn with flowers. The table is adorned with them, and the most exquisite wines are handed to us in crystal goblets. When we have glorified God, by the agreeable use of the palate, and the olfactory nerve, we enjoy a delightful sleep of two hours, in bowers of orange trees, roses, and myrtles. Having acquired a fresh store of strength and spirits, we return to our occupations, that we may thus mingle labour with pleasure, which would lose its zest by long continuance. After our work, we return to the temple, to thank God, and to offer him incense. From thence we go to the most delightful part of the garden, where we find three hundred young girls, some of whom form lively dances with the younger of our monks; the others execute serious dances, which require neither strength nor agility, and which only keep time to the sound of musical instruments.

We talk and laugh with our companions, who are dressed in a light gauze, and whose tresses are adorned with flowers; we press them to partake of exquisite sherbets, differently prepared. The hour of supper being arrived, we repair to rooms illuminated with the lustre of a thousand tapers fragrant with amber. The supper-room is surrounded by three vast galleries, in which are placed musicians, whose various instruments fill the mind with the most pleasurable and the softest emotions. The young girls are seated at table with us, and, towards the conclusion of the repast, they sing songs, which are hymns in honour of the God who has endowed us with senses which shed such a charm over existence, and which promise us new pleasure from every fresh exercise of them. After the repast is ended, we return to the dance, and, when the hour of repose arrives, we draw from a kind of lottery, in which every one is sure of a prize; that is, a young girl as his companion for the night. They are allotted thus by chance, in order to avoid jealousy, and to prevent exclusive attachments. Thus ends the day, and gives place to a night of delights, which we sanctify by enjoying with due relish that sweetest of all pleasures, which Faraki has so wisely attached to the reproduction of our species. We reverently admire the wisdom and the goodness of Faraki, who, desiring to secure to the world a continued population, has implanted in the sexes an invincible mutual attraction, which constantly draws them towards each other. Fecundity is the end he proposes, and he rewards with intoxicating delights those who contribute to the fulfilment of his designs. What should we say to the favourite of a King from whom he had received a beautiful house, and fine estates, and who chose to spoil the house, to let it fall in ruins, to abandon the cultivation of the land, and let it become sterile, and covered with thorns? Such is the conduct of the faquirs of India, who



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condemn themselves to the most melancholy privations, and to the most severe sufferings. Is not this insulting Faraki? Is it not saying to him, I despise your gifts? Is it not misrepresenting him and saying, You are malevolent and cruel, and I know that I can no otherwise please you than by offering you the spectacle of my miseries? "I am told," added he, "that you have, in your country, faquirs not less insane, not less cruel to themselves." I thought, with some reason, that he meant the fathers of La Trappe. The recital of the matter afforded me much matter for reflection, and I admired how strange are the systems to which perverted reason gives birth.

The Duc de V---- was a nobleman of high rank and great wealth. He said to the King one evening at supper, "Your Majesty does me the favour to treat me with great kindness: I should be inconsolable if I had the misfortune to fall under your displeasure. If such a calamity were to befall me, I should endeavour to divert my grief by improving some beautiful estates of mine in such and such a province;" and he thereupon gave a description of three or four fine seats. About a month after, talking of the disgrace of a Minister, he said, "I hope your Majesty will not withdraw your favour from me; but if I had the misfortune to lose it, I should be more to be pitied than anybody, for I have no asylum in which to hide my head." All those present, who had heard the description of the beautiful country houses, looked at each other and laughed. The King said to Madame de Pompadour, who sat next to him at table, "People are very right in saying that a liar ought to have a good memory."

An event, which made me tremble, as well as Madame, procured me the familiarity of the King. In the middle of the night, Madame came into my chamber, en chemise, and in a state of distraction. "Here! Here!" said she, "the King is dying." My alarm may be easily imagined. I put on a petticoat, and found the King in her bed, panting. What was to be done?—it was an indigestion. We threw water upon him, and he came to himself. I made him swallow some Hoffman's drops, and he said to me, "Do not make any noise, but go to Quesnay; say that your mistress is ill; and tell the Doctor's servants to say nothing about it." Quesnay, who lodged close by, came immediately, and was much astonished to see the King in that state. He felt his pulse, and said, "The crisis is over; but, if the King were sixty years old, this might have been serious." He went to seek some drug, and, on his return, set about inundating the King with perfumed water. I forget the name of the medicine he made him take, but the effect was wonderful. I believe it was the drops of General Lamotte. I called up one of the girls of the wardrobe to make tea, as if for myself. The King took three cups, put on his robe de chambre and his stockings, and went to his own room, leaning upon the Doctor. What a sight it was to see us all



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three half naked! Madame put on a robe as soon as possible, and I did the same, and the King changed his clothes behind the curtains, which were very decently closed. He afterwards spoke of this short attack, and expressed his sense of the attentions shown him. An hour after, I felt the greatest possible terror in thinking that the King might have died in our hands. Happily, he quickly recovered himself, and none of the domestics perceived what had taken place. I merely told the girl of the wardrobe to put everything to rights, and she thought it was Madame who had been indisposed. The King, the next morning, gave secretly to Quesnay a little note for Madame, in which he said, 'Ma chere amie' must have had a great fright, but let her reassure herself—I am now well, which the Doctor will certify to you. From that moment the King became accustomed to me, and, touched by the interest I had shown for him, he often gave me one of his peculiarly gracious glances, and made me little presents, and, on every New Year's Day, sent me porcelain to the amount of twenty louis d'or. He told Madame that he looked upon me in the apartment as a picture or statue, and never put any constraint upon himself on account of my presence. Doctor Quesnay received a pension of a thousand crowns for his attention and silence, and the promise of a place for his son. The King gave me an order upon the Treasury for four thousand francs, and Madame had presented to her a very handsome chiming-clock and the King's portrait in a snuffbox.

The King was habitually melancholy, and liked everything which recalled the idea of death, in spite of the strongest fears of it. Of this, the following is an instance: Madame de Pompadour was on her way to Crecy, when one of the King's grooms made a sign to her coachman to stop, and told him that the King's carriage had broken down, and that, knowing her to be at no great distance, His Majesty had sent him forward to beg her to wait for him. He soon overtook us, and seated himself in Madame de Pompadour's carriage, in which were, I think, Madame de Chateau-Renaud, and Madame de Mirepoix. The lords in attendance placed themselves in some other carriages. I was behind, in a chaise, with Gourbillon, Madame de Pompadour's valet de chambre. We were surprised in a short time by the King stopping his carriage. Those which followed, of course stopped also. The King called a groom, and said to him, "You see that little eminence; there are crosses; it must certainly be a burying-ground; go and see whether there are any graves newly dug." The groom galloped up to it, returned, and said to the King, "There are three quite freshly made." Madame de Pompadour, as she told me, turned away her head with horror; and the little Marechale

[The Marechale de Mirepoix died at Brussels in 1791, at a very advanced age, but preserving her wit and gaiety to the last. The day of her death, after she had received the Sacrament, the physician told her that he thought her a good deal better. She replied, "You tell me bad news: having packed up, I had rather go." She was sister of the Prince de Beauveau. The Prince de Ligne says, in one of his printed letters: "She had that enchanting talent which supplies the means of pleasing everybody. You would have sworn that she had thought of nothing but you all her life."—En.]



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gaily said, "This is indeed enough to make one's mouth water." Madame de Pompadour spoke of it when I was undressing her in the evening. "What a strange pleasure," said she, "to endeavour to fill one's mind with images which one ought to endeavour to banish, especially when one is surrounded by so many sources of happiness! But that is the King's way; he loves to talk about death. He said, some days ago, to M. de Fontanieu, who was, seized with a bleeding at the nose, at the levee: 'Take care of yourself; at your age it is a forerunner of apoplexy.' The poor man went home frightened, and absolutely ill."

I never saw the King so agitated as during the illness of the Dauphin. The physicians came incessantly to the apartments of Madame de Pompadour, where the King interrogated them. There was one from Paris, a very odd man, called Pousse, who once said to him, "You are a good papa; I like you for that. But you know we are all your children, and share your distress. Take courage, however; your son will recover." Everybody's eyes were upon the Duc d'Orleans, who knew not how to look. He would have become heir to the crown, the Queen being past the age to have children. Madame de ----- said to me, one day, when I was expressing my surprise at the King's grief, "It would annoy him beyond measure to have a Prince of the blood heir apparent. He does not like them, and looks upon their relationship to him as so remote, that he would feel humiliated by it." And, in fact, when his son recovered, he said, "The King of Spain would have had a fine chance." It was thought that he was right in this, and that it would have been agreeable to justice; but that, if the Duc d'Orleans had been supported by a party, he might have supported his pretensions to the crown. It was, doubtless, to remove this impression that he gave a magnificent fete at St. Cloud on the occasion of the Dauphin's recovery. Madame de Pompadour said to Madame de Brancas, speaking of this fete, "He wishes to make us forget the chateau en Espagne he has been dreaming of; in Spain, however, they build them of solider materials." The people did not shew so much joy at the Dauphin's recovery. They looked upon him as a devotee, who did nothing but sing psalms. They loved the Duc d'Orleans, who lived in the capital, and had acquired the name of the King of Paris. These sentiments were not just; the Dauphin only sang psalms when imitating the tones of one of the choristers of the chapel. The people afterwards acknowledged their error, and did justice to his virtues. The Duc d'Orleans paid the most assiduous court to Madame de Pompadour: the Duchess, on the contrary, detested her. It is possible that words were put into the Duchess's mouth which she never uttered; but she, certainly, often said most cutting things. The King would have sent her into exile, had he listened only to his resentment; but he feared the eclat of such a proceeding, and he knew that she



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would only be the more malicious. The Duc d'Orleans was, just then, extremely jealous of the Comte de Melfort; and the Lieutenant of Police told the King he had strong reasons for believing that the Duke would stick at nothing to rid himself of this gallant, and that he thought it his duty to give the Count notice, that he ought to be upon his guard. The King said, "He would not dare to attempt any such violence as you seem to apprehend; but there is a better way: let him try to surprise them, and he will find me very well inclined to have his cursed wife shut up; but if he got rid of this lover, she would have another to-morrow.

