

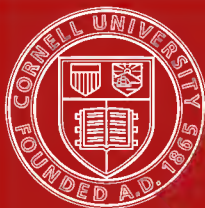


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Six Great Princesses



A Party of Pleasure
From the Painting by Lanorot.

**SIX GREAT PRIN-
CESSES. By THE
COUNT DE SOISSONS**



London : HOLDEN & HARDINGHAM
Adelphi , * * * * *

Dedication

To ARTHUR ELLIS, M.A.

Whose aesthetic taste is a source of delight to me, who has the rare gift of always doing what is right, whose classical learning and bibliographical knowledge are ever at the disposal of students in the British Museum in his capacity of Assistant Librarian, in token of friendship.

SOISSONS

PREFACE

ABOUT four years ago, when I was in Paris, I became acquainted with a painter named Bonnecontre, to whom I was attracted not only by his exquisite art, but also by his great artistic culture and very subtle literary intuition. His wife, although a *bourgeoise* to the tip of her fingers, was also very interesting because of her intimate knowledge of French literature and especially of the French language.

One day, while we were sitting in their little garden in the rue d'Assas, the old, but always interesting, subject of our conversation was Mme. de Sévigné and her inimitable letters. To my great astonishment, the painter's wife, notwithstanding her sound knowledge of the history of French literature, made a strenuous effort to prove to me that Mme. de Sévigné's letters were overrated by the whole world, and were not great masterpieces deserving my enthusiastic admiration. I was amazed at the daring of that woman, who through hatred towards everybody that came from the nobility, denied Mme. de Sévigné's great literary merit.

Preface

I could bring many other personal experiences to prove how unjust is the antagonism of modern democracy towards the glorious deeds of the nobility, an antagonism which prompts them even to falsify historical facts, in order to prove their thesis that the nobility were good for nothing. This amazing unfairness is daily manifested not only in the political speeches of the modern demagogues, but also in books which bear a semblance of seriousness.

Philippe II. Duc d'Orléans, the Regent, is a favourite subject with democratic writers, who, anxious to please the ignorant crowd, publish volume after volume wherein they heap opprobrious epithets on that *roué* of the *roués* and carefully avoid any mention of everything that deserves praise and even admiration in this distinctly superior prince.

This book, however, is not intended to be a defence of the Regent, although it includes some illuminating thoughts concerning his personality. It is an account of his six daughters, who were undoubtedly great princesses, and whose lives, strange and even extravagant as they were, should prove not only interesting, but also instructive reading to those who are fond of intimate history.

The readers of historical books know that Philippe II. Duc d'Orléans, the father of these six princesses, was of more than easy morals, but the corruption—if this word be not too strong—of his times must not be construed into a personal indictment against the Regent, for as one reads the details of the lives of those who

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lived at that epoch, one finds everywhere vice so *spirituel* and folly so charming, that one is compelled to smile at such a brilliant and unique carnival of history and to conclude that the anathemas dictated by the merciless rigidity of Puritanism are unjust and out of place.

Nevertheless, for one who gazes too long at those dazzling pictures of life there is a danger of falling into the virtuously brutal exaggeration of the Princess Palatine, who wrote: "All that one reads in the Bible of the excesses punished by the Deluge, and of the profligacy of Sodom and Gomorrah is nothing to the life they lead in Paris. Every time it thunders I fear for that city." Perhaps it would be wiser, and certainly kinder, to remember only that the personages discussed in this work were, like the rest of humankind, not without sin, and that to them, as to everybody else, one might apply the saying of the ancient sage: *Vide meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*

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SIX GREAT PRINCESSES

CHAPTER I

THE REGENT D'ORLÉANS

IN order to show the character of Philippe II. Duke d'Orléans, the Regent—son of Philippe I. d'Orléans—brother of Louis XIV. and Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, known as the Princess Palatine—a charming fable was composed; a fable which has been attributed to Madame, the Regent's mother, because it is to be found in her letters. It reads as follows:

Once upon a time a great Princess was delivered of a beautiful son. The Princess, following the custom of the time, invited to the baptismal *fête* all the fairies save one, who, by some unfortunate chance, was forgotten. The *fête* was celebrated with great magnificence, and the fairies gathered round the new-born prince, whom they delighted to honour, each making

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him a gift, as was the custom. One of them gave him valour ; another, a sweet disposition ; yet another, *esprit* ; a fourth, discernment ; a fifth, beauty ; a sixth, vigour ; while others bestowed on him the love of science, of art and of liberality ; indeed, there was not one fairy who did not make him a good gift.

Then, however, the forgotten fairy appeared ; she was withered by age and leant upon a stick. The natural ugliness of her features was intensified through secret resentment and wrath aroused in her by neglect. She therefore decided to make the infant prince a gift which to all appearances would seem good, but of such extreme goodness that it should prove injurious to him. She, indeed, granted him Facility, without explaining to what degree it should adorn his character ; but this Facility was such that it rendered all other gifts ineffectual.

If the Princess Palatine was really the authoress of that ingenious fable, one might surmise that she had a literary gift of a far superior quality than is shown in her voluminous gossipy, although entertaining, correspondence.

On consulting contemporary writers as to the appearance of the Regent, one reads in the "Memoirs" of the Count de Maurepas, which are written with simplicity, but interspersed with a certain amount of maliciousness, that "the



THE DUKE D'ORLÉANS, THE REGENT.

The Regent d'Orléans

Duke d'Orléans had in his physiognomy all that Nature could bestow of interest, of graciousness and of amiability. He was not tall, but he had a noble and easy deportment, his character was gentle, facile and especially open and frank. He had dark hair, a bright complexion and a temperament inclined towards good living and pleasure."

Yes, the engraving of his portrait to be found as a frontispiece of the Memoirs of the Regency shows that he was a handsome man physically.

With regard to his psychological characteristics the Count de Maurepas remarks :

"The Duke d'Orléans had a *penchant* for the beautiful, and all the arts, for science, mechanics and other studies, which he cultivated all his life in order to satisfy his tastes, and the result thereof was that he became the most amiable and most versatile man of his time."

He must have been a very superior man, for the same writer continues :

"Louis XIV. was jealous of him and his victories in Italy and Spain. All his gifts, his knowledge of the art of war, his courage in the midst of the greatest dangers, only served to draw on him a kind of disgrace in which he remained as long as the King lived. Louis

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XIV. was suspicious and jealous of all great talents."

The following story, related by Jean Buvat in his *Journal de la Régence*, proves the kindly spirit which this much-abused Regent of France possessed.

"The Duke de Saint-Simon," said Madame, the Regent's mother, "once became so impatient in regard to my son's good-heartedness, that he said to him angrily: 'Ah, you are so good-natured that there has been none to equal you since Louis le Débonnaire.'"

Madame, who well knew how to hate, never ceased to wonder how she could have brought into the world a prince who only knew how to forgive, and who could continue paying pensions to his two greatest foes: Mme. des Ursins and Mme. de Maintenon. "Every day," said Madame, "I tell my son that he is too good-hearted, and that he has no gall in his body."

His kindness was the subject of many Latin verses and allusions to *Regentis bonitatem*, while in the beautiful edition of *Le Recueil de Maurepas* one reads:

Vive notre Régent !
Il est si débonnaire
Qu'il est comme un enfant
Qu'on tient à la lisière
Toujours,
Et la nuit et le jour.

The Regent d'Orléans

In a satirical leaflet called *Les Logements de la Cour*, the Regent's address is given as *rue Jean-Pin-Mollet*.

"The Regent was endowed with that goodness of heart which seemed to be in the Bourbons' blood," says a contemporary writer. "He was neither proud nor disdainful towards anybody save those who attempted to be unduly familiar with him. He permitted any of the people to address him."

We cannot refrain from making a comparison between the attitude of the Regent to his inferiors and that of modern princes and kings, who, though they do not possess the power of kings and princes of former times, allow nobody to approach them or address them without their leave.

But he was too facile, because his good nature robbed him of all sterner qualities. Both hatred and feelings of revenge were foreign to him.

Modern democratic writers on this period of French history abuse the Regent on account of his attachment to Cardinal Dubois, but they forget that if Dubois dominated him and pandered to his grosser pleasures, he also enlightened him, so that in the Regent art and science found a generous and large-minded patron. At the same time the Cardinal waged bitter war against the calumnies which

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represented the Prince to the nation as the assassin of other princes for the purpose of reigning in their stead. Instead of heaping opprobrium on the Regent they should acclaim his clemency, which was only less marked than that of the good-hearted Henri IV., whom, by the way, he so much resembled physically that, when wearing a ruff, he was the living image of the great Gascon. Then they forget that Dubois was instrumental in the conclusion of an alliance between France and England, and for this alone both the Regent and his minister should be admired for their conception of a great notion ; for it cannot be denied that the alliance between two such powerful and cultured countries was the outcome of a peculiarly broad-minded outlook on politics. Anyone who has a great notion is deserving of our admiration, even should his manner of living furnish an opportunity for just censure, since it should be remembered *humanum est errare*.

That this charming and *débonnaire* Prince had his good points may be concluded from the following note, to be found in Marais's *Journal* :

“ La Motte has written *Inès de Castro*, a Spanish* play ; he has read it to the Regent in the presence of two ladies, and it is said that all of them wept copiously.”

* Marais ought to have said Portuguese.

The Regent d'Orléans

This brief report of the Regent's feeling nature, emanating from a writer who is noted for his good faith, is important, for it confirms the general remarks we have made in regard to the Duke d'Orléans' love of art and letters, and shows that this dissolute man, notwithstanding his carousals and the cares of state, found time to patronize literature; and this cannot be said of every prince lauded as good. However, such references as this are not quoted in the works of those writers who, catering for minds eager for gross sensations, prefer to emphasize the Regent's fondness of feasting, and write pages about his suppers.

In the same author one reads :

“At the same time this Prince satisfied another taste. During the Coronation at Reims he had seen some beautiful original pictures in the Cathedral, and he did not rest until he deprived that church of them, as he had done at Narbonne. The Chapter granted him a Titian fourteen feet long, a Correggio, and other pictures by great masters, in exchange for which he gave them some beautiful copies, which were themselves too good for the Champenois ; moreover he promised the Chapter the protection of his patronage.”

When Marais said that the Regent deprived the church of the pictures he used too strong

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a word, but its meaning is softened by the expression which follows: "the Chapter granted him"—indicating that the Duke d'Orléans did not use any gross and dishonest means to satisfy his love for art, which was, so it seems, even stronger than his love for feminine charms, for the same writer adds:

"He has left his new mistress at Saint-Cloud in order to come to Paris to see these pictures, so that it is difficult to tell which of the two passions is the stronger." Surely the passion for the beautiful was stronger, for he left a woman for pictures, and not the pictures for a woman.

This fondness for art was not a momentary caprice, for Marais says further:

"I was told that when he was in Spain he had leave to make a copy of an excellent original picture in the Escorial, and that he wished to put this copy in the place of the original, but that the monks, on hearing of it, caused the painter to be arrested and sent to the Inquisition."

One must allow, it seems, a little indulgence to a man who was so fond of art, for art is the quintessence of the soul, and one who admires that sublime flower of human life cannot be altogether base, however black he may be painted.

The Regent d'Orléans

Besides, the Duke d'Orléans was not only fond of art, but was himself a painter of merit, as was shown by the famous engraving of "Daphnis et Chloé," the wall paintings in the Château de Meudon, and the pictures in the Gallery of the Palais Royal.

This universal man found time even for music, and composed an opera entitled *Pathée*, for which La Fare had written the words. "My son is very much like King David," remarks the Princess Palatine in one of her letters; "he has heart and wit; he is a musician, he is little, but courageous; and he adores women."

But it was chemistry that this wonderful Prince studied with the greatest enthusiasm and success, and here he proceeded even into the debateable regions of alchymy and witchcraft!

There was, then, no excuse for Mme. de Sabran, when she dared to remark to the Regent, during one of his gay suppers, that "princes and lackeys were made of the same clay but that God had separated it at the creation from the clay from which he made all other people."

No, that original *fusée* of feminine wit could not be applied to Philippe Duke d'Orléans, for he was a true prince—*princeps*—*primus*—not

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only by birth, but also by his qualities, his actions and even by his faults. Notwithstanding that he was small in stature, he towered above the grey multitude of envious nonentities, who, prompted by jealousy, spat at him the venom of calumny, just as the toads spit on the nightingale in Rostand's *Chantecler*. There was nothing of a *bourgeois*' pettiness in Philippe; for everything he did, whether good or evil, was done in a really princely manner. Here is an instance:

"Having learnt one day," says Count de Maurepas, "that Mme. de Parabère wished for certain porcelain, he gave an order to have it sought for everywhere, and purchased at any cost. And what was the amount of the purchase? Eighteen hundred thousand *livres*." Never did a *bourgeois* satisfy the fancy of his inamorata in such a princely manner!

Jean Buvat gives us another example of the Regent's way of doing things in the manner of a *grand seigneur*: "A fête has just been held in honour of Madame la Maréchale d'Estrées at the house of the Duke d'Orléans, which is situated on the slope of Saint-Cloud. The gardens were lighted by more than twenty thousand candles, which, with the cascades, produced a marvellous effect."

Even during those suppers which have been

The Regent d'Orléans

so much talked about, the Regent showed himself to be a man of more than ordinary calibre. He did not pompously seat himself at the head of the table, as is customary nowadays, and treat his guests as if he were doing them a great favour by entertaining them. No, he was wont to be very attentive and affable, and to forget that, after the King, he was the first in the country, and the head of no mean kingdom. The author of the "Memoirs of the Duc de Richelieu," says that "any company was good enough for him provided only the spirit of art and literature was not lacking." And undoubtedly this is quite the best way of looking on life and drawing therefrom the utmost possible amount of pleasure, for assuredly there is more pleasure to be gained from the company of people who, even if inferior in social rank, are superior by their intellectual achievements than from the society of well-born dullards and ignoramuses.

With his inamoratas he was amiable, somewhat *galant*, but inclined to sudden and frequent outbursts of passion with little or no premeditation. He pretended neither to be faithful nor attached to them. He would leave one and take another; then return to the first, to the third, to the tenth, according to his caprice. He was enamoured only of variety and change.

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In this respect he was a true eighteenth-century man, seeking pleasure everywhere without mingling the tragical features of Romanticism with love. He was right in this, as it seems that Nature has no other end than to throw two beings into each other's arms, and allow them, between two infinities of nothingness, the ephemeral intoxication of a kiss. By means of his intuition the Regent seemed to understand what is expressed by that great thinker Anatole France, when he said: "Nothing checks passion; it is conscious of its inevitable fatality. Even religion has not availed against it; it has merely imparted an additional pleasure to it, the pleasure of remorse. It is its own glory, its own happiness and its own punishment. It scoffs at books which either exalt it or condemn it."

One reads in the Count de Maurepas's Memoirs the following story, so eminently characteristic of the Regent's attitude towards women:

"Richelieu wishing to avenge himself on the Regent, who was indifferent to the attachment the princess, his daughter, had for him, determined to carry off the Regent's inamorata, La Souris.

"In order to execute this mad project, Richelieu confided in a well-known actor of the

The Regent d'Orléans

Opera, La Souris's favourite, whose name was Trevenard, giving him two hundred *louis* for the expenses of a *fête villageoise*, to be given at a house which the actor owned at Auteuil. A mighty concourse of people assembled for the ball, the fireworks and the illuminations; and La Souris was the queen of the *fête*. Richelieu arrived after dinner in a carriage; La Souris was told that a great lord wished to speak to her, and when she came out she was put in the vehicle and carried as fast as possible to Paris. But the Regent was in no way disconcerted or angry at the insult"—which was intended by this abduction.

Although the Duke d'Orléans was very fond of women, he did not allow himself to be hoodwinked by them in regard to important State affairs, and when Mme. de Parabère, to whom he was much attached, wished to make him reveal to her a certain secret of consequence, he conducted her to a looking-glass and said: "Look there, and tell me if one can speak of State affairs to such a *minois* as yours?"

Jean Buvat was right when he exclaimed respecting the Regent: "He was a Protean divinity, for he assumed all kinds of shapes, to-day he was a transported lover, to-morrow a *galant* husband, and always far removed from the

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limited intelligence of the courtiers who surrounded but could not fathom him.”

An Italian diplomatist, who had but recently arrived in Paris from Rome and did not as yet know the Duke d'Orléans, said when he saw him for the first time :

“Questo principe ha la cera d'ingannar tutti questi equanti.”

In this the verb *ingannar*—to deceive—should be replaced by *sorpassare*—to surpass, for if there seemed to be any deceit in the Regent's actions, this was but the consequence of his superior intelligence, which was beyond the grasp of the ordinary mind and gave the impression of deceit.

In point of fact the Regent adorned his supreme position by the charm of his good nature, the ascendancy of his glory and the brilliancy of that superior *esprit* with which so many princes of the House of France have been endowed.

Such was the father of the six princesses of whom we propose to write.

CHAPTER II

THE REGENT'S WIFE

ALTHOUGH the mother of the six Princesses was a daughter of Louis XIV. and very strange in her manner of living, she was far less interesting than was their father.

Françoise-Marie, *légitimée* of France, was born on May 25th, 1677. Her mother was the Marchioness de Montespan, and consequently she was a sister of the Duchess de Bourbon, the Duke du Maine and the Count de Toulouse. She came into the world after the reconciliation of the King with his mistress, following on the rupture caused by the jubilee of 1676. Mme. de Caylus, speaking of this little affair, wittily remarked :

“I cannot refrain from expressing a thought that has come to my mind : it seems to me that one still sees in the physiognomy and indeed

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in the whole figure of Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans indications of a strife of love and jubilee."

Françoise-Marie was called Mademoiselle de Blois, and, like the other children of Mme. de Montespan, was brought up by Mme. de Maintenon.

It is a pity that the fairies were not called upon to make her the same special gifts that they are supposed to have made to her consort, the Duke d'Orléans, for from this, or some other reason, she was endowed with no very brilliant qualities. The Duke de Saint-Simon describes her in the following manner:

"She was tall and majestic; her complexion, her bust and her arms were beautiful, as were also her eyes; she had quite a good mouth with fine teeth, which were perhaps, however, a trifle too long; her cheeks were broad and pendent, which spoiled but did not entirely destroy their beauty.

"She was disfigured by a deficiency of eyebrows, which were red and as if scorched by the sun, there being but very little hair. She had, however, beautiful lashes, and abundant auburn hair on her head. Without being hunch-backed or deformed, she had one side larger than the other; she walked sideways."

The Princess Palatine completed this portrait



THE DUCHESS D'ORLÉANS, IN 1700.

The Regent's Wife

when she said: "She rouges and her head shakes since she had the smallpox."

To be just, one should add that the future Duchess was possessed of common-sense, and expressed herself in an agreeable and original manner, in which she reminded one of her mother. It is true, as Saint-Simon says, that "her speech was thick, slow, embarrassed and difficult, which, at the beginning, rendered the conversation not very easy, but one quickly became accustomed to it and then only its elegance and subtlety were noticeable."

The future Duchess d'Orléans was timid and always very much afraid of her father, Louis XIV., as well of Mme. de Maintenon; she could never get rid of that timidity and was unable to talk to them in public without blushing and stammering. She never thought of speaking to her father, unless he addressed her first.

Her character was not sympathetic, and in spite of her timidity she was governed by a very false principle, which influenced all her actions. She considered herself superior to any other princess because she was a daughter of Louis XIV. and would never admit any inferiority resulting from her illegitimacy.

She was devoted to her mother, at whose death she showed great and deep grief, but the

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only other person she respected was her brother, the Duke du Maine, who, thanks to Mme. de Maintenon's influence, was a great favourite of the old monarch's.

Louis XIV., wishing before all things to establish his illegitimate children well in life, decided to marry Mlle. de Blois to the Duke de Chartres, who subsequently became the Regent, Duke d'Orléans. One of the King's illegitimate daughters by La Montespan was already married to the Duke de Bourbon, and the daughter of the charming Mlle. de la Vallière had become the widow of the Prince de Conti. For Mlle. de Blois Louis desired as husband the son of the first prince of the blood, that is, of his own brother, Philippe I. Duke d'Orléans. He was aware that these alliances between legitimate and illegitimate members of the House of France were distasteful to the public, but this was of no importance to him. Nevertheless, despite his iron will he was in this instance a little embarrassed, for he was obliged to overcome his brother's repugnance, and in particular the pride of his sister-in-law, the Princess Palatine, who was very proud of her genealogy and particularly abhorred the royal bastards.

Louis XIV. succeeded in winning over his brother and the latter's son, the Duke de



MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

The Regent's Wife

Chartres, his assent being gained by the Abbé Dubois, his tutor, who on one hand filled him with fear of the King and his father, and on the other depicted to him "the heavens opening," as Saint-Simon has it.

However, the Abbé could not have had a hard task, for the Duke de Chartres was but seventeen years of age when the King made him marry Mlle. de Blois. Still, there was some difficulty with Madame, as the consort of the eldest brother of the King of France was then styled, for she, on hearing of the intrigue, urged her objections to her son with all the vehemence of her ardent nature and made him promise her that he would not give in, no matter how much they might coax or lecture him.

But Louis XIV. was anxious that there should be as little delay as possible in the accomplishment of this union on which he had set his heart, especially as it had been almost made public. He therefore caused the Duke de Chartres to come to his cabinet, and there, with the young Prince's father present, asked him in that paternal-kingly way of his—before which everybody bent—whether he was willing to marry Mlle. de Blois, thus apparently leaving the youth to decide of his own accord. In the presence of his father, who approved of the

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King's wishes, the embarrassed young Prince began to stammer some answer when his mother entered.

The Duke de Saint-Simon thus recounts the scene :

“ The King said to her that he felt certain she would not offer any opposition to an affair which Monsieur desired and to which M. de Chartres had himself given his consent ; it was the latter's marriage with Mlle. de Blois. He admitted that he desired it very passionately, and briefly added what he had already said to M. le Duc de Chartres, all with an imposing air, as if he never doubted that Madame would be delighted, although he was more than certain of the contrary.

“ Madame, who had counted on her son refusing, for he had pledged his word to her to that effect, was overcome with surprise, and remained silent. She looked furiously at both Monsieur and M. de Chartres, and said that as the latter wished it, she had nothing to say, then made a short curtsy, and returned to her apartments.

“ Her son followed her immediately, but she, without allowing him to explain how things had happened, grossly upbraided him amidst a torrent of tears, and then drove him away.”

The same evening, after the concert, the

The Regent's Wife

King sent for the youthful Princess, who had just begun to appear at Court. She knew nothing of what had happened and, being naturally very timid, imagined that she had been sent for in order to be reprimanded.

“She was trembling to such a degree,” says Saint-Simon, “that Mme. de Maintenon took her on her lap, and could hardly free her from fear.”

The next day, on his way to the King's Mass, the Duke de Chartres went up to his mother and wished to kiss her hand, as was the custom, but the fierce German Princess, instead of giving him her hand gave him such a “resounding blow on the face that it was heard some paces away.”

Notwithstanding this energetic protest, the marriage ceremony was celebrated on February 18th, 1692, and the Princess Palatine, who was so proud of the purity of her descent, wrote :

“If I could redeem my son's marriage with my own blood, I would do so.”

The preliminaries were certainly very alarming, but the beginning of the union was not unhappy, and at the end of the following year the young Duchess was delivered of a daughter, who lived, however, only a few months.

Although the Duchess de Chartres never loved the consort imposed upon her by the

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King's tenacious will, she was apparently happy and lighthearted, living in close intimacy for a time with her two sisters, the Duchess de Bourbon and the Princess de Conti.

Unfortunately this happiness did not last long. Bickerings and quarrels began between the three sisters, the cause of the wrangling being the favour which the King showed more or less to one or the other of them.

A contemporary writer tells us about these squabbles in the following manner :

“The Princesses, as they were styled at Court, tried to injure each other by every means in their power. Here is an instance. Louis XIV. having exacted that the Duchess de Chartres should call the other sisters *ma sœur*, and that they should address her as *madame*, they became very angry. The Princess de Conti submitted willingly enough, but the Duchess de Bourbon tried to circumvent the difficulty by calling the Duchess de Chartres *ma mignonne*, under the pretext that they were sisters.

“The Duchess de Chartres did not dare to make any complaint, although it was evident that this graceful term was used in ridicule of her face and figure ; but the Duke d'Orléans, when he heard of it, was very much annoyed and complained loudly to the King.

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“The King thereupon spoke severely to the Duchess de Bourbon, who, in her turn, gave in but not without feeling hurt. It was then that she conceived the notion of arranging for several big crackers to be exploded under Monsieur's windows during an evening party at Trianon. The Duke was extremely angry, but this time Madame la Duchesse was clever enough to prove that her sister was guilty, and her father-in-law resented it for a long time.

“The Duchess de Bourbon had added piquancy to her mischief-making by composing some quite lively songs, and Mme. de Maintenon's intervention became necessary before Monsieur could be induced to forego his anger and harmony was again established between the two sisters. Mme. de Maintenon preserved great influence over them and to her they were always extremely respectful.”

As her position at Court became more important, the Duchess de Chartres grew eager to increase her influence over the crowd of courtiers, and in this her father the King greatly helped her, in order to ensure her future position as the first Princess of the blood.

The death of her father-in-law—Philippe I. of Orléans—which occurred on June 9th, 1701, did not cause her any grief, for it brought her

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nearer the King, and she could now count on never leaving the Court.

All her efforts were centred on increasing her importance by every possible means, taking no heed that she made many people around her very dissatisfied. For instance, she ceased in 1704 to make calls on ladies without titles, and tried to form a little Court of her own. Unfortunately her personal peculiarities repelled rather than attracted people, and the result was that those who gathered round her were of humble and servile character, while her very chambermaids obtained great influence over her, notwithstanding the inconstancy of her favours towards those who were near her.

“She thinks that she is the first Princess in the world,” wrote the Princess Palatine; “and much more witty than her husband. She is certainly endowed with superior ability in regard to domestic affairs, and that is why she prefers the company of her chambermaids to that of gently-born people. Sometimes she does not see a lady for a whole week, for none dare to call on her without being invited.”

Nevertheless the Court of the Duchess d'Orléans was quite large. The Duke de Saint-Pierre, a dangerous intriguer under an austere appearance, and his wife, were great favourites with the Duchess, who although she could never

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agree with them, could never refuse them anything.

Her other ladies were Mme. de Castries, lady in waiting ; Mme. de Jussac, a woman of a serious turn of mind ; the Duchess Sforza, her first cousin—for she was a niece of Mme. de Maintenon—and Mme. de Damas-Thianges, her most intimate favourite and *confidante*. The Duke de Saint-Simon says of this lady that she was “intelligent, wise, good, honest and benevolent.”

The Duchess d'Orléans was an absolute and hard ruler in her own house. She was a great eater. “She gets as drunk as a bell-ringer, three or four times a week,” says that merciless gossip the Princess Palatine. Slow in all her movements and her speech, she was also very slow at table.

She was superstitious to the highest degree ; and whenever she lost anything she made Mme. de Boiter, a nun whom she kept at her Court, recite certain prayers, believing that they would help her to find the mislaid object. She was so lazy that she would remain whole days lying in a loose gown on a sofa, specially made for that purpose, surrounded by her parrots, painting her face, making little trifles of needlework, sometimes listening to reading, or playing at lansquenet with the Duchess Sforza. When she

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did stir herself to action it was only to repair to the Abbey of Montmartre to observe a retreat. Still she was capable of great duplicity, and would then shake off her indolence and become very energetic. Further, her health was not particularly good and she did not improve it by her unhealthy manner of living, which was probably the cause of her frequent *migraines*—when they were genuine, for they were often simulated—so that one cannot wonder if the Duke d'Orléans did not become very much attached to his consort. Yet he was fond of her, for, as his mother said, he was fond of all women unless there was some definite cause for displeasure. He went almost every day to visit her; and when she was in a good humour he would willingly remain with her for quite a long time; but when she was not, he would only just enter and depart immediately, without saying a word.

“He must be pitied,” wrote his mother, “for having a wife who is so much opposed to his views, and is so convinced, moreover, that she did him a great honour when she consented to marry him.”

Notwithstanding this, the Duchess had a certain amount of influence over her consort, who called her “Madame Lucifer” when they were on good terms and occasionally gave in to

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her caprices in order to have peace at home. But she tired him by her whims, her vanity, her insufferable pride, and habitual nonchalance, so that it was little to be wondered at if he sought elsewhere for distractions which he could not find at the Palais-Royal.

The Princess in return kept to herself, and in a few years' time became absorbed by two passions : pride and laziness. She would make no effort to attract her husband, claiming that she was much too far above him to stoop to such attempts, nor would she even give up anything that displeased him ; but, as Saint-Simon says, "she wished to be adored by him as a divinity."

She was never even winsome or gentle with him ; and when she exerted herself to be kind, she affected grand airs that wounded him or made him simply shrug his shoulders. The Duke d'Orléans made several attempts to conquer her indifference, but he was unsuccessful, and that was why, according to Saint-Simon, he went elsewhere for consolation.

The private conduct of the Princess was seldom attacked ; although her mother-in-law, the Palatine, did not hesitate to accuse her. True, she refers to her but seldom in her correspondence, and it is well known that she was very hostile to her. Nevertheless, such passages as

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the following are certainly startling if no credence is to be attached to them :

“ Notwithstanding her gravity, she [the Duchess] is not without ‘*affaires*’; but in justice it must be admitted that she has great control of herself and will never create a scandal. All Paris thinks she is a vestal, but I, who see things ‘behind the scenes,’ know she is not.”

The Duke d’Orléans apparently was under no misapprehension on this score, for his mother adds :

“ I advised my son to remain always on good terms with her, for what would be the use of an *éclat*? The King would side with his daughter, and notwithstanding the scandal my son would be obliged to keep her ; it is better, therefore, to be blind and contrive to rub along together.”

If the foregoing be true it is no wonder that the Princess Palatine abhorred her daughter-in-law, who was for her the personification of all the imperfections implied by the word bastard, and this will account for the following judgment in her *piquante* correspondence :

“ My daughter-in-law is a disagreeable and wicked creature. She does not care for my son and she despises Monseigneur*, as if she herself

* That is the Dauphin.

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were something good; she does nothing, and towards me she preserves callous indifference. She is always unwilling to say anything in my presence and there are times when she does not come to see me for a fortnight I leave her alone, and do not show that I care what she does; but her arrogance and bad humour are unbearable and her appearance is very displeasing. She is frightfully disfigured; has an atrocious pronunciation, as if she always had some pap in her mouth, and a head that shakes continually.

“Such is the present that the old *ordure* [the King!] has given us. You can imagine how agreeable life is with her. But, then, her birth supplies everything, and makes up for the qualities that are wanting. She tortures her husband so much that the poor boy bitterly regrets that he did not listen to my advice.”

From that badly-matched couple three daughters were born between 1693 and 1700: Louise-Elisabeth-Marie, Mlle. d'Orléans, afterwards Duchess de Berry; Louise-Adélaïde, Mlle. de Chartres, later Abbess of Chelles; and Charlotte-Aglaré, Mlle. de Valois, subsequently Princess of Modena. In 1703 was born Louis d'Orléans, the only son of the marriage. Then, in 1709, followed Louise-Elisabeth, Mlle. de Montpensier, who was destined to marry

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Don Luis, Prince of Asturias. In 1714 came Philippine-Elisabeth, Mlle. de Beaujolais, who was betrothed to the second son of the King of Spain; and in 1716 Louise-Diane, who became known as Mlle. de Chartres, taking that name from Louise-Adélaïde, who being the oldest unmarried girl—after the eldest sister had wedded the Duke de Berry—was called simply Mademoiselle. Louise-Diane ultimately became Princess de Conti.

CHAPTER III

THE REGENT'S MOTHER

VERY little effort to bring up her children—and that effort bad—was made by the Duchess d'Orléans, who thereby gave another just cause of reproach to the Princess Palatine, who expressed her opinion of her daughter-in-law's incompetency in such words as these: "The mother brings up her children in a manner that is a subject of derision and shame; I am obliged to witness this all day long, and everything I say is entirely unheeded."

As a matter of fact the Duchess was consumed by pride and laziness, and did not love her children or care a whit about their education. She preferred to dine with her inseparable friend the Duchess Sforza, and to prattle with her chambermaids. It seemed as if she deemed it sufficient to have brought these children into

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being, after which they had no further claim on her. Besides, it was too fatiguing to have them round her, to watch over their governesses, to direct their studies; and the simplest way out of the difficulty was to entrust the "granddaughters of France" to the care of some good nuns. It seems, moreover, that she openly expressed her desire for them all to choose conventual life.

"She is not stupid enough," wrote Madame, "to believe that such a course would smooth their path to heaven. It is simply laziness on her part; she is afraid that they will always be near her, and that she will have the trouble of bringing them up."

As a natural result the children, feeling the want of affection in their mother, turned for it to their grandmother. And how curious, how interesting, how original that grandmother was!

Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria succeeded, as Monsieur's second wife, the beautiful and coquettish Princess Henrietta of England, who died in 1670, poisoned, in all probability, by the Chevalier de Lorraine and the Marquis d'Effiat.

The new Madame was born at Heidelberg, on July 7th, 1652.

Let this sincere Princess trace her own physical portrait. Her moral likeness is depicted by



ELIZABETH CHARLOTTE, PALATINE DU RHIN.
THE DUCHESS D'ORLÉANS.

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Saint-Simon and Duclos, the latter of whom has left us in his *Mémoires secrets* both an ingenious satire and a picture of morals, a true masterpiece of wit and *verve*, in which love of truth and justice prevails over the less creditable characteristic of *pique*.

Here is the Princess's physical portrait :

“I am obliged to own that I am abominably ugly, but I must confess it does not cost me much to make such an admission. I have no features ; I have small eyes, a thick and big nose, long and flat lips. But this does not comprise the total of my ugliness. I have big hanging cheeks and a large face ; and added to this I am very small, short and fat. It would be necessary to examine my eyes with a microscope in order to find out if I am intelligent, for by no other means would it be possible to judge. Probably one would not find, in the whole world, more ugly hands than are mine.

“In my childhood I preferred swords and guns to dolls ; I wished to be a boy, and this desire nearly cost me my life, for on hearing that Marie Germain had become a man through jumping, I took such terrible jumps, in order that the same change might happen to me, that it was only by a miracle I did not break my neck.”

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When the Princess Charlotte grew up she became very ugly indeed. However, she was a princess, and this good fortune assured her marrying, no matter how ugly she might be. Moreover, notwithstanding her ugliness, she inspired a true passion in Frederick, Marquis von Baden-Durlach, who did everything to gain her affections; but—this was very strange—although he was young and handsome, the *affreux laideron* cared not a whit for him. The unfortunate Marquis, who was terribly disconsolate at his ill-luck, only married the Princess von Holstein when forced to do so by his parents, and when all hope of winning the Princess Palatine had to be abandoned.

This, however, was not the end of her matrimonial troubles, for later her relations wished to marry her to Frederick Casimir, Duke of Courland. Unfortunately the gentleman was in love with the Princess Marianne, daughter of Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg; but his parents preferred an alliance with the Princess Palatine and refused to give their consent to the marriage with the Princess Marianne. They compelled their son to repair to Heidelberg, hoping that the charms of the Princess Charlotte would induce him to give up the daughter of the Duke of Würtemberg; but he would hardly so much as glance at her,

The Regent's Mother

and eventually ran away and asked leave to join the army, asserting that he preferred to be killed rather than marry such a monster.

Prince Casimir was still running, and the Princess was still laughing at the effect she had produced on her suitor, when the envoys of Louis XIV. arrived and requested her to become the consort of Monsieur, the Duke d'Orléans.

It is not difficult to explain the reasons prompting the great King to conclude this alliance. By making the Duke d'Anjou King of Spain he had gained influence in that country; by the marriage of the Princess Henrietta with Monsieur, he had been able to say something in England; while by effecting an alliance with the last but one Elector of the Palatinate, he would have a finger in the German pie. The marriage offered no very bright prospects, however, for the Princess; she was about to succeed a princess who had died a violent death; she was going to marry a prince whose strange idiosyncrasies were a matter of common talk; finally, she was going to appear at a Court where, as she said herself, falsehood was considered *esprit* and frankness was accounted silliness. She therefore proffered all manner of objections to the union, but for State reasons she was obliged to yield.

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When she arrived at Saint-Germain she gave Monsieur the impression of being hideous ; so that, after glancing at her, he ran away, as the Duke of Courland had done ; but Louis XIV., who, after all, was not going to marry her himself, professed to be charmed with Madame. He called at her apartments and conducted her to the Queen, saying :

“ Be at your ease ; she will be more afraid of you than you of her.”

During all the ceremonies he took his seat beside her, telling her when she ought to rise or sit down.

Monsieur had no son by his first wife, and Louis XIV. was anxious that he should have one by his second, so that Monsieur was in the end obliged to comply with the King's wish.

In 1674, after three years of an ill-matched union, Philippe d'Orléans was born, being followed by Elizabeth-Charlotte d'Orléans in 1676.

As soon as he had thus done his duty, Monsieur asked Madame's leave to sleep separately, and this the Princess granted with whole-hearted thankfulness, for she was not fond of married life.

About this time the Princess of Monaco, Catherine-Charlotte de Grammont, became inspired with a great friendship for Madame. It

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is easy to understand how Madame, with her German frigidity, received the advances of that ardent spirit which was so little in harmony with her own coldness. For a time the Princess of Monaco suffered acutely at the icy reception of her approaches, and in her despair said one day to Madame: "*Mon Dieu*, of what are you made, Madame, that you are insensible both to the love of men and to the friendship of women?"

It was obvious that Mme. de Maintenon hated the new Duchess d'Orléans. She even alienated the affection of the Dauphin's consort from her. When it chanced that Madame noticed the change in la Dauphine's demeanour, she went straight to Mme. de Maintenon and said to her:

"Madam, Madame la Dauphine has treated me with discourtesy. I do not mind as long as she makes a tolerable attempt at politeness towards me, for it is not with her that I would ever quarrel; but if she should become over-rude, I shall go to the King and ask him whether such is his desire."

