

# BARINE ARVÈDE

LA GRANDE  
MADEMOISELLE

Arvède Barine

**La Grande Mademoiselle**

«Public Domain»

**Barine A.**

La Grande Mademoiselle / A. Barine — «Public Domain»,

© Barine A.

© Public Domain

# Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I	7
CHAPTER II	37
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	47

# Arvède Barine

## La Grande Mademoiselle / 1627 – 1652

### PREFACE

La Grande Mademoiselle was one of the most original persons of her epoch, though it cannot be said that she was ever of the first order. Hers was but a small genius; there was nothing extraordinary in her character; and she had too little influence over events to have made it worth while to devote a whole volume to her history – much less to prepare for her a second chronicle – had she not been an adventurous and picturesque princess, a proud, erect figure standing in the front rank of the important personages whom Emerson called "representative."

Mademoiselle's agitated existence was a marvellous commentary on the profound transformation accomplished in the mind of France toward the close of the seventeenth century, – a transformation whose natural reaction changed the being of France.

I have tried to depict this change, whose traces are often hidden by the rapid progress of historical events, because it was neither the most salient feature of the closing century nor the result of a revolution.

Essential, of the spirit, it passed in the depths of the eager souls of the people of those tormented days. Such changes are analogous to the changes in the light of the earthly seasons. From day to day, marking dates which vary with the advancing years, the intense light of summer gives place to the wan light of autumn. So the landscape is perpetually renewed by the recurring influences of natural revolution; in like manner, the moral atmosphere of France was changed and recharged with the principles of life in the new birth; and when the long civil labour of the Fronde was ended, the nation's mind had received a new and opposite impulsion, the casual daily event wore a new aspect, the sons viewed things in a light unknown to their fathers, and even to the fathers the appearance of things had changed. Their thoughts, their feelings, their whole moral being had changed.

It is the gradual progress of this transformation that I have attempted to show the reader. I know that my enterprise is ambitious; it would have been beyond my strength had I had nothing to refer to but the Archives and the various collections of personal memoirs. But two great poets have been my guides, Corneille and Racine, both faithful interpreters of the thoughts and the feelings of their contemporaries; and they have made clear the contrast between the two distinct social epochs – between the old and the new bodies, so different, yet so closely connected.

When the Christian pessimism of Racine had – in the words of Jules Lemaître – succeeded the stoical optimism of Corneille, all the conditions evolving their diverse lines of thought had changed.

The nature of La Grande Mademoiselle was exemplified in the moral revolution which gave us *Phédre* thirty-four years (the space of a generation) after the apparition of *Pauline*.

In the first part of her life, – the part depicted in this volume, – Mademoiselle was as true a type of the heroines of Corneille as any of her contemporaries. Not one of the great ladies of her world had a more ungovernable thirst for grandeur; not one of them cherished more superb scorn for the baser passions, among which Mademoiselle classed the tender sentiment of love. But, like all the others, she was forced to renounce her ideals; and not in her callow youth, when such a thing would have been natural, but when she was growing old, was she carried away by the torrent of the new thought, whose echoes we have caught through Racine.

The limited but intimately detailed and somewhat sentimental history of Mademoiselle is the history of France when Louis XIII. was old, and when young Louis – Louis XIV. – was a minor, living the happiest years of all his life.

If I seem presumptuous, let my intention be my excuse for so long soliciting the attention of my reader in favour of La Grande Mademoiselle.

## CHAPTER I

I. Gaston d'Orléans – His Marriage – His Character – II. Birth of Mademoiselle – III. The Tuileries in 1627 – The Retinue of a Princess – IV. Contemporary Opinions of Education – The Education of Boys – V. The Education of Girls – VI. Mademoiselle's Childhood – Divisions of the Royal Family.

In the Château of Versailles there is a full-length portrait of La Grande Mademoiselle, – so called because of her tall stature, – daughter of Gaston d'Orléans, and niece of Louis XIII. When the portrait was painted, the Princess's hair was turning grey. She was forty-five years old. Her imperious attitude and warlike mien befit the manners of the time of her youth, as they befit her Amazonian exploits in the days of the Fronde.

Her lofty bearing well accords with the adventures of the illustrious girl whom the customs and the life of her day, the plays of Corneille, and the novels of La Calprenède and of Scudéry imbued with sentiments much too pompous. The painter of the portrait had seen Mademoiselle as we have seen her in her own memoirs and in the memoirs of her companions.

Nature had fitted her to play the part of the goddess in exile; and it had been her good fortune to find suitable employment for faculties which would have been obstacles in an ordinary life. To become the Minerva of Versailles, Mademoiselle had to do nothing but yield to circumstances and to float onward, borne by the current of events.

In the portrait, under the tinselled trappings the deep eyes look out gravely, earnestly; the thoughtful face is naively proud of its borrowed divinity; and just as she was pictured – serious, exalted in her assured dignity, convinced of her own high calling – she lived her life to its end, too proud to know that hers was the fashion of a bygone age, too sure of her own position to note the smiles provoked by her appearance. She ignored the fact that she had denied her pretensions by her own act (her romance with Lauzun, – an episode by far too bourgeois for the character of an Olympian goddess). She had given the lie to her assumption of divinity, but throughout the period of her romance she bore aloft her standard, and when it was all over she came forth unchanged, still vested with her classic dignity. The old Princess, who excited the ridicule of the younger generation, was, to the few surviving companions of her early years, the living evocation of the past. To them she bore the ineffaceable impression of the thought, the feeling, the inspiration, the soul of France, as they had known it under Richelieu and Mazarin.

The influences that made the tall daughter of Gaston d'Orléans a romantic sentimentalist long before sentimental romanticism held any place in France, ruled the destinies of French society at large; and because of this fact, because the same influences that directed the illustrious daughter of France shaped the course of the whole French nation, the solitary figure – though it was never of a high moral order – is worthy of attention. La Grande Mademoiselle is the radiant point whose light illumines the shadows of the past in which she lived.

### I

Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, Duchess of Montpensier, was the daughter of Gaston of France, younger brother of King Louis XIII., and of a distant cousin of the royal family, Marie of Bourbon, Duchess of Montpensier. It would be impossible for a child to be less like her parents than was La Grande Mademoiselle. Her mother was a beautiful blond personage with the mild face of a sheep, and with a character well fitted to her face. She was very sweet and very tractable. Mademoiselle's father resembled the decadents of our own day. He was a man of sickly nerves, vacillating, weak of purpose, with a will like wax, who formed day-dreams in which he figured as a gallant and warlike knight,

always on the alert, always the omnipotent hero of singularly heroic exploits. He deluded himself with the idea that he was a real prince, a typical Crusader of the ancient days. In his chaotic fancy he raised altar against altar, burning incense before his purely personal and peculiar gods, taking principalities by assault, bringing the kings and all the powers of the earth into subjection, bearing down upon them with his might, and shifting them like the puppets of a chess-board. His efforts to attain the heights pictured by his imagination resulted in awkward gambols through which he lost his balance and fell, crushed by the weight of his own folly. Thus his life was a series of ludicrous but tragic burlesques.

In the seventeenth century, in flesh and blood, he was the Prince whom modern writers set in prominent places in romance, and whom they introduce to the public, deluded by the thought that he is the creature of their invention. Louis XIII. was a living and pitiable anachronism. He had inherited all the traditions of his rude ancestors. Yet, to meet the requirements of his situation, nature had accoutred him for active service with nothing but an enervated and unbalanced character. One of his most odious infamies – his first – served as a prologue to the birth of "Tall Mademoiselle." In 1626, as Louis XIII. had no child, his brother Gaston was heir-presumptive to the throne, and he was a bachelor. They who had some interest in the question were pushing him from all sides, urging him not to fetter himself by the inferior marriage of a younger son. They implored him to have patience; to "wait a while"; to see if there would not be some unlooked-for opening for him in the near future. His own apparent future was promising; there was much encouragement in the fact that the King was sickly. What might not a day bring forth? – "under such conditions great changes were possible!"

Monsieur's mind laid a tenacious grasp on the idea that he must either marry a royal princess, or none at all; and he was so imbued with the thought that he must remain free to attain supreme heights that when Marie de Médicis proposed to him a marriage with the richest heiress of France, Mlle. de Montpensier, he tried to evade her offer. He encouraged Chalais's conspiracy, which was to be the means of helping him to effect his flight from Court; he permitted his friends to compromise themselves, then without a shadow of hesitation he sold them all. When the plot had been exposed, he hastily withdrew his irons from the fire by reporting everything to Richelieu and the Queen-mother. His friends tried to excuse him by saying that he had lost his head; but it was not true. His avowals as informer are on record in the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and they prove that he was a man who knew very well what he was doing and why he was doing it, who worked intelligently and systematically, planning his course with matter-of-fact self-possession, selling his treason at the highest market-price of such commodities.

The 12th July, 1626, Monsieur denounced thirty of his friends, or servitors, whose only fault had lain in their devotion to his interests.

Once when Marie de Médicis reproached him for having failed to keep a certain written promise "never to think of anything tending to separate him from the King," Monsieur replied calmly that he had *signed that paper* but that he never had *said* that he would not do it, – that he "never had given a verbal promise." They then reminded him that he had "solemnly sworn several times." The young Prince replied with the same serenity, that whenever he took an oath, he did it "with a mental reservation."

The 18th, Monsieur, being in a good humour, made some strong protestations to his mother, who was in her bed. He again took up the thread of his denunciations to Richelieu without waiting to be invited to give his information. The 23d, he went to the Cardinal and told him to say that he, Monsieur, was ready to marry whenever they pleased, "if they would give him his appanage at the time of the marriage," – after which announcement he remarked that *the late M. d'Alençon had had three appanages*. Monsieur sounded his seas, and spied out his land in all directions, carefully gathering data and making very minute investigations as to the King's intentions. He intimated his requirements to the Cardinal, who "sent the President, Le Coigneux, to talk over his marriage and his appanage."

His haggling and his denunciations alternated until August 2d. Finally he obtained the duchies of Montpensier and of Chartres, the county of Blois, and pecuniary advantages which raised his

income to the sum of a million livres. His vanity was allowed free play on the occasion of the signing of the contract, but this was forgiven him because he was only eighteen years old.

Monsieur had eighty French guards, all wearing casques, and bandoleers of the fine velvet of his livery. Their helmets were loaded, in front and behind, with Monsieur's initials enriched with gold. He had, also, twenty-four Swiss guards, who marched before him on Sundays and other fête days, with drums beating, though the King was still in Paris. He was fond of pomp. The lives of his friends did not weigh a feather in the balance against a few provinces and a rolling drum.

His guardian, Marshal d'Ornano, was a prisoner in Versailles, where the Court was at that time. Investigations against him were in rapid progress; but the face of the young bridegroom was wreathed with smiles when he led his bride to the altar, 5th August, 1626. As soon as he had given his consent they had hastened the marriage. The ceremony took place as best it could. It was marriage by the lightning process. There was no music, the bridegroom's habit was not new. While the cortège was on its way, two of the resplendent duchesses quarrelled over some question of precedence. To quote the *Chronicles*: "From words they came to blows and from blows to scratches of their skins."

This event scandalised the public, but the splendour of the fêtes effaced the memory of the regrettable incidents preceding them. While the fêtes were in progress, Monsieur exhibited a gayety which astonished the people; they were not accustomed to the open display of such indelicacy. It was known why young Chalais had been condemned to death; it was known that Monsieur had vainly demanded that he be shown some mercy. When the 19th – the day of execution – came, Monsieur saw fit to be absent. The youthful Chalais was beheaded by a second-rate executioner, who hacked at his neck with a dull sword and with an equally dull tool used by coopers. When the twentieth blow was struck, Chalais was still moaning. The people assembled to witness the execution cried out against it.

Fifteen days later Marshal d'Ornano gave proof of his accommodating amiability by dying in his prison. Others who had vital interests at stake either fled or were exiled.

Judging from appearances, Monsieur had had nothing to do with the condemned or the suspected. His callous levity was noted and judged according to its quality. Frequently tolerant to an extraordinary degree, the morality of the times was firm enough where the fidelity of man to master, or of master to man, was concerned. The common idea of decency exacted absolute devotion from the soldier to his chief, from servant to employer, from the gentleman to his seignior. Nor was the duty of master to man less binding. Though his creatures or servants were in the wrong, though their failures numbered seventy times seven, it was the master's part to uphold, to defend, and to give them courage, to stand or to fall with them, as the leader stands with his armies. Gaston knew this; he knew that he dishonoured his own name in the eyes of France when he delivered to justice the men who had worn his colours. But he mocked at the idea of honour, shaming it, as those among our own sons – if they are unfortunate enough to resemble him – mock at the higher and broader idea of home and country, – the idea which, in our day, takes the place of all other ideas exacting an effort or a sacrifice.

It must not be supposed that Monsieur was an ordinary poltroon, bowed down by the weight of his shame, desperately feeble, a mawkish and shambling type of the effeminate adolescent; though a coward in shirking consequences he was a typical "prince": very spirited, very gay, and very brilliant; conscious of the meaning of all his actions; contented in his position, – such as he made it, – and resigned to act the part of a coward before the world.

His vivacity was extraordinary. The people marvelled at his unflinching lack of tact. Though very young, he was well grown. He was no longer a child whose nurse caught him with one hand, forcibly buttoning his apron as he struggled to run away; yet he skipped and gambolled, spinning incessantly on his high heels, his hand thrust into his pocket, his cap over his ear. In one way or in another he incessantly proclaimed his presence. His sarcastic lips were always curved over his white teeth; he was always whistling.

"One can see well that he is high-born," wrote the indulgent Madame de Motteville. "His restlessness and his grimaces show it." But Madame de Motteville was not his only chronicler. Others relished his manners less. A gentleman who had lived in his (Monsieur's) house when Monsieur was very young, saw him again under Mazarin, and finding that despite his age and size he was the same peculiar being that he had been in infancy, the old gentleman turned and ran away. "Well, upon my word," he cried, "if he is not the same deuced scamp as in the days of Richelieu! I shall not salute him."

Monsieur's portraits are not calculated to contradict the impression given by his contemporaries. He is a handsome boy. The long oval face is delicately fine. The eyes are spiritual; and despite its look of self-sufficiency the whole face is infinitely charming. One of the portraits shows a certain shade of sly keenness, but as a whole the face is always indescribably attractive, – and yet as we gaze upon it we are seized by an impulse to follow the example of the old marquis, and run away without saluting. In the portrait the base soul looks out of the handsome face just as it did in life, manifesting its deplorable reality through its mask of natural beauty and intelligence. No one could say that Monsieur was a fool. Retz declared: "M. le Duc d'Orléans had a fine and enlightened mind." It was the general impression that his conversation was admirable; judged by his talk he was a being of a superior order. His manners and his voice were engaging. He was an artist, very fond of pictures and rare and handsome trifles. He was skilful in engraving on metals; he loved literature; he loved to read; he was interested in new ideas and in the march of thought. He knew many curious sciences. He was a cheerful companion, easy-mannered, sprightly, easy of approach, fond of raillery, and full of his jests, but his jests were never ill-natured. Even his enemies were forced to own that he had a good disposition, and that he was naturally kind; and this was the general opinion of the strange being who was a Judas to so many of his most devoted friends.

Had Monsieur possessed but one grain of moral consciousness, and had he been free from an almost inconceivable degree of weakness and of cowardice, he would have made a fine Prince Charming. But his poltroonery and his moral debility stained the whole fabric of his life and made him a lugubrious example of spiritual infirmity. He engaged in all sorts of intrigues because he was too weak to say No, and owing to the same weakness he never honestly fulfilled an engagement.

At times he started out intending to do his duty, then when midway on his route he was seized by fear, he took the bit between his teeth, and ran, and nothing on earth could stop him. He carried out his cowardice with impudence, and his villainy was artful and adroit. However base his action, he was never troubled by remorse. He was insensible to love, and devoid of any sense of honour. Having betrayed his associates, he abandoned them to their fate, then thrust his hand into his pocket, pirouetted, cut a caper, whistled a tune, and thought no more of it.