"Nay, she has others at this moment; for instance, the Chevalier de Colbert, and the Comte de l'Aigle." Madame de Pompadour, however, told me these two last affairs were not certain.

An adventure happened about the same time, which the Lieutenant of Police reported to the King. The Duchesse d'Orleans had amused herself one evening, about eight o'clock, with ogling a handsome young Dutchman, whom she took a fancy to, from a window of the Palais Royal. The young man, taking her for a woman of the town, wanted to make short work, at which she was very much shocked. She called a Swiss, and made herself known. The stranger was arrested; but he defended himself by affirming that she had talked very loosely to him. He was dismissed, and the Duc d'Orleans gave his wife a severe reprimand.

The King (who hated her so much that he spoke of her without the slightest restraint) one day said to Madame de Pompadour, in my presence, "Her mother knew what she was, for, before her marriage, she never suffered her to say more than yes and no. Do you know her joke on the nomination of Moras? She sent to congratulate him upon it: two minutes after, she called back the messenger she had sent, and said, before everybody present, 'Before you speak to him, ask the Swiss if he still has the place.'" Madame de Pompadour was not vindictive, and, in spite of the malicious speeches of the Duchesse d'Orleans, she tried to excuse her conduct. "Almost all women," she said, "have lovers; she has not all that are imputed to her: but her free manners, and her conversation, which is beyond all bounds, have brought her into general disrepute."

My companion came into my room the other day, quite delighted. She had been with M. de Chenevieres, first Clerk in the War-office, and a constant correspondent of Voltaire, whom she looks upon as a god. She was, by the bye, put into a great rage one day, lately, by a print-seller in the street, who was crying, "Here is Voltaire, the famous Prussian; here you see him, with a great bear-skin cap, to keep him from the cold! Here is the famous Prussian, for six sous!"—"What a profanation!" said she. To return to my story: M. de Chenevieres had shewn her some letters from Voltaire, and M. Marmontel had read an 'Epistle to his Library'.



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M. Quesnay came in for a moment; she told him all this: and, as he did not appear to take any great interest in it, she asked him if he did not admire great poets. “Oh, yes; just as I admire great bilboquet players,” said he, in that tone of his, which rendered everything he said diverting. “I have written some verses, however,” said he, “and I will repeat them to you; they are upon a certain M. Rodot, an Intendant of the Marine, who was very fond of abusing medicine and medical men. I made these verses to revenge AEsculapius and Hippocrates.

“What do you say to them?” said the Doctor. My companion thought them very pretty, and the Doctor gave me them in his handwriting, begging me, at the same time, not to give any copies.

Madame de Pompadour joked my companion about her ‘bel-esprit’, but sometimes she reposed confidence in her. Knowing that she was often writing, she said to her, “You are writing a novel, which will appear some day or other; or, perhaps, the age of Louis XV.: I beg you to treat me well.” I have no reason to complain of her. It signifies very little to me that she can talk more learnedly than I can about prose and verse.

She never told me her real name; but one day I was malicious enough to say to her, “Some one was maintaining, yesterday, that the family of Madame de Mar—— was of more importance than many of good extraction. They say it is the first in Cadiz. She had very honourable alliances, and yet she has thought it no degradation to be governess to Madame de Pompadour’s daughter. One day you will see her sons or her nephews Farmers General, and her granddaughters married to Dukes.” I had remarked that Madame de Pompadour for some days had taken chocolate, ‘a triple vanille et ambre’, at her breakfast; and that she ate truffles and celery soup: finding her in a very heated state, I one day remonstrated with her about her diet, to which she paid no attention. I then thought it right to speak to her friend, the Duchesse de Brancas. “I had remarked the same thing,” said she, “and I will speak to her about it before you.” After she was dressed, Madame de Brancas, accordingly, told her she was uneasy about her health. “I have just been talking to her about it,” said the Duchess, pointing to me, “and she is of my opinion.” Madame de Pompadour seemed a little displeased; at last, she burst into tears. I immediately went out, shut the door, and returned to my place to listen. “My dear friend,” she said to Madame de Brancas, “I am agitated by the fear of losing the King’s heart by ceasing to be attractive to him. Men, you know, set great value on certain things, and I have the misfortune to be of a very cold temperament. I, therefore, determined to adopt a heating diet, in order to remedy this defect, and for two days this elixir has been of great service to me, or, at least, I have thought I felt its good effects.”

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The Duchesse de Brancas took the phial which was upon the toilet, and after having smelt at it, "Fie!" said she, and threw it into the fire. Madame de Pompadour scolded her, and said, "I don't like to be treated like a child." She wept again, and said, "You don't know what happened to me a week ago. The King, under pretext of the heat of the weather, lay down upon my sofa, and passed half the night there. He will take a disgust to me and have another mistress."—"You will not avoid that," replied the Duchess, "by following your new diet, and that diet will kill you; render your company more and more precious to the King by your gentleness: do not repulse him in his fond moments, and let time do the rest; the chains of habit will bind him to you for ever." They then embraced; Madame de Pompadour recommended secrecy to Madame de Brancas, and the diet was abandoned.

A little while after, she said to me, "Our master is better pleased with me. This is since I spoke to Quesnay, without, however, telling him all. He told me, that to accomplish my end, I must try to be in good health, to digest well, and, for that purpose, take exercise. I think the Doctor is right. I feel quite a different creature. I adore that man (the King), I wish so earnestly to be agreeable to him! But, alas! sometimes he says I am a macreuse (a cold-blooded aquatic bird). I would give my life to please him."

One day, the King came in very much heated. I withdrew to my post, where I listened. "What is the matter?" said Madame de Pompadour. "The long robes and the clergy," replied he, "are always at drawn daggers, they distract me by their quarrels. But I detest the long robes the most. My clergy, on the whole, is attached and faithful to me; the others want to keep me in a state of tutelage."—"Firmness," said Madame de Pompadour, "is the only thing that can subdue them."—"Robert Saint Vincent is an incendiary, whom I wish I could banish, but that would make a terrible tumult. On the other hand, the Archbishop is an iron-hearted fellow, who tries to pick quarrels. Happily, there are some in the Parliament upon whom I can rely, and who affect to be very violent, but can be softened upon occasion. It costs me a few abbeyes, and a few secret pensions, to accomplish this. There is a certain V— who serves me very well, while he appears to be furious on the other side."—"I can tell you some news of him, Sire," said Madame de Pompadour. "He wrote to me yesterday, pretending that he is related to me, and begging for an interview."—"Well," said the King, "let him come. See him; and if he behaves well, we shall have a pretext for giving him something." M. de Gontaut came in, and seeing that they were talking seriously, said nothing. The King walked about in an agitated manner, and suddenly exclaimed, "The Regent was very wrong in restoring to them the right of remonstrating; they will end in ruining the State."—"All,



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Sire," said M. de Gontaut, "it is too strong to be shaken by a set of petty justices." "You don't know what they do, nor what they think. They are an assembly of republicans; however, here is enough of the subject. Things will last as they are as long as I shall. Talk about this on Sunday, Madame, with M. Berrien." Madame d'Amblimont and Madame d'Esparbes came in. "Ah! here come my kittens," said Madame de Pompadour; "all that we are about is Greek to them; but their gaiety restores my tranquility, and enables me to attend again to serious affairs. You, Sire, have the chase to divert you—they answer the same purpose to me." The King then began to talk about his morning's sport, and Lansmatte.

[See the "Memoirs of Madame Campan," vol. iii., p. 24. Many traits of original and amusing bluntness are related of Lansmatte, one of the King's grooms.]

It was necessary to let the King go on upon these subjects, and even, sometimes, to hear the same story three or four times over, if new persons came into the room. Madame de Pompadour never betrayed the least ennui. She even sometimes persuaded him to begin his story anew.

I one day said to her, "It appears to me, Madame, that you are fonder than ever of the Comtesse d'Amblimont."—"I have reason to be so," said she. "She is unique, I think, for her fidelity to her friends, and for her honour. Listen, but tell nobody—four days ago, the King, passing her to go to supper, approached her, under the pretence of tickling her, and tried to slip a note into her hand. D'Amblimont, in her madcap way, put her hands behind her back, and the King was obliged to pick up the note, which had fallen on the ground. Gontaut was the only person who saw all this, and, after supper, he went up to the little lady, and said, 'You are an excellent friend.'—"I did my duty,' said she, and immediately put her finger on her lips to enjoin him to be silent. He, however, informed me of this act of friendship of the little heroine, who had not told me of it herself." I admired the Countess's virtue, and Madame de Pompadour said, "She is giddy and headlong; but she has more sense and more feeling than a thousand prudes and devotees. D'Esparbes would not do as much most likely she would meet him more than half-way. The King appeared disconcerted, but he still pays her great attentions."—"You will, doubtless, Madame," said I, "show your sense of such admirable conduct."—"You need not doubt it," said she, "but I don't wish her to think that I am informed of it." The King, prompted either by the remains of his liking, or from the suggestions of Madame de Pompadour, one morning went to call on Madame d'Amblimont, at Choisy, and threw round her neck a collar of diamonds and emeralds, worth between fifty thousand and seventy-five thousand francs. This happened a long time after the circumstance I have just related.

