

# MARIE CATHERINE D'AULNOY

THE INGENIOUS AND  
DIVERTING LETTERS OF  
THE LADY—TRAVELS INTO  
SPAIN

**Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy**  
**The Ingenious and Diverting**  
**Letters of the Lady**  
**—Travels into Spain**

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*The Ingenious and Diverting Letters of the Lady—Travels into Spain*  
*Describing the Devotions, Nunneries, Humours, Customs, Laws, Militia,*  
*Trade, Diet and Recreations of that People:*

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Humours, Customs, Laws,  
Militia, Trade, Diet and  
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**To the Honourable**

**M<sup>RS</sup> *Martha Lockhart***

**Madam,**

I Humbly beg Leave these Letters may appear in an English Dress, under the Protection of your Name; whose Accuracy in the Original, justly Intitles you to this Dedication; and

whose Advantagious Birth, Greatness of Mind, and Uncommon Improvements, exact a Veneration from the most Invidious; and render you an Illustrious Ornament of your Sex.

Madam, For me to attempt here the Publishing your Vertues and Accomplishments, so universally acknowledg'd by all that have the Honour of your Acquaintance, would be to detract from your Merit; and might more justly be censured for Presumption than Flattery.

It were better to imitate the Painter, who perceiving it not possible to represent the Father's Grief for the loss of his Daughter, drew a Veil over his Face, and owned his Inability.

But I forget, Madam, 'tis my part only to crave your Pardon for this bold Address; and to study ever to approve myself,

*Madam,*

*Your most Obedient Servant.*

## **TO THE**

## **READER**

IT is not sufficient to write things true, but they must likewise seem probable, to gain belief. This has sometime so prevail'd with me, as to make me think of retrenching from my Relation the strange Stories you will find therein. But I have been withheld

from doing this, by Persons of such great Sence and Merit, as has made me conclude, that I cannot do amiss in following their Judgments.

I do not doubt but there will be some, who will accuse me of hyperbolizing, and composing Romances; but such would do well to acquaint themselves first with the Countrey, Humour, and Character of those I treat of. A Fact must not be presently condemn'd as false, because it is not publick, or may not hit every Man's Fancy. I cite no feigned Names, no Persons whose Death may give me the Liberty of attributing what I please to them.

In a word: I write nothing but what I have seen, or heard from Persons of Unquestionable Credit; And therefore shall conclude with assuring you, That you have here no Novel, or Story, devised at pleasure; but an Exact and most True Account of what I met with in my Travels.

# INTRODUCTION

AT the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth there were several women in France who had gained no small reputation for the writing of amusing if somewhat extravagant *Contes des Fées*. Of these Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Baroness of Aulnoy, has best survived her contemporaries as the author of *La Chatte Blanche*, *La Grenouille Bien-complaisante*, *Le Prince Lutin*, *L'Oiseau Bleu*, and of other tales which, as M. La Harpe has thought, place her supreme in the realm of delicate frivolity.

The life of this brilliant woman will doubtless present a contrast with most preconceptions of her character based upon a mere reading of her books; and we may be surprised to find in her such a marked individuality, so peculiarly in touch with her time, and offering so little of the ideal and sensitive nature it was fairly natural to infer. We have not, in fact, a mere writer of amusing tales and half romantic histories, but an intriguing, though charming, woman, of a bold and often reckless nature, sufficient to stamp her a worthy daughter of her time. And, after all harsh verdicts have been passed, we shall, I think, return to Madame Aulnoy, by way of her books, with a feeling of affection and interest.

Barneville, near Bourg-Achard (Eure), is her birthplace. Her father was Nicolas-Claude Le Jumel, and her mother, who

subsequently married the Marquis of Gudaigne and went with him to Rome, Judith-Angélique Le Coustellier. Nicolas is said to have served long in the armies of Louis XIV., and to have been related to some of the best families of Normandy. Judith later, when in Rome, seems to have rendered peculiar services to the Spanish court, for which she was duly rewarded.

The date of their daughter's birth is not positively fixed. It is given as 1650 or 1651, but no record of baptism remains, and of the life of Madame Aulnoy previous to the date of her marriage with François de La Motte little is known. That event occurred on Monday, the 8th of March, 1666.

But if the minor details of her life are wanting, we have yet a general and quite sufficient survey of its broader lines. Married at sixteen to a man thirty-six years her senior, we may find in the character of her husband ("un assez triste personnage," as one of his biographers has named him) no uncertain commentary on the subsequent behavior of his wife.

He is described as: "Un bel homme, bien fait, d'abord valet de pied de César, duc de Vendôme, qui cherchait d'avoir de beaux hommes à son service."

He rose in the confidence of this master, who in 1649 to 1650 employed him in important affairs. This duke of Vendôme, called by Le Vassor<sup>1</sup> "un mince capitaine, que ne sut jamais se faire craindre ni se faire estimer," had, on his return to France in 1641, been accused of an attempt to poison Richelieu. These

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<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de Louis XIII.*



were the days of the celebrated Brinvilliers, when *Acqua Tofana* had been brought from Italy and the number of poisoners was increasing in France. The duke had again returned after the death of Richelieu, and under Mazarin in 1650 was given the government of Bourgoigne. In 1653 he took Bordeaux, and two years later put to flight the Spanish fleet before Barcelona. It was in 1653 that La Motte, rising to prosperity with the fortunes of his master, was made Chevalier de Saint-Michel, and one year later he purchased for 150,000 livres from Claude Gobelin the Barony of Aulnoy in Brie. His success was, however, of short duration, and his money soon slipped away. He died in 1700 in his eightieth year, "Accablé de ses infortunes et des infamies de ses filles, dont il y en a deux qui imitent leur mère."