This threat did not win La Maintenon's heart to Madame, but it at least compelled her to preserve a smiling face. Throughout her life the Princess Palatine hated Mme. de Maintenon, and in her correspondence one often

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finds such epithets as: "*la vieille truie*," "*la sorcière*," "*la bigotte*," "*la veuve Scarron*."

Another story. Mme. de Fiennes, wife of Madame's equerry, was very witty, but too fond of raillery, and her sharp tongue spared nobody, not even Monsieur, not even the King; and naturally Madame became a favourite butt for her ridicule. But one day the Princess took her aside and said to her: "Madam, you are very witty, you are charming, and you have a way of talking which the King and Monsieur do not mind, for they are accustomed to it. But I, who come from Germany, am not and shall probably never become used to it, for as a rule I get extremely angry whenever I am laughed at. Will you allow me, therefore, to give you a word of advice. If you spare me, we shall be good friends; but if you treat me as you do the others, I shall say nothing to you, but complain to your husband, and if your husband does not correct you, I will have him dismissed from my service."

Mme. de Fiennes realized that it was dangerous to mock at such a woman, and wisely held her tongue, so that she was soon on the best terms with the Princess, to the great astonishment of the Court and even of the King himself, who could not understand why Mme. de Fiennes, who spoke evil of everybody, and even

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of him, should remain absolutely silent in regard to Madame. This puzzled him so much that one day he asked his sister-in-law the reason of it, and she told him her secret.

A French author once said of Madame that "it was only possible to credit her with the triple heroism of activity, slander and appetite." Be that as it may, although people at Versailles laughed at her ugliness and even at "her atrocious *Sauerkraut*," they were afraid of her, for she was sufficiently shrewd to be always on good terms with the King. She spent her life in writing letters, in which she told her friends, scattered all over the Continent, the most secret affairs of State, and left for posterity a most valuable series of documents, without which it would be difficult to accurately depict the Court life of Versailles and to revive many of its historical personages. It is through those letters of hers that her figure stands out so distinctly in the pages of French history, and it is impossible to write of her period without making frequent reference to them.

CHAPTER IV

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—HER MOTHER'S SCHEMES FOR HER

DURING the childhood of princesses it is only natural that contemporary writers of memoirs should pay little attention to them, but from such references as occur here and there one can infer that nobody watched carefully over the education of the daughters of the future Regent of France.

In his *Journal* Dangeau says, under date June 28, 1701:

“Mademoiselle—Louise-Elisabeth, the future Duchess de Berry—was so ill at Saint-Cloud that for six hours they thought she was dead, The physicians had given her up, without even being able to say from what malady she was suffering. It was then that her father, the Duke d'Orléans, who was an enthusiastic advocate

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of simple remedies, undertook to cure her. He ordered that she should be carried into his own apartments, and there he watched over her and took such care of her that he virtually brought her back to life."

This incident shows the much-abused Duke d'Orléans in a very favourable light, for acting on his own judgment, he rose above the common and unjustified belief in the infallibility of physicians and by self-acquired skill was able to demonstrate how little they knew.

From that time the Regent loved his daughter doubly. Having given her to the world and having preserved her in it, he loved her both with paternal love and with *amour-propre*; that is as a father and as a saviour.

That increase of his affection for Mademoiselle, which according to Saint-Simon and the Princess Palatine was already great, became a source of one of the most abominable accusations that human wickedness could imagine. Those who invented it deserve our deepest contempt. Philippe, Duke d'Orléans, was a prodigal father, who loved his children *à la diable*, as one says, but there is an abyss between blind indulgence, exaggerated tolerance and crime, and he never leaped over that precipice.

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How much the Duchess d'Orléans cared about her daughters is demonstrated by her own admissions. The Count de Maurepas tells us that when Louis XIV. reproached her for the excesses of Mademoiselle, she answered him very quietly: "I do not know her any better than your Majesty does, for I have never taken any part in my children's education."

Unfortunately this was true, and though the Duchess d'Orléans did afterwards overcome her natural apathy towards her two eldest daughters, it was only because she determined that they should serve—as they ultimately did serve—her ambitious plans, for by her instrumentality Mademoiselle, as a married woman, was able to precede all the other Princesses of the Royal family, while Mlle. de Chartres, whom the Duchess d'Orléans loved the best of her family, was married to a son of the Duke du Maine.

One reads in Dangeau's *Journal* that in 1704 Mademoiselle was invited by Louis XIV. to sup at his table and that after supper he asked her to his cabinet. This was a great event at Court, where the smallest details of etiquette were strictly observed, and the same Dangeau says that the King only admitted the Princesses of the blood to his table during great ceremonies. The Duchess d'Orléans,

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whose pride was unlimited, was naturally very much inflated by the unusual favour shown to her daughter.

Mademoiselle had inherited her mother's pride, with which was mingled a spirit of independence and violence, which made the Princess Palatine say of her: "She is neither wicked nor capricious, but through bad upbringing, and through having had entirely her own way, she has become haughty and autocratic in everything she desires."

It seems that her mother fostered her pride, for Dangeau says that in 1709 she had "a little court of ladies and friends at the Palais-Royal." She was then already a personage, and of an age to be married.

Now it was the Duchess d'Orléans' most cherished ambition that her eldest daughter should precede all the other Princesses of the Royal family. It was not sufficient that she should have the rank of Granddaughter of France, nor could she be satisfied with the acknowledgment of her children as Princes and Princesses of the blood. The Duchess contrived to overcome the difficulty by inventing the title of the "Great-grandchildren of France."

The Duke d'Orléans at the outset paid little heed to this apparently chimerical plan, but the Duchess was not disheartened. Her son was

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too young to be brought into the matter, but her daughter was already fifteen years of age, the King showed her special favour, and she had a good footing at Court. The Duchess decided to take advantage of these favourable circumstances. The method employed by her was made easier by the girl being the eldest of the d'Orléans branch of the Royal house, for by virtue of this position she headed all the unmarried Princesses of the blood, and there remained only the wives and the widows of the Princes to be reckoned with. To win her point the Duchess adopted a very clever manoeuvre, says Saint-Simon, and insisted that her daughter should be called *Mademoiselle*, a title which had previously been granted to only two Granddaughters of France. The other Princesses of the blood, not suspecting the Duchess's plans, were very much pleased at the revival of this title, and naturally accepted the change without raising any objection, while the King tacitly approved of it. Henceforward the Duchess became very angry if anybody ever called her daughter differently. But it was not long before the Duchess's ambitious plan was discovered, for she forbade her daughter to sign any marriage contract as a witness, lest she should have to append her name after those of certain Princes of the blood. This became a subject of

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lively contention at Court. The Duchess de Bourbon's arguments against her sister were particularly insulting, and her recriminations most aggressive, for there was great rivalry between the Duchess d'Orléans and the Duchess de Bourbon.

During this squabble, however, the Duke de Bourbon died, and the Duke d'Orléans, incited by his consort, begged the King to end the dispute by deciding the point. The King, also anxious for peace, promised his nephew to solve the subtle question, and his answer was as follows :

“The unmarried Daughters of France should precede their younger brothers' consorts, excepting la Dauphine and the direct Daughters of France.

“The unmarried Granddaughters of France should be preceded by the consorts of the Daughters of France.

“The consorts of the Princes of the blood should precede all the Daughters and Grandsons of France and the first-born children of Princes of the blood.”

It was a hard blow for the Duchess d'Orléans' ambition and she felt it very keenly.

The dispute is interesting from this point of view, that people who wish to lower those who are socially above them, but not to raise those

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who are beneath them, impudently give the name of snobs to those who claim a difference of treatment and honours on account of their social position. It is certain, however, that whatever one might say against the pride of the Duchess d'Orléans, one could not call her a snob, for she neither aped gentility nor affected intimacy with noble persons—such being the true meaning of the word snob. Nor could one qualify as such a nobleman who insists on being addressed and treated properly by those who are not of the same rank as himself.

But democracy uses very cunning arguments, is unsurpassed in its effrontery, and extremely unscrupulous in twisting the meaning of everything that is not in its favour.

“The day after the King's decision was known,” writes the Duke de Saint-Simon, “I saw M. le Duc d'Orléans coming from the King's cabinet, and I asked him how the matter stood.

“‘We are condemned,’ he whispered in my ear, and taking hold of my arm he added: ‘Are you coming to see Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans?’

“I thought she would be very angry, and did not wish to go, but he compelled me. We found her in a little room with some coffee on

The Duchess de Berry

a table before her. When I looked at her, she began to weep. I stood near the door and wanted to go out quietly, but she called me and obliged me to be seated. We then talked the matter over at our ease, and she showed me a letter she had written to Mme. de Maintenon, in which she expressed her thoughts and insisted that at least the marriage of Mademoiselle with M. le Duc de Berry should be arranged and announced."

It would be hazardous to assume that the defeat of the Duchess d'Orléans on the subject of the rank of her children was the main cause of the union which the Duchess wished to effect between her daughter and the Duke de Berry, in order to obtain in that manner the honours which she could not otherwise secure for her eldest daughter. The difficulty is that the Count de Maurepas tells us quite a different story, and the point is whose veracity should be trusted. One must certainly admit that the Duke de Saint-Simon was *au courant* with the Orléans affairs, for he was on intimate terms with both the Duke and the Duchess, but, on the other hand, he is notorious for his unfairness and lack of scruple in perverting the truth—often only because he liked or disliked the person of whom he was writing. As for the Count de Maurepas' *Mémoires*, they are certainly

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less interesting and less searching than those of the Duke, but, on the other hand, they are not distorted by hatred and wilful malice.

The Count de Maurepas says simply, for simplicity is his great quality: "The Duchess de Bourgogne exercised such authority over the Duke de Berry, or in other words, he was so much in love with her, that she made him marry Mlle. d'Orléans in order to prevent him from marrying an English Princess whom she hated bitterly, for she was aware that such a woman would be clever enough to supplant her with the King."

This is an interesting point for discussion by English historical writers.

It was a hard task to bring about the union of Mademoiselle with the Duke de Berry. In the first place, the Duchess de Bourbon sought the same alliance for her daughter, and was very active in the matter. Perhaps the greatest obstacle, however, was the Dauphin's hatred of the Duke d'Orléans, for he believed the slanderous tales that the future Regent had accused him of wishing to secure the Spanish as well as the French crown. Besides, Louis XIV. was not particularly fond of his nephew, and, last of all, the exchequer was so empty that it was difficult to provide sufficient funds to set up a new princely establishment.

The Duchess de Berry

Things were in such a position that to all appearances the Duchess de Bourbon had only to obtain the King's declaration of his desire that his grandson, Berry, should choose a consort in France, and her daughter's marriage with this Prince would have ensued.

But there was at Court an active man to whom that alliance would have been detrimental, and he determined that it should not take place.

CHAPTER V

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—HER PROJECTED MARRIAGE

THIS man was the Duke de Saint-Simon, and he tells us in his "Memoirs" of his activity and his motives for it.

He knew that the Dauphin disliked him very much; on the other hand, he enjoyed the confidence of the Duke de Bourgogne, and it was not difficult for him to understand that by preventing the marriage of this Prince's brother with the daughter of the Duke de Bourbon, and by uniting him instead with the daughter of the Duke d'Orléans, he would make *un coup double*, that is, he would obtain an influential position at Court and make that position secure for the future.

This time he found a powerful ally in the Duchess d'Orléans—who, prompted by her

The Duchess de Berry

ambition, shook off her natural laziness—and another great supporter in the Duchess de Bourgogne, who was very friendly with the Duchess d'Orléans and had quarrelled with the Duchess de Bourbon.

The Duchess de Bourgogne was the favourite of Louis XIV., whom she greatly amused by her cheerful disposition and sprightly tricks. She was personally interested in curbing the increasing favour of her aunt*, who, with her father on the throne, might naturally secure an embarrassing if not a preponderant amount of power in her hands. Knowing Louis XIV. well, she also dreaded to see a princess placed on the same footing by family rank so near him, a princess, too, who, being younger, might prove more entertaining for the old monarch and might by dint of cajolery make him forget his previous affection for herself.

Besides, she knew that her consort was attached to his brother the Duke de Berry, and she dreaded admitting to her intimacy a daughter of the Duchess de Bourbon, who might spy on her continually.

But the enterprising Duke de Saint-Simon, not being satisfied with such powerful allies, also secured the influence of other courtiers. Mme. de Lévis, a devoted friend of the

* The Duchess de Bourbon.

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Duchess de Bourgogne, promised to help him, for there was danger for herself in the Berry-Bourbon union. Mme. d'O, another confidante of the Duchess de Bourgogne, did the same. The Dukes and Duchesses de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers followed suit. Through M. d'O, Saint-Simon secured the help of the Count de Toulouse and the Duke du Maine, who likewise promised to favour Mademoiselle. This was very important assistance, for the Duke du Maine had great influence over Mme. de Maintenon, who could do anything with the old King, on whom it was that everything depended. But the intriguing Duke's master-stroke was his idea of securing the help of the Jesuits, who controlled the King through one of his confessors.

The beginning of the attack was very inauspicious, however. The Duchess de Bourgogne, being aware that Mme. de Maintenon would help her and thinking that the King's disposition was favourable, wished to attempt *un grand coup*. A few days before Easter, then, on Mademoiselle coming to see Louis XIV. in Mme. de Maintenon's apartments, the Duchess de Bourgogne began to praise Mademoiselle, and, after she had left the room, exclaimed :

“She will make an excellent wife for M. le Duc de Berry !”



THE DUKE DU MAINE.

The Duchess de Berry

On hearing this Monseigneur—the Dauphin—blushed, and answered with animation :

“It would be very *à propos* to reward M. le Duc d’Orléans for his Spanish affair.”

Having said this, he abruptly left the room, leaving the company astonished at such an unexpected outburst from a Prince who ordinarily displayed indifference, and always moderation.

However, the Duchess de Bourgogne, wishing to save the situation, turned to Mme. de Maintenon and said :

“Aunt, have I said anything stupid ?”

The King, who was angry, answered for Mme. de Maintenon, saying with emphasis that “*si Mme. la Duchesse le prenait sur ce ton-là et entreprenait d’empaumer Monseigneur, elle compterait avec lui.*”

Thereupon, however, Mme. de Maintenon intervened, and the trend of the conversation was little to the interest of Mlle. de Bourbon.

But the King, it seems, hesitated for quite a *piquant* reason, which is mentioned by the Duke de Luyes, who writes in the supplement to Dangeau’s *Journal* :

“Mademoiselle passionately desired this marriage, but she knew that the King objected to it because she was too fat, for which reason he feared that she would have no children.

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Mademoiselle was always very fond of eating, but on being informed of the King's objection to her stoutness, she determined to become thinner at all costs. Consequently for a whole year she laced herself very tightly, scarcely ate at table and took a deal of exercise. The treatment proved successful, her waist diminished, and the marriage was decided upon.

"But," continues the Duke de Luynes, "as soon as she had accomplished her purpose she again followed her tastes, and in less than six months' time she became prodigiously fat."

The Duke de Saint-Simon having heard of the conversation between the King, the Duchess de Bourgogne and Mme. de Maintenon, "brought all his batteries into play." It was absolutely necessary that the Duke d'Orléans should speak to the King on the subject, but when he was pressed to do so both by the Duchess his wife and the Duke de Saint-Simon, he resisted for two days, saying that it "was ridiculous to think of the marriage in the midst of war and misery." When he was pressed yet further, he even admitted that he did not feel courageous enough to face the King.

The Duchess d'Orléans then thought everything lost, and was "stupefied by grief and surprise." But Saint-Simon was not disheartened,

The Duchess de Berry

and suggested to the Duke d'Orléans that a letter from him to the King would suffice. The Duke agreed to write one, and it was understood that Saint-Simon should write one also, and that the better of the two should be chosen. Saint-Simon wrote his letter, and when he had finished it he noticed that the Duke d'Orléans had not even begun his, but was sitting at the table looking into space.

Saint-Simon's letter certainly contains some very shrewd and clever arguments in favour of the Duke d'Orléans, but its style is so involved, entangled and often obscure—faults which one also finds in the Duke's "Memoirs"—that we will not quote it.

Finally the Duke d'Orléans copied Saint-Simon's letter and agreed to give it to the King at the first opportune moment. Unfortunately his embarrassment returned to him, and in addition to his natural timidity there was the important question of finding a day when Mme. de Maintenon would be in a good humour, and when the Marquis d'Antin,* the devoted friend of the Duchess de Bourbon, would be absent, a combination of events of infrequent occurrence.

Twice, however, the chance did occur, but the opportunity was allowed to be wasted

* Legitimate son of M. and Mme. de Montespan.

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because the Duke d'Orléans could not make up his mind to benefit by it. Thus a whole week passed away, notwithstanding the Duchess de Bourgogne's exhortations to action, she on this occasion being Mme. de Maintenon's echo.

At length, one day, Maréchal, the first surgeon to the King, advised Saint-Simon that Louis XIV. had proved *gaillard* at the *petit lever* and that the Marquis d'Antin was absent. This was the moment for the Duke d'Orléans to deliver the letter. The Duke de Saint-Simon was in the drawing-room when the King entered Mme. de Maintenon's apartment on his return from Mass, whereupon Saint-Simon went up to the Duke d'Orléans and asked him how long he proposed to keep the letter in his pocket. Indeed he chaffed him until the King again passed through the drawing-rooms and entered his private cabinet.

The scene is so interesting that it must be told in Saint-Simon's own words :

"I then pressed M. le Duc d'Orléans with all my strength to go and deliver that letter. He thereupon went towards the small drawing-room, but then turned his back to the manger. I, continuing to urge him, pushed him with my shoulder towards the small drawing-room ; and I again managed to wedge him between that drawing-room and myself, but once more

The Duchess de Berry

he ambled away ; these tactics were repeated so often that I feared the people in the large drawing-room and the courtiers in the small one would notice us through the large glass doors.

“At any rate I did so much, that by dint of argument and the use of my shoulders I at last pushed him into the small drawing-room, and then with some effort to the door of the King’s room, which was wide open. Thereupon he could not retreat, but was obliged to go into the King’s cabinet. It remained to be seen if he would dare to give the letter.”

The Duke de Saint-Simon waited, and after the time necessary to repeat about “three or four Paternosters,” saw the Duke hasten out and disappear.

The letter had been delivered!

One can easily imagine how anxious the instigator of all this was to learn the details of the interview.

It had been very short ; the King had put the letter in his pocket without opening it, and had said a few kind words to his timid nephew, though nothing touching the important question.

The next day, however, Louis XIV. sent for the Duke d’Orléans, expressed his satisfaction and his wish for the conclusion of the marriage, but added that as his son [the

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Dauphin] was so much against it, "it would take him some time to speak to him about it."

All those who were interested in this intrigue (which for them was so important and to us is so amusing) began to act vigorously. The Duchess de Bourgogne, Mme. de Maintenon and Father Le Tellier neglected nothing. Strange for a woman was the silence of the Duchess d'Orléans in the matter, for from that source nobody at Court gained any knowledge of the trend of events, while the Duchess de Bourbon, over-confident of success, did nothing to counteract the clever scheming of her adversaries.

The Duke de Saint-Simon, realizing that everything now depended on the Dauphin's consent, and feeling certain of the King's approval, wished to take a step by which the Duchess de Bourbon's influence with the Dauphin might be counterbalanced.

It was a public secret that Monseigneur—as the Dauphin was styled—had a "Mme. de Maintenon." Everybody knew of his *liaison* with Mlle. de Chouin, and the Duke de Saint-Simon conceived the idea of obtaining her goodwill. On her side the Duchess d'Orléans was so anxious to marry her daughter to the Duke de Berry, that she put her pride and

The Duchess de Berry

dignity aside and authorized Saint-Simon to express to Mlle. de Chouin her wish to call upon her in order to request her to second her plans.

The Duke de Saint-Simon asked Bignon, the favourite adviser of this "Queen of Meudon," to help him in the matter, and he promised to do so. But "la Chouin" was not to be "taken up" in this fashion, and instructed Bignon to answer that "she was much gratified at the desire of M. le Duc and Mme la Duchesse d'Orléans to call on her, but as she was already sufficiently noticeable she did not wish to increase either her *éclat* or the number of her acquaintances."

The Duke d'Orléans was as indignant as so *débonnaire* a man could be, at such an impertinent answer being given to a person of his rank, but the Duchess was too greatly preoccupied about the marriage to feel the affront, which in other circumstances would have put her beside herself with indignation.

However, that past-master of intrigue, the Duke de Saint-Simon, took advantage even of this episode to convince the Duke d'Orléans that he would be very much compromised should the marriage not take place, and by this argument made him press on the imperative *dénouement*. The Duke d'Orléans promised to

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act energetically, and, accompanied by Saint-Simon, called on Mme. de Maintenon and told her and the Duchesse de Bourgogne of Mlle. de Chouin's impertinent answer, emphasizing the attitude of the Dauphin towards this woman and the danger which threatened the Duchess de Bourgogne from such a person.

The King was at once advised of this unpleasant incident, and the Duke d'Orléans, incited by his friends, was so emboldened that he went to the King and spoke to him quite frankly on the matter. During the conversation he was clever enough to *piquer* Louis XIV. *au jeu* by insinuating that the monarch would not dare to impose his will on his son. That was a stimulant sharp enough to arouse the energy of the terrible autocrat, and wishing to prove his absolute sway, he summoned the Dauphin to his cabinet, and in "the tone of a father, combined with the tone of a King and master," definitely proposed the marriage of his son the Duke de Berry with the daughter of the Duke d'Orléans.

The Dauphin was so surprised that he hesitated, stammered, and ended by pledging his word, only asking for a few days' delay before the official announcement, in order that he might have time to become accustomed to an alliance that was not greatly to his taste.

The Duchess de Berry

The King granted the delay, advising him to make it as short as possible, and closed the interview by telling his son that it would be impossible to go back on his pledged word.

Half an hour later Louis XIV., feeling happy that he had got rid of a difficulty, announced the result to his nephew d'Orléans, authorizing him to convey the news to his consort, to the Duchess de Bourgogne and to Mme. de Maintenon, but to nobody else.

The meticulous Dangeau wrote in his *Journal*, under the date of June 2nd: "M. le Duc d'Orléans who yesterday intended going to Saint-Cloud to see Mademoiselle, said that he would not go to see his daughter at all, for he would be unable to keep from her certain news that would cause her very much joy."

CHAPTER VI

THE DUKE DE BERRY—HIS BRIDE'S DISPOSITION— MATRIMONIAL PRELIMINARIES

THOUGH everybody was making strenuous efforts to marry the Duke de Berry to Mademoiselle, nobody dreamed of asking him whether the arrangement would be convenient and agreeable to him.

Charles, Duke de Berry, second son of the Dauphin, was born at Marly, on August 31st, 1686; consequently he was twenty-three years of age when his marriage with Mademoiselle was projected.

He was generous and kindly disposed, of middling intelligence, entirely without imagination, but endowed with common-sense, which made him capable of listening to and understanding good advice; he was always anxious

The Duke de Berry

to do good. Simple and devoid of vanity, but with a great sense of dignity, he was staunch, upright and pious.

He was of medium height and somewhat inclined to obesity. His complexion was fresh. He had all the appearances of good health and good humour and his hair was fair. He was a great favourite with his father because of his sweet disposition and engaging manners.

The Duchess de Bourgogne was very fond of him. He was very friendly with the Duke de Bourgogne, his brother, whom he accompanied in 1708 to the war in Flanders, where he distinguished himself by his good sense, courage and sound advice in councils of war, for which he was much extolled by the Duke de Vendôme, though this commendation was for the most part due to Vendôme's anxiety to diminish the merits of the Duke de Bourgogne, whom he greatly disliked.

Unfortunately the Duke de Berry's education had been much neglected, so that he was without either the knowledge or the acumen of his elder brother of Bourgogne. Of this inferiority he was himself only too painfully conscious, and it was the cause of frequent embarrassment on his part, especially in the presence of the King, when his best qualities were utterly at a

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discount. There was one instance of that embarrassment which he always remembered with particular bitterness.

During a sitting of the Paris Parliament, at which he declared his renunciation of the Crown of Spain, he had to deliver a little speech. The Duke de Saint-Simon wrote it for him, and he learnt it by heart, but in spite of all his efforts he could stammer only a few words, which were devoid of any sense whatever. The Duke de Berry felt this humiliation very deeply, and he once wept when he was talking of it to the Duchess de Saint-Simon, complaining bitterly that his upbringing had quenched in him all that might have given him moral value.

“I was the *cadet*—the younger son,” he said in despair, “I defied my brother, he was always afraid of the consequences, so I was quashed. They only credited me with a capacity to hunt and play, and they succeeded in turning me into a stupid man, incapable of anything of consequence, so that I must always remain a subject for the contempt and derision of the world.”

Such was the Prince whom certain people wanted to marry Mademoiselle.

He was too good and too weak to dominate that impetuous Princess, who was not accustomed

The Duke de Berry

to suffer any restraint on her will or her caprices. One reads of her in the Duke de Richelieu's *Memoirs* :

“The Duchess de Berry, the Regent's daughter, was endowed with great wit, a brilliant and flighty imagination, which caused her to look on the most daring enterprises as the most praiseworthy. She had a splendid personality, and her conversation was full of charm, but her temperament was violent, and being bent on enjoying herself, she spoilt everything that was beautiful, great and natural in her disposition.”

The honest Duclos wrote of her :

“Mme. de Berry really had an excellent heart. She has given proofs of it to her mother, taking good care of her during her illness ‘with the devotion of a Grey Sister,’ as Madame, that irascible German Princess, said of her. She was an excellent person, and if her mother had taken greater care of her and given her a better education, there would have been no occasion for remarks.”

On the day following the explanation with the Dauphin, the King took the Duke de Berry into his cabinet, and asked him whether it would please him to marry. Dominated in part by the Duchess de Bourbon, although he did not feel any *penchant* towards her daughter,

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and being also under the influence of his brother and sister-in-law, without whom he decided nothing, the Duke de Berry answered evasively, speaking only of his submissiveness to the will of the King, his grandfather.

“The King then asked him,” says Saint-Simon “if he would feel any repugnance in marrying Mademoiselle, the only lady in France who was at all suitable. At the same time his Majesty pointed out that as things were at that moment it was impossible to contemplate an alliance with a foreign princess.

“M. le Duc de Berry answered that he would obey the King with pleasure; whereupon the King told him that he wished this marriage to take place without delay, and that Monseigneur gave his consent to it, but he forbade him to speak about it.”

The Duke de Saint-Simon afterwards discourses at length respecting the doings of the Duchess de Bourbon, her devoted friend the Marquis d'Antin, and other personages who took part in this diverting Court comedy, but, as usual, he is not very accurate—and it is far more interesting to quote a letter written by the Princess Palatine on June 5th, 1710, in which she not only mentions some very curious details, but gives a very original form to her thoughts:



LOUIS XIV.

The Duke de Berry

“On Monday the King took medicine and when I went to him he said to me:

“‘You appeared to me very merry yesterday, Madame.’

“I answered him: ‘Monsieur, I had good reason to be so, because my son spoke to me on your Majesty’s behalf.’

“‘I am delighted,’ said the King, ‘to have done something that pleases you, Madame, and I hope that this marriage will unite us still more closely.’

“‘Nothing could bring me or my son closer to your Majesty than we are already, and always shall be,’ I said, ‘but should that be possible, then most assuredly this marriage would be the most likely means, for it overwhelms us with honour and joy.’

“‘Your joy makes me happy; but do not speak of the marriage for two or three days,’ the King answered.

“In the evening, after seven o’clock, when I had returned from a walk and was writing at my window to the Queen of Spain and the Duchess de Savoie, the Duchess de Bourgogne and her husband rushed into my room, crying:

“‘Madame, we bring you M. le Duc de Berry, for the King has formally declared that he is to marry Mademoiselle. The King

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himself will tell you this, and Monseigneur as well. We outran them.'

"I replied to the Duchess de Bourgogne: 'As I am permitted to speak, I must assure you that I shall always be grateful to you for all the care and trouble you have taken in this matter. I know that you have always desired this union, and I render you a thousand thanks.' Then to the Duke de Berry I said: 'Come, that I may kiss you, because, as Mme. la Dauphine used to say, you are now more than ever "my Berry, *le Berry à Madame*."' "

"I kissed him heartily, and he said to me: 'I have only to ask you, Madam, to grant me the same friendship and kindness that you have had for me during my childhood, and to continue to give me your good advice.'

"I answered him, laughing: 'I think it would be better if I were to ask your forgiveness for having importuned you in that respect, but I have not done so for my own pleasure, and if Mme. la Dauphine had not ordered it of me while she was dying, I had taken care to abstain. You are now too big for me to give you advice, consequently I will not importune you again. I shall be satisfied if I give both you and Mme. la Duchesse de Berry a thousand good wishes. I shall have you in my heart and love you tenderly, but I am too old to

The Duke de Berry

see you often ; besides, I could be of no use to you. Be happy, gay and content, and I shall enjoy your happiness.'

"Hardly had I finished speaking those words when the King entered with M. le Dauphin. Everything went well with them. My son and Mme. d'Orléans, who had not thought that the affair would be declared so soon, repaired to Saint-Cloud to hide their joy, for it was inexpressible. I also sent a lackey to Saint-Cloud, with compliments in writing to Mademoiselle. You can imagine that my room was soon full of all the great and petty folk who were at Marly ; it was not vacated until supper-time."

This delightful comedy was continued.

The Duke and the Duchess d'Orléans went straight to the Dauphin, whom they found at table after his return from hunting, with his son and some ladies of his Court. The Dauphin did not hesitate to forget the past, and received the visitors in the most affectionate manner, kissed them, and told his sons and the principal personages of the company to do the same. Then, having placed the Duchess d'Orléans beside him at the table, he held her hands, kissed them several times, and drank to the health of both her and her husband.

"In a word," says Saint-Simon, "never before was Monseigneur so gay, so occupied,

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so full of anything. The repast was long, the toasts were repeated again and again, in a word, there was complete happiness. M. le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans were never so much surprised in their lives as they were by that unexpected reception. As for Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, he was so pleased at this marriage and at seeing it so well accepted that he *haussa le coude jusqu'à tenir des propos si joyeux qu'il ne pouvait le croire le lendemain.*"

What a pity that the talkative Duke de Saint-Simon did not deem it proper to transmit to posterity those *propos joyeux*, for they would have contributed still more to our delight at reading this highly diverting human comedy.

Usually comedies on the stage end by a banquet, but in this case, although numerous toasts were already drunk, the *divertissement* continued, and perchance that was the best part of it.

When the Duke and Duchess d'Orléans left the Dauphin, they called on the Duchess de Bourbon, who had already heard the news. The Duchess d'Orléans found her sister walking in the garden in the company of a few guests; she spoke first, and the answer she received was icy. However, the Duke and the Duchess kept a good countenance, for they had

The Duke de Berry

resolved not to be irritated by anything ; they even determined to make an allusion to an eventuality concerning the marriage of their second daughter with the son of "Madame la Duchesse," as the Duchess de Bourbon was styled.

"What ! your daughter ?" she answered in an irritated manner. "My son, for the present, is too bad a *parti* ; his affairs are in strange disorder ; there are disputes about everything, and he does not know what he will have, whilst your daughter is too young to marry."

The Duke d'Orléans, who did not wish to be defeated in his design, answered that the Prince's fortune would be sufficient. Then they began to talk of the Princess's age and the precise dates were stated. The Duchess de Bourbon, driven to her last entrenchment, declared, however, still more angrily, that she would not marry her son for a long time to come. After the exchange of a few insignificant words they separated, "Mme. la Duchesse satisfied that she had been able to show herself insolent to her sister, and her sister laughing heartily at her rage, which had become so strong that she was unable to conceal it."

The Princess Palatine wrote very judiciously on July 5th, 1710 :

"The manner in which this marriage was

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brought about is a very droll story, but it could not be sent through the post: it was effected rather by hatred than by attachment."

The Duke de Saint-Simon hastened to Saint-Cloud on the following day and found there a brilliant and noisy company. When Mademoiselle noticed him, she left the guests who surrounded her, kissed him on both cheeks, and catching hold of his hand led him to the Orangery, where she showered on him the most hearty thanks for his efforts.

In that way he was doubly rewarded: he satisfied his *amour-propre* and won the gratitude of the house of Orléans.

On June 4th Mademoiselle went with her parents to dine at Marly. In the first place they called on Madame, then they went to the King, who was surrounded by the Dauphin, the Duke and Duchess de Bourgogne, the Duke de Berry, and the principal officers of the Court.

"Madame presented Mademoiselle to the King; Mademoiselle prostrated herself before him, but he raised her and kissed her and presented her to Monseigneur, to Monseigneur le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne, and to M. le Duc de Berry, all of whom kissed her. The King, in order to dispel all embarrassment, showed all his wonted graciousness and shortened the interview."

The Duke de Berry

The future Duchess de Berry continued her calls, and Dangeau wrote :

“Mademoiselle, who is not yet fifteen years of age, went through it all with an air of modesty in which joy appeared.”

No wonder, her ambition was fully satisfied, she was going to take precedence of all the other Princesses, excepting la Dauphine.

CHAPTER VII

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—HER INTRIGUES

THE Duchess de Bourgogne and the Duchess de Berry became, then, very friendly before the marriage to the success of which the former—that charming and vivacious Marie-Adelaïde of Savoy—had contributed so much.

It would seem, however, that neither of them understood friendship as did that extraordinarily clever Marchioness de Rambouillet, who said that it meant “complete oblivion of one’s own interests in favour of one’s friends.” Thus they began to quarrel during the same year that the Duchess de Berry was married.

There are numerous references in contemporary Memoirs to the squabbles of the two Princesses, but nothing is equal to the simple account of the Marquis de Maurepas, who

The Duchess de Berry

thus describes the sequel of the Court comedy related in our previous chapter.

“The marriage of M. le Duc de Berry with Mlle. d'Orléans took place in 1710, and the two sisters-in-law were soon at variance, the bent of their minds being quite different. That of Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne was sweet and insinuating; every day she would invent something new to divert the King. Mme. la Duchesse de Berry was of quite a different character; she was high-spirited, haughty, incapable of controlling herself, and courted nobody. Every day the King and Mme. de Maintenon felt the effects of the variance between these two persons; consequently all their marks of friendship were for the first, and the other only met with repulses.

“At Fontainebleau, in 1710, Mme. la Duchesse de Berry was subjected by the King to some very sharp talks, which she deserved, and of which Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne was the innocent cause.

“This Princess would go to Mass, which Mme. la Duchesse de Berry should also have attended. She was not present in the chapel, however, and Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne caused the Mass to be delayed, saying to the ladies of the palace: ‘That woman would miss the Mass if they did not wait for her.’

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“This Princess used to pass through the King’s cabinet on her way to Mass, and return through it to her own apartment. The King, who found that she was late, sent to the chapel in order to know the cause of the delay, and it was reported to him that Mass had only just begun because Mme la Duchesse [de Berry] made them wait for her.

“He spoke of it to the Duchess de Bourgogne, when she passed again, and in the evening he told Mme. la Duchesse de Berry that in future she must be punctual; that she should not make others wait and ought to know and feel the difference between herself and Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne.

“She suffered such a speech impatiently, and, shedding tears, she withdrew to her apartment and went to bed.”

The author of the Duke de Richelieu’s “Memoirs”—for it was not the Duke himself who wrote them—does not say whether this was the beginning of the differences between the two Princesses, but it would be no serious mistake, we think, if we surmise that it was so.

The author of the “Memoirs” continues :

“Mme. la Duchesse de Berry was the more hurt by this adventure because the King compelled her, against her own will, to go to the Mass which was celebrated for Mme. la Duchesse

The Duchess de Berry

de Bourgogne ; and commanded that she should be present, knowing how little inclined to religion she was, and being well-informed concerning her bad conduct.

“ He even spoke of the matter to Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans, whom he reproached for her daughter’s faults. He said to her one day :

“ ‘ What sort of person have you given us ? ’

“ The lady answered that she did not know her better than did His Majesty. She added that she had never interfered with her daughter’s education, which was M. le Duc d’Orléans’ work.”

Although the Duchess de Berry had been married by the help of the seductive Duchess de Bourgogne, a woman worthy of admiration, the Duchess de Berry soon forgot it all, and it became her greatest desire to turn the Dauphin against her sister-in-law.

For this purpose she entered the *Parvulo* of Meudon, as people called the residence of Mlle. de Chouin, through whom she was able to discover that her brother-in-law was not a great favourite with the Dauphin, whereupon she conceived and began to execute a very malicious plan. She at once made advances to the party who had been most deeply hurt by the

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success of the negotiations of the Duchess de Bourgogne. She—the Duchess de Berry—who had taken the place of Mlle. de Bourbon, who had also wished to marry the Duke de Berry, now became the principal ally of Madame la Duchesse de Bourbon, because she wished to ruin the Duke and the Duchess de Bourgogne in the Dauphin's mind. This was an unexpected and important help for the *coterie* surrounding Monseigneur, and the Duchess de Berry was heartily welcomed at Meudon.

Her next move was to set the Duke de Bourgogne at variance with his bewitching consort. This was not an easy matter, but taking advantage of the Duke de Berry's attachment to his sister-in-law, as well as of his straightforwardness and simplicity, she soon succeeded so well that the Duchess de Bourgogne had to withdraw from all intimacy with her.

The Duchess de Bourbon's cabal became triumphant when this success was attained, and went so far as to threaten the Duchess de Bourgogne that she would be made to pay dearly for her interference in regard to the project of marrying Mlle. de Bourbon to the Duke de Berry, when the Dauphin became King.

Henceforth the variance between the Bourgoignes and the Berrys was complete and became public.



THE DUKE DE BOURGOGNE.

The Duchess de Berry

On the first day of the rupture a crowd of visitors went to call on the Duchess de Bourgogne, whose charms were much appreciated by everybody, while she continued to be a great favourite with the King. The intriguing Duchess de Berry, on the contrary, was strangely neglected, and became very wrathful. She determined, however, to avail herself of this circumstance to finally estrange the Duke de Berry from his sister-in-law, by trying to persuade him that the latter's conduct towards her was an unpardonable affront.

The Duchess de Bourgogne was then obliged to appeal to the King, and told him of the Duchess de Berry's intrigues.

