

# A ROSE OF SAVOY

MARIE ADÉLAÏDE OF SAVOY, DUCHESSE  
DE BOURGOGNE, MOTHER OF LOUIS XV

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN BONAPARTES"



## PREFATORY NOTE

THE principal authorities, both contemporary and modern, which I have consulted in the preparation of these volumes are mentioned either in the text or the footnotes. I desire, however, to acknowledge my obligations to the following works by modern writers : the Comtesse Faverges, *Anne d'Orléans, première reine de Sardaigne* ; M. A. Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie, Lettres et Correspondances* ; M. A. Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon d'après sa Correspondance authentique* ; the Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV* ; Imbert de Saint-Amand, *les Femmes de Versailles : la cour de Louis XIV* ; M. Ernest Jaeglé, *Correspondance de Madame, duchesse d'Orléans* ; Théophile Lavallée, *Correspondance générale de Madame de Maintenon* ; M. G. de Lérès, *Étude historique sur la comtesse de Verrue et la cour de Victor Amédée de Savoie* ; the Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la duchesse de Bourgogne et de la reine d'Espagne* ; Viscount Saint-Cyres, *François de Fénelon* ; Luisa Sarredo, *Anna di Savoia* ; the Marchesa Vitelleschi, *The Romance of Savoy : Victor Amadeus and his Stuart Bride* ; and the Marquis de Vogüé, *le Duc de Bourgogne et le duc de Beauvilliers*.

I must also express my thanks to Messrs. Harper & Brothers for their courtesy in allowing me to include two illustrations and several passages from my work on Madame de Montespan, and to Mr. Heinemann for kindly permitting the reproduction of the portrait of the Duchesse de Bourgogne which appeared in the *Correspondence of Madame, Princess Palatine, mother of the Regent, of Marie Adélaïde de Savoie, Duchesse de Bourgogne, and of Madame de Maintenon in relation to Saint-Cyr*, published by him in 1899.

Lastly, I should like to express my appreciation of the care which has been bestowed on the Index by Mrs. Eileen Mitchell.

H. NOEL WILLIAMS

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# A ROSE OF SAVOY

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EVER since the days of Humbert *aux Blanches Mains* (985–1048), from which the autonomy and history of Savoy may be said to date, that little State occupied in Europe a prominence altogether out of proportion to its size and its resources. For this, of course, it was chiefly indebted to its geographical position. The

rulers of Savoy were the gate-keepers of the Alps ; their eastern gate gave access to Italy, their western, to France and Switzerland ; and their alliance was constantly of vital importance to their more powerful neighbours.

And the immense advantages which Nature had placed in their hands the rulers of Savoy exploited to most excellent purpose. The centuries passed ; counts and dukes succeeded one another ; some reigned in peace, others saw their territories overrun by half the nations of the Continent ; but all seem to have been animated by the desire for aggrandizement, and to have possessed a remarkably keen appreciation of the marketable value of their friendship. And ever the dominions of their House—that House which was some day to wield the sceptre of a united Italy—expanded, now on one side of the Alps, now on the other, since the weak are generally more crafty than the strong, and the pen of the diplomatist often proves a more serviceable weapon than the sword of the conqueror.

However, the acquisitions of the House of Savoy on the western side of the Alps were not destined to be permanent ; and, in June 1601, the astute Charles Emmanuel I, having come to the conclusion that the hereditary ambition of his family could best be satisfied in Italy, abandoned his dream of ruling over a reconstructed Burgundian kingdom which was to extend to the Rhone, and ceded to Henri IV the counties of Bresse, Bugey, Gex, and Valromey, forming the modern Department of the Ain, in exchange for the marquise of Saluzzo in Piedmont, a strip of country lying in the shadow

of Monte Viso, and communicating directly with France by the passes of the Briançonnais Alps.<sup>1</sup>

From that time, the House of Savoy regarded itself as an Italian State; and, if Henri iv had lived a year or two longer, it would in all probability have acquired a preponderating influence in Upper Italy, since there was an understanding between Henri and Charles Emmanuel that, after the latter had assisted in driving the Spaniards out of the peninsula, he should receive Lombardy, in return for the cession of Savoy and his possessions, in the East of France. But the knife of Ravallac brought this and many other calculations to naught, and it was not till two and a half centuries later that the hopes which Charles Emmanuel had cherished were realised.

Louis XIII—or rather Richelieu—pursued towards Savoy a different policy from that of Henri iv. Henri had desired to make Savoy the friend and ally of France; Richelieu wished to make her a vassal. Charles Emmanuel naturally objected, and prepared to throw himself into the arms of Spain; but, in January 1629, a French army, commanded by Louis XIII in person, forced the passes of the Alps and took Susa, and the Duke was forced to sue for pardon and embrace His Majesty's boot: an act of humiliation which Louis "made not the semblance of an attempt to prevent."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although Henri iv's acquisition was territorially four times as great as Savoy's, he lost the footing in Italy which had cost his predecessors so much blood and treasure, and Lesdiguières remarked bitterly: "*Le roi de France a fait une paix de marchand, et Monsieur de Savoie a fait un paix de roi.*"

<sup>2</sup> *Saint-Simon, Mémoires.* Claude de Saint-Simon, father of the author, was an eye-witness of this episode.



In the early spring of the following year, Charles Emmanuel I died, his end having been hastened by grief and mortification, and was succeeded by his son Victor Amadeus I, who had married, in 1619, Marie Christine de France, Henri IV's eldest daughter. Upon him, in 1631, Richelieu imposed the Treaty of Cherasco, whereby the fortress of Pinerolo—better known, perhaps, by the gallicized form of the name—and with it the entrance to Piedmont, was secured to France. This acquisition was regarded by Richelieu as a great triumph for French supremacy; but, though it certainly made him more formidable than ever to the Imperialists in Italy, France was called upon to pay a heavy price for it in after years. Just as the sight of Calais in English hands had been to France a constant source of exasperation, so the French occupation of Pinerolo was regarded by Savoy as a national humiliation which must at all costs be removed, and until the end of the seventeenth century her whole policy was subordinated to one object—its restoration. "All her manœuvres, all her subterfuges, all her duplicities will be explained by that. She will leave one alliance to enter into another, according as she believes that a greater or less chance exists of obtaining Pinerolo in exchange. Pinerolo, in the hands of the French, was, according to the energetic expression of Carutti, 'Piedmont in servitude,' and from this servitude the Dukes of Savoy will continually seek to escape." <sup>1</sup>

Victor Amadeus I died in 1637, leaving a son,

<sup>1</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

Charles Emmanuel II, a child of three, and the regency in the hands of his widow, Christine of France, *Madame Royale* as she was called.<sup>1</sup> *Madame Royale* naturally inclined towards the country of her birth, and for many years French influence predominated at the Court of Turin. Her policy was continued by Marie Jeanne Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours,<sup>2</sup> the second wife of Charles Emmanuel II,<sup>3</sup> likewise called *Madame Royale*, a beautiful, fascinating, and intelligent, but dissolute and unscrupulous woman, who, on her husband's death, in 1675, also assumed the reins of government, and was even more blindly devoted to French interests than the previous regent.

By his marriage with Jeanne - Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours, Charles Emmanuel II had a son, Victor Amadeus II, who at the time of his father's death was nine years old. He was a delicate lad—indeed, during his childhood it had been feared that he would never live to grow up; and he is said to have owed his preservation to the good sense of a village doctor named Petechia, whom the Duchess called in, and who, having vetoed the various drugs prescribed by the Court physicians, ordered the little patient to be brought up on the very simplest fare, and thus saved his

<sup>1</sup> *Madama Reale*; but we employ the French form, which seems to be generally used, not only by French, but by English historians.

<sup>2</sup> She was the daughter of Charles Amédée de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, who was killed by his brother-in-law, François de Vendôme, Duc de Beaufort, in a celebrated duel in 1652. See the author's "A Princess of Intrigue" (London, Hutchinson; New York, Putnams, 1907).

<sup>3</sup> His first wife was Françoise d'Orléans, Mlle. de Valois, daughter of Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII. She died a few months after the marriage.

and so disgusted the young Duke that on the rare occasions when *Madame Royale* condescended to embrace her son before retiring for the night, the latter was observed to rub his cheek vigorously, as though he had been touched by some plague-stricken person.<sup>1</sup>

Victor Amadeus felt keenly, too, the humiliating position to which his country was reduced, for Louis XIV, pushed by Louvois and encouraged by the complaisance of *Madame Royale*, treated Savoy as an appanage of the crown of France, rather than an independent State, and the condition of servitude to which he desired to condemn her grew every year more intolerable. The climax was reached in 1681, when the King of France, not content with the possession of Pinerolo, purchased from Charles IV, Duke of Mantua, the fortress of Casale and established a garrison there, thus securing the free passage of his troops through Piedmont and shutting in Turin on both sides. To wrest Casale from France became, from that time, in the eyes of Victor Amadeus, an object second only in importance to the recovery of Pinerolo.

However, the young sovereign felt that the moment when he would be in position to attempt the liberation of his kingdom from the yoke of France was yet far distant, as, before any steps could be taken in that direction, he must first secure his own emancipation from the tutelage of his mother. He was, therefore, at pains to dissimulate the hostility which he entertained towards France, the more so, since he was aware that the goodwill

<sup>1</sup> Camille Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*.

of Louis XIV would be of material assistance to him in his efforts to assert his independence of the maternal control.

In 1677, *Madame Royale* proposed to her sister, the Queen of Portugal,<sup>1</sup> a marriage between Victor Amadeus and the Infanta Donna Isabella Luisa, only child of Dom Pedro of Bragança, King of Portugal, and heiress to the throne. A fundamental law of Portugal prohibited an infanta who was heiress to the throne from marrying a foreign prince; but *Madame Royale* overcame this obstacle, by proving that her son was not a foreign prince, since he was descended in the direct line from Emmanuel Philibert, who, in 1580, had been offered the throne of Portugal. The Regent was exceedingly anxious for this match, since the Portuguese insisted that both the Infanta and her husband must reside in Portugal until the birth of an heir, an event which, having regard to the youth of the parties, was unlikely to take place for several years, during which she would continue to exercise uncontrolled influence at Turin. *Madame Royale* forbore to communicate to her son her plans for his future until the affair should be so far advanced that it would be difficult for him to draw back. The boy, however, soon learned from other sources what was in the wind; but his powers of self-control enabled him to disguise his feelings, and he allowed nothing to escape him which might be interpreted either as approval or the reverse.

His subjects were less reticent, and a strong

<sup>1</sup> Marie de Savoie-Nemours, born June 21, 1646; married 1666 to Alfonso VI, King of Portugal, and after the dissolution of this marriage, two years later, to his younger brother, Pedro II.

party among the nobility could not conceal its hostility to the proposed expatriation of their youthful sovereign. The Marchese Pianezza and two other members of the Council of Regency entered into a conspiracy to carry off *Madame Royale*, shut her up in a convent, and declare the majority of her son. But their intentions were discovered by the Regent, and it was the conspirators themselves who went into confinement.

When at length, in March 1629, the marriage-contract stipulated in his name was submitted to Victor Amadeus, the young Duke at first flatly refused to sign it. But eventually he yielded and agreed to ratify it, although he had not yet completed his thirteenth year, the age when the Dukes of Savoy attained their majority. Nevertheless, if he judged it prudent not to protest against the alliance which his mother desired to thrust upon him, he was none the less determined that nothing should induce him to enter into it; and his first act on his majority being proclaimed was to postpone the date of his departure for Portugal for two years.

Although on May 14, 1679, the regency nominally came to an end, *Madame Royale* continued to govern with the full consent of her son, whose part in affairs of State appeared to be confined to signing the decrees which she laid before him. But, unknown to his mother, the Duke sent to his ambassadors instructions diametrically opposed to those which they received from the princess, and worked in secret to strengthen his party at the Court and in the country, which daily received fresh accessions.



MARIE JEANNE BAPTISTE DE SAVOIE-NEMOURS, DUCHESS OF SAVOY  
("MADAME ROYALE")

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY NANTEUIL, AFTER THE PAINTING BY LAURENT DU TRIE



The two years of grace for which Victor Amadeus had stipulated expired, and in the spring of 1682 a Portuguese squadron of twelve vessels, which had been sent to escort the Duke to Lisbon, cast anchor in the harbour of Villefranche ; and the Duke of Cadaval, in his quality of Ambassador Extraordinary, proceeded to Turin, where he met with a very flattering reception from the Regent. However, the national party was resolved to prevent, even by force, the departure of their young sovereign ; and Victor Amadeus, encouraged by its attitude, was suddenly seized with a diplomatic illness, which the Court physicians declared would render it impossible for him to undertake the voyage for some months at least.

*Madame Royale*, in despair at the threatened failure of her machinations, assured Cadaval that the physicians exaggerated the gravity of her son's condition, and implored him to wait until he should be restored to health. But Cadaval, who had become aware of the hostility with which a considerable party at the Court regarded the projected marriage, and had a shrewd suspicion of the nature of the Duke's illness, replied that he must seek instructions from Lisbon. These were of such a nature that immediately he received them he quitted Turin, without even taking leave of *Madame Royale*, and on October 1 set sail for Portugal.

The rupture of the Portuguese marriage-project was followed by two comparatively uneventful years, during which *Madame Royale* continued to govern, without, so far as appearances went, any opposition from her son, who judged the time had



not yet come to strike a blow for his independence. In secret, however, the young Duke continued to work to strengthen the hands of his party, and kept a very watchful eye on the actions of his mother, whose rule he perceived, with great satisfaction, was becoming more and more unpopular. Meanwhile, the Ministers had been urging the advisability of finding a suitable bride for the Duke, and in 1684 they proposed a marriage between him and Maria Anna Luisa, the daughter of Cosmo III, Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Such an alliance they represented would be of great advantage to Savoy, since it would secure to her an ally in Central Italy, whose assistance might prove of the highest value against foreign adversaries. Victor Amadeus was favourably disposed to the project, as was the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, but both were very doubtful as to how the matter would be regarded by France; and negotiations between the Courts of Turin and Florence were carried on with such secrecy, lest any inkling of what was under consideration should reach Versailles, that no trace of them are to be found in the Archives of either city.

However, *Madame Royale*, who had been feverishly anxious for her son's marriage when such an event would have necessitated his prolonged absence from Savoy, viewed the prospect of one which would probably entail his immediate emancipation from her authority with very different feelings, and strove by every means to hinder the negotiations, which it was of the utmost importance to conclude with the least possible delay. The time thus wasted enabled France to discover the

project. Louis XIV, who did not conceal his displeasure on learning that the House of Savoy was contemplating an alliance which suggested a desire to free itself from his control, immediately resolved to intervene ; and, on the pretext of strengthening the authority of the Regent, threatened by the friction between her and the chiefs of the national party, Louvois gave orders for three thousand French troops to cross the frontier into Piedmont.

*Madame Royale* expostulated vigorously against this high-handed action, being well aware that the arrival of foreign troops would be the death-blow of the little popularity that remained to her. But her remonstrances came too late ; the French had already entered Piedmont, and there Louis XIV intended them to remain until the Tuscan marriage had been definitely abandoned. At the same time, the French Ambassador at Turin intimated to the Regent that it was his master's desire that her son should wed a princess of the Royal House of France.

Perceiving the futility of persisting in a course which would end by entirely alienating his all-powerful neighbour and bringing about the ruin of his country, Victor Amadeus summoned the French Ambassador to a secret audience, and informed him that he had definitely abandoned his intention of marrying the daughter of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, and was prepared to accept the hand of the princess whom it might please his Most Christian Majesty to choose for him. Louis XIV, however, had not even waited for this surrender to his will to choose the princess who was to become the future Duchess of Savoy, and the Duke was forth-

with informed that a demand for the hand of Anne Marie d'Orléans, the second daughter of *Monsieur*<sup>1</sup> by his first wife, the beautiful and ill-fated Henrietta of England, immortalised by Bossuet, would meet with favourable consideration.

*Madame Royale* endeavoured to prolong her tenure of power by delaying the nuptials, and instructed the Marchese Ferrero della Marmora, the Ambassador of Savoy at Versailles, to represent to Louis xiv all the satisfaction and gratitude which she experienced at the prospect of this alliance, but to inform him that the Duke had no intention of marrying at present, "since there was no example of a prince who had done so at so early an age." Such a line of argument from a princess who had left no stone unturned to push her son into matrimony two years before must have caused His Excellency no small amusement. But Victor Amadeus sent him secret orders to hasten the marriage by every possible means; and, being a prudent man, he not unnaturally preferred to serve the interests of the rising rather than of the waning star, with the result that the preliminaries were settled in a surprisingly short space of time, and on April 8, 1684, the nuptials of "the demoiselle Anne d'Orléans with the very high and puissant prince, Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy," were celebrated by procuration, at Versailles, with great splendour.

The bride presented herself at the altar escorted by the Duke du Maine, eldest son of Louis xiv

<sup>1</sup> Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, younger son of Louis xiii and Anne of Austria, and only brother of Louis xiv. Born 1640; married, firstly, in 1660, Henrietta of England, daughter of Charles I; secondly, in 1671, Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, Princess Palatine; died 1701.

and Madame de Montespan, and the Conte di Magliano, Envoy-Extraordinary of Savoy. She was dressed in "a silver brocade trimmed with lace, also of silver, and covered with jewels," the train of which, borne by her half-sister, Mlle. de Chartres, was nine ells in length. The princes and princesses who assisted at the ceremony were dressed with equal magnificence, notwithstanding that the Court was still in mourning for the late Queen, Maria Theresa of Austria. "Of all the august personages, the King and the Dauphin, on account of their mourning,<sup>1</sup> alone wore no jewels; the rest of the company, though dressed in mourning, were covered with jewels. The Duke du Maine wore a black Venetian costume, the whole of which was ornamented with diamonds; the trimmings were of narrow rose-coloured ribbons; the feathers in his cap were of the same colour, covered with diamonds. Nothing could be more magnificent than the dress of Madame la Dauphine.<sup>2</sup> *Monsieur's* waistcoat was entirely covered with diamonds, tied by strings formed of diamonds. The Duke de Chartres had a set of emeralds; and his crape shoulder-knot, as well as the bow in his cap, sparkled with diamonds. The Prince de Conti had diamond buckles on his waistcoat. The Comte de Toulouse,<sup>3</sup> Mlle. de

<sup>1</sup> The mourning of the Royal Family was, of course, violet, not black. Up to 1801, when the title of sovereign of France was relinquished, the Kings of England also mourned in violet, because they claimed to be Kings of France. James II, even when the guest of Louis XIV at Saint-Germain, adhered to this custom.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Anna Christina Victoria of Bavaria. Born, 1660; married 1680, to Louis, Dauphin of France; died 1690.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Alexandre de Bourbon, the youngest son of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan. Born in 1678; married in 1728 to Mlle. de Noailles, widow of the Marquis de Gondrin; died 1737.

Nantes,<sup>1</sup> and Mlle. de Blois,<sup>2</sup> owing to their youth, were not required to appear in deep mourning; they wore costumes of black and silver, and their jewels were arranged in such good taste that they aroused murmurs of admiration on all sides.

"It is a long time," wrote Ferrero to the Duke of Savoy, "since such magnificence and an assembly so noble and numerous as this one has been seen."

Victor Amadeus sent his bride some magnificent jewels, which included a pearl-necklace valued at 30,000 pistoles (about 300,000 francs), a diamond pendant, and a diamond-clasp, which Ferrero assures the Duke created such a sensation at the Court of France, that the King himself had praised the good taste shown in their selection, and spoken of these objects as truly superb and worthy of the occasion." And the Ambassador profited by his Majesty's satisfaction to secure an order on the Treasury for 100,000 livres on account of the princess's dowry,<sup>3</sup> which he lost no time in converting into cash, his master's finances being just then in a far from satisfactory condition.<sup>4</sup>

The marriage-contract credited Victor Amadeus

<sup>1</sup> Louise Françoise de Bourbon, second daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan. Born 1673; married 1685, to the Duc de Bourbon; died in 1743.

<sup>2</sup> Françoise Marie de Bourbon, youngest daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan. Born 1677; married 1692, to the Duc de Chartres (the future Regent); died in 1749.

<sup>3</sup> Louis XIV gave his niece a dowry of 900,000 livres, to which he added jewellery to the value of 60,000 livres, and 240,000 livres previously deducted from the dowry of her mother, Henrietta of England. Victor Amadeus, in addition to the jewellery above mentioned, assured his consort an annual pension of 100,000 livres and a dowry of 40,000 livres.

<sup>4</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*; Comtesse de Faverges, *Anne d'Orléans*; Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie: Lettres et correspondances*.

with sentiments in regard to France which that prince was very far from entertaining, and Louis XIV with a confidence in his new nephew's amicable intentions which is difficult to reconcile with the instructions he sent his Ambassador at Turin. But, if the autocrat of Versailles had not the smallest intention of acting in accordance with his declaration that "no one could doubt that the very high and puissant Princess, Marie Jeanne Baptiste de Nemours had succeeded in inspiring her son with the same sentiments towards the interests of his Majesty which she had shown during the period of her regency," he was undoubtedly well satisfied with the match, which not only frustrated an alliance that might have gone far to neutralise the advantage he derived from the possession of Pinerolo and Casale, but afforded him, on the score of relationship, an excellent pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of Savoy.

Victor Amadeus had much less cause for satisfaction. Nevertheless, the mortification which he experienced at finding himself compelled, for some time at least, to continue the subservience towards France which his father and grandfather had shown, was sensibly modified by the knowledge that his marriage with a niece of Louis XIV assured his determination to emancipate himself from the control of his mother meeting with no opposition from that quarter.

In this persuasion, no sooner had he learned that the negotiations for the marriage had been concluded than he summoned two of his confederates, the Principe della Cisterna and the Abbate della Torre, with whose assistance he

task in a manner worthy of the highest praise, and under her firm yet kindly guidance the two children grew into charming, accomplished, and high-principled girls, regarded with affection and respect by all who knew them.

Anne d'Orléans could not pretend to either the beauty or the intelligence which distinguished the Queen of Spain, but she was, nevertheless, a far from unattractive young lady. At the time of her marriage, when she was within a month of completing her fifteenth year, she is described as tall and graceful, with black hair falling in long curls upon white and shapely shoulders, an oval face, a high forehead, an aquiline nose, smiling lips, and "an air of dignity tempered by an expression of goodness." Her countenance did not belie her character, for her stepmother, the second *Madame*—no mean judge of her own sex by the way—describes her as "one of the most amiable and virtuous of women," and speaks in high terms of her tact and good sense; and, indeed, her subsequent career proves her to have been a woman of a singularly sweet and gentle disposition.

Immediately after the marriage the princess set out for Turin, and on May 6 reached the Pont-de-Beauvoisin, which at this period marked the boundary between Dauphiné and Savoy,<sup>1</sup> where she was met by Victor Amadeus, at the head of his military household, "*en grande parade et tymbales sonnantes*," escorted by a great number of Savoyard and Piedmontese gentlemen.

<sup>1</sup> The Pont-de-Beauvoisin was a village situated on the little river Guiers. A narrow bridge, from which it derived its name, crossed the river, the western half of the bridge being considered French territory and the eastern Savoyard.

The young Duchess, it is related, had been carefully instructed by the Conte di Magliano, the Envoy-Extraordinary of Savoy, in regard to the formalities which it was necessary to observe on this important occasion; but, when she perceived her husband, she promptly forgot all that the worthy count had been at such pains to impress upon her, and, hastening forward, threw herself into his arms. This bold disregard of etiquette greatly shocked the more punctilious members of his Highness's entourage, who could not conceal their disapproval. But the Duke, charmed and touched by the action, embraced his wife tenderly, "and they exchanged for some moments," writes an eye-witness, "those first sentiments which beat in every heart."<sup>1</sup>

The same evening, the bridal pair arrived at Chambéry, where, in the chapel of the ancient château, the Archbishop of Grenoble pronounced the nuptial blessing upon them, and two days later, at two o'clock in the morning, made their entry into Turin, amid great rejoicings.

At the time when he married Anne d'Orléans and assumed the government of his dominions, Victor Amadeus II was just eighteen, but, thanks to the peculiar circumstances in which his lot had been cast, already possessed of a fund of worldly wisdom which many a prince of mature years might have envied. His appearance was certainly very striking: "Of middle height, slender, admirably made. A bearing which denoted

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Conte Scaravelli, gentleman of the Chamber to Victor Amadeus II, cited by the Comtesse de Faverges, *Anne d'Orléans*.



independence and pride, an animated expression, aquiline features. He had inherited from the House of Nemours very fair hair and eyes of a peculiar shade of blue and of exceptional vivacity.”<sup>1</sup>

His character, according to a contemporary, whose account, though a trifle highly-coloured here and there, is in the main corroborated by the events of the Duke’s life, was even more remarkable, though far less pleasing.

“He is a prince with many good and an infinite number of bad qualities. He has a vivid imagination, an admirable memory, a great facility of expression, a serious application for affairs, ambition, a desire for fame, and an incomparable dexterity in concealing his designs. But he possesses little sense of justice or breadth of view, greater brilliancy than solidity, a bad heart, a strong feeling of hatred and ingratitude towards every one, an avarice which extends even to his mistresses, little knowledge, little religion, more ostentation than true worth, more obstinacy than firmness of character, and, above all, a great love of his own opinions and contempt for those of others.”<sup>2</sup>

With such a husband it would have been difficult for any woman to have found happiness, much less a gentle and sensitive girl like Anne d’Orléans. Nevertheless, for the first few months of her married life her path seemed strewn with roses. The handsome young Duke conquered her heart at once, and she conceived for him a deep affection, a passionate admiration which survived

<sup>1</sup> Costa de Beauregard, *Histoire de la Maison de Savoie*.

<sup>2</sup> *Relation de la Cour de Savoie*, in G. de Lérins, *la Comtesse de Verrue*.



VICTOR AMADEUS II, DUKE OF SAVOY  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



all the just causes of complaint which he subsequently gave her and endured to the day of her death. She was so proud of being the consort of this youthful sovereign, who, at an age when most young princes scarcely know the meaning of the word affairs, supervised every department of the administration like a consummate statesman ; so proud of the confidence which he seemed to repose in her, and of the deference which he paid to her wishes. And, above all, she believed that he returned, in some measure at least, the wealth of affection which she lavished upon him.

She was soon disillusioned. Scarcely had the fêtes which followed the marriage terminated than Victor Amadeus, wearying of conjugal bliss, became entirely absorbed in the government of his dominions and the organisation of his army, and forgot the young wife who thought only of him. When he did condescend to remember her existence, it was as often as not to complain that she was leading either too retired or too gay a life, for he was of a changeable humour, and what pleased him one week irritated him the next. Nor were his neglect and his caprices the only trials which she had to endure.

The little Court of Turin, as might naturally be expected, from its long and intimate connection with France, was modelled very closely upon that of its powerful neighbour, and in no respect was this resemblance more striking than in the matter of morals ; indeed, it seemed as though Victor Amadeus, in his relations with the opposite sex, had taken Louis XIV—that is to say, the Louis XIV of twenty years before—for his example. Jeanne

Baptiste de Nemours, like the late Queen of France, had gathered round her a bevy of fair ladies and maids-of-honour, drawn from the first families of the duchy, who appear to have been well-nigh as proficient in the arts of seduction as the celebrated *escadron volant* of Catherine de' Medici. "This princess only accepted those of surpassing loveliness. Thus the sovereign and the young noblemen of his suite were able to flit from beauty to beauty, and, thanks to the variety of these charming objects, to resume their pleasures without ever becoming satiated." <sup>1</sup>

Victor Amadeus, who was of a decidedly ardent temperament, did not fail to profit by the favour with which these charming objects naturally regarded one who was not only their sovereign, but a very handsome youth ; and, not long before his marriage, he had discovered his La Vallière, in the person of a certain Mlle. di Cumiana, a pretty brunette, "whom he overwhelmed with extraordinary benefits, which distinguished her in a little time from her colleagues by spoiling her figure." <sup>2</sup> This intrigue, which, for "reasons of State," *Madame Royale* judged it advisable to put an end to, by promptly marrying the young lady to her grand equerry, the Conte di San Sebastiano, was renewed many years later, and in 1730, when the countess had lost her husband and the Duke of Savoy—or rather the King of Sardinia, as he had then become—his wife, Victor Amadeus contracted with her a secret marriage, which he acknowledged after his abdication.

<sup>1</sup> Lamberti, *Histoire de l'abdication de Victor Amédée II.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The young Duke soon found consolation for the loss of his inamorata in the society of another of his mother's maids-of-honour, Mlle. di Saluzzo by name. But, as the damsel in question happened to be nearly related to a nobleman who had been implicated in the conspiracy against the Regent of which we have spoken elsewhere, and *Madame Royale* feared that she might seek to influence her son in a direction contrary to her own interests, she decided to nip this romance in the bud also, and married off the lady to the Comte de Prié.

Victor Amadeus was at first inconsolable, and, a fortnight after the marriage, we find the French Ambassador, who had strict injunctions to keep his Court informed of every detail of "Monsieur de Savoie's" life, writing to Louvois that "the attachment of the Duke for Madame de Prié seemed stronger than ever." *Madame Royale* now took the prudent step of appointing the Comte de Prié Ambassador of Savoy at Vienna, and, after a while, Victor Amadeus appeared to forget all about the lady, his interest in whom had perhaps been stimulated by a spirit of opposition to his mother's authority. Shortly before his marriage with Anne d'Orléans, however, the count and his wife returned to Turin, and when the prince's all too-brief honeymoon had terminated, it began to be remarked that his Highness was paying his former enchantress considerable attention. But the *liaison*—if *liaison* there were—was conducted very discreetly, and does not appear to have occasioned the young Duchess much uneasiness.

Very different was the state of affairs when Jeanne-Baptiste d'Albert de Luynes, Contessa di

Verrua, the heroine of Dumas *père's* romance, *la Dame de Volupté*, appeared upon the scene. The countess was, like the legitimate owner of the ducal affections, a Frenchwoman, one of the five daughters of Louis Charles, Duc de Luynes, a pious and estimable old gentleman and a profound admirer of the *dévots* of Port-Royal. There was, however, nothing of the Jansenist in the career or character of Jeanne-Baptiste, and it was perhaps just as well that the worthy Duke was gathered to his fathers within a few weeks of completing his seventieth year, since otherwise he must have experienced even more than the usual share of labour and sorrow which is supposed to fall to those who exceed the allotted span of life.

In August 1683, when she was not yet fourteen,<sup>1</sup> Jeanne-Baptiste was married to the Conte di Verrua, a young Piedmontese noble connected with the ancient family of Scaglia, and, some six months before the marriage of Anne d'Orléans, came to reside with her husband in Turin.

"Most of his daughters were beautiful," says Saint-Simon, in speaking of the Duc de Luynes, "but this one [the Contessa di Verrua] was extremely so." But the girl possessed something more than mere perfection of face and form, and the testimony of her contemporaries is almost unanimous in declaring her to have been one of the most fascinating women of her time,—witty, vivacious, amiable, and intelligent.

For four years Madame di Verrua seems to have

<sup>1</sup> She was born on January 18, 1670, and not on October 8, 1675, as stated by the Comte d'Haussonville, in his *la Duchesse de Bourgogne*. The distinguished historian has confused her with her younger sister, who married, in 1698, the Comte de Clermont-Lodève.

frequented the Court, where her husband held the post of Gentleman of the Chamber to Victor Amadeus, without arousing more than a passing interest in the Duke. But during the severe winter of 1687-1688, when for some weeks the country round Turin was covered with snow and sleighing parties were much in vogue, we find d'Arcy, the French Ambassador, reporting that the invariable occupant of the Duke's sledge was "Madame di Verrua, a daughter of the Duc de Luynes, about seventeen or eighteen years of age, beautiful and very modest." <sup>1</sup>

The intimacy between his Highness and the lady made rapid progress, and, a month later, the Ambassador writes again :—

"Since your Majesty continues to give me orders to keep him informed very precisely of the private employments and amusements of the Duke of Savoy, I must inform him that, since he took young Madame di Verrua out sleighing, he appears to continue, and even to redouble, his attentions to her. Not a day passes at the Opera but he is seen in this lady's box, where they laugh so loudly together that they attract every one's attention. However, the lady's youth and high spirits may be more accountable for this, at least on her side, than anything else, and as yet one cannot perceive any understanding between them which justifies the suspicion of an approaching intrigue." <sup>2</sup>

But d'Arcy was mistaken, and before many months had passed the nature of the relations

<sup>1</sup> D'Arcy to Louis XIV, January 17, 1688, published by M. G. de Lérès, *la Comtesse de Verrue*.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch of February 14, 1688.



between Victor Amadeus and Madame di Verrua no longer permitted of any doubt. To do the lady justice, however, she did not capitulate without a struggle, and even took refuge for a time with her father in France, to escape the compromising attentions of the Duke. Induced to return to Turin, her life, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, was rendered so unendurable by the malicious accusations brought against her by an uncle of her husband, the Abbate di Verrua, whose odious advances she had scornfully rejected, that "virtue eventually yielded to dementia and to the ill treatment to which she was subjected at home; she listened to M. de Savoie and delivered herself to him to deliver herself from persecutors."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, if Madame di Verrua's surrender was a reluctant one, when once the die had been cast, she showed a remarkably keen appreciation of the rights and prerogatives attached to the position of *maîtresse en titre*, and exercised over her royal lover, who had hitherto been credited with far too much shrewdness ever to permit himself to become the victim of a really serious attachment, an empire even more despotic than Madame de Montespan had wielded over Louis XIV.

Following the evil example set him by *le Grand Monarque*, who had named his mistress Superintendent of the Queen's Household, Victor Amadeus appointed Madame di Verrua his wife's Mistress of the Robes, legitimated the two children whom he had by her, and, though as a rule parsimonious to the last degree, overwhelmed her with benefits. Her toilettes were the envy and despair

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

of all the ladies of the Court ; her apartments in the palace were furnished with a sublime disregard for expense, and filled with bronzes, cameos, porcelain, statuary, and valuable pictures—for the countess was an insatiable art-collector—and, when she travelled, her retinue was composed of the greatest nobles of Savoy, and governors and prefects waited upon her to offer her homage. The almost sovereign honours paid to her were not confined to the dominions of the Duke of Savoy, for when in 1695 she passed through the Milanese, on her way to the waters of San Moritz, we hear of her being received with the firing of cannon, escorted by torchlight processions, and regaled with sumptuous banquets.

Madame di Verrua's reign lasted twelve years—until the autumn of 1700—at the end of which time, growing weary of the restraints imposed upon her liberty by the Duke, and the frequent and violent quarrels to which his jealousy and her own indiscretions gave rise, she profited by Victor Amadeus's absence from Turin to escape to France, with the assistance of her younger brother, the Chevalier de Luynes,<sup>1</sup> having first taken the precaution to transfer the greater part of her art collection to Paris. For some four years previously she appears to have been in the pay of France, and to have been in the habit of communicating to that Court anything of importance which Victor Amadeus happened to let fall in his unguarded moments ; and the fear that her treachery was in

<sup>1</sup> The Chevalier de Luynes was a captain in the French Navy, and displayed on this occasion all the fertility of resource which we are accustomed to associate with that profession.

danger of being discovered was probably not unconnected with her flight.

The Duke of Savoy, on learning of his mistress's desertion, so far from being "wounded to the quick," as Saint-Simon would have us believe, received the news with an equanimity bordering on indifference; and when his representative in Paris, the Conte di Vernone, demanded how he was to treat the fugitive, contented himself by replying that he pardoned her conduct, since she had acted under the influence of her brothers. He never saw or corresponded with her again, though in October 1702 we find him instructing Vernone to visit her and render her any assistance she required, adding: "We shall always retain a sincere regard for this lady."<sup>1</sup>

Madame di Verrua passed the four years which followed her flight from Turin, partly at Dampierre, the country-seat of the de Luynes family, and partly in a convent; but, after the death of her husband in the Battle of Blenheim had left her entire mistress of her actions, she took up her residence in Paris, where she passed the rest of her life. She died on November 18, 1736, in her sixty-seventh year, leaving behind her one of the finest private art-collections in Europe, containing some splendid examples of the work of Teniers, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, and other Flemish masters, and a library of several thousand volumes, which comprised many rare and valuable works. The inventory of her possessions, which necessitated more than two months' continuous labour, covers forty quires of large-sized paper.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de la Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances*.

<sup>2</sup> G. de Lérès, *la Comtesse de Verrue*.

Shortly before her death, Madame di Verrua is said to have composed for herself the following epitaph—

Ci-gît dans une paix profonde  
Cette dame de volupté,  
Qui, pour plus grande sûreté,  
Fit son paradis en ce monde.

During the years that Madame di Verrua's reign lasted, poor Anne d'Orléans garnered, as may be imagined, a plentiful crop of humiliations ; nevertheless, she continued to oppose to her husband's neglect and infidelities an unalterable resignation, and to render the most implicit obedience to his imperious and capricious will. Did the Duke express a desire that, during his absence with the Army, she should lead a retired life, "her Royal Highness passed her time in the most extraordinary retirement, and we only meet at the promenade or when we visit churches together."<sup>1</sup> Did he, in order to ingratiate himself with Louis XIV, who had reproached him with "leading a solitary life, contrary to the indispensable needs of absolute power," resolve to impart a little gaiety to his Court, the Duchess immediately organised fêtes, balls, and card-parties, and danced and gambled till the small hours of the morning, abandoning, however, these unaccustomed diversions with equal promptitude the moment Victor Amadeus judged it safe to revert to his former habits of economy.

Nor did this sweet-tempered and loyal wife confine herself to mere obedience to her husband's

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Madame Royale to Madame de la Fayette, G. de Lérès, *la Comtesse de Verrue*.

wishes, but lavished upon him the most touching proofs of her love and devotion.

Victor Amadeus, as we have seen, had given very early evidence that he had inherited the martial instincts of his race, and he held it to be the imperative duty of a sovereign to command his troops in person. When he was but twelve years of age, some one happened to refer in his presence to the failure of a campaign which had been undertaken during the reign of his father, Charles Emmanuel II, against the Republic of Genoa. He inquired whether the Duke had himself directed the operations, and, on being told that he had not, observed: "I shall never make war without being at the head of my armies, and I shall recommend my successors to do the same." He was faithful to this resolution, and, since war was the almost permanent condition of his reign, found himself obliged to spend the greater part of his time in the camp. As a general, he showed no little skill, as well as remarkable courage and tenacity; but his health, never vigorous, was severely tried by the fatigues and privations he was compelled to undergo, and this occasioned the Duchess the most intense anxiety. Whenever her husband was absent on a campaign, she never knew a moment's peace of mind until his return, and the torments of anxiety which she suffered on his account are pathetically depicted in the numerous letters written by her, preserved in the State Archives of Turin. Her letters were at first addressed to Victor Amadeus himself, but, since the Duke detested writing except on affairs of State, and seems to have seldom or never troubled

to reply to them—in the whole voluminous portfolio devoted to his correspondence in the Turin Archives there is not a single letter addressed to his wife—she was forced to have recourse to the Marquis de Saint-Thomas, the Duke's confidential Minister, who always accompanied him on his campaigns, and directed him to keep her informed with un-failing regularity of the state of his master's health.

When, during his absences, Anne learned that he was ill—which happened several times—her anxiety knew no bounds, and she wrote demanding, in the most touching terms, permission to join him. "Give me this consolation," she writes to him on August 30, 1692, when he was lying dangerously ill of small-pox at Embrun; "it would be the greatest mark of affection which you could bestow upon me. I assure you that I can come without causing the least embarrassment. Only my two ladies need accompany me. I shall be satisfied at being near you, and you will see of what a tender affection is capable. I shall neglect nothing which can show you that I love you as my own life."<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion, the permission she so ardently desired was accorded her, and, braving the contagion, she established herself at her husband's bedside and tended him with unremitting care. As Victor Amadeus was in a most critical condition when she arrived, and the Duchess states, in a letter to *Madame Royale*, that no doctors were

<sup>1</sup> *State Archives of Turin*, published by the Marchesa Vitelleschi, "The Romance of Savoy." This letter—or rather portions of it—has also been published by Luisa Sarredo (*Anna di Savoia*), Madame de Faverges (*Anne d'Orléans*), and the Comte d'Haussonville (*la Duchesse de Bourgogne*), but neither of the last three writers gives the date.

available, it is probable that, under Heaven, it was to her devoted nursing that he owed his recovery. Nevertheless, his gratitude was of short duration, and scarcely was his health re-established, than Madame di Verrua resumed her empire over him.

In these years of neglect and humiliation the only joys which Anne d'Orléans seems to have known were those of maternity, which, since she bore her husband eight children, and had, besides, several miscarriages, were not spared her. Of her numerous family, however, two sons and two daughters alone survived their infancy. The elder son, a handsome and intelligent lad, died in his sixteenth year; the younger, a pitiable contrast to his brother in both mind and body, lived to succeed his father as Charles Emmanuel III. Of the girls, the elder, Maria Luisa, married Philip v of Spain, and became the ancestress of the Spanish Bourbons; the elder, Marie Adélaïde—better known to history by the gallicized form of her name, by which we propose to speak of her—is the subject of the present volume.

Marie Adélaïde was the Duchess's firstborn, and made her appearance in the world on December 6, 1685. The little lady's arrival nearly cost her mother her life; indeed, Anne's condition was at one time so critical that the viaticum was administered. However, after two very anxious days, during which, according to d'Arcy, "the Court, the town, and every one were in a state of consternation and affliction which had never been surpassed,"<sup>1</sup> she was declared out of danger, a

<sup>1</sup> D'Arcy to Louis XIV, January 1, 1686.

result which seems to have been chiefly due to the attentions lavished upon her by Victor Amadeus, whom gratification at becoming a father, and the fear of losing his long-suffering consort, had momentarily roused from his habitual indifference. "The Duke of Savoy," writes d'Arcy, "performs his duties as a good husband and father. He has had a little camp-bed taken to his wife's room, in order that he may sleep there, and is continually mounting to the princess's [Marie Adélaïde] apartment."<sup>1</sup>

The baptism of the little princess, which took place on December 1685, *Madame Royale* and Victor Amadeus's uncle, Prince Philibert di Carignano, acting as sponsors, was not accompanied by any great rejoicings, for the Court was sorely disappointed that the new arrival was not a boy.<sup>2</sup> At Versailles there was much discussion as to whether etiquette demanded that an envoy should be sent to Turin to compliment the Duke of Savoy, "since it was only a daughter." But, after precedents had been consulted, it was found that his Majesty had sent one to Lisbon on the occasion of the birth of the Infanta Isabella Luisa, the princess whom *Madame Royale* had once intended as the bride of Victor Amadeus; and the Marquis d'Urfé, a grand-nephew of Honoré d'Urfé, the author of *l'Astrée*, was chosen for the mission.

When d'Urfé reached Turin, the Duchess was

<sup>1</sup> D'Arcy to Louis xiv, December 8, 1685.

<sup>2</sup> In December 1698, Marie Adélaïde, then Duchesse de Bourgogne, wrote to *Madame Royale*: "I believe, my dear grandmother, that I did not occasion you much joy thirteen years ago, and that you would have preferred a boy; but, from all the kindness that you have shown, I cannot doubt that you have forgiven me for being a girl."



still confined to her bed, which the envoy describes, in one of his despatches, as "rather handsome, with canopy and hangings of crimson velvet embroidered with pearls." And he adds: "Those who have not seen the furniture which the King [Louis XIV] possesses imagine it to be the finest in the world. As I am not charged to disabuse their minds, I contented myself by expressing my opinion in such a way as to let them understand that it is sumptuous, but not the finest that I have seen."<sup>1</sup>

Before the envoy returned to France, however, her Highness was sufficiently recovered to be churched. On these occasions it was the custom at Turin, after the ecclesiastical ceremony had been performed, for the Duchess to receive all the ladies of the Court, who each in turn approached and kissed her hand. The beauty of the Turinese ladies was celebrated throughout Europe, but d'Urfé could not be prevailed upon to admit that their charms were in any way comparable to those of his own fair countrywomen, and "praised them as he had praised the bed."

Some eighteen months later (August 15, 1688), the Duchess of Savoy gave birth to a second daughter, Maria Luisa, the future Queen of Spain. On this occasion, Victor Amadeus had been so confident of an heir that he had already nominated the envoys who were to carry the glad tidings to all the Courts of Europe, and he did not attempt to conceal from his consort the mortification which this *contretemps* occasioned him. In-

<sup>1</sup> D'Urfé to Croissy, January 14, 1686, published by the Comte d'Haussonville.

deed, the ostentatious indifference he displayed towards the poor lady about this time was the subject of public comment; and *Monsieur*, highly indignant at the manner in which his daughter was being treated, appealed to Louis XIV to remind the Duke of Savoy of the respect he owed to a princess of the blood royal. This ill-advised interference in his domestic affairs greatly irritated Victor Amadeus, and, instead of bringing about any improvement in his attitude towards his wife, seems to have estranged him still further from her.

However, if the Duke of Savoy seemed to resent the arrival of his two little daughters as a personal grievance, they proved an infinite consolation to their mother, and, as they grew older, they became more and more the principal interest of her sad and lonely life. Whereas in those days the children of the great, and in particular of royal persons, were usually left very much to the care of their attendants, and the *gouvernante* of a young princess often filled, to all intents and purposes, the place of a mother, the Duchess preferred to keep her daughters with her as much as possible, and to confine the authority of their preceptresses to the exercise of purely scholastic duties. Even these would appear to have been performed in a very perfunctory manner, as, although Marie Adélaïde's *sous-gouvernante*, the Comtesse des Noyers,<sup>1</sup> had the reputation of being a lady of the very highest attainments, she never succeeded in teaching her pupil either how to write or to spell, and to the end

<sup>1</sup> Françoise de Lucinge, granddaughter of Guillaume de Lucinge, Comte de Faucigny. The name is sometimes written Dunoyer, but the above appears to be its correct form.

of her life the princess remained faithful to the laborious copybook hand of her childhood—which perhaps accounts for the brevity of her epistles—while her spelling was a thing to marvel at, even in an age of fantastic orthography.<sup>1</sup>

The Duchess Anne did not care for Turin, and during the frequent and prolonged absences of her husband from his capital, she was accustomed to pass the most of her time with her children at one or other of the country-residences of the Crown. Of these there were several within the compass of a few miles from the city. In the south-eastern environs, on the banks of the Po, in the midst of a spacious park, now the Giardino Pubblico, stood the Castello del Valentino, an imposing château in the French Renaissance style, with four towers, built for Christine of France. Some four miles farther south, was the Château of Moncalieri—now the residence of Princess Clotilda of Saxony, widow of Prince Jérôme Bonaparte—perched on a height above the town of that name, and command-

<sup>1</sup> Here are two amusing specimens of her spelling and punctuation, the first written a few days after her arrival in France, the second some eighteen months later. Both letters are addressed to her grandmother, Jeanne-Baptiste de Nemours :—

“ De Versaie ce 13 Novembre [1696].

“ Vous me pardonere Madame si ie ne uous est pas ecrit la peur de uous anuier me la fait fair ie fini Madame uous embrasan.—Tres humble tres obeisantes petite fille, M. ADELAIDE DE SAUOIE.”

“ Versaile ce 25 Mars, 1698.

“ Iespere que iescrire assez bien, ma chere grandmaman jai un maitre qui se donne beaucoup de paine jaurais grans tort de ne pas profiter des soins qu'on prend de tout ce que me regarde la D. du Lude estre revenüe auprais de moy dont je suis ravie et il est vrais que Mme. de Mentenon me voit le plus souvent qui lui est possible ie croys pouvoir vous assurer sans saut [trop ?] me flatter que ces deux dames maimen. Ne douttes jamais ma chere gran maman que ie ne vous aime tous jours autant que ie le dois.”



**ANNE MARIE D'ORLÉANS**

Fille de Mons<sup>r</sup> Philippe De France Duc  
et de Henriette Stuart d'Angleterre  
a esté Epousée Par Mons<sup>r</sup> le Duc  
de S.A.R. le Duc de Savoie le dix<sup>me</sup>  
fuite par Mons<sup>r</sup> le Cardinal de Bouillon  
Versailles, En presence de sa Maj<sup>te</sup> de Monseig<sup>r</sup> de Mad<sup>te</sup> la Dauphine, de M<sup>le</sup> et de Mad<sup>te</sup>  
du Duc de Chartres, Et de Mad<sup>te</sup> sa Soeur, des Princes, et princesses du Sang, de l'Ambas<sup>sade</sup>  
de Savoie, et des Principaux Seig<sup>neurs</sup> de la Cour, &c.

**DUCHESSE DE SAVOYE**

D'Orléans Frere Unique du Roy.  
Nacquit le 27<sup>me</sup> d'Aoust 1669, et  
du Maine au Nom Et cōc Procureur  
d'Auil 1684, la Cereimone En a esté  
en la Chapelle du Chasteau Royal de  
Versailles, En presence de sa Maj<sup>te</sup> de Monseig<sup>r</sup> de Mad<sup>te</sup> la Dauphine, de M<sup>le</sup> et de Mad<sup>te</sup>  
du Duc de Chartres, Et de Mad<sup>te</sup> sa Soeur, des Princes, et princesses du Sang, de l'Ambas<sup>sade</sup>  
de Savoie, et des Principaux Seig<sup>neurs</sup> de la Cour, &c.

ANNE MARIE D'ORLÉANS, DUCHESSE OF SAVOY

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY L'ARMESSIN



ing a magnificent view of the surrounding country. About the same distance from Turin, in an easterly direction, was Rivoli, where, in 1684, Victor Amadeus had announced his assumption of the government of his dominions, and which, by a singular coincidence, was to witness, fifty-six years later, his formal abdication of the authority which he had exercised with such extraordinary ability and success; while a little to the north lay Il Veneria, the Versailles of the Dukes of Savoy. But the favourite residence of the Duchess was the Vigna di Madame, a charming country-house on the slopes of a wooded hill overlooking the Po, about half an hour's drive from the capital. The Vigna, which derived its name from the vineyards which had once occupied the spot on which it stood, had been built, in 1649, by Cardinal Maurice of Savoy, younger son of Charles Emmanuel I, who cleared away the vines and laid out the grounds in terraces in the French fashion of the period. On his death, he left the property on which he had expended so much money and care to his niece, Ludovica Maria of Savoy, who in her turn bequeathed it to the successive princesses of her house.<sup>1</sup>

In later years, when Marie Adélaïde and her sister had left their home, the elder for Versailles, the younger for Madrid, the name of the Vigna is frequently mentioned in their letters as that of the place where the greater part of their childhood was passed. But, though this little palace, "hidden

<sup>1</sup> The Marchesa Vitelleschi, "The Romance of Savoy." After the Duchess Anne became Queen of Sicily, the Vigna di Madame was known as the Villa della Regina, which name it still retains. It is now an institute for the daughters of military officers.

in a nest of verdure," was undoubtedly a delightful residence, and the pure, invigorating air of the hillside made it an equally desirable resort from the Court physicians' point of view,<sup>1</sup> it is to be feared that, as they grew older, the two girls must have found their sojourns there decidedly dull, since the Duchess brought only a small part of her Household with her, and passed nearly the whole of her time out of doors ; and the only recreation which she seems to have permitted her daughters were long walks, in which she herself was generally their companion. " You are then all alone in Turin, since my mother and brothers have gone to the Vigna," wrote the Queen of Spain to her grandmother, *Madame Royale*, some years later. " The small number of persons whom she has taken with her does not surprise me, since it was the same in my time." <sup>2</sup>

The Duchess was the most tender and devoted of mothers. She insisted on nursing her daughters with her own hands in all their childish ailments, and once, when one of the young princesses had contracted some contagious malady, she shut herself up with her, and would not permit even *Madame Royale* to enter the sick-room. Nevertheless, despite the care and affection which she lavished upon the girls, there was little of that intimacy between her and her children which we should naturally expect to find, and this is particularly noticeable in regard to the future Duchesse de Bourgoigne. It was her grandmother, *Madame*

<sup>1</sup> It was here that Victor Amadeus came to recruit his shattered health after the serious illness of which we have already spoken.

<sup>2</sup> Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgoigne et de la Reine d'Espagne*.

*Royale*, and not her mother, who seems to have been the recipient of Marie Adélaïde's childish confidences ; it is to her to whom, in years to come, she will write those brief yet charming letters, full of little details about herself and her life at the French Court, whom she will implore not to love less than her sister, with whom she will desire "to share all her troubles." In the Archives of Turin, which contain more than a hundred of her letters to *Madame Royale*, only eight addressed to her mother are to be found, and these, though affectionate in tone, are always a trifle ceremonious. "I pique myself now on being a great personage," she writes to her, in January 1702, "and I think that 'Mamma' is not suitable. But I shall love my dear mother even more than my dear mamma, because I shall be better able to understand all your worth, and all that I owe to you." To her mother, indeed, she is the dutiful, obedient, and grateful daughter, but it is from her grandmother that she will seek counsel and sympathy.

Nor is this difficult of explanation. It is a sad but undeniable fact that to very young girls the beautiful, fascinating, light-hearted woman of the world, whose *métier* is to charm and amuse all about her, appeals far more strongly than her grave, devout, retiring sister, however worthy of confidence and affection the latter may be ; and, from the little princesses' point of view, the widow of Charles Emmanuel II was a much more attractive personality than their own mother.

What few pretensions to beauty Anne d'Orléans had possessed at the time of her marriage had not survived the tribulations of childbirth, which had



been for her peculiarly severe, and on more than one occasion had nearly cost her her life ; while her natural seriousness of disposition had been intensified by her repeated disappointments at the non-appearance of the son so ardently desired, and by the infidelities and neglect of her husband. Excellent woman though she was, she does not appear to have understood that it was her duty to forget her own sorrows when in the company of her little daughters, to affect an interest in their childish amusements, and to do everything in her power to gladden their lives ; that children are attracted by gaiety and repelled by melancholy ; that though daily attendance at Mass and listening to the reading of works of devotion may be good for the youthful soul, and long "constitutionals" excellent for the body, the mind occasionally requires a little distraction ; and that the mother who would gain the confidence and affection of her children must be to them something more than a moral preceptress.

On the other hand, the years had dealt leniently with Jeanne-Baptiste de Nemours, who, although she had grown somewhat stout, was still beautiful, while she had retained all her wonderful charm of manner. With the approach of old age, she had renounced the gallantries which had disgraced the first half of her life, and, disdaining to have recourse to art to repair the ravages of Time, had accepted it in the spirit of the true philosopher, finding, as so many women of a like temperament have done both before and since, consolation for the loss of her adorers in the homage paid to her intelligence and wit. Her circle, however, would appear to

have been a somewhat limited one, since Victor Amadeus not only denied his mother every vestige of influence, but regarded her with a hatred which he was at little pains to conceal, and those who had the courage to brave their sovereign's displeasure by paying court to *Madame Royale* were comparatively few. The weekly visits which the old princess received from her grand-daughters at the Palazzo Madama—that huge, ungainly mediæval pile in the midst of the Piazza Castello, now occupied by the State Archives and other institutions—which during her later years she seldom quitted, were therefore the more welcome, and she exerted herself to interest and amuse the children and to encourage them to make her their friend and confidante. In this she was eminently successful, particularly with Adélaïde, in whose affections her “*chère gran maman*” always retained the foremost place.

But we must now turn to the consideration of certain political events which were to have a very important bearing on Adélaïde's future career.