In view, therefore of the seemingly general evil opinion as to the character of François de La Motte we may possibly abate somewhat of the severity of judgment in regard to his wife. Yet on the whole Madame Aulnoy does not present a too pleasing portrait. Of her five children two only were acknowledged by their father. Marie-Angélique was born on the 26th of January, 1667; Dominique-César on the 22d of November of the same year; Anne, 1668; Judith-Henriette, 1669; Thérèse-Aymée in 1676.

Of these the only son died young. Thérèse was taken to Spain in the early part of 1679 by Madame Aulnoy, whither the latter had gone to rejoin her mother, the Marquise de Gudaigne. Marie-Angélique, it appears, had the clever nature of her mother, and

won a salon reputation. She married Claude Denis de Herre de Vaudois. Anne, the most beautiful, married a gentleman of Berry, by name M. de Preaulx d'Artigny. Thérèse-Aymée remained in Spain with the queen, where she was in 1705. Judith-Henriette seems to have remained in Paris and followed, in a "carrière d'intrigue et de galanterie," the footsteps of her mother and grandmother.

All amicable relations between Madame Aulnoy and her husband had come to an end even before the tragic event which all but involved her and her mother, and for which they were undoubtedly responsible. A certain C. Bonenfant, Seigneur de Lamoizière, and another, J. A. de Crux, Seigneur Marquis de Courboyer, who were, without seeming question, lovers of Madame Aulnoy and the Marquise de Gudaigne, attacked, at their instigation, in the courts, the unfortunate La Motte, who, however, managed to save himself, and the attempt ended in failure. The accusers were tried, put to the torture, and confessed. Both suffered death, and the two women found it necessary to make their escape. It was said that Madame Aulnoy was all but captured, having been found by the officer in bed, whence she managed to escape, and hid herself beneath a catafalque in a neighboring church. The two went first to England and afterwards to Spain. Here, however, having rendered some service to their own government, they were finally pardoned and returned to France, where, in 1699, Madame Aulnoy again appears, this time mixed up in the famous Ticquet scandal, which

ended in the beheading of Angélique Ticquet on the 17th of June. Our author seems to have run some danger of joining her on the scaffold. She died, however, in her house in the Rue Saint-Benoit on the 14th of January, 1705.

If the *Contes des Fées* of Madame Aulnoy have had a remarkable vogue, not so fortunate has been the lot of some of the historical endeavors of this lady. Her *Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne* (1679-1681) and *Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre* (1695) have been quietly laid aside, together with the *Histoire d'Hippolyte, Comte de Douglas* (1690), and the *Histoire de Jean de Bourbon* (1692), for, though always interesting, the qualities of imagination which combine to the writing of a fairy tale are not quite those needed for the making of history, and unfortunately for the clever lady, it is in the field of "delicate frivolity" that she has been placed.

But Madame Aulnoy has put forward a more serious claim to legitimate reputation in the small volume of travel published anonymously at Paris in 1691, wherein she describes her voyage into Spain with a brilliancy and wealth of detail which is all the more grateful in that the period has furnished us with but little like it. In this Journey she has produced a remarkable book. To the quick eye of the clever French woman nothing is lost. She sees the astonishing condition of the Peninsula with an instant but not unsympathetic glance. Into what might have well proved a dismal picture she has woven her ever lively personality, and with a ready humor turns the incidents of evil chance to

amusing asides. If in all this an air of unreality and lack of truth is introduced, it does not on the whole affect the picture. Nor does this resemble the more fanciful historical work of the same writer, for here at least all is natural and fairly told. Spaniards have been at pains to attack this writer. They have argued and abused. But it is not far wrong to find in her book a near approach to a truthful picture. There was, in fact, small need for calling up the imagination. There is evidence enough that in that day no one need closet himself and dream for the seeing of strange sights. It is the commonplace that surprises us. We feel how little the nation was responding to the sense of awakening which began to be felt elsewhere. Cervantes with his laughter had not brought to earth all fabrics of romance. The modern spirit was not yet stirring.

Of this book, as of Madame Aulnoy, Taine has been unhesitating in his praise. To him she was neither prude, philosopher, nor pedant; without affectation; a ready observer, praising or condemning with discretion, he seemed to find in her a representative in some measure of the great literary age of which she was a part.

And to him she never exaggerates; she has the inestimable qualities of good sense, frankness, and tact, is a French woman of culture and breeding. "On imprime," he says, speaking of the book before us, "beaucoup de livres nouveaux, on ferait bien de réimprimer quelques livres anciens, au premier rang celui-ci."

On the death of Philip IV., in 1665, a sigh of relief might well

have risen from all Spain, yet scarcely through any anticipation of better days to come. For, though this man had presented to Europe a peculiarly marked type of bad government, his end raised no profound hopes of improvement. A man of strong character, of inflexible honesty, of patience; a statesman, a philosopher, and, last of all, a king, was what a few who remembered other days may have hoped. Instead, a Regency. At a time when throughout the land a magistrate, a viceroy, or a noble who had no place to sell or influence to buy was scarcely to be found; when an exhausted treasury, the loss of possessions, the slipping of prestige, the corruption of all classes, called for a guiding hand, then it was that fate saw fit to introduce a new king —*at the age of four*.

Spanish writers have a justified bitterness for this period of the national history. While the Imperial power was sinking slowly away, no return of prosperity, of New World conquest, or Old World grandeur appeared in the distance. None ever came. Stretching back into the past, the widening road of disaster ran straight to the foot of the throne of Philip II. On every side the downfall had begun. Spanish troops once invincible retreated and again retreated. Bit by bit the schemes of other countries began to be realized in the dismemberment of the Empire. Literature grown decadent, history perverted, Mannerism and Gongorism were the new gods and Churriguera the builder of their temples.

The arts decayed and died. Merchants, anticipating the destruction of trade, refused to venture their money. They

rather hoarded it in secret places, discarding hope of interest. Commerce knew no security. Wealth brought but extortion. Power lay in the hands of court favorites.

