

Marie Antoinette — Volume 04 eBook

Marie Antoinette — Volume 04 by Jeanne-Louise-Henriette Campan

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CHAPTER XI.

About the close of the last century several of the Northern sovereigns took a fancy for travelling. Christian *iii.*, King of Denmark, visited the Court of France in 1763, during the reign of Louis xv. We have seen the King of Sweden and Joseph *ii.* at Versailles. The Grand Duke of Russia (afterwards Paul I.), son of Catherine *ii.*, and the Princess of Wurtemberg, his wife, likewise resolved to visit France. They travelled under the titles of the Comte and Comtesse du Nord. They were presented on the 20th of May, 1782. The Queen received them with grace and dignity. On the day of their arrival at Versailles they dined in private with the King and Queen.

The plain, unassuming appearance of Paul I. pleased Louis XVI. He spoke to him with more confidence and cheerfulness than he had spoken to Joseph *ii.* The Comtesse du Nord was not at first so successful with the Queen. This lady was of a fine height, very fat for her age, with all the German stiffness, well informed, and perhaps displaying her acquirements with rather too much confidence. When the Comte and Comtesse du Nord were presented the Queen was exceedingly nervous. She withdrew into her closet before she went into the room where she was to dine with the illustrious travellers, and asked for a glass of water, confessing "she had just experienced how much more difficult it was to play the part of a queen in the presence of other sovereigns, or of princes born to become so, than before courtiers." She soon recovered from her confusion, and reappeared with ease and confidence. The dinner was tolerably cheerful, and the conversation very animated.

Brilliant entertainments were given at Court in honour of the King of Sweden and the Comte du Nord. They were received in private by the King and Queen, but they were treated with much more ceremony than the Emperor, and their Majesties always appeared to me to be very, cautious before these personages. However, the King one day asked the Russian Grand Duke if it were true that he could not rely on the fidelity of any one of those who accompanied him. The Prince answered him without hesitation, and before a considerable number of persons, that he should be very sorry to have with him even a poodle that was much attached to him, because his mother would take care to have it thrown into the Seine, with a stone round its neck, before he should leave Paris. This reply, which I myself heard, horrified me, whether it depicted the disposition of Catherine, or only expressed the Prince's prejudice against her.

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The Queen gave the Grand Duke a supper at Trianon, and had the gardens illuminated as they had been for the Emperor. The Cardinal de Rohan very indiscreetly ventured to introduce himself there without the Queen's knowledge. Having been treated with the utmost coolness ever since his return from Vienna, he had not dared to ask her himself for permission to see the illumination; but he persuaded the porter of Trianon to admit him as soon as the Queen should have set off for Versailles, and his Eminence engaged to remain in the porter's lodge until all the carriages should have left the chateau. He did not keep his word, and while the porter was busy in the discharge of his duty, the Cardinal, who wore his red stockings and had merely thrown on a greatcoat, went down into the garden, and, with an air of mystery, drew up in two different places to see the royal family and suite pass by.

Her Majesty was highly offended at this piece of boldness, and next day ordered the porter to be discharged. There was a general feeling of disgust at the Cardinal's conduct, and of commiseration towards the porter for the loss of his place. Affected at the misfortune of the father of a family, I obtained his forgiveness; and since that time I have often regretted the feeling which induced me to interfere. The notoriety of the discharge of the porter of Trianon, and the odium that circumstance would have fixed upon the Cardinal, would have made the Queen's dislike to him still more publicly known, and would probably have prevented the scandalous and notorious intrigue of the necklace.

The Queen, who was much prejudiced against the King of Sweden, received him very coldly.

[Gustavus *iii.*, King of Sweden, travelled in France under the title of Comte d'Haga. Upon his accession to the throne, he managed the revolution which prostrated the authority of the Senate with equal skill, coolness, and courage. He was assassinated in 1792, at a masked ball, by Auckarstrum.—*Note by the editor.*]

All that was said of the private character of that sovereign, his connection with the Comte de Vergennes, from the time of the Revolution of Sweden, in 1772, the character of his favourite Armfeldt, and the prejudices of the monarch himself against the Swedes who were well received at the Court of Versailles, formed the grounds of this dislike. He came one day uninvited and unexpected, and requested to dine with the Queen. The Queen received him in the little closet, and desired me to send for her clerk of the kitchen, that she might be informed whether there was a proper dinner to set before Comte d'Haga, and add to it if necessary. The King of Sweden assured her that there would be enough for him; and I could not help smiling when I thought of the length of the menu of the dinner of the King and Queen, not half of which would have made its appearance had they dined in private. The Queen looked significantly at me, and I withdrew.

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In the evening she asked me why I had seemed so astonished when she ordered me to add to her dinner, saying that I ought instantly to have seen that she was giving the King of Sweden a lesson for his presumption. I owed to her that the scene had appeared to me so much in the bourgeois style, that I involuntarily thought of the cutlets on the gridiron, and the omelette, which in families in humble circumstances serve to piece out short commons. She was highly diverted with my answer, and repeated it to the King, who also laughed heartily at it.

The peace with England satisfied all classes of society interested in the national honour. The departure of the English commissary from Dunkirk, who had been fixed at that place ever since the shameful peace of 1763 as inspector of our navy, occasioned an ecstasy of joy.

[By the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) it was stipulated that the fortifications and port of Dunkirk should be destroyed. By the Treaty of Paris (1763) a commissary was to reside at Dunkirk to see that no attempt was made to break this treaty. This stipulation was revoked by the Peace of Versailles, in 1783.—see DYER'S "Modern Europe," 1st edition, vol. i., pp. 205-438 and 539.]

The Government communicated to the Englishman the order for his departure before the treaty was made public. But for that precaution the populace would have probably committed some excess or other, in order to make the agent of English power feel the effects of the resentment which had constantly increased during his stay at that port. Those engaged in trade were the only persons dissatisfied with the treaty of 1783. That article which provided for, the free admission of English goods annihilated at one blow the trade of Rouen and the other manufacturing towns throughout the kingdom. The English swarmed into Paris. A considerable number of them were presented at Court. The Queen paid them marked attention; doubtless she wished them to distinguish between the esteem she felt for their noble nation and the political views of the Government in the support it had afforded to the Americans. Discontent was, however, manifested at Court in consequence of the favour bestowed by the Queen on the English noblemen; these attentions were called infatuations. This was illiberal; and the Queen justly complained of such absurd jealousy.

The journey to Fontainebleau and the winter at Paris and at Court were extremely brilliant. The spring brought back those amusements which the Queen began to prefer to the splendour of fetes. The most perfect harmony subsisted between the King and Queen; I never saw but one cloud between them. It was soon dispelled, and the cause of it is perfectly unknown to me.

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My father-in-law, whose penetration and experience I respected greatly, recommended me, when he saw me placed in the service of a young queen, to shun all kinds of confidence. "It procures," said he, "but a very fleeting, and at the same time dangerous sort of favour; serve with zeal to the best of your judgment, but never do more than obey. Instead of setting your wits to work to discover why an order or a commission which may appear of consequence is given to you, use them to prevent the possibility of your knowing anything of the matter." I had occasion to act on this wise advice. One morning at Trianon I went into the Queen's chamber; there were letters lying upon the bed, and she was weeping bitterly. Her tears and sobs were occasionally interrupted by exclamations of "Ah! that I were dead!—wretches! monsters! What have I done to them?" I offered her orange-flower water and ether. "Leave me," said she, "if you love me; it would be better to kill me at once." At this moment she threw her arm over my shoulder and began weeping afresh. I saw that some weighty trouble oppressed her heart, and that she wanted a confidant. I suggested sending for the Duchesse de Polignac; this she strongly opposed. I renewed my arguments, and her opposition grew weaker. I disengaged myself from her arms, and ran to the antechamber, where I knew that an outrider always waited, ready to mount and start at a moment's warning for Versailles. I ordered him to go full speed, and tell the Duchesse de Polignac that the Queen was very uneasy, and desired to see her instantly. The Duchess always had a carriage ready. In less than ten minutes she was at the Queen's door. I was the only person there, having been forbidden to send for the other women. Madame de Polignac came in; the Queen held out her arms to her, the Duchess rushed towards her. I heard her sobs renewed and withdrew.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the Queen, who had become calmer, rang to be dressed. I sent her woman in; she put on her gown and retired to her boudoir with the Duchess. Very soon afterwards the Comte d'Artois arrived from Compiègne, where he had been with the King. He eagerly inquired where the Queen was; remained half an hour with her and the Duchess; and on coming out told me the Queen asked for me. I found her seated on the couch by the side of her friend; her features had resumed their usual cheerful and gracious appearance. She held out her hand to me, and said to the Duchess, "I know I have made her so uncomfortable this morning that I must set her poor heart at ease." She then added, "You must have seen, on some fine summer's day, a black cloud suddenly appear and threaten to pour down upon the country and lay it waste. The lightest wind drives it away, and the blue sky and serene weather are restored. This is just the image of what has happened to me this morning." She afterwards told me that the King would return from Compiègne after hunting

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there, and sup with her; that I must send for her purveyor, to select with him from his bills of fare all such dishes as the King liked best; that she would have no others served up in the evening at her table; and that this was a mark of attention that she wished the King to notice. The Duchesse de Polignac also took me by the hand, and told me how happy she was that she had been with the Queen at a moment when she stood in need of a friend. I never knew what could have created in the Queen so lively and so transient an alarm; but I guessed from the particular care she took respecting the King that attempts had been made to irritate him against her; that the malice of her enemies had been promptly discovered and counteracted by the King's penetration and attachment; and that the Comte d'Artois had hastened to bring her intelligence of it.

It was, I think, in the summer of 1787, during one of the Trianon excursions, that the Queen of Naples—[Caroline, sister of Marie Antoinette.]—sent the Chevalier de Bressac to her Majesty on a secret mission relative to a projected marriage between the Hereditary Prince, her son, and Madame, the King's daughter; in the absence of the lady of honour he addressed himself to me. Although he said a great deal to me about the close confidence with which the Queen of Naples honoured him, and about his letter of credit, I thought he had the air of an adventurer.—[He afterwards spent several years shut up in the Chateau de l'Oeuf.]—He had, indeed, private letters for the Queen, and his mission was not feigned; he talked to me very rashly even before his admission, and entreated me to do all that lay in my power to dispose the Queen's mind in favour of his sovereign's wishes; I declined, assuring him that it did not become me to meddle with State affairs. He endeavoured, but in vain, to prove to me that the union contemplated by the Queen of Naples ought not to be looked upon in that light.

I procured M. de Bressac the audience he desired, but without suffering myself even to seem acquainted with the object of his mission. The Queen told me what it was; she thought him a person ill-chosen for the occasion; and yet she thought that the Queen, her sister, had done wisely in not sending a man worthy to be avowed,—it being impossible that what she solicited should take place. I had an opportunity on this occasion, as indeed on many others, of judging to what extent the Queen valued and loved France and the dignity of our Court. She then told me that Madame, in marrying her cousin, the Duc d'Angouleme, would not lose her rank as daughter of the Queen; and that her situation would be far preferable to that of queen of any other country; and that there was nothing in Europe to be compared to the Court of France; and that it would be necessary, in order to avoid exposing a French Princess to feelings of deep regret, in case she should be married to a foreign prince, to take her from the palace of Versailles

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at seven years of age, and send her immediately to the Court in which she was to dwell; and that at twelve would be too late; for recollections and comparisons would ruin the happiness of all the rest of her life. The Queen looked upon the destiny of her sisters as far beneath her own; and frequently mentioned the mortifications inflicted by the Court of Spain upon her sister, the Queen of Naples, and the necessity she was under of imploring the mediation of the King of France.