### CHAPTER III

Victor Amadeus II and Louis XIV—Incessant interference of the latter in the affairs of Savoy and the domestic life of the Duke—Victor Amadeus compelled by him to engage in a cruel persecution of his own Protestant subjects, the Vaudois—The League of Augsburg—Double game of Victor Amadeus—Rupture between Savoy and France—The allies are defeated at Staffarda—Savoy and Piedmont are over-run by the French, and Turin threatened—Invasion of Dauphiné by the Allies fails, owing to the serious illness of Victor Amadeus—Siege of Pinerolo and Battle of Marsaglia—Louis XIV anxious to detach Savoy from the League—The Comte de Tessé—Secret negotiations with the Court of Turin—Propositions of Victor Amadeus—He proposes a marriage between the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne—Secret visit of Tessé to Turin—Victor Amadeus sends an envoy to Vienna to propose an alliance between the Princess Adélaïde and the King of the Romans—Refusal of the Emperor—The Duke resumes his negotiations with France—Treaty signed between France and Savoy—Its terms—Joy of Victor Amadeus

IF Louis XIV, in giving his niece to Victor Amadeus, flattered himself that he had secured a nephew whom it would be easy to bend to his imperious will, he had fallen into a very grievous error. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that for some years the conduct of the Duke was such as to encourage this pleasing illusion, since, though he frequently endeavoured to evade the execution of the orders he received from Versailles, he generally ended by obeying them. But the yoke of France was very heavy; nominally an

independent sovereign, the Duke of Savoy found himself treated exactly as though he had been a vassal of the French Crown. Louis XIV interfered incessantly, not only in every act of his government, but in those of his private life. He remonstrated with him on his treatment of his wife, thereby, as we have seen, making the lot of that unfortunate princess still more difficult to bear; intimated that he lived too much in retirement, and that it behoved him to maintain a gay and brilliant Court; espoused with the utmost warmth *Madame Royale's* side in her frequent quarrels with her son; and ordered the Duke to forbid the marriage of his uncle, Prince Philibert di Carignano, heir-presumptive to the throne, with Catherine d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Modena, and when Philibert, ignoring his nephew's wishes, contracted a secret marriage, compelled Victor Amadeus to banish him and his wife from Savoy.

When, after the rupture with France, of which we are about to speak, peace was concluded and diplomatic relations between the two Courts were about to be resumed, it was indeed with good reason that Victor Amadeus said to the French envoy at Turin: "Implore the King to give me an Ambassador who will leave us in peace with our sheep, our wives, our mothers, our mistresses, and our servants. The charcoal-burner ought to be the master in his own hut, and from the day when I had the use of my reason until that on which I had the misfortune to engage in this unhappy war, scarcely a week has passed in which there has not been demanded of me, either in regard to my own conduct or that of my family, ten things, or, when

I have accorded only nine, that I have not been threatened.”<sup>1</sup>

But a humiliation far more intolerable than any interference in his private or family affairs was imposed on Victor Amadeus when, in the spring of 1686, the Most Christian King, carried away by his zeal for the extermination of heresy, forced him to undertake, in conjunction with French troops under Catinat, a cruel and bloody persecution of his own Protestant subjects, the Vaudois, and to lay waste their peaceful valleys with fire and sword. Wounded at once in his pride as a sovereign and in his natural sentiments of kindness for his people, the Duke returned from this expedition bitterly incensed against France, and impatient for an opportunity of casting off the fetters which weighed so heavily upon him.

In July of that year, the celebrated League of Augsburg was formed against the monarch whose ambition and imperious manners had alarmed and offended all the princes and peoples of Europe, Catholic and Protestant alike, and was joined by England, the Emperor, the Kings of Spain and Sweden, the Dutch Republic, the Palatine and Saxon Electors, and the Circles of Bavaria, Franconia, and the Upper Rhine. Victor Amadeus at once began coquetting with the Allies, but, finding the guarantees which they offered him insufficient, declined to commit himself, and accordingly, while making his preparations for war, in anticipation of the moment when military exigencies should wring from them more satisfactory terms, continued to profess an unalterable devotion to the interests of France.

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*.

This double game proceeded until the late spring of 1690, when, French agents having intercepted some very compromising correspondence between William of Orange and Victor Amadeus, Louis XIV directed Catinat to call upon the Duke to deliver up to his uncle, as a pledge of his fidelity, not only the fortress of Verrua, on the confines of Piedmont and Savoy, but the citadel of Turin as well,—that is to say, nothing less than his own capital. Victor Amadeus, finding himself with his back to the wall, hesitated no longer, but despatched an envoy to Milan to announce his adhesion to the League, and to demand assistance from the Spaniards; for Catinat with 18,000 French troops was now at the gates of Turin, and it was only by haggling with him over the conditions on which the citadel was to be delivered up that he could prevent him from commencing hostilities.

The Allies received the news of the Duke of Savoy's belated decision with joy, and a Spanish army at once advanced to the relief of Turin. On its approach, Victor Amadeus flung aside the mask; informed the Comte de Rebenac, who had succeeded d'Arcy as French Ambassador, that the extremity to which his master had reduced him left him no alternative but to accept the assistance which Spain had several times offered him; signed with his own hand a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Emperor Leopold (June 14, 1674); and convened a great meeting of the nobility at the Palazzo Reale, and addressed to them what Rebenac styles "a very eloquent and very bellicose harangue," in which he announced his intention of "entering the universal cause and

going to seek the French army at the head of his faithful people."

The nobles, no less eager than their sovereign to avenge the long series of humiliations which France had inflicted on their country, welcomed this announcement with frenzied applause; the enthusiasm for war rapidly spread to the Army, the people, and even to the clergy, who voluntarily offered the valuables which their churches contained to the war fund; and the remnant of the persecuted Vaudois, seeing in the outbreak of hostilities an end of the cruel persecution to which they had been subjected, sent a deputation to the Duke to offer their services, and on being assured by him that their religion should henceforth be respected, and that "so long as he had a morsel of bread in his mouth, he would share it with them," furnished a contingent, which served throughout the war and fought with the utmost heroism and ferocity. In short, within a few days of Victor Amadeus entering the Coalition, the whole of Savoy and Piedmont, noble and peasant, Catholic and Protestant alike, had risen in arms.

The odds against the little State were, however, very heavy, opposed as it was to the finest troops of the Continent and to one of Louis XIV's most experienced generals. Austria sent to the assistance of Victor Amadeus his cousin Eugène of Savoy, the "little abbé" whose sword *le Grand Monarque* had once so contemptuously rejected, and who was ere long to become a veritable thorn in the side of France. But the two young princes conducted their operations with more courage than discretion, and in August they were completely

defeated by Catinat at Staffarda, and Savoy and Nice and the greater part of Piedmont fell into the hands of the French, who ravaged and burned in the most ruthless fashion, since Louvois had given orders "to treat the country like the Palatinate, and make fire and sword do their work there." Catinat even pushed his advance-posts almost within sight of the walls of Turin, and threw the capital into a state of the utmost consternation. Victor Amadeus gave orders for the Duchess and her children to retire to Vercelli; but the French general decided that the forces under his command were insufficient to invest so large a town, and, having burned the ducal château of Rivoli,<sup>1</sup> retired to Coni, to which he proceeded to lay siege. The garrison, however, aided by the inhabitants, offered a desperate resistance, and gave Eugène time to bring up an army to their succour and compel Catinat to raise the siege.

Encouraged by this success, and by the arrival of reinforcements under Maximilian of Bavaria, the Allies decided to assume the aggressive; and Catinat found himself so hard pressed that he was forced to evacuate Piedmont and fall back into Savoy, though the surrender of the fortress of Montmélian, which the French had been besieging for several months, afforded him some consolation for this retrograde movement.

At the opening of the following campaign, Victor Amadeus proposed the investment of Pinerolo, the key of Piedmont, which had been in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> On learning of this catastrophe, Victor Amadeus observed that he would cheerfully submit to the destruction of his own palaces if the enemy would spare the houses of his people.



France ever since the Treaty of Cherasco, and which he had always been intensely anxious to recover. But the Imperialists had other views, and desired to carry the war on to French soil, by the invasion of Dauphiné. Their counsels ultimately prevailed, and in August the Allies crossed the frontier in two divisions, the Duke marching on Embrun, while the Germans invested Gap. Both places fell, and the most deplorable excesses were committed by the invaders, eager to avenge the ravaging of the Palatinate and Piedmont.

Here, however, their successes terminated; for, at Embrun, Victor Amadeus was seized with the dangerous illness of which we have spoken elsewhere, and this so discouraged the Allies that, though Grenoble lay to all appearances at their mercy, they decided not to prosecute the campaign, and fell back into Savoy.

The following July found the Duke, though still weak from sickness, once more at the head of his troops. Pinerolo was now invested, and the Fort of Santa-Brigida, one of its outlying defences, carried by assault. But on Pinerolo itself the Allies could make no impression; and on October 4, Catinat suddenly swooped down from the mountains, fell upon the investing army at Marsaglia, and utterly routed it.

Notwithstanding the successes of Catinat, Louis XIV had been for some time past anxious to detach Victor Amadeus from the League, in order to strengthen his armies on the Rhine and in the Netherlands; and Croissy, who on the death of Louvois—whose aggressive counsels in regard to Savoy had been the principal cause of the rupture

with that country—had resumed the entire direction of foreign affairs, was of the same mind. Accordingly, at the end of December 1691, the Marquis de Chamlay was sent to Pinerolo, with instructions to intimate to the Court of Turin his Majesty's desire to come to terms. His advances, however, were by no means favourably received, the supercilious tone which he adopted towards Victor Amadeus having, it would appear, greatly irritated the Duke, and at the end of two months he returned to France, leaving matters much as they were before.

Recognising that so delicate a mission called for the services of a more skilful and supple diplomatist, Louis XIV chose, to succeed Chamlay, René de Froullay, Comte de Tessé, a person little estimable as a man, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, but "of distinguished appearance, shrewd, adroit, courteous, polished, and obliging," a noted *raconteur*, and one of the most charming letter-writers of his time. Saint-Simon, with his usual indifference to the truth where persons whom he dislikes are concerned, states that "he pushed his good-fortune to such remarkable lengths as to become a Marshal of France without having heard a musket fired."<sup>1</sup> But, so far from being a carpet-knight, Tessé saw service in Flanders, Italy, and Spain, and at the siege of Veillane, in 1691, was wounded "*par un éclat de grenade gros comme un petit œuf de poule.*"<sup>2</sup> However, though he appears to have been a brave and capable officer, his true *métier* was not war

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Tessé to Louvois, June 7, 1691, Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois.*

but diplomacy, in which he rendered his country services which history has perhaps too little recognised.

A few weeks before Chamlay was sent to Pinerolo, Tessé had established himself there as "commandant for the service of the King of the fortresses and frontiers of Piedmont," and after the marquis's return to France, he lost no time in picking up the thread of the negotiations. War in the seventeenth century was a singular compound of cruelty and courtesy. If conquered territory were mercilessly ravaged, towns and villages burned to the ground, and neither age nor sex respected, this did not prevent the generals on either side from sending each other presents of wine and fruit, facilitating the passage of letters relating to private affairs, and, in short, showing to one another every consideration which one gentleman might expect from another; and Tessé was careful to allow no opportunity to pass of rendering himself agreeable to the Duke of Savoy and his Ministers. Thus, we find him felicitating Victor Amadeus on the improvement in his health after his dangerous illness at Embrun, and assuring him that his master would be only too willing to place the services of the best French physicians at his disposal; offering the Marquis de Saint-Thomas, when he also fell ill, passports for any watering-place in France which his medical advisers might recommend, adding that, if it were inconvenient for the Minister to leave his post just then, he would give orders for whatever waters he desired to be bottled and despatched to Turin, and giving permission for the passage of certain relics which the



RENÉ DE FROULLAY, COMTE DE TESSÉ  
 FROM AN ENGRAVING BY TARDIEU FILS, AFTER THE PAINTING BY RIGAUD



Duchess of Savoy was anxious to send to the Convent of the Val-de Grâce.<sup>1</sup>

The excellent relations which the astute Frenchman soon succeeded in establishing with the Court of Savoy did not a little to facilitate the negotiations, which were carried on through the medium of one Groppe, auditor of the War Office at Turin, who went to and fro between Pinerolo and the capital disguised as a peasant, since it was of the utmost importance that no inkling of what was in progress should reach the Duke's allies, and the slightest indiscretion might have ruined everything. Victor Amadeus had suffered far too severely at the hands of his redoubtable foe not to desire an accommodation, if such could be arranged on his own terms. But the price he demanded for his defection was a very high one, since he was well aware, as was Louis XIV, that though, from a military and financial point of view, Savoy was one of the weakest members of the League, her geographical position rendered her co-operation absolutely essential to the successful carrying on of the war. The evacuation of his dominions by the French, the restoration of all conquests, an ample indemnity for the expense to which he had been put, and, lastly, the cession—or rather the restoration—of Pinerolo, the fortress to the possession of which Richelieu had attached such enormous importance, these were the conditions on which this prince, who had seen his territory over-run, his palaces burned, and the enemy encamped almost at the

<sup>1</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

gates of his capital, was prepared to treat with his victorious foe. If they were acceded to, he would engage to abandon the League, and use his good offices with the Emperor and the King of Spain to bring about a general peace; while, in the event of his mediation being unsuccessful, he would be prepared to range himself openly on the side of France.

Nevertheless, exorbitant as the Duke's propositions may appear, Louis XIV, after some little hesitation, decided to accept them; for, in his opinion, no sacrifice was too great, if only thereby the compactness of the League could be shaken. But, since his nephew's conduct during recent years had inspired him with the most profound distrust, he insisted on receiving guarantees against any breach of faith on his part, and suggested that certain towns and fortresses in Savoy and Piedmont should remain in the possession of France, or, at any rate, be garrisoned by the troops of some neutral State, until the conclusion of the general peace. To this Victor Amadeus demurred, but expressed his willingness to give hostages instead, and proposed that his elder daughter, the Princess Adélaïde, and the eldest son of the Prince di Carignano, then heir presumptive to the throne, should be sent to France.

The Duke's offer, however, does not appear to have been taken very seriously at Versailles, for Victor Amadeus had not shown himself so affectionate a father as to lead Louis XIV and his Ministers to believe that the prospect of an indefinite separation from one of his daughters would deter him from breaking his engagements to them, if he

were so inclined ; and, as the Prince di Carignano refused, on any consideration, to part with his son, the negotiations looked like breaking down, when the Duke of Savoy made a fresh proposal. This was that the Princess Adélaïde should be brought up at the French Court ; and that when she had attained a marriageable age, she should wed Louis, Duc de Bourgogne, eldest son of the Dauphin.<sup>1</sup>

The documents preserved in the French Archives leave us in some doubt as to whether this proposal was a spontaneous one on the part of Victor Amadeus, or whether he had not received a hint from Tessé that such an arrangement would be the easiest way out of the difficulty. Any way, Louis XIV seems to have regarded it as a sufficient proof of the Duke's intention to keep faith with him, and by the middle of April 1693 matters had so far progressed that the Court of Turin submitted to Tessé a rough draft of the projected treaty, one of the articles of which stipulated that, though the marriage in question should not take place until the parties had reached a suitable age, the contract should be drawn up forthwith. To which proposition Tessé replied : " I shall have the honour of treating, in the name of the King and of *Monseigneur*,<sup>2</sup> of the marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne with the Princess of Savoy, the contract relating to which shall be signed and concluded at the same time as the present treaty, the consummation thereof to be postponed to the time when age will permit of it."

<sup>1</sup> The Duc de Bourgogne was now in his eleventh year, having been born on August 6, 1682.

<sup>2</sup> The Dauphin.



However, though in principle the parties were now in accord, the time which had been consumed in haggling over the price of Victor Amadeus's defection had brought them to the verge of a new campaign, and it was impossible for the Duke to conclude the negotiations and abandon his allies at that moment, however much he might desire to do so. His immediate object, indeed, was to conceal from the Imperialists the game he was playing ; and it was no doubt this motive which led him to assist at the siege of Pinerolo, notwithstanding that he was still so weak from sickness as scarcely to be able to keep his saddle.

The campaign ended in the sanguinary defeat of the Allies at Marsaglia, and it is certainly a striking proof of the strength of Victor Amadeus's position that, a month after this disaster, he should have resumed the negotiations with France without abating one jot of his demands, and that Louis XIV, despite this fresh victory, should have shown himself no less anxious to come to terms.

The Duke now suggested that progress might be facilitated if Tessé were to pay a personal visit to Turin ; and thither the Governor of Pinerolo accordingly repaired, disguised in a suit of the prince's livery, which had been sent him, and an immense black wig, and was introduced, in the dead of night, by a back staircase, into the Palazzo Reale. Here he remained for four days in the utmost secrecy, and had several long conferences with Victor Amadeus and the Marquis de Saint-Thomas. The former repeatedly protested his desire to make his peace with the King of France ; but he clung tenaciously to the conditions on which

he had already expressed himself willing to abandon the League, though, after the recent disastrous campaign, it was obvious that, if he were to continue the war, he must be prepared to act entirely on the defensive. He particularly insisted that if his daughter went to France, it should be as the affianced wife of the Duc de Bourgogne, and one day, when in the company of Tessé, he sent for the little princesses and talked to them for some time, in order that the Frenchman might have an opportunity of forming an opinion of Adélaïde. Finally, Tessé yielded on every point, and promised to set out at once for Versailles to obtain Louis XIV's assent to the Duke's demands ; and Victor Amadeus, putting his hand in his, "swore by his faith and his word as a man of honour and a prince, that if he played false in this matter, he would be willing to pass for a knave and a dog." <sup>1</sup>

However, the affair was still very far from concluded, for the Duke of Savoy was a prince as deficient in scruple as he was fertile in resource ; and he believed that, since Louis XIV were willing to pay a high price to detach him from the League, the Emperor Leopold might be disposed to bid even higher to retain him in it. He had promised Tessé that, so soon as he received a favourable answer from Versailles, he would send the Abbate Grimani, an astute Venetian in the service of Savoy, to inform the Emperor of his intention to withdraw from the Coalition, and to urge him to make peace. But, though, when the Duke was informed of Louis XIV's assent to his proposals, he

<sup>1</sup> Archives des Affaires Étrangères, *Correspondance Turin*. Unsigned note of December 10, 1696, cited by Comte d'Haussonville.

lost no time in despatching Grimani to Austria, the mission with which the latter was entrusted was of quite a different nature. His instructions were to demand from the Emperor reinforcements sufficient to secure the total expulsion of the French from Italy, and to propose the betrothal of the Princess Adélaïde to Leopold's eldest son, the King of the Romans, then thirteen years of age, the marriage to take place when the former had completed her fourteenth year, until which time she was to be brought up at Innsbruck, under the eye of the Empress. He was further instructed to inform his Imperial Majesty that, if his proposals were rejected, the Duke of Savoy would undoubtedly be compelled, in sheer self-preservation, to accept the very advantageous offers he had already received from Versailles, to enter into an alliance with France, and give the Princess Adélaïde in marriage to the Duc de Bourgogne.

These propositions, which, it will be observed, were, with the change of names, almost identical with those which Tessé had carried to Louis XIV, proved anything but acceptable to the Emperor. Leopold had too much on his hands in Germany to think of sending reinforcements into Italy, and he naturally considered that the heir of the Holy Roman Empire ought to look far higher than the daughter of a prince of the second rank. However, he did not venture on a direct refusal, but begged for delay, in order to enable him to consult the Empress and his Ministers ; and, to the intense disgust of Grimani, the matter dragged on until the spring of 1695, Leopold raising all kinds of objections to the proposed

marriage, the most curious of which was perhaps his fear that, if his son were obliged to wait until the mature age of nineteen before taking unto himself a wife, he might be tempted into vicious courses.

In the meanwhile, the Emperor, determined not to yield to the demands of the Duke of Savoy, but anxious to prevent that prince from throwing himself into the arms of France, found means to enlighten Louis XIV as to the real object of Grimani's mission to Vienna, in the belief that the discovery of the double game which Victor Amadeus was playing would so incense the King that he would immediately break off his negotiations with Savoy. This not very creditable proceeding, however, served only to hasten the defection which Leopold sought to prevent. Louis XIV and his Ministers had by this time gauged the character of Victor Amadeus too accurately for his duplicity to cause them either surprise or indignation, and contented themselves by calling upon him for an explanation. The Duke, through Saint-Thomas, of course indignantly denied the conduct attributed to him, protesting that the prolonged stay of Grimani in Vienna was due to the difficulty of persuading the Emperor to listen to his master's pacific counsels. But, recognising the danger of hesitating any longer between France and Austria, he immediately despatched a courier to Vienna to obtain a definite reply concerning the marriage of his daughter with the King of the Romans.

The courier returned with an autograph letter from the Emperor, in which, while expressing his pleasure at the Duke's desire to give the Princess

Adélaïde in marriage to his son, he regretted that, owing to the youth of the parties, it was impossible for him to arrive at present at a definite decision. He concluded by thanking Victor Amadeus for the "ardent zeal" he had shown in their common cause,—a touch of irony which perhaps did not make this disguised refusal any the more palatable to its recipient.

Seeing that he had nothing to hope for from the side of Austria, Victor Amadeus hastened to resume his negotiations with France, whom he found still as willing as ever to come to terms, though the discovery of his double-dealing had shown Louis XIV the importance of obtaining from him some more substantial guarantees for the execution of his engagements than the person of the Princess Adélaïde; and this caused the *pourparlers* to be prolonged for many months. However, soon after the resumption of hostilities in the spring of 1695, France agreed to the Duke's proposal that Casale, which he was preparing to invest at the head of a composite force of Imperialists, Spaniards, and Piedmontese, should be surrendered to him, after a sham siege, on condition that it should be subsequently handed over to the Duke of Mantua, its former owner, from whom Louis XIV had purchased it. Thus, one of the great objects of Victor Amadeus's policy was already achieved, and the fortress which had shut in Turin on its eastern side, and cut Piedmont off from communication with Central Italy, passed into friendly hands.

Slowly but surely the negotiations drew to a conclusion. On the night of June 4-5, 1696,

Tessé paid a second secret visit to Turin, "disguised as a servant of the Adjutant-General of Savoy," and wearing "a very dark wig belonging to Monsieur le Maréchal de Catinat";<sup>1</sup> and, after more than three weeks of incessant haggling, a treaty was signed by him and Saint-Thomas (June 24, 1696).

This treaty stipulated that Pinerolo should be given up to Savoy, on condition that its fortifications were dismantled; that France was to restore forthwith all conquests, with the exception of Montmélian and Susa, which were to remain in her possession until the conclusion of the general peace; and that the Princess Adélaïde should be formally betrothed to the Duc de Bourgogne and sent to the French Court, where, so soon as she had attained her thirteenth year, the marriage was to be celebrated, Louis XIV engaging to provide the dowry. Finally, Victor Amadeus obtained a distinction which his House had long coveted, namely, that his Ambassadors should be treated henceforth in France like those of crowned heads, and the title of Royal Highness conferred on himself in all public acts.

In return for these concessions, the Duke engaged to use his influence to obtain from his old allies their recognition of the neutrality of Italy; and, should they refuse, to unite his forces with those of the King of France. In this eventuality, he was to be given the command of the Franco-Piedmontese troops, and receive, in virtue of this

<sup>1</sup> A treaty had already been signed by Tessé and Groppe, at Pinerolo, on the 30th of the preceding month; but Victor Amadeus subsequently refused to ratify it, on the ground that he could not accept the conditions on which Pinerolo was to be restored to him.

appointment, the sum of 100,000 crowns a month so long as the war lasted.

Thus, after six years of warfare, in which he had suffered an almost unbroken series of reverses, Victor Amadeus, thanks to his own adroitness and the exhausted condition to which her sovereign's pride and ambition had reduced France, had the satisfaction of realising the double end which from his boyhood he had always kept steadily in view : the restoration of Casale to Mantua and that of Pinerolo to Savoy ; had rescued his country from the servitude in which she had been held since the Treaty of Cherasco ; had re-established with her western neighbour, if only for a brief period, those cordial relations which were so greatly to the interests of both States to maintain ; and had betrothed his daughter to a prince who would in all probability live to ascend the greatest throne in Christendom.

Reserved and secretive though he naturally was, the Duke had great difficulty in dissimulating the exultation which this extraordinary transformation in his fortunes occasioned him ; and Tessé wrote to Louis XIV, that in the privacy of his own apartments, when he believed himself unobserved save by his confidential attendants, he might be seen "striking attitudes before his mirror, felicitating himself on the great affair which he had brought to a conclusion, and capering like a man whom joy inspired with involuntary movements."

Yet, in the light of future events, who shall say that the delight which manifested itself in so ludicrous a manner was not abundantly justified ? For the treaty signed that summer's day at Turin

had secured to the House of Savoy infinitely more than what we have mentioned above—infininitely more than the Duke could have foreseen, even in his most ambitious dreams. It had laid the foundation on which, more than a century and a half later, the descendants of Victor Amadeus were to rear the fabric of an independent and united Italy.



## CHAPTER IV

Tessé's mission to Turin—Joy of the Duchess of Savoy at the conclusion of peace with France and the approaching marriage of her daughter to the Duc de Bourgogne—Sentiments of the Princess Adélaïde—An amusing comedy—Reports of Tessé concerning the princess—Portraits of her sent to Versailles—Mission of Mansfeld to Turin—Victor Amadeus, in conjunction with the French, invades the Milanese—Suspension of hostilities in Italy—Indignation of the Allies at the defection of the Duke of Savoy—Marriage-contract of the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne—Trousseau of the princess—The signing of the contract—Formation of the princess's household—Great and acrimonious competition for the post of *dame d'honneur*—The Duchesse du Lude nominated—Other nominations—The question of the waiting-women—Victor Amadeus declines to permit the Duchess of Savoy to accompany her daughter to France—Selection of the envoys

ON July 12, 1696, an armistice for two months was signed between France and Savoy, and Victor Amadeus suggested that Tessé should be again sent to Turin, nominally as a hostage, but really to complete the arrangements for the marriage of the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne. The French Government assented, though Tessé does not appear to have relished altogether the idea of putting himself in the power of the Duke of Savoy, and wrote pathetically to Croissy, begging him "not to leave him too long in the ambiguous position of a hostage," as he recalled an instance in which, through some unfortunate misunderstanding, which was not recti-

fied until too late, one of these gentlemen had been hanged; adding that nothing but his regard for the service of the King would have induced him to accept such a post.

However, as he was a very magnificent personage indeed, these apprehensions did not prevent him from making a most imposing entry into Turin, where he arrived on the day after the signing of the armistice, accompanied by the Marquis de Bouzols, a son-in-law of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was also to remain as a hostage until the end of the truce, and a suite which required thirty mules to transport their baggage. He speedily discovered that there was to be very little ambiguity about his mission in the eyes of the citizens; for, though the treaty which had been signed a fortnight before had been kept a profound secret, the impression that the armistice was but the harbinger of peace was general, and the arrival of the commandant of Pinerolo was regarded as placing the matter beyond all doubt. As the Turinese were by this time heartily weary of the war, their delight at the prospect of its speedy termination knew no bounds; and scarcely had Tessé passed the gates, when he found himself surrounded by an enormous crowd, which greeted him with frenzied acclamations, amid which cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" might have been heard.

The *cortège* made its way through the surging throng to the Palazzo Reale, at one of the windows of which stood the Duchess of Savoy, with the Princess Adélaïde behind her. The conclusion of the peace between France and Savoy, and the stipulation of the marriage by which the agree-

ment had been sealed, was a great joy to Anne d'Orléans. During six years her heart had been torn between her natural affection for the country of her birth and her loyalty to the land of her adoption, while her fears for her husband's safety had made her life one perpetual martyrdom. Now, at last, she was to know peace of mind once more, and moreover the dearest wish of her heart, next to that of occupying the first place in her husband's affections, was about to be realised. For Anne, in the words of Tessé, had "remained as much a Frenchwoman as though she had never crossed the Alps," and, almost from the day when she found herself a mother, it had been the dream of her life to see her eldest daughter wedded to the Duc de Bourgogne, and one day sharing with him the throne of France. "I could not render an adequate account to your Majesty of the lively and indescribable joy of the Duchess of Savoy," writes Tessé to Louis XIV. "She is quite unable to repress it, and, although she has been warned to be on her guard, so as not to allow the leaders of the Allies to become aware of the inclinations of her heart, this princess cannot contain herself, and seizes every occasion to converse with me, and to speak of your Majesty, of her happiness, and of her past troubles and mortifications."<sup>1</sup> And, good courtier that he was, he added, in a subsequent despatch: "Assuredly, she has a heart worthy of the honour of being your Majesty's niece."

That the Duchess had early communicated her

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of July 20, 1696, published by the Comtesse de Faverges, *Anne d'Orléans*.

ambitious hopes to her little daughter, and had brought her up in the belief that she was reserved for this exalted destiny, there can be no doubt, since, so far back as the spring of 1688, we find the industrious Souches recording in his *Mémoires* that the Dauphine had been very distressed on learning of the serious illness of the Duke of Savoy's eldest daughter,<sup>1</sup> "not only on account of the near relationship, but also because this princess, child though she was, had already declared that she could not be happy unless she married the Duc de Bourgogne."<sup>2</sup>

Nor can we wonder that so brilliant a prospect should have made an irresistible appeal to Adélaïde's precocious imagination, when we reflect that she must have been continually hearing from her mother, her grandmother, and her *gouvernante*, Madame des Noyers, of the splendour and magnificence of that Court, the like of which Europe had never seen before and will certainly never see again; of the brilliant throng of fair women and brave men, radiant in many-hued silks and satins and velvets, and glittering with jewels, who basked in the rays of the Sun King; of the round of splendid balls, fêtes, and masquerades in which these favoured beings passed their days;<sup>3</sup> of the adoration with which that mighty monarch before whose frown the nations trembled, and every member of his family, were regarded.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the illness in which the Duchess of Savoy fulfilled the duties of nurse. See p. 40, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Marquis de Sourches, *Mémoires*, April 20, 1688.

<sup>3</sup> The three ladies in question had, of course, left the Court of France before the Maintenon régime began. It was a much less entertaining place now.

On entering the palace, Tessé was required to play his part in an amusing little comedy. Although he had already paid two visits to Turin, one of which had lasted more than three weeks, he had on each occasion preserved the strictest incognito, and appears never to have quitted the apartments allotted him, save under cover of night and with the most elaborate precautions. As it was still of the utmost importance to keep the treaty between France and Savoy from the knowledge of the Allies until the moment for proclaiming it had arrived, he was now, of course, officially understood to be visiting Turin for the first time; and his diplomatic gravity seems to have been severely tested when, after Victor Amadeus had expressed the pleasure it gave him to welcome to his Court a nobleman whom he had so long desired to meet, the Marquis de Saint-Thomas, with whom Tessé had formerly been closeted for hours in earnest conclave, approached and, with a perfectly grave face, begged the Master of the Ceremonies to present him to the distinguished foreigner, "as though he had never cast eyes on him in his life."

The comedy was continued with the Princess Adélaïde, who, although she immediately identified Tessé as the person whom she had previously met in her father's cabinet, notwithstanding that he had then been carefully disguised, followed the instructions she had received from the Duke to the letter, and gave not the slightest sign of recognition when the diplomatist was presented to her.

Tessé had been expressly enjoined by Louis XIV to take every opportunity of observing his pros-

pective grand-daughter, and to furnish him with the most minute details concerning her. In the eyes of the King, the physique of the little princess whose children were to carry on his dynasty was of infinitely more importance than her character, and on this point the envoy was fortunately able to assure his master that he need entertain no misgivings. "The more I observe this Princess," he writes, "the more I am convinced that she is healthy and possessed of a sound constitution." And he adds: "Whenever I have the honour of seeing her, she blushes with becoming modesty, as though the sight of me reminded her of the Duc de Bourgogne."

A miniature of Adélaïde had been given to Tessé, by Groppe, during the conferences at Pinerolo in the preceding spring, and duly forwarded to Versailles, and this was followed by a full-length portrait sent by the Duchess of Savoy to her father, which the latter, needless to observe, lost no time in showing to the Duc de Bourgogne. That young gentleman was graciously pleased to express his approbation of the appearance of his bride-elect; indeed, so gratified was he that, happening to meet Barbezieux, the Minister for War, he carried him off to his apartments to admire it in his turn.

The next objects of interest relating to the princess to reach Versailles were a corsage and a ribbon lately worn by her Highness, which Tessé had procured, to give the King a correct idea of the young lady's physical proportions. They were directed to the Minister for War, and must have occasioned that functionary no little mystifica-

tion, if he happened to open the package containing them before the accompanying letter.

The Court was now fully enlightened as to the face and figure of the Princess Adélaïde, but it was still in doubt as to the exact colour of her hair, for Tessé had informed the King that, in his opinion, the painter of the portrait which the Duchess of Savoy had sent to *Monsieur* had represented her hair "a little less dark than it really was." However, he subsequently discovered that he had done the artist an injustice, and writes to Barbezieux, begging him to tell his Majesty that, "owing to the excessive quantity of essence with which the princess's hair had been sprinkled on the first days on which he had seen her," he had been deceived as to its colour, which was, in reality, "a rather light chestnut, and lighter than the Dauphine's<sup>1</sup> had been."

While Tessé was occupied in studying the Princess Adélaïde, and in reporting the result of his observations to his master at Versailles, the Allies had become seriously alarmed at the cessation of hostilities between France and Savoy and the presence of Tessé at the latter Court; and, at the beginning of August, the Imperial Commissioner in Italy, the Graf von Mansfeld,<sup>2</sup> arrived in Turin,

<sup>1</sup> Maria Anna Christina Victoria of Bavaria.

<sup>2</sup> Mansfeld came to Turin preceded by a very unsavoury reputation. He had formerly been Austrian Ambassador in Spain, and it was during his embassy at Madrid (February 9, 1689) that the Duchess of Savoy's elder sister, Marie Louise d'Orléans, consort of Carlos II, had died suddenly, under highly suspicious circumstances. The belief that the Queen died from the effects of poison administered by some agent of the Austrian faction at the Court was held by many well-informed persons, including Rebenac, the French Ambassador at Madrid (see his despatch to Louis XIV

charged by the Emperor to do everything possible to induce Victor Amadeus to reject the offers of France and continue his support of the League.

Although Mansfeld was unaware that a treaty between France and Savoy had actually been signed, he soon perceived that matters had now progressed so far that nothing but the highest bribe in his master's power to offer could avert such a catastrophe; and he accordingly proposed to renew the propositions which Grimani had brought to Vienna at the beginning of 1694, and to substitute the alliance with the King of the Romans for that with the Duc de Bourgogne.

But now it was the turn of Victor Amadeus to refuse, and it was not without a touch of irony that he replied that "the mother and daughter were not disposed to profit by so great an advantage, and that, just as his Imperial Majesty had appeared to believe, at one time, that an alliance with Denmark was more suitable for the Emperor than that of Savoy, it was now believed at Turin that that of France was the more advantageous." And when the Austrian pressed him to reconsider his decision, and offered to engage, in his master's name, to compel France to restore Pinerolo, curtly responded that "the affront which his Imperial Majesty had offered the House of Savoy over that

in the author's "Five Fair Sisters," pp. 386-388), and rumour even credited Mansfeld with being privy to the crime. That he was in any way connected with it is, however, extremely improbable, and the story related by Saint-Simon of Olympe Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons having prepared a glass of poisoned milk at the Austrian Legation appears to be a malicious invention of that chronicler.



matter was still too recent to be effaced in a moment.”<sup>1</sup>

And so Mansfeld took his departure, much crestfallen, to the great joy of the Princess Adélaïde, who had been terribly alarmed lest he should succeed in persuading her father to renounce the marriage on which she had set her heart. “This princess observed yesterday to her mother, who spoke to her of the Comte de Mansfeld: ‘*Mon Dieu*, what has he come here for? You will see that papa will listen to what he says, as he has done before. That man has no business here. Why does he not leave you in peace?’ ”<sup>2</sup>

The armistice expired on September 15, and Victor Amadeus having failed in his efforts to induce the Allies to recognise the neutrality of Italy, joined his forces to those of Catinat, and, at the head of an army of fifty thousand men, entered the Milanese and proceeded to lay siege to Valenza. This bold stroke brought the war in Italy to a speedy conclusion, since Carlos II of Spain, learning that the town was on the point of capitulating, brought so much pressure to bear on the Allies, that, in October, a treaty was signed, at Vigevano, stipulating for a suspension of arms until the proclamation of a general peace. This was not long delayed, as the termination of hostilities in Italy left France free to throw all her strength into the Netherlands and Spain; and by the end of October 1697 the two treaties of

<sup>1</sup> Comte d’Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l’Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> Tessé to Louis XIV, August 11, 1696.

Ryswick had been signed, and peace at length reigned over the exhausted Continent.

The defection of Victor Amadeus excited the utmost indignation amongst his former allies. In England, his name was never mentioned save in terms of derision and contempt; at Milan, the bitterest imprecations were heaped upon him by the Spaniards, who "spoke of him as a traitor, and accused him of black ingratitude towards the Allies, whose blood he had shed for the gratification of his own interests"; while at the Hague, the fury of the people was such that the Piedmontese Legation had to be guarded by troops, and the Ambassador wrote to the Duke that "a plot had been discovered to pillage his house and tear him in pieces."<sup>1</sup> "But," writes the Italian historian Muratori, "persons skilled in politics were of a different opinion. There was general satisfaction (among the Italians) at this prince having closed to Louis XIV the barriers of Italy by a treaty. All the Peninsula soon came to regard Victor Amadeus as its benefactor."<sup>2</sup>

By the middle of September 1696 the marriage-contract of the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne had been drawn up, and Tessé had received authorisation from Versailles to sign it, in the name of Louis XIV and his grandson. Most of the articles had presented little difficulty, but that which provided for the princess's renunciation of her rights to the throne of Savoy had greatly exercised the minds of the juriconsults of the Crown, since the matter was one

<sup>1</sup> The Marchesa Vitelleschi, "The Romance of Savoy."

<sup>2</sup> Muratori, *Annali*, MDCXCVI.

of much more importance than may at first sight appear. The Duke had no son and his health was far from robust, while the heir-presumptive, Prince Philibert di Carignano, was a deaf mute, and though, having regard to his affliction, he was a man of quite remarkable intelligence, his claim to succeed was able to be contested. In the event, therefore, of her father's death it might very well happen that Adélaïde would find only one life—that of Philibert di Carignano's little son—between her and the throne; and Victor Amadeus, mindful of what had occurred almost on the morrow of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, when, on the pretext of the non-payment of Maria Theresa's dowry, Louis xiv had repudiated his consort's renunciation of her rights to the Spanish throne, was determined to leave no loophole which might enable his greedy and unscrupulous neighbour to absorb Savoy.

The stipulations respecting the dowry of the princess are not without their humorous side. It will be remembered that, in the recently-signed treaty between France and Savoy, it was Louis xiv who had engaged to dower the young lady. But since, on reflection, Victor Amadeus had come to the conclusion that it would be contrary to his dignity to marry his daughter without a *dot*, Article II stipulated that he should provide her with “the sum of two hundred thousand gold crowns<sup>1</sup> or their just equivalent,” *de la manière qu'il a été convenu à part.*<sup>2</sup> Well, this separate

<sup>1</sup> About 600,000 livres tournois.

<sup>2</sup> See Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances*, pp. 119 et seq., in which the complete text of the marriage-contract will be found.

arrangement was a deed whereby Louis engaged to give his future grand-daughter 200,000 crowns, and—another proof that Victor Amadeus had not forgotten what followed the Treaty of the Pyrenees—to guarantee and to hold absolved the said lord Duke of Savoy and his heirs from all annoyance on the subject of the said dowry.”

Although Victor Amadeus had, by this singular expedient, succeeded in shifting the burden of his daughter's dowry on to the shoulders of Louis XIV, while, at the same time, preserving his dignity, he was naturally obliged to defray the cost of her trousseau out of his own purse. He seems, however, to have been determined to escape as cheaply as he could, and the bills for the princess's frills and furbelows only reached the comparatively moderate total of 53,905 francs. And, sad to relate, it was not until more than fifteen years had elapsed, and poor Adélaïde was in her grave, that his Royal Highness—or rather his Majesty, as Victor Amadeus had by that time become—could make up his mind to discharge them.

We append the accounts, which have been published in M. Gagnière's work, and may not be without interest to the reader :—

Summary of the expense incurred for the trousseau  
of the late Dauphine of France, elder daughter  
of their Majesties of Sicily.

Bistori and Giovanneti, merchants, for gold and silver brocades . . . . .	13,160 fr. 15
Barberis and Roland, linen and lace . . . . .	24,210 fr. 9
Andrea Ricaldini, for Venetian point . . . . .	1,642 fr. 9
Peretti and Sachetti, silver-smiths, gold and silver work for the toilette . . . . .	9,538 fr. 13

Servan, embroiderer, for embroidery on petticoats	2,750 fr.
Maurel, shoemaker, for shoes . . . . .	106 fr.
Marchetti, for ribbons . . . . .	195 fr.
Bassurello Compaire, for baskets . . . . .	261 fr. 50
Ausermetto, joiner, for a box of violet-wood for the silver toilette-set . . . . .	360 fr.
Varnier, coachmaker. Cost of the sedan-chair, and repairs for those of the ladies of her suite	1682 fr. 11
<hr/>	
Total . . .	53,905 fr. 19

M. Gagnière observes that, at 5 per cent. interest, the unfortunate tradesmen of the House of Savoy must have lost, through the delay in settling their accounts, close upon 26,000 francs. Assuredly, the privilege of placing the Royal Arms over the doors of one's shop was a costly one in those days !

The signing of the marriage-contract, which took place on September 15, 1696, was a most impressive ceremony. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning, the whole Court of Savoy, dressed in gala costume, repaired to the apartments of the Duchess, where they found the Royal Family assembled. The Duke "was powdered and habited in a handsome costume"; the Duchess, "whose countenance expressed ineffable joy," wore "a suitable quantity of diamonds"; *Madame Royale* was "adorned with all the jewels she possessed"; while the two princesses, their aunt the Princess di Carignano, and their respective suites, were all in full Court toilette.

When all were assembled, the company proceeded to the Chapel Royal to hear Mass. Tessé,

who had lately been nominated equerry to the bride-elect, having the honour of escorting that princess, "who," he assures Louis XIV, "acquitted herself of her duties with a facility which had astonished him." Mass over, the Royal Family, accompanied by the Nuncio, the Archbishop of Turin, Tessé, the Chancellor of Savoy, the Ministers, the Marchese di Dronero, Grand Marshal of the Palace,<sup>1</sup> and the princesses' ladies-of-honour, returned to the Duchess's apartments, where the Marquis de Saint-Thomas read to them the marriage-contract. Then a copy of the Gospels was brought in, and after Adélaïde and Tessé, on behalf of the Duc de Bourgogne, had touched it "at every place where the contract of marriage is mentioned," the all-important document was signed by every one present,<sup>2</sup> the young princess appending her signature "with courage, modesty, and dignity."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the doors were thrown open, and all who desired were permitted to enter and kiss the princess's hand. Soon the enthusiasm increased and culminated in general and spontaneous salutations; and the diverting spectacle might have been witnessed of a hundred women and twice as many men, falling

<sup>1</sup> Philibert d'Este. He was descended from a legitimate daughter of Charles Emmanuel I, and was styled a "nobleman of the Blood."

<sup>2</sup> But not until there had been a heated dispute between the Archbishop of Turin and the Marchese di Dronero, as to which had the right to sign before the other, the marquis claiming to take precedence of the prelate, in virtue of his connection with the Royal Family. See *Rélation du mariage de la Princesse Marie-Adélaïde de Savoie avec le Duc de Bourgogne*, by the Conte di Vernone, Master of the Ceremonies at Turin, in Gagnière.

on one another's necks and "exchanging all the outward manifestations of a veritable satisfaction."<sup>1</sup>

The marriage-contract signed, the question of the ceremonial to be observed during the Princess Adélaïde's journey to France and on her arrival there, and that of the composition of her Household, engaged the attention of the two Courts.

Since there was no longer either a Queen or a Dauphine in France, Maria Theresa having died in 1683, and Maria Anna of Bavaria in 1690, the wife of the Duc de Bourgogne would become the first lady in the land, though, of course, during the King's lifetime, the influence exercised by his morganatic consort, Madame de Maintenon, was never likely to be challenged. The coming of the Princess Adélaïde was therefore regarded at Versailles as an event of supreme importance, and there were few, indeed, who were not already busily speculating as to what effect the advent of this little girl of eleven was likely to have upon their own prospects.

Louis XIV had decided that the princess's Household was to be composed of a lady-of-honour (*dame d'honneur*), a mistress of the robes (*dame d'atour*), six ladies-in-waiting (*dames du palais*), five waiting-women (*femmes de chambre*), a *chevalier d'honneur*, a first equerry, an almoner, and a confessor; and the question of who were to fill the more important of these posts threw the Court into a perfect ferment of excitement.

The most important office of all was that of *dame d'honneur*, the fortunate holder of which would enjoy several highly-prized privileges, among which

<sup>1</sup> Tessé to the King, September 16, 1696.

may be mentioned those of taking precedence of all ladies not of the royal blood or married to Princes of the Blood, and of riding with her mistress in the King's coach. That such a post should have at once become an object of ambition to every lady whose rank or degree of favour gave her the smallest hope of being selected for it is easy to understand, and, as none of them seem to have been particularly fastidious as to the means she employed to exalt her own qualifications and disparage those of her competitors—"anonymous letters, delations, and false reports" were freely employed, if we are to believe Saint-Simon—the contest, if not very edifying, did not lack features of interest. The candidates whose chances were the most highly esteemed were the Duchess de Créquy, who had been *dame d'honneur* to Maria Theresa, the Duchess d'Arpajon who had held the same post in the Household of the late Dauphine, the Maréchale de Rochefort, *dame d'atour* to the Duchess de Chartres;<sup>1</sup> the Duchesse de Ventadour, a daughter of the Maréchal de la Mothe-Houdancourt, celebrated in the days of the Fronde; and the Duchesse du Lude, a lady who had married *en premières noces* poor Henrietta of England's devoted admirer, Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche, and is said to have received the news of that nobleman's untimely death with the remark: "He was an amiable person. I should

<sup>1</sup> Françoise Marie de Bourbon, called Mlle. de Blois, youngest daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan; born 1677, legitimated 1681; married in 1692 to Philippe d'Orléans, Duc de Chartres, afterwards Regent of France, whose mother, the second *Madame*, was so infuriated on learning of her son's betrothal that she boxed his ears before the whole Court.



have loved him passionately, if he had loved me a little."

It was the last-named of these *grandes dames* who bore away the coveted prize, a result which Saint-Simon attributes to bribery and corruption of the most outrageous kind. If we are to believe his story, a certain Madame Barbesi, a waiting-woman of the Duchesse du Lude, went to Madame de Maintenon's waiting-woman, Nanon, who had been in her service "since the time when she was the widow Scarron, living on the charity of her parish," and enjoyed her entire confidence, and engaged her, in consideration of a sum of 20,000 écus, to persuade her mistress to use her influence with the King in favour of the duchess. When Madame de Maintenon is in question, however, it is generally advisable to take Saint-Simon's assertions with a pinch of salt; and the Duchesse du Lude would certainly appear to have stood in no need of such questionable methods of bringing her claims to the notice of the King. Not only was she a very great lady indeed, both by birth and marriage, but she was very wealthy, very gracious, of a most amiable and kindly disposition, and—what Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon probably considered the most important qualification of all—though she had been one of the most beautiful women of her time, she could boast of a reputation which had come quite unscathed through forty years of Court life. Any way, her selection for the post, as Saint-Simon himself admits, was generally applauded; and the Princesse des Ursins, in a letter to one of her friends, expresses the opinion that "the King could not, from every point of

view, have made a better choice than the Duchesse du Lude."

The post of *dame d'atour* (mistress of the robes) to the princess was almost as eagerly "ambitioned" by the marchionesses and countesses as that of *dame d'honneur* had been by the duchesses and *maréchaux*. But here the influence which Madame de Maintenon was actively, though discreetly, exercising in the formation of the new Household revealed itself in no uncertain manner; and the Comtesse de Mailly, who possessed the inestimable advantage over her rivals of having that lady for her aunt, was the successful candidate.

The same influence made itself felt in the selection of the five *dames du palais*, since one of those nominated was the Comtesse de Montgon, daughter of Madame d'Heudicourt, one of the most intimate friends of Madame de Maintenon's early widowhood. The other four were the Marquise de Nogaret (*née* Mlle. de Gontaut-Biron); the Marquise d'O, the wife of a descendant of Henri III's favourite, the Marquise du Châtelet, a member of Bellefonds family, who previous to her marriage had been maid-of-honour to the late Dauphine; and the Marquise de Dangeau,<sup>1</sup> the lovely and amiable German wife of the compiler of the famous *Journal*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sophie von Löwenstein (not Levenstein, as Dangeau himself writes the name). Madame de Sévigné, speaking of her at the time of her marriage, describes as "*la plus belle, la plus jolie, la plus jeune, la plus délicate, la plus nymphe de la cour*"; and Saint-Simon declares that she was "beautiful as the day, formed like a nymph, with all the graces of the mind and the body."

<sup>2</sup> Philippe de Courcillon, Marquis de Dangeau (1638-1720), soldier, diplomatist, poet, courtier, diarist, and gambler. Although

That versatile personage was himself appointed *chevalier d'honneur* ; while Tessé, as a reward for his diplomatic services in Piedmont, received the post of first equerry.<sup>1</sup> For the office of confessor, a certain Père Emerique was first proposed, apparently by Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris ; but this suggestion was rejected by the King and Madame de Maintenon, on the ground that he was too austere a *directeur* for a young girl, and a Jesuit, Père Le Comte, formerly a missionary in China, was chosen.

There remained the selection of the *femmes de chambre*, which, singularly enough, occasioned the King infinitely more embarrassment than that of all the rest of the princess's Household together, and involved almost as much correspondence between his Majesty and Tessé as the marriage itself.

The difficulty, however, was not that of deciding between the rival claimants for the honour of brushing her Highness's hair and supervising her complexion, but the demand of the Duke of Savoy that certain of the ladies who performed these duties for his daughter in Turin should be

successful in all these varied rôles, he is now best remembered by his *Journal*, which, in spite of the ridicule poured upon it by Voltaire, who had a grudge against the author, is a work of great value, "the necessary complement, if not the counterpart, of the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon." Dangeau is the Pamphilus of La Bruyère's *Caractères*.

<sup>1</sup> Tessé wrote asking for the post in a letter which the Comte d'Haussonville describes as "a masterpiece of sollicitation, worthy to be cited in its entirety, in a collection of letters, as a model of its kind." It is, however, too long to insert here. He might have spared himself the trouble of its composition, since the King had already decided to give him the appointment.

permitted to continue them, for a time at least, at Versailles.

Although there had been for many years past a rule at the Court of Louis XIV that foreign princesses coming to France to marry princes of the Royal House should not be permitted to retain in their service any woman of their own nationality—a very wise precaution, indeed, in view of the troubles occasioned by the foreign favourites of Marie de' Medici and other queens—this regulation, though rigidly enforced in regard to ladies-of-honour and ladies-in-waiting, had been occasionally relaxed in favour of those occupying subordinate posts. Thus, the Bavarian Dauphine had been permitted to bring with her from Munich a girl named Bezzola, who attained so extraordinary a degree of favour with her mistress, that the latter was never happy unless in her company, and when, on one occasion, Mlle. Bezzola fell ill, the princess installed herself at her bedside, and no persuasion could induce her to leave it until her favourite was convalescent. This infatuation naturally gave the greatest umbrage to the rest of her Household and to all the ladies of the Court, and determined the King on no consideration to grant a similar concession to the Princess Adélaïde, lest haply a second Bezzola should appear upon the scene.

Accordingly, so early as July 26, we find Louis XVI directing Tessé to inform the Duke of Savoy that he considered it essential to the princess's future welfare that she should come to France unaccompanied by any of the women at present in her service. And he added: "He is himself aware

of the inconveniences which the practice entails, and I am persuaded that he will conform in this matter to what you give him to understand is my wish."

Greatly to his Majesty's annoyance, however, Victor Amadeus showed himself very far from disposed to conform to his wishes; indeed, he argued the matter as stoutly as he had any clause in the recent treaty. It would be positively cruel, he declared, to isolate his daughter, "a mere baby of eleven years," from every one whom she had been used to see about her; and he demanded that two of her waiting-women and one of the Court physicians should be permitted to accompany her to France, and remain with her for a few months, by which time she would have become accustomed to her new surroundings, and her Majesty's physicians would have begun to understand her constitution.

To this Louis XIV replied that the separation from her Piedmontese attendants would be quite as distressing for the princess three or four months hence as it would be now, and that it would be much better for her to accustom herself from the moment of her arrival to the services of those whom he had selected. As for the physician, so soon as he had acquainted those in the King's service with her Highness's constitution, his presence would be altogether superfluous.

In the hope of persuading the Duke to withdraw his demand, Tessé showed him the King's despatch. But Victor Amadeus, instead of yielding, as he expected, shed tears of emotion, as he bemoaned the sad fate which his Majesty desired



LOUIS DE FRANCE, DUC DE BOURGOGNE  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



to inflict upon his daughter ; and the display of so much sensibility on the part of a man generally so self-contained affected Tessé to such a degree that he began to weep also, and wrote to the King advising him to grant the concession demanded, since "it certainly appeared to him that, in this matter, the Duke of Savoy was actuated by no other consideration than misplaced tenderness for his daughter."<sup>1</sup>

Louis XIV, however, was of a different opinion. He knew too much of the domestic life of Victor Amadeus to have much faith in the sincerity of that prince's sudden solicitude for his daughter, which he shrewdly suspected was nothing but a pretext to enable him to establish spies, or, at least, correspondents of his own, at the Court of France, who would keep him informed of all that was passing there.<sup>2</sup> He therefore remained obdurate, and wrote to Tessé that he "persisted in his belief that the counsels of the women whom it was proposed should accompany the princess would be prejudicial to her happiness," and that he was absolutely resolved not to permit her to retain them in her service ; and he directed him to request the Duke of Savoy to give orders that they should not go farther than the Pont-de-Beauvoisin, where his envoys would receive her. "For," he concludes, "if he believes that it will be a grief to his daughter to part from them, it is more to the purpose to allow her time to console

<sup>1</sup> Tessé to the King, August 11, 1696.

<sup>2</sup> This suspicion was probably correct, since it subsequently transpired that Victor Amadeus had acted entirely on his own initiative, and that the little princess was quite resigned to the idea of parting with her Piedmontese attendants.



herself for it during the journey, than to cause her this pain when she reaches me.”<sup>1</sup>

After some further correspondence, however, the King finally consented to a doctor and two of Adélaïde’s waiting-women accompanying her to France. But he said nothing as to the length of time he intended to allow them to remain there, and, though Victor Amadeus seems to have been under the impression that they were to stay indefinitely with his daughter, his Majesty had, in point of fact, decided that they should be sent back to Turin as soon as the princess reached Fontainebleau, and had given orders to that effect.

