The Memoirs of Louis XIV., His Court and The Regency, V6

Duc de Saint−Simon

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CHAPTER XXXIX

I went this summer to Forges, to try, by means of the waters there, to get rid of a tertian fever that quinquina only suspended. While there I heard of a new enterprise on the part of the Princes of the blood, who, in the discredit in which the King held them, profited without measure by his desire for the grandeur of the illegitimate children, to acquire new advantages which were suffered because the others shared them. This was the case in question.

After the elevation of the mass—at the King's communion—a folding−chair was pushed to the foot of the altar, was covered with a piece of stuff, and then with a large cloth, which hung down before and behind. At the Pater the chaplain rose and whispered in the King's ear the names of all the Dukes who were in the chapel. The King named two, always the oldest, to each of whom the chaplain advanced and made a reverence. During the communion of the priest the King rose, and went and knelt down on the bare floor behind this folding seat, and took hold of the cloth; at the same time the two Dukes, the elder on the right, the other on the left, each took hold of a corner of the cloth; the two chaplains took hold of the other two corners of the same cloth, on the side of the altar, all four kneeling, and the captain of the guards also kneeling and behind the King. The communion received and the oblation taken some moments afterwards, the King remained a little while in the same place, then returned to his own, followed by the two Dukes and the captain of the guards, who took theirs. If a son of France happened to be there alone, he alone held the right corner of the cloth, and nobody the other; and when M. le Duc d'Orleans was there, and no son of France was present, M. le Duc d'Orleans held the cloth in like manner. If a Prince of the blood were alone present, however, he held the cloth, but a Duke was called forward to assist him. He was not privileged to act without the Duke.

The Princes of the blood wanted to change this; they were envious of the distinction accorded to M. d'Or1eans, and wished to put themselves on the same footing. Accordingly, at the Assumption of this year, they managed so well that M. le Duc served alone at the altar at the King's communion, no Duke being called upon to come and join him. The surprise at this was very great. The Duc de la Force and the Marechal de Boufflers, who ought to have served, were both present. I wrote to this last to say that such a thing had never happened before, and that it was contrary to all precedent. I wrote, too, to M. d'Orleans, who was then in Spain, informing him of the circumstance. When he returned he complained to the King. But the King merely said that the Dukes ought to have presented themselves and taken hold of the cloth. But how could they have done so, without being requested, as was customary, to come forward? What would the king have thought of them if they had? To conclude, nothing could be made of the matter, and it remained thus. Never then, since that time, did I go to the communions of the King.

An incident occurred at Marly about the same time, which made much stir. The ladies who were invited to Marly had the privilege of dining with the King. Tables were placed for them, and they took up positions according to their rank. The non−titled ladies had also their special place. It so happened one day; that Madame de Torcy (an untitled lady) placed herself above the Duchesse de Duras, who arrived at table a moment after her. Madame de Torcy offered to give up her place, but it was a little late, and the offer passed away in compliments. The King entered, and put himself at table. As soon as he sat down, he saw the place Madame de Torcy had taken, and fixed such a serious and surprised look upon her, that she again offered to give up her place to the Duchesse de Duras; but the offer was again declined. All through the dinner the King scarcely ever took his eyes off Madame de Torcy, said hardly a word, and bore a look of anger that rendered everybody very attentive, and even troubled the Duchesse de Duras.

Upon rising from the table, the King passed, according to custom, into the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, followed by the Princesses of the blood, who grouped themselves around him upon stools; the others who entered, kept at a distance. Almost before he had seated himself in his chair, he said to Madame de Maintenon, that he had just been witness of an act of "incredible insolence" (that was the term he used) which had thrown him into such a rage that he had been unable to eat: that such an enterprise would have been insupportable in a woman of the highest quality; but coming, as it did, from a mere bourgeoise, it had so affected him, that ten times he had been upon the point of making her leave the table, and that he was only restrained by consideration

for her husband. After this outbreak he made a long discourse upon the genealogy of Madame de Torcy's family, and other matters; and then, to the astonishment of all present, grew as angry as ever against Madame de Torcy. He went off then into a discourse upon the dignity of the Dukes, and in conclusion, he charged the Princesses to tell Madame de Torcy to what extent he had found her conduct impertinent. The Princesses looked at each other, and not one seemed to like this commission; whereupon the King, growing more angry, said; that it must be undertaken however, and left the robes; The news of what had taken place, and of the King's choler, soon spread all over the Court. It was believed, however, that all was over, and that no more would be heard of the matter. Yet the very same evening the King broke out again with even more bitterness than before. On the morrow, too, surprise was great indeed, when it was found that the King, immediately after dinner, could talk of nothing but this subject, and that, too, without any softening of tone. At last he was assured that Madame de Torcy had been spoken to, and this appeased him a little. Torcy was obliged to write him a letter, apologising for the fault of Madame de Torcy; and the King at this grew content. It may be imagined what a sensation this adventure produced all through the Court.

While upon the subject of the King, let me relate an anecdote of him, which should have found a place ere this. When M. d'Orleans was about to start for Spain, he named the officers who were to be of his suite. Amongst others was Fontpertius. At that name the King put on a serious look.

"What! my nephew," he said. "Fontpertius! the son of a Jansenist—of that silly woman who ran everywhere after M. Arnould! I do not wish that man to go with you."

"By my faith, Sire," replied the Duc d'Orleans, "I know not what the mother has done; but as for the son, he is far enough from being a Jansenist, I'll answer for it; for he does not believe in God."

"Is it possible, my nephew?" said the King, softening.

"Nothing more certain, Sire, I assure you."

"Well, since it is so," said the King, "there is no harm: you can take him with you."

"This scene—for it can be called by no other name—took place in the morning. After dinner M. d'Orleans repeated it to me, bursting with laughter, word for word, just as I have written it. When we had both well laughed at this, we admired the profound instruction of a discreet and religious King, who considered it better not to believe in God than to be a Jansenist, and who thought there was less danger to his nephew from the impiety of an unbeliever than from the doctrines of a sectarian. M. d'Orleans could not contain himself while he told the story, and never spoke of it without laughing until the tears came into his eyes. It ran all through the Court and all over the town, and the marvellous thing was, that the King was not angry at this. It was a testimony of his attachment to the good doctrine which withdrew him further and further from Jansenism. The majority of people laughed with all their heart. Others, more wise, felt rather disposed to weep than to laugh, in considering to what excess of blindness the King had reached.

For a long time a most important project had knocked at every door, without being able to obtain a hearing anywhere. The project was this:— Hough, an English gentleman full of talent and knowledge, and who, above all, knew profoundly the laws of his country, had filled various posts in England. As first a minister by profession, and furious against King James; afterwards a Catholic and King James's spy, he had been delivered up to King William, who pardoned him. He profited by this only to continue his services to James. He was taken several times, and always escaped from the Tower of London and other prisons. Being no longer able to dwell in England he came to France, where he occupied himself always with the same line of business, and was paid for that by the King (Louis XIV.) and by King James, the latter of whom he unceasingly sought to re− establish. The union of Scotland with England appeared to him a favourable conjuncture, by the despair of that ancient kingdom at seeing itself reduced into a province under the yoke of the English. The Jacobite party remained there; the vexation caused by this forced union had increased it, by the desire felt to break that union with the aid of a King that they would have reestablished. Hough, who was aware of the fermentation going on, made several secret journeys to Scotland, and planned an invasion of that country; but, as I have said, for a long time could get no one to listen to him.

The King, indeed, was so tired of such enterprises, that nobody dared to speak to him upon this. All drew back. No one liked to bell the cat. At last, however, Madame de Maintenon being gained over, the King was induced to listen to the project. As soon as his consent was gained to it, another scheme was added to the first. This was to profit by the disorder in which the Spanish Low Countries were thrown, and to make them revolt

against the Imperialists at the very moment when the affair of Scotland would bewilder the allies, and deprive them of all support from England. Bergheyck, a man well acquainted with the state of those countries, was consulted, and thought the scheme good. He and the Duc de Vendome conferred upon it in presence of the King.

After talking over various matters, the discussion fell, upon the Meuse, and its position with reference to Maastricht. Vendome held that the Meuse flowed in a certain direction. Bergheyck opposed him. Vendome, indignant that a civilian should dare to dispute military movements with him, grew warm. The other remained respectful and cool, but firm. Vendome laughed at Bergheyck, as at an ignorant fellow who did not know the position of places. Bergheyck maintained his point. Vendome grew more and more hot. If he was right, what he proposed was easy enough; if wrong, it was impossible. It was in vain that Vendome pretended to treat with disdain his opponent; Bergheyck was not to be put down, and the King, tired out at last with a discussion upon a simple question of fact, examined the maps. He found at once that Bergheyck was right. Any other than the King would have felt by this what manner of man was this general of his taste, of his heart, and of his confidence; any other than Vendome would have been confounded; but it was Bergheyck in reality who was so, to see the army in such hands and the blindness of the King for him! He was immediately sent into Flanders to work up a revolt, and he did it so well, that success seemed certain, dependent, of course, upon success in Scotland.

The preparations for the invasion of that country were at once commenced. Thirty vessels were armed at Dunkerque and in the neighbouring ports. The Chevalier de Forbin was chosen to command the squadron. Four thousand men were brought from Flanders to Dunkerque; and it was given out that this movement was a mere change of garrison. The secret of the expedition was well kept; but the misfortune was that things were done too slowly. The fleet, which depended upon Pontchartrain, was not ready in time, and that which depended upon Chamillart, was still more behindhand. The two ministers threw the fault upon each other; but the truth is, both were to blame. Pontchartrain was more than accused of delaying matters from unwillingness; the other from powerlessness.

Great care was taken that no movement should be seen at Saint Germain. The affair, however, began in time to get noised abroad. A prodigious quantity of arms and clothing for the Scotch had been embarked; the movements by sea and land became only too visible upon the coast. At last, on Wednesday, the 6th of March, the King of England set out from Saint Germain. He was attended by the Duke of Perth, who had been his sub−preceptor; by the two Hamiltons, by Middleton, and a very few others. But his departure had been postponed too long. At the moment when all were ready to start, people learned with surprise that the English fleet had appeared in sight, and was blockading Dunkerque. Our troops, who were already on board ship, were at once landed. The King of England cried out so loudly against this, and proposed so eagerly that an attempt should be made to pass the enemy at all risks, that a fleet was sent out to reconnoitre the enemy, and the troops were re−embarked. But then a fresh mischance happened. The Princess of England had had the measles, and was barely growing convalescent at the time of the departure of the King, her brother. She had been prevented from seeing him, lest he should be attacked by the same complaint. In spite of this precaution, however, it declared itself upon him at Dunkerque, just as the troops were re−embarked. He was in despair, and wished to be wrapped up in blankets and carried on board. The doctors said that it would kill him; and he was obliged to remain. The worst of it was, that two of five Scotch deputies who had been hidden at Montrouge near Paris, had been sent into Scotland a fortnight before, to announce the immediate arrival of the King with arms and troops. The movement which it was felt this announcement would create, increased the impatience for departure. At last, on Saturday, the 19th of March, the King of England, half cured and very weak, determined to embark in spite of his physicians, and did so. The enemy's vessels hats retired; so, at six o'clock in the morning, our ships set sail with a good breeze, and in the midst of a mist, which hid them from view in about an hour.

Forty−eight hours after the departure of our squadron, twenty−seven English ships of war appeared before Dunkerque. But our fleet was away. The very first night it experienced a furious tempest. The ship in which was the King of England took shelter afterwards behind the works of Ostend. During the storm, another ship was separated from the squadron, and was obliged to take refuge on the coast of Picardy. This vessel, a frigate, was commanded by Rambure, a lieutenant. As, soon as he was able he sailed after the squadron that he believed already in Scotland. He directed his course towards Edinburgh, and found no vessel during all the voyage. As he approached the mouth of the river, he saw around him a number of barques and small vessels that he could not avoid, and that he determined in consequence to approach with as good a grace as possible. The masters of these

ships' told him that the King was expected with impatience, but that they had no news of him, that they had come out to meet him, and that they would send pilots to Rambure, to conduct him up the river to Edinburgh, where all was hope and joy. Rambure, equally surprised that the squadron which bore the King of England had not appeared, and by the publicity of his forthcoming arrival, went up towards Edinburgh more and more surrounded by barques, which addressed to him the same language. A gentleman of the country passed from one of these barques upon the frigate. He told Rambure that the principal noblemen of Scotland had resolved to act together, that these noblemen could count upon more than twenty thousand men ready to take up arms, and that all the towns awaited only the arrival of the King to proclaim him.

More and more troubled that the squadron did not appear, Rambure, after a time, turned back and went in search of it. As he approached the mouth of the river, which he had so lately entered, he heard a great noise of cannon out at sea, and a short time afterwards he saw many vessels of war there. Approaching more and more, and quitting the river, he distinguished our squadron, chased by twenty−six large ships of war and a number of other vessels, all of which he soon lost sight of, so much was our squadron in advance. He continued on his course in order to join them; but he could not do so until all had passed by the mouth of the river. Then steering clear of the rear−guard of the English ships, he remarked that the English fleet was hotly chasing the ship of the King of England, which ran along the coast, however, amid the fire of cannon and oftentimes of musketry. Rambure tried, for a long time, to profit by the lightness of his frigate to get ahead; but, always cut off by the enemy's vessels, and continually in danger of being taken, he returned to Dunkerque, where he immediately despatched to the Court this sad and disturbing news. He was followed, five or six days after, by the King of England, who returned to Dunkerque on the 7th of April, with his vessels badly knocked about.

It seems that the ship in which was the Prince, after experiencing the storm I have already alluded to, set sail again with its squadron, but twice got out of its reckoning within forty−eight hours; a fact not easy to understand in a voyage from Ostend to Edinburgh. This circumstance gave time to the English to join them; thereupon the King held a council, and much time was lost in deliberations. When the squadron drew near the river, the enemy was so close upon us, that to enter, without fighting either inside or out, seemed impossible. In this emergency it was suggested that our ships should go on to Inverness, about eighteen or twenty leagues further off. But this was objected to by Middleton and the Chevalier Forbin, who declared that the King of England was expected only at Edinburgh, and that it was useless to go elsewhere; and accordingly the project was given up, and the ships returned to France.

This return, however, was not accomplished without some difficulty. The enemy's fleet attacked the rear guard of ours, and after an obstinate combat, took two vessels of war and some other vessels. Among the prisoners made by the English were the Marquis de Levi, Lord Griffin, and the two sons of Middleton; who all, after suffering some little bad treatment, were conducted to London.

Lord Griffin was an old Englishman, who deserves a word of special mention. A firm Protestant, but much attached to the King of England, he knew nothing of this expedition until after the King's departure. He went immediately in quest of the Queen. With English freedom he reproached her for the little confidence she had had in him, in spite of his services and his constant fidelity, and finished by assuring her that neither his age nor his religion would hinder him from serving the King to the last drop of his blood. He spoke so feelingly that the Queen was ashamed. After this he went to Versailles, asked M. de Toulouse for a hundred Louis and a horse, and without delay rode off to Dunkerque, where he embarked with the others. In London he was condemned to death; but he showed so much firmness and such disdain of death, that his judges were too much ashamed to avow the execution to be carried out. The Queen sent him one respite, then another, although he had never asked for either, and finally he was allowed to remain at liberty in London on parole. He always received fresh respites, and lived in London as if it his own country, well received everywhere. Being informed that these respites would never cease, he lived thus several years, and died very old, a natural death. The other prisoners were equally well treated. It was in this expedition that the King of England first assumed the title of the Chevalier de Saint George, and that his enemies gave him that of the Pretender; both of which have remained to him. He showed much will and firmness, which he spoiled by a docility, the result of a bad education, austere and confined, that devotion, ill understood, together with the desire of maintaining him in fear and dependence, caused the Queen (who, with all her sanctity, always wished to dominate) to give him. He asked to serve in the next campaign in Flanders, and wished to go there at once, or remain near Dunkerque. Service was promised him, but he was made to return to

Saint Germain. Hough, who had been made a peer of Ireland before starting, preceded him with the journals of the voyage, and that of Forbin, to whom the King gave a thousand crowns pension and ten thousand as a recompense.

