

The Memoirs of Count Grammont — Volume 02 eBook

The Memoirs of Count Grammont — Volume 02

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CHAPTER FOURTH.

*His arrival at the court of Turin,
and how he spent his time there.*

Military glory is at most but one half of the accomplishments which distinguish heroes. Love must give the finishing stroke, and adorn their character by the difficulties they encounter, the temerity of their enterprises, and finally, by the lustre of success. We have examples of this, not only in romances, but also in the genuine histories of the most famous warriors and the most celebrated conquerors.

The Chevalier de Grammont and Matta, who did not think much of these examples, were, however, of opinion, that it would be very agreeable to refresh themselves after the fatigues of the siege of Trino, by forming some other sieges, at the expense of the beauties and the husbands of Turin. As the campaign had finished early, they thought they should have time to perform some exploits before the bad weather obliged them to repass the mountains.

They sallied forth, therefore, not unlike Amadis de Gaul or Don Galaor after they had been dubbed knights, eager in their search after adventures in love, war and enchantments. They were greatly superior to those two brothers, who only knew how to cleave in twain giants, to break lances, and to carry off fair damsels behind them on horseback, without saying a single word to them; whereas our heroes were adepts at cards and dice, of which the others were totally ignorant.

They went to Turin, met with an agreeable reception, and were greatly distinguished at court. Could it be otherwise? They were young and handsome; they had wit at command, and spent their money liberally. In what country will not a man succeed, possessing such advantages? As Turin was at that time the seat of gallantry and of love, two strangers of this description, who were always cheerful, brisk and lively, could not fail to please the ladies of the court.

Though the men of Turin were extremely handsome, they were not, however, possessed of the art of pleasing. They treated their wives with respect, and were courteous to strangers. Their wives, still more handsome, were full as courteous to strangers, and less respectful to their husbands.

Madame Royale, a worthy daughter of Henry IV., rendered her little court the most agreeable in the world. She inherited such of her father's virtues as compose the proper ornament of her sex; and with regard to what are termed the foibles of great souls, her highness had in no wise degenerated.

The Count de Tanes was her prime minister. It was not difficult to conduct affairs of state during his administration. No complaints were alleged against him; and the

princess, satisfied with his conduct herself, was, above all, glad to have her choice approved by her whole court, where people lived nearly according to the manners and customs of ancient chivalry.

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The ladies had each a professed lover, for fashion's sake, besides volunteers, whose numbers were unlimited. The declared admirers wore their mistresses' liveries, their arms, and sometimes even took their names. Their office was, never to quit them in public, and never to approach them in private; to be their squires upon all occasions, and, in jousts and tournaments, to adorn their lances, their housings, and their coats, with the cyphers and the colours of their dulcineas.

Matta was far from being averse to gallantry; but would have liked it more simple than as it was practised at Turin. The ordinary forms would not have disgusted him; but he found here a sort of superstition in the ceremonies and worship of love, which he thought very inconsistent: however, as he had submitted his conduct in that matter to the direction of the Chevalier de Grammont, he was obliged to follow his example, and to conform to the customs of the country.

They enlisted themselves at the same time in the service of two beauties, whose former squires gave them up immediately from motives of politeness. The Chevalier de Grammont chose Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain, and told Matta to offer his services to Madame de Senantes. Matta consented, though he liked the other better; but the Chevalier de Grammont persuaded him that Madame de Senantes was more suitable for him. As he had reaped advantage from the Chevalier's talents in the first projects they had formed, he resolved to follow his instructions in love, as he had done his advice in play.

Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain was in the bloom of youth; her eyes were small, but very bright and sparkling, and, like her hair, were black; her complexion was lively and clear, though not fair: she, had an agreeable mouth, two fine rows of teeth, a neck as handsome as one could wish, and a most delightful shape; she had a particular elegance in her elbows, which, however, she did not show to advantage; her hands were rather large and not very white; her feet, though not of the smallest, were well shaped; she trusted to Providence, and used no art to set off those graces which she had received from nature; but, notwithstanding her negligence in the embellishment of her charms, there was something so lively in her person, that the Chevalier de Grammont was caught at first sight; her wit and humour corresponded with her other qualities, being quite easy and perfectly charming; she was all mirth, all life, all complaisance and politeness, and all was natural, and always the same without any variation.

The Marchioness de Senantes was esteemed fair, and she might have enjoyed, if she had pleased, the reputation of having red hair, had she not rather chosen to conform to the taste of the age in which she lived than to follow that of the ancients: she had all the advantages of red hair without any of the inconveniences; a constant attention to her person served as a corrective to the natural defects of her complexion. After all, what does it signify, whether cleanliness be owing to nature or to art? it argues an invidious

temper to be very inquisitive about it. She had a great deal of wit, a good memory, more reading, and a still greater inclination towards tenderness.

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She had a husband whom it would have been criminal even in chastity to spare. He piqued himself upon being a Stoic, and gloried in being slovenly and disgusting in honour of his profession. In this he succeeded to admiration; for he was very fat, so that he perspired almost as much in winter as in summer. Erudition and brutality seemed to be the most conspicuous features of his character, and were displayed in his conversation, sometimes together, sometimes alternately, but always disagreeably: he was not jealous, and yet he was troublesome; he was very well pleased to see attentions paid to his wife, provided more were paid to him.

As soon as our adventurers had declared themselves, the Chevalier de Grammont arrayed himself in green habiliments, and dressed Matta in blue, these being the favourite colours of their new mistresses. They entered immediately upon duty: the Chevalier learned and practised all the ceremonies of this species of gallantry, as if he always had been accustomed to them; but Matta commonly forgot one half, and was not over perfect in practising the other. He never could remember that his office was to promote the glory, and not the interest, of his mistress.

The Duchess of Savoy gave the very next day an entertainment at La Venerie, where all the ladies were invited.

The Chevalier was so agreeable and diverting, that he made his mistress almost die with laughing. Matta, in leading his lady to the coach, squeezed her hand, and at their return from the promenade he begged of her to pity his sufferings. Thus was proceeding rather too precipitately, and although Madame de Senantes was not destitute of the natural compassion of her sex, she nevertheless was shocked at the familiarity of this treatment; she thought herself obliged to show some degree of resentment, and pulling away her hand, which he had pressed with still greater fervency upon this declaration, she went up to the royal apartments without even looking at her new lover. Matta, never thinking that he had offended her, suffered her to go, and went in search of some company to sup with him: nothing was more easy for a man of his disposition; he soon found what he wanted, sat a long time at table to refresh himself after the fatigue, of love, and went to bed completely satisfied that he had performed his part to perfection.

During all this time the Chevalier de Grammont acquitted himself towards Mademoiselle de Saint Germain with universal applause; and without remitting his assiduities, he found means to shine, as they went along, in the relation of a thousand entertaining anecdotes, which he introduced in the general conversation. Her Royal Highness heard them with pleasure, and the solitary Senantes likewise attended to them. He perceived this, and quitted his mistress to inquire what she had done with Matta.

"I" said she, "I have done nothing with him; but I don't know what he would have done with me if I had been obliging enough to listen to his most humble solicitations."

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She then told him in what manner his friend had treated her the very second day of their acquaintance.

The Chevalier could not forbear laughing at it: he told her Matta was rather too unceremonious, but yet she would like him better as their intimacy more improved, and for her consolation he assured her that he would have spoken in the same manner to her Royal Highness herself; however, he would not fail to give him a severe reprimand. He went the next morning into his room for that purpose; but Matta had gone out early in the morning on a shooting party, in which he had been engaged by his supper companions in the preceding evening. At his return he took a brace of partridges and went to his mistress. Being asked whether he wished to see the Marquis, he said no; and the Swiss telling him his lady was not at home, he left his partridges, and desired him to present them to his mistress from him.

The Marchioness was at her toilet, and was decorating her head with all the grace she could devise to captivate Matta, at the moment he was denied admittance: she knew nothing of the matter; but her husband knew every particular. He had taken it in dudgeon that the first visit was not paid to him, and as he was resolved that it should not be paid to his wife, the Swiss had received his orders, and had almost been beaten for receiving the present which had been left. The partridges, however, were immediately sent back, and Matta, without examining into the cause, was glad to have them again. He went to court without ever changing his clothes, or in the least considering he ought not to appear there without his lady's colours. He found her becomingly dressed; her eyes appeared to him more than usually sparkling, and her whole person altogether divine. He began from that day to be much pleased with himself for his complaisance to the Chevalier de Grammont; however, he could not help remarking that she looked but coldly upon him. This appeared to him a very extraordinary return for his services, and, imagining that she was unmindful of her weighty obligations to him, he entered into conversation with her, and severely reprimanded her for having sent back his partridges with so much indifference.