In the meanwhile, the future Duchesse de Bourgogne’s Household had been completed by the selection of five French waiting-women, of whom the chief was Madame Quantin, wife of Jean Quantin, *maître d’hôtel* to the King.

The last matter which Louis XIV was required to decide was the person who was to receive the Princess Adélaïde, in his Majesty’s name, on her arrival at the frontier, and since etiquette demanded that the King’s representative should be of the same rank as the one charged by the Duke of Savoy to escort his daughter thither, it was necessary to ascertain the intentions of the Court of Turin. The King had directed Tessé to inform Victor Amadeus that it would afford both him and his brother the greatest pleasure to see the Duchess of Savoy again after a separation of so many years, and that he sincerely hoped that he would permit her to bring the little princess, in

<sup>1</sup> The King to Tessé, September 9, 1696, published by the Comte d’Haussonville.

which case he and *Monsieur* would come as far as Nevers to receive her.<sup>1</sup> But the Duke, either because he feared to give umbrage to Madame di Verrua, who was at this time still high in favour and apt to take offence at any consideration which was shown to her rival, or, more probably, because he was disinclined to give his long-suffering consort an opportunity of explaining personally to her father and uncle the state of the royal *ménage* at Turin, excused himself from complying with his Majesty's wishes, on the plea that the Duchess's health was not strong enough to permit her to undertake a long journey so late in the year. And, though Tessé wrote to the King that the poor lady was "dying of desire" to behold her beloved France once more, and he and Saint-Thomas used every persuasion to induce the Duke to relent, he was inexorable.<sup>2</sup>

There remained two other princesses of the House of Savoy, namely, *Madame Royale* and the Princess di Carignano, to one of whom, under ordinary circumstances, the duty of escorting the Princess Adélaïde would have been confided. But Victor Amadeus detested the former far too heartily to grant her any such satisfaction; while the marriage of the latter had, it will be remembered, given great offence to Louis XIV, and her selection, it was feared, might be resented by that monarch. He was therefore obliged to seek his representative among the chief nobility of his Court, and nominated the Principessa della

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of July 26, 1696.

<sup>2</sup> The Marchesa Vitelleschi states that Louis XIV was opposed to the idea of the Duchess of Savoy accompanying her daughter, but she cannot be acquainted with the King's letter of July 26.

Cisterna, first lady-of-honour to the Duchess, with whom he associated the Marchese di Dronero, Grand Marshal of the Palace, and first chamberlain to the Duke, who, in virtue of his descent from a legitimated daughter of Charles Emmanuel I, ranked as a semi-royal personage.

These nominations freed Louis XIV from the necessity of sending any member of his family to the frontier, but, since the Marchese di Dronero was regarded in Savoy as "of the Blood," he selected as his representative the Comte de Brionne, son of his grand equerry, the Comte d'Armagnac,<sup>1</sup> who, as a scion of the princely House of Lorraine, might reasonably consider himself the equal, if not the superior in rank, of the marquis. With him went Dangeau and the Sieur Desgranges, his Majesty's Master of the Ceremonies, to assist him with his advice on the questions of etiquette which were sure to arise; and, of course, the Duchesse du Lude and the other ladies of the princess's Household.

<sup>1</sup> The Comtesse d'Armagnac had, in 1684, conducted Anne d'Orléans to Savoy, and the recollection of this circumstance may not have been unconnected with her son's selection.

## CHAPTER V

Reluctance of Victor Amadeus to permit his daughter to set out for France—The French escort leaves Versailles—Departure of the Princess Adélaïde from Turin—Her journey to the frontier—Letter of the Conte di Vernone to Victor Amadeus—The princess at Chambéry—Questions of etiquette—Reception of the princess at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin—Arrival at Lyons—Impressions of the escort—The princess is received by Louis xiv at Montargis—Delight of the King—His letter to Madame de Maintenon—Meeting of the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne—Arrival at Fontainebleau

WHETHER from one of those tardy awakenings of affection with which the prospect of an indefinite separation from their children often inspires even the most indifferent of parents, or because he desired to keep the little princess with him as a kind of hostage for the performance of Louis xiv's engagements, Victor Amadeus showed himself strangely reluctant to part with his daughter, and Tessé experienced the greatest difficulty in persuading him to name a day for her departure. The Duke even proposed that, since the year was so advanced, and the passage of the Alps in bad weather might prove a trying, not to say, a dangerous one, for so young a traveller, that her journey should be postponed until the spring, when the risk of her contracting a chill would be appreciably lessened ; and, though Tessé protested that, so long as the princess was protected

by "six chemises and a cloak," she might brave the elements with impunity, desired him to ascertain his Majesty's views upon the matter.

The King at once directed Tessé to intimate to the Duke that he could not possibly curb his impatience to see his future grand-daughter for another six months. Nevertheless, Victor Amadeus continued to find pretexts for delay, and it was not until Louis XIV caused him to be informed that, since he proposed to come as far as Fontainebleau to meet the princess, and feared that, if her arrival were delayed until the late autumn, the dampness of the forest at that season might be prejudicial to his health, that he consented to fix her departure for the first days of October.

So soon as this decision was known at Versailles, Louis XIV, in order apparently to allow the Duke no opportunity of changing his mind, issued orders for the immediate departure of the retinue he had selected to receive the future Duchesse de Bourgogne at the Pont-de Beauvoisin; and on September 17 the *cortège* set out for the frontier. It was, as may be supposed, a most imposing one, and comprised five of the splendid royal coaches, each drawn by six or eight horses ridden by postilions, which were reserved for the use of Brionne, Dangeau, the Duchesse du Lude, and the other ladies of the princess's Household, and a physician, a surgeon, and an apothecary chosen from the medical staff of his Majesty; and a number of less sumptuous equipages for the use of the minor officers, the servants of the great personages, and certain officials of the royal kitchen, whom the King had despatched, under

the guidance of his first *maitre d'hôtel*, to prepare her Highness's meals. The whole company, including the officers and soldiers of the Garde du Corps and Swiss Guards who escorted it, numbered some six hundred persons.

The *cortège* travelled by easy stages to Lyons, where it halted to await news of the Princess Adélaïde's movements, for, as the accommodation at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin was of a primitive kind, the ladies of the party had no desire to arrive there a day earlier than was absolutely necessary. At length, on October 12, a courier arrived with intelligence that the princess had quitted Turin on the 7th, and the following day the escort resumed its journey to the frontier.

The departure of the princess had been preceded by splendid fêtes and rejoicings at Turin, which no doubt greatly diverted the citizens. The young lady in whose honour they were organised, however, passed a much less pleasant time, since from morning till night she appears to have been occupied in listening to addresses of congratulation from the numerous deputations who came to wait upon her, and in holding out her hand to be kissed until it was positively sore. Indeed, her grief at leaving her native city must have been sensibly mitigated by the respite from these wearisome functions which it afforded her.

The streets of Turin were densely crowded as the royal *cortège* passed through them, and the acclamations of the citizens testified in no uncertain manner to the popularity of Victor Amadeus and their affection and sympathy for his daughter. Many of the bystanders were moved to tears at

the sight of the little princess whom political exigencies had summoned from her home at so tender an age ; but Adélaïde was careful to control her own feelings, and bowed and smiled graciously in response to the cheers which greeted her. The Duchess of Savoy, *Madame Royale*, and the Prince and Princess di Carignano accompanied the traveller as far as Avigliano, where she passed the first night of her journey.

The leave-taking with her mother and grandmother on the morrow was naturally a very trying moment for Adélaïde, and, despite all her heroic resolutions, she was unable to restrain her tears. But, since Tessé, who was remaining at Turin until a French Ambassador had been appointed, told her that the future Duchesse de Bourgogne ought not to cry at anything which made her unhappy, she hastened to write to him that "though she wept much, she had remembered that he had enjoined her, in case she wept, to laugh immediately afterwards, and to bear in mind the position she was destined to occupy."<sup>1</sup>

After bidding farewell to her daughter, the Duchess of Savoy, with *Madame Royale* and the Princess di Carignano, returned to Turin, but the Prince di Carignano accompanied the little traveller as far as Susa, where he also took his leave. The *cortège* crossed the Alps safely, and entered Savoy, where its progress seems to have been considerably

<sup>1</sup> Tessé to the King, October 16, cited by the Marchesa Vitelleschi. M. d'Haussonville, who also cites this passage, seems to be under the impression that it relates to the princess's parting with her Piedmontese attendants at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin on the 17th, but the date of the letter shows that it must refer to what happened at Avigliano nine days earlier.

impeded by the enthusiasm of the inhabitants. Every one wanted to see this little princess, who had become a gage of peace between the two nations ; every town wished to present her with an address of welcome. At Montmélian, which was still occupied by the French, the garrison received her under arms, and the governor escorted her for a considerable distance. On bidding her farewell, he begged her to name the password for the day, upon which she immediately replied : “ Saint-Louis,” and added : “ He will be my saint henceforth.”

Chambéry was reached on the evening of October 13, whence the Conte di Vernone, the Duke of Savoy’s Master of the Ceremonies, addressed the following letter to Victor Amadeus :—

“ *October 13, 1696*

“ Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lord and Most Beloved Master,—This evening, the Most Serene Princess has arrived at Chambéry, in excellent health, having met with no other mishap than the accidental entry of a gnat into her left eye, near Montmélian, which has occasioned her some annoyance, but caused little loss of time ; and, although this evening she still suffers some slight inconvenience in the eye, I trust that by to-morrow she will be altogether rid of it.

“ The stay which she will make here to-morrow was absolutely essential, on account of the fatigue which one is bound to take into consideration in the case of one of such tender years, in order that she may remain in the same good health as when she left Turin, and that she may be conducted to the Pont-de-Beauvoisin in the best possible.

“ Throughout the journey the demonstrations



of joy and affection among the people have been all that one could possibly desire, and this town has shown more than on any previous occasion, though, since the relation would be too long to set down here, I shall reserve it for an audience. On Monday, the Princess will sleep at Écheltes, where she will breakfast on Tuesday morning, and in the evening she will reach the Pont. These two easy stages are to be undertaken with the intention that the Princess shall arrive there in good health, as we have recognised that to cover the remainder of the way by a long journey, as that to the Pont is, would not be to her advantage.

“I beg Your Excellency to honour me with a continuance of your powerful protection, and that you will believe me with respect and devotion, which will endure so long as I live,

“Your Excellency’s very humble, very respectful, and very grateful servant,

“CONTE DI VERNONE”<sup>1</sup>

The ancient capital of Savoy had prepared for the daughter of its sovereign a splendid reception. The municipality had raised for the occasion a company of twenty-four cavalry, dressed in scarlet greatcoats, while the trappings of their horses were of the same colour, who, together with a great number of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, met the princess some distance from Chambéry, and escorted her into the town, which was brilliantly illuminated. Moreover, it had provided all the children with plumes to wear in their hats, and all the servants with red coats with a star on the sleeve.

At the château, where she was, of course, lodged,

<sup>1</sup> A. Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie: Lettres et Correspondances*.

she found the principal ladies of the town awaiting her, whom, we are told, she received with the utmost graciousness. On the morrow, she began the day by hearing Mass in the chapel and receiving an address from the clergy, after which, having fortified herself by breakfast, she spent some hours in giving audience to the various public bodies which came to felicitate her. Vernone had announced that only persons of a certain rank were to be permitted to kiss her Highness's hand, and this enabled her to escape the indiscriminate osculations which she had been compelled to endure at Turin. Nevertheless, it is to be feared that the benefit which the little traveller was expected to derive by breaking her journey at Chambéry must have been seriously discounted by the intolerable ennui of these official receptions.

Nor when the last deputation had bowed itself out of her presence, was she permitted to rest, since she was then required to attend a service at the Church of Saint-François ; next, to partake of a collation with the nuns of the Convent de la Visitation ; and, finally, to hold a sort of " drawing-room " at the château.

When the princess and her escort had reached Chambéry the previous evening, they had found awaiting them there a grave and important personage, who announced that he was M. Desgranges, the French Master of the Ceremonies, and that he had preceded the rest of his company in order to discuss with the Conte di Vernone the momentous question of the ceremonial to be observed on the arrival of her Highness at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin.

Doctors, lawyers, divines, and diplomatists are all proverbially fond of argument, but their powers of disputation are feeble indeed compared with those of the officials to whom was entrusted the duty of regulating the minute ceremonial of the Courts of the seventeenth century; and, on the present occasion, both Vernone and Desgranges were compelled to admit that in the other he had certainly found a foeman worthy of his steel. While the Princess Adélaïde was engaged in receiving addresses and visiting churches and convents, these two functionaries were closeted together in strenuous argument, every point which admitted of the smallest difference of opinion being debated with as much fervour and eloquence as though the fate of Europe depended upon it. The question most difficult of solution was whether the French escort should advance on to Savoyard ground to receive the princess, or await her on French soil. Vernone argued for the former course, citing the precedent of Victor Amadeus himself, who, in 1684, had crossed the Pont-de-Beauvoisin to welcome his wife. But to this Desgranges replied that the Duke's eagerness to behold his bride had led him, in his opinion, to commit a breach of etiquette; but that, even presuming he had not, the circumstances of 1684 were very different from those which they had now to consider, since Anne d'Orléans had been already married by procuration, while her daughter was only betrothed. Neither functionary would give way an inch, and it seemed as if the princess would have to remain at Chambéry until the question had been referred to their respective Courts. At length, however, they hit

upon a truly brilliant idea, of which each subsequently claimed the credit.

We have mentioned that the western half of the Pont-de-Beauvoisin was regarded as French territory, and the eastern as Savoyard ; and it was now arranged that the royal coach destined for the princess should be brought to the middle of the bridge, in such a way that the front wheels should rest in France and the hind wheels in Savoy ; while the two escorts should also advance on to the bridge, each, however, remaining on its own territory. Her Highness was then to enter the coach, and the difficulty would thus be solved without being decided, and the dignity of both nations and the reputation of the two high priests of etiquette duly safeguarded.

But the questions which he had discussed with the Conte di Vernone were not the only ones with which M. Desgranges was called upon to deal. Louis XIV had not yet decided the exact rank which the Princess Adélaïde was to occupy in France until the celebration of her marriage, and the problem now presented itself whether she was to be treated as the Duchesse de Bourgogne, that is to say, as the first lady in the land, or merely as a foreign princess. If as the former, then the Comte de Brionne must stand when she was seated ; if as the latter, then, since he was a member of the princely House of Lorraine, he had the right to sit down also. This delicate question caused poor Desgranges much perplexity, particularly as Brionne informed him that, unless the lady were to receive at once all the honours which would eventually be hers, he should insist on asserting his claim.

His resourcefulness, however, again saved the situation; and it was agreed that, whenever they had anything to say to one another, both the princess and the count should carry on their conversation standing up. Nevertheless, this was by no means the only embarrassment to which the ambiguous position of the princess threatened to give rise; and the worthy Desgranges was therefore immensely relieved when a courier arrived from Versailles with his Majesty's instructions that she was to be accorded the rank of Duchesse de Bourgogne, and to receive all the honours usually paid to a Daughter of France, with the exception of the title of Royal Highness.

All the preliminaries having been thus satisfactorily settled, on the morning of October 16, the Princess Adélaïde and her escort, which had been swollen to the size of quite a small army by the accession of nobles and gentry from all the country round, quitted Échelles, where she had passed the night, and at three o'clock in the afternoon reached the Pont-de-Beauvoisin. In the exact centre of the bridge stood the royal coach which was to receive her, draped in violet, since the French Court was in mourning, with the horses' heads turned in the direction of France. Beyond it the French escort was drawn up, while both banks of the little river were thronged with spectators.

But we will allow the Conte di Vernone to describe the ceremony which followed :—

“ Near the middle of the bridge stood the Comte de Brionne, the Duchesse du Lude, the Marquis

Dangeau, and all the rest of the King's Household. There the Princess's sedan-chair stopped, and I said to the Comte de Brionne: 'Monsieur, here is the Marchese di Dronero,' and to the Duchesse du Lude: 'Madame, here is the Principessa della Cisterna.' The Marquis (*sic*) Desgranges said to the Marchese di Dronero: 'Monsieur, here is the Comte de Brionne,' and to the Principessa della Cisterna: 'Madame, here is the Duchesse du Lude.' Finally, the Marchese di Dronero said to the Comte de Brionne: 'Here is the Princess of Savoy,' and the Marchese di Dronero repeated the same phrase to the Principessa della Cisterna and to the Duchesse du Lude. And all immediately bowed and saluted the Princess, according to the custom of France, as did also the Marquis d'Anjou [Dangeau]. Then the Marchese di Dronero showed the order that he carried to consign the Princess to his care; and the Comte de Brionne, to whom the order to receive the Princess had been given, thanked him in civil and courteous terms."<sup>1</sup>

Brionne next made a speech to the princess, who had alighted from her sedan-chair, expressive of the pride and joy which he felt at having been deputed by the King to receive her, and presented to her Dangeau, the Duchesse du Lude, and the other ladies of her suite. These presentations concluded, a French page stepped forward and took the train of the princess's gown from the hands of the Savoyard page who held it, upon

<sup>1</sup> *Cérémonial du Comte de Vernon, Année 1696. Relation du mariage de la Princesse Marie Adélaïde de Savoie avec le Duc de Bourgogne*, published by Gagnière.

which the latter began to weep copiously,—a mark of sensibility which, we are told, was “regarded with all the attention which the heart of this worthy gentleman merited.” Then Brionne took the princess’s right hand and Dangeau her left, and assisted her to mount into the royal coach, into which she was followed by the Principessa della Cisterna and the Duchesse du Lude; and, amid cries of “*Vive le Roi et la princesse de Savoie!*” from the crowd which had gathered at the head of the bridge, the future Duchesse de Bourgogne made her entry into France, and was driven to the lodging which had been prepared for her.

On her arrival, all the officers of the King’s Household who had accompanied the escort were presented to her in turn, “the princess receiving them with infinite grace, and giving them proofs of her great benevolence.” In the evening, she supped with the Principessa della Cisterna and her *sous-gouvernante*, Madame des Noyers, while the Comte de Brionne and the Duchesse du Lude entertained the principal nobles and ladies of the Piedmontese escort. Then the princess was put to bed by the Principessa della Cisterna, who slept in her chamber, “the Duchesse du Lude having willingly surrendered to her this honour.”

The Duchesse du Lude was delighted with the princess, whose modesty, sweet temper, and charming manners conquered her heart at once. “I wish,” she remarked to the duchess, “that you could have been in some little corner, when mamma has spoken to me of you, to hear all the kind things that she said to me”; and, when a courier arrived from the Court with a letter for her Highness,

she immediately handed it to the *dame d'honneur* and begged her to open it, observing that she was still too young to open her own letters. The other ladies of her Household seem to have been equally pleased with their little mistress, and Dronero wrote to Victor Amadeus that he had found the princess conversing with them with as much self-possession as though she had known them all her life.

It had been arranged that Adélaïde should set out for Fontainebleau in the early afternoon of the following day (October 17). Before the two escorts parted company, however, Brionne and Desgranges, on behalf of the King, presented gifts of more or less magnificence, according to their several degrees, to all the principal personages who had accompanied the princess from Turin: jewels and diamond-bracelets to the ladies, rings and miniatures of Louis XIV set with diamonds to the men. The present received by the Principessa della Cisterna was valued at 31,628 livres, that of Dronero at 14,620 livres, and that of Vernone at 8719 livres. The humbler members of her escort received presents of money.

All were loud in their praise of his Majesty's generosity, with the single exception of an equerry of the Duke of Savoy named Maffei, who had been despatched by his master to bid the princess *bon voyage*, and to bring him an account of her reception. Since his arrival had not been foreseen, there was no suitable present for him; and though Brionne offered him a considerable sum of money, he intimated that it would be beneath his dignity to accept it. At the same time, he



let it be known that he would be quite satisfied with a sword, if one worthy of his acceptance could be found; and, rather than allow him to depart empty-handed, Dangeau, whose courtesy, tact, and good-humour had made a very favourable impression upon the Piedmontese, immediately offered his own—a magnificent weapon—the hilt and scabbard of which were set with diamonds.

The moment for departure having arrived, the Piedmontese attendants came to take their leave of the princess. The Duchesse du Lude had urged that this ceremony should be curtailed as much as possible, in order that her little mistress might not be too much distressed. But Adélaïde, although in a very lachrymose condition, insisted on receiving every one; and when the ordeal was over, turned to her *dame d'honneur* and, smiling through her tears, exclaimed, “Now I shall be sad no more, since I know that I am going to be henceforth the happiest person in the world.”

The princess and her escort passed the night of the 17th at Bourgoin, and at four o'clock on the following afternoon arrived at Lyons,—then, as to-day, the second city in France,—where “ceremonies such as had never been seen before in like circumstances” awaited her. Some distance from the town she was met “by two thousand horsemen, and a great number of ladies occupying a very great number of carriages,” who escorted her to the Porte-de-Rhône, the gate by which she was to make her entry. Here she was welcomed by the Provost of the Merchants, who delivered a long harangue in the approved fashion of the period, declaring that “Heaven could not reserve

for her a more brilliant destiny ; that all France tasted in anticipation the fruits of the union of the two noblest families in the world," and so forth.

The princess having acknowledged the compliments of the Provost,<sup>1</sup> the *cortège* proceeded to the Place Bellecour, where her Highness was to lodge at the house of a certain M. de Mascagny, which was considered the finest in the town ; the intervening streets being lined by thirty-six companies of the citizen militia under arms. On alighting from her coach, she was received by the Marquis de Canaples, commandant of the garrison, who conducted her to the apartments prepared for her, amid the firing of cannon and muskets, the ringing of church bells, and other manifestations of joy. Here she was presently waited upon by two of the city officials in their robes of office, who came to present her, in the name of their colleagues, with "a number of boxes of sugar-plums and sweetmeats," which, we may conjecture, pleased the little lady infinitely more than the high-flown compliments that accompanied the gift. At night the entire city was illuminated, and, as a further concession to the youth of its illustrious guest, the municipality thoughtfully arranged for a display of fireworks on the "Place," opposite her windows.

<sup>1</sup> The Comte d'Haussonville, who follows the official account preserved in the City Archives, says that the princess merely "thanked the Provost, from her carriage, by an inclination of the head and body, and told him that she would acquaint the King with the honour that had been paid her." But Madame de Maintenon told Govone, the Envoy Extraordinary of Savoy at Versailles, that "the princess had made a better response than the King himself could have done," which seems to imply that she made something in the nature of a speech.

Adélaïde remained three days in Lyons,<sup>1</sup> her time being chiefly occupied in receiving deputations, and visiting churches, convents, and colleges ; while, on one occasion, she dined *au grand couvert*, that is to say, in the full gaze of the public, as did Louis xiv at Versailles. On the 21st, she departed, the citizen militia being again placed under arms, and acclaiming her as she passed by as "*la Princesse de la Paix*" ; "and joy," writes the chronicler of these events, "ceased in the town of Lyons."<sup>2</sup>

The amiability, modesty, and charming manners of the little princess won golden opinions from all her escort, and the letters which Dangeau and Desgranges addressed to Versailles were full of her

<sup>1</sup> Soon after the princess's company reached Lyons, a courier arrived from the Marchese di Dronero, bearing the *acte de délivrance*, or formal acknowledgment of the safe delivery of the princess's person into his hands, which Brionne had handed him at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin, and a letter in which he pointed out that in this document his master the Duke of Savoy was referred to, not as "Royal Highness,"—by which title he had been mentioned in all the other acts relating to the marriage,—but as "Highness" only, and stated that he should refuse to accept it unless the error was rectified. Vernone had remarked this omission at the time when the document was handed to him for his approval ; but, being unwilling to delay the departure of the princess, he had refrained from mentioning it to Dronero, and it was not until the following day that the marquis had discovered it. The omission was, of course, intentional, since Brionne was, as we have mentioned, a member of the House of Lorraine, between which and the House of Savoy there was a long-standing quarrel over precedence ; and now, despite all the persuasions of Dangeau and Desgranges, he firmly refused to repair it. The difficulty, however, was finally overcome by a new "receipt" being drawn, in which the Duke of Savoy was not mentioned at all.

<sup>2</sup> "*Relation des réceptions qu'a eues la Princesse Marie-Adélaïde dans les diverses cités de France, du Pont-de-Beauvoisin jusqu'à Versailles, à l'occasion de son voyage pour contracter son mariage avec le duc de Bourgogne, et de la manière avec laquelle elle fut reçue du Roi et de la Cour,*" *Mercur de France*, November, 1696.

praises. "The more we see of her," writes Dangeau to Torcy from Lyons, "the more the good opinion which we have formed of her increases. And, some days later: "She is quite a child; but, with much childishness, she shows good-sense and intelligence, amiability, and animation." Desgranges is not less flattering, though he seems to have considered her much more advanced for her age than did Dangeau, since, after paying tribute to her sweet temper and other good qualities, he adds: "On my part, I persist in asserting that she is not a child of eleven at all, but a sensible woman, capable of being married at once. The serious little replies that she makes to the compliments paid her are spontaneous, and are assuredly not suggested to her."<sup>1</sup>

The princess continued her journey northwards, relieving the tedium of the official receptions which awaited her in every town through which she passed by playing various games with the ladies and gentlemen of her escort. Like the great Napoleon, she seems to have been particularly partial to blindman's buff; and Dangeau, who was her favourite playmate, wrote that her Highness had been greatly disappointed, on reaching the little town of Saint-Pierre, to find that her apartment was too small to admit of her indulging in this time-honoured pastime.

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Comte d'Haussonville. On the other hand, Adélaïde's appearance would not appear to have impressed her suite very favourably at first, since we find Madame de Maintenon writing to her friend Madame de Berval: "We are informed that the Princess of Savoy, although plain, is not displeasing." Subsequently, however, much more reassuring reports in regard to this must have reached Versailles, since, a few days later, the same lady tells Dangeau that she will "esteem it a happiness to superintend the education of one so *beautiful* and so naturally good."

At la Charité, where they arrived on All Hallows' Eve, and remained three days, they learned that Louis XIV, whose original intention had been, it will be remembered, to receive the princess at Fontainebleau, had altered his plans, and decided to come as far as Montargis to meet her, and that he would be accompanied by almost the entire Court. Such condescension on the part of his Majesty, which was the more remarkable, since he was in indifferent health at the time, and Montargis did not contain any residence of sufficient size to accommodate himself and his suite, proves that he must have been all impatience to behold his future granddaughter, and to judge for himself the truth of the reports which had reached him concerning her.

The King left Fontainebleau at a little after noon on November 4, accompanied by the Dauphin, the Prince de Conti, the Duc du Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, and a brilliant suite, and reached Montargis at four o'clock, where the Présidial had been prepared for his accommodation. *Monsieur* and his son, the Duc de Chartres, who were, of course, Adélaïde's nearest relatives, had preceded the Court, with the intention of meeting the princess *en route* and of being the first of the Royal Family to embrace her. But considerations of etiquette appear to have intervened, and they went no farther than Montargis.

At six o'clock in the evening, the princess, who had quitted la Charité at ten that morning, arrived, and proceeded to the Présidial, where Louis XIV was awaiting her. But let us allow the correspondent of the *Mercur*e to relate what followed in his own words:

“ So soon as the King, who was on the balcony of his lodging, caught sight of the carriage, his Majesty descended with all the Princes to receive her. On stepping out of her coach, she wished to fall on her knees, but the King embraced her and prevented her, saying, ‘ Madame, I await you with much impatience.’ And the King kissed her three times. She took his Majesty’s hand and kissed it very tenderly. That Prince presented *Monseigneur* [the Dauphin], whom she kissed twice, and *Monsieur* once. She inquired where her dear uncle, the Duc de Chartres, was. The King gave her his hand to mount the staircase, which occupied some time, since the steps were occupied by an immense number of distinguished persons, to whom they had the kindness to show her, by the light of the torches which the ushers carried. That Prince conducted her to the chamber which was prepared for her, where he presented to her all the great nobles in turn, whom she saluted according to their quality. The Princes and the dukes and peers she kissed, the King being unable to refrain from remarking her grace and intelligence. And, as the young Princess, in replying to the questions which his Majesty addressed to her, made use of the word Sire, the King told her that henceforward she must call him *Monsieur*. *Monseigneur* did not appear less pleased than his Majesty, who asked her many questions, to which she replied very intelligently and clearly. During this conversation, the Princess twice took his Majesty’s hand, which she kissed very affectionately. In short, she did not appear in the slightest degree embarrassed. His Majesty then went to his apartment until supper-time, while

she received the compliments of the Présidial, the Mayor, the Sheriffs, and all the public bodies of the town.”<sup>1</sup>

On reaching his apartment, Louis XIV sat down at his desk to give Madame de Maintenon his first impressions of the new arrival—this little rosebud of Savoy, which had come over the mountains to gladden with its beauty and its fragrance his dull and ceremonious life. And here is his letter, which is not only an admirable pen-picture of Adélaïde, but is so eminently characteristic of the writer that, lengthy though it is, it would be impossible to omit it.

“MONTARGIS, 4 November, 6.30 p.m.

“I arrived here before five o’clock; the princess did not arrive until six. I went to the coach to receive her; she allowed me to speak first, and afterwards replied extremely well, but with a little embarrassment that would have pleased you. I conducted her to her room through the crowd, letting her be seen, from time to time, by causing the torches to be brought near to her face. She bore this progress with grace and modesty. At length we reached her room, where there was a crowd and heat enough to kill us. I showed her now and then to those who approached her, and I studied her in every way, in order to write you my impressions of her. She has the best grace and the most beautiful figure that I have ever seen: dressed to paint, and *coiffée* the same; eyes bright and very beautiful, the lashes black and admirable; complexion very harmonious, white and red, all that one could desire; the most

<sup>1</sup> “*Relation des réceptions qu’a eues la Princesse Marie Adélaïde dans les diverses cités de France, etc.*,” *Mercure de France*, November 1696.

beautiful hair, and a great quantity of it. She is thin, as befits her age ; her mouth is rosy, the lips full, the teeth white, long, and ill-placed ; the hands well-shaped, but the colour of her age. She speaks little, so far as I have seen, and shows no embarrassment when she is looked at, like a person who has seen the world. She curtsseys badly, and with rather an Italian air. She has also something of the Italian in her face ; but she pleases ; I saw that in the eyes of all present. For my part, I am very satisfied with her.<sup>1</sup> She bears a strong resemblance to her first portrait, not to the second.<sup>2</sup> To speak to you, as I always do, I find her all that could be wished ; I should be sorry if she were more beautiful.

“ I say it again ; everything is pleasing except the curtsey. I will tell you more after supper, for then I shall remark many things which I have not been able to see as yet. I forgot to tell you that she is short rather than tall for her age.”

At this point in his letter the King laid down his pen and returned to Adélaïde's apartments, where he found the Dauphin, *Monsieur*, the Duc de Chartres, Govone, the Envoy Extraordinary of Savoy, and Dangeau. “ I wish,” said he to his brother, “ that her poor mother could be here for a few moments to witness the joy that we feel. I would not have her changed in any way whatever.” He then set the princess to play with her ladies, and admired her graceful movements.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ I took the liberty of inquiring of him, as he was re-entering his apartment, if he were satisfied with the princess. He answered that he was, but too much so, and that he found it difficult to contain his joy.” Dangeau, *Journal*, November 4, 1696.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, to the miniature which Tessé had sent from Pinerolo, and not to the full-length portrait which the Duchess of Savoy had sent to *Monsieur*. See p. 69, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, November 4, 1696.



When supper was announced, Dangeau, in his capacity of *chevalier d'honneur*, gave the princess his hand to conduct her to table, where she sat between the King and the Dauphin. Her behaviour during the meal was perfect; and it was particularly remarked that she partook of no dish without prettily thanking the officer who handed it to her. His Majesty playfully inquired what she thought of his son's figure (*Monseigneur* had a very decided tendency to *embonpoint*), to which she gravely replied that, although he was certainly stout, he did not seem to her too stout, and that she had expected to find him much more so.

After supper, His Majesty accompanied her to her bedchamber, telling her that "he did not know whether she was tired of him, but that, for his part, he could not bring himself to leave her." And he waited while her women put her to bed, and then departed to his cabinet, in high good-humour; and, before retiring to rest, added the following postscript to his letter to Madame de Maintenon, which he despatched to Fontainebleau by one of his equerries:—

"The more I see of the princess the more satisfied I am. We have had a further conversation, in which she said nothing; and that is saying all. Her figure is very beautiful,—one might say perfect,—and her modesty will please you. We supped, and she failed in nothing, and showed charming courtesy to every one; but towards me and my son she failed in nothing, and behaves as you might have done. She was closely watched and observed, and every one seemed in good faith to be satisfied. She has a noble air and polished

and agreeable manners. I take pleasure in telling you such good of her, for I find that, without either prepossession or flattery, I can do so, and that everything impels me to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

As it had been decided to start for Fontainebleau early on the following day, the princess rose at six o'clock. The King did her the honour of attending her toilette, and “admired her hair, which is the most beautiful in the world.” At nine, he conducted her through the midst of an enormous crowd, which the *Mercure de France* estimates at more than twenty thousand persons, to the church of the college of the Barnabite Fathers,<sup>2</sup> to hear Mass, during which the “Princess prayed to God with an edifying piety.” Dinner

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve's comments on this letter are interesting : “Language excellent, phrases neat, exact and perfect, terms appropriate, good taste supreme in everything which concerns what is external and visible, in whatever belongs to regal representation. As for the moral basis, that, one must allow, is thin and mediocre, or rather it is absent. . . . There is certainly a mention of modesty once or twice in this letter ; but it is of the modest demeanour, of the good effect which it produces, of the grace which depends on it. For all the rest, it is impossible to find in these pages anything other than a charming description, physical, external, mundane, without the smallest concern as to the inward and moral qualities. Evidently, in this case, he troubles as little about these as he is deeply concerned for externals. Let the princess succeed and please, let her charm and amuse, let her adorn the Court and enliven it, let her then have a good confessor, a Jesuit confessor and a reliable one ; and, for the rest, let her be and do as she pleases. The King her grandfather asks nothing else of her. That is the impression which the letter leaves upon me.”—*Causeries du Lundi, la Duchesse de Bourgogne*.

<sup>2</sup> This college had been founded by *Monsieur* as a thank-offering for the victory he had gained over William of Orange, at Cassel, in April 1677. If we are to believe La Fare, Louis XIV was exceedingly jealous of his brother's success in a pitched battle. Any way, *Monsieur* was never again given the command of an army.

was taken at eleven, after which the Court set out for Fontainebleau, the princess riding in the King's coach, with the Dauphin, *Monsieur*, and the Duchesse du Lude. The remaining place in the coach was reserved for the Duc de Bourgogne, who was to meet them on the way.

The young prince, who had quitted Fontainebleau at noon with his *gouverneur*, the Duc de Beauvilliers, met the Court half a league beyond Nemours. Impatient to behold his future wife, he alighted from his carriage while some little distance still separated it from the royal coach, which headed the procession, and advanced on foot. However, notwithstanding his eagerness, he seemed very embarrassed when actually in the presence of the princess, and, instead of paying her the pretty compliment which he had doubtless prepared, contented himself by twice kissing her hand, at which the lady blushed becomingly.

Fontainebleau was reached at five o'clock. The King's coach entered the Cour du Cheval Blanc, and his Majesty himself assisted the princess to alight. The steps leading from the court to the château, the terraces, the windows of the galleries, even the roofs, were thronged with spectators. The King, holding the hand of the princess, "who seemed," remarks Saint-Simon, "to emerge from his pocket," mounted the staircase at the top of which the Duc de Bourgogne's younger brothers, the Ducs d'Anjou<sup>1</sup> and de

<sup>1</sup> Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, born December 19, 1683; became King of Spain, as Philip v, on the death of Carlos II, October, 1700; married, firstly, in 1702, Maria Luisa of Savoy, younger daughter of Victor Amadeus II; secondly, in 1715, Elizabeth Farnese of Parma; died July 9, 1746.

Berry<sup>1</sup> were awaiting them. Having presented the princes to their future sister-in-law, he conducted her to the chapel, where a short service was held, and thence to her apartments, which were those formerly occupied by his mother, Anne of Austria. Here the Princesses of the Blood, Madame de Maintenon, and an immense crowd of courtiers were waiting to be presented, and the pushing and jostling were so great, that people were scarcely able to keep their feet, and the Duchesse de Nemours and another lady collided violently with Madame de Maintenon, who was only prevented from falling by *Madame* catching her by the arm.<sup>2</sup>

The King remained for some time, and himself presented the Prince and Princesses of the Blood. Then he retired to his cabinet, leaving his brother to take his place. *Monsieur* stood by his granddaughter's side, naming each person who approached, and telling her how he or she was to be received. The most had only the privilege of saluting the hem of her Highness's dress; but when a duke, a prince, or a marshal, or their wives, appeared, *Monsieur* gave her a little push, saying, "Kiss," and she embraced them.

This ceremony continued for more than two hours, at the end of which, although there was still a number of persons awaiting their turn, the poor girl, who had been standing the whole time, was so tired that it was decided to postpone further presentations until the following day. Neverthe-

<sup>1</sup> Charles, Duc de Berry, born August 31, 1686; married 1710, Marie Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans, eldest daughter of the future Regent; died May 4, 1714.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé), Letter of November 8, 1696.

less, several ladies succeeded in persuading the Duchesse du Lude to allow them to remain and present them to her mistress while she was being prepared for bed; and seldom has the rest of a little princess been more thoroughly earned than the one which Marie Adélaïde of Savoy enjoyed on her first night in the Château of Fontainebleau.

But let us leave the little lady to her slumbers, while we speak of the young prince whose bride she is to become, and of certain other actors on that stage on which she will presently play so prominent a part.

## CHAPTER VI

The Duc de Bourgogne—Frenzied rejoicings at his birth—His parents—The Dauphin (*Monseigneur*) and Maria Anna of Bavaria—Total failure of the elaborate scheme for the education of *Monseigneur*—His singular character—His appearance—Melancholy disposition and unhappy life of the Bavarian Dauphine—Her early death—*Monseigneur* and Mlle. de Choin—Childhood of the Duc de Bourgogne—The Duc de Beauvilliers appointed his *gouverneur*, and Fénelon his tutor. Early career of Fénelon—A born teacher—Saint-Simon's portrait of him—Methods which he pursues in the education of the Duc de Bourgogne—His wonderful success—Daily life of the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers—Their physical training—Appearance of the Duc de Bourgogne—Aspirations of Fénelon.

LOUIS, Duc de Bourgogne, the eldest of the three sons of the Dauphin, or *Monseigneur* as he was called at the Court, and Maria Anna of Bavaria, was at the time of the Princess Adélaïde's arrival at Fontainebleau just completing the first quarter of his fifteenth year, having been born at Versailles on August 6, 1682.

Few events of the reign had been awaited with such intense anxiety, and few had given rise to such frenzied rejoicings. From the early morning of August 5, when the pains of labour began, until a little after ten o'clock on the evening of the following day, when the princess was safely delivered, "one might have said that all the Court, all the nobility of France, surrounded the apartment of Madame la Dauphine."<sup>1</sup> The King and *Mon-*

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure de France*, August 1682.

*seigneur* passed the whole of the night of the 5th there, without undressing; while the Place d'Armes and all the approaches to the château were made light as day by a multitude of lanterns and torches carried by persons awaiting the auspicious event.

As, in the case of the birth of a son, Louis XIV desired to announce the news himself; he had arranged with Clément, the accoucheur who attended the princess, certain words by which he was to be informed of the sex of the child. If the new arrival were a girl, Clément was to reply to his Majesty's inquiry: "*Je ne sais pas*"; if a boy, he was to answer: "*Je ne sais pas encore.*" So soon as the physician pronounced the *encore*, the King turned to the members of the Royal Family and the Princes and Princesses of the Blood gathered about the bed, and cried in joyful tones: "We have a Duc de Bourgogne!" and then, hastening to the door communicating with the apartment in which the duchesses and *dames du palais* were waiting, communicated the glad tidings to them; while the Duchesse de Créquy, the Dauphine's *dame d'honneur*, informed the nobles, who occupied another ante-chamber.

Instantly all was uproar and commotion. The joy bordered on delirium. "Some broke through the crowd to spread the news on every side; others, without knowing precisely where they were or what they did, were transported. There were tears of joy; animosities were forgotten; people embraced those nearest them, without distinction of rank."<sup>1</sup> The happy father kissed all the ladies indiscriminately. Every one took

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, August 1682.

the liberty of embracing the King, and one gentleman, in the fervour of his enthusiasm, bit the monarch's finger. "Sire," he exclaimed, as Louis uttered an exclamation of pain, "I crave your Majesty's pardon, but, if I had not bitten you, you would have paid no attention to me." From the Dauphine's apartments the enthusiasm quickly spread to the exterior of the château. "Nothing could equal the zeal and activity of M. d'Ormoy.<sup>1</sup> He ran up and down the staircases, shouting everywhere that it was a prince, and he shouted so much that for some time afterwards he could scarcely speak." One of the King's guards dragged the straw mattress on which he had been sleeping into the first courtyard and set it on fire; and, as though this were a preconcerted signal, lackeys and soldiers came running from all directions, bearing tables, bedding, benches, chairs, everything, in short, on which they could lay their hands, and soon the flames of gigantic bonfires were mounting to the skies, while about them sparsely-clad figures capered and shouted.

Bontemps, the King's first *valet de chambre*, fearing that such uproarious demonstrations of joy might be displeasing to his master, hastened to inform him of what was taking place. But Louis, whose own satisfaction at an event which seemed to assure his throne and his race made him forget for a moment the rigid etiquette with which he loved to surround himself, only laughed, and answered good-humouredly: "Let them alone, so long as they do not burn us!"

The little prince whose entry into the world had

<sup>1</sup> He was one of the King's Gentlemen-in-Ordinary.



been hailed with such transports of joy was far from fortunate in his parents, save from a purely worldly point of view; and it was certainly well for him that they exercised little or no control over his upbringing. *Monseigneur* was a singular personage; "the most incomprehensible man in the world," according to *Madame*. Louis XIV, who had never ceased to regret the defects in his own education, had early resolved that his son should lack for nothing in that respect, and had planned for the Dauphin a course of mental and moral training which was intended to make him the most accomplished and virtuous prince in Europe. The austere old Duc de Montausier—the husband of the "incomparable Julie" of the Hôtel de Rambouillet<sup>1</sup>—whom many believed to have been the original of Alceste in the *Misanthrope*, was appointed his *gouverneur*; the great Bossuet was his tutor; Huet, Bishop of Avranches, distinguished alike as a theologian, a philologist, and a mathematician, his *sous-précepteur*. It was for him that Bossuet wrote his celebrated *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle*; that Fléchier composed his life of Theodosius, and Tellemont his life of Saint-Louis; that Huet, in collaboration with Danet, Père de la Rue, and other savants, published that splendid edition of the Latin classics, *ad usum Delphini*, enriched with notes and explanations. Finally, it was to initiate him into the *métier de Roi* that his royal father wrote those *Mémoires* which have impressed the world with so profound a belief in Louis XIV's kingly qualities, though it is not improbable that

<sup>1</sup> Julie d'Angennes, daughter of the celebrated Madame de Rambouillet.



LOUIS, DAUPHIN OF FRANCE (SON OF LOUIS XIV)  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY VAN SCHUPPEN, AFTER THE PAINTING BY FRANÇOIS DE TROY



the maxims and instructions which Mazarin had left behind him for the guidance of his young sovereign were incorporated therein.

And the result of all these labours, of all this solicitude, was that *Monseigneur* became, not the ripe scholar, the virtuous prince, the accomplished gentleman, whom Louis XIV had expected to see, but—the greatest wolf-hunter of his time! Nor is the total failure of one of the most elaborate schemes of education ever devised for the benefit of a young prince difficult to understand. The boy was dull, obstinate, and idle; his teachers, over-conscientious and over-anxious, and their zeal defeated the end which they desired to attain. It was Montausier who was mainly responsible for this lamentable fiasco. He was a worthy man, but harsh, unsympathetic, and intolerant of failure, and a firm believer in Solomon's precept concerning the use of the rod.<sup>1</sup> His severity inspired the unfortunate Dauphin with a perfect horror of the schoolroom,<sup>2</sup> and, since neither Bossuet nor Huet seem to have been capable of condescending to the level of their pupil's dull and sluggish mind, all their pains and all their learning were absolutely thrown away. "The

<sup>1</sup> Dubois, *valet de chambre* to the Dauphin, relates, in his *Journal*, several instances of Montausier's severity to his pupil, of which he was an eye-witness. One evening, in August 1671, when the boy was ten years old, his *gouverneur* gave him "five cuts with all his might on each of his hands," for making the same mistake twice over in repeating his *Oraison dominicale*. "The next day he showed me his hands, which were quite purple."

<sup>2</sup> "Do you have to write essays?" inquired the Dauphin one day of a lady who had been telling him of some misfortune which had befallen her. "No, *Monseigneur*." "Ah! then you don't know what sorrow means," rejoined the lad.

harsh methods by which he was forced to study," writes Madame de Caylus, "gave him so great a dislike for books, that he determined never to open one when he should become his own master ; and he kept his resolution." <sup>1</sup>

*Monseigneur*, in fact, emerged from his teachers' hands a timid, taciturn, awkward youth, incorrigibly indolent, entirely without ambition, and supremely indifferent to everything which did not affect his personal comfort. He never read anything save the *Gazette de France*, in which the births, deaths, and marriages of persons of importance were recorded ; he never was known to take the faintest interest in affairs of State, save on the occasion of the meeting of the Council called to decide whether France should accept or reject the will of Carlos II, which left the Crown of Spain to *Monseigneur's* second son, the Duc d'Anjou, when he spoke with a warmth which astonished every one present in favour of the acceptance of the legacy ; and he would spend whole afternoons lolling in a chair and tapping his shoes with a cane.<sup>2</sup>

"Nevertheless," says *Madame*, "he was far from being a fool, although he always behaved as if he were one, through idleness or indifference." He was a shrewd observer, told stories agreeably, possessed a wonderfully retentive memory, and, though Saint-Simon charges him with being without taste, he was a good judge of pictures and *objets d'art*, and "one saw in the cabinets of his apartments an exquisite collection of all that was most rare and precious, not only in respect to the neces-

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenirs*.

<sup>2</sup> Duclos, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XIV.*

sary furniture, tables, cabinets, porcelains, mirrors, and chandeliers, but also paintings by the most famous masters, bronzes, vases of agate, jewels, and cameos.”<sup>1</sup>

The chief—one might say, the only—occupation of his life was hunting. He hunted practically every day, even in the height of summer, rising frequently at five o’clock in the morning, and sometimes not returning to Versailles until nearly midnight. The wolf was his favourite quarry, and he pursued these animals with such persistence, that eventually they became exceedingly scarce in that part of the country, much to *Monseigneur’s* annoyance, but to the great satisfaction of the peasantry. For the rest, *Monseigneur* was “rather above the middle height, very fat without being obese, with a noble and distinguished air, which had nothing repellent about it, a face that would have been pleasing, if the Prince de Conti had not accidentally broken his nose while they were playing together as children, fair hair, a ruddy complexion, the finest legs imaginable, and singularly small and delicate feet”;<sup>2</sup> a docile son, with an almost superstitious reverence for his imperious father; a punctilious observer of the fasts of the Church, though anything but strict in his observance of her moral ordinances;<sup>3</sup> a brave soldier; an indulgent master, and very affable towards his inferiors, particularly to the lower-class Parisians, with whom he enjoyed great popularity.

<sup>1</sup> Félibien, in Dussieux, *le Château de Versailles*.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>3</sup> Apropos of this, the Princess Palatine relates the following anecdote: “One day the Dauphin brought Raisin, the actress, to Choisy, and hid her in a mill, without giving her anything to

It is probable that the Dauphin might have become a more useful, or at any rate a more agreeable, member of society, if he had been married to a princess of any strength of character. But Maria Anna of Bavaria was a poor creature, wholly unfitted for the great position to which destiny called her. Not only had she no pretensions to beauty—Madame de Caylus goes so far as to declare that she was not only ugly, but repulsive—but she was shy, retiring, melancholy, and none too sweet-tempered. Notwithstanding her unsociable disposition, *Monseigneur* seems to have been at first attached to her, but she made little effort to retain his affections, which were presently transferred to one of her *filles d'honneur*, Mlle. de la Force.

When the death of the Queen had made the Dauphine, from the hierarchical point of view, the first lady of the Court, Louis XIV used every effort to draw her out, and persuade her to undertake the duties which her position demanded. But the princess thought, like Massillon, that “grandeur is a weight which wearies,” and, after a while, the King gave up the attempt in despair, and he and all the Court left her to her own devices. Thenceforth she passed the most of her time with her confidante Bezzola and a few friends in the *petits cabinets* behind her State apartments, which had “neither air nor view.” Of her children she appears to have

eat or drink ; for it was a fast-day, and the Dauphin thought there was no greater sin than to eat meat on a fast-day. After the Court had departed, he gave her for supper some salad and bread toasted in oil. Raisin laughed at this very much, and told several persons about it. When I heard of it, I asked the Dauphin what he meant by making his mistress fast in this manner. ‘I had a mind,’ he replied, ‘to commit one sin, not two.’”

seen but little, and the only occasion on which we hear of her intervening in the bringing up of the Duc de Bourgogne was in 1687, when the boy had a severe attack of fever, and she strenuously opposed his *gouvernante's* desire to give him quinine, then a newly-discovered remedy. The last years of her life were spent in isolation and a kind of semi-disgrace, due to her fidelity to her brother Maximilian of Bavaria, who, to Louis XIV's intense indignation, had joined the League of Augsburg. The ravages committed by the French troops in Germany occasioned her great distress, and her health, which had always been delicate, grew steadily worse. The Court physicians appear to have regarded her malady as nothing more serious than an aggravated form of "vapours"—the king of fanciful complaints—brought on by the secluded life which she persisted in leading; but there can be little doubt that it was consumption. Any way, the poor Dauphine terminated her melancholy existence "willingly and with calmness," according to the expression of her compatriot the Duchesse d'Orleans, in April 1690, at the age of twenty-nine.

The Dauphin does not appear to have wasted much time in mourning for his consort, and a week after the funeral Dangeau records that "*Monseigneur* hunted the wolf." Some years later—probably in 1695—he followed the example of his father and contracted a secret marriage *à la Maintenon* with Mlle. de Choin, one of the *filles d'honneur* of his half-sister, the Princesse de Conti. Saint-Simon paints a far from alluring portrait of this lady, whom he describes as "stout, squat, swarthy, and snub-nosed"; but, if she had no pretensions



to beauty, she possessed intelligence, charming manners, and an abundance of good-humour. Moreover, she was singularly free from ambition, and appears really to have cared for the vacuous prince, who, on his side, remained devoted to her until the day of his death.

Louis XIV, who, in the later years of his life, showed himself very severe in the matter of morals, and had, some time before, banished another inamorata of the Dauphin from Court, was at first highly displeased at his son's intimacy with Mlle. de Choin, dismissed the lady from the service of the Princesse de Conti, and ordered her to withdraw to Paris. When, however, he learned that the connection had been regularised, he relented—possibly regarding his son's morganatic union as a compliment to himself—offered to receive his new daughter-in-law, and even to give her apartments at Versailles. His offers were, however, declined, Mlle. de Choin preferring to play the same rôle at Meudon as did Madame de Maintenon at Versailles; while, when *Monseigneur* was not at his country-seat, she lived very quietly in Paris.

Such were the parents of the Duc de Bourgogne. Happily for him, he bore little resemblance to either of them. Nevertheless, there were few indications in his childhood of what he was eventually to become; indeed, his arrogance, wilfulness, and ungovernable temper drove his *gouvernante*, the Maréchale de la Mothe-Houdancourt, and the other women to whose care he was at first confided, almost to distraction. The earliest portrait which Saint-Simon has drawn of the prince whom he afterwards came to regard as a prodigy of saintli-

ness, altogether too virtuous for this wicked world, is really a terrible one :—

“ This prince was born terrible, and in his early youth made people tremble. He would fall into ungovernable fits of rage, even against inanimate objects, would break the clock which summoned him to some unwelcome duty, or storm at the rain when it prevented him from going out. He was impetuous with frenzy ; incapable of supporting the least resistance ; obstinate to excess ; passionately fond of all kinds of pleasure. He had an ardent inclination for everything which is forbidden the mind and the body, and a biting cruel wit, which spared no one and never missed its mark. His pride and arrogance were indescribable. As from the height of the sky, he looked down upon men, whoever they were, as flies and atoms, and even his brothers scarcely seemed to him connecting-links between himself and the human race, although all three had been brought up together in perfect equality.”<sup>1</sup>

Although it is probable that Saint-Simon has exaggerated the faults of the child, in order to exalt by contrast the noble qualities of the young man, there can be little doubt that the portrait is, in its main lines, faithful enough ; and when, at the age of seven, the Duc de Bourgogne passed out of the hands of the women, who had been only too ready to purchase peace and quiet by humouring the little tyrant, into those of the Duc de Beauvilliers and Fénelon, both *gouverneur*

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

and tutor must have realised that a task of exceptional difficulty confronted them.

Happily, they were in no way daunted by it, for two wiser selections it would have been impossible to make. Beauvilliers, a younger son, who until the death of his elder brother had been intended for an ecclesiastical career, was an excellent man, profoundly religious, kindly, patient, and gentle. Both he and his wife were close friends of Madame de Maintenon, "who dined with them once or twice every week, with a hand-bell on the table, so that they might have no servants about them, and might converse without restraint";<sup>1</sup> and it is not improbable that to this lady's influence the duke owed his appointment. Nevertheless, it was a nomination which met with general approval, as did that of Fénelon; and Madame de Sévigné wrote that the King had made three men out of one duke—in allusion to Beauvillier's three offices, *gouverneur*, First Gentleman of the Chamber, and sinecure President of the Council of Finance—and that Saint-Louis himself could not have chosen better. She added that the Abbé de Fénelon was a man of rare merit for intelligence, knowledge, and piety.<sup>2</sup>

François de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon—to give the future archbishop his full name—entirely deserved the high opinion which the writer had formed of him, since no divine of the Gallican Church has left behind him a more honoured memory than the good and gifted man who, at the age of thirty-eight, became the preceptor of

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan, August 1689.

the Duc de Bourgogne. A member of a noble and ancient, but impoverished, Périgord family, his feeble health and studious habits had early decided his parents that the priesthood was his vocation, and, after a preliminary training in classics at the University of Cahors, and in philosophy at the Collège du Plessy, he was sent to the theological seminary of Saint-Sulpice, then under the direction of the Abbé Tronson, where he remained for ten years. Soon after his ordination—which appears to have taken place some time in the year 1675, though the exact date is uncertain—animated partly by evangelical motives, and partly, as he tells us, by “a wish to inhale among those precious monuments and ruins the very essence of the antique,” he formed the project of making a missionary journey to the Levant, which, however, he abandoned, in deference to the wishes of his relatives. For the next two or three years his time was mainly occupied with attendance at the hospitals and other parochial duties in the parish of Saint-Sulpice, but in 1678 he was appointed *directeur* of the Nouvelles Catholiques, an institution founded in 1634 by Jean François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, “to provide young girls converted from Protestantism with a safe retreat from the persecutions of their relatives and the artifices of heretics,” though, as a matter of fact, most of the inmates were Huguenot children, who had been legally kidnapped, in order to bring them up in the State religion.

