JOHN ABBOTT

LOUIS XIV

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Louis XIV. Makers of History Series:

Содержание

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PREFACE

We all live a double life: the external life which the world sees, and the internal life of hopes and fears, joys and griefs, temptations and sins, which the world sees not, and of which it knows but little. None lead this double life more emphatically than those who are seated upon thrones.

Though this historic sketch contains allusions to all the most important events in the reign of Louis XIV., it has been the main object of the writer to develop the inner life of the palace; to lead the reader into the interior of the Louvre, the Tuileries, Versailles, and Marly, and to exhibit the monarch as a man, in the details of domestic privacy.

This can more easily be done in reference to Louis XIV. than any other king. Very many of the prominent members of his household left their autobiographies, filled with the minutest incidents of every-day life.

It is impossible to give any correct idea of the life of this proud monarch without allusion to the corruption in the midst of

which he spent his days. Still, the writer, while faithful to fact, has endeavored so to describe these scenes that any father can safely read the narrative aloud to his family.

There are few chapters in history more replete with horrors than that which records the "Revocation of the Edict of Nantes." The facts given are beyond all possibility of contradiction. In the contemplation of these scenes the mind pauses, bewildered by the reflection forced upon it, that many of the actors in these fiend-like outrages were inspired by motives akin to sincerity and conscientiousness.

The thoughtful reader will perceive that in this long and wicked reign Louis XIV. was sowing the wind from which his descendants reaped the whirlwind. It was the despotism of Louis XIV. and of Louis XV. which ushered in that most sublime of all earthly dramas, the French Revolution.

John S. C. Abbott.

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Chapter I.
Birth and Childhood

1615-1650

Marriage of Louis XIII.

Louis XIII. of France married Anne of Austria on the 25th of November, 1615. The marriage ceremony was performed with great splendor in the Cathedral of Bordeaux. The bride was exceedingly beautiful, tall, and of exquisite proportions. She possessed the whitest and most delicate hand that ever made an imperious gesture. Her eyes were of matchless beauty, easily dilated, and of extraordinary transparency. Her small and ruddy mouth looked like an opening rose-bud. Long and silky hair, of a lovely shade of auburn, gave to the face it surrounded the sparkling complexion of a blonde, and the animation of a brunette.[1]

Character of Louis XIII.

The marriage was not a happy one. Louis XIII. was not a man of any mental or physical attractions. He was cruel, petulant, and jealous. The king had a younger brother, Gaston, duke of Anjou.

[1] Louis XIV. et son Siècle.

He was a young man of joyous spirits, social, frank, a universal favorite. His moody, taciturn brother did not love him. Anne did. She could not but enjoy his society. Wounded by the coldness and neglect of her husband, it is said that she was not unwilling, by rather a free exhibition of the fascinations of her person and her mind, to win the admiration of Gaston. She hoped thus to inspire the king with a more just appreciation of her merits.

Louis XIII., at the time of his marriage, was a mere boy fourteen years of age. His father had died when he was nine years old. He was left under the care of his mother, Mary de Medicis, as regent. Anne of Austria was a maturely developed and precocious child of eleven years when she gave her hand to the boy-king of France. Not much discretion could have been expected of two such children, exposed to the idleness, the splendors, and the corruption of a court.

Character of Anne of Austria.

Anne was vain of her beauty, naturally coquettish, and very romantic in her views of life. It is said that the queen dowager, wishing to prevent Anne from gaining much influence over the mind of the king, did all she could to lure her into flirtations and gallantries, which alienated her from her husband. For this purpose she placed near her person Madame Chevreuse, an intriguing woman, alike renowned for wit, beauty, and unscrupulousness.

Quite a desperate flirtation arose between Anne and little Gaston, who was but nine years of age. Gaston, whom the folly of

the times entitled Duke of Anjou, hated Louis, and delighted to excite his jealousy and anger by his open and secret manifestation of love for the beautiful Anne. The king's health failed. He became increasingly languid, morose, emaciate. Anne, young as she was, was physically a fully developed woman of voluptuous beauty. The undisguised alienation which existed between her and the king encouraged other courtiers of eminent rank to court her smiles.

Cardinal Richelieu.

Cardinal Richelieu, notwithstanding his ecclesiastical vows, became not only the admirer, but the lover of the queen, addressing her in the most impassioned words of endearment. Thus years of intrigue and domestic wretchedness passed away until 1624. The queen had then been married nine years, and was twenty years of age. She had no children.

The Duke of Buckingham.

The reckless, hot-headed George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, visited the French court to arrange terms of marriage between Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII., and the Prince of Wales, son of James I. of England. He was what is called a splendid man, of noble bearing, and of chivalric devotion to the fair. The duke, boundlessly rich, displayed great magnificence in Paris. He danced with the queen, fascinated her by his openly avowed admiration, and won such smiles in return as to induce the king and Cardinal Richelieu almost to gnash their

teeth with rage.

His death.

This flirtation, if we may not express it by a more emphatic phrase, created much heart-burning and wretchedness, criminations and recriminations, in the regal palace. In August, 1628, the Duke of Buckingham, then in England, terminated his wretched and guilty life. He fell beneath the dagger of an assassin. Anne, disdaining all dissimulation, wept openly, and, secluding herself from the gayeties of the court, surrendered herself to grief.

Estrangement of the king and queen.

A mutual spirit of defiance existed between the king and queen. Both were wretched. Such are always the wages of sin. Ten more joyless years passed away. The rupture between the royal pair was such that they could scarcely endure each other. Louis himself was the first to inform the queen of the news so satisfactory to him, so heart-rending to her, that a dagger had pierced the heart of Buckingham. After this they met only at unfrequent intervals. All confidence and sympathy were at an end. It was a bitter disappointment to the queen that she had no children. Upon the death of the king, who was in very feeble health, her own position and influence would depend almost entirely upon her having a son to whom the crown would descend. Louis resided generally at the Castle of Blois. Anne held her court at the Louvre.

A married life of twenty-two years had passed away, and still the queen had no child. Both she and her husband had relinquished all hope of offspring. On the evening of the 5th of December, 1637, the king, having made a visit to the Convent of the Visitation, being overtaken by a storm, drove to the Louvre instead of Blois. He immediately proceeded to the apartments of the queen. Anne was astonished, and did not disguise her astonishment at seeing him. He, however, remained until the morrow.

Joy of the nation.

Soon after this, to the inexpressible joy of the queen, it appeared that she was to become a mother. The public announcement of the fact created surprise and joy throughout the nation. The king was equally astonished and delighted. He immediately hastened to the Louvre to offer the queen his congratulations.

The queen repaired to St. Germain-en-Laye, about six miles from Versailles, to await the birth of her child. Here she occupied, in the royal palace, the gorgeous apartments in which Henry IV. had formerly dwelt. The king himself also took up his abode in the palace. The excitement was so great that St. Germain was crowded with the nobility, who had flocked to the place in anxious expectancy of the great event. Others, who could not be accommodated at St. Germain, stationed couriers on the road to obtain the earliest intelligence of the result.

Birth of Louis XIV.

On the 5th of September, 1638, the king was greeted with the joyful tidings of the birth of a son. A vast crowd had assembled in front of the palace. The king, in the exuberance of his delight, took the child from the nurse, and, stepping out upon a balcony, exhibited him to the crowd, exclaiming, "A son! gentlemen, a son!"

The announcement was received with a universal shout of joy. The happy father then took the babe into an adjoining apartment, where the bishops were assembled to perform the ordinance of baptism. These dignitaries of the Church had been kneeling around a temporary altar praying for the queen. The Bishop of Meaux performed the ceremony. A Te Deum was then chanted in the chapel of the castle. Immediately after this, the king wrote an autograph letter to the corporation of Paris, announcing the joyful tidings. A courier was dispatched with the document at his highest possible speed.

Gift of the Pope.

The enthusiasm excited in the capital surpassed any thing which had ever before been witnessed. The common people, the nobles, the ecclesiastics, and the foreign embassadors, vied with each other in their demonstrations of joy. A few months after, in July, an extraordinary messenger arrived from the pope, to convey to the august mother and her child the blessing of the holy father. He also presented the queen, for her babe, swaddling-

clothes which had been blessed by his holiness. These garments were exceedingly rich with gold and silver embroidery. They were inclosed in a couple of chests of red velvet, and elicited the admiration of the royal pair.

Condition of Paris.

The France of that day was very different from that magnificent empire which now stands in intellectual culture, arts, and arms, prominent among the nations of the globe. The country was split up into hostile factions, over which haughty nobles ruled. The roads in the rural districts were almost impassable. Paris itself was a small and dirty city, with scarcely any police regulations, and infested with robbers. There were no lamps to light the city by night. The streets were narrow, ill paved, and choked with mud and refuse. Immediately after nightfall these dark and crooked thoroughfares were thronged with robbers and assassins, whose depredations were of the most audacious kind.

Socially, morally, and intellectually, France was at the lowest ebb. The masses of the people were in a degraded condition of squalid poverty and debasement. Still the king, by enormous taxation, succeeded in wresting from his wretched subjects an income to meet the expenses of his court, amounting to about four millions of our money. But the outlays were so enormous that even this income was quite unavailing, and innumerable measures of extortion were adopted to meet the deficit.

Reconciliation of the king and queen.

The king was so much gratified by the birth of a dauphin that for a time he became quite reconciled to his beautiful and haughty queen. Two years after the birth of the dauphin, on the 21st of September, 1640, Anne gave birth to a second son, who took the title of Philip, duke of Anjou. The queen and her two children resided in the beautiful palace of Saint Germain-en-Laye, where the princes were born.

Orders of Louis XIII. respecting the dauphin.

A company of French Guards, commanded by Captain Montigni, protected the castle. Madame de Lausac was the governess of the two children. The title by which the king's brother was usually designated was simply Monsieur. But for these children of the king, the crown, upon the death of the monarch, would descend immediately to Monsieur, the king's brother. The morals of the times were such that the king was ever apprehensive that some harm might come to the children through the intrigues of his brother. Monsieur lived in Paris. The king left orders with Madame de Lausac that, should his brother visit the queen, the officers of the household should immediately surround the dauphin for his protection, and that Monsieur should not be permitted to enter the palace should he be accompanied by more than three persons.

To Montigni, the captain of the guard, the king gave half of a gold coin, of which he retained the other half. Montigni was commanded to watch over the persons of the princes with the utmost vigilance. Should he receive an order to remove them,

or to transfer them to other hands, he was enjoined not to obey that order, even should it be in the handwriting of his majesty himself, unless he at the same time received the other half of the broken coin.