“Les provinces étoient si épuisées,” writes Villars, “qu’en quelques endroits de la Castille on étoit obligé pour vivre, de trocquer les marchandises, parcequ’il n’y avoit plus d’argent pour acheter. Dans Madrid même il ne se’en trouvoit presque plus, et l’on y ressentoit à loisir les suites du changement de la monnoye que l’on avoit fait, avec tant de précipitation. Les personnes de qualité dont la dépense avoit doublé par ce changement ne pouvoient payer leurs marchands, et les banquiers n’avoient plus de fonds et ne trouvoient point à emprunter; on ne payoit rien dans la maison du Roy et les choses en vinrent à une telle extrémité, que la plus part des petits domestiques ayant rendu leurs livrées pour quitter le service, on eut beaucoup de peine à trouver les moyens de les y faire demeurer.”

Even religion was to become the vehicle of a host of strange mysteries; professional saints flourished; miracles were of daily report, the stigmata had repeatedly appeared. Superstition fed upon tales of witches and hobgoblins, and the minds of high and low were filled with a strange, incongruous mass of belief and doubt. A whole supernatural world both local and national crowded the places of Christian tradition. Every fragment of Roman, Arabic, or Gothic belief came to be fused upon the general credulity.

While the form that faith had assumed no longer surprises the

reader as he turns the pages of contemporary writers, yet the *auto de fé* had not gasped its last. Outside the gate of Fuencarral the fires still burned. In 1680, the very year in which our author is writing her later letters from Madrid, it had produced an exhibition in the Plaza Mayor which had the utmost detail of dramatic staging given it to lend impressiveness. The bull-fight, too, was beginning to grow into that popularity which was later to make it the national sport.

The condition of the people was lamentable. Little by little the lower orders, driven from trades and manufacturing, were forced to face conditions of pauperism. Theft came to be too common to be noted. Every mountain pass was infested by robbers. People travelled well armed or stayed at home.

Into such a country, under such conditions as these, came, in February, 1679, this French woman of position, cultivation, and wit, and from San Sebastian she wrote the first of the series of letters which one by one found their way northward as she journeyed toward Madrid.

“Le premier trait du caractère Espagnol, c’est le manque de sense pratique,” says Taine. Something, however, must be added to every epigram on Spain, for she will not permit of hasty summing. Something must be said of language, dignity, and, last but not least, of the instinctive ceremonial. All of this our author has perceived.

This ceremonial of Spain, what and whence is it and how is it that it is first discerned by the traveller? Its history, could

it be written, would be indeed a history of shadows, a ghostly palimpsest of needs made forms. Time was when a stern and God-favored war, fought day by day, year to year, and century to century behind the Pyrenean wall, nursed and fostered strange forms and moulded fantastic mental attitude. Europe busied herself but little with it all. It was enough for her that the Spaniard did well his office of guard and watcher at the outer gate. There, she came to believe, was his place, and there he wore his livery. And a strange livery it was – made up of rags and tatters of Iberian pride, Roman servitude, and Christian independence, and as it was fought day after day at the cheerless outer gate, from time to time the foe who bore upon him with the banners of Islam fell back before him, leaving upon the field some word to be gathered up as booty, some spoil of solemn gesture or grave reply or strangely formed garment brought across all Africa from Hejaz or the land of the Anazeh. And in this strange attire he stood and fought and bled until with sweat and blood of a thousand years the garment was a single hue and had become a solemn cloak.

Then the word came for the sheathing of the sword to the south, and with this cloak wrapped about him the erstwhile guardian of the outer gate of a sudden stalked out upon Europe, jangling the gold purse of the Indies at his belt, to the terror and the unfeigned astonishment of the world.

And this strange, melancholy creation of spectral silence has worn his piecemeal cloak of historic ceremonial, and, like the garment of the Seises, when it grew too old and threadbare



redarned and furbished it anew until it in turn became but a shade and figure of its predecessor, yet drawn ever closer and hugged with a dearer love about the wasting old guardsman's figure.

**A  
RELATION  
OF A  
Voyage to *SPAIN*  
IN  
Several Letters**

**Letter I**

SEEING you are so earnest with me to let you know all my Adventures, and whatever I have observ'd during my Travels, you must therefore be contented (my dear Cousin) to bear with a great many trifling Occurrences, before you can meet with what will please you: I know your Fancy is so nice and delicate, that none but extraordinary Accidents can entertain you; and I wish I had no others to relate: but recounting things faithfully, as they have hapned, you must be contented therewith.

I gave you an Account in my last, of what I met with as far as Bayonne: you know this is a Town in France, Frontier to Spain, wash'd by the Rivers Dadour and Nivelle, which joyn together; and the Sea comes up to them. The Port and Trade are

considerable: I came from Axe by Water, and observ'd that the Boat-men of Adour have the same Custom as those of Garonne; which is to say, That in passing by one another, they set up a Hollowing; and they had rather lose their Wages than to forbear these sort of Shoutings, although exceeding vexatious to those who are not used to them. There are two Castles strong enough to defend the Town, and there are about it several pleasant Walks.

At my Arrival there, I intreated the Baron de Castleneau, who had accompany'd me from Axe, to bring me acquainted with some Women, with whom I might spend my time with less impatience, till the Litters came, which were to be sent to me from St. Sebastian.

He readily complied with my Request; for being a Person of Quality and Worth, he is much esteem'd at Bayonne. He fail'd not the next Morning to bring several Ladies to visit me.

These Women begin here to feel the scorching Heats of the Sun; their Complexion is dark, their Eyes sparkling; they are charming enough, their Wits are sharp: And I could give you a farther Account of their Capacities, could I have better understood what they said: not but that they could all speak French, yet with such a different Dialect, as surpast my Understanding.

Some who came to see me, brought little Sucking Pigs under their Arms, as we do little Dogs: it's true they were very spruce, and several of 'em had Collars of Ribbons, of various Colours: However, this Custom looks very odd, and I cannot but think that

several among themselves are disgusted at it: When they danced, they must set them down, and let these grunting Animals run about the Chamber, where they make a very pleasant Harmony. These Ladies danc'd at my Intreaty, the Baron of Castleneau having sent for Pipes and Tabors.