Although, even at this early period of his career, the sincerity of Fénelon’s religious con-

victions cannot be doubted, there seems to have been a strong vein of ambition in his character, and he did not disdain "to knock at every door,"<sup>1</sup> to utilise to the full the opportunities which his aristocratic connections gave him for making powerful friends, and even to become "one of the most outrageous flatterers of Bossuet."<sup>2</sup> Among the great houses at which he was a frequent visitor, was that of the Beauvilliers, and it was at the request of the Duchesse de Beauvilliers—a mother of many daughters—that he wrote his celebrated treatise *De l'Éducation des filles*, which, originally intended only for private circulation, attracted so much attention that in 1687 it was given to the public.

The success which had attended Fénelon's gentle persuasiveness with the New Catholics led to his appointment as head of a mission which, at the end of the year 1685, was despatched to Saintonge to preach among the Protestant population of that province and complete the work which the *dragonnades* had begun. This mission, which lasted until the following July, and was renewed for a few months in the spring and summer of 1687, resulted in the bringing back of many a lost sheep to the Catholic fold; but though Fénelon's methods of proselytism seem to have been gentleness itself in comparison with those in vogue in other parts of France, "it is on the whole a dark page in his life."<sup>3</sup>

However that may be, it undoubtedly increased

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

<sup>2</sup> Brunetière, Art. "Fénelon," in *la Grande Encyclopédie*

<sup>3</sup> Viscount St. Cyres, *François de Fénelon* (Methuen, 1901).

the favour with which Fénelon was regarded in high quarters, and when, two years later, Beauvilliers begged Louis XIV to give him for his principal coadjutor in the training of the Duc de Bourgogne the young ecclesiastic whose treatise on the education of girls had demonstrated his aptitude for so responsible a post, the King, recollecting the good seed sown in Saintonge, granted the request without hesitation.

He soon had reason to felicitate himself upon his decision, for rarely has the value of a sound and judicious education in eradicating the evil propensities of a child been more strikingly demonstrated. What Montausier and Bossuet had so conspicuously failed in doing for the father, Beauvilliers and Fénelon did for the son. But it is to the preceptor to whom the credit of the achievement mainly belongs, since Beauvilliers, though officially his superior, was really his disciple, who readily adopted all his suggestions and left him an entirely free hand. Fénelon was a born teacher in the highest sense, gifted with all the qualities that make for success in that most difficult of professions, and combining with these gifts an extraordinary personal charm, which left a deep impression even upon those who had but the slightest acquaintance with him. Saint-Simon tells us that he "knew him only by sight," yet that mere sight was enough to enable the chronicler to grasp the wonderful fascination of the man, and to furnish him with materials for one of his most arresting portraits.

"He was," he writes, "a tall thin man, with a large nose, eyes from which fire and intellect

streamed like a torrent, and a physiognomy the like of which I have never seen in any other man, and which, once seen, could never be forgotten. It combined all things, and yet the contradictions produced no want of harmony. It united gravity, gaiety, and courtesy; it equally expressed the man of learning, the bishop, and the *grand seigneur*. But its prevailing characteristic, as in everything about him, was elegance, refinement, grace, modesty, and, above all, nobility. It was difficult to take one's eyes off him. His manner was in complete accord with his appearance; his perfect ease was infectious to others, and his conversation was distinguished by that grace and good taste which are only acquired by constant intercourse with the best society and the great world."<sup>1</sup>

Fénelon quickly perceived that, though, thanks to the foolish indulgence of his *gouvernante* and her assistants, the boy's faults had hitherto alone attracted attention, there was in him the germ of much that was good; that he was, like most passionate children, capable of sincere affection; that his quickness and penetration were remarkable, and that he was frank and truthful to a fault. He therefore set himself to gain the affection and confidence of his pupil, and this once secured his task was immensely facilitated. Recognising that, with so sensitive and highly strung a lad, corporal punishment would be a fatal mistake, and that even direct reprimands might provoke resentment rather than contrition, he had recourse to other means of bringing home to his pupil the gravity of his faults, and awakening in him a desire

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

for amendment. Thus, one day, after he had fallen into a violent passion, his attendants received orders to remark how ill he was looking, which so alarmed him that he asked that Fagon<sup>1</sup> should be sent for. Fagon, who was, of course, in the secret, felt his patient's pulse, looked at his tongue, and, after pretending to reflect for a few moments, inquired whether something had not occurred to irritate the prince. His Royal Highness admitted that he had been very much irritated indeed, and demanded if that were the cause of his indisposition. The doctor rejoined that it was undoubtedly the case, and proceeded to enumerate all the maladies to which excess of anger might give rise, adding that he had even known instances in which those who had been unable to control their passion had suddenly fallen down dead.

Frequently the preceptor made use of object-lessons to illustrate the faults of the prince, setting him to study La Fontaine's *Fables*, and to discover for himself the moral which they pointed, or to compose essays concerning historical personages whose pride, obstinacy, or passions had brought them to ruin. Sometimes, in order that these object lessons might take a form more likely to impress themselves on the mind of his pupil, he did not shrink from employing deception. One morning, a carpenter came to execute some repairs in the gallery on to which the prince's apartments opened. The boy went out to watch what was going on, and began to examine the man's tools. Thereupon, the carpenter, who had

<sup>1</sup> Guy Crescent Fagon, chief physician to Louis XIV, and the most celebrated doctor of his time.



received his instructions from Fénelon, pretended to fly into a violent rage. "Off with you, prince!" he shouted, "when I am in a temper, I break every bone in the bodies of those who come near me." The prince, terribly frightened, ran to his tutor and told him that the carpenter must be a terribly wicked man. "What then," replied Fénelon, "would you call a prince who beats his *valet de chambre*, when the poor fellow is doing his best to serve him?"

On another occasion, the preceptor contrived a much more elaborate piece of deception. He showed his pupil a letter which he pretended he had received from Bayle, then in exile in Holland, in which the philosopher spoke of a curious medal, which had been sent him by a Dutch antiquary named Vanden, who was travelling in Italy. On one side, this medal represented a handsome and noble-looking boy, surrounded by Apollo, Minerva, and other denizens of Olympus. On the reverse, the same boy appeared, but his body ended in the tail of a monstrous fish, and, instead of the deities and the Muses, he had for companions serpents, witches, owls, and satyrs. And the writer expressed his belief that this medal had been struck by the orders of the enemies of France, and was intended to depreciate the good qualities of a certain young prince, by imputing to him all kinds of vices.<sup>1</sup>

When the little duke's humour happened to be more than usually tempestuous, and Fénelon felt that punishment was absolutely necessary,

<sup>1</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*



FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE FÉNELON, ARCHBISHOP OF  
CAMBRAI

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DREVET, AFTER THE PAINTING BY VIVIER



he condemned him to a kind of solitary confinement. He was not allowed to go out, and no one was permitted to visit him ; his books and play-things were taken away from him ; he dined and supped alone, and his attendants went about with sad and averted faces, replied to his questions in monosyllables, or ignored them altogether, and treated him with mingled pity and contempt, as though he were not responsible for his actions. A day or two of this treatment generally sufficed to bring about the result desired, when the boy would confess his fault and ask pardon of those whom he had offended.

Then it appears to have been Fénelon's practice to request the penitent to commit his promise of amendment to writing, which was presumably handed to the prince on the next occasion that he showed signs of unruliness, and must have served to check many a passionate outburst. One of these engagements has been published by the Duc de Bourgogne's eighteenth-century biographer, the Abbé Proyard, and is thus conceived :—

“ I promise Monsieur l'Abbé de Fénelon, on the word of a prince, to do at once what he tells me, and to obey him the moment he gives me any order ; and, if I fail in this, I will submit to any kind of punishment and disgrace.

“ Written at Versailles, the 27th of November 1689. LOUIS ”<sup>1</sup>

Kindly, tactful, sympathetic, and “ more patient than patience itself,”<sup>2</sup> yet concealing

<sup>1</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis XV.*

<sup>2</sup> Joubert.

beneath all his gentleness an inflexible determination, Fénelon gradually succeeded in establishing over the mind and heart of his pupil the most complete ascendancy, and in bringing about that reformation which his contemporaries appeared to have regarded as little short of miraculous. "God, who is the master of hearts," writes Saint-Simon, "worked a miracle in this prince. From the abyss he emerged affable, gentle, kindly, tolerant, modest, humble, even austere, more than was compatible with the duties of his position."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in later years, when Fénelon was no longer at hand to guide and direct him, he sometimes carried his religious scruples to lengths which brought upon him the ridicule of the ungodly, and tried the patience even of his old tutor himself, who wrote in 1708, when the duke was in command of the French troops in Flanders, reproaching him with "a piety which attempts to govern an army like a nunnery."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon places the date of the "miracle" between the duke's fifteenth and eighteenth years, but, as a matter of fact, it was accomplished several years earlier, probably about the time of his first Communion, which produced upon the boy's mind a most profound impression. "Since the first Communion of the Duc de Bourgogne," writes Madame de Maintenon, "we have observed the gradual disappearance of all the faults which, in his childhood, inspired us with great anxiety for the future. His progress in virtue was remarked from year to year. At first jeered at by all the Court, he has become the admiration of the most pronounced Libertines. He continues to do violence to himself in order to eradicate entirely his faults. His piety has so transformed him that, passionate though he is, he has become even-tempered, sweet, complaisant. One would say that this is his real character, and that virtue has become natural to him."

<sup>2</sup> Lord St. Cyres, in his admirable and impartial study of Fénelon, blames him for "a dangerous extravagance in the moral and spiritual education of his pupil"; but M. d'Haussonville is of

And the boy's intellectual progress kept pace with his moral development—or rather, outstripped it—since he was remarkably intelligent and possessed of a real passion for knowledge. At eleven, he had already read Virgil, Homer, Horace, Livy, and portions of Tacitus, possessed a good general knowledge of modern history, and had been so well grounded in geography, that his tutor declared that he knew that of France as well as he knew the park of Versailles. Yet, so far from Fénelon making an attempt to “cram” his charge, four hours a day were all that were spent in the schoolroom, and the tutor strictly adhered to the principle which he himself had laid down in his treatise on the education of girls: “The less formal lessons that there are, the better. An infinite amount of instruction, more useful even than lessons, can be imparted in the course of pleasant conversation.” It was these conversations, in which Fénelon succeeded in stimulating the interest of his pupil in a variety of subjects, which constituted the most valuable part of the Duc de Bourgogne's education.

The daily life of the prince and that of his younger brothers, the Ducs d'Anjou and de Berry, when they, in their turn, came under the control of Beauvilliers and Fénelon, was marked by a simplicity at that time very unusual in the case of children of their rank. They rose at a quarter to eight, and, so soon as they were dressed, went opinion that this reproach ought to be more justly addressed to Beauvilliers, under whose influence the Duc de Bourgogne came during the two years which separated Fénelon's nomination to the archbishopric of Cambrai from the prince's marriage, and who “set him the example of an almost ascetic piety.”

to hear Mass. Then they attended their father's *lever*, and afterwards that of the King. At nine o'clock, they returned to their apartments, where they were free to do what they pleased till ten, when the first lesson of the day began. This lasted until noon, at which hour they dined. After dinner, which never occupied more than three-quarters of an hour, they had a dancing- or a drawing-lesson. At two o'clock, they played tennis or some other game with their *sous-gouverneur*, Denonville or their gentlemen until a quarter to three. In summer, they worked with Fénelon from three to five, and walked or rode from five to seven; but in winter this order was reversed. From seven until a quarter to eight, when they supped, they were permitted to amuse themselves by reading anything they chose, and after supper they played games until bedtime. This was generally nine o'clock, but, if they had behaved well during the day, they were permitted to stay up a quarter of an hour later, as a reward; while if, on the other hand, they had been idle or disobedient, they were sent to bed immediately after supper.

Their fare was very plain—much plainer, indeed, than that of the children of many a well-to-do citizen of Paris. Breakfast consisted of dry bread and a tumbler of water, or water mixed with *vin ordinaire*, whichever they preferred; dinner of boiled beef, stewed chicken, or roast pheasant, with a great deal of bread, the consumption of which was considered of the highest importance, and a couple of glasses of light burgundy, cider, or beer; supper of roast mutton or

veal, with a little venison or chicken, and some cake or oranges; while for their "collation"—the seventeenth-century equivalent of the modern afternoon tea—they were given dry bread or biscuits and a glass of water. Ragouts and such-like rich dishes were seldom seen upon their table, and champagne and other strong wines were altogether forbidden. This simple fare was no doubt the prescription of the tutor, since he lays down very similar rules of diet in his *Éducation des filles*. But their outdoor life was regulated by their *gouverneur*, who was a believer in the value of manly exercises, and it should not be overlooked that, if the credit for the mental and moral training of the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers belonged mainly to Fénelon, that of the physical was due to Beauvilliers, and that the benefit which their bodies derived from the almost Spartan system which he insisted upon must have materially aided the preceptor in forming their minds. "As for the exercises which they are made to practise, they are of such a kind that no citizen of Paris would suffer his children to take the risk of a similar training. They are brought up as though they were one day intended to become athletes, and so persuaded is the Duc de Beauvilliers that a delicate prince is good for nothing, particularly in France, where they are bound to command their armies in person, that all the accidents that one can foresee from this are powerless to divert him from his purpose." Whether the weather were wet or fine, they walked or rode every afternoon. Neither in the burning sun of July nor in the snows of January were they ever permitted to



cover their heads. They were made to follow the chase on foot, and to play tennis until they were bathed in perspiration. Colds, coughs, and such-like ailments were ignored, and, in case of fever, bleeding and purgatives were strictly forbidden, and quinine substituted for these fashionable remedies.<sup>1</sup>

Unnecessarily rigorous as such a system may appear, it seems to have proved highly beneficial, particularly in the case of the Duc de Bourgogne, whom it transformed from a frail, sickly child, always imagining that "his soul was about to take her flight into his pocket handkerchief," and "kingly neither in face nor carriage,"<sup>2</sup> if not into a robust, at least into a well-grown, pleasant-featured, dignified youth. He was, according to Saint-Simon—whose description is borne out by the portraits of the prince at Versailles—rather below the middle height, with a long sallow face, thick curly brown hair, a broad forehead, fine expressive eyes, a long nose, a pointed chin, and a very pleasing expression. He was slightly deformed, one shoulder having early outgrown the other and defied all the efforts of the surgeons to set it right, and this defect became more marked as he grew older;<sup>3</sup> but, on the other hand, he could show a well-turned leg and a small and shapely foot.

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Louville, *Mémoire sur l'éducation des ducs de Bourgogne, d'Anjou, et de Berry*.

<sup>2</sup> Proyard, cited by Viscount St. Cyres.

<sup>3</sup> This was generally attributed to his over-anxiety to learn to write. In order to effect a cure, the surgeons condemned him to wear an iron collar and cross, from which he suffered considerable pain, without deriving any benefit.

Fénelon did not confine himself, as Bossuet had formerly done, to instructing the prince in his duties in general. He strove to prepare the mind and heart of his pupil for the great responsibilities that, in the natural course of events, he would one day be called upon to bear as the ruler of France, and gave him lessons in politics as well as in morals. The books which he wrote for the duke's use: the *Fables*, the *Dialogues des Morts*, and, above all, *Télémaque*,<sup>1</sup> in which he subsequently admitted that he had "set down truths most necessary to be known by one who was about to reign, and described the faults that cling most closely to the sovereign power," had a political rather than a moral end to serve. "He regarded himself as invested with the mission not only to educate the prince, but, through him and with him, to reform the State, and the courtiers seemed to admit that the success of the Duc de Bourgogne's education foreshadowed that of his fortunate preceptor's plans of government."<sup>2</sup> However, these high hopes were never destined to materialise, since in 1697 the Quietist controversy arose to ruin Fénelon's credit at Court, and destroy in a few months the fruit of so many years' patience and perseverance.

<sup>1</sup> Fénelon also wrote for his pupil a translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil and a *Vie de Charlemagne*. But the manuscript of the former has been lost, while that of the latter was destroyed in the burning of the archiepiscopal palace at Cambrai in 1697.

<sup>2</sup> Brunetière, Art. "Fénelon," in *la Grande Encyclopédie*.

## CHAPTER VII

The Princess Adélaïde at Fontainebleau—Madame de Maintenon entrusted with the supervision of her education—Letters of that lady to the Duchess of Savoy—Blindman's buff—Arrival of the princess at Versailles—Decision of the King as to the life which she is to lead until her marriage—She is visited by James II and Mary of Modena—Motives of her conduct towards the King and Madame de Maintenon considered—Relations between Louis XIV and his legitimated children—The Duc du Maine—The Comte de Toulouse—The Dowager-Princesse de Conti—*Madame la Duchesse*—The Duchesse de Chartres—The King is completely subjugated by the little princess—His attentions to her—Dullness of the Court since the conversion of Louis XIV—The arrival of the Princess Adélaïde brings about a reaction—Amusements of the princess

THE Court remained at Fontainebleau for three days after the arrival of the Princess Adélaïde, that is to say, until November 7. On the 5th, after hearing Mass, her Highness received at her toilette the persons whose presentations had been postponed from the previous evening. At noon, she dined alone in her apartments, and then went to pay her first visit to Madame de Maintenon, in whose apartments she found Louis XIV awaiting her.

It had long since been decided that the education of the princess was to be completed under the care of Madame de Maintenon, a task for which the ex-governess's great experience in the management of children eminently fitted her. "The Duke

of Savoy," wrote Louis XIV to Tessé, some weeks earlier, "may make his mind easy in regard to the care which will be taken of her [his daughter's] education when she arrives at my Court. A skilful hand will complete the fashioning of the intelligence of which this princess has already given proof. She will receive the knowledge and instruction conformable to the rank which she is to occupy, and the example of the most perfect virtues will strengthen every day the instructions which will be given her to cause her to love her duties. I have reason to hope that she will follow the sentiments wherewith she will be inspired, and that she will be made to understand those which she must entertain in order to ensure the happiness of her life." <sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the glowing account of the perfections of the new arrival which she had received from the King, Madame de Maintenon must have looked forward to the princess's visit with no little anxiety, for she was aware that, if her charge were to show herself in the least inclined to resent her supervision, these rebellious tendencies would be sedulously fostered by her enemies at Court, and her task might become one of exceptional difficulty. She was, however, speedily reassured on that score, as will be gathered from the following letter which the lady wrote to the Duchess of Savoy:—

"She [the Princess] has a natural courtesy which does not permit her to say anything disagreeable. When I wished to resist the caresses which she was bestowing upon me, because I was too old, she replied: '*Ah! point si vieille!*' She ap-

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of September 9, 1696, published by the Comte d'Haussonville.

proached me when the King quitted the room, and did me the honour to embrace me. Then, having noticed at once that I could not remain standing, she made me sit down, and seating herself with a caressing air almost on my lap, she said to me : ' Mamma has charged me to give you a thousand friendly greetings from her, and to ask your friendship for myself. Teach me well, I beg you, all that I must do to please the King.' These are her very words, Madame ; but the gay, sweet, and graceful manner which accompanied them cannot be described in a letter." <sup>1</sup>

Later in the afternoon, the princess accompanied the King and Madame de Maintenon for a drive, the Duchess du Lude, and the Comtesse de Mailly, her *dame d'atour*, also occupying seats in the royal coach ; while *Monseigneur* and a number of nobles followed in their own coaches, each of which was drawn by a team of six horses. The direction taken was by the side of the canal, and, to amuse the little lady, his Majesty gave directions for the cormorants which were kept there to be set to catch fish. On her return to the château, the princess paid visits of ceremony to *Madame*, the Dowager-Princesse de Conti, *Madame la Duchesse* (the Duchesse de Bourbon), and the Duchesse du Maine, in the order of their rank, which duties performed, she returned to her own apartments and received the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers.

The exigencies of etiquette having thus been complied with, on the morrow the princess was allowed a day of repose in her own apartments, where she had leisure to contemplate the splendour

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance générale de Madame de Maintenon*, Letter of November 6, 1696.

of the Crown jewels, a portion of which Louis XIV had sent her on the evening of her arrival, with directions that she was to wear them whenever she pleased,<sup>1</sup> and to enjoy a game of blind-man's buff with her ladies and several distinguished persons who came to pay her informal visits. "Every one is becoming a child again," writes *Madame* to her aunt, the Electress Sophia of Hanover. "The day before yesterday, the Princesse d'Harcourt and Madame de Pontchartrain played at blind-man's buff; and yesterday it was the turn of the Dauphin, the Prince and Princesse de Conti, two of my ladies, and myself. What think you of the company?"<sup>2</sup>

Every one, indeed, from the King downwards, seems to have been delighted with the intelligence, sweet disposition, and high spirits of the little princess, and to have been genuinely anxious to please and amuse her; and, allowing for the flattery inseparable from such communications, Madame de Maintenon undoubtedly expressed the general opinion of the Court when she wrote to the Duchess of Savoy:—

"She is perfect in every respect, which is a very agreeable surprise in a person eleven years old. I do not venture to mingle my expressions of admiration with those which alone ought to be counted; but I cannot refrain from telling you that, according to all appearances, she will be the glory of her time."

<sup>1</sup> The Crown jewels at this period, according to Dangeau, were valued at 11,333,000 livres, "without reckoning those which have been added since M. de Pontchartrain has had them in his keeping." He adds that at the death of Louis XIII their computed value was only 700,000 livres.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé), Letter of November 8, 1696.

And she adds :—

“ Your Royal Highnesses do me too much honour in expressing your approval of my taking her under my supervision. I believe that it will have to be confined to preventing people from spoiling her, and to praying to God to bless this amiable marriage.”<sup>1</sup>

On November 7, the Court quitted Fontainebleau for Versailles. The King did not leave until after mid-day, but the princess preceded him by a couple of hours, as Prudhomme, formerly barber to Louis XIV, who, on his retirement from his Majesty's service, had gone to reside at Le Plessis, about an hour's journey from Fontainebleau, had begged the honour of being allowed to entertain her to dinner, and his request had been granted. This worthy man was a great favourite with the Royal Family, and particularly with the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers, who often accepted his hospitality when travelling between Versailles and Fontainebleau. It is not a little singular that Louis XIV, always quick to resent the slightest attempt at familiarity on the part of his great nobles, should have been generally easy and affable in his intercourse with his confidential domestics, and should have frequently given them marks of condescension which would have been highly prized by those in infinitely more exalted stations. But the bitter lessons of the Fronde had disinclined him to allow the nobility to decrease by a hairbreadth the distance between them and their

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance générale de Madame de Maintenon*, Letter of November 5, 1696.

sovereign ; while, on the other hand, he was aware that the condescension which rewards long and faithful service by humbler persons stands in no danger of being misunderstood.

The Court arrived at Le Plessis soon after the princess had dined, and her carriage having taken its place behind that of the King, the long procession of coaches continued its journey to Versailles, which was reached at five o'clock in the afternoon. His Majesty again gave the princess his hand to assist her to alight, and conducted her to the apartments formerly occupied by the late Queen, and, after her death, by the Bavarian Dauphine,<sup>1</sup> which, Dangeau tells us, had been superbly furnished, in honour of their new mistress.

Louis XIV had, as we have mentioned, decided as to the rank which the future Duchesse de Bourgogne was to occupy before her arrival at the Pont-de-Beauvoisin, and, while the Court was still at Fontainebleau, he had also announced his decision on the question of how she was to be addressed and the life she was to lead during the interval which must elapse before her marriage. Since, until that event took place, she could not well be called "Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne," or even "Madame la Princesse," such being the designation of the Princesse de Condé, the King directed that she was to be called simply "the Princess," by which title Dangeau invariably refers to her up to the time when she becomes Duchesse de Bourgogne, not a little to the mystifi-

<sup>1</sup> And after the Duchesse de Bourgogne, by the Infanta of Spain, the *fiancée* of Louis XV, from 1722 to 1725, when the projected marriage was broken off ; next, by Queen Marie Leczinska ; and, finally, by Marie Antoinette.



cation of students of the period who are unacquainted with his Majesty's decision on this matter.

The question of the life she was to lead presented some difficulty, since, on the one hand, a princess who had already an almost complete Household—*dame d'honneur*, *dame d'atour*, and all the rest of it—could scarcely be treated as a child; while, on the other, she was still too young to hold a little court of her own, like the married princesses. He therefore decided on a middle course, and directed that the Court should pay its respects to her Highness at her toilette twice a week—on Tuesdays and Fridays—but that she was to dine and sup in solitary state, served by the Duchesse du Lude. At the same time, he regulated her relations with the Duc de Bourgogne, who was permitted to visit his bride-elect once a week, while his brothers were authorised to pay her a monthly visit.

Two days after the Princess Adélaïde's arrival at Versailles, the ex-King of England, James II, and his consort, Mary of Modena, came from Saint-Germain to visit her. This visit was regarded as one of great importance by the Court, since it was the first occasion on which the princess, in accordance with the King's decision, claimed the prerogative to which otherwise she would not have been entitled until her marriage—that of occupying an armchair exactly similar to that of Mary of Modena. The princesses and duchesses who were present at the interview sat on *tabourets*, according to the custom of the French Court.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of Govone, Envoy Extraordinary of Savoy, to Victor Amadeus II, November 12, 1696, in Gagnière.

A week later, the princess went to Saint-Germain to return their Majesties' visit, and again occupied the coveted *fauteuil*.

The princess continued to make progress in the good graces of the Court, and particularly in those of the King and Madame de Maintenon. *Madame* and Saint-Simon assert that, from the first moment of her arrival, she expressly laid herself out to win the hearts of these two all-powerful persons, in obedience to the instructions she had received from her parents, who were aware how greatly their daughter's future happiness depended on the impression she succeeded in making in that quarter. *Madame*, in one of her letters to the Electress of Hanover, declares that "for a child of her years, she is very supple. She pays little attention to her grandfather (*Monsieur*), and scarcely notices my son (the Duc de Chartres) and myself. But, so soon as she perceives Madame de Maintenon, she smiles at her, and goes to meet her with open arms. You can understand from this that she is already politic." And, in another letter: "It is impossible to be more politic than the little Princess. She no doubt owes this to her father's training." <sup>1</sup>

As *Madame*, who had been the first lady of the Court since the death of the Dauphin, six years before, was naturally piqued at having to yield her place to the new arrival, we might expect her to view the conduct of the little princess with a somewhat jaundiced eye; but Saint-Simon, whose

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé). Letters of November 8 and November 25, 1696.

admiration for the Duchesse de Bourgogne is well known, is here in accord with her.

“Never,” he writes, “had princess, arriving so young, come so well schooled and better capable of profiting by the instructions which she had received. M. de Savoie, who possessed a thorough knowledge of our Court, had depicted it to her, and had taught her the only way to make herself happy there. A great deal of natural intelligence seconded him, and other amiable qualities attached people’s hearts to her, while her position in regard to the King and the Duc de Bourgogne attracted to her the homage of the ambitious. From the very moment of her arrival she understood how to work to obtain this, nor did she cease so long as she lived to continue a work so useful, and from which she was continually gathering all the fruits.”<sup>1</sup>

That her parents and *Madame Royale* had been at pains to impress upon the little princess the importance of doing everything possible to gain the favour of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon cannot be doubted; her letters prove it, and, after her death, some instructions which the Duchess of Savoy had given her on this matter were found among her papers. But, at the same time, it would be unjust to her to suppose that her efforts to please the King and his wife were mainly dictated by the *politesse* of which *Madame* speaks. For Adélaïde of Savoy was a child of a singularly sweet and lovable nature, in whose

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

heart kindness and affection awakened a ready response; and if, like a true daughter of Victor Amadeus II, she did not fail to perceive in which direction her interests lay, it is certain that she soon conceived both for the King and Madame de Maintenon a warm and lasting attachment.

But let us listen to the latter's niece, Madame de Caylus, a very shrewd observer, and one whose criticisms of her contemporaries certainly do not err on the side of benevolence.

“The public finds it difficult to imagine that princes behave simply and naturally, because it does not see them close enough to form a correct opinion of them, and because the marvellous, which it is constantly looking for, is not met with in simple conduct and ordinary sentiments. People accordingly preferred to believe that the Dauphine [the Princess Adélaïde]<sup>1</sup> resembled her father, and that she was, from the age of eleven, at which she came to France, as crafty and politic as he was himself, and affected for the King and Madame de Maintenon an attachment which she did not entertain. As for myself, who had the honour of being admitted to her intimacy, I judge the matter differently, and I have seen her weep with such sincerity over the great age of these two persons, whom she believed, with good reason, must die before her, that it is impossible for me to doubt her affection for the King.”<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the sentiments which chiefly prompted

<sup>1</sup> The Duchesse de Bourgogne became Dauphine after the death of *Monseigneur*, in April 1711.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs*.

the conduct of the little princess in those early days at the French Court, her conquest of the King was both speedy and complete. Nor is this difficult to understand. Egotist though Louis XIV was, he combined with his egotism a keen sensibility. He was capable of deep and sincere affection, as is proved by his stubborn resistance to the arguments and entreaties of Anne of Austria and Mazarin in the affair of Marie Mancini,<sup>1</sup> and all his life he had craved for love. In the days of his passionate youth, even his most evanescent attachments had been redeemed by a touch of sentiment.<sup>2</sup> He lavished titles and riches upon his mistresses, but these gifts were the reward of their affection—or what he fondly imagined to be affection—not the price of their favours. Never did he use his position as King to force his attentions upon any woman whom he had reason to believe was indifferent to him as a man; never did he condescend to such odious bargains as his grandfather struck with Henriette d'Entragues or his contemptible successor with Madame de Châteauroux.

Now that old age and penitence had come upon him, it was another kind of affection of which he felt the need: that of his own family. But hitherto this need had remained unsatisfied.

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the romance of Louis XIV and Marie Mancini, see the author's "Five Fair Sisters" (London, Hutchinson; New York, Putnams, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> "The late King (Louis XIV)," wrote *Madame*, many years later, "was undoubtedly very gallant. . . . At the age of twenty, all sorts and conditions of women found favour in his eyes—peasant girls, gardeners' daughters, maid-servants, waiting-women, ladies of quality—provided that they were able to make him believe that they loved him."

The heavy, commonplace Dauphin was certainly not the kind of person to inspire affection, and he stood far too much in awe of his royal father to have any to bestow, though he always displayed towards him the most admirable docility. As for his legitimated sons and daughters—the Duc du Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, the Princesse de Conti, the Duchesse de Bourbon, and the Duchesse de Chartres—their origin and the difference of rank constituted a barrier between himself and them which the splendid positions to which he had elevated them had been powerless to remove. In their relations a certain restraint was always present, for though the King treated them as his children, it was impossible for them to treat him as their father.

Nor, with the exception of the Comte de Toulouse, a quiet, amiable, unassuming youth, who in after years served with considerable distinction in the Navy, and in August 1704 defeated the Anglo-Dutch fleet, under Admiral Rooke, off Malaga, did they afford Louis much cause for satisfaction. The Duc du Maine, a great favourite with Madame de Maintenon, who had brought him up, which perhaps explains the ferocity with which Saint-Simon assails him, was an intelligent, well-read, and polished young man, and particularly assiduous in his attendance on the King, but ambitious, intriguing, and wanting in personal courage. His pusillanimous conduct in Flanders during the campaign of 1695 had occasioned his father the bitterest mortification, and, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, was the cause of his Majesty forgetting,

for almost the only time in his life, his dignity in public.<sup>1</sup>

Of his daughters, the Dowager-Princesse de Conti—often called *la Grande Princesse de Conti*, to distinguish her from Marie Thérèse de Bourbon, the wife of the present holder of that title—possessed much of the grace and charm of her mother, Louise de la Valliere; indeed, in outward attractions, she far surpassed her, and until an attack of smallpox, ten years before, spoiled the freshness of her complexion, had passed for one of the most beautiful women of her time. But she was frivolous, coquettish, and spiteful, and had lately fallen into sad disgrace with the King, through the discovery of certain letters written by her, in which his Majesty's relations with Madame de Maintenon were turned into ridicule.

<sup>1</sup> "The King, so perfectly composed, so thoroughly master of his slightest movements, even upon the gravest occasions, was overcome by this event. On rising from the table at Marly, he perceived a servant, who, while removing the dessert, helped himself to a biscuit, which he slipped into his pocket. In a moment the King forgot his dignity, and, cane in hand, rushed at this servant (who little suspected what was in store for him), struck him, rated him soundly, and broke the cane upon his body. In truth, it was a very thin one, which snapped easily. However, with the stump in his hand, and still muttering abuse of this valet, the King walked away, like a man beside himself, and entered Madame de Maintenon's apartment, where he remained nearly an hour. Upon leaving, he met Père la Chaise [his confessor]. 'Father,' said the King to him in a loud tone, 'I have chastised a knave, and broken my cane upon his back, but I do not think I have offended God.' Every one standing near trembled at this public confession, and the unfortunate priest murmured something that sounded like approval, in order to avoid irritating the King further. The sensation that this affair aroused, and the alarm it inspired, may be conceived. For some time none could divine the cause, although every one readily perceived that the apparent reason could not be the real one."

Her half-brother the Dauphin was much attached to her, and when he was not hunting or with Mlle. de Choin, passed most of his time in her company.

The Duchesse de Bourbon—or *Madame la Duchesse*, as the Court called her—the elder of Louis XIV's two surviving daughters by Madame de Montespan, was an exceedingly pretty, accomplished, and charming young woman. If, however, she had inherited her mother's beauty, intelligence, and fascination, she had also her full share of that too-celebrated lady's less agreeable qualities, being selfish, extravagant, and deceitful, while her mordant wit made her universally dreaded. "Her wit shines in her eyes," writes *Madame*; "but there is some malignity in them also. I always say that she reminds me of a pretty cat which, while you play with it, lets you feel its claws." Moreover, she was far from an exemplary wife, and infinitely preferred the society of the Prince de Conti to that of her liege lord, "though this affair was conducted with such admirable discretion, that they never gave any one any hold over them."<sup>1</sup>

Her younger sister, the Duchesse de Chartres, wife of the future Regent, whose marriage with her had caused *Madame* so much indignation,<sup>2</sup> was, according to Saint-Simon, a person of considerable intelligence, "having a natural eloquence, a justness of expression, and a fluency and singularity in the choice of language, which always

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon. The chronicler says that *Madame la Duchesse* was "the siren of the poets; she had all their charms and all their perils."

<sup>2</sup> See p. 79 *supra*.



astonished one, together with that manner peculiar to Madame de Montespan and her sisters, which was transmitted to none save those intimate with her or those whom she had brought up." However, she appears to have been far too indolent to employ her intelligence except in conversation, and altogether failed either to gain the affection of her husband—which is perhaps not surprising, if we are to put any faith in *Madame's* description of her as "a disagreeable person, who gets as drunk as a currier three or four times a week"—or to give a suitable education to her eldest daughter, afterwards the notorious Duchesse de Berry, the heroine of some of the worst scandals of the Regency. The pride of this princess was "almost satanic," and Duclos tells us that people jocosely compared her to Minerva, who, recognising no mother, prided herself on being the daughter of Jupiter.<sup>1</sup> With all her haughtiness, however, she was timidity itself in the presence of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon. "The King," says Saint-Simon, "could make her swoon by a single severe look, and Madame de Maintenon too, perhaps; at all events, she trembled before her, and in public she never replied to them without stammering and looking frightened. I say replied, since to address the King first was beyond her strength." In appearance, Madame de Chartres was handsome, though not nearly so attractive as her sister or the Princesse de Conti, while Nature had endowed her with a figure that was too ample for grace. Both she and *Madame la Duchesse* detested their half-sister, who fully reciprocated

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XIV.*

their sentiments towards her, and their constant bickerings caused the King so much annoyance, that one day he summoned the princesses before him and warned them that, unless they could contrive to compose their differences, he would banish all three of them from Court. When not united by their common aversion to the Princesse de Conti, the two younger ladies quarrelled with one another, and we hear of *Monsieur* complaining to the King that *Madame la Duchesse* persisted in addressing his daughter-in-law as "*Mignonne*," which appellation, having regard to the generous proportions of the latter, was plainly intended to cast ridicule upon her.

The three princesses delighted in practical jokes, and were for ever in some "scrape" or other. One night, at Trianon, they procured a petard and exploded it beneath the window of *Monsieur's* bedchamber; while once, when the Court was at Marly, the odour of an exceedingly pungent tobacco was wafted to the King's nostrils as he was on the point of retiring to rest, which, on inquiry being made, was found to proceed from the apartments of Madame de Chartres, where she and her sister were smoking pipes borrowed from the Swiss Guards!

Thus, his own children offered Louis XIV but little of the consolation which most fathers find when old age is creeping upon them, and, in spite of his devotion to Madame de Maintenon and her unwearying efforts to amuse and divert him, there were many moments when he must have yearned for that more complete relaxation which the affection and companionship of youth affords.

And now there had come into his life a charming, high-spirited, lovable, unspoiled child, who, so far from being overawed by this great King, before whom every one else in France trembled, seemed to regard him as a species of grown-up playfellow specially created for her benefit; who "in private clasped him round the neck at all hours, jumped upon his knees, tormented him with all kinds of playfulness," who was always ready to be his companion in his daily walk or drive, to charm away his ennui with her artless prattle, to make him feel that he was not only a monarch, but a man and a grandfather. It was indeed a novel and delightful experience for one who never in his whole life had been on really familiar terms with any human being, not even with his mistresses. "The King was enchanted by her ways," writes Saurches, "and showed for her an astonishing affection, passing whole hours with her in his cabinet, or in the Marquise de Maintenon's apartments."

Louis XIV seemed, indeed, as though he could not see enough of the little princess, or show her sufficient attention, and almost every day Dangeau notes in his *Journal*, or Govone mentions in his despatches to Turin, some fresh instance of the pleasure his Majesty is deriving from the society of his prospective grand-daughter. Let us listen to the Italian :—

"She [the Princess] continues to enjoy good health, and to possess the good graces of the King, who visits her regularly twice a day, not ceremoniously, but from affection, since his attention is continuously occupied in procuring her amusements suitable to her age, but which exceed all that she

can dream about. Yesterday the King took her to visit all the gardens and fountains, to which I had the honour of following them; and I observed with surprise and emotion the kindness of his Majesty, who was pleased to permit the young Princess to walk by his side on foot, and when he perceived that she was tired, to make her enter a sedan-chair with him, while he explained everything to her, and made his observations in the affectionate tone of a very loving father. This spectacle was for me, a simple spectator, a true gourmet's banquet."

And a week later :—

"The Princess understands how to attach the hearts of his Majesty, *Monseigneur*, and Madame de Maintenon more and more closely to her. . . . His Majesty continues to relate to me with tenderness the questions and answers which are exchanged between himself and the Princess, and to say how rejoiced he is at finding such childish ways joined to a fund of good sense."

And in a third despatch he writes :—

"The Princess continues to give further and stronger proofs of good sense and good conduct, in demonstrating the lively affection which she feels for his Majesty. Moreover, the affection which the King entertains for her grows stronger every day. Madame de Maintenon does not cease to tell me of the satisfaction of his Majesty, of herself, and of the whole Court." <sup>1</sup>

Here, too, are some extracts from the diary of the omniscient Dangeau :—

<sup>1</sup> Govone to the Duke of Savoy, despatches of November 12, November 19, and December 3, 1696.

"*November 12.*—On leaving the Council, the King sent for the Princess ; he has given her masters to teach her dancing and to play the harpsichord.

"*November 13.*—The King went to dine at Marly, and took thither the Princess, with Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Chevreuse, and all the Princess's ladies.

"*November 15.*—The Princess came here [Meudon] to dine with the King, and brought all her ladies. After dinner, the King took her into the gardens, but their walk did not last long, as the weather was very bad. The King told the Princess that all the Princesses possessed menageries around Versailles, and that he wished to give her a much finer one than the others, and accordingly proposed to give her the real menagerie, which is the Menagerie of Versailles.<sup>1</sup>

"*November 17.*—The King returned early from Meudon, and on his arrival went to see the Princess.

<sup>1</sup> The Menagerie was situated at the extremity of the southern arm of the grand canal. All kinds of wild animals and birds were kept there : bears, wolves, pelicans, ostriches, gazelles, herons, foxes, lions, and even an elephant. The aviary was the finest in France, and there was also an immense pigeon-house, containing three thousand pigeons, a poultry-yard, and a farm for cows and horses. The little château of the Menagerie, originally a hunting-pavilion, contained a handsome octagonal salon, surmounted by a dome, and lighted by seven windows, in which Louis xiv often dined when he visited the Menagerie, and a number of smaller rooms, all very tastefully decorated and furnished. There were, however, no bedchambers, since the château was intended merely as a house in which to give dinner- or supper-parties, and not as a residence. The Menagerie soon became a favourite resort of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who came frequently with her ladies to partake of a "collation" and spend a few hours there, and after 1698, when the improvements which the King had caused to be carried out at the château for her benefit, had been completed, she sometimes entertained his Majesty and other members of the Royal Family.

" *November 18.*—The King went out shooting and returned early. When he had entered Madame de Maintenon's apartment he sent for the Princess, and gave her the rest of the Crown jewels, of which some had already been taken to her during her stay at Fontainebleau.

" *November 21.*—The King drove after dinner to Marly. He returned at six o'clock, and sent immediately for the Princess to come to him in Madame de Maintenon's apartments.

" *November 24.*—The King went to the chase, but the bad weather caused him to return at three o'clock. After his unbooting,<sup>1</sup> he went to the Princess's apartments, where he remained a long time."

Since the King's conversion, the Court, once the centre of gaiety and pleasure, had become decidedly dull, and but for the fact that his Majesty regarded it as a sacred duty on the part of his nobility to sun themselves in his presence, many of them would have certainly preferred the cheerful and unrestrained life of Paris, or even the seclusion of their country-houses, to the dreary round of aimless pomps and ceremonies, varied by attendance at the services of the Church, in which they were compelled to pass their time. Writing in 1687, *Madame* declares that "the Court was growing so dull that people were getting to loathe it, for the King imagined that he was pious if he made life a bore to other people." Moreover, since de-

<sup>1</sup> The unbooting (*débotté*) of the King after hunting was, like everything else in his daily life, a more or less solemn function. It was always performed by the First Gentleman of the Chamber on duty at the time.

votion—or at least a skilful affectation of it—was judged to be the most potent of all passports to the royal favour, the amount of hypocrisy which prevailed was simply appalling; “an ordinary Sunday had become like an Easter Sunday,” and people flocked to services as they had done to the masquerades and ballets of the pre-devotional days.

But now it seemed as though the advent of this little girl was to bring about a reaction, if not to the gaiety of the early part of the reign, at least to something resembling that joyous time. For the King was sincerely desirous of finding amusement for the child who had so speedily captured his heart, and “sought every day something new to divert her.” The visits to Marly and Meudon multiplied; there were hunting-parties at which the princess followed the chase in his Majesty’s “*soufflet*”;<sup>1</sup> and when the spring came, picnics in the forest of Marly, an invitation to which soon came to be regarded as a great honour, and excursions in gondolas or barges on the grand canal of Versailles,<sup>2</sup> which in warm weather were often prolonged until the small hours of the morning. Sometimes the King took the princess to the riding-school of the *Grande Écurie* to watch the pages exercising their horses; at others he set her to fish for carp. Nor did he neglect

<sup>1</sup> A light carriage, built to hold two persons, and drawn by four swift ponies. In his later years, Louis xiv usually preferred to follow the chase in his *soufflet* to the fatigue which a long day on horseback entailed.

<sup>2</sup> In 1678, the Republic of Venice had presented Louis xiv with a magnificent gilded gondola, and his Majesty was so pleased with it that he bought several others, and also engaged the services of a number of Venetian gondoliers, who were lodged at the head of the canal, in the buildings which are still called “Little Venice.”

amusements more suitable to her age. He sent for a conjurer from Paris—probably the same artiste who had given a *séance* for the benefit of the Duc de Bourgogne two or three years before, and had greatly diverted not only the little prince, but his Majesty himself, “who had never been known to laugh so heartily,”—ordered a performance of marionettes, and organised little lotteries. On the other hand, the King refused to allow the princess to attend the Opera or the theatre, to be present at a ball, or to join in any game of cards, until she was married, and even gave orders that these forbidden pleasures were not to be so much as mentioned before her, lest she should be seized with a desire to participate in them. Such restrictions seem to have been regarded with disapproval by many persons, and *Madame* declared that “she pitied the poor child,” but, having regard to the “poor child’s” tender years, there can be no doubt that Madame de Maintenon, upon whose advice they were, of course, imposed, acted judiciously.



## CHAPTER VIII

Madame de Maintenon—Widely divergent views in regard to her character—The probable truth—Extent of her influence considered—Her “life of slavery”—Her affection for children—She succumbs to the charms of the Princess Adélaïde—Education of the princess—Madame de Maintenon and Saint-Cyr—First visit of the princess to that institution—She becomes a frequent visitor, and shares in the studies and recreations of the pupils—Anecdotes of her life there—She takes part in a representation of Racine’s *Esther*—Madame Maintenon’s views on marriage—Her advice to the princess in reference to her future husband

SINCE Madame de Maintenon is destined to play a by no means unimportant part in the life of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, it may be as well for us to say something concerning her here; not in regard to her career, since her romantic story is sufficiently well known, but as to her character and influence.

During the last half-century, the popular conception of Madame de Maintenon, until then largely derived from the highly-coloured pages of Saint-Simon—who, by the way, had no personal knowledge of the woman whom he so rancorously assails—has undergone a remarkable change, and, in place of the scheming hypocrite who, foreseeing that, in her case, religion and virtue were the safest cards to play, passed from a youth of secret vice to a middle-age of ostentatious piety, and, after basely betraying her benefactress, Madame

de Montespan, contrived to bewitch a superstitious monarch into a humiliating subjection to her, the unacknowledged wife of Louis XIV is not infrequently represented as "a sort of courtly Jeanne d'Arc, divinely appointed to convert a licentious King from the error of his ways."

The truth, as we have pointed out in a previous work,<sup>1</sup> would appear to lie midway between these two extremes. Madame de Maintenon deserves neither the shameful aspersions of her enemies nor the extravagant praises of her friends. Her character was a singularly complex one, in which the two dominating traits were an intense religious conviction and a worldly prudence pushed to the verge of unscrupulousness. That she was ever guilty of the irregularities of which certain of her contemporaries accuse her is in the highest degree improbable; in the first place, because the charge rests on very unsatisfactory evidence; and, in the second, because such conduct is entirely alien to the character of a woman whom "every trustworthy record proves to have moved in a plane that diverged at right angles to the path which leads to sins of the flesh,"<sup>2</sup> and whose favourite maxim was that an irreproachable behaviour is also the cleverest in a worldly sense.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, to maintain, as her enthusi-

<sup>1</sup> See the author's "Madame de Montespan," from which, by the courtesy of Messrs. Harper & Brothers, we have been permitted to reproduce several passages.

<sup>2</sup> Cotter Morison, "Madame de Montespan: *an étude*."

<sup>3</sup> On the supposed irregularities of Madame de Maintenon, see our "Madame de Montespan" (p. 86), where the question of her relations with the Marquis de Villarceaux, whom Saint-Simon, *Madame*, and Ninon de l'Enclos assert to have been her lover, is discussed.

astic admirers insist on doing, that her whole conduct was dictated by the purest and most disinterested motives, that her sole object was the salvation of Louis XIV, will not bear the test of investigation. That she ardently desired to pluck the monarch as a brand from the burning is beyond question, but that she was fully alive to the material advantages which the post of keeper of his Majesty's conscience would confer is no less certain. The motives which guided her in this matter, as in every action of her life, were two, and two which are generally considered to be utterly incompatible—worldly advancement and eternal salvation. She would seem, in short, to have been of opinion that there were exceptions to the Scriptural precept concerning the impossibility of serving two masters, and that she might hold to the one without necessarily despising the other.

But let it not be supposed that it was worldly advancement in any vulgar sense that Madame de Maintenon desired. To give her her due, she set small store by the things to which other royal favourites attached so much importance; reasonable comfort in the present, reasonable security for the future, was all she demanded. But she loved the praise of men, and especially the praise of the godly. It was to her what *tabourets* and pensions and resplendent toilettes and eight-horse coaches and royal guards were to the Montespons and the Fontanges. And the praise of the godly she had indeed received: good measure, pressed down, running over. "All good men," writes M. Lavallée, "the Pope, the bishops, applauded the

victory of Madame de Maintenon, and considered that she had rendered a signal service to the King and to the State.”<sup>1</sup> “I am but too much extolled (*glorifiée*),” wrote the lady, with proud humility, “for certain good intentions which I owe to God.”

When, after the death of the Queen, Louis XIV, unwilling to expose the State to the inconveniences and dangers which a second family might entail, unable to dispense with a wife, and yet sincerely desirous of leading a regular life, decided to offer his hand to the keeper of his conscience, whose age prevented her from having children, and whose companionship had already become almost a necessity of his existence, her triumph was complete. Nor did the King ever have cause to regret an action, which, though never publicly acknowledged, shocked the prejudices of the great majority of his subjects and involved the sacrifice of some of his most cherished principles. He found in Madame de Maintenon a wife who, if she were no longer young, still retained many of the “thousand charms” of which Mlle de Scudéry speaks in her portrait of Lyrienne,<sup>2</sup> “reminding one of those last fair days of autumn, when the sun’s rays, though no longer dazzling, have none the less a penetrating softness,”<sup>3</sup>—a wife, amiable, self-sacrificing, discreet, disinterested, who, notwithstanding her narrow views, gave him much good counsel, and the value of whose moral support during the political and domestic misfortunes which

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance générale de Madame de Maintenon.*

<sup>2</sup> Mlle. de Scudéry, *Clélie*.

<sup>3</sup> Imbert de Saint-Amand, *les Femmes de Versailles : la Cour de Louis XIV.*

clouded the last years of his reign can scarcely be overestimated.

The extent of the influence exercised by Madame de Maintenon after her marriage with Louis XIV has been the subject of almost as much discussion as her character, and is by no means easy to determine. But we are inclined to think that in affairs of State it was really very small—infinitesimally small compared with that wielded by Madame de Pompadour in the succeeding reign—and that the charge so often brought against her of having pushed the King to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the persecution which accompanied that shameful and disastrous measure, is quite unfounded.<sup>1</sup> Louis XIV never let the reins of government out of his hands for a single moment; and, if he transacted business with his Ministers in her apartments, if he sometimes jestingly inquired: "What does your Solidity think about this matter?" he was quick to resent the slightest attempt on her Solidity's part to interfere in matters which he deemed outside the province of a woman, as Madame de Maintenon's own letters abundantly testify. Here, for instance, is one which she wrote,

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Maintenon undoubtedly approved of the Revocation itself, but so did practically all the most influential persons about the King, Colbert and Vauban alone excepted. The chief responsibility for the measure rests with Louvois and his father, Michel Le Tellier, and it had been resolved upon long before Madame de Maintenon was in a position to exercise much influence. Moreover, if she approved of the Revocation, she certainly did not approve of the steps taken to give effect to it, and, so far as she dared, she strove to obtain some mitigation of the severities practised against the unfortunate Huguenots. "I fear, Madame," observed the King to her on one occasion, "that the mildness with which you wish the Calvinists to be treated proceeds from some remaining sympathy with your former religion."



FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ, Marquise de Maintenon  
Née le 28. Novembre 1636. Décédée le 10. Avril 1719

FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ, MARQUISE DE MAINTENON  
FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PAINTING BY MIGNARD



in September 1698, to Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris :—

“The King will allow only his Ministers to talk to him about business. He was displeased because the Nuncio addressed himself to me. Make him understand the position once and for all, I implore you. I can only give general advice on occasions, and have no control over particular events, which are seldom spoken of before me. I should be well rewarded for the life of slavery I lead, if I could do some good. I can only groan, Monseigneur, over the turn matters are taking. . . . Pray tell the Nuncio that I do not venture to interfere in affairs of State, that my views are what he does me the honour of believing them to be, but that I am compelled to keep them to myself.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, if she possessed little or no political power, it is beyond question that the King made few Court or ecclesiastical appointments without consulting her; that her influence in such matters as the distribution of honours, and pensions and places was very great indeed, and that a word from her was sufficient to make or mar the fortune of any courtier. How else are we to account for the fact that, as she herself tells us, her apartment was like a crowded church, and that Ministers and Marshals and even members of the Royal Family were content to cool their heels in her ante-chamber until it was her good pleasure to receive them? How else for the virulence with which contemporaries like Saint-Simon and *Madame* have assailed her?

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance générale*, Letter of September 12, 1698.



But, despite her astonishing success, Madame de Maintenon was far from a happy woman. In her letter to the Cardinal de Noailles, she speaks of her "life of slavery," and her conversation with Madame de Glapion at Saint-Cyr in 1705 shows that this was no mere figure of speech. There was, indeed, scarcely an hour in the day which she could call her own. She seldom left her apartment, save to attend Mass, to drive with the King, or to visit Saint-Cyr; the most of the morning and afternoon was occupied in receiving persons who came to pay their court to her, in listening to the more or less vapid conversation of members of the Royal Family, all of whom visited her almost daily, and her voluminous correspondence; while the evening hours, which Louis XIV invariably passed in her apartments, were the most trying of all.

"When the King returns from the chase, he comes to me; my door is closed, and no one is allowed to enter. So I am alone with him, and have to listen to his troubles, if he happens to have any, and bear with his melancholy and his *vapeurs*. Sometimes he bursts into tears, which he cannot control, or else he complains of illness. He has no conversation. Then some Minister arrives, who is often the bearer of bad news, and the King works with him. If they wish me to be a third in their consultation, they call me. If not, I withdraw to a little distance, and it is then that I say my afternoon prayers. . . .

"While the King is still working, I sup; but it is not once in two months that I can do so at my leisure. I know that the King is alone, or that I have left him sad, or when M.

Chamillart<sup>1</sup> has almost finished with him, he sometimes sends and begs me to make haste. Another day, he wishes to show me something. In consequence, I am always hurried, and am forced to eat quickly. I have my fruit brought in with the meat, in order to save time.

“After this, as you may suppose, it is late. I have been up since six in the morning, and I have not had time to breathe freely the whole day. I am overcome with fatigue; I yawn . . . and at length I find myself so tired, that I can hold out no longer. Sometimes the King perceives it, and says: ‘You are very tired, are you not? You ought to go to bed.’ So I go to bed; my women come and undress me, but I know that the King wishes to say something and is waiting till they go; or some Minister is present, and he is afraid of being overheard by my women. That makes him ill at ease, and myself also. What can I do? I hurry, and to such an extent that I am almost faint; and you must know that all my life I have hated being hurried. . . . Well, at last I am in bed; I dismiss my women; the King approaches and sits down by my pillow. Although I am in bed, there are many things I require, since mine is not a glorified body without wants. But there is no one present whom I can ask for what I need; not one of my women. It is not because I could not have them; for the King is kindness itself, and, if he thought that I required one woman, he would put up with ten. But he never realises that I am uncomfortable. Since he is his own master everywhere, and does precisely what he pleases, he cannot imagine that any one should do otherwise, and believes that, if I ask for nothing, I require nothing. He

<sup>1</sup> Michel de Chamillart, Comptroller-General of Finance and Minister of War.

remains with me till he goes to supper. At ten or a quarter-past every one leaves me, and I take the relief of which I am in need ; but frequently the anxieties and fatigues I have endured during the day prevent me from sleeping."