There was a large sofa in a little room adjoining Madame de Pompadour's, upon which I often reposed.



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One evening, towards midnight, a bat flew into the apartment where the Court was; the King immediately cried out, "Where is General Crillon?" (He had just left the room.) "He is the General to command against the bats." This set everybody calling out, "Où états tu, Crillon?" M. de Crillon soon after came in, and was told where the enemy was. He immediately threw off his coat, drew his sword, and commenced an attack upon the bat, which flew into the closet where I was fast asleep. I started out of sleep at the noise, and saw the King and all the company around me. This furnished amusement for the rest of the evening. M. de Crillon was a very excellent and agreeable man, but he had the fault of indulging in buffooneries of this kind, which, however, were the result of his natural gaiety, and not of any subserviency of character. Such, however, was not the case with another exalted nobleman, a Knight of the Golden Fleece, whom Madame saw one day shaking hands with her valet de chambre. As he was one of the vainest men at Court, Madame could not refrain from telling the circumstance to the King; and, as he had no employment at Court, the King scarcely ever after named him on the Supper List.

I had a cousin at Saint Cyr, who was married. She was greatly distressed at having a relation waiting woman to Madame de Pompadour, and often treated me in the most mortifying manner. Madame knew this from Colin, her steward, and spoke of it to the King. "I am not surprised at it," said he; "this is a specimen of the silly women of Saint Cyr. Madame de Maintenon had excellent intentions, but she made a great mistake. These girls are brought up in such a manner, that, unless they are all made ladies of the palace, they are unhappy and impertinent."

Some time after, this relation of mine was at my house. Colin, who knew her, though she did not know him, came in. He said to me, "Do you know that the Prince de Chimay has made a violent attack upon the Chevalier d'Henin for being equerry to the Marquise." At these words, my cousin looked very much astonished, and said, "Was he not right?"—"I don't mean to enter into that question," said Colin—"but only to repeat his words, which were these: 'If you were only a man of moderately good family and poor, I should not blame you, knowing, as I do, that there are hundreds such, who would quarrel for your place, as young ladies of family would, to be about your mistress. But, recollect, that your relations are princes of the Empire, and that you bear their name.'"—"What, sir," said my relation, "the Marquise's equerry of a princely house?"—"Of the house of Chimay," said he; "they take the name of Alsace"—witness the Cardinal of that name. Colin went out delighted at what he had said.

"I cannot get over my surprise at what I have heard," said my relation. "It is, nevertheless, very true," replied I; "you may see the Chevalier d'Henin (that is the family name of the Princes de Chimay), with the cloak of Madame upon his arm, and walking alongside her sedan-chair, in order that he may be ready, on her getting in, to cover her shoulders with her cloak, and then remain in the antechamber, if there is no other room, till her return."



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From that time, my cousin let me alone; nay, she even applied to me to get a company of horse for her husband, who was very loath to come and thank me. His wife wished him to thank Madame de Pompadour; but the fear he had lest she should tell him, that it was in consideration of his relationship to her waiting-woman that he commanded fifty horse, prevented him. It was, however, a most surprising thing that a man belonging to the house of Chimay should be in the service of any lady whatever; and, the commander of Alsace returned from Malta on purpose to get him out of Madame de Pompadour's household. He got him a pension of a hundred louis from his family, and the Marquise gave him a company of horse. The Chevalier d'Henin had been page to the Marechal de Luxembourg, and one can hardly imagine how he could have put his relation in such a situation; for, generally speaking, all great houses keep up the consequence of their members. M. de Machault, the Keeper of the Seals, had, at the same time, as equerry, a Knight of St. Louis, and a man of family—the Chevalier de Peribuse—who carried his portfolio, and walked by the side of the chair.

Whether it was from ambition, or from tenderness, Madame de Pompadour had a regard for her daughter,—[The daughter of Madame de Pompadour and her husband, M. d'Atioles. She was called Alexandrine.]—which seemed to proceed from the bottom of her heart. She was brought up like a Princess, and, like persons of that rank, was called by her Christian name alone. The first persons at Court had an eye to this alliance, but her mother had, perhaps, a better project. The King had a son by Madame de Vintimille, who resembled him in face, gesture, and manners. He was called the Comte du -----. Madame de Pompadour had him brought to Bellevue. Colin, her steward, was employed to find means to persuade his tutor to bring him thither. They took some refreshment at the house of the Swiss, and the Marquise, in the course of her walk, appeared to meet them by accident. She asked the name of the child, and admired his beauty. Her daughter came up at the same moment, and Madame de Pompadour led them into a part of the garden where she knew the King would come. He did come, and asked the child's name. He was told, and looked embarrassed when Madame, pointing to them, said they would be a beautiful couple. The King played with the girl, without appearing to take any notice of the boy, who, while he was eating some figs and cakes which were brought, his attitudes and gestures were so like those of the King, that Madame de Pompadour was in the utmost astonishment. "Ah!" said she, "Sire, look at -----." --"At what?" said he. "Nothing," replied Madame, "except that one would think one saw his father."



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“I did not know,” said the King, smiling, “that you were so intimately acquainted with the Comte du L-----.”--“You ought to embrace him,” said she, “he is very handsome.”—“I will begin, then, with the young lady,” said the King, and embraced them in a cold, constrained manner. I was present, having joined Mademoiselle’s governess. I remarked to Madame, in the evening, that the King had not appeared very cordial in his caresses. “That is his way,” said she; “but do not those children appear made for each other? If it was Louis XIV., he would make a Duc du Maine of the little boy; I do not ask so much; but a place and a dukedom for his son is very little; and it is because he is his son that I prefer him to all the little Dukes of the Court. My grandchildren would blend the resemblance of their grandfather and grandmother; and this combination, which I hope to live to see, would, one day, be my greatest delight.” The tears came into her eyes as she spoke. Alas! alas! only six months elapsed, when her darling daughter, the hope of her advanced years, the object of her fondest wishes, died suddenly. Madame de Pompadour was inconsolable, and I must do M. de Marigny the justice to say that he was deeply afflicted. His niece was beautiful as an angel, and destined to the highest fortunes, and I always thought that he had formed the design of marrying her. A dukedom would have given him rank; and that, joined to his place, and to the wealth which she would have had from her mother, would have made him a man of great importance. The difference of age was

not sufficient to be a great obstacle. People, as usual, said the young lady was poisoned; for the unexpected death of persons who command a large portion of public attention always gives birth to these rumours. The King shewed great regret, but more for the grief of Madame than on account of the loss itself, though he had often caressed the child, and loaded her with presents. I owe it, also, to justice, to say that M. de Marigny, the heir of all Madame de Pompadour’s fortune, after the death of her daughter, evinced the sincerest and deepest regret every time she was seriously ill. She, soon after, began to lay plans for his establishment. Several young ladies of the highest birth were thought of; and, perhaps, he would have been made a Duke, but his turn of mind indisposed him for schemes either of marriage or ambition. Ten times he might have been made Prime Minister, yet he never aspired to it. “That is a man,” said Quesnay to me, one day, “who is very little known; nobody talks of his talents or acquirements, nor of his zealous and efficient patronage of the arts: no man, since Colbert, has done so much in his situation: he is, moreover, an extremely honourable man, but people will not see in him anything but the brother of the favourite; and, because he

is fat, he is thought dull and heavy.” This was all perfectly true. M. de Marigny had travelled in Italy with very able artists, and had

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acquired taste, and much more information than any of his predecessors had possessed. As for the heaviness of his air, it only came upon him when he grew fat; before that, he had a delightful face. He was then as handsome as his sister. He paid court to nobody, had no vanity, and confined himself to the society of persons with whom he was at his ease. He went rather more into company at Court after the King had taken him to ride with him in his carriage, thinking it then his duty to shew himself among the courtiers.

Madame called me, one day, into her closet, where the King was walking up and down in a very serious mood. "You must," said she, "pass some days in a house in the Avenue de St. Cloud, whither I shall send you. You will there find a young lady about to lie in." The King said nothing, and I was mute from astonishment. "You will be mistress of the house, and preside, like one of the fabulous goddesses, at the accouchement. Your presence is necessary, in order that everything may pass secretly, and according to the King's wish. You will be present at the baptism, and name the father and mother." The King began to laugh, and said, "The father is a very honest man;" Madame added, "beloved by every one, and adored by those who know him." Madame then took from a little cupboard a small box, and drew from it an aigrette of diamonds, at the same time saying to the King, "I have my reasons for it not being handsomer."—"It is but too much so," said the King; "how kind you are;" and he then embraced Madame, who wept with emotion, and, putting her hand upon the King's heart, said, "This is what I wish to secure." The King's eyes then filled with tears, and I also began weeping, without knowing why. Afterwards, the King said, "Guimard will call upon you every day, to assist you with his advice, and at the critical moment you will send for him. You will say that you expect the sponsors, and a moment after you will pretend to have received a letter, stating that they cannot come. You will, of course, affect to be very much embarrassed; and Guimard will then say that there is nothing for it but to take the first comers. You will then appoint as godfather and godmother some beggar, or chairman, and the servant girl of the house, and to whom you will give but twelve francs, in order not to attract attention."—"A louis," added Madame, "to obviate anything singular, on the other hand."—"It is you who make me economical, under certain circumstances," said the King. "Do you remember the driver of the fiacre? I wanted to give him a *louis*, and Duc d'Ayen said, 'You will be known;' so that I gave him a crown." He was going to tell the whole story. Madame made a sign to him to be silent, which he obeyed, not without considerable reluctance. She afterwards told me that at the time of the fetes given on occasion of the Dauphin's marriage, the King came to see her at her mother's house in a hackney-coach. The coachman would not go on, and the King would have given him a *louis*. "The police will hear of it, if you do," said the Duc d'Ayen, "and its spies will make inquiries, which will, perhaps, lead to a discovery."



