

BARINE ARVÈDE

LOUIS XIV AND LA
GRANDE
MADEMOISELLE,
1652-1693

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*Louis XIV and La Grande Mademoiselle, 1652-1693:**

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Arvede Barine

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PREFACE

IN the volume entitled *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle* I have tried to present the conditions of France during the period in which the ancient liberties of the people and the turbulent society which had abused its privileges suffered, in the one case death, in the other extinction.

As is always the case, a lack of proper discipline had prepared the way for absolute rule, and the young King who was about to assume full power was an enigma to his subjects. The nearest relatives of Louis had always found him impenetrable. The Grande Mademoiselle had been brought up side by side with her cousin, but she was entirely ignorant of his real character, knowing only that he was silent and appeared timid. In her failure to understand the King, Mademoiselle showed herself again a true child of her century.

At the moment in which the Prince assumed full power, his true disposition, thoughts, and beliefs were entirely hidden from the public, and Saint-Simon has contributed to this ignorance by

prolonging it to posterity. Louis XIV. was over fifty when this terrible writer appeared at Court. The *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon present the portrait of a man almost old; this portrait however is so powerful, so living that it obliterates every other. The public sees only the Louis of Saint-Simon; for it, the youthful King as he lived during the troubled and passionate period of his career, the period that was most interesting, because most vital, has never existed.

The official history of the times aids in giving a false impression of Louis XIV., figuring him in a sort of hieratic attitude between an idol and a manikin. The portraits of Versailles again mask the Louis of the young Court, the man for whose favour Molière and the Libertines fought with varying chances of success.

In the present volume I have tried to raise a corner of this mask.

The *Mémoires* of Louis XIV., completely edited for the first time according to any methodical plan in 1860, have greatly aided me in this task. They abound in confessions, sometimes aside, sometimes direct, of the matters that occupied the thoughts of the youthful author. The Grande Mademoiselle, capable of neither reserve nor dissimulation, has proved the next most valuable guide in the attempt to penetrate into the intimate life of Louis. As related by her, the perpetual difficulties with the Prince throw a vivid light upon the kind of incompatibility of temper which existed at the beginning of the reign between absolute

power and the survivors of the Fronde.

How the young King succeeded in directing his generation toward new ideas and sentiments and how the Grande Mademoiselle, too late carried away by the torrent, became in the end a victim to its force, will be seen in the course of the present volume, provided, that is, that I have not overestimated my powers in touching upon a subject very obscure, very delicate, with facts drawn from a period the most frequently referred to and yet in some respects the least comprehended of the entire history of France.

A. B.

CHAPTER I

Exile – Provincial Life – Conversation at Saint-Fargeau – Sentiment towards Nature in the Seventeenth Century – Differences between Mademoiselle and her Father – Mademoiselle Returns to Court

THE Fronde was an abortive revolution. It was condemned in advance, the leaders having never clearly known what ends they were seeking. The consequences of its failure proved to be of profound importance to France. The civil disorders existing between 1648 and 1652 were the last efforts of the French against the establishing of absolute monarchy, to the strengthening of which the entire regency of Anne of Austria had tended. The end of these disorders signified that the nation, wearied and discouraged, had accepted the new régime. The result was a great transformation, political and moral, so great that the Fronde may be considered as clearly marking a separation between two periods of French history – a deep abyss as it were between the times which precede and those which follow.

The leaders of the Fronde had been dispersed by the return

of the King to his capital on October 21, 1652. When the exiles returned, some sooner, some later, the last after the Peace of the Pyrénées (November 7, 1659), so great a change had taken place in ideas and customs that more than one exile felt himself in a strange land.

It was necessary to adjust oneself to the new atmosphere. It was very much the same situation – though the Frondeurs were under much lighter accusations – as that experienced by the *émigrés* returning under the Consulate. The Princess, the events of whose heroic years have been related, offers an excellent example of this condition.

When the Grande Mademoiselle, who had urged on the civil war in order to force Louis XIV. into marriage with herself, obtained at the end of five years, permission to return to Court, she brought with her the old undisciplined habits which were no longer in fashion, and in the end incurred much that was disagreeable. Exile had not weakened her pride. According to a celebrated formula, she had learned nothing, she had forgotten nothing; she remained that person of impulse of whom Mme. de Sévigné said, "I do not care to mix myself with her impetuosités."¹

Far be it from me to reproach Mademoiselle! All honour be to her who stood firm in the age of servility which succeeded the Fronde! In other respects exile had been most healthful for her. She had been obliged to seek in herself resources the finding

¹ Letter of January 19, 1689.

of which surprised her. Mademoiselle naïvely admires herself in her *Mémoires*² for never having experienced a single moment of ennui "in the greatest desert in the world," and surely she deserves praise, as her first experiences at Saint-Fargeau would have crushed most women.

The reader will be convinced of this if he imagines himself in her company the night of arrival in the early days of November, 1652. At the end of *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle* we left her weeping without shame before her entire suite. Her dream of glory had evaporated. Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans would never be queen of France. She would take no more cities; pass no more troops at review to the sound of trumpet and cannon. Three weeks previous, the great Condé had treated her as a companion in arms. She rejoiced the soldiers by her martial carriage, and any one of them would have been not only surprised but very indignant if it had been suggested that she was capable of being almost as cowardly as her father, the "*triste* Gaston."

Now all that was finished, even the romantic flight. While playing hide-and-seek with imaginary pursuers, the Grande Mademoiselle had fallen into a state of physical and moral prostration. The heroine of Orléans and of Porte Saint-Antoine sobbed like a little child because she "had too much grief" and was "too afraid"³; the aspect of her future home had taken away the last remnants of courage.

² *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*. Edited by Chéruef.

³ *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*. Edited by Chéruef.

The Château of Saint-Fargeau, begun under Hugh Capet and often repaired, particularly during the fifteenth century, seemed more like a fortress than a peaceful dwelling. Its heavy mass dominated the valley of the Loing, a region of great and dense forests, with few clearings. Itself enveloped with brushwood and protected by deep moats, the château harmonised well with the surroundings. Its windows opened at a great height above the ground, and its towers were strong. The body of the building was massive and bare, united by strong ramparts forming an *enceinte* irregular with severe appearance.

The *ensemble* was imposing, never smiling. Saint-Fargeau, long uninhabited, was almost a ruin filled with rats at the time when Mademoiselle presented herself as a fugitive. She was shown into a room with a prop in the centre. Coming from the palace of the Tuileries, this sight overwhelmed her, and made her realise the depth of her fall. She had an access of despair: "I am most unfortunate to be absent from Court, to have only a dwelling as ugly as this, and to realise that this is the best of my châteaux." Her fear became terror when she discovered that doors and windows were lacking. A report came from a valet that she was sought for imprisonment, and she was too confused to reflect that if the King had ordered her arrest locks would have been useless.

She continued her journey to reach a little château, situated two leagues from Saint-Fargeau, which was reported safer. "Imagine," says she, "with what pleasure I made the extra

journey. I had risen two hours before daylight; I had ridden twenty-two miles upon a horse already worn out with previous travel. We arrived at our destination at three in the morning; I went to bed in haste." The crisis was short. The next day it was explained to Mademoiselle that Saint-Fargeau had two exits in case of alarm. She returned in consequence on the fourth day, and there was no more question of grief, nor even ill-temper; from that moment the place was "good and strong."

The Princess adapted herself to the glassless windows, the broken ceilings, the absence of doors, and all the rest. The great ladies of the seventeenth century were fortunately not too particular. Mademoiselle encamped in a cellar while the apartment above was being repaired, and was forced to borrow a bed. She recovered all her gaiety before the comicality of the situation: "for the first cousin of the King of France." "Happily for me," wrote she, "the bailiff of the château had been recently married; therefore he possessed a new bed." The bed of Madame the Bailiff was the great resource of the château. It was returned as soon as the Princess received her own from Paris, but it was again used to give a resting-place to the Christmas guests, many of whom appeared – a fact to the credit of the French nobility – as soon as it was known where the illustrious unfortunate was passing her period of banishment.

Mademoiselle did not know how to provide for these guests and the most important were lodged with the bailiff. The Duchess of Sully and her sister, the Marquise of Laval, came

together for a prolonged sojourn and performed the office of shuttle between the cellar in which the Grande Mademoiselle held her court and "the new bed of the city of Saint-Fargeau." Ladies of quality arriving at this time lodged where they could with small regard to comfort, and this condition lasted until the château was put in order. Every one suffered but nobody complained. There was a certain elegance in this haughty fashion of ignoring comfort, the importance of which in our own days seems in comparison rather bourgeois, in the worst sense of the word.

Gradually all was arranged. The château was restored, the apartments enlarged.⁴ The overgrowth of the approaches gave place to a terrace from which to the surprise of all a charming view was discovered. The Saint-Fargeau of the Capets and of the first Valois, "a place so wild," says Mademoiselle, "that when I arrived, only herbs fit for soup were to be found," became a beautiful residence, hospitable and animated.

The mistress of the place loved open air and movement, as did all the French nobility before an absolute monarchy, in the interest of order and peace, had trained them to rest tranquilly in the salons of Versailles. Muscular decadence commenced with the French at the epoch when it became the fashion to pass the days in silk stockings and practising bows, under

⁴ The Château of Saint-Fargeau still exists, but the interior has been transformed since a great fire which occurred in 1752; the apartments of Mademoiselle no longer remain. Cf. *Les Châteaux d'Ancy-le-Franc, de Saint-Fargeau*, etc., by the Baron Chaillou des Barres.

punishment of being excluded from all society. Violent exercises were abandoned or made more gentle.⁵ Attention was paid only to what gave majestic grace to the body in harmony with the Versailles "Galerie of Mirrors."

The bourgeoisie were eager to imitate the people of quality, and the higher classes paid for their fine manners or their attempts at fine manners with the headaches and nervous disorders of the eighteenth century. The taste for sport has only reappeared in France during our own times. We are now witnessing its resurrection.

This taste, however, was still lively immediately after the Fronde, and Mademoiselle abandoned herself to it with passion. She ordered from England a pack of hounds and hunters. She possessed many equipages. With a game of marl before the château, indoor games for rainy days, violins from the Tuileries to play for dancing, it would be difficult to find a court more brisk, more constantly in joyous movement.

Mademoiselle, whom nothing tired, set an example, and seasoned these "games of action" with *causeries*, some of which happily have been preserved for us by Segrais,⁶ her Secretary of the Commandments. Thanks to him, we know, even admitting that he may have slightly rearranged his reports, what they

⁵ Cf. *Les Sports et jeux d'exercice dans l'ancienne France*, by J. J. Jusserand.

⁶ *Les nouvelles françaises, ou Les divertissements de la princesse Aurélie*, by Segrais, Paris, 2 vols., 1656-1657. The last of the "Nouvelles françaises," *Floridon, ou l'amour imprudent*, is the history of the intrigues in the harem which led to the death of Bajazet. Racine had certainly read it when he wrote his tragedy.

talked about at the court of Saint-Fargeau, and one cannot fail to be somewhat surprised. He tells us all sorts of things of which we never should have dreamed, things that we have never imagined as subjects of interest in the seventeenth century. In this age which believed itself entirely indifferent towards nature, conversation nevertheless fell ceaselessly upon the beauties of landscape. People paused to admire "points of view," sought them, and endeavoured to explain why they were beautiful. The reasons given were, that those who knew how to enjoy a large forest and "the beautiful carpet of moss at the feet," actually preferred landscapes made more intelligible through the intervention of man. A desert pleased them less than an inhabited country, a wild landscape less than sunny collections of cultivated fields and orchards symmetrically planted, recalling "the agreeable variety of parterres made by the ingenuity of man."

Mademoiselle praises in her *Mémoires* the view from the end of the terrace. She attempts to describe it and fails. Segrais also tries in vain. It was impossible at that epoch. The vocabulary did not exist which could furnish words to describe a landscape. The creation of our descriptive vocabulary is one of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's⁷ greatest glories. In compensation, Segrais knew very well how to explain why the beauty of the view, about which he had so ineffectively written, pleased him and his companions.

⁷ See *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*, in the Collection of Grands écrivains. Paris, Hochette.

He said that, arranged by chance, it conformed to the rules of classic pictures and in no way appeared the sole work of nature. Neither the valley of the Loing nor the immense marsh which closed this side of the château, nor the island in the midst of this marsh, with clumps of trees, nor the church and small height which could be perceived, seemed placed without human intervention. "And this," writes Segrais, "is so well represented in those excellent landscapes of the great artists, that all who look upon it believe that they have seen the marsh, church, and little island in a thousand pictures."

Literature, imaginative literature at least, also held a considerable place in the conversation. Mademoiselle, who had read nothing before her sojourn at Saint-Fargeau, was anxious to make up for lost time. "I am a very ignorant creature," writes she, at the beginning of her exile, "detesting reading and having seen only the gazettes. Henceforth I am going to apply myself and see if it be possible to like a thing from deliberate determination."

Success surpassed her hopes; she conceived a passion for reading. In the winter of 1652-1653, during which there were few distractions, and the château was given over to workmen; when the bad weather and the rough roads rendered Saint-Fargeau unapproachable, and left the castle solitary, she read, or listened to reading while plying her needle, without being bored.

I laboured from morning till night at my work and descended from my chamber only to dine or to be present at mass. The winter weather was so bad that walking was

impossible. If there ever was a moment of fine weather I rode, or if the ground was too frozen I walked a little to watch my workmen. While I sewed some one read to me, and it was at this period that I began to love reading as I have done ever since.

At the end of some years of banishment her "erudition" struck Dr. Huet, who met her at the baths of Forges. "She loves history passionately," says he in his *Mémoires*, "but above all, romances, so-called. While her women were dressing her hair, she desired me to read aloud, and no matter what the subject, it provoked a thousand questions on her part. In this I well recognised the acuteness of her mind."

The fashionable romances easily pleased a Princess who had a grandeur of soul and loved to meet it in others. They were the works of Gomberville,⁸ of La Calprenède, and of Mlle. de Scudéry, in which the sheepfolds and dove-cotes of l'Astrée had yielded to the heroic adventures and grand sentiments of princes warlike and proud, who, notwithstanding their exotic names, were the same who resisted under Richelieu, and lead the Fronde under Mazarin. The generations born in the first third of the century were charmed with the resemblance to their own heroes which these tales offered them. They went wild with delight over Scythe, Oroondate, or the Grand Cyrus, as they were fascinated

⁸ His *Polexandre* had appeared, 1629-1637; his last romance, *La Jeune Alcidiane*, in 1651; *Cassandre* and *Cléopâtre*, by La Calprenède, in 1642-1647. *Arlamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*, by Mlle. de Scudéry, was published 1649-1653.

with Saint-Preux and Lelia, and many readers remained faithful till death to these writers who had so well expressed the ideals of their youth.