Her lot would undoubtedly have been easier to bear if she had had any love for the man to whom she had dedicated her life. But, though she entertained for Louis XIV veneration, gratitude, and devotion, she did not love him. Nor is this difficult to understand. "Women," observes one of her biographers, "are seldom enamoured of the men to whom they owe their fortune. In general, they prefer to protect than to be protected. They find it sweeter to inspire gratitude than to experience it. What they like best of all, is to show their superiority, and precisely because their sex seems to be condemned by Nature to a position of dependence, they are happy when the rôles are inverted, when it is they who dominate, protect, oblige. Madame de Maintenon was too much indebted to Louis XIV to be in love with him." <sup>1</sup>

But, since she was a woman, and, moreover, a woman of sensibility, she must needs bestow her affection somewhere, and it was on children that she lavished it. "She was always devoted to children," writes her secretary and confidante, Mlle. d'Aumale, "and liked to see them behave naturally," and children so well understood this goodness that "they were more at their ease with her than with any one." Having no children of

<sup>1</sup> Imbert de Saint-Amand, *les Femmes de Versailles : la Cour de Louis XIV.*

her own, she was compelled to seek satisfaction for her maternal sentiments in devoting herself to those of other people. The first objects of her solicitude were the adulterine offspring of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, particularly the Duc du Maine, who probably owed his life to her devoted care, and for whom she always retained the deepest affection. Then, when they had passed out of her hands, certain of the *demoiselles* of Saint-Cyr became very near to her heart, among whom may be mentioned Madame de Glapion, the recipient of the confidence we have just cited, Mlle. d'Aumale, and a Mlle. de Pinchré, to whom she was so much attached that she permitted her to address her as "*maman*." Finally, the little Princess of Savoy appeared upon the scene, before whose charms she succumbed almost as easily as had the King.

The success of the princess in conquering the good graces of Madame de Maintenon was undoubtedly facilitated by the deference which, from the very first, she was careful to pay that lady, and the docility with which she listened to her counsels. "I do what you order me about Madame de Maintenon," she writes to *Madame Royale*. "I have much affection for her, and confidence in her advice. Believe, my dear grandmother, all that she writes to you about me, though I do not deserve it; but I should like you to have that pleasure, for I count on your affection, and I never forget all the proofs that you have given me of it."

The girl solved very happily the somewhat delicate question of how she was to address Madame

de Maintenon by calling her "*ma tante*," combining thus prettily, observes Saint-Simon, rank and friendship. According to Languet de Gergy, she was merely following the example of the lady's niece, Mlle. d'Aubigné,—daughter of Madame de Maintenon's dissipated brother, Charles—who naturally addressed her thus.<sup>1</sup> But the Contessa della Rocca points out "that the Piedmontese equivalent '*magna*' was in common use in families to denote women whose age, position, degree of relation, or friendship entitled them to a certain superiority, and that the princess no doubt imported the custom from her own country."<sup>2</sup>

Madame de Maintenon quickly perceived that the task of completing the education of her charge would be no sinecure; since, from a scholastic point of view, it could scarcely be said to have begun. The girl was surprisingly ignorant, and, though she began by giving her professors of music and dancing, she soon decided that a writing-master was a more immediate necessity. However, though the princess really seems to have taken pains, and assures her grandmother, some months after her marriage, that she was sensible of "the disgrace of a married woman [*ætæt* 13] having a master for so common a thing,"<sup>3</sup> writing and orthography were, as we have already mentioned, obstacles which, to the end of her days, she never succeeded in more than partially overcoming.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la fondation de la maison de Saint-Cyr et de Madame de Maintenon*, cited by M. d'Haussonville.

<sup>2</sup> Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et la Reine d'Espagne*.

<sup>3</sup> The Duchesse de Bourgogne to Madame Royale, May 26, 1698, in Gagnière.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 37 *supra*.

Madame de Maintenon was much exercised in her mind to find that the ignorance of the little princess extended to history, a subject which, in those days, played an important part in the curriculum of all royal personages. To remedy this omission, she had recourse to the good offices of Dangeau, whom she persuaded to give her Highness lessons in Roman History—recommending for that purpose the *Histoire de l'Empire romain* of Nicolas Coëffeteau, “because the chapters are short, and our princess does not care for what is long.”<sup>1</sup> In another letter, she begs Dangeau to endeavour to cure the princess of a little mocking laugh to which she was addicted, and advises him to read her a certain conversation on the subject of raillery which she herself had composed for the benefit of the young ladies of Saint-Cyr. It would be interesting to know how this versatile personage acquitted himself in his new rôle, but unfortunately his modesty prevents him from enlightening us.

In the eyes of Madame de Maintenon, the moral and religious training of the princess was naturally of far greater importance than the purely intellectual. This she had the satisfaction of finding had been as efficient as the other had been the reverse, and that the moment the child was assured that anything she proposed doing was “sinful,” she invariably replied: “If it is sinful, I will not do it.” However, since her charge was now at an age when the mind is peculiarly susceptible to new impressions, and the younger ladies of the Royal Family certainly did not share her horror of sin, Madame de Maintenon decided to

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance générale*, Letter of June 21, 1697.

remove her as far as possible from the sphere of their influence, and, as we have mentioned, to place a veto on certain pleasures which she held to be highly undesirable for one so young.

At the same time, with her usual sagacity in dealing with young girls, she encouraged such amusements as might be safely indulged in, and, recognising that the child naturally required the companionship of those nearer her own age than the ladies of her Household, resolved that she should spend as much time as possible at Saint-Cyr.

A few words concerning this celebrated institution may not be out of place.

The idea of rendering assistance to poor girls of gentle birth, and protecting them from the dangers through which she herself had passed, was one which Madame de Maintenon had long cherished, and for some years before her marriage to Louis XIV she had maintained, first at Rueil, and afterwards at Noisy, an institution in which a number of the daughters of the *petite noblesse* were educated in a "Christian, reasonable, and noble" manner. Lack of funds, however, naturally prevented her from accepting more than a small proportion of the candidates who presented themselves for admission, or from giving those whom she selected all the advantages which she wished them to enjoy. But in 1684—the year of her marriage—she persuaded the King to perfect the undertaking, and to build and endow for the benefit of her *protégées* a house at Saint-Cyr, where her benevolent designs might have full scope.

This house, constructed from designs by

Mansart, at a cost of 1,200,000 livres, was completed by July 1686, when the school was transferred thither, and contained accommodation for some two hundred and fifty pupils<sup>1</sup> and their mistresses. The latter, who were called "*dames de Saint-Louis*," were nuns, and were recruited, as occasion arose, by postulants selected from among the elder scholars. The first Superior was Madame de Brinon, a member of the Ursuline community.

Although the mistresses of Saint-Cyr were under vows, and Madame de Maintenon lent a sympathetic ear to the appeal of any *demoiselle* who felt that religion was her vocation, the aim of Saint-Cyr was not to manufacture nuns, but "to bring the girls up piously to the duties of their condition," that is to say, to people the châteaux and manor-houses of provincial France with a race of high-principled, practical young women, who would make excellent wives and mothers, and who would not disdain "to see that the cattle, the turkeys, and the fowls were properly tended, and occasionally to lend a hand themselves." Indeed, during the first few years of Saint-Cyr's existence, the education given there seems to have been conducted on sound and judicious lines, and the results to have been eminently satisfactory from every point of view.

However, after the remarkable success which

<sup>1</sup> The pupils were divided, according to their age, into four classes, named after the colour of the ribbons which they wore to distinguish them. The Red Class contained the youngest girls, from seven to eleven years of age; the Green Class, those from eleven to fourteen; the Yellow Class, those from fourteen to seventeen; and the Blue Class, those from seventeen to twenty.



attended the pupils' representations of Racine's *Esther* before the King and the Court, which led to several of the damsels being asked in marriage, Madame de Maintenon learned, to her profound consternation, that a spirit of worldliness and frivolity — nay even of coquetry — was gaining ground among her *protégées*; that some of them declined to sing Latin chants in church, from fear of injuring their pronunciation, and that they were "becoming more proud and haughty than would be seemly in great princesses." She therefore decided that she had been "building on sand," and that the harm which had been done could only be repaired by a complete change in the system of education. From that time, the regulations to which the girls were subjected became much more severe, and, from fear of corrupting the heart, much that might have served to enlarge the mind was banished from the curriculum. The result of thus permitting her scruples to get the better of the sound judgment which she had hitherto shown was fatal to the best interests of the institution, and the remark made by Louis xv, more than half a century later, that Saint-Cyr produced nothing but prudes, was probably not without justification, though perhaps *le Bien-Aimé* can scarcely be regarded as an impartial critic.

Saint-Cyr was the pride and joy of Madame de Maintenon's life; she regarded it as her work, her creation, her own domain, wherein she had at last succeeded in producing the perfect ideal that she cherished, and her devotion to it amounted to a positive passion. "Sanctify your house," said

she to the *dames de Saint-Louis*, "and through your house the whole kingdom. I would shed my blood to be able to communicate the education of Saint-Cyr to all religious houses which educate young girls. In comparison with Saint-Cyr, everything else is foreign to me, and my nearest relatives are less dear to me than the least of the good daughters of the community." Whenever she could escape for a few hours from the tedium of the Court, she repaired to this beloved retreat for rest and consolation. "When I see the door closing behind me as I enter here," she once observed to Madame de Glapion, "I am full of joy, and I never depart without pain. Often on returning to Versailles, I think: 'This is the world, and apparently the world for which Jesus Christ would not pray on the eve of His death. . . . Here all the passions are in action: self-interest, ambition, envy, pleasure.' I confess to you that this reflection inspires me with a sense of sadness and horror for that place where, nevertheless, I have to live."

However, as one of her most profound admirers is fain to admit, it was not religion alone which made her prefer the convent to the palace. "At Versailles, she is constrained, incommoded; she obeys. At Saint-Cyr, she is free, she commands, she governs. . . . At Versailles, she possibly regrets the crown and the ermine mantle which are lacking to her. At Saint-Cyr, she has no need of them, for there her sovereignty is undisputed. Her lightest words are accepted as oracles. Her letters, read in the presence of the whole community, evoke universal admiration.

The inmates to whom they are addressed boast of them as titles of glory. Madame de Maintenon is almost the Queen of France. She is absolutely Queen of Saint-Cyr.”<sup>1</sup>

About a fortnight after the Princess Adélaïde's arrival at Versailles—to be exact, on November 25, 1696—Madame de Maintenon took her to Saint-Cyr for the first time, where her visit naturally aroused the liveliest interest. She had decided that, on this occasion, the princess was to be received with all the honours due to her rank, and the whole community, in long cloaks, met her at the door of the cloister, where the Superior, Madame du Peyrou, bade her welcome in a complimentary speech. All the *demoiselles* were drawn up in a double line, through which she was escorted to the church, and afterwards shown over the refectory, the dormitories, the class-rooms, and the rest of the establishment. The reception concluded with a dialogue, recited by the pupils, which had been composed for the occasion by one of the *dames*, and “was seasoned with delicate praise.”<sup>2</sup>

The princess was delighted at all she saw, and on her return to Versailles went to find the King, to tell him how much she had enjoyed herself. She was eager to return, and, as Madame de Maintenon was only too pleased to gratify her wish, she soon became a kind of *habituée* of Saint-Cyr, and went there at least once a week. Sometimes she accompanied Madame de Maintenon on her afternoon visits, but more often she went early

<sup>1</sup> Imbert de Saint-Amand, *les Femmes de Versailles : la Cour de Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr.*

in the morning and remained all day, sharing the lessons, meals, and recreations of the pupils. On these occasions, she was treated without ceremony, though always with respect, wore the ordinary dress of the school, and answered to the name of Mlle. de Lastic, which was that of a pupil who had recently left."

The *Mémoires* of the *dames* of Saint-Cyr furnish us with some interesting and amusing details concerning the visits of the princess:

"She was good, affable, gracious to everybody, interesting herself in the different duties of the *dames*, and in all the occupations and studies of the *demoiselles*; subjecting herself readily to all the regulations of the establishment, even to silence; running and playing with the "Reds" in the long alleys of the garden; going with them to choir, confession, and catechism; appearing also at the novitiate and following its austere exercises, and even at the assemblies of the Chapter, in order that she might learn to take interest in the community."

Although the princess's age entitled her to join the Green Class, which, as we have said, was composed of girls from eleven to fourteen years of age, her education had been so neglected that it was found necessary to place her among the "Reds," whose instruction was limited to the "three R's," the elements of grammar, a little Scriptural History, and the Catechism. Since it was the custom to test each pupil's knowledge of the Catechism in the presence of her classmates, and great importance was attached to proficiency therein, the *dames* always took

the precaution of warning the princess of the questions which were to be put to her, in order that she might learn the answers by heart and fire the rest with a spirit of emulation.

Among her Highness's favourite companions, was Madame de Maintenon's niece, Mlle. d'Aubigné, already mentioned. Notwithstanding their affection for each other, however, quarrels between them appear to have been of not infrequent occurrence, and sometimes they even came to blows. On one such occasion, it happened that the affray was interrupted by the arrival of a message from Père Lecomte, the princess's confessor, who had sent to remind the young lady that it was her day for confession, and that he was awaiting her convenience. "Oh!" cried Mlle. d'Aubigné, with a malicious smile, "how my conscience would prick if it were I who had been sent for to go to confession!"

À propos of confession at Saint-Cyr, Madame de Caylus relates an amusing anecdote, which shows that the austere atmosphere of that establishment was sometimes powerless to quell the mischievous spirit of childhood. One afternoon, when the princess came there in the company of Madame de Maintenon, she found that a general confession was in progress, and accordingly went into the confessional and knelt down, but without saying who she was. Now, on this occasion, she was not wearing the simple uniform of the inmates, but the costly gown in which she had come from Versailles; and the worthy priest, hearing the rustle of silk, and concluding that his penitent was some fashionable sinner from the Court, who

preferred not to reveal her identity, proceeded to administer such admonition as he considered needful. The princess, choking with suppressed merriment, heard him to the end, and then ran off to find Madame de Maintenon. "*Ma tante*," cried she, "I am enchanted with that confessor; he told me that I was worse than Magdalene!"

Although the alarming consequences which had followed the representations of *Esther* and the invasion of the profane had determined Madame de Maintenon never again, under any circumstances, to leave the door of her dovecot ajar, she still permitted the two plays which Racine had written at her request<sup>1</sup> to be performed occasionally at Saint-Cyr, on the understanding that every one not connected with the establishment should be rigorously excluded.<sup>2</sup> Thus, on January 30, 1697,

<sup>1</sup> The second play was *Athalie*, which was played before the King and five or six persons whom he had brought with him. This was the last occasion on which profane society was admitted to a theatrical performance at Saint-Cyr.

<sup>2</sup> Her instructions to the *dames* on this point were very explicit: "Confine these amusements to your institution, and do not give them publicity under any pretext whatsoever. It will always be dangerous to permit men to see well-made young girls, who increase the attractions of their persons by playing their parts well. Suffer, then, no man to be present, rich or poor, young or old, priest or layman; no, nor even a saint, if there be such a thing on earth"—Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*.

Madame de Maintenon, we may here observe, always seems to have entertained a poor opinion of the opposite sex, and, as she grew older, to have regarded the most of those who composed it as so many roaring lions seeking whom they might devour. "Flee from men," she told the *demoiselles*, "as from your mortal enemies. Never be alone with them. Take no pleasure in hearing that you are pretty, amiable, or have a fine voice. The world is a malignant deceiver, which seldom means what it says; and the majority of men who say these things to girls do it in the hope of finding some means of ruining them."

a representation of *Esther* was given, and the Princess Adélaïde coaxed Madame de Maintenon into giving her consent to her appearing in it. As, however, she was of course too young to fill any of the leading parts, she had to content herself with a very minor rôle—that of “*une jeune Israélite*.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the pleasure she derived from having taken part in a representation of “that adorable play”—as Saint-Beuve rightly terms Racine’s masterpiece—no doubt sufficed to make the day a memorable one in her life.

Madame de Maintenon, of course, did not neglect to give her charge frequent counsels as to her conduct when she became Duchesse de Bourgogne, and particularly in regard to her relations with her future husband. Entertaining as she did so poor an opinion of men, her attitude towards matrimony was naturally pessimistic, and, indeed, she appears to have regarded it as a kind of necessary evil. Thus, while deprecating the disinclination of certain of the *dames de Saint-Louis* to speak to their pupils upon the subject as “false delicacy,” she impressed upon them the duty of fortifying the girls’ minds against any illusions which they might be inclined to harbour, and representing marriage as a condition in which loyalty to her husband’s interests, “a sincere and discreet zeal for his salvation,” the management of her servants, economy in her household, and the care and education of her children, must be a woman’s paramount considerations; while love, companionship, and sympathy were of altogether secondary importance; in a word, as one of ceaseless and

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau.

arduous responsibility, with few, if any, compensating advantages. "When once they are married," she writes, "they will discover that it is no laughing matter. You must accustom them to speak of it seriously, and even sadly, for I think that it is the state in which one experiences the most tribulations, even in the most favourable circumstances." And in her instructions to the girls themselves, she observes: "There is no novitiate to prepare you for marriage. It is difficult to foresee how far a husband may carry his authority. One finds few good ones; in truth, I have only known two, and were I to say only one, I should not be exaggerating."

Such counsels were scarcely calculated to inspire her *protégées* with any consuming desire to enter the Holy Estate, and it is not altogether surprising to learn that many of them preferred to become the brides of Heaven, rather than those of His Majesty's lieges. Nor was the advice which she gave the Princess Adélaïde, "in reference to *Monsieur* her husband," though certainly judicious, particularly exhilarating. For instance, she tells her that she must not expect perfect happiness; that she must not expect her husband to love her as much as she loved him, "since men, as a general rule, are less affectionate than women," and that she must pray to God that she might not be jealous. If, however, her husband was so ill-advised as to give her cause for that, then she must not seek to win him back by complaints and reproaches, but by sweetness and patience. "But I hope," she adds, "that the Duc de Bourgogne will not subject you to such trials."



## CHAPTER IX

Sentiments of the Duc de Bourgogne in regard to the Princess Adélaïde—Fénelon and Madame Guyon—Fénelon appointed Archbishop of Cambrai—The conference at Issy—The *Maximes des Saints*—Indignation of Louis XIV—Disgrace of Fénelon—Preparation for the marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne and the Princess Adélaïde—Ruinous rivalry between the courtiers in the matter of dress—Completion of the future Duchesse de Bourgogne's Household—The marriage—The wedding-night—The ball of December 11, 1697

MADAME DE MAINTENON would perhaps have been more optimistic in regard to the matrimonial future of the Princess Adélaïde, if she had been aware of the sentiments of the Duc de Bourgogne towards that young lady. Although the prince was only permitted to see his bride-elect once a week, and always under the Argus-eye of the Duchesse du Lude, he had soon conceived for her a warm interest and affection, which was ere long to ripen into a passionate devotion ; and, a few days after the princess's arrival at Versailles, we find Govone writing to the Duke of Savoy :—

“ I was present yesterday at the conversation which the princess had for half an hour with the Duc de Bourgogne, which is fixed regularly for each Saturday, in order to inspire him with a desire to return to her. From the outset the young couple began to converse familiarly, and concluded more

sadly, when they perceived that the moment when they must separate was at hand.”<sup>1</sup>

It was well for the Duc de Bourgogne that he was able to contemplate his approaching marriage with such satisfaction, since it was to be preceded by one of the greatest trials of his life: in the summer of 1697, his beloved tutor Fénelon, to whom he owed so incalculable a debt, fell into disgrace, and was banished from Court.

Shortly before his nomination as preceptor to the Duc de Bourgogne, Fénelon had made the acquaintance of that singular *illuminée*, Madame Guyon, authoress of *le Moyen court et facile de faire l'oraison*, *l'Exposition du Cantique des Cantiques*, and several other mystical works, in which she expounded her views concerning the inner life. Although not a professed follower of Molinos, Madame Guyon favoured his doctrines at least to the extent of maintaining that, in the state of perfect contemplation of God, the soul resigns itself so entirely to the divine will, and the love of God is so purified from all personal considerations, that it cares not whether it be damned or saved; and there can be no doubt that, from the orthodox point of view, her teaching was distinctly dangerous.

With this lady, who joined to her intellectual attainments a great personal charm, Fénelon eventually formed a “*lien d'âme*,”<sup>2</sup> and, under her influence,

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of November 16, 1696, published by Gagnière.

<sup>2</sup> “*Il me semble*,” says Madame Guyon, in her autobiography, “*que mon âme a un rapport entier avec la sienne, et ces paroles de David pour Jonathas: que son âme étoit collée à celle de David, me paroissoient propres à cette union.*” In the theological war which subsequently arose, some of Fénelon’s enemies did not hesitate

began to develop "a taste for refined and subtle piety suited only for choice souls,"<sup>1</sup> and to compose little mystical treatises of his own. These were freely circulated at Saint-Cyr, to which, on Fénelon's recommendation of her as a "prodigy of saintliness," Madame de Maintenon had granted Madame Guyon free access, and, amid such congenial surroundings, the new mysticism made rapid progress.

In 1694, Madame de Maintenon's confessor, Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, who had become *directeur* of Saint-Cyr, growing alarmed at the disturbing influence which Madame Guyon's doctrines were exercising upon his flock, subjected her works to a searching examination, and, having found them "full of dangerous errors and suspicious novelties," intimated to the lady that her visits to Saint-Cyr would no longer be tolerated, and persuaded Madame de Maintenon to cease all relations with her.

Fénelon, without abjuring the opinions which he held in common with Madame Guyon, recommended her to submit her writings to a commission composed of Bossuet, Louis de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, who soon afterwards became Archbishop of Paris, and Tronson, his old tutor at Saint-Sulpice, and promised that he himself would abide by its decision ; indeed, his conduct at this stage of the affair was marked by such prudence and moderation, that

to assert that there was something more than spiritual sympathy between him and the lady, and Père de la Rue, an anti-Quietist Jesuit and a friend of Bossuet, compared them in the pulpit to Abélard and Héloïse ; but for such a charge there does not appear to have been the smallest justification.

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve.

most persons regarded him merely as the victim of the errors or indiscretions of his friend.

Nevertheless, his appointment in February 1695, at Madame de Maintenon's suggestion, to the vacant archbishopric of Cambrai, was probably dictated as much by a desire to remove him to a distance from the Court as by the wish to find a suitable reward for the great services he had rendered in the education of the Duc de Bourgogne; and it was undoubtedly a sore disappointment to his disciples, who had confidently anticipated that when Harlay de Chanvallon, the aged Archbishop of Paris, died, Fénelon would step into his shoes.

Louis XIV, who does not appear as yet to have had any suspicion how deeply his grandson's preceptor was compromised by the conduct of Madame Guyon—Madame de Maintenon, aware that she was herself to blame for having permitted that lady's doctrines to take root at Saint-Cyr, was naturally anxious to hush the matter up—would have been willing to release the new prelate from the obligation of residing in his diocese until the education of the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers was finished. But Fénelon, feeling the impossibility of reconciling such neglect of his episcopal duties with his conscience, declined his Majesty's offer, and announced his intention of residing at Cambrai for the full nine months prescribed by the Council of Trent, and devoting the remainder of the year to his pupils.

In the following August, he left the Court to take up his duties at Cambrai, but, even while absent, he continued to direct the studies of the young

princes, his instructions on every point being faithfully followed by Beauvilliers and the *sous-précepteur*, the Abbé de Fleury. However, as matters fell out, this temporary separation from the Duc de Bourgogne was but the prelude to a complete severance between tutor and pupil.

After his nomination to the see of Cambrai, Fénelon had taken part in the conference of divines which met at Issy, nominally to examine the works of Madame Guyon, but really for the purpose of a general investigation of the new spirituality.

The report drawn up by this commission was of such a nature that he at first refused to subscribe to it ; but, after it had been amended so as to meet his objections to some extent, he signed, though with great reluctance.

But Fénelon felt that the matter could not be permitted to rest here. Bossuet was pursuing the unfortunate Madame Guyon with an intemperate zeal which could not but be repugnant to one who entertained for her the greatest sympathy and respect ; and he ascertained that he was contemplating a work whereby he intended to inflict the *coup de grâce* upon her already discredited effusions.

Partly from a chivalrous desire to defend his friend, and partly from a belief that her complete discomfiture might involve his own discredit, and ruin all hope of his ever realising the political ambitions which he had so long cherished, he determined to constitute himself her champion, and to anticipate the attack of Bossuet by a treatise in her defence.

This work—the famous *Maximes des Saints*

*sur la vie intérieure*, published in February 1697—and Bossuet's trenchant reply in his *Instruction sur les états d'oraison*, fanned the dying embers of the Guyon affair into a furious blaze, which speedily consumed the remains of Fénelon's favour in high circles. Louis XIV, although his ignorance of theological subtleties would have moved any junior student at Saint-Sulpice to irreverent mirth,<sup>1</sup> had always piqued himself upon his orthodoxy, and having put down Jansenism with a ruthless hand, he was not disposed to show himself more complaisant towards Quietism. Accordingly, at the end of July, he wrote to Innocent III to denounce the *Maximes des Saints* as a "very bad and dangerous book," and, a week later, without waiting for the Pope's decision, sent orders to Fénelon, who was then at Versailles, to retire to his diocese and to remain there. If we are to believe Proyart, the Duc de Bourgogne, who had an audience of the King that same day, threw himself at his Majesty's feet and implored him not to separate him from the man whom he had come to regard almost as a father. To which his Majesty replied that no other course was possible, since it was "a question of the purity of the Faith," adding: "Monsieur de Meaux [Bossuet] knows more about this matter than either you or I."

Although the disgrace of Fénelon was followed

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon asserts that, in religious matters, he was as "ignorant as a child," while *Madame* declares that "it was impossible for a man to be more ignorant of religion than the King was." They probably exaggerate, but there can be no doubt that, for "the eldest son of the Church," Louis XIV's knowledge of theology was deplorably deficient.

by the dismissal of nearly all the officers of the Duc de Bourgogne's Household who had enjoyed his confidence, Beauvilliers retained his post, and, through the medium of the *gouverneur's* brother-in-law, the Duc de Chevreuse, a devoted admirer of the exiled archbishop, the latter still continued, to some extent, to direct the life and studies of his former pupil. As for that prince, though for several years he strictly obeyed the orders of the King, whose wishes he held to be "an emanation of the divine will," to hold no communication with Fénelon, time and absence, as we shall see hereafter, seem only to have strengthened the affection and esteem which he entertained for him.

That but for the unauthorised publication of *Télémaque*,<sup>1</sup> under the allegorical disguise of which Louis XIV, notwithstanding the author's denials, persisted in recognising a satire against his own principles of government, it is probable that the King, despite his zeal for the "purity of the Faith," might have been ultimately induced to pardon Fénelon. But the appearance of that work effectually destroyed all hopes of the archbishop regaining the royal favour, and he remained in disgrace for the rest of his life.

It will be remembered that the marriage-contract of the Princess Adélaïde and the Duc de Bourgogne, signed at Turin on September 15, 1696, stipulated that their union should take place so soon as the princess had completed her twelfth year, although it was, of course, understood that for some time after its celebration the marriage

<sup>1</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.*

would be one in name only. Louis XIV, delighted to find in his future grand-daughter an intelligence and self-possession beyond her years, and impatient for her to take her place in the ceremonies and pleasures of the Court, had, on the morrow of her arrival in France, announced his intention of marrying her the very day after she was twelve years old, that is to say, on December 7, 1697; and, in point of fact, the auspicious event was finally fixed for that date.<sup>1</sup>

For fully two months previously nothing was heard of at Versailles but the approaching marriage, the preparations for which were marked by a lavishness altogether unprecedented, even in the annals of that prodigal Court. The King, having been injudicious enough to express one evening a hope that the balls which were to follow the marriage would be brilliant affairs, every one appeared to consider it a point of honour to eclipse his or her neighbour, and "there was no longer any question of consulting either one's purse or one's rank."<sup>2</sup> The gazettes—for let it not be imagined that the sartorial expert is the exclusive product of modern journalism—were full of eloquent descriptions of the ravishing confections which were to be worn by this or that noble dame; the *couturières* of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue de Richelieu laboured day and night, and did not

<sup>1</sup> But we learn, from the despatches of Ferrero to the Duke of Savoy, that the 10th had been the date originally decided upon, and that it was changed to the 7th, because, since that day fell upon a Saturday, the Parisians would thus have two days for rejoicings.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon. The chronicler tells us that his own and his wife's habiliments cost 20,000 livres.



forget to raise their prices. to an extent which, in ordinary times, would have been considered preposterous, but were now accepted without protest ; the jewellers' shops on the Quai des Orfèvres were besieged by persons in quest of costly gems wherewith to enhance the splendour of their apparel ; and so great was the demand for *coiffeurs* that twenty louis were readily offered for the services of one of these artists for a single hour on the day of the marriage. Not a few of those who participated in this insane rivalry saw ruin staring them in the face, but, since to a courtier of Louis XIV a financial *débâcle* was always preferable to social extinction, it is doubtful if this had the effect of curtailing their outlay by so much as a sol.

Although most of the chief offices of the future Duchesse de Bourgogne's Household had been filled prior to her arrival in France, several important posts still remained to be allotted, among which were those of first almoner, first *maître d'hôtel*, secretary, *surintendant*, physician, and surgeon. The services of Bossuet in exposing the fallacies of the *Maximes des Saints* were recognised by his nomination to the office of first almoner—an appointment which, as may be supposed, was viewed with anything but a favourable eye by the Duc de Bourgogne ; but the other charges were put up for sale, and realised sums which, in view of the heavy expenditure which the marriage entailed, must have been very welcome to the Treasury, the Marquis de Villacerf paying no less than 300,000 livres for the honour of supervising the princess's cuisine. Many of the minor posts

were disposed of in the same manner, but the King reserved a certain number of these for persons who had been in the service of the late Dauphine, to compensate them for the pecuniary loss they had suffered through the premature death of their mistress. Nothing was neglected to make the entourage of the princess in every way worthy of a future Queen of France. Her Household, including the staff of her stables, numbered at least five hundred persons ; her plate, her linen, and all the appointments of her table were of the most costly description ; her liveries, resplendent with gold and silver lace ; her carriages, hardly inferior to those of the King ; while Tessé, in his quality of first equerry, despatched agents in every direction, even so far as Naples and The Hague, in search of horses worthy to draw these magnificent equipages, and eventually nearly fifty splendid animals were got together.

The eventful day arrived. Soon after eleven o'clock, the princes and princesses and the principal ladies of the Court assembled in the bedchamber of the Princess Adélaïde. At half-past eleven, the Duc de Bourgogne, accompanied by the Duc de Beauvilliers, was conducted thither by the Marquis de Blainville, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, and our old acquaintance Desgranges, Master of the Ceremonies, and took a seat near his betrothed, who was still at her toilette. The duke wore a suit of black velvet, with a mantle of the same, which was embroidered in gold and lined with cloth of silver, likewise embroidered with gold, but of a very fine embroidery. He was in doublet and open hose, and covered with lace, "with broad

garters, ribbons on his shoes, and an aigrette in his hat." <sup>1</sup>

Presently a message arrived to say that the Council had broken up, and that the King was awaiting the bride in the Galerie des Glaces. The Duc de Bourgogne then gave his hand to the princess, whose dress was "of cloth of silver, embroidered in silver, with a set of rubies and pearls," and she left her chamber, Dangeau, her *chevalier d'honneur*, supporting her dress on one side, and Tessé on the other ; while an exempt of the Guards staggered beneath the weight of her enormous train.

In the gallery they found the King and the whole Court assembled. All, men and women alike, wore costumes of the utmost magnificence, and the princesses were literally covered with jewels. "Never had splendour of apparel been carried so far." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, December 1697.

<sup>2</sup> We extract from the *Mercur*, which devotes some fifty pages to an account of the marriage and the fêtes which followed it, a description of some of the wedding garments, which may not be without interest : "The King wore a suit of cloth of gold, relieved on the seams by a rich and heavy gold embroidery. *Monseigneur* was habited in gold brocade, with gold embroidery on the seams. . . . *Monsieur's* dress was superb. His coat was of black velvet, with button-holes of heavy gold embroidery and large diamond buttons. His waistcoat was of cloth of gold, and the rest of his costume of a like sumptuousness. The Duc de Chartres wore a suit of grey velvet, very tastefully embroidered, and enriched with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. . . . The dresses of *Madame*, the Duchesse de Chartres, and *Madame la Duchesse*, were of the most beautiful cloth of gold, embroidered in gold as heavily and richly as possible. Their *coiffures* and their persons were covered with all kinds of jewels. The dress of *Mademoiselle* [Élisabeth Charlotte d'Orléans, *Monsieur's* daughter by his second marriage], which aroused universal admiration, was of green velvet, exquisitely

The procession to the chapel was at once formed. First came the bridal pair ; next, *Monseigneur* and *Monsieur*, their nearest relatives ; then the King, who was followed, by his Majesty's orders, by the Marchese Ferrero della Marmora, the Ambassador of Savoy, accompanied by the *introducteur* of the Ambassadors ;<sup>1</sup> then the princess and princesses, headed by *Madame* ; while the nobles and ladies in the order of their rank brought up the rear. But let us listen to the *Mercur* :

“ The Court in this magnificence passed through the grand gallery and the State apartments, descended the Grand Staircase, and entered the chapel. In all the apartments the crowd of spectators was very great, but in the chapel they kept excellent order. The Duc de Bourgogne and the Princess of Savoy knelt on cushions opposite one another at the foot of the altar steps. The Cardinal de Coislin, Bishop-elect of Metz, first almoner to the King, performed the betrothal ceremony,<sup>2</sup> which was followed by that of the marriage. In both these ceremonies the Duc de Bourgogne turned towards the King and *Monseigneur* to ask their consent ; and the Princess of Savoy did likewise, and also turned towards *Monsieur* and

embroidered in gold, with a parure of diamonds and rubies. That of Mlle. de Condé [Anne Louise de Bourbon, daughter of *Monsieur le Prince*] was of carnation-coloured velvet, with gold and silver embroidery and many jewels.”

<sup>1</sup> Ferrero to the Duke of Savoy, December 7, 1697, in Gagnière. Ferrero's despatch leaves one in doubt as to whether the rest of the Diplomatic Corps walked in the procession, though he tells us that places were reserved for them in the chapel.

<sup>2</sup> This was a deviation from custom. When Princes or Princesses of the Blood married, the betrothal ceremony was generally performed the evening before the wedding in the King's private apartments.

*Madame* to demand theirs as well.<sup>1</sup> The Duc de Bourgogne placed a ring on the finger of the Princess of Savoy, and presented her with thirteen pieces of gold. Then the cardinal began the Mass. At the Offertory, the Duc de Bourgogne and the Princess of Savoy went to the offering, after having made the usual obeisances to the altar, to the King, and to *Monseigneur*. The Marquis de Blainville presented to the Duc de Bourgogne a wax taper and ten louis d'or, and M. des Granges did the same to the Princess of Savoy, together with an equal number of louis. After the Mass, the King signed the register of the parish, and the Dauphin, the Duc de Bourgogne, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the Duc d'Anjou, the Duc de Berry, *Monsieur* and *Madame*, the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres, *Monsieur le Prince* and *Madame la Princesse*, and the other princes and princesses signed after him."<sup>2</sup>

The procession then reformed and returned to the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, by which title we must henceforth speak of the Princess Adélaïde. In the ante-chamber a large table in the form of a horse-shoe had been arranged, at which the King, the bridal pair, and all the princes and princesses, to the number of twenty-one, dined, the guests including the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse, "who, up to the present, had not enjoyed this honour"<sup>3</sup> and the Duchesse de Verneuil, widow of Henri de Bourbon, Henri iv's

<sup>1</sup> "When the moment arrived to say 'Yes,' the *fiancée* made four reverences, and the *fiancé* two, since he asked the consent of his father and grandfather only; while the *fiancée* asked the consent of *Monsieur* and myself also as grandparents." Letter of *Madame* to the Electress of Hanover.

<sup>2</sup> *Mercure*.

<sup>3</sup> Ferrero to the Duke of Savoy, December 7, 1697.



MARIE ADÉLAÏDE OF SAVOY, DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE, AT THE  
TIME OF HER MARRIAGE

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DESROCHER, IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM



son by Henriette d'Entragues.<sup>1</sup> "So that," observes Saint-Simon, "M. de Verneuil became thus 'Prince of the Blood,' so many years after his death, without having suspected it."<sup>2</sup>

During dinner, it was remarked that the Duc de Bourgogne cast many affectionate glances in the direction of his bride. "I see my brother ogling his little wife," whispered the Duc de Berry to *Madame*, who sat next him. "But, if I wished, I could ogle quite as well; you have to look steadily, sideways." Saying which, he proceeded to imitate his brother in so droll a manner, that *Madame* was quite unable to restrain her merriment.

Upon leaving table, the company returned to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's bedchamber, where the King remained a few minutes and then retired to his own apartments. The Duc de Bourgogne and the other princes also withdrew, and the duchess was able to lay aside her heavy bridal robes and rest for a couple of hours. At six o'clock, however, she was compelled to don them again, in order to receive the Ambassador of Savoy, who came to compliment her on her marriage, and present to her several Italian nobles, who had come to assist at the ceremony and the fêtes. At a quarter past seven, followed by a number of ladies, she repaired to the King's apartments, where Louis XIV was awaiting her, to receive James II and his consort. Upon their Majesties' arrival, the whole Court moved off to the gallery to see the fireworks, which had been prepared at the end of the Swiss lake.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrero to the Duke of Savoy, December 8, 1697.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires*.



“Then, in the grand gallery, illuminated by lustres,<sup>1</sup> which shed their dazzling light on the robes of the ladies and the costumes laced with gold and silver embroidery and covered with precious stones, appeared the King, holding by the hand the Queen of England, who, together with the King of England, he conducted to the windows overlooking the garden, where, in the midst of that great sheet of water, there burst forth the most magnificent display of fireworks that had ever been seen.”<sup>2</sup>

After this spectacle, the effect of which was somewhat marred by the wind and rain which prevailed, the Court proceeded to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's bedchamber to view the nuptial couch—a veritable *chef-d'œuvre* of the upholsterer's art, with a counterpane of green velvet, embroidered in gold and silver—and the princess's toilette-set, which was laid out in an adjoining room, and was “much admired, both for its articles of gold and silver and for its embroidery and lace.”

Supper was then served, in the ante-chamber, to the King and the same persons who had had the honour of dining with him, with the addition of the ex-King and Queen of England. During the meal, the Duc de Bourgogne's toilette-set was laid out in the duchess's *grand cabinet*, and aroused almost as much admiration as had that of his wife.

<sup>1</sup> “The gallery was lighted by three lines of lustres and a great number of candelabra.”—*Mercur*.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch of the Venetian Ambassador, Nicolo Erizzo, to the Doge, December 13, 1697, in Gagnière. “Everything was so arranged as to form arches of fire over the water, at the sides of which an immense number of lamps in earthen pots made a *parterre* of light.”—*Mercur*.

The time had now arrived for the pretended consummation of the marriage, without which the union would not have been considered binding. But this singular ceremony we will permit the *Mercur*e to describe for us :

“After the supper, the Grand Master of the Ceremonies [Blainville] and the Master of the Ceremonies [Desgranges] went to summon the Cardinal de Coislin, who was to pronounce the benediction of the bed. The Duc de Bourgogne undressed in the cabinet in which his toilette-set had been placed, and, at the same time, the Duchesse de Bourgogne was undressed and knelt down at her *prie-dieu*, as soon as they had made all persons leave her bedchamber who had not the right to remain. The King of England [James II] handed the shirt to the Duc de Bourgogne, and the Queen of England the nightdress to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who gave her garters and her nightcap to *Mademoiselle*. So soon as the Duchesse de Bourgogne was in bed, the King sent to summon the Duc de Bourgogne, who entered the room in his dressing-gown, with his nightcap in his hand, and his hair tied behind with a flame-coloured ribbon, and placed himself in bed on the right side. The curtains at the foot of the bed were closed, but those at the sides remained half-open. The King and the King and Queen of England withdrew, but *Monsieur* remained in the bedchamber. A moment later, the Duc de Bourgogne rose, passed into the *grand cabinet*, where he dressed again, and returned to his own apartments to sleep.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The Duc de Bourgogne rose at the end of a quarter of an hour. . . . The Duchesse du Lude and all the Duchesse de Bourgogne’s ladies remained around the bed. . . . The Duc de

Both Saint-Simon and the Venetian Ambassador relate an amusing incident, mentioned neither in the semi-official account given by the *Mercur*, nor in the discreet pages of Dangeau, which took place before the young couple parted for the night. We give the preference to Erizzo's version, which, though less piquant, is probably the more accurate.

"The Most Christian King and his Britannic Majesty, and the greater part of those who had been invited having retired, the Dauphin, by dint of affectionate encouragements, persuaded his son to approach his spouse and embrace her. The pious and austere Duc de Beauvilliers, his *gouverneur*, objected strongly to this, reminding them of the King's stringent orders to the contrary.<sup>1</sup> But the Duc de Bourgogne, on this occasion, preferred to obey his father rather than the other, and called the princess, who ran forward, threw herself into his arms, and gave immense proofs of her satisfaction. But, the first embraces exchanged, they will not find themselves together again until after the expiration of the two years necessary to reach the age of maturity."<sup>2</sup>

The following evening, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, wearing a dress of red velvet, embroidered in gold, and a set of diamonds, held a *cercle* in her *grand cabinet*, which was attended by nearly all the princesses and duchesses, magnificently attired.<sup>3</sup>

Beauvilliers, *gouverneur* of the Duc de Bourgogne, remained in the *ruelle* of the bed all the time that he was with the Duchesse de Bourgogne."—Dangeau, *Journal*, December 7, 1697.

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon says that it was the Duchesse du Lude, and not Beauvilliers, who objected.

<sup>2</sup> Erizzo to the Doge, December 13, 1697.

<sup>3</sup> *Mercur*.

On the 9th, the young lady went to receive the felicitations of her friends at Saint-Cyr. "She was all in white, and her gown was so heavily embroidered with silver that she was scarcely able to support it." However, she seems to have enjoyed herself. On her arrival, she was received with great pomp, and conducted to the church, where the *Te Deum* was sung; while afterwards a choir composed on the plan of the choruses in *Esther*, recited verses in her honour, written by the *dames*.<sup>1</sup>

On the 10th, the prince, who was in after years to be known as the "Old Pretender," and his sister, came to Versailles to offer her their congratulations, and in the evening she and the Duc de Bourgogne supped with Madame de Maintenon in that lady's apartments; while, on the 11th, the first of the two grand balls which it had been arranged to give took place in the gallery, and is described by the *Mercure* as the "largest and most magnificent that had ever been seen at Court." But let us listen to the impressions of the Venetian Ambassador, amplified by a few details from the above-mentioned journal.

"The grand gallery was illuminated by more than five thousand candles, and between the reflections from the mirrors and the diamonds, this place was rendered brighter than if it had been lighted by the rays of the sun, when, on a sudden, the Duc de Bourgogne, wearing a costume starred with gems,<sup>2</sup> gave the signal for the grand dance."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*.

<sup>2</sup> "The Duc de Bourgogne's coat was of black velvet, with many diamonds."—*Mercure*.

<sup>3</sup> The *branle*, which the Duke opened with his wife.

"In this dance, in which beauty and magnificence showed to advantage, the eye and the mind experienced enchantments such as the blessed can scarcely conceive. The princes and the nobles were in gala costume, the princess and the ladies wore the most sumptuous gowns that had ever been seen.<sup>1</sup> Part of their hair fell in long curls, and the other part was confined by sparkling gems.

"The cost of the least sumptuous of these vestments was computed at twelve thousand livres, and the most sumptuous at thirty thousand livres, not including the precious stones, which were numberless and priceless.

"At that hour the grandeur and *brio* of France was made manifest, and one understood how poor and miserable are the attempts of other countries to imitate it. The presence of the King gave lustre, and, at the same time, imposed a restraining influence on the fête, in which the silence and constraint were so great, that one would have imagined oneself in the midst of a Senate of grave men rather than in a ball-room.

"The dancing was followed by the collation, which was brought in by a hundred lackeys; and the ball-room was so skilfully arranged, that in a moment it was transformed into a garden covered with flowers, fruit, and sweetmeats."<sup>2</sup>

And Erizzo adds:

"In the midst of so much joyfulness, one saw

<sup>1</sup> "The dress of the Duchesse de Bourgogne was of cloth of gold, with a trimming of diamonds, in which, as in her head-dress, were the most beautiful of the Crown diamonds. All the ladies at the ball were in cloths of gold or silver, or in velvets of all colours, and covered with jewels."—*Mercur*.

<sup>2</sup> "At eight o'clock, the King called for the collation, which was brought in on twelve tables, covered with moss and verdure, instead of table-cloths. When all together, they formed a fragrant parterre, in which were four orange-trees."—*Mercur*.

tears flowing from the eyes of the King and Queen of England, unhappy spectators of this great ball.”<sup>1</sup>

The second ball was given three nights later (December 14). It was equally magnificent, and more enjoyable than the one which had preceded it, on which occasion the crowd of spectators had been so great as to cause serious inconvenience to the dancers. The Duchesse de Bourgogne wore that evening “a dress of black velvet all covered with diamonds; her hair was braided with pearls, and the rest of her coiffure was so full of diamonds, that one might say without exaggeration that the eye could scarcely endure such dazzling splendour.”<sup>2</sup> The little princess’s dancing was much admired, particularly in the minuet.

The fêtes nominally concluded on the 17th, with the performance of the opera of *Apollon et Issé*, “an heroic pastoral in three acts,” the music of which had been composed by Destouches, in the theatre of Trianon; but, as a matter of fact, unofficial rejoicings continued for some days longer.

<sup>1</sup> Erizzo to the Doge, December 13, 1697.

<sup>2</sup> *Mercure de France*, December 1697.

## CHAPTER X

Relations of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne to one another after their marriage—Studious habits of the duke—The princess begins to hold receptions—Efforts of social aspirants to take advantage of her inexperience—Removal of the restrictions hitherto imposed on her choice of amusements—She assists at a performance of the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*—Her visit to the Fair of Saint-Laurent—Her passion for dancing—She is encouraged to play cards—Pleasure which Louis xiv finds in her society—Her letters to *Madame Royale*—A water-party at Trianon—Consequences of the King and Madame de Maintenon's foolish indulgence of the little princess—Her conduct severely criticised by *Madame*—A welcome improvement—The review at Compiègne—Consummation of the marriage of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne

THE marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne and the Princess Adélaïde made little immediate difference in their relations to one another, and they continued to lead a separate existence, the one under the charge of the Duc de Beauvilliers, the other under that of the Duchesse du Lude. However, as Louis xiv considered that it would be unreasonable, now that they were husband and wife, to restrict their intercourse to the weekly meeting which had been the rule since the princess's arrival in France, the Duc de Bourgogne was permitted to see her every day, and to talk to her without restraint, provided that one of the Duchess's ladies always remained in the room.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If we are to believe the unknown correspondent of Madame Dunoyer, the Duc de Bourgogne rebelled against these restrictions ;

Although nominally a married man, the young prince continued *in statu pupillari*, studying as diligently as ever to fit himself for the great position which, unhappily for France, he was destined never to occupy. His favourite study at this period was political philosophy, and he read and analysed with great care the *Republic of Plato*, while, "since he was persuaded that justice is the basis of true policy, he made himself acquainted with the principles of Roman and French jurisprudence."<sup>1</sup>

Highly pleased with his grandson's industry, Louis XIV determined to give him practical lessons in the art of government, and accordingly directed the intendants throughout the kingdom to furnish detailed reports concerning the districts within their jurisdiction—their manufactures, agricultural products, roads, canals, ports, and so forth. The digestion of so stupendous a mass of statistics would have constituted a formidable undertaking for even the trained mind of a statesman; but the

and one fine night, with the connivance of a complaisant waiting-woman of the princess, concealed himself in her chamber, and, so soon as he believed that the Duchesse du Lude, who occupied the same room as her mistress, was asleep, emerged from his hiding-place. But scarcely had he done so, when the *dame d'honneur*, who apparently slept with one eye open, precipitated herself upon the intruder and promptly ejected him from the room. The writer adds that, next morning, Madame du Lude complained to the King, who sent for his grandson and drily observed: "I have ascertained, Monsieur, that something has happened which might be injurious to your health; I must beg you not to let it occur again"—*Lettres historiques et galantes*. The writer's weakness for the picturesque, however, renders the authenticity of this anecdote open to suspicion.

<sup>1</sup> "Père Martineau, *Recueil des vertus du duc de Bourgogne, et ensuite dauphin, pour servir à l'éducation d'un grand prince*";—Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*



knowledge of the resources of the country subsequently shown by the young prince proves that he had grappled with it with remarkable success, and that he must have been endowed, not only with unwearying industry and a veritable passion for details, but an astonishing memory.

While the Duc de Bourgogne was employed in analysing Plato and Justinian, and digesting statistics, his wife had taken her place in the official life of the Court. She now held a *cercle* of her own, newcomers to the Court were presented to her, and the Ambassadors received in public audience. That she would very willingly have dispensed with the right of holding these formal receptions is more than probable, since in an age and in a society which attached such extraordinary importance to the minutiae of etiquette, she was constantly required to be on her guard against the commission of some error which might enable aspiring persons, who were only too ready to take advantage of the youth and inexperience of the first lady in the land, to lay claim to privileges to which they were not entitled.

Nevertheless, she appears to have emerged from these decidedly trying ordeals with much credit, though, on two or three occasions, her ignorance or timidity might have entailed very serious consequences, from the hierarchical point of view. Thus, at the reception of Madame van Heemskirke, the wife of the Dutch Ambassador, she conferred the cousinly kiss, not only on the Ambadress, but on that lady's daughter as well; while, at another reception, she permitted, without a word of protest, the haughty and enterprising

Princesse d'Harcourt, who, in virtue of her connection with the House of Lorraine, claimed precedence over the wives of all the dukes not of the Royal Blood, to deprive Madame de Rohan by force of her place at the head of the duchesses. Both ladies felicitated themselves on having established their respective claims to the privileges they coveted. But, in the first instance, *Madame*, the second lady of the Court, firmly refused to consider the example of an inexperienced child binding upon her, and speedily dissipated the fond illusion of the Ambassador's daughter ; while, in the second, the King himself intervened, ordered the Princesse d'Harcourt to tender a public apology to the Duchesse de Rohan, and pronounced against her pretensions.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Duchesse de Bourgogne found abundant compensations for such little mortifications in the gradual removal of the restrictions hitherto imposed on her choice of pleasures. On October 30, 1698, she was permitted to go to the play for the first time, as were the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers ; and, in company with them, witnessed a performance of the *Bourgeois gentilhomme* at the Comédie-Française, on which occasion the delight of the young people must have afforded the audience almost as much diversion as the antics of the immortal M. Jourdain. "The Duc de Bourgogne," writes *Madame*, "quite lost his gravity, and laughed till the tears came into his eyes ; the Duc d'Anjou was so delighted that he sat in ecstasies, with his mouth wide open ; the Duc de Berry laughed so much

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

that he nearly fell off his chair. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, who understands better how to disguise her feelings, controlled herself very well at the beginning, laughed but little, and contented herself with smiling; but now and then she forgot herself, and rose from her chair in order to see better. She was also very amusing in her way.”<sup>1</sup> Two months later, we hear of the princess gracing with her presence a performance of *Bajazet*—though, unfortunately, we are not told what impression this tragedy made upon her; and Dangeau announces that the King had given her permission to visit the “Comédie” whenever she wished.<sup>2</sup>

The Duchesse de Bourgogne’s expeditions to Paris, however, were not confined to the occasions when she visited the Comédie-Française or the Opera, which she attended for the first time on January 28, 1699, under the escort of the Dauphin. She went there pretty frequently to inspect the latest modes; for, young as she was, she was already beginning to appreciate the important part which the toilette and its accessories played in the life of a lady of rank. But, since she loved amusements of all kinds, the days generally selected for her visits were those of some popular fête, when the great city wore its gayest aspect. Thus, in August 1698, escorted by Tessé and accompanied by a number of ladies of the Court, she drove to the Fair of Saint-Laurent, in a magnificent coach drawn by eight horses. On arriving at the fair,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d’Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé). Letter of November 1, 1698, to the Electress of Hanover.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, December 28, 1698.

which was held outside the Porte Saint-Denis, she alighted from her coach and mingled with the people, who all applauded her charm and her gracious manners, and were lost in admiration at the magnificence of her attire, which consisted of "*un habit gris de lis en falbala*, trimmed with silver-lace, diamonds, and emeralds." First she went to see the tight-rope dancers and the marionettes, whose performances were always one of the principal attractions of the famous fair, and was so pleased with their skill that she presented them with a handsome donation. Then she made the round of the principal shops, including that of a jeweller, who, in anticipation of her visit, had prepared for her a most sumptuous collation, and made numerous purchases, which she subsequently distributed among the ladies who had accompanied her. She remained at the fair until nearly seven o'clock, when, after leaving a considerable sum of money for distribution among the poor of Paris, she re-entered her coach and returned to Versailles by a circuitous route, which enabled her to make the acquaintance of the Place Royale, the Rue Saint-Antoine, the Place de Grève, the quays, and the Cours-la-Reine.<sup>1</sup>

The interdict which had been placed on her attendance at balls was also removed, and, since she was passionately fond of dancing, this diversion, which had been for some time past out of fashion, became once more the mode, and all the principal personages of the Court desired to give a ball or a masquerade in honour of the princess. Several of these entertainments were very splendid affairs

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, August 1698.

indeed, particularly the masquerades given by the King at Marly, in February 1698, at which, we are told, many of the dancers disguised themselves four or five times every evening, and where "nothing was lacking which might please the eye, flatter the ear, and satisfy the taste."<sup>1</sup>

Among the balls given by members of the Court, one of the most magnificent was that of Madame de Pontchartrain, the wife of the Chancellor, in connection with which the *Lettres historiques et galantes* relate an amusing anecdote :

"On the morning of the day on which *Madame la Chancelière* gave her ball to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the princess sent a coach drawn by six horses to the Professionist Monastery to fetch Père Le Comte [her confessor]. On his arrival, the Jesuit, greatly surprised at this summons, inquired 'if it were her wish to confess at so unseasonable an hour.' To which the princess replied : 'No, Father ; I did not send for you to shrive me, but to design for me as quickly as possible a Chinese lady's costume. I know that you have lived in China, and I want to wear the dress of that country at the ball this evening.' The confessor frankly avowed that he had had more to do with the men of China than with the women. Nevertheless, she insisted on his sketching her a design, after which she dismissed him, and set people to work upon her costume."<sup>2</sup>

The King and Madame de Maintenon would certainly have been well-advised if they had continued their prohibition of cards and similar diversions for some years longer. But play was so popular

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, February 1698.

<sup>2</sup> Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres historiques et galantes*, Lettre xxi.

an amusement at Court, that their complaisance in this matter, though very regrettable, is not difficult to understand, since to deny the little lady permission to worship at the shrine of Fortune would have been to condemn her to spend many a dull evening. What, however, is surprising, is that, so far from counselling moderation in the pursuit of this insidious pastime, Louis XIV actually appears to have encouraged a taste for play in the child, organising games of chance and raffles for her in Madame de Maintenon's apartments, taking her with him to watch the gambling orgies which went on in the Princesse de Conti's, and even now and again permitting her to take a hand at lansquenet, at this period the most popular medium for speculation. The consequence was that the little princess soon began to develop a passion for play, which was to bring upon her serious embarrassments and much unhappiness; but of this we shall have occasion to speak later on.