Ill health of Louis XIII.

The king, as we have mentioned, had been for some time in feeble health. Early in the spring of 1643 he became seriously ill. The symptoms were so alarming as to lead the king, as well as his friends, to think that death could not be far distant. There are few men so hardened as to be able to contemplate without some degree of anxiety death and the final judgment. The king was alarmed. He betook himself to prayer and to the scrupulous discharge of his religious duties.

The dauphin declared King Louis XIV.

In preparation for the great change, he repaired to Saint Germain to invest the queen with the regency when he should die. His brother, Monsieur, who had taken the title of the Duke of Orleans, and all the leading nobles of the court, were present. The king, pale, emaciate, and with death staring him in the face, was bolstered in his bed. Anne of Austria stood weeping by his side. She did not love her husband – she did love power; but the scene was so solemn and so affecting as to force tears into all eyes. The dauphin was then four and a half years old. He was declared king, with the title of Louis XIV., under the regency of his mother until he should attain his majority.

The next day, April 21st, the christening of the dauphin with his new title took place with great state in the chapel of the palace. After the celebration of the rite, the dauphin was carried into the chamber of his dying father, and seated upon the bed by his side. The poor king, dying in the prime of life, was oppressed with the profoundest melancholy. There was nothing in the memory of the past to give him pleasure; nothing in the future to inspire him with well-grounded hope. Turning to the little prince, who had just been christened with the royal title, he inquired,

"What is your name, my child?"

"Louis XIV.," the dauphin promptly replied.

"Not yet," said the king, sadly, shaking his head; "but pray God that it may soon be so."

A few more days of sickness and suffering passed away, during which it was almost hourly expected that the king would die. Death often comes to the palace invested with terrors unknown in the cottage. Beneath his sceptre all gradations and conditions of rank disappear. The sufferings of the king were such that he longed for release.

Last hours of Louis XIII.

On the 13th of May, as the shades of evening were gathering around his dying bed, he anxiously inquired of his physicians if it were possible that he could live until morning. They consulted together, and then informed him that they did not think it possible.

"God be praised!" the king replied. "I think it is now time that I should take leave of all whom I love."

The royal household was immediately assembled around the couch of the dying monarch. He had sufficient strength to throw his arms around the neck of the queen, and to press her tenderly to his heart. In such an hour past differences are forgotten. In low and broken tones of voice, the king addressed the queen in a few parting words of endearment.

The dauphin was then placed in his arms. Silently, but with tearful eyes, he pressed his thin and parched lips to both cheeks and to the brow of the child, who was too young to comprehend the solemn import of the scene.

His brother, Monsieur, the duke of Orleans, the king had never loved. In these later years he had regarded him with implacable hostility. But, subdued by the influences of death, he bade that brother an eternal adieu, with even fond caresses. Indeed, he had become so far reconciled to Monsieur that he had appointed him lieutenant general of the kingdom, under the regency of Anne of Austria, during the minority of the dauphin.

Death of Louis XIII.

Several of the higher ecclesiastics were present, who had assisted in preparing him to die. He affectionately embraced them all, and then requested the Bishop of Meaux to read the service for the dying. While it was being read he sank into a lethargy, and never spoke again. He died in the forty-second year of his age, after a reign of thirty-three years, having ascended

the throne when but nine years old.

Immediately after the death of the king, Anne of Austria held a private interview with Monsieur, in which they agreed to co-operate in the maintenance of each other's authority. The Parliament promptly recognized the queen as regent, and the Duke of Orleans as lieutenant general, during the minority of the dauphin.

Louis XIV. recognized king.

The Duke de Grammont, one of the highest nobles of France, and a distinguished member of the court of Louis XIII., had a son, the Count de Guiche, a few months older than the dauphin. This child was educated as the play-fellow and the companion in study of the young king. One of the first acts of Anne of Austria was to assemble the leading bodies of the realm to take the oath of allegiance to her son. The little fellow, four and a half years old, arrayed in imperial robes, was seated upon the throne. The Count de Guiche, a very sedate, thoughtful, precocious child, was placed upon the steps, that his undoubted propriety of behavior might be a pattern to the infant king. Both of the children behaved remarkably well.

Palais Royal.

Soon after this, at the close of the year 1643, the queen, with her household, who had resided during the summer in the palace of the Louvre, took up her residence in what was then called the Cardinal Palace. This magnificent building, which had

been reared at an enormous expense, had been bequeathed by the Cardinal Richelieu to the young king. But it was suggested that it was not decorous that the king should inhabit a mansion which bore the name of the residence of a subject. Therefore the inscription of *Cardinal Palace* was effaced from above the doorway, and that of *Palais Royal* placed in its stead. The palace had cost the cardinal a sum nearly equal to a million of dollars. This ungrateful disregard of the memory of the cardinal greatly displeased his surviving friends, and called forth earnest remonstrance. But all expostulations were in vain. From that day to this the renowned mansion has been known only as the "Palais Royal." The opposite engraving shows the palace as left by the cardinal. Since his day the building has been greatly enlarged by extending the wings for shops around the whole inclosure of the garden.

Apartments of the queen regent.

Louis XIV. was at this time five years old. The apartments which had been occupied by Richelieu were assigned to the dauphin. His mother, the queen regent, selected for herself rooms far more spacious and elegant. Though they were furnished and embellished with apparently every appliance of luxury, Anne, fond of power and display, expended enormous sums in adapting them to her taste. The cabinet of the regent, in the gorgeousness of its adornments, was considered the wonder of Paris.

Cardinal Mazarin had also a suite of rooms assigned him in the palace which looked out upon the Rue des bons Enfans. These households were quite distinct, and they were all surrounded with much of the pageantry of royalty. The superintendence of the education of the young prince was intrusted to the cardinal. He had also his governor, his sub-governor, his preceptor, and his valet de chambre, each of whom must have occupied posts of honor rather than of responsibility. The Marchioness de Senecey, and other ladies of high rank, were intrusted with the special care of the dauphin until he should attain the age of seven years.

Thus the court of the baby-king was quite imposing. From his earliest years he was accustomed to the profoundest homage, and was trained to the most rigid rules of etiquette. The dauphin early developed a fondness for military exercises. Very eagerly he shouldered the musket, brandished the sword, and beat the drum. The temperament of his brother Philip, the duke of Anjou, was very different: he was remarkably gentle, quiet, and affectionate. Gradually the baby-court of the dauphin was increased by the addition of other lads. The young king was the central luminary around whom they all revolved. By them all the dauphin was regarded with a certain kind of awe, as if he were a being of a superior, almost of a celestial race. These lads were termed "children of honor." They always addressed the king, and were addressed in return, with the formality of full-grown men. One day a little fellow named Lomenie delighted the king with a gift.

The king was amusing himself with a cross-bow, which for the time being happened to be in special favor. He loaned the bow for a few moments to Lomenie. Soon, however, anxious to regain the valued plaything, he held out his hand to take it back. His governess, the Marchioness de Senecey, said to him, aside,

"Sire, kings give what they lend."

Speech of Louis at five years old.

Louis, immediately approaching his companion, said, calmly, "Monsieur de Lomenie, keep the cross-bow. I wish that it were something of more importance; but, such as it is, I give it to you with all my heart."

Dislikes the change of teachers.
Interest in history.

This was a speech of a boy of five years old to a companion of the same age. When the dauphin reached his seventh birthday, a great change took place in his household. All his female attendants were withdrawn, and he was placed exclusively under the charge of men. It is said that this change was at first the occasion of much grief to him. He had become much attached to many of the ladies, who had devoted themselves to the promotion of his happiness. We are told that he was greatly chagrined to find that none of the gentlemen of his court could tell him any of those beautiful fairy tales with which the ladies had often lulled him to sleep. In conference with the queen upon the subject, it was decided that M. Laporte, his first valet de chambre, should read

to him every night a chapter of a very popular history of France. The dauphin soon became greatly interested in the narrative. He declared that he, when he grew up, would be a Charlemagne, a St. Louis, a Francis First, and expressed great abhorrence of the tyrannical and slothful kings.

Mazarin's wicked policy.

The pleasure which the little king took in these historical readings daily increased. Cardinal Mazarin accidentally found out what was going on, and was greatly displeased. He was anxious that the intellectual powers of the king should not be developed, for the cardinal desired to grasp the reins of government with his own hands. To do this, it was necessary that the king should be kept ignorant, and should be incited only to enervating indulgence.

Scornfully the cardinal remarked, "I presume the governor of the king must put on his shoes and stockings, as I perceive his valet de chambre is teaching him history."

The young king entertained an instinctive aversion to the proud cardinal, who assumed imperial airs, and who was living in splendor far surpassing that of the regent or of the child-king. Those who surrounded the prince were equally inimical to the cardinal-minister, who, in that age of superstition and fanaticism, had attained such power that the regent herself stood in awe of him.

Henrietta, queen of Charles I.

Henrietta, queen of England, wife of the unfortunate Charles I., was a daughter of Henry IV., and sister of Louis XIII. She was consequently aunt to the dauphin. The troubles in England, which soon led to the beheading of the king her husband, rendered it necessary for her to escape to France. Her brother, Monsieur, duke of Orleans, went to the coast to receive his unhappy and royal sister. As they approached Paris, the queen regent and her son the king rode out to meet them. Henrietta took a seat in the same carriage with their majesties, and returned with them to the Louvre. The pallid cheeks and saddened features of the English queen proclaimed so loudly the woes with which she was stricken as to exert universal sympathy.

Figure and bearing of the king.

The young king at seven years of age was tall, muscular, and excelled in all physical exercises; but the villainous cardinal had endeavored in every way to dwarf his intellect, so that his mind remained almost a blank. Both the young king and his brother at this early age had acquired a very remarkable degree of courtly grace. A chronicler of the times, speaking of the bearing of Louis at a court wedding, says,

"The king, with the gracefulness which shines in all his actions, took the hand of the Queen of Poland, and conducted her to the platform, where his majesty opened the dance, and was followed by nearly all the princes, princesses, great nobles, and ladies of the court. At its termination, the king, with the same grace and majestic deportment, conducted the young queen to

her place. The king then danced a second time, and led out the Duke of Anjou with such skill that every one was charmed with the polite bearing of these two young princes."

His first campaign.