The King of England arrived at Saint Germain on Friday, the 20th of April, and came with the Queen, the following Sunday, to Marly, where our King was. The two Kings embraced each other several times, in the presence of the two Courts. But the visit altogether was a sad one. The Courts, which met in the garden, returned towards the Chateau, exchanging indifferent words in an indifferent way.

Middleton was strongly suspected of having acquainted the English with our project. They acted, at all events, as if they had been informed of everything, and wished to appear to know nothing. They made a semblance of sending their fleet to escort a convoy to Portugal; they got in readiness the few troops they had in England and sent them towards Scotland; and the Queen, under various pretexts, detained in London, until the affair had failed, the Duke of Hamilton, the most powerful Scotch lord; and the life and soul of the expedition. When all was over, she made no arrests, and wisely avoided throwing Scotland into despair. This conduct much augmented her authority in England, attached all hearts to her, and took away all desire of stirring again by taking away all hope of success. Thus failed a project so well and so secretly conducted until the end, which was pitiable; and with this project failed that of the Low Countries, which was no longer thought of.

The allies uttered loud cries against this attempt on the part of a power they believed at its last gasp, and which, while pretending to seek peace, thought of nothing less than the invasion of Great Britain. The effect of our failure was to bind closer, and to irritate more and more this formidable alliance.

CHAPTER XL

Brissac, Major of the Body−guards, died of age and ennui about this time, more than eighty years old, at his country−house, to which he had not long retired. The King had made use of him to put the Guards upon that grand military footing they have reached. He had acquired the confidence of the King by his inexorable exactitude, his honesty, and his aptitude. He was a sort of wild boar, who had all the appearance of a bad man, without being so in reality; but his manners were, it must be admitted, harsh and disagreeable. The King, speaking one day of the majors of the troops, said that if they were good, they were sure to be hated.

"If it is necessary to be perfectly hated in order to be a good major," replied M. de Duras, who was behind the King with the baton, "behold, Sire, the best major in France!" and he took Brissac, all confusion, by the arm. The King laughed, though he would have thought such a sally very bad in any other; but M. de Duras had put himself on such a free footing, that he stopped at nothing before the King, and often said the sharpest things. This major had very robust health, and laughed at the doctors—very often, even before the King, at Fagon, whom nobody else would have dared to attack. Fagon replied by disdain, often by anger, and with all his wit was embarrassed. These short scenes were sometimes very amusing.

Brissac, a few years before his retirement, served the Court ladies a nice turn. All through the winter they attended evening prayers on Thursdays and Sundays, because the King went there; and, under the pretence of reading their prayer−books, had little tapers before them, which cast a light on their faces, and enabled the King to recognise them as he passed. On the evenings when they knew he would not go, scarcely one of them went. One evening, when the King was expected, all the ladies had arrived, and were in their places, and the guards were at their doors. Suddenly, Brissac appeared in the King's place, lifted his baton, and cried aloud, "Guards of the King, withdraw, return to your quarters; the King is not coming this evening." The guards withdrew; but after they had proceeded a short distance, were stopped by brigadiers posted for the purpose, and told to return in a few minutes. What Brissac had said was a joke. The ladies at once began to murmur one to another. In a moment or two all the candles were put out, and the ladies, with but few exceptions, left the chapel. Soon after the King arrived, and, much astonished to see so few ladies present, asked how it was that nobody was there. At the conclusion of the prayers Brissac related what he had done, not without dwelling on the piety of the Court ladies. The King and all who accompanied him laughed heartily. The story soon spread, and these ladies would have strangled Brissac if they had been able.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne being in the family way this spring, was much inconvenienced. The King wished to go to Fontainebleau at the commencement of the fine season, contrary to his usual custom; and had declared this wish. In the mean time he desired to pay visits to Marly. Madame de Bourgogne much amused him; he could not do without her, yet so much movement was not suitable to her state. Madame de Maintenon was uneasy, and Fagon gently intimated his opinion. This annoyed the King, accustomed to restrain himself for nothing, and spoiled by having seen his mistresses travel when big with child, or when just recovering from their confinement, and always in full dress. The hints against going to Marly bothered him, but did not make him give them up. All he would consent to was, that the journey should put off from the day after Quasimodo to the Wednesday of the following week; but nothing could make him delay his amusement, beyond that time, or induce him to allow the Princess to remain at Versailles.

On the following Saturday, as the King was taking a walk after mass, and amusing himself at the carp basin between the Chateau and the Perspective, we saw the Duchesse de Lude coming towards him on foot and all alone, which, as no lady was with the King, was a rarity in the morning. We understood that she had something important to say to him, and when he was a short distance from her, we stopped so as to allow him to join her alone. The interview was not long. She went away again, and the King came back towards us and near the carps without saying a word. Each saw clearly what was in the wind, and nobody was eager to speak. At last the King, when quite close to the basin, looked at the principal people around, and without addressing anybody, said, with an air of vexation, these few words:

"The Duchesse de Bourgogne is hurt."

M. de la Rochefoucauld at once uttered an exclamation. M. de Bouillon, the Duc de Tresmes, and Marechal de

Boufflers repeated in a, low tone the words I have named; and M. de la Rochefoucauld returning to the charge, declared emphatically that it was the greatest misfortune in the world, and that as she had already wounded herself on other occasions, she might never, perhaps, have any more children.

"And if so," interrupted the King all on a sudden, with anger, "what is that to me? Has she not already a son; and if he should die, is not the Duc de Berry old enough to marry and have one? What matters it to the who succeeds me,—the one or the other? Are the not all equally my grandchildren?" And immediately, with impetuosity he added, "Thank God, she is wounded, since she was to be so; and I shall no longer be annoyed in my journeys and in everything I wish to do, by the representations of doctors, and the reasonings of matrons. I shall go and come at my pleasure, and shall be left in peace."

A silence so deep that an ant might be heard to walk, succeeded this strange outburst. All eyes were lowered; no one hardly dared to breathe. All remained stupefied. Even the domestics and the gardeners stood motionless.

This silence lasted more than a quarter of an hour. The King broke it as he leaned upon a balustrade to speak of a carp. Nobody replied. He addressed himself afterwards on the subject of these carps to domestics, who did not ordinarily join in the conversation. Nothing but carps was spoken of with them. All was languishing, and the King went away some time after. As soon as we dared look at each other—out of his sight, our eyes met and told all. Everybody there was for the moment the confidant of his neighbour. We admired—we marvelled—we grieved, we shrugged our shoulders. However distant may be that scene, it is always equally present to me. M. de la Rochefoucauld was in a fury, and this time without being wrong. The chief ecuyer was ready to faint with affright; I myself examined everybody with my eyes and ears, and was satisfied with myself for having long since thought that the King loved and cared for himself alone, and was himself his only object in life.

This strange discourse sounded far and wide−much beyond Marly.

Let me here relate another anecdote of the King—a trifle I was witness of. It was on the 7th of May, of this year, and at Marly. The King walking round the gardens, showing them to Bergheyck, and talking with him upon the approaching campaign in Flanders, stopped before one of the pavilions. It was that occupied by Desmarets, who had recently succeeded Chamillart in the direction of the finances, and who was at work within with Samuel Bernard, the famous banker, the richest man in Europe, and whose money dealings were the largest. The King observed to Desmarets that he was very glad to see him with M. Bernard; then immediately said to this latter:

"You are just the man never to have seen Marly—come and see it now; I will give you up afterwards to Desmarets."

Bernard followed, and while the walk lasted the King spoke only to Bergheyck and to Bernard, leading them everywhere, and showing them everything with the grace he so well knew how to employ when he desired to overwhelm. I admired, and I was not the only one, this species of prostitution of the King, so niggard of his words, to a man of Bernard's degree. I was not long in learning the cause of it, and I admired to see how low the greatest kings sometimes find themselves reduced.

Our finances just then were exhausted. Desmarets no longer knew of what wood to make a crutch. He had been to Paris knocking at every door. But the most exact engagements had been so often broken that he found nothing but excuses and closed doors. Bernard, like the rest, would advance nothing. Much was due to him. In vain Desmarets represented to him the pressing necessity for money, and the enormous gains he had made out of the King. Bernard remained unshakeable. The King and the minister were cruelly embarrassed. Desmarets said to the King that, after all was said and done, only Samuel Bernard could draw them out of the mess, because it was not doubtful that he had plenty of money everywhere; that the only thing needed was to vanquish his determination and the obstinacy—even insolence—he had shown; that he was a man crazy with vanity, and capable of opening his purse if the King deigned to flatter him.

It was agreed, therefore, that Desmarets should invite Bernard to dinner —should walk with him—and that the King should come and disturb them as I have related. Bernard was the dupe of this scheme; he returned from his walk with the King enchanted to such an extent that he said he would prefer ruining himself rather than leave in embarrassment a Prince who had just treated him so graciously, and whose eulogiums he uttered with enthusiasm! Desmarets profited by this trick immediately, and drew much more from it than he had proposed to himself..

The Prince de Leon had an adventure just about this time, which made much noise. He was a great, ugly, idle, mischievous fellow, son of the Duc de Rohan, who had given him the title I have just named. He had served in one campaign very indolently, and then quitted the army, under pretence of ill−health, to serve no more. Glib in

speech, and with the manners of the great world, he was full of caprices and fancies; although a great gambler and spendthrift, he was miserly, and cared only for himself. He had been enamoured of Florence, an actress, whom M. d'Orleans had for a long time kept, and by whom he had children, one of whom is now Archbishop of Cambrai. M. de Leon also had several children by this creature, and spent large sums upon her. When he went in place of his father to open the States of Brittany, she accompanied him in a coach and six horses, with a ridiculous scandal. His father was in agony lest he should marry her. He offered to insure her five thousand francs a−year pension, and to take care of their children, if M. de Leon would quit her. But M. de Leon would not hear of this, and his father accordingly complained to the King. The King summoned M. de Leon into his cabinet; but the young man pleaded his cause so well there, that he gained pity rather than condemnation. Nevertheless, La Florence was carried away from a pretty little house at the Ternes, near Paris, where M. de Leon kept her, and was put in a convent. M. de Leon became furious; for some time he would neither see nor speak of his father or mother, and repulsed all idea of marriage.

At last, however, no longer hoping to see his actress, he not only consented, but wished to marry. His parents were delighted at this, and at once looked about for a wife for him. Their choice, fell upon the eldest daughter of the Duc de Roquelaure, who, although humpbacked and extremely ugly, she was to be very rich some day, and was, in fact, a very good match. The affair had been arranged and concluded up to a certain point, when all was broken off, in consequence of the haughty obstinacy with which the Duchesse de Roquelaure demanded a larger sum with M. de Leon than M. de Rohan chose to give.

The young couple were in despair: M. de Leon, lest his father should always act in this way, as an excuse for giving him nothing; the young lady, because she, feared she should rot in a convent, through the avarice of her mother, and never marry. She was more than twenty−four years, of age; he was more than eight−and−twenty. She was in the convent of the Daughters of the Cross in the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

As soon as M. de Leon learnt that the marriage was broken off, he hastened to the convent; and told all to Mademoiselle de Roquelaure; played the passionate, the despairing; said that if they waited for their parents' consent they would never marry; and that she would rot in her convent. He proposed, therefore, that, in spite of their parents, they should marry and be their own guardians. She agreed to this project; and he went away in order to execute it.

One of the most intimate friends of Madame de Roquelaure was Madame de la Vieuville, and she was the only person (excepting Madame de Roquelaure herself) to whom the Superior of the convent had permission to confide Mademoiselle de Roquelaure. Madame de la Vieuville often came to see Mademoiselle de Roquelaure to take her out, and sometimes sent for her. M. de Leon was made acquainted with this, and took his measures accordingly. He procured a coach of the same size, shape, and fittings as that of Madame de la Vieuville, with her arms upon it, and with three servants in her livery; he counterfeited a letter in her handwriting and with her seal, and sent this coach with a lackey well instructed to carry the letter to the convent, on Tuesday morning, the 29th of May, at the hour Madame de la Vieuville was accustomed to send for her.

Mademoiselle de Roquelaure, who had been let into the scheme, carried the letter to the Superior of the convent, and said Madame de la Vieuville had sent for her. Had the Superior any message to send?

The Superior, accustomed to these invitations; did not even look at the letter, but gave her consent at once. Mademoiselle de Roquelaure, accompanied solely by her governess, left the convent immediately, and entered the coach, which drove off directly. At the first turning it stopped, and the Prince de Leon, who had been in waiting, jumped−in. The governess at this began to cry out with all her might; but at the very first sound M. de Leon thrust a handkerchief into her mouth and stifled the noise. The coachman meanwhile lashed his horses, and the vehicle went off at full speed to Bruyeres near Menilmontant, the country−house of the Duc de Lorges, my brother−in−law, and friend of the Prince de Leon, and who, with the Comte de Rieux, awaited the runaway pair.

An interdicted and wandering priest was in waiting, and as soon as they arrived married them. My brother−in−law then led these nice young people into a fine chamber, where they were undressed, put to bed, and left alone for two or three hours. A good meal was then given to them, after which the bride was put into the coach, with her attendant, who was in despair, and driven back to the convent.

Mademoiselle de Roquelaure at once went deliberately to the Superior, told her all that happened, and then calmly went into her chamber, and wrote a fine letter to her mother, giving her an account of her marriage, and asking for pardon; the Superior of the convent, the attendants, and all the household being, meanwhile, in the

utmost emotion at what had occurred.

The rage of the Duchesse de Roquelaure at this incident may be imagined. In her first unreasoning fury, she went to Madame de la Vieuville, who, all in ignorance of what had happened, was utterly at a loss to understand her stormy and insulting reproaches. At last Madame de Roquelaure saw that her friend was innocent of all connection with the matter; and turned the current of her wrath upon M. de Leon, against whom she felt the more indignant, inasmuch as he had treated her with much respect and attention since the rupture, and had thus, to some extent, gained her heart. Against her daughter she was also indignant, not only for what she had done, but because she had exhibited much gaiety and freedom of spirit at the marriage repast, and had diverted the company by some songs.

The Duc and Duchesse de Rohan were on their side equally furious, although less to be pitied, and made a strange uproar. Their son, troubled to know how to extricate himself from this affair, had recourse to his aunt, Soubise, so as to assure himself of the King. She sent him to Pontchartrain to see the chancellor. M. de Leon saw him the day after this fine marriage, at five o'clock in the morning, as he was dressing. The chancellor advised him to do all he could to gain the pardon of his father and of Madame de Roquelaure. But he had scarcely begun to speak, when Madame de Roquelaure sent word to say, that she was close at hand, and wished the chancellor to come and see her. He did so, and she immediately poured out all her griefs to him, saying that she came not to ask, his advice, but to state her complaint as to a friend (they were very intimate), and as to the chief officer of justice to demand justice of him. When he attempted to put in a word on behalf of M. de Leon, her fury burst out anew; she would not listen to his words, but drove off to Marly, where she had an interview with Madame de Maintenon, and by her was presented to the King.