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“Guimard,” continued the King, “will tell you the names of the father and mother; he will be present at the ceremony, and make the usual presents. It is but fair that you also should receive yours;” and, as he said this, he gave me fifty *louis*, with that gracious air that he could so well assume upon certain occasions, and which no person in the kingdom had but himself. I kissed his hand and wept. “You will take care of the accouchee, will you not? She is a good creature, who has not invented gunpowder, and I confide her entirely to your direction; my chancellor will tell you the rest,” he said, turning to Madame, and then quitted the room. “Well, what think you of the part I am playing?” asked Madame. “It is that of a superior woman, and an excellent friend,” I replied. “It is his heart I wish to secure,” said she; “and all those young girls who have no education will not run away with it from me. I should not be equally confident were I to see some fine woman belonging to the Court, or the city, attempt his conquest.”

I asked Madame, if the young lady knew that the King was the father of her child? “I do not think she does,” replied she; “but, as he appeared fond of her, there is some reason to fear that those about her might be too ready to tell her; otherwise,” said she, shrugging her shoulders, “she, and all the others, are told that he is a Polish nobleman, a relation of the Queen, who has apartments in the castle.” This story was contrived on account of the *cordon bleu*, which the King has not always time to lay aside, because, to do that, he must change his coat, and in order to account for his having a lodging in the castle so near the King. There were two little rooms by the side of the chapel, whither the King retired from his apartment, without being seen by anybody but a sentinel, who had his orders, and who did not know who passed through those rooms. The King sometimes went to the *Parc-aux-cerfs*, or received those young ladies in the apartments I have mentioned.

I must here interrupt my narrative, to relate a singular adventure, which is only known to six or seven persons, masters or valets. At the time of the attempt to assassinate the King, a young girl, whom he had seen several times, and for whom he had manifested more tenderness than for most, was distracted at this horrible event. The Mother-Abbess of the *Parc-aux-cerfs* perceived her extraordinary grief, and managed so as to make her confess that she knew the Polish Count was the King of France. She confessed that she had taken from his pocket two letters, one of which was from the King of Spain, the other from the *Abbe de Brogue*. This was discovered afterwards, for neither she nor the Mother-Abbess knew the names of the writers. The girl was scolded, and M. Lebel, first valet de chambre, who had the management of all these affairs, was called; he took the letters, and carried them to the King, who was very much embarrassed



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in what manner to meet a person so well informed of his condition. The girl in question, having perceived that the King came secretly to see her companion, while she was neglected, watched his arrival, and, at the moment he entered with the Abbess, who was about to withdraw, she rushed distractedly into the room where her rival was. She immediately threw herself at the King's feet. "Yes," said she, "you are King of all France; but that would be nothing to me if you were not also monarch of my heart: do not forsake me, my beloved sovereign; I was nearly mad when your life was attempted!" The Mother-Abbess cried out, "You are mad now." The King embraced her, which appeared to restore her to tranquility. They succeeded in getting her out of the room, and a few days afterwards the unhappy girl was taken to a madhouse, where she was treated as if she had been insane, for some days. But she knew well enough that she was not so, and that the King had really been her lover. This lamentable affair was related to me by the Mother-Abbess, when I had some acquaintance with her at the time of the accouchement I have spoken of, which I never had before, nor since.

To return to my history: Madame de Pompadour said to me, "Be constantly with the 'accouchee', to prevent any stranger, or even the people of the house, from speaking to her. You will always say that he is a very rich Polish nobleman, who is obliged to conceal himself on account of his relationship to the Queen, who is very devout. You will find a wet-nurse in the house, to whom you will deliver the child. Guimard will manage all the rest. You will go to church as a witness; everything must be conducted as if for a substantial citizen. The young lady expects to lie in in five or six days; you will dine with her, and will not leave her till she is in a state of health to return to the Parc-aux-cerfs, which she may do in a fortnight, as I imagine, without running any risk." I went, that same evening, to the Avenue de Saint Cloud, where I found the Abbess and Guimard, an attendant belonging to the castle, but without his blue coat. There were, besides, a nurse, a wet-nurse, two old men-servants, and a girl, who was something between a servant and a waiting-woman. The young lady was extremely pretty, and dressed very elegantly, though not too remarkably. I supped with her and the Mother-Abbess, who was called Madame Bertrand. I had presented the aigrette Madame de Pompadour gave me before supper, which had greatly delighted the young lady, and she was in high spirits.

Madame Bertrand had been housekeeper to M. Lebel, first valet de chambre to the King. He called her Dominique, and she was entirely in his confidence. The young lady chatted with us after supper; she appeared to be very naive. The next day, I talked to her in private. She said to me, "How is the Count?" (It was the King whom she called by this title.) "He will be very sorry not to



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be with me now; but he was obliged to set off on a long journey." I assented to what she said. "He is very handsome," said she, "and loves me with all his heart. He promised me an allowance; but I love him disinterestedly; and, if he would let me, I would follow him to Poland." She afterwards talked to me about her parents, and about M. Lebel, whom she knew by the name of Durand. "My mother," said she, "kept a large grocer's shop, and my father was a man of some consequence; he belonged to the Six Corps, and that, as everybody knows, is an excellent thing. He was twice very near being head-bailiff." Her mother had become bankrupt at her father's death, but the Count had come to her assistance, and settled upon her fifteen hundred francs a year, besides giving her six thousand francs down. On the sixth day, she was brought to bed, and, according to my instructions, she was told the child was a girl, though in reality it was a boy; she was soon to be told that it was dead, in order that no trace of its existence might remain for a certain time. It was eventually to be restored to its mother. The King gave each of his children about ten thousand francs a year. They inherited after each other as they died off, and seven or eight were already dead. I returned to Madame de Pompadour, to whom I had written every day by Guimard. The next day, the King sent for me into the room; he did not say a word as to the business I had been employed upon; but he gave me a large gold snuff-box, containing two rouleaux of twenty-five louis each. I curtsied to him, and retired. Madame asked me a great many questions of the young lady, and laughed heartily at her simplicity, and at all she had said about the Polish nobleman. "He is disgusted with the Princess, and, I think, will return to Poland for ever, in two months."—"And the young lady?" said I. "She will be married in the country," said she, "with a portion of forty thousand crowns at the most and a few diamonds." This little adventure, which initiated me into the King's secrets, far from procuring for me increased marks of kindness from him, seemed to produce a coldness towards me; probably because he was ashamed of my knowing his obscure amours. He was also embarrassed by the services Madame de Pompadour had rendered him on this occasion.

Besides the little mistresses of the Parc-aux-cerfs, the King had sometimes intrigues with ladies of the Court, or from Paris, who wrote to him. There was a Madame de L-----, who, though married to a young and amiable man, with two hundred thousand francs a year, wished absolutely to become his mistress. She contrived to have a meeting with him: and the King, who knew who she was, was persuaded that she was really madly in love with him. There is no knowing what might have happened, had she not died. Madame was very much alarmed, and was only relieved by her death from inquietude. A circumstance took place at this time which doubled Madame's



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friendship for me. A rich man, who had a situation in the Revenue Department, called on me one day very secretly, and told me that he had something of importance to communicate to Madame la Marquise, but that he should find himself very much embarrassed in communicating it to her personally, and that he should prefer acquainting me with it. He then told me, what I already knew, that he had a very beautiful wife, of whom he was passionately fond; that having on one occasion perceived her kissing a little 'porte feuille', he endeavoured to get possession of it, supposing there was some mystery attached to it. One day that she suddenly left the room to go upstairs to see her sister, who had been brought to bed, he took the opportunity of opening the porte feuille, and was very much surprised to find in it a portrait of the King, and a very tender letter written by His Majesty. Of the latter he took a copy, as also of an unfinished letter of his wife, in which she vehemently entreated the King to allow her to have the pleasure of an interview—the means she pointed out. She was to go masked to the public ball at Versailles, where His Majesty could meet her under favour of a mask. I assured M. de ----- that I should acquaint Madame with the affair, who would, no doubt, feel very grateful for the communication. He then added, "Tell Madame la Marquise that my wife is very clever and very intriguing. I adore her, and should run distracted were she to be taken from me." I lost not a moment in acquainting Madame with the affair, and gave her the letter. She became serious and pensive, and I since learned that she consulted M. Berrier, Lieutenant of Police, who, by a very simple but ingeniously conceived plan, put an end to the designs of this lady. He demanded an audience of the King, and told him that there was a lady in Paris who was making free with His Majesty's name; that he had been given the copy of a letter, supposed to have been written by His Majesty to the lady in question. The copy he put into the King's hands, who read it in great confusion, and then tore it furiously to pieces. M. Berrier added, that it was rumoured that this lady was to meet His Majesty at the public ball, and, at this very moment, it so happened that a letter was put into the King's hand, which proved to be from the lady, appointing the meeting; at least, M. Berrier judged so, as the King appeared very much surprised on reading it, and said, "It must be allowed, M. le Lieutenant of Police, that you are well informed." M. Berrier added, "I think it my duty to tell Your Majesty that this lady passes for a very intriguing person." "I believe," replied the King, "that it is not without deserving it that she has got that character."