The Gentlemen who attended the Ladies, took each of 'em her whom he had brought with him, and the Dance began in a Round, all holding Hands: they had afterwards long Canes brought them, and then each Spark taking hold of his Lady's Handkerchief, which separated them from one another, moved very gracefully at the Sound of this Martial sort of Musick, which inspired them with such Heat, that they seem'd not to be able to moderate it. This seem'd to me to resemble the Pyrric Dance so much celebrated by the Ancients; for these Gentlemen and Ladies made so many Turns, Frisks and Capers, their Canes being thrown up into the Air, and dexterously caught again, that it is impossible to describe their Art and Agility: And I had a great deal of Pleasure in seeing 'em; but methoughts it lasted too long, and I began to grow weary of this ill-ordered Ball: When the Baron de Castleneau, who perceiv'd it, caused several Baskets of dried Fruit to be brought in. They are the Jews who pass for Portugises, and dwell at Bayonne, who transport them from Genoa, and furnish all the Country with them. We wanted not for Limonade, and other refreshing Waters, of which these Ladies drank heartily; and so the Entertainment ended.

I was carry'd the next Morning to see the Synagogue of the

Jews, in the Suburb of the Holy Spirit, but met with nothing remarkable there. Monsieur de St. Pe, the King's Lieutenant, who came to see me, though much troubled with the Gout, invited me to Dine at his House, where I was most deliciously entertain'd; for this a Country abounding with good Cheer, and at cheap Rates. I found here Women of Quality that were very handsome, whom he had invited to bear me Company. The sight of the Castle, which faces the River, is very pleasant, and has always a good Garison in it.

At my return to my Lodging, I was surpriz'd to find several Pieces of Linnen, which were brought to me from the Ladies who came to see me, with Baskets full of dried Sweetmeats. This Treatment seem'd to me very obliging to a Lady whom they had not known above four or five Days. But I must not forget to tell you, there is not any finer Linnen in the World, than that which is made in this Country, some of which is open like Network, and the Threads of it finer than Hair: And I remember, that travelling thro' the Villages of Bourdeaux, which may be rather call'd Desarts, the poor Peasants living so wretchedly; yet I found among them as neat Napkins as those used among People of Quality at Paris.

I fail'd not to send these Ladies such little Presents which I thought might please them: I perceiv'd they were great Admirers of Ribbons, and wear a great many on their Heads and Ears, which made me send them a great many; to which I added several Fans: and they, by way of Return, presented me with Gloves, and

Thread-Stockins, most delicately knit.

In sending them to me they desired me to go to the next Chappel, which was not far from my Quarters, where they intended to Regale me with the best Musick the Town would afford: but though there were very good Voices, yet there is no great pleasure in hearing them, because they want both Air and Skill.

The Litters which I expected from Spain, being come, I prepared for my Departure; but I never met with any thing dearer than these sort of Equipages; for each Litter has a Master that accompanies it, who keeps the Gravity of a Roman Senator, being mounted on a Mule, and his Man on another, with which they release ever and anon those that carry the Litter. I had two, I took the greatest for myself and my Child, and had besides four Mules for my Servants, and two for my Baggage: to conduct them, there were other two Masters and two Men. You see what Charge one is at, to go to Madrid, seeing you must pay not only for their Attendance on you forwards, but the same Price for their return back: However, we must submit to their Customs, and suffer ourselves to be peel'd by them.

I found at Bayonne several Turks and Mores, and I think a worse sort of People, and these are Custom-House-Men: I had caused my Trunks to be weigh'd at Paris, that I might have the less to do with these sort of People; but they were more subtle, or to speak better, more obstinate than I; so that I was forc'd to give them whatever they demanded. Scarcely was I got clear

from them, when the Drums, Trumpets, Pipes, and Violins of the Town, came thundring upon me; they follow'd me farther than St. Anthony's Gate, through which you pass for Spain through Biscaye: they play'd each of them in their way, and all together, without any Harmony, which was enough to drive any one out of their Senses: I ordered some Money to be given them, upon which they left persecuting me. As soon as we had left Bayonne, we enter'd into a large barren Heath, where we saw nothing but Chesnut-Trees; but we afterwards past along by the Sea, whose Sand makes a delightful Way, and a pleasant Prospect.

We arriv'd in good time at St. John de Luz: nothing can be pleasanter than this Borough, which is the greatest in France, and the best built; there are several smaller Cities: its Port lies between two Mountains, which Nature seems to have expresly placed to defend it from Storms; the River Nivelle disgorges it self therein; the Sea comes up very high in it, and the greatest Barks come up commodiously to the Key. The Seamen here are very skilful at catching Whales, and other large Fish. We were here very well entertain'd, so that our Tables were covered with all sorts of Wild Fowl: but our Beds were not answerable, being stuck with Feathers whose Pinions ran into our sides, and we wanted Quilts to lay on the top of them: I thought when we were to pay, that we should have had a large Reckoning, but they only demanded of me half a Lewis Dor, when they would have cost more than five Pistoles at Paris. The Situation of St. John de Luz is extreamly agreeable.

In the most spacious part of the Town you see here a very fine Church, built after the Modern Fashion; and here is a Passage over the River Nivelles, on a Wooden Bridge of great length. Here are Toll-Gatherers, who make you pay for every thing you carry with you, not excepting your Cloaths: This Tax is demanded at their Pleasure; and it is excessive on Strangers. I was weary with speaking French to 'em, and protesting I was no Spaniard; they feigning not to understand me, sneering in my Face, and wrapping up their Heads in their Hooded-Gowns; they seem'd to be Thieves, disguised in Capuchins: In short, they tax'd me eighteen Crowns, and would perswade me they used me well, tho' I found the contrary. But I have already told you (dear Cousin), that when you travel this Country, you must stock yourself with Patience, and good store of Money.