At sixty, La Rochefoucauld re-read La Calprenède. Mme. de Sévigné was a grandmother when she found herself "glued" to *Cléopâtre*. "The beauty of the sentiments," writes she, "and the violence of the passions, the grandeur of the events, and the marvellous successes of the redoubtable swords, all enchain me as if I were still a little child. The sentiments are of a perfection which satisfy my conception of beautiful souls."⁹

Realism and Naturalism have in the present day destroyed the capacity for enthusiasm for heroes of romance. One's imagination can hardly be kindled by a Coupeau or a Nana, nor even by a Madame Bovary, whatever may be the literary value of the works in which they figure. For the little court of Saint-Fargeau it was hardly possible to speak calmly of the favourite heroes. One day, followed by a numerous assemblage, Mademoiselle drove in the fresh valley of the Loing and descended from her chariot under the tall willows which bordered the little river. It was spring and the sun was radiant. The new grass and the growing leaves offered a picture so "laughing" that nothing else could at first be spoken of. While walking, the conversation finally turned upon romance, and each fought for the favourite hero. The discussion was waxing warm when the Princess, who had hardly spoken, intervened to

⁹ Letters of the 12th and 15th of July, 1671, to Mme. de Grignan.

moderate its ardour. After avowing that she had read but little, she gave an eulogium upon Roman history, or rather what it might become, better comprehended in the hands of a learned writer, and criticised the custom of giving French manners to Greeks, Persians, or Indians.

Mademoiselle desired greater "historic truth" and what might be designated as more local colour. Why not frankly take characters from French contemporaries? "I am astonished," she said in ending, "that so many people of intelligence who have created for us such worthy Scythians and such generous Parthians have not taken the same pleasure in imagining as accomplished French cavaliers or princes: whose adventures would not have been less pleasing." After a moment's silence, objections were advanced. The idea of writing a romance upon the "war of Paris" seemed very daring. One young lady very naïvely urged that the author would not know how to name his characters. "The French," said she, "naturally love foreign names. Arabaze, Iphidamante, Crosmane, are beautiful names; Rohan, Lorraine, Montmorency, are nothing of the kind."

The old Mme. de Choissy, with the authority given by her noted intelligence, tried to prove that in an imaginative recital both time and space must be distant. One Marquise appeared wearied of the kings and emperors of romance, and desired heroes taken from the middle class. Another, Mme. de Mauny, who was supposed¹⁰ to have invented the expression

¹⁰ See *Le dictionnaire des Précieuses*, by Somaize.

"*s'encanailler*" asserted that it was forbidden to heroes of romance to do or say anything derogatory to pure sentiment, which was possible to those of "high birth only." Mademoiselle maintained the necessity of observation and truth for the tale, but she admitted that the author of a great romance, writing as a "poet," had the right to imagine events, instead of servilely copying them. "The tale," said she, "relates things as they are, the romance as they should be."

This distinction neither lacks acuteness nor a certain justice, and we should like to know how much Segrais had contributed to it. No one having replied to this last remark, the Princess remounted her carriage, and gave the order to follow the pack of hounds, which had just started a hare a few steps off. She was obeyed, in spite of the obstacles which the country presented, and she returned to the château, very well satisfied with her afternoon.

At Saint-Fargeau they talked more frequently of love than of either literature or the beauties of nature. Love is a subject of which women never weary, and about which they always have something to say. Mademoiselle lent herself completely to such conversation; it was she who one day posed a question the subtlety of which the Hôtel Rambouillet might have enjoyed. "Whose absence causes the greater anguish, a lover who should be loved or one who should not be?"

She consented to admit the ideas of *l'Astrée* upon the fatality of passion, on the condition that the effects should be limited to

personages of romance, or in real life to those of humble birth. Segrais makes her say without protest in a tale¹¹ ascribed to her "Man is not free to love or not to love as he pleases." In the depths of her soul, in her most intimate thoughts, Mademoiselle had never been further from comprehending love, never had she more energetically refused for it any beauty, any grandeur. One of her ladies, the gracious Frontenac, with her eyes "filled with light," had made a marriage of inclination, an act absurd, base, and shameful in the judgment of Mademoiselle, her mistress. The marriage turned out badly. M. de Frontenac was eccentric. His young wife at first feared, then hated him, and at Saint-Fargeau there passed between the couple tragi-comic scenes, of which no one could be ignorant.

Mademoiselle had just commenced her *Mémoires*.¹² She eagerly relates the conjugal quarrels of M. and Mme. de Frontenac with more details than it would be suitable to repeat, and this was the opportunity for an outburst against the folly of trying to found marriage upon the most fickle of human feelings. She writes:

I have always had a strong aversion for even legitimate love. This passion appears to me unworthy of a noble soul; but I am now confirmed in this opinion, and I comprehend

¹¹ *Eugénie, ou la force du destin.*

¹² Mademoiselle commenced her *Mémoires* shortly after her arrival at Saint-Fargeau. She interrupted them in 1660, resumed them in 1677, and definitely abandoned them in 1688, five years before her death.

well that reason has but little to do with affairs of passion. Passion passes quickly, is never, in fact, of long duration. One may be unhappy for life in entering upon marriage for so transient a feeling, but on the other hand, happy if one marries for reason and other imaginable considerations, even if physical aversion exists; for I believe that one often loves more with this aversion conquered.

The principle may be sage, but the Grande Mademoiselle is too sure of her fact. This "even if aversion exists" is difficult to digest. The Princess was nearing her thirtieth year, when she treated love with contempt, and nothing had yet warned her of the imprudence of defying nature; so she believed herself well protected.

In the spring of 1683, the rumour had spread that she and M. le Prince de Condé had promised to marry, in the expectation and hope of being soon relieved of the Princess de Condé, now a hopeless invalid, and that the imagination of Mademoiselle, for lack of heart, pressed her "furiously" in this affair. The Parisian salons had discovered no other explanation for the hostile attitude which she persisted in maintaining towards the Court of France, which she had so much interest in conciliating. It was inconceivable that without some reason of this kind she should compromise herself as she did, for a Prince who had become an alien and whom she might never again see. Why betray news through letters which always fell into the hands of Mazarin? Why leave to Condé, now a Spanish General, the companies

raised under the Fronde with the funds of Mademoiselle and bearing her name? Either she had lost her senses or one might expect some romantic prank, which could only be unravelled by marriage.

"Have you told everything?" demanded Mademoiselle of the old Countess de Fiesque, her former governess, one morning, when this last poured out the comments of the world. "No," said the good woman. Her mistress let her proceed, then expressed herself as indignant that she should have been believed capable of marrying on account of a sudden passion; the other reproaches had not touched her.

She declared that M. le Prince had never spoken of marriage, that it would be time to think of this if Madame la Princesse should die, when M. le Prince should be pardoned, when he should formally demand her hand, and the King should approve the affair.

I believe [continued she] that I should marry him finding in his personality only what is grand, heroic, and worthy of the name I bear. But that I should marry like a young lady of romance, that he should come to seek me upon a palfrey destroying all barriers in the road; and on the other hand that I should mount another palfrey like Mme. Oriane¹³; I assure you this would not suit my temper, and I am very indignant against those people who have thought it possible.

At this point the Princess was silent. It would have been the

¹³ Oriane was the mistress of Amadis.

moment to confess the true key to her conduct; but one must avow that, in spite of her fine words and her expressed contempt for lovers, she was after all a true Princess of romance, led by her imagination.

The idea of making war upon the King from the bottom of a cellar had amused her, and still more the thinking of herself as the price of peace between her cousin and Condé, and she had not wished to look further.

While the tempest gathered over her head, the great preoccupation of Mademoiselle was the installation of a theatre in her dilapidated château, in which the country workmen had not yet succeeded in arranging a suitable bedroom for her. She could no longer live without the comedy; the theatre must come first. It was ready in February, 1653, and inaugurated immediately by a wandering troop, engaged for the season. The hall was commodious, but very cold. The court of Saint-Fargeau descended from its garrets entirely muffled, the ladies in fur hoods. The country people, only too delighted to be invited to shiver in such good company, hastened from distances of ten leagues. Mademoiselle was perfectly contented: "I listened to the play with more pleasure than ever before."

We no longer understand what it means to love truly the theatre. According to the gazette of Loret, the opening piece was a pastoral, "half gay, half moral." Mademoiselle loved this sort, slightly out of fashion; Segrais has preserved an agreeable reminiscence of a summer's evening passed in the forest, with

the natural background of high trees, listening to an ancient "Amaryllis" repolished and arranged for the stage by some penny-a-liner.

Mademoiselle loved, what is more, everything pertaining to the theatre from tragedy to trained dogs. One reads in a little squib written by her as a pastime,¹⁴ and printed for the diversion of her friends, "Comedians are essentials – at least for the French and Italians. Jugglers, rope dancers, *buveurs d'eau*, without forgetting marionettes and bell players, dogs trained to leap, and monkeys as examples to our own; violins and merry-andrews and good dancers." This skit should not be taken too seriously, but it well accords with the account left us by an eye-witness of one of the representations at Saint-Fargeau. The piece was called *Country Pleasures*, an operetta. The greatest applause fell neither to the Goddess Flora, nor to the "melancholy lover," but to two children disguised as monkeys, and executing songs with the "cadence which belongs to those animals."

Twice a week, the pleasures and cares of Saint-Fargeau were varied by the arrival of messengers bringing letters and gazettes. News not to be trusted to the post was received through guests from Paris or by special messengers. The news consisted mainly of political events, but it fell to the exiles to discover the springs and to draw the morals from the facts. This talent of divining, possessed in a high degree by the Parisians, has never passed the

¹⁴ *La relation de l'Isle imaginaire*, printed in 1659, also *L'histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*. We shall again refer to them.

banlieue. It cannot be carried away.

Mademoiselle herself had never attained the art. Even at the Tuileries she used to say: "I can never guess anything." Once in her place of refuge, she comprehended nothing of the real significance of passing events. For those who were not Provincials there was nothing clearer than the conduct of the Court of France, after its return to the capital. Mademoiselle had fled from the Tuileries October 21, 1652. The next day the young King held a *Lit de Justice*, in which the Parliament was forbidden to occupy itself with the general affairs of the kingdom. Banishments and pursuits immediately commenced, but the gazettes hardly referred to them. From their pages one might have gathered that Paris was entirely absorbed in its pleasures.

The post of November brought to Saint-Fargeau description of the first Court ball and some lines on a new *Lit de Justice* (November 13th), in which the Prince de Condé and his adherents had been declared criminals "de lèse majesté." The December number of the *Gazette* gave news of the arrest of Retz, who had rallied before the end of the Fronde, and the account of a great marriage with enumeration of gifts and names of donors, exactly as in our modern journals. The January number was made interesting by the accounts of the several successes of Turenne over Condé and the Spanish troops, and by the news of the death of an ancient aunt of Mademoiselle who had been in retreat for seven or eight years. The necrological article took a larger space

in the gazette of Loret than that absorbed by the warlike and political news together.

The third of the following month the revolutionary era was closed by the triumphal return of Mazarin. Louis XIV. travelled three leagues to meet him, and took him back in his own carriage to the Louvre, where a sumptuous festival, fireworks, and homage, more or less sincere, from the crowds of courtiers, awaited him.

Encor qu'il fait un temps étrange
Temps de vent, de pluie et de fange,

The attention of the Parisians was at once directed to a grand ballet with mechanical devices and changes of scene, danced three times by the King and the flower of his nobility,¹⁵ before a public analogous to that of the free representations of July 14th in Paris. Places were reserved for the Court and its guests, who really made part of the spectacle, but otherwise all entered who desired. The crowd besieged the doors to see what will probably never again be witnessed: a monarch sufficiently sure of his prestige to dare to pirouet, costumed as a mythological divinity, or stagger as a thief who had drunk too much, before the *canaille* of his capital.

The following day, a journalist bitterly bewails in his paper

¹⁵ These representations took place in the grand hall of the Petit Bourbon, near the Louvre. (Cf. *L'Histoire de Paris*, by Delaure.)

having seen nothing at all, although he had stood in line three hours and waited eight hours in the hall. This journalist exacted and obtained consideration; at the second representation, the chronicler before carelessly treated was led in ceremony to the "reserved places." He was not yet content, not being in front. He showed himself, however, a good fellow and wrote an article admiring all, even a scene in which the joke to-day seems somewhat inhuman. It was a dance of cripples, the contortions of these miserable beings causing much laughter.

Of the abuses which gave rise to the Fronde, no living soul breathed a word. Not one of these abuses had disappeared. For the most part they had been aggravated by the general disorder; but France resembled an invalid who had so far found only charlatans for physicians; it was weary of remedies. "The people of Paris," wrote André d'Ormesson, "were disgusted with Princes and did not longer wish to feed upon war."

One might say the same of the Provinces. They remained for the most part troubled and miserable, their hate now turning against the nobility, with whom the four years of anarchy had brought back the manners of the feudal brigands. Deceived on all sides, betrayed by all its pretended saviours, the country began again to put its faith in the central power. It was only necessary that this last should regain its strength day by day, and it was clear to the Parisians as well as to the Provinces that the first use royalty would make of convalescence would be to cripple the nobility so that a revival of the Fronde would be impossible.

The period had passed in which the King could be aided by the nobles according to their own methods not his, as at the time in which they had fought against him, to deliver him from his first minister. Louis XIV. wished now to be served in his own way, which was to be obeyed, and he felt the strength to impose obedience. It required all the naïveté of Mademoiselle to be able to imagine that she could make the King as an old Frondeur admit the distinctions between M. le Prince whose success one had the right to desire, and the Spanish soldiers led by this same Prince in whom one must not be interested. She had so little realisation of the change which had taken place in sentiments, from the date of her exile, that she did not even attempt to conceal her grief at the news of the victory at Arras brought back by Turenne, August 27, 1654.