## II

The third week in October the Duchess of Orleans returned to Paris. The Court was at the Louvre. The young pair, Monsieur and his wife, had their apartments in the palace, and the courtiers were not slow in finding their way to them.

Hardly had she arrived when Madame declared her pregnancy. As there was no direct heir to the crown, this event was of great importance. The people precipitated themselves toward the happy Princess who was about to give birth to a future King of France. Staid and modest though she was, her own head was turned by her condition. She paraded her hopes. It seemed to her that even then she held in her arms the son who was to take the place of a dauphin. Every one offered her prayer and acclamations; and every one hailed Monsieur as if he had been the rising sun.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Gaston.*

Monsieur asked nothing better than to play his part; he breathed the incense offered to his brilliant prospects with felicity.

Husband and wife enjoyed their importance to the full; they displayed their triumphant faces in all parts of that palace that had seen so much bitterness of spirit.

In itself, politics apart, the Louvre was not a very agreeable resting-place. On the side toward Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois its aspect was rough and gloomy. The remains of the old fortress of Philip Augustus and of Charles V. were still in existence. Opposite the Tuileries, towards the Quai, the exterior of the palace was elegant and cheerful. There the Valois and Henry IV. had begun to build the Louvre as we know it to-day.

A discordant combination of extreme refinement and of extreme coarseness made the interior of the palace one of the noisiest and dirtiest places in the world. The entrance to the palace of the King of France was like the entrance to a mill; a tumultuous crowd filled the palace from morning until night; and it was the custom of the day for individuals to be perfectly at ease in public, – no one stood on ceremony. The ebbing and flowing tide of courtiers, of business men, of countrymen, of tradesmen, and all the throngs of valets and underlings considered the stairways, the balconies, the corridors, and the places behind the doors, retreats propitious for the relief of nature.

It was a system, an immemorial servitude, existing in Vincennes and Fontainebleau as at the Louvre, – a system that was not abolished without great difficulty. In a document dated posterior to 1670, mention is made of the thousand masses of all uncleanness, and the thousand insupportable stench, "which made the Louvre a hot-bed of infection, very dangerous in time of epidemic." The great ones of earth accepted such discrepancies as fatalities; they contented themselves with ordering a sweep of the broom.

Neither Gaston nor the Princess, his wife, descended to the level of their critical surroundings. They were habituated to the peculiar features of the royal palaces; and certainly that year, in the intoxication of their prospects, they must have considered the palatial odours very acceptable.

It did not agree with their frame of mind to note that the always gloomy palace was more than usually dismal. Anne of Austria had been struck to the heart by the pregnancy of her sister-in-law. She had been married twelve years and she no longer dared to cherish the hope of an heir. She felt that she was sinking into oblivion. Her enemies had begun to insinuate that her usefulness was at an end and that she had no reason for clinging to life. The Queen of France lived so eclipsed a life that to the world she was nothing but a pretty woman with a complexion of milk and roses. The people knew that she was unhappy, and they pitied her. They never learned her true character until she became Regent. Anne of Austria was not the only one to drain the cup of bitterness that year. Louis XIII. also was jealous of the maternity of Madame. It was a part of his nature to cherish evil sentiments, and his friends found some excuse for his faults in his misfortunes. Since Richelieu had attained power, Louis had succumbed to the exigencies of monarchical duty. His whole person betrayed his distress, exhaling constraint and anxiety. The most mirthful jester quailed at the sight of the long, livid face, so mournful, so expressive of the mental torment of the Prince who "knew that he was hated and who had no fondness for himself."

Louis was timid and prudish, and, like his brother, he had sick nerves. Hérouard, who was his doctor when he was a child, exhibits the young Prince as a somnambulist, who slept with eyes open, and who arose in his sleep, walking and talking in a loud voice. Louis's doctors put an end to any strength that he may have had originally. In one year Bouvard bled him forty-seven times; and during that one twelvemonth the child was given twelve different kinds of medicines and two hundred and fifteen enemas. Is it credible that after such an experience the unhappy King merited the reproach of being "obstreperous in his intercourse with the medical faculty"?

He had studied but little; he took no interest in the things that pleased the mind; his pastimes were purely animal. He liked to hunt, to work in his garden, to net pouches for fish and game, to make snares and arquebuses. He liked to make preserves, to lard meat, and to shave. Like his brother,

he had one artistic quality: he loved music and composed it. "This was the one smile, the only smile of a natural ingrate."

Louis XIII. was of a nature dry and hard. He detested his wife; he loved nothing on earth but his young favourites. He loved them; then, in an instant, without warning, he ceased to love them; and when he had ceased to love them he did not care what became of them, – did not care whether they lived or died. Whenever he could witness the agony of death he did so, and turned the occasion into a picnic or a pleasure trip. He enjoyed watching the grimaces of the dying. His religious devotion was sincere, but it was narrow and sterile. He was jealous and suspicious, forgetful, frivolous, incapable of applying himself to anything serious.

He had but one virtue, but that he carried to such lengths that it sufficed to embalm his memory. This virtue was the one which raised the family of Hohenzollern to power and to glory. The sombre soul of Louis XIII. was imbued with the imperious sentiment of royal duty, – the professional duty of the man designed and appointed by Divine Providence to give account to God for millions of the souls of other men. He never separated either his own advantage or his own glory from the advantage and the glory of France. He forced his brother to marry, though he knew that the birth of a nephew would ulcerate his own flesh. He harboured Richelieu with despairing resolution because he believed that France could not maintain its existence without the hated ministry. He had the essential quality, the one quality which supplies the lack of other qualities, without which all other qualities, great and noble though they be, are useless before the State.

Around these chiefs of the Court buzzed a swarm of ambitious rivals and whispering intriguers all animated by one purpose, to effect the discomfiture of Richelieu. The King's health was failing. The Cardinal knew that Louis "had not two days to live"; he was seen daily, steadily advancing toward the grave. In Michelet's writings there is a striking page devoted to the "great man of business wasting his time and strength struggling against I do not know how many insects which have stung him." Marie de Médicis was the only one who united with the King in defending Richelieu in the critical winter of 1626. The Cardinal was the Queen's creature. The pair had many memories in common – and of more than one kind. Some years previous Richelieu had taken the trouble to play lover to the portly quadragenarian, and he had brought to bear upon his effort all the courage requisite for such a suit. The Court of France had looked on while the Cardinal took lessons in lute playing, because the Queen-mother, notwithstanding her age and her proportions, had had a fancy to play the lute as she had done when a little girl. Marie de Médicis had given proof that she was not insensible to such delicate attentions, and she had forgotten nothing; but the moment was approaching when Richelieu would find that it had been to no purpose that he had shouldered the ridicule of France by sighing out his music at the feet of the fat Queen.

That year a stranger would have said that the Court of France had never been more gay. Fête followed fête. In the winter there were two grand ballets at the Louvre, danced by the flower of the nobility, the King at their head. Louis XIII. adored such exhibitions, though they overthrow all modern ideas of a royal majesty.

The previous winter he had invited the Bourgeoisie of Paris to the Hôtel-de-Ville to contemplate their ghastly monarch masked for the carnival, dancing his *grand pas*. "It is my wish," said he, "to confer honour upon the city by this action." The Bourgeoisie had accepted the invitation; man and wife had flocked to the appointed place at the appointed hour, and there they had waited from four o'clock in the afternoon until five o'clock in the morning, before the royal dancers had made their appearance. The dance had not ended until noon, when the honoured Bourgeoisie had returned to their homes.

Monsieur took his full share of all official pleasures, and he had also some pleasures of his own, – and purely personal they were. Some of them were infantine; some of them, marked by intelligence, were far in advance of the ideas of that epoch. Contemporary customs demanded that people of the world should relegate their serious affairs to the tender mercies of the professional keen

wits, who made it their business to attend to such questions. Gaston used to convene the chosen of his lords and gentlemen, to argue subjects of moral and political import. In discussion Monsieur bore himself very gallantly. The resources of his wit were inexhaustible, and the justice of his judgment invariably evoked applause. He was a sleep-walker, because awake or asleep he was so restless that "he could not stay long in one place."<sup>2</sup> But he was not always asleep when he was met in the night groping his way through the noisome alleys. He used to jump from his bed, disguise himself, and run about in the night, leading a life like that of the wretched Gérard de Nerval, lounging on foot through the little streets of Paris which were very dark and suspiciously dirty. It amused him to enter strange houses and invite himself to balls and other assemblies. His behaviour in such places is not recorded, but the gentlemen who followed him (to protect him) let it be understood that there was "nothing good in it."

Gaston of Orleans had all the traits common to those whom we call "degenerate." His chief characteristic was an active form of bare and shameless moral relaxation. He was the mainspring of many and various movements.

One day when Richelieu was present, Louis XIII. twitted the Queen with her fancies. He said that she had "wished to prevent Monsieur from marrying so that she could marry him herself when she became a widow."

Anne of Austria cried out: "I should not have gained much by the change!"

(Neither would France have "gained much by the change," and it was fortunate for her that Louis was permitted to retain possession of his feeble rights.)

The child so desired by some, so envied and so dreaded by others, entered the world May 29, 1627. Instead of a dauphin it was a girl —*La Grande Mademoiselle*. Seven days after the child was born the mother died.

Louis XIII. gave orders for the provision of royal obsequies, and he himself sprinkled the bier with the blessed water, very grateful because Providence had not endowed him with a nephew. Anne of Austria, incognito, assisted at the funeral pomps. This act was received with various interpretations. The simple – the innocent-minded – said that it was a proof of the compassion inspired by Madame's sudden taking off; the malicious supposed that it was just as the King had said: "The Queen loved Monsieur; she rejoiced in his wife's death; she hoped to marry him when she became a widow."

The Queen was sincerely afflicted by Madame's death. She cherished an open preference for her second son, and the thought of his ambitious flight had agreeably caressed her heart.

Richelieu pronounced a few suitable words of regret for the Princess who had never meddled with politics, and Monsieur did just what he might have been expected to do: he wept boisterously, immediately dried his tears, and plunged into debauchery.

The Court executed the regulation manœuvres, and came to the "about face" demanded by the circumstances. Whatever may have been the calculations made by individuals relative to the positions to be taken in order to secure the best personal results, and whatever the secret opinions may have been (as to the advantages to be drawn from the catastrophe), it was generally conceded that the little Duchess had been fortunate in being left sole possessor of the vast fortune of the late Madame her mother.

The latter had brought as marriage-portion the dominion of Dombes, the principality of Rochesur-Yon, the duchies of Montpensier, Châtellerault, and Saint-Fargeau, with several other fine tracts of territory bearing the titles of marquisates, counties, viscounties, and baronies, with very important incomes from pensions granted by the King and by several private individuals, – in all amounting to three hundred thousand livres of income.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires de Gaston.*

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires de Gaston.*

The child succeeding to this immense inheritance was the richest heiress in Europe. As her mother had been before her, so Mademoiselle was raised in all the magnificence and luxury befitting her rank and fortune.

### III

They had brought her from the Louvre to the Tuileries by the balustraded terrace along the Seine.<sup>4</sup>

She was lodged in the *Dôme*— known to the old Parisians as the *pavillon d'Horloge*— and in the two wings of the adjoining buildings. At that time the Tuileries had not assumed the aspect of a great barrack. They wore a look of elegance and fantastic grace before they were remodelled and aligned by rule. At its four corners the *Dôme* bore four pretty little towers; on the side toward the garden was a projecting portico surmounted by a terrace enclosed by a gallery. On this terrace, in time, Mademoiselle and her ladies listened to many a serenade and looked down on many a riot.

The rest of the façade (as far as the *pavillon de Flore*) formed a succession of angles, now jutting forward, now receding, in conformations very pleasing to the eye. The opposite wing and the *pavillon de Marsan* had not been built. Close at hand lay an almost unbroken country. The rear of the palace looked out upon a parterre; beyond the parterre lay a chaos from which the *Carrousel* was not wholly delivered until the Second Empire. There stood the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet, close to the hotel of Madame de Chevreuse, confidential friend of Anne of Austria and interested enemy of Richelieu. There were other hotels, entangled with churches, with a hospital, a "Court of Miracles," gardens, and wild lands overgrown with weeds and grasses. There were shops and stables; and away at the far end of the settlement stood the Louvre, closing the perspective.

The Court and the city crowded together around the Bird House and the Swans' Pond, in the Dedalus and before the Echo, ogling or criticising one another. At that time the Place de la Concorde was a great, green field, called the Rabbit Warren. In one part of the field stood the King's kennels.<sup>5</sup> The city's limits separated the Champs-Élysées from the wild lands running down to the Seine at the point where the Pont de la Concorde now stands. This space, enclosed by the boundaries of the city, assured to the Court a park-like retreat in the green fields of the open country. The enclosure was entered by the gate of the Conférence. The celebrated "Garden of Renard" was associated with Mademoiselle's first memories. It had been taken from that part of *La Garenne* which lay between the gate of the Conférence<sup>6</sup> and the Garden of the Tuileries. Renard had been *valet-de-chambre* to a noble house. He was witty, pliable, complaisant to the wishes or the fancied needs of his employers, amiable, and of "easy, accommodating manners"<sup>7</sup>; in short, he was a precursor of the Scapins and the Mascarells of Molière. Mazarin found pleasure and profit in talking with him. Renard's garden was a bower of delights. It was the preferred trysting-place of the lordlings of the Court, and the scene of all things gallant in that gallant day.

The fair ladies of the Court frequented the place; so did the crowned queens; and there many an amorous knot was tied, and many a plot laid for the fall of many a minister.

There the men of the day gave dinners, and rolled under the table at dessert; and in the bosky glades of the garden the ladies offered their collations. There were balls, comedies, concerts, and serenades in the groves, and all the gay world met there to hear the news and to discuss it. Renard was the man of the hour, no one could live without him.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*.

<sup>5</sup> Sauval (1620-1670), *Histoire et recherches sur les antiquités de Paris*.

<sup>6</sup> The gate of the "Conférence" was built at the time the great improvements were begun, in 1633. It was built after the grand plans of Cardinal de Richelieu and according to his own instructions (Gamboust).

<sup>7</sup> Piganiol de la Force (1673-1753), *Description of the City of Paris*, etc.

The Cours la Reine, created by Marie de Médicis, was outside of Paris. It was a broad path, fifteen hundred and forty common steps long, with a "round square," or *rond-point*, in its centre. In that sheltered path, the fine world, good and bad, displayed its toilets and its equipages.

Mlle. de Scudéry has given us a description of it at the hour when it was most frequented. Two of her characters entered Paris by the village of Chaillot.

Coming into the city, where Hermogène led Bélésis, one finds beside the beautiful river four great alleys, so broad, so straight, and so shaded by the great trees which form them, that one could not imagine a more agreeable promenade. And this is the place where all the ladies come in the evening in little open chariots, and where all the men follow them on horseback; so that having liberty to approach either one or the other, or all of them, as they go up and down the paths they all promenade and talk together; and this is doubtless very diverting.

Hermogène and Bélésis having penetrated into the Cours,

they saw the great alleys full of little chariots, all painted and gilded; sitting in the chariots were the most beautiful ladies of Suze (Paris), and near the ladies were infinite numbers of gentlemen of quality, admirably well mounted and magnificently dressed, going and coming, saluting as they passed.

In the summer they lingered late in the Cours la Reine, and ended the evening at Renard's. Marie de Médicis and Anne of Austria were rarely absent.

Close by the Champs-Élysées lay a forest, through which the huntsman passed to hunt the wolf in the dense woods of the Bois de Boulogne. In the distance could be seen the village of Chaillot, perched on a height amidst fields and vines. Market gardens covered the quarters of Ville l'Évêque and the Chaussée d'Antin.

Mademoiselle was installed with royal magnificence at the Tuileries. In her own words: "They made my house, and they gave me an equipage much grander than any daughter of France had ever had."