As soon as she was in his presence, she fell down on her knees before him, and demanded justice in its fullest extent against M. de Leon. The King raised her with the gallantry of a prince to whom she had not been indifferent, and sought to console her; but as she still insisted upon justice, he asked her if she knew fully what she asked for, which was nothing less than the head of M. de Leon. She redoubled her entreaties notwithstanding this information, so that the King at last promised her that she should have complete justice. With that, and many compliments, he quitted her, and passed into his own rooms with a very serious air, and without stopping for anybody.

The news of this interview, and of what had taken place, soon spread through the chamber. Scarcely had people begun to pity Madame de Roquelaure, than some, by aversion for the grand imperial airs of this poor mother,—the majority, seized by mirth at the idea of a creature, well known to be very ugly and humpbacked, being carried off by such an ugly gallant,—burst out laughing, even to tears, and with an uproar completely scandalous. Madame de Maintenon abandoned herself to mirth, like the rest, and corrected the others at last, by saying it was not very charitable, in a tone that could impose upon no one.

Madame de Saint−Simon and I were at Paris. We knew with all Paris of this affair, but were ignorant of the place of the marriage and the part M. de Lorges had had in it, when the third day after the adventure I was startled out of my sleep at five o'clock in the morning, and saw my curtains and my windows open at the same time, and Madame de Saint−Simon and her brother (M. de Lorges) before me. They related to me all that had occurred, and then went away to consult with a skilful person what course to adopt, leaving me to dress. I never saw a man so crestfallen as M. de Lorges. He had confessed what he had done to a clever lawyer, who had much frightened him. After quitting him, he had hastened to us to make us go and see Pontchartrain. The most serious things are sometimes accompanied with the most ridiculous. M. de Lorges upon arriving knocked at the door of a little room which preceded the chamber of Madame de Saint−Simon. My daughter was rather unwell. Madame de Saint−Simon thought she was worse, and supposing it was I who had knocked, ran and opened the door. At the sight of her brother she ran back to her bed, to which he followed her, in order to relate his disaster. She rang for the windows to be opened, in order that she might see better. It so happened that she had taken the evening before a new servant, a country girl of sixteen, who slept in the little room. M. de Lorges, in a hurry to be off, told this girl to make haste in opening the windows, and then to go away and close the door. At this, the simple girl, all amazed, took her robe and her cotillon, and went upstairs to an old chambermaid, awoke her, and with much hesitation told her what had just happened, and that she had left by the bedside of Madame de Saint Simon a fine gentleman, very young, all powdered, curled, and decorated, who had driven her very quickly out of the chamber. She was all of a tremble, and much astonished. She soon learnt who he was. The story was told to us, and in spite

of our disquietude, much diverted us.

We hurried away to the chancellor, and he advised the priest, the witnesses to the signatures of the marriage, and, in fact, all concerned, to keep out of the way, except M. de Lorges, who he assured us had nothing to fear. We went afterwards to Chamillart, whom we found much displeased, but in little alarm. The King had ordered an account to be drawn up of the whole affair. Nevertheless, in spite of the uproar made on all sides, people began to see that the King would not abandon to public dishonour the daughter of Madame de Roquelaure, nor doom to the scaffold or to civil death in foreign countries the nephew of Madame de Soubise.

Friends of M. and Madame de Roquelaure tried to arrange matters. They represented that it would be better to accept the marriage as it was than to expose a daughter to cruel dishonour. Strange enough, the Duc and Duchesse de Rohan were the most stormy. They wished to drive a very hard bargain in the matter, and made proposals so out of the way, that nothing could have been arranged but for the King. He did what he had never done before in all his life; he entered into all the details; he begged, then commanded as master; he had separate interviews with the parties concerned; and finally appointed the Duc d'Aumont and the chancellor to draw up the conditions of the marriage.

As Madame de Rohan, even after this, still refused to give her consent, the King sent for her, and said that if she and her husband did not at once give in, he would make the marriage valid by his own sovereign authority. Finally, after so much noise, anguish, and trouble, the contract was signed by the two families, assembled at the house of the Duchesse de Roquelaure. The banns were published, and the marriage took place at the church of the Convent of the Cross, where Mademoiselle de Roquelaure had been confined since her beautiful marriage, guarded night and day by five or six nuns. She entered the church by one door, Prince de Leon by another; not a compliment or a word passed between them; the curate said mass; married them; they mounted a coach, and drove off to the house of a friend some leagues from Paris. They paid for their folly by a cruel indigence which lasted all their lives, neither of them having survived the Duc de Rohan, Monsieur de Roquelaure, or Madame de Roquelaure. They left several children.

CHAPTER XLI

The war this year proceeded much as before. M. d'Orleans went to Spain again. Before taking the field he stopped at Madrid to arrange matters. There he found nothing prepared, and every thing in disorder. He was compelled to work day after day, for many hours, in order to obtain the most necessary supplies. This is what accounted for a delay which was maliciously interpreted at Paris into love for the Queen. M. le Duc was angry at the idleness in which he was kept; even Madame la Duchesse, who hated him, because she had formerly loved him too well, industriously circulated this report, which was believed at Court, in the city, even in foreign countries, everywhere, save in Spain, where the truth was too well known. It was while he was thus engaged that he gave utterance to a pleasantry that made Madame de Maintenon and Madame des Ursins his two most bitter enemies for ever afterwards.

One evening he was at table with several French and Spanish gentlemen, all occupied with his vexation against Madame des Ursins, who governed everything, and who had not thought of even the smallest thing for the campaign. The supper and the wine somewhat affected M. d'Orleans. Still full of his vexation, he took a glass, and, looking at the company, made an allusion in a toast to the two women, one the captain, the other the lieutenant, who governed France and Spain, and that in so coarse and yet humorous a manner, that it struck at once the imagination of the guests.

No comment was made, but everybody burst out laughing, sense of drollery overcoming prudence, for it was well known that the she−captain was Madame de Maintenon, and the she−lieutenant Madame des Ursins. The health was drunk, although the words were not repeated, and the scandal was strange.

Half an hour at most after this, Madame des Ursins was informed of what had taken place. She knew well who were meant by the toast, and was transported with rage. She at once wrote an account of the circumstance to Madame de Maintenon, who, for her part, was quite as furious. 'Inde ira'. They never pardoned M. d'Orleans, and we shall see how very nearly they succeeded in compassing his death. Until then, Madame de Maintenon had neither liked nor disliked M. d'Orleans. Madame des Ursins had omitted nothing in order to please him. From that moment they swore the ruin of this prince. All the rest of the King's life M. d'Orleans did not fail to find that Madame de Maintenon was an implacable and cruel enemy. The sad state to which she succeeded in reducing him influenced him during all the rest of his life. As for Madame des Ursins, he soon found a change in her manner. She endeavoured that everything should fail that passed through his hands. There are some wounds that can never be healed; and it must be admitted that the Duke's toast inflicted one especially of that sort. He felt this; did not attempt any reconciliation; and followed his usual course. I know not if he ever, repented of what he had said, whatever cause he may have had, so droll did it seem to him, but he has many times spoken of it since to me, laughing with all his might. I saw all the sad results which might arise from his speech, and nevertheless, while reproaching M. d'Orleans, I could not help laughing myself, so well, so simply; and so wittily expressed was his ridicule of the government on this and the other side of the Pyrenees.

At last, M. le Duc d'Orleans found means to enter upon his campaign, but was so ill−provided, that he never was supplied with more than a fortnight's subsistence in advance. He obtained several small successes; but these were more than swallowed up by a fatal loss in another direction. The island of Sardinia, which was then under the Spanish Crown, was lost through the misconduct of the viceroy, the Duke of Veragua, and taken possession of by the troops of the Archduke. In the month of October, the island of Minorca also fell into the hands of the Archduke. Port Mahon made but little resistance; so that with this conquest and Gibraltar, the English found themselves able to rule in the Mediterranean, to winter entire fleets there, and to blockade all the ports of Spain upon that sea. Leaving Spain in this situation, let us turn to Flanders.

Early in July, we took Ghent and Bruges by surprise, and the news of these successes was received with the most unbridled joy at Fontainebleau. It appeared easy to profit by these two conquests, obtained without difficulty, by passing the Escaut, burning Oudenarde, closing the country to the enemies, and cutting them off from all supplies. Ours were very abundant, and came by water, with a camp that could not be attacked. M. de Vendome agreed to all this; and alleged nothing against it. There was only one difficulty in the way; his idleness and unwillingness to move from quarters where he was comfortable. He wished to enjoy those quarters as long as

possible, and maintained, therefore, that these movements would be just as good if delayed. Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne maintained on the contrary, with all the army—even the favourites of M. de Vendome—that it would be better to execute the operation at once, that there was no reason for delay, and that delay might prove disastrous. He argued in vain. Vendome disliked fatigue and change of quarters. They interfered with the daily life he was accustomed to lead, and which I have elsewhere described. He would not move.

Marlborough clearly seeing that M. de Vendome did not at once take advantage of his position, determined to put it out of his power to do so. To reach Oudenarde, Marlborough had a journey to make of twenty−five leagues. Vendome was so placed that he could have gained it in six leagues at the most. Marlborough put himself in motion with so much diligence that he stole three forced marches before Vendome had the slightest suspicion or information of them. The news reached him in time, but he treated it with contempt according to his custom, assuring himself that he should outstrip the enemy by setting out the next morning. Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne pressed him to start that evening; such as dared represented to him the necessity and the importance of doing so. All was vain—in spite of repeated information of the enemy's march. The neglect was such that bridges had not been thought of for a little brook at the head of the camp, which it was necessary to cross.

On the next day, Wednesday, the 11th of July, a party of our troops, under the command of Biron, which had been sent on in advance to the Escaut, discovered, after passing it as they could, for the bridges were not yet made, all the army of the enemy bending round towards them, the rear of their columns touching at Oudenarde, where they also had crossed. Biron at once despatched a messenger to the Princes and to M. de Vendome to inform them of this, and to ask for orders. Vendome, annoyed by information so different to what he expected, maintained that it could not be true. As he was disputing, an officer arrived from Biron to confirm the news; but this only irritated Vendome anew, and made him more obstinate. A third messenger arrived, and then M. de Vendome, still affecting disbelief of the news sent him, flew in a passion, but nevertheless mounted his horse, saying that all this was the work of the devil, and that such diligence was impossible. He sent orders to Biron to attack the enemy, promising to support him immediately. He told the Princes, at the same time, to gently follow with the whole of the army, while he placed himself at the head of his columns, and pushed on briskly to Biron.

Biron meanwhile placed his troops as well as he could, on ground very unequal and much cut up. He wished to execute the order he had received, less from any hopes of success in a combat so vastly disproportioned than to secure himself from the blame of a general so ready to censure those who did not follow his instructions. But he was advised so strongly not to take so hazardous a step, that he refrained. Marechal Matignon, who arrived soon after, indeed specially prohibited him from acting.

While this was passing, Biron heard sharp firing on his left, beyond the village. He hastened there, and found an encounter of infantry going on. He sustained it as well as he could, whilst the enemy were gaining ground on the left, and, the ground being difficult (there was a ravine there), the enemy were kept at bay until M. de Vendome came up. The troops he brought were all out of breath. As soon as they arrived, they threw themselves amidst the hedges, nearly all in columns, and sustained thus the attacks of the enemies, and an engagement which every moment grew hotter, without having the means to arranging themselves in any order. The columns that arrived from time to time to the relief of these were as out of breath as the others; and were at once sharply charged by the enemies; who, being extended in lines and in order, knew well how to profit by our disorder. The confusion was very great: the new−comers had no time to rally; there was a long interval between the platoons engaged and those meant to sustain them; the cavalry and the household troops were mixed up pell−mell with the infantry, which increased the disorder to such a point that our troops no longer recognised each other. This enabled the enemy to fill up the ravine with fascines sufficient to enable them to pass it, and allowed the rear of their army to make a grand tour by our right to gain the head of the ravine, and take us in flank there.

Towards this same right were the Princes, who for some time had been looking from a mill at so strange a combat, so disadvantageously commenced. As soon as our troops saw pouring down upon them others much more numerous, they gave way towards their left with so much promptitude that the attendants of the Princes became mixed up with their masters,— and all were hurried away towards the thick of the fight, with a rapidity and confusion that were indecent. The Princes showed themselves everywhere, and in places the most exposed, displaying much valour and coolness, encouraging the men, praising the officers, asking the principal officers what was to be done, and telling M. de Vendome what they thought.

The inequality of the ground that the enemies found in advancing, after having driven in our right, enabled our

them to rally and to resist. But this resistance was of short duration. Every one had been engaged in hand−to−hand combats; every one was worn out with lassitude and despair of success, and a confusion so general and so unheard−of. The household troops owed their escape to the mistake of one of the enemy's officers, who carried an order to the red coats, thinking them his own men. He was taken, and seeing that he was about to share the peril with our troops, warned them that they were going to be surrounded. They retired in some disorder, and so avoided this.

The disorder increased, however, every moment. Nobody recognised his troop. All were pell−mell, cavalry, infantry, dragoons; not a battalion, not a squadron together, and all in confusion, one upon the other.

Night came. We had lost much ground, one−half of the army had not finished arriving. In this sad situation the Princes consulted with M. de Vendome as to what was to be done. He, furious at being so terribly out of his reckoning, affronted everybody. Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne wished to speak; but Vendome intoxicated with choler and authority; closed his mouth, by saying to him in an imperious voice before everybody, "That he came to the army only on condition of obeying him." These enormous words, pronounced at a moment in which everybody felt so terribly the weight of the obedience rendered to his idleness and obstinacy, made everybody tremble with indignation. The young Prince to whom they were addressed, hesitated, mastered himself, and kept silence. Vendome went on declaring that the battle was not lost—that it could be recommenced the next morning, when the rest of the army had arrived, and so on. No one of consequence cared to reply.

From every side soon came information, however, that the disorder was extreme. Pursegur, Matignon, Sousternon, Cheladet, Purguyon, all brought the same news. Vendome, seeing that it was useless to resist, all this testimony, and beside himself with rage, cried, "Oh, very well, gentlemen! I see clearly what you wish. We must retire, then;" and looking at Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, he added, "I know you have long wished to do so, Monseigneur."

These words, which could not fail to be taken in a double sense, were pronounced exactly as I relate them, and were emphasized in a manner to leave no doubt as to their signification. Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne remained silent as before, and for some time the silence was unbroken. At last, Pursegur interrupted it, by asking how the retreat was to be executed. Each, then, spoke confusedly. Vendome, in his turn, kept silence from vexation or embarrassment; then he said they must march to Ghent, without adding how, or anything else.

The day had been very fatiguing; the retreat was long and perilous. The Princes mounted their horses, and took the road to Ghent. Vendome set out without giving any orders, or seeing to anything. The general officers returned to their posts, and of themselves gave the order to retreat. Yet so great was the confusion, that the Chevalier Rosel, lieutenant−general, at the head of a hundred squadrons, received no orders. In the morning he found himself with his hundred squadrons, which had been utterly forgotten. He at once commenced his march; but to retreat in full daylight was very difficult, as he soon found. He had to sustain the attacks of the enemy during several hours of his march.