The Grande Mademoiselle believed herself in accord with her King and country when she wrote in her *Mémoires*: "I have not desired the Spaniards to gain advantage over the French, but I do wish that M. le Prince might do so and I cannot persuade myself that this is against the service of the King." It was then four months since the young monarch had entered, whip in hand, into his Parliament and forbade it to mix itself with his affairs; but his cousin had no more comprehended this warning than the others which had preceded it. It had not once occurred to her that the cadet branches of the royal family were amongst the vanquished and that the relations of the King of France, very far from being in a position to dictate to him, would henceforth

be the most strictly held in leash of all his subjects. Only the approach of the great revolution gave them an opportunity to regain their importance and we know how much Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette were able to congratulate themselves over this fact.

Monsieur Gaston undertook to bring his daughter to a realisation of the truth. It had been said that as long as he lived bitter experiences would come to Mademoiselle through this dangerous Prince.

Gaston d'Orléans had disappeared from the stage at the end of the Fronde, like a true hero of comedy. His wife said, half weeping, half laughing, that he seemed to her a Tewlin, a celebrated comic actor who filled the rôle designated to-day as the "king of operetta."

The return of the Court to Paris had been announced to the Luxembourg by a letter from Louis XIV. This news had entirely upset Monsieur and he blustered with so much appearance of truth that Mademoiselle had once more been convinced. "He was so completely beside himself," relates de Retz, "that one would judge from his manner of speaking, that he was already on horseback, completely armed and ready to cover with blood the plains of St. Denis and Grenelle."

Madame was terrified; she endeavoured to pacify him, but the more she tried the more vigorously he threatened to annihilate everything. His martial ardour vanished when he received a decree of banishment (October 21, 1652). It was at the date the

King was entering Paris, and cannon were heard on all sides, the populace, according to the custom of the times, firing in the air as a sign of joy. Nothing, however, could persuade Monsieur, old Parisian as he was, that these charges did not come from the King's guards, and that the palace was not being besieged.

He was overcome with terror; moved to and fro with agitation; sent constantly to inquire what was going on, and finally hastened his departure, which should not have taken place till the next day before dawn. He drew a free breath only upon arriving at the valley of Chevreuse. No one dreamed of retaining him – on the contrary, Mazarin, who governed France from the depths of his exile, was resolved to have no more trouble with him. "Let his Royal Highness depart with his appanage,"¹⁶ wrote he. His Royal Highness having arrived at the Château of Limours, Michel Le Tellier, Secretary of State and War, hastened to find him, and it was a repetition of the former scenes with Richelieu.

In his final adieus to public life, Gaston d'Orléans denounced Retz as before he had denounced Chalais, Montmorency, Cinq-Mars, and many others. When he had said all that he wished, thus preparing the arrest of the Cardinal, who was to astonish Mademoiselle by arriving at Saint-Fargeau, the King permitted him to retire to Blois.¹⁷ Monsieur obeyed with ill-grace; he felt that they were burying him alive.

This was not the first time that he had dwelt at Blois in spite

¹⁶ Letter of October 12th, to the Abbé Fouquet.

¹⁷ *Mémoires de Montglat.*

of himself. The forced sojourn made at that place under Louis XIII. had not been disagreeable, constraint aside, because he was not definitely limited, and he succeeded, being young and gay, in living like "a little king of Yvetot." He had rebuilt according to his own taste (1635-1638) a portion of the château after the plans of François Mansard, "the cleverest architect of his times,"¹⁸ the uncle of the builder of the Palace of Versailles.

Chambord served him for a country-seat, near at hand, and fruitful for the kitchen garden, with forests teeming with game for hunting-grounds, and amiable people for subjects, who had guarded a monarchical faith and considered themselves much honoured when the brother of the King deigned to flatter them and their daughters.

Saint-Fargeau was steep and gloomy; Blois, on the contrary, with its sky full of caresses, showed itself the worthy forerunner of the Angevine gentleness:

Coteaux riants y sont des deux côtés,
Coteaux non pas si voisins de la nue,
Qu'en Limousin, mais coteaux enchantés,
Belles maisons, beaux parcs et bien plantés,
Prés verdoyants donc ce pays abonde,
Vignes et bois, tant de diversités
Qu'on croit d'abord être en un autre monde.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Mémoires du Marquis de Sourches*. Cf. *L'Histoire du château de Blois*, by La Saussaye.

¹⁹ Letter of September 3, 1663.

It is a tourist of the time who so speaks, La Fontaine, who visited Blois in 1663, and described it to his wife in a letter half prose, half verse. The city had charmed him on account of its beautiful situation and the amiable manners of its inhabitants. "Life is very polished here, possibly has always been so, the climate and the beauty of the country contributing to its charm; probably the sojourn of Monsieur or the number of pretty women has caused this politeness."

As a man of taste, La Fontaine had admired the portion of the château of Francis I., without regularity and order; as a good liver he had appreciated the excellent breakfast at the inn. As a good traveller, he had gossiped sufficiently with the people of the place to realise how happy they were under the gentle reign of Gaston.

The traces of the civil wars had been quickly effaced in these fertile and populous provinces. La Fontaine gaily retook his route towards Amboise; he saw the smile of France, and he was made to enjoy it.

In this first time of peaceful enjoyment one of the great pleasures of Monsieur was to pass through his domains as an idle prince; descending here from his carriage to chase a stag, stopping there his boat to dine upon the grass, inviting himself into any dwellings belonging to either nobles or bourgeoisie in which he found pretty women.

He embarked one day on one of those covered boats which the

pictures of the seventeenth century show us. They were called "galiotes," and were used in voyaging upon rivers and canals. "Monsieur," relates an eye-witness, "had commanded a second boat in which he put a quantity of provisions, and the officers of his *ménage*, those of the kitchen as well as the wardrobe; the horses were led along the bank."

He took ten or twelve of his suite with himself, and when he reached some beautiful and agreeable island, he disembarked and ordered dinner and supper to be served under the shade.

"Certainly one might say that all cares were banished from our society, that life went on without restraint, playing, drinking, eating, sleeping at will, that time meant nothing; at last the master, although son and brother of great kings, had put himself in the rank of his servants."²⁰

Thus they drifted down the stream as far as Brittany. The weather was perfect. The châteaux of the Loire defiled before the galiote. These people travelled as if they were poets.

As soon, however, as Richelieu permitted, Gaston rushed to Paris and again plunged into politics; which meant to him only cowardice and betrayals, but which nevertheless fascinated him. This was his favourite vice which nothing would have induced him to correct, for politics gave him a round of new sensations. To hold the life of a friend in one's hand, knowing in advance that he will be delivered to the executioner, and at the same time bitterly to bewail his loss; to realise also that the present grief will

²⁰ Nicolas Goulas, *Mémoires*.

surely vanish and that one can joyously take another life in the hand, – such events evidently make days most interesting, when neither conscience nor heart are tender. These excitements had filled the public career of Gaston, and when he found himself again in his château of Blois, almost twenty years after the radiant voyage down the Loire, for ever deprived, according to all probabilities, of the strong emotions whose savour Le Tellier had permitted him to taste for the last time in the interview at Limours, existence appeared to him intolerably pale and empty.

The good which he could do and actually was doing, did not interest him; he bitterly regretted the evil no longer in his power.

No one, even amongst his enemies, has ever accused him of being wicked. Only physicians can analyse such morbid natures. Monsieur had commenced by struggling against ennui. He had collected a fine library and had attracted literary people to his court, in the hopes of refinding the taste for literature which had animated his youth. He recalled his collections of objects of art and curiosities, continued them and began new. Nothing, however, really interested him, except a botanical garden with which he occupied himself with pleasure.

Everything seemed infinitely puerile to a man who had contributed so long to the making of history; it had become impossible for him to attach any importance to the little verses of his "beaux esprits," or to become impassioned over impaled birds or even an antique medal.

Weary of war, he threw himself into devotion. The gazette

of Loret made this fact part of the official news of France and kept the country informed of his progress in the path of piety. The first sign which he gave of his conversion was to correct himself of a fault which had formerly brought from Richelieu useless remonstrances. This Prince with so refined a taste, cursed and swore abominably. The habit had been caught by those near him; we know that Mademoiselle herself used lively words in moments of irritation. In December, 1652, oaths and blasphemies were severely forbidden at the court of Blois, and Monsieur insisted upon obedience.

To-day, reports the gazette²¹:

Aucun de ceux qui sont à lui,
Quelque malheur qui lui survienne,
N'oserait jurer la mordienne.

One learns, afterwards, that these fine beginnings were not belied, and that Monsieur was now "less often at home than in the church." The Parisians and the Court of France had much difficulty in believing that repentance should have come to a spirit so free and so skeptical. His piety would have been entirely estimable "if his laziness had not in some portion aided his virtue." But however this may be, the devotion of Gaston was not the less sincere. He reformed his life, and succeeded in finding, at the foot of the altar, not perhaps contentment, but some patience

²¹ Gazette of August 22, 1654.

and resignation.

This did not come, however, for a long time; the beginning of his definite exile was filled with miserable agitations and complaints without dignity. Madame rejoined him with their little flock of daughters.²² This Princess did not add to the animation of the château. Entirely occupied with her own health, she lived shut up, without any other distraction than that of eating from morning till night, "in order to cure her melancholies," relates the Grande Mademoiselle, "but which really increases her ills." She gave no orders, only sent for her daughters ten minutes in the morning and evening, never spoke to them except to say "Hold yourselves erect, raise your head"; this was her sole instruction. She never saw them again during the day and never inquired what they were doing.

The governess in her turn neglected her pupils, who were abandoned to the care of inferiors. Their father found nothing to criticise in these educational methods; Anne of Austria had not brought up her sons very differently. Besides, Monsieur was a submissive husband. He considered his wife's judgment good, and that she possessed much more intelligence than was indicated by her large, frightened eyes.

"This one," said Tallemant, "is a poor idiot, who nevertheless has intelligence." Mme. de Motteville judged her exactly the same. Madame was not loved because she was not amiable, but no one was astonished at her ascendancy over her husband.

²² Four, but the last died at an early age.

Gaston's court, contrary to that of his daughter, was almost deserted. Disgrace for this couple had been the signal for general abandonment. During the first years, Gaston took the trouble to entertain his guests; he became again, for some hours, the incomparable talker, who knew a thousand beautiful tales and found charming methods of telling them.²³ Chapelle and Bachaumont were received at the château on their passage to Blois in 1656, and brought back the pleasantest remembrances of the dinners of the Duc d'Orléans.

La d'une obligeante manière,
D'un visage ouvert et riant,
Il nous fit bonne et grande chère,
Nous donnant a son ordinaire
Tout ce que Blois a de friand.

"The table arrangements were the neatest possible, not even a crumb of bread was allowed on the table. Well polished glasses of all sorts stood upon the buffet, and ice was abundant. The hall was prepared for the evening dance, all the beauties of the neighbouring cities invited, all the violins from the provinces collected."²⁴ After a short time, however, the effort of entertaining became a burden upon Monsieur. He cared for nothing but repose, and he would have passed the remainder of his days in sleeping with open eyes, if it had not been for

²³ *Mémoires de Bussy-Rabutin.*

²⁴ *Voyage de Chapelle et de Bachaumont.*

his daughter of Saint-Fargeau, the terrible Mademoiselle, from whom he had separated at Paris after a painful explanation, and who had never left him in peace since that time.

She had commenced by coming to seek him in spite of frequent commands, to which she paid not the least attention. The Grande Mademoiselle, openly allied to Condé, was a compromising guest for a Prince possessed at this epoch with the desire to retake his place near the throne. In vain she declared that she had recalled her troops from the army of the Prince, her father knew very well that she was mocking him, and received her coldly on the evening of her first arrival (December, 1652). "He came to meet me at the door of his room, and said, 'I do not dare to come out because I have a swollen cheek.'" A moment after Monsieur heard from afar a joyous voice; it was Mademoiselle relating the adventures during her flight to Saint-Fargeau. Monsieur could hold out no longer. He approached, made her recommence, and laughed with the others. The ice was broken. The fourth day, however, he said to Préfontaine, the man of confidence of Mademoiselle, while walking in the park of Chambord, "I love my daughter very much, but I have many obligations, and shall be easier if she stays here but little."

Mademoiselle departed the next day. The following month (January, 1653), Monsieur and Madame made a sojourn at Orléans. In spite of new orders, Mademoiselle came to pass a day with them. "I did not wait for escort," wrote she, "I departed suddenly from Saint-Fargeau and went to Orléans."

This determination to impose herself upon people whom she saw with but little pleasure, is difficult to explain. Monsieur and Madame, who feared her, welcomed her, and her father said in bidding her farewell, "The affairs of your minority have never been settled. I wish to close this business. Give orders for this to your people."

Mademoiselle did not wait for a second request. "In consequence I wrote to Paris, then to Blois, a host of writings which were somewhat wearisome." Monsieur had his own projects. It was the single opportunity to extract a little money for the daughters by his second wife.

These young princesses had nothing to expect from their own mother, and very little from their father, whose pensions and appointments were destined to disappear with him. Madame was preoccupied with this situation.

For a long time [reports one of their intimates]²⁵ Madame has skilfully urged Monsieur to think of his affairs, and to put some solid property aside for her children, telling him that he possessed nothing in the world not reversible to the crown in case he had no male children, and that their daughters would be left to the mercy of the court and the ministers for their subsistence.

Until Gaston's disgrace, Madame had obtained nothing, and for cause. Her husband ruined himself at play; he had been seen to lose a half-million francs to the famous Chevalier de Gramont.

²⁵ *Mémoires de Nicolas Goulas.*

He reformed only at Blois, too late to begin to save; his debts crushed him, and his pensions were paid most irregularly. The fortune of Mademoiselle presented itself as the sole means of floating the House of Orléans, and the accounts of her minority were the troubled waters in which it was proposed to fish. Monsieur did not suspect how much the exile and the influence of Préfontaine had changed his daughter.

The Préfontaine type has disappeared with the ancient régime. There is no place in our democratic society for these men at once servants and friends; friends however who remained in the background. Persons of this kind were frequently met with in the great families of former times, and nothing appeared more natural than the dog-like devotion to their masters, always exacting and often ungrateful. The Grande Mademoiselle was not ungrateful but she was violent, and it was always upon the patient Préfontaine that she vented her anger. He was the counsellor, the factotum shrewd and firm, to whom all affairs came, the confidant who knew her most secret projects of marriage without ceasing to be the domestic of no account.