Deplorable as such imprudence on the part of Louis XIV may seem, it no doubt proceeded from his inability to deny any pleasure to the child who had so completely conquered his heart, and in whose company he seemed to renew his youth, and to experience sentiments to which he had been for too many years a stranger. "The King," writes Sourches, "entertains for her all the affection and all the kindness which it is possible to conceive." He never allowed a day to pass without seeing her. If he remained in bed, because he was unwell or had "taken medicine," he sent for her to come to his room. If, on the other hand, the princess was confined to her apartments, which happened occasionally,

as most of her teeth were decayed, and she suffered much from toothache, his Majesty always came to see her. Every day, she either walked or drove with him; and when he followed the chase, almost invariably occupied the second place in his *soufflet*, wearing a hunting costume of red velvet trimmed with gold lace and a plumed hat, which every one declared suited her to perfection.

Since, however, Louis XIV did not hunt so frequently as in his younger days, and walks and drives were somewhat monotonous occupations for a young girl, the King frequently spent the afternoon in giving the princess lessons in pall-mall, at which ancient game he was an expert performer. Pall-mall had been for some years rather neglected; but no sooner was his Majesty and the Duchesse de Bourgogne seen playing it, than its vogue revived with quite extraordinary rapidity; and we find *Monseigneur*, when he proposed spending a few days at Meudon, inviting none but votaries of the game to accompany him.

The little princess would certainly have been hard to please if she had not been happy when so many pains were taken to keep her amused; and the brief letters which she wrote during the two years which followed her marriage to *Madame Royale* show that she was enchanted with her new life, and far from insensible to all the kindness and attention of which she was the object. A selection from these letters<sup>1</sup> may not be without interest to the reader :

<sup>1</sup> These letters have been published by the Contessa della Rocca, in her *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et de la Reine d'Espagne* (Paris, 1864), and by M. Gagnière, in his *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie, Lettres et Correspondances* (Paris, 1897).

“VERSAILLES, 13 *February* 1698

“I hope, my dear grandmamma, that the Marquis de Cirié<sup>1</sup> will tell you agreeable things of this country, and particularly of myself, who have a great desire to please you. I envy the pleasure that he will have in giving you an account of everything; you will have no difficulty in understanding how happy I am. My only desire is that it will long continue, and you have enough affection for me to interest yourself therein.”

“[*February* 1698]

“If I were able to amuse you by my letters, my dear grandmamma, you would receive them more often; but I am afraid of wearying you by constantly assuring you of my affection, about which you can entertain no doubt. I know that a thousand ladies send you news of me, and you know better than myself what happens here. It only remains for me to tell you that I appreciate all my happiness, and that I love you tenderly.”

“28 *February* 1698

“I hope to remedy, when I have learned how to write, the faults, which I now commit, and to make you understand then, my dear grandmamma, that I write to you seldom, because I write very badly, but that I do not love you less tenderly. I am going to the ball.”

“2 *July* [1698]

“They are working on my menagerie.<sup>2</sup> The King has ordered Mansart<sup>3</sup> to spare nothing. Imagine, my dear grandmamma, what it will be.

<sup>1</sup> The Marquise de Cirié, a member of the House of Doria, had been sent by the Duke of Savoy to compliment Louis XIV on the marriage.

<sup>2</sup> She means, of course, the Château of the Menagerie, in which various alterations were being carried out.

<sup>3</sup> Jules Hardouin Mansart, the famous architect.



But I shall not see it until my return from Fontainebleau. It is true that the King's kindnesses to me are wonderful; but I love him well also. I have made him your compliments, and he orders me to make them to you on his behalf. Love me always, my dear grandmother; I shall treat you the same."<sup>1</sup>

"VERSAILLES, [*September*] 1698

"Those who love me as you do, my dear grandmamma, have every reason to rejoice with me at the King's kindness, for he gives me every day fresh proofs of it. I have reason to hope that it will increase. At any rate, I shall forget nothing on my part to deserve it. I am going to try a new pleasure—that of travelling. But I shall love you everywhere, my dear grandmamma."

"FONTAINEBLEAU, 31 *October* 1698

"The stay at Fontainebleau is very agreeable to me, particularly as it is the second place where I had the honour of seeing the King; and I hope one thing, my dear grandmamma, which is that I shall be happy, not only at Fontainebleau, but everywhere, being resolved to do everything that depends on me to be so."

"VERSAILLES, 16 *December* 1698

"I do not dare to tell you, my dear grandmamma, that I could not have the pleasure of writing to you sooner, because I have very little time to myself. I am shown every day something new and beautiful. The King continues his kindness to me, and I am very happy. I beg you, my dear grandmamma, to love me always, and to be assured of my respect for you."

<sup>1</sup> M. Gagnière considers this letter "too well expressed for us to doubt for a moment that it was dictated by Madame de Maintenon." He places it among the letters of 1699, although it undoubtedly belongs to the previous year.

“VERSAILLES, *December* 1698

“I could not write to you by the last courier, my dear grandmamma, because I am out continually, and every evening I go to see the King. I am sure that this excuse will not displease you, and that you will think that my time is well employed, when I spend it with the King. His kindness to me cannot be expressed, and, since I know the interest you take in my happiness, I am very pleased to assure you that it is perfect, and that it will never cause me to forget the tenderness that I ought to have and do have for you.”

“*May* 18, [1699]

“You have then attained the summit of happiness, my dear grandmamma, since you find it in having a grandson.<sup>1</sup> Your joy increases mine, since I cannot but share all that you feel, loving you as much as is possible, and being as grateful as I am for all your kindness to me.”

“MARLY, 3 *July* 1699

“I am very glad, my dear grandmamma, that you are not tired of telling me of your affection, for I always receive the assurances of it with a new joy. I wish I could tell you of the beauties of this place, and of the pleasures we have here. I am delighted to be on the footing of coming here on all the visits, for I like them as much as the Marlys-Bourgogne.<sup>2</sup> I embrace you, my dear grandmamma, and I am going to bathe.”

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Savoy had given birth to the ardently-desired heir on April 26, 1699. Unhappily, as we have mentioned elsewhere, Victor Amadeus, Prince of Piedmont, did not live to succeed his father, as he died in 1715.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is somewhat enigmatical. But M. Gagnière is of opinion that the princess means by “*les Marly-Bourgogne*” the brief visits to Marly on which she often accompanied the King, as distinguished from the formal sojourns of the Court there.

“7 September [1699]

“They tell you the truth, my dear grandmamma, when they assure you of my happiness, and I may say that I have too many amusements, for they take up all my time. It is, however, true that the kindnesses of the King and of *Monseigneur* are my great pleasure.

“I am well persuaded, my dear grandmamma, that you interest yourself in me, and I beg you to believe that I deserve it, in some degree, by the affection I have for you.”

Singularly enough, though there is scarcely one of the princess's letters written during these two years in which the King is not mentioned, her husband is only once referred to, namely, in a letter dated January 10, 1699, when she writes as follows :

“10 January 1699

“I am not yet free enough, my dear grandmamma, with M. le Duc de Bourgogne to do the honours for him. I am only very pleased that you are satisfied with his letters.”

However, it should be borne in mind that the young couple were not yet really married.

When the summer came, water-parties appear to have been again a favourite means of amusing the princess. Dangeau describes at some length one which was organised in June 1699 at Trianon.

“At six o'clock in the evening,” he writes, “the King entered the gardens, and, after promenading for some time, took a seat on the terrace which overlooked the canal, and watched *Monseigneur*, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and all the

Princesses embark. *Monseigneur* was in a gondola, with the Duc de Bourgogne and the Princesse de Conti. The Duchesse de Bourgogne was in another, with the ladies whom she had chosen; the Duchesse de Chartres and *Madame la Duchesse* in others. All the King's musicians were on a yacht. The King remained until eight o'clock, listening to the music, which was brought as near to him as possible. When the King re-entered the château, the gondolas went to the end of the canal, and the party did not return to the château till supper time. The King had originally intended to embark; but, as he had some tendency to rheumatism, M. Fagon dissuaded him, although the weather was very fine. *Monseigneur* and the Duchesse de Bourgogne walked in the gardens and on the terrace above the château till two hours after midnight, when *Monseigneur* went to bed, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne entered a gondola with some of her ladies, and remained on the canal until sunrise."

Dangeau adds that even then the young lady, so far from seeking repose, insisted on staying up until seven o'clock to see Madame de Maintenon start for Saint-Cyr, when she at length retired to bed, "without appearing the least fatigued by so long a vigil."<sup>1</sup>

Unhappily, neither Louis XIV nor Madame de Maintenon seem to have stopped to consider the probable effect of so much indulgence upon the character of the little girl. The King desired to see the princess happy; and, since, to the very

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, June 10, 1699.

young, happiness is generally synonymous with the pursuit of pleasure, multiplied the balls, fêtes, and other entertainments which afforded her so much delight. Madame de Maintenon desired the child's affection, partly because she was really attached to her, and partly from motives of expediency, since she foresaw that a day might come when the princess would be in a position to exercise considerable influence. The easiest way to gain and to retain this affection seemed to be to render her life as pleasant as possible, and, though she can scarcely have failed to perceive the danger of the empty and frivolous existence which her former charge was leading, she comforted herself with the reflection that she had done all in her power to inspire her with sentiments of religion and duty while she was under her care, and that she might now be left to follow her own inclinations.

The consequences of this injudicious treatment were not slow in revealing themselves. On her arrival in France, nothing about the princess had been more favourably remarked upon than the modesty of her behaviour and the charming courtesy with which she had treated every one with whom she came in contact. But, after her marriage, the attentions lavished upon her by the King and the flattery of the time-serving courtiers, always quick to follow their master's lead, began to turn the child's head, and, if we are to believe *Madame*, her manners deteriorated in the most alarming fashion, and, emboldened by the indulgence which was extended to her, she ended by developing into a veritable hoyden.

In her letters to the Electress of Hanover, the outspoken German criticises the girl's conduct in the most severe terms.

“ 18 September 1698

“ They [the King and Madame de Maintenon] are absolutely spoiling the Duchesse de Bourgogne. When she goes for a drive, she does not remain in her place for a moment, but seats herself upon the knees of all who happen to be in the same coach, and jumps about like a little monkey. All this is considered charming. In her own apartments she is absolute mistress, and people do everything she wishes. Sometimes she takes it into her head to go and ramble about at five o'clock in the morning.<sup>1</sup> Everything is permitted and admired. Any other person would give his child a whipping if she behaved in this way. A time will come, I am sure, when they will regret having allowed this child to act just as she pleases.”

And, a month later, she writes again :

“ 22 October 1698

*Mon Dieu !* how badly, in my opinion, is the Duchesse de Bourgogne being brought up ! This child makes me pity her. In the middle of dinner, she begins to sing, she dances on her chair, pretends to bow to the servants, makes the most hideous grimaces, tears the chickens and partridges on the dishes to pieces with her hands, thrusts her fingers into the sauces. In short, it is impossible to be worse brought up, and those who stand behind her exclaim : ‘ What grace she has ! how pretty she is.’ She treats her father-

<sup>1</sup> This is confirmed by the *Lettres historiques et galantes* : “ Sometimes she [the Duchesse de Bourgogne] took it into her head to get up at night and go out for a walk in the park ; and then the worthy Madame du Lude must needs get up, too, and go after her.

in-law [*Monseigneur*] disrespectfully, and addresses him as 'thee' and 'thou.' He imagines then that he is in favour, and is quite delighted by it. She treats the King with more familiarity still."

However, if the young princess's head was a little turned, her heart remained good, and *Madame* herself relates, with evident satisfaction, the grief she had shown in taking leave of the writer's daughter, Élisabeth Charlotte d'Orléans, who in October 1698 was married to the Duke of Lorraine, and adds that it was a proof that she possessed a good disposition. Nor were the bad manners of which she had complained of long duration, since by the end of the year *Madame* is able to report that a very welcome change has taken place in her Royal Highness's behaviour, and that she "eats quietly and soberly," and has entirely ceased to sing and jump about, or thrust her fingers into the dishes. This reformation she attributes to the fact that one of her letters had been opened by the officials of the Post Office, and the attention of the Duchesse de Bourgogne drawn to its contents; and, as a similar fate befell that princess's correspondence on several other occasions, her supposition is probably well founded.

The chief event of the year 1698 was the great review at Compiègne, which was intended by Louis XIV to serve the twofold purpose of demonstrating to Europe that, so far from being enfeebled by the immense efforts she had made during the recent struggle, France was still as redoubtable as ever, and of giving the Duc de Bourgogne his first lessons in the art of war. The

manœuvres, which began in the first days of September, lasted three weeks, and were witnessed by the King, Madame de Maintenon, and almost the entire Court, for whom the officers of the different regiments engaged kept open table and dispensed such lavish hospitality, that many are said to have been well-nigh ruined. The Duc de Bourgogne was nominally in command of the troops, which consisted of 35,000 infantry, nearly 3000 cavalry, and several batteries of artillery, though the Maréchal de Boufflers really directed the operations. These included a cannonade, the passage of a river, a skirmish, a general engagement, and the investment of Compiègne, which was undertaken, according to the rules of war, with trenches, batteries, mines, and so forth, and concluded with a grand assault upon the town.

The assault, which took place on September 13, was regarded as the chief spectacle of the manœuvres. Early in the morning the inhabitants of Compiègne were awakened by the thunder of cannon, and the King and all the Court proceeded to the top of the ramparts, from which a splendid view of the surrounding plain and all the dispositions of the troops could be obtained. "It was the most beautiful sight that can be imagined," writes Saint-Simon, "to see all that army, and the prodigious number of spectators on horse and foot, and that game of attack and defence so cleverly carried out." But what the chronicler declares interested him infinitely more than the martial panorama beneath him, was the sight of Madame de Maintenon in her sedan-chair, which her porters had laid upon the ground, with the Duchesse de



Bourgogne seated on the left pole in front, the other princesses and the ladies of the Court standing round in a semicircle, and the King at the right window, bending ever and anon, with bared head, to explain to his wife the reason for the different movements which the troops were executing. Madame de Maintenon, who had a horror of fresh air, and even on the hottest days kept the windows of her apartments and her carriage closed, declined to let down the glass of her sedan-chair more than a few inches when his Majesty wished to address her, and put it up again the moment he had finished speaking, so that conversation was carried on with some difficulty, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne was compelled to shout to her "aunt" through the front window.

The spectacle of his enemy receiving in the presence of Court and Army the honours due to a queen impressed itself so vividly on Saint-Simon's mind, that he assures us that he could describe it "forty years hence as well as to-day"; and, if hatred and malice were as powerful a stimulus to his memory as they were to his imagination, we can well believe it.

On September 15, a "pitched battle" was fought, in which the Duc de Bourgogne, aided by the counsels of Boufflers, commanded one of the armies, and the Marquis, afterwards the Maréchal, de Rosen, the other. It had been, of course, arranged that the young prince should be victorious; but, owing to some misunderstanding, the opposing army found itself in an unexpectedly favourable position when the King sent orders for it to retire from the field; and it is to be feared that,

in actual warfare, retreat in such circumstances would have resulted in its commander being promptly cashiered.

A few days later, the manœuvres, from which Dangeau tells us the Duc de Bourgogne had derived "great pleasure and much profit," terminated, and the Court returned to Versailles, to the intense relief of the ladies, most of whom had been compelled to put up with very poor accommodation, and were heartily tired of spending long hours under a hot sun, and counterfeiting an interest in matters in regard to which their indifference was only surpassed by their ignorance. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, on the other hand, seems to have rather enjoyed herself, and went frequently to the camp to dine with Boufflers and show herself to the soldiers, whose rations she on more than one occasion assisted in distributing.

In the summer of 1699, Louis XIV having decided that the time was now approaching when the young couple might be permitted to live together, gave orders that apartments should be prepared for the Duc de Bourgogne, who had up to then shared a suite with his two brothers in the southern wing of the château. The apartments selected were those occupied by the former *gouvernante* of the young princes, the Maréchale de la Mothe, which were situated on the first floor of the old wing, overlooking the Cour Royale,<sup>1</sup> and communicating both with the ante-chamber of the King

<sup>1</sup> These apartments were the official lodging of the *gouvernante* of the Children of France; but, though the last of the young princes had passed out of the Maréchale de la Mothe's hands some years before, the King had permitted her to retain them.

and with the *grand cabinet* of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; and here the Duc de Bourgogne lived until the death of his father in 1711.

The necessary alterations were completed by the time the Court returned from its annual autumnal visit to Fontainebleau, and the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne began their married life forthwith. Under date October 22, 1699, Dangeau writes in his *Journal*:

"The Duc de Bourgogne passed the night for the first time with the Duchesse de Bourgogne. At first, he will only pass alternate nights with her.<sup>1</sup> The King, after he had supped, decided to go and see them in bed together; but he went a little too late, and, finding the doors closed, discreetly declined to cause them to be opened."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This arrangement, however, only lasted three weeks; for on November 11, Dangeau announces that in future the Duc de Bourgogne will always pass the night with his wife.

<sup>2</sup> A fragment from the *Mémoires* of the Baron de Breteuil, who shared with Nicolas Saintot the duties of *introducteur* of the Ambassadors, which has been published by Cimber and Danjou in the *Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France*, under the title, *De la Soirée et du lendemain de la première nuit que M. le duc et madame la duchesse de Bourgogne ont passée ensemble*, contains some curious details concerning this event which, to his evident regret, took place "without any ceremony or publicity," the King having decided that, since the marriage had nominally been consummated two years before, there was no necessity for a repetition of the formalities which had been observed on that occasion:

"The Duchesse de Bourgogne, who supped in Madame de Maintenon's apartments, retired to bed at ten o'clock, and so unexpectedly, that, with the exception of her first *femme de chambre*, none of her women were awaiting her. The Duc de Bourgogne, who supped with the King, went, after supper, to undress in his new apartment, which had been prepared for him during the visit to Fontainebleau, and which communicated, on one side, with the ante-chamber of the King, and, on the other, with the *grand cabinet* of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. So soon as he was undressed, he passed into the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; and

"The *rapprochement* of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne was duly announced by the *Mercure*, and subsequently by the foreign journals, and celebrated in the capital by public rejoicings and by the composition of numerous *chansons*, some of which were of so very *gai* a character that the lieutenant of police gave orders to his myrmidons to confiscate them, though their efforts do not appear to have been attended with much success.<sup>1</sup> At the Court, it was immediately followed by the emancipation of the young prince from the authority of the Duc de Beauvilliers, and the recognition of his arrival at man's estate. The King added three noblemen to the number of his gentlemen,<sup>2</sup> offered him a substantial increase of the allowance which he had made him at the time of his marriage,—though the duke declined it, observing that, what he already enjoyed was sufficient for his needs, and that if at any future time he should find it inadequate, he would take the liberty of informing his Majesty,—and finally, to mark his appreciation of his high character and the aptitude for affairs of

all this occupied so short a time, that the King, who had told them that he was coming alone to their apartment to see them in bed, arrived too late and did not go in. The Duc de Bourgogne's hair was frizzled, and the magnificence of his *déshabillé* and his toilette savoured of marriage. He quitted his apartment with a courageous and rather sprightly air, and, as I had the honour of holding his candlestick, I conducted him up to the door of the nuptial chamber. As for Madame de Bourgogne, she wept copiously all the evening at Madame de Maintenon's; and the King told us, at his *petit coucher*, that her alarmed modesty had begun to cause her to shed tears four or five days ago."

<sup>1</sup> According to the *Lettres historiques et galantes*, the most popular of these had been composed by *Madame la Duchesse*.

<sup>2</sup> These three noblemen were called *menins*, and one at least of them accompanied the prince wherever he went.

which he was already beginning to give promise, nominated him a member of the Council of Despatches,<sup>1</sup> an honour which had never before been conferred upon so youthful a prince.

<sup>1</sup> The Council of Despatches was that in which the internal affairs of the kingdom were discussed. Every prince was required to attend its deliberations for some time before he was admitted to the Council of Finances and the Council of State.

## CHAPTER XI

Contrast between the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne—Attempt of the latter to enter into the serious views of her husband—She rallies him on his gravity, and makes game of him behind his back—Happiness of the first years of their married life—The Carnival of 1700—*Madame la Chancelière's* ball—The Duchesse de Bourgogne aspires to fame as an amateur actress—A theatre is organised for her amusement in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon—Representations of *Jonathas*, *Absalon*, and *Athalie*—Gambling at the Court of Louis XIV—Losses of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at lansquenet—She is compelled to seek the good offices of Madame de Maintenon to get her debts paid—Her grateful and contrite letter to that lady—"High play still her dominant passion"—She gets into a serious scrape over lansquenet—Injurious effect upon the princess's health of her insatiable appetite for pleasure—Her alarming illness in August 1701

IT would have been difficult to find two persons more dissimilar in character than the young people who thus began their married life at a time when their united ages scarcely exceeded thirty years; the husband grave, studious, pious to the verge of austerity, guided in his every action by that stern sense of religion and duty which had enabled him to subdue the promptings of an exceptionally passionate and stubborn nature; the wife amiable, affectionate, high-spirited, and intelligent, but impulsive, thoughtless, and greedy for all kinds of pleasure. Nevertheless, they would appear to have been for some years happy enough. The Duc de Bourgogne adored his wife; and, if the

girl did not reciprocate his passionate devotion, she was of too affectionate a nature to remain wholly unresponsive; while it is certain that she felt for him the warmest esteem, and though too young and frivolous to sympathise with his serious views of life, at any rate, made some effort to understand them. In this connection, Proyard cites an amusing letter which she wrote about this time to Madame de Maintenon.

“I am not content with doing the will of the Duc de Bourgogne, but I even enter into his views, which is no small matter for me. For you must understand, my dear aunt, that he sometimes offers them to me in three degrees,—the good, the better, the perfect,—just as M. de Cambrai [Fénelon] would do, and leaves me free to choose. Sometimes I have a good mind to declare for neutrality; but, by what enchantment I know not, I always conform to his wishes, even in spite of myself.<sup>1</sup>

But the young princess's respect for her husband and her anxiety to conform to his wishes did not prevent her from rallying him incessantly on a gravity of speech and manner so far beyond his years, and making game of him behind his back; and, on one occasion, if we are to believe the correspondent of Madam Dunoyer, the girl's fondness for ridicule came very near to causing a serious breach between her and the prince.

We have mentioned that one of the Duc de Bourgogne's shoulders had outgrown the other, and, as he advanced in years, this defect increased

<sup>1</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.*

to a degree which spoiled his figure and seriously hampered him in walking. Writing in the spring of 1701, *Madame* declares that "the Duc de Bourgogne is more deformed than the Duc de Luxembourg. The latter was merely a hunchback, but the Duc de Bourgogne is quite awry. One of his legs is much shorter than the other, and so much so, that, when he wishes to stand up, the heel of one of his feet is in the air, and he only touches the ground with the toes."<sup>1</sup>

Now, the Duchesse de Bourgogne was an admirable mimic, and frequently diverted the King by the cleverness with which she imitated the peculiarities of prominent persons at the Court. One day, at Madame de Maintenon's, encouraged by the laughter and applause which her efforts evoked, she so far forgot what was due to her husband as to include him among her victims, and counterfeited both his mannerisms and his gait with merciless skill.

Unhappily, one of the company informed the Duc de Bourgogne of what had taken place. The prince, as might be expected, was exceedingly angry, and that night, instead of repairing as usual to his wife's room, he slept in his own apartments, and sent one of his gentlemen to tell the duchess that "he was greatly displeased at her conduct, and that, though she would place him under an obligation by informing him at once of his defects of mind or character, so that he might hasten to correct them, there was nothing witty in holding his physical infirmities up to ridicule."

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé). Letter of March 31, 1701, to the Electress of Hanover.



The young lady would not appear to have taken this well-merited rebuke in very good part, and the prince, in consequence, kept to his own apartments for some days. Nor was it until the King himself intervened that a reconciliation was effected.<sup>1</sup>

However, this quarrel, which gossip has perhaps exaggerated, was the only misunderstanding of any consequence that occurred to mar the harmony of the first few years of their married life. In general, the duke was the kindest and most indulgent of husbands; while the princess, if she were unable to resist the temptation of bantering him on his serious life, in which the pleasures which she herself held so dear found no part, was seldom ill-natured, and seems to have lived with him on very affectionate terms. It is true that *Madame*, in September 1701, expresses her belief that the Duchesse de Bourgogne, "provided she had given birth to a prince or two, would see without regret the worthy man [the Duc de Bourgogne] take his departure for the celestial regions."<sup>2</sup> But that lady's predilection for exhibiting people whom she disliked in the most unfavourable colours is almost as pronounced as that of Saint-Simon, and, any way, it is difficult to reconcile such a statement with the account given by Dangeau of the affectionate meeting between husband and wife on the duke's arrival from the Spanish frontier a few months earlier, when "it would have been impossible to testify more joy than they have both shown

<sup>1</sup> Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres historiques et galantes*. Lettre xvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé). Letter of September 26, 1701.

at seeing one another again,"<sup>1</sup> or with the princess's conduct on her husband's return from his first campaign in the autumn of 1702: "The Duc de Bourgogne, who was not expected until to-morrow, arrived a little before midnight. . . . The Duchesse de Bourgogne, warned promptly of his arrival, ran to the King's cabinet by way of the gallery, although she was *en déshabillé*, having been on the point of getting into bed. The embraces were warm and tender. She carried him off to her apartments and into her *petits cabinets*. Livry [first *maître d'hôtel* to the King] sent for food for him, and he was served by the waiting-women. The meal lasted but a short time, such was his impatience to find himself alone with her."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, as we shall presently see, a time did arrive when the growing austerity of the Duc de Bourgogne began to weary his young wife, and to transform the affection and respect which she had hitherto entertained for him into something very like indifference and contempt. Happily, this phase of their married life was not of long duration, and was succeeded by an almost perfect understanding, which lasted until death claimed them both.

Although the commencement of the married life of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne was not signalised by any festivities, so far as the Court was concerned, their absence was fully atoned for during the Carnival of 1700, which was the gayest that had been known for many years.

The openly-expressed desire of Louis XIV to see

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, April 20, 1701.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, September 8, 1702.

his idolized grand-daughter the centre of a Court whose gaiety and splendour should recall the joyous days when Versailles was a synonym for all the delights which the heart could desire, was hailed with enthusiasm by the younger generation, who had listened with envy to the tales which their elders had told them of *fêtes galantes* and *îles enchantées*, and bemoaned their sad lot at being born into a world which had apparently forgotten how to be merry. Like some mountain torrent which has been dammed by the ice and snow of winter, and, with the return of spring, finds its swollen waters at length released, the long-repressed gaiety of Versailles seemed to burst forth in an overwhelming flood, sweeping away in its headlong career all ideas of prudence and moderation. Madame de Sévigné's old friend and correspondent Madame de Coulanges, in a letter to Madame de Grignan, thus describes the rage for pleasure which had taken possession of the Court:

“ You cannot conceive, Madame, the extent of the frenzy for all kinds of pleasure which now exists. The King wishes the Duchesse de Bourgogne to do exactly as she pleases from morning till night, and that is sufficient for her to give herself up to it to her heart's content. In consequence, one no longer hears of anything but visits to Marly and Meudon, and trips to Paris for the operas, the balls, and the masquerades; and nobles who, so to speak, lay the knives on the table, in order to secure the good graces of the young princess. The ladies who take part in these pleasures have need, on their side, of having their finances in a sound condition, since expenses are quadrupled; the materials of which the costumes worn at the

masquerades are composed never cost less than from one hundred to one hundred and fifty francs an ell; and when, by ill-luck, any one is obliged to appear twice in the same dress, people observe that they are sure that she only comes to Paris to wear her old clothes."

The Duchesse de Bourgogne lived in a perpetual whirl of gaiety, and the *Mercur*e describes, with a wealth of detail which no Society journal of our own day can hope to emulate, the magnificence of the balls which she graced with her presence. The young princess herself naturally occupies the chief place in these relations, where the writer rhapsodises, in turn, over her toilettes, her beauty, her grace, the charm of her manner, and the perfection of her dancing, until one is tempted to believe that so enchanting a creature had never before been seen on earth.

Since dancing was her Royal Highness's great delight, and there was no surer passport to her good graces than to offer her a ball, everybody wanted to give one; and, though the Duchesse du Maine was in an interesting condition and compelled to keep her bed, this did not prevent her from giving "not less than twenty balls" in honour of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The guests danced in her bedchamber, and it is not surprising to learn that the crush was terrible. *Monseigneur*, the Prince de Condé, the Duc d'Antin,—Madame de Montespan's only legitimate son,<sup>1</sup>—and, in fact, almost all the leaders of the Court, organised balls,

<sup>1</sup> Louis Antoine de Pardaillan de Gondrin. For an account of this personage, see the author's "Madame de Montespan" (London, Harpers; New York, Scribners, 1903).

that given by *Monsieur le Prince* being particularly successful. But, by common consent, the most brilliant fête of the whole Carnival was one given by Madame de Pontchartrain (*Madame la Chancelière*) at the Hôtel de la Chancellerie, on February 8, 1700, who, says the *Mercur*, "contrived to combine in one evening all the diversions which are usually indulged in during the Carnival period, namely, those of comedy, fair, and ball."

"When the evening came, detachments of Swiss, together with a number of *Madame la Chancelière's* servants were posted in the street and in the courtyard, so that there was no confusion either at the gates or in the courtyard, which was brilliantly illuminated by torches. On alighting from her coach, the Duchesse de Bourgogne was received by *Monsieur le Chancelier*, *Madame la Chancelière*, their son, the Comte de Ponchartrain, and many of their friends and relatives, and conducted to the ballroom, which was lighted by ten chandeliers and magnificent gilded candelabra. At one end, on raised seats, were the musicians, hautboys, and violins, in fancy dress, with plumed caps. Above the fireplace was a full-length portrait of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Beyond the ballroom was another room, brilliantly lighted, in which were hautboys and violins. This was reserved for the masks, whose numbers were such that the ballroom could not have contained them.

"After remaining about an hour at the ball, *Madame la Chancelière* and the Comte de Pontchartrain escorted the Duchesse de Bourgogne into another room, filled with lights and mirrors, where a theatre had been erected to furnish the diversion

of a little comedy, which *Madame la Chancelière* had persuaded M. Dancourt to write expressly for this fête. All the actors belonged to the Comédie-Française. Their acting was perfection, and they were much applauded.

"The comedy over, *Madame la Chancelière* conducted the Duchesse de Bourgogne into another room, where a superb collation had been prepared in an ingenious manner. At one end of the room, in a semicircle, were five booths, kept by merchants attired in the costumes of different countries: a French pastrycook, a Provençal seller of oranges and lemons, an Italian *limonadière*, a sweetmeat merchant, and an Armenian vendor of tea, coffee, and chocolate. They were from the King's musicians, and chanted the merits of their wares to the accompaniment of music, while pages served the guests. . . . After the collation, as the ball-room was so crowded with masks, the Duchesse de Bourgogne returned to the room in which the comedy had been performed, and here a smaller ball was kept up until two o'clock. Then she went to the grand ball to see the masks, and amused herself there until five in the morning. When *Madame la Chancelière* and the Comte de Pontchartrain escorted her to the foot of the staircase, she informed them, in the most gracious manner, that the entertainment which they had just given her had afforded her great enjoyment, and that she was extremely pleased with it. Thus terminated this fête, which brought *Madame la Chancelière* many congratulations."<sup>1</sup>

The little princess's passion for dancing seems

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure de France*, February 1700.

to have been quite insatiable, and, though there were balls on almost every night of the Carnival, she invariably danced until the small hours of the morning, and was quite offended if any of her friends wished to leave the ballroom before she did ; indeed, Saint-Simon tells us that when, on one occasion, he tried to slip away early, he was informed that she had given orders that he was not to be allowed to pass the doors. The chronicler adds that he and his wife passed the last three weeks of the Carnival "without seeing the day," and that when Ash Wednesday arrived, they were both completely worn out.

Although dancing was at this time the Duchesse de Bourgogne's favourite diversion, she was also an enthusiastic playgoer ; and, as theatrical representations were frequently given at Versailles, while during the annual sojourn of the Court at Fontainebleau a play was performed almost every evening, she had ample opportunities for gratifying her taste, without the necessity of making the journey to Paris. She also occasionally assisted at the amateur performances which the Duchesse du Maine had already inaugurated at the Château of Clagny, and which she subsequently continued with so much *éclat* at Sceaux ; and the applause which greeted the histrionic efforts of this enterprising little lady inspired the princess with a desire to make her reappearance upon the boards, and in some more prominent rôle than that which she had filled at Saint-Cyr. Neither Louis xiv nor Madame de Maintenon would hear of her taking part in the representations at Clagny, to which not only the friends of the Duchesse du

Maine, but even the public were admitted; but they had no objection to her playing before themselves and such persons as they should select; and accordingly a little theatre was erected in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, the audience being limited to the princes and princesses and a few of the most favoured courtiers.

The theatre was inaugurated on December 5, 1699, by the representation of *Jonathas*, a "devotional play," in three acts, by Duché de Vancy, a *protégé* of Madame de Maintenon, who wrote, at that lady's instigation, several pieces of a similar character for the *demoiselles* of Saint-Cyr. The Duchesse de Bourgogne was supported by Madame de Maintenon's niece, Françoise d'Aubigné, who had married the Comte d'Ayen, eldest son of the Duc de Noailles, her husband, and other members of the Noailles family; but, beyond this, we are given no information concerning the cast. The first representation was witnessed only by the King, Madame de Maintenon, *Monsieur*, and the ladies of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; but, on the following evening, when a second performance was given, several other members of the Royal Family were present; while Chamillart, and Dangeau and his little son, the Marquis de Courcillon, were also admitted.

Dangeau, who seems to have regarded the invitation which he and his son had received as a signal honour, tells us that the piece was excellently represented, and that the King and *Monsieur* "found it very touching." He praises the acting of the Comte and Comtesse d'Ayen, but, singularly enough, has nothing to say about that



of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, from which we may infer that the young princess's performance must have left a good deal to be desired, even in the eyes of such an indulgent spectator as the Court diarist.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from giving a third performance of *Jonathas* some months later, the Duchesse de Bourgogne's company rested on its laurels for two years, when *Absalon*, another of Duché's religious tragedies, was produced. Much greater pains were taken to assure the success of this play than its predecessor; the rehearsals occupied a whole month, and the celebrated actor Baron was engaged as stage-manager and "coach" to the young amateurs.<sup>2</sup> The first performance took place on January 19, 1702, the Comte d'Ayen playing the title-part; the Comtesse d'Ayen, Thares, the wife of Absalon; the Duc d'Orléans (the future Regent), David; and the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who was attired in a magnificent dress embroidered with all the Crown jewels,<sup>3</sup> Absalon's daughter; while Baron was himself in the cast, though in a rôle of secondary importance. The audience on this occasion consisted of nearly forty persons, and included the King and Madame de Maintenon,

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, December 5 and 6, 1699.

<sup>2</sup> Baron, the most distinguished of all the pupils of Molière, had retired from the stage six years before, after a brilliantly successful career. Happily for the future of French acting, however, his retirement was not permanent, and in 1720 he returned to the theatre and rendered invaluable assistance to Adrienne Leconvreur in her efforts to replace the inflated style of elocution then in vogue by "a declamation simple, noble, and natural." See the author's "Queens of the French Stage" (London, Harpers; New York, Scribners, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, January 19, 1702.

nearly all the princes and princesses, the Duchesse de Bourgogne's ladies, and several members of the Noailles family. Thanks, in a great measure no doubt to Baron's careful tuition, the piece seems to have created a very favourable impression; and *Madame* assures Philip v of Spain that she "wept like a fool, and that the King had likewise great difficulty in restraining some tears."<sup>1</sup>

*Absalon* was succeeded by a little comedy, in which the Duchesse de Bourgogne again appeared, though, in *Madame's* opinion, with less success than in the tragedy, which was represented on two other occasions.

Encouraged by the success which had attended the performance of *Absalon*, the princess proposed to Madame de Maintenon that her company should attempt *Athalie*; and, on the following February 14, Racine's tragedy was played before Louis xiv and another distinguished company. The wife of Président de Chailly, who had had the honour of "creating" the rôle of Athalie at Saint-Cyr, came from Paris, at Madame de Maintenon's request, to undertake the title-part; the Duchesse de Bourgogne played Josabeth; the Comtesse d'Ayen, Salomith;<sup>2</sup> her husband, Joad; the little

<sup>1</sup> Letter of February 16, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> We learn, from a letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Comte d'Ayen, that the Comtesse d'Ayen had been originally cast for the part of Josabeth, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne for that of Salomith; but that the latter, who wished to play the more important rôle, thereupon declared her belief that the play was "too cold" to succeed, an opinion, however, which only lasted until Josabeth was given her. "The Duchesse de Bourgogne told me that she did not believe that *Athalie* would be a success; that it was a very cold play, and several other things which enable me to perceive, through the knowledge that I have of this Court, that her part

Comte de Lesparre, second son of the Duc de Guiche, Joas; and the Duc d'Orléans, Abner.

The *Mercur*, to whom we owe these details, since Dangeau confines himself to the bare statement that "to-day the Duchesse de Bourgogne played in *Athalie*, in Madame de Maintenon's apartments,"<sup>1</sup> distributes commendations all round with lavish hand, though its eulogy of the young princess contains a hint that she was more than a little nervous:

"The Duchesse de Bourgogne played Josabel (*sic*) with all the grace and the intelligence imaginable, and, though her rank might have justified her in displaying more boldness than another, that which she has shown, merely to prove that she was mistress of her part, was always joined to a certain timidity, which ought perhaps to be accounted modesty rather than nervousness. The costumes of this princess were of great magnificence; nevertheless, one may say, that the stage was more adorned by her person than by the richness of her dresses."<sup>2</sup>

A second performance of *Athalie* was given on the 23rd of the same month, and a third two days later, and with her appearance on the latter occasion the histrionic career of the Duchesse de Bourgogne came to an end. Whether the young princess had not met with quite the measure

displeases her. She wants to play Josabeth, which she cannot play as well as the Comtesse d'Ayen. . . . I told her that she need not undertake anything against her will in an amusement which was only arranged for her pleasure. She is delighted and finds *Athalie* a very fine play."

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, February 14, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> *Mercur de France*, February 1702.

of success she had been led to anticipate, and was a little annoyed at finding her own efforts eclipsed, as they undoubtedly were, by her old friend the Comtesse d'Ayen, or whether Madame de Maintenon was tired of having the tranquillity of her apartments disturbed by the noise and confusion which the preparations for these performances entailed, and, after the little unpleasantness we have mentioned, was no longer inclined to undertake the responsibility of organising them, there were no more amateur theatricals at Versailles ; and the princess henceforth confined her interest in the drama to the rôle of spectator.

But the drama, except during the annual visit of the Court to Fontainebleau, and dancing, save during the Carnival, were not pleasures which could be indulged in every evening of the week. There were, however, other methods of passing the time agreeably, and preventing young ladies with no taste for serious occupation from becoming bored, which were quite independent of the seasons ; and the most popular of these was play.

The France of Louis XIV was remarkable for its passion for play ; and, if the vice were not quite so widespread as in the eighteenth century, the stakes were infinitely higher. " Play without limit and without regulation," said the celebrated Jesuit preacher Bourdaloue, in one of his sermons, " which is no longer an amusement, but a business, a profession, a trade, a fascination ; nay, if I may say so, a rage and a madness ; which brings inevitably in its train the neglect of duty, the ruin of families, the dissipation of fortunes, the

mean trickery and knavery which result from greed of gain, insanity, misery, despair.”<sup>1</sup>

The Court in this matter set a deplorable example to the rest of the country, and the Royal Family a deplorable example to the Court. Even the devout Queen found it not inconsistent with her religious scruples to play for much higher sums than she could conveniently pay, and on her death, in 1683, was found to have left debts of honour amounting to 100,000 écus (300,000 francs) behind her, which Louis XIV promptly discharged. Madame de Sévigné, writing in 1676, tells us that when the King played with the Court at reversi, the pools ranged from 500 to 1200 louis, and each player began by contributing 20 louis. But this semi-public gaming was a mere bagatelle to what went on in private, where such prodigious sums were won and lost as would seem scarcely credible, were they not vouched for by a score of witnesses.

Madame de Montespan, who was one of the greatest gamblers of which history makes mention, thought nothing of winning or losing a million livres at bassette at a single sitting.<sup>2</sup> On Christmas Day 1678, she lost 700,000 écus (2,100,000 francs) and at the beginning of the following March took part in company with *Monsieur Bouyn*—a wealthy financier of the time—and certain other kindred spirits in an all-night *séance*, at which the players staked as though they had the coffers of the State behind them:

<sup>1</sup> Hurel, *les Orateurs sacrés à la Cour de Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Montmorency to Bussy-Rabutin, December 9, 1687, *Correspondance de Bussy-Rabutin.*



PHILIPPE DE COURCILLON, MARQUIS DE DANGEAU  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DREVET, AFTER THE PAINTING BY RIGAUD



“Madame de Montespan lost 400,000 pistoles [4,000,000 francs] playing against the bank, which, however, she eventually won back. At eight o’clock in the morning, Bouyn, who kept the bank, wished to stop, but the lady declared that she did not intend to go to bed until she had won back another 100,000 pistoles which she owed him from a previous occasion. *Monsieur* only left Madame de Montespan’s apartments in time to attend the King’s lever. The King paid 30,000 pistoles which *Monsieur* and Madame de Montespan still owed the other players.”<sup>1</sup>

The most consistently successful gambler at the Court was undoubtedly Dangeau, who, though he never appears to have indulged in any such orgies as the above, must have amassed a very large fortune at the card-table. “I saw Dangeau play,” writes Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, “and could not help observing how awkward others appeared in comparison with him. He thinks of nothing but the game ; gains when others lose ; never throws a chance away ; profits by every mistake ; nothing escapes or distracts him. Thus, two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand écus in a month, are added to his receipt-book.” Another person who gained great wealth at play was Langlée, the son of a waiting-woman of Anne of Austria, who, by his skill and address, had succeeded in making his way into the very highest society. Neither he nor Dangeau ever fell under the suspicion of assisting Fortune, but as much cannot be said

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Marquis de Trichateau to Bussy-Rabutin, March 6, 1687, *Correspondance de Bussy-Rabutin*.



for several other successful players; and we learn that in 1700 such unpleasant rumours were in circulation in regard to the persistent good-luck enjoyed by the Duc d'Antin, that his mother, Madame de Montespan, fearing a scandal, persuaded him to renounce the card-table, in consideration of a substantial increase of his allowance.

It might be supposed that Louis XIV's conversion would have been followed by some abatement of this evil, but the very opposite was the case. Recognising that his courtiers must have some amusement to replace the brilliant fêtes which he had ceased to offer them, the King rather encouraged than frowned upon the votaries of Chance, granted them certain dispensations of etiquette, such as permission to remain seated when he passed through the rooms where the card-tables were set out, and played himself for much higher stakes than in former days.<sup>1</sup>

The result of the absence of rival attractions and of the royal approval was that Versailles became a veritable hotbed of gambling, and about the time of the Princess Adélaïde's arrival the mania for play seems to have reached its height. Lansquenet, a game which had hitherto been confined to the lower classes, had recently become the fashion at Court, and fortunes changed hands in the course of a single *séance*. "Here, in France," writes *Madame*, "so soon as people get together they do nothing but play lansquenet; the young people no longer care about dancing. . . . They

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau and Sourches both mention a game of reversi, which the King played with *Monseigneur*, *Monsieur*, Dangeau, and Langlée in the winter of 1686-1687, at which each player brought with him to the table a sum of 5000 pistoles.

play here for frightful sums, and the players seemed bereft of their senses. One shouts at the top of his voice; another strikes the table so violently with his fist that the whole room resounds; a third blasphemes in a manner to make one's hair stand on end; all appear beside themselves, and it is horrible to watch them."<sup>1</sup> Brélan was another game much in vogue, and the Princesse de Conti had a brélan-party nearly every evening in her apartments. Both she and her half-sister, *Madame la Duchesse*, were terrible gamblers, and in May 1700 the latter wrote to Madame de Maintenon to tell her that she had lost "from 10,000 to 12,000 pistoles, which it was impossible for her to pay just then." Madame de Maintenon showed the letter to the King, and begged him to come to his daughter's assistance. His Majesty consented, and, having directed Langlée, "whom *Madame la Duchesse* honoured with her confidence," to draw up and submit to him a detailed statement of the whole of the lady's liabilities, paid them in full, and without saying a word to the lady's husband, which was distinctly kind of him.<sup>2</sup>

With such examples all around her, it is not surprising that the Duchesse de Bourgogne should speedily have become a constant *habituée* of the card-table, nor that she should have been compelled to pay pretty dearly for her initiation into the mysteries of *hombre*, *brélan*, and *lansquenet*, since young ladies of fifteen or thereabouts are not generally endowed with the self-restraint which

<sup>1</sup> This was, of course, at private gambling-parties. When people played in the State apartments, the stakes were comparatively moderate, and the utmost decorum was observed.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, May 17, 1700.

enables older and more experienced gamblers to cut their losses. Lansquenet was her passion, and the cause of her most disastrous reverses, and, singularly enough, about the same time that *Madame la Duchesse* found herself obliged to have recourse to the good offices of Madame de Maintenon to get her debts paid, the latter received a similar petition from the Duchesse de Bourgogne. We are not told the amount of the princess's liabilities, but it was no doubt very considerable; and since, according to Saint-Simon, she was very punctilious about her debts of honour, the matter must have caused her the keenest distress. However, her appeal was successful, and, in acknowledging the money, she wrote the following grateful and contrite letter to Madame de Maintenon:—

“*Friday, Midnight, May 1700*

“I am in despair, my dear aunt, at always committing follies, and giving you reason to find fault with me. I am firmly resolved to correct myself, and not to play again at this wretched game [lansquenet], which serves only to damage my reputation and to diminish your affection, which is more precious to me than anything. I beg you, my dear aunt, not to speak to me about it, if I keep my resolution. If I fail only once, I shall be delighted for the King to forbid me the game, and to endure everything which may result from the bad impression which he will form of me. I shall never console myself for being the cause of your sufferings, and I shall not forgive this accursed lansquenet.

“Pardon, then, my dear aunt, my past faults. I hope that my conduct hereafter will generally make amends for my follies, and that I shall be

worthy of your affection. All that I shall desire in this world is to be a princess whose conduct renders her estimable, and this I shall strive to deserve in the future. I flatter myself that I am not yet too old, nor my reputation too tarnished, for me to succeed in time. I am overwhelmed by all your kindness, and by what you have sent me to enable me to pay my debts. . . . I am in despair at having displeased you. I have abandoned God, and He has abandoned me; but I trust that, with His help, which I ask of Him with all my heart, I shall get the better of all my faults, and restore to you your health, which is so dear to me, and which I am the cause of your having lost. To my sorrow, I should not dare to flatter myself that you will forget my faults, nor to ask you to give me back again, my dear aunt, an affection of which I have rendered myself unworthy. I trust, however, that in time I shall merit it once more; and I shall have no other occupation.”<sup>1</sup>

The Duchesse de Bourgogne was no doubt perfectly sincere in her expressions of penitence and her resolution to amend her ways. But circumstances proved too strong for her, and, though she certainly did renounce lansquenet for a season, *hombre*, *brélan*, and *reversi*—in which last game Dangeau tells us that he had the honour of giving her lessons—seem to have provided her with ample opportunities for dissipating her superfluous cash, and often a good deal that was not superfluous; and, some eighteen months later, we learn that “high play is still her dominant

<sup>1</sup> *Mélanges de littérature et d'histoire*, published by the Société des Bibliophiles Français; Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

passion.”<sup>1</sup> Finally, lansquenet reasserted its fatal fascination, and in the summer of 1707 her desire to indulge in this dangerous pastime led her to represent to Madame de Maintenon that a gambling orgy to which she had been invited by *Madame la Duchesse* at La Bretesche, a little village between Versailles and Marly, was merely an innocent hunting-collation, which piece of deception so angered the King that he forbade her to play the game again. Under date July 16, 1707, Madame de Maintenon writes to Madame de Dangeau :—

“ It is to speak to the Duchesse de Bourgogne that I asked you to postpone your visit to Paris until to-morrow. The King told me yesterday that he had been surprised to find the card-players at La Bretesche, so I knew that the Duchesse de Bourgogne had been deceiving me. . . . The King said to me : ‘ Was not a dinner, a ride, a hunt, and a collation enough for one day ? ’ Then he added, after a little reflection, ‘ I shall do well to tell these gentlemen that they are not paying their court to me in an acceptable way by playing cards with the Duchesse de Bourgogne.’ I told him that lansquenet had always been a source of trouble to me, from my fear lest it should lead her to do something which might injure her and place her in an equivocal position. We then talked of other matters, but the King returned to the subject and said to me : ‘ Ought I not to speak to these gentlemen ? ’ I answered that I thought that such a step would hurt the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and that it would be better for

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse de Soubise, December 1701, in Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon d'après sa correspondance authentique*.

him to speak to her and keep the affair a secret. He told me that he would do so to-day, and it is in order to warn her, Madame, that I have begged you to remain. Here we are then, and, sooner than I expected, on the verge of that estrangement which I have always dreaded. The King will think that he has offended her by forbidding her to play lansquenet, and will be more distant to her; and it is certain that she will be angry and more cold towards him. I shall think the same, but I am not yet sufficiently indifferent to the world's good opinion as to suffer it to believe that I approve of such conduct . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The incessant pursuit of pleasure in which the Duchesse de Bourgogne continued to pass her days: balls, fêtes, card-parties, the chase, visits to the Opera and the Comédie-Française, expeditions to the fairs in and around Paris, water excursions, collations at the Menagerie, picnics in the forests of Marly and Fontainebleau, and so forth, not only left her no time for any useful occupation, and fostered a craving for novelty and excitement which, as will be seen hereafter, she sometimes carried to dangerous lengths, but was exceedingly injurious to her health, since it frequently entailed a good deal of physical exertion and the keeping of very late hours. Even to a young girl of robust constitution such a life would have been a severe strain, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne was naturally delicate. Moreover, as we have already mentioned, she had very bad teeth and suffered severely from toothache, from

<sup>1</sup> Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon d'après sa correspondance authentique*.

which, as the science of dentistry was then in its infancy, she was never able to obtain any permanent relief, and also from what would appear to have been an acute form of indigestion. During the first three years which followed her marriage, she had several slight attacks of fever, and in the first week of August 1701 fell seriously ill, the result, according to Saint-Simon, of having bathed in the Seine immediately after she had eaten a quantity of fruit.

The Court was then on the point of starting for Marly, and, although quite unfit to leave her bed, she would not hear of the visit being postponed or of being left behind. On the 9th—the day after arriving at Marly—she was in a high fever, which lasted until late on the following day, when, as the result of the administration of an emetic, she took a turn for the better, and Fagon, who attended her, confidently asserted that all danger was over. However, on the 13th she had a relapse, and speedily became delirious, and, though the violent remedies to which Fagon had recourse brought her back to consciousness, they reduced her to such a pitiably weak condition that she believed her case to be hopeless and asked for her confessor. As that worthy man had not accompanied the Court to Marly, and some hours must elapse before he could arrive, it was judged advisable to send for the curé of the parish, “to whom she made her confession, and with whom she was very satisfied.”<sup>1</sup>

The King and Madame de Maintenon were in despair, and the grief of the Duc de Bourgogne

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, August 13, 1701.

was such that even *Madame*, between whom and the young princess there was very little love lost, could not refrain from weeping with him.<sup>1</sup> The next day, however, she was much better, and on the 16th she was pronounced convalescent, and Dangeau reports that "the Duchesse de Bourgogne is very gay, and not so weak as might be expected after so severe an illness and so many remedies."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, her convalescence, through which she was nursed by Madame de Maintenon with a devotion to which even Saint-Simon renders justice, was a long one, and it was some weeks before she was able to leave her room.

It might be supposed that this narrow escape would have served as a warning to the young lady of the danger of constantly drawing bills upon Nature ; but no sooner was she restored to health, than she resumed her pursuit of pleasure with all the zest begotten of long abstinence ; nor does Madame de Maintenon, though she admits that the girl's illness " must be considered as a result of the irregular life which she was leading," appear to have made any effort to restrain her.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of *Madame* to the Raugravine Luise, August 14, 1701. *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans* (edit. Jaeglé).

<sup>2</sup> *Journal*, August 16, 1701.



## CHAPTER XII

Death and testament of Carlos II of Spain—Louis XIV resolves to accept the succession to the throne of Spain on behalf of his grandson, Philippe, Duc d'Anjou—" *Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées!*"—The new king treated at the French Court as a foreign sovereign—His parting present to the Duchesse de Bourgogne—His departure for Madrid—Position of Victor Amadeus II in regard to the Spanish succession (1696–1700)—His designs on the Milanese—He seeks to obtain a promise from Louis XIV to secure this province for him on the death of Carlos II—His claims ignored in the First Partition Treaty—The death of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria revives his hopes—His indignation at being excluded from the benefits of the Second Partition Treaty—Negotiations between Savoy and France for the cession of the Milanese to the Duke interrupted by the death of Carlos II—Anger of Victor Amadeus against Louis XIV—His equivocal behaviour—He is constrained by France to enter into a fresh alliance which offers him no hope of an increase of territory

ON November 9, 1700, news reached Fontainebleau, where the Court was then in residence, that the childless Carlos II of Spain was dead, and that, by a will which he had signed on the preceding October 7, the whole of the vast dominions of the Spanish crown had been bequeathed to Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, the second son of the Dauphin.<sup>1</sup> On the following day, a solemn council was held to decide whether France was to accept or reject the Will, to which were summoned

<sup>1</sup> The Dauphin had formally renounced his claims in favour of his second son, while the Emperor Leopold had done likewise in favour of his second son, the Archduke Charles.

the Chancellor Pontchartrain, Beauvilliers, President of the Council of Finance, Torcy, Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Monseigneur*, and Madame de Maintenon. The Council was divided. Torcy and *Monseigneur* were strongly in favour of acceptance; Beauvilliers declared his conviction that such a course would inevitably be followed by a war which would cause the ruin of France; the Chancellor confined himself to a judicial survey of the whole situation, and concluded by begging to be excused from committing himself either way; while Madame de Maintenon does not appear to have spoken at all, nor ever to have expressed a decided opinion, at any rate publicly, and the part she played in this matter, as in so many others, remains an enigma.