She showed me several letters that she had received from the Queen of Naples relative to her differences with the Court of Madrid respecting the Minister Acton. She thought him useful to her people, inasmuch as he was a man of considerable information and great activity. In these letters she minutely acquainted her Majesty with the nature of the affronts she had received, and represented Mr. Acton to her as a man whom malevolence itself could not suppose capable of interesting her otherwise than by his services. She had had to suffer the impertinences of a Spaniard named Las Casas, who had been sent to her by the King, her father-in-law, to persuade her to dismiss Mr. Acton from the business of the State, and from her intimacy. She complained bitterly to the Queen, her sister, of the insulting proceedings of this charge d'affaires, whom she told, in order to convince him of the nature of the feelings which attached her to Mr. Acton, that she would have portraits and busts of him executed by the most eminent artists of Italy, and that she would then send them to the King of Spain, to prove that nothing but the desire to retain a man of superior capacity had induced her to bestow on him the favour he enjoyed. This Las Casas dared to answer her that it would be useless trouble; that the ugliness of a man did not always render him displeasing; and that the King of Spain had too much experience not to know that there was no accounting for the caprices of a woman.

This audacious reply filled the Queen of Naples with indignation, and her emotion caused her to miscarry on the same day. In consequence of the mediation of Louis XVI. the Queen of Naples obtained complete satisfaction, and Mr. Acton continued Prime Minister.

Among the characteristics which denoted the goodness of the Queen, her respect for personal liberty should have a place. I have seen her put up with the most troublesome importunities from people whose minds were deranged rather than have them arrested. Her patient kindness was put to a very disagreeable trial by an ex-councillor of the Bordeaux Parliament, named Castelnau; this man declared himself the lover of the Queen, and was generally known by that appellation. For ten successive years did he follow the Court in all its excursions. Pale and wan, as people who are out of their senses usually are, his sinister appearance occasioned the most uncomfortable sensations. During the two hours that the Queen's public

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card parties lasted, he would remain opposite her Majesty. He placed himself in the same manner before her at chapel, and never failed to be at the King's dinner or the dinner in public. At the theatre he invariably seated himself as near the Queen's box as possible. He always set off for Fontainebleau or St. Cloud the day before the Court, and when her Majesty arrived at her various residences, the first person she met on getting out of her carriage was this melancholy madman, who never spoke to any one. When the Queen stayed at Petit Trianon the passion of this unhappy man became still more annoying. He would hastily swallow a morsel at some eating-house, and spend all the rest of the day, even when it rained, in going round and round the garden, always walking at the edge of the moat. The Queen frequently met him when she was either alone or with her children; and yet she would not suffer any violence to be used to relieve her from this intolerable annoyance. Having one day given M. de Seze permission to enter Trianon, she sent to desire he would come to me, and directed me to inform that celebrated advocate of M. de Castelnau's derangement, and then to send for him that M. de Seze might have some conversation with him. He talked to him nearly an hour, and made considerable impression upon his mind; and at last M. de Castelnau requested me to inform the Queen positively that, since his presence was disagreeable to her, he would retire to his province. The Queen was very much rejoiced, and desired me to express her full satisfaction to M. de Seze. Half an hour after M. de Seze was gone the unhappy madman was announced. He came to tell me that he withdrew his promise, that he had not sufficient command of himself to give up seeing the Queen as often as possible. This new determination: was a disagreeable message to take to her Majesty but how was I affected at hearing her say, "Well, let him annoy me! but do not let him be deprived of the blessing of freedom."

[On the arrest of the King and Queen at Varennes, this unfortunate Castelnau attempted to starve himself to death. The people in whose house he lived, becoming uneasy at his absence, had the door of his room forced open, when he was found stretched senseless on the floor. I do not know what became of him after the 10th of August.—*Madame Campan.*]

The direct influence of the Queen on affairs during the earlier years of the reign was shown only in her exertions to obtain from the King a revision of the decrees in two celebrated causes. It was contrary to her principles to interfere in matters of justice, and never did she avail herself of her influence to bias the tribunals. The Duchesse de Praslin, through a criminal caprice, carried her enmity to her husband so far as to disinherit her children in favour of the family of M. de Guemenee. The Duchesse de Choiseul, who, was warmly interested in this affair, one day entreated the Queen, in my presence, at least to condescend to ask the first president when the cause would be called on; the Queen replied that she could not even do that, for it would manifest an interest which it was her duty not to show.

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If the King had not inspired the Queen with a lively feeling of love, it is quite certain that she yielded him respect and affection for the goodness of his disposition and the equity of which he gave so many proofs throughout his reign. One evening she returned very late; she came out of the King's closet, and said to M. de Misery and myself, drying her eyes, which were filled with tears, "You see me weeping, but do not be uneasy at it: these are the sweetest tears that a wife can shed; they are caused by the impression which the justice and goodness of the King have made upon me; he has just complied with my request for a revision of the proceedings against Messieurs de Bellegarde and de Monthieu, victims of the Duc d'Aiguillon's hatred to the Duc de Choiseul. He has been equally just to the Duc de Guines in his affair with Tort. It is a happy thing for a queen to be able to admire and esteem him who has admitted her to a participation of his throne; and as to you, I congratulate you upon your having to live under the sceptre of so virtuous a sovereign."

The Queen laid before the King all the memorials of the Duc de Guines, who, during his embassy to England, was involved in difficulties by a secretary, who speculated in the public funds in London on his own account, but in such a manner as to throw a suspicion of it on the ambassador. Messieurs de Vergennes and Turgot, bearing but little good-will to the Duc de Guines, who was the friend of the Duc de Choiseul, were not disposed to render the ambassador any service. The Queen succeeded in fixing the King's particular attention on this affair, and the innocence of the Duc de Guines triumphed through the equity of Louis XVI.

An incessant underhand war was carried on between the friends and partisans of M. de Choiseul, who were called the Austrians, and those who sided with Messieurs d'Aiguillon, de Maurepas, and de Vergennes, who, for the same reason, kept up the intrigues carried on at Court and in Paris against the Queen. Marie Antoinette, on her part, supported those who had suffered in this political quarrel, and it was this feeling which led her to ask for a revision of the proceedings against Messieurs de Bellegarde and de Monthieu. The first, a colonel and inspector of artillery, and the second, proprietor of a foundry at St. Etienne, were, under the Ministry of the Duc d'Aiguillon, condemned to imprisonment for twenty years and a day for having withdrawn from the arsenals of France, by order of the Duc de Choiseul, a vast number of muskets, as being of no value except as old iron, while in point of fact the greater part of those muskets were immediately embarked and sold to the Americans. It appears that the Duc de Choiseul imparted to the Queen, as grounds of defence for the accused, the political views which led him to authorise that reduction and sale in the manner in which it had been executed. It rendered the case of Messieurs de Bellegarde and de Monthieu more unfavourable that

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the artillery officer who made the reduction in the capacity of inspector was, through a clandestine marriage, brother-in-law of the owner of the foundry, the purchaser of the rejected arms. The innocence of the two prisoners was, nevertheless, made apparent; and they came to Versailles with their wives and children to throw themselves at the feet of their benefactress. This affecting scene took place in the grand gallery, at the entrance to the Queen's apartment. She wished to restrain the women from kneeling, saying that they had only had justice done them; and that she ought to be congratulated upon the most substantial happiness attendant upon her station, that of laying just appeals before the King.

On every occasion, when the Queen had to speak in public, she used the most appropriate and elegant language, notwithstanding the difficulty a foreigner might be expected to experience. She answered all addresses herself, a custom which she learned at the Court of Maria Theresa. The Princesses of the House of Bourbon had long ceased to take the trouble of speaking in such cases. Madame Addlaide blamed the Queen for not doing as they did, assuring her that it was quite sufficient to mutter a few words that might sound like an answer, while the addressers, occupied with what they had themselves been saying, would always take it for granted that a proper answer had been returned. The Queen saw that idleness alone dictated such a proceeding, and that as the practice even of muttering a few words showed the necessity of answering in some way, it must be more proper to reply simply but clearly, and in the best style possible. Sometimes indeed, when apprised of the subject of the address, she would write down her answer in the morning, not to learn it by heart, but in order to settle the ideas or sentiments she wished to introduce.

The influence of the Comtesse de Polignac increased daily; and her friends availed themselves of it to effect changes in the Ministry. The dismissal of M. de Montbarrey, a man without talents or character, was generally approved of. It was rightly attributed to the Queen. He had been placed in administration by M. de Maurepas, and maintained by his aged wife; both, of course, became more inveterate than ever against the Queen and the Polignac circle.

The appointment of M. de Segur to the place of Minister of War, and of M. de Castries to that of Minister of Marine, were wholly the work of that circle. The Queen dreaded making ministers; her favourite often wept when the men of her circle compelled her to interfere. Men blame women for meddling in business, and yet in courts it is continually the men themselves who make use of the influence of the women in matters with which the latter ought to have nothing to do.

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When M. de Segur was presented to the Queen on his new appointment, she said to me, "You have just seen a minister of my making. I am very glad, so far as regards the King's service, that he is appointed, for I think the selection a very good one; but I almost regret the part I have taken in it. I take a responsibility upon myself. I was fortunate in being free from any; and in order to relieve myself from this as much as possible I have just promised M. de Segur, and that upon my word of honour, not to back any petition, nor to hinder any of his operations by solicitations on behalf of my proteges."

During the first administration of M. Necker, whose ambition had not then drawn him into schemes repugnant to his better judgment, and whose views appeared to the Queen to be very judicious, she indulged in hopes of the restoration of the finances. Knowing that M. de Maurepas wished to drive M. Necker to resign, she urged him to have patience until the death of an old man whom the King kept about him from a fondness for his first choice, and out of respect for his advanced age. She even went so far as to tell him that M. de Maurepas was always ill, and that his end could not be very distant. M. Necker would not wait for that event. The Queen's prediction was fulfilled. M. de Maurepas ended his days immediately after a journey to Fontainebleau in 1781.

M. Necker had retired. He had been exasperated by a piece of treachery in the old minister, for which he could not forgive him. I knew something of this intrigue at the time; it has since been fully explained to me by Madame la Marechale de Beauvau. M. Necker saw that his credit at Court was declining, and fearing lest that circumstance should injure his financial operations, he requested the King to grant him some favour which might show the public that he had not lost the confidence of his sovereign. He concluded his letter by pointing out five requests—such an office, or such a mark of distinction, or such a badge of honour, and so on, and handed it to M. de Maurepas. The or's were changed into and's; and the King was displeased at M. Necker's ambition, and the assurance with which he displayed it. Madame la Marechale de Beauvau assured me that the Marechal de Castries saw the minute of M. Necker's letter, and that he likewise saw the altered copy.

The interest which the Queen took in M. Necker died away during his retirement, and at last changed into strong prejudice against him. He wrote too much about the measures he would have pursued, and the benefits that would have resulted to the State from them. The ministers who succeeded him thought their operations embarrassed by the care that M. Necker and his partisans incessantly took to occupy the public with his plans; his friends were too ardent. The Queen discerned a party spirit in these combinations, and sided wholly with his enemies.

After those inefficient comptrollers-general, Messieurs Joly de Fleury and d'Ormesson, it became necessary to resort to a man of more acknowledged talent, and the Queen's friends, at that time combining with the Comte d'Artois and with M. de Vergennes, got

M. de Calonne appointed. The Queen was highly displeased, and her close intimacy with the Duchesse de Polignac began to suffer for this.