His mistress could do nothing without him, and she does not even tell us – she who loses herself in the smallest details when they concerned people of quality in her suite – at what date this precious man entered her service. She mentions him for the first time in 1651, without saying who he is or where he comes from. From that date she never ceased to speak of him as long as the troubled times lasted, but left him in the shadow nevertheless in

her *Mémoires*. When we have said that he was a gentleman, that there was no reason for his devotion to Mademoiselle but his own choice, we have told all we know about him. He had found the affairs of his mistress in a very bad condition, and so he warned her; Monsieur, her father, had been a negligent guardian and what is more an untrustworthy one. At first Mademoiselle would not listen to Préfontaine. It was at Paris in the midst of the fire of the Fronde, and she had other things to think of.

Préfontaine returned to the charge at Saint-Fargeau, where time abounded, and was better received. A new sentiment had awakened in Mademoiselle. She commenced to love money. She took interest in her affairs, and skilfully applied herself to economising with so much success that she would have soon risen to be a Countess Pimbesche.

Ideas of order and economy, rarely found with princesses of this epoch, occurred to her. "It is not sufficient," said she one day to Préfontaine, "to have an eye upon my legal affairs and the increase of my revenues; but it is also necessary to supervise the expenses of my house. I am convinced that I am robbed, and to prevent this, I wish to be accounted to as if I were a private person."

This was not beneath a great Princess. Examination proved that she *was* robbed by her people. After being assured of this, she took upon herself the duty of supervising all the accounts twice a week, "even to the smallest."

She knew the price of everything; "who could have predicted

when I lived at Court, that I should ever know how much bricks, lime, plaster, carriages cost, what are the daily wages of the workmen, in fine all the details of a building, and that every Saturday I should myself settle the accounts: every one would have been skeptical." And still more the people at large; it was really almost incredible. She quickly perceived that Monsieur had not taken his duties as guardian very seriously. It was in his belief both the right and duty of the chief of the Orléans family to advance the general interests of the House, even at the expense of individual members. The daughter by the first marriage was enormously rich. What could be more just than to use her fortune for the common good? What more natural than to throw upon her the burden of debts contracted to add to the éclat of the family? or to give a little of her superfluity to her young sisters in view of their establishment?

Gaston sent to his daughter for signature an act conceived in this spirit, and received the clearest refusal. Very respectfully but with firmness Mademoiselle assured him that henceforth she intended to hold to her legal rights, which guaranteed the integrity of her fortune. Monsieur threw himself into a great rage, but knew not what more to do. Politics gave him unexpected aid. A gentleman sent as courier by Condé into France had just been arrested. Among other letters was found one without address, but evidently destined for Mademoiselle and most compromising for her.

Mazarin charged the Archbishop of Embrun to take a copy of

this to Gaston. The dispatch in which the prelate renders account of his mission has been preserved. Here is one of the significant passages:

Blois, March 31, 1653.

Monseigneur:

I arrived Sunday evening in this city where I was received most warmly by Monsieur... Immediately upon arrival I had a conference of an hour with him alone in his cabinet. I pointed out to him through the letter addressed to Mademoiselle her relations to M. le Prince, the Spaniards, and M. de Lorraine, which were all visibly marked in the letter. He declared himself very ill satisfied with Mademoiselle, but that the Queen knew that they had never been eight hours at a time together: and that at this moment she was trying to cause trouble in demanding account of his care of her wealth when he was guardian, and that it was thus impossible to doubt his anger. I told him that I had orders to beseech his Royal Highness to make two observations upon the letter; the first: that Mademoiselle as long as she enjoyed the free possession of her immense wealth could assist any party she pleased, and that the King in order to check this had resolved to place administrators or a commission over her property to preserve it for her own use, but without permitting its abuse. His Royal Highness should be left the choice of these commissioners.

The second remark was, that it was to be feared, according to the news in the letter, that if M. le Prince advanced,

Mademoiselle would join him, and that the King in this difficulty demanded counsel of him as the person most interested in the conduct of Mademoiselle. Gaston replied: that he had ordered his daughter to join him at Orléans, Tuesday of Holy Week; and he would bring her back to Blois, and keep her near him.

I have also, my Lord, talked over the same subjects with Madame as with Monsieur, knowing that she was very intelligent, and also that Monsieur deferred much to her opinions.

Mazarin took no action upon this communication of the Archbishop of Embrun.

It was sufficient to intimate to Monsieur that he was authorised not to worry himself about a rebel, and Gaston on his side asked nothing better.

Sure of being for the present under Court protection, he poured forth bitter words and threats against this disobedient and heartless daughter, who forgot her duty. Sometimes he wrote to her that "if she did not willingly give everything he demanded he would take possession of all the property and only give her what he pleased."

Sometimes he cast fire and flame between her and the public: "She does not love her sisters; says they are beggars; that after my death she will see them demand alms, without giving a penny. She wishes to see my children in the poor-house," and other sentiments of the same kind, which were repeated at Saint-Fargeau.

Mademoiselle herself dreamed one day that Monsieur thought

of enclosing her in a convent, "that this was the intention of the King," and that she must prepare for his coming. At the same time she was warned from Paris that her father had promised the Court to arrest her as soon as she arrived at Blois. Things reached such a pass that Gaston could no longer hear the name of his daughter without flying into a passion.

The Princess had at first showed herself fearless. Knowing that the letter of Condé did not have any address, she denied that it was meant for her and took a high hand with her father; "I assert that they cannot take away my property unless I am proved either mad or criminal and I know very well that I am neither one nor the other."

Reflection, however, diminished her assurance. The idea of "being arrested" terrified her, and it was this fate, in the opinion of her ladies, which awaited her at Blois – for which reason Monsieur, having previously forbidden her to come, now ordered her to meet him.

She wept torrents of tears; she was ill when she was obliged to obey and she confesses that on arriving at Blois she quite lost her head from terror. It was the story of the hare and the frogs. The projects of Gaston, whatever they may have been, vanished at sight of this agitated person and he had no other thought than of calming his daughter and avoiding scenes.

For this he exerted all his grace, which was much, and forced Mademoiselle, reassured and calmed, to acknowledge that her father could be "charming."

The days rolled by and the question of their differences was not touched upon. "I wanted one day to speak to him about my affairs and he fled and would pay no attention."

Mademoiselle felt the delights of a country covered with superb châteaux in which she was fêted, and amiable cities which fired cannon in her honour. She made excursions during a large part of the summer (1653) and finally separated from her father most amicably. Eight days after, the situation however was more sombre than before her departure for Blois. The demands of Monsieur had not diminished, his language became still more hard and menacing.

These differences lasted many years. Mademoiselle lets it be understood that it was a question of considerable sums. She relates sadly the progress of the ill-will of her father; how painful her sojourn at Blois had been, so that she wept from morning till night; how without the influence of Préfontaine she would have retired into a Carmelite convent; "not to be a religieuse, God having never given me that vocation, but to live away from the world for some years." The ennui of the cloister life would have been compensated by the thought that it was an economical one. "I should save much money," said she; and this thought consoled her. Once it was believed that an amicable solution was imminent. The father and daughter had submitted themselves to the arbitration of the maternal grandmother of Mademoiselle, the old Mme. de Guise, who had made them promise in writing to sign "all that she wished without reading the stipulations."

The only result was a more definite embroilment. Mme. de Guise²⁶ "was devoted to her House,"²⁷ that ambitious and intriguing House of Lorraine into which she had married, and with which she was again connected through the second wife of Gaston, sister of the Duke Henri.²⁸ When Mademoiselle, after "signing without reading," realised the force of the "transaction" into which she had been led by her grandmother, she declared that Mme. de Guise had despoiled her with shocking bad faith, in order that her half-sisters, the little Lorraines, should no longer be menaced with the "poor-house." The love of family had extinguished with Mme. de Guise, as with Monsieur, all considerations of justice and sense of duty towards her own granddaughter. All this happened at Orléans in the month of May, 1655. Mademoiselle, indignant, ran to her grandmother:

I told her that it was evident that she loved the House of Lorraine better than the House of Bourbon; that she was right in seeking to give money to my sisters, that they would have little from Madame, and this showed me, indeed, to be a lady of great wealth, enough to provide for others, and that the fortune of my family should be established upon what could be seized from me; but as I was so much above them

²⁶ Saint-Simon, *Écrits inédits*.

²⁷ Henriette-Catherine, Duchesse de Joyeuse, first married to Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier, by whom she had Marie de Bourbon, mother of Mademoiselle; married for the second time to Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, by whom she had several children.

²⁸ Henri de Lorraine reigned from 1608 to 1624.

that they could receive my benefactions, it would serve them better to depend upon my liberality rather than to attempt to swindle me; that this would be better before both God and man.

This scene lasted three hours. The same day Monsieur was warned that Mademoiselle refused to be "duped." He gave a precipitate order for departure, and declined to receive his daughter. In the disorder that ensued Madame almost went dinnerless and appeared much disconcerted.

The attendants intervened to save appearances at least, and a formal leave was taken, but this was all; the complete rupture was consummated. Upon the return to Saint-Fargeau, Mademoiselle at once learned that Monsieur had taken away her men of business, including the indispensable Préfontaine, and had left her without even a secretary. This gives a vision of the authority possessed by the chief of a family, and its limitations, with the princely houses of this epoch. We perceive how much better the fortune of Mademoiselle was defended against her father than her person and her independence. Monsieur did not dare to take away her money without a free and formal assent; he knew that if things were not done regularly "in a hundred years the heirs of Mademoiselle could torment the children of Monsieur." In revenge for this disability he tyrannised over her household. And here he was in his full right.

He could shut her up in a convent or in the Château of Amboise, as many counselled him to do, and this again would be

within his legal powers. If he did nothing of the kind, it was only because, being nervous and impressionable, he dreaded feminine tears.

Mademoiselle realised that she was at his mercy; it did not occur to her to contest the parental authority – outside of the question of money. She wept, "suffered much," but she did not attempt to save Préfontaine.

The years which followed were sad ones for her. Until this time she had had but two days of grief a week, those upon which the courier arrived, on account of the business letters which must be read and answered. She confined herself to her study to conceal her red eyes, but her correspondence once sent off, "I only thought," says she, "of amusing myself."

Conditions changed when she was forced to understand that Monsieur, that father so contemptible, from whom she had suffered so much since her infancy, but so amiable that she admired and loved him notwithstanding, had no kind of affection for her. Very sensitive, in spite of her brusqueness, Mademoiselle experienced a profound grief at this reflection. Her temper gave way in a moment in which the young ladies of her suite, commencing to find the exile long, and to regret Paris, were ill-disposed to patience. There was coldness, frictions, and finally that domestic war, the account of which fills a large space in the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

Petty griefs, small intrigues, and much gossip rendered insupportable to one another persons condemned to daily

intercourse. Affairs became so strained between some of the parties that communication was impossible, and this state of things lasted until the most discontented, Mmes. de Fiesque and de Frontenac, had formed the determination to return to Paris.

These quarrels had the effect of spoiling for Mademoiselle Saint-Fargeau, inclining her to submission to the Court; but mere mention is sufficient, and we shall not again refer to them.

Mademoiselle commenced to be convinced of the imprudence of being at odds with the Court and her father at the same time. Her obstinacy in sustaining Condé had ended by seriously vexing Mazarin. The nobility felt this attitude and showed less fondness for the Princess. In 1655 she approached to six leagues from Paris. She counted much upon visitors; very few appeared. "I was responsible for so many illnesses," says she wittily, "for all those who did not dare to confess that they feared to embroil themselves with the Court, feigned maladies or accidents in extraordinary numbers."

The third day she received an order to "return." This misadventure enlightened her; Mademoiselle admitted the necessity of making peace with royalty. Just at this period the Prince de Condé grew less interesting to her, as his chances of becoming a widower diminished. Mme. la Princesse became gradually re-established in health, and each of her steps towards recovery made Mademoiselle a little less warm for M. le Prince. This latter perceived the change, and at once altered his tone. "There is no rupture," says the Duc d'Aumale, "but one can

perceive the progress of the coolness and its accordance with *certain news.*"

A letter from Condé, received after the journey to the environs of Paris, gave warning of the end of a friendship which on one side at least was entirely political.

Brussels, March 6, 1655.

... As to this change which you declare to perceive in me, you do me much injustice and it seems to me that I have more right to reproach you than you me. Since your long silence the tone of your letters plainly indicates how different your present sentiments are from those of past times. This is not true of my own; they remain always the same and if you believe otherwise and if you lend faith to the rumours which my enemies start, it is my misfortune, not crime; for I protest there is nothing in them, that affairs are not in this state, and if they were I should never listen to a proposition without full consideration for your interests and satisfaction, also not without your consent and participation.

You will recognise the truth of this statement through my conduct and not one of my actions will ever give the lie to the words which I now give you, even if you should have forgotten all the fine sentiments you had when you came to see our army, which I can hardly consider possible for a generous person like you.

I knew that you came to Lésigny and that, the Court disapproving of this, you received orders to return, which fact gave me much displeasure.

Mademoiselle did not longer want a pretext for withdrawing her pin from the game. The embroilment with her father furnished it. She immediately prayed Condé to write to her no more. "It is necessary to hold back," said she to herself, "and if I am able without baseness to come into accord with the Cardinal Mazarin, I will do it in order to withdraw myself from the persecutions of his Royal Highness."

Some days later the Comte de Bethune transmitted to the Cardinal overtures of peace from the Grande Mademoiselle. The Cardinal desired pledges. She sent a recall for the companies from the Spanish army, upon which M. le Prince without warning "held the soldiers and put the officers in prison."

In vain the indignation of Mademoiselle. "It is seven or eight years," wrote Condé to one of the agents, "since I have really had the favour of Mademoiselle; I formerly possessed her good graces, but if she now wishes to withdraw them I must accept, without desperation."²⁹ Here is a man liberated rather than grieved.

Thus failed, one after the other, the menaces directed by the Fronde against royalty. The project of alliance between the two cadet branches of the House of Bourbon had been inspired in Mademoiselle by the desire to marry. Few of the ideas of all those which menaced the throne which had entered into the brain of the revolutionary leaders seemed so dangerous and caused so much care to Mazarin. We must recollect that he would have

²⁹ Letter of August 10, 1657, to the Comte d'Auteuil.

been ready, in order to appease the cadet branches, to marry the little Louis XIV. to his great cousin.