She did not understand what he meant; and highly offended that he did not apologize, after the reprimand which she concluded him to have received, told him that he certainly had met with ladies of very complying dispositions in his travels, as he seemed to give to himself airs that she was by no means accustomed to endure. Matta desired to know wherein he could be said to have given himself any. "Wherein?" said she: "the second day that you honoured me with your attentions, you treated me as if I had been your humble servant for a thousand years; the first time that I gave you my hand you squeezed it as violently as you were able. After this commencement of your courtship, I got into my coach, and you mounted your horse; but instead of riding by the side of the

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coach, as any reasonable gallant would have done, no sooner did a hare start from her form, than you immediately galloped full speed after her; having regaled yourself, during the promenade, by taking snuff, without ever deigning to bestow a thought on me, the only proof you gave me, on your return, that you recollected me, was by soliciting me to surrender my reputation in terms polite enough, but very explicit. And now you talk to me of having been shooting of partridges and of some visit or other, which, I suppose, you have been dreaming of, as well as of all the rest.”

The Chevalier de Grammont now advanced, to the interruption of this whimsical dialogue. Matta was rebuked for his forwardness, and his friend took abundant pains to convince him that his conduct bordered more upon insolence than familiarity. Matta endeavoured to exculpate himself, but succeeded ill. His mistress took compassion upon him, and consented to admit his excuses, for the manner, rather than his repentance for the fact, and declared that it was the intention alone which could either justify or condemn, in such cases; that it was very easy to pardon those transgressions which arise from excess of tenderness, but not such as proceeded from too great a presumption of success. Matta swore that he only squeezed her hand from the violence of his passion, and that he had been driven, by necessity, to ask her to relieve it; that he was yet a novice in the arts of solicitation; that he could not possibly think her more worthy of his affection, after a month’s service, than at the present moment; and that he entreated her to cast away an occasional thought upon him when her leisure admitted. The Marchioness was not offended, she saw very well that she must require an implicit conformity to the established rule of decorum, when she had to deal with such a character; and the Chevalier de Grammont, after this sort of reconciliation, went to look after his own affair with Mademoiselle de St. Germain.

His concern was not the offspring of mere good nature, nay, it was the reverse; for no sooner did he perceive that the Marchioness looked with an eye of favour upon him, than this conquest, appearing to him to be more easy than the other, he thought it was prudent to take advantage of it, for fear of losing the opportunity, and that he might not have spent all his time to no purpose, in case he should prove unsuccessful with the little St. Germain.

In the mean time, in order to maintain that authority which he had usurped over the conduct of his friend, he, that very evening, notwithstanding what had been already said, reprimanded him for presuming to appear at court in his morning suit, and without his mistress’s badge; for not having had the wit or prudence to pay his first visit to the Marquis de Senantes, instead of consuming his time, to no purpose, in inquiries for the lady; and, to conclude, he asked him what the devil he meant by presenting her with a brace of miserable

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red partridges. "And why not?" said Matta: "ought they to have been blue, too, to match the cockade and sword-knots you made me wear the other day? Plague not me with your nonsensical whimsies: my life on it, in one fortnight your equal in foppery and folly will not be found throughout the confines of Turin; but, to reply to your questions, I did not call upon Monsieur de Senantes, because I had nothing to do with him, and because he is of a species of animals which I dislike, and always shall dislike: as for you, you appear quite charmed with being decked out in green ribands, with writing letters to your mistress, and filling your pockets with citrons, pistachios, and such sort of stuff, with which you are always cramming the poor girl's mouth, in spite of her teeth: you hope to succeed by chanting ditties composed in the days of Corisande and of Henry IV., which you will swear yourself have made upon her: happy in practising the ceremonials of gallantry, you have no ambition for the essentials. Very well: every one has a particular way of acting, as well as a particular taste: your's is to trifle in love; and, provided you can make Mademoiselle de St. Germain laugh, you are satisfied: as for my part, I am persuaded, that women here are made of the same materials as in other places; and I do not think that they can be mightily offended, if one sometimes leaves off trifling, to come to the point: however, if the Marchioness is not of this way of thinking, she may e'en provide herself elsewhere; for I can assure her, that I shall not long act the part of her squire."

This was an unnecessary menace; for the Marchioness in reality liked him very well, was nearly of the same way of thinking herself, and wished for nothing more than to put his gallantry to the test. But Matta proceeded upon a wrong plan; he had conceived such an aversion for her husband, that he could not prevail upon himself to make the smallest advance towards his good graces. He was given to understand that he ought to begin by endeavouring to lull the dragon to sleep, before he could gain possession of the treasure; but this was all to no purpose, though, at the same time, he could never see his mistress but in public. This made him impatient, and as he was lamenting his ill-fortune to her one day: "Have the goodness, madam," said he, "to let me know where you live: there is never a day that I do not call upon you, at least, three or four times, without ever being blessed with a sight of you." "I generally sleep at home," replied she, laughing; "but I must tell you, that you will never find me there, if you do not first pay a visit to the Marquis: I am not mistress of the house. I do not tell you," continued she, "that he is a man whose acquaintance any one would very impatiently covet for his conversation: on the contrary, I agree that his humour is fantastical, and his manners not of the pleasing cast; but there is nothing so savage and inhuman, which a little care, attention, and complaisance may not tame into docility. I must repeat to you some verses upon the subject: I have got them by heart, because they contain a little advice, which you may accommodate, if you please, to your own case."

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Rondeau.

Keep in mind these maxims rare,
You who hope to win the fair;
Who are, or would esteemed be,
The quintessence of gallantry. That fopp'ry, grinning, and grimace,
And fertile store of common-place;
That oaths as false as dicers swear,
And Wry teeth, and scented hair;
That trinkets, and the pride of dress,
Can only give your scheme success.

Keep in mind. Has thy charmer e'er an aunt?
Then learn the rules of woman's cant,
And forge a tale, and swear you read it,
Such as, save woman, none would credit
Win o'er her confidante and pages
By gold, for this a golden age is;
And should it be her wayward fate,
To be encumbered with a mate,
A dull, old dotard should he be,
That dulness claims thy courtesy.

Keep in mind.

"Truly," said Matta, "the song may say what it pleases, but I cannot put it in practice: your husband is far too exquisite a monster for me. Why, what a plaguey odd ceremony do you require of us in this country, if we cannot pay our compliments to the wife without being in love with the husband!"

The Marchioness was much offended at this answer; and as she thought she had done enough in pointing out to him the path which would conduct him to success, if he had deserved it, she did not think it worth while to enter into any farther explanation; since he refused to cede, for her salve, so trilling an objection: from this instant she resolved to have done with him.

The Chevalier de Grammont had taken leave of his mistress nearly at the same time: the ardour of his pursuit was extinguished. It was not that Mademoiselle de Saint Germain was less worthy than hitherto of his attentions: on the contrary her attractions visibly increased: she retired to her pillow with a thousand charms, and ever rose from it with additional beauty the phrase of increasing in beauty as she increased in years seemed to have been purposely made for her. The Chevalier could not deny these truths, but yet he could not find his account in them: a little less merit, with a little less discretion, would have been more agreeable. He perceived that she attended to him



with pleasure, that she was diverted with his stories as much as he could wish, and that she received his billets and presents without scruple; but then he also discovered that she did not wish to proceed any farther. He had exhausted every species of address upon her, and all to no purpose: her attendant was gained: her family, charmed with the music of his conversation and his great attention, were never happy without him: in short, he had reduced to practice the advice contained in the Marchioness's song, and everything conspired to deliver the little Saint Germain into his hands, if the little Saint

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Germain had herself been willing: but alas! she was not inclined. It was in vain he told her the favour he desired would cost her nothing; and that since these treasures were rarely comprised in the fortune a lady brings with her in marriage, she would never find any person, who, by unremitting tenderness, unwearied attachment, and inviolable secrecy, would prove more worthy of them than himself. He then told her no husband was ever able to convey a proper idea of the sweets of love, and that nothing could be more different than the passionate fondness of a lover, always tender, always affectionate, yet always respectful, and the careless indifference of a husband.

Mademoiselle de Saint Germain, not wishing to take the matter in a serious light, that she might not be forced to resent it, answered, that since it was generally the custom in her country to marry, she thought it was right to conform to it, without entering into the knowledge of those distinctions, and those marvellous particulars, which she did not very well understand, and of which she did not wish to have any further explanation; that she had submitted to listen to him this one time, but desired he would never speak to her again in the same strain, since such sort of conversation was neither entertaining to her, nor could be serviceable to him. Though no one was ever more facetious than Mademoiselle de Saint Germain, she yet knew how to assume a very serious air, when ever occasion required it. The Chevalier de Grammont soon saw that she was in earnest; and finding it would cost him a great deal of time to effect a change in her sentiments, he was so far cooled in this pursuit, that he only made use of it to hide the designs he had upon the Marchioness de Senantes.

He found this lady much disgusted at Matta's want of complaisance; and his seeming contempt for her erased every favourable impression which she had once entertained for him. While she was in this humour, the Chevalier told her that her resentment was just; he exaggerated the loss which his friend had sustained; he told her that her charms were a thousand times superior to those of the little Saint Germain, and requested that favour for himself which his friend did not deserve. He was soon favourably heard upon this topic; and as soon as they were agreed, they consulted upon two measures necessary to be taken, the one to deceive her husband, the other his friend, which was not very difficult: Matta was not at all suspicious: and the stupid Senantes, towards whom the Chevalier had already behaved as Matta had refused to do, could not be easy without him. This was much more than was wanted; for as soon as ever the Chevalier was with the Marchioness, her husband immediately joined them out of politeness; and on no account would have left them alone together, for fear they should grow weary of each other without him.