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Her Majesty, continuing to converse with me upon the difficulties she had met with in private life, told me that ambitious men without merit sometimes found means to gain their ends by dint of importunity, and that she had to blame herself for having procured M. d'Adhemar's appointment to the London embassy, merely because he teased her into it at the Duchess's house. She added, however, that it was at a time of perfect peace with the English; that the Ministry knew the inefficiency of M. d'Adhemar as well as she did, and that he could do neither harm nor good.

Often in conversations of unreserved frankness the Queen owned that she had purchased rather dearly a piece of experience which would make her carefully watch over the conduct of her daughters-in-law, and that she would be particularly scrupulous about the qualifications of the ladies who might attend them; that no consideration of rank or favour should bias her in so important a choice. She attributed several of her youthful mistakes to a lady of great levity, whom she found in her palace on her arrival in France. She also determined to forbid the Princesses coming under her control the practice of singing with professors, and said, candidly, and with as much severity as her slanderers could have done, "I ought to have heard Garat sing, and never to have sung duets with him."

The indiscreet zeal of Monsieur Augeard contributed to the public belief that the Queen disposed of all the offices of finance. He had, without any authority for doing so, required the committee of fermiers-general to inform him of all vacancies, assuring them that they would be meeting the wishes of the Queen. The members complied, but not without murmuring. When the Queen became aware of what her secretary had done, she highly disapproved of it, caused her resentment to be made known to the fermiers-general, and abstained from asking for appointments,—making only one request of the kind, as a marriage portion for one of her attendants, a young woman of good family.

CHAPTER XII.

The Queen did not sufficiently conceal the dissatisfaction she felt at having been unable to prevent the appointment of M. de Calonne; she even one day went so far as to say at the Duchess's, in the midst of the partisans and protectors of that minister, that the finances of France passed alternately from the hands of an honest man without talent into those of a skilful knave. M. de Calonne was thus far from acting in concert with the Queen all the time that he continued in office; and, while dull verses were circulated about Paris describing the Queen and her favourite dipping at pleasure into the coffers of the comptroller-general, the Queen was avoiding all communication with him.

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During the long and severe winter of 1783-84 the King gave three millions of livres for the relief of the indigent. M. de Calonne, who felt the necessity of making advances to the Queen, caught at this opportunity of showing her respect and devotion. He offered to place in her hands one million of the three, to be distributed in her name and under her direction. His proposal was rejected; the Queen answered that the charity ought to be wholly distributed in the King's name, and that she would this year debar herself of even the slightest enjoyments, in order to contribute all her savings to the relief of the unfortunate.

The moment M. de Calonne left the closet the Queen sent for me: "Congratulate me, my dear," said she; "I have just escaped a snare, or at least a matter which eventually might have caused me much regret." She related the conversation which had taken place word for word to me, adding, "That man will complete the ruin of the national finances. It is said that I placed him in his situation. The people are made to believe that I am extravagant; yet I have refused to suffer a sum of money from the royal treasury, although destined for the most laudable purpose, even to pass through my hands."

The Queen, making monthly retrenchments from the expenditure of her privy purse, and not having spent the gifts customary at the period of her confinement, was in possession of from five to six hundred thousand francs, her own savings. She made use of from two to three hundred thousand francs of this, which her first women sent to M. Lenoir, to the cures of Paris and Versailles, and to the Soeurs Hospitalieres, and so distributed them among families in need.

Desirous to implant in the breast of her daughter not only a desire to succour the unfortunate, but those qualities necessary for the due discharge of that duty, the Queen incessantly talked to her, though she was yet very young, about the sufferings of the poor during a season so inclement. The Princess already had a sum of from eight to ten thousand francs for charitable purposes, and the Queen made her distribute part of it herself.

Wishing to give her children yet another lesson of beneficence, she desired me on New Year's eve to get from Paris, as in other years, all the fashionable playthings, and have them spread out in her closet. Then taking her children by the hand, she showed them all the dolls and mechanical toys which were ranged there, and told them that she had intended to give them some handsome New Year's gifts, but that the cold made the poor so wretched that all her money was spent in blankets and clothes to protect them from the rigour of the season, and in supplying them with bread; so that this year they would only have the pleasure of looking at the new playthings. When she returned with her children into her sitting-room, she said there was still an unavoidable expense to be incurred; that assuredly many mothers would at that season think as she did,—that the toyman must lose by it; and therefore she gave him fifty Louis to repay him for the cost of his journey, and console him for having sold nothing.

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The purchase of St. Cloud, a matter very simple in itself, had, on account of the prevailing spirit, unfavourable consequences to the Queen.

The palace of Versailles, pulled to pieces in the interior by a variety of new arrangements, and mutilated in point of uniformity by the removal of the ambassadors' staircase, and of the peristyle of columns placed at the end of the marble court, was equally in want of substantial and ornamental repair. The King therefore desired M. Micque to lay before him several plans for the repairs of the palace. He consulted me on certain arrangements analogous to some of those adopted in the Queen's establishment, and in my presence asked M. Micque how much money would be wanted for the execution of the whole work, and how many years he would be in completing it. I forget how many millions were mentioned: M. Micque replied that six years would be sufficient time if the Treasury made the necessary periodical advances without any delay. "And how many years shall you require," said the King, "if the advances are not punctually made?"—"Ten, Sire," replied the architect. "We must then reckon upon ten years," said his Majesty, "and put off this great undertaking until the year 1790; it will occupy the rest of the century."

The King afterwards talked of the depreciation of property which took place at Versailles whilst the Regent removed the Court of Louis xv. to the Tuileries, and said that he must consider how to prevent that inconvenience; it was the desire to do this that promoted the purchase of St. Cloud. The Queen first thought of it one day when she was riding out with the Duchesse de Polignac and the Comtesse Diane; she mentioned it to the King, who was much pleased with the thought,—the purchase confirming him in the intention, which he had entertained for ten years, of quitting Versailles.

The King determined that the ministers, public officers, pages, and a considerable part of his stabling should remain at Versailles. Messieurs de Breteuil and de Calonne were instructed to treat with the Duc d'Orleans for the purchase of St. Cloud; at first they hoped to be able to conclude the business by a mere exchange. The value of the Chateau de Choisy, de la Muette, and a forest was equivalent to the sum demanded by the House of Orleans; and in the exchange which the Queen expected she only saw a saving to be made instead of an increase of expense. By this arrangement the government of Choisy, in the hands of the Duc de Coigny, and that of La Muette, in the hands of the Marechal de Soubise, would be suppressed. At the same time the two concierges, and all the servants employed in these two royal houses, would be reduced; but while the treaty was going forward Messieurs de Breteuil and de Calonne gave up the point of exchange, and some millions in cash were substituted for Choisy and La Muette.

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The Queen advised the King to give her St. Cloud, as a means of avoiding the establishment of a governor; her plan being to have merely a concierge there, by which means the governor's expenses would be saved. The King agreed, and St. Cloud was purchased for the Queen. She provided the same liveries for the porters at the gates and servants at the chateau as for those at Trianon. The concierge at the latter place had put up some regulations for the household, headed, "By order of the Queen." The same thing was done at St. Cloud. The Queen's livery at the door of a palace where it was expected none but that of the King would be seen, and the words "By order of the Queen" at the head of the printed papers pasted near the iron gates, caused a great sensation, and produced a very unfortunate effect, not only among the common people, but also, among persons of a superior class. They saw in it an attack upon the customs of monarchy, and customs are nearly equal to laws. The Queen heard of this, but she thought that her dignity would be compromised if she made any change in the form of these regulations, though they might have been altogether superseded without inconvenience. "My name is not out of place," said she, "in gardens belonging to myself; I may give orders there without infringing on the rights of the State." This was her only answer to the representations which a few faithful servants ventured to make on the subject. The discontent of the Parisians on this occasion probably induced M. d'Espremenil, upon the first troubles about the Parliament, to say that it was impolitic and immoral to see palaces belonging to a Queen of France.

[The Queen never forgot this affront of M. d'Espremenil's; she said that as it was offered at a time when social order had not yet been disturbed, she had felt the severest mortification at it. Shortly before the downfall of the throne M. Espremenil, having openly espoused the King's side, was insulted in the gardens of the Tuileries by the Jacobins, and so ill-treated that he was carried home very ill. Somebody recommended the Queen, on account of the royalist principles he then professed, to send and inquire for him. She replied that she was truly grieved at what had happened to M. d'Espremenil, but that mere policy should never induce her to show any particular solicitude about the man who had been the first to make so insulting an attack upon her character.—*Madame Campan*]

The Queen was very much dissatisfied with the manner in which M. de Calonne had managed this matter. The Abbe de Vermond, the most active and persevering of that minister's enemies, saw with delight that the expedients of those from whom alone new resources might be expected were gradually becoming exhausted, because the period when the Archbishop of Toulouse would be placed over the finances was thereby hastened.

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The royal navy had resumed an imposing attitude during the war for the independence of America; glorious peace with England had compensated for the former attacks of our enemies upon the fame of France; and the throne was surrounded by numerous heirs. The sole ground of uneasiness was in the finances, but that uneasiness related only to the manner in which they were administered. In a word, France felt confident in its own strength and resources, when two events, which seem scarcely worthy of a place in history, but which have, nevertheless, an important one in that of the French Revolution, introduced a spirit of ridicule and contempt, not only against the highest ranks, but even against the most august personages. I allude to a comedy and a great swindling transaction.

Beaumarchais had long possessed a reputation in certain circles in Paris for his wit and musical talents, and at the theatres for dramas more or less indifferent, when his "Barbier de Seville" procured him a higher position among dramatic writers. His "Memoirs" against M. Goesman had amused Paris by the ridicule they threw upon a Parliament which was disliked; and his admission to an intimacy with M. de Maurepas procured him a degree of influence over important affairs. He then became ambitious of influencing public opinion by a kind of drama, in which established manners and customs should be held up to popular derision and the ridicule of the new philosophers. After several years of prosperity the minds of the French had become more generally critical; and when Beaumarchais had finished his monstrous but diverting "Mariage de Figaro," all people of any consequence were eager for the gratification of hearing it read, the censors having decided that it should not be performed. These readings of "Figaro" grew so numerous that people were daily heard to say, "I have been (or I am going to be) at the reading of Beaumarchais's play." The desire to see it performed became universal; an expression that he had the art to use compelled, as it were, the approbation of the nobility, or of persons in power, who aimed at ranking among the magnanimous; he made his "Figaro" say that "none but little minds dreaded little books." The Baron de Breteuil, and all the men of Madame de Polignac's circle, entered the lists as the warmest protectors of the comedy. Solicitations to the King became so pressing that his Majesty determined to judge for himself of a work which so much engrossed public attention, and desired me to ask M. Le Noir, lieutenant of police, for the manuscript of the "Mariage de Figaro." One morning I received a note from the Queen ordering me to be with her at three o'clock, and not to come without having dined, for she should detain me some time. When I got to the Queen's inner closet I found her alone with the King; a chair and a small table were ready placed opposite to them, and upon the table lay an enormous manuscript in several books. The King said to me, "There is Beaumarchais's comedy; you must read it to us. You will find several parts troublesome on account of the erasures and references. I have already run it over, but I wish the Queen to be acquainted with the work. You will not mention this reading to any one."

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I began. The King frequently interrupted me by praise or censure, which was always just. He frequently exclaimed, "That's in bad taste; this man continually brings the Italian concetti on the stage." At that soliloquy of Figaro in which he attacks various points of government, and especially at the tirade against State prisons, the King rose up and said, indignantly:

"That's detestable; that shall never be played; the Bastille must be destroyed before the license to act this play can be any other than an act of the most dangerous inconsistency. This man scoffs at everything that should be respected in a government."