Reassured at length by the promises of Mademoiselle, who engaged herself to have nothing more to do with M. le Prince, Mazarin took the trouble to overcome his wrath and permitted her to expect the recompense for her submission.

In general, Mazarin had shown himself easy with the repentant Frondeurs. The Prince de Conti had been fêted at the Louvre in 1654. It is true that he accepted the hand of a niece of Mazarin in marriage, Anne Marie Martinozzi, on conditions which put him in bad odour with the public. "This marriage," wrote d'Ormesson,³⁰ "is one of the most signal marks of the inconsistency of human affairs and the fickleness of the French character to be seen in our times."

After Conti, another Prince, Monsieur, in person, entirely submerged as he was in laziness and devotions, exerted himself sufficiently to come to Court. The welcome involved conditions which contained nothing hard nor unusual for Gaston d'Orléans; it cost him nothing but the abandonment of some last friends. In truth, he received but little in exchange. When he came to salute the King everyone made him feel that he was already "in the ranks of the dead," according to the expression of Mme. de Motteville. The ill-humour caused by this impression quickly

³⁰ André d'Ormesson died in 1665, dean of the Council of State. Some fragments of his memoirs have been published by Chéruel, in the course of the Journal of his son, Olivier d'Ormesson.

sent him back to Blois, which was precisely what was wished.

It was the men of business who profited above all by this reconciliation. They had greater freedom to harass Mademoiselle, and left her neither time nor repose. Their end was to make her execute the transaction signed at Orléans, but she held her own, without counsel or secretary. She only suffered from an enormous labour, of which her minority accounts were only a chapter, and not the most considerable. The administration of the immense domains had fallen entirely upon herself. It was now Mademoiselle who opened the mass of letters arriving from her registers, foresters, controllers, lawyers, farmers, and single subjects – in short, from all who in the principalities of Dombes or of Roche-sur-Yonne, in the duchies of Montpensier or of Catellerault, had an account to settle with her, an order to demand of her, or a claim to submit.

It was Mademoiselle herself who replied; she who followed the numerous lawsuits necessitated by the paternal management; she who terminated the great affair of Champigny, of which the echo was wide-spread on account of the rank of the parties and of the remembrances awakened by the pleaders.

Champigny was a productive territory situated in Touraine, and an inheritance of Mademoiselle. Richelieu had despoiled her of it when she was only a child, through a forced exchange for the Château of Bois-le-Vicomte, in the environs of Meaux.

Become mistress of her own fortune, Mademoiselle summoned the heirs of the Cardinal to give restitution, and had

just gained her suit when Monsieur took away Préfontaine. The decree returning Champigny to her allowed her also damages, the amount to be decided by experts, for buildings destroyed and woods spoiled. Mademoiselle estimated that these damages might reach a large sum; she knew that with her father at Blois the rumour ran that she had been placed in cruel embarrassments and that it would be repeated to all comers that she had obtained almost nothing from this source. This report excited her to action. The moment arrived; Mademoiselle went to Champigny, and remained there during several weeks, spending entire days upon the heels of eighteen experts, procurers, lawyers, gentlemen, masons, carpenters, wood merchants, collected together to value the damages. She had long explanations with that "good soul Madelaine," counsellor of the Parliament, and charged with directing the investigation, who was confounded at the knowledge of the Princess. He said to her: "You know our business better than we ourselves, and you talk of affairs like a lawyer." Operations finished, Mademoiselle had the pleasure of writing to Blois that this doubtful affair from which she was supposed to receive only "50,000 francs, really amounted to 550,000." She came out less generously from her litigation with her father. Mazarin rendered Mademoiselle the bad service of having her suit introduced by the King's counsellor. A decree confirmed the decision of Mme. de Guise, and there was nothing to do but to obey. Mademoiselle signed, "furiously" weeping, the act which despoiled her, and submitted with despair to the

departure for Blois.

She was going to visit her father, after having the thought flash through her mind that he could order her assassination. It is said there had been some question of this at Blois. "Immersed in melancholy reveries, I dreamed that his Royal Highness was a son of the Médicis, and I even reflected that the poison of the Médicis must have already entered my veins and caused such thoughts."

Her father, on the other hand, was going to overwhelm her with tenderness after having permitted it to be said without protest that Mademoiselle was preparing a trap, with the purpose of poisoning one of his gentlemen.

Considering the times and the family, this was a situation only a little "strained"; but Mademoiselle was so little a "Médicis" that she made her journey a prey to a poignant grief, which was plainly to be read upon her countenance by the attendants at her arrival at Blois.

"Upon my arrival I felt a sudden chill. I went directly to the chamber of Monsieur; he saluted me and told me he was glad to see me. I replied that I was delighted to have this honour. He was much embarrassed." Neither the one nor the other knew what more to say. Mademoiselle silently forced back her tears. Monsieur, to give himself composure, caressed the greyhounds of his daughter, La Reine and Madame Souris. Finally he said: "Let us go to seek Madame."

"She received me very civilly and made many friendly

remarks. As soon as I was in my own chamber, Monsieur came to see me and talked as if nothing disagreeable had passed between us." A single quarter of an hour had sufficed to bring back to him his freedom of spirit, and he made an effort to regain the affections of his daughter.

She had never known him to continue to be severe; Monsieur counted upon this fact. He was attentive, flattered her weaknesses great and small, amused her with projects of marriage, and treated her greyhounds as personages of importance; he could be seen at midnight in the lower court in the midst of the dunghill, inquiring about Madame Souris, who had met with an accident. He did still better; he wrote to Mazarin asking for an accommodation with Mademoiselle.

After the rupture with Condé, it was evident from signs not to be mistaken that the hour was approaching in which the all-powerful minister would pardon the heroine of Orléans and of Porte Saint-Antoine. In the month of July, 1656, Mademoiselle went to the baths of Forges, in Normandy. She had passed in sight of Paris; had sojourned in the suburbs without anxiety, and her name this time had not made "every one ill."

Visitors had flocked. Mademoiselle had entertained at dinner all the princesses and duchesses then in Paris; and she drew the conclusion, knowing the Court and the courtiers, that her exile was nearing an end. "In truth," says she, "I do not feel as much joy at the thought as I should have believed. When one reaches the end of a misery like mine, its remembrance lasts so long and

the grief forms such a barrier against joy that it is long before the wall is sufficiently melted to permit happiness to be again enjoyed."

Nevertheless the news of the letter from her father to Mazarin put her in a great agitation. The Court of France was then in the east of France where Turenne made his annual campaign against M. le Prince and the Spaniards. Mademoiselle resolved to approach in order to sooner receive the response of the Cardinal.

She quitted Blois as she had arrived there, a stranger. One single thing could have touched her: the recall of Préfontaine and of her other servitors struck down for having been faithful. This Monsieur had absolutely refused; his exaggerated politeness and his grimaces of tenderness had only the result of alienating his daughter. She felt that he detested her and she no longer loved him.

Upon the route to Paris she doubled the length between her stopping-places. Impatience gained as she neared the end and the "barrier of grief" permitted itself gradually to be penetrated by joy.

She again saw, in passing, Étampes³¹ and its ruins, which already dated back five years and were found untouched by La Fontaine in 1663. So long and difficult in certain regions was the uplifting of France, after the wars of the Fronde, never taken

³¹ Turenne had conquered the troops of the Prince at Étampes (May, 1652), upon the occasion of a review in honour of Mademoiselle and of the disorder which resulted. See *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*. Some weeks later, he besieged the town.

very seriously by historians, doubtless because too many women were concerned in them.

"We looked with pity at the environs of Étampes," wrote La Fontaine.³² "Imagine rows of houses without roofs, without windows, pierced on all sides; nothing could be more desolate and hideous." He talked of it during an entire evening, not having the soul of a heroine of the Fronde, but Mademoiselle had traversed with indifference these same ruins in which the grass flourished in default of inhabitants to wear it away. No remorse, no regret, however light, for her share in the responsibility for the ruin of this innocent people, had touched her mind, and yet she was considered to possess a tender heart.

She learned at Saint-Cloud that she had been invited to rejoin the Court at Sedan. Mademoiselle took a route through Reims. She thus traversed Champagne, which had been a battle-field during the more than twenty years of the wars with Spain³³; and which appeared the picture of desolation. The country was depopulated, numbers of villages burned, and the cities ruined by pillage and forced contributions of war.

More curious in regard to things which interest *la canaille*, Mademoiselle might have heard from the mouths of the survivors that of all the enemies who had trampled upon and oppressed this unfortunate people, the most cruel and barbarous had been her ally, the Prince de Condé, with whom were always found

³² Letter to his wife, August 3, 1663.

³³ Richelieu had declared war with Spain March 26, 1635.

her own companies. She would not the less have written in her *Mémoires*, entirely unconsciously, apropos of her trouble in obtaining pardon from the Court: "I had really no difference with the Court, and I was criminal only because I was the daughter of his Royal Highness."

We have hardly the right to reproach her with this monstrous phrase. To betray one's country was a thing of too frequent occurrence to cause much embarrassment. The only men of this epoch who reached the point of considering the common people³⁴ and attaching the least importance to their sufferings were revolutionary spirits or disciples of St. Vincent de Paul.

Mademoiselle had no leaning towards extremes. Neither her birth nor the slightly superficial cast of her mind fostered free opinions. During her journey in Champagne, she was delighted to hear again the clink of arms and the sound of trumpets. Mazarin had sent a large escort. The skirmishers of the enemy swept the country even to the environs of Reims. A number of the people of the Court, seizing the occasion, joined themselves to her, in order to profit by her gens d'armes and light riders.

Colbert also placed himself under her protection with chariots loaded with money which he was taking to Sedan, and this important convoy was surrounded by the same "military pomp, as if it had guarded the person of the King."

The great precautions were, perhaps, on account of the chariots of money; the honours, however, were for

³⁴ The phrase is by Bussy-Rabutin.

Mademoiselle, and they much flattered her vanity. The commandant of the escort demanded the order from her. When she appeared the troops gave the military salute. A regiment which she met on her route solicited the honour of being presented to her. She examined it closely, as a warlike Princess who understood military affairs, and of whom the grand Condé had said one day, apropos of a movement of troops, that "Gustavus Adolphus could not have done better." A certain halt upon the grass in a meadow through which flowed a stream left an indelible impression. Mademoiselle offered dinner this day to all the escort and almost all the convoy. The sight of the meadow crowded with uniformed men and horses recalled to her the campaigns of her fine heroic times. "The trumpets sounded during dinner; this gave completely the air of a true army march." She arrived at Sedan intoxicated by the military spectacle of her route, and her entry showed this. Considering her late exile the lack of modesty might well be criticised. The Queen, Anne of Austria, driving for pleasure in the environs of Sedan, saw a chariot appear with horses at full gallop surrounded by a mass of cavalry: "I arrived in this field at full speed with gens d'armes and light riders, their trumpets sounding in a manner sufficiently triumphant."

The entire Court of France recognised the Grande Mademoiselle before actually seeing her. Exile had not changed her, and this entrance truly indicated her weaknesses.

CHAPTER II

The Education of Louis XIV. – Manners – Poverty – Charity – Vincent de Paul, a Secret Society – Marriage of Louis XIV. – His Arrival at Power, on the Death of Mazarin – He Re-educates himself

THE remembrance of the Fronde was destined to remain a heavy weight during the remainder of the reign of Louis XIV. Its shadow dominated for more than half a century interior politics and decided the fate, good and bad, of the great families.

The word "Liberty" had become synonymous with "Licence, Confusion, Disorder,"³⁵ and the ancient Frondeurs passed the remainder of their lives in disgrace, or at least in disfavour. The Grande Mademoiselle was never pardoned, although she did not wish to avow this, even to herself. She might have realised the fact at once upon her return to Court, if she had not decided to believe the contrary. Warnings were not wanting. The first was her encounter with the Queen Mother in the field of Sedan.

When Anne of Austria saw arrive to sound of trumpets, with

³⁵ See the *Mémoires de Louis XIV.*, edited by Charles Dreys. The *Mémoires* of Louis XIV. were not written by himself. He dictated them to his secretaries afterward adding notes in his own handwriting and correcting the proofs. See the *Introduction* by M. Dreys.

manner at ease and triumphant, this insolent Princess who had drawn her cannon upon the King, hardly embracing her niece, the Queen Mother burst into reproaches, and declared that after the battle of Saint-Antoine, "if she had held her, she would have strangled her."³⁶ Mademoiselle wept; the Court looked on. "I have forgotten everything," said the Queen at length, and her niece was eager to believe her. The meeting with the King was still more significant. He arrived on horseback, soaked and muddy, from the city of Montmédy, taken that same day from the Spaniards (August 7, 1657).

His mother said to him, "Behold a young lady, whom I present to you and who is very sorry to have been so naughty; she will be 'very good' in future." The young King only laughed and replied by talking of the siege of Montmédy.

Mademoiselle nevertheless departed from Sedan filled with joyous thoughts. She imagined reading in all eyes the news of marriage with the brother of the King, the little Monsieur. He was seventeen, she thirty, with hair already partially white.

Some months ensued, passed in a half retreat, and the Grande Mademoiselle remained with the Court during the years of transition in which the personal government of Louis XIV. was maturing. A new régime was being born and a new world with it.

One could gradually see this new formation relegating to the shadow of the past the old spirit of independence, and stifling the confused aspirations of the country towards any legal liberties.

³⁶ *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier. Mémoires de Montglat.*

Mazarin incarnated this great political movement. On the eve of disappearance, this unpopular minister had become all France.

He was master; no one thought any longer of resisting him; but he was always detested, never admired. France having at this date neither journals nor parliamentary debates, the foreign policy of Mazarin, which in our eyes did him so much honour, remained very little known even at Paris. This explains why his glory has been in large part posthumous. It has increased in measure as it has been possible to judge of his entire policy, from documents contained in our national archives or in those of other countries. His correspondence displays so fine a diplomatic genius, that the historians have turned aside from the evil side of the man, his littlenesses, in order to give full weight to his services as minister. Precisely a contrary course had been taken in the seventeenth century. Little besides the Cardinal's defects, open to all eyes, were realised. Bad fortune had redoubled his rapacity. Mazarin had guarded in his heart the experience of poverty at the time in which he was expelled from the kingdom. He had sworn to himself that he would not again be taken without "ammunition." He had worked industriously since his return in putting aside millions in safe keeping. Everything aided him in raising this kind of war treasure. He sold high functions of State, and also those belonging to low degree, even to that of laundress to the Queen. He shared the benefits with the corsairs to whom he gave letters of marque. He undertook contracts for public service, pocketed the money, left our ambassadors without salaries, our

vessels and fortifications without means of subsistence. The army was crying with hunger and thirst as soon as he made himself its sutler and its commissariat. He furnished bread of diminished purity and even found means, said the courtiers, to make the soldiers, so rarely paid themselves, pay for the water they drank. Turenne once broke up his plate to distribute the pieces to his troops, who were perishing from want.