Elsewhere, also, the difficulty of retreating was great. Fighting went on at various points all night, and the enemy were on the alert. Some of the troops of our right, while debating as to the means of retreat, found they were about to be surrounded by the enemy. The Vidame of Amiens saw that not a moment was to be lost. He cried to the light horse, of which he was captain, "Follow me," and pierced his way through a line of the enemy's cavalry. He then found himself in front of a line of infantry, which fired upon him, but opened to give him passage. At the same moment, the household troops and others, profiting by a movement so bold, followed the Vidame and his men, and all escaped together to Ghent, led on by the Vidame, to whose sense and courage the safety of these troops was owing.

M. de Vendome arrived at Ghent, between seven and eight o'clock in the morning. Even at this moment he did not forget his disgusting habits, and as soon as he set foot to ground.... in sight of all the troops as they came by,—then at once went to bed, without giving any orders, or seeing to anything, and remained more than thirty hours without rising, in order to repose himself after his fatigues. He learnt that Monseigneur de Bourgogne and the army had pushed on to Lawendeghem; but he paid no attention to it, and continued to sup and to sleep at Ghent several days running, without attending to anything.

CHAPTER XLII

As soon as Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne arrived at Lawendeghem, he wrote a short letter to the King, and referred him for details to M. de Vendome. But at the same time he wrote to the Duchess, very clearly expressing to her where the fault lay. M. de Vendome, on his side, wrote to the King, and tried to persuade him that the battle had not been disadvantageous to us. A short time afterwards, he wrote again, telling the King that he could have beaten the enemies had he been sustained; and that, if, contrary to his advice, retreat had not been determined on, he would certainly have beaten them the next day. For the details he referred to Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne.

I had always feared that some ill−fortune would fall to the lot of Monseigneur, le Duc de Bourgogne if he served under M. de Vendome at the army. When I first learned that he was going to Flanders with M. de Vendome, I expressed my apprehensions to M. de Beauvilliers, who treated them as unreasonable and ridiculous. He soon had good cause to admit that I had not spoken without justice. Our disasters at Oudenarde were very great. We had many men and officers killed and wounded, four thousand men and seven hundred officers taken prisoners, and a prodigious quantity missing and dispersed. All these losses were, as I have shown, entirely due to the laziness and inattention of M. de Vendome. Yet the friends of that general—and he had many at the Court and in the army— actually had the audacity to lay the blame upon Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne. This was what I had foreseen, viz., M. de Vendome, in case any misfortune occurred, would be sure to throw the burden of it upon Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne.

Alberoni, who, as I have said, was one of M. de Vendome's creatures, published a deceitful and impudent letter, in which he endeavoured to prove that M. de Vendome had acted throughout like a good general, but that he had been thwarted by Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne. This letter was distributed everywhere, and well served the purpose for which it was intended. Another writer, Campistron—−a poor, starving poet, ready to do anything to live—went further. He wrote a letter, in which Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne was personally attacked in the tenderest points, and in which Marechal Matignon was said to merit a court−martial for having counselled retreat. This letter, like the other, although circulated with more precaution, was shown even in the cafes and in the theatres; in the public places of gambling and debauchery; on the promenades, and amongst the news−vendors. Copies of it were even shown in the provinces, and in foreign countries; but always with much circumspection. Another letter soon afterwards appeared, apologising for M. de Vendome. This was written by Comte d'Evreux, and was of much the same tone as the two others.

A powerful cabal was in fact got up against Monseigneur de Bourgogne. Vaudeville, verses, atrocious songs against him, ran all over Paris and the provinces with a licence and a rapidity that no one checked; while at the Court, the libertines and the fashionables applauded; so that in six days it was thought disgraceful to speak with any measure of this Prince, even in his father's house.

Madame de Bourgogne could not witness all this uproar against her husband, without feeling sensibly affected by it. She had been made acquainted by Monseigneur de Bourgogne with the true state of the case. She saw her own happiness and reputation at stake. Though very gentle, and still more timid, the grandeur of the occasion raised her above herself. She was cruelly wounded by the insults of Vendome to her husband, and by all the atrocities and falsehoods his emissaries published. She gained Madame de Maintenon, and the first result of this step was, that the King censured Chamillart for not speaking of the letters in circulation, and ordered him to write to Alberoni and D'Evreux (Campistron, strangely enough, was forgotten), commanding them to keep silence for the future.

The cabal was amazed to see Madame de Maintenon on the side of Madame de Bourgogne, while M. du Maine (who was generally in accord with Madame de Maintenon) was for M. de Vendome. They concluded that the King had been led away, but that if they held firm, his partiality for M. de Vendome, for M. du Maine, and for bastardy in general, would bring him round to them. In point of fact, the King was led now one way, and now another, with a leaning always towards M. de Vendome.

Soon after this, Chamillart, who was completely of the party of M. de Vendome, thought fit to write a letter to Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, in which he counselled him to live on good terms with his general. Madame

de Bourgogne never forgave Chamillart this letter, and was always annoyed with her husband that he acted upon it. His religious sentiments induced him to do so. Vendome so profited by the advances made to him by the young Prince, that he audaciously brought Alberoni with him when he visited Monseigneur de Bourgogne. This weakness of Monseigneur de Bourgogne lost him many friends, and made his enemies more bold than ever: Madame de Bourgogne, however, did not despair. She wrote to her husband that for M. de Vendome she had more aversion and contempt than for any one else in the world, and that nothing would make her forget what he had done. We shall see with what courage she knew how to keep her word.

While the discussions upon the battle of Oudenarde were yet proceeding, a league was formed with France against the Emperor by all the states of Italy. The King (Louis XIV.) accepted, however, too late, a project he himself ought to have proposed and executed. He lost perhaps the most precious opportunity he had had during all his reign. The step he at last took was so apparent that it alarmed the allies, and put them on their guard. Except Flanders, they did nothing in any other spot, and turned all their attention to Italy.

Let us return, however, to Flanders.

Prince Eugene, with a large booty gathered in Artois and elsewhere, had fixed himself at Brussels. He wished to bear off his spoils, which required more than five thousand waggons to carry it, and which consisted in great part of provisions, worth three million five hundred thousand francs, and set out with them to join the army of the Duke of Marlborough. Our troops could not, of course, be in ignorance of this. M. de Vendome wished to attack the convoy with half his troops. The project seemed good, and, in case of success, would have brought results equally honourable and useful. Monseigneur de Bourgogne, however, opposed the attack, I know not why; and M. de Vendome, so obstinate until then, gave in to him in this case. His object was to ruin the Prince utterly, for allowing such a good chance to escape, the blame resting entirely upon him. Obstinacy and audacity had served M. de Vendome at Oudenarde: he expected no less a success now from his deference.

Some anxiety was felt just about this time for Lille, which it was feared the enemy would lay siege to. Boufflers went to command there, at his own request, end found the place very ill−garrisoned with raw troops, many of whom had never smelt powder. M. de Vendome, however, laughed at the idea of the siege of Lille, as something mad and ridiculous. Nevertheless, the town was invested on the 12th of August, as the King duly learned on the 14th. Even then, flattery did its work. The friends of Vendome declared that such an enterprise was the best, thing that could happen to France, as the besiegers, inferior in numbers to our army, were sure to be miserably beaten. M. de Vendome, in the mean time, did not budge from the post he had taken up near Ghent. The King wrote to him to go with his army to the relief of Lille. M. de Vendome still delayed; another courier was sent, with the same result. At this, the King, losing temper, despatched another courier, with orders to Monseigneur de Bourgogne, to lead the army to Lille, if M. de Vendome refused to do so. At this, M. de Vendome awoke from his lethargy. He set out for Lille, but took the longest road, and dawdled as long as he could on the way, stopping five days at Mons Puenelle, amongst other places.

The agitation, meanwhile, in Paris, was extreme. The King demanded news of the siege from his courtiers, and could not understand why no couriers arrived. It was generally expected that some decisive battle had been fought. Each day increased the uneasiness. The Princes and the principal noblemen of the Court were at the army. Every one at Versailles feared for the safety of a relative or friend. Prayers were offered everywhere. Madame de Bourgogne passed whole nights in the chapel, when people thought her in bed, and drove her women to despair. Following her example, ladies who had husbands at the army stirred not from the churches. Gaming, conversation ceased. Fear was painted upon every face, and seen in every speech, without shame. If a horse passed a little quickly, everybody ran without knowing where. The apartments of Chamillart were crowded with lackeys, even into the street, sent by people desiring to be informed of the moment that a courier arrived; and this terror and uncertainty lasted nearly a month. The provinces were even more troubled than Paris. The King wrote to the Bishop, in order that they should offer up prayers in terms which suited with the danger of the time. It may be judged what was the general impression and alarm.

It is true, that in the midst of this trepidation, the partisans of M. de Vendome affected to pity that poor Prince Eugene, and to declare that he must inevitably fail in his undertaking; but these discourses did not impose upon me. I knew what kind of enemies we had to deal with, and I foresaw the worst results from the idleness and inattention of M. de Vendome. One evening, in the presence of Chamillart and five or six others, annoyed by the conversation which passed, I offered to bet four pistoles that there would be no general battle, and that Lille

would be taken without being relieved. This strange proposition excited much surprise, and caused many questions to be addressed to me. I would explain nothing at all; but sustained my proposal in the English manner, and my bet was taken; Cani, who accepted it, thanking me for the present of four pistoles I was making him, as he said. The stakes were placed in the hand of Chamillart.

By the next day, the news of my bet had spread a frightful uproar. The partisans of M. de Vendome, knowing I was no friend to them, took this opportunity to damage me in the eyes of the King. They so far succeeded that I entirely lost favour with him, without however suspecting it, for more than two months. All that I could do then, was to let the storm pass over my head and keep silent, so as not to make matters worse. Meanwhile, M. de Vendome continued the inactive policy he had hitherto followed. In despite of reiterated advice from the King, he took no steps to attack the enemy. Monseigneur de Bourgogne was for doing so, but Vendome would make no movement. As before, too, he contrived to throw all the blame of his inactivity upon Monseigneur de Bourgogne. He succeeded so well in making this believed, that his followers in the army cried out against the followers of Monseigneur de Bourgogne wherever they appeared. Chamillart was sent by the King to report upon the state and position of our troops, and if a battle had taken place and proved unfavourable to us, to prevent such sad results as had taken place after Ramillies. Chamillart came back on the 18th of September. No battle had been fought, but M. de Vendome felt sure, he said, of cutting off all supplies from the enemy, and thus compelling them to raise the siege. The King had need of these intervals of consolation and hope. Master as he might be of his words and of his features, he profoundly felt the powerlessness to resist his enemies that he fell into day by day. What I have related, about Samuel Bernard, the banker, to whom he almost did the honours of his gardens at Marly, in order to draw from him the assistance he had refused, is a great proof of this. It was much remarked at Fontainebleau, just as Lille was invested, that, the city of Paris coming to harangue him on the occasion of the oath taken by Bignon, new Prevot des Marchand, he replied, not only with kindness, but that he made use of the term "gratitude for his good city," and that in doing so he lost countenance,—two things which during all his reign had never escaped him. On the other hand, he sometimes had intervals of firmness which edificed less than they surprised. When everybody at the Court was in the anxiety I have already described, he offended them by going out every day hunting or walking, so that they could not know, until after his return, the news which might arrive when he was out.

As for Monseigneur, he seemed altogether exempt from anxiety. After Ramillies, when everybody was waiting for the return of Chamillart, to learn the truth, Monseigneur went away to dine at Meudon, saying he should learn the news soon enough. From this time he showed no more interest in what was passing. When news was brought that Lille was invested, he turned on his heel before the letter announcing it had been read to the end. The King called him back to hear the rest. He returned and heard it. The reading finished, he went away, without offering a word. Entering the apartments of the Princesse de Conti, he found there Madame d'Espinoy, who had much property in Flanders, and who had wished to take a trip there.

"Madame," said he, smiling, as he arrived, "how would you do just now to get to Lille?" And at once made them acquainted with the investment. These things really wounded the Princesse de Conti. Arriving at Fontainebleau one day, during the movements of the army, Monseigneur set to work reciting, for amusement, a long list of strange names of places in the forest.

"Dear me, Monseigneur," cried she, "what a good memory you have. What a pity it is loaded with such things only!" If he felt the reproach, he did not profit by it.

As for Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, Monseigneur (his father) was ill− disposed towards him, and readily swallowed all that was said in his dispraise. Monseigneur had no sympathy with the piety of his son; it constrained and bothered him. The cabal well profited by this. They succeeded to such an extent in alienating the father from the son, that it is only strict truth to say that no one dared to speak well of Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne in the presence of Monseigneur. From this it may be imagined what was the licence and freedom of speech elsewhere against this Prince. They reached such a point, indeed, that the King, not daring to complain publicly against the Prince de Conti, who hated Vendome, for speaking in favour of Monseigneur de Bourgogne, reprimanded him sharply in reality for having done so, but ostensibly because he had talked about the affairs of Flanders at his sister's. Madame de Bourgogne did all she could to turn the current that was setting in against her husband; and in this she was assisted by Madame de Maintenon, who was annoyed to the last degree to see that other people had more influence over the King than she had.

The siege of Lille meanwhile continued, and at last it began to be seen that, instead of attempting to fight a grand battle, the wisest course would be to throw assistance into the place. An attempt was made to do so, but it was now too late.

The besieged, under the guidance of Marechal Boufflers, who watched over all, and attended to all, in a manner that gained him all hearts, made a gallant and determined resistance. A volume would be necessary in order to relate all the marvels of capacity and valour displayed in this defence. Our troops disputed the ground inch by inch. They repulsed, three times running, the enemy from a mill, took it the third time, and burnt it. They sustained an attack, in three places at once, of ten thousand men, from nine o'clock in the evening to three o'clock in the morning, without giving way. They re−captured the sole traverse the enemy had been able to take from them. They drove out the besiegers from the projecting angles of the counterscarp, which they had kept possession of for eight days. They twice repulsed seven thousand men who attacked their covered way and an outwork; at the third attack they lost an angle of the outwork; but remained masters of all the rest.

So many attacks and engagements terribly weakened the garrison. On the 28th of September some assistance was sent to the besieged by the daring of the Chevalier de Luxembourg. It enabled them to sustain with vigour the fresh attacks that were directed against them, to repulse the enemy, and, by a grand sortie, to damage some of their works, and kill many of their men. But all was in vain. The enemy returned again and again to the attack. Every attempt to cut off their supplies failed. Finally, on the 23rd of October, a capitulation was signed. The place had become untenable; three new breaches had been made on the 20th and 21st; powder and ammunition were failing; the provisions were almost all eaten up there was nothing for it but to give in.

Marechal Boufflers obtained all he asked, and retired into the citadel with all the prisoners of war, after two months of resistance. He offered discharge to all the soldiers who did not wish to enter the citadel. But not one of the six thousand he had left to him accepted it. They were all ready for a new resistance, and when their chief appeared among them their joy burst out in the most flattering praises of him. It was on Friday, the 26th of October, that they shut themselves up in the citadel.

The enemy opened their trenches before the citadel on the 29th of October. On the 7th of November they made a grand attack, but were repulsed with considerable loss. But they did not flinch from their work, and Boufflers began to see that he could not long hold out. By the commencement of December he had only twenty thousand pounds of powder left; very little of other munitions, and still less food. In the town and the citadel they had eaten eight hundred horses. Boufflers, as soon as the others were reduced to this food, had it served upon his own table, and ate of it like the rest. The King, learning in what state these soldiers were, personally sent word to Boufflers to surrender, but the Marechal, even after he had received this order, delayed many days to obey it.