Early in the year 1646, the king, not yet quite eight years old, was conducted upon what was singularly called his first campaign. The queen and her son repaired to Amiens, where they sojourned for a short time with the army, and established a very brilliant court. When the army left Amiens for Flanders, the regent and her son returned from their campaign.

The cardinal's nieces.

The infant court of the monarch was now established at Paris. The ambitious cardinal had brought from Italy several little children, his relatives, the eldest of whom had attained but her twelfth year. They were immediately introduced to the court of Louis XIV. The wealth of the cardinal was such, and his influence so great, that, young as these his nieces were, they were instantly surrounded by admirers. The Duke of Orleans, who hated the cardinal and all that belonged to him, bitterly remarked,

"There is such a throng about those little girls that I doubt if their lives are safe, and if they will not be suffocated."

The boy-king, however, notwithstanding his dislike for the cardinal, received the little girls with that gallantry for which throughout life he was distinguished.

Anecdote.

Very early he began to develop quite a positive character. On one occasion the courtiers were speaking in his presence of the absolute power exercised by the sultans of Turkey. Several very striking examples were given. The young prince, who had listened attentively, remarked,

"That is as it should be; that is really reigning."

"Yes, sire," pertinently replied Marshal d'Estrées, "but two or three of those sultans have, within my memory, been strangled."

The Prince de Condé inquired of Laporte, the first valet of the king, respecting the character his young majesty was developing. Upon being told that he was conscientious and intelligent, he replied, "So much the better. There would be no pleasure in obeying a fool, and no honor in being commanded by a bad man."

Feud between Mazarin and the Parliament.

Cardinal Mazarin, the prime minister, who looked with jealousy upon any development of superior intelligence in the dauphin, said to Marshal de Grammont, "Ah! sir, you do not know his majesty. There is enough stuff in him to make four kings and an honest man."

Alarm of Mazarin.

There had gradually sprung up a deadly feud between the court, headed by the tyrannical minister Mazarin on the one side, and by the Parliament on the other. The populace of Paris were in sympathy with the Parliament. Many of the prominent nobles, some even of royal blood, detesting the haughty prime

minister, espoused the Parliamentary cause. There were riots in Paris. Affairs looked very threatening. Mazarin was alarmed, and decided to escape from Paris with the court to the palace of St. Germain. There he could protect the court with an ample military force. He thought, also, that he should be able to cut off the supply of provisions from the capital, and thus starve the city into subjection.

It was necessary to move with much caution, as the people were greatly agitated, were filling the streets with surging crowds, and would certainly prevent the removal of the king should they suspect the design. The night of the 5th of January was selected as a time in which to attempt the escape. The matter was kept profoundly secret from most of the members of the royal household.

Escape of the royal family from Paris.

At three o'clock in the morning a carriage was drawn up in the gate of the royal garden. The queen regent, who, to avoid suspicion, had retired to bed at the usual hour, had in the mean time risen and was prepared for her flight. The young king and his brother were awoke from their sleep, hurriedly dressed, and conveyed to the carriage in waiting. The queen regent, with several other prominent members of the court, descended the back stairs which led from the queen's apartment and joined the children. Immediately one or two other carriages drove up, and the whole party entered them, and by different routes, through the dark and narrow streets, left the city. It was a short ride of

about twelve miles.

Flight of the court.

Other prominent members of the court, residing in different parts of the city, had been apprised of the movement, so that at five o'clock in the morning twenty carriages, containing one hundred and fifty persons, drove into the court-yard of the palace. One of the ladies who accompanied the expedition, Mademoiselle Montpensier, gives the following graphic description of the scene:

Discomfort of the court at St. Germain.

"When we arrived at St. Germain we went straight to the chapel to hear mass. All the rest of the day was spent in questioning those who arrived as to what they were doing in Paris. The drums were beating all over the city, and the citizens had taken up arms. The Countess de Fiesque sent me a coach, and a mattress, and a little linen. As I was in so sorry a condition, I went to seek help at the Chateau Neuf, where *Monsieur and Madame* were lodged; but Madame had not her clothes any more than myself. Nothing could be more laughable than this disorder. I lodged in a large room, well painted and gilded, with but little fire, which is not agreeable in the month of January. My mattress was laid upon the floor, and my sister, who had no bed, slept with me. Judge if I were agreeably situated for a person who had slept but little the previous night, with sore throat and violent cold.

"Fortunately for me, the beds of Monsieur and Madame

arrived. Monsieur had the kindness to give me the room which he vacated. As I was in the apartment of Monsieur, where no one knew that I was lodged, I was awoke by a noise. I drew back my curtain, and was much astonished to find my chamber quite filled by men in large buff skin collars, who appeared surprised to see me, and who knew me as little as I knew them.

"I had no change of linen, and my day chemise was washed during the night. I had no women to arrange my hair and dress me, which is very inconvenient. I ate with Monsieur, who keeps a very bad table. Still I did not lose my gayety, and Monsieur was in admiration at my making no complaint. It is true I am a creature who can make the best of every thing, and am greatly above trifles. I remained in this state ten days, at the end of which time my equipage arrived, and I was very glad to have all my comforts. I then went to lodge in the chateau Vieux, where the queen was residing."[2]

Excitement in Paris.

At a very early hour in the morning the news was circulated through the streets of Paris that the court had fled from the city, taking with it the young king. The excitement was terrible, creating universal shouts and tumults. All who were in any way connected with the court attempted to escape in various disguises

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[2] There were at that time two palaces at St. Germain. The old palace, originally built by Charles V., and in the alteration of which Louis XIV. spent over a million of dollars, still remains. The new palace, constructed by Henry IV. about a quarter of a mile from the other, is now in ruins.

to join the royal party. The populace, on the other hand, closed the gates, and barricaded the streets, to prevent their flight. In the midst of this confusion, a letter was received by the municipal magistrates, over the signature of the boy-king, stating that he had been compelled to leave the capital to prevent the seizure of his person by the Parliament, and urging the magistrates to do all in their power for the preservation of order and for the protection of property. The king also ordered the Parliament immediately to retire from the city to Montargis.

Issue of a parliamentary decree.

The Parliament refused to recognize the order, declaring "that it did not emanate from the monarch himself, but from the evil counselors by whom he was held in captivity." Upon the reception of this reply, the queen regent, who had surrounded her palace at St. Germain with a thousand royal troops, acting under the guidance of Mazarin, issued a decree forbidding the villages around Paris sending into the capital either bread, wine, or cattle. Troops were also stationed to cut off such supplies. This attempt to subdue the people by the terrors of famine excited intense exasperation. A decree was promptly issued by the Parliament stating,

"Since Cardinal Mazarin is notoriously the author of the present troubles, the Parliament declares him to be the disturber of the public peace, the enemy of the king and the state, and orders him to retire from the court in the course of this day, and in eight days more from the kingdom. Should he neglect to do

this, at the expiration of the appointed time all the subjects of the king are called upon to hunt him down."

At the same time, men-at-arms were levied in sufficient numbers to escort safely into the city all those who would bring in provisions. The Parliament, from the populace of Paris, could bring sixty thousand bayonets upon any field of battle. Thus very serious civil war was inaugurated.

As we have mentioned, many of the nobles, some of whom were allied to the royal family, assuming that they were not contending against their legitimate sovereign, the young king, but against the detested Mazarin, were in cordial co-operation with the Parliament. The people in the rural districts were also in sympathy with the party in Paris.

Origin of the names Fronde and Mazarins.

The court party was now called "The *Mazarins*," and those of the Parliament "The *Fronde*." The literal meaning of the word fronde is sling. It is a boy's plaything, and when skillfully used, an important weapon of war. It was with the sling that David slew Goliath. During the Middle Ages this was the usual weapon of the foot soldiers. Mazarin had contemptuously remarked that the Parliament were like school boys, *fronding in the ditches*, and who ran away at the approach of a policeman. The Parliament accepted the title, and adopted the *fronde* or *sling* as the emblem of their party.

Two rival courts.

Straw scarce.

There were now two rival courts in France. The one at St. Germain was in a state of great destitution. The palace was but partially furnished, and not at all capable of affording comfortable accommodations for the crowd which thronged its apartments. Nothing could be obtained from Paris. Their purses were empty. The rural population was hostile, and, while eager to carry their products to Paris, were unwilling to bring them to St. Germain. Madame de Motteville states in her memoirs "that the king, queen, and cardinal were sleeping upon straw, which soon became so scarce that it could not be obtained for money."

The court of the Fronde was assembled at the Hotel de Ville in Paris. There all was splendor, abundance, festive enjoyment. The high rank of the leaders and the beauty of the ladies gave éclat to the gathering.

Character of Mazarin.

Cardinal Mazarin was not only extortionate, but miserly. He had accumulated an enormous property. All this was seized and appropriated by the Fronde. Though there were occasional skirmishes between the forces of the two factions, neither of them seemed disposed to plunge into the horrors of civil war.

Termination of the war.

The king sent a herald, clad in complete armor and accompanied by two trumpeters, to the Parliament. The Fronde refused to receive the herald, but decided to send a deputation

to the king to ascertain what overtures he was willing to make. After a lengthy conference a not very satisfactory compromise was agreed upon, and the royal fugitives returned to Paris. It was the 5th of April, 1650. A Te Deum was chanted with great pomp at the cathedral of Notre Dame.

Society reversed.

"Thus terminated the first act of the most singular, bootless, and, we are almost tempted to add, burlesque war which, in all probability, Europe ever witnessed. Throughout its whole duration society appeared to have been smitten with some moral hallucination. Kings and cardinals slept on mattresses, princesses and duchesses on straw. Market-women embraced princes, prelates governed armies, court ladies led the mob, and the mob, in its turn, ruled the city."[3]

[3] Louis XIV. and the Court of France, vol. i., p, 262.

Chapter II.
The Boy-King

1650-1653

M. de Retz.

The reconciliation between the court and the Fronde was very superficial. The old antagonism soon reappeared, and daily grew more rancorous. To add to the embarrassment of the court, *Monsieur*, the duke of Orleans, became alienated from Mazarin, and seemed inclined to join the Fronde. The most formidable antagonist of the cardinal in the Parliament was M. de Retz. He was coadjutor of the Archbishop of Paris, a man of consummate address and great powers of eloquence.

Fears of Mazarin.

The struggle between De Retz and Mazarin soon became one of life and death. The coadjutor was at length imboldened to offer a decree in Parliament urging the king to banish from his presence and his councils Cardinal Mazarin. This measure threw the court into consternation. The cardinal was apprehensive of arrest. Some of his friends urged him to retire immediately to a fortress. Others proposed to garrison the Palais Royal and its

neighborhood with an efficient guard.