"It will not be played, then?" said the Queen.

"No, certainly," replied Louis XVI.; "you may rely upon that."

Still it was constantly reported that "Figaro" was about to be performed; there were even wagers laid upon the subject; I never should have laid any myself, fancying that I was better informed as to the probability than anybody else; if I had, however, I should have been completely deceived. The protectors of Beaumarchais, feeling certain that they would succeed in their scheme of making his work public in spite of the King's prohibition, distributed the parts in the "Mariage de Figaro" among the actors of the Theatre Francais. Beaumarchais had made them enter into the spirit of his characters, and they determined to enjoy at least one performance of this so-called chef d'oeuvre. The first gentlemen of the chamber agreed that M. de la Ferte should lend the theatre of the Hotel des Menus Plaisirs, at Paris, which was used for rehearsals of the opera; tickets were distributed to a vast number of leaders of society, and the day for the performance was fixed. The King heard of all this only on the very morning, and signed a 'lettre de cachet,'—[A 'lettre de cachet' was any written order proceeding from the King. The term was not confined merely to orders for arrest.]—which prohibited the performance. When the messenger who brought the order arrived, he found a part of the theatre already filled with spectators, and the streets leading to the Hotel des Menus Plaisirs filled with carriages; the piece was not performed. This prohibition of the King's was looked upon as an attack on public liberty.

The disappointment produced such discontent that the words oppression and tyranny were uttered with no less passion and bitterness at that time than during the days which immediately preceded the downfall of the throne. Beaumarchais was so far put off his guard by rage as to exclaim, "Well, gentlemen, he won't suffer it to be played here; but I swear it shall be played,—perhaps in the very choir of Notre-Dame!" There was something prophetic in these words. It was generally insinuated shortly afterwards that Beaumarchais had determined to suppress all those parts of his work which could be obnoxious to the Government; and on pretence of judging of the

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sacrifices made by the author, M. de Vaudreuil obtained permission to have this far-famed “Mariage de Figaro” performed at his country house. M. Campan was asked there; he had frequently heard the work read, and did not now find the alterations that had been announced; this he observed to several persons belonging to the Court, who maintained that the author had made all the sacrifices required. M. Campan was so astonished at these persistent assertions of an obvious falsehood that he replied by a quotation from Beaumarchais himself, and assuming the tone of Basilio in the “Barbier de Seville,” he said, “Faith, gentlemen, I don’t know who is deceived here; everybody is in the secret.” They then came to the point, and begged him to tell the Queen positively that all which had been pronounced reprehensible in M. de Beaumarchais’s play had been cut out. My father-in-law contented himself with replying that his situation at Court would not allow of his giving an opinion unless the Queen should first speak of the piece to him. The Queen said nothing to him about the matter. Shortly, afterwards permission to perform this play was at length obtained. The Queen thought the people of Paris would be finely tricked when they saw merely an ill-conceived piece, devoid of interest, as it must appear when deprived of its Satire.

[“The King,” says Grimm, “made sure that the public would judge unfavourably of the work.” He said to the Marquis de Montesquiou, who was going to see the first representation, ‘Well, what do you augur of its success?’—‘Sire, I hope the piece will fail.’—‘And so do I,’ replied the King.

“There is something still more ridiculous than my piece,” said Beaumarchais himself; “that is, its success.” Mademoiselle Arnould foresaw it the first day, and exclaimed, “It is a production that will fail fifty nights successively.” There was as crowded an audience on the seventy-second night as on the first. The following is extracted from Grimm’s ‘Correspondence.’

“Answer of M. de Beaumarchais to ----, who requested the use of his private box for some ladies desirous of seeing ‘Figaro’ without being themselves seen.

“I have no respect for women who indulge themselves in seeing any play which they think indecorous, provided they can do so in secret. I lend myself to no such acts. I have given my piece to the public, to amuse, and not to instruct, not to give any compounding prudes the pleasure of going to admire it in a private box, and balancing their account with conscience by censuring it in company. To indulge in the pleasure of vice and assume the credit of virtue is the hypocrisy of the age. My piece is not of a doubtful nature; it must be patronised in good earnest, or avoided altogether; therefore,

with all respect to you, I shall keep my box.” This letter was circulated all over Paris for a week.]

Under the persuasion that there was not a passage left capable of malicious or dangerous application, Monsieur attended the first performance in a public box. The mad enthusiasm of the public in favour of the piece and Monsieur's just displeasure are well known. The author was sent to prison soon afterwards, though his work was extolled to the skies, and though the Court durst not suspend its performance.

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The Queen testified her displeasure against all who had assisted the author of the “Mariage de Figaro” to deceive the King into giving his consent that it should be represented. Her reproaches were more particularly directed against M. de Vaudreuil for having had it performed at his house. The violent and domineering disposition of her favourite’s friend at last became disagreeable to her.

One evening, on the Queen’s return from the Duchess’s, she desired her ‘valet de chambre’ to bring her billiard cue into her closet, and ordered me to open the box that contained it. I took out the cue, broken in two. It was of ivory, and formed of one single elephant’s tooth; the butt was of gold and very tastefully wrought. “There,” said she, “that is the way M. de Vaudreuil has treated a thing I valued highly. I had laid it upon the couch while I was talking to the Duchess in the salon; he had the assurance to make use of it, and in a fit of passion about a blocked ball, he struck the cue so violently against the table that he broke it in two. The noise brought me back into the billiard-room; I did not say a word to him, but my looks showed him how angry I was. He is the more provoked at the accident, as he aspires to the post of Governor to the Dauphin. I never thought of him for the place. It is quite enough to have consulted my heart only in the choice of a governess; and I will not suffer that of a Governor to the Dauphin to be at all affected by the influence of my friends. I should be responsible for it to the nation. The poor man does not know that my determination is taken; for I have never expressed it to the Duchess. Therefore, judge of the sort of an evening he must have passed!”

CHAPTER XIII.

Shortly after the public mind had been thrown into agitation by the performance of the “Mariage de Figaro,” an obscure plot, contrived by swindlers, and matured in a corrupted society, attacked the Queen’s character in a vital point and assailed the majesty of the throne.

I am about to speak of the notorious affair of the necklace purchased, as it was said, for the Queen by Cardinal de Rohan. I will narrate all that has come to my knowledge relating to this business; the most minute particulars will prove how little reason the Queen had to apprehend the blow by which she was threatened, and which must be attributed to a fatality that human prudence could not have foreseen, but from which, to say the truth, she might have extricated herself with more skill.

I have already said that in 1774 the Queen purchased jewels of Boehmer to the value of three hundred and sixty thousand franca, that she paid for them herself out of her own private funds, and that it required several years to enable her to complete the payment. The King afterwards presented her with a set of rubies and diamonds of a fine water, and subsequently with a pair of bracelets worth two hundred thousand francs. The Queen, after having her diamonds reset in new patterns, told Boehmer that she found her jewel case rich enough, and was not desirous of making any addition to it.

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[Except on those days when the assemblies at Court were particularly attended, such as the 1st of January and the 2d of February, devoted to the procession of the Order of the Holy Ghost, and on the festivals of Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas, the Queen no longer wore any dresses but muslin or white Florentine taffety. Her head-dress was merely a hat; the plainest were preferred; and her diamonds never quitted their caskets but for the dresses of ceremony, confined to the days I have mentioned. Before the Queen was five and twenty she began to apprehend that she might be induced to make too frequent use of flowers and of ornaments, which at that time were exclusively reserved for youth. Madame Bertin having brought a wreath for the head and neck, composed of roses, the Queen feared that the brightness of the flowers might be disadvantageous to her complexion. She was unquestionably too severe upon herself, her beauty having as yet experienced no alteration; it is easy to conceive the concert of praise and compliment that replied to the doubt she had expressed. The Queen, approaching me, said, "I charge you, from this day, to give me notice when flowers shall cease to become me."—"I shall do no such thing," I replied, immediately; "I have not read 'Gil Bias' without profiting in some degree from it, and I find your Majesty's order too much like that given him by the Archbishop of Granada, to warn him of the moment when he should begin to fall off in the composition of his homilies."—"Go," said the Queen; "You are less sincere than Gil Blas; and I would have been more amenable than the Archbishop."—*Madame Campan.*]

Still, this jeweller busied himself for some years in forming a collection of the finest diamonds circulating in the trade, in order to compose a necklace of several rows, which he hoped to induce her Majesty to purchase; he brought it to M. Campan, requesting him to mention it to the Queen, that she might ask to see it, and thus be induced to wish to possess it. This M. Campan refused to do, telling him that he should be stepping out of the line of his duty were he to propose to the Queen an expense of sixteen hundred thousand francs, and that he believed neither the lady of honour nor the tirewoman would take upon herself to execute such a commission. Boehmer persuaded the King's first gentleman for the year to show this superb necklace to his Majesty, who admired it so much that he himself wished to see the Queen adorned with it, and sent the case to her; but she assured him she should much regret incurring so great an expense for such an article, that she had already very beautiful diamonds, that jewels of that description were now worn at Court not more than four or five times a year, that the necklace must be returned, and that the money would be much better employed in building a man-of-war.

[Messieurs Boehmer and Bassange, jewellers to the Crown, were proprietors of a superb diamond necklace, which had, as it was said, been intended for the Comtesse du Barry. Being under the necessity of selling it, they offered it, during the last war, to the king and Queen; but their Majesties made the following prudent answer: "We stand more in need of ships than of jewels."—"Secret Correspondence of the Court of Louis XVI."]

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Boehmer, in sad tribulation at finding his expectations delusive, endeavoured for some time, it is said, to dispose of his necklace among the various Courts of Europe.

A year after his fruitless attempts, Boehmer again caused his diamond necklace to be offered to the King, proposing that it should be paid for partly by instalments, and partly in life annuities; this proposal was represented as highly advantageous, and the King, in my presence, mentioned the matter once more to the Queen. I remember the Queen told him that, if the bargain really was not bad, he might make it, and keep the necklace until the marriage of one of his children; but that, for her part, she would never wear it, being unwilling that the world should have to reproach her with having coveted so expensive an article. The King replied that their children were too young to justify such an expense, which would be greatly increased by the number of years the diamonds would remain useless, and that he would finally decline the offer. Boehmer complained to everybody of his misfortune, and all reasonable people blamed him for having collected diamonds to so considerable an amount without any positive order for them. This man had purchased the office of jeweller to the Crown, which gave him some rights of entry at Court. After several months spent in ineffectual attempts to carry his point, and in idle complaints, he obtained an audience of the Queen, who had with her the young Princess, her daughter; her Majesty did not know for what purpose Boehmer sought this audience, and had not the slightest idea that it was to speak to her again about an article twice refused by herself and the King.

Boehmer threw himself upon his knees, clasped his hands, burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Madame, I am ruined and disgraced if you do not purchase my necklace. I cannot outlive so many misfortunes. When I go hence I shall throw myself into the river."

"Rise, Boehmer," said the Queen, in a tone sufficiently severe to recall him to himself; "I do not like these rhapsodies; honest men have no occasion to fall on their knees to make their requests. If you were to destroy yourself I should regret you as a madman in whom I had taken an interest, but I should not be in any way responsible for that misfortune. Not only have I never ordered the article which causes your present despair, but whenever you have talked to me about fine collections of jewels I have told you that I should not add four diamonds to those which I already possessed. I told you myself that I declined taking the necklace; the King wished to give it to me, but I refused him also; never mention it to me again. Divide it and try to sell it piecemeal, and do not drown yourself. I am very angry with you for acting this scene of despair in my presence and before this child. Let me never see you behave thus again. Go." Baehmer withdrew, overwhelmed with confusion, and nothing further was then heard of him.