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Madame de Pompadour had many vexations in the midst of all her grandeur. She often received anonymous letters, threatening her with poison or assassination: her greatest fear, however, was that of being supplanted by a rival. I never saw her in a greater agitation than, one evening, on her return from the drawing-room at Marly. She threw down her cloak and muff, the instant she came in, with an air of ill-humour, and undressed herself in a hurried manner. Having dismissed her other women, she said to me, "I think I never saw anybody so insolent as Madame de Coaslin. I was seated at the same table with her this evening, at a game of 'brelan', and you cannot imagine what I suffered. The men and women seemed to come in relays to watch us. Madame de Coaslin said two or three times, looking at me, 'Va tout', in the most insulting manner. I thought I should have fainted, when she said, in a triumphant tone, I have the 'brelan' of kings. I wish you had seen her courtesy to me on parting."—"Did the King," said I, "show her particular attention?" "You don't know him," said she; "if he were going to lodge her this very night in my apartment, he would behave coldly to her before people, and would treat me with the utmost kindness. This is the effect of his education, for he is, by nature, kind-hearted and frank." Madame de Pompadour's alarms lasted for some months, when she, one day, said to me, "That haughty Marquise has missed her aim; she frightened the King by her grand airs, and was incessantly teasing him for money. Now you, perhaps, may not know that the King would sign an order for forty thousand *louis* without a thought, and would give a hundred out of his little private treasury with the greatest reluctance. Lebel, who likes me better than he would a new mistress in my place, either by chance or design had brought a charming little sultana to the Parc-aux-cerfs, who has cooled the King a little towards the haughty Vashti, by giving him occupation, has received a hundred thousand francs, some jewels, and an estate. Jannette—[The Intendant of Police.]—has rendered me great service, by showing the King extracts from the letters broken open at the post-office, concerning the report that Madame de Coaslin was coming into favour: The King was much impressed by a letter from an old counsellor of the Parliament, who wrote to one of his friends as follows: 'It is quite as reasonable that the King should have a female friend and confidante—as that we, in our several degrees, should so indulge ourselves; but it is desirable that he should keep the one he has; she is gentle, injures nobody, and her fortune is made. The one who is now talked of will be as haughty as high birth can make her. She must have an allowance of a million francs a year, since she is said to be excessively extravagant; her relations must be made Dukes, Governors of provinces, and Marshals, and, in the end, will surround the King, and overawe the Ministers.'"



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Madame de Pompadour had this passage, which had been sent to her by M. Jannette, the Intendant of the Police, who enjoyed the King's entire confidence. He had carefully watched the King's look, while he read the letter, and he saw that the arguments of this counsellor, who was not a disaffected person, made a great impression upon him. Some time afterwards, Madame de Pompadour said to me, "The haughty Marquise behaved like Mademoiselle Deschamps,

[A courtesan, distinguished for her charms, and still more so for an extraordinary proof of patriotism. At a time when the public Treasury was exhausted, Mademoiselle Deschamps sent all her plate to the Mint. Louis XIV. boasted of this act of generous devotion to her country. The Duc d'Ayen made it the subject of a pleasantry, which detracted nothing from the merit of the sacrifice—but which is rather too gay for us to venture upon.]

and she is turned off." This was not Madame's only subject of alarm. A relation of Madame d'Estrades,

[The Comtesse d'Estrades, a relative of M. Normand, and a flatterer of Madame de Pompadour, who brought her to Court, was secretly in the pay of the Comte d'Argenson. That Minister, who did not disdain la Fillon, from whom he extracted useful information, knew all that passed at the Court of the favourite, by means of Madame d'Estrades, whose ingratitude and perfidiousness he liberally paid.]

wife to the Marquis de C——, had made the most pointed advances to the King, much more than were necessary for a man who justly thought himself the handsomest man in France, and who was, moreover, a King. He was perfectly persuaded that every woman would yield to the slightest desire he might deign to manifest. He, therefore, thought it a mere matter of course that women fell in love with him. M. de Stainville had a hand in marring the success of that intrigue; and, soon afterwards, the Marquise de C----, who was confined to her apartments at Marly, by her relations, escaped through a closet to a rendezvous, and was caught with a young man in a corridor. The Spanish Ambassador, coming out of his apartments with flambeaux, was the person who witnessed this scene. Madame d'Estrades affected to know nothing of her cousin's intrigues, and kept up an appearance of the tenderest attachment to Madame de Pompadour, whom she was habitually betraying. She acted as spy for M. d'Argenson, in the cabinets, and in Madame de Pompadour's apartments; and, when she could discover nothing, she had recourse to her invention, in order that she might not lose her importance with her lover. This Madame d'Estrades owed her whole existence to the bounties of Madame, and yet, ugly as she was, she had tried to get the King away from her. One day, when he, had got rather drunk at Choisy (I think, the only time that, ever happened to him), he went on board a beautiful barge, whither Madame, being ill of an indigestion, could not accompany him. Madame d'Estrades



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seized this opportunity. She got into the barge, and, on their return, as it was dark, she followed the King into a private closet, where he was believed to be sleeping on a couch, and there went somewhat beyond any ordinary advances to him. Her account of the matter to Madame was, that she had gone into the closet upon her own affairs, and that the King, had followed her, and had tried to ravish her. She was at full liberty to make what story she pleased, for the King knew neither what he had said, nor what he had done. I shall finish this subject by a short history concerning a young lady. I had been, one day, to the theatre at Compiègne. When I returned, Madame asked me several questions about the play; whether there was much company, and whether I did not see a very beautiful girl. I replied, "That there was, indeed, a girl in a box near mine, who was surrounded by all the young men about the Court." She smiled, and said, "That is Mademoiselle Dorothee; she went, this evening, to see the King sup in public, and to-morrow she is to be taken to the hunt. You are surprised to find me so well informed, but I know a great deal more about her. She was brought here by a Gascon, named Dubarre or Dubarri, who is the greatest scoundrel in France. He founds all his hopes of advancement on Mademoiselle Dorothee's charms, which he thinks the King cannot resist. She is, really, very beautiful.. She was pointed out to me in my little garden, whither she was taken to walk on purpose. She is the daughter of a water-carrier, at Strasbourg, and her charming lover demands to be sent Minister to Cologne, as a beginning."—"Is it possible, Madame, that you can have been rendered uneasy by such a creature as that?"—"Nothing is impossible," replied she; "though I think the King would scarcely dare to give such a scandal. Besides, happily, Lebel, to quiet his conscience, told the King that the beautiful Dorothee's lover is infected with a horrid disease;" and, added he, "Your Majesty would not get rid of that as you have done of the scrofula." This was quite enough to keep the young lady at a distance.

"I pity you sincerely, Madame," said I, "while everybody else envies you." "Ah!" replied she, "my life is that of the Christian, a perpetual warfare. This was not the case with the woman who enjoyed the favour of Louis XIV. Madame de La Valliere suffered herself to be deceived by Madame de Montespan, but it was her own fault, or, rather, the effect of her extreme good nature. She was entirely devoid of suspicion at first, because she could not believe her friend perfidious. Madame de Montespan's empire was shaken by Madame de Fontanges, and overthrown by Madame de Maintenon; but her haughtiness, her caprices, had already alienated the King. He had not, however, such rivals as mine; it is true, their baseness is my security. I have, in general, little to fear but casual infidelities, and the chance that they may not all be sufficiently transitory for my safety. The King likes variety, but he is also bound by habit; he fears eclats, and detests manoeuvring women. The little Marechale (de Mirepoig) one day said to me, 'It is your staircase that the King loves; he is accustomed to go up and down it. But, if he found another woman to whom he could talk of hunting and business as he does to you, it would be just the same to him in three days.'"



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I write without plan, order, or date, just as things come into my mind; and I shall now go to the Abbe de Bernis, whom I liked very much, because he was good-natured, and treated me kindly. One day, just as Madame de Pompadour had finished dressing, M. de Noailles asked to speak to her in private. I, accordingly, retired. The Count looked full of important business. I heard their conversation, as there was only the door between us.