Escape of the cardinal.

From the saloons of the palace the shouts were heard of the excited populace swarming through the streets. No one could tell to what extremes of violence they might proceed. Warned by these hostile demonstrations, the cardinal decided to escape from Paris. At ten o'clock at night he took leave of the queen regent, hastened to his apartments, exchanged his ecclesiastical costume for a dress in which he was entirely disguised, and on foot threaded the dark streets to escape from the city. Two of his friends accompanied him. At the Richelieu Gate they took horses, which were awaiting them there, and in two hours alighted at the palace of St. Germain.

Dangers of civil war.

M. de Retz, through his spies, was immediately informed of the flight of the cardinal. He at once hastened to communicate the intelligence to *Monsieur*. The duke at first could not credit the statement, as he felt assured that Mazarin would not have left without taking the young king with him. Should the cardinal, in his retreat, gain possession of the king, in whose name he would issue all his orders, it would be hardly possible to avoid the horrors of a desolating civil war. All minds in Paris, from the highest to the lowest, were thrown into a state of the most intense excitement.

Alarm and energy of De Retz.

On the night of the second day after the cardinal's flight, M. de Retz was awakened by a messenger, who informed him that the Duke of Orleans was anxious to see him immediately at the palace of the Luxembourg. The coadjutor rose, hastily dressed, and in great anxiety repaired to the palace. The duke, though lieutenant general of the kingdom, was a very timid man, and exceedingly inefficient in action. As they entered the chamber of the duke, he listlessly said to M. de Retz,

"It is just as you said. The king is about to leave Paris; what shall we do? I do not see what can be done to prevent it."

The resolute coadjutor replied, "We must immediately take possession of the city gates."

The populace aroused.

But the inert and weak duke brought forward sundry silly excuses. He had not sufficient force of character or moral courage to commit himself to any decisive course of action. The only measure he could be induced to adopt was to send a message to the queen regent, imploring her to reflect upon the consequences which would inevitably result from the removal of the king from Paris. In the mean time, the resolute and fearless coadjutor sent his emissaries in all directions. The populace were aroused with the cry that Mazarin was about to carry off the king. The gates of the city were seized. Mounted patrols traversed the streets urging the citizens to arms. An enormous crowd of excited men and women rushed toward the Palais Royal.

Palace of the Luxembourg.
Discovery of the attempted flight of the royal family.

The carriages were, in fact, at that hour, at the appointed rendezvous for the midnight flight of the king and his attendants. The young monarch was already in his traveling dress, just about to descend the stairs of the palace, when the queen was apprised, by the tumult in the streets, that the design was discovered, and that consequently its execution was impracticable.

With the utmost precipitancy, the traveling dress of the king was removed, and he was robed in his night garments, replaced in bed, and urged to feign that he was asleep. Scarcely was this accomplished ere one of the officers of the household entered and announced to the queen that the exasperated mob was threatening the palace, insisting upon seeing the king, that they might satisfy themselves that he had not been carried away. While he was speaking, another messenger entered with the announcement that the mob had already proceeded to violence, and were tearing down the palisades of the palace. While he was yet speaking, a messenger from the Duke of Orleans arrived, imploring the queen regent not to attempt the removal of the king, and assuring her that it was impossible to do so, since the citizens were resolved to prevent it.

The queen, with dignity, listened to all. To the messenger of the Duke of Orleans she haughtily replied,

Haughty reply of Anne of Austria.

"Say to the duke that he, instigated by the coadjutor, has caused this tumult, and that he has power to allay it. That nothing can be more unfounded than the idea that there has been any design to remove the king. That both his majesty and his brother, the Duke of Anjou, are asleep in their beds, as I myself had been until the uproar in the streets had caused me to rise." To satisfy the messenger, M. de Souches, she led him into the chamber of the king, and showed him his majesty apparently soundly asleep.

Courage of the queen mother.

As they were softly retiring from the room, the outcry of the populace filling the court-yard was heard shouting "The king! the king! we must see the king." The queen regent hesitated for a moment, and then, with wonderful presence of mind, and with moral and physical courage rarely equaled, turning to the envoy of *Monsieur*, said,

"Say to the people that the doors of the palace shall be immediately thrown open, and that every one who wishes may enter the chamber of the king. But inform them that his majesty is asleep, and request them to be as quiet as is possible."

Respectful conduct of the populace.

M. Souches obeyed. The doors were opened. The mob rushed in. Nevertheless, contrary to all expectation, they had no sooner reached the royal apartment than their leaders, remembering that their king was sleeping, desired the untimely visitors to proceed in perfect quiet. As the human tide moved onward, their

very breathing was suppressed. They trod the floor with softest footsteps. The same tumultuous multitude that had howled, and yelled, and threatened outside the gates, now, in the chamber of the sovereign, became calm, respectful, and silent. They approached the royal bed with a feeling of affectionate deference, which restrained every intruder from drawing back the curtains.

The queen herself performed this office. She stood at the pillow of her son, beautiful in features, of queenly grace in form and stature. Pale, calm, and dignified as though she were performing some ordinary court ceremonial, she gathered back the folds of the velvet drapery, and revealed to the gaze of the people their young sovereign in all the beauty of youth, and apparently in profound slumber.

This living stream of men and women from the streets of Paris continued to flow through the chamber until three o'clock in the morning, entering at one door and passing out at its opposite. Through this trying scene the queen never faltered.

Fortitude of the regent.

"Like a marble statue," writes Miss Pardoe, "she retained her position, firm and motionless, her majestic figure drawn haughtily to its full height, and her magnificent arm resting in broad relief upon the crimson draperies. And still the boy-king, emulating the example of his royal parent, remained immobile, with closed eyes and steady breathing, as though his rest had remained unbroken by the incursion of his rebellious subjects. It was a singular and marked passage in the life of both mother

and son."[4]

The queen regent dissembles.

In those days and at that court falsehood was deemed an indispensable part of diplomacy. In the afternoon of the same day in which the scene we have described occurred, the queen assembled in her saloon in the palace the prominent magistrates of the city. With firm voice and undaunted eye, she assured them that she had never entertained the slightest idea of removing his majesty from the city. She enjoined it upon them vigilantly to continue to guard the gates, that the populace might be convinced that no design of escape was cherished. Her words were not believed; her directions were obeyed. The gates were rigidly closed. Thus the king was a prisoner.

Vigilance of Monsieur.

The apprehensions of the Fronde, that by some stratagem the king might be removed, were so great that *Monsieur* dispatched a gentleman of his household every night to ascertain if the king were quietly in his bed. The messenger, M. Desbuches, carried a nightly greeting to the queen, with orders not to leave the Palais Royal without seeing the young sovereign. The excuse for this intrusion was, that *Monsieur* could not, without this evidence, satisfy the excited citizens that the king was safe. This was a terrible humiliation to the queen regent.

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[4] Louis XIV. and the Court of France, vol. i., page 351.

Cardinal Mazarin in exile.

Cardinal Mazarin, having passed the night at St. Germain, commenced traveling by slow stages toward Havre. He was expecting every hour to be joined by the queen regent and other members of the royal household. He was, however, overtaken by a courier, who announced to him what had transpired in Paris, and that the escape of the royal family was impossible. The cardinal thus found himself really in exile, and earnest endeavors were made by the Fronde to induce the queen regent to secure a cardinal's hat for M. de Retz, and make him her prime minister. The last act of the queen regent was the issuing of a decree that Mazarin was banished forever from the kingdom.

Majority of the dauphin attained.

Such was the posture of affairs when, on the 5th of September, 1651, the minority of the dauphin ceased. He now entered upon his fourteenth year, and, immature boy as he was, was declared to be the absolute monarch of France.

It was immediately announced to the Parliament by the grand master of ceremonies that on the seventh day of the month the king would hold his bed of justice. This name was given to the throne which the king took at extraordinary meetings of Parliament. The bed, or couch, was furnished with five cushions, and stood under a gorgeous canopy. Upon this couch the king extended himself, leaning upon the cushions.

Imposing ceremony.

The ceremony was attended with all the pomp which the wealth and taste of the empire could create. As, in the morning, the court left the Palais Royal, a band of trumpeters led the van, causing the air to resound with their bugle peals. These were followed by a troop of light-horse, succeeded by two hundred of the highest nobility of France, splendidly mounted and in dazzling array. But it is vain to attempt to describe the gorgeous procession of dignitaries, mounted on tall war-horses, caparisoned with housings embroidered with silver and gold, and accompanied by numerous retainers. The attire of these attendants, from the most haughty man of arms to the humblest page, was as varied, picturesque, and glittering as human ingenuity could devise.

Appearance of Louis XIV.

The young king himself rode upon a magnificent cream-colored charger. He was a beautiful boy, well formed and tall for his age. Apparently deeply impressed with the grandeur of the occasion, he appeared calm and dignified to a degree which attracted the admiration of every beholder. As he sat gracefully upon his horse, he appeared almost like a golden statue, for his dress was so elaborately embroidered with gold that neither its material or its color could be distinguished. His high-mettled charger became frightened by the shouts of "Long live the king" which burst so enthusiastically from the lips of the crowd. But Louis managed the animal with so much skill and self-possession as to increase the admiration with which all seemed to regard

him. After attending mass, the young monarch took his seat in the Parliament. Here the boy of thirteen, covering his head, while all the notabilities of France stood before him with heads uncovered, repeated the following words:

Address of Louis.

"Gentlemen, – I have attended my Parliament in order to inform you that, according to the law of my kingdom, I shall myself assume its government. I trust that, by the goodness of God, it will be with piety and justice. My chancellor will inform you more particularly of my intentions."

The chancellor then made a long address. At its conclusion the queen mother rose and said to her son:

Address of the queen regent.

"Sire, – This is the ninth year in which, by the last will of the deceased king, my much honored lord, I have been intrusted with the care of your education and the government of the state. God having by his will blessed my endeavors, and preserved your person, which is so precious to your subjects, now that the law of the kingdom calls you to the rule of this monarchy, I transfer to you, with great satisfaction, the power which had been granted me to govern. I trust that God will aid you with his strength and wisdom, that your reign may be prosperous."

Reply of Louis.

To this the king replied, "I thank you, madame, for the care which it has pleased you to take of my education and the

administration of my kingdom. I pray you to continue to me your good advice, and desire that, after myself, you should be the head of my council."