Matta, who all this time was entirely ignorant that he was disgraced, continued to serve his mistress in his own way. She had agreed with the Chevalier de Grammont, that to all appearance everything should be carried on as before; so that the court always

believed that the Marchioness only thought of Matta, and that the Chevalier was entirely devoted to Mademoiselle de Saint Germain.

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There were very frequently little lotteries for trinkets: the Chevalier de Grammont always tried his fortune, and was sometimes fortunate; and under pretence of the prizes he had won, he bought a thousand things which he indiscreetly gave to the Marchioness, and which she still more indiscreetly accepted: the little Saint Germain very seldom received any thing. There are meddling whisperers everywhere: remarks were made upon these proceedings; and the same person that made them communicated them likewise to Mademoiselle de Saint Germain. She pretended to laugh, but in reality was piqued. It is a maxim religiously observed by the fair sex, to envy each other those indulgences which themselves refuse. She took this very ill of the Marchioness. On the other hand, Matta was asked if he was not old enough to make his own presents himself to the Marchioness de Senantes, without sending them by the Chevalier de Grammont. This roused him; for of himself, he would never have perceived it: his suspicions, however, were but slight, and he was willing to have them removed. "I must confess," said he to the Chevalier de Grammont, "that they make love here quite in a new style; a man serves here without reward: he addresses himself to the husband when he is in love with the wife, and makes presents to another man's mistress, to get into the good graces of his own. The Marchioness is much obliged to you for-----"

"It is you who are obliged," replied the Chevalier, "since thus was done on your account: I was ashamed to find you had never yet thought of presenting her with any trifling token of your attention: do you know that the people of this court have such extraordinary notions, as to think that it is rather owing to inadvertency that you never yet have had the spirit to make your mistress the smallest present? For shame! how ridiculous it is, that you can never think for yourself?"

Matta took this rebuke, without making any answer, being persuaded that he had in some measure deserved it: besides, he was neither sufficiently jealous, nor sufficiently amorous, to think any more of it; however, as it was necessary for the Chevalier's affairs that Matta should be acquainted with the Marquis de Senantes, he plagued him so much about it, that at last he complied. His friend introduced him, and his mistress seemed pleased with this proof of complaisance, though she was resolved that he should gain nothing by it; and the husband, being gratified with a piece of civility which he had long expected, determined, that very evening, to give them a supper at a little country seat of his, on the banks of the river, very near the city.

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The Chevalier de Grammont answering for them both, accepted the offer; and as this was the only one Matta would not have refused from the Marquis, he likewise consented. The Marquis came to convey them in his carriage at the hour appointed; but he found only Matta. The Chevalier had engaged himself to play, on purpose that they might go without him: Matta was for waiting for him, so great was his fear of being left alone with the Marquis; but the Chevalier having sent to desire them to go on before, and that he would be with them as soon as he had finished his game, poor Matta was obliged to set out with the man who, of all the world, was most offensive to him. It was not the Chevalier's intention quickly to extricate Matta out of this embarrassment: he no sooner knew that they were gone, than he waited on the Marchioness, under pretence of still finding her husband, that they might all go together to supper.

The plot was in a fair way; and as the Marchioness was of opinion that Matta's indifference merited no better treatment from her, she made no scruple of acting her part in it: she therefore waited for the Chevalier de Grammont with intentions so much the more favourable, as she had for a long time expected him, and had some curiosity to receive a visit from him in the absence of her husband. We may therefore suppose that this first opportunity would not have been lost, if Mademoiselle de Saint Germain had not unexpectedly come in, almost at the same time with the Chevalier.

She was more handsome and more entertaining that day than she had ever been before; however, she appeared to them very ugly and very tiresome: she soon perceived that her company was disagreeable, and being determined that they should not be out of humour with her for nothing, after having passed above a long half hour in diverting herself with their uneasiness, and in playing a thousand monkey tricks, which she plainly saw could never be more unseasonable, she pulled off her hood, scarf, and all that part of her dress which ladies lay aside, when in a familiar manner they intend to pass the day anywhere. The Chevalier de Grammont cursed her in his heart, while she continued to torment him for being in such ill-humour in such good company: at last the Marchioness, who was as much vexed as he was, said rather drily that she was obliged to wait on her Royal Highness: Mademoiselle de Saint Germain told her that she would have the honour to accompany her, if it would not be disagreeable: she took not the smallest notice of her offer; and the Chevalier, finding that it would be entirely useless to prolong his visit at that time, retired with a good grace.

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As soon as he had left the house, he sent one of his scouts to desire the Marquis to sit down to table with his company without waiting for him, because the game might not perhaps be finished as soon as he expected, but that he would be with him before supper was over. Having despatched this messenger, he placed a sentinel at the Marchioness's door, in hopes that the tedious Saint Germain might go out before her; but this was in vain, for his spy came and told him, after an hour's impatience and suspense, that they were gone out together. He found there was no chance of seeing her again that day, everything falling out contrary to his wishes; he was forced therefore to leave the Marchioness, and go in quest of the Marquis.

While these things were going on in the city, Matta was not much diverted in the country: as he was prejudiced against the Marquis, all that he said displeased him: he cursed the Chevalier heartily for the *tete-a-tete* which he had procured him; and he was upon the point of going away, when he found that he was to sit down to supper without any other company.

However, as his host was very choice in his entertainments, and had the best wine and the best cook in all Piedmont, the sight of the first course appeased him; and eating most voraciously, without paying any attention to the Marquis, he flattered himself that the supper would end without any dispute; but he was mistaken.

When the Chevalier de Grammont was at first endeavouring to bring about an intercourse between the Marquis and Matta, he had given a very advantageous character of the latter, to make the former more desirous of his acquaintance; and in the display of a thousand other accomplishments, knowing what an infatuation the Marquis had for the very name of erudition, he assured him that Matta was one of the most learned men in Europe.

The Marquis, therefore, from the moment they sat down to supper, had expected some stroke of learning from Matta, to bring his own into play; but he was much out in his reckoning; no one had read less, no one thought less, and no one had ever spoken so little at an entertainment as he had done as he did not wish to enter into conversation, he opened his mouth only to eat, or ask for wine.

The other, being offended at a silence which appeared to him affected, and wearied with having uselessly attacked him upon other subjects, thought he might get something out of him by changing the discourse of love and gallantry; and therefore, to begin the subject, he accosted him in this manner:

"Since you are my wife's gallant—" "I!" said Matta who wished to carry it discreetly: "those who told you so, told a damned lie." "Zounds, sir," said the Marquis, "you speak in a tone which does not at all become you; for I would have you to know, notwithstanding your contemptuous airs, that the Marchioness de Senantes is perhaps as worthy of your attentions as any of your French ladies, and that I have known some

greatly your superiors, who have thought it an honour to serve her.” “Very well,” said Matta, “I think she is very deserving, and since you insist upon it, I am her servant and gallant, to oblige you.”

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"You think, perhaps," continued the other, "that the same custom prevails in this country as in your own, and that the ladies have lovers, with no other intentions than to grant them favours: undeceive yourself if you please, and know, likewise, that even if such events were frequent in this court, I should not be at all uneasy." "Nothing can be more civil," said Matta; "but wherefore would you not?" "I will tell you why," replied he: "I am well acquainted with the affection my wife entertains for me: I am acquainted with her discretion towards all the world; and, what is more, I am acquainted with my own merit."

"You have a most uncommon acquaintance then," replied Matta; "I congratulate you upon it; I have the honour to drink it in a bumper." The Marquis pledged him; but seeing that the conversation dropped on their ceasing to drink, after two or three healths, he wished to make a second attempt, and attack Matta on his strong side, that is to say, on his learning.

He desired him, therefore, to tell him, at what time he thought the Allobroges came to settle in Piedmont. Matta, who wished him and his Allobroges at the devil, said, that it must be in the time of the civil wars. "I doubt that," said the other. "Just as you like," said Matta. "Under what consulate?" replied the Marquis: "Under that of the League," said Matta, "when the Guises brought the Lansquenets into France; but what the devil does that signify?"

The Marquis was tolerably warm, and naturally savage, so that God knows how the conversation would have ended, if the Chevalier de Grammont had not unexpectedly come in to appease them. It was some time before he could find out what their debate was; for the one had forgotten the questions, and the other the answers, which had disoblged him, in order to reproach the Chevalier with his eternal passion for play, which made him always uncertain. The Chevalier, who knew that he was still more culpable than they thought, bore it all with patience, and condemned himself more than they desired: this appeased them; and the entertainment ended with greater tranquillity than it had begun. The conversation was again reduced to order; but he could not enliven it as he usually did. He was in very ill humour, and as he pressed them every minute to rise from table, the Marquis was of opinion that he had lost a great deal. Matta said, on the contrary, that he had won; but for want of precautions had made perhaps an unfortunate retreat; and asked him if he had not stood in need of Serjeant La Place, with his ambuscade.