“A circumstance has taken place,” said he, “which I think it my duty to communicate to the King; but I would not do so without first informing you of it, since it concerns one of your friends for whom I have the utmost regard and respect. The Abbe de Bernis had a mind to shoot, this morning, and went, with two or three of his people, armed with guns, into the little park, where the Dauphin would not venture to shoot without asking the King’s permission. The guards, surprised at hearing the report of guns, ran to the spot, and were greatly astonished at the sight of M. de Bernis. They very respectfully asked to see his permission, when they found, to their astonishment, that he had none. They begged of him to desist, telling him that, if they did their duty, they should arrest him; but they must, at all events, instantly acquaint me with the circumstance, as Ranger of the Park of Versailles. They added, that the King must have heard the firing, and that they begged of him to retire. The Abbe apologized, on the score of ignorance, and assured them that he had my permission. ‘The Comte de Noailles,’ said they, ‘could only grant permission to shoot in the more remote parts, and in the great park.’” The Count made a great merit of his eagerness to give the earliest information to Madame. She told him to leave the task of communicating it to the King to her, and begged of him to say nothing about the matter. M. de Marigny, who did not like the Abbe, came to see me in the evening; and I affected to know nothing of the story, and to hear it for the first time from him. “He must have been out of his senses,” said he, “to shoot under the King’s windows,”—and enlarged much on the airs he gave himself. Madame de Pompadour gave this affair the best colouring she could the King was, nevertheless, greatly disgusted at it, and twenty times, since the Abbe’s disgrace, when he passed over that part of the park, he said, “This is where the Abbe took his pleasure.” The King never liked him; and Madame de Pompadour told me one night, after his disgrace, when I was sitting up with her in her illness, that she saw, before he had been Minister a week, that he was not fit for his office. “If that hypocritical Bishop,” said she, speaking of the Bishop of Mirepoix, “had not prevented the King from granting him a pension of four hundred louis a year, which he had promised me, he would never have been appointed Ambassador. I should, afterwards, have been able to give him an income of eight hundred louis a year,



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perhaps the place of master of the chapel. Thus he would have been happier, and I should have had nothing to regret." I took the liberty of saying that I did not agree with her. That he had yet remaining advantages, of which he could not be deprived; that his exile would terminate; and that he would then be a Cardinal, with an income of eight thousand louis a year. "That is true," she replied; "but I think of the mortifications he has undergone, and of the ambition which devours him; and, lastly, I think of myself. I should have still enjoyed his society, and should have had, in my declining years, an old and amiable friend, if he had not been Minister." The King sent him away in anger, and was strongly inclined to refuse him the hat. M. Quesnay told me, some months afterwards, that the Abbe wanted to be Prime Minister; that he had drawn up a memorial, setting forth that in difficult crises the public good required that there should be a central point (that was his expression), towards which everything should be directed. Madame de Pompadour would not present the memorial; he insisted, though she said to him, "You will ruin yourself." The King cast his eyes over it, and said "'central point,'—that is to say himself, he wants to be Prime Minister." Madame tried to apologize for him, and said, "That expression might refer to the Marechal de Belle-Isle."—"Is he not just about to be made Cardinal?" said the King. "This is a fine manoeuvre; he knows well enough that, by means of that dignity, he would compel the Ministers to assemble at his house, and then M. l'Abbe would be the central point. Wherever there is a Cardinal in the council, he is sure, in the end, to take the lead. Louis XIV., for this reason, did not choose to admit the Cardinal de Janson into the council, in spite of his great esteem for him. The Cardinal de Fleury told me the same thing. He had some desire that the Cardinal de Tencin should succeed him; but his sister was such an intrigante that Cardinal de Fleury advised me to have nothing to do with the matter, and I behaved so as to destroy all his hopes, and to undeceive others. M. d'Argenson has strongly impressed me with the same opinion, and has succeeded in destroying all my respect for him." This is what the King said, according to my friend Quesnay, who, by the bye, was a great genius, as everybody said, and a very lively, agreeable man. He liked to chat with me about the country. I had been bred up there, and he used to set me a talking about the meadows of Normandy and Poitou, the wealth of the farmers, and the modes of culture. He was the best-natured man in the world, and the farthest removed from petty intrigue. While he lived at Court, he was much more occupied with the best manner of cultivating land than with anything that passed around him. The man whom he esteemed the most was M. de la Riviere, a Counsellor of Parliament, who was also Intendant of Martinique; he looked upon him as a man of the greatest genius, and thought him the only person fit for the financial department of administration.



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The Comtesse d'Estrades, who owed everything to Madame de Pompadour, was incessantly intriguing against her. She was clever enough to destroy all proofs of her manoeuvres, but she could not so easily prevent suspicion. Her intimate connection with M. d'Argenson gave offence to Madame, and, for some time, she was more reserved with her. She, afterwards, did a thing which justly irritated the King and Madame. The King, who wrote a great deal, had written to Madame de Pompadour a long letter concerning an assembly of the Chambers of Parliament, and had enclosed a letter of M. Berrien. Madame was ill, and laid those letters on a little table by her bedside. M. de Gontaut came in, and gossiped about trifles, as usual. Madame d'Amblimont also came, and stayed but very little time. Just as I was going to resume a book which I had been reading to Madame, the Comtesse d'Estrades entered, placed herself near Madame's bed, and talked to her for some time. As soon as she was gone, Madame called me, asked what was o'clock, and said, "Order my door to be shut, the King will soon be here." I gave the order, and returned; and Madame told me to give her the King's letter, which was on the table with some other papers. I gave her the papers, and told her there was nothing else. She was very uneasy at not finding the letter, and, after enumerating the persons who had been in the room, she said, "It cannot be the little Countess, nor Gontaut, who has taken this letter. It can only be the Comtesse d'Estrades;—and that is too bad." The King came, and was extremely angry, as Madame told me. Two days afterwards, he sent Madame d'Estrades into exile. There was no doubt that she took the letter; the King's handwriting had probably awakened her curiosity. This occurrence gave great pain to M. d'Argenson, who was bound to her, as Madame de Pompadour said, by his love of intrigue. This redoubled his hatred of Madame, and she accused him of favouring the publication of a libel, in which she was represented as a worn-out mistress, reduced to the vile occupation of providing new objects to please her lover's appetite. She was characterised as superintendent of the Parc-aux-cerfs, which was said to cost hundreds of thousands of louis a year. Madame de Pompadour did, indeed, try to conceal some of the King's weaknesses, but she never knew one of the sultanas of that seraglio. There were, however, scarcely ever more than two at once, and often only one. When they married, they received some jewels, and four thousand louis. The Parc-aux-cerfs was sometimes vacant for five or six months. I was surprised, some time after, at seeing the Duchesse de Luynes, Lady of Honour to the Queen, come privately to see Madame de Pompadour. She afterwards came openly. One evening, after Madame was in bed, she called me, and said, "My dear, you will be delighted; the Queen has given me the place of Lady of the Palace; tomorrow I am to be presented to her:



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you must make me look well." I knew that the King was not so well pleased at this as she was; he was afraid that it would give rise to scandal, and that it might be thought he had forced this nomination upon the Queen. He had, however, done no such thing. It had been represented to the Queen that it was an act of heroism on her part to forget the past; that all scandal would be obliterated when Madame de Pompadour was seen to belong to the Court in an honourable manner; and that it would be the best proof that nothing more than friendship now subsisted between the King and the favourite. The Queen received her very graciously. The devotees flattered themselves they should be protected by Madame, and, for some time, were full of her praises. Several of the Dauphin's friends came in private to see her, and some obtained promotion. The Chevalier du Muy, however, refused to come. The King had the greatest possible contempt for them, and granted them nothing with a good grace. He, one day, said of a man of great family, who wished to be made Captain of the Guards, "He is a double spy, who wants to be paid on both sides." This was the moment at which Madame de Pompadour seemed to me to enjoy the most complete satisfaction. The devotees came to visit her without scruple, and did not forget to make use of every opportunity of serving themselves. Madame de Lu----- had set them the example. The Doctor laughed at this change in affairs, and was very merry at the expense of the saints. "You must allow, however, that they are consistent," said I, "and may be sincere." "Yes," said he; "but then they should not ask for anything."

One day, I was at Doctor Quesnay's, whilst Madame de Pompadour was at the theatre. The Marquis de Mirabeau

[The author of "L'Ami des Hommes," one of the leaders of the sect of Economistes, and father of the celebrated Mirabeau. After the death of Quesnay, the Grand Master of the Order, the Marquis de Mirabeau was unanimously elected his successor. Mirabeau was not deficient in a certain enlargement of mind, nor in acquirements, nor even in patriotism; but his writings are enthusiastical, and show that he had little more than glimpses of the truth. The Friend of Man was the enemy of all his family. He beat his servants, and did not pay them. The reports of the lawsuit with his wife, in 1775, prove that this philosopher possessed, in the highest possible degree, all the anti-conjugal qualities. It is said that his eldest son wrote two contradictory depositions, and was paid by both sides.]

came in, and the conversation was, for some time, extremely tedious to me, running entirely on 'net produce'; at length, they talked of other things.



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Mirabeau said, "I think the King looks ill, he grows old."—"So much the worse, a thousand times so much the worse," said Quesnay; "it would be the greatest possible loss to France if he died;" and he raised his hands, and sighed deeply. "I do not doubt that you are attached to the King, and with reason," said Mirabeau: "I am attached to him too; but I never saw you so much moved."—"Ah!" said Quesnay, "I think of what would follow."—"Well, the Dauphin is virtuous."—"Yes; and full of good intentions; nor is he deficient in understanding; but canting hypocrites would possess an absolute empire over a Prince who regards them as oracles. The Jesuits would govern the kingdom, as they did at the end of Louis XIV.'s reign: and you would see the fanatical Bishop of Verdun Prime Minister, and La Vauguyon all-powerful under some other title. The Parliaments must then mind how they behave; they will not be better treated than my friends the philosophers."—"But they go too far," said Mirabeau; "why openly attack religion?"—"I allow that," replied the Doctor; "but how is it possible not to be rendered indignant by the fanaticism of others, and by recollecting all the blood that has flowed during the last two hundred years? You must not then again irritate them, and revive in France the time of Mary in England. But what is done is done, and I often exhort them to be moderate; I wish they would follow the example of our friend Duclos."—"You are right," replied Mirabeau; "he said to me a few days ago, 'These philosophers are going on at such a rate that they will force me to go to vespers and high mass;' but, in fine, the Dauphin is virtuous, well-informed, and intellectual."—"It is the commencement of his reign, I fear," said Quesnay, "when the imprudent proceedings of our friends will be represented to him in the most unfavourable point of view; when the Jansenists and Molinists will make common cause, and be strongly supported by the Dauphine. I thought that M. de Mury was moderate, and that he would temper the headlong fury of the others; but I heard him say that Voltaire merited condign punishment. Be assured, sir, that the times of John Huss and Jerome of Prague will return; but I hope not to live to see it. I approve of Voltaire having hunted down the Pompignans: were it not for the ridicule with which he covered them, that bourgeois Marquis would have been preceptor to the young Princes, and, aided by his brother, would have succeeded in again lighting the faggots of persecution."—"What ought to give you confidence in the Dauphin," said Mirabeau, "is, that, notwithstanding the devotion of Pompignan, he turns him into ridicule. A short time back, seeing him strutting about with an air of inflated pride, he said to a person, who told it to me, 'Our friend Pompignan thinks that he is something.'" On returning home, I wrote down this conversation.