The mother and the son embraced each other, and then resumed their conspicuous seats on the platform. The king's brother, Philip, duke of Anjou, next rose, and, sinking upon his knee, took the oath of allegiance to his royal brother. He was followed in this act by all the civil and ecclesiastical notabilities. The royal procession returned to the gates of the Palais Royal, greeted apparently by the unanimous acclamations of the people.

Power of the King of France.

Thus a stripling, who had just completed his thirteenth year, was accepted by the nobles and by the populace as the absolute and untrammeled sovereign of France. He held in his hands, virtually unrestrained by constitution or court, their liberties, their fortunes, and their lives. It is often said that every nation has as good a government as it deserves. In republican America, it seems incredible that a nation of twenty millions of people could have been guilty of the folly of surrendering themselves to the sway of a pert, weak, immature boy of thirteen years.

Gallantry of Louis.

The young king, in those early years, was celebrated for his gallantry. A bevy of young beauties, from the most illustrious families in the realm, crowded his court. The matter of the marriage of the king was deemed of very great moment.

According to the etiquette of the times, it was thought necessary that he should marry a lady of royal blood. It would have been esteemed a degradation for him to select the daughter of the highest noble, unless that noble were of the royal family. But these pretty girls were not unconscious of the power of their charms. The haughty Anne of Austria was constantly harassed by the flirtations in which the young king was continually engaging with these lovely maidens of the court.

Louis by nature, and still more by education, was egotistical, haughty, and overbearing. His brother Philip, on the contrary, was gentle, retiring, and effeminate. The young king wished to be the handsomest man of his court, the most brilliant in wit, and the most fascinating in the graces of social life. He was very jealous of any one of his companions who might be regarded as his rival in personal beauty, or in any intellectual or courtly accomplishment. His mother encouraged this feeling. She desired that her son should stand in his court without a peer.

Influence of Anne and Mazarin upon Louis.

Still Anne of Austria, in conjunction with Cardinal Mazarin, had done what she could to check the intellectual growth of her son. Wishing to retain power as long as possible, they had manifested no disposition to withdraw young Louis from the frivolities of childhood. His education had been grossly neglected. Though entirely familiar with the routine of his devotional exercises, and all the punctilios of court etiquette, he was in mental culture and general intelligence far below ordinary

school-boys of his age.

Though the king was nominally the absolute ruler of France, still there were outside influences which exerted over him a great control. There is no such thing as independent power. All are creatures of circumstances. There were two antagonistic forces brought to bear upon the young king. Anne of Austria for nine years had been regent. With the aid of her prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, she had governed the realm. This power could not at once and entirely pass from their hands to the ignorant boy who was dallying with the little beauties in the saloons of the Palais Royal. Though Mazarin was in exile – an exile to which the queen regent had been compelled to assent – still he retained her confidence, and an influence over her mind.

Conflict between the court and Parliament.

On the other hand, there was the Parliament, composed mainly of proud, haughty, powerful nobles, the highest dignitaries of Church and State. This body was under the leadership of the coadjutor, M. de Retz. The antagonism between the Parliament and the court was by no means appeased. The great conflict now rose, which continued through months and years, between them, as to which should obtain the control of the king. Impelled by the action of the Parliament, the king had applied to the pope for a cardinal's hat to be conferred upon M. de Retz. This dignity attained would immeasurably increase the power of the coadjutor.

Mazarin arrives in France.

In the mean time, Cardinal Mazarin, who had fled to Spain, had re-entered France with an army of six thousand men. Paris was thrown into a state of great agitation. Parliament was immediately assembled. The king sent them a message requesting the Parliament not to regard the movements of the cardinal with any anxiety, "since the intentions of his eminence were well known by the court." This, of course, increased rather than diminished the fears of the nobles. Notwithstanding the message of the king, a decree was immediately passed declaring the cardinal and his adherents disturbers of the public peace. The cardinal was outlawed. A sum equal to thirty thousand dollars, the proceeds of the sale of some property of the cardinal, was offered to any one who should deliver him either dead or alive. Unintimidated, Mazarin continued his march toward Paris, arriving at Poictiers at the end of January, one month after having re-entered France. The king, the queen regent, and the whole court advanced there to meet him. They received him with the greatest demonstrations of joy.

Civil war inaugurated.

When the news reached the capital that Mazarin had thus triumphantly returned, Parliament and the populace were thrown into a state of great excitement. The Duke of Orleans was roused as never before. The hostile demonstrations in Paris became so alarming, that the royal family adopted the bold resolve to return

immediately to the capital. The king commenced his march at the head of the troops of the cardinal. When he reached Blois, he tarried there for a couple of days to concentrate his forces. Civil war was now inaugurated, though on rather a petty scale, between the hostile forces in various parts of the kingdom. The Prince of Condé was the prominent leader of the Parliamentary troops.

Mazarin's army defeated.
Depression of the regent.

The city of Blois is situated on the right bank of the River Loire, about forty-five miles below the city of Orleans, which is also on the northern side of the same stream. At Blois, the court learned to its consternation that the Mazarin army had been attacked at Orleans by the Prince de Condé and utterly routed, with the loss of many prisoners, nearly three thousand horses, and a large part of its ordnance stores. The royal party, which was at this time in a state of great destitution, was quite overwhelmed by the disaster. The queen ordered all the equipages and baggage to be transported to the south side of the Loire, and the bridge to be broken down. At midnight, in the midst of a scene of great terror and confusion, this movement was accomplished. As the morning dawned, the carriages, crowded with the ladies of the court, were seen on the left bank of the stream, ready for flight. The queen was, for the only time in her life, so dejected as to seem utterly in despair. She feared that the triumph of the Fronde at Orleans would induce every city in the kingdom to close its gates against the court.

The royal fugitives retreated to Montereau. In the disorder of the flight they were exposed to great privation. Even the young king lost several of his best horses. Thence they proceeded to Corbeil, on the right bank of the Seine, about twelve leagues from Versailles. Here a scene occurred which is graphically described by M. Laporte, an eye-witness, who was a prominent attendant of his majesty.

Monsieur.

Ludicrous quarrel of Louis and his brother.

"The king," writes Laporte, "insisted that *Monsieur*[5] should sleep in his room, which was so small that but one person could pass at a time. In the morning, as they lay awake, the king inadvertently spat upon the bed of *Monsieur*, who immediately spat upon the king's bed in return. Thereupon Louis, getting angry, spat in his brother's face. When they could spit no longer, they proceeded to drag each other's sheets upon the floor, after which they prepared to fight. During this quarrel I did what I could to restrain the king. As I could not succeed, I sent for M. de Villeroi, who re-established peace. *Monsieur* lost his temper sooner than the king, but the king was much more difficult to appease."

It is very evident that aristocratic titles, and all the formalities of court etiquette, do not change the nature of boyhood. Though

[5] As Louis XIV. was now king, his brother Philip, eleven years of age, according to usage, took the title of *Monsieur*. The title for a time adhered still to the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII.

one of these little belligerents bore the title of Louis XIV., king of France, and the other was called Monsieur, the duke of Anjou, they were in character like all other ungoverned and ungovernable boys.

Embarrassment of the court.

The court, not venturing to enter Paris, pursued its way by a circuitous route to St. Germain, leaving the city on the left. Here an additional gloom was cast over their spirits by the intelligence of very decided acts of hostility manifested against them by the inhabitants of the metropolis. The court was in a state of great embarrassment, without any money, and without possibility of obtaining stores from the capital. It was supposed that Cardinal Mazarin, noted for his selfishness, had taken good care of himself. But he declared that he was as poor as the meanest soldier in the ranks.

Conflict at Etampes.

While at St. Germain, there was another petty conflict between the Parliamentary forces and those of the court in the vicinity of Etampes, about forty miles from Versailles. The Fronde was routed with loss. The glad tidings was brought by a courier at night to St. Germain. The news was too good to be kept till morning. M. Villeroi, to whom it was at first communicated, hastened to the chamber of the king and the Duke of Anjou, to awake them from sleep and inform them of the victory. They both, Laporte informs us, sprang from their

beds, and rushed, in their slippers, night caps, and dressing-gowns, to the chamber of the cardinal, whom they awakened with the joyful tidings. He hurried in his turn with them, and in the same unsophisticated costume, to the chamber of the queen, to announce the intelligence to her.

Destitution of Louis XIV.

The destitution of Louis XIV. while at St. Germain was such that he borrowed one hundred and ten francs from Moreau, one of his valets, for some replenishment of his wardrobe. Subsequently the valet, learning that the king had obtained possession of one hundred *louis d'or*, applied for payment of the debt; but the king had already expended the coin.

The routed troops of Condé took refuge within the walls of Etampes. The court, in its elation, immediately proceeded from St. Germain to the scene of conflict, to take part in the siege. This was the first serious campaign of the young king. As, attended by his suite, he examined the works, he was at one time under fire, and several bullets passed near him. Still young as he was, he had sufficient regard for his reputation and control over himself not to manifest the slightest fear.

Scenes of the conflict at Etampes.

The scenes of war which here presented themselves to the young monarch were painful in the extreme. He was every where surrounded by sick and dying soldiers. But he had no money with which to relieve their misery, and when finally the city of

Etampes was taken, the spectacle of starvation, woe, and death was more awful than words can express.

As the king was entering the city, he passed a group lying upon the ground, consisting or a mother and three children, huddled closely together. The mother had died of starvation. Two of the skeleton children were also dead by her side, and the third, a babe, was straining at the exhausted breast, which could no longer afford it any nourishment.

Retreat of Condé.

The Prince de Condé retreated to Paris with about three thousand men. The royal troops, eight thousand in number, pursued. Each party gathered re-enforcements, so that the Prince de Condé, with about five thousand men, held at bay the royal troops, then numbering about ten thousand. The citizens, as we have mentioned, were in sympathy with the Parliament. They hated Cardinal Mazarin, and with good reason regarded the king as a prisoner in his hands. The king also detested Mazarin personally, while the force of circumstances compelled him to regard the cardinal as the advocate of the royal cause.

Battle at St. Antoine.

A very severe battle was fought between the two parties in the Faubourg St. Antoine. The ranks of the Fronde, shattered by overpowering numbers, were, in a disordered retreat, hotly pursued by their foes under Marshal Turenne. The carnage was dreadful. Suddenly the cannon of the Bastile flamed out in rapid

succession, hurling their deadly shot through the compact masses of the Royalists. They recoiled and fled in confusion. Paris was in the hands of the Fronde. The populace surged through the streets, shouting "Long live the king! Death to Mazarin!"