I saw the Castle of Artois, which seems a strong place; and a little farther Orognes, where the Biscaye is spoken, without either French or Spanish. I design'd to lye at Iron, which is but three Leagues distant from St. John de Luz; and I had set out after Noon, but the Dispute which we had with the Watch on the Bridge, the Difficulty we had in passing the Mountains of Beotia, and the ill Weather, joyned to other little Difficulties which hapned, were the Cause that it was Night before we arriv'd on the Borders of the River Bidassoa, which separates France from Spain. I observ'd along the way from Bayonne thither, little Carriages, on which they transport every thing, which have only two Iron Wheels, and the Noise they make is so great, that they



are heard a Mile off, when there are many of them together, which often happen; for you often meet with Sixty or Seventy at a time; they are drawn by Oxen. I have seen the same in the Villages of Bourdeaux, and especially on the side of Axe.

The River of Bidassoa is usually very small, but the Snows melting had increas'd it to such a degree, that we had no small trouble to pass it, some in a Boat, and others swimming on their Mules: The Moon shined very bright, by means of which I was shew'd on the right Hand the Isle of Conference, where the Marriage of our King was made with Maria Therese, Infanta of Spain. I saw a while after the Fort of Fontarabia, which belongs to the King of Spain, standing on the Mouth of this small River: the Flux and Reflux of the Sea arrives here. Our Kings heretofore pretended it belonged to them: there have been such great Contests hereupon, especially by the Inhabitants of Fontarabia, and those of Andaye, that they have several times come to Blows. This oblig'd Lewis the Twelfth, and Ferdinand, to agree, That it should be common to both Nations: the French and the Spaniards take Toll equally; these last making those pay who pass into Spain, and the former doing the like in relation to those who pass over to France.

War does not hinder Commerce on this Frontier: it's true they cannot subsist without it, seeing they must perish through Want, did they not assist one another.

This Country call'd Biscaye, is full of high Mountains, where are several Iron Mines: The Biscays climb up the Rocks as easily,

and with as great swiftness as Stags: Their Language (if one may call such Jargon Language) is very poor, seeing one Word signifies abundance of Things: There are none but those born in the Country that can understand it; and I am told, that to the end it may be more particularly theirs, they make no use of it in Writing; they make their Children to read and write French and Spanish, according to which King's Subjects they are. It's certain, as soon as I past the little River of Bidassoa, I was not understood, unless I spake Castilian; and not above a quarter of an Hour before, I should not have been understood had I not spoke French.

I found on the other side of this River a Banker of St. Sebastian, to whom I was recommended: he tarried for me, with two of his Relations; they were cloath'd after the French manner, but ridiculously, their Justau Corps being short and large, and their Sleeves hanging down very short; those of their Shirts were so large, that they hung down below their Justau Corps: they had Bands without Collars; Periwigs, one of which had enough Hair for four, and so frizled, as made 'em look as if they were frighted; iller-drest People you cannot meet with. Those who wear their own Hair, wear it very long and close, parting it on the Crown, and pass part of it behind their Ears: but what kind of Ears think you? those of Midas were not larger; and I believe, that to lengthen them, they are stretched when they be young: without question they find some kind of Beauty herein.

My three Spaniards made me in bad French most tedious and

dull Complements. We past through the Bourg of Tran, which is about a quarter of a League from the River, and came afterwards to Irun, which is distant about another quarter of a League: this little Town is the first of Spain which you meet with, leaving France: it's ill built; the Streets are unequal, and there's nothing one can speak of: We entered into the Inn through the Stable, where are the Stairs on which you must ascend to your Chamber; this is the Country's Fashion. I found the House very light, by a great many Candles, which were as small as Pack-thread; there were at least forty in my Chamber, fixt on little bits of Wood; in the midst of 'em stood a Pan of Coals burning, made of Olive Rhines, to take away the scent of the Candles.

I had a great Supper, which my Gallants, the Spaniards, had caus'd to be made ready for me; but all was so full of Garlick, Saffron and Spice, that I could eat nothing: and I had made very bad Cheer, had not my Cook made me a little Ragou of what he could find.

Determining to go but to St. Sebastian the next Morning, which is but seven or eight Leagues, I thought to Dine before I set out: I was sitting at Table when one of my Women brought me my Watch to wind it up, as it was my Custom at Noon; It was a striking Watch, of Tompion's make, and cost me fifty Lewises: My Banker, who was by me, shew'd some desire to see it; I gave it him, with a customary Civility. This was enough: my Blade rises, makes me a profound Reverence, telling me, "He did not deserve so considerable a Present; but such a Lady as I could

make no other: That he would engage his Faith and Reputation, that he would never part with my Watch as long as he liv'd; and that he found himself extreamly oblig'd to me." He kist it at the end of his pleasant Complement, and thrust it into his Pocket, which was deeper than a Sack. You'll take me to be a very great Sot, in saying nothing to all this, and I do not wonder at it; but I confess ingenuously, I was so surpriz'd at his Proceeding, that the Watch was out of sight before I could resolve on what I was to do. My Women, and the rest of my Servants who were about me, stared on me, and I on them, blushing with Shame and Vexation to be thus caught: However, I recollected myself, and considered, that this Man was to pay me a good round Sum of Money for the Charge of my Journey, and to return Money to Bourdeaux, where I had taken it up; that having Bills of Credit on him, he might use several Tricks to me, and Put-offs, which might make me spend twice the Value of the Watch: In fine, I let him part with it, and endeavour'd to do myself Honour from a thing which gave me great Mortification.

I have learnt, since this little Adventure, that 'tis the Custom in Spain, when any thing is presented to one, if he likes it, and kisses your Hand, he may take it with him. This is a very pleasant Fashion, and being sufficiently acquainted with it, 'twill be my Fault if I am Trapt again.