Thirty years later she was still happily surrounded by the retinue provided by her far-seeing guardians. Her servitors were of every grade, from the lowest, who prepared a pathway for her feet, to the highest, whose service added dignity to her presence. By investing her with her nucleus of domestic tributaries, her friends had established her importance, even in her infancy, by manifestations that could not be disputed. In that day people were obliged to attach importance to such details. But a short time had passed since brutal force had been the only recognised right; and it was the way of the world to judge the grandeur of a prince by the length and volume of his train. It was because La Grande Mademoiselle had, from earliest youth, possessed an army of squires, of courtiers, of valets, and of serving-men and serving-women – a horde beginning with the fine milord and ending with the hare-faced scullion, seen now and then in some shadowy retreat of the palace, low-browed, down-trodden, looking out with dazzled eyes upon the world of life and luxury, – it was because she had been a ruler even in her swaddling bands, that she could aspire, naturally and without overweening arrogance, to the hands of the most powerful sovereigns. "The sons of France," says a document of 1649, "are provided with just such officials as surround the King; but they are less numerous... The Princes have officers in accordance with their revenues and in accordance with the rank that they hold in the kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

The same document furnishes us with details of the installation of Anne of Austria. If, when we estimate the equipage of Mademoiselle, we reduce it by half of the estimate of the Queen's equipage, we fall short of the reality. Like an army in campaign, a Court ought to be sufficient unto itself, able to meet all its requirements. The upper domestic retinue of the Queen comprised more than one

---

<sup>8</sup> *Estat de la France* (Collection Danjou).

hundred persons, *maîtres-d'hôtel* or stewards, cup-bearers, carvers, secretaries, physicians, surgeons, oculists, musicians, squires, almoners, nine chaplains, "her confessor," a common confessor, and too many other kinds of employees to be enumerated. Under all these officials, each one of whom had his own especial underlings, were equal numbers of valets and of chambermaids who assured the service of the apartments. The Court cooking kept busy one hundred and fifty-nine drilled knife-sharpeners, soup-skimmers, roast-hastenings, and water-handers, or people to hand water as the cooks needed it for their mixtures. There were other servitors whose business it was to await the beck and call of their superiors, – call-boys, always waiting for signals. Then came the busy world of the stables; then fifty merchants or shop-men, and an indefinite number of artisans of all the orders of all the trades. In all there were between six and seven hundred souls, not counting the valets of the valets or the grand "*charges*," the officials close to the Queen, the Queen's chancellor, the *chevaliers d'honneur*, or gentlemen-in-waiting, the ladies in-waiting, and maids of honour.

The great and noble people were often very badly served by their hordes of servants. Madame de Motteville tells us how the ladies of the Court of Anne of Austria were nourished in the peaceful year 1644, when the Court coffers were yet full.

According to the law of etiquette, the Queen supped in solitary state. Her supper ended, we ate what was left. We ate without order or measure, in any way we could. Our only table service was her wash-cloth and the remnants of her bread. And, though this repast was very ill-organised, it was not at all disagreeable, because it had the advantage of what is called "privacy," and because of the quality and the merit of those who sometimes met there.

The most modern Courts still retain some vestiges of the Middle Ages. Louis XIII. had, or had had, four dwarfs, their salary being three hundred "tournois" or Tours livres. The King paid a man to look after his dwarfs, keep them in order, and regulate their conduct.<sup>9</sup>

To the day of her death, despite her exile and her misery, Marie de Médicis maintained in her service a certain Jean Gassan, who figures in her will as employed in "keeping the parrot."

When a child, Louis XIV. had two *baladins*. Mademoiselle had a dwarf who did not retire from her service until 1645. The registers of the Parliament (date, 10th May, 1645) contain letters patent and duly verified, by which the King accorded to "Ursule Matton, the dwarf of Mademoiselle, sole daughter of the Duke of Orleans, the power and the right to establish a little market in a court behind the new meat market of Saint Honoré."<sup>10</sup>

Marie de Médicis completed the house and establishment of her granddaughter by giving her, for governess, a person of much virtue, wit, and merit, Madame de Saint Georges, who knew the Court thoroughly. Nevertheless Mademoiselle asserted that she had been very badly raised, thanks to the herd of flattering hirelings who thronged the Tuileries, and who no sooner surrounded her than they became insupportable.

It is a common thing [said she] to see children who are objects of respect, and whose high birth and great possessions are continually the subject of conversation, acquire sentiments of spurious glory. I so often had at my ears people who talked to me either about my riches or about my birth that I had no trouble to persuade myself that what they said was true, and I lived in a state of vanity which was very inconvenient.

While very young she had reached a degree of folly where it displeased her to have people speak of her maternal grandmother, Madame de Guise. "I used to say: '*She* is my *distant* grandmamma; *she* is not Queen.'"

---

<sup>9</sup> *Extraits des comptes et dépenses du roi pour l'année 1616* (Collection Danjou).

<sup>10</sup> *Mémoires de Mathieu Molé*.

It does not appear that Madame Saint Georges, that person of so much merit, had done anything to neutralise evil influences.

Throughout the seventeenth century, opinions on the education of girls were very vacillating because little importance was attached to them. In 1687, after all the progress accomplished through the double influence of Port Royal and Madame de Maintenon, Fénelon wrote:

Nothing is more neglected than the education of girls. Fashion and the caprices of the mothers often decide nearly everything. The education of boys is considered of eminent importance because of its bearing upon the public welfare; and while as many errors are committed in the education of boys as in the education of girls, at least it is an accepted idea that a great deal of enlightenment is required for the successful education of a boy.

It was supposed that contact with society would be sufficient to form the mind and to polish the wit of woman. In this fact lay the cause of the inequality then noticeable in women of the same class. They were more or less superior from various points of view, as they had been more or less advantageously placed to profit by their worldly lessons, by the spectacle of life, and by the conversation of honest people.

The privileged ones were women who, like Mademoiselle and her associates, had been accustomed to the social circles where the history of their times was made by the daily acts of life. Their best teachers were the men of their own class, who intrigued, conspired, fought, and died before their eyes, – often for their pleasure. The agitated and peril-fraught lives of those men, their chimeras, and their romanticism put into daily practice, were admirable lessons for the future heroines of the Fronde. To understand the pupils, we must know something of their teachers. What was the process of formation of those professors of energy; in what mould was run that race of venturesome and restless cavaliers who evoked a whole generation of Amazons made in their own image? The system of the education of France of that epoch is in question, and it is worthy of a close and detailed examination.

#### IV

From their infancy, boys were prepared for the ardent life of their times. They were raised according to a clearly defined and fixed idea common to rich and poor, to noble and to plebeian. The object of a boy's education was to make him a man while he was still very young. The only difference in the opinions of the gentleman and of the bourgeois was this:

The gentleman believed that action was the best stimulant to action. The bourgeois thought that the finer human sentiments, the so-called "humanities," were the only sound foundations for a virile and practical education. But whatever the method used, in that day, a man entered upon life at the age when our sons are but just beginning interminable studies preliminary to their "examinations." At the age of eighteen, sixteen – even fifteen years, – the De Gassions, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Omer Talons, and the Arnauld d'Andillys had become officers, lawyers, or men of business, and in their day affairs bore little resemblance to modern affairs. In our day men do not enter active life until they have been aged and fatigued by the march of years. The time of entrance upon the career of life ought not to be a matter of indifference to a people. At the age of thirty years a man no longer thinks and feels as he thought and felt at the age of twenty. His manner of making war is different; and there is even more difference in his political action. He has different ambitions. His inclinations lead him into different adventures. The moments of history, when the agitators of the nation were young men, glow with the light of no other epoch. There was then an indefinable quality in life, – an active principle, more ardent and more vital. Under Louis XIII. there were scholars to make the unhappy students of our own emasculated times die of envy. Certain examples of our modern school become bald before they rise from the benches of their college.

Jean de Gassion, Marshal of France at the age of thirty years, who "killed men" at the age of thirty-eight years (1647), was the fourth son, but not the last, of a President of Parliament at Navarre, who had raised his offspring with great care (having destined him for the career of "Letters"). The child took such advantage of his opportunities that before he was sixteen years old he was a consummate scholar. He knew several of the living languages – German, Flemish, Italian, and Spanish. Thus prepared for active life, he set out from Pau astride of his father's old horse. When he had gone four or five leagues, the old horse gave out. Jean de Gassion continued his journey on foot. When he reached Savoy, they made war on him. He enlisted as common soldier, and fought so well that he was promoted cornet. When peace was declared, he was in France. He determined to go to the King of Sweden – Gustavus Adolphus, – who was said to be somewhere in Germany. De Gassion had resolved to offer the King the service of his sword, and to ask to be allowed to lead the Swedish armies. But as he had no idea of presenting himself to the King single-handed, he persuaded some fifteen or twenty cavaliers of his own regiment to go with him, and embarked with them on the Baltic Sea. And – so runs the story – he just happened to land where Gustavus Adolphus was walking along the shore.

(Such coincidences are possible only when youths are in their teens; after the age of twenty, no man need hope for similar experience.) Jean saluted the King, and addressed him in excellent Latin. He expressed his desire to be of service. The King was amused; he received the strange offer amiably, and consented to put the learned stripling to the test. And so it was that Gassion was enabled to attain to a colonelcy when he was but twenty-two years old. His early studies had stood him in good stead; had he not known his Latin, he would have missed his career. His Ciceronian harangue, poured out fluently just as the occasion demanded it, attracted the favour of a King who was, by his own might, a prince of letters.

After the King of Sweden died, Gassion returned to France. With Condé he won the battle of Rocroy, and, during the siege, died of a bullet in his head, leaving behind him the reputation of a brilliant soldier and accomplished man of letters, as virtuous as he was brave. He never wished to marry. When they spoke to him of marriage, he answered that he did not think enough of his life to offer a share of it to any one. This was an expression of pessimism far in advance of his epoch.

La Rochefoucauld, who will never be accused of having been naturally romantic, offered another example of the miracles performed by youths. Only once in his life did he play the part of Paladin. He launched himself in politics before he had a beard. When he was sixteen years old, he entered upon his grand campaign, bearing the title of "Master of the Camp."

The following year he was at Court, elbowing his way among all the parties, busily engaged in opposition to Richelieu. But his politics did not add anything to his age; he was still an adolescent, far removed from the enlightened theorist of the *Maximes*.

The peculiarly special savour of the springtime of life was communicated to his soul at the hour appointed by nature. In him it was impregnated by a faint perfume of heroism and of poetry. He never forgot the happiness with which for a week or more he played the fool. He was then twenty-three years old. Queen Anne of Austria was in the depths of her disgrace, maltreated and persecuted by her husband and by Richelieu.

In this extremity [said Rochefoucauld], abandoned by all the world, devoid of aid, daring to confide in no one but Mademoiselle de Hautefort – and in me, – she proposed to me to abduct them both and take them to Brussels. Whatever difficulty I may have seen in such a project, I can say that it gave me more joy than I had ever had in my life. I was at an age when a man loves to do extraordinary things, and I could not think of anything that would give me more satisfaction than that: to strike the King and the Cardinal with one blow, to take the Queen from her husband and

from the jealous Richelieu, and to snatch Mademoiselle de Hautefort from the King who was in love with her!

In truth the adventure would not have been an ordinary one; La Rochefoucauld assumed its duties with enthusiasm, renouncing them only when the Queen changed her mind.

Like all his fellows, La Rochefoucauld had his outburst of youth; but he fell short of its folly. Recalling his extravagant project, he said: "Youth is a continuous intoxication; it is the fever of Reason."

The memoirs of Arnauld d' Andilly tell us how the sons of the higher nobility were educated in the year 1600 and thereabout. Arnauld d' Andilly began to study Greek and Latin at home, under the supervision of a very learned father. Toward his tenth year his family thought that the moment had come to introduce into his little head the meanings and the realities of speculation. The child was destined for "civil employment." His day was divided into two parts; one half was devoted to "disinterested study"; the other half to the study of things practical. So he served his apprenticeship for business by such a system that his themes and his versions lost none of their rights. His mornings were consecrated to lessons and tasks. They were long mornings; the family rose at four o'clock. The little student became a good Latinist, and even a good Hellenist. He wrote very well in French, and he was a good reader.

Ten or twelve volumes which belonged to him are still in existence, and they attest that he knew a great deal more than the graduates of our modern colleges, – though he knew nothing of the things they aim at. At eleven o'clock he closed his lexicons, bade adieu to his preceptor and to the pedagogy, bestrode his horse, and rode to Paris, to the house of one of his uncles, who had taken it upon himself to teach the boy everything that he could not learn from his books. Our forefathers carefully watched their sons' first contact with reality. They tried not to leave to chance the duties of so important an initiation; and as a general thing their supervision left ineffaceable traces. Uncle Claude de la Mothe-Arnauld, Treasurer-General of France, installed his nephew in his private cabinet and gave him various bundles of endorsed papers to decipher. The child was obliged to pick out their meaning and then render a clear analysis of it in a distinct voice. When he was fifteen years old another uncle, a Supervisor of the National Finances, caused the student to "put his fist into the dough" in his own office. At sixteen years of age, "little Arnauld" was "M. Arnauld d' Andilly"; vested with office under the State, received at Court, and permitted to assist behind the chair of the King, at the Councils of Finance, so that he might hear financial arguments, and learn from the Nation's statesmen how to decide great questions. His education was not an exceptional one. The sons of the bourgeoisie were raised in like manner. Attempts to educate boys were more or less successful, according to the natural gifts of the postulants. Omer Talon, Advocate-General of the Parliament of Paris, and one of the great Parliamentary orators of the century, had pursued extensive classical studies, and "as he spoke, Latin and Greek rushed to his lips." He had "vast attainments in law," a science much more complicated in the sixteenth century than in our day. But, learned though he was, he had not lingered on the benches of his school. He was admitted to the Bar when he was eighteen years old, and "immediately began to plead and to be celebrated."

Antoine Le Maître, the first "Solitaire" of Port Royal, began his career by appearing in public as the best known and most important and influential lawyer in Paris when he was twenty-one years old.

Generally, the nobility sacrificed learning, which it despised, to an impatient desire to see its sons "in active life." The nobles made pages of their sons as soon as they were thirteen or fourteen years old, or else sent them to the "Academy" to learn how to make proper use of a horse, to fence, to vault, and to dance.<sup>11</sup>

In the eyes of people of quality books and writings were the tools of plebeians; good enough for professional fine wits, or lawyers' clerks, but not fit for the nobility.

---

<sup>11</sup> Letter written by Pontis.

In the reign of Louis XIII.,<sup>12</sup> M. d'Avenal wrote thus: "Gentlemen are perfectly ignorant, – the most illustrious and the most modestly insignificant alike. In this respect, with few exceptions, there is absolute equality between them."

The Constable, De Montmorency, had the reputation of a man of sound sense, "though he had no book learning, and hardly knew how to write his own name." Many of the great lords knew no more; and this ignorance was not shameful; on the contrary it was desired, affected, gloried in, and eagerly imitated by the lesser nobility.

"I never sharpen my pen with anything but my sword," proudly declared a gentleman.

"Ah?" answered a wit; "then your bad writing does not astonish me!"

The exceptions to the rule resulted from the caprices of the fathers; and they were sometimes found where least expected. The famous Bassompierre, arbiter of fashion and flower of courtiers, who, at one sitting, burned more than six thousand letters from women, who wore habits costing fourteen thousand écus, and could describe their details twenty years after he had worn them, had been very liberally educated, and according to a method which as may be imagined, was far in advance of the methods of his day. He had followed the college course until the sixteenth year of his age, he had laboured at rhetoric, logic, physics, and law, and dipped deep into Hippocrates and Aristotle. He had also studied *les cas de Conscience*. Then he had gone to Italy, where he had attended the best riding schools, the best fencing schools, a school of fortifications, and several princely Courts. At the age of nineteen years he was a superb cavalier and a good musician, he knew the world, and had made a very brilliant first appearance at Court.