Cardinal Mazarin forced to retire.

The cardinal, taking the king with him, retired to St. Denis. Turenne re-collected his scattered forces at Pontoise, about twenty miles north from Versailles. The cardinal, with the king, took refuge at that place in the centre of Turenne's army. Here the king issued an ordinance, transferring the Parliament from Paris to Pontoise; but the Parliament replied "that they could not obey the royal command so long as Cardinal Mazarin, whom they had outlawed, remained in France." They also issued an ordinance of their own, forbidding any member of the Parliament to leave Paris. The king, we know not under what influences, acquiesced in both of these decrees. This led the cardinal immediately to tender his resignation and retire. This important step changed the whole aspect of affairs. After the removal of the cardinal, all opposition to the court became rebellion against the king, to whom the Fronde professed entire allegiance.

The king invited to return.

Parliament immediately issued a decree, thanking the king for banishing the cardinal, and imploring him to return to his good city of Paris. After some negotiation the king acceded to their wishes, and on the 17th of October arrived at St. Germain. Here

a numerous civic guard and deputation hastened to greet him, and to conduct him to the metropolis. On the 20th he proceeded to Ruel, where he passed the night.

The Duke of Orleans retires to Blois.

The king decided to enter the city at the head of his army. In order to render the scene more imposing, it was to take place at night, by the light of thousands of torches. The spectacle was such as Paris had rarely witnessed. The fickle people, ever ready to vibrate between the cry of hosanna and crucify, pealed forth their most enthusiastic rejoicings. The triumphant boy-king took possession of the Tuileries. Cardinal de Retz, who had now gained his long-coveted ecclesiastical distinction, hastened to congratulate the king and his mother upon their return to the city, from which they had so long been banished. The Duke of Orleans, chagrined and humiliated, retired to Blois.

Doom of the leaders of the Fronde.

The king soon held what was called a bed of justice, in which, instead of granting a general amnesty, he denounced the princes Condé and Conti, and other of the prominent leaders of the Fronde, as traitors to their king, to be punished by death. These doomed ones were nobles of high rank, vast wealth, with thousands of retainers. Many throughout the kingdom were in sympathy with them. They would not die without a struggle. Hence the war, which had hitherto raged between Mazarin and the Fronde, was renewed between the king and the Fronde. All

over the provinces the hostile forces were rallying themselves for the conflict.

Respectful refusal of De Retz.

It was necessary that the Parliament should register this decree of the king. It did so, but Cardinal de Retz refused to give his vote. He very respectfully declared to the king that he, having been on friendly terms and in co-operation with the Prince de Condé, it would be neither courteous nor just for him to vote his condemnation.

This enraged both the king and his mother. They said it proved that he was in sympathy with their enemies. The court did not venture at once to strike down one so formidable. A mission was assigned the cardinal at Rome, to remove him from the country. He refused to accept it. The boy-king was growing reckless, passionate, self-willed. He began to feel the power that was in his hand. The cardinal was warned of his danger. He smiled, and said "that, sustained by his ecclesiastical rank, he had nothing to fear."

Orders for his arrest.

The court issued an order for the arrest of the cardinal. It was placed in the hands of Pradelle for execution. But the king was told that the cardinal would never suffer himself to be arrested without resistance; that, to secure his seizure, it might be necessary to take his life. The king seized a pen and wrote at the bottom of the order,

"I have commanded Pradelle to execute the present order on the person of De Retz, and even to arrest him, dead or alive, in the event of resistance on his part.

"Louis."

It was deemed very important to arrest the cardinal, if possible, without exciting a popular tumult. The palace of the cardinal was well guarded. He never went out without a numerous retinue. Should the populace of Paris see him endangered, they would spring to his rescue.

Treachery of Anne of Austria.
Arrest of De Retz.

At length De Retz was earnestly invited to visit the queen at the Louvre, in token that he was not hostile to the court. It was one of the most dishonorable of stratagems. The cardinal was caught in the trap. As he was entering the antechamber of the queen upon this visit of friendship, all unsuspicious of treachery, the captain of the guard, who had been stationed there for the purpose with several gendarmes, seized him, hurried him through the great gallery of the Louvre, and down the stairs to the door. Here a royal carriage was awaiting him. He was thrust into the carriage, and five or six officers took seats by his side. To guard against any possibility of rescue, a numerous military escort was at hand. The horses were driven rapidly through the streets, and out through the Porte St. Antoine.

At nine o'clock the cardinal found himself a prisoner at the

castle of Vincennes. The apartment assigned him was cold and dreary, without furniture and without a bed. Here the prisoner remained a fortnight, in the middle of December, with no fire.

The arrest of the cardinal created a great sensation throughout Paris. But the chateau was too strong, and too vigilantly guarded by the royal troops, to encourage any attempt at a rescue.

Return of Mazarin.

In the mean time, Mazarin had placed himself at the head of the royal troops in one of the provinces, where he gained several unimportant victories over the bands of the Fronde. These successes were trumpeted abroad as great achievements, so as to invest the cardinal with the renown of a great conqueror. Mazarin was well aware of the influence of military glory upon the populace in Paris. The king also began to feel the need of his dominant mind. He was invited to return to Paris. Louis himself rode out six miles beyond the walls to receive him. The cardinal entered the city in triumph, in the same carriage with his sovereign, and seated by his side. All the old idols were forgotten, and the once detested Mazarin was received as though he were an angel from heaven. Bonfires and illuminations blazed through the streets; the whole city resounded with demonstrations of rejoicing. Thus terminated the year 1652.

First care of Mazarin.
Festivities at court.

The first care of Cardinal Mazarin, after his return to Paris,

was to restore the finances, which were in a deplorable condition. Louis was fond of pleasure. It was one great object of the cardinal to gratify him in this respect, in every possible way. Notwithstanding the penury of the court, the cardinal contrived to supply the king with money. Thus, during the winter, the royal palaces resounded with festivity and dissipation. The young king became very fond of private theatricals, in which he, his brother Philip, and the young ladies of the court took prominent parts. Louis often appeared upon the stage in the character of a ballet-dancer. He was proud of the grace with which he could perform the most difficult pirouettes. He had plays written, with parts expressly composed for his aristocratic troop.

The scene of these masqueradings was the theatre of the Hotel du Petit Bourbon, which was contiguous to the Louvre. When royalty plays and courtiers fill pit and gallery, applause is without stint. The boy-king was much elated with his theatric triumphs. The queen and Cardinal Mazarin were well pleased to see the king expending his energies in that direction.

Approaching coronation.
Paucity of notabilities at the coronation.

These entertainments cost money, which Mazarin was greatly embarrassed in obtaining. The hour was approaching for the coronation of Louis. The pageant would require large sums of money to invest the occasion with the desirable splendor. But gold was not all that was wanted. Rank, brilliance, beauty were requisite suitably to impress the masses of the people. But the

civil war had robbed the court of many of its most attractive ornaments.

Monsieur, the duke of Orleans, was sullenly residing at Blois. Here he held a somewhat rival court to the king. He refused to attend the coronation unless certain concessions were granted, to which Mazarin could not give his consent. Mademoiselle, the duchess of Montpensier, daughter of Monsieur by his first wife, a young lady of wonderful heroism and attractions, who possessed an enormous property in her own right, and who was surrounded by a brilliant court of her own, could not consistently share in festivities at which her father refused to appear.

The Prince of Condé, one of the highest nobles of the realm, and who had many adherents of the most illustrious rank, was in arms against his king at the head of the Spanish forces, and sentence of death had been pronounced upon him.

Cardinal de Retz was a prisoner at Vincennes. His numerous followers in Church and State refused to sanction by their presence any movements of a court thus persecuting their beloved cardinal.

It was thus impossible to invest the coronation with the splendor which the occasion seemed to demand.

The coronation took place, however, at Rheims. Cardinal Mazarin exerted all his ingenuity to render the pageant imposing; but the absence of so many of the most illustrious of the realm cast an atmosphere of gloom around the ceremonies.

The king repairs to Stenay.

France was at the time at war with Spain. The Fronde co-operated with the Spanish troops in the civil war. Immediately after the coronation, the king, then sixteen years of age, left Rheims to place himself at the head of the army. He repaired to Stenay, on the Meuse, in the extreme northeastern frontier of France. This ancient city, protected by strong fortifications, was held by Condé. The royal troops were besieging it. The poverty of the treasury was such that Mazarin could not furnish Louis even with the luxury of a carriage. He traveled on horseback. He had no table of his own, but shared in that of the Marquis de Fabert, the general in command.

Louis in the trenches.

It seems difficult to account for the fact that the young king was permitted to enter the trenches, and to engage in skirmishes, where he was so exposed to the fire of the enemy that the wounded and the dead were continually falling around him. He displayed much courage on these occasions.

Defeat of Condé.

The Prince of Condé left a garrison in one of the strong fortresses, and marched with the main body of his troops to Arras. The movements of the two petty armies, their skirmishes and battles, are no longer of any interest. The battles were fought and the victories gained by the direction of the generals Turenne and Fabert. Though the boy-king displayed intrepidity which secured for him the respect of the soldiers, he could exert but

little influence either in council or on the field. Both Stenay and Arras were soon taken. The army of the Prince of Condé was driven from all its positions.

The king returned to Paris to enjoy the gratulation of the populace, and to offer public thanksgiving in the cathedral of Notre Dame.

Chapter III.
Matrimonial Projects

1653-1656

Gayeties in Paris.

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There is nothing so successful as success." The young king returned to Paris from his coronation and his brief campaign a hero and a conqueror. The courage he had displayed won universal admiration. The excitable populace were half frenzied with enthusiasm. The city resounded with shouts of gladness, and the streets were resplendent with the display of gorgeous pageants.

Poverty of the court.

The few nobles who still rallied around the court endeavored to compensate by the magnificence of their equipages, the elegance of their attire, and the splendor of their festivities, for their diminished numbers. There were balls and tournaments, where the dress and customs of the by-gone ages of chivalry were revived. Ladies of illustrious birth, glittering in jewels, and proud in conscious beauty, contributed to the gorgeousness of the

spectacle. Still, in the midst of all this splendor, the impoverished court was greatly embarrassed by straitened circumstances.

Cardinal Mazarin, eager to retain his hold upon the king, did everything he could to gratify the love of pleasure which his royal master developed, and strove to multiply seductive amusements to engross his time and thoughts.

Death of the Archbishop of Paris.
Murmurings.