This piece of history was beyond the comprehension of the Marquis, and being afraid that Matta might explain it, the Chevalier changed the discourse, and was for rising from table; but Matta would not consent to it. This effected a reconciliation between him and the Marquis, who thought this was a piece of civility intended for him; however, it was not for him, but for his wine, to which Matta had taken a prodigious liking.

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The Duchess, who knew the character of the Marquis, was charmed with the account which the Chevalier de Grammont gave her of the entertainment and conversation: she sent for Matta to know the truth of it from himself: he confessed, that before the Allobroges were mentioned the Marquis was for quarrelling with him, because he was not in love with his wife.

Their acquaintance having begun in this manner, all the esteem which the Marquis had formerly expressed for the Chevalier seemed now directed towards Matta: he went every day to pay Matta a visit, and Matta was every day with his wife. This did not at all suit the Chevalier: he repented of his having chid Matta, whose assiduity now interrupted all his schemes; and the Marchioness was still more embarrassed. Whatever wit a man may have, it will never please where his company is disliked; and she repented that she had been formerly guilty of some trifling advances towards him.

Matta began to find charms in her person, and might have found the same in her conversation, if she had been inclined to display them; but it is impossible to be in good humour with persons who thwart our designs. While his passion increased, the Chevalier de Grammont was solely occupied in endeavouring to find out some method, by which he might accomplish his intrigue; and this was the stratagem which he put in execution to clear the coast, by removing, at one and the same time, both the lover and the husband.

He told Matta, that they ought to invite the Marquis to supper at their lodgings, and he would take upon himself to provide everything proper for the occasion. Matta desired to know if it was to play at quinze, and assured him that he should take care to render abortive any intention he might have to engage in play, and leave him alone with the greatest blockhead in all Europe. The Chevalier de Grammont did not entertain any such thought, being persuaded that it would be impossible to take advantage of any such opportunity, in whatever manner he might take his measures, and that they would seek for him in every corner of the city rather than allow him the least repose: his whole attention was therefore employed in rendering the entertainment agreeable, in finding out means of prolonging it, in order ultimately to kindle some dispute between the Marquis and Matta. For this purpose he put himself in the best humour in the world, and the wine produced the same effect on the rest of the company.

The Chevalier de Grammont expressed his concern, that he had not been able to give the Marquis a little concert, as he had intended in the morning; for the musicians had been all pre-engaged. Upon this the Marquis undertook to have them at his country-house the following evening, and invited the same company to sup with him there. Matta asked what the devil they wanted with music, and maintained that it was of no use on such occasions but for women who had something to say to their lovers, while the fiddles

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prevented them from being overheard, or for fools who had nothing to say when the music ended. They ridiculed all his arguments: the party was fixed for the next day, and the music was voted by the majority of voices. The Marquis, to console Matta, as well as to do honour to the entertainment, toasted a great many healths: Matta was more ready to listen to his arguments on this topic than in a dispute; but the Chevalier, perceiving that a little would irritate them, desired nothing more earnestly than to see them engaged in some new controversy. It was in vain that he had from time to time started some subject of discourse with this intention; but having luckily thought of asking what was his lady's maiden name, Senantes, who was a great genealogist, as all fools are who have good memories, immediately began by tracing out her family, by an endless confused string of lineage. The Chevalier seemed to listen to him with great attention; and perceiving that Matta was almost out of patience, he desired him to attend to what the Marquis was saying, for that nothing could be more entertaining. "All this may be very true," said Matta; "but for my part, I must confess, if I were married, I should rather choose to inform myself who was the real father of my children, than who were my wife's grand fathers." The Marquis, smiling at this rudeness, did not leave off until he had traced back the ancestors of his spouse, from line to line, as far as Yolande de Senantes: after this he offered to prove, in less than half an hour, that the Grammonts came originally from Spain. "Very well," said Matta, "and pray what does it signify to us from whence the Grammonts are descended? Do not you know, sir, that it is better to know nothing at all, than to know too much?"

The Marquis maintained the contrary with great warmth, and was preparing a formal argument to prove that an ignorant man is a fool; but the Chevalier de Grammont, who was thoroughly acquainted with Matta saw very clearly that he would send the logician to the devil before he should arrive at the conclusion of his syllogism: for which reason, interposing as soon as they began to raise their voices, he told them it was ridiculous to quarrel about an affair in itself so trivial, and treated the matter in a serious light, that it might make the greater impression. Thus supper terminated peaceably, owing to the care he took to suppress all disputes, and to substitute plenty of wine in their stead.

The next day Matta went to the chase, the Chevalier de Grammont to the bagnio, and the Marquis to his country house. While the latter was making the necessary preparations for his guests, not forgetting the music, and Matta pursuing his game to get an appetite, the Chevalier was meditating on the execution of his project.

As soon as he had regulated his plan of operations in his own mind, he privately sent anonymous intelligence to the officer of the guard at the palace that the Marquis de Senantes had had some words with Monsieur de Matta the preceding night at supper; that the one had gone out in the morning; and the other could not be found in the city.

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Madame Royale, alarmed at this advice, immediately sent for the Chevalier de Grammont: he appeared surprised when her highness mentioned the affair: he confessed, indeed, that some high words had passed between them, but that he did not believe either of them would have remembered them the next day. He said that if no mischief had yet taken place, the best way would be to secure them both until the morning, and that if they could be found, he would undertake to reconcile them, and to obliterate all grievances: in this there was no great difficulty. On inquiry at the Marquis's they were informed that he was gone to his country-house: there certainly he was, and there they found him; the officer put him under an arrest, without assigning any reason for so doing, and left him in very great surprise.

Immediately upon Matta's return from hunting, her Royal Highness sent the same officer to desire him to give her his word that he would not stir out that evening. This compliment very much surprised him, more particularly as no reason was assigned for it. He was expected at a good entertainment he was dying with hunger, and nothing appeared to him more unreasonable than to oblige him to stay at home, in a situation like the present; but he had given his word, and not knowing to what this might tend, his only resource was to send for his friend; but his friend did not come to him until his return from the country. He had there found the Marquis in the midst of his fiddlers, and very much vexed to find himself a prisoner in his own house on account of Matta, whom he was waiting for in order to feast him: he complained of him bitterly to the Chevalier de Grammont: he said that he did not believe that he had offended him; but that, since he was very desirous of a quarrel, he desired the Chevalier to acquaint him, if he felt the least displeasure on the present occasion, he should, on the very first opportunity, receive what is called satisfaction. The Chevalier de Grammont assured him that no such thought had ever entered the mind of Matta; that on the contrary, he knew that he very greatly esteemed him; that all this could alone arise from the extreme tenderness of his lady, who, being alarmed upon the report of the servants who waited at table, must have gone to her Royal Highness, in order to prevent any unpleasant consequences; that he thought this the more probable, as he had often told the Marchioness, when speaking of Matta, that he was the best swordsman in France; for, in truth, the poor gentleman had never fought without having the misfortune of killing his man.

The Marquis, being a little pacified, said he was very much obliged to him, that he would severely chide his wife for her unseasonable tenderness, and that he was extremely desirous of again enjoying the pleasure of his dear friend Matta's company.

The Chevalier de Grammont assured him that he would use all his endeavours for that purpose, and at the same time gave strict charge to his guard not to let him escape without orders from the Court, as he seemed fully bent upon fighting, and they would be responsible for him: there was no occasion to say more to have him strictly watched, though there was no necessity for it.

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One being thus safely lodged, his next step was to secure the other: he returned immediately to town: and as soon as Matta saw him, "What the devil," said he, "is the meaning of this farce which I am obliged to act? for my part, I cannot understand the foolish customs of this country; how comes it that they make me a prisoner upon my parole?" "How comes it?" said the Chevalier de Grammont, "it is because you yourself are far more unaccountable than all their customs; you cannot help disputing with a peevish fellow, whom you ought only to laugh at; some officious footman has no doubt been talking of your last night's dispute; you were seen to go out of town in the morning, and the Marquis soon after; was not this sufficient to make her Royal Highness think herself obliged to take these precautions? The Marquis is in custody; they have only required your parole; so far, therefore, from taking the affair in the sense you do, I should send very humbly to thank her Highness for the kindness she has manifested towards you in putting you under arrest, since it is only on your account that she interests herself in the affair. I shall take a walk to the palace, where I will endeavour to unravel this mystery; in the mean time, as there is but little probability that the matter should be settled this evening, you would do well to order supper; for I shall come back to you immediately."

Matta charged him not to fail to express to her Royal Highness the grateful sense he had of her favour, though in truth he as little feared the Marquis as he loved him; and it is impossible to express the degree of his fortitude in stronger terms.