The great Condé, General-in-Chief at the age of twenty-two years, had followed a college course at the school of Bourges, and had been "drilled" at the "Academy." He was tried by the fire of many a hard school. Wherever he went he was preceded by tart letters of instruction from his father. By his father's orders he was always received and treated as impartially as any of the lesser aspirants to education; he was severely "exercised," put on his mettle in various ways, and compelled to start out from first principles, no matter how well he knew them. When seven years old he spoke Latin fluently. When he reached the age of eleven he was well grounded in rhetoric, law, mathematics, and the Italian language. He could turn a verse very prettily; and he excelled in everything athletic.

Louis XIII. applauded this deep and thorough study, – perhaps because he regretted his lost opportunities. He told people that he should "wish to have ... Monsieur the Dauphin," educated in like manner.<sup>13</sup>

In measure as the century advanced it began to be recognised that a nobleman could "study" without detracting from his noble dignity. Louis de Pontis, who started out as a D'Artagnan, and ended at Port Royal,<sup>14</sup> wished that time could be taken to instruct the youth of the nation. Answering some one who had asked his advice as to the education of two young lords of the Court, he wrote<sup>15</sup>:

I will begin by avowing that I do not share the sentiments of those who wish for their children only so much science as is "needed" – as they call it – "for a gentleman"; I do not see things in that light. I should demand more science.

Since science teaches man how to reason and to speak well in public, is it not necessary to men, who, by the grandeur of their birth, their employment, and their duties, may need it at any moment, and who make use of it in their numerous meetings with the enlightened of the world? There are several personages who hold that the society of virtuous and talented women expands and polishes the mind of

---

<sup>12</sup> *Richelieu et la monarchie absolue.*

<sup>13</sup> *Mémoires* of Lenet.

<sup>14</sup> See his *Mémoires*.

<sup>15</sup> A few years before his death, which occurred in 1670.

a young cavalier more than the conversation of men of letters; but I am not of their opinion...

Notwithstanding this declaration, Pontis desired that great difference should be established between the treatment of a child training for the robes and the treatment of one training for military service. "The first ought never to end his studies; it is sufficient for the second to study until his fifteenth or sixteenth year; after that time he ought to be sent to the Academy..."

In this opinion Pontis echoed the general impression. At the time when La Grande Mademoiselle was born, the man of quality no longer had a right to be "brutal," – in other words, to betray coarseness of nature. New customs and new manners exacted from the man of noble birth tact and good breeding, not science. But it was requisite that the nobleman's mind should be "formed" by the influence and discourse of a man of letters, so that he might be capable of judging witty and intellectual works ("works of the mind").

Marshal Montmorency,<sup>16</sup> son of the Constable, who "hardly knew how to write his own name," had always in his employ cultured and intellectual people, who "made verses" for him on a multitude of such subjects as it was befitting his high estate that he should know; such subjects as were calculated to give him an air of intelligence and general information. His intellectual advisers informed him what to think and what to say of the current questions of the day.<sup>17</sup> It was good form for great and noble houses to entertain at least one *authheur*. As there were no public journals or reviews, the *authheur* took the place of literary chronicles and literary criticism. He talked of the last dramatic sketch, or of the last new novel.

It was not long before another step in advance was taken, by which every nobleman was permitted to entertain his own personal *authheur*, and to compose "works of the mind" for himself. But he who succumbed to the epidemic (*cacoëthes scribendi*), owed it to his birth and breeding to hide his malady, or to make excuses for it.

Mlle. de Scudéry puts in the mouth of *Sapho* (herself) in *Le Grand Cyrus*<sup>18</sup>:

Nothing is more inconvenient than to be intellectual or to be treated as if one were so, when one has a noble heart and a certain degree of birth; for I hold that it is an indubitable fact that from the moment one separates himself from the multitude, distinguishing one's self by the enlightenment of one's mind; when one acquires the reputation of having more mind than another, and of writing well enough – in prose or in verse – to be able to compose books, then, I say, one loses one half of one's nobility – if one has any – and one is not one half as important as another of the same house and of the same blood, who has not meddled with writings...

About the time this opinion saw the light, Tallemant des Réaux wrote to M. de Montausier, husband of the beautiful Julie d'Angennes, and one of the satellites of the Hôtel de Rambouillet: "He plys the trade of a man of mind too well for a man of quality – or at least he plays the part too seriously ... he has even made translations..." This mention is marked by one just feature: the man who wrote, who could write, or who indulged in writing, was supposed to have judgment enough to keep him from attaching importance to his works. The fine world had regained the taste for refinement lost in the fracas of the civil wars; but in the higher classes of society was still reflected the horror of the preceding generations for pedants and for pedantry.

Ignorant or learned, half-grown boys were cast forward by their hasty education into their various careers when they had barely left the ranks of infancy. They were reckless, still in the flower of their giddy youth; but they were enthusiastic and generous. France received their high spirits

---

<sup>16</sup> Beheaded in 1632, aged thirty-seven years.

<sup>17</sup> Tallemant.

<sup>18</sup> The first volume of *Le Grand Cyrus* appeared in 1649; the last in 1653.

very kindly. Deprived of the good humour, and stripped of the illusions furnished by the young representatives of their manhood, the times would have been too hard to be endured. The traditions of the centuries when might was the only right still weighed upon the soul of the people. One of those traditions exacted that – from his infancy – a man should be "trained to blood." A case was cited where a man had his prisoners killed by his own son, – a child ten years old. One exaction was that a man should never be conscious of the sufferings of a plebeian.

France had received a complete inheritance of inhuman ideas, which protected and maintained the remains of the savagery that ran, like a stained thread, through the national manners, just falling short of rendering odious the gallant cavaliers. All that saved them from the disgust aroused by the brutal exercise of the baser "rights" was the bright ray of poetry, whose dazzling light gleamed amidst their sombre faults.

They were quarrelsome, but brave. Perchance as wild as outlaws, but devoted, gay, and loving. They were extraordinarily lively, because they were – or had been but a short time before – extraordinarily young, with a youth that is not now, nor ever shall be.

They inspired the women with their boisterous gallantry. In the higher classes the sexes led nearly the same life. They frequented the same pleasure resorts and revelled in the same joys. They met in the lanes and alleys, at the theatre (*Comédie*), at balls, in their walks, on the hunt, on horseback, and even in the camps. A woman of the higher classes had constantly recurring opportunities to drink in the spirit of the times. As a result the ambitious aspired to take part in public life; and they shaped their course so well, and made so much of their opportunities, that Richelieu complained of the importance of women in the State. They were seen entering politics, and conspiring like men; and they urged on the men to the extremes of folly.

Some of the noblewomen had wardrobes full of disguises; and they ran about the streets and the highways dressed as monks or as gentlemen. Among them were several who wielded the sword in duel and in war, and who rode fearlessly and well. They were all handsome and courageous, and even in the abandon of their most reckless gambols they found means to preserve their delicacy and their grace. Never were women more womanly. Men adored them, trembling lest something should come about to alter their perfection. Their fear was the cause of their desperate and stubborn opposition to the idea of the education of girls, then beginning to take shape among the elder women.

I cannot say that the men were not in the wrong; but I do say that I understand and appreciate their motives. Woman, or goddess, of the order of the nobles of the time of Louis XIII., was a work of art, rare and perfect; and to tremble for her safety was but natural!

It happened that La Grande Mademoiselle came to the age to profit by instruction just when polite circles were discussing the education of girls. The governess whose duty it had been to guide her mind was caught between two opposing forces: the defendants of the ancient ignorance and the first partisans of the idea of "*enlightenment for all.*"

## V

*Les Femmes Savantes* might have been written under Richelieu. *Philaminte* had not awaited the advent of Molière to protest against the ignorance and the prejudice that enslaved her sex. When the piece appeared, more than half a century had elapsed since people had quarrelled in the little streets about woman's position, – what she ought to know, and what she ought not to know. But if the piece had been written long before its first appearance, the treatment of the subject could not have been the same. It would have been necessary to agree as to what woman ought to be in her home and in her social relations; and at that time they were just beginning to disagree on that very subject. Nearly all men thought that things ought to be maintained in the existing conditions. The nobles had exquisite mistresses and incomparable political allies; the bourgeois had excellent housekeepers; and to one and all alike, noble and bourgeois, it seemed that any instruction would be superfluous; that things were

perfect just as they were. The majority of the women shared the opinions of the men. The minority, looking deeper into the question, saw that there might be a more serious and more intellectual way of living to which ignorance would be an obstacle; but at every turn they were met by men stubbornly determined that women should not be made to study. Such men would not admit that there could be any difference between a cultivated woman and "*Savante*," – the term then used for "blue-stocking." It must be confessed that there was some justice in their judgment. For a reason which escapes me, when knowledge attempted to enter the mind of a woman it had great trouble to make conditions with nature and simplicity. It was not so easy! Even to-day certain preparations are necessary, – appointment of commandants, the selection of countersigns, establishment of a picket-line – not to say a deadline. We have *précieuses* in our own day, and their pretensions and their grimaces have been lions in our path whenever we have attempted the higher instruction of our daughters; the truly *précieuses*, they who were instrumental in winning the cause of the higher education of women – they who, under the impulsion given by the Hôtel de Rambouillet, worked to purify contemporary language and manners – were not ignorant of the baleful affectation of their sisters, nor of the extent of its compromising effect upon their own efforts. Mlle. de Scudéry, who knew "nearly everything that one could know" (by which was probably meant "everything fit to be known"), and who piqued herself upon being not less modest than she was wise, could not be expected to share, or to take part in, and in the mind of the public be confounded with, the female *Trissotins* whose burden of ridicule she felt so keenly. She would not allow herself to resemble them in any way when she brought them forth in *Grand Cyrus*, where the questions now called "feminist" were discussed with great good sense.

*Damophile*, who affects to imitate *Sapho*, is only her caricature. *Sapho* "does not resemble a '*Savante*'"; her conversation is natural, gallant, and easy (commodious).

*Damophile* always had five or six teachers. I believe that the least learned among them taught her astrology.

She was always writing to the men who made a profession of science. She could not make up her mind to have anything to say to people who did not know anything. Fifteen or twenty books were always to be seen on her table; and she always held one of them in her hand when any one entered the room, or when she sat there alone; and I am assured that it could be said without prevarication that one saw more books in her cabinet than she had ever read, and that at *Sapho's* house one saw fewer books than she had read.

More than that, *Damophile* used only great words, which she pronounced in a grave and imperious voice; though what she said was unimportant; and *Sapho*, on the contrary, used only short, common words to express admirable things. Besides that, *Damophile*, believing that knowledge did not accord with her family affairs, never had anything to do with domestic cares; but as to *Sapho*, she took pains to inform herself of everything necessary to know in order to command even the least things pertaining to the household.

*Damophile* not only talked as if she were reading out of a book, but she was always talking about books; and, in her ordinary conversation, she spoke as freely of unknown authors as if she were giving public lessons in some celebrated academy.

She tries ... with peculiar and strange carefulness, to let it be known how much she knows, or thinks that she knows. And that, too, the first time that a stranger sees her. And there are so many obnoxious, disagreeable, and troublesome things about *Damophile*, that one must acknowledge that if there is nothing more amiable nor more charming than a woman who takes pains to adorn her mind with a thousand agreeable forms of knowledge, – when she knows how to use them, – nothing is as ridiculous and as annoying as a woman who is "stupidly wise."

Mlle. de Scudéry raged when people, who had no tact, took her for a *Damophile*, and, meaning to compliment her, consulted her "on grammar," or "touching one of Hesiod's verses."

Then the vials of her wrath were poured out upon the "*Savantes*" who gave the prejudiced reason for condemning the education of woman, and who provoked annoying and ridiculous misconception by their insupportable pedantry; when there were so many young girls of the best families who did not even learn their own language, and who could not make themselves understood when they took their pens in hand.

"The majority of women," said Nicanor, "seem to try to write so that people will misunderstand them, so strange is their writing and so little sequency is there in their words."

"It is certain," replied Sapho, "that there are women who speak well who write badly; and that they do write badly is purely their own fault... Doubtless it comes from the fact that they do not like to read, or that they read without paying any attention to what they are doing, and without reflecting upon what they have read. So that although they have read the same words they use when they write, thousands and thousands of times, when they come to write they write them all wrong. And by putting some letters where other letters ought to be, they make a confused tangle which no one can distinguish unless he is well used to it."

"What you say is so true," answered Erinne, "that I saw it proved no longer ago than yesterday. I visited one of my friends, who has returned from the country, and I carried her all the letters she wrote to me while she was away, so that she might read them to me and let me know what was in them."

Mademoiselle de Scudéry did not exaggerate; our great-grandmothers did not see the utility of applying a knowledge of spelling to their letters. In that respect each one extricated herself by the grace of God.

The Marchioness of Sablé, who was serious and wise, and, according to the testimony of *Sapho*, "the type of the perfect *précieuse*" had peculiar ways of her own in her spelling. She wrote, *J'hasse, notre broulerie votre houbly*. Another "*précieuse*," Madame de Brégy, whose prose and verse both appeared in print, wrote to Madame de Sablé, when they were both in their old age:

Je vous diré que je vieus d'apprendre que samedi, Monsieur, Madame, et les poupons reviene a Paris, et que pour aujourd'hui la Rayue et Madame de Toscane vout a Saint-Clou don la naturelle bauté sera reausé de tout les musique possible et d'un repas magnifique don je quiterois tous les gous pour une écuelle non pas de nantille, mes pour une devostre potage; rien n'éta si délisieus que d'an mauger en vous écoutan parler. (19th September, 1672.)

It is but just to add that as far as orthography was concerned many of the men were women. The following letter of the Duke of Gesvres, "first gentleman of Louis XIV.," has no reason to envy the letter of the old Marchioness.

(Paris, this 20th September, 1677.) Monsieur me trouvant oblige de randre vuue bonne party de l'argan que mais enfant out pris de peuis quil sont en campane Monsieur cela m'oblige a vous suplier très humblement Monsieur de me faire la grasse de Commander Monsieur quant il vous plaira que l'on me pay le capitenery de Movsaux monsieur vous assurant que vous m'obligeres fort sansiblement Monsieur, comme ausy de me croire avec toute sorte de respec Monsieur vostre très humble et très obeissant serviteur.

Enough is as good as a feast! Though we stand in no superstitious awe of orthography, we can but laud Mademoiselle de Scudéry for having crossed lances in its favour. And well might she wish that to the first elements of an education might be added a certain amount of building material

suitable for a foundation so solid that something more serious than dancing steps and chiffons might at a later date be introduced into the brains of young girls.

Seriously, [she said] is there anything stranger than the way they act when they prepare to enter upon the ordinary education of woman? One does not wish women to be coquettish or gallant, and yet they are permitted to learn carefully everything that has anything to do with gallantry; though they are not permitted to know anything that might fortify their virtue or occupy their minds. All the great scoldings given them in their first youth because they are not proper<sup>19</sup> – that is to say dressed in good taste, and because they do not apply themselves to their dancing lessons and their singing lessons – do they not prove what I say? And the strangest of all is that this should be so when a woman cannot, with any propriety, dance more than five or six years of all the years of her life! And this same person who has been taught to do nothing but to dance is obliged to give proof of judgment to the day of her death; and though she is expected to speak properly, even to her last sigh, nothing is done – of all that might be done – to make her speak more agreeably, nor to act with more care for her conduct; and when the manner in which these ladies pass their lives is considered, it might be said that they seem to have been forbidden to have reason and good sense, and that they were put in the world only that they might sleep, be fat, be handsome, do nothing, and say nothing but silly things... I know one who sleeps more than twelve hours every day, who takes three or four hours to dress herself, or, to speak more to the point: not to dress herself – for more than half of the time given to dressing is passed either in doing nothing or in doing over what has been done. Then she employs fully two or three hours in consuming her divers repasts; and all the rest of the time is spent receiving people to whom she does not know what to say, or in paying visits to people who do not know what to say to her.