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When Madame Sophie was born the Queen told me M. de Saint-James, a rich financier, had apprised her that Boehmer was still intent upon the sale of his necklace, and that she ought, for her own satisfaction, to endeavour to learn what the man had done with it; she desired me the first time I should meet him to speak to him about it, as if from the interest I took in his welfare. I spoke to him about his necklace, and he told me he had been very fortunate, having sold it at Constantinople for the favourite sultana. I communicated this answer to the Queen, who was delighted with it, but could not comprehend how the Sultan came to purchase his diamonds in Paris.

The Queen long avoided seeing Boehmer, being fearful of his rash character; and her valet de chambre, who had the care of her jewels, made the necessary repairs to her ornaments unassisted. On the baptism of the Duc d'Angouleme, in 1785, the King gave him a diamond epaulet and buckles, and directed Baehmer to deliver them to the Queen. Boehmer presented them on her return from mass, and at the same time gave into her hands a letter in the form of a petition. In this paper he told the Queen that he was happy to see her "in possession of the finest diamonds known in Europe," and entreated her not to forget him. The Queen read Boehmer's address to her aloud, and saw nothing in it but a proof of mental aberration; she lighted the paper at a wax taper standing near her, as she had some letters to seal, saying, "It is not worth keeping." She afterwards much regretted the loss of this enigmatical memorial. After having burnt the paper, her Majesty said to me, "That man is born to be my torment; he has always some mad scheme in his head; remember, the first time you see him, to tell him that I do not like diamonds now, and that I will buy no more so long as I live; that if I had any money to spare I would rather add to my property at St. Cloud by the purchase of the land surrounding it; now, mind you enter into all these particulars and impress them well upon him." I asked her whether she wished me to send for him; she replied in the negative, adding that it would be sufficient to avail myself of the first opportunity afforded by meeting him; and that the slightest advance towards such a man would be misplaced.

On the 1st of August I left Versailles for my country house at Crespy; on the 3d came Boehmer, extremely uneasy at not having received any answer from the Queen, to ask me whether I had any commission from her to him; I replied that she had entrusted me with none; that she had no commands for him, and I faithfully repeated all she had desired me to say to him.

"But," said Boehmer, "the answer to the letter I presented to her,—to whom must I apply for that?"

"To nobody," answered I; "her Majesty burnt your memorial without even comprehending its meaning."

"Ah! madame," exclaimed he, "that is impossible; the Queen knows that she has money to pay me!"

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"Money, M. Boehmer? Your last accounts against the Queen were discharged long ago."

"Madame, you are not in the secret. A man who is ruined for want of payment of fifteen hundred thousand francs cannot be said to be satisfied."

"Have you lost your senses?" said I. "For what can the Queen owe you so extravagant a sum?"

"For my necklace, madame," replied Boehmer, coolly.

"What!" I exclaimed, "that necklace again, which you have teased the Queen about so many years! Did you not tell me you had sold it at Constantinople?"

"The Queen desired me to give that answer to all who should speak to me on the subject," said the wretched dupe. He then told me that the Queen wished to have the necklace, and had had it purchased for her by Monseigneur, the Cardinal de Rohan.

"You are deceived," I exclaimed; "the Queen has not once spoken to the Cardinal since his return from Vienna; there is not a man at her Court less favourably looked upon."

"You are deceived yourself, madame," said Boehmer; "she sees him so much in private that it was to his Eminence she gave thirty thousand francs, which were paid me as an instalment; she took them, in his presence, out of the little secretaire of Sevres porcelain next the fireplace in her boudoir."

"And the Cardinal told you all this?"

"Yes, madame, himself."

"What a detestable plot!" cried I.

"Indeed, to say the truth, madame, I begin to be much alarmed, for his Eminence assured me that the Queen would wear the necklace on Whit-Sunday, but I did not see it upon her, and it was that which induced me to write to her Majesty."

He then asked me what he ought to do. I advised him to go on to Versailles, instead of returning to Paris, whence he had just arrived; to obtain an immediate audience from the Baron de Breteuil, who, as head of the King's household, was the minister of the department to which Boehmer belonged, and to be circumspect; and I added that he appeared to me extremely culpable,—not as a diamond merchant, but because being a sworn officer it was unpardonable of him to have acted without the direct orders of the King, the Queen, or the Minister. He answered, that he had not acted without direct orders; that he had in his possession all the notes signed by the Queen, and that he had even been obliged to show them to several bankers in order to induce them to extend

the time for his payments. I urged his departure for Versailles, and he assured me he would go there immediately. Instead of following my advice, he went to the Cardinal, and it was of this visit of Boehmer's that his Eminence made a memorandum, found in a drawer overlooked by the Abbe Georgel when he burnt, by order of the Cardinal, all the papers which the latter had at Paris. The memorandum was thus worded: "On this day, 3d August, Boehmer went to Madame Campan's country house, and she told him that the Queen had never had his necklace, and that he had been deceived."

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When Boehmer was gone, I wanted to follow him, and go to the Queen; my father-in-law prevented me, and ordered me to leave the minister to elucidate such an important affair, observing that it was an infernal plot; that I had given Boehmer the best advice, and had nothing more to do with the business. Boehmer never said one word to me about the woman De Lamotte, and her name was mentioned for the first time by the Cardinal in his answers to the interrogatories put to him before the King. After seeing the Cardinal, Boehmer went to Trianon, and sent a message to the Queen, purporting that I had advised him to come and speak to her. His very words were repeated to her Majesty, who said, "He is mad; I have nothing to say to him, and will not see him." Two or three days afterwards the Queen sent for me to Petit Trianon, to rehearse with me the part of Rosina, which she was to perform in the "Barbier de Seville." I was alone with her, sitting upon her couch; no mention was made of anything but the part. After we had spent an hour in the rehearsal, her Majesty asked me why I had sent Boehmer to her; saying he had been in my name to speak to her, and that she would not see him. It was in this manner I learnt that he had not followed my advice in the slightest degree. The change of my countenance, when I heard the man's name, was very perceptible; the Queen perceived it, and questioned me. I entreated her to see him, and assured her it was of the utmost importance for her peace of mind; that there was a plot going on, of which she was not aware; and that it was a serious one, since engagements signed by herself were shown about to people who had lent Boehmer money. Her surprise and vexation were great. She desired me to remain at Trianon, and sent off a courier to Paris, ordering Boehmer to come to her upon some pretext which has escaped my recollection. He came next morning; in fact it was the day on which the play was performed, and that was the last amusement the Queen allowed herself at that retreat.

The Queen made him enter her closet, and asked him by what fatality it was that she was still doomed to hear of his foolish pretence of selling her an article which she had steadily refused for several years. He replied that he was compelled, being unable to pacify his creditors any longer. "What are your creditors to me?" said her Majesty. Boehmer then regularly related to her all that he had been made to believe had passed between the Queen and himself through the intervention of the Cardinal. She was equally incensed and surprised at each thing she heard. In vain did she speak; the jeweller, equally importunate and dangerous, repeated incessantly, "Madame, there is no longer time for feigning; condescend to confess that you have my necklace, and let some assistance be given to me, or my bankruptcy will soon bring the whole to light."

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It is easy to imagine how the Queen must have suffered. On Boehmer's going away, I found her in an alarming condition; the idea that any one could have believed that such a man as the Cardinal possessed her full confidence; that she should have employed him to deal with a tradesman without the King's knowledge, for a thing which she had refused to accept from the King himself, drove her to desperation. She sent first for the Abbe de Vermond, and then for the Baron de Breteuil. Their hatred and contempt for the Cardinal made them too easily forget that the lowest faults do not prevent the higher orders of the empire from being defended by those to whom they have the honour to belong; that a Rohan, a Prince of the Church, however culpable he might be, would be sure to have a considerable party which would naturally be joined by all the discontented persons of the Court, and all the frondeurs of Paris. They too easily believed that he would be stripped of all the advantages of his rank and order, and given up to the disgrace due to his irregular conduct; they deceived themselves.

I saw the Queen after the departure of the Baron and the Abbe; her agitation made me shudder. "Fraud must be unmasked," said she; "when the Roman purple and the title of Prince cover a mere money-seeker, a cheat who dares to compromise the wife of his sovereign, France and all Europe should know it." It is evident that from that moment the fatal plan was decided on. The Queen perceived my alarm; I did not conceal it from her. I knew too well that she had many enemies not to be apprehensive on seeing her attract the attention of the whole world to an intrigue that they would try to complicate still more. I entreated her to seek the most prudent and moderate advice. She silenced me by desiring me to make myself easy, and to rest satisfied that no imprudence would be committed.

On the following Sunday, the 15th of August, being the Assumption, at twelve o'clock, at the very moment when the Cardinal, dressed in his pontifical garments, was about to proceed to the chapel, he was sent for into the King's closet, where the Queen then was.

The King said to him, "You have purchased diamonds of Boehmer?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What have you done with them?"

"I thought they had been delivered to the Queen."

"Who commissioned you?"

"A lady, called the Comtesse de Lamotte-Valois, who handed me a letter from the Queen; and I thought I was gratifying her Majesty by taking this business on myself."

The Queen here interrupted him and said, "How, monsieur, could you believe that I should select you, to whom I have not spoken for eight years, to negotiate anything for me, and especially through the mediation of a woman whom I do not even know?"

"I see plainly," said the Cardinal, "that I have been duped. I will pay for the necklace; my desire to please your Majesty blinded me; I suspected no trick in the affair, and I am sorry for it."

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He then took out of his pocket-book a letter from the Queen to Madame de Lamotte, giving him this commission. The King took it, and, holding it towards the Cardinal, said:

“This is neither written nor signed by the Queen. How could a Prince of the House of Rohan, and a Grand Almoner of France, ever think that the Queen would sign Marie Antoinette de France? Everybody knows that queens sign only by their baptismal names. But, monsieur,” pursued the King, handing him a copy of his letter to Baehmer, “have you ever written such a letter as this?”

Having glanced over it, the Cardinal said, “I do not remember having written it.”

“But what if the original, signed by yourself, were shown to you?”

“If the letter be signed by myself it is genuine.”

He was extremely confused, and repeated several times, “I have been deceived, Sire; I will pay for the necklace. I ask pardon of your Majesties.”

“Then explain to me,” resumed the King, “the whole of this enigma. I do not wish to find you guilty; I had rather you would justify yourself. Account for all the manoeuvres with Baehmer, these assurances and these letters.”

The Cardinal then, turning pale, and leaning against the table, said, “Sire, I am too much confused to answer your Majesty in a way—”

“Compose yourself, Cardinal, and go into my cabinet; you will there find paper, pens, and ink,—write what you have to say to me.”

The Cardinal went into the King's cabinet, and returned a quarter of an hour afterwards with a document as confused as his verbal answers had been. The King then said, “Withdraw, monsieur.” The Cardinal left the King's chamber, with the Baron de Breteuil, who gave him in custody to a lieutenant of the Body Guard, with orders to take him to his apartment. M. d'Agoult, aide-major of the Body Guard, afterwards took him into custody, and conducted him to his hotel, and thence to the Bastille. But while the Cardinal had with him only the young lieutenant of the Body Guard, who was much embarrassed at having such an order to execute, his Eminence met his heyduc at the door of the Salon of Hercules; he spoke to him in German and then asked the lieutenant if he could lend him a pencil; the officer gave him that which he carried about him, and the Cardinal wrote to the Abbe Georgel, his grand vicar and friend, instantly to burn all Madame de Lamotte's correspondence, and all his other letters.