Comical scenes mingled with these tragic ones. Bussy-Rabutin, who served in the army of Turenne, had been fortunate at play. The Cardinal had learned of this, and ordered it to be represented to Bussy that his pay which had been pledged in the game would be guarded by the Cardinal as his portion of the gain. He had extended his traffic into the royal palace. It was he who furnished furniture and utensils. He undertook to provide the Court mourning, and costumes for the fêtes: when the King danced a ballet, his first minister gained by the decorations and accessories. The housekeeping accounts passed through his hands. During the campaign of 1658, he suppressed the King's cook, in order to appropriate to himself what the table would have cost. Louis XIV. was forced to invite himself to dine with this one and that one. Mazarin touched even his pocket money and the young King permitted it with a patience which was a constant source of astonishment to the courtiers. His mother was neither better treated nor less submissive.

The Cardinal was as jealous of his authority as of his money. The King had no voice in his council; when he accorded a pardon,

however trivial, his first minister revoked it, "scolding him like a schoolboy."³⁷

It was said of the Queen Mother that her influence was only worth a hundred crowns, and she agreed. Still more, she was scolded from morning till night. Age had rendered Mazarin insupportable. He had no delicacy with the King, still less with the King's mother: the courtiers shrugged their shoulders in hearing him speak to Anne of Austria "as to a chambermaid."³⁸

The Queen was not insensible to this rudeness. She confessed to the faithful Motteville "that the Cardinal had become so bad tempered and so avaricious that she did not know how in the future it was going to be possible to live with him." But it did not seem to occur to her that it might be possible to live without the Cardinal. Can it be believed that Anne of Austria and Mazarin were married, as La Palatine,³⁹ mother of the Regent, asserted? As they gradually grew old, one is tempted to believe it, so strongly the spectacle offered by these illustrious persons, he so disagreeable, she so submissive, gives the impression of two destinies "united together," according to the expression of the Cardinal himself,⁴⁰ "by bonds which could not be broken." The question to be solved is, could Mazarin marry? According to

³⁷ Montglat.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ Letters of January 3, 1717, of September 27, 1718, and of July, 1722. Madame adds in this last: "Now, all the circumstances are known."

⁴⁰ Letter to the Queen, Anne of Austria, October 27, 1651.

tradition he was not a priest. According to the Euridite that point is open to discussion.⁴¹ Until this matter is fixed, the marriage of Anne of Austria with her minister will remain among historical enigmas, for everything said will be words in the air.

PRIÈRE DU ROY

Jesus-Christ Roy du Ciel et de la Terre, ie vous adore et reconnois pour le Roy des Roys. C'est de vostre Majesté Diuine que ie tiens ma Couronne: mon Dieu ie vous l'offre, pour la Gloire de la très Sainte Trinité, et pour l'honneur de la Reine des Agnes la Sacrée Vierge Marie que iay choisy pour ma Protectrice, et des Estats que vous m'auiez donné; Seigneur baillez moy vostre crainte et une si grande Sagesse et humilité, que ie puisse deuenir un homme selon vostre coeur; en sorte que ie merite efficacement le tiltre aimable de Louis Dieu donné le Pacifique pour maintenir vostre Peuple en Paix, afin qu'il vous serve avec tranquillité, et l'acompissement de toutes les Vertus.

⁴¹ March 23, 1865, Père Theiner, Guardian of the Secret Archives of the Vatican, replied to some one who had pressed the question: "Our acts of December 16, 1641, in which Jules Mazarin was created Cardinal, do not say whether or not he was a priest. How could he then have been admitted to the order of Cardinal-priest? No doubt he was a priest." The letter of Père Theiner has been published by M. Jules Loiseleur in his *Problèmes historiques*.

VŒU ET PRIÈRE DES PEUPLES POUR LE ROY

Adorable Redempteur Jesus-Christ, qui estes le distributeur des Couronnes, recevez la pieté du Roy tres-Crestien, et exaucez ses Prieres respectueses faites par l'entremise de vostre Sainte Mere Vierge, que linfluence des Graces du St. Esprit luy soit donnée, afin croissant en aage, it croisse aussi en telle Sagesse, qu'il puisse maintenir vostre peuple in Paix, pour mieux observer vos saints commandemens.

(Translation of the above.)

PRAYER OF THE KING

Jesus Christ, King of the Heavens and the Earth, I adore Thee and recognize Thee for the King of Kings, the divine majesty from whom I receive my crown, which I offer to Thee for the Glory of the Most Holy Trinity, and for the honor of the Queen of Angels, the blessed Virgin Mary, whom I have chosen as my Protector, and also of the States which Thou hast given me. Lord grant me due reverence and that I may possess so much wisdom and humility that I may become a man after Thine own heart, so that I may

truly merit the title of the Beloved Louis, the God-given and peaceful, and be able to maintain Thy people in peace that they may live in tranquillity and virtuously serve Thee.

VOW AND PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Adorable Redeemer Jesus Christ; who art the giver of crowns; regard the piety of the most Christian King and listen to his prayers for the intervention of the most blessed Mother Virgin; and grant that the influence of the Holy Spirit may so be poured out upon him that as he increases in years he may also grow in wisdom; and that he may keep Thy people in peace that they may better be able to preserve Thy commands.

The patience of Louis XIV. can only be explained by his entire bringing up and by the state of mind which had been its fruit.

Louis's cradle had been surrounded by a crowd of servitors charged to watch over his least movement. His mother adored him and, for a queen, occupied herself much with him. Nevertheless, there could hardly a child be found throughout the entire kingdom so badly cared for as the son of the King.

Louis XIV. had never forgotten this neglect and spoke of it all his life with bitterness.

"The King always surprises me," relates Mme. de Maintenon at Saint Cyr, "when he speaks to me of his education. His governesses gossiped the entire day, and left him in the hands of

their maids without paying any attention to the young Prince." The maids abandoned him to his own devices and he was once found in the basin of the fountain in the Palais Royal. One of his greatest pleasures was to prowl in the kitchens with his brother, the little Monsieur. "He ate everything he could lay his hands on without paying attention to its healthfulness. If they were frying an omelette, he would break off a piece, which he and Monsieur devoured in some corner."⁴² One day when the two little Princes thus put their fingers into the prepared dishes, the cooks impatiently drove them away with blows from dishcloths. He played with any one. "His most frequent companion," again relates Mme. de Maintenon, "was the daughter of the Queen's own maid." When he was withdrawn from such surroundings, to be led to his mother, or to figure in some ceremony, he appeared a bashful boy who looked at people with embarrassment without knowing what to say, and who cruelly suffered from this shyness.

One day after they had given him a lesson, his timidity prevented him from remembering the right words and he burst into tears with rage and anger. The King of France to make a fool of himself!

At five and a half years, they gave him a tutor and many masters,⁴³ but he learned nothing. Mazarin for reasons known to himself would not force him to work; and circumstances

⁴² *Letters of Madame de Maintenon* edited by Geoffroy.

⁴³ For further details see the excellent volume of M. Lacour-Gayet, *L'éducation politique de Louis XIV.*

favoured the views of the first minister. The Fronde came, and rendered any study impossible on account of the complete upsetting of the daily life of the Court of France, which was only encamped when it was not actually on the move. Louis XIV. was fourteen at the date of the reinstallation of the Court at the Louvre and there was no question of making him recover the lost time; he thenceforth passed his days in hunting, in studying steps for the ballet, and in amusing himself with the nieces of the Cardinal. The political world believed that it divined the reason for this limited education and severely expressed its opinion about it. "The King," wrote the Ambassador from Venice,⁴⁴ "applies himself the entire day to learning the ballet... Games, dances, and comedies are the only subjects of conversation with the King, the intention being to turn him aside from affairs more solid and important." The Ambassador returns to the same subject upon the occasion of an Italian opera,⁴⁵ in which the King exhibited himself as Apollo surrounded by beautiful persons representing the nine muses:

Certain people blame this affair, but these do not understand the politics of the Cardinal, who keeps the King expressly occupied with pastimes, in order to turn his attention from solid and important pursuits, and whilst the King is concerned in rolling machines of wood upon the

⁴⁴ December 24th, *Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens*.

⁴⁵ The letter is dated April 21, 1654. Louis XIV. was then fifteen and a half years of age.

stage, the Cardinal moves and rolls at his good pleasure, upon the theatre of France, all the machines of state.

Some few observers, of whom Mazarin himself was one, divined that this youth, with his air of being absorbed in tomfooleries, secretly reflected upon his profession of King, and upon the means of rendering himself capable of sustaining it. Nature had endowed him with the instinct of command, joined to a very lively sentiment of the duties of his rank. Louis says in his *Mémoires*, "even from infancy the names alone of the kings *fainéants* and mayors of the palace gave me pain if pronounced in my presence."⁴⁶

His preceptor, the Abbé of Péréfixe, had encouraged this sentiment, at the same time, however, permitting his pupil, by a contradiction for which perhaps he was not responsible, to take the road which leads in the direction of idleness, and thus making it possible for Louis to become a true King *fainéant* himself.

Péréfixe had written for the young King a history of King Henry the Great in which one reads

that royalty is not the trade of a do-nothing, that it consists almost entirely of action, that a King should make a pleasure of his duty, that his enjoyment should be in reigning and he only should know how to reign, that is, he should himself hold the helm of the state. His glory is interested in this. In truth, who does not know that there can

⁴⁶ Mme. de Motteville had heard him express the same idea. Cf. his *Mémoires*, v., 101, ed. Petitot.

be no honour in bearing a title whose functions one does not fulfil —

a doctrine which would suppress the first ministers and by which Louis XIV. profited later.

Chance came to the aid of the preceptor. On June 19, 1651, the ancient governess of the King, Mme. de Lansac, disturbed him in the midst of a lesson, in order to make a gift of "three letters written by Catherine de Médicis to Henry III.,⁴⁷ her son, for his edification." Péréfixe took the letters and read them aloud, the King listening "with much attention." One of them was almost a memorial.⁴⁸ In it, Catherine gave to her son the same precept as Péréfixe to his pupil: "a king must reign," that is to say, carry out the functions belonging to his title. In order to "reign," one must begin to work at once upon awakening, read all the dispatches and afterwards the replies, speak personally to the agents, receive every morning accounts of receipts and expenditures; pursue this course from morning till night, and every day of one's life. It was the programme for a slave to power. Louis XIV. made it his own, in the bottom of his soul; he was not yet thirteen.

Such beautiful resolutions however, were destined to remain dead so long as Mazarin lived. They could only be executed to the

⁴⁷ *Les fragments des mémoires inédits* by Dubois, valet of Louis XIV., published by Léon Aubineau in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, and in his *Notices littéraires* upon the 17th century.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lacour-Gayet, p. 203.

detriment of his authority, and the idea of entering into a struggle with the Cardinal was repugnant to the young King, partially on account of old affection, partially on account of timidity and the habit of obedience.

The mind of Louis XIV. had however been awakened and the fruits of this awakening were later visible, but for a time he was content to find good excuses for leaving affairs alone. He explains in his *Mémoires* that he was arrested by political reasons; as he had too much experience also (however strange this word may appear when applied to a child so foolishly brought up) not to realise the danger of a revolution in the royal palace in the present condition of France after the devastations of the civil wars.

In default of the science which one draws from books, Louis XIV. had received lessons in realities from the Fronde: The riots and barricades, the vehement discourse of the Parliament to his mother, the humiliating flights with the Court, the periods of poverty in which his servants had no dinner and he himself slept with his sheets full of holes, and wore clothes too short, the battles in which his subjects fired upon him, the treasons of his relations and of his nobility and their shameful bargains; nothing of all this had been lost upon the young King.

With a surface order re-established, he perceived how troubled the situation remained at bottom, how precarious, and he judged it prudent to defer what he both "wished" and "feared," says very clearly his *Mémoires*. He queries if this were an error:

It is necessary [says he] to represent to one's self the state

of affairs: Agitations throughout the entire kingdom were at their height; a foreign war continued in which a thousand advantages had been lost to France owing to these domestic troubles; a Prince of my own blood and a very great name at the head of my enemies; many cabals in the state; the Parliaments still in possession of usurped authority; in my own Court very little of either fidelity or interest, and above all my subjects, apparently the most submissive, were as great a care and as much to be suspected as those most openly rebellious.

Was this the moment in which to expose the country to new shocks?

Louis XIV. had remained convinced⁴⁹ to the contrary, avowing, however, that he had much to criticise in the fashions of Mazarin,

a minister [pursued he] re-established in spite of so many factions, very able, very adroit, who loved me and whom I loved, and who had rendered me great services, but whose thoughts and manners were naturally very different from mine, and whom I could not always contradict nor discredit without anew exciting, by that image, however erroneous, of disgrace, the same tempests which had been so difficult to calm.

The King had also to take into consideration his own extreme youth, and his ignorance of affairs. He relates in regard to this point his ardent desire for glory, his fear of beginning ill, "for

⁴⁹ M. Dreyss dates the writing of this portion of the *Mémoires* about 1670.

one can never retrieve one's self"; his attention to the course of events "in secret and without a confidant"; his joy when he discovered that people both able and consummate shared his fashion of thinking.

Considering everything, had there ever been a being urged forward and retarded so equally, in his design to take upon himself "the guidance of the state"?

This curious page has no other defect than that of having been dictated by a man matured, in whose thoughts things have taken a clearness not existing in the mind of the youth, and who believes himself to recollect "determinations" when there existed in reality only "desires."

Louis XIV. would be unpardonable if full credit were given to his *Mémoires*. Why, if he saw so clearly, did he grumble at any kind of work? When Louis was sixteen, Mazarin had arranged with him some days in which he might be present at a council. The King was bored and retired to talk of the next ballet and to play the guitar with his intimates. Mazarin was obliged to scold him to force him to return and remain at the council.