But a few days after Cardinal de Retz had been conducted a prisoner to Vincennes, his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris, died. The cardinal could legally claim the succession. The metropolitan clergy, who had been almost roused to rebellion by his arrest, were now still more deeply moved, since he had become their archbishop. They regarded his captivity as political martyrdom, and their murmurs were deep and prolonged. The pope also addressed several letters to the court, soliciting the liberation of his cardinal. The excitement daily increased. Nearly all the pulpits more or less openly denounced his captivity. At length a pamphlet appeared urging the clergy to close all their churches till their archbishop should be released.

Escape of Cardinal de Retz.

Mazarin was frightened. He sent an envoy to the captive cardinal presenting terms of compromise. We have not space to describe the diplomacy which ensued, but the conference was unavailing. The cardinal was soon after removed, under an escort

of dragoons, to the fortress of Nantes. From this place he almost miraculously escaped to his own territory of Retz, where he was regarded as sovereign, and where he was surrounded by retainers who, in impregnable castles, would fight to the death for their lord. These scenes took place early in the summer of 1653.

In the mean time, the young king was amusing himself in his various palaces with the many beautiful young ladies who embellished his court. Like other lads of fifteen, he was in the habit of falling in love with one and another, though the transient passion did not seem very deeply to affect his heart. Some of these maidens were exceedingly beautiful. In others, vivacity and intellectual brilliance quite eclipsed the charms of the highest physical loveliness.

Manœuvres of Anne of Austria.

Anne of Austria, forgetting that the all-dominant passion of love had led her to regret that she was the wife of the king, that she might marry the Duke of Buckingham, did not deem it possible that her son could stoop so low as to marry any one who was not of royal blood. She therefore regarded without much uneasiness his desperate flirtations, while she was scanning the courts of Europe in search of an alliance which would add to the power and the renown of her son.

Olympia de Mancini.

One of the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, an Italian girl by the name of Olympia Mancini, was among the first to whom

the boy-king of fifteen became specially attached. Olympia was very beautiful, and her personal fascinations were rivaled by her mental brilliance, wit, and tact. She was by nature and education a thorough coquette, amiable and endearing to an unusual degree. She had a sister a little older than herself, who was also extremely beautiful, who had recently become the Duchess of Mercœur. Etiquette required that in the balls which the king attended every evening he should recognize the rank of the duchess by leading her out first in the dance. After this, he devoted himself exclusively, for the remainder of the evening, to Olympia.

Henrietta of England.

It will be remembered that Henrietta, the widowed queen of Charles II., who was daughter of Henry IV. and sister of Louis XIII., was then residing in France. She had no pecuniary means of her own, and, chagrined and humiliated, was a pensioner upon the bounty of the impoverished French court. Henrietta had with her a very pretty daughter, eleven years of age. Being the granddaughter of Henry IV. and daughter of Charles II., she was entitled, through the purity of her royal blood, to the highest consideration in the etiquette of the court. But the mother and the daughter, from their poverty and their misfortunes, were precluded from any general participation in the festivities of the palace.

Embarrassment of Henrietta.
Rudeness of Louis XIV.

The queen, Anne of Austria, on one occasion, gave a private ball in honor of these unfortunate guests in her own apartments. None were invited but a few of her most intimate friends. Henrietta attended with her daughter, who bore her mother's name. There are few situations more painful than that of poor relatives visiting their more prosperous friends, who in charity condescend to pay them some little attention. The young Henrietta was a fragile and timid girl, who keenly felt the embarrassment of her situation. As, with her face suffused with blushes, and her eyes moistened with the conflicting emotions of joyousness and fear, she entered the brilliant saloon of Anne of Austria, crowded with those below her in rank, but above her in prosperity and all worldly aggrandizement, she was received coldly, with no marks of sympathy or attention. As the music summoned the dancers to the floor, the king, neglecting his young and royal cousin, advanced, according to his custom, to the Duchess of Mercœur, to lead her out. The queen, shocked at so gross a breach of etiquette, and even of kindly feeling, rose from her seat, and, advancing, withdrew the hand of the duchess from her son, and said to him, in a low voice, "You should dance first with the English princess." The boy-king sulkily replied, "I am not fond of little girls." Both Henrietta and her daughter overheard this uncourteous and cruel remark.

Henrietta, the mother, hastened to the queen, and entreated her not to attempt to constrain the wishes of his majesty. It was an exceedingly awkward position for all the parties. The spirit of

Anne of Austria was aroused. Resuming her maternal authority, she declared that if her niece, the Princess of England, were to remain a spectator at the ball, her son should do the same. Thus constrained, Louis very ungraciously led out Henrietta upon the floor. The young princess, tender in years, sensitive through sorrow, wounded and heart-crushed, danced with tears streaming down her cheeks.

Royal quarrel.
Independence of the king.

Upon the departure of the guests, the mother and the son had their first serious quarrel. Anne rebuked Louis severely for his shameful conduct. The king rebelled. Haughtily facing his mother, he said, "I have long enough been guided by your leading-strings. I shall submit to it no longer." It was a final declaration of independence. Though there were tears shed on both sides, and the queen made strenuous efforts at conciliation, she felt, and justly felt, that the control of her son had passed from her forever. It was a crisis in the life of the king. From that hour he seemed disposed on all occasions to assert his manhood.

A remarkable indication of this soon occurred. It was customary, when the king, through his ministers, issued any decrees, that they should be registered by the Parliament, to give them full authority. Some very oppressive decrees had been issued to raise funds for the court. It was deemed very important that they should be registered. The king in person attended Parliament, that the influence of his presence might carry the

measure. No one dared to oppose in the presence of the king.

Louis had now established his summer residence at the castle of Vincennes. Arrangements had been made for a magnificent hunt in the forest the next day, to be attended by all the ladies and gentlemen of the court. The king, after leaving the Parliament, returned to Vincennes, which is about three miles from Paris. He had scarcely arrived at the castle when he received information that, immediately upon his leaving the Parliament, a motion had been made to reconsider the approval of the decrees.

Order of the king.

The king dispatched a courier ordering the Chamber to reassemble the next morning. The pleasure-loving courtiers were dismayed by this order, as they thought it would interfere with the hunt. But the king assured them that business should not be allowed to interfere with his pleasures.

Audacity of Louis.

At half past nine o'clock the next morning the king entered the chamber of deputies in his hunting-dress. It consisted of a scarlet coat, a gray beaver hat, and high military boots. He was followed by a large retinue of the nobles of his court in a similar costume.

"In this unusual attire," writes the Marquis de Montglat, "the king heard mass, took his place with the accustomed ceremonies, and, with a whip in his hand, declared to the Parliament that in future it was his will that his edicts should be registered, and not discussed. He threatened them that, should the contrary occur,

he would return and enforce obedience."

Submission of Parliament.

How potent must have been the circumstances which the feudalism of ages had created. These assembled nobles yielded without a murmur to this insolence from a boy of eighteen. Parliament had ventured to try its strength against Cardinal Mazarin, but did not dare to disobey its king.

Soon after this, Louis, having learned that Turenne had gained some important victories over the Fronde, decided to join the army to witness the siege of the city of Condé and of St. Quilain. Both of these places soon fell into the hands of the Royalist troops. The king had looked on. Rapidly he returned to Paris to enjoy almost a Roman triumph for his great achievement.

A tournament.

As one of the festivities of the city, the king arranged a tournament in honor of his avowed lady-love, Olympia Mancini. She occupied a conspicuous seat among the ladies of the court, her lovely person decorated with a dress of exquisite taste and beauty. The king was prominent in his attire among all the knights assembled to contest the palm of chivalry. He was dressed in robes of brilliant scarlet. A white scarf encircled his waist, and snow-white plumes waved gracefully from his hat.

The scene was as gorgeous as the wealth and decorative art of the court could create. There were retainers surrounding the high lords, and heralds, and pages, and trumpeters, all arrayed in the

most picturesque costume. No one could be so discourteous or impolitic as to vanquish the king. He consequently bore away all the laurels. This magnificent tournament gave the name of "The Carousal" to the space where it was held, between the Louvre and the Tuileries.

Christina of Sweden.

Early in the summer the court removed to Compiègne, to spend the season in rural amusements there. Christina, the young queen of Sweden, who had just abdicated the throne, and whose eccentricities had attracted the attention of Europe, came to the frontiers of France with an imposing retinue, and, announcing her arrival, awaited the invitation of the king to visit his court. She was one of the most extraordinary personages of that or any age. Good looking, "strong minded" to the highest degree, masculine in dress and address, always self-possessed, absolutely fearing nothing, proud, haughty, speaking fluently eight languages, familiar with art, and a consummate *intriguante*, she excited astonishment and a certain degree of admiration wherever she appeared.

The curiosity of Louis was so greatly excited and so freely expressed to see this extraordinary personage as to arouse the jealousy of Olympia. The king perceived this. It is one of the most detestable traits in our fallen nature that one can take pleasure in making another unhappy. The unamiable king amused himself in torturing the feelings of Olympia.

Reception of Christina.
Her eccentric character.

Christina proceeded at first to Paris. Here she was received with the greatest honor. For a distance of nearly six miles from the Louvre the streets were lined with armed citizens, who greeted her with almost unintermitted applause. The crowd was so great that, though she reached the suburbs of Paris at two o'clock in the afternoon, she did not alight at the Louvre until nine o'clock in the evening. This eccentric princess was then thirty years of age, and, though youthful in appearance, in dress and manners she affected the Amazon. She had great powers of pleasing, and her wit, her entire self-reliance, and extensive information, enabled her to render herself very attractive whenever she wished to do so.

After spending a few days in Paris, she proceeded to Compiègne to visit the king and queen. Louis and his brother, with Mazarin and a crowd of courtiers, rode out as far as Chantilly, a distance of nearly twenty miles, to meet her. Christina also traveled in state, accompanied by an imposing retinue. Here there was, at that time, one of the largest and finest structures in France. The castle belonged to the family of Condé. The opposite cut presents it to the reader as it then appeared.

The king and his brother, from some freak, presented themselves to her at first *incognito*. They were introduced by Mazarin as two of the most nobly born gentlemen in France. Christina smiled, and promptly replied,

"Yes, I have no doubt of it, since their birthright is a crown."

She had seen their portraits in the Louvre the day before, and immediately recognized them.