The King felt very dissatisfied, but wishing to preserve peace in his family, he said nothing to the Duchess de Berry, although he tried to let her understand that he knew everything. She, however, misunderstood the King's attitude and, thinking that he either did not dare to reprimand her, or did not know how to act towards her, she continued her intrigues and caused a terrific storm to burst over her head.

"The King summoned the Duchess de Berry to his cabinet," says Saint-Simon. "The scolding was long and of such a kind that she does not desire to be subjected to it again. After dinner it was necessary for her to go up to

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Mme. de Maintenon, who, without raising her voice, did not speak less firmly. The Duchess de Berry listened and pretended to submit, though in fact she felt an invincible hatred for her sister-in-law, the more so as the public now knew all, and she was deserted by the courtiers. She consoled herself by drawing nearer to the *coterie* of Meudon, and by rejoicing in advance at the revenge that she would take as soon as the Dauphin should become sovereign."

It is easy to understand what a blow the Dauphin's sudden death* proved to her, for all her hopes were then annihilated. She was simply in despair. But the Court was not duped by her extraordinary marks of grief, and Saint-Simon, although a friend of the House of Orléans, wrote in his "Memoirs":

"Mme. la Duchesse de Berry was beside herself. The bitterest despair was depicted on her face. One saw inscribed there, so to say, a rage of grief, not the grief of friendship, but of self-interest."

There can be no doubt that his keen observation was accurate, for in point of fact the Duchess de Berry's position had become very difficult. The Duchess de Bourgogne was now more powerful than ever, for she was the consort of the immediate heir to the throne,

* Born in 1661, he died in 1711.

The Duchess de Berry

invested with all the confidence of Louis XIV., and it was necessary to bend before her. The cabal which had backed up the Duchess de Berry existed no longer, and she could not look for help either to her father—who, although he loved her dearly, hated difficulties, and besides as yet had no influence—or to her mother, whose wise advice she had rudely repulsed when counselled by her to give up the campaign against the omnipotent Duchess de Burgogne.

Thus, after the death of her father-in-law, the Duchess de Berry found herself completely isolated in the midst of a hostile Court. The generous Duchess de Bourgogne, however, did not wish to take advantage of her unexpected triumph. She and her husband had but one thought; to alleviate the Duke de Berry's grief and re-establish the previous intimacy with him.

They went to see him the same sad day, and they gave that weak but good-hearted Prince the consolation of feeling that he had near him two devoted hearts, towards which he returned immediately.

The new Dauphine was no less kind towards her sister-in-law, who, as Saint-Simon says, *paya d'esprit, de larmes et de langage*, but who suffered terribly on account of the generosity which she was obliged to accept.

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Moreover, the Duchess de Berry was now obliged to assume towards the Duchess de Bourgogne an attitude of inferiority and live in it henceforth. She revolted at this necessity, and was beside herself at the thought that she must give up the rank of equality with her sister-in-law, whom the title of Dauphine so manifestly placed above her.

Mme. de Saint-Simon, who, by her virtues and calmness, alone had a certain amount of influence over the Princess, spent several hours in trying to reason with her and tranquillize her ; and at last made her promise to call on her sister-in-law and become reconciled with her.

She kept the promise, and it must be said that the new Dauphine did all she could to make that painful step easy. The two Princesses spent an hour together maintaining a contest of graciousness and amiability. On the same day the Dauphin called on the Duke and the Duchess de Berry, and the reconciliation was apparently effected in the most sincere manner.

There remained, however, an act of service which had to be performed. It was this : On some one occasion the Duchess de Berry had to hand a chemise to her sister-in-law, and the Duke de Berry a shirt to his brother, at their respective *levers*. The Duke did not object to do so, but the Duchess revolted at the thought

The Duchess de Berry

of this public recognition of her inferiority, although it was an act of etiquette in which there was nothing humiliating, and it was necessary to observe it, in order to preserve the custom.

But she again became wrathful and protested against this service of "valeting." The Duke de Berry tried to appease her, but she made a terrible scene, insulting and threatening him in the midst of a torrent of tears. Thereupon the Duke d'Orléans came to the help of his son-in-law, and after a whole day of terrific discussions, the Duchess gave in, for her father threatened her with a fresh scolding from the King. However, she asked for a few days' delay, after which she finally went to the Dauphine's toilette and presented her with the chemise and *la sale*, namely the silver-gilt cup in which Queens and Princesses were presented with their rings, watches, fans, etc. The Dauphine received her sister-in-law in the most charming manner, without the slightest indication that there was any friction between them.

The Court remained for some time at Marly. The Duchess de Berry, enervated by the struggle and still more by the state of pregnancy in which she now found herself, and on account of which she was not allowed to hunt or sit up at card parties, became very

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irritable. Her husband, who was in love with her, did his best to appease her, but was not very successful in his earnest endeavours, and had to endure some terrible scenes. Thereupon the Duke d'Orléans, seeing his dear daughter suffering, would call every day and spend several hours with her, for he knew that it was *ennui* that she dreaded the most.

This assiduity, which was very natural on the part of a father towards a beloved child, who was obliged to remain closeted—for according to the notions of those times a pregnant woman had to remain lying down the whole day—supplied the terrible Duchess de Bourbon with an opportunity to show her pernicious malice and pursue her vengeance. It was she who interpreted the Duke d'Orléans' frequent visits to his daughter so viciously, and spread infamous slanders about him.

When the Duke de Saint-Simon deemed it his duty to inform him of what was being said, "he was astounded and wept at the horror of such an imputation."

Ah! The world was cruel, cruel indeed towards that charming *débonnaire* Prince, who had never done any serious harm to any of his merciless and unscrupulous slanderers, for to win a husband for a beloved daughter was not an act deserving of such dreadful revenge. It

The Duchess de Berry

is only right that posterity should vindicate his honour and admire him for his magnanimity, for when a little later he acquired supreme power, he rose above his slanderers, and did not inflict on them the punishment which their perverse wickedness rightly deserved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY AND HER MOTHER

IN July the Court left Marly for Fontainebleau, for smallpox was prevalent at Versailles.

Fagon, the Court physician, thought it imprudent for the Duchess de Berry to travel during her pregnancy. The Duke de Berry mentioned this to the King, but was badly received by the old monarch, who wished to be obeyed in everything he ordered. Thereupon Mme. de Maintenon, Madame and Fagon represented the danger to the King, but he proved obstinate, and after four days of wrangling decided that his granddaughter should travel by water ; that once in Paris, she should stay at the Palais Royal until a vessel was ready for her, and that during her stay in Paris she should visit no places of amusement.



THE MARCHIONESS DE MAINTENON.

The Duchess de Berry and her Mother

Such was the senile tyrant!

On July 15th the Duchess de Berry embarked for Petit-Bourg, where the King was staying the night. The Duchess arrived there very ill. Louis XIV. did not wish to notice it and was *épanoui d'une obéissance si exacte!*

The next day the vessel struck the bridge at Melun, and was nearly wrecked; the fear was great. However, the travellers were able to get ashore and arrived at Fontainebleau during the night.

Five days later the Princess was delivered of a daughter without serious consequences to herself. But the infant died after being baptized, and "as it was but a daughter," says Saint-Simon, "they were consoled when it was carried to Saint Denis."

The Duchess de Berry was soon well again, and began to follow the hunts in an elegant carriage together with her inseparable friends, Mme. de la Vrillière and Mme. d'Estrées. But soon fresh storms began to rage within her and caused fresh tribulations to the fantastical Princess's father and husband.

One of those psychological storms was the Princess's hatred of her mother, whom she could not forgive for having been born out of

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wedlock.* She forgot that to this circumstance she was indebted for her marriage, and did not care to show any gratitude for the gentleness which the Duchess d'Orléans at least always evinced towards her, being incapable of any more maternal sentiment. The Duchess de Berry, then, never lost an opportunity of showing her antipathy for her mother, on which account she was severely censured both by the King and by Madame.

The following story is related by the writers of the contemporary memoirs: A new usher had been engaged for the Duchess de Berry's service, and one morning, while she sat at her toilette and her mother came to see her, this usher blunderingly opened the door *à deux battants*. Thereupon the Duchess de Berry flushed and, not dissimulating her anger, received her mother very rudely. As soon as the latter had left, the Princess spoke of this incident to Mme. de Saint-Simon, her *dame d'honneur*, and told her to dismiss the usher who had opened the door as to a "daughter of France," which the Duchess d'Orléans was really not. Mme. de Saint-Simon reasoned with the impetuous Princess, who, however,

* The Duchess d'Orléans, it will be remembered, was a daughter of the King by La Montespan. Like her brothers and sisters, however, she was legitimated by royal letters patent registered by the Paris Parliament.

The Duchess de Berry and her Mother

“insisted, wept and raged,” but finally became silent, leaving her *dame d'honneur* to teach the unfortunate officer to perform his service better in the future.

This story shows how scrupulously, in those days, the honours attached to different ranks were observed, and affords a strong contrast with our times, when nobody thinks of etiquette, for at receptions one often sees well-born ladies attending to the wants of youths before those of elderly women and men of rank.

The signs of the Duchess de Berry's dislike of her mother were so frequent and so striking that at last the King asked her grandmother, the Princess Palatine, to reprimand her. Madame had long avoided having anything to do with her stormy grandchild, but as the request was officially conveyed to her through Mme. de Maintenon, she could not disobey it, and only asked that her granddaughter might be advised of the order given to her by the monarch.

Thereupon the King, greatly wishing to reform his granddaughter, ordered Madame to watch over her assiduously, and she did so, for she was afraid of the old autocrat, although she had no illusions in regard to the success of her preachings and other efforts.

She was right, for after three months of

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preaching and scolding the Duchess de Berry not only continued to act towards her mother in a most ill-natured manner, but was instrumental in bringing about an *éclat* which upset the whole Court for a few days.

It would be difficult to improve on the way in which the Count de Maurepas relates this incident :

‘ There was a big ball given at Court. Mme. la Chancelière de Pontchartrain gave one at the Chancery for Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne ; Mme. Desmarets gave another ; and Mme. la Duchesse de Berry wished to obtain from her mother some earrings which had formerly belonged to the Queen-mother, and a *garniture* of yellow diamonds which the King had given her on her wedding, in order that she [Mme. de Berry] might wear them at the ball. She asked her mother for them, as she had already done several times before, but Mme. la Dauphine requested Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans not to give them to Mme. la Duchesse de Berry, consequently the request was refused.

“ The Duke d’Orléans, who loved his daughter a great deal, and perhaps too much, thereupon asked Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans to lend him the diamonds in order that he might pawn them to satisfy a debt for which he was pressed, and which he had contracted in Spain. The Prin-

The Duchess de Berry and her Mother

cess brought him the casket with her jewels, telling him to take anything he wanted. He, however, only took the *garniture* of yellow diamonds and the earrings, which he carried to Mme. la Duchesse de Berry.

“ She appeared with this *ajustement* at the ball, and on Mme. la Duchesse de Bourgogne seeing Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans three or four days later, she told her that, notwithstanding her promise, she had lent the diamonds to Mme. la Duchesse de Berry.

“ Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans replied in all good faith that the diamonds she spoke of were pledged, M. le Duc d’Orléans having asked her for them for that purpose. The contrary was proved, whereupon Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans ordered her daughter to bring her back the diamonds, and kept her half an hour in the Cabinet of the King, who reproached her with her conduct. It was necessary to obey the command ; the diamonds were brought, and the King returned them to Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans, forbidding her ever to lend them to her daughter ; and in addition he sent an order to Mlle. de Vienne, Mme. de Berry’s maid, who had fostered all this business, to quit Versailles in six hours. Mme. de Berry, incensed at what had happened to her, remained six days without leaving her room, and nobody

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kept her company, for it was known at Court how the King had treated her."

It seems that the Count de Maurepas is inaccurate when he says that nobody went to see her, for Dangeau, who belonged to the Duchess de Bourgogne's household, says that this Princess visited her and preached to her also on the very day after the scene with the King, spending three hours with her in the presence of the Duke de Berry, who was so dominated by his wife that he did not know with whom to side.

However, the Dauphine prevailed upon her sister-in-law to beg her mother's forgiveness.

The next day "Mme. la Duchesse de Berry went to Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans," also says Dangeau, "and a reconciliation was effected. Mme. la Duchesse de Berry spoke to her mother in a very friendly and respectful way, begging her to advise her as if she were still a little girl, and adding that she had always intended to do well and would do still better in the future. In response, Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans kissed her very tenderly, and promised to reconcile her with the King."

The peace thus concluded amidst tears of affection was, however, soon broken, and the Princess Palatine, in describing the fresh troubles which arose, exclaimed: "Lord! how unpleasant are stubborn children!"

CHAPTER IX

MME. DE BERRY'S ENHANCED POSITION

ALL the contemporary writers greatly praise the Duchess de Bourgogne's sweet disposition, good nature, intelligence and charm, and in the face of such praises it is difficult to believe the following story told by the Count de Maurepas in his *Memoirs* :

“Mme. la Dauphine was playing *lansquenet* at Fontainebleau and she lost prodigiously. Imagining that Mme. la Duchesse de Berry had her seat, she said to her: ‘Rise, Madam, you have my chair.’

“No sooner was this speech delivered than the lackeys took the chair. Mme. la Duchesse de Berry, who had won a great deal of money, thereupon threw everything on the table, uttering loud cries. She withdrew to her apartments, where her father went to see her and promised to avenge her.

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“ People attributed the death of Mme. la Dauphine, that of her husband, and that of the Duke de Bretagne their son, to this vengeance.”

This is a most light-hearted and wicked accusation, in which there is not a particle of truth. As this work is not intended to be a defence of the Duke d'Orléans, of whom enough has been said to show that he was rather a *bon-homme* than a criminal, it will suffice to state distinctly and emphatically that impartial history has completely absolved the Duke of all such accusations heaped on him by his enemies, and that long ago writers like the Duke de Saint-Simon, Duclos, Voltaire and La Beaumelle defended him very eloquently and efficaciously against them. His very character suffices to protect him against such base imputations, which were accredited by the jealous envy of the legitimized Princes.

The death of that most fascinating Duchess de Bourgogne proved a terrible blow to the old King, for she alone had been able to dispel the gloom of his old age ; but it did not cause any regret to her sister-in-law, who was incapable of understanding that the Dauphine was the only person at Court who had been sincerely interested in her, and had even loved her, and wished her as well as one can wish one's own daughter.

Mme. de Berry's Enhanced Position

The only sentiment of which Mme. de Berry was capable was that of joy at being delivered from an importunate inspector, and from "one who was greater and more loved than herself," as Saint-Simon puts it.

The death of the Dauphine and the little Dauphin did not make any impression on her.

The aged King wept, and while kissing the Duke de Berry said to him: "I have now only you left," whereas the Duchess "was extremely joyful because she and her consort were now the first."

She continued to enjoy herself according to her heart's desire, the chase being her principal diversion. At Marly and Fontainebleau she was continually hunting stags, followed by her temporary favourites, Mme. de Rochepot and Mme. de Saint Germain-Beaupré. In spite of all that exercise, however, she became so stout that, one day at Marly, the King, excusing himself from offering her a seat in his carriage, said: "We are a little too fat to be together in the same calash."

Although she was now more contented and consequently in a better humour, as the death of her sister-in-law had given her first place at Court, she was still unreasonable, and of this we have a proof in an interesting letter written

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by her grandmother, the Princess Palatine, who says under date October 1st, 1712 :

“Berry is madder and more impertinent than ever. She wished to slight me, but I have told her my way of thinking. She came here, very much adorned, in a great robe, with fourteen *poinçons* of the most beautiful diamonds in the world ; everything was right, except that on her face she had twelve *mouches* which suited her very badly. When she came near me I said to her :

“ ‘Madam, you are marvellously adorned, but it seems to me that you have too many patches ; *cela n'a pas l'air assez haut*. You are the first person in this country ; it is necessary to be more dignified than to be *mouchetée* like an actress.’

“She pouted and replied : ‘I know that you dislike patches, but I like them, and only wish to please myself . . .’

“I said to her : ‘It is a mistake due to your extreme youth ; instead of pleasing yourself, you should try to please the King.’

“Then I laughed and added : ‘One may go very far with such sentiments as yours. You should listen when I express to you mine, it is for your good, because, being your grandmother, I am obliged to express them, and because the King commanded me to do so. Were it not

Mme. de Berry's Enhanced Position

for that I would not say a word. It is wise to be silent.'

"'Yes,' she said, 'for talking does no good, and one cannot stop me from doing what I choose.'

"'So much the worse for you,' I said to her, 'but as I have only spoken to you about the abuses and mistakes of youth, I hope you will change.'

"'For my part,' she said, 'I am satisfied, and I shall not change.'

"'It is not sufficient to be satisfied with oneself,' said I, 'it is necessary that everybody should be satisfied with one.'

"Upon this she rose.

"'That little head of yours will cause you a deal of pain,' I added.

"'What do you mean?' she asked.

"'You understand me,' I answered, 'it suffices; but if you don't, experience will soon teach you,' and she left with that lesson.

"You see," said the Princess Palatine in conclusion, "with what an extravagant person we have to deal."

That extravagance of the Duchess de Berry's was soon to reach such a degree that it would be necessary for the Princess Palatine to use a much stronger qualificative.

For a time, however, a fresh pregnancy of

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the Princess's prevented her grandmother from being severe and from complaining to the King as she had intended.

The Duchess de Berry was at this time settled at Versailles. The King was full of hopes that she would give him a male descendant who would make the succession to the crown certain,* and thus deliver him from the obsession to which he was subjected by the legitimized Princes. Mme. de Maintenon went to see her every day, and the King decided that his own musicians should play at her Mass.

The Duke de Berry spent every evening in her apartments, playing *brelan* until half-past nine o'clock with Mme. la Maréchale de Villars, the Duchess de Lauzun, Mme. de Polignac, Mme. de la Vrillière, Mme. de Courcillon, and the poet Hilaire de Longepierre.

On March 25th, 1713, the Princess was delivered of a son, on whom the title of Duke d'Alençon was bestowed. On April 10th, however, the infant prince died, and was buried at Saint-Denis. On April 24th the Duchess de Berry left her bed-chamber and repaired to the King's great cabinet to sup with him. The next month she followed the Court to Marly. In June one finds her at Rambouillet, hunting

* The Duke and Duchess de Bourgogne had left only one son, the future Louis XV., who, born in 1710, was still only an infant.

Mme. de Berry's Enhanced Position

wild boars from four o'clock in the morning and in any weather, with her favourites Mesdames de Châtillon, de Rochepot, de Parabère and de Maillebois.

At this time she enjoyed the King's entire goodwill; he treated her as affectionately as he had treated the Dauphine, and lent her the crown jewels.

Dangeau says that "on July 8th, 1713, were celebrated the betrothals of the Duke de Bourbon and the Prince de Conti, with Mesdemoiselles de Conti and de Bourbon. That day the King wore a *habit pluie d'or*, the Duke de Berry a *habit pluie d'argent*. Mme. la Duchesse de Berry had a robe of gold cloth covered with pearls and diamonds, of which her coiffure was full, His Majesty having sent her all the jewels of the crown; and it is said that those she wore were worth more than eighteen millions.*

On reading the boastful descriptions of the toilettes and jewels of modern nouveaux riches, one cannot help smiling when one thinks of the display of the great ladies of former times. They were first not only by their birth and their qualities, but also by their wealth.

The same Dangeau has left us another description of princely lavishness :

* Livres or francs.

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“ Monseigneur le Duc de Berry and Mme. la Duchesse went to Paris, to the Opera and Saint Laurent’s fair. Mme. la Duchesse organized the fair for seventeen ladies who were with her, and gave much at the Opera and at all the shows at the fair, and threw money to the people in the streets. The ladies were served with supper in their boxes before the opera was over, and returned to Marly only at five o’clock.”

The King did not object to the Duchess de Berry’s fancies ; on the contrary, he was pleased with that gaiety for which he sought the more in proportion as it deserted him. The Duchess de Berry was constantly with him. When a comedy was played at Fontainebleau she sat beside him ; during the hunts she followed him in a little gilded calash.

Her clothes were always of the richest fabrics, covered with emeralds, rubies and diamonds ; and a contemporary writer in the *Mercur*e says that on one occasion “ her coiffure was so full of precious stones that one could say without any exaggeration that one was dazzled by their shine.”

Towards the end of the year her drawing-room at Versailles was a true centre of the Court.

CHAPTER X

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—DEATH OF HER HUSBAND AND THE KING

THE Duchess de Berry was right when she said to the Princess Palatine that the King got accustomed to everything, and that she had decided she would not bother about anything.

She caused Louis XIV. to become almost as accommodating to herself as he had been to the Dauphine, and to let her act according to her fancy, which was entirely for feasting, dressing and hunting.

“She was so little reasonable,” says Dangeau, “that having fallen from her horse on October 5th, she again rode the next day, although everybody believed that she was pregnant.”

On January 23rd, 1714, she gave a great *fête* in her apartments at Versailles; there was a comedy, a supper and then a fancy dress

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ball. "The ball was magnificent and well arranged ; it ended only at eight o'clock in the morning," so Dangeau informs us. On February 11th a similar *fête* was given.

The Duke de Berry, dominated by his wife's intelligence, and endowed with only a little sense and a weak will, suffered her fancies for a long time. Being in love with her, he was not much troubled by her violent temper, her fantastic caprices, and especially her free ways, which were such as had hitherto been really unheard of at that period.

The Princess Palatine wrote a curious letter in that respect :

"As for M. le Duc de Berry, he would not be so silly if he had not been brought up in such ignorance ; but he knows nothing whatever, he is hardly aware that he exists, and, besides, he is very obstinate. But he is very much in love with his wife, who, unfortunately is not in love with him, and, although her conduct is now better than it was, I fear lest she should become a coquette ; she has a great propensity for being so."

At last the Duke de Berry grew tired of the *rôle* she made him play. He, who wished to love his wife and have her to himself, could hardly see her ; she hunted from dawn, then became busy with her toilette, her promenades,

The Duchess de Berry

and gambling. Whenever she had a few spare moments she gave them to her father, at which the Duchess de Bourbon's *coterie* did not cease spreading slanders, those frequent visits giving them a semblance of foundation.

The Princess Palatine herself testified to the gravity of those charges when she wrote: "My son and his daughter are so much attached to each other, that unfortunately it makes people say vile things about them."

The Count de Maurepas, for his part, wrote: "M. le Duc de Berry, suffering impatiently at all the gossip that was circulated on that subject, compelled M. le Duc d'Orléans to draw his sword on the terrace at Marly. But they were soon separated, the affair died out, and one heard no more about it."

There is no historical evidence to refute the Duke de Berry's alleged absurd outburst. One can only say that the Duke de Saint-Simon, who knew the whole Orléans family intimately, who was well informed by his wife, the Duchess de Berry's *dame d'honneur*, respecting every detail of her life, says nothing about it. Moreover, one should not forget that the Duchess de Saint-Simon was a highly moral woman, and therefore would not have suffered anything so monstrous as that of which the Duke d'Orléans was accused by his traducers. Besides, there

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is a passage in one of the Princess Palatine's letters, written on November 24th, 1713, in which she says of her son and his daughter: "They engage in devilish disputes, and, what is worse, the daughter causes variance between her father and her husband. The father has gone to Paris quite desperate."

From this and other allusions it is evident that the egotistical and passionate daughter tormented her father, who, blinded by his great affection, always gave in to her and lacked the courage to cease pampering her after the odious scenes she inflicted upon him. He was conscious of his weakness, he realized how wrong his daughter was, and would go off in sheer despair when, after trying to bring her to reason, he was treated by her *comme un nègre*, to use Saint-Simon's energetic expression. Those quarrels and contentions were repeated again and again, and the whole Court knew of them.

One sees, then, that the Duchess de Berry became on bad terms with her mother and subsequently with her father. Her husband's turn came next.

In a moment of pique he had forgotten himself with his wife's chambermaid, and fell in love with her quite seriously. His wife noticed it, and instead of getting angry, seized this opportunity to get rid of her husband and become

The Duchess de Berry

entirely free. She arranged the matter in such a manner that he could not deny anything, and without making a scene she told him, so the Princess Palatine reported in one of her letters, that, "should he desire to continue living with her amicably, as they had hitherto done, she would let him conduct himself according to his wishes and would act as if she knew nothing, otherwise, she would complain to the King, and the person would be driven away, and he would neither see her nor hear of her as long as he lived."

The Duke de Berry henceforth left his wife free, and she, being no longer hectored by her grandmother, who had given up all mentorship as useless, being at variance also with her mother, who hardly ever saw her, having her father at her feet, who dared not contradict her, and knowing that nobody would be so bold as to denounce her behaviour to the King, who was grateful to her for imparting some animation to the Court, no longer curbed any of her fancies.

After ostensibly taking M. de Salvart as her lover, she transferred her affections to M. de la Haye, one of her husband's equerries, for whom she purchased the office of first chamberlain, as this post gave him the right to sit at the Prince's table and in his carriage.

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His twofold office of first chamberlain, with a room next to that of the Prince, and of lover to the Princess, procured for La Haye at Court the nickname of *Monsieur Tout Prêt*.

The Duke de Saint-Simon says that "he was well-built, but that his figure was as if made of boards; his face was galled, he looked a stupid coxcomb, and had *peu d'esprit*." Nevertheless, the Duchess de Berry was so much fascinated by him that she conceived a mad plan to run away with him to Flanders. This gives an idea how stupid must have been the head in which this plan originated.

La Haye refused to carry out the scheme, whereupon the foolish Princess besought, threatened and insulted him, subjecting him in turns to scenes which were one day terrible, and the other tender. The Court watched these incidents with curiosity, for the Princess did not trouble to hide her passion. The unfortunate chamberlain became frightened to death, and at last made the Duke d'Orléans a confidant of his fears, whereupon the *débonnaire* Prince answered:

"What the devil does my daughter wish to do in Holland? It seems to me that she enjoys herself very well in this country."

It appears that although the Duke de Berry no longer had any love for his consort he be-

The Duchess de Berry

came one day so angry at her impudence that, as Saint-Simon puts it, "he kicked Mme. la Duchesse de Berry, and threatened to shut her up in a convent for the rest of her days."

Such was the life of this princely couple when, on April 26th, 1714, the Duke de Berry, while hunting at Marly, fell from his horse, broke "a vein in his stomach," so the physicians stated, and expired on May 4th.

This poor Prince was good and worthy of affection. Contemporary writers state that he was the best man in the world, fond of his own and other people's pleasure. He was, however, of mediocre intelligence, as was proved by his weakness towards his consort; yet he was not without some sense and judgment. He loved truth and justice; in a word, he was a Prince of a certain merit, and deserved to be treated with regard by his family and the Court.

However, his death passed almost unnoticed, and while Louis XIV. was taking an after-dinner walk in the forest, the defunct Prince's body was conveyed in one of his carriages to the Tuileries, accompanied only by the officers of his guard. The funeral service was celebrated *d'une façon un peu cavalière*; he was buried on May 16th, with *un cérémonial médiocre*, as Dangeau states.

The Duchess de Berry, however, assumed

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mourning with ridiculous affectation ; she ordered her whole apartment to be upholstered in black, and all the windows to be closed. When the King called on her, one of the windows had to be opened a little, in order that he might see where to step.

That concession, however, was only made for his Majesty, and the rest of the time while the Princess remained in bed there was complete obscurity, which led to many ridiculous scenes. Persons coming from outside could not see, but stumbled, tottered and made all sorts of mistakes. For instance, Father du Trévoux addressed his compliments to a wall, thinking that he was talking to the Princess ; Father Le Tellier spoke to the foot of the bed ; the ladies and officers of the Princess's household became embarrassed, and yet were sometimes unable to control the laughter aroused by the amusing incidents.

The Duchess de Berry, who was at this time again pregnant, remained ill during April and May. The King called on her, and increased her pension by 200,000 *livres*, although on the day her consort died she already had 40,000 *livres* of income from her dowry, 40,000 *livres* of jointure, and 580,000 *livres* of pension.

Notwithstanding the serious precautions which this time were taken—for the Princess realized

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of what importance for her future the birth of a son would be—she was delivered before her time. Her regret was diminished, however, by the fact that the infant was a girl, who lived but twelve hours.

On this occasion the Princess Palatine wrote :

“I should be easily consoled if I had no other cause for pain than that produced by the premature accouchement of Mme. de Berry ; the infant is not to be pitied, for most assuredly it must be with God. Its mother looks fresh and well. I do not find her unhappy without child or husband. She has a higher rank than she had ambition for. She is the first [woman] in France ; she possesses 250,000 *livres* of income more than I have ; so she is very rich. She is young and in good health ; in regard to jewels she has the most beautiful anyone can have. I cannot think why she should be unhappy.”

Six weeks later the Duchess de Berry supped at Marly with the King in company with Mesdames de Saint-Simon, de la Vieuville, de Parabère and de Mouchy. The King “loaded her with favours and presents.” He gave orders that 400,000 *livres* of debts, contracted during her marriage, should be paid from the exchequer, and presented her with all the jewels and furniture that had belonged to her husband.

In addition he granted her a special favour,

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which she desired very much indeed, namely, that she should have her own Guards.

Be it weakness, or need of distraction on the King's part, or any other cause, the fact was that the Duchess de Berry was now as great a favourite with him as the charming Duchess de Bourgogne had been formerly. It seems, too, that Mme. de Maintenon shared that infatuation, for Dangeau says :

“A few days ago the Duchess had a long conversation with Mme. de Maintenon, and it is believed that they were both pleased with each other, and that Mme. de Maintenon found that the Princess has *beaucoup d'esprit*.”

It would be more reasonable to presume that Mme. de Maintenon, seeing that the King was near his grave, was bent on assuring her future by winning over the Duke d'Orléans through his well-beloved daughter, and that this was why she caressed the Princess.

The Duchess de Berry took advantage of Mme. de Maintenon's favour, and became so powerful at Marly that she was even able to change at will a programme prepared by the King—a thing which had never happened before.

She was first at all the *fêtes*, and when she accompanied the King in the park, she was followed by twelve carriages full of her ladies.



MARIE-ADELAÏDE DE SAVOIE, DUCHESS OF BOURGOGNE.

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She profited indeed by her favour with the King and Mme. de Maintenon to obtain from them the great privilege of having ladies in waiting specially attached to her person. The King readily agreed to it, and decided that she should have four ladies, each to be paid by him a salary of 4,000 *livres*. The Duchess chose the Countess de Brancas, Mme. de Coëtenfau, Mme. de Clermont d'Amboise, and Mme. de Pons. The King approved of her choice, and his affection for the Duchess seemed to become ever greater.

She had a true Court, and the number of ladies round her increased. She always accompanied the King, and chose the ladies who should follow her. Mme. de Parabère was very often amongst them. On June 15th, however, Dangeau wrote: "Mme. la Duchesse de Berry went to the hunt on horseback, with many ladies; but Mme de Parabère, who rides very well, was not selected by the Princess to follow her; though it seems that she was very friendly with her some months ago."

It is probable that the Duchess de Berry had learnt that Mme. de Parabère had become her father's mistress, and it is a fact that the Princess Palatine noted the commencement of this new amour of the Duke d'Orléans at the beginning of the winter of 1715, writing about it in the following very *piquant* manner:

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“A young and beautiful lady came to see my son in his cabinet. He made her a present of a diamond worth two thousand *louis d'or* and a box worth two hundred. The lady had a jealous husband, and was so brazen that she went to him and told him that some people, who were in need of money, had offered her the jewels for a trifle. And she begged him not to lose such a good opportunity. The husband believed it all, and gave his wife the money she asked. She thanked him heartily and took the money; then put the box in her bag and the diamonds on her fingers and at once went into distinguished company. She was asked where the box and the ring had come from. She answered: ‘M. de Parabère gave them to me.’ The husband was present, and he said: ‘Yes, it was I who gave them to her.’ Is it possible to do less when one has a wife of quality, who does not love her husband exclusively?”

Although the Duchess de Berry could not help seeing that the King was growing weaker every day, that the crown was about to pass to an infant—the little son of the deceased Duke and Duchess de Bourgogne—that the gravest complications threatened the State from the pretensions of the legitimized Princes and the Paris Parliament, her light-brained head

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could in this serious conjuncture think of nothing better than of effecting a revolution in feminine dress.

Woman has not changed, and when one thinks of her as she was two centuries back and compares her with our women of to-day, one sees that her principal occupation was, and is still, her toilette.

The Duchess de Berry gathered the Duchess d'Orléans—who for the sake of clothes had forgotten her daughter's behaviour towards her—the Princess de Conti and Mlle. de Charolais together in her apartments. The most skilful tailors and the most famous dressmakers had been asked to bring their models, and Berain, the designer to the Opera, was also invited. The Duchess de Berry's idea was to introduce military sashes and bows into feminine toilettes. On June 27th the new fashion was inaugurated at an inspection of a regiment of guards by the King. The Princess arrived on horseback, surrounded by numerous ladies, "who wore sashes as did the officers, and bows of the colour of fire on their shoulders."

On July 31st three different costumes were brought to the Duchess de Berry; she took one of them, the Duchess d'Orléans took another, and the Princess de Conti the third. The next day all three appeared at the King's supper in

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the new attire. Louis XIV. showed himself a good-natured Prince, and did not tell them very decidedly how ridiculous they appeared to him. "The King," says Dangeau, "informed these Princesses that they might dress as they liked, that they might adopt the clothes they thought most comfortable and most agreeable to them; that this was indifferent to him, but that for his own part he must say that he liked neither their aprons nor their sashes."

Those words alone reveal to us of what the innovations introduced by the Duchess de Berry consisted, for they did not meet with the general approval of the ladies of the Court, and were not transmitted to posterity by the medium of engravings in such wise that modern innovators have been unable to inflict on us the Duchess de Berry's odd tastes, as they have inflicted on us the *bizarceries* of other forgotten fashions.

But the King's death stopped the Duchess de Berry's efforts in the province of fashion. It was strange, however, that she did not call on her munificent benefactor as soon as he was taken ill, and that she did not even see him until all the Princes and Princesses of the blood were summoned to his death-bed, after the last sacraments had been administered to him for his journey into the future life.

CHAPTER XI

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—THE REGENCY BEGINS

DURING the last three days of Louis XIV.'s sickness the drawing-rooms of the Duke d'Orléans became full or empty by turns, according to the fluctuating state of the royal health. But on the evening of August 31st, 1715, the Palais-Royal was flooded with courtiers who hastened to the Duke d'Orléans, for they were now certain that Louis XIV. was about to die.

The most kingly King that ever sat on any throne expired on September 1st at a quarter past eight o'clock in the morning, that is four days before his seventy-seventh birthday and in the seventy-second year of his reign. Never before had Europe known either a reign so long as his nor a king so old as he.

On the same day, September 1st, there was

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a famous meeting of the Parliament of Paris, which assembled to decide on the validity of the monarch's testament.

Only those people who are endowed with little brains fail to admire the Duke d'Orléans for the intelligent skill with which he succeeded in grasping the supreme power in France. The future Regent displayed the most strenuous energy. The first President of Parliament, M. de Mesmes, was Mme. de Maintenon's creature, and it was useless to think of winning him over. M. de Guiche was much attached to the "bastards"—otherwise the legitimized Princes—but he was colonel of the French guards and consequently an important man. M. de Guiche therefore received 600,000 *livres*, and thereupon answered for his men. It was understood that most of the French Guards were to occupy the palace quietly, while the officers and the pick of the soldiers would remain in the hall, but in civilians' attire.

As for Presidents Maison and Le Peletier, they were devoted to the Duke d'Orléans, who called them his *pigeons privés*. D'Aguesseau was also his man, and Joly and Fleury had promised to speak in his favour. The young counsellors would not hesitate between *la Vieille*—as Mme. de Maintenon was called—and the Duke d'Orléans. The old counsellors would

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not resist the temptation of the right of admonition which was about to be restored to them. The peers, moreover, were about to be seduced by the prerogative, which was to be definitely accorded them, to remain covered while the President should ask for their votes.

Spain threatened that she would not recognize the Regency of the Duke d'Orléans on account of the old rancour which the King harboured against the Duke, who had flirted with his wife, but Lord Stair, in the name of Great Britain, had promised to uphold him, and agreed to be present at the sitting. Lord Stair was in great favour with Louis XIV. and owed that favour to a characteristic incident, which is worthy of being recounted once more for the edification of those who think that good manners are of no consequence. One day, someone said to Louis XIV. that Lord Stair was, of all diplomatists, the best-mannered man. "I will see," said Louis XIV.

The same evening Lord Stair was invited to drive with the King. When they came to the carriage, Lord Stair waited humbly, hat in hand, for the King to take his place. "Get in, Monsieur Stair," said the King brusquely.

Lord Stair at once passed before the King and entered the carriage.

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“They were right, sir,” said Louis XIV., “you are the politest man I know.”

It is clear that the politeness consisted in obeying the King immediately, without making the slightest protest, as would be done by people of inferior rank or age when asked by their seniors to pass first, although it was an unheard-of thing for anybody to precede Louis XIV.

The Duke d'Orléans passed the greater part of the night of August 31st with Cardinal de Noailles, with whom the last measures for the following day were agreed upon. Dawn found the Duke d'Orléans ready for the struggle which was about to begin. The Parliament assembled under the presidency of Jean-Antoine de Mesmes. The *lettre de cachet* officially announcing the death of Louis XIV. was read, and a little later the Duke d'Orléans was introduced with the honours due to a son of France. Then the Duke du Maine entered, followed by the Count de Toulouse.

The Duke d'Orléans seated himself above the Duke de Bourbon. M. de Guiche was at his post with his guardsmen.

The battle began by a speech from the president.

One knows the details of that memorable sitting, when the structure so laboriously reared

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by Mme. de Maintenon, Father Le Tellier and the "bastards," during ten years of patience and ability, was in a few hours pulled down. As Louis XIV. himself had foreseen, his will and its codicil were annulled.

The political and military authority was given to the Duke d'Orléans. By the King's will he was only to have been the President of the Council of Regency, by his own efforts he was appointed Regent. The command of the King's troops was to have been given to the Duke du Maine; Philippe d'Orléans was entrusted with it. Besides, the Regent was empowered to appoint anybody he liked to the Council of Regency, and even the inferior councillors of State.