In spite of her strictness, Mlle. de Scudéry was no advocate of the idea which makes a woman her husband's servant, or installs her as the slave of the stew-pan. Whenever she was urged to "tell precisely what a woman ought to know," the problem was so new to her that she did not know how to answer it. She evaded it, rejecting its generalities. She had only two fixed ideas: that science was necessary to women; and that the women who attained it must not let it be known that they had attained it. She expressed her two opinions clearly:

It [science] serves to show them the meaning of things; it makes it possible for them to listen intelligently when their mental superiors are talking – even to talk to the point and to express opinions – but they must not talk as books talk; they must try to speak as if their knowledge had come naturally, as if their inherent common sense had given them an understanding of the things in question.

Mademoiselle had in her mind one woman whom she would have liked to set up as a pattern for all other women. That one woman knew Latin, and because of her sense and propriety, was esteemed by Saint Augustine, and yet no one had ever thought of calling her a "*Savante*."

Mlle. de Scudéry was very grateful to the charming Mme. de Sévigné, because she plead the cause of woman's education by so fine an example, and she depicted her admirable character with visible complaisance, under the name of Clarinte.<sup>20</sup>

Her conversation is easy, diverting and natural. She speaks to the point, and evinces clear judgment; she speaks well; she even has some spontaneous expressions,

---

<sup>19</sup> Mademoiselle de Scudéry uses the word *propre*, meaning "elegant," etc.

<sup>20</sup> In *Clélie*.

so ingenuous and so witty that they are infinitely pleasing... Clarinte dearly loves to read; and what is better, without playing the wit, she is admirably quick to seize the hidden meaning of fine ideas. She has so much judgment that, though she is neither severe, nor shy, she has found the means to preserve the best reputation in the world... What is most marvellous in this person is that, young as she is, she cares for her household as prudently as if she had had all the experience that time can give to a very enlightened mind; and what I admire still more, is that whenever it is necessary she can do without the world, and without the Court; she is as happy in the country, she can amuse herself as well there, as if she had been born in the woods... I had nearly forgotten to tell you that she writes as she speaks; that is to say, most agreeably and as gallantly as possible.

The programme used for the distribution of studies by means of which the De Sévigné's were fabricated is not revealed. Nature herself must have furnished a portion of the plan. As far as we can judge the part played by education was restricted to the adoption of some of the suggestions of very rich moral endowments.

Mlle. de Chantal had been admirably directed by her uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, and, aside from the cares of the profession which now presides over the education of woman, it is probable that more efficient means could not be found for the proper formation of the character of a girl than it was Mademoiselle de Chantal's good fortune to enjoy.

Ménage and Chapelain had been her guides in rhetoric. She had read Tacitus and Virgil in the original all her life. She was familiar with Italian and with Spanish, and had ancient and modern history at her tongue's end, – also the moralists and the religious writers.

These serious and well-grounded foundations, which she continually strengthened and renewed until death, did not prevent her from "adoring" poetry, the drama, and the superior novels, – in short, all things of enlightenment and worth wherever she found them and under whatever form. She was graceful in the dance; she sang well, – her contemporaries said that her manner of singing was "impassioned."

The Abbé Coulanges had raised her so carefully that she was orderly; and, unlike the majority, she liked to pay her debts. She was a perfect type of woman. She even made a few mistakes in orthography, taking one, or more, letter, or letters, for another, or for others. In short, she made just the number of errors sufficient to permit her to be a writer of genius without detracting from her air of distinguished elegance, or from the obligations and the quality of her birth.

There were others at Court and in the city who confirmed their right to enlightenment, thereby justifying the theses of Mademoiselle de Scudéry. But a large number of women gave the lie to her theories by their resemblance to *Damophile*. Of these latter was "the worthy Gournay," Montaigne's "daughter by alliance," who, from the exalted heights of her Greek and Latin, and in a loud, insistent voice, discoursed like a doctor of medicine on the most ticklish of subjects, – subjects far from pleasing when rolled out of the mouth of a woman, even when so displaced in the name of antiquity and all that is venerable! (For in these names "the good Gournay" evoked them.) There was another pedant, the Viscountess d'Auchy, who had "founded conferences" in her own house; the people of the fine world flocked there to smother as they listened while it was proved, for their edification, that the Holy Trinity had natural reasons for its existence. On those "foundations" the Innate Idea also was proved by demonstrative reason by collecting and by analysing the ideas of young children concerning philosophy and theology. The lady who founded the conferences had bought some manuscript *Homilies on the Epistles of St. Paul*, of a doctor of theology. She had had them imprinted and attached to portraits of herself. Thus accoutred for their mission, they were circulated with great success, and their proceeds formed the endowment fund of the *Conférence* Library.

"The novelty of seeing a great lady of the Court commenting on the most obscure of the apostles caused every one to buy the book."<sup>21</sup> It ended by the Archbishop of Paris intimating to the "Order of the Conferences" that they "would better leave Theology to the Sorbonne."

Mlle. Des Jardins declaimed her verses in the salons with great "contortions" and with eyes rolling as if in death; and she was not at all pleased when people preferred Corneille's writings to her own.

Mlle. Diodée frightened her hearers so that they took to their heels when she began to read her fine thoughts on Zoroaster or on Hermes Trismegistus. Another learned lady would speak of nothing but solar or lunar eclipses and of comets.

The pedantry of this high order of representative woman transported the "honest man" with horror. The higher the birth of the man the greater his fear lest by some occult means he might be led to slip his neck into the noose of a "*Savante*." But there was one counter-irritant for this virulent form of literary eruption. The young girls of the highest nobility were all extremely ignorant. Mlle. de Maillé-Brézé, niece of Cardinal de Richelieu, had not an idea of the most limited degree of the knowledge of books when she married the great Condé (1641). She knew nothing whatever. It was considered that ignorance carried to such length proved that neglect of instruction had gone too far, and when the great Condé went on his first campaign, friends seized the opportunity to add a few facets to the uncut jewel. She was turned and turned about, viewed in different lights, and polished so that her qualities could be seen to the best advantage. "The year after her marriage," says Mlle. de Scudéry, "she was sent to the Convent of the Carmelite Nuns of Saint Denis, to be taught to learn to read and write, during the absence of Monsieur her husband."

The *Contes de Perrault*—faithful mirror of the habits of those days—teaches us what an accomplished princess ought to be like. All the fairies to be found in the country had acted as godmothers to the *Belle-au-Bois-dormant*,

so that each one of them could bring her a gift ... consequently the princess had acquired every imaginable perfection... The youngest fairy gave her the gift of being the most beautiful woman in the world; the one who came next gave her the spirit of an angel; the third endowed her with power to be graceful in everything that she did; the fourth gave her the art of dancing like a fairy; the fifth the art of singing like a nightingale; and the sixth endowed her with the power to play all kinds of instruments to perfection.

Perrault had traced his portraits over the strongly defined lines of real life. La Grande Mademoiselle was trained after the manner of the *Belle-au-Bois-dormant*. Her governess had had too much experience to burden her with a science that would have made her redoubtable in the eyes of men; so she had transferred to the fairies the task of providing her young charge with a suitable investiture. Unhappily for her eternal fame, when she distributed her powers of attorney some of the fairies were absent; so Mademoiselle neither sang like a nightingale, nor displayed classic grace in all her actions. But her resemblance to Perrault's heroines was striking. The fairies empowered to invest her with mind and delicacy of feeling had been present at her baptism, and they had left indisputable proof of the origin of her ideas. Like their predecessors, the elves of the *Contes*, they had never planned for anything less than the marriage of their god-daughter to the King's son. By all that she saw and heard, Mademoiselle knew that Providence had not closed an eye at the moment of her creation. She knew that her quality was essential. She knew that it was written on high that she should marry the son of a great King.

Her life was a conscientious struggle to "accomplish the oracle"; and the marriages that she missed form the weft of her history.

---

<sup>21</sup> Tallemant.

## VI

The first of the *Mémoires* show us the Court of Louis XIII. and the affairs of the day as seen by a little girl. This is an aspect to which historians have not accustomed us; and as a natural result of the infantine point of view the horizons are considerably narrowed. The little Princess did not know that anything important was taking place in Germany. She could not be ignorant of the fact that Richelieu was engaged in a struggle with the high powers of France; she read the general distress in the clouded faces surrounding her. But in her mind she decided that it was nothing but one of her father's quarrels with the Cardinal. The judgments she rendered against the high personages whose houses she frequented were dictated by purely sentimental considerations. "Some she liked; some she did not like"; consequently the former gained, and the latter lost. Many contestants were struggling before her young eyes; Louis XIII. was among the winners.

He was a good uncle, very affectionate to his niece, and deeply grateful that she was nothing worse than a girl. He could never rid himself of the idea that his brother might have endowed him with an heir. He had Mademoiselle brought to the Louvre by the gallery along the river, and allowed himself to be cheered by her turbulence and uncurbed indiscretions.

Anne of Austria exhibited a deep tenderness for Mademoiselle; but no one can deceive a child. "I think that all the love she showed me was nothing but the effect of what she felt for Monsieur," writes Mademoiselle; and further on she formally declares that the Queen, believing herself destined to a near widowhood, had formed the "plan" of marrying Monsieur. Whatever the Queen's plans may have been, it is certain that she caressed the daughter for love of the father. Anne of Austria never forgave Mademoiselle for the part that she had played before her birth, in the winter of 1626-1627, when the Duchess of Orleans so arrogantly promised to bring forth a Dauphin. Monsieur had no reason to fear the scrutiny of a child. He was a charming playfellow; gay, complaisant, fond of his daughter, at least for the moment, – no one could count upon the future!

Cardinal de Richelieu could not gain anything by thoughtful criticism. To the little Princess he was the Croquemitaine of the Court. When we think of his ogre face – spoil sport that he was! as he appeared to the millions of French people who were incapable of understanding his policy – the silhouette traced by the hand of Mademoiselle appears in a new light, and we are forced to own that its profound and simple ignorance is instructive.

Marie de Médicis had managed to disappear from the Luxembourg and from Paris, after the *Journée des Dupes* (11 November, 1630), and her little granddaughter had not noticed her departure. She writes: "I was still so young that I do not remember that I ever saw her." The case was not the same after the departure of Monsieur. He had continually visited the Tuileries, and when he came no more the child knew it well enough. She understood that her father had been punished, and she was not permitted to remain ignorant of the identity of the insolent personage who had placed him on the penitential stool. Mademoiselle, then less than four years old, was outraged in all her feelings by the success of Richelieu. She made war upon him in her own way; and, dating from that day, became dear to the people of Paris, who had always loved to vex and to humble the Government. She wrote with a certain pride: "On that occasion my conduct did not at all answer to my years. I did not want to be amused in any way; and they could not even make me go to the assemblies at the Louvre." As she had no better scapegoat, her bad humour was vented on the King. She constantly growled at him, demanding that he should bring back her "papa." But Mademoiselle was never able to pout to such purpose that she could stay away from the palace long, for she was a true courtier, firmly convinced that to be away from Court was to be in a desert, no matter how many servants and companions might surround her. She soon mended her broken relations with the assemblies and the collations of the Louvre, and could not refrain from "entering into the joy of her heart" when "Their Majesties" sent

word to her guardians to take her to Fontainebleau. But she never laid down her arms where Richelieu was concerned. She knew all the songs that were written against him.

Meanwhile Monsieur had not taken any steps to make himself interesting. As soon as he had crossed the French frontier he entered upon a pleasure debauch which rendered him unfit for active service, for a time at least. He paid for his high flight in Spanish money. In 1632 he further distinguished himself by entering France at the head of a foreign army. On that occasion he caused the death of the Duke of Montmorency, who was executed for "rebellion."

Immediately after the Duke's execution, it was discovered that Monsieur had secretly married a sister of the Duke of Lorraine. He, Monsieur, crowned his efforts by signing a treaty with Spain (12 May, 1634), for which act France paid by yielding up strips of French territory.

But to his daughter Monsieur was always the victim of an impious persecution. Speaking of the years gorged with events so closely concerning her own life, she says:

Many things passed in those days. I was only a child; I had no part in anything, and could not notice anything; All that I can remember is that at Fontainebleau (5 May, 1663) I saw the Ceremony of the Chevaliers of the Order. During the ceremony they degraded from the Order Monsieur the Duke d'Elbœuf, and the Marquis de la Vieu Ville. I saw them tear off and break the arms belonging to their rank, – a rank equal to all the others; and when I asked the reason they told me they had insulted them "because they had followed Monsieur." Then I wept. I was so wounded by this treatment that I would have retired from Court; and I said that I could not look on this action with the submission that would become me.

The day after the ceremony an incident exciting much comment added to Mademoiselle's grief. Her enemy, the Cardinal, took part in the promotion of the Cordons Bleus. On this occasion Louis XIII. wished to exalt his Minister by giving him a distinguishing mark of superiority. He wished to distinguish him, and him only, by giving him a present. His choice of a present fell upon an object well fitted to evoke the admiration of a child. The chevaliers of the *Saint Esprit* were at a banquet. At dessert they brought to Richelieu the King's gift, an immense rock composed of various delicate confitures. From the centre of the rock jetted a fountain of perfumed water. Given under solemn circumstances and to a prince of the Church, it was a singular present. It attracted remark, its familiarity tended to give colour to the rumours circulating to the effect that an alliance then in process of incubation would eventually unite the House of France and the family of a very powerful Minister. The people voiced the current rumour volubly; they said that "Gaston's marriage with a Lorraine" would never be recognised, and that the young Prince would buy his pardon by marrying the niece of the Cardinal. Mademoiselle heard the rumours and her heart swelled with anguish at the thought of her father's dishonour.

I was not so busy with my play that I did not listen attentively when they spoke of the "accommodating ways" of Monsieur! The Cardinal de Richelieu, who was first minister and master of affairs, had made up his mind that it should be so, – that he should marry *that one!* and he had expressed his wishes with such shameful suggestions that I could not hear them mentioned without despair. To make peace with the King, Monsieur must break his marriage with Princesse Marguerite d'Orléans, and marry Mlle. de Combalet, niece of the Cardinal, now Madame d'Aguillon! From the time I first heard of the project I could not keep from weeping when it was spoken of; and, in my wrath, to avenge myself, I sang all the songs against the Cardinal and his niece that I knew. Monsieur did not let himself be "arranged" to suit the Cardinal. He came back to France without the assistance of the ridiculous condition. But how it was done I do not know. I cannot say anything about it, because I had no knowledge of it.

If it is true that Mademoiselle did not know the details of the quarrels in which the House of France engaged during her childhood, she was not inquisitive. Her knowledge in that respect had been at the mercy of her own inclination. By the thoughtful care of Richelieu, all the correspondence and all the official reports exposing the Court miseries were placed where all might read who ran. Richelieu had divined the power of the press over public opinion, although in that day there was no press in France. There were no journals to defend the Government. The *Mercure Française*<sup>22</sup> was not a journal; it appeared once a year, and contained only a brief narration of "the most remarkable things that had come to pass" in the "four parts of the world." Renaudot's *Gazette*<sup>23</sup> was hardly a journal, though it appeared every eight days, and numbered Louis XIII. among its contributors. Louis furnished its military news. Richelieu and "Father Joseph" furnished its politics. Neither Renaudot nor his protectors had any idea of what we call a "premier Paris" or an "article de fond"; they had never seen such things and they would not have been capable of compassing such inventions. The *Gazette* was not a sheet of official information; it did not contain matter enough for one page of the *Journal des Débats*. But the necessity of saying something to France was a crying one. It had become absolutely necessary to put modern royalty in communication with the nation, and to explain to the people at large the real meaning of the policy of the Prime Minister. The people must be taught why wars, alliances, and scaffolds were necessary. Something must be done to defend France against the attacks of Marie de Médicis and the cowardly Gaston. At that time placards and pamphlets rendered the services now demanded of the journals. By means of the placards the King could speak directly to the people and take them to witness that he was in difficulty, and that he was trying to do his best. In his public letters he confided to them his family chagrins, and the motives of his conduct toward the foreign powers. His correspondence with his mother and his brothers was printed as fast as it was written or received by him. Apologies for his conduct were supported by a choice of documents. From time to time the pamphlets were collected and put in volumes – the volumes which were the ancestors of our "yellow books."