Christina was to be honored with quite a triumphal entrance to Compiègne. The king accordingly returned to Compiègne, and the next day, with the whole court in carriages, rode out a few leagues to a very splendid mansion belonging to one of the nobles at Fayet. It was a lovely day, warm and cloudless. Anne of Austria decided to receive her illustrious guest upon the spacious terrace. There she assembled her numerous court, resplendent with gorgeous dresses, and blazing with diamonds. Soon the carriage of the Swedish queen drove up, with the loud clatter of outriders and the flourish of trumpets. Cardinal Mazarin and the Duke de Guise assisted her to alight. As she ascended the terrace the queen advanced to meet her.

Astonishment of Anne of Austria.

Though Anne was at first struck with amazement at the ludicrous appearance of the attire of Christina, she was immediately fascinated by her conversational tact and brilliance. Some allusion having been made to the portrait of the king in the Louvre, the queen held out her arm to show a still more faithful miniature in the clasp of her bracelet. Anne of Austria had a very beautiful arm, and was very proud of it. Christina, instead of looking at the bracelet, surveyed the undraped arm and hand with admiration.

"How beautiful! how beautiful!" she exclaimed. "Never did

I see an arm and hand of such lovely hue and such exquisite symmetry. I would willingly have made the journey from Rome to Paris to see this arm."

The queen's heart was won, Christina knew it. The next achievement was to win the king.

Varied information of Christina.

Christina was apparently as familiar with the French court, and all the intrigues there, from the information which she had obtained, as if she had always been a resident at that court. She immediately turned with very marked attention to Olympia Mancini, and seemed dazzled by her beauty. The heart of the boy-king was won in seeing his own good taste thus highly appreciated and sanctioned. Having thus secured the queen and the king, Christina was well aware that she had captivated the whole court.

An elegant collation was prepared. The plump little queen ate like a hungry dragoon. The royal cortège, enveloping the Swedish princess, returned to the palace of Compiègne. Several days were spent at Compiègne, during which she astonished every one by the remarkable self-poise of her character, her varied information, and the versatility of her talents. She conversed upon theology with the ecclesiastics, upon politics with the ministers, upon all branches of science and art with philosophers and the *virtuosi*, and eclipsed the most brilliant of the courtiers in the small-talk of gallantry.

Rudeness of the ex-queen.

She attended the theatre with the queen. During the tragedy she wept like a child, heartily and unaffectedly. During the farce, which was one of those coarse and pungent compositions by the poet Scarron, which would now be scarcely tolerated, her shouts of laughter echoed through the theatre. She astonished the court by clapping her hands and throwing her feet upon the top of the royal box, like a rowdy in a smoking-room.

She visits Mademoiselle.

From Compiègne, Christina, by invitation, went to Fontainebleau to visit Mademoiselle de Montpensier. The piquant pen of Mademoiselle has described this interview. Some allowance must perhaps be made for the vein of satire which pervaded nearly all the utterances of this haughty princess. The dress of Christina consisted of a skirt of gray silk, trimmed with gold and silver lace, with a bodice of gold-colored camlet trimmed like the skirt. She wore a kerchief of Genoa point about her neck, fastened with a knot of white ribbon. A light wig concealed her natural hair. Her hat was profusely decorated with white plumes. She looked, upon the whole, Mademoiselle thought, like a handsome boy.

Mademoiselle, accustomed to the rigid propriety of the French court, was not a little surprised to hear Christina, during the comedy, interlard her conversation with hearty oaths, with all the volubility of an old guardsman. She flung about her legs

in the most astonishing manner, throwing them over the arms of her chair, and placing herself in attitudes quite unprecedented in Parisian circles.

Christina returns to Sweden.
Outbreak of Christina.

Soon after this, this Amazonian princess returned by a circuitous route to her Northern home. Before taking leave of her, it may be well to remark that subsequently Christina made a second visit to France uninvited – not only uninvited, but very unwelcome. She took possession of the palace of Fontainebleau with her attendants, where with cold courtesy she was tolerated. In a freak of passion, she accused her grand equerry, M. Monaldeschi, of high treason, and actually put him to death. So high-handed an outrage, even in those days of feudal barbarism, excited throughout France a universal feeling of disgust and indignation. The sentiment was so strong and general that the king deemed it necessary to send her a letter through his minister, Mazarin, expressive of his extreme displeasure.

Christina, much exasperated, sent a reply containing the following expressions:

Letter to Cardinal Mazarin.

"Mr. Mazarin, – Those who acquainted you with the details regarding Monaldeschi, my equerry, were very ill informed. Your proceeding ought not, however, to astonish me, silly as it is. But I should never have believed that either you or your haughty

young master would have dared to exhibit the least resentment toward me. Learn all of you, valets and masters, little and great, that it was my pleasure to act as I did; that I need not, and I will not account for my actions to any one in the world, and particularly to bullies of your description. I wish you to know, and to say to all who will hear it, that Christina cares very little about your court, and still less about yourself; and that, in order to revenge my wrongs, I do not require to have recourse to your formidable power. Believe me, therefore, Jules,[6] you had better conduct yourself in a manner to deserve my favor, which you can not study too much to secure. God preserve you from ever risking the least indiscreet remark upon my person. Although at the end of the earth, I shall be informed of your plots. I have friends and courtiers in my service who are as clever and far-sighted as yours, although they are not so well paid.

"Christina."

Soon after this her Swedish majesty disappeared from France, to the great relief of the court, and was seen there no more.

Count de Soissons.

Olympia Mancini had ever increasing evidence that the love of the king for her was but a frivolous and heartless passion. The Count de Soissons, of Savoy, a young prince who had just become the head of his house, visited the court of Louis XIV. The marvelous beauty of Olympia, at first glance, won his heart.

[6] Jules, the Christian name of Mazarin.

He was young, handsome, chivalric, high-born, and was just entering upon a magnificent inheritance. Olympia had recently lost by death a mother whom she greatly revered, and a beloved sister. She was overwhelmed with grief. The entire want of sympathy manifested by the king shocked her. He thought of nothing but his own personal pleasure. Regardless of the grief of Olympia, he exhibited himself, evening after evening, in court theatricals, emulating the agility of an opera-dancer, and attired in spangled robes.

Marriage of Olympia Mancini.
Mademoiselle d'Argencourt.

Wounded and irritated by such conduct, Olympia accepted the proffered hand of the Count de Soissons, who was grandson of Charles V. The marriage was attended with great splendor at the palace of the Louvre. All the court was present. The king himself seemed not at all discomposed that another should marry the beautiful maiden whom he had professed so ardently to love. Indeed, he was already beginning to transfer his attentions to Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, a queenly beauty of the high family of Conti. Her figure was perfect, her manners were courtly in the highest degree, and all who approached her were charmed with her conversational vivacity and tact.

But Mademoiselle's affections were already engaged, and, being fully aware that the king flitted from beauty to beauty, like the butterfly from flower to flower, she very frankly intimated to the king that she could not receive his attentions. Louis was heart-

broken; for such fragile hearts are easily broken and as easily repaired. He hastened to his mother, and told her that he must leave Paris to conquer his passion. The love-sick monarch retired to Vincennes, spent ten days there, and returned quite cured.

The Pope's choir.

The marriage of Olympia, as we have mentioned, was celebrated with very great brilliance. The ambitious cardinal, in heart disappointed that he had not been able to confer the hand of Olympia on the king, was increasingly desirous of investing the members of his family with all possible éclat. He had imported for the occasion the principal members of the Pope's choir. These wonderful vocalists from the Sistine Chapel astonished the French court with melody and harmony such as had never been heard in the Louvre before.

Mary Mancini.

Olympia had a younger sister, Mary, fifteen years of age. She had come from her school in a convent to witness the marriage festivities. The music and the impressive scene affected the artless child deeply, and her tears flowed freely. The king, surrounded by the brilliant beauties of his court, accidentally caught sight of this child. Though not beautiful, there was something in her unaffected attitude, her tears, her entire absorption in the scene, which arrested his attention.

Description of Mary Mancini.

Mary had early developed so bold, independent, and self-

reliant a spirit as to induce her father, on his death-bed, to entreat Madame de Mancini to compel her to take the veil. In compliance with this injunction, Mary had been placed in a convent until she should attain the fitting age to assume the irrevocable vows. Thus trained in seclusion, and with no ambitious aspirations, she had acquired a character of perfect simplicity, and her countenance bore an expression of intelligence and sensibility far more attractive than ordinary beauty. A contemporaneous writer says,

"Her movements, her manners, and all the bearing of her person were the result of a nature guided by grace. Her look was tender, the accents of her voice were enchanting. Her genius was great, substantial, and extensive, and capable of the grandest conceptions. She wrote both good prose and pleasing poetry; and Mary Mancini, who shone in a courtly letter, was equally capable of producing a political or state dispatch. She would not have been unworthy of the throne if among us great merit had been entitled to obtain it."

The king inquired her name. Upon learning that she was a niece of the cardinal, and a sister of Olympia, he desired that she might be presented to him.

Mary Mancini becomes a member of the court.

Mary was an enthusiast. The young king was very handsome, very courtly, and a perfect master of all the phrases of gallantry. Mary fell in love with him, without knowing it, at first sight. It was not the *monarch* which had won her, but the *man*, of

exquisitely symmetrical proportions, so princely in his bearing, so fascinating in his address. The young schoolgirl returned to her convent with the image of the king indelibly engraven on her heart. The few words which passed between them interested the king, for every word she said bore the impress of her genius. Ere long she was added to the ladies of the queen's household.

The king, having closed his flirtation with Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, found himself almost insensibly drawn to Mary Mancini. Though there were many in his court more beautiful in person, there were none who could rival her in intellect and wit. Though naturally timid, her reserve disappeared when in his presence. Though ever approaching him with the utmost possible deference and respect, she conversed with him with a frankness to which he was entirely unaccustomed, and which, at the same time, surprised and charmed him.

Her influence over Louis.

His vanity was gratified with the almost religious devotion with which she unaffectedly regarded her sovereign, while at the same time she addressed him with a bold simplicity of utterance which astounded the courtiers and enthralled the king. He was amazed and bewildered by the grandeur of a character such as he had never encountered before. She reproved him for his faults, instructed him in his ignorance, conversed with him upon themes beyond the ordinary range of his intellect, and endeavored to enkindle within him noble impulses and a lofty ambition. The king found himself quite unable to compete with her strength of

intellect. His weaker nature became more and more subject to one endowed with gifts far superior to his own. In every hour of perplexity, in every serious moment, when the better nature of the king gained a transient ascendency, he turned from the frivolity of the gay and thoughtless beings fluttering around him to Mary Mancini for guidance and strength.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.