It is probable that Louis XIV had already decided in the affirmative, and that the arguments to which he listened had little effect upon him. Any way, on the 12th a despatch was sent to Madrid conveying his Majesty's acceptance of the Will on behalf of his grandson, and the Spanish Ambassador was informed of the momentous decision which had been arrived at. This, however, was not made public until the morning of the 16th, the day after the Court had returned to Versailles, when Louis XIV, at his *lever*, presented the Duc d'Anjou to the expectant crowd of courtiers and diplomatists as Philip V of Spain, and the Spanish Ambassador uttered those celebrated words, which many historians still persist in putting into the mouth of Louis himself: "*Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées; elles sont abîmées!*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Ambassador threw himself at his [the Duc d'Anjou's] feet, and kissed his hand, his eyes filled with tears of joy; and,

From that hour until the departure of the new monarch to take possession of his inheritance, he was treated in all respects as a foreign sovereign; and the lad, who only a few hours before had been under the authority of his *gouverneur*, became forthwith the equal of his grandfather and the superior of his brothers. Louis XIV, indeed, took pleasure in emphasising the new position which his grandson occupied, and on the first evening insisted on accompanying him to the door of his bed-chamber, where he observed as he parted from him : “ *Je souhaite que sa Majesté repose bien cette nuit !* ” However, the comic side of the situation proved too much for Louis’s gravity, and he was unable to repress a smile.

Visits of ceremony were exchanged between the King of Spain and the different members of the Royal Family precisely as though he had been a foreign sovereign newly arrived at the Court, and, though the three young princes lived on terms of the greatest familiarity and affection, the rigid etiquette of the time did not permit them to forego a single detail of the formalities prescribed for these occasions. Thus, during the visit which Philip paid to the Duc de Bourgogne, both brothers remained standing the whole time, and the same uncomfortable custom was observed when he visited the Duc de Berry. In the case of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, however, etiquette was relaxed, not improbably because that young lady had intimated to his Catholic Majesty that she having risen, he made his son and the Spaniards of his suite advance and do likewise. Then he cried : “ *Quelle joie ! il n’y a plus de Pyrénées, elles sont abîmées, et nous ne sommes plus qu’un.* ” ” *Mercur de France*, October 1700.

preferred to be seated when there was no useful object to be served by standing ; and their visits were exchanged without any ceremony whatever.

The princess's behaviour towards the new King, indeed, was sadly wanting in respect, for, shortly afterwards, she secreted herself in the *ruelle* of the royal bed to listen to an address of congratulation with which the Academy was to present him. However, his Majesty would not appear to have resented this familiarity, and, a few days before his departure for Spain, he begged her to accept, as a souvenir of the close friendship which had always existed between them, a pair of magnificent diamond-earrings, which had been left him by his mother, the ill-fated Bavarian Dauphine, having first, Dangeau tells us, consulted Madame de Maintenon "to know if this present were not too insignificant."<sup>1</sup>

On December 4, Philip v set out on his long journey to Madrid, accompanied by the Ducs de Bourgogne and de Berry, and an imposing escort, under the command of Beauvilliers. The King parted from his brothers, neither of whom he was ever to see again on earth, at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, whence they returned to Versailles by way of Languedoc and Provence, this circuitous route being selected in order that the Duc de Bourgogne might make himself acquainted with as much of France as possible ; while the young sovereign continued his journey to his capital, which he reached in safety on February 18, 1701. Before the year had run half its course the Imperialists had invaded the Milanese, and that long and

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, November 27, 1700.

sanguinary struggle known as the War of the Spanish Succession had begun.

We have no intention of entering here upon the vexed question of how far Louis XIV was morally and politically justified in accepting the crown of Spain for his grandson, in defiance of the terms of the Second Partition Treaty,<sup>1</sup> nor of discussing whether the series of provocative steps afterwards taken by him, which caused England and Holland to range themselves on the side of the Emperor, who, without their co-operation, would have been powerless to offer any effective opposition to the accession of Philip V, were merely the result of "the fumes of pride which had mounted to his brain and obscured his judgment,"<sup>2</sup> as so many French writers would have us believe, or "all parts of a definite policy, which arose out of a sure belief that war must result from the Spanish Will,"<sup>3</sup> which seems to be the opinion of most English historians. Such questions naturally lie beyond the scope of a volume which is concerned mainly with the Duchesse de Bourgogne and with matters which affected her more or less directly; and we shall therefore confine ourselves to a brief account of the events which led up to the rupture of the

<sup>1</sup> By the Second Partition Treaty, which was signed by England, France, and Holland in May 1700, the contracting parties agreed that, on the death of Carlos II, the Duc d'Anjou should receive the Two Sicilies, the Tuscan ports, Giupuscoa, and the Milanese, the last-named territory to be handed over to the Duke of Lorraine in exchange for his duchy, which was already, to all intents and purposes, a French fief; while the Archduke Charles was to have Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Indies.

<sup>2</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

<sup>3</sup> Kitchin, *History of France*, vol. iii.

peace of 1696 between France and Savoy and caused Victor Amadeus II to return to his old allies. But, to explain this more clearly, it will be necessary for us to go back to the time of the peace.

The ambitious and enterprising ruler of Savoy was not the man to stand aside when so momentous a question as the disposal of the vast possessions of the Spanish crown was occupying the attention of Europe, nor could it be denied that he possessed sufficient reason to justify his intervention. He was himself a relative of Carlos II, being descended from the Infanta Catherine, daughter of Philip II, who had married, in 1585, Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy; and the Will of Philip IV, while excluding his daughter Maria Theresa, Queen of France, and her children from the succession, had provided that, in the event of the death without issue of his son Carlos, his third daughter Margaret Theresa, wife of the Emperor Leopold I, and his sister the Empress Maria Anna, widow of the Emperor Ferdinand III, the crown should descend to the Duchess of Savoy. The right of Philip IV to dispose thus in advance of the inheritance of his son was disputed, and, even if it had been admitted, there were, in 1696, two princes with superior claims between Victor Amadeus and the succession, namely, Joseph Ferdinand, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, and the Archduke Charles. Nevertheless, the fact of the Duke's descent from the Infanta Catherine certainly entitled him to consideration, if the Powers of Europe were to decide upon a partition of the Spanish monarchy.

And the part of the Spanish monarchy which he coveted was the Milanese, the great object of the ambition of his House in those far-off days before Savoy had felt the yoke of France. That yoke once lifted and Pinerolo and Casale wrested from the grip of his western neighbour, Victor Amadeus turned longing eyes towards the fertile plains of Lombardy, and in the treaty of 1696 he persuaded Louis XIV to consent to the insertion of a secret article, which stipulated that, "in the event of the death of the Catholic King [Carlos II of Spain], without children, *during the course of the present war*, his Most Christian Majesty [Louis XIV] would undertake to render every possible assistance to his Royal Highness [Victor Amadeus] to obtain the Milanese," and that, "in the event of the death of the said Catholic King, he would renounce all pretensions, whether by conquest or otherwise, to the Duchy of Milan."<sup>1</sup>

Although the sickly Carlos II survived the war, and thus freed Louis XIV from the obligations which this article imposed, Victor Amadeus considered that he still remained under a kind of moral obligation to secure the Milanese for his nephew, and all his energies were henceforth directed to obtaining a fresh and binding promise.

However, for some time he could secure nothing more satisfactory from Louis than an assurance that, when the death of the King of Spain occurred, he would "find him favourably disposed to everything which might contribute to his personal advantage"; and his indignation was intense when,

<sup>1</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

in the autumn of 1698, he learned of the terms of the First Partition Treaty, concluded between England and France and subsequently ratified by Holland, whereby the Spanish dominions were divided between the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, the Duc d'Anjou, and the Archduke Charles, and his own claims were entirely ignored.<sup>1</sup> Nor does he appear to have been at all mollified when news came that Carlos II, so far from being grateful for the forethought of their Majesties of England and France in drawing up his will for him, had answered the Partition Treaty by leaving the whole of his possessions to the Electoral Prince; and he intimated very plainly to the French Ambassador at Turin that, if his master contemplated taking up arms to oppose the Bavarian prince's succession, he must expect no help from him. But the death of Joseph Ferdinand, in January 1699, entirely changed the situation and revived the hopes of Victor Amadeus, who could with difficulty conceal his joy, since he was convinced that, whether a partition or a regular succession was to be the ultimate fate of the Spanish monarchy, his claims could now no longer be overlooked.

That he had grounds for this belief is proved by the despatches of Louis XIV to Tallard, the French Ambassador at St. James's, wherein he suggests that Victor Amadeus should have the Two Sicilies, in exchange for Nice and Savoy, which were to be ceded to France, or even the crown

<sup>1</sup> This Treaty stipulated that the Electoral Prince was to have Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Indies; the Duc d'Anjou was to receive the Two Sicilies, the Tuscan ports, Finale, and Giupuscoa; and the Archduke Charles, the Milanese.



of Spain, with the Indies, provided that Piedmont were also surrendered.

But nothing came of these proposals, chiefly no doubt because they tended to make France more formidable than ever to Austria, but also because neither William III nor the Emperor had forgiven the defection of Victor Amadeus three years before, and regarded with anything but favour the suggested aggrandisement of their faithless ally.

And so the Duke of Savoy had the mortification to find himself excluded from the benefits of the Second Partition Treaty, as he had been from its predecessor, and his indignation at what he considered to be his betrayal by Louis XIV was in proportion to his disappointment. When Phélypeaux, the French Ambassador at Turin, was instructed by his master to obtain his adhesion to the treaty, it was refused, Victor Amadeus observing ironically that he was "too small a prince to enter into so important an affair, in which it had not been thought necessary to give him either part or portion"; and the Ambassador wrote to Versailles that he was informed that in the privacy of his apartments the Duke had abandoned himself to transports of rage.

The attitude of Victor Amadeus caused Louis XIV considerable uneasiness, since, in view of possible complications with Austria, it was of the highest importance to France to be able to count upon the alliance of the prince who held the keys of the Alps. When, therefore, it was suggested that he should undertake to secure such amendment of the Partition Treaty as would meet the Duke's wishes in regard to the Milanese, he lent a very

favourable ear to the proposal, and, as the result of numerous conferences between Torcy and Verdone—who had been sent as Ambassador of Savoy to Versailles in the summer of 1699—it was arranged that the Duke of Lorraine should receive the Two Sicilies instead of the Milanese, which, it will be remembered, was to be the price of the cession of his duchy to France, and that the Milanese should be given to Victor Amadeus, Louis XIV receiving in exchange Savoy and the county of Nice. An alliance offensive and defensive was also to be signed between France and Savoy.

Such an arrangement was not only highly advantageous to the Duke of Savoy, but equally so to France, since it enabled Louis XIV to extend his frontiers on the south-east, as well as on the side of Germany. But, unfortunately, Victor Amadeus, instead of being satisfied with the prospect of realising the dream of his ancestors and exchanging his thinly-populated dominions on the western side of the Alps for the wealthiest State of Northern Italy, desired to get possession of Montferrato<sup>1</sup> and Finale as well, and also to retain the valley of Barcelonnette, which would give him access to France. These new demands caused the negotiations to be protracted for many months,<sup>2</sup> and, though, on learning that the King of Spain was *in extremis*, the Duke realised the fatal mistake he

<sup>1</sup> Montferrato formed part of the Duchy of Mantua. Victor Amadeus considered that he had an hereditary claim upon it.

<sup>2</sup> Louis XIV was himself partly responsible for the delay, since he desired Pinerolo to be included in the cession of Savoy and Nice, but it was understood that he would not insist on this, if Victor Amadeus were prepared to surrender the valley of Barcelonnette and withdraw his pretensions to Montferrato and Finale.

had committed and endeavoured to repair it, it was then too late, and neither of the treaties had been signed when the news of the death and testament of Carlos II reached Fontainebleau.

These events destroyed all hope of Victor Amadeus obtaining the Milanese by the aid of France, since no sane person could imagine that Louis XIV would be so ill-advised as to compel his grandson to incur the odium of his new subjects by dismembering the Spanish monarchy, in order to satisfy the cupidity of the Duke of Savoy. This the French Ambassador at Turin did not fail to point out to the mortified prince; but the latter elected to pose as a singularly ill-used person, and told Phélypeaux, in very plain terms, that he refused to admit his Most Christian Majesty's right to repudiate his engagements.

As the weeks went by, and Victor Amadeus, notwithstanding Louis's assurance that he would "lose no opportunity of furthering his interests" and a promise to secure the payment of considerable sums long due from Spain to Savoy, declined to be placated, the King became seriously alarmed, for the Imperialists were preparing to invade the Milanese, and, unless the Duke of Savoy were willing to open the Alpine passes to the French troops, the Spanish forces in that State might be completely crushed before their allies could come to their assistance. He accordingly directed Phélypeaux to sound the Duke upon the matter, but neither he nor Tessé, who visited Turin on his way to Milan to confer with the Prince de Vaudémont,<sup>1</sup> the Governor of

<sup>1</sup> He was a natural son of Charles IV of Lorraine and Béatrix de Cantecroix, and had entered the service of Spain.

the Milanese, in regard to the approaching campaign, were able to obtain from him any satisfactory assurances. "The King of France," he told Phélypeaux, "was so powerful that he did not need his consent to march his troops through his States." But when the Ambassador spoke of the arrangements necessary for provisioning the French troops during their passage through Savoy and Piedmont, he replied angrily that he was not an army-contractor, and that he declined to concern himself with such matters.<sup>1</sup>

Greatly irritated by this response, and in the belief that Victor Amadeus was meditating, even if he had not already begun, negotiations with the Emperor, Louis XIV now directed Phélypeaux to demand an unconditional passage for his Majesty's forces through the Duke's States, and to offer him, as the price of his alliance, the marriage of his second daughter, Maria Luisa, — known as the Princess of Piedmont, then in her thirteenth year, with the young King of Spain, and the title of Generalissimo of the French and Spanish troops in Italy during the forthcoming year, together with a subsidy of 50,000 écus a month, on condition that he placed 3500 cavalry and 8000 infantry in the field.

These propositions were very far from satisfactory to Victor Amadeus, who considered that the services which were in his power to render merited a much higher recompense than a marriage which, though flattering to his family pride, was evidently intended to chain him to the side of

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of Phélypeaux to Louis XIV, January 26, 1701, cited by Haussonville.

France and Spain and destroy his hopes of territorial aggrandisement.<sup>1</sup> He therefore strove to secure the insertion of a secret article in the proposed treaty of alliance, stipulating that if, at the conclusion of the war, the Milanese were allotted to France, any of the Italian princes, or the Duke of Lorraine, Louis XIV would secure its cession to him, in exchange for Savoy, Nice, and the valley of Barcelonnette. Louis XIV, however, not only expressed his inability to comply with this demand, but declined to hold out to the Duke any hope of an increase of territory whatever; and the treaty presented for his acceptance contained a clause providing for the maintenance of the *status quo ante bellum* in Italy.

That in directing the insertion of this clause, the King committed a grave error of judgment cannot be doubted, for Phélypeaux had warned him that the refusal of the Milanese would probably result in driving Victor Amadeus into the arms of the Emperor, and he could therefore have been under no illusion as to the real sentiments of his ally. Nevertheless, Victor Amadeus accepted the terms offered him (April 6, 1701), since, with the French on one side of him and the Spanish forces in the Milanese on the other, and the Imperialists still on the farther side of the Alps, to refuse would have been worse than folly. But he did so with a bitter heart, and with the full determination to turn his back upon his allies the moment his interests justified such a step; indeed, scarcely was the ink dry upon the parchment of

<sup>1</sup> Costa de Beauregard, *Mémoires de la Maison de Savoie*.

the treaty, than he sent instructions to his Ambassador at Vienna to represent to the Emperor that he had acted wholly under constraint, and to pave the way for the defection which he meditated.

## CHAPTER XIII

Life of the Duc de Bourgogne—Brief period of frivolity, terminated by the serious illness of his wife, which he regards as a judgment upon him—His increasing austerity: renunciation of dancing and the theatre, and finally of play, except for trifling sums—His piety—His exaggerated scruples—Impatience of the Duchesse de Bourgogne with the conduct of her husband—Extraordinary diffidence of the duke towards women encourages her and her ladies to indulge in practical jokes at his expense—Fondness of the duchess for practical joking—Her persecution of the Princesse d'Harcourt—Beginning of hostilities in Flanders and Alsace—The Duc de Bourgogne placed in nominal command of the French army in Flanders—His interview with Fénelon at Cambrai—First campaign of the young prince—He is associated with Tallard in the command of part of the Army of the Rhine; but their connection is not a fortunate one—The taking of Brisach—The duke's intense desire to see his wife the true explanation of his return for Versailles before the conclusion of the campaign—His pathetic letters from the army to the duchess's confidante, Madame de Montgon

THE life of the Duc de Bourgogne presented a singular contrast to that of his light-hearted little wife. It is true that for the first year or two after his emancipation from the authority of his *gouverneur* his new-found liberty was not without its attractions, and he availed himself pretty freely of the permission now accorded him to participate in all the pleasures of the Court. Thus, we hear of him accompanying his father to the Opera, of which *Monseigneur* was a great supporter, and even of taking part in an amateur performance of Lulli's *Alceste* in the apartments

of the Princesse de Conti ; of attending balls and masquerades, and of winning and losing considerable sums at the card-table.

But this period of frivolity did not survive the serious illness of his wife in August 1701, which he appears to have regarded as a judgment of God for having permitted himself to be ensnared by worldly pleasures, and a solemn warning to him to abandon them and allow nothing but religion and duty to occupy his time and thoughts :—

“ I began to pray to God,” he writes to Beauvilliers ; “ I bemoaned in His presence my sins, for I firmly believe that He was punishing me for them by this means. I beseeched Him to cast on me the burden of them all, and to spare this poor innocent ; and that, if she had committed any sins, to let me bear the iniquity of them. He had pity upon me, and, thank God, the Duchesse de Bourgogne is entirely out of danger. . . . I cease not to thank God for this benefit, since it is obvious that He intended to punish me, but that he stayed His wrath, and had compassion upon me.” <sup>1</sup>

From that time, the Duc de Bourgogne gradually withdrew from the pleasures of the Court, and lived a life of increasing austerity. He began by giving up dancing on the ground “ that it was his misfortune to lack adroitness at that exercise,” <sup>2</sup> and only appeared at those balls where etiquette required him to be present. Next, he ceased to visit the Opera or the theatre, and, not content

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Vogüé, *le Duc de Bourgogne et le Duc de Beauvilliers* (Paris, 1900).

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau.



with abstaining from this form of amusement himself, endeavoured to persuade those of the courtiers with whom he was most intimate to follow his example. Finally, though not without considerable effort, since, like his wife, he had caught the gambling fever in a rather severe form,<sup>1</sup> he resolved to renounce play, or rather those games at which the stakes generally ruled high, and to confine himself to playing for small sums, while, in the event of losing, he made a rule of settling his debts before leaving the table. As he was a very unlucky player, it was his custom to select his opponents from among the poorer members of the Court, to whom the money they might win from him would be of assistance, and thus his gambling may be regarded as a delicate form of charity.<sup>2</sup>

The only fashionable pastimes, indeed, in which his conscience appears to have permitted him

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau tells us that in 1702 the duke had to apply to the King for money to pay his card-debts, and that his Majesty gave him more than he asked for, at the same time telling him "to play without anxiety, since money would not fail him."

<sup>2</sup> It may seem at first sight not a little singular that the Duc de Bourgogne should have been able to reconcile gambling far more easily with his conscience than attendance at the play. But it should be remembered that to the bulk of the French clergy, and to many of the devout, the theatre was anathema (see the author's "Queens of the French Stage"); while that, on the other hand, the attitude of so many worthy people to-day, whose principles will not permit them to indulge in even the most modest rubber, would have been as unintelligible to a Frenchman of the early eighteenth century as the idea that a man should refuse to drink a glass of wine, because many of his fellows are guilty of excess in this respect. As a matter of fact, both Saint-Simon and the duke's two panegyric biographers, Martineau and Proyard, are fain to admit that their hero was, not only a great eater, like all the Bourbons, but a lover of good wine as well, and that he thought it no sin to be merry with his friends.

to indulge freely were hunting and shooting, though, unlike his father, he took care that his love of the chase should never interfere with his duties, and was so generous in the matter of compensation for any damage which he or his gentlemen might happen to commit, that it is to be feared that those over whose land he rode not infrequently took advantage of him.

Never since the time of Louis XIII had the Court of France seen so pious a prince. He passed hours every day in prayer and in the study of the Scriptures and devotional works; he composed *Réflexions pour chaque jour de la semaine*; he was often closeted with his confessor for a couple of hours at a time; he attended three services on Sunday, and kept the day almost as strictly as a Puritan; he communicated every Sunday and every Saint's Day, always in the splendid costume of the Order of the Saint-Esprit, that he might do more honour to the Sacrament; and, though so fond of good cheer at other seasons, he fasted in Lent until he became, according to *Madame*, "thin as a packing-stick."

Unfortunately, the Duc de Bourgogne forgot that the life of a saint is scarcely compatible with the duties of a prince, and Saint-Simon deploras "the ever-increasing devotion which inspired him with an austerity which went beyond all bounds, and often gave him, without his perceiving it, the air of a censor"; while his confessor and biographer, Père Martineau, admits that "his scruples entailed inconveniences."<sup>1</sup>

The duke's exaggerated scruples, indeed, some-

<sup>1</sup> Père Martineau, *Recueil des vertus du duc de Bourgogne*, etc.

times rendered him ridiculous in the eyes of most of the Court, and were condemned even by his devout friends. Thus, on Twelfth-Night 1702, he declined to attend a ball at which the King had expressed a desire that he should be present, and persisted in his refusal, although the austere Beauvilliers himself endeavoured to persuade him to waive his objections on this particular occasion, out of deference to his Majesty's wishes.<sup>1</sup>

The growing austerity of the young prince was scarcely likely to appeal to his merry little consort, who was quite unable to understand his attitude towards amusements which were countenanced even by persons the sincerity of whose religious convictions could not be doubted. In the early days of their married life, she had endeavoured, though without much success, to sympathise with his serious views, and, if she frequently rallied him upon his scruples, she at heart respected them. But when she found that they prevented him from accompanying her to ball or play, and that he preferred to spend long hours in his cabinet in prayer and meditation to joining in her amusements; when she learned from her confidantes that the semi-monastic existence which he persisted in leading was a subject of ridicule with the younger members of the Court, she became impatient and a little contemptuous, and did not hesitate to express openly her opinion of such exaggerated piety. "I should like to die before the Duc de Bourgogne," she observed one evening to her ladies, "but to see, nevertheless, what would happen here. I

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

am certain that he would marry a *sœur grise*<sup>1</sup> or a *tourrière* of the Filles de Sainte-Marie."

When the Duchesse de Bourgogne said this, she was no doubt referring more particularly to the extreme reserve with which her husband treated the somewhat coquettish ladies by whom he was surrounded. As though fearful lest he should be tempted to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, the duke avoided feminine society as much as possible, and was cold and constrained when in the company of all ladies, save those whose age or reputation for piety rendered them above suspicion. "He considered himself at the Court," writes the worthy Proyart, "as in the midst of that voluptuous isle of which his dear Mentor had depicted the dangers."<sup>2</sup> He was continually on his guard against the insidious artifices of those perfidious nymphs who contended for the glory of triumphing over the virtue of Ulysses."<sup>3</sup>

The prince's diffidence where women were concerned soon became a standing jest at the Court, and the ladies of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, encouraged by their mistress, frequently amused themselves by practical jokes at his expense. One of them, the Maréchale de Cœuvres, once attempted to snatch a kiss from his Royal Highness. The latter offered a desperate resistance, but the maréchale, who was a muscular young woman, was not to be denied, and was on the point of effecting her purpose, when the angry prince

<sup>1</sup> A nun of the community now known as the Sisters of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

<sup>2</sup> The writer is referring to Fénelon's *Télémaque*.

<sup>3</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.*

drew a pin and drove it with such force into his assailant's head, that she was compelled to keep her bed for several days. "Joseph himself was outdone," writes *Madame*, who tells the story, "since he saved himself by leaving his garment behind him, but did not strike or scratch any one. Never was such modesty seen."

The same writer relates another anecdote, which, for the sake of the Duchesse le Bourgogne's reputation with posterity, we will hope contains at least as much fiction as fact, though it is quite in keeping with the character of an age in which coarse practical jokes were regarded as the highest form of wit.

One night the princess, "wishing to tease her husband a little," retired to rest at an unusually early hour, on the plea of feeling very sleepy. But, when she reached her room, instead of getting into bed, she directed one of her friends, *Madame de la Vrillière*, a giddy young matron of eighteen, to take her place, while she and other kindred spirits hid themselves in different parts of the room to await events.

Presently the Duc de Bourgogne arrived, and, anxious not to disturb his consort, who appeared to be slumbering peacefully, immediately extinguished his candle, undressed, got into bed, and composed himself to sleep. But, scarcely had he done so, when, to his amazement, the curtains were drawn aside, and the duchess stood beside him, and, with admirably-simulated indignation, demanded an explanation of his conduct.

The poor prince's wrath when he recovered from his first astonishment, and heard the tittering of the concealed ladies, knew no bounds. He

dragged the rash Madame de la Vrillière out of bed, flung her on to the floor, poured upon her a torrent of invectives, "of which 'shameless hussy' was the least strong," and was proceeding from words to blows, when she prudently took to flight. "They wanted to make him listen to reason," concludes *Madame*, "but no one could speak for laughing."

The Duchesse de Bourgogne, it may here be observed, had a weakness for practical jokes, particularly at the expense of persons whom she disliked. One of her favourite butts was the Princesse d'Harcourt, the lady who, it will be remembered, had endeavoured to take advantage of her ignorance when she first began to hold receptions. Madame d'Harcourt was one of the ugliest women at the Court, "a great fat creature, with a mottled complexion, ugly thick lips, and hair like tow";<sup>1</sup> and her manners matched her appearance. She cheated at cards, underpaid and beat her servants,<sup>2</sup> behaved with intolerable insolence to her inferiors, and often to her equals as well, and was so gluttonous as to disgust those at whose tables she dined. She was also a notorious coward, and nothing diverted the younger courtiers more than to devise some means of terrifying her. One evening, at Marly, the Duchesse de Bourgogne caused a number of petards to be placed along the whole length of the avenue

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> "She was lodged immediately above me," writes *Madame*, "and I often used to hear her chasing the servants about the room, cane in hand." One day, however, one of her maids, a sturdy peasant-girl, retaliated by wrenching the cane out of her mistress's hand and administering a severe thrashing.

which led from the château to the Perspective, where the Princesse d'Harcourt lodged. When the lady in her sedan-chair had proceeded a short distance, the petards began to explode on all sides, upon which the porters, who were in the secret, dropped the chair and took to flight, leaving the princess screaming with terror, to the huge delight of a number of people who had followed her to enjoy the fun. The princess was furious at the trick which had been played upon her, and sulked for some time. So, as it was winter and the ground was covered with snow, the Duchesse de Bourgogne and her ladies took to paying her nocturnal visits and snowballing her when she was in bed. This form of pleasantry proved too much for Madame d'Harcourt's fortitude, and, with many tears, she "asked pardon for having taken offence, and begged that they would cease to amuse themselves with her." <sup>1</sup>

In April 1702, hostilities, which had hitherto been confined to Italy, broke out in Flanders and Alsace as well, preceding by nearly a month the official declaration of war by the Grand Alliance. The Duc de Bourgogne was naturally eager to be given a chance of winning his spurs, and, Dangeau tells us, addressed to the King a letter, in which "he besought his Majesty to permit him to serve him, in order that he might render himself worthy of the honour of being his grandson." Louis XIV willingly granted his request, and gave him the nominal command of the Army of Flanders, the Maréchal de Boufflers being associated with him,

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

as he had been in the manœuvres at Compiègne three years before, to give him the benefit of his military experience.

The position was not perhaps one which that veteran greatly coveted, since, if it were a signal proof of his Majesty's confidence, the responsibilities attached to it were very heavy, while, in the event of the prince declining to regard the counsels which he gave him as orders, the blame for the disasters which might follow would fall upon his shoulders. However, he was too good a courtier not to express himself deeply sensible of the honour which the King had done him in confiding to his care "the person and reputation of Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne," though he ventured to add that considerations of such importance must necessarily render him a little more cautious than he would otherwise be. For the post of chief adviser, Louis XIV selected the Comte d'Artagnan, a nephew of the hero of Dumas's immortal romance, who, combined with soldierly qualities a decided talent for *espionnage*,<sup>1</sup> and was charged by Chamillart, the Minister for War, to report to him, not only everything which his Royal Highness did in his professional capacity, but all his private actions, in order that he might keep the King informed. His Majesty also nominated six gentlemen to act as his aides-de-camp, while the Marquis de Saumery, formerly *sous-gouverneur* to the young princes, was attached to his staff.

These matters having been settled, on April 25, 1702, the Duc de Bourgogne bade a "tearful

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.



and tender farewell ” <sup>1</sup> to his wife, who was perhaps not quite so inconsolable at his departure as we should like to believe, and left Versailles to join the Army of Flanders, which was then engaged in defending a line which extended from the sea to Kaiserwörth on the Rhine, a town belonging to the Elector of Cologne, one of France’s few German allies, which the Imperialists were already besieging.

Before leaving, he had entreated the King’s permission to stop at Cambrai and see Fénelon, and his request had been granted, on condition that the interview should take place in the presence of Saumery. The archbishop had now been confined to his diocese for nearly five years, during which he and his former pupil had had no direct communication, with the exception of an exchange of letters towards the end of the previous year, though they had contrived to keep in touch with each other by the indirect channels of which we have spoken elsewhere ; and their joy at this brief reunion may be imagined.

The meeting took place at the post-house, where a large crowd had assembled to welcome the prince, who greeted Fénelon with a delight which he made no attempt to conceal, and embraced him tenderly. The presence of the watchful Saumery, who, according to Saint-Simon, executed the orders which he had received from the King “ with an air of authority which scandalised every one,” and never quitted the duke’s side for an instant, naturally prevented the discussion of private matters ; but “ the prince’s piercing and expressive eyes expressed much more effectually

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau.

than his words what was passing in his mind, and the archbishop, whose eyes were not less eloquent, responded with all his being, while maintaining the most scrupulous reserve." The interview, however, was a very brief one, and at its conclusion the Duc de Bourgogne resumed his journey, and a few days later arrived at Santen, a village near the left bank of the Rhine, opposite Wesel, where the main body of the French army lay.

In the campaign which followed, the young prince gained the good opinion of all ranks by his courage under fire, his zealous discharge of his duties, the courtesy and consideration with which he treated his officers, and the solicitude which he displayed for the welfare of the soldiers, and particularly for the wounded; and the despatches of Boufflers and d'Artagnan are full of his praises. But he gained nothing else, except experience, though public opinion, much more just to the Duc de Bourgogne on this occasion than it was to show itself some years later, readily admitted that the failure to bring Marlborough to a decisive engagement, and the consequent loss of Venloo, Liège, and other towns, ought not to be ascribed to him. When, therefore, at the beginning of September, Louis XIV recalled the prince to Versailles, the latter found himself the object of a kind of ovation, and, to give him a public token of his satisfaction, the King, a few weeks later, made him a member, not only of the Council of Finances, but of the Council of State as well.

Louis XIV did not send his grandson again to

Flanders when hostilities recommenced in the spring of 1703, since his confidence in Boufflers had been somewhat shaken by the events of the previous year. He and his Ministers had decided to make a vigorous attack upon the Empire, for which purpose the Army of the Rhine had been divided into two corps. One corps under Villars, recently created a marshal, in recognition of his victory over the Imperialists at Friedlingen, was to cross the Rhine, traverse the Black Forest, effect a junction with Maximilian of Bavaria, who had now declared for France, and enter the Tyrol from the North; while Vendôme, at the head of the Army of Italy, entered it from the Lago di Garda on the South, and united his forces with theirs for a combined advance upon Vienna by the valley of the Danube. The other corps under Tallard, formerly French Ambassador at St. James's, who in the following year commanded the French in the disastrous Battle of Blenheim, was to manœuvre along the Rhine and hold in check the army commanded by Louis of Baden; and with Tallard the King decided to associate the Duc de Bourgogne.

He would have better served the duke's military reputation by selecting Villars, who gained plenty of glory, if no lasting success. Tallard was but an indifferent general, and, unlike Boufflers, he was inclined to resent his nominal subordination to the young prince, and to saddle him with the responsibility for errors which were really his own. They permitted the Prince of Baden to escape them, cross the Danube, take Augsburg, and threaten Villars's rear, thus con-

tributing not a little to frustrate that marshal's plans, and, though on September 6, thanks chiefly to Vauban's skill, they succeeded in reducing Brisach, after a fortnight's siege, they effected little else. On the 18th, the Duc de Bourgogne quitted the army and returned to Versailles, where he again met with a flattering reception, and the Court poets vied with one another in celebrating the taking of Brisach.

Prendre Brisach en treize jours,  
C'est une plus belle besogne.  
Ces exploits vigoureux et courts  
Sont du goût du Duc de Bourgogne.

Saint-Simon asserts that the prince had been anxious to remain with the army until the termination of the campaign, and that he only quitted it in deference to the orders of the King. But the Duc de Bourgogne's correspondence proves that he did so at his own desire, and that, in point of fact, he had solicited his *congé* even before the capitulation of Brisach, stipulating, however, that he might be permitted to rejoin in the event of any movement of importance being determined upon. Nor does the same correspondence leave any room for doubt as to the reason which prompted his return—a step which he had soon reason to regret, since, after his departure, Tallard gained a victory over the Imperialists at Speyer, which enabled him to lay siege to and reduce Landau.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to Proyard, the duke had earnestly pressed the King to permit him to rejoin the army, but his Majesty, learning that he had exposed himself somewhat rashly during the siege of Brisach, refused.

"A soldier," wrote Napoleon, in 1801, to his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, in refusing him permission to come to Paris for Caroline Murat's confinement, "ought to remain faithful to his wife, but not to wish to return to her whenever he thinks he has nothing else to do." Louis XIV might have replied to the Duc de Bourgogne in similar terms, for it was the young prince's intense desire to see his wife again, after what appeared to him an intolerably long separation, which rendered him comparatively indifferent to the call of duty and the possibilities of glory. Unfortunately, none of the letters which he addressed to the Duchesse de Bourgogne in the course of the campaign of 1703 have been preserved; but we have, on the other hand, a number written by him to her *dame du palais* and confidante, Madame de Montgon. This lady occupied, in regard to the young couple, very much the same position in which, in years gone by, the Marquis de Saint-Thomas had stood to the Duchess of Savoy and Victor Amadeus, that is to say, she acted as a kind of intermediary between them, and was in the habit of furnishing the amorous prince with the information concerning his wife's health and occupations which the object of his adoration did not condescend to supply personally. For though, during the campaign of the previous year, the Duchesse de Bourgogne had written to her husband every day—or, at least, she assures *Madame Royale* that she did so<sup>1</sup>—in 1703 her letters appear to have been like

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Duchesse de Bourgogne to *Madame Royale*, June 12, 1702, Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et de la Reine d'Espagne*.



MARIE ADÉLAÏDE OF SAVOY, DUCHESSE DE BURGOGNE  
FROM A PAINTING ATTRIBUTED TO SANTERRE, IN THE PALA/ZO REALE, TURIN



angels' visits; and the poor young man, aware as he was of her somewhat frail health and the heavy demands she was continually making upon it, was, in consequence, a prey to the keenest anxiety. His letters to Madame de Montgon<sup>1</sup> indeed, are an eloquent and pathetic testimony to the sincerity of a passion which met as yet with but a feeble response. Here is one which he wrote on June 12, a fortnight after leaving Versailles, in which he complains that his wife has allowed an "interminable time" to pass without writing him more than a couple of letters:

"I am astonished, Madame, at not having yet received anything from you, and still more at the irregularity of your illustrious mistress, who allows an interminable time to pass without writing to me more than two letters. . . . I know not whether I shall weary you by returning to my sheep, but you can well understand that I must say a few words about this irregularity. I have decided not to begin by reproaching her; nevertheless, I am unable to bear this with patience, and I was really angry yesterday evening at not receiving any letters by the courier who arrived from Franche-Comté. I would that you had seen me at supper, looking as gloomy as a chimney, speaking to no one, with my hat pulled down to my eyes.

"Make my compliments to your mother,<sup>2</sup> from whom I have been expecting a letter every day,

<sup>1</sup> These letters, which are now in the possession of the Marquis de Montgon, a descendant of the lady to whom they were addressed, have been published by the Marquis de Vogüé, in his interesting work, *le duc de Bourgogne et le duc de Beauvilliers*, and, in part, by the Comte d'Haussonville in *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> Madame d'Heudicourt, the old friend of Madame de Maintenon.



and, as for the other naughty one of whom I have spoken, tell her that, if in future I do not receive letters from her more often, I shall quarrel with her, and shall not write to her during the whole campaign.

“*P.S.*—I greatly fear that these threats will be useless, since I should certainly be more severely punished than she.”

In one of her rare moments of tenderness for her absent husband, the Duchesse de Bourgogne had charged Madame de Montgon to send him a letter written in the princess's own blood. The uxorious duke was transported with joy on receiving what he considered so convincing a proof of his beloved's affection, and hastened to reply in like fashion, bidding Madame de Montgon assure her mistress that he had “kissed a thousand times, and would continue to kiss several times a day, the adorable blood he had received”; that he had not lost a moment in drawing some of his own, and that he would gladly shed every drop in his body for her, as the princess had declared that she was prepared to do for him. He continues :—

“But we must preserve it for each other, and unite our hearts, like those which I have sketched here, with my own blood drawn from the fingers of my left hand.

“This letter, as well as the little sketch, is scrawled entirely with the blood which love caused me to shed on the instant, only too happy to have shed it for her :—

“*Quoy donc! voilà le sang qui colore ses joues,  
C'est luy qui la fait vivre et qui jusqu' en ses yeux  
Met le feu qui me rend amant et bienheureux,  
Qui dans trois mois au plus fera tourner mes roues.*

Gardez-le donc ce sang, ce trésor précieux,  
Pour vous le mien est prest à couler dans ces lieux,  
Car, en cherchant icy la gloire,  
C'est votre cœur dont je veux la victoire.

“ You must promise me faithfully to carry this letter to her so soon as you receive it. Endeavour to see her in private. Go on your knees before her, and, after kissing both her hands for me, offer her the blood which has been shed for her alone. I know not whether you will entertain doubts about my sanity ; but can I do enough to prove to this queen how much I love her, although she is already well aware of it ? Let me know how she has received the commission I am entrusting to you, and her very words, and ask her, at the same time, if she does not love me with all her heart, and if I deserve it. Farewell, my dear Montgon. If some further extravagance comes into my mind between now and this evening, when the post leaves, I shall add it to this letter.”

Some further extravagance did occur to him, and he adds the following postscript :—

“ 6 *p.m.*

“ The more I think of it, the more delighted I am with the idea of your having written to me with the blood of the beloved one. But I should have liked two lines in her own handwriting ; not because I believe that she does not think of it, but because the letter would have been more tender and more touching. But make her clearly understand that the blood which she will see has not been shed by the orders of any doctor, and sent by chance, but for her alone, and in the tender emotion of my heart, which has prevented me from feeling the little injury I have done myself. . . . Farewell, my dear Montgon, I thank you a thousand times

for the ingenious letter which you have written me, and I shall keep it all my life, for the sake of the precious ink which has been used ; and I shall love you more sincerely than ever."

But, if the Duchesse de Bourgogne were ready to shed a little of her blood<sup>1</sup> in order that Madame de Montgon might write to her husband, she seems to have had a singular objection to penning even the briefest epistles herself ; for, a little later, we find the Duke complaining bitterly to the *confidante* that, though he has despatched six letters to his wife within the past week, five successive couriers have arrived without a line from the princess, " a proof that she had not written to him for at least nine days."

" . . . I should be very much tempted to write to her no more until I have received some letters, and even to discontinue writing for some time. But if, on her side, she did the same, I should be a hundred times more punished than she would be, since she, apparently, no longer cares at all for me, who would not hesitate to shed my blood in order to give her a fresh proof of a love of which she can entertain no doubt ; who would expose myself to frightful perils for her sake ; who would sacrifice everything for her. These are my sentiments, and I am sure that she understands them perfectly. Could I deserve more to be loved and to be less worthy of the forgetfulness and coldness which I have suffered for eleven whole days ? It would be in truth far too much for a heart less tender and

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis de Vogüé rather unkindly suggests that the "adorable blood " had been drawn by the princess's physician, for reasons quite unconnected with her Royal Highness's correspondence.

faithful than mine. I say nothing of the promise which she made me on my departure, to write to me at least twice a week ; but, even if she were not bound by her word, ought she not to do so of her own free will ? Ask her again for me, I entreat you, the reason why she does not write ; whether it is that she is angry with me, in which case tell her that I shall endeavour to make amends as soon as possible ; whether my frequent letters weary her ; finally, if she is tired of being so passionately beloved, and if she speaks the truth when she says that she loves me with her whole heart. But, above all, do not send an answer to this letter without a little line in her handwriting at the foot ; for, if there is none, I shall be in despair, and shall believe in good earnest that she does not care for me any more. I ask your pardon if I speak so much of her, but she occupies my mind more than ever, and it seems that her neglect serves but to increase my ardour. . . .”

As this touching appeal failed to bring the little lines for which he craved, he wrote again to Madame de Montgon, bidding her remind “ this coquette ” that, even at the very moment in which she was speaking to her, the duke might be risking his life in the trenches, “ into which the cannon and musket-shot were constantly falling, and where the dead and wounded were all about him.” And he concludes :—

“ Picture to her also the arrival of a courier with the news that I am dangerously wounded, in which condition my only thought would be that I might perhaps never see her again, and that, in dying, I should regret no one in this world save her. I think that it will be well for you to read

this passage to her, in order to tell me exactly what you may be able to divine of the sentiments of her heart, from the effect which it produces upon her outwardly."

As the campaign proceeded, the letters of the Duchesse de Bourgogne became less and less frequent, and at length she allowed so long a time to elapse without writing to him, that the poor prince began to fear that she was seriously ill, and that Madame de Montgon and his other correspondents at the Court were conspiring together to keep him in ignorance. Tormented by this idea, he writes to Madame de Montgon :—

"If anything were to happen in conformity with my gloomy presentiments, I should take a walk along the palisades of the covered way, to find there the end of my sorrows ; and I should think myself fortunate, if she were ill, to get some bullet-wound which would reduce me to the same condition."

When the princess did eventually break through her long silence, it was to advise her husband to remain with the army instead of returning to Court. On September 12, the Duc de Bourgogne writes to his *ex-gouverneur*, the Duc de Beauvilliers :—

"I received this morning also a long letter from the Duchesse de Bourgogne, in which she begins by telling me that she has not written sooner, because she was too angry, and then, after having exhorted me not to hasten my return like last year, she continues as follows : 'The King has been greatly surprised that you are so soon

demanding permission to return, as the campaign is not yet very far advanced, and you are still engaged in the siege [of Brisach], and this inclines him to think that you do not care for war any more than the others, and has annoyed him very much, which you will apparently understand, from the letter that he has written to you.' I confess that this has caused me some surprise, since I have found nothing to correspond to it in the King's letters. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

A subsequent chapter will explain the true reason of the princess's silence, and why she had so little desire to see the return of this too-devoted husband ; and it was certainly just as well for the Duc de Bourgogne's peace of mind that he was unaware of it.

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Vogüé, *le Duc de Bourgogne et le Duc de Beauvilliers*.

## CHAPTER XIV

Impatience of Louis XIV to see a son born to the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne—Severe régime imposed upon the young princess when she becomes enceinte in the autumn of 1703—Birth of the first Duc de Bretagne (June 24, 1704)—Marriage of the Duchesse de Bourgogne's younger sister, Maria Luisa of Savoy, Princess of Piedmont, to Philip V of Spain—The war in Italy: Victor Amadeus II generalissimo of the Army of the Two Crowns—Consequences of his delay in joining the army and the want of unanimity between him and the French and Spanish generals—Villeroy supersedes Catinat—Defeat of the allies at Chiari—The Duke of Savoy suspected of having betrayed the plans of the allies to the Imperialists—His indignation at the insolent familiarity of Villeroy—Failure of negotiations between France and the Duke of Mantua for the cession of Montferrato to Savoy—Offers of the Emperor to Victor Amadeus—Philip V in Italy—Refusal of the King of Spain to accord his father-in-law the honours due to an equal removes the Duke's last scruples about breaking with his allies—Successes of Vendôme in Italy—Negotiations of Victor Amadeus with Vienna—Louis XIV, convinced of his treasonable intentions, orders Vendôme to take vigorous measures against him—Victor Amadeus deserts his allies, and signs a treaty with the Emperor

ALTHOUGH the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne had now lived together for nearly four years, the primary object of their marriage still remained to be accomplished. Louis XIV, who desired to see the succession to the throne in the direct line secured against all possibility of failure—and it must be admitted that the successive deaths of *Monseigneur*, the Duc de Bourgogne, the second little Duc de Bretagne,

and the Duc de Berry, in the closing years of his reign, fully justified an anxiety which in 1703 may have appeared to many persons unwarranted—was becoming very impatient; and his impatience was sensibly increased by the fact that in the spring of 1701, and again in the summer of the following year, the princess had been enceinte, and that on each occasion his hopes had been disappointed, through her refusal to comply with the commonest precautions.

However, soon after her husband's return to Versailles in the autumn of 1703, the young lady was once more in an interesting condition, and this time his Majesty determined that the most severe régime should be imposed upon her, in order to guard against a fresh accident. Not only were hunting, dancing,<sup>1</sup> and every amusement which entailed exertion strictly forbidden, but, when she drove out, her coachmen had orders to avoid paved roads and to walk their horses the greater part of the way; while, about three months before she expected her confinement, Clément, the accoucheur to whose care she had been entrusted, finding that she was not progressing as satisfactorily as he could desire, ordered her to bed, where, in spite of her indignant protests, she was condemned to pass the remainder of the time.

These somewhat excessive precautions did not go unrewarded, and on the afternoon of June 24, 1704, "at one minute and a half after five,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As the princess's medical advisers feared that during the coming Carnival she might insist on dancing, in defiance of their prohibition, the King gave orders that during that festive season no balls were to be given at the Court.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau.



the Duchesse de Bourgogne gave birth to a son, to the great joy of the whole Court. Louis XIV stationed himself at the foot of the bed from the moment when the pains of labour began until the princess was delivered, as he had done for the late Dauphine ; but the Duc de Bourgogne, unable to bear the sight of his wife's sufferings, remained in his cabinet until his brother, the Duc de Berry, brought him the glad news. The infant prince, to whom the King gave the title of the Duc de Bretagne, was baptized at once by the Cardinal de Coislin, Bishop of Orléans, assisted by the curé of Versailles, after which he was wrapped in his swaddling-clothes and carried by the Maréchale de la Mothe, *gouvernante* of the Children of France, to his father, who kissed him. A sedan-chair was then brought to the door of the bed-chamber, and the maréchale, with the child in her arms, entered it, and was conveyed to the apartments which had been prepared for the newcomer, to whom, a little later in the evening, the King sent the cross and blue ribbon of the Order of the Saint-Esprit. Then his Majesty and the Duc de Bourgogne went to the chapel to return thanks to God, and remained there in prayer for three-quarters of an hour.<sup>1</sup>

The birth of her little son must have been doubly welcome to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, since it occurred at a time when she stood in sore need of something to divert her thoughts from an event which was causing her great distress.

It will be remembered that, at the beginning

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, June 1704.

of April 1701, Victor Amadeus II had signed the treaty which Louis XIV had, so to speak, offered him at the sword's point, though with the full determination to desert his allies so soon as he could obtain satisfactory terms from the Emperor. A month later, he received a formal demand from Philip V of Spain for the hand of his daughter, the Princess of Piedmont, to which he, of course returned a favourable answer. But, at the same time, he charged his Ambassador at Vienna to inform the Emperor that he was not a free agent in the matter, and that, had he been at liberty to choose a husband for his daughter, he would have infinitely preferred an alliance between her and the Archduke Charles.

The young princess was thirteen years of age, two years older than her sister Adélaïde at the time when the latter left Turin for France. In appearance she was not unlike the Duchesse de Bourgogne, but possessed of far greater ability and strength of character; and, young as she was, she already gave promise of the qualities which were to make her the right arm of her feeble and indolent husband and the idol of the Spanish people.

The marriage was celebrated by proxy, at Turin, on September 12, 1701, the old Prince di Carignano representing Philip V; and the same day the young queen set out on her journey to Madrid.

Since early summer, hostilities had been in progress in Northern Italy, where Prince Eugène with some thirty thousand Imperialists was pitted against a composite force of French, Spaniards,

and Savoyards, which is usually designated as the Army of the Two Crowns. The French were commanded by Catinat,<sup>1</sup> the Spaniards by the Prince de Vaudémont, Governor of the Milanese; while Victor Amadeus, in accordance with the treaty of the previous April, was invested with the title of generalissimo. The responsibilities of the last-named seem to have sat very lightly upon him, for his troops did not begin to put in an appearance until the patience of his allies was almost exhausted, and then only by single battalions at a time, while he himself, in spite of the urgent representations of the French Ambassador at Turin, invented so many pretexts to delay his departure for the front, that that personage began to entertain serious doubts as to whether he intended to go at all.

So consummate a general as Eugène did not fail to profit by these delays. In the first days of July, he advanced towards the Adige, routed a French division at Carpi, forced the passage of the river, and made himself master of the whole country between the Adige and the Adda. Nor did the situation improve when Victor Amadeus at length arrived upon the scene, for neither Catinat nor Vaudémont were inclined to place any confidence in his judgment, and the want of unanimity between the three generals enabled Eugène to outmanœuvre them, cross the Adda, and push his advance-posts to the frontiers of the Milanese, without firing a shot.

Louis XIV, much irritated by these reverses, now resolved to replace Catinat by Villeroy, who

<sup>1</sup> Prior to the arrival of Catinat, Tessé had held the command.

was one of his Majesty's favourite generals, though quite unworthy of the confidence reposed in him. But there seems to be no truth in the charge made in the so-called *Mémoires* of Catinat, and reproduced by Michelet and other historians, that the Duchesse de Bourgogne had persuaded the King to this step, because in his despatches to Versailles the marshal had accused her father of treason; and Catinat, at his own request, was permitted to serve under the orders of Villeroy.

With the arrival of Villeroy, matters went from bad to worse. The marshal had received orders from Louis XIV, who appears to have imagined that he could direct operations quite effectively from his cabinet at Versailles, to assume the offensive, and, contrary to the advice of his old colleagues, he insisted on attacking the Imperialists, who were strongly entrenched at Chiari (September 9, 1701).<sup>1</sup> The result was a disastrous defeat for the allies, in which Catinat was wounded, and the Duke of Savoy, whose coldness in the Bourbon cause did not prevent him from displaying great bravery and leading a charge in person, had his horse killed under him and his uniform pierced by musket-balls.

After this reverse, the Army of the Two Crowns was compelled to fall back into the Milanese, and the whole of the Duchy of Mantua, with the exception of the capital and Goito, passed into the hands of Eugène, whose information concerning the movements of the allies was declared by the French to be so extraordinarily accurate, that they

<sup>1</sup> When Victor Amadeus protested against this rash undertaking, Villeroy answered insolently that "the King of France had not sent so many brave warriors to the Army of Italy to observe the enemy through field-glasses."

were forced to the conclusion that there must be treachery at work.

If we are to believe the *Mémoires* of Catinat, that marshal did not hesitate to express this opinion openly, and one day, at a council of war, looked the Duke of Savoy in the face and observed: "Not only is Prince Eugène kept informed of the movements of our army, of the strength of the detachments which leave it, and of their destination, but he is even acquainted with the projects which are discussed here."

This anecdote, which has been reproduced, without comment, in a recently-published biography of Victor Amadeus, to which we have several times had occasion to refer,<sup>1</sup> seems of very doubtful authenticity,<sup>2</sup> since, as the Comte d'Haussonville points out, the despatches of Catinat are characterised, where the Duke of Savoy is concerned, by great reserve. Moreover, while Villeroy and Tessé suspected Victor Amadeus, Phélypeaux, the French Ambassador at Turin, who had accompanied the Duke to the army, and Louis xiv believed the Prince de Vaudémont, who had a son and a nephew with Eugène, to be the traitor; and the King gave instructions for him to be closely watched. The probability is that both were innocent of any military treason, and that the reverses of the Army of the Two Crowns are

<sup>1</sup> The Marchesa di Vitelleschi, "The Romance of Savoy: Victor Amadeus and his Stuart Bride."

<sup>2</sup> Villeroy wrote in almost identical language to Louis xiv in a despatch of September 25, 1701, though without actually naming the Duke of Savoy. It is possible that the compiler of Catinat's *Mémoires* was acquainted with this document, and put Villeroy's words into the mouth of his hero.

sufficiently explained by the jealousy and incapacity of its leaders and the immeasurable superiority of Eugène as a general.<sup>1</sup>

However that may be, it is certain that the Duke of Savoy's dislike of the alliance which had been forced upon him had been greatly increased since the arrival of Villeroy, who addressed the prince habitually as "Monsieur de Savoie" and treated him with the most insolent familiarity. He complained bitterly to Phélypeaux of the conduct of the marshal, and, to mark his displeasure, sent his troops into winter-quarters even before the conclusion of the campaign, and returned to Turin.

Louis XIV, warned by Phélypeaux that, if matters continued to go badly in Italy, the Duke of Savoy would certainly change sides, began at last to recognise the necessity of attaching his slippery ally to his cause by some surer tie than that of the treaty of the previous April, and accordingly permitted negotiations to be opened with a view to obtaining from the Duke of Mantua the cession of Montferrato to the Kings of France and Spain, and subsequently to Victor Amadeus, in return for a money indemnity. This affair dragged on for some months, but without result, since, though the Duke of Mantua was only a little prince, he was a very proud one, and he declared that no sum which their Majesties might offer could induce him to part with any portion of his dominions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> This decision was the more creditable to him, since, if we are to believe Tessé, he kept no less than three hundred and sixty-

It was, of course, open to Louis XIV to compel the Duke to accede to his wishes, but Mantua was an old ally of France, and the idea of employing coercion was distasteful to him; and he therefore forbore to press the matter.

He would probably have been less complaisant, if he had been aware that simultaneously with this negotiation the Duke of Savoy had been carrying on one with the Emperor, and that, almost at the same moment that Victor Amadeus was informed of the refusal of the Duke of Mantua, he had received from Leopold, who cared nothing for the interests of that prince, a promise of Montferrato, with the addition of the rich province of Alessandria, in return for his desertion of the Bourbon cause.

The Duke of Savoy had now no longer any inducement to remain faithful to his engagements, save that natural reluctance to join the party opposed to his two sons-in-law to which Louis XIV seems to have attached an altogether exaggerated importance. But, unhappily for his Majesty's calculations, an incident which occurred in the summer of 1702 served to remove any scruples that Victor Amadeus might have entertained on that score.

In April, the new King of Spain, recognising the necessity of making himself known to his Italian subjects, and stimulating by his presence the zeal of the Spanish troops in Italy, sailed for Naples, and, after taking formal possession of his

eight mistresses, and must therefore have been often pressed for money. Tessé adds that, notwithstanding his amative propensities, he was "a pious and charitable prince."

Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, proceeded to the Milanese. A meeting between Philip v and his wife's family was arranged, and the Duke and Duchess of Savoy and *Madame Royale* set out for Alessandria, where the two princesses remained, while the Duke went on to Acqui, a little town some miles distant, to meet his royal son-in-law.