I left this Inn where they peel'd me sufficiently; for this is a grievous dear Country, and every one strives to be Rich at his Neighbour's Cost. A while after we had left the Town we

entred on the Pyrenean Mountains, which are so high and steep, that looking down, you see, not without Horror, the Precipices which environ them; we went thus as far as Rentry: Don Antonio (which was my Banker's Name) went before me, and for my more commodious Passage, he oblig'd me to quit my Litter; for although we had traversed several Mountains, yet there remain'd more difficult to pass: he made me enter into a little Boat, which he had prepar'd to go down the River of Andaye, till we were near the Mouth of the Sea, where we saw the King of Spain's Gallions; there were three very fine and large ones. Our little boats were set forth with Gilt Streamers; they were manag'd by Girls, who were very lusty and handsome; there are three in each, two that Row, and one who holds the Rudder.

These Wenches are very well shaped, of Chesnut Complexion, have very good Teeth, Hair Black, which they tie up with Ribbons, in Knots, and so let it hang behind them: They wear a kind of Veil on their Heads, made of Musling, embroidered with Flowers of Gold and Silk, which hangs loose, and covers their Breasts: they wear Pendants in their Ears of Gold and Pearls, and Bracelets of Coral; they have a kind of Justau Corps, like our Gypsies, whose Sleeves are very strait: I can assure you they charm'd me. I was told these Wenches swim like Fishes, and suffer neither Women nor Men among them. This is a kind of Republick, where they repair from all Parts, and where their Parents send them very young.

When they are willing to marry, they go to Mass at Fontarabia,

which is the nearest Town to 'em; and there the young Men come to chuse 'em Wives to their Humour. He that will engage himself in Hymen's Bonds, goes to his Mistress's Parents, declares to them his Intentions, regulates every thing with them: And this being done, notice of it is given to the Maid: If she likes the Party, she retires to their house, where the Nuptuals are celebrated.

I never saw a more gay Air than that on their Countenances; they have little Habitations along the Waterside, and there are old Maidens to whom the younger pay Respect, as to their Mothers. They related these Particulars to us in their Language, and we hearken'd to 'em with great Delight, when the Devil, who never sleeps, disturb'd us with a vexatious Adventure.

My Cook, who is a Gascon, and exactly of the Humour of those of that Country, was in one of our Boats behind us, at some distance, very near a young Biscaneer, who appeared to him very handsome; he contented not himself with telling her as much, but would have rudely turn'd up her Veil. She being not used to this sort of plain Dealing without any Words broke his Head with her Oar: Having done this Exploit, Fear seizing on her, she threw herself immediately into the Water, tho' the Season was very cold, and swam with great swiftness; but having all her Cloaths on, and it being far to the Shoar, her strength began to fail her. Several of these Wenches who saw this at Land, leapt immediately into their Boats to her Assistance, when those who had remain'd in the Boat with the Cook, fearing the loss of their Companion, fell on him like two Furies, resolving by all means

to drown him, and had like two or three times to have overturn'd their little Vessel, which we beholding from ours, had much a-do to part and appease them.

I assure you the foolish Gascon was so cruelly handled, that he was all over blood; and my Banker told me, that these young Biscaneers provoked, are worse than Lions. In fine, we came to Land, but were scarcely on Shoar, but we saw this Wench which was saved out of the Water, making up towards us, with near fifty others, each with an Oar on their Shoulder, marching in Battle-ray, with Fife and Drum; when she who was to be the Mouth of the Company, advanc'd, and calling me several times Andria, which is to say, Madam, (for that's all I could retain of her Speech) gave me to understand, That they would have my Cook's Skin, if Satisfaction were not made proportionably to the Damage done their Companion's Cloaths. At the ending of which words, the She-Drummers fell loudly beating their Drums, and the rest of their Amazons set up an Hollowing, Leaping and Dancing, and Fencing with their Oars in a most astonishing manner.

Don Antonio, to make me amends for the Present he had wrung from me (I cannot but often mention it, lying on my Heart as it does) undertook to make Peace: He found that my Cook, who thought himself sufficiently beaten, had Reason to give nothing; and therefore he distributed some Pieces of Money among this Marine Troop: On receipt of which they set forth lower Hollow's than before, and wish'd me a good Journey, and

speedy Return, each of 'em dancing and singing at the sound of their Pipes and Tabors.

We entred into a very rough Way, and ascended along very narrow Paths, on the side of which there are Precipices; so that I was greatly afraid, lest the Mules which carry'd my Litter should stumble: We afterwards past over a large Sandy Field. I tarry'd some time in the Convent of St. Francis, which stands near the River of Andaye: We past over it on a very long Wooden Bridge; and though we were very near St. Sebastian, yet we could not then perceive it, because a Mount of Sand hid the Town: It's situated on the Foot of a Mountain, which serves on one side as a Rampart against the Sea, and the Vessels come to the Foot of this Mountain, to shelter them from the Storms; for here arise extraordinary Tempests, that the Ships at Anchor perish in the Port: it's deep, and defended by two Moles, which leave only as much room as is requisite for one Vessel passing at a time. They have rais'd here a great four Square Tower, where there is ever a good Garison to defend the Place, in case of Assault: it was a fine Day for the Season: I found the Town very pleasant, being surrounded with a double Wall: there are mounted several Pieces of Cannon on that part towards the Sea, with Bastions and Half Moons: the Town is situated in a Province of Spain, call'd Guipuscoa: the Outparts are exceeding pleasant, by reason that the Sea, as I now said, serves for a Channel to it: the Streets of this Town are long and large, pav'd with great White Stones, which are always clean: the Houses are well enough; and the Churches



decent, in which the Altars are of Wood, on which are hung little Pictures, from top to bottom. Mines of Iron and Steel abound in this Country, finer and purer perhaps than in any other Parts of Europe; and this is the greatest part of their Trade. Here the Wool which comes from Castille, is embark'd, which makes a considerable part of their Traffick. Bilbo and St. Sebastian are two of the most considerable Ports which the King of Spain has on the Ocean: The Castle stands very high, and may make an indifferent Defence: here are mounted several fine Pieces of Cannon; and there are a great many along the Ramparts; but the Garison is so weak, that the Women might conquer them with their Distaffs.