At last, in want of the commonest necessaries, and able to protract his defence no longer, he beat a parley, signed a capitulation on the 9th of December, obtaining all he asked, and retired from Lille. Prince Eugene, to whom he surrendered, treated him with much distinction and friendship, invited him to dinner several times,—overwhelmed him, in fact, with attention and civilities. The Prince was glad indeed to have brought to a successful issue such a difficult siege.

CHAPTER XLIII

The position of Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne at the army continued to be equivocal. He was constantly in collision with M. de Vendome. The latter, after the loss of Lille, wished to defend the Escaut, without any regard to its extent of forty miles. The Duc de Bourgogne, as far as he dared, took the part of Berwick, who maintained that the defence was impossible. The King, hearing of all these disputes, actually sent Chamillart to the army to compose them; and it was a curious sight to behold this penman, this financier, acting as arbiter between generals on the most delicate operations of war. Chamillart continued to admire Vendome, and treated the Duc de Bourgogne with little respect, both at the army, and, after his return, in conversation with the King. His report was given in presence of Madame de Maintenon, who listened without daring to say a word, and repeated everything to the Duchesse de Bourgogne. We may imagine what passed between them, and the anger of the Princess against the minister. For the present, however, nothing could be done. Berwick was soon afterwards almost disgraced. As soon as he was gone, M. de Vendome wrote to the King, saying, that he was sure of preventing the enemy from passing the Escaut—that he answered for it on his head. With such a guarantee from a man in such favour at Court, who could doubt? Yet, shortly after, Marlborough crossed the Escaut in four places, and Vendome actually wrote to the King, begging him to remember that he had always declared the defence of the Escaut to be, impossible!

The cabal made a great noise to cover this monstrous audacity, and endeavoured to renew the attack against the Duc de Bourgogne. We shall see what success attended their efforts. The army was at Soissons, near Tournai, in a profound tranquillity, the opium of which had gained the Duc de Bourgogne when news of the approach of the enemy was brought. M. de Vendome advanced in that direction, and sent word to the Duke, that he thought he ought to advance on the morrow with all his army. The Duke was going to bed when he received the letter; and although it was too late to repulse the enemy, was much blamed for continuing to undress himself, and putting off action till the morrow.

To this fault he added another. He had eaten; it was very early; and it was no longer proper to march. It was necessary to wait fresh orders from M. de Vendome. Tournai was near. The Duc de Bourgogne went there to have a game at tennis. This sudden party of pleasure strongly scandalized the army, and raised all manner of unpleasant talk. Advantage was taken of the young Prince's imprudence to throw upon him the blame of what was caused by the negligence of M. de Vendome.

A serious and disastrous action that took place during these operations was actually kept a secret from the King, until the Duc de la Tremoille, whose son was engaged there, let out the truth. Annoyed that the King said nothing to him on the way in which his son had distinguished himself, he took the opportunity, whilst he was serving the King, to talk of the passage of the Escaut, and said that his son's regiment had much suffered. "How, suffered?" cried the King; "nothing has happened." Whereupon the Duke related all to him. The King listened with the greatest attention, and questioned him, and admitted before everybody that he knew nothing of all this. His surprise, and the surprise it occasioned, may be imagined. It happened that when the King left table, Chamillart unexpectedly came into his cabinet. He was soon asked about the action of the Escaut, and why it had not been reported. The minister, embarrassed, said that it was a thing of no consequence. The king continued to press him, mentioned details, and talked of the regiment of the Prince of Tarento. Chamillart then admitted that what happened at the passage was so disagreeable, and the combat so disagreeable, but so little important, that Madame de Maintenon, to whom he had reported all, had thought it best not to trouble the King upon the matter, and it had accordingly been agreed not to trouble him. Upon this singular answer the King stopped short in his questions, and said not a word more.

The Escaut being forced, the citadel of Lille on the point of being taken, our army exhausted with fatigue was at last dispersed, to the scandal of everybody; for it was known that Ghent was about to be besieged. The Princes received orders to return to Court, but they insisted on the propriety of remaining with the army. M. de Vendome, who began to fear the effect of his rashness and insolence, tried to obtain permission to pass the winter with the army on the frontier.

He was not listened to. The Princes received orders most positively to return to Court, and accordingly set out.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne was very anxious about the way in which the Duke was to be received, and eager to talk to him and explain how matters stood, before he saw the King or anybody else. I sent a message to him that he ought to contrive to arrive after midnight, in order to pass two or three hours with the Duchess, and perhaps see Madame de Maintenon early in the morning. My message was not received; at any rate not followed. The Duc de Bourgogne arrived on the 11th of December, a little after seven o'clock in the evening, just as Monseigneur had gone to the play, whither the Duchess had not gone, in order to wait for her husband. I know not why he alighted in the Cour des Princes, instead of the Great Court. I was put then in the apartments of the Comtesse de Roncy, from which I could see all that passed. I came down, and saw the Prince ascending the steps between the Ducs de Beauvilliers and De la Rocheguyon, who happened to be there. He looked quite satisfied, was gay, and laughing, and spoke right and left. I bowed to him. He did me the honour to embrace me in a way that showed me he knew better what was going on than how to maintain his dignity. He then talked only to me, and whispered that he knew what I had said. A troop of courtiers met him. In their midst he passed the Great Hall of the Guards, and instead of going to Madame de Maintenon's by the private door, though the nearest way, went to the great public entrance. There was no one there but the King and Madame de Maintenon, with Pontchartrain; for I do not count the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Pontchartrain noted well what passed at the interview, and related it all to me that very evening.

As soon as in Madame de Maintenon's apartment was heard the rumour which usually precedes such an arrival, the King became sufficiently embarrassed to change countenance several times. The Duchesse de Bourgogne appeared somewhat tremulous, and fluttered about the room to hide her trouble, pretending not to know exactly by which door the Prince would arrive. Madame de Maintenon was thoughtful. Suddenly all the doors flew open: the young Prince advanced towards the King, who, master of himself, more than any one ever was, lost at once all embarrassment, took two or three steps towards his grandson, embraced him with some demonstration of tenderness, spoke of his voyage, and then pointing to the Princess, said, with a smiling countenance: "Do you say nothing to her?" The Prince turned a moment towards her, and answered respectfully, as if he dared not turn away from the King, and did not move. He then saluted Madame de Maintenon, who received him well. Talk of travel, beds, roads, and so forth, lasted, all standing, some half−quarter of an hour; then the King said it would not be fair to deprive him any longer of the pleasure of being alone with Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, and that they would have time enough to see each other. The Prince made a bow to the King, another to Madame de Maintenon, passed before the few ladies of the palace who had taken courage to put their heads into the room, entered the neighbouring cabinet, where he embraced the Duchess, saluted the ladies who were there, that is, kissed them; remained a few moments, and then went into his apartment, where he shut himself up with the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

Their tete−a−tete lasted two hours and more: just towards the end, Madame d'O was let in; soon after the Marechal d'Estrees entered, and soon after that the Duchesse de Bourgogne came out with them, and returned into the great cabinet of Madame de Maintenon. Monseigneur came there as usual, on returning from the comedy. Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, troubled that the Duke did not hurry himself to come and salute his father, went to fetch him, and came back saying that he was putting on his powder; but observing that Monseigneur was little satisfied with this want of eagerness, sent again to hurry him. Just then the Marechale d'Estrees, hair−brained and light, and free to say just what came into her head, began to attack Monseigneur for waiting so tranquilly for his son, instead of going himself to embrace him. This random expression did not succeed. Monseigneur replied stiffly that it was not for him to seek the Duc de Bourgogne; but the duty of the Duc de Bourgogne to seek him. He came at last. The reception was pretty good, but did not by any means equal that of the King. Almost immediately the King rang, and everybody went to the supper−room.

During the supper, M. le Duc de Berry arrived, and came to salute the King at table. To greet him all hearts opened. The King embraced him very tenderly. Monseigneur only looked at him tenderly, not daring to embrace his (youngest) son in presence of the King. All present courted him. He remained standing near the King all the rest of the supper, and there was no talk save of post−horses, of roads, and such like trifles. The King spoke sufficiently at table to Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne; but to the Duc de Berry, he assumed a very different air. Afterwards, there was a supper for the Duc de Berry in the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; but the conjugal impatience of the Duc de Bourgogne cut it rather too short.

I expressed to the Duc de Beauvilliers, with my accustomed freedom, that the Duc de Bourgogne seemed to

me very gay on returning from so sad a campaign. He could not deny this, and made up his mind to give a hint on the subject. Everybody indeed blamed so misplaced a gaiety. Two or three days after his arrival the Duc de Bourgogne passed three hours with the King in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon. I was afraid that, his piety would withhold him from letting out on the subject of M. de Vendome, but I heard that he spoke on that subject without restraint, impelled by the advice of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and also by the Duc de Beauvilliers, who set his conscience at ease. His account of the campaign, of affairs, of things, of advices, of proceedings, was complete. Another, perhaps, less virtuous, might have used weightier terms; but at any rate everything was said with a completeness beyond all hope, if we consider who spoke and who listened. The Duke concluded with an eager prayer to be given an army in the next campaign, and with the promise of the King to that effect. Soon after an explanation took place with Monseigneur at Meudon, Mademoiselle Choin being present. With the latter he spoke much more in private: she had taken his part with Monseigneur. The Duchesse de Bourgogne had gained her over. The connection of this girl with Madame de Maintenon was beginning to grow very close indeed.

Gamaches had been to the army with the Duc do Bourgogne, and being a free−tongued man had often spoken out very sharply on the puerilities in which he indulged in company with the Duc de Berry, influenced by his example. One day returning from mass, in company with the Duke on a critical day, when he would rather have seen him on horseback; he said aloud, "You will certainly win the kingdom of heaven; but as for the kingdom of the earth, Prince Eugene and Marlborough know how to seek it better than you." What he said quite as publicly to the two Princes on their treatment of the King of England, was admirable. That Prince (known as the Chevalier de Saint George) served incognito, with a modesty that the Princes took advantage of to treat him with the greatest indifference and contempt. Towards the end of the campaign, Gamaches, exasperated with their conduct, exclaimed to them in the presence of everybody: "Is this a wager? speak frankly; if so, you have won, there can be no doubt of that; but now, speak a little to the Chevalier de Saint George, and treat him more politely." These sallies, however, were too public to produce any good effect. They were suffered, but not attended to.

The citadel of Lille capitulated as we have seen, with the consent of the King, who was obliged to acknowledge that the Marechal de Boufflers had done all he could, and that further defence was impossible. Prince Eugene treated Boufflers with the greatest possible consideration. The enemy at this time made no secret of their intention to invest Ghent, which made the dispersal of our army the more shameful; but necessity commanded, for no more provisions were to be got.

M. de Vendome arrived at Versailles on the morning of December 15th, and saluted the King as he left table. The King embraced him with a sort of enthusiasm that made his cabal triumph. He monopolised all conversation during the dinner, but only trifles were talked of. The King said he would talk to him next day at Madame de Maintenon's. This delay, which was new to him, did not seem of good augury. He went to pay his respects to M. de Bourgogne, who received him well in spite of all that had passed. Then Vendome went to wait on Monseigneur at the Princesse de Coriti's: here he thought himself in his stronghold. He was received excellently, and the conversation turned on nothings. He wished to take advantage of this, and proposed a visit to Anet. His surprise and that of those present were great at the uncertain reply of Monseigneur, who caused it to be understood, and rather stiffly too, that he would not go. Vendome appeared embarrassed, and abridged his visit. I met him at the end of the gallery of the new wing, as I was coming from M. de Beauvilliers, turning towards the steps in the middle of the gallery. He was alone, without torches or valets, with Alberoni, followed by a man I did not know. I saw him by the light of my torches; we saluted each other politely, though we had not much acquaintance one with the other. He seemed chagrined, and was going to M. du Maine, his counsel and principal support.

Next day he passed an hour with the King at Madame de Maintenon's. He remained eight or ten days at Versailles or at Meudon, and never went to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's. This was nothing new for him. The mixture of grandeur and irregularity which he had long affected seemed to him to have freed him from the most indispensable duties. His Abbe Alberoni showed himself at the King's mass in the character of a courtier with unparalleled effrontery. At last they went to Anet. Even before he went he perceived some diminution in his position, since he lowered himself so far as to invite people to come and see him, he, who in former years made it a favour to receive the most distinguished persons. He soon perceived the falling−off in the number of his visitors. Some excused themselves from going; others promised to go and did not. Every one made a difficulty about a journey of fifteen leagues, which, the year before, was considered as easy and as necessary as that of Marly.

Vendome remained at Anet until the first voyage to Marly, when he came; and he always came to Marly and Meudon, never to Versailles, until the change of which I shall soon have occasion to speak.

The Marechal de Boufflers returned to Court from his first but unsuccessful defence of Lille, and was received in a triumphant manner, and overwhelmed with honours and rewards. This contrast with Vendome was remarkable: the one raised by force of trickery, heaping up mountains like the giants, leaning on vice, lies, audacity, on a cabal inimical to the state and its heirs, a factitious hero, made such by will in despite of truth;—the other, without cabal, with no support but virtue and modesty, was inundated with favours, and the applause of enemies was followed by the acclamations of the public, so that the nature of even courtiers changed, and they were happy in the recompenses showered upon him!

Some days after the return of the Duc de Bourgogne Cheverny had an interview with him, on leaving which he told me what I cannot refrain from relating here, though it is necessarily with confusion that I write it. He said that, speaking freely with him on what had been circulated during the campaign, the Prince observed that he knew how and with what vivacity I had expressed myself, and that he was informed of the manner in which the Prince de Conti had given his opinion, and added that with the approval of two such men, that of others might be dispensed with. Cheverny, a very truthful man, came full of this to tell it to me at once. I was filled with confusion at being placed beside a man as superior to me in knowledge of war as he was in rank and birth; but I felt with gratitude how well M. de Beauvilliers had kept his word and spoken in my favour.

The last evening of this year (1708) was very remarkable, because there had not yet been an example of any such thing. The King having retired after supper to his cabinet with his family, as usual, Chamillart came without being sent for. He whispered in the King's ear that he had a long despatch from the Marechal de Boufflers. Immediately the King said good−night to Monseigneur and the Princesses, who went out with every one else; and the King actually worked for an hour with his minister before going to bed, so excited was he by the great project for retaking Lille!

Since the fall of Lille, in fact, Chamillart, impressed with the importance of the place being in our possession, had laid out a plan by which he were to lay siege to it and recapture it. One part of his plan was, that the King should conduct the siege in person. Another was that, as money was so difficult to obtain, the ladies of the Court should not accompany the King, as their presence caused a large increase of expense for carriages, servants, and so on. He confided his project to the King, under a strict promise that it would be kept secret from Madame de Maintenon. He feared, and with reason, that if she heard of it she would object to being separated from the King for such a long time as would be necessary for the siege: Chamillart was warned that if he acted thus, hiding his plant from Madame de Maintenon, to whom he owed everything, she would assuredly ruin him, but he paid no attention to the warning. He felt all the danger he ran, but he was courageous; he loved the State, and, if I may say so, he loved the King as a mistress. He followed his own counsels then, and made the King acquainted with his project.