The Duke d'Orléans showed himself a really superior man in regard to the Duke de Bourbon, who belonged to a *coterie* which had striven to injure his—the Regent's—reputation by means of the most wicked calumnies. It had been intended that the Duke de Bourbon should be admitted to the Council of Regency only on attaining his majority, but the Duke d'Orléans asked that he might be admitted at once, and this was granted. How generous!

As soon as the first decision of the Parliament was known in Paris there was general rejoicing. The Duke d'Orléans represented the

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future, namely the unknown, and the unknown—God willed it so for the happiness of human-kind—is hope.

The Duke du Maine represented the past, that is to say, Mme. de Maintenon and Father Le Tellier, the disasters of the War of Succession, dreadful famine and gloomy sadness.

The past was death; the future was life. Naturally enough, the appointment of the Duke d'Orléans as Regent was for the Duchess de Berry a source of intense joy, for she perceived that it might be possible for her to rule absolutely. She felt certain of her influence over her father, she was sure she would be able to prevail over her mother, and she was also convinced that she would nowhere encounter a force capable of counterbalancing her power.

At that moment she was but twenty years of age, but her manner of living had given her experience above what one would expect in a woman of her age.

Though tall and well-built, she was already too fat, and thus her movements lacked elegance. Her looks also revealed her character. But she was capable of expressing herself with great ease, as she pleased, with precision, fitness of terms, and originality.

This slight addition to the portrait already

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sketched of her in a previous chapter would not be complete without a quotation from that extraordinary writer Saint-Simon, who, like nobody either before or after him, was able to plunge so profoundly into the abysses of the human Ego and reveal its deepest secrets.

This is what he says of this very complex Princess :

“On one side timid in trifles, on the other she frightened one by her daring. Haughty to folly, low to the last degree of indecency, one could say—putting avarice aside—that she was a model of all the vices, which was the more dangerous as none could be more artful or possess more *esprit*.”

What a masterpiece of psychological observation expressed with matchless force! But also what a merciless indictment!

To this Madame adds: “Tell me if it be possible for hell to contain a worse devil than this woman; she is beginning well to follow in her mother’s footsteps.”

When one recollects what this same Madame had said to her when she was but a little girl, one is not so much surprised at the changes she had undergone, for psychological cataclysms often happen; nevertheless one becomes deeply grieved on thinking of the changeability of human nature.

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She had shown herself false, egotistical, irreligious, but at the same time superstitious; passionate and even violent to such a degree that she had made a slave of her father, whom she had treated with a haughtiness that frightened and afflicted those who saw it. She had domineered even over her mother, of whom she had merely felt a little afraid through fear of the King. Endowed with really superhuman pride—her mother's pride compared with hers was very mild—she had found nothing extraordinary in her marriage to the Duke de Berry, for she was convinced that she alone in all Europe was of sufficiently high rank to suit him, and she hated all those who had taken part in the negotiations concerning her union, for she regarded them as so many witnesses of the difficulties at which her *amour-propre* had suffered.

The thought of the King's death had frightened her for a long time, for she realized that if the Duke du Maine should secure supreme power—which would mean the triumph of her mother's party, in which her sister, the Duchess de Bourbon, was very active—her supremacy would be over. But as soon as she learnt that her father was made Regent, and that her uncle was badly defeated, she let her joy burst forth, without the slightest regret that

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her mother might suffer. Henceforth, indeed, the Duchess de Berry had but one notion: to usurp the rank of Queen and to rule the fashion and the pleasures of Paris without restraint.

CHAPTER XII

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—HER GUARDS AND HER LOVER

I N order to effect her purpose the Duchess de Berry asked her father to give her the Luxembourg Palace as a residence, which request was at once granted ; and so eager was she to get rid of her mother and the Princess Palatine, her grandmother, that she ordered that those who inhabited the Luxembourg should at once leave it.

As soon as she was settled, her terrible propensities began to develop. Her first caprice was to secure a detachment of Guards. The Duke d'Orléans, who could not refuse his well-beloved daughter anything, granted that request also.

The choice of the noblemen who were to act as her Guards became a serious matter for her, when it was decided that she should

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have officers to command them. This time her father hesitated in presence of the really extraordinary concession he was asked for, as hitherto none of the Daughters of France had possessed such a privilege. But as he was incapable of resisting the Duchess de Berry's caprices he gave in. The Marquis de la Rochefoucauld-Roye, who had succeeded La Haye in her favours, was appointed Captain, and the Chevalier de Courtaumer, Cornet of her Royal Highness's guard. The Lieutenancy remained to be filled up.

One morning while Mme. de Pons, one of the Duchess's ladies-in-waiting, was present at her toilette, she asked the Princess to give this lieutenancy to M. de Riom.

"Who may M. de Riom be?" asked the Princess, searching in her memory for a face that she could link with that name.

"He is a very good nobleman, madame la Duchesse; he is a *cadet* of the d'Aydie family, a son of the Count de Benanges and of Diane de Bautru de Nogent; his mother is a sister of Mme. de Biron's, so that M. de Riom is nephew of the old Duke de Lauzun."

"I am not asking you for his genealogy; you know I am fond of pleasant faces."

"I am obliged to confess to your Highness that M. de Riom is not exactly what is called

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a handsome boy, but I can assure you that he is *un homme sûr*."

"Very well, then, let the Count come to Paris ; I will see him."

Mme. de Pons, as one may easily surmise, hastened to write to her cousin, who, on his side, hastened to make the journey.

Mme. de Pons had done rightly in not praising M. de Riom's looks, for according to the Duke de Saint-Simon "he was a short fat boy, whose pale face greatly resembled an abscess on account of its numerous pimples." Madame depicted him as being even more ugly. "I cannot understand," she wrote, "how anyone could love this *drôle* ; he has neither face nor figure ; he looks like a water ghost, for he is yellow and green in the face ; his mouth, his nose and eyes are like those of a Chinaman ; one might take him for a baboon rather than for the Gascon that he is. He is a coxcomb, and void of *esprit*. He has a big head set between broad shoulders ; it is noticeable that he cannot see well. In a word, he is a very ugly *drôle* ; but they say that he is very strong, and that this charms all the debauched women."

At the same time the Count de Riom had beautiful teeth ; and he was then a gentle, respectful, polished, obliging, honest boy. He

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never fancied that he could inspire a passion, and so, on noticing that the Princess was in love with him, he felt amazed at his good luck, and went off to see his uncle, the old Duke de Lauzun, so famous for his love affair with la Grande Mademoiselle.

The Duke reflected for a while; then, seeing that he had revived in his nephew, he said to him :

“ You ask me for advice ? ”

“ Yes, uncle.”

“ Well, behave, then, as I behaved.”

“ How shall I behave ? ”

“ You must be supple, complaisant and respectful as long as you are not the Princess’s favourite, but as soon as you are, you must change your tone and manners; you must be as strong-willed as a master and as capricious as a woman.”

The Count de Riom bowed to the old and experienced courtier and withdrew.

His favour with the Duchess de Berry was soon complete, and it is easy to ascertain the exact date of its beginning, by stating that on July 29, 1716, he changed his modest rank of Lieutenant of the Princess’s Guards for that of Colonel of the Soissonais regiment, for which post his mistress paid 30,000 *livres* on the date mentioned.

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He was amiable, simple and modest towards everybody at the Luxembourg ; but, being well informed as to the Princess's character, he followed his uncle's advice in her respect, assuming towards her the same attitude as the Duke de Lauzun had assumed towards la Grande Mademoiselle.

While she was constantly anxious to prove her attachment to him, by giving him precious lace, rich clothes, jewels and money, he received everything very haughtily and tried to make her jealous, pretending that he was jealous also. He behaved, too, so as to make himself desired by her, and purposely refrained from keeping appointments. He scolded her and made her weep ; he even maltreated her ; in a word, he tamed her, and never did that haughty woman dare to complain. On the contrary, she surrendered to all his caprices, which he pitilessly multiplied. If she were ready to go to the Opera, he made her stay at the Luxembourg ; at another time he would force her to go to the Opera if she wished to remain at home. He often ordered her to change her toilette or her coiffure when she was already dressed ; and this happened so often that, at last, she would send to him in the morning for his orders as to what she should wear and how she should spend her day.

Even the prolific fancy of Shakespeare could

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not have devised a better means of taming that shrew.

Meantime, however, the Duchess de Berry multiplied her fêtes and gambled with such frenzy that on one occasion, says Buvat, she lost as much as 180,000 *livres* on a turn of the cards to the ambassador of Portugal.

She put no curb on her love of luxury and domination, and Madame writes: "She amuses herself as much as she wishes: one day she hunts, on another she promenades, on a third she repairs to a fair; sometimes she goes to see some tight-rope dancers or else the Comedy, and sometimes the Opera, *mais toujours en corps et en écharpe.*"

Her unbridled fancy suggested to her the oddest toilettes and equipages. It once became her idea to wear and have everything about her white; and consequently all was white and silver in her apartments, her carriage and harness were of silver, the servants wore white liveries, and her horses also were white. Then, however, she changed everything to gold.

Her perverse inclinations found a great abettor in Mme. de Mouchy, in whom she had entire confidence, and of whom the Duke de Saint-Simon wrote: "Besides being addicted to gallantry and licentiousness of the table, Mme. de Mouchy had a talent and resource-

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fulness for inventions of the most horrible blackness ; a peerless effrontery and an avidity in her own interest, which made her undertake anything with all the *esprit*, and art of intrigue proper for success ; she always had a purpose, and never said or did anything without design, no matter how trifling or indifferent what she said or did might seem ”

All the contemporary writers agree that Mme. de Mouchy was an intriguer of the worst and most dangerous kind.

In order to show that she was now the first Princess in the kingdom, the Duchess de Berry requested that the child-King might come to the Luxembourg to see her the second time he left the Tuileries ; his first visit being due to the Palais-Royal, where the Regent resided.

A few days later she drove out of the Luxembourg, in spite of Mme. de Saint-Simon's pressing remonstrances, surrounded by her Guards and preceded by drummers beating their drums.

The King's Governor, Marshal de Villeroy, complained of this to the Regent, who admitted that nobody had the right to have drummers in a town where the sovereign resided. On this occasion he spoke so severely to his daughter that she was obliged to relinquish that noisy usurpation. But resolved as she was that she would not be beaten, the moment she

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made a concession to her father she thought she had a right to attempt an innovation in another direction.

It was thus that she devised a new ceremonial for her appearance at the French Comedy. She repaired there in a *grande toilette*; a canopy was set over her box; four of her Guards stood sentry-wise on the stage, others were in the auditorium, and before the play began one of the actors came forward and delivered a speech in her honour. The public were very much surprised at this, and signified their appreciation of the Princess's fancy in such a manner that she never again appeared at the Comedy, in order to show that she did not relinquish what she considered her right.

Then came an adventure with the Prince de Conti. One evening when the Duchess de Berry was driving to the Opera preceded by her Guards, they stopped the Prince de Conti's carriage and maltreated his coachman, who wished to continue his journey. According to etiquette the Prince should have let the Princess pass first, but, on the other hand, her Guards should have been satisfied with stopping the carriage without maltreating the servant, and the Princess should not have permitted them to do so.

The Prince de Conti complained to the

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Regent, who compelled his daughter to receive the Prince in her box. Dangeau says: "He came, and the conversation took place in public, *fort mal à propos*, for, speaking frankly, in spite of all her wit she came out of it very badly. She reproached the Prince for not having come to her; she wished to accuse his coachman and to excuse her Guards; then, seeing that she was not successful and that M. le Duc d'Orléans meant to be obeyed, she told the Prince de Conti that as he wished her Guards to go to prison, they should do so, but she begged of him that they might not remain there."

The Guardsmen entered and left the prison at the same moment, but the Princess's pride was curbed.

All those incidents produced a bad effect, and ill-disposed the public towards the Regent, whose weakness with his daughter was well known.

Meanwhile she hunted in the Saint-Germain forest with the King's hounds, and organized cavalcades in the Bois de Boulogne, where men and women solicited the favour of accompanying her. Then she had a new caprice. She imitated her father's fancy to go about everywhere unceremoniously. She became fond of hearing what people said of her, and often

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walked *incognito* in the gardens of her palace in order to listen to the conversation there.

The Count de Maurepas tells us that one evening "the Duchess de Berry, accompanied by Mesdames de la Rochefoucauld, de Mouchy and d'Arpajon, remained quite late in the Luxembourg gardens and were accosted by some young men *qui mirent les mains sous les jupes*; they shouted for help, but the men escaped through the Porte d'Enfer and could not be apprehended."

In order to be free in her own gardens the Princess then ordered that the gates should be closed to the public, which aroused great indignation, and prompted some scurrilous songs, as is shown by the following stanza :

Si l'on fait fermer les portes
Du jardin du Luxembourg,
C'est cette grosse jaufflotte
Qui nous a joué ce tour.

At the same time the Duke de Bourbon, wishing to spite the Princess, ordered that his gardens, situated in the Rue de Condé, should be opened to the public, and circulated the most wicked insinuations in order to explain the step taken by the Duchess de Berry.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REGENT'S SUPPERS

A GREAT deal has been written by sensational writers about the Regent's suppers, which have often been described as orgies, but nobody has emphasized the fact that when the Duke d'Orléans worked he became very ardent, like all men of imagination and energy.

He began his work in bed ; then during his *lever* he received people. This was followed by audiences which took up much of his time ; then the heads of the Council kept him in turn until two o'clock, when, instead of dining, as he used formerly, he took only a cup of chocolate. After the chocolate, half an hour was given to the Duchess d'Orléans and half an hour to the Princess Palatine, when she lived at the Palais Royal.

Next M. de la Vrillière and M. Le Blanc,

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who directed the Regent's secret service, had an audience, followed by M. de Torcy, with whom it was his custom to open his correspondence. Then came M. de Villeroy, for nothing—unless it were to strut about, as Saint-Simon puts it. Once a week the Duke received the foreign ministers and sometimes presided over the council.

In that way he remained busy until seven o'clock. Does any modern Republican president or even minister work as long?

On Sundays the Duke d'Orléans attended Mass in his private chapel. Sometimes in the morning before starting work, and sometimes in the evening when work was done, the Duke would call upon the young King. This greatly delighted Louis XV., for the Regent almost always brought him a beautiful plaything. Sometimes, too, he told his Majesty an amusing story, and all this made the little King wait impatiently for the Regent's visits. The Duke never left the King without many bows and marks of profound respect.

In his *Journal de la Régence*, Jean Buvat speaks as follows of the Duke d'Orléans' sentiments for Louis XV. :

“The Regent had a true affection for the royal child, even at the expense of his own son, the Duke de Chartres, against whom he was so

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prejudiced that he would sometimes upbraid him for having united in his person all the faults of the other Princes of the blood—‘the hunch of the Prince de Conti, the harsh voice of the Duke de Bourbon, and the savagery of M. de Charolais.’”

D’Argenson has related that he one day heard him saying to himself: “How could I wish that my son should reign to the prejudice of this amiable child, who is to-day my natural master?”

After his work was finished the Regent would go either to the Opera or else into the country.

“As soon as the hour of supper arrived,” says Saint-Simon, “everything was so barricaded from within that no matter what unlooked-for affair might arise it was useless to try to penetrate to the Regent. I do not mean merely private affairs, but those which might be dangerously interesting for the State or for his person.”

Let us now see what those famous or infamous suppers were, and what proofs there are at the command of the writers who are bold enough to qualify the opprobrium they have heaped upon the Regent as honest conviction, based on irrefutable evidence. In the first place, none but the Regent’s friends were

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admitted to those suppers; even servants were absolutely excluded; the guests not only had to serve themselves, but even to cook the food, for which purpose silver utensils were provided. The names of the Regent's friends, whom he quaintly called *roués*, have passed to posterity together with their characteristics and peculiarities, but none of them has left any evidence in writing as to what happened at the suppers in which they participated.

It is true that the Duke de Saint-Simon has given us a lengthy description of them, but it must be emphatically stated that the malicious duke was never present at any of the suppers he so vividly describes. How, then, could he know what the *roués* said and did? That they drank, even to excess, one cannot deny, but some people drink, even to excess, in our would-be virtuous times.

Yes, they told stories, they gossiped, but gossip and story-telling are always welcome at any table, and especially after a good repast and numerous toasts.

There is a volume of scurrilous verse called *Les Philippiques*, written by Joseph Chancel de la Grange, which has inspired salacious writers with extraordinarily glaring descriptions of those *saturnales augustes*, as La Grange put it. But anybody with any common-sense

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could see at a glance that the *Philippiques* are not historical evidence, but a product of a mind distorted by wickedness. A few allusions of a general character in contemporary Memoirs do not constitute positive evidence, for no writer says that he ever saw this or that with his own eyes.

But supposing that the description of the *Jugement de Paris* were true, and that Mme. de Parabère represented Juno, that the Duchess de Berry embodied Venus, and Mme. d'Avernes Minerva, then indignation should be changed into rapture at the artistic taste of the *roués*, who, notwithstanding their copious libations, did not become drunken brutes but remained refined beings.

Other proofs of the witty culture of that period are to be found in the nicknames given to the *convives* at those *émoustillants* gatherings, as Saint-Simon has styled them. Thus the Duchess de Berry was called Sainte Commode ; Mme. de Parabère, Sainte Nitouche ; Mme. de Villefranche, Sainte Facile ; Mme. de Courcillon, Sainte Modeste ; Mme. d'Estrées, Sainte Contente ; Mme. de Gracé, Sainte Fringante ; Mme. de Castelnau, Sainte Eveillée ; the Princesse de Rohan, Sainte Accroupie ; Mme. de la Vrillière, Sainte Fidèle ; Mme. de Jonzac, Sainte Fillette ; Mme. de Chevillard, Sainte

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Finette ; and Mme. d'Armagnac, Sainte Pleureuse.

Then, how amusing, too, are the wittily invented fancy addresses of those ladies and gentlemen : The Duchess de Berry inhabited au Puits d'Amour ; the Prince de Conti, au Singe vert, Rue de la Savonnerie ; Mme. de Polignac, au Cœur-Volant, Rue Perdue ; the Duke du Maine, au Diable Boiteux, Vallée de Misère ; Mlle. de Montbrun, à la Femme Pucelle, Rue de Bœuf ; Mme. de Gracé, à la Guinguette, Rue de l'Égout, and Mme. de la Vrillière, à la Petite-Vertu, Rue Gracieuse.

The usual *roués* of the Duke d'Orléans were the Duke de Brancas, called *la caillette gaie* ; the Marquis de Canillac, called *la caillette triste* ; the Duke de Broglie, called Bronglion, the beau Fargis, Effiat, Nocé and the Chevalier de Simiane, who wrote good verses and drank hard. The Marquis de la Fare was called *le bon enfant* ; Fargis was a young man styled *le mieux fait de son temps* and as *galant homme* as one could be in those times. The Duke de Brancas was a charming voluptuary, a perfect epicure, who plucked the flowers of life without accepting any of its duties that might disturb his egotism. Nor did he care for any bother that might interfere with his lazy ways.

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Did the Regent attempt to confide in him, 'Hush, monseigneur!' he would say, "I could never keep my own secrets, consequently I am not fit to keep anyone else's."

If somebody wished to talk to him of State affairs, "*Tout beau!*" he would answer; "affairs bore me and life is given one to enjoy."

Some of his friends would beg of him to ask a favour from the Prince. "It's useless," answered M. de Brancas; "I am much in favour, but have no influence."

At the end, however, of two or three years of such a life, the Duke de Brancas repented and became a devotee, withdrew to the Abbaye du Bec, and wrote to the Duke d'Orléans, exhorting him to give up the world and repent as he had done! The Regent limited his answer to the refrain of a song which was very popular at that period:

Reviens, Philis! en faveur de tes charmes,
Je ferai grâce à ta légèreté. . . .

The Duke de Brancas was one of the most handsome men at Court, but not very *galant* towards women.

After de Brancas came the Marquis de Canillac. He was captain of a company of the King's Mousquetaires; the expression of his face was gentle, his wit was agreeable, and his

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conversation courteous; he told stories with a particularly gracious facility; provided with magnificent teeth, he pleased people while tearing them to pieces; he was very fond of pleasure and good food, but affected austere frugality, at which he sometimes laughed himself.

The Regent called him his Mentor, for he was but a moderate drinker and prevented excesses, says the Count de Maurepas in his "Memoirs."

When Law's Bank became embarrassed M. de Canillac said to Law: "Monsieur Law, I myself have long contracted bills and not paid them; you have stolen my system."

The Duke de Broglie resembled an owl and a monkey combined. A gambler and a libertine, riddled with debts, he often spent his nights in gambling dens, which made him sad during the day; but in the evening, glass in hand, his conversation sparkled like the wine which he carried to his mouth so frequently that the hardest drinkers admired him.

The Count de Nocé was tall and dark, or, rather, as the Princess Palatine said, green, black and yellow; he had grand manners and a haughty impertinence; his wit vented itself in bitter sallies. Having been educated with the Regent—his father was the Duke's governor—he had great influence over him. Whenever

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the Regent went out at night it was Count de Nocé who accompanied him ; he was the Giaffar of that Haroun-al-Raschid.

Yet another *convive* worthy of remembrance was Cossé de Brissac, a Knight of Malta, who amidst the extremes of carousing preserved the chivalrous manners of his forefathers.

“To these a detachment of the *filles de l'Opéra* was sometimes joined,” says the author of the “Memoirs” of the Duke de Richelieu, “in order to enliven the company. One also saw among it some comedians and other personages, who, without being distinguished by birth, could shine by their light wit and appropriate repartees.”

Judging by the characteristics of the principal *roués* one may logically infer that the Regent's *convives* were not drunken boors—as they are usually represented—especially as they were under the supervision of the Prince, who never forgot his manners of a *grand seigneur*, as may be gathered from the careful perusal of the contemporary Memoirs, which, with the exception of certain scurrilous and base writings, praise his amiable and polished behaviour.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REGENT'S MISTRESSES

MME. DE CAYLUS, speaking of the Regent and the Duchess de Berry, says: "From her birth onward he had a peculiar friendship for her, and, in proportion as she grew older, he made her his *confidante* in regard to his tastes, and permitted her to witness all his actions. She saw him with his mistresses: he often asked her to visit him when he was with Mme. d'Argenton."

There can be no doubt that the Duchess de Berry, fond as she was of feasting and even of copious libations, took part in the Regent's gay suppers; but this circumstance is also a logical argument that they were not so dreadful as some writers have described them, for however profligate the Duke d'Orléans may have been, one cannot admit that he was so basely

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corrupt as to allow his daughter—although a matured and married woman—to witness degrading scenes.

One of the foremost ladies who participated in the Regent's amusing suppers was Mme. de Parabère, whom he called his *petit corbeau-noir* after his first glass of champagne, and his *gigot* when he was drinking his last.

Mme. de Parabère, as her nickname indicates, was little, graceful, slender, daring and *prompte à la repartie*; she ate and drank with admirable zest, and thanks to those qualities, and others respecting which one must be silent, she domineered over the Regent. There is just one other quality—perhaps the greatest, when one reflects on the greed of women—that should not be forgotten: she loved the Regent for himself and not for the sake of lucre, being in that respect, indeed, *Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno!*

For the same reason Émilie Souris, usually referred to as La Souris, may be described as another *rara avis*. She had come from Rennes and was a dancer at the Opera, but *sage* and full of sentimentality. She was one of the women whom the volatile Regent loved the longest, but she accepted only one gift from him.

We read in the "Memoirs" de Richelieu:

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“When the Duke d’Orléans met Émilie, he presented her with some earrings worth 15,000 *livres*; but she refused them, telling her *prince charmant* that they were not made for her, as they were too beautiful. Instead of them she begged him to give her 10,000 *livres*, in order that she might be able to purchase a house at Pantin, where she wished to die when she should no longer have the happiness to be loved by him, for, after enjoying the kindness of so great a prince, there would never be anybody worthy of succeeding him. The Regent thereupon kissed her tenderly, and sent her 25,000 *livres*. She, however, returned 15,000 of them, saying that he had made a mistake and that she would never accept anything else from him.”

Yet another gay inamorata of the Prince’s was Mme. d’Averne, an adorable young woman, full of grace, with fine fair hair—the most beautiful hair in the world. Her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, and her waist so small that one could encircle it with a garter. To her voice, which was sweet and tender, a slight Provençal accent contributed a peculiar charm. Her physiognomy, which was susceptible to emotion, became charming when it was animated; and when, in some sweet, tender reverie, her blue eyes were veiled with a humid mist, when her

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lips, in parting, permitted one to perceive the string of pearls within them, she no longer seemed to be a woman, but the very personification of voluptuousness. Some of the girl's heads painted by Greuze might give an idea of Mme. d'Averne. The Duke d'Orléans became so fond of her that Buvat wrote: "Mme. d'Averne is always with the Regent, who promenades her publicly at the Tuileries."

As for Mme. de Sabran she also was very young, but she had a disposition that gave her quite a *réputation galante*. She had escaped from her mother in order to marry a man with a great name, but possessed of nothing; this marriage, however, made her free, which was all she desired. She was of charming appearance, endowed with perfect beauty, a beauty that was at the same time regular, pleasing and touching, with a natural air and simple manners. She was also insinuating and witty, and somewhat *débauchée*, in a word, such as was necessary to please the Regent.

The Duke d'Orléans appointed M. de Sabran his *maître d'hôtel*, with a salary of 2,000 crowns, which Mme. de Sabran thought right to draw for herself. It was she who, during one of the Regent's suppers, launched—to the great delight of the company—the aphorism which has already been quoted in the form given to it by

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Marais : " God, after forming man, took the rest of the mud and made princes and lackeys of it."

Mme. de Phalaris, another of the Regent's favourites, was a tall, serious-looking woman, always covered with patches, *empanachée de plumes*, proud of her influence at Court, pretentious and prudish and affecting principles which everybody knew she did not possess, and in which she alone seemed to believe.

However, all those women, no matter how attractive they were, had very little influence over the Duke d'Orléans, who did not ruin himself for them, and did not allow them to meddle in State affairs. In that regard he was as wise as Napoleon I., and this must be also inscribed to his credit.

That his so-called *saturnales augustes* were not so disgusting as they are represented by evil-minded writers may be inferred from many pictures and engravings, full of lively mirth, such as one painted by Lancret, who represented the Regent seated at table with seven gay companions. This picture, called *Partie de Plaisirs*,* was set over a mantelpiece in the dining-room of the Château de Champlatreux, which is situated on the bank of the Seine, not very far from Paris. The Château de Champlatreux was the property of the Duke d'Orléans,

* See Frontispiece.

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and he often received his guests there, especially his inamorata Mme. de Parabère. The park of eight *hectares* was surrounded by a wall, in which, in the rear of the house, there was a small door, by which the Regent would enter in order not to be seen.

The only woman represented in the painting called *Partie de Plaisirs* is Mme. de Parabère, who at one time occupied the Château de Champlatreux. She stands behind her husband, holding up her left hand, two fingers of which form two horns, while with her right hand she caresses her husband's chin. The Duke and his companions are laughing heartily at this joke, of which the deceived husband is not conscious. Hence the mirth of those who are seated at the same table.

One certainly cannot say that this picture expresses the whole spirit of the Regent's *parties de plaisir*, and that it was painted after an actual scene; but one may well infer that if the Regent's suppers could inspire a painter like Lancret with such a diverting picture, the much-abused entertainments which the Duke d'Orléans gave after a hard day's work, were not altogether so horrible as sensational writers wish us to believe.

CHAPTER XV

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—MAGNIFICENCE AND REPENTANCE

IT was in the midst of such society that the Duchess de Berry lived and ruled, always influencing her father—whose love for her seemed to increase—and outwardly imposing her will and caprices on everybody, though secretly governed by Mme. de Mouchy and completely dominated by M. de Riom.

Her taste for luxury and enjoyment knew no bounds. She frequently attended balls, such as one given by the Portuguese Ambassador to celebrate the birthday of the heir to the throne, and another of unheard-of luxury given in her own honour at the residence of the dowager Princess de Conti, at Issy. A description of it is to be found in Dangeau's *Journal*, in which one reads that she drove to it in a marvellous

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coach, the springs of which were gilded, while the harness of the horses was embroidered with gold. Moreover, she still hunted furiously, placing no restraint on her life of pleasure.

However, her greatest sin was her extraordinary gluttony, of which her grandmother speaks very plainly: "It would be impossible to enjoy good health with her atrocious greediness. She sits down to the table at eight or nine o'clock every evening and goes on eating until three o'clock in the morning." Again: "Her illness was caused by having eaten and drunk too much."

As soon as she awoke in the morning all sorts of things were brought to her to eat. She would rise at twelve o'clock and eat until three, then return to her apartment, where she rested, lying on a couch, and at four o'clock fruit, cream, salads and other things were served to her.

She never went to bed before two o'clock at the earliest. She greatly disliked all kinds of exercise except hunting, and nobody but her mother was lazier than she.

She hardly ever dressed for dinner, in which respect Madame, her grandmother, was very exacting, for as she rightly said: "A Princess should be dressed as a Princess, and a *soubrette*

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en soubrette.” A good lesson for those among modern Princesses who dress like shop or chorus girls, and sometimes even like *cocottes*.

However, it must not be inferred that the Duchess de Berry was invariably slovenly. No, she knew how to be a great princess on February 27th, 1717, when she went to Versailles with the young King, for the christening of the Marchioness de Mouchy's daughter. She arrived there in a magnificent coach entirely of silver colour, and escorted by her Guards; and she wore a robe of gold tissue, covered with precious stones, her *coiffure* being resplendent with jewels, as the *Nouveau Mercure de France* described. Another example of her princely magnificence was given in 1718, when she gave a ball at the Luxembourg Palace in honour of the Duchess of Lorraine, the Regent's sister. The magnificence of this *fête* was so great that the *Mercure* devoted a considerable part of its issues of March and April to descriptions of the splendour, which surpassed anything of the kind previously seen.

There was one table of a hundred and twenty-five covers for the ladies with whom the Princes of the blood dined, besides other tables for the many other guests.

It may interest gastronomists to read just a

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part of the *menu* as set out in verse by the editor of the *Mercur*e :

Des filets minces d'aloyau ;
Des gendarmes au jus de veau ;
Petits dindons aux ciboulettes,
Et des anchois en allumettes ;
Poulets de grain, mets excellent,
Cuits derrière le pot cassant ;
Pigeon au soleil, chose exquise ;
Des côtelettes en surprise.

By way of supplementing that culinary effusion one may add that the first service included a hundred and thirty-two *hors-d'œuvre*, thirty-one soups, sixty *entrées* ; while at the two following services there were a hundred and thirty hot *entremets*, sixty cold *entremets* and seventy-two *plats ronds*. The dessert consisted of a hundred baskets of fresh fruit, ninety-four baskets of dried fruit, fifty dishes of *fruits glacés* and a hundred and six *compotes*. Two hundred Swiss carried the dishes, and a hundred and thirty-two lackeys served the wines. We read also that three hundred and twenty-seven fowls, three hundred and eighty-two pigeons, three hundred and seventy partridges and pheasants and one hundred and twenty-six sweetbreads were served.

The palace was splendidly illuminated both within and without ; there was a concert before

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the supper and a fancy dress ball afterwards ; the ladies who sat at the table with the Duchess de Berry were magnificently dressed ; the ball lasted till morning, and cost, so Dangeau says, no less than 20,000 crowns.

A few days later, when the Duchess of Lorraine visited the Duchess de Berry at the Château de la Muette, her residence near the Bois de Boulogne, she found in her apartment "a magnificent chest of drawers, filled with scarves, aprons, handkerchiefs, *palatines*, *fichus*, ribands and *crevés*, with *déshabillés* and all sorts of *galanteries* of that kind." From this one sees that the old-time Princes and Princesses, so greatly censured by modern writers, knew how to be both magnificent and munificent.

It would seem that at this time there was an interesting psychological evolution in the Duchess de Berry, for we read in Madame's correspondence : "I am satisfied with my granddaughter de Berry ; she behaved very well to my children the Lorraines : she is possessed of judgment, and manifests a return towards religion and disgust of vice." Then, in another place : "She has done all her duty by her mother." Again, in another letter : "She behaves very well in my presence and forgets nothing in order to show me her affection, consequently I love her sincerely."

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On June 21st, 1717, the Palatine wrote of the Duchess: "During her mother's illness she took care of her with all the zeal of a grey sister. I should be very ungrateful if I felt no attachment for her, for she gives me all possible marks of friendship, and often shows me such politeness that I am moved by it."

The valuable correspondence between the Marquis d'Argenson and the Marchioness de la Cour de Balleroy, preserved in the Mazarin Library in Paris, includes a letter which explains the Duchess de Berry's psychological evolution towards religion, and, as a consequence, towards finer sentiments, which hitherto it had not been her wont to cultivate.

On January 9th, 1717, the Marquis d'Argenson wrote: "People speak of a great conversion at the Luxembourg: Father Massillon was the instrument of it. Truly, never before did a priest or a monk conduct an affair better. After several 'retreats' at the Carmelites he has persuaded the Duchess de Berry that it was necessary for her to marry to efface her sin. She has married Riom. I tell you this, as I have seen the wedding-dress, which was very beautiful."

This testimony shows that Massillon—the most eloquent preacher of the French church after Bossuet—succeeded where nobody else was

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able. He not only removed the Duchess's sin, but also led her on the road of religion, and it was due to him that, accompanied by her two ladies-in-waiting, she often visited the Convent of the Carmelites, to whom she would say mirthfully: "I bring you my two *bourgeoises*."

The Duke de Saint-Simon, who knew so much, was not apparently acquainted with this detail of the Duchess's life—her marriage with Riom. He wrote of her, however: "She does not cease to live at the Luxembourg in luxury and with the Carmelites in penitence, in that way offering a surprising contrast."

The precise Dangeau carefully notes each of the Duchess's acts of piety, and one reads in his *Journal*: "During all this time she edified them [the nuns]; *elle fit ses Paques** on Thursday, and on Friday she fasted on bread and water." Then again: "This Princess's piety continues and increases."

One also reads in the Count de Maurepas's *Mémoires*: "During the last years of her life she took an apartment at the Carmelites in the Rue de Grenelle; and whenever she was in a mood of devotion she would retire there. She would weep there like a Magdalene; pray to

* To confess, receive absolution, and partake of the Communion during the Easter season.

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God like a saint, thus living in a strange commingling of devotion and profligacy.”

Yes, it was a commingling of devotion and profligacy, even as our Ego is a mixture of the spiritual and the material, of the sublime and the vile, of the exalted and the low, of the divine and the diabolical.

The change in the Duchess de Berry was complete. In her earlier years she had disliked all religious practices. Married to a pious Prince, she had delighted in preventing him from going to Church ; she would cause him to miss Mass, and deceive him during fast-days by giving him meat. “ She mocked him and made him break a fast by her caresses, her complaisance or the embarrassment produced by her sour *plaisanteries*, and as this did not happen without some strife, and he did not give way without evincing pain and scruples, there ensued an increase of *raillerie*, at which he was distressed. She did everything to destroy the religious bent of M. le Duc de Berry.”

Her husband's death did not make any impression on her ; even its suddenness did not affect her. The only change she made in her life was to increase its gaiety. Now, however, all that was changed, and the Count de Maurepas wrote : “ Notwithstanding her liber-

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tine character she was often rent by remorse. Brought up partly in the principles of the old, and partly in those of the new Court, she was tormented in turn by fits of religious libertinism and of libertinism without religion. Whenever she came under the influence of repentance, she would leave the world and turn to the God of sinners, with whom she became reconciled; one then saw her bury herself in the depths of a Carmelite convent, where she fasted and prayed, rose during the night to recite the office with the nuns, moaned over the mistakes of her past life, and flogged herself; then, however, when the need of pleasure tormented her again she resuscitated as from another world, put her rosaries and her confessors aside, returned to Riom and held her Court. In this manner her short life was spent in continual alternations of repentance and enjoyment."

One need not wonder, then, that Mme. de Maintenon, who was aware of the Duchess de Berry's religious accesses, should have written to M. de Caylus:

"Who knows if we shall not see Mme. de Berry become a saint?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—HER MARRIAGE AND HER DEATH

HAVING put sin out of her life and tranquillized her conscience by secretly marrying her former lover, the Count de Riom—which occurred towards the end of 1716—the Duchess de Berry ardently desired that her marriage might be made public. Here, however, we find ourselves in presence of a curious psychological problem, which is that the Duke d'Orléans, that *débonnaire* Prince, that loving father who usually granted all the caprices of his beloved daughter, no matter how strange they might be, absolutely refused to accede to her entreaties respecting her matrimonial position.

The Count de Riom, following the advice of his uncle, the Duke de Lauzun, also made strenuous efforts to have the marriage declared,



Mlle. D'ORLÉANS, THE DUCHESS DE BERRY.

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and the Princess, wishing to satisfy his desire, in order to obtain some alleviation from the whimsical exigencies of his tyrannical nature, seconded him whole-heartedly. She besought her father, she stormed at him, she wept bitterly, but all in vain. The Duke d'Orléans not only refused to grant her request, but forbade her even to mention to anybody that she was married.

Strange to say, that impetuous woman, whose only law was usually her own sweet will, obeyed her father, and when Madame, having heard some gossip respecting the marriage, mentioned it to her, she replied :

“ Ah! Madame, have I not the honour to be sufficiently well known to you? Can you believe me capable of such a stupid move, I, who am accused of such intense pride? ”

“ In that manner, ” continues Madame, “ she hoodwinked me, and I could not believe the gossip. Her father and mother would not for all eternity have consented to such impertinence. Riom made her believe, however, that he was of the House of Aragon, that the King of Spain was the usurper of his kingdom, and that if they were married they might claim it. La Mouchy talked to her about it night and day. ”

Wilfully tortured by Riom, “ who every day deliberately made her suffer such caprices that

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she was deprived of all freedom, and whose brutal humour every day made her weep," as Saint-Simon writes, the Duchess de Berry became neurotic; she felt frightened of death, and even the rumbling of thunder filled her with painful apprehensions. This nervousness, combined with advanced pregnancy, made her fall dangerously ill at the end of March, 1720. Buvat says in his *Journal* that "for three hours she was as dead."