[The Abbe Georgel thus relates the circumstance: The Cardinal, at that trying moment, gave an astonishing proof of his presence of mind; notwithstanding the escort which surrounded him, favoured by the attendant crowd, he stopped, and stooping down with his face towards the wall, as if to fasten his buckle, snatched out his pencil and hastily

wrote a few words upon a scrap of paper placed under his hand in his square red cap.
He rose again and proceeded. on entering

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his house, his people formed a lane; he slipped this paper, unperceived, into the hand of a confidential valet de chambre, who waited for him at the door of his apartment." This story is scarcely credible; it is not at the moment of a prisoner's arrest, when an inquisitive crowd surrounds and watches him, that he can stop and write secret messages. However, the valet de chambre posts off to Paris. He arrives at the palace of the Cardinal between twelve and one o'clock; and his horse falls dead in the stable. "I was in my apartment," said the Abbe Georgel, "the valet de chambre entered wildly, with a deadly paleness on his countenance, and exclaimed, 'All is lost; the Prince is arrested.' He instantly fell, fainting, and dropped the note of which he was the bearer." The portfolio containing the papers which might compromise the Cardinal was immediately placed beyond the reach of all search. Madame de Lamotte also was foolishly allowed sufficient time after she heard of the arrest of the Cardinal to burn all the letters she had received from him. Assisted by Beugnot, she completed this at three the same morning that she was: arrested at four.—See "Memoirs of Comte de Beugnot," vol i., p. 74.]

This commission was executed before M. de Crosne, lieutenant of police, had received an order from the Baron de Breteuil to put seals upon the Cardinal's papers. The destruction of all his Eminence's correspondence, and particularly that with Madame de Lamotte, threw an impenetrable cloud over the whole affair.

From that moment all proofs of this intrigue disappeared. Madame de Lamotte was apprehended at Bar-sur-Aube; her husband had already gone to England. From the beginning of this fatal affair all the proceedings of the Court appear to have been prompted by imprudence and want of foresight; the obscurity resulting left free scope for the fables of which the voluminous memorials written on one side and the other consisted. The Queen so little imagined what could have given rise to the intrigue, of which she was about to become the victim, that, at the moment when the King was interrogating the Cardinal, a terrific idea entered her mind. With that rapidity of thought caused by personal interest and extreme agitation, she fancied that, if a design to ruin her in the eyes of the King and the French people were the concealed motive of this intrigue, the Cardinal would, perhaps, affirm that she had the necklace; that he had been honoured with her confidence for this purchase, made without the King's knowledge; and point out some secret place in her apartment, where he might have got some villain to hide it. Want of money and the meanest swindling were the sole motives for this criminal affair. The necklace had already been taken to pieces and sold, partly in London, partly in Holland, and the rest in Paris.

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The moment the Cardinal's arrest was known a universal clamour arose. Every memorial that appeared during the trial increased the outcry. On this occasion the clergy took that course which a little wisdom and the least knowledge of the spirit of such a body ought to have foreseen. The Rohans and the House of Conde, as well as the clergy, made their complaints heard everywhere. The King consented to having a legal judgment, and early in September he addressed letters-patent to the Parliament, in which he said that he was "filled with the most just indignation on seeing the means which, by the confession of his Eminence the Cardinal, had been employed in order to inculcate his most dear spouse and companion."

Fatal moment! in which the Queen found herself, in consequence of this highly impolitic step, on trial with a subject, who ought to have been dealt with by the power of the King alone. The Princes and Princesses of the House of Conde, and of the Houses of Rohan, Soubise, and Guemenee, put on mourning, and were seen ranged in the way of the members of the Grand Chamber to salute them as they proceeded to the palace, on the days of the Cardinal's trial; and Princes of the blood openly canvassed against the Queen of France.

The Pope wished to claim, on behalf of the Cardinal de Rohan, the right belonging to his ecclesiastical rank, and demanded that he should be judged at Rome. The Cardinal de Bernis, ambassador from France to his Holiness, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs, blending the wisdom of an old diplomatist with the principles of a Prince of the Church, wished that this scandalous affair should be hushed up. The King's aunts, who were on very intimate terms with the ambassador, adopted his opinion, and the conduct of the King and Queen was equally and loudly censured in the apartments of Versailles and in the hotels and coffee-houses of Paris.

Madame, the King's sister-in-law, had been the sole protectress of De Lamotte, and had confined her patronage to granting her a pension of twelve to fifteen hundred francs. Her brother was in the navy, but the Marquis de Chabert, to whom he had been recommended, could never train a good officer. The Queen in vain endeavoured to call to mind the features of this person, of whom she had often heard as an intriguing woman, who came frequently on Sundays to the gallery of Versailles. At the time when all France was engrossed by the persecution against the Cardinal, the portrait of the Comtesse de Lamotte Valois was publicly sold. Her Majesty desired me one day, when I was going to Paris, to buy her the engraving, which was said to be a tolerable likeness, that she might ascertain whether she could recognise in it any person whom she might have seen in the gallery.

[The public, with the exception of the lowest class, were admitted into the gallery and larger apartments of Versailles, as they were into the park.—*Madame Campan*.]

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The woman De Lamotte's father was a peasant at Auteuil, though he called himself Valois. Madame de Boulainvilliers once saw from her terrace two pretty little peasant girls, each labouring under a heavy bundle of sticks. The priest of the village, who was walking with her, told her that the children possessed some curious papers, and that he had no doubt they were descendants of a Valois, an illegitimate son of one of the princes of that name.

The family of Valois had long ceased to appear in the world. Hereditary vices had gradually plunged them into the deepest misery. I have heard that the last Valois then known occupied the estate called Gros Bois; that as he seldom came to Court, Louis *xiii.* asked him what he was about that he remained so constantly in the country; and that this M. de Valois merely answered, "Sire, I only do there what I ought." It was shortly afterwards discovered that he was coining.

Neither the Queen herself nor any one near her ever had the slightest connection with the woman De Lamotte; and during her prosecution she could point out but one of the Queen's servants, named Desclos, a valet of the Queen's bedchamber, to whom she pretended she had delivered Boehmer's necklace. This Desclos was a very honest man; upon being confronted with the woman De Lamotte, it was proved that she had never seen him but once, which was at the house of the wife of a surgeon-accoucheur at Versailles, the only person she visited at Court; and that she had not given him the necklace. Madame de Lamotte married a private in Monsieur's body-guard; she lodged at Versailles at the Belle Image, a very inferior furnished house; and it is inconceivable how so obscure a person could succeed in making herself believed to be a friend of the Queen, who, though so extremely affable, seldom granted audiences, and only to titled persons.

The trial of the Cardinal is too generally known to require me to repeat its details here. The point most embarrassing to him was the interview he had in February, 1785, with M. de Saint-James, to whom he confided the particulars of the Queen's pretended commission, and showed the contract approved and signed Marie Antoinette de France. The memorandum found in a drawer of the Cardinal's bureau, in which he had himself written what Baehmer told him after having seen me at my country house, was likewise an unfortunate document for his Eminence.

I offered to the King to go and declare that Baehmer had told me that the Cardinal assured him he had received from the Queen's own hand the thirty thousand francs given on account upon the bargain being concluded, and that his Eminence had seen her Majesty take that sum in bills from the porcelain secretaire in her boudoir. The King declined my offer, and said to me, "Were you alone when Boehmer told you this?" I answered that I was alone with him in my garden. "Well," resumed he, "the man would deny the fact; he is now sure of being paid his sixteen hundred thousand francs, which the Cardinal's family will find it necessary to make good to him; we can no longer rely

upon his sincerity; it would look as if you were sent by the Queen, and that would not be proper."

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[The guilty woman no sooner knew that all was about to be discovered than she sent for the jewellers, and told them the Cardinal had perceived that the agreement, which he believed to have been signed by the Queen, was a false and forged document. "However," added she, "the Cardinal possesses a considerable fortune, and he can very well pay you." These words reveal the whole secret. The Countess had taken the necklace to herself, and flattered herself that M. de Rohan, seeing himself deceived and cruelly imposed upon, would determine to pay and make the best terms he could, rather than suffer a matter of this nature to become public.—"Secret Correspondence of the Court of Louis XVI."]

The procureur general's information was severe on the Cardinal. The Houses of Conde and Rohan and the majority of the nobility saw in this affair only an attack on the Prince's rank, the clergy only a blow aimed at the privileges of a cardinal. The clergy demanded that the unfortunate business of the Prince Cardinal de Rohan should be submitted to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the Archbishop of Narbonne, then President of the Convocation, made representations upon the subject to the King; the bishops wrote to his Majesty to remind him that a private ecclesiastic implicated in the affair then pending would have a right to claim his constitutional judges, and that this right was refused to a cardinal, his superior in the hierarchical order. In short, the clergy and the greater part of the nobility were at that time outrageous against authority, and chiefly against the Queen.

The procureur-general's conclusions, and those of a part of the heads of the magistracy, were as severe towards the Cardinal as the information had been; yet he was fully acquitted by a majority of three voices; the woman De Lamotte was condemned to be whipped, branded, and imprisoned; and her husband, for contumacy, was condemned to the galleys for life.

[The following extract is from the "Memoirs" of the Abbe Georgel: "The sittings were long and multiplied; it was necessary to read the whole proceedings; more than fifty judges sat; a master of requests; a friend of the Prince, wrote down all that was said there, and sent it to his advisers, who found means to inform the Cardinal of it, and to add the plan of conduct he ought to pursue." D'Epremesnil, and other young counsellors, showed upon that occasion but too much audacity in braving the Court, too much eagerness in seizing an opportunity of attacking it. They were the first to shake that authority which their functions made it a duty in them to respect.—*Note by the editor.*]

M. Pierre de Laurencel, the procureur general's substitute, sent the Queen a list of the names of the members of the Grand Chamber, with the means made use of by the friends of the Cardinal to gain their votes during the trial. I had this list to keep among the papers which the Queen deposited in the house of M. Campan, my father-in-law, and which, at his death, she ordered me to preserve. I burnt this statement, but I remember ladies performed a part not very creditable to their principles; it was by them,

in consideration of large sums which they received, that some of the oldest and most respected members were won over. I did not see a single name amongst the whole Parliament that was gained directly.

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The belief confirmed by time is, that the Cardinal was completely duped by the woman De Lamotte and Cagliostro. The King may have been in error in thinking him an accomplice in this miserable and criminal scheme, but I have faithfully repeated his Majesty's judgment about it.

However, the generally received opinion that the Baron de Breteuil's hatred for the Cardinal was the cause of the scandal and the unfortunate result of this affair contributed to the disgrace of the former still more than his refusal to give his granddaughter in marriage to the son of the Duc de Polignac. The Abbe de Vermond threw the whole blame of the imprudence and impolicy of the affair of the Cardinal de Rohan upon the minister, and ceased to be the friend and supporter of the Baron de Breteuil with the Queen.

In the early part of the year 1786, the Cardinal, as has been said, was fully acquitted, and came out of the Bastille, while Madame de Lamotte was condemned to be whipped, branded, and imprisoned. The Court, persisting in the erroneous views which had hitherto guided its measures, conceived that the Cardinal and the woman De Lamotte were equally culpable and unequally punished, and sought to restore the balance of justice by exiling the Cardinal to La Chaise-Dieu, and suffering Madame de Lamotte to escape a few days after she entered l'Hopital. This new error confirmed the Parisians in the idea that the wretch De Lamotte, who had never been able to make her way so far as to the room appropriated to the Queen's women, had really interested the Queen herself.