The King was at once delighted with it. He entered into the details submitted to him by Chamillart with the liveliest interest, and promised to carry out all that was proposed. He sent for Boufflers, who had returned from Lille, and having, as I have said, recompensed him for his brave defence of that place with a peerage and other marks of favour, despatched him privately into Flanders to make preparations for the siege. The abandonment of Ghent by our troop, after a short and miserable defence, made him more than ever anxious to carry out this scheme.

But the King had been so unused to keep a secret from Madame de Maintenon, that he felt himself constrained in attempting to do so now. He confided to her, therefore, the admirable plan of Chamillart. She had the address to hide her surprise, and the strength to dissimulate perfectly her vexation; she praised the project; she appeared charmed with it; she entered into the details; she spoke of them to Chamillart; admired his zeal, his labour, his diligence, and, above all, his ability, in having conceived and rendered possible so fine and grand a project.

From that moment, however, she forgot nothing in order to ensure its failure. The first sight of it had made her tremble. To be separated from the King during a long siege; to abandon him to a minister to whom he would be grateful for all the success of that siege; a minister, too, who, although her creature, had dared to submit this project to the King without informing her; who, moreover, had recently offended her by marrying his son into a family she considered inimical to her, and by supporting M. de Vendome against Monseigneur de Bourgogne! These were considerations that determined her to bring about the failure of Chamillart's project and the disgrace

of Chamillart himself.

She employed her art so well, that after a time the project upon Lille did not appear so easy to the King as at first. Soon after, it seemed difficult; then too hazardous and ruinous; so that at last it was abandoned, and Boufflers had orders to cease his preparations and return to France! She succeeded thus in an affair she considered the most important she had undertaken during all her life. Chamillart was much touched, but little surprised: As soon as he knew his secret had been confided to Madame de Maintenon he had feeble hope for it. Now he began to fear for himself.

CHAPTER XLIV.

One of the reasons Madame de Maintenon had brought forward, which much assisted her in opposing the siege of Lille, was the excessive cold of this winter. The winter was, in fact, terrible; the memory of man could find no parallel to it. The frost came suddenly on Twelfth Night, and lasted nearly two months, beyond all recollection. In four days the Seine and all the other rivers were frozen, and,—what had never been seen before,—the sea froze all along the coasts, so as to bear carts, even heavily laden, upon it. Curious observers pretended that this cold surpassed what had ever been felt in Sweden and Denmark. The tribunals were closed a considerable time. The worst thing was, that it completely thawed for seven or eight days, and then froze again as rudely as before. This caused the complete destruction of all kinds of vegetation—even fruit−trees; and others of the most hardy kind, were destroyed. The violence of the cold was such, that the strongest elixirs and the most spirituous liquors broke their bottles in cupboards of rooms with fires in them, and surrounded by chimneys, in several parts of the chateau of Versailles. As I myself was one evening supping with the Duc de Villeroy, in his little bedroom, I saw bottles that had come from a well− heated kitchen, and that had been put on the chimney−piece of this bed−room (which was close to the kitchen), so frozen, that pieces of ice fell into our glasses as we poured out from them. The second frost ruined everything. There were no walnut−trees, no olive−trees, no apple−trees, no vines left, none worth speaking of, at least. The other trees died in great numbers; the gardens perished, and all the grain in the earth. It is impossible to imagine the desolation of this general ruin. Everybody held tight his old grain. The price of bread increased in proportion to the despair for the next harvest. The most knowing resowed barley where there had been wheat, and were imitated by the majority. They were the most successful, and saved all; but the police bethought themselves of prohibiting this, and repented too late! Divers edicts were published respecting grain, researches were made and granaries filled; commissioners were appointed to scour the provinces, and all these steps contributed to increase the general dearness and poverty, and that, too, at a time when, as was afterwards proved, there was enough corn in the country to feed all France for two years, without a fresh ear being reaped.

Many people believed that the finance gentlemen had clutched at this occasion to seize upon all the corn in the kingdom, by emissaries they sent about, in order to sell it at whatever price they wished for the profit of the King, not forgetting their own. The fact that a large quantity of corn that the King had bought, and that had spoiled upon the Loire, was thrown into the water in consequence, did not shake this opinion, as the accident could not be hidden. It is certain that the price of corn was equal in all the markets of the realm; that at Paris, commissioners fixed the price by force, and often obliged the vendors to raise it in spite of themselves; that when people cried out, "How long will this scarcity last?" some commissioners in a market, close to my house, near Saint Germain−des−Pres, replied openly, "As long as you please," moved by compassion and indignation, meaning thereby, as long as the people chose to submit to the regulation, according to which no corn entered Paris, except on an order of D'Argenson. D'Argenson was the lieutenant of police. The bakers were treated with the utmost rigour in order to keep up the price of bread all over France. In the provinces, officers called intendents did what D'Argenson did at Paris. On all the markets, the corn that was not sold at the hour fixed for closing was forcibly carried off; those who, from pity, sold their corn lower than the fixed rate were punished with cruelty!

Marechal, the King's surgeon, had the courage and the probity to tell all these things to the King, and to state the sinister opinions it gave rise to among all classes, even the most enlightened. The King appeared touched, was not offended with Marechal, but did nothing.

In several places large stores of corn were collected; by the government authorities, but with the greatest possible secrecy. Private people were expressly forbidden to do this, and informers were encouraged to; betray them. A poor fellow, having bethought himself of informing against one of the stores alluded to above, was severely punished for his pains. The Parliament assembled to debate upon these disorders. It came to the resolution of submitting various proposals to the King, which it deemed likely to improve the condition of the country, and offered to send its Conseillers to examine into the conduct of the monopolists. As soon as the King heard of this, he flew into a strange passion, and his first intention was to send a harsh message to the Parliament to attend to law trials, and not to mix with matters that did not concern it. The chancellor did not dare to represent

to, the King that what the Parliament wished to do belonged to its province, but calmed him by representing the respect and affection with which the Parliament regarded him, and that he was master either to accept or refuse its offers. No reprimand was given, therefore, to the Parliament, but it was informed that the King prohibited it from meddling with the corn question. However accustomed the Parliament, as well as all the other public bodies, might be to humiliations, it was exceedingly vexed by this treatment, and obeyed with the greatest grief. The public was, nevertheless, much affected by the conduct of the Parliament, and felt that if the Finance Ministry had been innocent in the matter, the King would have been pleased with what had taken place, which was in no respect an attack on the absolute and unbounded authority of which he was so vilely jealous.

In the country a somewhat similar incident occurred. The Parliament of Burgundy, seeing the province in the direst necessity, wrote to the Intendant, who did not bestir himself the least in the world. In this pressing danger of a murderous famine, the members assembled to debate upon the course to adopt. Nothing was said or done more than was necessary, and all with infinite discretion, yet the King was no sooner informed of it than he grew extremely irritated. He sent a severe reprimand to this Parliament; prohibited it from meddling again in the matter; and ordered the President, who had conducted the assembly, to come at once to Court to explain his conduct. He came, and but for the intervention of M. le Duc would have been deprived of his post, irreproachable as his conduct had been. He received a sharp scolding from the King, and was then allowed to depart. At the end of a few weeks he returned to Dijon, where it had been resolved to receive him in triumph; but, like a wise and experienced man, he shunned these attentions, arranging so that he arrived at Dijon at four o'clock in the morning. The other Parliaments, with these examples before them, were afraid to act, and allowed the Intendants and their emissaries to have it all their own way. It was at this time that those commissioners were appointed, to whom I have already alluded, who acted under the authority of the Intendants, and without dependence of any kind upon the Parliaments. True, a court of appeal against their decisions was established, but it was a mere mockery. The members who composed it did not set out to fulfil their duties until three months after having been appointed.

Then, matters had been so arranged that they received no appeals, and found no cases to judge. All this dark work remained, therefore, in the hands of D'Argenson and the Intendants, and it continued to be done with the same harshness as ever.

Without passing a more definite judgment on those who invented and profited by this scheme, it may be said that there has scarcely been a century which has produced one more mysterious, more daring, better arranged, and resulting in an oppression so enduring, so sure, so cruel. The sums it produced were innumerable; and innumerable were the people who died literally of hunger, and those who perished afterwards of the maladies caused by the extremity of misery; innumerable also were the families who were ruined, whose ruin brought down a torrent of other ills.

Despite all this, payments hitherto most strictly made began to cease. Those of the customs, those of the divers loans, the dividends upon the Hotel de Ville—in all times so sacred—all were suspended; these last alone continued, but with delays, then with retrenchments, which desolated nearly all the families of Paris and many others. At the same time the taxes—increased, multiplied, and exacted with the most extreme rigour—completed the devastation of France.

Everything rose incredibly in price, while nothing was left to buy with, even at the cheapest rate; and although—the majority of the cattle had perished for want of food, and by the misery of those who kept them, a new monopoly was established upon, horned beasts. A great number of people who, in preceding years, used to relieve the poor, found, themselves so reduced as to be able to subsist only with great difficulty, and many of them received alms in secret. It is impossible to say how many others laid siege to the hospitals, until then the , shame and punishment of the poor; how many ruined hospitals revomited forth their inmates to the public charge—that is to say, sent them away to die actually of hunger; and how many decent families shut themselves up in garrets to die of want.

It is impossible to say, moreover, how all this misery warmed up zeal and charity, or how immense were the alms distributed. But want increasing each instant, an indiscreet and tyrannical charity imagined new taxes for the benefit of the poor. They were imposed, and, added to so many others, vexed numbers of people, who were annoyed at being compelled to pay, who would have preferred giving voluntarily. Thus, these new taxes, instead of helping the poor, really took away assistance from them, and left them worse off than before. The strangest thing of all is, that these taxes in favour of the poor were, perpetuated and appropriated by the King, and are

received by the financiers on his account to this day as a branch of the revenue, the name of them not having even been changed. The same thing has happened with respect to the annual tax for keeping up the highways and thoroughfares of the kingdom. The majority of the bridges were broken, and the high roads had become impracticable. Trade, which suffered by this, awakened attention. The Intendant of Champagne determined to mend the roads by parties of men, whom he compelled to work for nothing, not even giving them bread. He was imitated everywhere, and was made Counsellor of State. The people died of hunger and misery at this work, while those who overlooked them made fortunes. In the end the thing was found to be impracticable, and was abandoned, and so were the roads. But the impost for making them and keeping them up did not in the least stop during this experiment or since, nor has it ceased to be appropriated as a branch of the King's revenue.

But to return to the year 1709. People never ceased wondering what had become of all the money of the realm. Nobody could any longer pay, because nobody was paid: the country−people, overwhelmed with exactions and with valueless property, had become insolvent: trade no longer yielded anything—good faith and confidence were at an end. Thus the King had no resources, except in terror and in his unlimited power, which, boundless as it was, failed also for want of having something to take and to exercise itself upon. There was no more circulation, no means of re−establishing it. All was perishing step by step; the realm was entirely exhausted; the troops, even, were not paid, although no one could imagine what was done with the millions that came into the King's coffers. The unfed soldiers, disheartened too at being so badly commanded, were always unsuccessful; there was no capacity in generals or ministers; no appointment except by whim or intrigue; nothing was punished, nothing examined, nothing weighed: there was equal impotence to sustain the war and bring about peace: all suffered, yet none dared to put the hand to this arch, tottering as it was and ready to fall.

This was the frightful state to which we were reduced, when envoys were sent into Holland to try and bring about peace. The picture is exact, faithful, and not overcharged. It was necessary to present it as it was, in order to explain the extremity to which we were reduced, the enormity of the concessions which the King made to obtain peace, and the visible miracle of Him who sets bounds to the seas, by which France was allowed to escape from the hands of Europe, resolved and ready to destroy her.

Meanwhile the money was re−coined; and its increase to a third more than its intrinsic value, brought some profit to the King, but ruin to private people, and a disorder to trade which completed its annihilation.

Samuel Bernard, the banker, overthrew all Lyons by his prodigious bankruptcy, which caused the most terrible results. Desmarets assisted him as much as possible. The discredit into which paper money had fallen, was the cause of his failure. He had issued notes to the amount of twenty millions, and owed almost as much at Lyons. Fourteen millions were given to him in assignats, in order to draw him out of his difficulties. It is pretended that he found means to gain much by his bankruptcy, but this seems doubtful.

The winter at length passed away. In the spring so many disorders took place in the market of Paris, that more guards than usual were kept in the city. At Saint Roch there was a disturbance, on account of a poor fellow who had fallen, and been trampled under foot; and the crowd, which was very large, was very insolent to D'Argenson, Lieutenant of Police, who had hastened there. M. de la Rochefoucauld, who had retired from the Court to Chenil, on account of his loss of sight, received an atrocious letter against the King, in which it was plainly intimated that there were still Ravaillacs left in the world; and to this madness was added an eulogy of Brutus. M. de la Rochefoucauld at once went in all haste to the King with this letter. His sudden appearance showed that something important had occurred, and the object of his visit, of course, soon became known. He was very ill received for coming so publicly on such an errand. The Ducs de Beauvilliers and de Bouillon, it seems, had received similar letters, but had given them to the King privately. The King for some days was much troubled, but after due reflection, he came to the conclusion that people who menace and warn have less intention of committing a crime than of causing alarm.

What annoyed the King more was, the inundation of placards, the most daring and the most unmeasured, against his person, his conduct, and his government—placards, which for a long time were found pasted upon the gates of Paris, the churches, the public places; above all upon the statues; which during the night were insulted in various fashions, the marks being seen the next morning, and the inscriptions erased. There were also, multitudes of verses and songs, in which nothing was spared.

We were in this state until the 16th of May. The procession of Saint Genevieve took place. This procession never takes place except in times of the direst necessity; and then, only in virtue of orders from the King, the

Parliament, or the Archbishop of Paris. On the one hand, it was hoped that it would bring succour to the country; on the other, that it would amuse the people.

It was shortly after this, when the news of the arrogant demands of the allies, and the vain attempts of the King to obtain an honourable peace became known, that the Duchesse de Grammont conceived the idea of offering her plate to the King, to replenish his impoverished exchequer, and to afford him means carry on the war. She hoped that her example would be followed by all the Court, and that she alone would have the merit and the profit of suggesting the idea. Unfortunately for this hope, the Duke, her husband, spoke of the project to Marechal Boufflers, who thought it so good, that he noised it abroad, and made such a stir, exhorting everybody to adopt it, that he passed for the inventor, and; no mention was made of the Duke or the old Duchesse de Grammont, the latter of whom was much enraged at this.

The project made a great hubbub at the Court. Nobody dared to refuse to offer his plate, yet each offered it with much regret. Some had been keeping it as a last resource, which they; were very sorry to deprive themselves of; others feared the dirtiness of copper and earthenware; others again were annoyed at being obliged to imitate an ungrateful fashion, all the merit of which would go to the inventor. It was in vain that Pontchartrain objected to the project, as one from which only trifling benefit could be derived, and which would do great injury to France by acting as a proclamation of its embarrassed state to all the world, at home and abroad. The King would not listen to his reasonings, but declared himself willing to receive all the plate that was sent to him as a free−will offering. He announced this; and two means were indicated at the same time, which all good citizens might follow. One was, to send their plate to the King's goldsmith; the other, to send it to the Mint. Those who made an unconditional gift of their plate, sent it to the former, who kept a register of the names and of the number of marks he received. The King regularly looked over this list; at least at first, and promised in general terms to restore to everybody the weight of metal they gave when his affairs permitted—a promise nobody believed in or hoped to see executed. Those who wished to be paid for their plate sent it to the Mint. It was weighed on arrival; the names were written, the marks and the date; payment was made according as money could be found. Many people were not sorry thus to sell, their plate without shame. But the loss and the damage were inestimable in admirable ornaments of all kinds, with which much of the plate of the rich was embellished. When an account came to be drawn up, it was found that not a hundred people were upon the list of Launay, the goldsmith; and the total product of the gift did not amount to three millions. I confess that I was very late in sending any plate. When I found that I was almost the only one of my rank using silver, I sent plate to the value of a thousand pistoles to the Mint, and locked up the rest. All the great people turned to earthenware, exhausted the shops where it was sold, and set the trade in it on fire, while common folks continued to use their silver. Even the King thought of using earthenware, having sent his gold vessels to the Mint, but afterwards decided upon plated metal and silver; the Princes and Princesses of the blood used crockery.