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I, one day, found Quesnay in great distress. "Mirabeau," said he, "is sent to Vincennes, for his work on taxation. The Farmers General have denounced him, and procured his arrest; his wife is going to throw herself at the feet of Madame de Pompadour to-day." A few minutes afterwards, I went into Madame's apartment, to assist at her toilet, and the Doctor came in. Madame said to him, "You must be much concerned at the disgrace of your friend Mirabeau. I am sorry for it too, for I like his brother." Quesnay replied, "I am very far from believing him to be actuated by bad intentions, Madame; he loves the King and the people." "Yes," said she; "his 'Ami des Hommes' did him great honour." At this moment the Lieutenant of Police entered, and Madame said to him, "Have you seen M. de Mirabeau's book?"—"Yes, Madame; but it was not I who denounced it?"—"What do you think of it?"—"I think he might have said almost all it contains with impunity, if he had been more circumspect as to the manner; there is, among other objectionable passages, this, which occurs at the beginning: Your Majesty has about twenty millions of subjects; it is only by means of money that you can obtain their services, and there is no money."—"What, is there really that, Doctor?" said Madame. "It is true, they are the first lines in the book, and I confess that they are imprudent; but, in reading the work, it is clear that he laments that patriotism is extinct in the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and that he desires to rekindle it." The King entered: we went out, and I wrote down on Quesnay's table what I had just heard. I then returned to finish dressing Madame de Pompadour: she said to me, "The King is extremely angry with Mirabeau; but I tried to soften him, and so did the Lieutenant of Police. This will increase Quesnay's fears. Do you know what he said to me to-day? The King had been talking to him in my room, and the Doctor appeared timid and agitated. After the King was gone, I said to him, 'You always seem so embarrassed in the King's presence, and yet he is so good-natured.'—"I Madame," said he, "I left my native village at the age of forty, and I have very little experience of the world, nor can I accustom myself to its usages without great difficulty. When I am in a room with the King, I say to myself, This is a man who can order my head to be cut off; and that idea embarrasses me."—"But do not the King's justice and kindness set you at ease?"—"That is very true in reasoning," said he; "but the sentiment is more prompt, and inspires me with fear before I have time to say to myself all that is calculated to allay it."

I got her to repeat this conversation, and wrote it down immediately, that I might not forget it.

An anonymous letter was addressed to the King and Madame de Pompadour; and, as the author was very anxious that it should not miscarry, he sent copies to the Lieutenant of Police, sealed and directed to the King, to Madame de Pompadour, and to M. de Marigny. This letter produced a strong impression on Madame, and on the King, and still more, I believe, on the Duc de Choiseul, who had received a similar one. I went on my knees to M. de Marigny, to prevail on him to allow me to copy it, that I might show it to the Doctor. It is as follows:



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“Sire—It is a zealous servant who writes to Your Majesty. Truth is always better, particularly to Kings; habituated to flattery, they see objects only under those colours most likely to please them. I have reflected, and read much; and here is what my meditations have suggested to me to lay before Your Majesty. They have accustomed you to be invisible, and inspired you with a timidity which prevents you from speaking; thus all direct communication is cut off between the master and his subjects. Shut up in the interior of your palace, you are becoming every day like the Emperors of the East; but see, Sire, their fate! ‘I have troops,’ Your Majesty will say; such, also, is their support: but, when the only security of a King rests upon his troops; when he is only, as one may say, a King of the soldiers, these latter feel their own strength, and abuse it. Your finances are in the greatest disorder, and the great majority of states have perished through this cause. A patriotic spirit sustained the ancient states, and united all classes for the safety of their country. In the present times, money has taken the place of this spirit; it has become the universal lever, and you are in want of it. A spirit of finance affects every department of the state; it reigns triumphant at Court; all have become venal; and all distinction of rank is broken up. Your Ministers are without genius and capacity since the dismissal of *mm.* d’Argenson and de Machault. You alone cannot judge of their incapacity, because they lay before you what has been prepared by skilful clerks, but which they pass as their own. They provide only for the necessity of the day, but there is no spirit of government in their acts. The military changes that have taken place disgust the troops, and cause the most deserving officers to resign; a seditious flame has sprung up in the very bosom of the Parliaments; you seek to corrupt them, and the remedy is worse than the disease. It is introducing vice into the sanctuary of justice, and gangrene into the vital parts of the commonwealth. Would a corrupted Parliament have braved the fury of the League, in order to preserve the crown for the legitimate sovereign? Forgetting the maxims of Louis XIV., who well understood the danger of confiding the administration to noblemen, you have chosen M. de Choiseul, and even given him three departments; which is a much heavier burden than that which he would have to support as Prime Minister, because the latter has only to oversee the details executed by the Secretaries of State. The public fully appreciate this dazzling Minister. He is nothing more than a ‘*petit-maitre*’, without talents or information, who has a little phosphorus in his mind. There is a thing well worthy of remark, Sire; that is, the open war carried on against religion. Henceforward there can spring up no new sects, because the general belief has been shaken, that no one feels inclined to occupy himself with

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difference of sentiment upon some of the articles. The Encyclopedists, under pretence of enlightening mankind, are sapping the foundations of religion. All the different kinds of liberty are connected; the Philosophers and the Protestants tend towards republicanism, as well as the Jansenists. The Philosophers strike at the root, the others lop the branches; and their efforts, without being concerted, will one day lay the tree low. Add to these the Economists; whose object is political liberty, as that of the others is liberty of worship, and the Government may find itself, in twenty or thirty years, undermined in every direction, and will then fall with a crash. If Your Majesty, struck by this picture, but too true, should ask me for a remedy, I should say, that it is necessary to bring back the Government to its principles, and, above all, to lose no time in restoring order to the state of the finances, because the embarrassments incident to a country in a state of debt necessitate fresh taxes, which, after grinding the people, induce them towards revolt. It is my opinion that Your Majesty would do well to appear more among your people; to shew your approbation of useful services, and your displeasure of errors and prevarications, and neglect of duty: in a word, to let it be seen that rewards and punishments, appointments and dismissals, proceed from yourself. You will then inspire gratitude by your favours, and fear by your reproaches; you will then be the object of immediate and personal attachment, instead of which, everything is now referred to your Ministers. The confidence in the King, which is habitual to your people, is shewn by the exclamation, so common among them, 'Ah! if the King knew it' They love to believe that the King would remedy all their evils, if he knew of them. But, on the other hand, what sort of ideas must they form of kings, whose duty it is to be informed of everything, and to superintend everything, that concerns the public, but who are, nevertheless, ignorant of everything which the discharge of their functions requires them to know? 'Rex, roi, regere, regar, conduire'—to rule, to conduct—these words sufficiently denote their duties. What would be said of a father who got rid of the charge of his children as of a burthen?

"A time will come, Sire, when the people shall be enlightened—and that time is probably approaching. Resume the reins of government, hold them with a firm hand, and act, so that it cannot be said of you, 'Faeminas et scorta volvit ammo et haec principatus praemia putat':—Sire, if I see that my sincere advice should have produced any change, I shall continue it, and enter into more details; if not, I shall remain silent."

Now that I am upon the subject of anonymous letters to the King, I must just mention that it is impossible to conceive how frequent they were. People were extremely assiduous in telling either unpleasant truths, or alarming lies, with a view to injure others. As an instance, I shall transcribe one concerning Voltaire, who paid great court to Madame de Pompadour when he was in France. This letter was written long after the former.



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“Madame—M. de Voltaire has just dedicated his tragedy of Tancred to you; this ought to be an offering of respect and gratitude; but it is, in fact, an insult, and you will form the same opinion of it as the public has done if you read it with attention. You will see that this distinguished writer appears to betray a consciousness that the subject of his encomiums is not worthy of them, and to endeavour to excuse himself for them to the public. These are his words: ‘I have seen your graces and talents unfold themselves from your infancy. At all periods of your life I have received proofs of your uniform and unchanging kindness. If any critic be found to censure the homage I pay you, he must have a heart formed for ingratitude. I am under great obligations to you, Madame, and these obligations it is my duty to proclaim.’

“What do these words really signify, unless that Voltaire feels it may be thought extraordinary that he should dedicate his work to a woman who possesses but a small share of the public esteem, and that the sentiment of gratitude must plead his excuse? Why should he suppose that the homage he pays you will be censured, whilst we daily see dedications addressed to silly gossips who have neither rank nor celebrity, or to women of exceptional conduct, without any censure being attracted by it?”