[Further particulars will be found in the "Memoirs of the Comte de Beugnot" (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1871), as he knew Madame de Lamotte from the days of her early childhood (when the three children, the Baron de Valois, who died captain of a frigate, and the two Mademoiselles de Saint-Remi, the last descendants of the Baron de Saint-Remi, a natural son of Henri *ii.*, were almost starving) to the time of her temporary prosperity. In fact, he was with her when she burnt the correspondence of the Cardinal, in the interval the Court foolishly allowed between his arrest and her capture, and De Beugnot believed he had met at her house, at the moment of their return from their successful trick, the whole party engaged in deluding the Cardinal. It is worth noting that he was then struck by the face of Mademoiselle d'Oliva, who had just personated the Queen in presenting a rose to the Cardinal. It may also be cited as a pleasing quality of Madame de Lamotte that she, "in her ordinary conversation, used the words stupid and honest as synonymous."—See "Beugnot," vol. i., p. 60.]

CHAPTER XIV.

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The Abbe de Vermond could not repress his exultation when he succeeded in getting the Archbishop of Sens appointed head of the council of finance. I have more than once heard him say that seventeen years of patience were not too long a term for success in a Court; that he spent all that time in gaining the end he had in view; but that at length the Archbishop was where he ought to be for the good of the State. The Abbe, from this time, in the Queen's private circle no longer concealed his credit and influence; nothing could equal the confidence with which he displayed the extent of his pretensions. He requested the Queen to order that the apartments appropriated to him should be enlarged, telling her that, being obliged to give audiences to bishops, cardinals, and ministers, he required a residence suitable to his present circumstances. The Queen continued to treat him as she did before the Archbishop's arrival at Court; but the household showed him increased consideration: the word "Monsieur" preceded that of Abbe; and from that moment not only the livery servants, but also the people of the antechambers rose when Monsieur l'Abbe was passing, though there never was, to my knowledge, any order given to that effect.

The Queen was obliged, on account of the King's disposition and the very limited confidence he placed in the Archbishop of Sens, to take a part in public affairs. While M. de Maurepas lived she kept out of that danger, as may be seen by the censure which the Baron de Besenval passes on her in his memoirs for not availing herself of the conciliation he had promoted between the Queen and that minister, who counteracted the ascendancy which the Queen and her intimate friends might otherwise have gained over the King's mind.

The Queen has often assured me that she never interfered respecting the interests of Austria but once; and that was only to claim the execution of the treaty of alliance at the time when Joseph *ii.* was at war with Prussia and Turkey; that, she then demanded that an army of twenty-four thousand men should be sent to him instead of fifteen millions, an alternative which had been left to option in the treaty, in case the Emperor should have a just war to maintain; that she could not obtain her object, and M. de Vergennes, in an interview which she had with him upon the subject, put an end to her importunities by observing that he was answering the mother of the Dauphin and not the sister of the Emperor. The fifteen millions were sent. There was no want of money at Vienna, and the value of a French army was fully appreciated.

"But how," said the Queen, "could they be so wicked as to send off those fifteen millions from the general post-office, diligently publishing, even to the street porters, that they were loading carriages with money that I was sending to my brother!—whereas it is certain that the money would equally have been sent if I had belonged to another house; and, besides, it was sent contrary to my inclination."

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[This was not the first time the Queen had become unpopular in consequence of financial support afforded by France to her brother. The Emperor Joseph *ii*, made, in November, 1783, and in May, 1784, startling claims on the republic of the United Provinces; he demanded the opening of the Scheldt, the cession of Maeatricht with its dependencies, of the country beyond the Meuse, the county of Vroenhoven, and a sum of seventy millions of florins. The first gun was fired by the Emperor on the Scheldt 6th November, 1784. Peace was concluded 8th November, 1785, through the mediation of France. The singular part was the indemnification granted to the Emperor: this was a sum of ten millions of Dutch florins; the articles 15, 16, and 17 of the treaty stipulated the quotas of it. Holland paid five millions and a half, and France, under the direction of M. de Vergennes, four millions and a half of florins, that is to say, nine millions and forty-five thousand francs, according to M. Soulavie. M. de augur, in his "Policy of Cabinets" (vol. iii.), says relative to this affair:

"M. de Vergennes has been much blamed for having terminated, by a sacrifice of seven millions, the contest that existed between the United Provinces and the Emperor. In that age of philosophy men were still very uncivilised; in that age of commerce they made very erroneous calculations; and those who accused the Queen of sending the gold of France to her brother would have been better pleased if, to support a republic devoid of energy, the blood of two hundred thousand men, and three or four hundred millions of francs, had been sacrificed, and at the same time the risk run of losing the advantage of peace dictated to England." *Madame Campan*.]

When the Comte de Moustier set out on his mission to the United States, after having had his public audience of leave he came and asked me to procure him a private one. I could not succeed even with the strongest solicitations; the Queen desired me to wish him a good voyage, but added that none but ministers could have anything to say to him in private, since he was going to a country where the names of King and Queen must be detested.

Marie Antoinette had then no direct influence over State affairs until after the deaths of M. de Maurepas and M. de Vergennes, and the retirement of M. de Calonne. She frequently regretted her new situation, and looked upon it as a misfortune which she could not avoid. One day, while I was assisting her to tie up a number of memorials and reports, which some of the ministers had handed to her to be given to the King, "Ah!" said she, sighing, "there is an end of all happiness for me, since they have made an intriguer of me." I exclaimed at the word.

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“Yes,” resumed, the Queen, “that is the right term; every woman who meddles with affairs above her understanding or out of her line of duty is an intriguer and nothing else; you will remember, however, that it is not my own fault, and that it is with regret I give myself such a title; Queens of France are happy only so long as they meddle with nothing, and merely preserve influence sufficient to advance their friends and reward a few zealous servants. Do you know what happened to me lately? One day since I began to attend private committees at the King’s, while crossing the oiel-de-boeuf, I heard one of the musicians of the chapel say so loud that I lost not a single word, ‘A Queen who does her duty will remain in her apartment to knit.’ I said within myself, ‘Poor wretch, thou art right; but thou knowest not my situation; I yield to necessity and my evil destiny.’”

This situation was the more painful to the Queen inasmuch as Louis XVI. had long accustomed himself to say nothing to her respecting State affairs; and when, towards the close of his reign, she was obliged to interfere in the most important matters, the same habit in the King frequently kept from her particulars which it was necessary she should have known. Obtaining, therefore, only insufficient information, and guided by persons more ambitious than skilful, the Queen could not be useful in important affairs; yet, at the same time, her ostensible interference drew upon her, from all parties and all classes of society, an unpopularity the rapid progress of which alarmed all those who were sincerely attached to her.

Carried away by the eloquence of the Archbishop of Sens, and encouraged in the confidence she placed in that minister by the incessant eulogies of the Abbe de Vermond on his abilities, the Queen unfortunately followed up her first mistake of bringing him into office in 1787 by supporting him at the time of his disgrace, which was obtained by the despair of a whole nation. She thought it was due to her dignity to give him some marked proof of her regard at the moment of his departure; misled by her feelings, she sent him her portrait enriched with jewelry, and a brevet for the situation of lady of the palace for Madame de Canisy, his niece, observing that it was necessary to indemnify a minister sacrificed to the intrigues of the Court and a factious spirit of the nation; that otherwise none would be found willing to devote themselves to the interests of the sovereign.

On the day of the Archbishop’s departure the public joy was universal, both at Court and at Paris there were bonfires; the attorneys’ clerks burnt the Archbishop in effigy, and on the evening of his disgrace more than a hundred couriers were sent out from Versailles to spread the happy tidings among the country seats. I have seen the Queen shed bitter tears at the recollection of the errors she committed at this period, when subsequently, a short time before her death, the Archbishop had the audacity to say, in a speech which was printed, that the sole object of one part of his operations, during his administration, was the salutary crisis which the Revolution had produced.

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The benevolence and generosity shown by the King and Queen during the severe winter of 1788, when the Seine was frozen over and the cold was more intense than it had been for eighty years, procured them some fleeting popularity. The gratitude of the Parisians for the succour their Majesties poured forth was lively if not lasting. The snow was so abundant that since that period there has never been seen such a prodigious quantity in France. In different parts of Paris pyramids and obelisks of snow were erected with inscriptions expressive of the gratitude of the people. The pyramid in the Rue d'Angiviller was supported on a base six feet high by twelve broad; it rose to the height of fifteen feet, and was terminated by a globe. Four blocks of stone, placed at the angles, corresponded with the obelisk, and gave it an elegant appearance. Several inscriptions, in honour of the King and Queen, were affixed to it. I went to see this singular monument, and recollect the following inscription

"To Marie Antoinette."

"Lovely and good, to tender pity true,
Queen of a virtuous King, this trophy view;
Cold ice and snow sustain its fragile form,
But ev'ry grateful heart to thee is warm.
Oh, may this tribute in your hearts excite,
Illustrious pair, more pure and real delight,
Whilst thus your virtues are sincerely prais'd,
Than pompous domes by servile flatt'ry rais'd."

The theatres generally rang with praises of the beneficence of the sovereigns: "La Partie de Chasse de Henri iv." was represented for the benefit of the poor. The receipts were very considerable.

When the fruitless measure of the Assembly of the Notables, and the rebellious spirit in the parliaments,

[The Assembly of the Notables, as may be seen in "Weber's Memoirs," vol. i., overthrew the plans and caused the downfall of M. de Calonne. A prince of the blood presided over each of the meetings of that assembly. Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII., presided over the first meeting.

"Monsieur," says a contemporary, "gained great reputation at the Assembly of the Notables in 1787. He did not miss attending his meeting a single day, and he displayed truly patriotic virtues. His care in discussing the weighty matters of administration, in throwing light upon them, and in defending the interests and the cause of the people, was such as even to inspire the King with some degree of jealousy. Monsieur openly said that a respectful resistance to the orders of the monarch was not blamable, and that authority might be met by argument, and forced to receive information without any offence whatever."—*Note by the editor.*]

had created the necessity for States General, it was long discussed in council whether they should be assembled at Versailles or at forty or sixty leagues from the capital; the Queen was for the latter course, and insisted to the King that they ought to be far away from the immense population of Paris. She feared that the people would influence the deliberations of the deputies; several memorials were presented to the King upon that question; but M. Necker prevailed, and Versailles was the place fixed upon.

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The day on which the King announced that he gave his consent to the convocation of the States General, the Queen left the public dinner, and placed herself in the recess of the first window of her bedchamber, with her face towards the garden. Her chief butler followed her, to present her coffee, which she usually took standing, as she was about to leave the table. She beckoned to me to come close to her. The King was engaged in conversation with some one in his room. When the attendant had served her he retired; and she addressed me, with the cup still in her hand: "Great Heavens! what fatal news goes forth this day! The King assents to the convocation of the States General." Then she added, raising her eyes to heaven, "I dread it; this important event is a first fatal signal of discord in France." She cast her eyes down, they were filled with tears. She could not take the remainder of her coffee, but handed me the cup, and went to join the King. In the evening, when she was alone with me, she spoke only of this momentous decision. "It is the Parliament," said she, "that has compelled the King to have recourse to a measure long considered fatal to the repose of the kingdom. These gentlemen wish to restrain the power of the King; but they give a great shock to the authority of which they make so bad a use, and they will bring on their own destruction."