I have before me one of these volumes, dated 1639, without name of editor or publisher. It bears the title: *Recueil de divers pièces pour servir a l'histoire*. Two thirds of its space are consecrated to the King's quarrels with his family. Mademoiselle must have learned from it many things which she has not the air of suspecting. Perhaps she found it convenient or agreeable to be ignorant of them. In the pages of this instructive volume none of her immediate relations appear to any advantage. Louis XIII. is invariably dry and bombastic, or constrained and affected; he shows no trace of emotion when, in his letter of 23 February, 1631, he informs the people that

being placed in the extremity of choosing between our mother and our minister we did not even hesitate, because they have embittered the Queen our very honoured lady and mother against our very dear and very beloved cousin, Cardinal de Richelieu; there being no entreaty, no prayer or supplication, nor any consideration, public or private, that we have not put forward to soften her spirit; our said cousin recognising what he owes her, by reason of all sorts of considerations, having done all that he could do for her satisfaction; the reverence that he bears her having carried him to the point of urging us and supplicating us, divers times, to find it good that he should retire from the management of our affairs; a request which the utility of his past services and the interests of our authority have not permitted us to think of granting... And recognising the fact that none of the authors of these differences continue to maintain their disposition to diverge from our royal justice, we have not found a way to avoid removing certain persons from our Court, nor even to avoid separating ourselves, though with unutterable pain, from the Queen, our very

---

<sup>22</sup> The first number bears date 1605.

<sup>23</sup> The first number appeared May 1, 1631.

honoured lady and mother, during such time as may be required for the softening of her heart...

Another letter, from the King to his mother, is revolting in its harshness. After her departure from France, Marie de Médicis addressed to him some very tart pages in which she accused Richelieu of having had designs on her life. In the same letter she represented herself as flying from her son's soldiers:

I will leave you to imagine my affliction when I saw myself in flight, pursued by the cavalry with which they had threatened me! so that I would be frightened and run the faster out of your kingdom; by that means constraining me to press on thirty leagues without either eating or drinking, to the end that I might escape from their hands. (Avesnes, 28 July, 1631.)

Instead of feeling pity for the complaints of the old woman who realised that she had been conquered, Louis XIII. replied:

Madame, I am the more annoyed by your resolution to retire from my state because I know that you have no real reason for doing so. The imaginary prison, the supposititious persecutions of which you complain, and the fears that you profess to have felt at Compiègne during your life there, were as lacking in foundation as the pursuit that you pretend my cavalry made when you made your retreat.

After these words, the King delivered a pompous eulogy on the Cardinal and ended it thus:

You will permit me, an it please you, to tell you, Madame, that the act that you have just committed, and all that has passed during a period more or less recent, make it impossible for me to be ignorant of your intentions in the past, and the action that I have to expect from you in the future. The respect that I owe to you hinders me from saying any more.

It is true that Marie de Médicis received nothing that she did not deserve; but it may be possible that it was not for her son to speak to her with brutality.

In their way Gaston's letters are *chefs-d'œuvre*. They do honour to the psychological sensibility of the intelligent *névrosé*. Monsieur knew both the strength and the weakness of his brother. He knew him to be jealous, ulcerated by the consciousness of his own insignificance – an insignificance brought into full relief by the importance of the superior Being then hard at work making "of a France languishing a France triumphant"<sup>24</sup>; and with marvellous art he found the words best qualified to irritate secret wounds.

His letters open with insinuations to the effect that Richelieu had a personal interest in maintaining the enmity between "the King and his own brother," so that the King, "having no one to defend him," could be held more closely in his, Richelieu's, grasp.

I beseech ... your Majesty ... to have the gracious prudence to reflect upon what has passed, and to examine more seriously the designs of those who have been the architects of these plans; if you will graciously examine into this matter you will see that there are interests at stake which are not yours, – interests of a nature opposed to your interests, and which aim at something further, and something far in advance of anything that you have thought of up to the present time (March 23, 1631).

---

<sup>24</sup> *Recueil, etc. Discours sur plusieurs points importants de l'état présent des affaires de France.*

In the following letter Monsieur addresses himself directly to Louis XIII.'s worst sentiments and to his kingly conscience. He feigns to be deeply grieved by the deplorable condition of his brother, who, as he says, is reduced, notwithstanding

"the very great enlightenment of his mind" to the plight of a puppet ... nothing but the shadow of a king, a being deprived of his authority, lacking in power as in will, counted as nothing in his own kingdom, devoid even of the external lustre ordinarily attached to the rank of a sovereign.

Monsieur declares that Richelieu has left the King

"nothing but the name and the figure of a king," *and that for a time only*; for as soon as he has ridded *himself of you ... and of me!* ... *he means to take the helm and steer the Ship of State in his own name.*

Monsieur depicted the new "Mayor of the Palace" actually reigning in overburdened, crushed, and oppressed France,

whom he has ruined and whose blood he has sucked pitilessly and without shame. In his own person he has consumed more than two hundred millions since he took the rule of your affairs ... and he expends daily, in his own house, ten times more than you do in yours... Let me tell you what I have seen! In your kingdom not one third of your subjects eat bread made of wheat flour; another third eats bread made of oats; and another third not only is reduced to beggary, but it is languishing in need so crying that some are actually starving to death; those who are not dying of hunger are prolonging their lives with acorns, herbs, and like substances, like the lower animals. And they who are least to be pitied among these last are living on bran and on blood which they pick up in the gutters in front of the butchers' shops. I have seen these things with my own eyes, and in different parts of the country, since I left Paris.

In this Monsieur told the truth. The peasant had come to that point of physical degradation. But his sufferings could not be diminished by provoking a civil war, and Richelieu did not fail to make the fact plain in the polemics of the *Recueil*, written under his supervision – when it was not written in his own hand. He (Richelieu) defended his policy tooth and nail, he justified his millions, his accumulated official honours.

One of Monsieur's letters bears copious notes made throughout its length and breadth in the Cardinal's own hand. Without any of the scruples of false shame, he inspired long factums to the glory of the Prime Minister of France.

In the pages inspired by him there are passages of peculiar inhumanity. In one place, justifying the King for the treatment inflicted upon his mother, he says that "the pain of the nine months that she carried him would have been sold by her at too high a price, had the King, because of it, been forced to let her set fire to his kingdom."<sup>25</sup>

Other passages are equally heartless: "Do they blame the Prime Minister for his riches? – and if the King had seen fit to give him more? The King is free to give or to take away. Can he not act his pleasure; who has the right to say him nay?"

The *Recueil* shows passages teeming with cynical and pampered pride. In favour of himself Richelieu wrote:

The production of these great geniuses is not an ordinary bissextile work. Sometimes the revolution of four of Nature's centuries are required for the formation of a mind of such phenomenal proportions, in which are united all the excellencies,

---

<sup>25</sup> *Recueil*, etc. *Avertissement aux provinces sur les nouveaux mouvements du royaume*, by the Sieur de Cléonville (1631).

any one of which would be enough to set far above the ordinary character of man the being endowed with them. I speak not only of the virtues that are in some sort the essence of the profession made by their united representative types, – Pity, Wisdom, Prudence, Moderation, Eloquence, Erudition, and like attributes, – I speak of other virtues, the characteristic qualities of another and separate order, like those composing the perfections of a chief of war ... etc.

Among the official documents in the volume just quoted are instruments whose publication would have put any man but Gaston d'Orléans under ground for the rest of his days, among other things, his treaty of peace (1632), signed at Béziers (20th September) after the battle of Castelnaudary, where the Duc de Montmorency had been beaten and taken before his eyes. In that treaty Monsieur had pledged himself to abandon his friends, – not to take any interest in those who had been allied with him "on these occasions," and "not to pretend that he had any cause for complaint when the King made them submit to what they deserved." He promised "to love, especially, his cousin Richelieu." In recompense for this promise and the other articles of the treaty the King re-established his brother "in all his rights." As we know, the treaty of Béziers ended nothing. Gaston saw all his partisans beheaded as he recrossed the frontier. He did not enter France to remain there until October, 1634. Then he went home "on the faith" of the King's declaration, which closes the volume. By this declaration Monsieur was again re-established in the enjoyment of all his rights, appanages, pensions, and appointments. For him this was the important article. As Richelieu took the trouble to have all his monuments of egotism and barrenness of heart re-imprinted, it is probable that he did not intend to let the country forget them. In that case he attained his ends.

The public had formed its opinion, and in consequence it took no further interest in the royal family, always excepting Anne of Austria, who had retired among the shadows.

Marie de Médicis was now free to cry aloud in her paroxysms of fury. Gaston could henceforth pose as a martyr, and Louis XIII., withered by melancholy, dried remnant of his former pompous dignity, might be blown into a corner or be borne away by the wind like a dead leaf in autumn, and not a soul in France would hail it by the quiver of an eyelash. If Richelieu had hoped that profit would accrue to him from the royal unpopularity he had counted without the great French host. Despite the fact that his importance and the terror he inspired had increased tenfold, he also had become tainted by the insignificance of the royal family. But to all the people he seemed the ogre dreaded by Mademoiselle in her infancy, though indisputedly an unnatural ogre, possessing genius far beyond the reach of the normal man. He was universally looked upon as a leader of priceless value to a country in its hour of crisis, and as a companion everything but desirable. He appalled the people. His first interviews with Gaston after the young Prince's return to France were terrible. Monsieur was defenceless; the Cardinal was pitiless.

"Mademoiselle had run ahead to meet her father. In her innocence she had rejoiced to find him unchanged." Richelieu also believed that Monsieur had not changed, and he was all the more anxious to get him out to his (Richelieu's) château at Rueil. He pretended that there was to be a fête at the château. Monsieur did not leave Rueil until he had opened his heart to the Cardinal, just as he had done in regard to the affair Chalais.

Turned, and re-turned, by his terrible cousin, the unhappy wretch denounced mother and friends, – absent or present, – those who had plotted to overthrow the prime ministry and those who had (according to Gaston's story) tried to assassinate the Cardinal on such a day and in such a place. "Not," said Richelieu in his *Mémoires*, – "not that Monsieur recounted these things of his own accord. He did not do that; but the Cardinal asked him if it was not true that such a person had said such and such things, and he confessed, very ingenuously, that it was."

Truly the fête at Rueil had sinister results for the friends of Monsieur.

Monsieur retired to Blois, but he often returned to Paris, and whenever he returned he fulfilled his fatherly duties in his own fashion, romping and chattering with Mademoiselle. He amused himself

by listening to her songs against Richelieu, and for her pleasure he organised a *corps-de-ballet* of children. All the people of the Court flocked to the palace to witness the ballet.

On the occasion of another ballet danced at the Louvre he displayed himself to Mademoiselle in all his glory (18th February, 1635). The King, the Queen, and the principal courtiers of their suite were among the dancers.

This last solemnity left mingled memories, both good and bad, in Mademoiselle's mind. One of her father's most faithful companions in exile was to have danced in the ballet. During a rehearsal, Richelieu had him arrested and conducted to the Wood of Vincennes, "where he died very suddenly."<sup>26</sup> The rôle in which he should have acted was danced by one of the other courtiers, and therefore Gaston did not appear to be affected.

The *Gazette* informed the public that the fête had "succeeded admirably"; that every one had carried away from the place so teeming with marvels the same idea that Jacob had entertained when, having looked upon the angels all the night, he believed that the earth touched the confines of heaven! But, at least, there was one person for whom the sudden disappearance of Puylaurens had spoiled everything. Mademoiselle had "liked him and wished him well." He had won her heart by giving her bonbons, and she felt that the ugly history reflected upon her father. "I leave it," she said, "to people better instructed and more enlightened than I am to speak of what Monsieur did afterward to Puylaurens' prison."

The following year she had to swallow an insult on her own account. The lines which appeared in one of the gazettes of July, 1636, must have seemed insupportable to a child full of unchecked pride.

"The 17th, Mademoiselle, aged nine years and three months, was baptised in the Louvre, in the Queen's chamber, by the Bishop of Auxerre, First Almoner to the King, having for godmother and godfather the Queen and the Cardinal Duke (*Richelieu*), and was named Anne Marie."

Mention of this little event is made in Retz's *Mémoires*. "M. le Cardinal was to hold at the font Mademoiselle, who, as you may judge, had been baptised long before; but the ceremonies of the baptism had been deferred."

This godfather, who was not a prince, was a humiliation to Mademoiselle, and to crown her distress he thought that he ought to make himself agreeable to his god-daughter.

By his intention to be amiable he "made her beside herself" because he treated her – at nine years! – as if she had been a little girl. "Every time that he saw me he told me that that spiritual alliance obliged him to take care of me, and that he would arrange a marriage for me (a discourse that he addressed to me, talking just as they do to children to whom they incessantly repeat the same thing)."

A journey through France, which she made in 1637, "put balm on the wounds of her pride." They chanted the *Te Deum*, the Army Corps saluted her, a city was illuminated, and the nobility offered her fêtes. She "swam in joy"; for thus she had always thought that the appearance of a person of her quality should be hailed. She ended her tour in Blois where Monsieur, the ever good father, desired that he, in person, should be the one to initiate his child in the morality of princes, which virtue in those aristocratic times had nothing in common with the bourgeois's morality. For the moment he was possessed of an insignificant mistress, a young girl of Tours called "Louison." Monsieur took his daughter to Tours so that he might present his mistress to her. Mademoiselle declared herself satisfied with her father's choice. She thought that Louison had "a very agreeable face, and a great deal of wit for a girl of that quality who had never been to Court." But Mme. de Saint Georges saw the new relations with an anxious eye; she submitted her scruples to Monsieur:

Madame de Saint Georges ... asked him if the girl was good, because, otherwise, though she had been honoured by his good graces, she should be glad if she would not come to my house. Monsieur gave her every assurance and told her that he would not have wished for the girl himself without that condition. In those

---

<sup>26</sup> *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

days I had such a horror of vice that I said to her: "Maman (I called her thus), if Louison is not virtuous, even though my Papa loves her I will not see her at all; or if he wishes me to see her I will not receive her well." She answered that she was really a very good girl, and I was very glad of it, for she pleased me much – so I saw her often.

Mademoiselle did not suspect that there was anything comical in this passage; had she done so she would not have written it, because she was not one of those who admit that it is sometimes permissible to smile at the great.

On her return from her journey she resumed her ordinary life.

I passed the winter in Paris as I had passed my other winters. Twice a week I went to the assemblies given by Mme. the Countess de Soissons at the Hôtel de Brissac. At these assemblies the usual diversions were comedies [plays] and dancing. I was very fond of dancing and, for love of me, they danced there very often...

There were also assemblies with comedies at the Queen's, at Richelieu's, and at a number of personages', and Mademoiselle herself received at the Tuileries.

The night of the 23d-24th January (1636) [reports the *Gazette*] Mademoiselle in her lodgings at the Tuileries, gave a comedy and a ball to the Queen, where the Good Grace of this princess in the dawn of her life, gave proof of what her noontide is to be. The 24th February, Monsieur gave a comedy and a collation to His Royal Highness of Parma at Mademoiselle his daughter's, in her apartments at the Tuileries.

Mademoiselle passed the days and the nights in fêtes. Her studies did not suffer by it because she never studied and never knew anything of study outside of reading and writing, making a courtesy, and carefully observing the rules of a minute etiquette.