With a capacity for trifling, he cared for nothing serious, and there was much laziness contained in his resolution to leave all to his minister. The Court had formed its own opinion: it considered the young King incapable of application. It was also said that he lacked intelligence, and in this belief there was no error. Louis himself alluded to this and said with simplicity, "I am very stupid."

The libertine youth who surrounded him, and whom his solemn air restrained, did not conceal the fact that they found him a great bore, as probably did also Madame de Maintenon a half-century later. The Guiche and the Vardes believed him doomed to insignificance and did not trouble themselves much about him. The city was less convinced that he was a cipher, perhaps because otherwise it could not so easily have taken his part. Paris was commencing to fear those princes with whom, for one reason or another, first ministers were necessary, and the Parisian bourgeoisie was on the watch for some proof of intelligence in the young monarch. "It is said that the mind of the King is awakening," wrote Guy Patin in 1654; "God be thanked!"

This first light not having an apparent development, Paris, whilst waiting for something better, admired the looks of the sovereign. "I have to-day seen the King on his way to the chase," again wrote Guy Patin four years later. "A fine Prince, strong and healthy; he is tall and graceful; it is a pity that he does not better understand his duties."⁵⁰ His serious air was also lauded, his dislike to debauchery in any form, and the modesty which made him bravely reply before the entire Court, to a question about a new play: "I never judge a subject about which I know nothing."⁵¹

This was not the response of a fool.

In fine, as he was very cold, very capable of dissimulation, as

⁵⁰ Letters of June 9, 1654, and April 9, 1658.

⁵¹ *Segraisiana*. Louis XIV. was seventeen when he made this remark.

he spoke little, through calculation as much as through instinct, and generally confined his conversation to trifles, this youth upon whom all France had its eyes fixed remained an unknown quantity to his subjects.

In September, 1657, two strangers crossing the Pont Neuf found themselves in the midst of a pressure of people. The crowd precipitated itself with cries of joy towards a carriage whose livery had been recognised.

It was the Grande Mademoiselle returning from exile, and coming to take possession of the palace of the Luxembourg, in which her father permitted her to lodge, feeling certain that he himself should never return to it. The two strangers noted in their *Journal de Voyage*⁵² that the Parisians bore a "particular affection" for this Princess, because she had behaved like a "true amazon" during the civil war.

The Court had resigned itself to the inevitable. Mademoiselle had remained popular in Paris, and her exploits during the Fronde and her fine bearing at the head of her regiment were remembered with enthusiasm. She only passed through the city at this time, having affairs to regulate in the Provinces. Upon her definite return on December 31st, the Court and the city crowded to see her. The Luxembourg overflowed during several days, after which, when society had convinced itself that Mademoiselle had no longer a face "fresh as a fully blown rose,"⁵³ its curiosity

⁵² *Journal de voyage de deux jeunes Hollandais à Paris* (1656-1658).

⁵³ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

was satisfied and it occupied itself with something else.

Mademoiselle herself had much to do. The idea of marrying the little Monsieur had not left her mind since the meeting at Sedan. She was assured that the Prince was dying of desire for her, and Mademoiselle naïvely responded that she very well perceived this. "This does not displease me," adds she; "a young Prince, handsome, well-made, brother of the King, appears a good match."

In expectation of the betrothal, she stopped her pursuits of the happy interval at Saint-Fargeau in which she had loved intellectual pleasures, in order to make herself the comrade of a child only absorbed in pastimes belonging to his age, and passed the winter in dancing, in masquerading, in rushing through the promenades and the booths of the fair of Saint-Germain.⁵⁴

The public remarked that the little Monsieur appeared "not very gay" with his tall cousin, and troubled himself but little to entertain her,⁵⁵ and that he would have preferred other companions better suited to his seventeen years.

Mademoiselle did not perceive this. Philip, Duke of Anjou, had a face of insipid beauty posed upon a little round body. He did not lack *esprit*, had not an evil disposition, and would have made an amiable prince if reasons of state had not tended to

⁵⁴ The fair of Saint-Germain was held between Saint-Sulpice and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, from February 3d to the evening before Palm Sunday. The Court and the populace elbowed each other there.

⁵⁵ *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais.*

reduce him to the condition of a marionette.

His mother and Mazarin had brought him up as a girl, for fear of his later troubling his elder brother, and this education had only too well succeeded. By means of sending him to play with the future Abbé de Choisy, who put on a robe and patches to receive him; by means of having him dressed and barbered by the Queen's maids of honour and putting him in petticoats and occupying him with dolls, he had been made an ambiguous being, a species of defective girl having only the weaknesses of his own sex. Monsieur had a new coat every day and it worried him to spot it, and to be seen with his hair undressed or in profile when he believed himself handsomer in full face. Paris possessed no greater gossip; he babbled, he meddled, he embroiled people by repeating everything, and this amused him.

Mademoiselle considered it her duty to "preach" to him of "noble deeds," but she wasted her time. He was laziness and weakness itself. The two cousins were ill-adapted to each other in every way.

When they entered a salon together, Monsieur short and full, attired in the costume of a hunter, his garments sewed from head to foot with precious stones, Mademoiselle a little masculine of figure and manner and negligent in her dress, they were a singular couple. Those who did not know them opened their eyes wide, and they were often seen together in the winter at least, for the society was at this date most mixed, even in the most élite circles.

From Epiphany to Ash-Wednesday, the Parisians had no

greater pleasure than to promenade masked at night, and to enter without invitation into any house where an entertainment was taking place. Louis XIV. gladly joined in these gaieties. Upon one evening of Mardi-Gras, when he was thus running the streets with Mademoiselle, they met Monsieur dressed as a girl with blond hair.⁵⁶ Keepers of inns sent their guests to profit by this chance of free entry. A young Dutchman related that he went the same night "with those of his inn" to five great balls, the first at the house of Mme. de Villeroy, the last with the Duchess of Valentinois, and that he had seen at each place more than two hundred masks.⁵⁷

The crowd would not permit that entrance should be refused on any pretext.

The same Dutchman reports with a note of bitterness that on another evening it had been impossible to penetrate into the house of the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, because the King being there, measures had been taken to avoid too great a crowd. Custom obliged every one to submit to receiving society, choice or not. At a grand fête given by the Duc de Lesdiguières, which in the bottom of his heart he was offering to Mme. de Sévigné, "The King had hardly departed when the crowd commenced to scuffle and to pillage every thing, until, as it was stated, it became necessary to replace the candles of the chandeliers four or five times and this single article cost M. de Lesdiguières more than

⁵⁶ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

⁵⁷ *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais*.

a hundred pistoles."⁵⁸

Such domestic manners had the encouragement of the King, who also left his doors open upon the evenings on which he danced a ballet. He did better still. He went officially to sup "with the Sieur de la Bazinière," ancient lackey become financier and millionaire, and having the bearing, the manners, and the ribbon cascades of the Marquis de Mascarille. He desired that Mademoiselle should invite to the Luxembourg, Mme. de l'Hôpital, ancient laundress married twice for her beautiful eyes; the first time by a *partisan*, the second by a Marshal of France. These lessons were not lost upon the nobility. Mésalliances were no more discredited, even the lowest, the most shameful, provided that the dot was sufficient. A Duke and Peer had married the daughter of an old charioteer. The Maréchal d'Estrées was the son-in-law of a *partisan* known under the name of Morin the Jew. Many others could be cited, for the tendency increased from year to year.

In 1665, the King having entered Parliament,⁵⁹ in order to confirm an edict, a group of men amongst whom was Olivier d'Ormesson were regarding the Tribune in which were seated the ladies of the Court. Some one thought of counting how many of these were daughters of parvenues or of business men; he found three out of six. Two others were nieces of Mazarin, married to

⁵⁸ *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais.*

⁵⁹ April 29th.

French nobles.⁶⁰ The single one of aristocratic descent was Mlle. d'Alençon, a half-sister of the Grande Mademoiselle. One could hardly have anticipated such figures, even allowing for chance.

The King, however, approved of this state of affairs and the nobility was ruined; every one seized on what support he could. The general course of affairs was favourable to this confusion of rank. From the triumphal re-entry of Mazarin in 1653, until his death in 1661, a kind of universal freedom continued at the Court which surprised the ancient Frondeurs on their return from exile. The young monarch himself encouraged familiarities and lack of etiquette.

It was the nieces of the Cardinal who were largely responsible for these changes in manners and who gained their own profit through the additional freedom, since Marie, the third of the Mancini, was soon to almost touch the crown with the tip of her finger. Mademoiselle had some trouble in accustoming herself to the new manners towards the King.

For me [says she], brought up to have great respect, this is most astonishing, and I have remained long time without habituating myself to this new freedom. But when I saw how others acted, when the Queen told me one day that the King hated ceremony, then I yielded; for without this high authority the faults of manner could not be possible with others.

⁶⁰ To the Duc de Bouillon and to the son of the Marshal Duc de La Meilleraye, who took the title of Duc de Mazarin.

The pompous Louis XIV. wearing the great wig of the portraits did not yet exist, and the Louvre of 1658 but little resembled the particular and formal Versailles of the time of Saint-Simon.⁶¹

The licence extended to morals. Numbers of women of rank behaved badly, some incurred the suspicion of venality, and no faults were novelties; but vice keeps low company and it was this result which proud people like Mademoiselle could not suffer.

When it was related to her that the Duchesse de Châtillon, daughter of Montmorency-Boutteville, had received money from the Abbé Foucquet⁶² and wiped out the debt by permitting such lackey-like jokes as breaking her mirrors with blows of the foot, she was revolted. "It is a strange thing," wrote she, "this difference of time; who would have said to the Admiral Coligny, 'The wife of your grandson will be maltreated by the Abbé Foucquet'? – he would not have believed it, and there was no mention at all of this name of Foucquet in his time."

In the mind of Mademoiselle, who had lived through so many periods, it was the low birth of the Abbé which would have affected the Admiral. "Whatever may be said," added she, "I can never believe that persons of quality abandon themselves to the point which their slanderers say. For even if they did not consider

⁶¹ It must not be forgotten that Saint-Simon was presented at Court in 1692. Louis XIV. was then fifty-four, and had reigned forty-nine years. Saint-Simon only knew the end of the reign.

⁶² Brother of the Superintendent of Finances.

their own safety, worldly honour is in my opinion so beautiful a thing that I do not comprehend how any one can despise it."

Mademoiselle did not transgress upon the respect due to the hierarchy of rank; for the rest, she contented herself with what are called the morals of respectable people, which have always been sufficiently lenient. She understood, however, all the difference between this morality and Christian principles.

The *Provinciales* (1656) had made it clear to the blindest that it was necessary to choose between the two. Mademoiselle had under this influence made a visit to Port Royal des Champs⁶³ and had been entirely won by these "admirable people" who lived like saints and who spoke and wrote "the finest eloquence," while the Jesuits would have done better to remain silent, "having nothing good to say and saying it very badly," "for assuredly there were never fewer preachers amongst them than at present nor fewer good writers, as appears by their letters. This is why for all sorts of reasons they would have done better not to write."

Seeing Mademoiselle so favourably impressed, one of the Monsieurs of Port Royal, Arnauld d'Andilly, said upon her departure, "You are going to the Court; you can give to the Queen account of what you have seen." – "I assure you that I will willingly do this."

Knowing her disposition, there is but little doubt that she kept her word; but this was all. The worthy Mademoiselle, incapable of anything low or base, did not dream for a second of

⁶³ In the summer of 1657.

allowing the austere morality, ill fitted for the needs of a court, to intervene in influencing her judgments upon others, or in the choice of her friends. She blamed the Duchesse de Châtillon for reasons with which virtue, properly named, had nothing to do. We see her soon after meeting Mme. de Montespan, because common morality has nothing to blame in a King's mistress.

Mme. de Sévigné agreed with Mademoiselle and they were not alone. This attitude gave a kind of revenge to the Jesuits.

Tastes became as common as sentiments; those of the King were not yet formed, and the pleasure taken in the ballet in the theatre of the Louvre injured the taste for what was, in fact, no longer tragedy. Corneille had given up writing for the first time in 1652, after the failure of his *Pertharite*. The following year, Quinault made his debut and pleased. He taught in his tragi-comedies, flowery and tender, that "Love makes everything permissible," which had been said by Honoré d'Urfé in *l'Astrée*, a half-century previous, and he retied, without difficulty, after the Corneillian parenthesis, the thread of a doctrine which has been transmitted without interruption to our own days.

Love justifies everything, for the right of passion is sacred, nothing subsists before it.

Dans l'empire amoureux,
Le devoir n'a point de puissance.
L'éclat de beaux yeux adoucit bien un crime;

Au regard des amants tout parait légitime.⁶⁴

The idea which this verse expresses can be found throughout the works of Quinault. He has said it again and again, with the same langourous, insinuating sweetness, for a period which lasted more than thirty years, and in the beginning no one very seriously divided with him the attention of the public.

At the appearance of his first piece in 1653, Racine was fourteen; Molière did not return to Paris until 1658. Corneille, in truth, was preparing his return to the theatre; but he found when his last tragedies were played, that he had done well to study Quinault, and in doing this he had not wasted his time; – a decisive proof of the echo to which souls responded,⁶⁵ and of the increasing immorality of the new era.

Thus the Court of France lost its prestige. The éclat cast by the Fronde upon the men and women seeking great adventures had been replaced by no new enthusiasms. The pleasures to which entire lives were devoted had not always been refining, as we have seen above, and people had not grown in intelligence. The bold crowd of the Mazarins gave the tone to the Louvre, and this tone lacked delicacy. The Queen, Anne of Austria, groaned internally, but she had loosed the reins; except in the affair of her son's marriage she had nothing to refuse to the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin.

⁶⁴ *Vers d'Atys*, opera played in 1676, and *d'Astrate*, tragedy of 1663.

⁶⁵ The phrase is M. Jules Lemâitre's.

Because the Court was in general lazy and frivolous, a hasty opinion of the remainder of France should not be formed. The Court did not fairly represent the entire nation; outside of it there was room for other opinions and sentiments. It was during the years of 1650 to 1656, which appear to us at first sight almost a moral desert, that private charity made in the midst of France one of its greatest efforts, an effort very much to the honour of all concerned in it.

I have noticed elsewhere⁶⁶ the frightful poverty of the country during the Fronde. This distress which was changing into desert places one strip after another of French territory, must be relieved, and amongst those in authority no one was found capable of doing it.