Under these circumstances, the *curé* of Saint-Sulpice was summoned to the Luxembourg, but as certain sinners, said he, were in the palace, he demanded their expulsion before crossing the threshold with the sacraments. The Regent tried to dissuade him from so stern a course, but the *curé* remained firm. The Regent then sent for Cardinal de Noailles, but the prelate approved of the *curé's* conduct, and declared aloud, in the presence of several people, that he forbade, under canonical penalties, any priest to administer the sacraments to the Duchess de Berry as long as M. de Riom and Mme. de Mouchy remained in the Luxembourg. "One may judge," says Saint-Simon, "of the effect of such a scandal, and the embarrassment of M. le Duc d'Orléans."

A fresh consultation began between the three personages to decide who should communicate

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the decision to the sick Princess, who meantime had confessed to a Carmelite monk. The increasing danger and the Princess's fright at the apprehension of death at last induced the Duke d'Orléans to convey the disagreeable message to his daughter. He opened the door a little, and called Mme. de Mouchy, to whom he communicated the decision which had to be complied with. She, however, became angry, "upbraided him, and told him what she thought both of him and of the affront that those *cagots* wished to inflict on herself and Mme. la Duchesse, who would never consent to it."

However, she agreed to deliver the message to the Duchess, and a few moments later "a negative answer was returned to the Duke d'Orléans through a door set a little ajar."

The Cardinal reproached the Regent for having chosen such an intermediary in an affair of such great importance and urged him, in the name of the highest considerations, to intervene personally, and thereby fulfil the duty of a father to a daughter who was about to appear before God.

The Regent, who did not feel that he had enough courage to see his daughter, twice refused to do so; and the Cardinal then proposed that he should see the Princess. This, however, filled the Duke with fresh apprehension.

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He feared a fatal crisis for his daughter, and he said that he would negotiate. "He therefore went to hold another colloquy at the door, but with no greater success. Mme. la Duchesse de Berry became furious, abused the *cafards* who took advantage of her condition and their character to dishonour her by an unheard-of scandal, and not even sparing her father, upbraided him for his stupidity and weakness. . . . M. le Duc d'Orléans returned to the Cardinal, feeling very small and grieved."

He represented to the prelate that his daughter was too weak and begged him to wait. After two hours of useless efforts, however, the Cardinal decided that to wait longer would be indecent for one of his station, and he withdrew, after loudly enjoining the *curé* not to administer the sacraments before obtaining full satisfaction.

When the Cardinal had gone the Duke d'Orléans rushed eagerly into his daughter's bed-chamber. It is impossible to say what happened between them, but it is surmised that the whole conversation concerned the Regent's refusal to make his daughter's marriage public. However, although his beloved child seemed to be near the grave, he remained firm, even at that supreme moment.

When he left the bedroom he found the *curé*

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posted at the door and resolved not to leave it, even for a moment, lest some other priest, unfamiliar with the circumstances, should be called to administer the sacraments. The *curé* remained at his post for four days and four nights, absenting himself only for a short time to take his meals, and then leaving at the door two priests of whom he was quite sure.

The father's obstinacy was equal to that of the daughter; he, in the presence of death, refused to remove the one obstacle to her receiving the sacraments by declaring that she was married to the man whom the *curé* wished to see expelled from the palace; while she, in spite of her dreadful fear of death, declined to allow the man for whom alone she had any feeling to be humiliated. But it was all a false alarm, for she recovered, at least for a time. At the end of a few days, indeed, she became convalescent, and soon well enough to repair to Meudon, after attending a *Te Deum* at the Carmelites.

The Marquis de la Rochefoucauld-Roye took this opportunity to leave the Princess's Guards, in which he was captain. The real reason for his resignation was that the Duke d'Orléans fancied his beautiful wife. The Duchess de Berry, wishing to be agreeable to her father, in order to attract him to her Court again

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after the painful scene during her illness at the Luxembourg, had invited Mme. de la Rochefoucauld to supper, telling her to come without her husband, as no men excepting the Regent would be present that evening.

Mme. de la Rochefoucauld, however, being fond of her husband, told him of this strange invitation ; whereupon the Captain of the Guards went to the Duchess de Berry and said to her: "Madam, I am very much flattered by the honour you have done to my wife, but I am sorry to say that we never sup one without the other."

Thereupon, feeling uneasy about his wife, he determined to withdraw her from the Princess's Court, and that was why he handed her his resignation under the pretext that he would not care to remain six months at Meudon.

The end of this society comedy is related by Duclos in such an amusing manner that it would be a pity to change his narrative, which is as follows :

"M. le Duc d'Uzès entered, not knowing what had happened. When Mme. la Duchesse de Berry perceived him, she assumed an angry air and spoke thus: 'Monsieur le duc, I have reason to be angry with you; I have been told you have said that you could not understand a man of quality consenting to be

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Captain of my Guards. Such a speech surprises me.'

"M. le Duc d'Uzès protested that he had never said a word to that effect and would consider it an honour to be the Captain.

"'In order to prove this to me, be the Captain, then; I give you the post, and henceforth you are the Captain of my Guards.'

"M. le Duc d'Uzès stood surprised; he accepted the post, but worked hard for the return of M. de la Rochefoucauld, who had caressed Mme. de Berry, but did not care that, in guise of revenge, M. le Duc d'Orléans should do the same to his wife."

The journey to Meudon, undertaken too soon after a very painful lying-in, and certain cares from which the Princess was not free, presented serious dangers to her health. There was, however, another cause which prevented her complete recovery. The Regent's opposition to the declaration of her marriage exasperated her, for she was conscious of what was said against her by the public, and she also knew that her father had been much impressed by what the Duke de Broglie had said to him, when asked his opinion on the events at the Luxembourg. The old Marshal had approved of the Regent's conduct towards Cardinal de Noailles, on account of the publicity of the scene,

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adding: "Had I been in your place, I should have commanded the Princess to do for her father what she refused to do to satisfy the exigencies of the Church."

Be that as it may, it happened that soon after her arrival at Meudon the Duchess was taken ill with a fever, which left her, but made her so extremely weak that she could not quit her bed.

The Duke d'Orléans continually struggled against the declaration of her marriage, which she demanded with increased vivacity, for Riom, stimulated by his uncle, bent all his will to effect that purpose, feeling that the Duchess's days were numbered, and that his future must be assured. However, the Regent, contrary to his usual habit, opposed a desperate resistance, and, as if wishing to assure himself some help, told the secret to the Duke de Saint-Simon, who entirely approved of his attitude. At last the Duke d'Orléans became so incensed on the subject that he declared he would end the scandal by ordering Riom to be thrown out of the Luxembourg; but he modified this resolution by commanding that he should immediately join his regiment, which was then in Spain with the Duke of Berwick's army.

Jean Buvat says: "M. le Comte de Riom left on April 17th to join his regiment at

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Perpignan." Then: "People assert that M. le Comte de Riom, while going to join his regiment at Perpignan, has been arrested and conducted to Lyons or the Château de Pierre-Encise. They attribute his disgrace to the Dowager Duchess [of Orléans], who could not endure that his marriage with the Duchess de Berry should be made public." Buvat repeated the current rumour without inquiring whether it was true or not. It was not correct, however, that Riom had been arrested.

Naturally, the forced departure of her clandestine husband did not improve the Princess's health, and she suffered not only because she was obliged to submit to her father's will, but also because he almost ceased visiting her, which was noticed and increased the public prejudice against her.

Wishing to attract her father back to her, she invited him, notwithstanding her weakness, and against the advice of her physicians, to a *fête* which she gave in his honour on the terrace at Meudon. Desiring to give more publicity to this entertainment, she ordered that supper should be served in the open air. The *fête* was brilliant, but it did not restore to her either the favourable opinion of the public or her father's heart. As for her mother and her grandmother, they did not put in an

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appearance, whereat the Duchess de Berry's pride greatly suffered.

She became so disgusted with Meudon that she left the château for her other residence, La Muette, at Passy, although she was so ill that she had to make the journey "lying between two sheets in a large coach." It was a very dangerous step, and her condition became serious.

Under date May 23rd Madame recorded: "Last Sunday I went to see my granddaughter de Berry; I found her in a sad state; she had such an atrocious pain in the soles and toes of both feet that she cried. I found that she looked very bad. It is gout in the feet."

On June 18th Madame again wrote: "I called on the Duchess de Berry. She is better, thank God, but cannot yet walk. On the soles of her feet she has big blisters which burn her as if hot iron were applied; it is a strange malady. It seems that this illness is the result of her atrocious gluttony." Therein may be found an admonition for those who are overfond of food, and a consolation for the others who have to lead a frugal life!

It seems that the Princess Palatine's remark was quite justified, for the Count de Maurepas, in writing of the Duchess de Berry's last illness, says: "She answered the physicians who ex-

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horted her to eat less: 'No matter, my life will be short but good.' "

Until the last hour she rejected all regimen and spurned moderation.

On July 17th Jean Buvat wrote that her attendants had been obliged to give her an emetic "to take away the figs, the melon, the beer and the wine, all iced, which she had eaten or drunk against the advice of her principal officers and physicians."

The Marchioness de Mouchy, who felt that the Princess was lost, exerted herself to satisfy all her caprices in order to please her more, and to benefit thereby as much as possible. But the Princess became so ill that she confessed and received the communion publicly. The door of her chamber was opened, and, according to Saint-Simon, "she spoke to those surrounding her of her life and state as a queen might have done. When this was over and she was closeted with her confidants, she applauded herself for the firmness she had shown, and asked them whether she had spoken well, and whether she was dying with grandeur and courage."

The next day she became worse, and the Archbishop of Tours administered the viaticum and extreme unction, in the presence of the Dukes d'Orléans and de Chartres, after which

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she lost consciousness, recovering it but slightly, at long intervals, and only for a few moments.

In that extremity, the physicians having declared themselves powerless, the Regent listened to the advice of some courtiers who besought him to summon Garus, the inventor of an elixir which was then much talked about. Garus came, but found the Princess in such a state that he refused to guarantee anything. However, he consented to try his remedy, at the same time exacting that nothing should be given to the Duchess without his advice.

The remedy proved efficacious beyond all expectation, so Saint-Simon says ; but Dangeau, less enthusiastic, confines himself to stating that "Garus administered to Mme. la Duchesse de Berry a remedy which reanimated her slightly, thereby giving a slight hope." On the other hand, the improvement is said to have been so marked as to have aroused the jealousy of Chirac, the Regent's first physician, who felt that if the Princess were cured he would be dishonoured.

The Duke de Saint-Simon, indeed, formally accuses Chirac of having caused the Duchess's death: "Chirac took advantage of Garus being asleep on a sofa to present a purgative to Mme. la Duchesse de Berry, which he made her swallow without saying a word to anybody.

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The two nurses appointed to serve her were there, but they did not dare to move in his presence. His audacity was as complete as his villainy, for M. le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans were in the drawing-room of La Muette.

“Mme. la Duchesse de Berry had a relapse. Garus was awakened and called in. Seeing the change, he said that a purgative had been administered, which, no matter what it might be, was a poison for one in the Princess's condition. He then wished to go away, but they kept him and conducted him to M. le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans. There was a great uproar in their presence. Garus shouted, and Chirac displayed peerless impudence in attempting to justify what he had done. He could not deny it, for the two nurses were questioned and spoke of it.

“During this dispute, Mme. la Duchesse was dying, and neither Chirac nor Garus had any further remedy to offer. However, she lived through the day, and died at midnight. Chirac, on seeing that death was near, crossed the room and, making an insulting bow at the foot of the bed, wished the Duchess God-speed in equivocal terms.”

This, if true, was the most impudent deed of villainy ever perpetrated; and although one

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must often regard Saint-Simon's statements with some suspicion, it is possible that his account of the Duchess de Berry's death is correct, for the impudence with which some physicians trifle with human lives, for the sake of the reputation of their profession, is well known even in our own times, which are certainly far less callous than were those of the Regency.

The death of the Duchess was a cruel blow to her father, who had forgotten all the worry she had caused him for two years past and only remembered the deep affection in which he had held her since her birth. This grief could not be better described than in the following quotations :

Saint-Simon wrote: "He leaned on the iron bannister and wept so much that I feared he would suffocate. When his great explosion of grief had a little subsided, he began to talk about the misfortunes of this world, and of the short duration of what is most agreeable." On her side the Princess Palatine said: "She was his well-beloved child. My son has lost all sleep; he is in a condition that would move a rock."

Yes, the Regent wept over the death of his daughter, but his grief did not last long. He had loved her less since the struggle she had caused in regard to Riom; and Saint-Simon

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judiciously remarks : “ The yoke which he had accepted and had often found heavy was broken. In particular he was freed from the declaration of the marriage and its consequences.”

The public heard the news of the Duchess's death with great indifference, and thus though at the Palais-Royal a scandal was feared, it did not take place. The only expression of public feeling was shown in a few songs and two epitaphs. One of these was in French, as follows :

Babet a quitté la vie,
Quelle perte pour l'amour !
Babet de la Comédie ?
Non, Babet du Luxembourg.

The other was in Latin : *Hic jacet voluptas.*

To be just, neither of these epitaphs sums up the life of this Princess, who, notwithstanding her foibles and sins, was a very interesting personage in French history.

She was not an ordinary, colourless Princess.

Enough has been said of her physique and endowments in previous chapters. A few more details will suffice. She was fond of art. In the midst of her worldly affairs, which were certainly of wide scope, she found time to think of improving the Comedy. At the beginning of the Regency she summoned

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the Dukes d'Aumont and de Tresne to her palace in order to discuss with them the affairs of the theatre in which the public took the most interest, and which was controlled by those two noblemen in their capacity of first Gentlemen of the Chamber. The question then at issue was one of four actors who were considered too weak: La Chaise, Durand, Clavareau and la Morancourt. It would seem also that this was not the Duchess's first attempt at intervention, for there is a couplet written in 1713, likewise referring to her and the same theatre.

She was, moreover, an excellent musician; she sang with talent. She had a sound, even superior, education and much originality of wit. The Princess Palatine said of her: "When she wishes to seduce, it suffices for her to speak; she is endowed with natural eloquence." Again: "One must admit that the virtue and beauty of the Duchess de Berry were equal, and I own that I cannot praise her as I should like to do and as she ought to be praised."

Lemontey, who wrote *Histoire de la Régence* after devoting many years of study to that period, and who was provided by the French Government with materials such as are not at the command of every historian, had nothing worse to say about this great Princess

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than : “ I know that horrible accusations weigh on the memory of the Duchess de Berry, that mad young person who was as despotic in her pride as she was easygoing in her amours. However, she disarmed her judges by her wit and graces and especially by her premature death ; and I must not be more severe than were her contemporaries, who, satisfied with singing her follies, forgot her sins.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE DUCHESS DE BERRY—MME. DE MOUCHY AND
M. DE RIOM

ALTHOUGH the Duchess de Berry had possessed her husband's entire *apanage* and an annual pension of 660,000 *livres*, she left more than 400,000 *livres* of debts, which had to be paid by the Regent.

This is no wonder, for Buvat wrote: "Mme. la Duchesse de Berry had as many as eight hundred servants, who were ruined at her death, for the majority of them had put every penny to buy their posts. The Marchioness de Mouchy, one of her principal ladies-in-waiting, lost more than 6,000 *livres* of income. One of the cooks, burdened with a wife and nine young children, was reduced to nought, and for this reason was in despair, for he had invested everything he possessed in that office."

The Duchess kept up three establishments:

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the Luxembourg Palace, the Château de Meudon and the Château de la Muette. She satisfied all her fancies, and was very free with her money; she gave a million *livres* for the completion of the beautiful church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. As for Mme. de Mouchy, Buvat pitied her undeservedly, for that "most unworthy favourite that was ever seen, one who betrayed, deceived and robbed her Princess," as Madame said, knew how to take care of herself. Through pampering all her mistress's caprices she won her favour to such a degree that, after taking the communion for the last time, the Duchess de Berry gave Mme. de Mouchy the key of her casket, telling her to bring her ring-case, containing a collection of rings valued at more than 200,000 crowns, which she gave to her.

Such, at least, was the story told by Mme. de Mouchy, but one is justified in surmising—taking the woman's character into consideration—that having everything under her control she simply appropriated the jewels. She gave them to her husband, who being more scrupulous, found the affair too daring, apprehended a scandal and perhaps a criminal accusation also. However, having taken counsel of each other, they began—in order to avoid a charge of theft—to praise the Duchess's generosity in making such a magnificent present.

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The news of this soon reached Mme. de Saint-Simon, who advised the Regent of it. The scandal which the cautious M. de Mouchy had feared was indeed inevitable, and Mme. de Mouchy went to Mme. de Saint-Simon to ask her advice on the matter.

The Duchess de Saint-Simon, wishing to make the affair even more public, summoned several ladies who were at that moment in her drawing-room, under the pretext of making them admire the beauty of the jewels, but in reality in order to advise Mme. de Mouchy in their presence to go and see the Duke d'Orléans on the matter. Such advice was equivalent to an order. Mme. de Mouchy understood it in that way, and she went to the Palais-Royal.

The Duke d'Orléans, previously advised by Mme. de Saint-Simon, received her in his best manner and accepted the explanations given to him. When, however, Mme. de Mouchy had finished her story, he simply asked her to show him the ring-case; opened it, assured himself that nothing was missing, shut it, placed it in one of the drawers of his desk, locked it up, and then dismissed his visitor with a nod, saying never a word.

Saint-Simon declares that Mme. de Mouchy did not show herself again at La Muette, whither the Regent repaired very angry after

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his interview with her, and speaking of her in very derogatory terms. It seems that she had well known how to take advantage of the confidence of the Duchess de Berry, for Madame wrote :

“*Elle a fait de jolis coups* : she had double keys and left the poor Duchess *sans un sou ni un liard.*”

She was the only attendant of the Duchess's to whom the Regent did not continue to pay a pension ; in lieu thereof she received an order to leave Paris in twenty-four hours, and not to return there.

The Duke de Saint-Simon has it that “a long time after they both returned, but nothing could re-establish them in society, nor extricate them from disdain, obscurity and oblivion.”

But it may be asked what became of that “toad's head,” as Madame called the Count de Riom ? His downfall was complete and at the outset he suffered some cruel affronts. The Prince de Conti, who commanded the army with which Riom was serving, showed great satisfaction when he heard of his cousin's death, for he had never forgotten that she had said of him : “We have enough hunchbacks in our family.” He therefore hastened to Riom and shouted to him : “She is dead, *la vache aux paniers*, she must not be mentioned any more.”

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Saint-Simon tells us that Riom was in such despair that his companions were obliged to watch over him lest he should kill himself. He sold his regiment of dragoons and his governorship of Cognac. As, however, he was polite and amiable with his friends he was able to retain them, and feast with them by way of consolation, but—concludes Saint-Simon—“he remained obscure and that obscurity swallowed him up.” His uncle, the Duke de Lauzun, left him a considerable fortune. He twice refused to make a rich marriage and died when he was about forty years of age, respected by many people. No matter how badly he may have behaved to the Duchess de Berry, it seems that he was not cruel in his other *galanteries*, and had the secret of pleasing everybody.

“All the women run after him,” wrote Madame, “though I find him ugly and repulsive.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ABBESS OF CHELLES—HER EARLY YEARS

THE Princess de Ligne has included in her "Memoirs" the journal written by the youthful Princess Hélène Massalska while she was being educated at the Abbaye-au-Bois. This journal is very interesting, as it throws a good deal of light on the education of our great-grandmothers, and shows that the education of ladies was then much better than is that of many of our time.

The Princess Massalska says that the pupils of the Abbaye-au-Bois, whither the daughters of many great lords were sent, knew the history of France, ancient history and mythology; they could recite the *Fables* of La Fontaine, the songs of *La Henriade*, and the tragedies of Corneille and Racine. They could play the *clavecin* and the harp; they could draw and

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dance to perfection, and play a tragedy quite well.

Great actors of the Comédie Française gave the young ladies lessons in elocution and in reading aloud. In the summer the pupils played games in the large garden; in the winter they took part in drawing-room receptions at the Abbey and in balls to which former pupils were invited.

Nothing was neglected to make them *des femmes du monde accomplies*, who would know how to figure with grace, ease and dignity in a drawing-room; nothing was forgotten either to make them practical and experienced mistresses of a household. When they passed from the "white class" to the upper class, they took charge by turn of the convent kitchen, the vestry, the dispensary, the linen-room, the refectory and the dormitory. They directed the converts who did the rough work, they repaired clothes, they watched over the scrubbing, they laid table, and at times when they came from a theatrical performance in their robes covered with jewels they set to work preparing medicine and poultices in the dispensary.

The Princess Massalska's journal, however, is more closely connected with the present work than by reason of the light it throws on the education of the *grandes dames* of that period;

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for it contains certain particulars respecting the second daughter of the Duke d'Orléans, the one who is known in history as the Abbess de Chelles.

“In the extensive buildings of the Abbaye-au-Bois,” the Princess Massalska writes, “there was a suite of apartments which was rarely opened. It had formerly been occupied by Mme. d'Orléans, better known by the name of Abbess de Chelles. She was eighteen years of age when she became Abbess of the Abbaye-au-Bois, and one-and-twenty when she was made Abbess of Chelles.

“It was asserted that shrieks, sounds of blows, and the rattling of chains could be heard in the Orléans apartments, and it was said that Mme. d'Orléans' soul came back there in order to expiate all the evil which she had done during her lifetime. People were so afraid of these rooms that they never entered them except a number at a time; and Sister Huon, having once gone in alone to sweep them, found marks of blood in the bedroom, and was nearly suffocated by a strong smell of sulphur. She immediately fetched some of the nuns, but they saw nothing.

“When these apartments have to be cleaned, which is only twice a year, for no one ever occupies them, five or six people go in at the

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same time to sweep. There are I know not how many rooms of an immense size, all opening into each other, and it is dangerous to be in them alone. The apartments are only opened for strangers, to show them the ceilings, which are beautifully painted, and the magnificent tapestry on the walls, representing the histories of Esther and Judith. It is said that these tapestries are the finest that the Gobelin manufactory has ever produced.

“It is said of Mme. d’Orléans, who was a monster of cruelty, that she caused some of the nuns to be nearly beaten to death; that she had shut up others; and sometimes made others chant the services the whole night long. Meanwhile M. le Régent would come to her rooms, and she herself would spend the night laughing and amusing herself, eating, and perpetrating all sorts of folly, in the presence of young nuns whom she had chosen as her companions. She said that she made the other ladies spend their nights in prayer in order to expiate the sins which she herself committed. It is also said that she used to take off her clothes and send for the nuns to admire her figure, for she was the most beautiful woman of her time. She took baths of milk, and the next day had it distributed among the nuns at the refectory, ordering them by their vows of obedience to

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drink it. At last her practices reached such a point that the nuns made a formal complaint, and were told she would be transferred to the Abbey of Chelles.

“Over the fireplace in the Common Hall at the Abbaye-au-Bois there was a very fine portrait of Mme. d’Orléans. She was represented standing, trampling crowns and sceptres under her feet, in one hand holding a crucifix and with the other taking a crown of thorns from an altar. A peculiarity of this picture was that, although she was dressed as a nun, her feet were bare.”

This interesting quotation shows how mistakes creep into history, and how the charming Abbess de Chelles has been depicted by some sensational writers as a corrupt representative of the nobility. However, it would not be difficult to show that apart from the portrait, of the existence of which at the Abbaye-au-Bois there can be no doubt, there is no truth in the Princess Massalska’s sensational narrative.

Louise-Adélaïde, Mlle. de Chartres, was the second daughter of the Duke d’Orléans. When she was ten years old she was sent, with her younger sister Mlle. de Valois, to the Abbaye de Chelles. This was in June.

At the beginning of July, when her elder sister was about to be betrothed to the Duke

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de Berry, there arose a subtle question of etiquette, which occupied the whole Court. According to custom the future bride had to wear a long mantle, the train of which had to be carried by a princess of equal rank. As the sisters of the future Duchess de Berry were at the convent at Chelles, and were neither Daughters nor Granddaughters of France, the duty in question fell on Mlle. de Bourbon. Now the Duchess de Bourbon, although a sister of the Duchess d'Orléans, strongly objected to this, for, as one will remember, she had desired that the Duke de Berry should marry her own daughter.

The difficulty became important, and Louis XIV. was much perplexed how to solve it, for on one hand he did not wish to hurt the Duchess de Bourbon, and on the other, being a protector of etiquette he did not dream of casting it aside. He searched, however, for a means of dispelling the difficulty and finally asked the Duke d'Orléans to send for his daughters and bring them to the ceremony. To this the Duchess d'Orléans strongly objected. Wishing to humiliate her sister, it was she who had insisted that her two daughters should be sent to a convent, in order that she might thereby compel Mlle. de Bourbon to carry her eldest daughter's train. However, the Duke d'Orléans did not

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dare to disobey the King's order, and Mlle. de Chartres was brought from Chelles and attended her sister's betrothal as train-bearer.

She afterwards returned to Chelles, where she remained until she was seventeen years of age, when she fell ill, and by the advice of the physicians was brought to the Palais-Royal. The laziness of the Duchess d'Orléans and the conduct of the Duke rendered it impossible for her to remain there altogether; she spent the day at her parents' residence, but in the evening she repaired to the Abbey of Montmartre.

She was then really a very accomplished young Princess, and "the most beautiful of all the sisters," says Madame. "She is very well formed, she has a beautiful face, beautiful hands and a beautiful complexion; its freshness and colour are dazzling and natural."

On March 31st, 1718, Madame wrote of her: "She is very agreeable, tall, with a lovely figure, a graceful face, a pretty mouth, and teeth like pearls. She dances well, she has a pretty voice, she knows music, she sings at sight anything she likes and without making grimaces. She is naturally eloquent and has a naturally good disposition; she loves everything she ought to love. I cherish her tenderly, and it is not difficult to love her, for she deserves it well." In another letter Madame wrote:

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“She insists on becoming a nun, but I do not think that is her vocation, for she has the tastes of a boy ; she is fond of dogs, horses, hunting, and fire-arms ; she is not afraid of anything in the world, and does not care for the things that women are fond of. She does not bother herself about her face, although she is far from plain and is well formed.”

As the Princess wished to become a nun, which did not meet with the approval of her father, and especially of her grandmother, they tried to amuse her, and in Dangeau's *Journal* one finds several references to her presence at the Opera and at different balls.

Duclos tells us that she was present at the performance of *Atys*. On this occasion Cauchereau, the vocalist who instructed her in singing, and who was famous for his extraordinary good looks, sang a passionate air so well that Mlle. de Chartres exclaimed, whilst clapping her hands : “Ah, my dear Cauchereau !” And Duclos adds that the Duchess d'Orléans, her mother, found “the exclamation too expressive.”

Another romantic story of the time when Mlle. de Chartres was staying at the Palais-Royal is concerned with one of the King's pages.

One day while she was going upstairs to her apartment she slipped and would have fallen

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but for the sudden help of the Chevalier de Saint-Maixent, who darted towards her. Some time afterwards the same page saved her life at a hunt, at the expense of a serious injury that almost proved mortal. This accident was the beginning of an idyllic attachment, which might well have ended with a wedding—for Mlle. de Chartres did not object to be loved by a mere nobleman—had it not been for the disapproval of the Duke d'Orléans.

Some writers think that it was this unhappy attachment which caused Mlle. de Chartres to quit the brilliant life of the Court for the quietude of a convent.

That may be true or not, for it is impossible to fathom anybody's soul, and especially a woman's; but there is some historical evidence from which one might logically surmise that Mlle. de Chartres embraced conventual life for other reasons.

The Duchess d'Orléans was very fond of her brother the Duke du Maine, and wishing to give him a certain influence over the Duke d'Orléans and to restore the equilibrium which the latter's intelligence and daring had destroyed to the disadvantage of the legitimized Princes, she conceived a notion of marrying one of her daughters to the Prince de Dombes, a son of the Duke du Maine. As only Mlle. de

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Chartres was then marriageable, her mother made her aware of her plans.

There is nothing to show why Mlle. de Chartres took exception to the match, but it is certain that she did so, and thereby aroused her mother's dislike, for Madame wrote on October 9th, 1718: "The real reason why the poor demoiselle d'Orléans became a nun was simply the little affection she found in her mother, and her fear that they would worry her into marrying the son of the Duke du Maine."

There was, however, another suitor for the hand of the beautiful Mlle. de Chartres, and one whom her grandmother would have welcomed heartily. "The Prince of Anhalt," wrote the indefatigable Madame, "is madly in love with her, but there is no danger of her loving him." It might, indeed, have been difficult to love a man of whom the same Princess wrote: "He is not badly built, but he is very ugly, and he fancies that he is handsome. He is smitten with my granddaughter Mlle. de Chartres; when he sees her, he makes such faces that, willy-nilly, it is impossible to keep from laughing."

Towards the end of 1715 there was a rumour of her marriage with the Chevalier of Saint-George, otherwise the Young Pretender, but it was false.

Under date November 14th, 1716, Dangeau

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wrote: "Mlle. d'Orléans, being with Madame at Saint-Cloud, asked her leave to go to Chelles, where she wished to spend some time in prayer. She was allowed to go. With her she only took Mme. des Bordes, her *sous-gouvernante*, who relied on bringing her back in the evening; but Mademoiselle sent her back with a letter to Mme. la Duchesse d'Orléans, saying that she had always intended to become a nun at Chelles, that she was now more determined than ever to do so, and that she had decided to remain there."

Buvat's account differs from the above, and he gives September 7th as the date of Mlle. de Chartres' withdrawal from the world. "It seems that she entered the Abbey without advice, and that after finding herself on the other side of the grating, she told the servants who accompanied her that they might return to Paris, for she had decided to end her life with those ladies."

However, the most interesting account of the affair is given by Madame in a letter in which all the details are found:

"I never saw this Abbess gayer than on the day when she took that resolution and declared it to her family. She had gone with her sister for a ride, and had not enjoyed herself so well for a long time, at least apparently;

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but at eight o'clock in the evening she came to me with her mother, and we played until supper. After supper I proposed to play again, but Mme. d'Orléans begged of me to go to my cabinet, and Mlle. de Chartres followed us there. And then that young person, falling on her knees, besought us to let her go to Chelles to spend some time in prayer. I said to her :

“ ‘My dearest, one can pray everywhere ; the place is perfectly indifferent ; only the preparation of the soul is essential.’ ”

“ She remained, however, on her knees and repeated her entreaties.

“ ‘Decide,’ I said to her mother, ‘do you wish your daughter to go to Chelles, or not?’ ”

“ Mme. d'Orléans answered : ‘One cannot keep her from her devotions.’ ”

“ The young person went thither the next day and sent back the carriage immediately with a letter addressed to her father, her mother and me, in which she took leave of us, and told us that she should remain at the convent. Mme. d'Orléans, being very fond of convents, is not afflicted. According to her, it is the greatest bliss to be a nun ; as for me, I think it the greatest misfortune.”

On the following day the Regent posted down to Chelles, but his efforts failed to overcome his daughter's invincible resolution.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ABBESS OF CHELLES—SHE TAKES THE VEIL—HER INSTALLATION

WE have no information respecting Mlle. de Chartres during the first months of her stay at Chelles. The meticulous Dangeau does not register any visit paid to her, either by her father or her mother or her grandmother, and there is nothing in the contemporary correspondence. Saint-Simon barely mentions the Princess—evidently the subject was not agreeable at the Palais-Royal—until at last he writes: “Mlle. de Chartres, having for a long time persevered in her inclination to become a nun against M. le Duc d’Orléans’ taste and efforts, he finally consented that she should take the veil at Chelles. M. le Duc and Mme. la Duchesse went there, but they did not wish anybody to go with them.

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The ceremony was edifying, and everything was done with the fewest people present and the greatest possible simplicity."

It was on March 31st, 1717, that Mlle. de Chartres thus became a novice. The Regent did not again go to Chelles until the beginning of September, when all his efforts to induce his daughter to desist from her design of becoming a nun again had no result. He then dispatched the Duchess de Berry to her, with a proposal that if she would take the position of Abbess of Montmartre, he would give his consent to her taking the vows. Mlle. de Chartres declined this proposal, however, as she was afraid of coming into contact with her mother, who constantly visited the Abbey of Montmartre, but she put her refusal in creditable terms, saying: "Before thinking of commanding, one must first learn how to obey." Maurepas tells us that "she sent her father away and referred to herself in her answers to his letter as 'the spouse of Jesus Christ.'"

By way of making a supreme effort the Regent repaired yet again to Chelles, on this occasion taking Cardinal de Noailles with him but he found his daughter more determined than ever. This occurred on July 19th, 1718, and Dangeau says that on August 20th she took the vows: "Mademoiselle made her profession at

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Chelles, and edified everybody by the piety, the courage and the joy which she exhibited on this occasion. She resisted Madame's beseeching letters, and M. Terrat's prayers to her on behalf of M. le Duc d'Orléans. Many ladies came from Paris for the ceremony. There were, however, neither Princes nor Princesses; Mlle. d'Orléans'* sisters did not trouble to come."

Buvat's version differs as to the date. "On August 25th, 1718," he writes, "Mlle. d'Orléans made her profession at the Abbey of Chelles before M. le Cardinal de Noailles, who pronounced a discourse which greatly edified the Princess and all the illustrious persons who listened to him. M. le Duc d'Orléans, her father, sent the Abbey a sum of 100,000 *livres* as the dowry of this illustrious nun, together with 30,000 *livres* for herself to be used for liberalities or alms, and assigned her a pension of 10,000 *livres*."

Madame, who declined to be present at the ceremony, wrote at the same date: "My heart is sore when I think that it is to-day that our poor Mlle. d'Orléans makes her profession. I represented to her everything I could think of in order to dissuade her from that wrong

* The marriage of her elder sister to the Duke de Berry had made her Mlle. d'Orléans instead of Mlle. de Chartres.

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resolution. Nobody, however, is afflicted by it to the point of tears, as would have happened to me had I been present at her profession."

Mlle. de Chartres assumed the name of Sister Sainte-Bathilde, she having been the foundress of the Abbey of Chelles, where a chapel was built to her and her memory revered. A few days after taking her vows the new Sister was appointed sacristan, and Madame commented: "I am glad they have given her something to do; it drives away melancholy and *ennui*."

As soon, however, as Mlle. de Chartres had attained her purpose and become a nun against the wishes of her family, a change took place in her, and as it is impossible to assign it to any other cause one must attribute it to the instability of human sentiments.

As long as she had been obliged to struggle religious thoughts had dominated her; but on the day when she overcame all obstacles, on the day when the grating of the cloisters closed on her for ever and separated her from the rest of the world, there arose in her soul a secret desire to recover a little of that power which was hers by right of birth and which she had lost by renunciation.

After a few months of pious retreat she awoke ambitious and ardent, a Jansenist and a friend of the things of the world, and this

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made Saint-Simon declare that she had merely become "a nun through humour, childishness and fancy. She could not live without ruling where she came to obey."

At that time the Abbess of Chelles was a sister of Marshal de Villars, and was not over well disposed towards the sister of the Duchess de Berry, who had treated the Marshal very rudely. There was, however, a faction of young nuns who did not like the old Abbess, and it did not take them long to persuade Mlle. de Chartres that the first position at Chelles ought to belong to her.

Father Ledux, the prior, joined the plot, and in a few weeks' time the ordinarily quiet Abbey began to seethe.

The old Abbess, supported by the older nuns, tried to quell the effervescence, but "soon became tired of the strife, in which," as Saint-Simon says, "God and man were on her side, but which became unbearable, so greatly did it disturb the peace and regularity of the house."

On the other hand the impetuous Sister Sainte-Bathilde, in whose veins circulated the blood of rulers, and who could no longer brook the annoyance of the old Abbess, begged her father to intervene. Thereupon the good-natured Prince repaired to Chelles, and on April 12th, 1719, Dangeau wrote: "The Duke d'Orléans

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went to see his daughter at Chelles; Cardinal de Noailles was there, and almost everybody believes that Mademoiselle has been declared Abbess and that 12,000 *livres* of pension have been given to the Abbess who has ceded her the position."

Dangeau's statement was correct; Mme. de Villars had accepted the said pension, with an apartment at the Abbey of Panthemont, in guise of indemnity. Further, in order to avoid all friction, it had been agreed that Mlle. de Chartres would go to live at the Val-de-Grâce Convent in Paris until the arrival of the papal bull confirming her election as Abbess.

These arrangements caused a fresh squabble with the Duchess d'Orléans, who always supported Mme. de Villars against her daughter, for the Marshal de Villars was an ardently devoted adherent of the Duke du Maine.

"The new Abbess has had a great quarrel with her mother," wrote Madame on May 5th; "who says she will never forgive her daughter for having agreed with the Duke to become Abbess without her knowledge. The Abbess answered that as her mother had upheld the old Abbess she had not been let into the secret of the negotiations, otherwise she would have opposed them. Her mother then began to cry bitterly, saying that she was very unhappy with



Mlle. D'ORLÉANS, ABBESSE DE CHELLES.

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her husband and children, that her husband was the most unjust man in the world, as he kept his brother-in-law*—the best and most pious man in the world, a very saint—as a captive, for which reason God would punish him. The daughter having answered that she had remained silent from respect, the mother became still more furious.”

On May 11th Mme. de Villars left Chelles. Immediately afterwards the nuns elected Mlle. de Chartres as their Abbess, and a courier was dispatched to Rome to obtain the bull of confirmation as promptly as possible. On May 23rd the young King visited the newly elected Abbess, and a few days later the Regent gave his daughter 100,000 *livres* “to pay the debts of the monastery and make some improvements in the house.” The bull arrived from Rome on June 16th, but the illness and death of the Duchess de Berry delayed the ceremony of installing and blessing the new Abbess.

It took place on September 14th. This time the Duke d'Orléans, Madame and Mlle. de Valois were present. It was a glorious pageant, in which wonderful vestments of gold tissue, artistically chased crosses, and sacred vessels of resplendent colours were displayed, and there was a dignified ritual accompanied by sublime

* The Duke de Maine.

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music. Madame described the scene, and although her narrative is long, it is well worthy of reproduction.