The Chevalier de Grammont returned in about half an hour, with two or three gentlemen whom Matta had got acquainted with at the chase, and who, upon the report of the quarrel, waited upon him, and each offered him separately his services against the unassisted and pacific Marquis. Matta having returned them his thanks, insisted upon their staying supper, and put on his robe de chambre.

As soon as the Chevalier de Grammont perceived that every thing coincided with his wishes, and that towards the end of the entertainment the toasts went merrily round, he knew he was sure of his man till next day: then taking him aside with the permission of the company, and making use of a false confidence in order to disguise a real treachery, he acquainted him, after having sworn him several times to secrecy, that he had at last prevailed upon the little Saint Germain to grant him an interview that night; for which reason he would take his leave, under pretence of going to play at Court; he therefore desired him fully to satisfy the company that he would not have left them on any other account, as the Piedmontese are naturally mistrustful. Matta promised he would manage this point with discretion; that he would make an apology for him, and that there was no occasion for his personally taking leave: then, after congratulating him upon the happy posture of his affairs, he sent him away with all the expedition and secrecy imaginable; so great was his fear lest his friend should lose the present opportunity.

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Matta then returned to the company, much pleased with the confidence which had been placed in him, and with the share he had in the success of this adventure. He put himself into the best humour imaginable in order to divert the attention of his guests; he severely satirised those, whose rage for gaming induced them to sacrifice to it every other consideration; he loudly ridiculed the folly of the Chevalier upon this article, and secretly laughed at the credulity of the Piedmontese, whom he had deceived with so much ingenuity.

It was late at night before the company broke up, and Matta went to bed, very well satisfied with what he had done for his friend; and, if we may credit appearances, this friend enjoyed the fruit of his perfidy. The amorous Marchioness received him like one who wished to enhance the value of the favour she bestowed; her charms were far from being neglected; and if there are any circumstances in which we may detest the traitor while we profit by the treason, this was not one of them; and however successful the Chevalier de Grammont was in his intrigues, it was not owing to him that the contrary was not believed; but, be that as it may, being convinced that in love whatever is gained by address is gained fairly, it does not appear that he ever showed the smallest degree of repentance for this trick. But it is now time for its to take him from the court of Savoy, to see him shine in that of France.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

He returns to the court of France—his adventures at the siege of Arras—his reply to cardinal mazarin—he is banished the court.

The Chevalier de Grammont, upon his return to France, sustained, with the greatest success, the reputation he had acquired abroad: alert in play, active and vigilant in love; sometimes successful, and always feared, in his intrigues; in war alike prepared for the events of good or ill fortune; possessing an inexhaustible fund of pleasantries in the former, and full of expedients and dexterity in the latter.

Zealously attached to the Prince de Conde from inclination, he was a witness, and, if we may be allowed to say it, his companion, in the glory he had acquired at the celebrated battles of Lens, Norlinguen, and Fribourg; and the details he so frequently gave of them were far from diminishing their lustre.

[Louis of Bourbon, Duke d'Enghien, afterwards, by the death of his father in 1656, Prince de Conde. Of this great man Cardinal de Retz says, "He was born a general, which never happened but to Caesar, to Spinola, and to himself. He has equalled the first: he has surpassed the second. Intrepidity is one of the least shining strokes in his character. Nature had formed him with a mind as great as his courage. Fortune, in setting him out in a time of wars, has given this last a full extent to work

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in: his birth, or rather his education, in a family devoted and enslaved to the court, has kept the first within too straight bounds. He was not taught time enough the great and general maxims which alone are able to form men to think always consistently. He never had time to learn them of himself, because he was prevented from his youth, by the great affairs that fell unexpectedly to his share, and by the continual success he met with. This defect in him was the cause, that with the soul in the world the least inclined to evil, he has committed injuries; that with the heart of an Alexander, he has, like him, had his failings; that with a wonderful understanding, he has acted imprudently; that having all the qualities which the Duke Francis of Guise had, he has not served the state in some occasions so well as he ought; and that having likewise having all the qualities of the Duke Henry of Guise, he has not carried faction so far as he might. He could not come up to the height of his merit; which, though it be a defect, must yet be owned to be very uncommon, and only to be found in persons of the greatest abilities.”]

So long as he had only some scruples of conscience, and a thousand interests to sacrifice, he quitted all to follow a man, whom strong motives and resentments, which in some manner appeared excusable, had withdrawn from the paths of rectitude: he adhered to him in his first disgrace, with a constancy of which there are few examples; but he could not submit to the injuries which he afterwards received, and which such an inviolable attachment so little merited. Therefore, without fearing any reproach for a conduct which sufficiently justified itself, as he had formerly deviated from his duty by entering into the service of the Prince de Conde, he thought he had a right to leave him to return again to his duty.

His peace was soon made at Court, where many, far more culpable than himself, were immediately received into favour, when they desired it; for the queen, still terrified at the dangers into which the civil wars had plunged the State at the commencement of her regency, endeavoured by lenient measures to conciliate the minds of the people.

[Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip III. of Spain, widow of Louis XIII., to whom she was married in 1615, and mother of Louis XIV. She died in 1666. Cardinal de Retz speaks of her in the following terms. “The queen had more than anybody whom I ever knew, of that sort of wit which was necessary for her not to appear a fool to those that did not know her. She had in her more of harshness than haughtiness; more of haughtiness than of greatness; more of outward appearance than reality; more regard to money than liberality; more of liberality than of self-interest; more of self-interest than disinterestedness: she was more tied to persons by habit than by affection; she had more of insensibility than of cruelty; she had a better memory for injuries than for benefits;

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her intention towards piety was greater than her piety; she had in her more of obstinacy than of firmness; and more incapacity than of all the rest which I mentioned before.”
Memoirs, vol. i., p. 247.]

The policy of the minister was neither sanguinary nor revengeful: his favourite maxim was rather to appease the minds of the discontented by lenity, than to have recourse to violent measures; to be content with losing nothing by the war, without being at the expense of gaining any advantage from the enemy; to suffer his character to be very severely handled, provided he could amass much wealth, and to spin out the minority to the greatest possible extent.

[Cardinal Mazarin, who, during a few of the latter years of his life, governed France. He died at Vincennes the 9th of March 1661, aged 59 years, leaving as heir to his name and property the Alarquis de la Meilleray, who married his niece, and took the title of Duke of Mazarin. On his death, Louis XIV. and the court appeared in mourning, an honour not common, though Henry IV. had shewn it to the memory of Gabrielle d’Estrees. Voltaire, who appears unwilling to ascribe much ability to the cardinal, takes an opportunity, on occasion of his death, to make the following observation. —“We cannot refrain from combating the opinion, which supposes prodigious abilities, and a genius almost divine, in those who have governed empires with some degree of success. It is not a superior penetration that makes statesmen; it is their character. All men, how inconsiderable soever their share of sense may be, see their own interest nearly alike. A citizen of Bern or Amsterdam, in this respect, is equal to Sejanus, Ximenes, Buckingham, Richelieu, or Mazarin; but our conduct and our enterprises depend absolutely on our natural dispositions, and our success depends upon fortune.”
Age of Louis XIV., chap. 5.]

His avidity to heap up riches was not alone confined to the thousand different means, with which he was furnished by his authority, and the situation in which he was placed: his whole pursuit was gain: he was naturally fond of gaming; but he only played to enrich himself, and therefore, whenever he found an opportunity, he cheated.

As he found the Chevalier de Grammont possessed a great deal of wit, and a great deal of money, he was a man according to his wishes, and soon became one of his set. The Chevalier soon perceived the artfulness and dishonesty of the Cardinal, and thought it was allowable in him to put in practice those talents which he had received from nature, not only in his own defence, but even to attack him whenever an opportunity offered. This would certainly be the place to mention these particulars; but who can describe them with such ease and elegance as maybe expected by those who have heard his own relation of them? Vain is the attempt to endeavour to transcribe these entertaining anecdotes: their spirit seems to evaporate upon paper; and in whatever light they are exposed the delicacy of their colouring and their beauty is lost.

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It is, then, enough to say, that upon all occasions where address was reciprocally employed, the Chevalier gained the advantage; and that if he paid his court badly to the minister, he had the consolation to find, that those who suffered themselves to be cheated, in the end gained no great advantage from their complaisance; for they always continued in an abject submission, while the Chevalier de Grammont, on a thousand different occasions, never put himself under the least restraint. Of which the following is one instance:

The Spanish army, commanded by the Prince de Conde and the archduke, —[Leopold, brother of the Emperor Ferdinand the III.]—besieged Arras. The Court was advanced as far as Peronne.—[A little bat strong town, standing among marshes on the river Somme, in Picardy.]—The enemy, by the capture of this place, would have procured a reputation for their army of which they were in great need; as the French, for a considerable time past, had evinced a superiority in every engagement.