Ere three months were over his head the King felt all the shame and the weakness of having consented to this surrendering of plate, and avowed that he repented of it. The inundations of the Loire, which happened at the same time, and caused the utmost disorder, did not restore the Court or the public to good humour. The losses they caused, and the damage they did, were very considerable, and ruined many private people, and desolated home trade.

Summer came. The dearness of all things, and of bread in particular, continued to cause frequent commotions all over the realm. Although, as I have said, the guards of Paris were much increased, above all in the markets and the suspected places, they were unable to hinder disturbances from breaking out. In many of these D'Argenson nearly lost his life.

Monseigneur arriving and returning from the Opera, was assailed by the populace and by women in great numbers crying, "Bread! Bread!" so that he was afraid, even in the midst of his guards, who did not dare to disperse the crowd for fear of worse happening. He got away by throwing money to the people, and promising wonders; but as the wonders did not follow, he no longer dared to go to Paris.

The King himself from his windows heard the people of Versailles crying aloud in the street. The discourses they held were daring and continual in the streets and public places; they uttered complaints, sharp, and but little measured, against the government, and even against the King's person; and even exhorted each other no longer to be so enduring, saying that nothing worse could happen to them than what they suffered, dying as they were of starvation.

To amuse the people, the idle and the poor were employed to level a rather large hillock which remained upon the Boulevard, between the Portes Saint Denis and Saint Martin; and for all salary, bad bread in small quantities was distributed to these workers. If happened that on Tuesday morning, the 20th of August, there was no bread for a large number of these people. A woman amongst others cried out at this, which excited the rest to do likewise. The archers appointed to watch over these labourers, threatened the woman; she only cried the louder; thereupon the archers seized her and indiscreetly put her in an adjoining pillory. In a moment all her companions ran to her aid, pulled down the pillory, and scoured the streets, pillaging the bakers and pastrycooks. One by one the shops closed. The disorder increased and spread through the neighbouring streets; no harm was done anybody, but the cry was "Bread! Bread!" and bread was seized everywhere.

It so fell out that Marechal Boufflers, who little thought what was happening, was in the neighbourhood, calling upon his notary. Surprised at the fright he saw everywhere, and learning, the cause, he wished of himself to appease it. Accompanied by the Duc de Gramont, he directed himself towards the scene of the disturbance, although advised not to do so. When he arrived at the top of the Rue Saint Denis, the crowd and the tumult made him judge that it would be best to alight from his coach. He advanced, therefore, on foot with the Duc de Grammont among the furious and infinite crowd of people, of whom he asked the cause of this uproar, promised them bread, spoke his best with gentleness but firmness, and remonstrated with them. He was listened to. Cries, several times repeated, of "Vive M. le Marechal de Boufflers!" burst from the crowd. M. de Boufflers walked thus with M. de Grammont all along the Rue aux Ours and the neighbouring streets, into the very centre of the sedition, in fact. The people begged him to represent their misery to the King, and to obtain for them some food. He promised this, and upon his word being given all were appeased and all dispersed with thanks and fresh acclamations of "Vive M. le Marechal de Boufflers!" He did a real service that day. D'Argenson had marched to the spot with troops; and had it not been for the Marechal, blood would have been spilt, and things might have gone very far.

The Marechal had scarcely reached his own house in the Place Royale than he was informed that the sedition had broken out with even greater force in the Faubourg Saint Antoine. He ran there immediately, with the Duc de Grammont, and appeased it as he had appeased the other. He returned to his own home to eat a mouthful or two, and then set out for Versailles. Scarcely had he left the Place Royale than the people in the streets and the shopkeepers cried to him to have pity on them, and to get them some bread, always with "Vive M. le Marechal de Boufflers!" He was conducted thus as far as the quay of the Louvre.

On arriving at Versailles he went straight to he King, told him what had occurred, and was much thanked. He was even offered by the King the command of Paris,—troops, citizens, police, and all; but this he declined, Paris, as he said, having already a governor and proper officers to conduct its affairs. He afterwards, however, willingly lent his aid to them in office, and the modesty with which he acted brought him new glory.

Immediately after, the supply of bread was carefully looked to. Paris was filled with patrols, perhaps with too many, but they succeeded so well that no fresh disturbances took place.

CHAPTER XLV

After his return from the campaign, M. de Vendome continued to be paid like a general serving in winter, and to enjoy many other advantages. From all this, people inferred that he would serve during the following campaign; nobody dared to doubt as much, and the cabal derived new strength therefrom. But their little triumph was not of long continuance. M. de Vendome came to Versailles for the ceremony of the Order on Candlemas−Day. He then learned that he was not to serve, and that he was no longer to receive general's pay. The blow was violent, and he felt it to its fullest extent; but, with a prudence that equalled his former imprudence, he swallowed the pill without making a face, because he feared other more bitter ones, which he felt he had deserved. This it was that, for the first time in his life, made him moderate. He did not affect to conceal what had taken place, but did not say whether it was in consequence of any request of his, or whether he was glad or sorry,—giving it out as an indifferent piece of news; and changed nothing but his language, the audacity of which he diminished as no longer suited to the times. He sold his equipages.

M. le Prince de Conti died February 22, aged not quite forty−five. His face had been charming; even the defects of his body and mind had infinite graces. His shoulders were too high; his head was a little on one side; his laugh would have seemed a bray in any one else; his mind was strangely absent. He was gallant with the women, in love with many, well treated by several; he was even coquettish with men. He endeavoured to please the cobbler, the lackey, the porter, as well as the Minister of State, the Grand Seigneur, the General, all so naturally that success was certain. He was consequently the constant delight of every one, of the Court, the armies; the divinity of the people, the idol of the soldiers, the hero of the officers, the hope of whatever was most distinguished, the love of the Parliament, the friend of the learned, and often the admiration of the historian, of jurisconsults, of astronomers, and mathematicians, the most profound. He was especially learned in genealogies, and knew their chimeras and their realities. With him the useful and the polite, the agreeable and the deep, all was distinct and in its place. He had friends, knew how to choose them, cultivate them, visit them, live with them, put himself on their level without haughtiness or baseness. But this man, so amiable, so charming, so delicious, loved nothing. He had and desired friends, as other people have and desire articles of furniture. Although with much self−respect he was a humble courtier, and showed too much how greatly he was in want of support and assistance from all sides; he was avaricious, greedy of fortune, ardent and unjust. The King could not bear him, and was grieved with the respect he was obliged to show him, and which he was careful never to trespass over by a single jot. Certain intercepted letters had excited a hatred against him in Madame de Maintenon, and an indignation in the King which nothing could efface. The riches, the talents, the agreeable qualities, the great reputation which this Prince had acquired, the general love of all, became crimes in him. The contrast with M. du Maine excited daily irritation and jealousy. The very purity of his blood was a reproach to him. Even his friends were odious, and felt that this was so. At last, however, various causes made him to be chosen, in the midst of a very marked disgrace, to command the army in Flanders. He was delighted, and gave himself up to the most agreeable hopes. But it was no longer time: he had sought to drown his sorrow at wearing out his life unoccupied in wine and other pleasures, for which his age and his already enfeebled body were no longer suited. His health gave way. He felt it soon. The tardy return to favour which he had enjoyed made him regret life more. He perished slowly, regretting to have been brought to death's door by disgrace, and the impossibility of being restored by the unexpected opening of a brilliant career.

The Prince, against the custom of those of his rank, had been very well educated. He was full of instruction. The disorders of his life had clouded his knowledge but not extinguished it, and he often read to brush up his learning. He chose M. de la Tour to prepare him, and help him to die well. He was so attached to life that all his courage was required. For three months crowds of visitors filled his palace, and the people even collected in the place before it. The churches echoed with prayers for his life. The members of his family often went to pay for masses for him; and found that others had already done so. All questions were about his health. People stopped each other in the street to inquire; passers− by were called to by shopmen, anxious to know whether the Prince de Conti was to live or to die. Amidst all this, Monseigneur never visited him; and, to the indignation of all Paris, passed along the quay near the Louvre going to the Opera, whilst the sacraments were being carried to the Prince

on the other side. He was compelled by public opinion to make a short visit after this. The Prince died at last in his arm−chair, surrounded by a few worthy people. Regrets were universal; but perhaps he gained by his disgrace. His heart was firmer than his head. He might have been timid at the head of an army or in the Council of the King if he had entered it. The King was much relieved by his death; Madame de Maintenon also; M. le Duc much more; for M. du Maine it was a deliverance, and for M. de Vendome a consolation. Monseigneur learned it at Meudon as he was going out to hunt, and showed no feeling of any kind.

The death of M. le Prince de Conti seemed to the Duc de Vendome a considerable advantage, because he was thus delivered from a rival most embarrassing by the superiority of his birth, just when he was about to be placed in a high military position. I have already mentioned Vendome's exclusion from command. The fall of this Prince of the Proud had been begun we have now reached the second step, between which and the third there was a space of between two and three months; but as the third had no connection with any other event, I will relate it at once.

Whatever reasons existed to induce the King to take from M. de Vendome the command of his armies, I know not if all the art and credit of Madame de Maintenon would not have been employed in vain, together with the intrigues of M. du Maine, without an adventure, which I must at once explain, to set before the reader's eyes the issue of the terrible struggle, pushed to such extremes, between Vendome, seconded by his formidable cabal, and the necessary, heir of the Crown, supported by his wife, the favourite of the King, and Madame de Maintenon, which last; to speak clearly, as all the Court saw, for thirty years governed him completely.

When M. de Vendome returned from Flanders, he had a short interview with the King, in which he made many bitter complaints against Pursegur, one of his lieutenant−generals, whose sole offence was that he was much attached to M. de Bourgogne. Pursegur was a great favourite with the King, and often, on account of the business of the infantry regiment, of which the thought himself the private colonel, had private interviews with him, and was held in high estimation for his capacity and virtue. He, in his turn, came back from Flanders, and had a private audience of the King. The complaints that had been made against him by M. de Vendome were repeated to him by the King, who, however, did not mention from whom they came. Pursegur defended himself so well, that the King in his surprise mentioned this latter fact. At the name of Vendome, Pursegur lost all patience. He described, to the King all the faults, the impertinences; the obstinacy, the insolence of M. de Vendome, with a precision and clearness which made his listener very attentive and very fruitful in questions. Pursegur, seeing that he might go on, gave himself rein, unmasked M. de Vendome from top to toe, described his ordinary life at the army, the incapacity of his body, the incapacity of his judgment, the prejudice of his mind, the absurdity and crudity of his maxims, his utter ignorance of the art of war, and showed to demonstration, that it was only by a profusion of miracles France had not been ruined by him—lost a hundred times over.

The conversation lasted more than two hours. The' King, long since convinced of the capacity, fidelity, and truthfulness of Pursegur, at last opened his eyes to the truth respecting this Vendome, hidden with so much art until then, and regarded as a hero and the tutelary genius of France. He was vexed and ashamed of his credulity, and from the date of this conversation Vendome fell at once from his favour.

Pursegur, naturally humble, gentle, and modest, but truthful, and on this occasion piqued, went out into the gallery after his conversation, and made a general report of it to all, virtuously, braving Vendome and all his cabal. This cabal trembled with rage; Vendome still more so. They answered by miserable reasonings, which nobody cared for. This was what led to the suppression of his pay, and his retirement to Anet, where he affected a philosophical indifference.

Crestfallen as he was, he continued to sustain at Meudon and Marly the grand manners he had usurped at the time of his prosperity. After having got over the first embarrassment, he put on again his haughty air, and ruled the roast. To see him at Meudon you would have said he was certainly the master of the saloon, and by his free and easy manner to Monseigneur, and, when he dared, to the King, he would have been thought the principal person there. Monseigneur de Bourgogne supported this—his piety made him do so—but Madame de Bourgogne was grievously offended, and watched her opportunity to get rid of M. de Vendome altogether.

It came, the first journey the King made to Marly after Easter. 'Brelan' was then the fashion. Monseigneur, playing at it one day with Madame de Bourgogne and others, and being in want of a fifth player, sent for M. de Vendome from the other end of the saloon, to come and join the party. That instant Madame de Bourgogne said modestly, but very intelligibly, to Monseigneur, that the presence of M. de Vendome at Marly was sufficiently painful to her, without having him at play with her, and that she begged he might be dispensed with.

Monseigneur, who had sent for Vendome without the slightest reflection, looked round the room, and sent for somebody else. When Vendome arrived, his place was taken, and he had to suffer this annoyance before all the company. It may be imagined to what an extent this superb gentleman was stung by the affront. He served no longer; he commanded no longer; he was no longer the adored idol; he found himself in the paternal mansion of the Prince he had so cruelly offended, and the outraged wife of that Prince was more than a match for him. He turned upon his heel, absented himself from the room as soon as he could, and retired to his own chamber, there to storm at his leisure.

Other and more cruel annoyances were yet in store for him, however. Madame de Bourgogne reflected on what had just taken place. The facility with which she had succeeded in one respect encouraged her, but she was a little troubled to know how the King would take what she had done, and accordingly, whilst playing, she resolved to push matters still further, both to ruin her guest utterly and to get out of her embarrassment; for, despite her extreme familiarity, she was easily embarrassed, being gentle and timid. The 'brelan' over, she ran to Madame de Maintenon; told her what had just occurred; said that the presence of M. de Vendome at Marly was a continual insult to her; and begged her to solicit the King to forbid M. de Vendome to come there. Madame de Maintenon, only too glad. to have an opportunity of revenging herself upon an enemy who had set her at defiance, and against whom all her batteries had at one time failed, consented to this request. She spoke out to the King, who, completely weary of M. de Vendome, and troubled to have under his eyes a man whom he could not doubt was discontented, at once granted what was asked. Before going to bed, he charged one of his valets to tell M. de Vendome the next morning, that henceforth he was to absent himself from Marly, his presence there being disagreeable to Madame de Bourgogne.

It may be imagined into what an excess of despair M. de Vendome fell, at a message so unexpected, and which sapped the foundations of all his hopes. He kept silent, however, for fear of making matters worse, did not venture attempting, to speak to the King, and hastily retired to Clichy to hide his rage and shame. The news of his banishment from Marly soon spread abroad, and made so much stir, that to show it was not worth attention, he returned two days before the end of the visit, and stopped until the end in a continual shame and embarrassment. He set out for Anet at the same time that the King set out for Versailles, and has never since put his foot in Marly.

But another bitter draught was to be mixed for him. Banished from Marly, he had yet the privilege of going to Meudon. He did not fail to avail himself of this every time Monseigneur was there, and stopped as long as he stopped, although in the times of his splendour he had never stayed more than one or two days. It was seldom that Monseigneur visited Meudon without Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne going to see him. And yet M. de Vendome never failed audaciously to present himself before her, as if to make her feel that at all events in Monseigneur's house he was a match for her. Guided by former experience, the Princess gently suffered this in silence, and watched her opportunity. It soon came.