“I promised to tell you about my journey to Chelles. I went there on Thursday at seven o'clock with the Duchess de Brancas, Mme. de Chasteantier and Mme. de Ratzamhausen. We arrived at half-past ten o'clock. My grandson, the Duke de Chartres, was already there; my son came a quarter of an hour later, and then Mlle. de Valois. Mme. d'Orléans had purposely made her doctor bleed her, so that she might be unable to come; she and the Abbess are not very good friends, and, besides, her extreme laziness would have prevented her from rising early.

“We went to the church; the *prie-Dieu* for the Abbess was placed in the nuns' choir; it was covered with purple velvet, embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis; my *prie-Dieu* was against the balustrade; my son and his daughters were behind the pulpit because the Princes of the blood cannot kneel on my carpet, and that was the place reserved for the Grandsons of France. The King's musicians were in the tribune; the Cardinal de Noailles celebrated the Mass. The altar was very beautiful; it was made of black and white marble. There were four beautiful statues representing canonized

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Abbesses; one of them resembles our Abbess so much that one might believe it was her portrait; however, it was made long before my granddaughter was born, for she is only twenty-one years of age.

“Twelve monks of the order, clad in superb chasubles, came to assist at the Mass. After the Cardinal had read the epistle the master of the ceremonies entered the nuns’ choir and led out the Abbess; she came *de fort bon air*, followed by two other Abbesses and six nuns of the convent; she made a deep bow to the altar and to me, and knelt before the Cardinal, who was seated in a large armchair before the altar.

“The confession of faith was brought ceremoniously and she read it; and after the Cardinal had recited several prayers she was given a book containing the rules of her convent. Then she went to her place, and after the *Credo* and the offertory she came to the oblation, accompanied by the other Abbesses and the nuns. For the oblation two big wax candles and two loaves of bread—one gilt, the other silvered—were brought.

“After the Cardinal’s communion she knelt before him, and he gave her the crozier. Then he reconducted her to her abbatial seat, which was a kind of throne, surmounted by a canopy

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with fleurs-de-lis, as appointed for Princesses of the blood. As soon as she was seated the trumpets and hautboys were heard, and the Cardinal, followed by all the priests, placed himself near the altar, to the left, crozier in hand, and the *Te Deum* was chanted. Then all the nuns came two by two, and signified their submission to their Abbess, each making *une grande révérence*.

“ After the *Te Deum* we entered the convent, and, at half-past twelve, we sat down at table, my son, my grandson the Duke de Chartres, the Princess Victoire de Soissons, the young demoiselle d’Auvergne, daughter of the Duke d’Albret, and three ladies who were with me.

“ The Abbess sat in the refectory at a table where there were forty covers, with Mlle. de Valois, two ladies who accompanied her, twelve other Abbesses, and all the nuns of the convent. It was funny to see all those black robes round the table. My son’s men served a very good repast ; the people were allowed to pillage the dessert and the preserves when dinner was over.”

Buvat reports that on the following day the new Abbess regaled the community splendidly, being supported on this occasion by the Abbesses of the Val-de-Grâce and Montmartre.

CHAPTER XX

THE ABBESS OF CHELLES—HER MUTABILITY—
CARDINAL DE BISSY

AFTER the death of the Duchess de Berry the Regent bestowed all his affection on his second daughter, the Abbess of Chelles, and visited her every Tuesday.

Wishing to dispel her father's grief, she did all in her power to make his visits as agreeable as possible. For this purpose she organized some dramatic performances, when Racine's most passionate pieces were played.

She made great improvements in the buildings of the convent, and entirely changed its austere aspect. The gardens were modified in a manner to present a much gayer outlook—magnificent flowers bloomed everywhere.

Younger nuns and prettier novices were attached to the establishment, and little work-girls were brought from Paris, who laboured under the direction of the Abbess at fashionable

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coiffures, tapestry and embroidery, the Abbess, for her part, amusing herself by making wigs with her own hands. Special workmen were also sent to make fireworks, of which the Abbess was very fond. She was not at all afraid of gunpowder, and it was her wont to carry a little pistol and frighten the nuns by firing it.

One must agree that all these amusements were rather odd, but there was nothing so sinful in them as to justify severe censure of the youthful Princess-Abbess. Besides, she seriously studied chemistry, physics and pharmacy, of which she was passionately fond. She even learnt surgery and became very skilful in the use of instruments. She also spent hours in the convent workshop, and became a good turner. Then, too, she did not neglect singing and playing, and the religious ceremonies at the church of her convent became real musical festivals, at which the best music was executed.

The reports of the Abbess's charming hospitality soon attracted numerous visitors, who did not mind travelling several miles to Chelles, where they were sure of a hearty welcome. The alterations in the convent were sumptuous; the dormitories became elegant; the parlours were changed into *salons* and boudoirs, upholstered with silk brocade and exquisitely furnished; the stables were well kept; flowers

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were seen everywhere ; new books, pamphlets and gazettes were sent to Chelles every day. The Duke d'Orleans often went there.

Maurepas says : " The Abbess of Chelles attracted a large company of both sexes by the concerts and suppers she used to give ; men were admitted, but only when dessert was served."

It is difficult to conceive a more exquisite *modus vivendi* in which material comfort was combined with the spiritual luxury of good music, and scholarly and witty conversation expressed in the best French, for which the seventeenth century had become famous. The Princess-Abbess deserved praise and admiration for her way of understanding monastic life, in which the serious and the profound were blended with the sweet and the agreeable. Why, indeed, should gloom be associated with conventual life ?

Naturally the *chansonniers* of the time did not fail to sharpen their pens and describe the manner of life at the Abbey of Chelles, and one of them wrote :

Le badinage
S'empare du parloir,
Il y a ramage
Du matin jusqu'au soir.
Sans lui, près de ces sœurs
On n'a nulle douceur,
On n'a nul avantage,
Et leur introducteur
Est badinage.

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Dans la clôture
Folâtaient les plaisirs,
La gaieté pure
Y règle les desirs.
Les ris, les jeux badins,
Les regards assassins,
Mêlés à l'aventure,
Descendent dans les coins
De la clôture.

However, one is bound to say that whatever might be the appearance of refined frivolity, even the most malicious scandalmongers could not tarnish the Abbess of Chelles's honour as a woman. Even the ill-tongued Saint-Simon found nothing worse to say of her than that she was "sometimes austere to excess, sometimes showing no more of religion than its vestments, in turn a musician, a surgeon, a theologian, and all that by fits and starts, always tired of and disgusted with various situations, and incapable of perseverance in any."

Saint-Simon is rather shallow in that passage, for he does not seem to realize that mutability is one of the principal characteristics of human nature. Everybody who watches the evolution of his Ego cannot fail to notice how many times in life he changes his tastes, fancies and propensities.

The Abbess of Chelles yielded to that law of evolution, and one day ordered all the musical instruments to be broken up, the masterpieces

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of music to be burnt, the guests excluded and the convent restored to its former gloomy aspect.

Here one cannot help thinking of that ferocious act of St. Paul's, who, although he may deserve the greatest admiration for the religious zeal with which he established Christ's teaching, must be blamed for having burnt the masterpieces of Greek and Roman literature on the square at Athens, for that was as unpardonable an act of barbarism as that of the followers of Cromwell, who destroyed so many works of art in English churches and monasteries.

However, the Princess-Abbess gave herself up to morbid meditations on death, which subject seized upon her impressionable nature. One evening after supper she went to examine a tomb she was erecting for herself beside that of Sainte-Bathilde. Each nun took a candle and followed her, first to the church and then to the crypt, to which they descended by a ladder. Then the Princess lay down for a few minutes in the tomb and afterwards expressed her satisfaction with it.

The chronicler Mathieu Marais wrote under date December, 1720: "She felt lonely at her abbey and has been to Val-de-Grâce to spend some time there, and be nearer the Court." But she did not like her sojourn at

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Val-de-Grâce and returned to Chelles, where she now took her position as superior very seriously. She almost entirely rebuilt the convent and restored the church.

As this did not suffice for her activity she threw herself into the Jansenist doctrines, and protected all who were persecuted by the Jesuits. The Cardinal de Bissy was at that time one of the most energetic adversaries of Jansenism, and the Princess determined to give him a good lesson.

The following narrative supplies an exquisite scene of social comedy, of which even Molière might be proud. After Mlle. de Chartres had become a nun, she grew to be very friendly with Mme. de Rohan, the Abbess of Notre-Dame de Jouarre, with whom she had a good deal in common in regard to tastes, opinions and vivacity of disposition. Now Mme. de Rohan was a great friend of the Cardinal de Bissy, and the Abbess of Chelles obtained her leave to employ a stratagem, in order that she might meet the Cardinal without his knowing who she was, and tell him what she thought of him.

The comedy which ensued is related by the Count de Maurepas as follows: "Mme. de Rohan told the prelate, when he paid a visit to her convent, that she was satisfied with

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her community, both as to manners and to sentiments, except in regard to one convert, whom she was not able to manage and whom she recommended to his zeal. Bissy thereupon told Mme. de Rohan to send this nun to him. It was Mme. d'Orléans, who was thereupon introduced to him under another name, and the Cardinal, who did not recognize her, began to call her his good child, but told her that if she should be disobedient and disrespectful he would have to make her do penance. Mme. d'Orléans then began to talk, and with great assurance told him the story of his own life, upbraiding him for his violence and accusing him of being actuated by ambition.

“The Cardinal interrupted her speech several times, telling her that no punishments were severe enough to be inflicted on her for such unparalleled audacity towards a Prince of the Church and her superior; but it was in vain that he threatened the alleged sister convert, who preserved all her calmness, and being naturally eloquent, defeated him entirely.

“Mme. de Rohan, who was listening in another room, could not help laughing, and did so in such hearty fashion that the Cardinal, while jumping in his armchair as if burnt with a red-hot iron, heard her. Her laughter made him reflect, he became disconcerted, stopped

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short, guessed a snare, looked at the so-called sister convert more attentively, and then recognized Mme. d'Orléans, Abbess of Chelles. This produced a sudden change in him. Confused and ashamed, he rose quickly, stammered some very humble excuses and withdrew, making a bow, while the Princess called after him: 'Profit by the lesson if you can.'

"The Cardinal complained to Mme. de Rohan for having compromised him so cruelly, but she answered that Mme. d'Orléans became the mistress when she visited her convent, so that if he had any complaints to make, the proper person to receive them was the Princess, who was capable of answering him. Unfortunately for him this adventure happened in the morning, and after it he naturally refused to dine with Mme. de Rohan, who wished to reconcile him with Mme. d'Orléans. He left the convent feeling angry and humiliated, was obliged to go to a tavern and join his domestics who dined there. He was intelligent enough not to speak about this affair himself, but Mme. d'Orléans and Mme. de Rohan told the story to everybody."

CHAPTER XXI

THE ABBESS OF CHELLES—HER LAST YEARS AND DEATH

IT is difficult to state positively when the Abbess of Chelles became Abbess of the Convent of Val-de-Grâce in the Faubourg St. Jacques, Paris. Buvat wrote on May 7, 1722, "that Mme. d'Orléans was transferred to the Abbey of Val-de-Grâce, in place of the old Abbess, who was transferred to Chelles with a pension of 20,000 *livres*."

The authors of *Gallia Christiane* state, however, that Mme. d'Orléans remained titular Abbess of Chelles until October, 1734. Marais says that "the ladies of Val-de-Grâce were mortified by the transference of their former Abbess to Chelles; they were also dissatisfied that Mme. d'Orléans, their new Abbess—whose apartment was separated from the dormitories

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of the nuns—should make so much *éclat* at great expense, and often send very late at night for pastry from a neighbouring confectioner, who would take it to the Abbey at unheard-of hours.”

The good sisters were also alarmed at the Regent's frequent visits, in which he was accompanied by a large number of courtiers, at the sight of whom their virtue took fright. They sent representations to the Duke d'Orléans in that respect, and the good-natured Prince, being unwilling to hurt anybody, agreed to enter the convent unattended, leaving his brilliant followers to wait for him in the vicinity.

Once again the Princess-Abbess became serious, and Maurepas tells us “she arranged her time in such a manner that different occupations should follow one another regularly. Work took up a considerable part of her time; she employed two secretaries for the interpretation of the Scriptures, the deep questions of Jansenism, and the Psalms, on which she herself worked, preparing commentaries, as did her brother at Sainte-Geneviève.”

In 1734 she finally relinquished her Abbey of Chelles in favour of Anne de Clermont-Gessan, and repaired to the priory of the Benedictines de la Madeleine du Trainel, situated in the Rue de Charonne at Paris. Lucie

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d'Artagnan, whom she had known as a nun at Val-de-Grâce, and to whom she caused that rich benefice to be given, arranged for her a beautiful set of apartments, in which she spent the remainder of her life in study and contemplation.

It was there that she wrote her *Examen de Conscience*, a very curious work, which testifies to her sincere return to God. It consists of reflections and prayers imbued with a passionate mysticism, and shows how impressionable was her imagination, which became frightened even by reading and meditation. In the pages of this work she appears to detach herself from the world and soar above the events of her own existence, of which she speaks as briefly as possible, ever trying to ascend towards heaven.

She regretted her past eccentricities so much that she did not judge herself equitably; she wrote as if excited by some fever, slandering herself and giving herself the bitter pleasure of disfiguring her portrait morally by speaking of her "enormous crimes."

It was during this long retreat that the Abbess of Chelles at last passed away. Her conduct in the final period of her life had won for her the respect of the public who had previously slandered her so wickedly—this

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change of opinion being well expressed in a dignified sonnet by Louis Racine :

Plaisirs, beauté, jeunesse, honneur, gloire, puissance,
Ambitieux espoir que permet la naissance,
Tout au pied de l'Agneau fut par elle immolé.
Elle s'immole encor dans sa retraite même ;
Assise au premier rang, son cœur en est troublé ;
De ce rang descendue, au seul objet qu'elle aime
En silence attachée, elle embrasse la croix,
Victime par l'amour devant Dieu consumée,
Vierge, qui nuit et jour tient sa lampe allumée,
En attendant l'époux dont elle avait fait choix.
Dans notre siècle impur, étonnante merveille,
Les princes sont changés en humbles pénitents ;
Et voilà par quels coups, Dieu puissant, tu réveilles
Même en ces derniers jours, la foi des premiers temps.

Under the date of February 21, 1743, the Duke de Luynes wrote : " We heard yesterday morning of the death of Madame l'Abbesse de Chelles ; she died the day before yesterday, of smallpox." She was then only forty-five years of age.

During the Revolution there was found at Chelles a manuscript which remained in the hands of an inhabitant of that locality. The title of this manuscript is : *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament*, used by Mme. Louise-Adelaïde d'Orléans, Abbess of Chelles, and on its margin is a contemporary inscription indicating that the thoughts contained in this manuscript were, at least, dictated by the Princess.

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Baron Ernouf, commenting on it in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, says that it is "full of decided originality, indicating the individual character and secret sentiments of the author."

It is beyond the scope of this work to analyse this highly interesting document of an eighteenth-century soul, whose exalted character is, however, shown sufficiently in the following quotations:

"Do not abandon me, O Lord, enlighten me, shine through the darkness. Come into my heart, and do not allow it to cast Thee away any more."

"Preserve me always pure, O Lord! O Mary, it is glorious for Thee to receive the vows of a heart which revolted so often against Thee."

"O folly of the world! O horrible blindness! Enlighten me, O Lord, and withdraw me from the slough. I cry to Thee aloud, but my voice is stifled by passions. Thou canst see the depths of my heart: it is dry and arid, it will perish if Thou dost not come to its succour."

These effusions of religious sentiment are as beautiful as some of those to be found in that great work the "Imitation of Jesus Christ."

The few quotations we have given suffice to show the exalted qualities and serious virtues

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of a Princess whose character, as well as her father's, was formerly burlesqued and traduced. Some people accused her of corruption, against which her whole life protests; others tried to associate her with romantic intrigues, unsupported by any evidence; still others represented her as an entirely fantastical person.

However, the proper study of her life shows that she was honest in regard to her vocation, that she abhorred vice, and that she ardently desired to progress on the road of personal improvement. One cannot, then, refuse her some true moral value and a superior intelligence. Mlle. d'Orléans was, indeed, one of the most interesting personages of the earlier part of the eighteenth century.

The Count de Maurepas's "Memoirs" contain a lasting monument to her superiority. "She studied," says he, "the most abstract sciences; those the most foreign to her social position. Physics led her to chemistry; skill in chemistry carried her to a knowledge of simples, and she then applied herself to pharmacy. Finally, the knowledge of remedies led her to study surgery, which she wished to learn, instruments in hand. One might also say that she was a musician, an artist, an embroiderer; skilled in fashions, in the art of coiffures and wig-making, as well as in cabinet work, she

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was, too, a theologian, a Jansenist, thoroughly conversant with parts of that subtle heresy which occupied the most profound minds of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”

Yes, she was a true and great Princess, one of the first by virtue of her birth, her beauty, her manners, her culture, her refinement and her sentiments.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DUCHESS OF MODENA—HER LOVE AFFAIR
WITH RICHELIEU

ON August 4, 1714, the Duke d'Orléans removed his third daughter from the Abbey of Chelles, where she had been placed with her sister.

Charlotte-Aglæé, called Mademoiselle de Valois, was then almost fourteen years of age. According to the contemporary Memoirs, Mlle. de Valois was very charming, even pretty, without being beautiful; she pleased and fascinated; her eyes were of extreme charm, her complexion of rare beauty, and her smile of great sweetness. She was endowed with *esprit*, but through laziness she let it slumber.

The Count de Maurepas wrote of her: "As to Mlle. de Valois, the Regent's third daughter, she had a lily-white complexion; she was well



MARIE DE VALOIS, DUCHESS OF MODENA.

The Duchess of Modena

formed, and, like her sisters, she had inherited her father's temperament."

However, her grandmother, that frequently terrible Princess Palatine, was merciless towards her, though at times she contradicted herself in her letters referring to her. In one of them she wrote: "She is dark and has very beautiful eyes, but her nose is ugly and too large. According to me she is not at all beautiful; however, there are days when she does not look plain, for she has a lovely colouring and a beautiful skin. When she laughs, a big tooth which she has in her upper jaw produces a horrible effect. Her figure is short and ugly; her head is sunk between her shoulders, but what is worse, according to me, is the *mauvaise grâce* with which she does everything; she walks as if she were a woman of forty."

What a horrid grandmother!

In another letter, however, the Palatine says: "She is certainly better looking than her sister de Chelles," and it will be remembered that the Abbess of Chelles was really beautiful. However, Madame could not help praising certain of Mlle. de Valois's qualities, for she also wrote, "she is very much like the Mortemarts, and especially like the Sforzas; *elle a l'esprit des Mortemart.*" This is great praise, for the Mortemarts were famous for their wit.

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As for Mlle. de Valois's moral portrait one also reads in Madame's letters: "She is false, tells lies, and is terribly coquettish. Mme. d'Orléans would be the falsest woman in the world if there was not her daughter, Mlle. de Valois, who, in a word, will cause us all much chagrin. I wish she were already married at some foreign court, so that we might not hear of her any more."

It seems, indeed, that they all wished to marry the girl as soon as possible. The Duchess de Berry was the first to conceive the idea of marrying her sister to the Prince de Conti, she herself being very friendly with the Prince's sister. It appears that Mlle. de Conti, who had been brought up very severely by her mother, found the Duchess de Berry's company very diverting, and was constantly with her at Saint-Cloud and in Paris.

The project of marrying Mlle. de Valois to the Prince de Conti was approved by the Duke and Duchess d'Orléans; but Mlle. de Conti was imprudent enough to speak about it to her grandmother, the Princess de Condé, whose plans were different, she wishing to reconcile her grandchildren, who had quarrelled over the inheritance of *Monsieur le Prince*, as the head of the Condés was called. The means of reconciliation devised by the Princess de

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Condé were to marry the Prince de Conti to Mlle. de Bourbon, and the Duke de Bourbon to Mlle. de Conti, who was already twenty years of age and greatly desired to find a husband.

The Princess de Condé felt sure that the King would approve of her plan, for he greatly disliked family squabbles. Mlle. de Conti was very much embarrassed on hearing this, and wished to explain everything to her friend, the Duchess de Berry, before the news became public. For that purpose she went to her at Saint-Cloud, and at the same hour the Princess de Condé repaired to Versailles to see the King.

Mlle. de Conti could neither conceal her own imprudence nor her grandmother's schemes. The Duchess de Berry interpreted her action wrongly, and, accusing her of having betrayed her secret for her own advantage, told her frankly what she thought of her, and treated her with all the indignity and haughtiness she thought she deserved. Immediately afterwards the Duchess de Berry hastened to advise her parents of this complication, and they were much mortified that they had preserved silence towards the King respecting the union they had planned between their own daughter and the Prince de Conti.

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Their chagrin was justified, for Louis XIV., having heard that a marriage had been projected without his knowledge, became very angry, and that same evening severely scolded the Duke and Duchess d'Orléans, as well as the Duchess de Berry, forbidding them to think any more of the union which they had dared to plan without speaking to him and ascertaining whether it would be agreeable to him or not.

The Duchess de Berry never forgave Mlle. de Conti her imprudence, which she thought had been premeditated, and never failed to let her feel the whole weight of her dislike and contempt.

The next attempt to get rid of Mlle. de Valois by marriage was made by her mother, who, having failed to marry Mlle. de Chartres to the Prince de Dombes, the Duke du Maine's son, turned her eyes on her third daughter. But Mlle. de Valois declined to second her mother's plan, whereupon the Duchess d'Orléans became very angry, and the Princess Palatine wrote: "She cannot even look at her daughter, for she has asked me to keep her with me for some time."

Madame received the Princess at Saint-Cloud, where the Duke de Bourbon asked her hand for his grandson, the Count de Charolais, but this application had no result.

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At Saint-Cloud, during the winter of 1719, the young Princess met the Duke de Richelieu, so famous for his amours. Born during the reign of Louis XIV., he survived his successor, Louis XV., and died in 1788, only a year before the Bastille was taken, that is to say a year before the monarchy received its mortal blow.

Richelieu was a type of the eighteenth-century aristocrat. Having come into the world in 1696, he was but twenty-one years of age when he met Mlle. de Valois. He was good-looking and his figure was elegant. He acquired the reputation of being one of the wittiest men of the period. He became *à la mode* through a love adventure when he was but fifteen years of age. He was found by the Duchess de Berry's maids hiding under her bed, even as Châtelard was found under that of Mary Stuart, only his adventure ended less tragically. Châtelard's daring was punished by decapitation, whereas Richelieu's was only followed by fourteen months' imprisonment in the Bastille.

He served under Marshal de Villars and enjoyed the rare privilege of being adored by both the husband and the wife. Hardly had he left the Bastille when Mlle. de Charolais, the Duke de Bourbon's sister, fell madly in love with him. The Duke de Bourbon was a

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son of Louis III. de Bourbon, who being a hunchback, said one day to Monsieur, Louis XIV.'s brother: "Monsieur, at the ball at the Opera last night I was taken for you."

To which Monsieur answered: "Monsieur, I shall offer this at the foot of the crucifix."

Mlle. de Charolais did not belong to any political cabal, but occupied herself solely with pleasure; she was beautiful, graceful, and endowed with that fatal or happy temperament which prompts one to love. That need of love became manifest in her, as in the Duke de Richelieu, at the age of fifteen, and when she was twenty she had as many lovers as Richelieu had mistresses. It was at that happy time of her life that she met Richelieu and began to love him passionately.

When, however, Mlle. de Valois met Richelieu at her grandmother's at Saint-Cloud, she also fell in love with him as madly as her cousin, Mlle. de Charolais, had done. The purpose of this work being to sketch those times not in the fashion of Tacitus, but rather in that of Suetonius, one has to consult the works of the *anecdotiers*, and this is what one reads in one of them, namely, the "Memoirs" of the Count de Maurepas: "Mlle. de Valois fell madly in love with the Duke de Richelieu, and being accustomed to place him beside her at play,

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conversation was established between them by means of their feet. This amused them, she conceived a true attachment for the Duke and he one for her, and there was practically no public scandal. The courtiers could not ascertain their mutual sentiments, as at the outset they were only able to carry on their conversation by means of their feet, which expressed a great deal under the gaming table. But at last Mlle. de Charolais, the Duke's first inamorata, noticed it; whereupon she put her own feet forward and the Duke attacked them according to his custom, thinking that they were the feet of Mlle. de Valois.

“Devoured by jealousy, Mlle. de Charolais was nevertheless patient enough to continue this game for some time, wishing to ascertain the extent of the Duke's passion. . . . But at the end of the game she rose like a fury, with shining eyes, which seemed to protrude from her head, and under a pretext of feeling unwell she went home to rage with wrath and vexation against Mlle. de Valois, leaving the Duke very much confused on account of his mistake. . . . Neither Princess, however, manifested any resentment against the Duke, who deceived both of them, but they declared war on each other, swore eternal enmity and published atrocious verses about one another.”

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Mlle. de Valois had not the same facilities for seeing the Duke de Richelieu as her cousin Mlle. de Charolais, who occupied an apartment on the ground-floor of the Château of Saint-Cloud, overlooking a garden, to which Richelieu had a key. Mlle. de Valois, on the other hand, was severely watched, especially by her father, who, not wishing to have any fresh worry in his family, gave peculiar advice to Richelieu, in the following manner: Richelieu had a bosom friend named M. de Monconseil, who lived at the Richelieu Palace; he was a charming young man in regard to looks and character, and was received everywhere, even at the Palais-Royal. One night at a fancy dress ball at the Opera Monconseil happened to wear a domino exactly like Richelieu's and spoke to Mlle. de Valois. The Regent, mistaking him for the Duke, thereupon said to him:

“Beautiful mask, take care of yourself if you do not wish to go to the Bastille for the third time.”

Monconseil in alarm thereupon took off his mask in order that the Regent might see that he had made a mistake.

“It is all right, Monsieur de Monconseil,” said the Regent on recognizing the young man, “but the advice stills holds good; repeat to your friend what I have said to you.”

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Then he turned his back on him and left.

Monconseil told Richelieu what had happened, but the die was cast. The lovers' ardent hearts, yielding to the impetuosity of desire, devised one of the most hazardous expedients one could imagine. The Duke, who was then quite smooth-faced, dressed himself as a woman, and, conducted by a *confidante* of the Princess, passed through several rooms where some of her ladies-in-waiting were assembled. None of them recognized him, however, and he was taken into a cabinet where the Princess was waiting for him more dead than alive. The woman who introduced him remained in an adjacent room in order to give warning in case they were likely to be disturbed.

This stratagem was repeated several times until the amorous couple were betrayed by the maid. The Regent thereupon scolded his daughter severely, and to stop her intercourse with the Duke de Richelieu dispatched the latter to Spain with the Order of the Holy Ghost for the Prince of Asturias, by which means, moreover, the Regent wished to open negotiations with Philip V. for the marriage of one of his daughters to the Spanish Prince. This occurred in 1717.

The Count de Maurepas tells a diverting story concerning the Duke de Richelieu, which

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although it does not directly bear on his amour with Mlle. de Valois, is worthy of being recounted afresh for the amusement of the reader.

“Richelieu dismissed Mme. de Polignac, who had been his mistress since he was nineteen years of age. She accused Mme. de Nesle of being the cause of this dismissal and challenged her to fight a duel in the Bois de Boulogne. Pistols were chosen, and after bowing to one another the two women fired and Mme. de Nesle fell with her bosom bleeding.

“Mme. de Polignac, proud of her victory, thereupon said to her adversary :

“‘Now, that will teach you not to trespass on the preserves of such a woman as I. If I could, I would eat the heart of such a perfidious creature as you are, after blowing your brains out.’

“‘You are avenged,’ thereupon said one of the witnesses, ‘and it is not proper to jeer at the misfortune of your adversary whom you have wounded ; her valour ought to have won your esteem.’

“‘Be silent, you hare-brained youth,’ she retorted, ‘it is still less proper on your part to give me a lesson.’

“Mme. de Nesle, who was but slightly wounded, thanked Heaven, declaring that she had triumphed over her rival. The people

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present asked her if the lover was worthy of all that bother. 'Yes, yes,' said the wounded woman, 'he is worthy of still more beautiful blood being shed for him.'

" 'Who, then, is the happy mortal for whom you have shed yours?'

" 'He is the most amiable lord of the Court ; I am ready to lose the last drop of my blood for him. All the ladies set snares for him, but I hope that the proof I have given him with my blood will secure him wholly for myself. I am under too deep an obligation to you to hide his name from you ; he is the Duke de Richelieu ; yes, the Duke de Richelieu, the eldest son of Venus and of Mars.'

Both the men and the women of those days knew how to hate and how to love.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DUCHESS OF MODENA—HER MARRIAGE TO
FRANCIS D'ESTE

THAT Mme. de Valois loved the Duke de Richelieu sincerely is proved by her attitude when the conspiracy known in history as that of Cellamare was discovered.

The omnipotent Prime Minister of Spain, Cardinal Alberoni, the Prince de Cellamare and the Duchess du Maine were at the head of the following plan, which Alberoni had conceived. He wished to seize the person of the Duke d'Orléans and shut him in the stronghold of Toledo or Tarragona. When he was imprisoned there, the Duke du Maine was to be made Regent, France was to be detached from the quadruple alliance, James III. was to attack England, while Prussia, Sweden and Russia, with whom Alberoni signed an alliance, were

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to invade Holland. The Empire was to take advantage of the strife and retake Naples and Sicily. Then Alberoni was to bestow the Grand Duchy of Tuscany on the second son of the King of Spain; the Netherlands were to go to France, Sardinia to the Duke of Savoy, Commachio to the Pope, Mantua to the Venetians; and the Spanish Minister would become the soul of the great league of the South and the West against the North and the East, and in the event of Louis XV. dying, make Philip V. the ruler of half the world.

The Duke de Richelieu was foolish enough to join this conspiracy, which was discovered by Jean Buvat, a poor copyist to whom the Prince de Cellamare, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, had given a document pertaining to the conspiracy to transcribe.

Jean Buvat made a copy of this document and carried it to Cardinal Dubois; the result being the discovery of the designs against the Regent and France, and the arrest of the Prince de Cellamare and his accomplices.

When the police came to arrest the Duke de Richelieu they found him in bed. He heard an unusual noise in his drawing-room, but before he had even time to ask the cause of it, Duchevron, a provost of the constabulary, was

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in the bed-chamber with his archers, and conducted him to the Bastille.

The Regent, who had an account to settle with Richelieu, declared that if the Duke had possessed four heads, he was sufficiently guilty to have them all cut off ; but the proofs of the Duke's culpability were not made public, except as regards a letter which proved that Richelieu wished his regiment to remain at Bayonne, so his arrest was attributed to another cause.

When the plot was discovered Mlle. de Valois learnt by accident that her lover was in danger and sent him a warning letter, but in spite of her zeal he was provided with a lodging in the Bastille, as we have seen.

This produced a curious and almost unique psychological phenomenon. Mlle. de Charolais felt her former passion for Richelieu revive and went to Mlle. de Valois, her rival, in order that they might agree upon a means of freeing the dear prisoner. The chroniclers assert that Mlle. de Charolais took an oath promising that if Mlle. de Valois should succeed with her father and save the Duke's life, she would never importune him with her own feelings.

Thanks to the intervention of the two Princesses, the little Duke's captivity became less severe. He was provided with books, a *trictrac*, and a bass viol, so that his evenings might be

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less trying. Mlle. de Charolais, faithful to her promise, did not once set foot inside the Bastille, but remained satisfied with making the prisoner's life more agreeable. Madame writes of her in the following terms: "Mademoiselle de Charolais says that the Bayonne affair cannot be true, because the Duke de Richelieu, who had no secrets from her, did not tell her about it. She also says that she does not wish to see my son, as he sent the Duke to the Bastille. The Duke, fully dressed and with his hair curled, frequently walks along the terrace—of the fortress—and all the ladies stand in the street to see that beautiful picture."

As for Mlle. de Valois, she did not hesitate to sacrifice everything for the prisoner, and Soulavie asserts in his *Mémoires* that she spent on the affair 200,000 *livres*, which she obtained from her liberal father. The same writer says that the two cousins would go together to see the prisoner at night, taking him *bonbons*, *briquets* and a deal of money, and that they wept and lamented together. Soulavie was not a contemporary, for he was only born in 1753, but if his account be true it shows that the cousins were not only great princesses, but real women as well, endowed with what is the greatest quality in the sex: namely good hearts.

When the Duke de Richelieu fell ill, Mlle.

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de Valois made a supreme effort and obtained his release. It is said that the Regent granted her request on condition that she would forget him and marry the Prince of Modena. Richelieu left the Bastille in 1719 and repaired to Conflans, where he was ordered to live instead of in Paris. But he soon secured permission to come to Saint-Germain. Three months later he called on the Regent who, incapable as he was of harbouring hatred, offered him his hand, and thus everything was forgotten.

Mlle. de Valois kept her word, and at the beginning of the autumn of the same year her betrothal to Francis d'Este, son of Renaud [or Rinaldo], Duke of Modena and of Charlotte-Félicité of Brunswick-Hanover, was announced.

Madame wrote of Mlle. de Valois's future consort: "They speak well of the Prince of Modena; he is capable, and endowed with good sentiments; he is not handsome, but well-bred and very reasonable. This Prince was smitten with his future wife's portrait. But it really pains me."

The Count de Salvatico was entrusted with the negotiations, which he began very awkwardly by asking Marshal de Villeroy to be his intermediary with the King, by adopting which course he offended Dubois the Minister. Salvatico realized his mistake, and repaired it in a

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truly Italian manner by presenting Dubois with five valuable pictures, whereupon Dubois found that everything was in order. This artistic bribe consisted of a "Pieta" by Carrachio, "Susanna in the Bath," by the same painter, "The Judgment of Solomon" and "Venus and Mars," by Paul Veronese, and a "Virgin," by Correggio.

Mlle. de Valois was very sad at the thought of being for ever separated from her beloved Duke, and on November 30th Madame wrote: "the bride is desolate," but on December 9th she said: "Mademoiselle de Valois has begun to console herself since she has seen the beautiful toilettes which have been made for her: they are giving her forty different *habits*; they have sent some very beautiful diamonds from Modena; this is a consolation." For his part Jean Buvat speaks of sixty *habits complets*, fifteen for each season, while the presents of the King were valued by him at more than 4,000,000 *livres*.

On December 15th one finds this mournful touch in one of Madame's letters: "*Mademoiselle de Valois fait contre fortune bon cœur, ou bonne mine à mauvais jeu*. But although her mouth expresses mirth, her eyes are red and swollen; one can see that she spends her nights in weeping." Poor Princess!

There is historical proof that the Duke de

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Richelieu—following the examples of the Duke de Lauzun and the Count de Riom, who were loved by Princesses of the blood—tried to induce Mlle. de Valois to recall her pledged word to her father and marry him; for the Princess Palatine wrote: “That Duke is daring and full of impertinence. He knows my son’s good nature and takes advantage of it. If justice were done to him, he would pay for his temerity and manœuvres with his head. He deserves it threefold. I am not cruel, but I should not shed a single tear if I saw that rascal hanging from a gibbet.”

She flattered herself that she was not cruel!

Mlle. de Valois tried to postpone her doom, but Salvatico pressed the affair forward, and on January 31st, 1720, the marriage contract was signed. The young King gave the bride 900,000 *livres*, the Regent 200,000, and as much in diamonds, that is: *une parure de neuf agrafes de diamants et émeraudes*, 150,000 *livres*; twelve similar buttons, 24,000 *livres*; several *gances* of twelve roses each, 24,000 *livres*; a pair of pendants, 13,000 *livres*; eight *bandes de crevés, topazes et diamants*, 13,000 *livres*. In addition, the Princess already had jewels of her own worth 498,300 *livres*!

The betrothal ceremony was celebrated on February 11th, 1720, in the King’s cabinet,

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the Duke de Chartres representing the Prince of Modena. The Cardinal de Rohan officiated, and Mlle. de Montpensier carried the train of her sister's mantle. Then the King called at the Palais-Royal, and personally brought the Princess a magnificent pearl and diamond necklace.

On the following day the marriage ceremony was celebrated at the chapel of the Tuileries, and immediately it was over the King, following the custom, conducted the bride to her carriage, and said to the coachman: "To Modena!"

The Princess, surrounded by Guards, repaired to the palace of her grandmother, as if she had in reality begun her journey, and Madame wrote: "Never in my life had I seen such a sad spouse; for three days past she had neither eaten nor slept; she weeps continually."

Before starting for Italy the Princess wished to visit her sister at Chelles. The Princess Palatine opposed this visit, however, on the ground that measles had broken out at the Abbey and that she would risk her life. "So much the better!" the Princess answered, "that is what I am looking for."

Indeed, she caught measles, but, blessed the malady, which retarded her departure.

Finally, the day fixed for her journey arrived and she was obliged to make it.

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In the archives of Modena is preserved a letter written by her to her consort ; its simple beauty is so charming that we must quote it here : “ The ceremony, Monsieur, which has been celebrated has given me to you, and my heart does not disavow it. I am about to begin with you a union which should bring me happiness, and I ardently desire, Monsieur, that I may contribute to yours.”

The Princess was followed by a true Court, or rather a caravan, composed of Frenchmen and Italians. There were more than four hundred persons with her. “ When she arrived at Avignon,” wrote Desgranges, “ her equipages were twice as numerous as were those of the Dukes de Bourgogne and de Berry when they passed through that town twenty years ago. There were eighty wagons, all well loaded, eight coaches drawn by six horses each, and four others with eight horses, several *chaises roulantes*, and thirty guards well-armed and mounted, plenty of pack-horses, twelve pages on horse-back, eight footmen mounted also.”

The Princess stopped where she could. She remained nine days at Lyons, and Dangeau informs us that every afternoon she went to the comedy, and that every evening she and her company played at *lansquenet* and *biribi*. That journey cost France 27,426 *livres* merely

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for the alms which were distributed on the way. On leaving Vienne the Princess gave 10,000 *livres* to be distributed amongst the poor.