The Prince supported a tottering party, as far as their usual inactivity and irresolution permitted him; but as in the events of war it is necessary to act independently on some occasions, which, if once suffered to escape, can never be retrieved; for want of this power it frequently happened that his great abilities were of no avail. The Spanish infantry had never recovered itself since the battle of Rocroy;—[This famous battle was fought and won 19th May, 1643, five days after the death of Louis XIII.]—and he who had ruined them by that victory, by fighting against them, was the only man who now, by commanding their army, was capable of repairing the mischief he had done them. But the jealousy of the generals, and the distrust attendant upon their counsels, tied up his hands.

Nevertheless, the siege of Arras was vigorously carried on.

[Voltaire observes, that it was the fortune of Turenne and Conde to be always victorious when they fought at the head of the French, and to be vanquished when they commanded the Spaniards. This was Conde's fate before Arras, August 25, 1654, when he and the archduke besieged that city. Turenne attacked them in their camp, and forced their lines: the troops of the archduke were cut to pieces; and Conde, with two regiments of French and Lorrainers, alone sustained the efforts of Turenne's army; and, while the archduke was flying, he defeated the Marshal de Hoquincourt, repulsed the Marshal de la Ferte, and retreated victoriously himself, by covering the retreat of the vanquished Spaniards. The king of Spain, in his letter to him after this engagement, had these words: "I have been informed that everything was lost, and that you have recovered everything."]

The Cardinal was very sensible how dishonourable it would be to suffer this place to be taken under his nose, and almost in sight of the king. On the other hand, it was very hazardous to attempt its relief,

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the Prince de Conde being a man who never neglected the smallest precaution for the security of his lines; and if lines are attacked and not forced, the greatest danger threatens the assailants. For, the more furious the assault, the greater is the disorder in the retreat; and no man in the world knew so well as the Prince de Conde how to make the best use of an advantage. The army, commanded by Monsieur de Turenne, was considerably weaker than that of the enemy; it was, likewise, the only resource they had to depend upon. If this army was defeated, the loss of Arras was not the only misfortune to be dreaded.

The Cardinal, whose genius was happily adapted to such junctures, where deceitful negotiations could extricate him out of difficulties, was filled with terror at the sight of imminent danger, or of a decisive event: he was of opinion to lay siege to some other place, the capture of which might prove an indemnification for the loss of Arras; but Monsieur de Turenne, who was altogether of a different opinion from the Cardinal, resolved to march towards the enemy, and did not acquaint him with his intentions until he was upon his march. The courier arrived in the midst of his distress, and redoubled his apprehensions and alarms; but there was then no remedy.

The Marshal, whose great reputation had gained him the confidence of the troops, had determined upon his measures before an express order from the Court could prevent him. This was one of those occasions in which the difficulties you encounter heighten the glory of success. Though the general's capacity, in some measure, afforded comfort to the Court, they nevertheless were upon the eve of an event, which in one way or other must terminate both their hopes and their fears while the rest of the courtiers were giving various opinions concerning the issue, the Chevalier de Grammont determined to be an eye-witness of it; a resolution which greatly surprised the court; for those who had seen as many actions as he had, seemed to be exempted from such eagerness; but it was in vain that his friends opposed his resolutions.

The king was pleased with his intention; and the queen appeared no less satisfied. He assured her that he would bring her good news; and she promised to embrace him, if he was as good as his word. The Cardinal made the same promise: to the latter, however, he did not pay much attention; yet he believed it sincere, because the keeping of it would cost him nothing.

He set out in the dusk of the evening with Caseau, whom Monsieur de Turenne had sent express to their majesties. The Duke of York, and the Marquis d'Humieres, commanded under the Marshal: the latter was upon duty when the Chevalier arrived, it being scarce daylight. The Duke of York did not at first recollect him; but the Marquis d'Humieres, running to him with open arms, "I thought," said he, "if any man came from court to pay us a visit upon such an occasion as this, it would be the Chevalier de Grammont. Well," continued he, "what are they doing at Peronne?"

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[Louis de Crevans, Marechal of France. He died 1694. Voltaire says of him, that he was the first who, at the siege of Arras, in 1658, was served in silver in the trenches, and had ragouts and entremets served up to his table.]

“They are in great consternation,” replied the Chevalier. “And what do they think of us?” “They think,” said he, “that if you beat the Prince, you will do no more than your duty; if you are beaten, they will think you fools and madmen, thus to have risked everything, without considering the consequences.” “Truly,” said the Marquis, “you bring us very comfortable news. Will you now go to Monsieur de Turenne’s quarters, to acquaint him with it; or will you choose rather to repose yourself in mine? for you have been riding post all last night, and perhaps did not experience much rest in the preceding.” “Where have you heard that the Chevalier de Grammont had ever any occasion for sleep?” replied he: “Only order me a horse, that I may have the honour to attend the Duke of York; for, most likely, he is not in the field so early, except to visit some posts.”

The advanced guard was only at cannon shot from that of the enemy. As soon as they arrived there, “I should like,” said the Chevalier de Grammont, “to advance as far as the sentry which is posted on that eminence: I have some friends and acquaintance in their army, whom I should wish to inquire after: I hope the Duke of York will give me permission.” At these words he advanced. The sentry, seeing him come forward directly to his post, stood upon his guard the Chevalier stopped as soon as he was within shot of him. The sentry answered the sign which was made to him, and made another to the officer, who had begun to advance as soon as he had seen the Chevalier come forward, and was soon up with him; but seeing the Chevalier de Grammont alone, he made no difficulty to let him approach. He desired leave of this officer to inquire after some relations he had in their army, and at the same time asked if the Duke d’Arcot was at the siege. “Sir,” said he, “there he is, just alighted under those trees, which you see on the left of our grand guard: it is hardly a minute since he was here with the Prince d’Aremberg, his brother, the Baron de Limbec, and Louvigny.” “May I see them upon parole?” said the Chevalier. “Sir,” said he, “if I were allowed to quit my post, I would do myself the honour of accompanying you thither; but I will send to acquaint them, that the Chevalier de Grammont desires to speak to them:” and, after having despatched one of his guard towards them, he returned. “Sir,” said the Chevalier de Grammont, “may I take the liberty to inquire how I came to be known to you?” “Is it possible,” said the other, “that the Chevalier de Grammont should forget La Motte, who had the honour to serve so long in his regiment?” “What! is it you, my good friend, La Motte? Truly, I was to blame for not remembering you, though

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you are in a dress very different from that which I first saw you in at Bruxelles, when you taught the Duchess of Guise to dance the triolets: and I am afraid your affairs are not in so flourishing a condition as they were the campaign after I had given you the company you mention.” They were talking in this manner, when the Duke d’Arscot, followed by the gentlemen above mentioned, came up on full gallop. The Chevalier de Grammont was saluted by the whole company before he could say a word. Soon after arrived an immense number of others of his acquaintance, with many people, out of curiosity, on both sides, who, seeing him upon the eminence, assembled together with the greatest eagerness; so that the two armies, without design, without truce, and without fraud, were going to join in conversation, if, by chance, Monsieur de Turenne had not perceived it at a distance. The sight surprised him: he hastened that way; and the Marquis d’Humieres acquainted him with the arrival of the Chevalier de Grammont, who wished to speak to the sentry before he went to the headquarters: he added, that he could not comprehend how the devil he had managed to assemble both armies around him, for it was hardly a minute since he had left him. “Truly,” said Monsieur de Turenne, “he is a very extraordinary man; but it is only reasonable that he should let us now have a little of his company, since he has paid his first visit to the enemy.” At these words he despatched an aide-de-camp, to recal the officers of his army, and to acquaint the Chevalier de Grammont with his impatience to see him.

This order arrived at the same time, with one of the same nature, to the enemy’s officers. The Prince de Conde, being informed of this peaceable interview, was not the least surprised at it, when he heard that it was occasioned by the arrival of the Chevalier de Grammont. He only gave Lussan orders to recal the officers, and to desire the Chevalier to meet him at the same place the next day; which the Chevalier promised to do, provided Monsieur de Turenne should approve of it, as he made no doubt he would.

His reception in the king’s army was equally agreeable as that which he had experienced from the enemy. Monsieur de Turenne esteemed him no less for his frankness than for the poignancy of his wit: he took it very kindly that he was the only courtier who came to see him in a time so critical as the present: the questions which he asked him about the court were not so much for information, as to divert himself with his manner of relating their different apprehensions and alarms. The Chevalier de Grammont advised him to beat the enemy, if he did not choose to be answerable for an enterprise which he had undertaken without consulting the Cardinal. Monsieur de Turenne promised him he would exert himself to the utmost to follow his advice, and assured him, that if he succeeded, he would make the queen keep her word with him; and concluded with saying, that he

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was not sorry the Prince de Conde had expressed a desire to see him. His measures were taken for an attack upon the lines: on this subject he discoursed in private with the Chevalier de Grammont, and concealed nothing from him except the time of execution: but this was all to no purpose; for the Chevalier had seen too much, not to judge, from his own knowledge, and the observations he had made, that from the situation of the army, the attack could be no longer deferred.