M. de Marigny, and Colin, Madame de Pompadour’s steward, were of the same opinion as Quesnay, that the author of this letter was extremely malicious; that he insulted Madame, and tried to injure Voltaire; but that he was, in fact, right. Voltaire, from that moment, was entirely out of favour with Madame, and with the King, and he certainly never discovered the cause.

The King, who admired everything of the age of Louis XIV., and recollected that the Boileaus and Racines had been protected by that monarch, who was indebted to them, in part, for the lustre of his reign, was flattered at having such a man as Voltaire among his subjects. But still he feared him, and had but little esteem for him. He could not help saying, “Moreover, I have treated him as well as Louis XIV. treated Racine and Boileau. I have given him, as Louis XIV. gave to Racine, some pensions, and a place of gentleman in ordinary. It is not my fault if he has committed absurdities, and has had the pretension to become a chamberlain, to wear an order, and sup with a King. It is not the fashion in France; and, as there are here a few more men of wit and noblemen than in Prussia, it would require that I should have a very large table to assemble them all at it.” And then he reckoned upon his fingers, Maupertuis, Fontenelle, La Mothe, Voltaire, Piron, Destouches, Montesquieu, the Cardinal Polignac. “Your Majesty forgets,” said some one, “D’Alembert and Clairaut.”—“And Crebillon,” said he. “And la Chaussee, and the younger Crebillon,” said some one. “He ought to be more agreeable than his father.”—“And there are also the Abbes Prevot and d’Olivet.”—“Pretty well,” said the King; “and for the last twenty years all that (tout cela) would have dined and supped at my table.”



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Madame de Pompadour repeated to me this conversation, which I wrote down the same evening. M. de Marigny, also, talked to me about it. "Voltaire," said he, "has always had a fancy for being Ambassador, and he did all he could to make the people believe that he was charged with some political mission, the first time he visited Prussia."

The people heard of the attempt on the King's life with transports of fury, and with the greatest distress. Their cries were heard under the windows of Madame de Pompadour's apartment. Mobs were collected, and Madame feared the fate of Madame de Chateauroux. Her friends came in, every minute, to give her intelligence. Her room was, at all times, like a church; everybody seemed to claim a right to go in and out when he chose. Some came, under pretence of sympathising, to observe her countenance and manner. She did nothing but weep and faint away. Doctor Quesnay never left her, nor did I. M. de St. Florentin came to see her several times, so did the Comptroller-General, and M. Rouilld; but M. de Machault did not come. The Duchesse de Brancas came very frequently. The Abbe de Bernis never left us, except to go to enquire for the King. The tears came in his eyes whenever he looked at Madame. Doctor Quesnay saw the King five or six times a day. "There is nothing to fear," said he to Madame. "If it were anybody else, he might go to a ball." My son went the next day, as he had done the day the event occurred, to see what was going on at the Castle. He told us, on his return, that the Keeper of the Seals was with the King. I sent him back, to see what course he took on leaving the King. He came running back in half an hour, to tell me that the Keeper of the Seals had gone to his own house, followed by a crowd of people. When I told this to Madame, she burst into tears, and said, "Is that a friend?" The Abbe de Bernis said, "You must not judge him hastily, in such a moment as this." I returned into the drawing-room about an hour after, when the Keeper of the Seals entered. He passed me, with his usual cold and severe look. "How is Madame de Pompadour?" said he. "Alas!" replied I, "as you may imagine!" He passed on to her closet. Everybody retired, and he remained for half an hour. The Abbe returned and Madame rang. I went into her room, the Abbe following me. She was in tears. "I must go, my dear Abbe," said she. I made her take some orange-flower water, in a silver goblet, for her teeth chattered. She then told me to call her equerry. He came in, and she calmly gave him her orders, to have everything prepared at her hotel, in Paris; to tell all her people to get ready to go; and to desire her coachman not to be out of the way. She then shut herself up, to confer with the Abbe de Bernis, who left her, to go to the Council. Her door was then shut, except to the ladies with whom she was particularly intimate, M. de Soubise, M. de Gontaut, the Ministers, and some



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others. Several ladies, in the greatest distress, came to talk to me in my room: they compared the conduct of M. de Machault with that of M. de Richelieu, at Metz. Madame had related to them the circumstances extremely to the honour of the Duke, and, by contrast, the severest satire on the Keeper of the Seals. "He thinks, or pretends to think," said she, "that the priests will be clamorous for my dismissal; but Quesnay and all the physicians declare that there is not the slightest danger." Madame having sent for me, I saw the Marechale de Mirepoix coming in. While she was at the door, she cried out, "What are all those trunks, Madame? Your people tell me you are going."—"Alas! my dear friend, such is our Master's desire, as M. de Machault tells me."—"And what does he advise?" said the Marechale. "That I should go without delay." During this conversation, I was undressing Madame, who wished to be at her ease on her chaise-longue. "Your Keeper of the Seals wants to get the power into his own hands, and betrays you; he who quits the field loses it." I went out. M. de Soubise entered, then the Abbe and M. de Marigny. The latter, who was very kind to me, came into my room an hour afterwards. I was alone. "She will remain," said he; "but, hush!—she will make an appearance of going, in order not to set her enemies at work. It is the little Marechale who prevailed upon her to stay: her keeper (so she called M. de Machault) will pay for it." Quesnay came in, and, having heard what was said, with his monkey airs, began to relate a fable of a fox, who, being at dinner with other beasts, persuaded one of them that his enemies were seeking him, in order that he might get possession of his share in his absence. I did not see Madame again till very late, at her going to bed. She was more calm. Things improved, from day to day, and de Machault, the faithless friend, was dismissed. The King returned to Madame de Pompadour, as usual. I learnt, by M. de Marigny, that the Abbe had been, one day, with M. d'Argenson, to endeavour to persuade him to live on friendly terms with Madame, and that he had been very coldly received. "He is the more arrogant," said he, "on account of Machault's dismissal, which leaves the field clear for him, who has more experience, and more talent; and I fear that he will, therefore, be disposed to declare war till death." The next day, Madame having ordered her chaise, I was curious to know where she was going, for she went out but little, except to church, and to the houses of the Ministers. I was told that she was gone to visit M. d'Argenson. She returned in an hour, at farthest, and seemed very much out of spirits. She leaned on the chimneypiece, with her eyes fixed on the border of it. M. de Bernis entered. I waited for her to take off her cloak and gloves. She had her hands in her muff. The Abbe stood looking at her for some minutes; at last he said, "You look like a sheep in a reflecting mood."

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She awoke from her reverie, and, throwing her muff on the easy-chair, replied, "It is a wolf who makes the sheep reflect." I went out: the King entered shortly after, and I heard Madame de Pompadour sobbing. The Abbe came into my room, and told me to bring some Hoffman's drops: the King himself mixed the draught with sugar, and presented it to her in the kindest manner possible. She smiled, and kissed the King's hands. I left the room. Two days after, very early in the morning, I heard of M. d'Argenson's exile. It was her doing, and was, indeed, the strongest proof of her influence that could be given. The King was much attached to M. d'Argenson, and the war, then carrying on, both by sea and land, rendered the dismissal of two such Ministers extremely imprudent. This was the universal opinion at the time.

Many people talk of the letter of the Comte d'Argenson to Madame d'Esparbes. I give it, according to the most correct version:

"The doubtful is, at length, decided. The Keeper of the Seals is dismissed. You will be recalled, my dear Countess, and we shall be masters of the field."

It is much less generally known that Arboulin, whom Madame calls Bou-bou, was supposed to be the person who, on the very day of the dismissal of the Keeper of the Seals, bribed the Count's confidential courier, who gave him this letter. Is this report founded on truth? I cannot swear that it is; but it is asserted that the letter is written in the Count's style. Besides, who could so immediately have invented it? It, however, appeared certain, from the extreme displeasure of the King, that he had some other subject of complaint against M. d'Argenson, besides his refusing to be reconciled with Madame. Nobody dares to show the slightest attachment to the disgraced Minister. I asked the ladies who were most intimate with Madame de Pompadour, as well as my own friends, what they knew of the matter; but they knew nothing. I can understand why Madame did not let them into her confidence at that moment. She will be less reserved in time. I care very little about it, since I see that she is well, and appears happy.

The King said a thing, which did him honour, to a person whose name Madame withheld from me. A nobleman, who had been a most assiduous courtier of the Count, said, rubbing his hands with an air of great joy, "I have just seen the Comte d'Argenson's baggage set out." When the King heard him, he went up to Madame, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "And immediately the cock crew."

"I believe this is taken from Scripture, where Peter denies Our Lord. I confess, this circumstance gave me great pleasure. It showed that the King is not the dupe of those around him, and that he hates treachery and ingratitude."

## **ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:**



## Page 42

A liar ought to have a good memory  
Because he is fat, he is thought dull and heavy  
Danger of confiding the administration to noblemen  
Do not repulse him in his fond moments  
He who quits the field loses it  
Money the universal lever, and you are in want of it  
Offering you the spectacle of my miseries  
Sentiment is more prompt, and inspires me with fear  
Sworn that she had thought of nothing but you all her life  
To despise money, is to despise happiness, liberty...  
We look upon you as a cat, or a dog, and go on talking  
When the only security of a King rests upon his troops  
You tell me bad news: having packed up, I had rather go