It is probable that she owed the little that she knew to several months of forced retreat in a convent, when she was nine years old. She made herself so intolerable to every one, – it is she who tells it, – she was so vexatious, with her "grimaces" and her "mockeries," that they put her in a cloister to try to discipline her and to correct her faults; the plan succeeded: "They saw me return ... wiser, and better than I had been." Yes, more sober, better behaved, and a little less ignorant, but not much less. The following letter, bearing the date of her maturity, shows more clearly than all the descriptions in the world, the degree of instructions which satisfied the seventeenth century's ideas of the education of a princess. The letter is addressed to Colbert ("a Choisy ce 5 Août 1665"):

Monsieur, le sieur Segrais qui est de la cademy et qui a bocoup travalié pour la gloire du Roy et pour le public, aiant este oublie lannee passée dans les gratifications que le Roy a faicts aux baus essprit ma prie de vous faire souvenir de luy set un aussi homme de mérite et qui est a moi il ya long tams jespere que cela ne nuira pas a vous obliger a avoir de la consideration pour luy set se que je vous demande et de une croire, monsieur Colbert, etc.

This orthography did not hinder Mademoiselle when, under the name of "Princess Cassandane" she figured in the *Grand Dictionnaire des Précieuses*; and according to the distinctions established between the "true *précieuse*" and the "*Savante*" by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, she had a right to figure there, as had many of her noble contemporaries, who would have been the shame of the humblest of the schools.

The "true *précieuse*," she who left comets and the Greek language to the "*Savantes*," applied herself to the task of penetrating the mysteries of the heart. That was her science, and from certain points of view it was worth as much as any other.

La Grande Mademoiselle devoted her talents and her life to the perfection of her particular art. Keeping well within the limits that she herself had set, she made a special study of the hearts of princesses and of everything concerning them; and she professed that she had established, definitely, the only proper methods by which persons of her quality should, bound in duty to themselves, look upon love, and upon glory.

The wells from which she drew her spiritual draughts were not exclusively her own; she shared their benefits with all honest people, of either sex, engaged in completing the sentimental education by the essential principle of life.

## CHAPTER II

I. Anne of Austria and Richelieu – Birth of Louis XIV. – II. *L'Astrée* and its Influence – III. Transformation of the Public Manners – The Creation of the Salon – The Hôtel de Rambouillet and Men of Letters.

### I

But little information concerning the affairs of the day previous to the last months of the reign of Louis XIII. can be gleaned from the *Mémoires* of La Grande Mademoiselle. It is hardly credible that a young girl raised at the Court of France, not at all stupid, and because of her birth so situated as to see and to hear everything, could have gone through some of the most thrilling catastrophes of that tragic time without seeing or hearing anything. At a later day Mademoiselle was the first to wonder at it; she furnishes an example surpassing imagination.

In 1637, before starting on her journey into the province, she went to bid adieu to "their Majesties," who were at Chantilly. Mademoiselle fell upon a drama. Richelieu had just disgraced the Queen of France, who had been declared guilty of abusing her religious retreat at the Convent of Val-de-Grâce by holding secret correspondence with Spain. Val-de-Grâce had been ransacked, and one of Anne of Austria's servants had been arrested. Anne herself had been questioned like a criminal, and she had had a very bitter *tête-à-tête* in her chamber with such a Richelieu as she had never met before.

It was then ten years since Louis XIII., abruptly entering his wife's private apartments, had interrupted a declaration of love made by his Minister. After Marie de Médicis, Anne of Austria! Evidently it was a system of policy in which pride of personal power played its part. Possibly the heart also played some small rôle when Anne of Austria was young and beautiful; but it was the heart of a Richelieu, and unless we know what such a thing is like it is difficult to explain the Minister's attitude at Chantilly. Historians have not taken the trouble to tell us, because there were things more important to them and to the history of Europe than the exploits of so high-flying a Cardinal. Nevertheless, even an historian could have made an interesting chapter out of the sentimental life of Richelieu. It was a violent and cruel life; as violent and as pitiless as the passions that haunted his harrowed soul. Michelet compared the Duke's life to "a lodging that had been ransacked." In him love was a cloak thickly lined with hatred. Mme. de Motteville, who witnessed Richelieu's courtship of the Queen, was astonished by his way of making love. "The first marks of his affection," she writes, "were his persecutions of her. They burst out before everybody, and we shall see that this new way of loving will last as long as the Cardinal lives."

Anne of Austria felt only his persecutions. Richelieu was not pleasing to women. He was the earthly All-powerful. He possessed riches and genius, but they knew that he was cruel – even pitiless – in anger; and he could not persuade them to pretend to love him; all, even Marion de Lorme, mocked and laughed at him, and Retz gave a reason for their conduct:

Not being a pedant in anything else, he was a thorough pedant in gallantry, and this is the fault that women never pardon. The Queen detested Richelieu, and she made him feel it; but he took his revenge at Val-de-Grâce. After the outburst – after the word *treason* had been spoken – it rested with him to have mercy, or to send into shameless banishment the barren Queen. It gave him pleasure to see her cowering before him, frightened and deprived of all her pride. He exulted in disdaining her with an exaggerated and insulting affectation of respect, and fearing lest the scene should not be known to posterity, he painted it with all the zest of the reaction of

his wounded dignity.<sup>27</sup> He listened complacently while she drove the nails into her coffin, rendering more proofs of her docility "than he should have dared to expect"; incriminating herself, as she explained in her own way, by palpable untruths, all her treasonable letters to her brothers and to her friends in Spain. When she had told a great deal more than she knew, Richelieu put a few sharp questions, and the Queen completely lost her head.

Then [wrote Richelieu, in his chronicle] she confessed to the Cardinal everything which is in the paper signed by her afterwards. She confessed with much displeasure and confusion, because she had taken oaths contrary to what she was confessing. While she made the said confession to the Cardinal her shame was such that she cried out several times, "Oh, how kind you must be, Monsieur the Cardinal!" protesting that all her life she should be grateful and recognise the obligation she was under to those who drew her out of the affair. She had the honour to say to the Cardinal: "Give me your hand," presenting her own as a mark of the fidelity with which she should keep all her promises. Through respect the Cardinal refused to give her his hand. From the same motive he retired instead of approaching her.

Officially Louis XIII. pardoned the intrigue of Val-de-Grâce, but the courtiers were not deceived, and they immediately deserted the Queen's apartment. When they passed her windows they modestly lowered their eyes. It was just at that time that Mademoiselle arrived. It was at the end of August. She read her welcome in every face. Now that she had come gayety became a duty and amusements an obligation. The feeling of relief was general. Mademoiselle wrote:

I put all the Court in good humour. The King was in great grief because of the suspicions they had awakened against the Queen, and not long before that they had found the strong box that had made all the trouble at Val-de-Grâce, about which too much has been said already. I found the Queen in bed, sick. Any one would be sick after such an affront as she had received.

Of all at Court, Anne of Austria was not the least happy to see Mademoiselle. Now she could pour out her sorrow. Mme. de Saint Georges, Mademoiselle's governess, was one of her familiar friends. The Queen told her everything. Mademoiselle was permitted to sit with the two ladies to avert suspicion. So the child found herself in possession of secrets whose importance and danger must have been known to her. It may be that she would have liked nothing better than to recount them in her memoirs, but she was "forced to admit with sheepish reticence that to her grief she had never remembered anything of it."

Some months later she was entangled in the King's romance with Mlle. de Hautefort, and "did not notice anything" – and this is to her credit – of all the struggles made by the Cabals to turn the adventure to their profit. In spite of her lack of memory she had opened wide both eyes and ears. The schemes of lovers always interested her, as they interest all little girls. To this instinct of her sex we owe a very pretty picture of the transformation of man by love. And the man was no other than the annoying and annoyed Louis XIII. Mademoiselle gives us the picture in default of more serious proof of her observation. Hunting was the King's chief pleasure.

In 1638, during the luminous springtime, he was seen in the forests gay, at times actually happy – thanks to two great blue eyes. When he followed his dogs he took his niece and other young people with him that he might have an excuse for taking Mlle. de Hautefort.

We were all dressed in colours [recounts Mademoiselle]. We were on fine, ambling horses, richly caparisoned, and to guarantee us against the sun each of

---

<sup>27</sup> *Relation de ce que c'est passé en l'affaire de la reyne au mois d'août, 1637, sui le sujet de la Porte et de l'Abbesse du Val-de-Grâce.* See document in the Bibliothèque National.

us had a hat trimmed with a quantity of plumes. They always turned the hunt so that it should pass fine and handsome houses where grand collations could be found, and, coming home, the King placed himself in my coach, between Mme. de Hautefort and me. When he was in good humour he conversed very agreeably to us of everything. At that time he suffered us to speak freely enough of the Cardinal de Richelieu, and the proof that it did not displease him was that he spoke thus himself.

Immediately after the hunting party returned they went to the Queen. I took pleasure in serving at her supper, and her maids carried the dishes (viands). There was a regular programme. Three times a week we had music, they of the King's chamber sang, and the most of the airs sung by them were composed by the King. He wrote the words, even; and the subject was never anything but Mme. de Hautefort. The King was in humour so gallant that at the collations that he gave us in the country he did not sit at table at all; and he served us nearly everything himself, though his civility had only one object. He ate after us, and did not seem to feel more complaisance for Mme. de Hautefort than for the others, so afraid was he that some one should perceive his gallantry.

Despite these precautions, the Court and the city, Paris, and the province were informed of the least incidents of an affair of such importance. The only person whom the King's passion left indifferent was the Queen. Anne of Austria had never been jealous. She did not consider Louis XIII. worth the pains of jealousy, – and now jealousy would have been out of place. Anne, after twenty-three years of marriage, was *enceinte*. The people who had loaded her with outrages while she was bowed by shame now knelt at her feet, sincere in their respectful demonstrations of devotion for the wife of the King who might one day become Queen-mother, or even Regent of France. It was like one of the fairy plays in a theatre. Nature had waved her wand, and the disgraced victim of enchantment had arisen "clothed on with majesty." It was an edifying and delightful transformation. After all her shame, the novelty of being cared for and treated gently was so great and so agreeable that when she saw her royal spouse sighing before the virtuous and malignant de Hautefort – "whose chains" were said to be heavy and hard to bear – she looked upon it very lightly. Anne of Austria smiled at the benumbed attitudes of the King, at his awkward ardour, and equally awkward prudery. The Queen learned with amusement that when among her companions, the young girls of the Court, Mlle. de Hautefort mocked the King, and boasted that he "dared not approach her, though he maintained her," and that she was "bored to death by his talk of dogs, and birds, and the hunt." Friends repeated these criticisms. Louis XIII. heard of them and took offence "at the ingrate," and the Court went into mourning. "If there should be some serious quarrel between them," wrote Mademoiselle, "all the comedies and the entertainments will be over. At that time, when the King came to the Queen's apartments, he did not speak to anybody, and nobody dared to speak to him. He sat in a corner, and very often he yawned and went to sleep. It was a species of melancholy which chilled the whole world, and during this grief he passed the most of the time writing what he had said to Mme. de Hautefort, and what she had answered. It is so true that after he died they found great bundles of papers recounting all his differences with his mistresses – to the praise of whom it must be said, and to his praise also, that he had never loved any women who were not very virtuous."

Mademoiselle never seemed to realise the political importance of the King's favourites. That subject, like all else serious, escaped her. She writes:

"I listened to all that they told me – all that I was old enough to hear."

We need not hope to learn from her what Richelieu thought of the King's chaste affection; why, though he had encouraged it, he was angered by it; why he looked with disfavour upon Mlle. de Lafayette, and manipulated her affairs so well that he introduced her into the cell of a convent, and ordered the King to take medicine whenever he suspected that Louis aspired to contemplate her through the grating of her prison; if Mademoiselle had ever known such things "they had never

presented themselves to her memory." Nor will it do us any good to search her memoirs for reasons making it clear why Louis XIII., who worked incessantly against Richelieu, and "did not love him," sacrificed, for the Cardinal's pleasure, all his friends and near relations. Throughout all the reverses of 1635 and 1636, when France was trembling under the trampling feet of the invader, when the enemy's skirmishers lay at the gates of Pontoise, the King was faithful to the dictator, whose policy had drawn ruin on the nation. Mademoiselle had never known these things. They had been far below her horizons. The ungrateful years had buffeted her as they passed. She had been pretty and sprightly in early childhood. At the age of eleven she was a buxom girl, with swollen cheeks, thick lips, and a stupid mien, – in a word: a frankly ill-favoured creature, too absorbed in the preoccupations of animal life (the need to skip and jump, to be seen and heard) to listen, to observe, or to reflect. The Queen's condition gave her one more occasion to manifest the lengths to which she had carried her innocence, though she had lived in a world where innocence was not regarded as the most important item in an outfit. She rejoiced that there was to be a Dauphin. Evidently she did not know that his advent would strip her father of his rights as heir-presumptive to the throne. In her own words, she "rejoiced without the least reflection." Anne of Austria was touched by a simpleness of heart to which her life had not accustomed her. "You shall be my daughter-in-law!" she cried repeatedly to her young niece. For she could not bear the thought that the child's later reflections might awake regret.

Mademoiselle embraced the idea only too ardently, and to it she owed one of the bitterest hours of her existence.

The child who was to be Louis XIV. was born at the Château of Saint Germain, 5th September, 1638. Mademoiselle made him her toy. She writes: "The birth of Monsieur the Dauphin gave me a new occupation. I went to see him every day and I called him *my little husband*. The King was diverted by this and he thought that I did well." She had counted without her godfather the Cardinal, who was more of a Croquemitaine, and more of a spoil-sport than he had ever been. He considered her childish talk very indecorous. Mademoiselle pursues:

Cardinal de Richelieu, who does not like me to accustom myself to being there, nor to have them accustomed to seeing me there, had me given orders to return to Paris. The Queen and Mme. de Hautefort did all that was possible to keep me. They could not obtain their wish, – which I regretted. It was all tears and cries when I left there. Their Majesties gave many proofs of friendship, especially the Queen, who made me aware of a particular tenderness on that occasion. After this displeasure I had still another to endure. They made me pass through Rueil to see the Cardinal, who usually lived there when the King was at Saint Germain. He took it so to heart that I had called the little Dauphin *my little husband* that he gave me a great reprimand: he said that I was too large to use such terms; that I had been ill-behaved to do so. He spoke so seriously – just as if I had been a person of judgment – that, without answering him, I began to weep. To pacify me he gave me collation, but I did not pass it over. I came away from there very angry at all he had said to me.

Richelieu meant that his orders should be obeyed. Mademoiselle adds: "When I was in Paris I only went to Court once in two months; and when I did go there I only dined with the Queen and then returned to Paris to sleep." It must be said that if the Cardinal had submitted to it for a night or two, she might have found it difficult to sleep at the château. At that time our kings had strange and very inconvenient arrangements for receiving guests; their household appointments had brought them to such a pass that they had suppressed their guest-chamber. When the royal family went to Saint Germain there was a regular house-moving; they carried all their furniture with them, and nothing was left in the Louvre, – not even enough for the King to sleep on when business called him to the capital. Henry IV., a monarch who did not stand on ceremony, invited himself to the house of some lord or of some rich bourgeois, where he put himself at his ease, receiving the Parliament, and also

his fair friends, and bidding adieu to his hosts only when he was ready to go home. He took leave of them in his own time and at his own hour.

The timid Louis XIII. had never dared to do such things; he had never thought of having two beds: one in the city, the other in the country.

When the Court came back to Paris they brought all their furniture; not a mattress was left in the palace at Saint Germain. This singular custom had evolved another, which appears to us to have lacked hospitality. When the King of France invited distinguished guests, he never furnished their rooms. He offered them the four walls, and let them arrange themselves as best they could. From as far back as people could remember, they had seen the great arrive at the château closely followed by their beds, their curtains, and even their cooks and their stew-pans. This was the case with Monsieur and his daughter; and so it was with Mazarin, in the following reign. Mademoiselle was not ignorant of the peculiar methods of the royal housekeeping. She knew that the King's friends could not be made comfortable for the night, on the spur of the moment, and she rested very well in Versailles, and thought of nothing but her amusements.