He set out the next day for his rendezvous, attended by a trumpet, and found the Prince at the place which Monsieur de Lussan had described to him the evening before. As soon as he alighted: "Is it possible," said the Prince, embracing him, "that this can be the Chevalier de Grammont, and that I should see him in the contrary party?" "It is you, my lord, whom I see there," replied the Chevalier, "and I refer it to yourself, whether it was the fault of the Chevalier de Grammont, or your own, that we now embrace different interests." "I must confess," said the Prince, "that if there are some who have abandoned me like base ungrateful wretches, you have left me, as I left myself, like a man of honour, who thinks himself in the right: but let us forget all cause of resentment, and tell me what was your motive for coming here, you, whom I thought at Peronne with the court." "Must I tell you?" said he: "why, faith then, I came to save your life. I know that you cannot help being in the midst of the enemy in a day of battle; it is only necessary for your horse to be shot under you, and to be taken in arms, to meet with the same treatment from this Cardinal, as your uncle Montmorency did from the other.

[Henry, Duke of Montmorency, who was taken prisoner first September, 1692, and had his head struck off at Toulouse in the month of November following.]

"I come, therefore, to hold a horse in readiness for you, in case of a similar misfortune, that you may not lose your head." "It is not the first time," said the Prince, smiling, "that you have rendered me this service, though the being taken prisoner at that time could not have been so dangerous to me as now."

From this conversation, they passed to more entertaining subjects. The Prince asked him many questions concerning the court, the ladies, play, and about his amours; and returning insensibly to the present situation of affairs, the Chevalier having inquired after some officers of his acquaintance, who had remained with him, the Prince told him that if he chose, he might go to the lines, where he would have an opportunity not only of seeing those whom he inquired after, but likewise the disposition of the quarters and entrenchments. To this he consented, and the Prince having shown him all the works and attended him back to their rendezvous, "Well, Chevalier, said he, "when do you think we shall see you again?" "Faith," replied he, "you have used me so handsomely,

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that I shall conceal nothing from you. Hold yourself in readiness an hour before daybreak; for, you may depend upon it, we shall attack you to-morrow morning. I would not have acquainted you with this, perhaps, had I been entrusted with the secret, but, nevertheless, in the present case you may believe me." "You are still the same man," said the Prince, again embracing him. The Chevalier returned to Monsieur de Turenne's camp towards night; every preparation was then making for the attack of the lines, and it was no longer a secret among the troops.

"Well, Monsieur le Chevalier, were they all very glad to see you?" said Monsieur de Turenne; "the Prince, no doubt, received you with the greatest kindness, and asked a great number of questions?" "He has shown me all the civility imaginable," replied the Chevalier; "and, to convince me he did not take me for a spy, he led me round the lines and entrenchments, and showed me the preparations he had made for your reception." "And what is his opinion?" said the Marshal. "He is persuaded that you will attack him to-night, or to-morrow by daybreak; for you great captains," continued the Chevalier, "see through each other's designs in a wonderful manner."

Monsieur de Turenne, with pleasure, received this commendation from a man who was not indiscriminately accustomed to bestow praise. He communicated to him the disposition of the attack; and at the same time acquainted him, that he was very happy that a man who had seen so many actions was to be present at this; and that he esteemed it no small advantage to have the benefit of his advice, but as he believed that the remaining part of the night would be hardly sufficient for his repose, after having passed the former without any refreshment, he consigned him to the Marquis d'Humieres, who provided him with a supper and a lodging.

The next day the lines of Arras were attacked, wherein Monsieur de Turenne, being victorious, added additional lustre to his former glory; and the Prince de Conde, though vanquished, lost nothing of his former reputation.

There are so many accounts of this celebrated battle, that to mention it here would be altogether superfluous. The Chevalier de Grammont, who, as a volunteer, was permitted to go into every part, has given a better description of it than any other person. Monsieur de Turenne reaped great advantage from that activity which never forsook the Chevalier either in peace or war; and that presence of mind which enabled him to carry orders, as coming from the general, so very apropos, that Monsieur de Turenne, otherwise very particular in such matters, thanked him, when the battle was over, in the presence of all his officers, and despatched him to court with the first news of his success.

All that is generally necessary in these expeditions, is to be accustomed to hard riding, and to be well provided with fresh horses, but he had a great many other obstacles to



surmount. In the first place, the parties of the enemy were dispersed over all the country, and obstructed his passage. Then he had to prepare against greedy and officious courtiers, who, on such occasions, post themselves in all the avenues, in order to cheat the poor courier out of his news. However, his address preserved him from the one, and deceived the others.

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He had taken eight or ten troopers, commanded by an officer of his acquaintance, to escort him half way to Bapaume, being persuaded that the greatest danger would lie between the camp and the first stage. He had not proceeded a league before he was convinced of the truth of what he suspected, and turning to the officer who followed him closely, "If you are not well mounted," said he, "I would advise you to return to the camp; for my part, I shall set spurs to my horse, and make the best of my way." "Sir," said the officer, "I hope I shall be able to keep you company, at whatever rate you go, until you are out of all danger." "I doubt that," replied the Chevalier, "for those gentlemen there seem prepared to pay us a visit." "Don't you see," said the officer, "they are some of our own people who are grazing their horses?" "No," said the Chevalier; "but I see very well that they are some of the enemy's troopers." Upon which, observing to him that they were mounting, he ordered the horsemen that escorted him to prepare themselves to make a diversion, and he himself set off full speed towards Bapaume.

He was mounted upon a very swift English horse; but having entangled himself in a hollow way where the ground was deep and miry, he soon had the troopers at his heels, who, supposing him to be some officer of rank, would not be deceived, but continued to pursue him without paying any attention to the others. The best mounted of the party began to draw near him; for the English horses, swift as the wind on even ground, proceeded but very indifferently in bad roads; the trooper presented his carbine, and cried out to him, at some distance, "Good quarter." The Chevalier de Grammont, who perceived that they gained upon him, and that whatever efforts his horse made in such heavy ground, he must be overtaken at last, immediately quitted the road to Bapaume, and took a causeway to the left, which led quite a different way; as soon as he had gained it, he drew up, as if to hear the proposal of the trooper, which afforded his horse an opportunity of recovering himself; while his enemy, mistaking his intention, and thinking that he only waited to surrender, immediately exerted every effort, that he might take him before the rest of his companions, who were following, could arrive, and by this means almost killed his horse.

One minute's reflection made the Chevalier consider what a disagreeable adventure it would be, thus coming from so glorious a victory, and the dangers of a battle so warmly disputed, to be taken by a set of scoundrels who had not been in it, and, instead of being received in triumph, and embraced by a great queen, for the important news with which he was charged, to see himself stripped by the vanquished.

During this short meditation, the trooper who followed him was arrived within shot, and still presenting his carbine, offered him good quarter, but the Chevalier de Grammont, to whom this offer, and the manner in which it was made, were equally displeasing, made a sign to him to lower his piece; and perceiving his horse to be in wind, he lowered his hand, rode off like lightning, and left the trooper in such astonishment that he even forgot to fire at him.

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As soon as he arrived at Bapaume, he changed horses; the commander of this place showed him the greatest respect, assuring him that no person had yet passed; that he would keep the secret, and that he would retain all that followed him, except the couriers of Monsieur de Turenne.

He now had only to guard against those who would be watching for him about the environs of Peronne, to return as soon as they saw him, and carry his news to court, without being acquainted with any of the particulars. He knew very well that Marshal du Plessis, Marshal de Villeroy, and Gaboury, had boasted of this to the Cardinal before his departure. Wherefore, to elude this snare, he hired two well-mounted horsemen at Bapaume, and as soon as he had got a league from that place, and after giving them each two louis d'ors, to secure their fidelity, he ordered them to ride on before, to appear very much terrified, and to tell all those who should ask them any questions, "that all was lost, that the Chevalier de Grammont had stopped at Bapaume, having no great inclination to be the messenger of ill news; and that as for themselves, they had been pursued by the enemy's troopers, who were spread over the whole country since the defeat."

Everything succeeded to his wish: the horsemen were intercepted by Gaboury, whose eagerness had outstripped the two marshals'; but whatever questions were asked them, they acted their parts so well, that Peronne was already in consternation, and rumours of the defeat were whispered among the courtiers, when the Chevalier de Grammont arrived.

Nothing so enhances the value of good news, as when a false alarm of bad has preceded; yet, though the Chevalier's was accompanied with this advantage, none but their Majesties received it with that transport of joy it deserved.

The queen kept her promise to him in the most fascinating manner: she embraced him before the whole court; the king appeared no less delighted; but the Cardinal, whether with the view of lessening the merit of an action which deserved a handsome reward, or whether it was from a return of that insolence which always accompanied him in prosperity, appeared at first not to pay any attention to what he said, and being afterwards informed that the lines had been forced, that the Spanish army was beaten, and that Arras was relieved, "Is the Prince de Conde taken?" said he. "No," replied the Chevalier de Grammont. "He is dead then, I suppose?" said the Cardinal. "Not so, neither," answered the Chevalier. "Fine news indeed!" said the Cardinal, with an air of contempt; and at these words he went into the queen's cabinet with their majesties. And happy it was for the Chevalier that he did so, for without doubt he would have given him some severe reply, in resentment for those two fine questions, and the conclusion he had drawn from them.