The Princess Palatine lamented over her granddaughter's extravagance in the following terms: "She is a peculiarly fantastical and stubborn person; she wishes to travel through the whole of Provence and visit Toulon, which is not on her way; she also wishes to go to Sainte-Baume; she does not care one whit for all the expense, which has to be met by her father. I have seen women go mad, but never to such a degree; the blood of La Montespan plainly shows itself in her."

Yes, it was true that the poor Princess wished to see everything excepting her husband, although M^{me}. de Villars, her lady-in-waiting, wrote to the Regent: "The great qualities of Madame la Princesse, the sweetness of her character and her natural complaisance do not allow one to doubt that she will find happiness in the Prince's affection."

The Princess travelled so slowly that her husband complained to the Regent of having to wait so long. The Regent thereupon became angry, and commanded that his daughter should embark without further delay. The embarkation took place at Antibes, whence the Princess sent the following message to her father:

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“ I received your order, my dear father, which fills my cup of misfortune and despair to the brim. But, no matter what pain it may cause me, I will obey you, even should you demand my life. I will hide my pain in the best manner I can, because you ask me to do so, but I must own to you that it is very great. Accept the sacrifice I am making for your sake and do me the justice to be convinced that I wish for nothing better than the continuance of your friendship, which I deserve by my tenderness and respect.”

This letter shows that Mlle. de Valois was not so wicked as her grandmother represented her, for it cannot be denied that she at least loved and obeyed her father.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DUCHESS OF MODENA—HER EARLY MARRIED LIFE

THE Princess reached Genoa on June 3rd, and on being conducted to the Durazzo palace she learnt that the ladies and gentlemen sent from Modena to meet her had been waiting there for three weeks.

She was at once faced with difficulties. In the first place the ladies of Modena claimed the right to be seated in armchairs in presence of the Princess, which she refused to permit, on the ground that she was a Princess of the blood royal of France, and not merely one of Modena.

Then, too, the Minister-resident of France, M. de Chavigny, had not yet received orders to pay the Princess's dowry to Salvatico, the Modenese Minister. On this ground Salvatico

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declined to receive the Princess, and it became necessary to send to Modena for instructions. The answer arrived on June 8th, the Duke of Modena saying, "that although a longer delay of payment would be very prejudicial to him, he would accept the Princess, as he did not doubt the King's word."

The dowry was sent to Chavigny on behalf of the King of France on June 20th, and the Regent then wrote to his daughter: "I was very angry that your dowry had not been paid as I had ordered. Present my apologies to M. le duc de Modène. . . . Nothing would console me more than to be assured that you will be happy."

What a good father was that slandered *débonnaire* Prince!

The princely caravan followed the road to Piacenza and at Reggio met the Duke and the two Princes of Modena. The old Duke hastened to the coach in order not to allow his daughter-in-law to alight.

Waiting at the gate of Reggio was the whole nobility of the country, who had arrived in more than a hundred coaches, each drawn by six horses. The reception was magnificent and there was a succession of *fêtes* lasting several days.

Then they entered Modena, where the Prince and Princess were left to themselves. There

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was a great contrast between them. She was lively, intelligent, good-looking even bewitching, but bored at being in Italy. He possessed no physical attractions and his mind offered no compensation for that deficiency; moreover, he was so bashful that he probably appeared very ridiculous in the eyes of a woman for whom the word "bashfulness" had no meaning.

The beginning, however, was quite satisfactory, for her very flattering reception had pleased the Princess, and Dangeau wrote that "she is much more pleased with the country than she anticipated."

However, her happiness soon changed into long worries and persecution. The first step on that road of tribulation was made by the old Duke of Modena when he appointed the Count de Salvatico to be Grand Master of his Court. Whilst representing the Duke at Versailles Salvatico had been a source of amusement to the courtiers, for he was extremely ridiculous. His head was exceedingly long, and was set on a disproportionate neck. His manners were no less ridiculous; he skipped instead of walking, cringed while bowing, and spoke detestable French, such as one would have expected more from a Gascon than from an Italian. Nevertheless, he was very well satisfied with himself.

It is said that on the day when he was

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presented to Mlle. de Valois she received him reclining on a *chaise-longue*, thus permitting a glimpse of a finely shaped leg. Salvatico became inflamed on the spot, and fell madly in love with the Princess. His diplomatic correspondence was so full of admiration for her person that the warmth of his letters was imparted to Francis d'Este.

At the outset Mlle. de Valois was amused by this comedy, and she afterwards thought it might be to her advantage to have under her influence a man who was greatly trusted by the old Duke of Modena. Salvatico felt so greatly encouraged by her kind manner that he believed success possible and, as Madame says, even "shouted his passion in the drawing-rooms of Versailles," became very jealous, and actually declared that his love for the Princess was so great that he would accept anything from her with happiness.

His excitement became still greater during the Princess's journey.

"The man must be mad," wrote Madame. "While they were on the road he made *une déclaration en forme* to the Princess, threatening her that he would make her very unhappy if she did not listen to his love. He began his declaration with these words: 'Ah, ah! Ah! Madame! Ah! Ah! Ah! Madame.'

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“Whereupon the Princess said to him: ‘What do you mean by your ah! ah! ah?’”

“‘Ah!’ he answered, ‘under what an obligation is the Prince of Modena to me, and how happy I shall make him!’”

After that outburst the Princess thought it would be best to keep him at a distance, and she excluded him from her table. *Inde iræ!*

From that time indeed Salvatico became the implacable foe and cruel persecutor of the woman who had disdained his homage. The old and unfortunate Celadon changed into a ferocious but courtly blackguard, and thus the Princess was vexed at his being appointed Grand Master of the Court.

When the question of the establishment of the young couple arose, Salvatico was entrusted with the furnishing, and provided old carriages, blind horses, pewter instead of silver, and everything else of inferior value.

It would be too monotonous to particularize all the rascality which Salvatico displayed towards the Princess, whom he did not cease to annoy at every possible opportunity, but one provoking action of this disappointed admirer was to intercept the Princess’s correspondence, and particularly her father’s letters.

However, the most vexatious point of which Salvatico took advantage was that the old

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Duke of Modena, beginning to doubt whether he would ever see the birth of an heir to his ducal crown, blamed his daughter-in-law in this respect, being incited to do so by the fiendish Grand Master, whereas according to others the fault rested with her husband.

The Princess's position became so unbearable that the Regent sent M. de Chavigny, his Minister-Resident at Genoa, to study the question and devise a *modus vivendi*.

There exists a long report prepared by M. de Chavigny, who was unable to do anything in the matter and left Modena weary of the worries of this Court, worries which he regarded as very serious so far as they concerned "the impotence of the young Prince, which was only too real."

In order to improve the situation the Princess conceived the notion of making a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto, and imploring the Madonna there to perform a miracle. She also had a notion of taking advantage of this pilgrimage to leave Italy for France, for which she longed.

Marais wrote as follows of this would-be pilgrimage :

"There is extraordinary news. The Duchess of Modena, the Regent's daughter, after being on very bad terms with her father-in-law and her mother-in-law, has persuaded her consort to leave them. They gave as a pretext a

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pilgrimage to Loretto in order to have children, for the superstitious Italians believe in that devotion. But the couple went incognito as far as Strasburg, whence they advised the Regent of their arrival. He was much surprised at the notion of being burdened afresh with a daughter of whom he had thought he was rid. Messenger after messenger has been sent to stop them, and it is not yet known what will be the result of that foolish move, which will cause fresh expense to France, should they be received here. It is dangerous for them either to return or remain. If they return they will be guarded like slaves; if they do not, they risk losing their State."

Everything had been carried out according to the Princess's plan. After a few days spent at the Convent of Our Lady of Loretto, she left it with her consort for Ancona, whence she wrote to M. de Chavigny and the Regent, advising them of her projected visit to France.

Her letter to her father is full of noble sentiments—gratitude, affection and submission, and she ends it thus :

"Permit me to remind you particularly of the kindness which you have always shown to me, and of the respectful and tender attachment which I have always had for you."

The Duke d'Orléans at once answered his daughter by representing to her the peril there

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was in setting Francis d'Este at variance with his father, and begging her, almost timidly, "to defer the journey until there was more information." Meanwhile he sent Abbé Philibert to the old Duke of Modena, who was pleased at this escapade of his eldest son, whom he detested, his only desire being to have a reasonable excuse to give the crown to his second son, Prince John-Frederick-Clement, commonly known as Prince Frederick. The Duke was therefore delighted that his daughter-in-law should have involuntarily come to his help by her scheme of leaving Modena for ever.

However, nobody at Versailles desired the return of Mlle. de Valois.

The Regent again sent M. de Chavigny to arrange matters at Modena, and after he and the Abbé Philibert had brought some pressure to bear, the egotistical, suspicious and narrow-minded old Duke was obliged to give in.

The Princess—without her husband—returned to Modena, where her reception by the Duke was stern and mortifying. Salvatico, being absolute master of the situation, continued his work of revenge, and prevailed upon the Duke to forbid the Princess to see her ladies-in-waiting, to exclude all Frenchmen from her Court, and to wall up a door communicating with the apartments of her three sisters-in-law,

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who were very friendly disposed towards her. This was too much, and in presence of the insults inflicted upon his daughter, the Regent, unable to use other means—for the Duke of Modena was assured of substantial support at the Court of Vienna—urged the Abbé Philibert to act energetically, and sent him full authority in that respect.

The loyal and intelligent priest now persuaded Prince Francis to return to Modena, where his father received him “with moderation and few words.”

This improved the position of the Princess, who was even permitted to go to drink the waters at Lucca, and then to repair to Rome, where the news of Madame’s death reached her. This was a fresh opportunity for her to display her sentiments as a dutiful and loving daughter, and she wrote to her father :

“The extreme grief caused me by Madame’s death did not allow me until now, my dear father, to express my sentiments to you. I am still hardly strong enough to entreat you not to allow yourself to be cast down by this mishap, but to preserve the health which is so precious to everybody and especially to me, for it is my only support in the misfortunes by which I am overwhelmed.”

Soon, however, the horizon of her life became

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brighter, for in the spring of 1723, after her return to her palace at Reggio, the great news that the Princess was *enceinte* reached the gloomy Court of Modena. On November 18th she was delivered of a son.

This event, apparently so much desired by the Duke, did not, however, cause the tension to disappear, as had been expected. Her father-in-law limited himself to sending messengers to inquire about the Princess's health, without showing that he was at all pleased to have an heir to his crown. Finally, however, he expressed the desire to make "an undeserved call" on the mother, which Prince Francis, excited to opposition by his friends, indignantly declined.

Amidst those paltry squabbles of a petty Court the Princess's beloved father died, and her grief was so deep that it was deemed necessary to bleed her—according to the custom of those times. Nevertheless, her prostration lasted for more than eight days. The blow was a terrible one, for it not only deprived her of her father, whom she tenderly loved, but also shattered her hopes of returning to France. Some time after, when the faithful Abbé Colibeaux, her confessor, told her that he had written to France concerning her, she replied, sobbing: "Your efforts are useless; my father is no more and I no longer count."

CHAPTER XXV

THE DUCHESS OF MODENA—HER LATER LIFE AND DEATH

BEFORE proceeding further it is interesting to mention a story invented by Soulavie concerning an alleged visit paid by the Duke de Richelieu to Modena. According to this writer, Richelieu, urged to it by the Princess, repaired to Italy with a friend, and, disguised as a book-pedlar, posted himself in a street along which the Princess used to pass when on her way to church. The Princess recognized him and asked him to call at the palace under the pretext of buying some books from him. Soulavie invented even an interesting meeting with the old Duke, who, says he, almost surprised the two lovers. However, Richelieu quitted Modena feeling tired of the Princess's tenderness.

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The best proof that the story is mere invention is that at the time of Richelieu's supposed visit the Princess was not at Modena. Besides, it is difficult to imagine that the old Duke, who was eagerly watching for an opportunity to rid himself of his eldest son and the latter's wife, would not have heard of that daring enterprise through his spies and have used it for his own purposes. Then, it is quite unlikely that the Princess, being aware of the Duke's attitude towards her and of the jealous disposition of her husband, who even objected to his own brother's admiration of her, would have run so great a risk, especially when one remembers that Mme. Piché, one of her ladies-in-waiting, often says in her letters that the Princess was afraid lest they should dispatch her *à l'italienne*.

In all the historical materials concerning the married life of this future Duchess of Modena it is impossible to find anything against her womanly honour. Her conduct was most correct in every respect. She had greatly changed since quitting Paris; and she became as simple as a dove and as wise as a serpent in her various dealings with her astute father-in-law, her crafty cousin, the Duke de Bourbon, who became Prime Minister of France, her egotistical brother, now Duke d'Orléans, and her still more selfish mother. It was to the latter that she

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finally turned, when she found herself repulsed everywhere else; but the Duchess d'Orléans shewed the most reprehensible indifference towards her unhappy daughter.

The Princess may have acted wrongly while she was in France, but, as said before, since she had been in Italy her private conduct had been blameless, and the injustice to which she was subjected sufficed to efface the recollection of her former eccentricities. She was profoundly unhappy, and undeservedly maltreated, and the Duchess d'Orléans merited censure for her neglect. If she was incapable of motherly sentiment, it was at least her duty to defend her daughter, or at any rate to resent insults inflicted on her house, for whose splendour she had formerly been so eager.

When the Princess of Modena, in sheer despair, turned to her mother to represent to her how obstinate her father-in-law was in keeping no agreements, she wrote her a letter so full of dignity and elevated feeling that it may well be quoted here.

“I have always regarded you, my dear mother, not only with the submissiveness of a daughter, but even that of a daughter-pupil; I have informed you of everything that has happened, but have never obtained any other result than to be accused of being the cause of

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my own misfortune. . . . Permit me to tell you that you have never shown any interest in what concerns me except to display your opposition to my wishes. You tell me it has been from friendship for me, but you forget that I am thirty years of age, and consequently think of nothing else but a quiet life. Moreover, if I wished to go to France it was in accordance with my husband's wishes. It was not merely a desire to show you my face, for I am aware that it is odious to you. But what I cannot understand is that you alone in the whole world should blame me. It is not because I am lacking either in respect or attachment that I am now going to ask you a favour, but because I am so extremely unhappy on account of your siding with M. le Duc against me. Allow me, then, to limit myself to expressing my respect and affection. Pray do not bother yourself any more about what may happen to me, and add to this the goodness of telling M. le Cardinal de Fleury that you do not wish to hear of anything concerning me."

The affectionate mother never replied to that remarkable letter.

To recount the rest of the Princess of Modena's life would be not only to narrate all the squabbles with her father-in-law in regard to sordid money matters, which

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demonstrated his miserly greed, all the humiliations that were heaped on her by him, and by the Dukes de Bourbon and d'Orléans and various ministers in France; but also to recount the history of Modena at that period, the wars with Spain and Charles-Emanuel of Savoy, the Princess's negotiations in favour of her cruel and merciless father-in-law, her travels to France and back; all of which would not only exceed the scope of this work, but would also necessitate the writing of another volume.

It must therefore suffice to say that she had several children, one of whom, Ercole Rinaldo, became Duke of Modena, whilst one of her daughters was married to the Duke de Chartres' son. The births of those children demonstrated that the earlier imputations cast on her and her husband were groundless; and this once again shows how defective is human judgment.

In 1737 the crafty old Duke died, and his son Francis hastened from Hungary, where he was chief commander of the artillery in the Emperor's service, to assume the ducal crown of Modena. His consort at the same time exchanged her title of Princess for that of Duchess.

After enjoying for a short time all the

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pleasure that falls to the consort of a sovereign, no matter how petty he may be, she was again obliged to journey towards France, where, although she was a Princess of the blood royal she was very badly treated. She left France in 1759. From that time there is a lack of historical evidence concerning her life. It would seem, however, that weariness took hold of her. She resided as little as possible at Modena, where her consort lived almost conjugally with the Marchioness Simonetti, the widow of a member of one of the greatest Milanese houses. For her part, the Duchess of Modena was almost constantly travelling about Italy, often changing her residence. D'Argenson, who is a trustworthy writer, said of her: "I have since heard that she became very religious." That, one may say, is almost the usual ending of human life.

She became ill while staying at Modena at the close of 1760, and died on January, 19th, 1761, after expressing her regret at not dying in France, which she loved so well, but where she had found neither consideration nor peace nor any kind of redress.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN—HER EARLY YEARS AND MARRIAGE

“MY fourth granddaughter is a good child, but very ugly and disagreeable,” wrote the by no means indulgent Princess Palatine on March 31st, 1718.

Louise-Elizabeth d'Orléans, called Mademoiselle de Montpensier, was then but eight years and three months old, an age which is very unfavorable for judging a girl's beauty.

When merely an infant she had been sent to the convent of the Benedictines at Beauvais, whence she was removed in 1716 at the age of six. Already in 1718 there was a question of a political marriage for her. It happened thus: One Berthelot de Plencœuf, a purveyor to Louis XIV.'s army, proved to be such a rogue that the King intended sending him to the Bastille.

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But Berthelot de Plencœuf heard of it, and fled to Italy. Whilst at Turin, as he had accumulated a large fortune, he succeeded in marrying his daughter to the son of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Prie. Being a shrewd intriguer he acquired certain influence at that not over-honest Court, and wishing to return to France with a kind of prestige he conceived a notion of marrying one of the Duke d'Orléans' daughters to the Prince of Piedmont.

Mme. de Plencœuf, who had not followed her husband across the Alps, for she wished to protect their interests in Paris, submitted the plan to the Duchess d'Orléans, who eagerly approved of it, for her heart's desire was to get rid of her daughters as soon as possible.

The Duchess asked the Duke de Saint-Simon to conduct the negotiations, and he states that in spite of the contempt he felt for Plencœuf, he could not refuse his services, especially when the Duke d'Orléans said to him, in answer to some observation he made in regard to the political inopportunity of such a matrimonial alliance: "After all, *c'est un coup d'épée dans l'eau*, and although it is unlikely to come to pass, stranger things have happened. The whole affair, too, would only cost us the writing of a few letters."

One morning, then, Mme. de Plencœuf, "well

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dressed, eloquent and full of her affair," called on the Duke and the negotiations began; but after a long correspondence the result was nil.

The Duke de Saint-Simon has forgotten to specify which of the Duke d'Orléans' daughters was the subject of his negotiations, but this detail is supplied by Madame in a letter dated September 18th, 1718, in which she says: "She is barely nine years of age: you see, then, that even if the marriage with the Prince of Piedmont were decided it would be forcibly retarded for some years."

As Mlle. de Montpensier was born on December 11th, 1709, she was at this time eight years and nine months old, consequently it was she whom Plenœuf had thought of marrying to an Italian Prince.

It was due to the Princess Palatine that this union did not take place. She said frankly—for she never disguised her thoughts: "This marriage would not give me any pleasure, it would be against the desires of the Queen of Sicily, whom I love the best of all my granddaughters, for I am as fond of this virtuous Queen as if she were my own daughter. She was but six months of age when her mother died, consequently she regards me as her own mother, and she has unlimited confidence in me."

The notion of the marriage in question was

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so disagreeable to Madame, that she would not have it taken seriously: "There is not a word of truth," she writes in one of her letters, "in what they say concerning the project of marrying Mlle. de Montpensier to the Prince de Savoie."

Moreover, Cardinal Dubois did not care for this union, and if he circulated the news of it—which had been kept secret by Saint-Simon and Plencœuf—it was with the express hope that Madame would not assist, but level at it one of her "ferocious German darts." This, indeed, happened. She wrote to the Queen of Sicily, telling her frankly what she thought of the Duke d'Orléans' daughters, and her information put an end to everything. The Regent heard of the malicious trick played on him by his mother, but he only laughed at this *incartade germanique*.

The chroniclers seldom speak about Mlle. de Montpensier; they just tell us that she had the smallpox and the measles at the same time, as Mlle. de Valois, and that she carried the train of her sister's mantle when the latter was married to the Prince of Modena.

In 1720, Philip V. of Spain opened various matrimonial negotiations with the Emperor, proposing that his son should marry the Emperor's eldest daughter; or else that the Infant Fernando should marry that Princess and



MLLE. DE MONTPENSIER, QUEEN OF SPAIN.

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be created King of the Romans ; or else that the Prince of Asturias should be united with the Archduchess who would become heiress of Flanders and Italy, and that the Infant Fernando should espouse the Archduchess who would remain heiress of the German and Austrian States. These negotiations dragged on until April in the year 1721.

Cardinal Dubois having heard of them, conceived the notion of taking advantage of the Emperor's seeming indifference, to depict it to Philip V. as a slight, and offer him a double marriage at Versailles instead of the same at Vienna. In that way, thought the Cardinal, he might bring the two great branches of the Bourbons closer together.

The King of Spain, in his pique against the Emperor, accepted the suggestion, and the Duke d'Orléans sent M. de Maulevrier to Spain with the order of the Holy Ghost for the Infant and instructions to negotiate the marriage of Louis XV. with the Infanta and that of the Prince of Asturias with Mlle, de Montpensier.

Everything was decided on September 14th, when a letter addressed to Louis XV. by Philip V. arrived announcing the consent of his Catholic Majesty to the double union and expressing his delight thereat.

It should be stated that the Infanta was

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only three-and-a-half and Mlle. de Montpensier only twelve years old. Nevertheless, the joy at the Escorial was so great that one of the French political agents wrote to Dubois: "Their Majesties are counting the hours and minutes necessary for our courier to go to Paris and return. They await his Royal Highness's answer with the greatest impatience."

Directly the courier returned to Madrid Maulevrier hastened to the Escorial with the good news. He found the King and Queen in bed, but they received the French ambassador with extreme joy.

The double marriage was announced at the Council in Paris on September 28th, 1721. It remained to convey the news to Louis XV., and it was feared that although he was only eleven years of age he might object to be married to a little girl of three. It was necessary, then, to secure the goodwill of the Duke de Villeroy, the *surintendant* of the King's education, and of the Bishop of Fréjus, his Majesty's tutor.

Villeroy was the Regent's avowed enemy, but he received the news well. The Bishop de Fréjus was colder; he objected to the age of the Infanta—an age which made the marriage quite an illusory act. However, he said that he would be present when the proposal was

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made to the King, and promised to use all his influence to make him agree to the Regent's plan.

The communication was postponed until the next day, when, at the agreed hour, the Regent called upon the King. To his great astonishment the Bishop of Fréjus was not in the ante-chamber, and the Regent at once sent for him. A few moments later the Bishop hurried in. They then both entered the King's room, where they found the Duke de Villeroy and Cardinal Dubois.

The Regent, assuming his most amiable air, announced the great news to the King, extolling the advantages of the match and entreating him to agree to it. But the King, who was greatly surprised, remained silent, and his eyes filled with tears. The Regent thereupon looked fixedly at the Bishop, for he felt that everything depended on him, as little Louis XV. loved him dearly.

The Bishop kept his promise, and insisted upon the necessity of keeping the agreement made by the Regent in the King's name. Hearing this, Villeroy also said to the King:

"Allons, sire, il faut faire la chose de bonne grâce."

But nothing would induce Louis to speak. The Bishop of Fréjus spoke to him in a low

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voice, exhorting him tenderly and begging him to come to the Council to declare his consent. But the King remained silent and motionless. At last, however, he undoubtedly made some movement in sign of assent, for the Bishop said to the Regent :

“ His Majesty will go to the Council, Monseigneur, but there must be a little delay until the King is disposed.”

The Regent bowed, said that he would wait the King's pleasure, and signed to the Cardinal and the Duke to follow him.

Half an hour later the King entered the Council chamber, and after Philip V.'s letter had been read to him he declared that he consented with pleasure to the marriage. He also approved of the union of Mlle. de Montpensier with the Prince of Asturias.

The conditions of the agreement were that the King was to grant Mlle. de Montpensier a dowry of 500,000 golden crowns, and the Regent 40,000 in specie and jewels, while Spain was to give her 50,000 crowns' worth of jewels. Everything was to be returned in case of the Prince's death without issue, or a dissolution of the marriage by the Pope.

The Regent's greatest foes were astounded by this unexpected *coup*, for by a most skilful political manœuvre the Duke d'Orléans not only became

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very closely allied to the King of Spain, who, a year previously, had asked for his head, but his daughter also set her foot on the Spanish throne.

Marais was right when he said: "One could never have supposed that the Duke d'Orléans' daughter would marry the heir to the throne of Spain, from which country the Duke received so many public and injurious reproaches."

As soon as this double marriage had been approved by the King, the Duke de Saint-Simon was appointed Ambassador-Extraordinary to the Court of Spain to ask officially for the Infanta's hand. Mme. de Ventadour was appointed her *gouvernante* and instructed to repair to Madrid to bring her to Paris.

While Saint-Simon was on his way to Spain, the Spanish ambassador, the Duke d'Ossuna, was on his way to France, and when he arrived in Paris he was as well received there as was the French ambassador at Madrid. On November 13th he officially asked the King for his cousin's hand, and then repaired to the Palais-Royal.

The contract was signed at the Tuileries on November 15th, and the King then paid a visit to Mlle. de Montpensier. Afterwards came a gala performance at the Opera and a magnificent ball at the Palais-Royal, Louis XV. opening it with the future Princess of Asturias.

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On November 15th she set out on her journey, entering a coach with her father, her brother, the Countess de Cheverny, her *gouvernante*, the Duchess de Ventadour, and the Princess de Soubise, being escorted by eighty Guards, and with many coaches following her. The Prince de Rohan-Soubise, who had been appointed to receive the Infanta, commanded one hundred and fifty Guards magnificently equipped at his own expense. He had refused 50,000 crowns offered him by the Regent for travelling expenses. The Dukes d'Orléans and de Chartres left the Princess at Bourg-la-Reine, and she continued her route.

At Bayonne, the Dowager-Queen of Spain Marie Anne of Bavaria-Neuburg, widow of King Charles II., presented Mlle. de Montpensier with a very costly diamond, a watch, a snuff-box set with diamonds, and a chest-of-drawers full of Chinese porcelain.

They reached Pheasant's Island, midway across the river Bidassoa, which separates the two kingdoms, at the same time as the retinue of the Infanta, brought by the Marquis de Santa-Cruz, who was about to receive Mlle. de Montpensier, also arrived there. The exchange of the two Princesses took place on January 9th, 1722, and after the usual compliments and presents, each continued her journey.

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While awaiting the arrival of Mlle. de Montpensier at the Escorial, the Duke de Saint-Simon discussed with the Spanish Royal family a very delicate question, which he considered of great importance.

Contrary to the custom admitted by the ancient ceremonial of all other Courts, there was no *coucher solennel des mariés* at the Court of Spain. The Duke de Saint-Simon was aware of this, and attributed it "to Spanish gravity and modesty." Although he had not received any instructions in that respect, he entertained some doubts as to the binding force of the marriage, from a political point of view, "if it were not followed by the at least presumed consummation." He therefore gathered all his wits together—though they were sharp enough already—spoke of the great joy which the union gave to the Orléans house, of an alliance between the two crowns, and of the consummation of the union.

"Here I stopped to see the effect of my speech, and as I thought it had answered the purpose for which I had made it, I became bolder and added that the greater and dearer the honour was to M. le Duc d'Orléans, and the more it was envied by all Europe and those Frenchmen who were ill-affected towards the Regent, the more important did the solidity

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of this marriage become for him ; and I said that I was not ignorant of the wise and modest Spanish customs, but that I was none the less convinced that they might be infringed in favour of such a great object, which was to make the marriage absolutely binding in circumstances which were so singular."

Briefly, the Duke de Saint-Simon simply asked for the *cérémonie du coucher*, such as Philip V. had witnessed at the marriage of the Duke and Duchess de Bourgogne.

The King and Queen let the ambassador continue to talk ; they did not say a word, but they looked at one another.

The ducal ambassador spoke further of his devotion to both monarchies, and of his desire to avoid all complications in the future. Then their Catholic Majesties again looked at one another, and consulted each other in undertones. Finally, the King asked the Duke what should be done in the event of their consent. Saint-Simon replied that there ought to be the same ceremony as at the Duke de Bourgogne's marriage. This plan was adopted.

The marriage was looked upon by the Court of Spain in the most favourable light, for the Duke d'Ossuna had sketched a most charming portrait of the royal bride. The King and his son went disguised to meet the Princess on her



THE DUKE D'ANJOU, PHILIPPE V., KING OF SPAIN.

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way ; they travelled in an ordinary carriage in the train of the Duke del Arco, who was going to present their compliments to the Princess at Cogollos. After delivering his speech he asked Mlle. de Montpensier's permission to present to her two noblemen who were very desirous of offering her their respects. However, one of the ladies accompanying the Princess recognized the King of Spain, whispered a few words to her, and thus "spoiled the mystery," while the Princess "wished to kiss the King's hands, but in lieu thereof was kissed by him."

When they arrived at Lerma the Princess was presented to the Queen, and then the marriage ceremony was celebrated. In the chapel there occurred an amusing incident, an account of which may brighten this narrative, so full of points of etiquette.

Cardinal Borgia, who was to give the nuptial benediction, did not know the ceremonial, but was making haste to learn it when the King, the Queen and the whole Court arrived at the door of the chapel. They were announced loudly ; but the Cardinal angrily exclaimed : "Let them wait ! I am not ready !"

They waited, and the Cardinal, redder than his robe and angrier than ever, continued learning his lesson. Finally, after a long delay he went to the door. The office was anything but

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imposing. The Cardinal did not know what to say or what to do; he was continually corrected by the priests who assisted him, he foaming at them the while to such a degree that neither the King nor the Queen nor indeed anybody present could help laughing.

That diverting story is told by Saint-Simon.

There was a ball on the following day, as is usual on such occasions, and it was attended by several bishops *en rochet et en camail*. Saint-Simon says that "the *fête* was very gay, but there was nothing in it at all derogatory to majesty and dignity."

When it was announced that the *coucher public* would take place "there was surprise but not dissatisfaction."

At two o'clock the married couple were conducted to their apartments by the King and Queen.

The Duke de Saint-Simon watched the ceremony and declared that everything was done as he desired, namely, that the courtiers were admitted to see the two children who had been married placed in a State bed, and that the curtains were drawn in the presence of everybody. "But the Duke de Popoli and the Duchess de Montpellano took care to slip under the curtains and did not for one moment lose sight of the young couple."

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Immediately after the departure of the Court the Prince rose and was conducted to a separate apartment, and Lemontey asserts in his history of the Regency that the lad wept when he was told to leave his juvenile spouse.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN—HER WHIMS AND ILL-BEHAVIOUR

WHEN Mlle. de Montpensier arrived at the Court of Spain she had reached that ungrateful age at which it is impossible to judge a girl's good looks. At the beginning of the previous chapter we quoted Madame's severe judgment respecting her granddaughter. In 1721 she had modified her opinion, and furnishes us with a more favourable view in some respects, though not in all, as will be seen by this quotation: "I cannot say that Mlle. de Montpensier is ugly; she has pretty eyes, a fine and white skin, a well-made nose, although a little slender, and a very small mouth; but with all that, she is the most disagreeable person I ever saw in my life; in everything she does, speaking, eating or drinking, she is unbearable;

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she did not shed a single tear when she left us, and she hardly bade us farewell.”

It is a pity that we cannot find in any other contemporary writer any mention of the physical and psychological characteristics of the youthful Princess.

However, it should not be forgotten that at the age of five she was removed from a convent, and that her indolent mother took no care of her, as she should have done. As for her father, he was too busy attending to State affairs and fighting his political antagonists.

The Court of the Escorial was not the place to improve the education of the new Princess of Asturias. The Duke de Saint-Simon's masterly description of it shows one what a fall the child made through being transferred, without the slightest transition, from the Palais-Royal to the Escorial.

The King of Spain was entirely overshadowed by the Queen—Elizabeth Farnese—who, “lively, active, decided, determined, vehement in her will and her interest,” thought of nothing but consolidating her position, in view of the King's death, as his successor was not her own son. It is easy to understand, therefore, that the Queen was not a mother-in-law in whom the Princess of Asturias was likely to find any affection. She was incapable of supplying the

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maternal care which the little Princess needed both morally and physically.

Everybody was so bored at the Escorial that "an amiable Princess would have appeared as a gift from heaven," says Lemontey, for they all hoped and expected that a young person would introduce some gaiety into the gloomy palace. Unfortunately, the Princess having made her journey during the most severe season, took cold and became seriously ill. Red spots appeared on her neck, and the whole Court became afraid lest it should be smallpox. The Duke de Saint-Simon was obliged to use all his eloquence to convince the alarmed sovereigns that there was no danger of that malady, for the simple reason that the Princess had already had both smallpox and measles.

The King and Queen, having been assured that the Princess's sickness was not contagious, visited her several times, and every day asked the French ambassador whether he also had seen her. His answer being that he dared not infringe the severe Spanish custom which forbade a man, no matter what the motive of his visit might be, to see a woman in bed, they commanded him to disregard the custom and see the Princess. He saw her, and was then in a position to assure their Majesties that there was no danger whatever, for the

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inflammation of the throat was due to erysipelas.

After a few days' care the Princess felt relieved, but, unfortunately, in proportion as she got better physically her mind seemed to become affected, for she became gloomy, maltreated her ladies-in-waiting, rebuffed her physicians and even returned sharp answers to the Queen who, in spite of everything, now visited her daily.

Elizabeth Farnese spoke of all this to Saint-Simon and asked him to intervene. He was obliged to do so, and this is what he says: "I went two or three times to see the Princess without being able to make her say more than yes or no in answer to my questions about her health. However, I induced her to call twice on the Queen, whom she visited *en déshabillé et d'assez mauvaise grâce.*"

The effect which this produced on the Court was most deplorable, especially as everybody was waiting for the great wedding ball. The Princess refused to attend it, which the King and Queen regretted very much, for they themselves were extremely fond of that kind of *divertissement*. The attitude of the Princess, who was already restored to health, dissatisfied both the Court and the town, and the tradesfolk complained bitterly. Matters came to such

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a pass that Saint-Simon decided to call on her and do all he could in the matter.

“Everything” says he, “was ready for the great ball which was to be given in the *salon des grands*, and they were only waiting for the Princess, who did not wish to attend. The King and Queen were fond of balls, as I said elsewhere. They had looked forward to this one with pleasure, the Prince of Asturias also, and indeed the whole Court had waited for it impatiently. The conduct of the Princess became known outside, and produced the worst possible effect. I was advised from within that the King and Queen were very impatient about it; and being urged by the Princess’s ladies to speak to her, I went and conversed with them in her presence respecting her health, which no longer presented any obstacle to the pleasure that was awaiting her.

“At last I brought forward the subject of the ball; I commended the arrangements, the scene it would present, its magnificence; I said that this pleasure was particularly one for those who were of the Princess’s age; that the King and the Queen, moreover, were very fond of it and were waiting for her impatiently.

“Suddenly like a disgusted child she exclaimed:

“‘I, go there? I shall not go!’

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“‘Very well, Madame, I answered, ‘you will not go, but you will be sorry for it, for you will deprive yourself of a real pleasure. The whole Court is waiting for you, and you have too much common-sense, and too great a desire to please the King and Queen to lose an opportunity of doing so.’

“She sat there and did not look at me. But, immediately after those words, she turned her head towards me, and said in the most determined manner I ever observed :

“‘No, sir ; I repeat that I will not go to the ball ; the King and Queen can go if they wish ; they are fond of balls, I am not ; they are fond of rising and retiring late, I like to retire early. They may do what is to their taste, and I will follow mine.’

“I began to laugh, and told her that she wished to amuse herself and alarm me, but that I was not going to take that *badinage* seriously ; that at her age one does not give up a ball so easily ; and that after that joke of hers it would be better not to make everybody wait any longer.

“The ladies sided with me, and the conversation between us continued on the same topic, while the Princess, it seemed, did not even listen.

“When I left the room, the Duchess de Montalbano followed me, with the Duchess de

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Liria and Mme. de Riscaldalgre. They surrounded me and expressed their fears with respect to such a decided will in so young a person, who regarded neither duty nor pleasure, and in a country, too, where she had only just arrived and would remain alone among strangers.

“I was more alarmed than they were, for I foresaw grave consequences. But I tried to reassure them by ascribing to her illness and its humours the position she had taken up and which I hoped would be relinquished with the full return of her health.

“However, I was careful enough to say nothing to the King and Queen until they themselves spoke to me about the ball—particularly the King, who spoke bitterly about the Princess’s whims, whereupon I took advantage of the opportunity to say to him that I did not suppose he would be stopped in his intentions by a child’s caprice, which had most assuredly arisen from her malady, or deprive the Court and the public of such an agreeable *fête*, which would certainly be as splendid as the first one I had seen at his Court; for in that event I should be very disappointed myself, as I anticipated great pleasure at it.

“‘Oh! it is impossible without the Princess,’ answered the King.

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“‘Why, Sire?’ I asked, ‘Your Majesty was going to give this *fête* for your own delight and the pleasure of the public. It is not the Princess’s place to control Your Majesty’s pleasures, and those which you are pleased to offer to the Court. If the Princess thought that her health would allow it, she would come, if not, the *fête* might be given without her.’

“While I was talking the Queen signed to me with her eyes and her head to urge the King still further, and I added that everything that was done was for their Majesties; that they were the only persons of supreme consequence; that no matter how great princes might be, they were but the first courtiers and never the principal objects.

“The Queen seconded my speech, but the King said nothing and turned the conversation to some other subject.”

Saint-Simon continues to recount the delightful Court comedy at length, but it will suffice for us to give the end of it, which took place two or three days later:

“The Queen drew near to the King. I remained motionless. They spoke in low voices; then the Queen called me, and said when I was near her: ‘It is decided that there shall be no great ball, *mais pour se dépiquer*, the

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King will have a small one this evening, after supper, in our private apartments, where there will only be the members of the household, and the King wishes you to come.'

"I bowed respectfully and thanked them.

"The Queen repeated: 'But you will come?'

"I acknowledged the honour as was my duty, and the King said:

"' *Au moins il n'y aura que nous.*'

"' *Et nous danserons tout à notre aise et en liberté.*'

"The ball was given in the small gallery. There were present only the lords on duty, the first equerries, the *majordomos* of the week, the *camerera-mayor*, the ladies of the palace, the young *señoras de honor* and the *caméristes*. The King, the Queen and the Prince of Asturias amused themselves a great deal; everybody danced several minuets, and yet a greater number of *contredanses*, until three o'clock after midnight, when their Majesties retired."