The people saw a gratuitous malevolence in her exile from Court; but the Fronde proved the justice of the Cardinal's action. La Grande Mademoiselle made civil war to constrain Mazarin to marry her to Louis XIV., who was eleven years her junior. Her godfather had guessed well: the idea of being Queen had germinated rapidly in the little head in which the influence of *Astrée*— still active despite its age — was busily forming romantic visions far in advance of its generation. D'Urfé died in 1620; to his glory be it said that we are obliged to go back to him and to his work when we would explain the moral state of the later days.

## II

Few books in any country or in any time have equalled the fortune of *Astrée*,<sup>28</sup> a pastoral romance in ten volumes, in which the different effects of honest friendship are deduced from the lives of shepherds and others, under a long title in the style of the century. Honoré d'Urfé's work immediately became the "code of polite society" and of all who aspired to appear polite. Everything was à l'*Astrée*— fashions, sentiments, language, the games of society, and the conversation of love. The infatuation extended to classes of society who read but little. In a comedy familiar to the lesser bourgeoisie,<sup>29</sup> some one reproached marriageable girls for permitting themselves to be captured by the insipid flattery of the first coxcomb who addresses them thus:

– Bien poli, bien frisé  
Pourvu qu' il sache un mot des livres d'*Astrée*.

Success had crossed the frontiers of France. People in foreign lands found material for their instruction in *Astrée*. The work was a novel with a key; a story with a meaning. "Celadon" was the author; "Astrée" was his wife (the beautiful Diane de Chateaumorand, with whom he had not been happy). The Court of *le grand Enric* was the Court of Henry IV. "Galatée" was the Queen (Marguerite) and so on. "All the stories in *Astrée* were founded on truth," wrote Patru, who had gathered his information from the lips of d'Urfé. But "the author has romanced everything – if I dare use the word." The charm found in the scandalous reality of the scenes and in the truth of the

---

<sup>28</sup> The first part appeared in 1610, or perhaps [says M. Brunetière], in 1618. The rest followed at long intervals. The four last volumes bear date 1627 and consequently are posthumous. The part written by d'Urfé cannot be distinguished from the part written by Baro, who continued the work begun by d'Urfé.

<sup>29</sup> *Manuel de l'histoire de la littérature française*, by M. Ferdinand Brunetière. Cf. *En Bourbonnais et en Forez*, by Emile Montégut, and *Le roman* (XVII. Century) by Paul Morillot in *L'histoire de la langue et de la littérature française*, published under the direction of M. Petit de Julleville. *Les vendanges de Suresnes*, by Pierre du Ryer.

characters crowned the work's success; the book was translated in most languages, and devoured with the same avidity by all countries. In Germany there was an *Académie des Vrais Amants* copied from the "Academy" of Lignon. In Poland, in the last half of the century, John Sobieski, who was not by any means one of the be-musked knights of the carpet, played at *Astrée* and *Celadon*, with Marie d'Arquien. "To grass with the matrimonial love which turns to friendship at the end of three months! ... *Celadon* am I, now as in the past; the ardent lover of those first glad days!"<sup>30</sup> he wrote after marriage.

When the people's infatuation had passed, the book still remained the standard of all delicate minds, and it continued to wield its literary influence.

Through two centuries [said Montégut] *Astrée* lost nothing of its renown. The most diverse and the most opposite minds alike loved the book; Pellisson and Huet the Bishop of Avranches were enthusiastic admirers of its qualities. La Fontaine and Mme. de Sévigné delighted in it. Racine, in his own silent and discreet way, read it with fond pleasure and profit, but did not say so.

Marivaux had read it and drawn even more benefit from it than Racine... Last of all, Jean Jacques Rousseau admired it so much that he avowed that he had re-read it once a year the greater part of his life. Now as Jean Jacques exerted a dominant influence upon the destinies of our modern imaginative literature, it follows that the success of *Astrée* has been indirectly prolonged even to our own day. Madame George Sand, for example, derived some little benefit from d'Urfé, though she was not too well aware of it.

Montégut had forgotten the Abbé Prévost; but M. Brunetière repairs the omission, and adds: "One may say that *Astrée's* success shaped the channel for the chief current of our modern literature."

Its social influence was equal to its influence upon literature. And yet, to-day, not one of all the books that had their time of glory and of popularity is more neglected. No one reads *Astrée* now, and no one can read it; with the best will in the world, the most indulgent must throw the book down, bored by its dulness. It has become impossible to endure the five thousand pages of the amorous dissertations of the shepherds of Lignon. At the best such a debauch of subtlety would be only tolerable, even had it emanated from a writer of genius. And d'Urfé had no genius; he had nothing but talent.

D'Urfé was a little gentleman of Forez, whom his epoch (he was born in 1568) had permitted to examine the society of the Valois. We know that no social body was ever more corrupt; nevertheless those who saw it were dazzled by it; and because they had looked upon it they were considered – in the time of Louis XIII. – exquisitely elegant and polite; they were regarded as the survivors of a superior civilisation.

The ladies of the Court of Anne of Austria were proud of their power to attract the notice of the elderly noblemen "thanks to whom," in the words of a contemporary writer, "remnants of the polite manners brought by Catherine de Médicis from Italy were still seen in France." The homage of the antique gentlemen was insistent, of a kind which refuses to be repelled. Even the Queen accepted it. Anne of Austria, whose habitually correct attitude was notable, felt that she was constrained to receive the attentions of the old Duc de Bellegarde, though the Duke's character and customs were notorious. Duc de Bellegarde had been one of the deplorable favourites of Henri III.

Anne of Austria was hypercritical in regard to forms of conversation; her own language was fastidiously delicate; she exacted minute attention to the superficial details of civility; yet the notorious de Bellegarde sat at ease before the Court, displaying all the peculiar gallantry of his epoch, "and," said the Queen's friend, Mme. de Motteville, "it was the more noticeable and the fame of it was the more scandalous because the Queen did not hesitate to accept from him incense whose smoke might

---

<sup>30</sup> Waliszewski: *Marysienka*.

well blacken her reputation. The Queen permitted the Duke to treat her as he had treated the women of his own day, a day when gallantry and women reigned."

The civil wars swept away the splendid but rotten world, but the prestige of the Valois still asserted its power.

In 1646, a posthumous romantic tale appeared in Paris, entitled *Orasie*. It was generally attributed to the pen of Mlle. de Senterre, a maid-of-honour of the Court of Catherine de Médicis. "This book," said the editorial preface, "is a true history, full of very choice events; there is nothing fictitious in it but the names given to its heroes and its heroines. *Orasie* is a mirror reflecting the most magnificent and the most pompous of kingly Courts, the Court where reigned the truest civility and the purest politeness, where false gallantry, like base action, was unknown."

The Court thus eulogised had been the centre of delicate mannerism and the incubating cell of the refinement of vice. Though the civil wars had annihilated the splendid rottenness of the Court, the memory of the delicacy of the Valois survived. When peace was declared, when men had leisure to look about them, they were confronted by the rude Court of Henry IV. They felt the need of a re-establishment of polite society, but where could they find the elements of such society? Foreign influences had enervated the national imagination, Spanish literature with its romances of cruel chivalry, its pastorals, and its theatrical dramas had imbued the Romanticism of France with its poison, and symptoms of moral debility were generally evident. A period of fermentation and expectancy follows war. When the civil wars were over, the men of France sat waiting; their need was pressing, but they could form no idea of its nature. At such a time the eager watchmen on the towers acclaim the bearer of tidings, be they tidings of good or of evil.

Honoré d'Urfé's chief merit lay in the fact that he was the man of the hour, he came when he was most needed, holding the mirror up to nature, and clearly reflecting the common feeling. If I may use the term, he presented his countrymen with an intelligent mirror reflecting their confused and agitated aspirations. Nature and occasion had fitted him for his work: he had all the accessories and all the requirements of his art; best of all, he had the imperious vocation which is the first and the essential qualification of authorship, without which no man should have the hardihood to lay hold upon an inkstand. D'Urfé knew that war demoralises a people; he comprehended the situation of his country; he had been a member of the League, and one of the last to surrender. He knew that the spirit of love was hovering over France, waiting to find a resting-place. François de Sales and d'Urfé were friends, and in such close communion of thought that, to quote the words of Montégut, "there was not a simple analogy, there was almost an identity of inspiration and of talent between *Astrée* and the *Introduction à la vie dévote*."

D'Urfé had only to remember the æstheticism which surrounded his expanding youth to comprehend the general weariness caused by the lack of intellectual symmetry and by the rusticity of the manners of the new reign. He was a serious and thoughtful man; he had devoted long months, even years, to meditation and to study before he had touched his pen, and by repeated revisions he had ranged in his book the greater part of the thoughts and the aspirations of his epoch. In a word, the obscure provincial writer who had never entered the Louvre had composed a quasi-universal work resuming all the intellectual and sentimental life of an epoch. *Astrée* was a powerful achievement; but one, or at most but two, such books can be produced in a century.<sup>31</sup> D'Urfé's laborious efforts attained a double result. While he extricated and brought into the light the ideal for which he had searched years together, he excited his contemporaries to strive to be natural and real, and the first French novel, *Astrée*, was our first romance with a thesis. The subject is commonplace: lovers whose theme is love, and a lovers' quarrel; in the last volume of the book, love triumphs, the quarrel is forgotten, and the lovers marry.

---

<sup>31</sup> Paul Morillot, *loc. cit.*

In the beginning of the work, the shepherdess *Astrée*, beside herself with causeless jealousy, overwhelms the shepherd Celadon with reproaches and Celadon, tired of life, throws himself into the Lignon. Standing upon the bank of the river, he apostrophises a ring and the riband left in his hand when his shepherdess escaped his grasp:

"Bear witness, O dear cord! that rather than break one knot of my affections I will renounce my life, and then, when I am dead, and my cruel love beholds thee in my hand, thou shalt speak for me, thou shalt say that no one could be loved as I loved her... Nor lover wronged like me!" Then he appeals to the ring. "And thou, emblem of eternal, faithful love, be glad to be with me in death, the only token left me of her love!"

Hardly has he spoken when, turning his face toward *Astrée*, he springs with folded arms into the water. The nymphs save him, and his romantic adventures serve as the wire carrying the action of the romance.

But the system is inadequate to its strain. Dead cars bring about a constantly recurring block, and more than an hundred personages of more or less importance stop the way by their gallant intrigues. The romance mirrors the passing loves and the fevered and passionate life of the beribanded people who hung up their small arms in their panoplies, twisted their lances into pruning-hooks, and replaced the pitiless art of war by the political arts of peace. Honoré d'Urfé's heroes appear to be more jealously careful of their fine sentiments than of the sword-thrusts lavishly distributed by the lords and gentlemen of their days. They are much more zealous in their search for elegant expressions than in bestirring themselves to serious action. The perfumed students of phraseology have changed since the night of Saint Bartholomew, when more than one of them fought side by side with Henry de Guise; but it is not difficult to recognise the precursors of the Fronde in the druids, shepherds, and chevaliers of *Astrée*, and so thought d'Urfé's first readers.

With extreme pleasure they contemplated themselves in the noble puppets seen in the romance, basking in the sun of peace. Away with care! They had nothing worse to fight than lovers' casuistries, and they lay in the shadows of the trees, enjoying the riches of a country redeemed by their own blood. With them were their ladies; lover and lass were disguised as shepherd and shepherdess, or as mythological god and goddess. Idle and elegant as they were, the happy lovers had been tortured by wounds, racked by pride, stung by the fire of battle; to sleep for ever had been the vision of many a bivouac, and now war was over, and to lie in a day-dream fanned by the summer winds and watched by the eye of woman, – this was the evolution of the hope of death! This was the restorative desired by the provincial nobles when they stood firm as rocks in ranks thinned and broken by thirty years of civil and religious war. Such a rest the jaded knights had hoped for when they accepted their one alternative, and, by their recognition of Henry IV., acknowledged submission to a principal superior to private interest and personal ambition.

The high nobility had soon tired of order and obedience. Never was it more turbulent or more undisciplined than under Louis XIII. and in the minority of Louis XIV., but it must be noted as one of the signs of the times that it no longer carried its jaunty ease of conscience into its plots and its mutinies. Curious proofs of this fact are still in existence; the revolting princes and lords stoutly denied that they had taken arms against the King. If they had openly made war, and so palpably that they could not deny it, they invariably asserted with affirmations that they had done it "to render themselves useful to the King's service." Gaston d'Orléans gave the same reason for his conduct when he deserted France for a foreign country. All averred that they had been impelled to act by a determination to force the King to accept deliverance from humiliating tyranny, or from pernicious influences. During the Fronde, when men changed parties as freely as they changed their gloves, the rebels protested their fidelity to the King, and they did it because the idea of infidelity was abhorrent to them.

No one in France would have admitted that it could be possible to hold personal interests or personal caprice above the interests of the State, and in the opinion of the French cavalier this would have been reason enough for any action; but there was a more practical reason; the descendants of the great barons were beginning to doubt their power to maintain the assertion of their so-called rights. By suggesting subjects for the meditations of all the people of France who could read or write *Astrée* had contributed a novelty in scruples. In our day such a book as *Astrée* would excite no interest; the reiteration of the "torrents of tenderness" to which it owed its sentimental influence would make it a doubtful investment for any publisher, and even the thoughtful reader would find its best pages difficult reading; but when all is said and done, it remains, and it shall remain, the book which best divines our perpetually recurring and eternal necessities.

It treats of but one passion, love, and yet it gives the most subtle study in existence. In it all the ways of loving are minutely analysed in interminable conversations. All the reasons why man should love are given, with all the reasons why he should not love. All the joys found by the lover in his sufferings are set forth, with all the sufferings that his joys reserve for him. All the reasons for fidelity and all the reasons for inconstancy are openly dissected. A complete list is given of all the intellectual sensations of love (and of some sensations which are not intellectual). In short, *Astrée* is a diagnosis of the spiritual, mental, and moral condition of the love-sick. It contains all the "cases of conscience" which may or might arise, under the same or different circumstances, in the lives of people who live to love, and who, thus loving, see but one reason for existence – people who severally or individually, each in his own way and according to his own light, exercise this faculty to love, – still loving and loving even then, now, and always.

D'Urfé's conception was of the antique type. He regarded love as a fatality against which it were vain to struggle. Toward the middle of the book the sorrowful Celadon, crushed by the wrath of *Astrée*, is hidden in a cavern where he "sustains life by eating grasses." The druid Adamas knows that Celadon is perishing by inches, and he essays to bring the lover to reason. Celadon answers him:

"If, as you say, God gave me full possession of power over myself, why does He ask me to give an account of myself? – for just as He gave me into my own hands and just as He gave me to myself, so have I given myself to her to whom I am consigned for ever. First of all! If He would have account of Celadon, let Him apply to her of whom I am! Enough for me if I offend not her nor violate my sacred gift to her. God willed my life, for by my destiny I love; and God knows it, and has always known it, for since I first began to have a will I gave myself to her, and still am hers. In brief, I should not have been blest by love as I have been in all these years had God not willed it.<sup>32</sup> If He has willed it would it be just to punish me because I still remain as He ordained that I should be? No! for I have not power to change my fate. So be it, if my parents and my friends condemn me! They all should be content and glad, when for my acts, I give my reason; *that I love her.*"

"But," answered Adamas, "do you count on living long in such away?"

"Election," answered Celadon, "depends not on him who has neither will nor understanding."

La Grande Mademoiselle and most of her contemporaries escaped *Astrée's* influence in this respect; they did not admit that man has "neither will nor understanding" where his passions are concerned; or that his feelings depend on "destiny." Corneille, who had confronted the question, set forth the principle that the heart should defer to the will. "The love of an honest man," he wrote in 1634,<sup>33</sup> – "The love of an honest man should always be voluntary. One ought never to love to the point

---

<sup>32</sup> In the Dedication of *Place Royale*.

<sup>33</sup> In the Dedication of *Place Royale*.

where he cannot help loving, and if he carries love so far, he is the slave of a tyranny whose yoke he should shake off."

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.