Every thing is as dear in this Town as in Paris, yet they fare well here: Fish is excellent, and I was told Fruit was the same. I lay in the best Inn, and when I had been there some time, Don Fernand de Toledo, sent his Gentlemen to enquire, Whether his Visit would not be troublesome to me? My Banker, who knew him, and who was then in my Chamber, told me, he was a Spaniard of great Quality, Nephew to the Duke D'Alva; that he came from Flanders, and was going to Madrid.

I receiv'd him with that Civility which was due to his Birth, and soon thereto adjoyn'd particular Respects to his own Merit: He is a Gentleman of good Presence, has Wit and Politeness, is Complaisant and Agreeable; he speaks as good French as I do; but understanding Spanish, and being desirous to speak it better, we therefore discours'd only in that Language.

I was very well satisfied with his Carriage. He told me he came Post hither from Brussels, and if I pleas'd, he would increase my Train, and be one of my Company. I thought he jested, and answered him accordingly; but he added, The ways were so full of Snow, that indeed they could not ride Post; that he could make more speed on Horses than in Litters, but the Honour of accompanying me, made abundant Recompence for that. In a word, I saw he was a civil Person, and came no way short of the Gallantry natural to the Spanish Cavaliers: I therefore consider'd, how advantageous it might prove to have a Man of this Quality, and Country, who could make himself be heard and obey'd by the Muletteers, who have Iron Souls, and no Consciences.

I told him, I was very glad I met with him, and the Fatigue of the Road would be less'ned by his Company. He immediately thereupon ordered his Gentlemen to find a Litter for him: It being late he took his leave of me, and I betook my self to be after a good Supper; for, my dear Cousin, I am none of those Romantick Ladies that never eat.

Scarcely did I begin to sleep, when I heard some-body speak French so near me, that I thought at first 'twas in my Chamber; but having hearkned with more attention, I found 'twas in a Chamber separated from mine by only some thin Boards, and those ill joyned: I drew my Curtain, and saw Light through the Crevices, and at the same time two young Women, the eldest of which appeared not to be above Seventeen or Eighteen; neither of 'em were of those Beauties without Defect, yet were they so

pretty, spake so sweetly, and had such great sweetness on their Countenances, that I was much taken with 'em.

The youngest, who seem'd to continue the Conversation, said to the other, 'No, my dear Sister, there is no Remedy to our Misfortunes; we must die, or get them out of the Clutches of this vilanous Dotard.' 'I am resolute for any thing,' reply'd the other, in uttering a deep sigh, 'should it cost me my Life: What remains? Have we not sacrific'd all for them?' Then considering a while their Misfortunes, they mutually embrac'd, and began to weep in a most piteous manner: And having consulted a while, and spake some other Words, the greatest part of which were interrupted by their Sighs, they concluded on Writing, which they did; and here is most of what I heard them read to one another:

'Judge not of my Love and Grief by my Words, I have none can express either the one or the other; but remember you Ruine me, unless you betake yourself to the greatest Extremities against him that persecutes us. He has now sent me word, That if we delay our Departure, he will have us seiz'd. Consider what he deserves from this base Usage of us; and remember you owe me all, seeing you owe me my Heart.'

I think the other Billet was in these Terms:

'Could I secure thee thy Happiness, in losing mine, I love thee sufficiently to offer thee such a Sacrifice: Yes, I would fly from thee, couldst thou be Happy without me; but I know thy Heart too well to believe this. Yet thou remainest as Quiet in thy Prison, as if I were with thee: Break thy Chains without more delay; punish

the Enemy of our Loves. My Heart shall be thy Recompense.'

Having made up these Billets, they went out together; and, I profess, I was not a little uneasie for 'em, and no less curious to know these poor Ladies Misfortunes. This hindred me from sleeping, and I was expecting their Return, when immediately there was a great Uproar in the House: I saw an old Man enter the Chamber, attended by a great many Servants: He held one of these young Women by the Hair of the Head, which he had wound about his Arm, and drew her after him, as a wretched Sacrifice. Her Sister was not treated with less Cruelty, by those who led her: 'Perfidious Wretches,' said he to them, 'not content with the irreparable Injury you do my Nephews, you would perswade them to be my Executioners? Had I not surprised you with these seducing Letters, what might have hapned? What dreadful Tragedies might I not have expected? But you shall pay once for all: as soon as ever the Day appears I will have you punisht as you deserve.' 'Ah Sir,' said she whom he held, 'remember we are Women of Quality, and that our Alliance can be no Dishonour to you; that your Nephews have given us their Faith, and we them ours; that in so tender an Age we have left all for their sakes; that we are Strangers, and have no Friends here: What will become of us? We dare not return to our Relations: if you are for constraining us to this, or for putting us in Prison, let us intreat you rather presently to dispatch us out of the World.'

The Tears which they shed in such abundance, wrought in me the greatest Compassion: And had the old Man been as tender as

I, he had soon freed 'em from their Trouble.

My Women, who had heard such a great Disturbance, and so near my Chamber, arose, in the fear of some Mishap towards me: I made Signs to them to draw near softly, and to behold through the Boards this sorrowful Spectacle: We hearkned to what they said, when two Men, with their Swords in their Hands, entred into my Chamber, the Door of which my Women had left open: They had Despair painted on their Faces, and Rage in their Eyes: I was so greatly frightened, that I cannot express it to you. They lookt on one another without speaking a word; and having heard the old Man's Voice, they ran on that side.