The double representation granted to the Tiers Etat was now the chief topic of conversation. The Queen favoured this plan, to which the King had agreed; she thought the hope of obtaining ecclesiastical favours would secure the clergy of the second order, and that M. Necker was sure to have the same degree of influence over the lawyers, and other people of that class comprised in the Tiers Etat. The Comte d'Artois, holding the contrary opinion, presented a memorial in the names of himself and several princes of the blood to the King against the double representation. The Queen was displeased with him for this; her confidential advisers infused into her apprehensions that the Prince was made the tool of a party; but his conduct was approved of by Madame de Polignac's circle, which the Queen thenceforward only frequented to avoid the appearance of a change in her habits. She almost always returned unhappy; she was treated with the profound respect due to a queen, but the devotion of friendship had vanished, to make way for the coldness of etiquette, which wounded her deeply. The alienation between her and the Comte Artois was also very painful to her, for she had loved him almost as tenderly as if he had been her own brother.

The opening of the States General took place on the 4th of May, 1789. The Queen on that occasion appeared for the last time in her life in regal magnificence. During the procession some low women, seeing the Queen pass, cried out "Vive le Duc d'Orleans!" in so threatening a manner that she nearly fainted. She was obliged to be supported, and those about her were afraid it would be necessary to stop the procession. The Queen, however, recovered herself, and much regretted that she had not been able to command more presence of mind.

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The rapidly increasing distrust of the King and Queen shown by the populace was greatly attributable to incessant corruption by English gold, and the projects, either of revenge or of ambition, of the Duc d'Orleans. Let it not be thought that this accusation is founded on what has been so often repeated by the heads of the French Government since the Revolution. Twice between the 14th of July and the 6th of October, 1789, the day on which the Court was dragged to Paris, the Queen prevented me from making little excursions thither of business or pleasure, saying to me, "Do not go on such a day to Paris; the English have been scattering gold, we shall have some disturbance." The repeated visits of the Duc d'Orleans to England had excited the Anglomania to such a pitch that Paris was no longer distinguishable from London. The French, formerly imitated by the whole of Europe, became on a sudden a nation of imitators, without considering the evils that arts and manufactures must suffer in consequence of the change. Since the treaty of commerce made with England at the peace of 1783, not merely equipages, but everything, even to ribands and common earthenware, were of English make. If this predominance of English fashions had been confined to filling our drawing-rooms with young men in English frock-coats, instead of the French dress, good taste and commerce might alone have suffered; but the principles of English government had taken possession of these young heads. Constitution, Upper House, Lower House, national guarantee, balance of power, Magna Charta, Law of Habeas Corpus,—all these words were incessantly repeated, and seldom understood; but they were of fundamental importance to a party which was then forming.

The first sitting of the States took place on the following day. The King delivered his speech with firmness and dignity; the Queen told me that he had taken great pains about it, and had repeated it frequently. His Majesty gave public marks of attachment and respect for the Queen, who was applauded; but it was easy to see that this applause was in fact rendered to the King alone.

It was evident, during the first sittings, that Mirabeau would be very dangerous to the Government. It affirmed that at this period he communicated to the King, and still more fully to the Queen, part of his schemes for abandoning them. He brandished the weapons afforded him by his eloquence and audacity, in order to make terms with the party he meant to attack. This man played the game of revolution to make his own fortune. The Queen told me that he asked for an embassy, and, if my memory does not deceive me, it was that of Constantinople. He was refused with well-deserved contempt, though policy would doubtless have concealed it, could the future have been foreseen.

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The enthusiasm prevailing at the opening of this assembly, and the debates between the Tiers Etat, the nobility, and even the clergy, daily increased the alarm of their Majesties, and all who were attached to the cause of monarchy. The Queen went to bed late, or rather she began to be unable to rest. One evening, about the end of May, she was sitting in her room, relating several remarkable occurrences of the day; four wax candles were placed upon her toilet-table; the first went out of itself; I relighted it; shortly afterwards the second, and then the third went out also; upon which the Queen, squeezing my hand in terror, said to me: "Misfortune makes us superstitious; if the fourth taper should go out like the rest, nothing can prevent my looking upon it as a sinister omen." The fourth taper went out. It was remarked to the Queen that the four tapers had probably been run in the same mould, and that a defect in the wick had naturally occurred at the same point in each, since the candles had all gone out in the order in which they had been lighted.

The deputies of the Tiers Etat arrived at Versailles full of the strongest prejudices against the Court. They believed that the King indulged in the pleasures of the table to a shameful excess; and that the Queen was draining the treasury of the State in order to satisfy the most unbridled luxury. They almost all determined to see Petit Trianon. The extreme plainness of the retreat in question not answering the ideas they had formed, some of them insisted upon seeing the very smallest closets, saying that the richly furnished apartments were concealed from them. They particularised one which, according to them, was ornamented with diamonds, and with wreathed columns studded with sapphires and rubies. The Queen could not get these foolish ideas out of her mind, and spoke to the King on the subject. From the description given of this room by the deputies to the keepers of Trianon, the King concluded that they were looking for the scene enriched with paste ornaments, made in the reign of Louis xv. for the theatre of Fontainebleau.

The King supposed that his Body Guards, on their return to the country, after their quarterly duty at Court, related what they had seen, and that their exaggerated accounts, being repeated, became at last totally perverted. This idea of the King, after the search for the diamond chamber, suggested to the Queen that the report of the King's propensity for drinking also sprang from the guards who accompanied his carriage when he hunted at Rambouillet. The King, who disliked sleeping out of his usual bed, was accustomed to leave that hunting-seat after supper; he generally slept soundly in his carriage, and awoke only on his arrival at the courtyard of his palace; he used to get down from his carriage in the midst of his Body Guards, staggering, as a man half awake will do, which was mistaken for intoxication.

The majority of the deputies who came imbued with prejudices produced by error or malevolence, went to lodge with the most humble private individuals of Versailles, whose inconsiderate conversation contributed not a little to nourish such mistakes. Everything, in short, tended to render the deputies subservient to the schemes of the leaders of the rebellion.

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Shortly after the opening of the States General the first Dauphin died. That young Prince suffered from the rickets, which in a few months curved his spine, and rendered his legs so weak that he could not walk without being supported like a feeble old man.

[Louis, Dauphin of France, who died at Versailles on the 4th of June, 1789, gave promise of intellectual precocity. The following particulars, which convey some idea of his disposition, and of the assiduous attention bestowed upon him by the Duchesse de Polignac, will be found in a work of that time: "At two years old the Dauphin was very pretty; he articulated well, and answered questions put to him intelligently. While he was at the Chateau de La Muette everybody was at liberty to see him. The Dauphin was dressed plainly, like a sailor; there was nothing to distinguish him from other children in external appearance but the cross of Saint Louis, the blue ribbon, and the Order of the Fleece, decorations that are the distinctive signs of his rank. The Duchesse Jules de Polignac, his governess, scarcely ever left him for a single instant: she gave up all the Court excursions and amusements in order to devote her whole attention to him. The Prince always manifested a great regard for M. de Bourset, his valet de chambre. During the illness of which he died, he one day asked for a pair of scissors; that gentleman reminded him that they were forbidden. The child insisted mildly, and they were obliged to yield to him. Having got the scissors, he cut off a lock of his hair, which he wrapped in a sheet of paper: 'There, monsieur,' said he to his valet de chambre, 'there is the only present I can make you, having nothing at my command; but when I am dead you will present this pledge to my papa and mamma; and while they remember me, I hope they will not forget you.'"—*Note by the editor.*]

How many maternal tears did his condition draw from the Queen, already overwhelmed with apprehensions respecting the state of the kingdom! Her grief was enhanced by petty intrigues, which, when frequently renewed, became intolerable. An open quarrel between the families and friends of the Duc Harcourt, the Dauphin's governor, and those of the Duchesse de Polignac, his governess, added greatly to the Queen's affliction. The young Prince showed a strong dislike to the Duchesse de Polignac, who attributed it either to the Duc or the Duchesse d'Harcourt, and came to make her complaints respecting it to the Queen. The Dauphin twice sent her out of his room, saying to her, with that maturity of manner which long illness always gives to children: "Go out, Duchess; you are so fond of using perfumes, and they always make me ill;" and yet she never used any. The Queen perceived, also, that his prejudices against her friend extended to herself; her son would no longer speak in her presence. She knew that he had become fond of sweetmeats, and offered him some

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marshmallow and jujube lozenges. The under-governors and the first valet de chambre requested her not to give the Dauphin anything, as he was to receive no food of any kind without the consent of the faculty. I forbear to describe the wound this prohibition inflicted upon the Queen; she felt it the more deeply because she was aware it was unjustly believed she gave a decided preference to the Duc de Normandie, whose ruddy health and amiability did, in truth, form a striking contrast to the languid look and melancholy disposition of his elder brother. She even suspected that a plot had for some time existed to deprive her of the affection of a child whom she loved as a good and tender mother ought. Previous to the audience granted by the King on the 10th August, 1788, to the envoy of the Sultan Tippoo Saib, she had begged the Duc d'Harcourt to divert the Dauphin, whose deformity was already apparent, from his intention to be present at that ceremony, being unwilling to expose him to the gaze of the crowd of inquisitive Parisians who would be in the gallery. Notwithstanding this injunction, the Dauphin was suffered to write to his mother, requesting her permission to be present at the audience. The Queen was obliged to refuse him, and warmly reproached the governor, who merely answered that he could not oppose the wishes of a sick child. A year before the death of the Dauphin the Queen lost the Princesse Sophie; this was, as the Queen said, the first of a series of misfortunes.

Note: As Madame Campan has stated in the foregoing pages that the money to foment sedition was furnished from English sources, the decree of the Convention of August, 1793, maybe quoted as illustrative of the entente cordiale alleged to exist between the insurrectionary Government and its friends across the Channel! The endeavours made by the English Government to save the unfortunate King are well known. The motives prompting the conduct of the Duc d'Orleans are equally well known.

Art. i. The National Convention denounces the British Government to Europe and the English nation.

Art. ii. Every Frenchman that shall place his money in the English funds shall be declared a traitor to his country.

Art. iii. Every Frenchman who has money in the English funds or those of any other Power with whom France is at war shall be obliged to declare the same.

Art. iv. All foreigners, subjects of the Powers now at war with France, particularly the English, shall be arrested, and seals put upon their papers.

Art. v. The barriers of Paris shall be instantly shut.

Art. vi. All good citizens shall be required in the name of the country to search for the foreigners concerned in any plot denounced.

Art. vii. Three millions shall be at the disposal of the Minister at War to facilitate the march of the garrison of Mentz to La Vendee.

Art. viii. The Minister at War shall send to the army on the coast of Rochelle all the combustible materials necessary to set fire to the forests and underwood of La Vendee.

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Art. ix. The women, the children, and old men shall be conducted to the interior parts of the country.

Art. x. The property of the rebels shall be confiscated for the benefit of the Republic.

Art. xi. A camp shall be formed without delay between Paris and the Northern army.

Art. xii. All the family of the Capets shall be banished from the French territory, those excepted who are under the sword of the law, and the offspring of Louis Capet, who shall both remain in the Temple.

Art. xiii. Marie Antoinette shall be delivered over to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and shall be immediately conducted to the prison of the Conciergerie. Louise Elisabeth shall remain in the Temple till after the judgment of Marie Antoinette.

Art. xiv. All the tombs of the Kings which are at St. Denis and in the departments shall be destroyed on August the 10th.

Art. xv. The present decree shall be despatched by extraordinary couriers to all the departments.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Customs are nearly equal to laws
Displaying her acquirements with rather too much confidence
I do not like these rhapsodies
Indulge in the pleasure of vice and assume the credit of virtue
No accounting for the caprices of a woman
None but little minds dreaded little books
Shun all kinds of confidence
The author (Beaumarchais) was sent to prison soon afterwards
Those muskets were immediately embarked and sold to the Americans
Young Prince suffered from the rickets