It is hardly possible to represent to one's self to-day the condition left by the simple passage of an army belonging to a civilised people, through a French or German land, two or three hundred years ago.

The idea of restricting the sufferings caused by war to those which are inevitable is a novel one. In the seventeenth century, on the contrary, the effort was to increase them. The chiefs for the most part showed a savage desire to excite the mania for destruction which is so easily aroused with soldiers during a campaign. Towards the end of the Fronde, some troops

⁶⁶ See *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*. For this chapter cf. *La misère au temps de la Fronde et Saint-Vincent de Paul*, by Feillet; *La cabale des dévots*, by Raoul Allier; *Saint-Vincent de Paul*, by Emanuel Broglie; *Saint-Vincent de Paul et les Goudi*, by Chantelauze; *Port-Royal*, by Sainte-Beuve.

belonging to Condé, then in the service of the King of Spain, occupied his old province of Bourgogne. If any district of France could have hoped to be respected by the Prince, it was this one; his father had possessed it before him and it was full of their friends. Ties of this kind, however, were of no advantage. March 23, 1652, the States of Bourgogne wrote to M. de Bielle, their deputy at Court:

The enemies having already burned fourteen villages [the names follow], besides others since burned, these fire-fiends are still in campaign and continuing these horrible ravages, all which has been under the express order of M. le Prince, which the commandant [de la ville] de Seurre has received, to burn the entire Province if it be possible. The same Sieur de Bielle can judge by the account of these fires, to which there has so far been no impediment presented, in what state the Province will be in a short time.

The common soldier troubled himself little whether the sacked region was on the one or the other side of the frontier. He made hardly any difference.

Some weeks after the fires in Bourgogne, two armies tortured the Brie. The one belonged to the King, the other to the Duc de Lorraine, and there was only a shade less of cruelty with the French forces than with the others. When all the troops had passed, the country was filled with charnel houses, and there are charnel houses and charnel houses.

That of Rampillon,⁶⁷ particularly atrocious, must be placed to the account of the Lorraines: "at each step one met mutilated people, with scattered limbs; women cut in four quarters after violation; men expiring under the ruins of burning houses, others spitted."⁶⁸ No trouble was taken to suppress these hells of infection.

It would be difficult to find any fashion of carrying on a war both more ferocious and more stupid. Some chiefs of divisions, precursors of humanitarian ideas, timidly protested, in the name of interest only, against a system which always gave to campaigning armies the plague, famine, and universal hatred. A letter addressed to Mazarin, and signed by four of these, Fabert at the head, supplicates him to arrest the ravages of a foreigner in the services of France, M. de Rosen. Mazarin took care to pay no attention to this protest: it would have been necessary first to pay Rosen and his soldiers. If it is expected to find any sense of responsibility in the State, in the opinion of contemporaries, for saving the survivors, left without bread, animals, nor harvests, without roof and without working tools, there is disappointment; the State held itself no more responsible for public disasters than for the poor, always with it.

The conception of social duty was not yet born. Public assistance was in its infancy, and the little which existed had been completely disorganised by the general disorders; like everything

⁶⁷ Village of the arrondissement of Provins.

⁶⁸ Feillet, *La misère au temps de la Fronde*.

else. Each city took care of its beggars or neglected them according to its own resources and circumstances. On the other hand, the idea of Christian charity had taken a strong hold upon some circles, under the combined influence of the Jansenism which exacted from its devotees a living faith; of a secret Catholic society whose existence is one of the most curious historical discoveries of these last years⁶⁹; and of a poor saint whose peasant airs and whose patched *soutane* caused much laughter when he presented himself before the Queen. Vincent de Paul is easily recognised. Relations with great people had not changed him. It was said of him after years of Court society, "M. Vincent is always M. Vincent," and this was true: men of this calibre never change, happily for the world.

He became the keynote of the impulse which caused the regeneration of provincial life, almost ruined by the wars of the Fronde. Even after the work was ended it would be difficult to decide upon the share of each of these bodies in this colossal enterprise. The society to which allusion has been made was founded in 1627, by the Duc de Ventadour, whose mystical thought had led him, as often happens, to essentially practical works. The name of *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement* was given it, and without doubt its supreme end was "to make honoured the Holy Sacrament."

Precisely on account of this, the society sought to "procure" for itself "all the good" in its power, for nothing is more profitable

⁶⁹ See the volume of Raoul Allier, *La cabale des dévots*.

to religion than support, material as well as spiritual and moral, distributed under its inspiration and as one might say on its own part.

One passes easily from the practice of charity, a source of precious teaching, to the correction of manners. After comes the desire to control souls, which naturally leads to the destruction of heresies, with or without gentleness.

This programme was responsible for many admirable charitable works, two centuries in advance of current ideas, and, at the same time, for cruelties, infamies, all the vices inseparable from the sectarian spirit in which the end justifies the means.

Once started, the society rapidly increased, always hidden, and multiplying precautions not to be discovered, since neither clergy nor royalty were well disposed towards this mysterious force, from which they were constantly receiving shocks without being able to discover whence came the blows.

It was an occult power, analogous in its extent and its intolerance, and even in the ways and means employed, to the Free Masonry of the present.

The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement had links throughout France and in all classes. Anne of Austria was included in its sacred band and a shoemaker played in it an important rôle. Vincent de Paul enrolled himself in the ranks towards the year 1635, contributed to the good, and probably was ignorant of the evil to be found in its folds. Dating from his affiliation, his charitable works so mingled with those of the society that

it was no longer to be recognised. The society brought to the Saint powerful succour, and aided him effectively in finding the support of which he had need; it would be difficult to say from whom came the first idea of many good works.

As for what at present concerns us, however, the point of departure is known. It was neither Vincent de Paul nor the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement which conceived and put in train the prodigious work of relieving the Provinces. The first committee of relief was founded in Paris, in 1649, by a Janséniste, M. de Bernières, who was also responsible for the invention of the printed "Relations" which were informing all France of the miseries to be relieved. It was the first time that Charity had aided itself through publicity. It soon found the value of this. M. de Bernières and his committee, in which the wives of members of Parliament dominated, were soon able to commence in Picardie and Champagne the distribution of bread, clothing, grain, and working implements. Hospitals were established. They put an end to the frightful feeling of desolation of these unfortunate populations, pillaged during so many years by mercenaries of all races and tongues. But the number of workers was small even if their zeal was great, and the Janséniste community was not equipped for a task of this dimension. From the end of the following year, the direction of the enterprise passed entirely into the hands of Vincent de Paul, who led with him his army of sisters of charity, his mission priests, and an entire contingent of allies, secret but absolutely devoted.

It does not seem as if at first there was any conflict. Mme. de Lamoignon and the Présidente de Herse were the right arms of M. Vincent as they had been of M. de Bernières. When the Queen of Poland,⁷⁰ a spiritual daughter of Port-Royal and brought up in France, wished to subscribe to the work, she sent her money to the Mother Angélique, telling her to communicate with M. Vincent. But this harmony was of short duration. The members of what the public were going to baptise with the sobriquet of "Cabale des Dévots," not being able to discover the real name, could not suffer the Janséniste concurrence in charitable works. They showered upon M. de Bernières a mass of odious calumnies and denunciations which resulted in the exile of this good man.

This was one of the most abominable of the bad actions to which a sectarian spirit has pushed human beings.

The "Relations" were continued under the direction of Vincent de Paul. One knows through them and through the documents of the time, the details of the task undertaken. The first necessity for the public health was the clearing the surface of the ground, in the provinces in which there had been fighting, of the putrifying bodies, and of the filthiness left by the armies. There was one village from which such an odour exhaled that no one would approach it. A "Relation" of 1652 describes in these terms the environs of Paris:

At Étréchy, the living are mingled with the dead, and the

⁷⁰ Marie de Gonzague.

country is full of the latter. At Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Crosne, Limay, one hundred and seventy-four ill people were found in the last extremity, with neither beds, clothes, nor bread.

It was necessary to commence by taking away the seeds of infection which increased the maladies, by interring the corpses of men, of dead horses and cattle, and removing the heaps of dirt which the armies had left behind. The cleansing of the soil was the specialty of M. Vincent and one of his most signal benefits. He employed for this work his mission priests and his sisters of charity. The missionaries placed themselves at the head of the workmen, the sisters sought the abandoned sick. Cloth and cap died at need "the arms in the hand," said their chief, but their work was good; and finally the work was taken hold of in the right way.

After the dead the living:

The curé of Boul⁷¹ [reports another "Relation"] assures us that he buried three of his parishioners dead from hunger; others were living only upon cut-up straw mixed with earth, of which was composed a food called bread. Five tainted and decaying horses were devoured; an old man aged seventy-five years had entered the presbytery to roast a piece of horse-flesh, the animal having died of scab fifteen days previously, was infected with worms, and had been found cast into a foul ditch... At Saint-Quentin, in the faubourgs, in which the houses had been demolished, the missionaries discovered the last inhabitants in miserable

⁷¹ En Picardie.

huts, "in each of which," wrote one of them, "I found one or two sick, in one single hut ten; two widows, each having four children, slept together on the ground, having nothing whatever, not even a sheet." Another Ecclesiastic, in his visit, having met with many closed doors, upon forcing them open discovered that the sick were too feeble to open them having eaten nothing during two days, and having beneath them only a little half rotten straw; the number of these poor was so great that without succour from Paris, the citizens under the apprehension of a siege, not being able to nourish them, had resolved to cast them over the walls.

Millions were needed to relieve such distress, but Vincent de Paul and his associates had a better dream; they wished to put these dying populations in a condition to work again and to undertake the reparation of the ruins themselves. The enterprise was organised in spite of obstacles which appeared insurmountable, the exhaustion of France and the difficulty of communication being the principal. The Parisians raised enormous sums and sent gifts of all kinds of materials, and found the means of transporting provisions. The committee divided the environs of Paris; Mme. Joly took the care of one village; the Présidente de Nesmond, four villages; and so on. Missionaries were sent outside the boundaries. One of the later biographers of Vincent de Paul⁷² values at twelve millions of francs, at this date worth about sixty millions, the sums distributed, without counting money spent directly for the work of piety nor for

⁷² M. Emanuel de Broglie.

the support of those engaged in it. However this may be, this latter body certainly consumed a large portion. The immensity of the enterprise, and its apparent boldness, gives us an idea of the wealth and power of the middle classes of the seventeenth century. After Vincent de Paul and M. de Bernières, the honour for this work of relief belongs to the parliamentary world and the Parisian bourgeoisie; the aristocracy only playing a very secondary rôle. The middle classes provided for this enormous effort, at a period in which all revenues failed at once. We are told that many were forced to borrow, that others sold their jewels and articles of silver; still this supposes luxury and credit. In one way or another, the citizen was in a position to give, while the small noble of Lorraine or of Beauce was obliged to receive; and this emphasises an historic lesson. Gentlemen as well as peasants lacked bread. After remaining two days without eating, one is ready to accept alms; at the end of three days, to demand them on account of the children. The decadence of the one class, the ascension of the other until their turn comes; it has always been the same since the world began.

One last detail, and perhaps the most significant: There is no reference in the *Memoirs of the times*⁷³ to the principal work of Vincent de Paul. Their authors would have made it a matter of conscience not to forget a Court intrigue or a scandalous

⁷³ Saul in the *Journal des guerres civiles de Dubuisson-Aubenay*. He mentions the date of December 2, 1650, upon which "large donations" were sent into Champagne, by Mmes. de Lamoignon and de Herse, Messieurs de Bernières, Lenain, etc.

adventure; but what can be interesting in people who are naked and hungry? One avoids speaking of them. It is even better not to think of them. In 1652, the year in which poverty was at its height in oppressed Paris, the Mother Angélique wrote from Port-Royal, to the Queen of Poland (June 28th):

With the exception of the few actually engaged in charity, the rest of the world live in as much luxury as ever. The Court and the Tuileries are as thronged as ever, collations and the rest of the superfluities go on as always. Paris amuses itself with the same fury as if its streets were not filled with frightful spectacles. And, what is more horrible, fashion will not suffer the priests to preach penitence (Letter of July 12th).

The lack of pity for the poor was almost general among the so-called higher classes. There is no need of too carefully inquiring as to what is passing in hovels.

Vincent de Paul and his allies struggled six years. Not once did the government come to their aid, and the war always continued; for one ruin relieved, the armies made ten others. The group of the "good souls" who had made these prodigious sacrifices was at length used up, as one might say, and was never reinforced, in spite of the inexhaustible source of devotion offered by the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement. This body had been composed of men and women so exceptional in character, as well as in intelligence, that its ranks, emptied by death, and by the exhaustion of means and courage, could not be filled up.

In 1655, the receipts of the committee were visibly diminished. Two years later, the resources were entirely exhausted and the work of relief remained unfinished.

It was well that it was attempted; a leaven of good has remained from it in the national soul.

The actual benefits however, were promptly effaced; the famine of 1659 to 1662, especially in the latter year, counts amongst the most frightful of the century, perhaps in our entire history. The excess of material poverty engendered immense moral misery, particularly in the large cities, in which luxury stood side by side with the most frightful conditions, and Paris became both excitable and evil, as always when it suffers.

The Carnival of 1660 was the most noisy and disorderly which old Parisians had ever known. Great and small sought amusement with a kind of rage, and dissensions and quarrels abounded from the top to the bottom of the social scale. Public places were noisy with riots and affrays. During the nights, masks were masters of the streets, and as has been seen above, no security existed with these composite crowds, which stole candles from the houses into which they had surged.

One ball alone received in a single evening the visit of sixty-five masks, who ran through the city three nights in succession. These hysterics in Paris, while France was dying with hunger, are so much the more striking, inasmuch as the Court was not there to communicate to the outer world its eternal need of agitation and amusement. Louis XIV. spent a large portion of

these critical years in journeying through his kingdom. One of the first journeys, lasting from October 27th to the following January 27th, had for its end the meeting of the Princess of Savoie at Lyons. There had been some question of marrying this Princess to the young King. On passing to Dijon, the Court stopped more than fifteen days. Mademoiselle tells us the reason for this delay; it is not very glorious for royalty. The Parliament of Dijon refused to register certain edicts which aggravated the burdens of the province. Le Tellier, "on the part of the King," promised that there should be no more difficulty if the states of Bourgogne would bring their subsidy to a sum which was indicated. "Upon which they agreed to what was demanded and presented themselves to account to the King."

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