I did not doubt but 'twas the two Lovers; and 'twas them indeed, who entred like two Lions into this Chamber: They struck these Servants with so great Terror, that never a one of 'em dared approach his Master, to defend him, when his Nephews advance towards him, and set their Swords to his Throat: 'Barbarian,' said they to him, 'can you thus use Women of Quality, that are to be our Wives? Because you are our Guardian, must you therefore be our Tyrant? And is not the separating of us from what we love, the taking our Lives from us? It's now in our Power to take a just Vengeance of you; but we cannot do it to a Man of your Age, who cannot defend himself: give us then your Word, and swear by all that's Good and Holy, That in Acknowledgment for the Life we give you, you will contribute to our Happiness, and suffer us to perform what we have promis'd.'

The poor old Wret[c]h was so afrighted, that he could hardly

make any Answer: However, he swore more than they would have him; he fell on his Knees, and kist an hundred times his Thumb laid a-cross one of his Fingers, after the manner of Spain. Yet he told them, 'That whatever he had done, was onely in regard to their Interests; however, he would not in any sort, for the future, oppose their Inclinations, in reference to this Marriage.' Two of the Domesticks took him under the Arm, and rather carried him away than led him. Then the Gentlemen seeing themselves free, threw themselves in their Mistresses Arms; they said to one another, whatever Grief, Love and Joy do usually inspire in such Occasions. But in Troth, one must have a Heart as affected and content as theirs, to repeat all these things: they are only proper to Persons more tender than you are, my dear Cousin. But I hope you will excuse this Relation; I was so tired, in having not yet slept, that I could scarce hear any more, but confusedly: and to hear no more, I got farther into Bed, and threw the Quilt over my Head.

The next Morning Don Fernand de Toledo, sent me some choice Wines, with great quantity of Oranges and Sweetmeats. As soon as he thought it a proper time to Visit me, he came: Having thankt him for his Present, I askt him, Whether he had heard nothing of what had past in the Night? He told me, No; for he had lain in another part of the House. I was about relating to him what I knew, When our Hostess entred into the Chamber: she came from the two Gentlemen who had given me that Disturbance, with the Swords in their Hands, intreating me

to receive their Excuses. She likewise told me, That two young Ladies desired they might wait on me, and kiss my Hand. I answered these Civilities as I ought; and they soon entred.

What charming Effects does the Return of Joy produce? I found these Gentlemen very well shaped, and these Ladies very lovely; neither one nor the other had any more on their Countenances the Characters of Despair; an Air of Gaiety display'd itself in all their Words and Gestures. The Eldest of the two Brethren made the most handsome Excuse as is possible for his Mistake in entring my Chamber: he added, 'He had well observ'd the Fear he had caus'd me; but told me, that in that Moment he was so transported, that he was capable of no other Thought but the Rescuing his Mistress.' 'You would have been to blame,' said I to him, 'should you have thought of any thing else: However, if it be true, you are willing to make me Satisfaction for the Alarum you have giv'n me, you must not refuse the gratifying my Curiosity: With these fair Ladies leave, inform me what has reduced all of you to these Extremities you were in.' He lookt on them, as if it were to ask their Approbation, which they willingly granted; and he thus began:

'We are two Brothers, Madam, Natives of Burgos, and of one of the best Families of this City. We were very young, when we fell into the Hands of an Uncle, who took care of our Education and Estates, which are so considerable, that we need not envy others on that account; Don Diego (is our Uncle's Name) he had made long since a firm Friendship with a Gentleman living near

Blaye, whose Merit is far above his Fortune; he is call'd Monsieur de Messignac: our Uncle resolving to send us for some time into France, he wrote hereupon to his Friend, who offer'd him his House, which he joyfully accepted. He made us set out; and it is a Year since we were received there with great Civility: Madam de Messignac used us as her own Children; she has several; but of her four Daughters, those you see are the most aimable. It would have been very difficult to have seen them every day, to dwell with them, and yet not to have loved them.

‘My Brother at first conceal’d from me his growing Passion, and I hid mine from him; we were both of us very melancholly; the trouble of loving, without being lov’d again, and the fear of displeasing those who caus’d our Passion, all this cruelly tormented us; but a new Vexation did greatly increase our Disquiet, which was a restless Jealousie we had one of another: My Brother plainly saw I was in Love, and thought ’twas with his Mistress; I lookt on him likewise as my Rival; and we bore such Hatred to one another, as might have transported us to the greatest Extremities; but that I resolutely determin’d one day to discover my Sentiments to Mademoiselle de Messignac; but wanting Courage to speak to her myself, I wrote some Verses in a little Book touching my Passion for her, and dexterously slid it into her Pocket without her perceiving me. My Brother, who had always an Eye on me, observ’d it, and playing with her, he took out the Verses, and found ’em to contain a respectful and passionate Declaration of Love to her; he kept them till



Night, when being withdrawn into my Chamber, with the greatest Inquietude, he came to me, and tenderly embracing me, he told me, He was heartily glad at the notice he had of my being in love with Mademoiselle de Messignac.

‘I remain’d as one Thunderstruck; I saw my Papers in his Hands; I imagin’d she had made them a Sacrifice to him, and that he came to insult on my Misfortune. He saw in my Eyes and Countenance part of what I thought: “Undeceive yourself,” continued he, “she gave ’em not to me; I have taken ’em without her seeing them: I’ll be serviceable to you for the obtaining her; be you the same to me in relation to her elder Sister.” I then embraced him, and promis’d him all he desired. Then we mutually rendred good Offices to one another; and our Mistresses, who were not then acquainted with the power of Love, began to accustom themselves to hear talk of it.

‘It would be to abuse your Patience, to tell you, Madam, how we came at length by our Cares and Assiduities to win their Hearts. What happy Moments! what sweet Hours! to see without ceasing what one loves, and to be beloved! to be together in the Fields, where an Innocent and Country Life let’s one taste, without disturbance, the Pleasures of a growing Passion; this is a Felicity which cannot be exprest.

‘Winter being come, Madam de Messignac was at Bourdeaux, where she had a House; we accompanied her thither; but this House was not great enough to lodge us, with all our Family; we took one near hers.

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