The Princess, whose apartments were situated at the extreme end of the gallery in which the ball was given, did not appear at the *fête* given in her honour.

On the following day the King ordered that the *fêtes* for the populace, who were dissatisfied with their long waiting, should be given.

The Duke de Saint-Simon, who did not wish

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to continue playing the ungrateful rôle of a mentor to a child, for the improvement of whose character much time was needed, then decided to leave Madrid, and on March 21st he obtained his *audience de congé*.

Everything went off in a solemn though hearty manner with the King and Queen, but it was quite different with the Princess of Asturias. "She was standing under a canopy, the ladies on one side, the grandees on the other. I made my three bows, then paid my compliments. Then I stopped, but in vain, for she answered not a word. After a few moments' silence, wishing to give her an opportunity for an answer, I asked her what I should say from her to the King, the Infanta, Madame and the Duke and the Duchess d'Orléans. She looked at me and *lâcha un rot* that resounded through the room. My surprise was so great that I remained confused. Another, more noisy than the first. I lost countenance and could not help laughing. On glancing to the right and to the left I saw everybody else laugh. Then another, even louder than the first two, put those present in confusion and me to flight, everybody rushing out with me and laughing more loudly in proportion to the efforts they made to stop their hilarity. All their Spanish gravity was upset, everything was topsy-turvy,

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there was no respect shown; roaring with laughter, everybody went off as fast as he could, only the Princess herself remaining serious."

Such was the last scene of the Duke de Saint-Simon's extraordinary embassy to the Court of the Escorial, and he concludes :

"La princesse en fit de toutes les façons les plus étranges, excepté la galanterie."

Yes, she was a naughty, impolite, ill-mannered girl, as there are plenty at the age of thirteen, but she never became a wicked woman and nobody ever attacked her honour.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN—HER MARRIED LIFE, TROUBLES AND DEATH

WHEN the Chevalier d'Orléans arrived at Madrid he wrote to the Duke d'Orléans respecting the Princess of Asturias: "To tell the truth, she has only dunces and imbeciles round her; the King, who does not care about the education of his own child, has left her entirely free; she has nobody near her bold enough to tell her of her faults."

In the archives of the French Foreign Office is the voluminous correspondence of Secretary Robin, Father Daubenton and Father de Lanbrussel, which contains numerous eulogies of the naughty little Princess; and on one occasion Cardinal Dubois could not help answering the Abbé de Lanbrussel: "I fear that your heroine is like the heroine of a novel, and that the

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attachment you have for her and your desire to please Monsieur le Régent make your veracity somewhat complaisant.”

Which of the two spoke truly—Lanbrussel or Dubois ?

At the outset the Prince of Asturias was at least very fond of his Princess, for one reads in contemporary documents that “he showed her extreme tenderness, and anticipated all her wishes.” One finds also that “on May 25th he gave her a phaeton with six small black horses; she drives in this equipage in the avenues of Aranjuez.”

The Prince’s sentiments became so strong that the King decided that on the day of Saint-Louis, 1723—the Prince’s fête-day—he should be definitely united to his wife, who was then about fourteen years old.

Secretary Stalpart reported this event to Dubois as follows: “The King and Queen arrived at the Escurial from Balsain on the 18th at ten o’clock in the evening. The Prince of Asturias and the Princess waited impatiently for the accomplishment of what had been promised them. The King went to the apartments of the Prince, who was divested in his presence; the Queen attended the Princess and put her to bed; after which Her Majesty went to the Prince, took him by the hand, and, accompanied

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by the King, conducted him to the bed in which the Princess was reposing, and leaving them together their Majesties withdrew until the morning, when they returned to see *les nouveaux mariés*. The Prince looked gay, the Princess was flushed. They continue to eat and sleep together, and seem to be satisfied."

Naturally this was a great event for the Spanish Court, and the sentiments that the Prince evinced towards his consort made everybody conceive great hopes for the future of the monarchy.

The Princess responded fully to her husband's sentiments, and when at the end of September the Prince was obliged to leave her for a few days, they parted with sobs, repeating to one another :

He : *Adios, mujer!*—Good-bye, wife.

She : *Adios, marido!*—Good-bye, husband.

However, the youthful Princess could not accustom herself to Spanish dignity, and the Spaniards could not understand her *esprit*.

One day, on seeing that all the grandees kept their hats on in her presence, she asked whether it rained, and they could never forget and forgive that "French impertinence."

By means of artfully hidden sprays she also amused herself by sprinkling water on those who walked in the gardens. One evening,

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having ascertained how her *camerera mayor*, the ceremonious Duchess d'Altamira, dressed, the Princess cut the band of her skirt, which caused it to fall, so that the dignified lady found herself standing in her petticoat in the midst of the Court. At another time, under the pretext that the heat was excessive, she would not wear either petticoats or stockings, whereat the Spaniards were very shocked, for in Spain, as in some parts of America, it is a great offence against decency to show even one's bare feet. Such pranks, however, were merely those of a naughty child, they were neither crimes nor sins.

That this capricious child was endowed with superior sentiments would seem to be shown by the fact that when, on December 14th of the same year (1723), the news of her father's death reached Madrid, "her grief was so great that the Queen was obliged to kneel before her, exhorting her to weep and console herself."

Meanwhile an event of great consequence was impending at the Escorial Court. Philip V. wished to abdicate. His bad health and his scrupulous character made the crown too heavy for him. The Duke de Bourbon, who had succeeded the Duke d'Orléans as Prime Minister in France, disliked this idea of Philip's abdication, because the accession of his son Luis, whose consort was an Orléans Princess, would

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increase the importance of the Orléans house. Thus, regardless of the interests of France, he sent Marshal de Tessé as ambassador to Madrid with instructions to persuade Philip V. to desist from abdication.

When, however, M. de Tessé reached the Spanish capital, on February 20th, 1724, he found that the Princess d'Orléans was already Queen, which was a blow for the egotism of the Duke de Bourbon but an advantage for France.

It is very difficult to ascertain the truth respecting the conduct of the youthful Queen, of whom the new King had been very fond a few months previously, though, according to Tessé's report, he was now living with her as "dog with cat." It seems that the Queen's eccentricities reached such a point that Sainte-Croix, the first *majordomo*, dismissed her *camerera mayor*, the Duchess d'Altamira, but it is impossible to fathom the cause of this dismissal. However, the King summoned Valero, another *majordomo*, and the Duchess d'Altamira before him, and conversed with them for about an hour. Nothing of that conversation transpired, but when the Queen's carriages arrived for the daily drive the Duchess d'Altamira produced an order from the King to accompany her, which was very unusual, the Duchess being dispensed from such service. However, she

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alone entered the same carriage as the Queen, and on their way back she produced another order, enjoining her to conduct the Queen to the Retiro.

Tessé heard of this domestic *coup d'état* in the evening, and at once sent a special courier to Versailles with the news. He also spoke to King Luis at his *lever* the next morning.

“The only wish is to mortify the Queen,” said the King, “in order to correct her conduct. I have admonished her several times; and my father has spoken to her about it, but she did not pay any attention.”

“I excuse her,” answered M. de Tessé, “for those are childish things of her age; the punishment will be short but efficacious.”

“Yes, we shall see if this mortification will correct her. You may report it to France.”

Other reports from M. de Tessé read as follows:

“On the day of their Majesties' departure from San Ildefonso the Queen-mother's confessor wrote to me: ‘The correction which the King inflicted on the young Queen did not produce any effect; the whole thing became more serious than it should have been: *necesse est ut eveniant scandala.*’ M. Higgens, the King's first physician, came to see me two days ago and told me that he was convinced that

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nothing had yet happened between the King and Queen ; that for four months past he had seen the Queen at dinner and supper, but had never noticed her eating as much as an ounce of bread ; that she always arrived saying that she had eaten something previously, or that she was in a hurry to return to her apartments with her ladies. All that is most pernicious for her health. For six months past the King and Queen have not said a word to each other on rising in the morning. At table the Queen has never been complaisant towards the King, nor tried to be amiable—on the contrary, there has been visible antipathy. Between you and me, those who are near her believe that she must be insane, although she has a deal of wit. For instance, when the King corrects her, she says to him : ‘Sire, you must not be angry. You have only to tell me what you wish me to do, and I will do it blindly.’

“I know that while they are driving together they turn their backs on each other, and travel twenty leagues without saying a word. Only God knows what will become of all this.

“The old King was obliged to talk to her, for, following her fancy, she walked about the garden of San Ildefonso without petticoats or stockings, wearing indeed only a chemise and a dressing-gown. The old King saw from the

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window that the wind made her gown and chemise flutter about, and this certainly scandalized the King, who could not help beholding what he was not curious to see."

For a diplomatic dispatch that is highly diverting, but at the same time one cannot help thinking how absurdly narrow-minded was Philip V. of Spain.

After the lapse of a week Tessé deemed it his duty to speak to the King, drawing his attention to the prolongation of the penitence, and adding that the Queen was a French Princess. Then he asked leave to call on her. The King, however, told him to wait a little longer.

As for the Queen, she cried a good deal and wrote uselessly to her husband, but as he did not reply to her, she turned to Philip V. and the Queen-mother, assuring them of her willingness to please them, which did not prevent her from telling them, as one reads in Tessé's dispatch: "There is nothing astonishing that at my age of thirteen I should make *des sottises et des enfances*. The Queen-mother was twenty-two when she came to Spain, and she was worse than I."

A princely answer was that!

On reading all those details, however, it is not difficult to perceive that the French ambassador was anxious to please the Regent's

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successor and enemy, the Duke de Bourbon, and that all he says should therefore be taken *cum grano salis*.

Mathieu Marais, who loves scandal, limits himself to recording the Queen's detention and then adds: "The reason is still secret. Some people say that she became insane; others that it is only reprisals on account of the Infanta, whom they are going to send back from France. It is an affair of Spanish politics, which will only be unveiled by time and perhaps may bring us war. The marriage of the King of Spain has been consummated, however; they cannot send us back the Queen, who, as they say, is with child. Marshal de Tessé *a fait là une vilaine ambassade.*"

Then Marais completes his information thus: "The Spanish news has cleared a little. The Queen is young and fond of pleasure; she likes to go barefooted, which is a great crime in a Spanish woman, who must hide her feet as the most secret part of her body. King Philip drew her attention to it, wishing to correct her, but she took no notice of his exhortation, and that is why the order was given for her to remain in her room; she was not permitted to go out. She weeps, she is in despair, and continually looks through the window, waiting for a counter-order, which does not arrive."

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From this one may perhaps surmise that Tessé's dispatch was unfair to the Queen. Abroad, the strangest news was spread. De La Place says in his *Pièces intéressantes et peu connues* that it was asserted at Brussels that a Frenchman had been found in the Queen's chamber and assassinated.

One is bound to admit that the severity shown in these strange circumstances and the length of the Queen's detention justified the strangest rumours.

On July 23rd, however, King Luis ordered Cellamare to go to the Queen and ask her at what time she desired her carriage. For his own part he went hunting. At eight o'clock, however, on his way back, he met the Queen on the Pont-Vert, dismounted and entered her carriage, and they supped together at the Retiro, where he presented her with a magnificent necklace of diamonds.

It seems, then, that the young King was again attracted to his wife; but she still evinced antipathy for him, according to Tessé, who writes :

“ I do not know what happens at night . . . but in the daytime they only see each other at dinner and supper, and it seems that it is not necessary to preach abstinence to them.”

If one may believe Tessé, the Queen, although

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very attractive, did not try to enhance her charms, and he expressed his opinion of her in a very *piquant* manner, saying: "The young Queen is a sheet of white paper, badly folded."

But suddenly everything became changed by the death of King Luis, who, after being attacked by smallpox on the 20th of August, expired on the 30th of that month.

The following letter, written by the Duchess de Saint-Pierre to the French ambassador at Madrid, throws the best light on the situation of the Duke d'Orléans' daughter at this time: "I told the Queen of your sentiments and your goodwill towards her. She needs them, for I assure you that, without reason, everybody is against her—they have done everything to make her catch the smallpox—and the poor child is worthy of pity; she weeps, she is not in a position to do anything, and she asked me to think for her.

"The young King's testament authorizes the King, his father, to do anything he likes; he very particularly recommends the Queen his consort to him; I believe, therefore, that your services are necessary at San Ildefonso, where you should obtain a settlement for her according to her rank and permission to retire whenever she pleases."

The old King's first word to Tessé, when the

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latter called on him, was, "What shall we do with the young Queen? I beg you to make them understand in France that we will do anything to induce her to return to her country."

The instructions received from Paris by the French ambassador were embarrassing, for he was told, "You have *carte blanche* in regard to the advice to be given at Madrid concerning the young Queen, provided she does not return to France."

The Duke de Bourbon was by no means so large-hearted as his antagonist the Duke d'Orléans had been. The solution of the difficulty was found, however, by Elizabeth Farnese, who applied herself to the study of her daughter-in-law's marriage-contract, in which, to her great delight, she found a paragraph setting forth that if the young Queen became a widow without issue, she would have the right, if she desired, to return to France.

The Duke de Bourbon was obliged to admit "the impossibility of opposing her return," and the old King, wishing to induce her to go back to France, offered to pay her a pension of 150,000 *ducats* instead of 50,000 *pistoles* as he had intended at the beginning of the negotiations.

After some sordid haggling between the Duke de Bourbon, the King of Spain and the

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Duchess d'Orléans about the expenses of the journey, the young widow left Lerna, where she had been kept almost like a prisoner, and arrived at Vincennes on June 22nd.

At the beginning of August Louis XV. called on her, but all he said to her was yes or no, although, contrary to her habit, she was very civil towards him.

As the Spanish Government stopped her pension, she was obliged to give up living at the palace and went to reside at a Carmelite convent in Paris, where she remained for more than three years. When the French Government at last made the Spaniards pay the money due to her, she left the convent and made her home at the Luxembourg, where, although she enjoyed a sufficient income, she lived miserably, dominated by her domestics, who, bribed by the Spaniards, spied on her constantly.

She must have counted for little in the world, for the minute Court chroniclers only once mention her name, that is on the occasion of the marriage of one of Louis XV.'s daughters with the Infant Philip of Spain. The former Queen of Spain was then remembered, and it was thought proper that the Princess should make a call on her. However, a question of etiquette prevented that visit. The new Infanta intended to go to the Luxembourg escorted by

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some of the King's Guards, who had the right of precedence over the Guards of the ex-Queen of Spain; but the latter objected that this privilege only belonged to them when they accompanied the King, their master. That was the difficulty and the visit was cancelled.

"The equerry who follows Madame on her journey was ordered on August 31st, 1739, to go to the Queen of Spain on behalf of Mme. l'Infante and present her compliments. This equerry told me," adds M. de Luynes, "that the compliments were not well received, and that the Queen of Spain answered him: 'I am much obliged to her,' and then turned her back on him."

The Duke de Luynes also says that the Queen became very pious a few years before her death, spending her whole time in churches and refusing to see anybody, wishing indeed to devote all her time to preparation for her future life, as if she had a presentiment that she would die soon.

She died of dropsy in 1741, and was buried at Saint-Sulpice church, where the vicar placed on her tomb this simple inscription: "Here lies Elizabeth, dowager Queen of Spain," whereupon the Orléans family were annoyed that the name of their house had not been mentioned. The vicar's answer was that the

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inscription was according to the dead Queen's desire and that "the title of queen was superior to a patronymical name."

What a sad life was that of this great Princess! Although she was a daughter of the Regent of France and the Queen of a great kingdom, she lived and died without knowing either real love or happiness, and left an equivocal reputation, the consequence rather of a badly directed childhood than of real vice. Throughout her life both families—her own and her consort's—had but one thought, that of getting rid of this unfortunate woman, and her death was an agreeable incident for one and a pleasant relief for the other.

CHAPTER XXIX

MADemoisELLE DE BEAUJOLAIS.

THE most charming of the Duke d'Orléans' daughters was Philippine-Elizabeth, called Mademoiselle de Beaujolais. Even the Princess Palatine could not help saying of her :

“She is a charming child, beautiful, lively and amusing ; I love her dearly ; she will not be deficient in *esprit*.”

Even smallpox did not diminish her beauty, for her grandmother said of her after that dreadful malady : “The little Beaujolais is prettier and nicer than ever.” The fact was that she was endowed with great beauty and a tender and thoroughly honest soul.

She was born on December 18th, 1714.

It was in 1722 that M. de Chavigny, then French ambassador at Madrid, received instructions to arrange a marriage between Mlle. de

Mademoiselle de Beaujolais

Beaujolais and the Infant don Carlos, son of Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese.

In order to succeed, Chavigny bribed the Queen's nurse, who had great influence over her, and he was able to carry out the plans of Cardinal Dubois, to whom he wrote :

“ This will be no mean event of your office, for it will prevent the much-wished-for alliance with Vienna.”

The Spanish Court asked the Regent for the hand of Mlle. de Beaujolais, and when the favourable answer reached Madrid it was received with great delight. The satisfaction was equally keen at the Palais-Royal, for Madame wrote the following note to Dubois :

“ *Mon cousin*, I am delighted to see my dear Mlle. de Beaujolais so well established. All the honour for those marriages is due to you ; I am so pleased that I beg of you to believe that I am your *très bonne cousine*.”

The official declaration was only made on August 12th, 1722. Jean Buvat says in his *Journal* : “ The marriage of Mlle. de Beaujolais, the Regent's daughter, with Don Carlos, second Infant of Spain, by the King's second marriage, was declared to-day. The Princess is eight and the Prince six years of age. We are allied with Spain, then, and no matter what happens, she must be with us. This

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Infant is to have the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Parma, according to the treaty of 1718."

The Infanta, Louis XV.'s *fiancée*, was at this time already at Versailles, and the Regent's two youngest daughters were her constant playmates. When they retired in the evening the little Spanish Princess was wont to say to them: "Little Princesses, go to your palace, and come back to me every day."

The Queen of Spain was so pleased with this union that she had the Escorial illuminated and a *Te Deum* chanted. She wrote to the Regent: "We were all charmed with the Princess de Beaujolais' portrait which you sent us; it is impossible to imagine a more beautiful and more charming child. Her little husband was transported with joy, and it is too much happiness for him to have such a charming Princess."

The cause of the Queen of Spain's delight was that she wished to establish her son well in Italy, which would be an easier matter with the help of such a powerful ally as France. There was, too, a still more egotistical reason; Elizabeth Farnese "looked with horror," as Saint-Simon says, "at the state of Queen-widows in Spain." She ruled over her husband absolutely, and she thought that after his death she might find herself with no



Mlle. DE BEAUJOLAIS, FIANCÉE OF THE INFANT OF SPAIN.

Mademoiselle de Beaujolais

prospects was unbearable to her. By securing for her son a good position in Italy she hoped to find there a sufficient shelter "*pour s'y consoler en petit de ce qu'elle y perdait en grand.*" The plan was clever, but unfortunately, as Saint-Simon again says: "Those marriages with Spain were not approved of in Heaven."

Accompanied by her father and her brother as far as Bourg-la-Reine, Mlle. de Beaujolais left for Spain on December 1st, 1723. The Duchesses de Duras and de Fitz-James were her ladies-in-waiting. She was nearly drowned while crossing the Gironde near Blaye. From Bordeaux, where she was magnificently received by all the burgesses in arms and with the thunder of cannon, she wrote the following letter to her father:

"This note, *Monsieur mon cher père*, is to assure you of the state of my health, which is quite good, to wish you a happy new year, as well as to *Madame ma chère mère*, and to prove to you that I love you and honour you infinitely."

Nothing more charming could be written by a child.

It must be noticed that the Duke d'Orléans' daughters always wrote to their father and not to their mother.

When the Princess crossed the river Bidassoa,

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separating France from Spain, she was met by the Countess de Lemos, who awaited her arrival with her ladies, sixteen coaches and three regiments of soldiers. The Duke de Duras entrusted her to the Duke d'Ossuna. She found her bridegroom, with others of his family, at Buytrago, a day's journey from Madrid, where numerous *fêtes* were given in her honour.

The Princess's dowry was the same as that of her sister Mlle. de Montpensier: 400,000 golden crowns granted by the King, 40,000 crowns by her father, and 50,000 crowns in jewels given by Spain. Moreover, Louis XV. presented her with five *agrafes*, *un nœud de derrière*, twenty-four *gances*, twelve buttons, and a pair of diamond earrings. From the Regent she received three pairs of earrings, a chain with a cross, and an *esclavage* of pearls and diamonds. Her *trousseau* was very rich; it included a *toilette* of rose and silver, one of green and gold, two of *feu et or*, one of *giroflée* and silver, one of satin embroidered with gold, two *habits de cour en velours feu, fond d'or et d'argent*, a dressing gown, *fond vert et or*, with a skirt of rose and silver, another of velvet *ciselé*, four *manteaux de lit*, and eight robes in pieces of twelve yards each.

Then came a dozen pairs of silk stockings, of which four were embroidered, a dozen pairs

Mademoiselle de Beaujolais

of cotton stockings, twelve pairs of shoes, twelve dozen pairs of gloves, two dozen *bonnets piqués*, forty-two thousand pins, twelve and a half dozen curling irons, four pieces of *cordonnets*, two ounces of silk, two dozen laces, six powder puffs, four packets of toothpicks, twelve petticoats of *basin*, two hundred needles for threading pearls, twelve pairs of sheets, six dozen pillow-cases, twelve dozen handkerchiefs, six dozen lace chemises, as many nightgowns, twelve fans and four *garnitures* of lace for full dress. It would be monotonous to continue the list, which is to be found in the archives of the French Foreign Office. But one may mention that her travelling trousseau comprised six *robes en brocart, or, argent, etc.*; one *corps*, two skirts, one *manteau de lit*, fourteen chemises, twenty-two nightgowns, twenty-five handkerchiefs, with lace, ribands, etc.

On February 14 Mlle. de Beaujolais arrived at Buytrago, where the King met her, took her into his carriage and conducted her to the palace.

The Infant was waiting for her. "They kissed each other a great deal," says Maulevrier, "and supped together. Nothing could be more charming in the world than the sight of the Princess with the Infant. She told him a thousand nice things and did not appear to be at all embarrassed."

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The Queen wrote to the Regent : “ I believe you would like to know about your daughter’s first interview with her little husband : they kissed each other very tenderly ; it seems to me that he likes her ; she is an angel, and my son is too happy to have her.”

Apparently this was not a mother’s exaggeration, for Marais says : “ This Princess is very pretty, well formed and has *beaucoup d’esprit*. Spain takes from us the best we have. The Queen she sent to us is very amiable, but she is too young for the King.”

The betrothal ceremony was celebrated on February 19th, and the Chevalier d’Orléans, who was then made a grandee of Spain, wrote to the Regent : “ I greatly fear that the Princess of Asturias* may become jealous, for she has already shown that the arrival of the little Princess here is disagreeable to her.”

The Chevalier d’Orléans was right, for the Princess of Asturias proved troublesome to her sister.

It would be rather tedious to speak of the childish success with which the little Princess met at Madrid and all the petty incidents of her life, which was very happy at the austere Court of the Escorial. When the Regent and

* The former Mlle. de Montpensier, whose unhappy career we narrated in previous chapters.

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after him King Luis of Spain died, all became changed. The Duke de Bourbon, who hated everything that was connected with the Duke d'Orléans, conceived the idea of sending the Infanta, affianced to Louis XV., back to Spain. When this became known at Madrid the Spanish ambassador in Paris received instructions to ask the Duke de Bourbon for a categorical explanation. The Duke denied the news and wrote to Marshal de Tessé, the French ambassador at Madrid, to do the same. But Tessé suspected the lie, and asked for his recall, leaving everything in the hands of the Abbé de Livry.

Marshal de Tessé's departure aroused suspicion, and the Spanish ambassador at Versailles was again ordered to ascertain the truth. He therefore called on the Duke de Bourbon and asked him to fix the day for the betrothal of the King and the Infanta, but receiving only a very vague answer, he went to the Duchess de Ventadour, the Infanta's *gouvernante*, whose eyes filled with tears when she was questioned on the matter. This proved sufficient.

Meanwhile the Duke de Bourbon received from the Pope an authorization for the rupture of the marriage on the ground of the Princess's age. When this news reached Madrid the King said that "the blood of the whole of

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France would not suffice to avenge the insult." On March 19 the Abbé de Livry was ordered to leave Madrid in twenty-four hours and Spain in fifteen days.

One reads in Marais's *Memoirs* the following note concerning the relations between Spain and France: "Everything is changed in Spain. They have become really angry, and have sent back both the dowager Queen and the Princess de Beaujolais, who arrived at Bayonne without any notice. They are waiting there for news from France, which they greatly need, for they are in want of everything, and the governor, M. d'Adoncourt, who does his best, is very much embarrassed."

The exchange of the two French Princesses and the Infanta took place at the foot of the mountain of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, and Marais added: "The Spaniards had taken an oath that they would not keep any presents, but they have taken everything, even the dolls, and have given nothing to the ladies who brought the Infanta to them. Among other things they have kept there was a silver toilette set which was worth more than 100,000 crowns and was a masterpiece of art."

Nothing was said for several years concerning Mlle. de Beaujolais, but it seems that she remained faithful to the souvenir of her *fiancé*,

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and that the impressions of her childhood were so vivid that she could not forget them.

In 1730 Philip V. had to notify Louis XV. of the birth of an Infant. Cardinal de Fleury seized this opportunity of answering in such a clever manner that the King of Spain was touched, and wrote him such an affectionate letter that it facilitated the way for a reconciliation. Philip V. announced this in his capital as an event causing him great joy, and the old Cardinal hastened to dispatch the Count de Rottenberg as ambassador to Madrid.

The Duchess d'Orléans, on her side, thought it a good opportunity to make an effort on behalf of her daughter's union with her former *fiancé*, and she approached the Cardinal on the matter. But Elizabeth Farnese no longer cared for the alliance. Moreover, affairs between France and Spain again became so complicated that there was a fear of war. It is easy to understand that in the midst of such grave incidents nobody thought of the poor Princess's marriage.

However, the Duchess d'Orléans did not give up all hope, and as long as the Infant Don Carlos remained unmarried she expected a happy *dénouement*. When, in 1731, Don Carlos took possession of the two duchies of Parma and Plasencia, the negotiations recommenced.

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The Cabinet of Versailles accredited to the Court of the new sovereign an academical *grand seigneur*, the Marquis de Bissy, whose special mission it was to try to marry Mlle. de Beaujolais to the Infant-Duke.

Don Carlos had remained faithful to his former *fiancée* and thought of her constantly ; he was often seen kissing a ring which she had given him at Madrid. Consequently, he not only was in favour of the union, but even pressed the Marquis de Bissy to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible.

The Marquis de Bissy, moved by the charming romance which he found in the midst of a Court which was like a convent—for Philip V. had surrounded his son with monks, who watched over the young Prince—took the affair to heart, and pressed Cardinal de Fleury. But the Prime Minister of France, now eighty years of age, regarded this idyll coldly, and only thought of the danger which might result for France. He was aware that at Madrid they did not look favourably on the projected union. He was afraid of Elizabeth Farnese ; he knew that she was turbulent, vindictive and jealous. Moreover, events put an end to this romance. The death of the King of Poland caused a war in Italy, and Don Carlos was dragged into it. Almost at the same time Mlle. de Beaujolais

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caught measles, and on May 21st, 1734, she passed away, calm and resigned.

In speaking of her departure to *celestia pascua*, Mathieu Marais, whose wont was seldom to say anything kind of the Regent's daughters, concluded: "Everybody shed tears, and I also, for she was a charming Princess."

CHAPTER XXX

THE PRINCESS DE CONTI

THE Regent's youngest daughter, Louise-Diane, was born on June 28th, 1716. They called her Mademoiselle de Chartres, in the place of Louise-Adélaïde, who, being unmarried, assumed the name of Mademoiselle when her eldest sister became Duchess de Berry.

Respecting the birth of Louise-Diane, the following may be quoted: "While I was writing to the Princess of Wales, I was told that Madame d'Orléans *était en mal d'enfant*; it was just eleven o'clock when my coach was ready; at a quarter to one I entered the antechamber and they told me in a whisper 'about an hour ago Her Royal Highness was successfully delivered.' This was said so sadly, that I could not doubt that Mme. d'Orléans had



MLLE. DE CHARTRES, PRINCESS DE CONTI.

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again given birth to a daughter, and unfortunately it was so."

It is obvious that nobody was pleased with the newly-born girl, and it seems that Madame was continually angry with her, for she wrote: "She is not ugly, but she is peevish and nasty, as soon as one looks at her she begins to cry."

Perhaps the truth was that the little Princess was afraid of her grandmother's ugly face and bulging eyes, in which there was no kindness, but which were always criticizing everything.

Dangeau tells us that in 1719 Mlle. de Chartres had the measles at the same time as her sister Mlle. de Beaujolais, that they were placed in the courtyard of the Palais-Royal and that they were there walled in. The early life of Louise-Diane was not eventful, for contemporary writers do not mention her name until December 11th, 1731, when Marais wrote to Bouhier: "The marriage of the Prince de Conti with Mademoiselle de Chartres is announced. Mademoiselle de Beaujolais was destined for M. le Comte de Charolais, but he said he did not wish to marry, and this is the reason why the younger has passed before the elder sister."

The celebration of this marriage aroused a grave question of etiquette at Court and caused serious discontent among the Princesses of the blood.

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The Grand Master of the Ceremonies was instructed by the King to invite them, together with the Princes of the blood and the legitimized Princes, to the ceremony, which was fixed for January 22nd. On the previous day the signing of the contract and the betrothal had taken place in the King's cabinet, and Mlle. de Sens had then carried the train of the Princess's mantle. At the Nuptial Mass on the morrow, Mlle. de Charolais, who was to have performed that duty, refused to do so on the ground that it was Mlle. de Beaujolais's duty, she being the first unmarried Princess. Mlle. de Clermont seconded her sister, and everybody became greatly embarrassed. Fortunately Mlle. de Sens saved the situation by performing the service for her cousin as she had done on the preceding day.

The Count de Maurepas narrates another story in connection with this marriage.

The Dowager Princess de Conti wrote to her daughter-in-law exhorting her to take steps so that the newly married couple, who were very young, should not remain too freely together. She particularly insisted that they should be separated early on the marriage night. The Princess approved of this advice, and spoke of it to the Duchess d'Orléans, the Regent's widow. But she, still preserving her indifference for her

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children, answered that "from the day of the marriage she had promised not to interfere in anything concerning Mlle. de Chartres, and that the matter was entirely her mother-in-law's affair."

Ten months younger than his bride, Louis-François de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, was the eldest son of that Conti who was better known as the Count de la Marche, and of Louise-Elizabeth de Bourbon-Condé. He was a brother of the young Duchess d'Orléans, daughter-in-law of the Regent.

In his youth the Prince de Conti had been known for his fast life; and although after he married Mlle. de Chartres he led a rather more orderly life, he could not refrain from certain excesses, on the principle expressed by Horace in the words: *quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu.*

Buvat relates the following story in the *Journal de la Régence*:

"M. le Prince de Conti, after attending the midnight Mass at Saint-Gervais, regaled himself at a neighbouring house, then returned to his palace, and entering his wife's apartments in a fit of jealousy, he began to search everywhere, sword in hand, although the Princess was always very well conducted. She being now in the seventh month of her pregnancy,

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rose up directly he had gone to bed to allow the fumes of the wine, of which he had drunk rather too much, to evaporate, and sought a refuge with Mme. la Princesse [that is, Anne, Palatine of Bavaria, widow of Henri-Jules de Bourbon, Prince de Condé] at the little Luxembourg.

“The Prince having been roused and told of his wife’s flight, got into his coach and drove to the little Luxembourg, where Mme. la Princesse said to him in a tone that marked her indignation : ‘Do not think of coming here, unless you have become wiser.’

“He hastened thence to the Palais-Royal, where he told M. le Duc d’Orléans everything, saying that it had occurred because he had drunk too much, as thirty of his servants could witness. M. le Régent thereupon replied :

“‘Monsieur, I remember reading in a book that when a man is drunk he ought to go to bed without saying a word to his wife. As for me, when I am in such a state, which often happens, as you know, I take good care not to say anything to Mme. la Duchesse d’Orléans, nor to let her know of it. I practise cunning, I go to bed without making any noise. Sometimes I return alone in order that my servants may not see me ; there are more than forty of them.’”

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“After hearing this speech, M. le Prince de Conti begged M. le Régent to use both his influence and the King’s authority in order to pacify Mme. la Princesse and his wife ; but M. le Duc d’Orléans answered :

“ ‘ Monsieur, I never meddle in family affairs ; do you not know the proverb that *entre l’écorce et le bois il ne faut mettre le doigt ?* ’

“M. le Comte de Charolais was at table when he heard of this affair of the Prince de Conti’s, and he became so angry that, rising up, he overthrew the table with all that was on it, and rushed to Mme. la Duchesse, his mother [Louise-Françoise de Bourbon], to whom he declared that if he met M. le Prince de Conti he would shoot him.”

Marais gives us another version of the same adventure : “Mme. la Princesse de Conti,” says he, “left her husband and his palace, and withdrew to the residence of Mme. la Princesse her grandmother. Her husband had greatly tormented her for a fortnight past ; he is odd, jealous, in love, and difficult to deal with. One day he asked his wife what she was thinking about, and as she did not answer he exclaimed : ‘ You are thinking that you would like to get rid of me.’

“She told him that it was true, and that she would be very happy if it happened. He next

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wished to know whether she had deceived him. Whereupon she said that she could do so in ten different ways and he would know nothing about it.

“ ‘But am I——?’ he asked.

“ ‘You will be, one day, if you do not treat me differently.’”

“ At this he became angry, and suspecting M. de Clermont, he compelled him to leave the house.

“ Finally, on Christmas Eve he forbade the Princess to go to the midnight Mass, or have *réveillon* with any man. She obeyed his orders, while he went to enjoy himself at a house he has at the Marais, and remained drinking there until seven o'clock in the morning. La Antier and Thévenart of the Opera were there.

“ When he returned to the Conti palace at seven o'clock he was not *de sang froid*; he entered the Princess's apartment—she was asleep there—drew the curtains aside, awoke her and declared that she had gone with some men to the midnight Mass, notwithstanding his prohibition. Then he ill-treated her a great deal by word of mouth, and threw a curtain at her head, the heavy gold fringe hurting her. The Princess, who was in the seventh month of her pregnancy, declared that he would cause her death and that he ought to go to bed and

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leave her alone. At last he retired, but after dinner she went to Mme. la Princesse's, sent back her carriage, and did not return."

The sequel of this unfortunate affair is related by the same author, as follows:

"The rupture between M. le Prince and Mme. la Princesse de Conti having continued since Christmas, they being unable to become reconciled, the Princess summoned her husband before Parliament in order to obtain a separation *de corps et de biens*, to which the Prince agreed.

"In May, 1722, the first Chamber reduced the *pension* of 50,000 *livres* which the Princess claimed to one of 20,000 *livres*.

"On June 27th the suit between the Prince and the Princess de Conti was again heard *in camera* by the Grand Chambre, and Parliament decided that the Princess should remain six months longer at the convent of Port-Royal, at the expiration of which time she might return, if such were her pleasure, to the Prince her husband. Nothing was decided in regard to the separation, for this must be judged by the King when he comes of age."

Nothing more is said by the annalists of the time respecting the end of this difference. They only report that on September 1st, 1734, the Princess was delivered of a son, who became

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heir of the house of Conti and subsequently married a daughter of her mother's sister, the Princess of Modena.

The Princess de Conti died on September 26th, 1736, at her magnificent château at Issy. As for her consort, he became one of the great military men of his century.

* * * * *

A few concluding words respecting the father of those six great Princesses will supply a proper epilogue to this volume.

On December 2nd, 1723, the Duke d'Orléans, after working with the King, was going to his cabinet, when he found Mme. de Phalaris waiting for him at the door.

This seemed to please him. "Come in," he said to her, "you will amuse me with your stories."

They both entered, and sat down by the fireplace in two armchairs. "By a remarkable singularity," says the Count de Maurepas, "the Duke on entering his cabinet was carrying a book which had been dedicated to him by a dying author. It was Bonnet's *Histoire de la danse sacrée et profane*, and the Abbé Richard had just handed it to him.

"He was struck by apoplexy while he sat there before the fireplace, and his head fell on

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the Duchess de Phalaris's lap, she being seated beside him. In this way indeed did that generous and witty Prince die. He passed away whilst his eyes were resting on a frivolous book, and fell into the arms of 'his ordinary confessor,' as the wits of the period said."

Marais wrote, *à propos* of the Regent's death :

" Thus it was that the great Duke d'Orléans, that Regent who was so famous, that Prince who wished to be King, died in a moment, God overthrowing all his plans."

Elevatus sum et manus tua præcipitat me.

As all the efforts of modern scientific historiographers have hitherto failed to discover any law governing historical events in any way whatever, it is surely best to adopt Bossuet's view, according to which Providence directs human affairs. Let us say, then, that Providence, needing the Regent of France for His purposes, made him sublimely honest in order that he might preserve the life of Louis XV. ; and that when the child-king's health had become stronger, when—helped by the Minister whom Providence had provided for him—he had become a young man and real King, that same minister died as if he had only awaited that moment to pass away.

He died as he had lived, without having time to repent of his faults, but he felt certain

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that he would be pardoned as soon as he said to the Supreme Judge :

“Thou didst entrust me with the Dauphin, I have returned to Thee the King.”

In spite of all his faults, even his sins, the Duke d'Orléans was a noble-hearted man, and the reader, charitably inclined towards his princely feastings, his faults as a father, and his foibles as a man, will find no exaggeration in the following epitaph, which was written soon after his death :

Son esprit fut l'élixir précieux
Des différents esprits qu'eurent les demi-dieux :
Musicien, géomètre, chimiste,
Excellent peintre, et grand controvertiste ;
La nature n'a rien de si majestueux
Dont ses conceptions ne fussent embellies ;
Intrépide guerrier, ministre industriel,
Il marcha sans glisser par des routes hardies.
Nul périls qu'il n'ait affronté,
Nul trâmes qu'il n'ait exécuté.

THE END