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The court was filled with the Cardinal's spies: the Chevalier, as is usual on such an occasion, was surrounded by a crowd of courtiers and inquisitive people, and he was very glad to ease himself of some part of the load which laid heavy on his heart, within the hearing of the Cardinal's creatures, and which he would perhaps have told him to his face. "Faith, gentlemen," said he, with a sneer, "there is nothing like being zealous and eager in the service of kings and great princes: you have seen what a gracious reception his Majesty has given me; you are likewise witnesses in what an obliging manner the queen kept her promise with me; but as for the Cardinal, he has received my news as if he gained no more by it than he did by the death of Peter Mazarin."

[Peter Mazarin was father to the Cardinal. He was a native of Palermo in Sicily, which place he left in order to settle at Rome, where he died in the year 1654.]

This was sufficient to terrify all those who were sincerely attached to him; and the best established fortune would have been ruined at some period by a jest much less severe: for it was delivered in the presence of witnesses, who were only desirous of having an opportunity of representing it in its utmost malignancy, to make a merit of their vigilance with a powerful and absolute minister. Of this the Chevalier de Grammont was thoroughly convinced; yet whatever detriment he foresaw might arise from it, he could not help being much pleased with what he had said.

The spies very faithfully discharged their duty: however, the affair took a very different turn from what they expected. The next day, when the Chevalier de Grammont was present while their Majesties were at dinner, the Cardinal came in, and coming up to him, everybody making way for him out of respect: "Chevalier," said he, "the news which you have brought is very good, their Majesties are very well satisfied with it; and to convince you it is more advantageous to me than the death of Peter Mazarin, if you will come and dine with me we will have some play together; for the queen will give us something to play for, over and above her first promise."

In this manner did the Chevalier de Grammont dare to provoke a powerful minister, and this was all the resentment which the least vindictive of all statesmen expressed on the occasion. It was indeed very unusual for so young a man to reverence the authority of ministers no farther, than as they were themselves respectable by their merit; for this, his own breast, as well as the whole court, applauded him, and he enjoyed the satisfaction of being the only man who durst preserve the least shadow of liberty, in a general state of servitude; but it was perhaps owing to the Cardinal's passing over this insult with impunity, that he afterwards drew upon himself some difficulties, by other rash expressions less fortunate in the event.

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In the mean time the court returned: the Cardinal, who was sensible that he could no longer keep his master in a state of tutelage, being himself worn out with cares and sickness, and having amassed treasures he knew not what to do with, and being sufficiently loaded with the weight of public odium, he turned all his thoughts towards terminating, in a manner the most advantageous for France, a ministry which had so cruelly shaken that kingdom. Thus, while he was earnestly laying the foundations of a peace so ardently wished for, pleasure and plenty began to reign at court.

The Chevalier de Grammont experienced for a long time a variety of fortune in love and gaming: he was esteemed by the courtiers, beloved by beauties whom he neglected, and a dangerous favourite of those whom he admired; more successful in play than in his amours; but the one indemnifying him for want of success in the other, he was always full of life and spirits; and in all transactions of importance, always a man of honour.

It is a pity that we must be forced here to interrupt the course of his history, by an interval of some years, as has been already done at the commencement of these memoirs. In a life where the most minute circumstances are always singular and diverting, we can meet with no chasm which does not afford regret; but whether he did not think them worthy of holding a place among his other adventures, or that he has only preserved a confused idea of them, we must pass to the parts of these fragments which are better ascertained, that we may arrive at the subject of his journey to England.

The peace of the Pyrenees, the king's marriage,—the return of the Prince de Conde, and the death of the Cardinal, gave a new face to the state.

[Louis XIV. married Maria Theresa of Austria. She was born 20th September, 1638, married 1st June, 1660, and entered Paris 26th August following. She died at Versailles 30th July, 1683, and was buried at St. Denis.]

The eyes of the whole nation were fixed upon their king, who, for nobleness of mien, and gracefulness of person, had no equal; but it was not then known that he was possessed of those superior abilities, which, filling his subjects with admiration, in the end made him so formidable to Europe. Love and ambition, the invisible springs of the intrigues and cabals of all courts, attentively observed his first steps: pleasure promised herself an absolute empire over a prince who had been kept in ignorance of the necessary rules of government, and ambition had no hopes of reigning in the court except in the minds of those who were able to dispute the management of affairs; when men were surprised to see the king on a sudden display such brilliant abilities, which prudence, in some measure necessary, had so long obliged him to conceal.

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An application, inimical to the pleasures which generally attract that age, and which unlimited power very seldom refuses, attached him solely to the cares of government: all admired this wonderful change, but all did not find their account in it: the great lost their consequence before an absolute master, and the courtiers approached with reverential awe the sole object of their respects and the sole master of their fortunes: those who had conducted themselves like petty tyrants in their provinces, and on the frontiers, were now no more than governors: favours, according to the king's pleasure, were sometimes conferred on merit, and sometimes for services done the state; but to importune, or to menace the court, was no longer the method to obtain them.

The Chevalier de Grammont regarded his master's attention to the affairs of state as a prodigy: he could not conceive how he could submit at his age to the rules he prescribed himself, or that he should give up so many hours of pleasure, to devote them to the tiresome duties, and laborious functions of government; but he blessed the Lord that henceforward no more homage was to be paid, no more court to be made, but to him alone, to whom they were justly due. Disdaining as he did the servile adoration usually paid to a minister, he could never crouch before the power of the two Cardinals who succeeded each other: he neither worshipped the arbitrary power of the one, nor gave his approbation to the artifices of the other; he had never received anything from Cardinal Richelieu but an abbey, which, on account of his rank, could not be refused him; and he never acquired anything from Mazarin but what he won of him at play.

By many years' experience under an able general he had acquired a talent for war; but this during a general peace was of no further service to him. He therefore thought that, in the midst of a court flourishing in beauties and abounding in wealth, he could not employ himself better than in endeavouring to gain the good opinion of his master, in making the best use of those advantages which nature had given him for play, and in putting in practice new stratagems in love.

He succeeded very well in the two first of these projects, and as he had from that time laid it down as the rule of his conduct to attach himself solely to the king in all his views of preferment, to have no regard for favour unless when it was supported by merit, to make himself beloved by the courtiers and feared by the minister, to dare to undertake anything in order to do good, and to engage in nothing at the expense of innocence, he soon became one in all the king's parties of pleasure, without gaining the ill will of the courtiers. In play he was successful, in love unfortunate; or, to speak more properly, his restlessness and jealousy overcame his natural prudence, in a situation wherein he had most occasion for it. La Motte Agencourt was one of the maids of honour to the queen dowager, and, though no sparkling beauty, she had drawn away lovers from the celebrated Meneville.

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[These two ladies at this period seem to have made a distinguished figure in the annals of gallantry. One of their contemporaries mentions them in these terms: "In this case, perhaps, I can give a better account than most people; as, for instance, they had raised a report, when the queen-mother expelled Mademoiselle de la Motte Agencourt, that it was on his score, when I am assured, upon very good grounds, that it was for entertaining the Marquis de Richelieu against her majesty's express command. This lady, who was one of her maids of honour, was a person whom I was particularly acquainted with; and that so much, as I was supposed to have a passion for her: she was counted one of the finest women of the court, and therefore I was not at all displeased to have it thought so; for except Mademoiselle de Meneville, (who had her admirers,) there was none that could pretend to dispute it" *Memoirs of the Comte de Rochfort*, 1696, p. 210. See also Anquetil, *Louis XVI. sa Cour et le Regent*, tome i. p. 46.]

It was sufficient in those days for the king to cast his eye upon a young lady of the court to inspire her with hopes, and often with tender sentiments; but if he spoke to her more than once, the courtiers took it for granted, and those who had either pretensions to, or love for her, respectfully withdrew both the one and the other, and afterwards only paid her respect; but the Chevalier de Grammont thought fit to act quite otherwise, perhaps to preserve a singularity of character, which upon the present occasion was of no avail.

He had never before thought of her, but as soon as he found that she was honoured with the king's attention, he was of opinion that she was likewise deserving of his. Having attached himself to her, he soon became very troublesome, without convincing her he was much in love. She grew weary of his persecutions, but he would not desist, neither on account of her ill-treatment nor of her threats. This conduct of his at first made no great noise, because she was in hopes that he would change his behaviour; but finding him rashly persist in it, she complained of him: and then it was that he perceived that if love renders all conditions equal, it is not so between rivals. He was banished the court, and not finding any place in France which could console him for what he most regretted—the presence and sight of his prince—after having made some slight reflections upon his disgrace, and bestowed a few imprecations against her who was the cause of it, he at last formed the resolution of visiting England.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

As all fools are who have good memories
Better memory for injuries than for benefits
Better to know nothing at all, than to know too much
Envy each other those indulgences which themselves refuse
He as little feared the Marquis as he loved him
Would have been criminal even in chastity to spare (her husband)