Two months afterwards it happened that, while Monseigneur was at Meudon, the King, Madame de Maintenon; and Madame de Bourgogne, came to dine with him. Madame de Maintenon wished to talk with Mademoiselle Choin without sending for her to Versailles, and the King, as may be believed, was in the secret. I mention this to account for the King's visit. M. de Vendome;: who was at Meudon as usual, was stupid enough to present himself at the coach door as the King and his companions descended. Madame de Bourgogne was much offended, constrained herself less than usual, and turned away her head with affectation, after a sort of sham salute. He felt the sting, but had the folly to approach her again after dinner, while she was playing. He experienced the same treatment, but this time in a still more marked manner. Stung to the quick and out of countenance, he went up to his chamber, and did not descend until very late. During this time Madame de Bourgogne spoke to Monseigneur of the conduct of M. de Vendorne, and the same evening she addressed herself to Madame de Maintenon, and openly complained to the King. She represented to him how hard it was to her to be treated by Monseigneur with less respect than by the King: for while the latter had banished M. de Vendome from Marly, the former continued to grant him an asylum at Meudon.

M. de Vendome, on his side, complained bitterly to Monseigneur of the strange persecution that he suffered everywhere from Madame de Bourgogne; but Monseigneur replied to him so coldly that he withdrew with tears in his eyes, determined, however, not to give up until he had obtained some sort of satisfaction. He set his friends to work to speak to Monseigneur; all they could draw from him was, that M. de Vendome must avoid Madame de Bourgogne whenever she came to Meudon, and that it was the smallest respect he owed her until she was

reconciled to him. A reply so dry and so precise was cruelly felt; but M. de Vendome was not at the end of the chastisement he had more than merited. The next day put an end to all discussion upon the matter.

He was card−playing after dinner in a private cabinet, when D'Antin arrived from Versailles. He approached the players, and asked what was the position of the game, with an eagerness which made M. de Vendome inquire the reason. D'Antin said he had to render an account to him of the matter he had entrusted him with.

"I!" exclaimed Vendome, with surprise, "I have entrusted you with nothing."

"Pardon me," replied D'Antin; "you do not recollect, then, that I have an answer to make to you?"

From this perseverance M. de Vendome comprehended that something was amiss, quitted his game, and went into an obscure wardrobe with D'Antin, who told him that he had been ordered by the King to beg Monseigneur not to invite M. de Vendome to Meudon any more; that his presence there was as unpleasant to Madame de Bourgogne as it had been at Marly. Upon this, Vendome, transported with fury, vomited forth all that his rage inspired him with. He spoke to Monseigneur in the evening, but was listened to as coldly as before. Vendome passed the rest of his visit in a rage and embarrassment easy to conceive, and on the day Monseigneur returned to Versailles he hurried straight to Anet.

But he was unable to remain quiet anywhere; so went off with his dogs, under pretence of going a hunting, to pass a month in his estate of La Ferme−Aleps, where he had no proper lodging and no society, and gave there free vent to his rage. Thence he returned again to Anet, where he remained abandoned by every one. Into this solitude, into this startling and public seclusion, incapable of sustaining a fall so complete, after a long habit of attaining everything, and doing everything he pleased, of being the idol of the world, of the Court, of the armies, of making his very vices adored, and his greatest faults admired, his defects commended, so that he dared to conceive the prodigious design of ruining and destroying the necessary heir of the Crown, though he had never received anything but evidences of tenderness from him, and triumphed over him for eight months with the most scandalous success; it was, I say, thus that this Colossus was overthrown by the breath of a prudent and courageous princess, who earned by this act merited applause. All who were concerned with her, were charmed to see of what she was capable; and all who were opposed to her and her husband trembled. The cabal, so formidable, so lofty, so accredited, so closely united to overthrow them, and reign, after the King, under Monseigneur in their place —these chiefs, male and female, so enterprising and audacious, fell now into mortal discouragement and fear. It was a pleasure to see them work their way back with art and extreme humility, and turn round those of the opposite party who remained influential, and whom they had hitherto despised; and especially to see with what embarrassment, what fear, what terror, they began to crawl before the young Princess, and wretchedly court the Duc de Bourgogne and his friends, and bend to them in the most extraordinary manner.

As for M. de Vendome, without any resource, save what he found in his vices and his valets, he did not refrain from bragging among them of the friendship of Monseigneur for him, of which he said he was well assured. Violence had been done to Monseigneur's feelings. He was reduced to this misery of hoping that his words would be spread about by these valets, and would procure him some consideration from those who thought of the future. But the present was insupportable to him. To escape from it, he thought of serving in Spain, and wrote to Madame des Ursins asking employment. The King was annoyed at this step, and flatly refused to let him go to Spain. His intrigue, therefore, came to an end at once.

Nobody gained more by the fall of M. de Vendome than Madame de Maintenon. Besides the joy she felt in overthrowing a man who, through M. du Maine, owed everything to her, and yet dared to resist her so long and successfully, she felt, also, that her credit became still more the terror of the Court; for no one doubted that what had occurred was a great example of her power. We shall presently see how she furnished another, which startled no less.

CHAPTER XLVI.

It is time now to retrace my steps to the point from which I have been led away in relating all the incidents which arose out of the terrible winter and the scarcity it caused.

The Court at that time beheld the renewal of a ministry; which from the time it had lasted was worn down to its very roots, and which was ,on that account only the more agreeable to the King. On the 20th of January, the Pere La Chaise, the confessor of the King, died at a very advanced age. He was of good family, and his father would have been rich had he not had a dozen children. Pere La Chaise succeeded in 1675 to Pere Ferrier as confessor of the King, and occupied that post thirty−two years. The festival of Easter often caused him politic absences during the attachment of the King for Madame de Montespan. On one occasion he sent in his place the Pere Deschamps, who bravely refused absolution. The Pere La Chaise was of mediocre mind but of good character, just, upright, sensible, prudent, gentle, and moderate, an enemy of informers, and of violence of every kind. He kept clear of many scandalous transactions, befriended the Archbishop of Cambrai as much as he could, refused to push the Port Royal des Champs to its destruction, and always had on his table a copy of the New Testament of Pere Quesnel, saying that he liked what was good wherever he found it. When near his eightieth year, with his head and his health still good, he wished to retire, but the King would not hear of it. Soon after, his faculties became worn out, and feeling this, he repeated his wish. The Jesuits, who perceived his failing more than he did himself, and felt the diminution of his credit, exhorted him to make way for another who should have the grace and zeal of novelty. For his part he sincerely desired repose, and he pressed the King to allow him to take it, but all in vain. He was obliged to bear his burthen to the very end. Even the infirmities and the decrepitude that afflicted could not deliver him. Decaying legs, memory extinguished, judgment collapsed, all his faculties confused, strange inconveniences for a confessor—nothing could disgust the King, and he persisted in having this corpse brought to him and carrying on customary business with it. At last, two days after a return from Versailles, he grew much weaker, received the sacrament, wrote with his own hand a long letter to the King, received a very rapid and hurried one in reply, and soon after died at five o'clock in the morning very peaceably. His confessor asked him two things, whether he had acted according to his conscience, and whether he had thought of the interests and honour of the company of Jesuits; and to both these questions he answered satisfactorily.

The news was brought to the King as he came out of his cabinet. He received it like a Prince accustomed to losses, praised the Pere La Chaise for his goodness, and then said smilingly, before all the courtiers, and quite aloud, to the two fathers who had come to announce the death: "He was so good that I sometimes reproached him for it, and he used to reply to me: 'It is not I who am good; it is you who are hard.'"

Truly the fathers and all the auditors were so surprised at this that they lowered their eyes. The remark spread directly; nobody was able to blame the Pere La Chaise. He was generally regretted, for he had done much good and never harm except in self−defence. Marechal, first surgeon of the King, and possessed of his confidence, related once to me and Madame de Saint−Simon, a very important anecdote referring to this time. He said that the King, talking to him privately of the Pere La Chaise, and praising him for his attachment, related one of the great proofs he had given of it. A few years before his death the Pere said that he felt getting old, and that the King might soon have to choose a new confessor; he begged that that confessor might be chosen from among the Jesuits, that he knew them well, that they were far from deserving all that had been said against them, but still—he knew them well—and that attachment for the King and desire for his safety induced him to conjure him to act as he requested; because the company contained many sorts of minds and characters which could not be answered for, and must not be reduced to despair, and that the King must not incur a risk—that in fact an unlucky blow is soon given, and had been given before then. Marechal turned pale at this recital of the King, and concealed as well as he could the disorder it caused in him. We must remember that Henry IV. recalled the Jesuits, and loaded them with gifts merely from fear of them. The King was not superior to Henry IV. He took care not to forget the communication of the Pere La Chaise, or expose himself to the vengeance of the company by choosing a confessor out of their limits. He wanted to live, and to live in safety. He requested the Ducs de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers to make secret inquiries for a proper person. They fell into a trap made, were dupes themselves, and the Church and State the victims.

The Pere Tellier, in fact, was chosen as successor of Pere La Chaise, and a terrible successor he made. Harsh, exact, laborious, enemy of all dissipation, of all amusement, of all society, incapable of associating even with his colleagues, he demanded no leniency for himself and accorded none to others. His brain and his health were of iron; his conduct was so also; his nature was savage and cruel. He was profoundly false, deceitful, hidden under a thousand folds; and when he could show himself and make himself feared, he yielded nothing, laughed at the most express promises when he no longer cared to keep to them, and pursued with fury those who had trusted to them. He was the terror even of the Jesuits, and was so violent to them that they scarcely dared approach him. His exterior kept faith with his interior. He would have been terrible to meet in a dark lane. His physiognomy was cloudy, false, terrible; his eyes were burning, evil, extremely squinting; his aspect struck all with dismay. The whole aim of his life was to advance the interests of his Society; that was his god; his life had been absorbed in that study: surprisingly ignorant, insolent, impudent, impetuous, without measure and without discretion, all means were good that furthered his designs.

The first time Pere Tellier saw the King in his cabinet, after having been presented to him, there was nobody but Bloin and Fagon in a corner. Fagon, bent double and leaning on his stick, watched the interview and studied the physiognomy of this new personage his duckings, and scrapings, and his words. The King asked him if he were a relation of MM. le Tellier. The good father humbled himself in the dust. "I, Sire!" answered he, "a relative of MM. le Tellier! I am very different from that. I am a poor peasant of Lower Normandy, where my father was a farmer." Fagon, who watched him in every movement, twisted himself up to look at Bloin, and said, pointing to the Jesuit: "Monsieur, what a cursed ————!" Then shrugging his shoulders, he curved over his stick again.

It turned out that he was not mistaken in his strange judgment of a confessor. This Tellier made all the grimaces, not to say the hypocritical monkey−tricks of a man who was afraid of his place, and only took it out of, deference to his company.

I have dwelt thus upon this new confessor, because from him have come the incredible tempests under, which the Church, the State, knowledge, and doctrine, and many good people of all kinds, are still groaning; and, because I had a more intimate acquaintance with this terrible personage than had any man at the Court. He introduced himself to me in fact, to my surprise; and although I did all in my power to shun his acquaintance, I could not succeed. He was too dangerous a man to be treated with anything but great prudence.

During the autumn of this year, he gave a sample of his quality in the part he took in the destruction of the celebrated monastery of Port Royal des Champs. I need not dwell at any great length upon the origin and progress of the two religious parties, the Jansenists and the Molinists; enough has been written on both sides to form a whole library. It is enough for me to say that the Molinists were so called because they adopted the views expounded by, the Pere Molina in a book he wrote against the doctrines of St. Augustine and of the Church of Rome, upon the subject of spiritual grace. The Pere Molina was a Jesuit, and it was by the Jesuits his book was brought forward and supported. Finding, however, that the views it expounded met with general opposition, not only throughout France, but at Rome, they had recourse to their usual artifices on feeling themselves embarrassed, turned themselves into accusers instead of defendants, and invented a heresy that had neither author nor follower, which they attributed to Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. Many and long were the discussions at Rome upon this ideal heresy, invented by the Jesuits solely for the purpose of weakening the adversaries of Molina. To oppose his doctrines was to be a Jansenist. That in substance was what was meant by Jansenism.

At the monastery of Port Royal des Champs, a number of holy and learned personages lived in retirement. Some wrote, some gathered youths around them, and instructed them in science and piety. The finest moral works, works which have thrown the most light upon the science and practice, of religion, and have been found so by everybody, issued from their hands. These men entered into the quarrel against Molinism. This was enough to excite against them the hatred of the Jesuits and to determine that body to attempt their destruction.

They were accused of Jansenism, and defended themselves perfectly; but at the same time they carried the war into the enemy's camp, especially by the ingenious "Provincial Letters" of the famous Pascal.

The quarrel grew more hot between the Jesuits and Port Royal, and was telling against the former, when the Pere Tellier brought all his influence to bear, to change the current of success. He was, as I have said, an ardent man, whose divinity was his Molinism, and the company to which he belonged. Confessor to the King, he saw himself in a good position to exercise unlimited authority. He saw that the King was very ignorant, and prejudiced upon all religious matters; that he was surrounded by people as ignorant and as prejudiced as himself, Madame de

Maintenon, M. de Beauvilliers, M. de Chevreuse, and others, and he determined to take good advantage of this state of things.

Step by step he gained over the King to his views, and convinced him that the destruction of the monastery of Port Royal des Champs was a duty which he owed to his conscience, and the cause of religion. This point gained, the means to destroy the establishment were soon resolved on.

There was another monastery called Port Royal, at Paws, in addition to the one in question. It was now pretended that the latter had only been allowed to exist by tolerance, and that it was necessary one should cease to exist. Of the two, it was alleged that it was better to preserve the one, at Paris. A decree in council was, therefore, rendered, in virtue of which, on the night from the 28th to the 29th of October, the abbey of Port Royal des Champs was secretly invested by troops, and, on the next morning, the officer in command made all the inmates assemble, showed them a 'lettre de cachet', and, without giving them more than a quarter of an hour's warning, carried off everybody and everything. He had brought with him many coaches, with an elderly woman in each; he put the nuns in these coaches, and sent them away to their destinations, which were different monasteries, at ten, twenty, thirty, forty, and even fifty leagues distant, each coach accompanied by mounted archers, just as public women are carried away from a house of ill−fame! I pass in silence all the accompaniments of this scene, so touching and so strangely new. There have been entire volumes written upon it.

The treatment that these nuns received in their various prisons, in order to force them to sign a condemnation of themselves, is the matter of other volumes, which, in spite of the vigilance of the oppressors, were soon in everybody's hands; public indignation so burst out, that the Court and the Jesuits even were embarrassed with it. But the Pere Tellier was not a man to stop half−way anywhere. He finished this matter directly; decree followed decree, 'Lettres de cachet' followed 'lettres de cachet'. The families who had relatives buried in the cemetery of Port Royal des Champs were ordered to exhume and carry them elsewhere. All the others were thrown into the cemetery of an adjoining parish, with the indecency that may: be imagined. Afterwards, the house, the church, and all the buildings were razed to the ground, so that not one stone was left upon another. All the materials were sold, the ground was ploughed up, and sown—not with salt, it is true, but that was all the favour it received! The scandal at this reached even to Rome. I have restricted myself to this simple and short recital of an expedition so military and so odious.