Now, when this interview was first proposed, Victor Amadeus, through his Ambassador at Versailles, had endeavoured to enlist the good offices of Torcy, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, to obtain from Philip v a promise that he would accord his father-in-law the honours due to a sovereign, as Philip II had done to the Duke's ancestor Charles Emmanuel I, when he journeyed to Spain to wed Catherine of Austria. Torcy, however, had excused himself from intervening, on the ground that he could not presume to regulate the ceremonial of a foreign Court. Nevertheless, in view of the precedent we have mentioned, their relationship, and their alliance, the Duke of Savoy fully expected to be received as an equal.

Nothing occurred at the first interview between the two sovereigns to destroy this illusion. The King of Spain alighted from his carriage and embraced his father-in-law warmly, regretted that the carriage in which he was travelling was too small for him to be able to offer him a seat, but invited him to sup with him in the evening ; and the Duke departed, convinced that his dignity was safe.

But, when supper-time arrived, he found that he was mistaken, for though two arm-chairs exactly similar to one another had been placed side by



side, it was the one on the left hand and not that on the right—the place of honour, which a sovereign always offered to a guest whom he desired to treat as an equal—which was reserved for him.

Bitterly mortified, Victor Amadeus excused himself from remaining to supper, on the plea of indisposition, and almost immediately withdrew; and, when, on arriving at Alessandria on the following day, Philip v aggravated this affront by advancing two paces only from the threshold of his apartment to receive the Duchess of Savoy and *Madame Royale*, his wrath against his son-in-law knew no bounds.<sup>1</sup>

From that moment, his last lingering scruples vanished, and, if he delayed an open rupture with his allies for some time longer, it was simply because the course of the war in Northern Italy rendered it advisable for him to wait upon events. For, in February 1702, the incapable Villeroy had been succeeded by the Duc de Vendôme, a general of a very different stamp, of whom we shall have occasion to speak at length later on, who relieved Mantua, checked Eugène's victorious career in the obstinate battle of Luzzara, compelled the Imperialists to fall back behind the Mincio, and held them in check during the whole of the campaigns of 1702 and 1703.

Victor Amadeus took no part personally in either of these campaigns, but remained at Turin, and devoted his energies to endeavouring to wrest

<sup>1</sup> Yet, with characteristic dissimulation, he wrote, a day or two later to his daughter, the Queen of Spain, that he had "been charmed by the obliging manner in which he [the King] had spoken to him, and that he regretted having been compelled to leave him so soon."

still more favourable terms from the Emperor ; while, at the same time, he again approached Louis XIV on the old question of the cession of the Milanese in exchange for Savoy and Nice.

According to the Italian historian, Denina, the Cabinet of Vienna, which, since the arrival of Vendôme in Italy, had become increasingly anxious to detach Victor Amadeus from his allies, had recourse to a ruse in order to effect its purpose : “ Letters and documents addressed to the Court of Turin, and explaining the measures which would be taken to put the Duke of Savoy in possession of three towns of Lombardy, were entrusted to a Neapolitan. This messenger had orders to allow himself to be captured by the French, and, on seeing these despatches, the King of France, ignorant of the ruse, did not doubt that the alliance had been ratified.”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever truth there may be in this story, it is certain that the Emperor’s agents did endeavour to force the Duke’s hand by spreading reports that he had joined the Grand Alliance, and, in the second week in September, Louis XIV, convinced that he had betrayed him—or, at least, was on the point of doing so—sent orders to Vendôme to surround and disarm the Piedmontese contingent of 6000 men, then encamped at San-Benedetto, near Pavia, and conduct them as prisoners to the fortress of Fenestrella ; which done, he was to demand from Victor Amadeus the surrender of Vercelli and Coni, as places of surety for his loyalty, and, in case of refusal, to invade Piedmont.

Victor Amadeus’s reply to the disarmament

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Faverges, *Anne d’Orléans*.

of his troops was to arrest every Frenchman in his States, including the Ambassador Phélypeaux, who was condemned to detention in the French Legation, and to despatch envoys to every Court in Europe to denounce what he stigmatized as a violation of the law of nations.

Meanwhile, Vendôme had advanced to the frontiers of Piedmont ; <sup>1</sup> but the necessity of detaching a considerable part of his forces to hold the Imperialists in check rendered it dangerous for him to attempt an invasion until reinforcements arrived from France. Victor Amadeus did not neglect to profit by the inaction of the French general to push on his negotiations with Vienna, and on November 8, 1703, a treaty was signed at Turin between him and the Emperor, whereby, in consideration of the Duke's adhesion to the Grand Alliance, Alessandria, Montferrato, the Lomellina, and the valley of the Sesia were ceded to him, and guaranteed by England and Holland, while all conquests which might be made in the course of the war in Dauphiné and Provence were to remain in his possession.

<sup>1</sup> Several writers speak of a plot organised by Vendôme to seize and carry off Victor Amadeus while he was hunting in the neighbourhood of Il Veneria, which, however, was discovered and checkmated ; but that such a step was ever contemplated is more than doubtful.

## CHAPTER XV

Distress of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at the defection of Victor Amadeus II—Her apprehensions that the conduct of her father may affect her own position prove to be unfounded—Saint-Simon's portrait of the princess—Imprudence of the Duchesse de Bourgogne in her relations with the opposite sex—She falls in love with the Marquis de Nangis—Embarrassing position in which this nobleman finds himself between the Duchesse de Bourgogne and his mistress, Madame de la Vrillière—The princess, piqued by Nangis's hesitation to take advantage of his good fortune, encourages the Marquis de Maulevrier—Nature of the latter's relations with the Duchesse de Bourgogne considered—Maulevrier feigns illness in order to remain at Court—His mad conduct—Alarm of the Duchesse de Bourgogne—Maulevrier is persuaded to go to Spain, but his indiscretions at Madrid necessitate his recall to France—The Abbé de Polignac first favourite with the princess—Fury of Maulevrier, who bombards the Duchesse de Bourgogne with threatening letters—His tragic end—Grief of the princess—Polignac is sent to Rome

THE suspicions concerning the loyalty of Victor Amadeus which had been openly expressed at Versailles for some months preceding his defection had not failed to reach the ears of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and had occasioned the young princess the keenest distress; and, when she learned of the orders which had been sent to Vendôme, she was "in a state of despair which was apparent to the eyes of every one."<sup>1</sup> For this strange man, so indifferent to the first duties of a husband and a father, so cold,

<sup>1</sup> Vernone to the Duke of Savoy, October 10, 1703.

capricious, and secretive, had, nevertheless, the gift of inspiring affection. By his neglected wife, as we have seen, he was passionately beloved, and both his daughters seemed to have cherished for him a warm attachment.

Nor were her fears for the future of her father and her family at Turin the sole cause of her distress. She was greatly alarmed lest the rupture between the country of her birth and that of her adoption might affect her own position, and saw herself in a kind of semi-disgrace, like the late Dauphine, when her brother, the Elector of Bavaria, had turned his arms against France, the object of covert sneers and contemptuous glances. What a terrible prospect for one who for nearly six years had been the joy of the King and the idol of the Court !

She was soon reassured on that score, for Louis XIV's attachment to the girl was far too strong for him to permit her to suffer for the conduct of her father ; and, to testify that his feelings towards her had undergone no change, and, at the same time, to divert her thoughts from the events which were passing in Italy, he multiplied the balls and fêtes which afforded her so much pleasure, and those which followed the birth of the little Duc de Bretagne were of the most brilliant description.

That the defection of Victor Amadeus should have been powerless to injure his daughter's position at the French Court is scarcely a matter for surprise, when we pause to consider to what an unprecedented degree of favour the young princess had now attained. But, to appreciate this, let us turn to that wonderful physical and

moral portrait by Saint-Simon, which, though it may be familiar to some of our readers, will none the less bear reproduction :

“Gentle, timid, but adroit, unwilling to give the slightest pain to any one ; all lightness and vivacity, and, nevertheless, capable of far-reaching views ; constraint, even to the point of annoyance, cost her no effort, though she felt all the burden of it. Complaisance was natural to her, flowed from her, and was bestowed on every member of the Court.

“Regularly plain, with pendant cheeks, a forehead too prominent, thick biting lips ; hair and eyebrows of dark chestnut, and well planted ; the most eloquent and the most beautiful eyes in the world ; few teeth, and those all decayed, about which she was the first to talk and jest ; the most beautiful complexion and skin ; not much bosom, but what there was, admirable ; the throat long, with the suspicion of a goitre, which did not ill become her ; a carriage of the head gallant, graceful, majestic, and the manner the same, the smile most expressive ; a figure long, round, slender, easy, perfectly shaped ; the walk of a goddess upon the clouds—she pleased to a superlative degree. Grace accompanied her every step, her manners, and her most ordinary conversation. An air always simple and natural, often rather naïve, but seasoned with wit, aided by that ease peculiar to her, charmed all who approached her, and communicated itself to them. Her gaiety (youthful, quick, active), animated everything, and her nymph-like lightness carried her everywhere, like a whirlwind which fills several places at once,

and gives them movement and life. She was the ornament of all diversions, the life and soul of all pleasure. . . .

“She spared nothing, not even her health, to gain Madame de Maintenon, and, through her, the King. Her suppleness towards them was unparalleled, and was never for a moment at fault. She accompanied it with all the discretion that her knowledge of them, which she had acquired by study and experience, had given her, and could measure their dispositions to an inch. In this way she had acquired a familiarity with them such as none of the King’s children had approached. In public, grave, reserved with the King, and timidly decorous with Madame de Maintenon, whom she never addressed except as *ma tante*, thus prettily confounding affection and respect ; in private, prattling, skipping, flying round them ; now perched upon the arms of their chairs, now playing upon their knees, she clasped them round the neck, embraced them, kissed them, rumbled them, tickled them under the chin, tormented them, rummaged their tables, their papers, their letters, broke open the seals and read the contents in spite of their resistance, if she perceived that her pranks were likely to be received in good part.

“The King really could not do without her. Everything went wrong with him if she were not present ; even at his supper, if she were absent, an additional cloud of seriousness and silence settled upon him. She took great care to see him every day ; and, if some ball in winter, some pleasure-party in summer, caused her to lose half the night, she nevertheless arranged matters

so well that she went and embraced the King the moment he was awake, and amused him with an account of the fête."

Idolised by Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon, she was scarcely less beloved by the Court, certain members of the Royal Family and their satellites alone excepted. For she never used her favour with the King to the detriment of any one; but, on the contrary, was always ready to plead the cause of those who had been so unfortunate as to incur the royal displeasure. "She was gracious to all; she wished to please even the most useless and the most ordinary persons; and you were tempted to believe her wholly and solely devoted to those with whom she happened to be. She was the darling of the Court, adored by all; everybody, great and small, was anxious to please her, everybody missed her when she was away; when she reappeared, the void was filled. In a word, she had attached all hearts to her."<sup>1</sup>

If Victor Amadeus had led an invading army to the gates of Paris, the Duchesse de Bourgogne would still have reigned supreme over the heart of the old King, still have been the idol of the Court. To resist so bewitching a young creature was an impossibility.

Naturally, the young princess did not lack for admirers in other than a platonic sense. Naturally, too, she was not altogether insensible to the admiration which she read in so many eyes—admiration which needed but a little complaisance on her part to declare itself in a bolder

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*



fashion. For a time, however, scandal found nothing substantial to lay hold of. The girl had received an excellent moral training at Turin, and again at Saint-Cyr, and, if she did not exactly love, she was, at least, fond of her husband, and anxious to please him, which served at first to counteract, in some degree, the baneful effects of the empty, frivolous life which she led and the constant adulation of which she was the object. Nevertheless, shrewd observers, like *Madame*, did not fail to perceive that the lady was by no means as prudent as could be desired in her relations with the opposite sex, and that the day might not be far distant when she would have cause to regret it. Thus, so early as April 1701, we find that princess writing to the Electress of Hanover :—

“The Duchesse de Bourgogne is very intelligent, but she is, as every young person would be who had been allowed such great liberty, extremely coquettish and giddy. If she had been with people who would have exercised over her the control which she needed, one might have been able to make something good of her Highness, but I fear, from the way she is allowed to behave, that many little stories will come to light.”

Possibly, *Madame* would have been wrong, and there would have been no “little stories,” if the too-sensitive conscience of the Duc de Bourgogne had not driven him to a semi-renunciation of the world, and to spend in devotion and conversation with his confessor hours which might have been more suitably employed in looking after his young wife, sharing her harmless pleasures, and

endeavouring to inspire her with a taste for some useful occupation. But the worthy youth was too short-sighted, too self-centred, to recognise the probable consequences of his conduct; and the princess, resenting her husband's lack of interest in her amusements, and mortified by the merriment which his asceticism aroused among her thoughtless companions, began to find indifference and something like contempt replacing the affectionate regard she had hitherto entertained for him; took more and more pleasure in the homage which was so freely offered her, and finally entered upon the dangerous path of flirtation, which promised her a new and agreeable form of excitement.

"The Duc de Bourgogne," writes *Madame*, in 1703, "is so steeped in devotion that, in my opinion, he will become stupid from it. . . . His wife is mischievous and coquettish; she will furnish him matter for mortification."

One of the most fascinating cavaliers of the Court at this time was the Marquis de Nangis, who, though only about the same age as the Duc de Bourgogne, was already a past-master in the art of gallantry. His popularity with the ladies was immense. To an agreeable, if not strikingly handsome face, a fine figure, and charming manners, he joined a reputation for great personal courage, which he had gained during the campaigns of 1701 and 1702, and "a discretion which was beyond his years, and did not belong to his time."<sup>1</sup>

In the early summer of 1703, soon after the

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

Duc de Bourgogne had left Versailles to take up his command on the Rhine, Nangis, who had been serving in Flanders under Villars, and had been ill or slightly wounded, was invalided home, to the great joy of the ladies of the Court, who vied with one another in their efforts to beguile the tedium of his convalescence.

It was now that he appears to have first attracted the attention of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who could not help contrasting the handsome, soldierly young marquis, who seemed to have not a care in the world, and was never so happy as when he was paying agreeable compliments to pretty women, with her grave, reserved, and deformed husband, with results that were far from flattering to the absent prince.

According to Saint-Simon, who, as we have observed elsewhere, is generally trustworthy enough when he feels compelled to relate the peccadilloes of his friends, the first advances came from the princess herself, in the form of certain "speechless messages," which a gentleman of M. de Nangis's experience in affairs of the heart could scarcely fail to interpret correctly.

He, on his part, was not ungrateful, but decidedly alarmed, since he was at that moment engaged in a *liaison* with Madame de la Vrillière, the heroine of the not very creditable incident mentioned in a previous chapter,<sup>1</sup> and the lady in question showed not the slightest intention of resigning her conquest. Indeed, the moment that jealousy had enlightened her as to what was taking place, it became doubly precious in her estimation,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 272, *supra*.

and she intimated to the marquis that he would abandon her at his peril.

The hapless Nangis found himself in a most embarrassing situation, and, for the first time in his life, began to wish that he was a trifle less irresistible. "He dreaded the fury of his mistress, who pretended to be more ready to make a commotion than she really was; and, apart from his love for her, he feared the result of a scandal, and already saw his fortune lost. On the other hand, any reserve on his part towards a princess who had so much power in her hands, who one day would be all-powerful, and who was not likely to yield to or even to suffer a rival, might be his ruin."<sup>1</sup> Was ever a gallant so distracted before?

While Nangis was racking his brains to discover some way of escape, the two ladies disputed for his possession, Madame de la Vrillière conducting herself with bitterness, and sometimes insolence towards her royal rival, who, on her side, "gently manifested her displeasure." No wonder that the poor Duc de Bourgogne's letters from the army remained unanswered while his wife's attention was concentrated upon this singular duel!

The affair was soon the talk of the Court, or, at least, of all who, like Saint-Simon, "made it their special ambition to be well informed of everything"; but, whether from fear of incurring the princess's resentment, or, more probably, from the affection which they entertained for her, the gossips seem to have exercised, on this occasion, a most commendable restraint, and no hint of what was

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

in progress was allowed to reach the King or Madame de Maintenon.

And now a new actor made his appearance upon the scene. Piqued apparently by Nangis's hesitation to take advantage of his good fortune, the Duchesse de Bourgogne resolved to excite his jealousy by encouraging a rival, and selected for the purpose François Édouard Colbert, Marquis de Maulevrier, a nephew of the famous Minister, and a son-in-law of her first equerry, Tessé.

Maulevrier, who, like Nangis, was still in his *première jeunesse*, and, like him, had served with some distinction in the Army, where he had just been made brigadier of infantry, could not lay claim to the elegance of that redoubtable squire of dames, being, indeed, a very commonplace-looking young man. But, *en revanche*, he was clever, witty, fertile in resource, enterprising, and intensely ambitious. He was also more than a trifle mad, and needed little to render him altogether irresponsible for his actions, though, as is frequently the case in the early stages of insanity, his disorder revealed itself in an audacity and a cunning which often proved of considerable assistance to his ambitious projects.

Overjoyed at the prospect of a *bonne fortune* which would make him, he believed, the most envied of men, Maulevrier hesitated not a moment. Through his relationship to Tessé and his wife's intimacy with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, he enjoyed easy access to the princess, and at once began to pay her the most assiduous court. The latter, somewhat alarmed by his boldness, pretended to misunderstand him, whereupon he

addressed to her eloquently-reproachful letters, to which she had the imprudence to reply. The intermediary was Madame Quantin, the princess's first *femme de chambre*, who appears to have been under the impression that the letters which her mistress handed to her came from Tessé, and that those which Maulevrier wrote were intended for his father-in-law.

This affair, like the other, was soon an open secret, but was treated with the same discretion. According to Saint-Simon, there were not wanting persons who believed that matters did not stop at flirtation, but this seems highly improbable. In the first place, it is doubtful whether the princess ever really cared for Maulevrier, though his audacity amused her, and she found it not unpleasant to be the recipient of a kind of homage from which her exalted station had hitherto debarred her. In the second, she was far too closely guarded and watched, not only by her ladies, who might perhaps have been a little inclined to complaisance, but by the Swiss spies who roamed day and night through the palaces and gardens of Versailles, Marly, and Fontainebleau,<sup>1</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> "The King, more anxious to know everything that was passing than most people believed, although they credited him with not a little curiosity in this respect, had authorised Bontemps [his confidential *valet de chambre*] to engage a number of Swiss, in addition to those posted at the gates and in the parks and gardens. These attendants had orders to roam, morning, noon, and night, along the corridors, the passages, and the staircases, and, when it was fine, in the courtyards and gardens, and in secret to watch people, to follow them, to notice where they went, to notice who was there, to listen to all the conversations they could hear, and to make reports of their discoveries. This was done at Versailles, at Marly, at Trianon, at Fontainebleau, and in every place where the King happened to be."—Saint-Simon.

have been able to grant a rendezvous to any member of the opposite sex, without the King being immediately aware of it. Nevertheless, however innocent she may have been, she was soon to discover that—to parody Chateaubriand's aphorism—while the sins of a private individual may go unpunished till the next world, the indiscretions of royalty are invariably punished in this, and to receive a sharp lesson on the danger of young princesses playing with fire.

The favour shown by the Duchesse de Bourgogne to Maulevrier put an end to the hesitations of Nangis, who could not endure the sight of another aspiring to the place which he felt to be rightly his ; and, braving the wrath of Madame de la Vrillière, he too entered the lists. His opposition greatly incensed and alarmed Maulevrier, who, to get the better of his rival, bethought himself, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, of a singular stratagem. This was to feign an affection of the chest, which deprived him almost entirely of the use of his voice, and prevented him from speaking above a whisper. By this means, he not only escaped active service, and was permitted to remain at Court, but enjoyed facilities for the most intimate conversation with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, without exciting the least suspicion.

For more than a year, Maulevrier pressed his suit, but the result was far from answering his expectations ; and, at length, perceiving the ill-humour of Madame de la Vrillière, he concluded that Nangis's wooing must have been crowned with success, and "jealousy and rage transported him to the last extremity of folly."

One morning, as the Duchesse de Bourgogne was returning from Mass, and he was aware that Dangeau, her *chevalier d'honneur*, was absent, he met her and offered his hand to conduct her to her apartments. The gentleman whose duty it was to take Dangeau's place courteously waived his claim to this honour, out of consideration for Maulevrier's loss of voice, and fell back out of earshot, so that the marquis had the full advantages of a private audience. Then, while careful to preserve the low tone in which he had trained himself to speak, Maulevrier "railed against Nangis; called him by all sorts of names; threatened to reveal everything to the King and Madame de Maintenon, and to the prince her husband; squeezed her fingers as though he would break them; and led her in this manner, like the madman that he was, to her apartments."<sup>1</sup>

Half-fainting with pain and terror, the unfortunate princess entered her *garde-robe* and sent for her favourite *dame du palais*, Madame de Nogaret, to whom she related what had occurred, "declaring that she knew not how she had reached her apartments, or how it was she had not sunk beneath the floor or died." Madame de Nogaret, after taking counsel with Saint-Simon and his wife, advised her mistress to humour this dangerous lover, but to avoid committing herself in any way with him. But, though such advice was no doubt excellent, it came a little too late to be of service, since Maulevrier had now turned the vials of his wrath upon Nangis, and, by abusing him, to every one whom he could induce to listen to

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.



his tirades, was doing his utmost to provoke him to a duel. Nangis, brave though he was, did not at all relish the idea of an encounter the real motive of which would have been patent to every one, and would have ruined him irretrievably ; and prudently kept out of the way of his infuriated rival. Nevertheless, for some six weeks, the Duchesse de Bourgogne lived in constant dread of hearing that her two admirers had met in mortal combat, and her state of mind was scarcely one to be envied.

This intolerable situation was at length ended by the diplomacy of Tessé. Warned of how matters were going, that skilful personage took Fagon into his confidence and persuaded him to assure Maulevrier that, as the remedies he had tried had proved ineffectual, he must go to a warmer climate, as to spend the approaching winter in France would inevitably kill him.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he begged his son-in-law to follow him to Madrid, whither he was about to proceed on an important mission, promising that he should meet with a cordial welcome at the Spanish Court.

Maulevrier allowed himself to be persuaded, and Tessé and Fagon having assured the King that he was really ill, the necessary permission was readily accorded, and in November 1704 he set out for Spain, furnished with a letter of recommendation to Philip v from the Duc de Bourgogne, who had not the least suspicion of the mortal terror with which his *protégé* had inspired his wife.

The relief of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at the

<sup>1</sup> It would appear from this that, though Maulevrier had greatly exaggerated the state of his health, he was really consumptive, and was alarmed about himself.

departure of her terrible admirer may be imagined ; and, as Tessé had promised to do everything in his power to keep his son-in-law in Spain, she flattered herself that it would be many a long day before she saw him again. But in this she was mistaken.

Admitted, thanks to the recommendations of the Duc de Bourgogne and Tessé into the intimacy of the King and Queen of Spain, the audacious Maulevrier, if we are to believe Saint-Simon and Madame de Caylus, did not hesitate to abuse their Majesties' condescension, and made love to the younger sister as he had made love to the elder. Saint-Simon adds that his advances were not ill received, and that the affair caused so much talk that the Duc de Gramont, the French Ambassador at Madrid, deemed it necessary to inform Louis XIV of the rumours which had reached him. In consequence, the King prohibited Maulevrier from accepting any honours which might be offered him by Philip V,—there was a report that he was about to be made a grandee of Spain,—and ordered him to join Tessé at the siege of Gibraltar, and, on learning, subsequently, that he had quitted Gibraltar and returned to Madrid, recalled him to France.

What is certain, is that Maulevrier did commit some indiscretion at Madrid, which caused his father-in-law to beg Louis XIV to summon him back to France ; and that in the autumn of 1705 he reappeared at Versailles, and at once resumed his persecution of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. In the interval, he had become madder than ever, and his wrath was terrible on learning that he had now not one rival, but two, to contend with. For, far from profiting by her recent sad

experience, the princess had added a fresh string to her bow, in the person of the Abbé Melchior de Polignac, afterwards cardinal.

The abbé was a much older man than either of his competitors for the princess's favour, for he was in his forty-fifth year; but, in every other respect, his qualifications for the rôle to which he aspired were infinitely greater than theirs. Writing fifteen years earlier to her friend Madame de Coulanges, Madame de Sévigné had described him as "one of the men of the world whose disposition appeared to her the most agreeable"; while Saint-Simon, though he disliked him heartily, is compelled to pay tribute to his good looks, his versatility, his cultured tastes, his conversational powers, and the wonderful fascination of his manner. "Pleasing, nay, most fascinating in manner," he writes, "the abbé was a man to gain all hearts. He desired to please the valet and the maid, as well as the master and the mistress. To succeed in this, he stopped at no flattery. One day, when following the King through the gardens of Marly, it came on to rain. The King considerably noticed the abbé's dress, which was little calculated to keep off rain. "It is no matter, Sire," observed Polignac, "the rain of Marly does not wet."

Notwithstanding all his suppleness, the abbé fell into disgrace in 1698, when, as French Ambassador in Poland, he failed in his negotiations to secure the uneasy crown of that kingdom for the Prince de Conti, and, on his return to France, he was banished from Court. But his exile lasted only three years, and, thanks to the publication of a



ABBÉ (AFTERWARDS CARDINAL) MELCHIOR DE POLIGNAC  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DAULLÉ, AFTER THE PAINTING BY HYACINTHE RIGAUD



philosophical poem in Latin, the *Anti-Lucretius*, which greatly pleased both the Duc de Bourgogne and the King, and procured its author's election to the Academy, in succession to Bossuet, he was now in high favour once more.

The astute Polignac succeeded in ingratiating himself with the Duc de Bourgogne, by sympathising with his religious views and flattering his taste for the sciences; and made friends with the duchess's intimates, the Maréchale de Cœuvres and Madame d'O. He thus found many opportunities of approaching the princess, of which he did not fail to take advantage. The attentions of distinguished middle-aged are often very acceptable to the vanity of youth; and, besides, the abbé was still a handsome man. "He sought to be heard, and he *was* heard. Soon he braved the danger of the Swiss, and on fine nights walked with the duchess in the gardens of Marly." The star of Nangis began to pale; Maulevrier, on his return, found himself altogether forgotten.

The latter gallant, however, had not the smallest intention of accepting his dismissal, and, to recall himself to the princess's memory, began to bombard her with threatening letters. Terrified lest she should find herself the victim of the scandal which she had so narrowly escaped twelve months before, the lady replied to them, and charged Madame Quantin, who again acted as the intermediary, to assure Maulevrier that he might always count upon her friendship. But Maulevrier refused to be placated; and, when he heard that his wife, "who concealed beneath a virginal appearance a most malignant disposition," resenting her lord's

infatuation for the Duchesse de Bourgogne, had begun to make advances to Nangis, and that Nangis seemed inclined to meet her half-way, he lost what little reason was left him, and committed so many follies that his friends were obliged to have him confined to his hôtel in Paris and carefully watched. At length, in the early morning of Good Friday 1706, the unfortunate man succeeded in eluding the vigilance of his gaolers, threw himself from an upper window into the courtyard below, and was instantly killed.<sup>1</sup>

News of the tragedy was brought to the Duchesse de Bourgogne as she was on her way to *Tenebræ*, in the midst of all the Court. She succeeded in controlling her feelings in public, but Saint-Simon assures us that, on her return to her apartments, she shed tears, and that for some days afterwards her eyes were suspiciously red. Perhaps, however, her emotion was due less to sorrow for the tragic end of her embarrassing admirer as to the fact that the letters which she had been indiscreet enough to write him had fallen into the hands of Madame de Maulevrier, who obstinately refused to surrender them. People also observed that Madame de Maintenon seemed constrained and abrupt in her manner towards the princess, and that they had several long interviews, from which the latter emerged in a lachrymose condition; and it was shrewdly suspected that the old lady was acquainted with the whole story. This suspicion was confirmed when, shortly afterwards, Polignac was nominated one of the auditors of the Rota at Rome, and departed into a kind of disguised exile. His

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

removal was certainly a prudent step, since the Duchesse de Bourgogne "wished him a pleasant journey in a manner very different from that in which she was accustomed to dismiss those who came to take leave of her," and shut herself up for the rest of the day in Madame de Maintenon's apartments, on the plea of a headache. A few days later, *Madame*, walking in the gardens of Versailles, found on the pedestal of a statue some verses on the subject, "which she was neither discreet enough nor benevolent enough to ignore." The Court, however, was more good-natured, and observed about the Polignac business the same reticence which it had shown in regard to Nangis and Maulevrier, and neither the King nor the lady's husband ever appear to have entertained any suspicion—a really remarkable testimony to the popularity of the princess.

After the departure of the fascinating Polignac, we hear of no more flirtations—there does not seem to be any reason to suppose that her conduct deserves a harsher name—on the part of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Perhaps, the lesson of the terrible fate of Maulevrier, victim of disappointed passions and ambitions which she had certainly done something to encourage, was not lost upon her; perhaps, she realised that it is not generally the good fortune of princesses to be loved for themselves alone, and that the homage which is offered them is seldom disinterested; and certainly, as time went on, she began to understand more fully the obligations which her position exacted, and to appreciate at something approaching its true worth the devotion of her



husband. Any way, she appears henceforth to have conducted herself towards the opposite sex with perfect propriety, and to have given no further cause for scandal.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We ought perhaps to except the affair in 1711 with the fifteen-year-old Duc de Fronsac, afterwards the too-celebrated Duc de Richelieu, who was found one day concealed in the princess's bed-chamber. But, though much has been made of this episode by the scandal-loving writers of the latter part of the eighteenth century, it seems to have been regarded at the time as merely a piece of boyish impertinence, and the *lettre de cachet*, which sent the precocious young gentleman to the Bastille was granted at the request of his indignant father, who appears to have had several other causes of complaint against him.

## CHAPTER XVI

Death of the little Duc de Bretagne—Letters of the Duchesse de Bourgogne to *Madame Royale*, and of the Duc de Bourgogne to Philip v—Desperate position of Victor Amadeus II: Turin invested by the French under La Feuillade—Cruel anxiety of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who endeavours to persuade her father to come to terms with France—Her letters to *Madame Royale*—Siege of Turin—Incapacity of the French generals—Eugène is permitted to effect a junction with the forces of Victor Amadeus, and inflicts a crushing defeat on the investing army—The historian Duclos's accusation of treachery against the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and the legend of the princess having seduced the French generals from their duty, considered.

THE Duchesse de Bourgogne had other troubles besides those in which her imprudences with Nangis, Maulevrier, and Polignac involved her. In April 1705, the little son whose birth had been celebrated by such brilliant fêtes died from convulsions, and the young princess knew, for the first time in her butterfly existence, the meaning of real sorrow. Her grief for her child was such that all the Court was moved with compassion, and, a few days after his death, we find her writing the following touching letter to her grandmother:—

“I cannot, my dear grandmamma, be longer without comforting myself with you in the sorrow which has befallen me. I am well persuaded that you have felt it, for I know the affection which you have always had for me. If we did not take all

the sorrows of this life from God, I know not what would become of us. I think He wishes to draw me to Him, by overwhelming me with every kind of grief. My health suffers greatly from it, but that is the least of my sorrows. I have received one of your letters, my dear grandmamma, which gave me very great pleasure. The assurances of affection which you give me bring me consolation. I have great need of it in my present state.”<sup>1</sup>

The grief of the young mother was not only very great, but some time seems to have elapsed ere she succeeded in conquering it, since two months later Madame de Maintenon informs the Princesse des Ursins that “the Duchesse de Bourgogne wept yesterday for her son as on the day of his death, because it was that of his birth.”

The young princess suffered also the keenest distress and the most cruel anxiety on behalf of

<sup>1</sup> Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et de la Reine d'Espagne*. On the previous day, the Duc de Bourgogne had written to his brother, the King of Spain, a letter in which he expresses his resignation to the Divine Will, and his ardent desire to fulfil the duties of his position in such a way that he may one day be permitted to rejoin his child :

“I have not written you, my dear brother, since the loss of my son, and I believe that the affection which you entertain for me will have caused you to feel it keenly. It would have been desirable, not only for my own sake, but for that of affairs in general, that this misfortune should not have befallen us, but men ought always to submit blindly to that which comes from above. God knows better than ourselves what is right for us ; He has life and death in His hands, and has taken my son to a place where I ardently desire to rejoin him one day. However, to desire that is not sufficient ; I must work for it, and I should be a Jansenist if I said otherwise, which you are well aware I am far from being. The position in which you are, my dear brother, and for which I am destined in the course of Nature (though I desire that the time may be very far distant), this position, I say, is as full of dangers as there are duties to discharge, and these dangers are so much the more pressing as the duties are great ; but, at the same time, what degree of glory is reserved in Heaven for those who discharge them worthily ! . . .”

her relatives in Italy. The course of the war in Flanders, Germany, and Spain during the years 1704 and 1705 and the first part of 1706 was disastrous to the Bourbon cause. Tallard was crushed at Blenheim; Villeroy at Ramillies; nearly the whole of Flanders fell into the hands of the Allies; the meteoric Peterborough carried all before him in Spain, and Philip v was compelled to leave Madrid and fly to Burgos, while the Allies entered the capital and proclaimed the Archduke Charles king, as Charles III.

But in Northern Italy the condition of affairs was very different. The events which had precipitated the defection of Victor Amadeus had been so rapid, that his new allies had had no time to send him assistance, and he found himself compelled to face unaided the storm which quickly burst upon him.

The results might well have daunted a less resolute spirit. The counties of Nice and Savoy were over-run; three French armies penetrated by different roads into Piedmont; and one after another almost every place of importance, with the exception of Turin, fell into the hands of the invaders. The Imperialists were too hard pressed themselves to be able to render any effective assistance to their stricken ally, and, after Vendôme's victories at Cassano and Calcinato had driven them back across the Adige, it seemed as if nothing could prevent the fall of Turin and the ruin of the House of Savoy. The Court of Versailles, indeed, exasperated by the defection of the Duke, seemed to regard the taking of his capital as an affair of honour, to which every other consideration ought

to be subordinated. Immense preparations were made for the siege, and in the last days of May the city was invested by a splendid army, commanded by the Duc de la Feuillade, a son-in-law of Chamillart, the Minister for War.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne was in the utmost consternation, when she learned of the proposed investment of Turin, and aware that its reduction would administer the *coup de grâce* to the tottering fortunes of her ambitious father, she endeavoured to induce him to come to terms with France. Since, however, she did not dare to address the Duke directly, it was to her mother that she wrote :

“ May 3 [1706]

“ I have had no letters from you by this courier, my dearest mother ; I hope, however, they will arrive in a few days.

“ We have had very good news from Barcelona,<sup>1</sup> and from all sides agreeable tidings are reaching us. All that is passing in Italy affords me much cause for reflection, and gives me many hopes. I confess the truth, my dearest mother, that it would be the greatest pleasure that I could have in this life, if I could see my father brought back to reason. I cannot understand why he does not make terms, especially in the unfortunate situation in which he now finds himself, and without any hope of being succoured [by the Austrians]. Does he still wish to allow Turin to be taken ? The rumour

<sup>1</sup> Barcelona had been taken by Peterborough in the previous October ; but early in 1706 a great effort was made to recover it, and Philip v and Tessé besieged it from the land side, while the French fleet, under the Comte de Toulouse, blockaded the harbour. At the time when the Duchesse de Bourgogne wrote, it seemed that the town must succumb, but it was subsequently relieved by the arrival of the English fleet, against which the French ships did not venture to contend.

afloat here is that it will not be long before the siege is begun. Conceive, therefore, my dear mother, the state in which I must be in, sensitive as I am to all that concerns you ! I am in despair at the situation to which my father is reduced by his own fault. Is it possible that he believes that we should not grant him favourable terms ? I assure you that all that the King desires is to see his kingdom tranquil, and that of his grandson, the King of Spain, also. It appears to me that my father ought to desire the same thing for himself, and, when I reflect that the power of making it so is in his hands, I am astonished that he does not do it.

“I fear, my dearest mother, that you will think me very bold in writing all that I have ; but I cannot restrain myself, feeling as I do my father’s position. I feel that he is my father, and a father whom I deeply love. Therefore, my dearest mother, forgive me if I write you too freely. It is my intense desire that we should escape these difficult moments that cause me to write as I do.

“Continue to love me, my dearest mother, and do not take all this in bad part, for you understand my intention in speaking, and the motive which inspires me. I send you a letter from my sister, who is as vexed as I am at all that is happening.”

M. Gagnière, who, by the way, gives the date of this letter as 1711, although, as M. d’Haussonville points out, the double allusion to the sieges of Barcelona and Madrid leaves no possible doubt that it belongs to 1706, is of opinion that it was dictated by Madame de Maintenon, “not because Marie Adélaïde did not cherish in her heart sentiments of peace and concord, but because she was

unable to express them” ;<sup>1</sup> and, since we know that, at this juncture, Louis XIV would have been very willing to enter into negotiations with his enemies and to purchase peace, even at the price of considerable sacrifices, his assumption is not unlikely to be correct. However that may be, Victor Amadeus remained deaf to the entreaties of his elder daughter, as he did to those, not less urgent and pathetic, which were addressed to him by her sister, the Queen of Spain ; and the Duchesse de Bourgogne was condemned to spend more than three months of the most terrible suspense, while the fate of the House of Savoy was trembling in the balance, although true to her rôle of always pleasing the King, no matter at what cost to herself, she did not cease to participate in the pleasures of the Court, and to affect a gaiety which she was very far from feeling.

What her real sentiments were, will be gathered from two letters which she wrote at this time to *Madame Royale*, who, with the Duchess of Savoy and the two young princes, had been sent for safety to Mondovi, and, subsequently, to Genoa, where the Doge and the Senate had offered them an asylum.

“ MARLY, *June 21, 1706*

“ I can be no longer, my dear grandmamma, without sharing all our sorrows with you. Imagine my anxiety as to all that is happening to you, loving you as I do very tenderly, and having all possible affection for my father, my mother, and my brothers. I cannot see them in so unhappy a situation without tears rising to my eyes, for assuredly, my dear grandmamma, I am very sensitive to all that

<sup>1</sup> *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances.*

concerns you, and I see, by all that is in me, to what point my affection for my family goes.

“My health is not so much injured as it might be. I am fairly well, but in a state of sadness which no amusements can mitigate, and which will never leave me, for it serves to console me in my present condition.

“Do not deprive me, I entreat you, of your letters. They afford me much pleasure, and I have need of them in the state I am in. Send me news of what is dearest to me in the world.”

“MARLY, *July 25, 1706*

“I have not written you, my dear grandmamma, as I do not know whether you are still with my mother, having been unable to obtain any information. You know my heart; imagine therefore the state I am in! I received yesterday one of your letters, by which I was very affected. I am not less at the state in which you are, and I cannot reconcile myself to all your misfortunes. I see them increasing with extreme sorrow, and there is not a day when I do not feel them very keenly and weep in thinking of what a family which is so dear to me, and which I would give my life to comfort for a moment, is suffering.

“I am very glad, my dear grandmamma, that the fatigues of a journey so long and painful as that which you have just made has not injured your health; which I trust will continue good, in spite of everything. I pity greatly my mother, who, for additional sorrow, is anxious about the illness of her children, and yet is obliged to continue to travel in such excessive heat and over such frightful roads.

“I have no other consolation, my dear grandmamma, than that of receiving your letters and the continued assurances of your affection. We have all need of great courage to sustain such terrible



trials as those which we have had of late. God wishes to try me by all the means to which I am most sensitive. I must resign myself to His will, and pray that He will soon deliver us from the state in which we are.

"As for myself, I feel that I cannot sustain it longer, if He does not give me strength to do so.

"Love me always, and be assured, my dear grandmamma, of my respect and affection, which will end only with my life." <sup>1</sup>

When this last letter was written, the siege of Turin had been in progress for just seven weeks, the first cannon-shots having been fired by the besiegers on June 3. Victor Amadeus was not himself in the city, but lay with what troops he could muster at Cherasco, from whence he could harass the investing army, while awaiting the arrival of Prince Eugène, now advancing from the Tyrol at the head of an Austrian force, which had been placed in the field owing to the representations of Marlborough, who had impressed upon the sluggish Cabinet of Vienne the vital importance of saving Turin. In the absence of the Duke, the defence was entrusted to two Savoyard nobles, the Marquis de Carrail and the Comte de la Roche d'Allery, who had greatly distinguished themselves in the defence of Nice and Verrua, with whom was associated an Austrian officer, the Graf von Daun, father of the celebrated general of the Seven Years' War.

Unanimity and enthusiasm reigned within the beleagured city, where the entire population, women as well as men, aided in the defence, and

<sup>1</sup> Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances*.

displayed the utmost courage and devotion. But in the camp of the besiegers a very different state of affairs prevailed. La Feuillade, a younger Villeroy, incapable, presumptuous, and insolent, who owed his appointment to the command of the Army of Piedmont entirely to his relationship to Chamillart, the Minister for War, declined to listen to the advice of Vauban and the other experienced officers who served under him, and conducted the operations with a sublime disregard for all the rules of siege-warfare.

Meanwhile, Eugène was gradually drawing nearer. By a bold and skilful manœuvre, he outwitted Vendôme, who was guarding the Adige and the Po, crossed both those rivers, and marched up the southern bank of the Po towards Turin. At this critical moment, Vendôme was summoned to Flanders, to replace Villeroy, who had just met with his deserts at Ramillies, leaving the command of his army to the young Duc d'Orléans, who, as the fashion was, had arrived with a general to guide him, in the person of Marsin, who had commanded part of the French forces at Blenheim. Orléans begged Vendôme to postpone his departure and endeavour to repair his errors ; but the latter, wishing, according to Saint-Simon, that his successor should remain charged with them, declined and left the duke to get out of the difficulty as best he might.

This was no easy matter, since Marsin, when ordered by Orléans to prevent the Imperialists crossing the Tanaro, a tributary of the Po, produced full powers from Louis XIV, and refused to move ; and the mortified prince had no alternative

but to lead his forces to Turin to reinforce the investing army.

Here long and heated discussions took place between the three commanders concerning the measures to be taken to oppose the approaching enemy. Orléans, who, though no great general, was infinitely more capable than either of his colleagues, strongly urged that they should at once advance against the Imperialists and make a last effort to prevent their junction with the Duke of Savoy; while Le Feuillade insisted on awaiting battle in their own lines, although these extended over fifteen miles of country, and thus served to neutralise the superiority in numbers which the French possessed. Marsin, however, "who wished to keep in the good graces of the son-in-law of the all-powerful Minister," and without whom Orléans could do nothing, sided with La Feuillade; the other officers present supported him likewise, and "the throat of France was cut."<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of September 7, the investing army was suddenly attacked by Eugène and Victor Amadeus, who had effected their junction some days previously at Carmagnola, and, on learning of the straits to which the besieged were now reduced through famine and sickness, had resolved to put their fate to the touch without delay.

The French were vastly superior in numbers, and were behind entrenchments, to attack which the Allies had to cross an open plain. But their extended line presented several weak points and was easily broken, while the whole army was de-

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

moralised by the dissensions between its leaders and the contradictory orders which were issued. After an obstinate combat, discipline and generalship carried the day, and the French were completely routed. Marsin was killed ; Orléans, who had displayed great courage and presence of mind, wounded ; and the besiegers fell back in utter confusion on Susa and Pinerolo ; while Eugène and Victor Amadeus entered Turin in triumph.

In losing the Battle of Turin, Louis XIV lost Italy as well. The French evacuated all Piedmont and Savoy, with the exception of the fortresses, which one after another were compelled to open their gates ; the Milanese and the Duchy of Mantua passed into the possession of the Emperor, who gave Montferrato to the Duke of Savoy ; and in March 1707 the Convention of Milan secured Northern Italy for the Allies. The Bourbon troops were also driven from the Kingdom of Naples, since it was no longer possible to send reinforcements thither by land, and the English fleet swept the seas ; and the Neapolitans hastened to make a separate peace with the Empire. Thus, in less than twelve months from that fatal day, their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties found themselves without a rood of ground in the whole peninsula.

We have dealt at greater length upon these events than would otherwise have been necessary, since they have been made the occasion of serious charges against the Duchesse de Bourgogne. "This fascinating child, so dear to the King," writes Duclos, "none the less betrayed France, by informing her father, then Duke of Savoy and

our enemy, of all the military plans which she found the means of perusing. The King discovered the proof of this in the princess's desk, after her death. 'The little rogue,' said he to Madame de Maintenon, 'was deceiving us.'"<sup>1</sup>

This sensational story, regarded by historians in other countries as the invention of Duclos—a recorder of gossip rather than of fact—has, singularly enough, been credited by several French historians, and even a writer usually so just and discriminating as Sainte-Beuve accords it a kind of semi-acceptance. But, when we examine it, its absurdity becomes at once apparent. Quite apart from the untrustworthiness of Duclos, and the fact that no allusion to this supposed treachery is to be found in the memoirs and correspondence of any of the Duchesse de Bourgogne's contemporaries, not even in those of the lynx-eyed and far from benevolent *Madame*, is it in the least degree probable that Louis XIV or his Ministers would have left important military plans lying about? And, even supposing them to have been guilty of such criminal negligence, and the princess to have taken advantage of it, how, one may well ask, could she have transmitted her information to Turin? It is true that she was still permitted to communicate with her relatives in Italy; but, from what we know about the fate of the epistles of *Madame* and other prominent members of the Court, even in time of peace, we may be very sure that every letter she wrote was closely scrutinised before being forwarded to its destination.

But there is another legend, which, though

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires secrets sur les règnes de Louis XIV. et de Louis XV.*

equally frivolous, was, according to Voltaire, who himself regards it with contempt, long believed by almost all the officers who had fought in the French army at Turin, and has been accepted by many eighteenth century historians, and even by some of more recent date.

“Almost all the historians,” he writes, “have assured us that the Duc de la Feuillade did not wish to take Turin. They pretend that, having dared to cast passionate glances in the direction of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, he had promised her to respect her father’s capital; and they declare that this princess had engaged Madame de Maintenon to cause the measures to be taken which were the salvation of this town. It is true that almost all the officers of that army were long persuaded of this, but it was one of those popular rumours which discredit the judgment of the newsmongers and dishonour histories.”<sup>1</sup>

The Duchesse de Bourgogne is then accused of having seduced La Feuillade—or, according to Michelet, Marsin—from his duty to his sovereign, and Madame de Maintenon, in order to please her, of having betrayed her husband and her country, by sending timely warning to the Duke of Savoy of the intention of the French to lay siege to Turin, which enabled him to place his capital in a state of defence. But, incredible as these charges may appear, their acceptance by so many writers makes it impossible for a biographer of the Duchesse de Bourgogne to dismiss them without comment, and we must therefore examine them.

<sup>1</sup> *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

First—to take them in chronological order—as to the warnings of the intention of the French to lay siege to Turin which Madame de Maintenon, at the instance of the princess, is supposed to have sent to Victor Amadeus.

Well, such warnings would have been altogether superfluous. From the very beginning of hostilities, the Duke of Savoy must have been well aware that Turin was the objective of the French armies—had it not been twice threatened by Catinat in the previous war?—and, even before his rupture with France in the autumn of 1703, he had already begun to strengthen its fortifications. Moreover, we know from Saint-Simon that the siege had been resolved upon during the campaign of 1705, and would have been undertaken forthwith, but for differences between Vauban, who wished to direct the siege, La Feuillade, and Vendôme, which caused it to be postponed until the following year; and that no secret was made of this project. Between that time and the late spring of 1706, Victor Amadeus had ample time to complete his preparations.

Next, as to the charge that the Duchesse de Bourgogne corrupted La Feuillade or Marsin. According to Mlle. d'Aumale, when La Feuillade, “who had been chosen to besiege Turin,” came to take formal leave of the princess before setting out for the army, the latter said to him, in a low voice: “Do not drive my father to extremities”; and these pathetic words, and the charms of the princess, which she enhanced by the gracious reception which she accorded him, “made this nobleman resolve not to grieve her by ruining the

Duke of Savoy." The duke, the chronicler adds, then sought out his father-in-law Chamillart, and "showed him very plainly that the taking of Turin would be disagreeable to the Duchesse de Bourgogne"; and having apparently made everything right with the War Minister—who, it may be incidentally remarked, was as honest as he was inefficient—departed for Italy, and "began the siege of Turin by a romantic attack upon the citadel, failed to take it, and was forced to raise the siege, the while he said to himself: 'If I succeed, I shall have the greater glory, and it will not be for want of having done everything to ensure failure.' " <sup>1</sup>

The utter absurdity of Mlle. d'Aumale's story is exposed by the Comte d'Haussonville, who points out that La Feuillade could not possibly have had an interview with the Duchesse de Bourgogne just before the siege of Turin began, as he had been in command of the Army of Piedmont since February 1705, and did not visit the Court at all between that time and the investment, and that though it is possible that, at the moment of his departure for Italy, the princess may have addressed to him some such request as the writer mentions, it could have had no reference to the siege of Turin, since that project had not then been resolved upon. He also shows that the plan of attacking the citadel originated not with La Feuillade, but with Vendôme, and that the former, as his despatches prove, was at first strongly opposed to it.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the conduct of La Feuillade certainly

<sup>1</sup> Mlle d'Aumale, *Cahiers*, cited by Haussonville.

<sup>2</sup> Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*



showed very little desire to spare the feelings of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, as Saint-Simon and Voltaire both reproach him with having several times quitted the siege and weakened his lines of circumvallation, in order to pursue the Duke of Savoy, who was constantly harassing the besiegers, in the chimerical hope of making him prisoner. "It is difficult to believe," observes the latter, "that the same general should have desired to fail before Turin and take the Duke of Savoy prisoner."<sup>1</sup>

There remains the question of Marsin, for, if we are to believe that implacable enemy of the Bourbons, Michelet, it was he, and not La Feuillade, who was the real victim of the Duchesse de Bourgogne's intrigues and the direct cause of the disaster. "The rumour of the time, of which the trace remains in very frivolous monuments (in the *chansons*), but which, nevertheless, appears to me grave and extremely probable, is that Marsin, friend and confidant of Madame de Maintenon, sympathised with the designs and fears of the ladies, and particularly with those of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Madame de Maintenon would not have welcomed a victory gained by the Duc d'Orléans; the Duchesse de Bourgogne would have feared a pitched battle, in which her father would have received scant consideration, whereas in an attack upon the lines of the besieging army, he could risk his person as much or as little as he pleased. Duclos (very well informed) says harshly that 'the princess betrayed us and informed the Duke of Savoy of everything.' That is difficult to believe; but it is very probable that, in such

<sup>1</sup> *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

terrible circumstances, she warned him. At any rate, she was able to admonish (*chapitrer*) Marsin on his departure [for Turin], and to make him promise that he would offer the advice which would be the least dangerous for her father." And the historian asks us to believe that it was for these reasons that Marsin opposed the proposal of the Duc d'Orléans to attack the allies, instead of waiting to be attacked.<sup>1</sup>

Now, Michelet states that this supposed interview took place on the departure of Marsin for Turin ; but when Marsin received orders to set out for Italy, he was not at Versailles, but in Alsace, whither he had just been transferred from Flanders, to take command of the army of the Rhine, in place of Villars, whom the King had originally intended to associate with the Duc d'Orléans ; and he travelled to Piedmont by way of Switzerland, and did not return to France.<sup>2</sup> What then becomes of Michelet's story ?

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de France*, vol. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau, *Journal*, June 23 and July 2.

## CHAPTER XVII

Birth of the second Duc de Bretagne (January 8, 1707)—Letters of the Duchesse de Bourgogne to *Madame Royale*—Egotism of Louis XIV—Miscarriage of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at Marly—The scene at the carp-basin—The Duc de Bourgogne receives the nominal command of the Army of Flanders, with the Duc de Vendôme to guide him—Character and career of Vendôme—Extraordinary ovation which he receives on his return from Italy—Louis XIV's reasons for associating his grandson with him—Apprehensions of Saint-Simon—The cabal of Meudon : its objects.

ON January 8, 1707, the Duchesse de Bourgogne made amends for the loss of the little Duc de Bretagne by giving birth to a second son, who received the same title as the dead child had borne, and, like him, was to meet with a premature death. Louis XIV's satisfaction was great, but, in view of the disasters of the previous year, and the terrible drain upon the resources of the country which the war was entailing, he prohibited all public celebrations, and informed the inhabitants of Versailles that "it was his desire that the joy of his subjects should be manifested only by their anxiety to pray." Notwithstanding his resentment against the Duke of Savoy, the King wrote to him with his own hand to announce the happy event, "and received in reply a letter of congratulation and thanks."<sup>1</sup>

Two months after the birth of her little son,

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau.

the Duchesse de Bourgogne wrote the following interesting letter to *Madame Royale*.

“VERSAILLES, *March 14, 1707*

“I am delighted, my dear grandmamma, that you exhort me to give you frequent news of my son ; I assure you that I have no need of that to do so. He is, thank God, very well. . . . I found him much grown and changed for the better on my return from Marly. He is not handsome as yet, but very lively, and much stronger than he was when he came into the world. He is only two months old, and I should not be astonished if, a few months hence, he were to become pretty. I do not know whether it is the fact that I am beginning to blind myself about him, which makes me hope that. But I believe that I shall never be blind about my children, and that the love I shall have for them will enable me to see their faults easily, so that I may endeavour to correct them in good time.

“I only go to see my son very seldom, in order that I may not grow too attached to him, and also to note any change in him ; for he is not old enough to play with as yet ; and, so long as I know that he is in good health, I am satisfied, and that is all that I need wish for.”<sup>1</sup>

Her expectation that her little son would in a few months' time be a pretty child was realised, for at the end of October, on her return from the annual visit of the Court to Fontainebleau, she writes to her grandmother :—

“I have not been insensible to the pleasure of seeing my son again ; and I have found him greatly

<sup>1</sup> A. Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie. Lettres et Correspondances*.

improved. I may say, with truth, that he is the prettiest child in the world. He is beginning to know me, and has very lovable ways. If this continues he will be extremely so."

After having given her husband an heir, the Duchesse de Bourgogne seems to have considered that she had done all that could be reasonably required of her in this respect, for in another letter to *Madame Royale*, written in June of that year, we find her rejoicing that her belief that she was again in an interesting condition had proved unfounded :—

"I believe, my dear grandmamma," she writes, "that you will share my joy that I am not pregnant. I have been in fear of this for a long time; but, thank God, my uneasiness on the subject is now at an end."

We do not know whether *Madame Royale* shared her grand-daughter's satisfaction, but Madame de Maintenon assuredly did not. "It is certain, Madame," she wrote to the Princesse des Ursins at Madrid, "that our princess is too much afraid of becoming pregnant. Yours [the Queen of Spain] is so reasonable, that I trust that she will not get these ideas, which I believe to be very wrong in the sight of God. They ought still, for many other reasons, to wish for children." And, in a subsequent letter to the same lady, she declares that "the Duchesse de Bourgogne is not yet sufficiently alive to her true interests."

However, by the beginning of the following spring, the Duchesse de Bourgogne had become

more reasonable, and, though Madame de Maintenon's hopes were doomed to disappointment, it was not, on this occasion, the carelessness of the princess, but the deplorable selfishness of the King which was the cause.

Although Louis XIV had insisted on the strictest precautions being taken by the Duchesse de Bourgogne previous to the birth of both her sons, these had certainly been dictated far more by his desire to see the succession in the direct line assured than by solicitude for the princess herself, since he did not usually permit consideration for the health or comfort even of those most dear to him to interfere with his own convenience. In his younger days, he had compelled the Queen and his mistresses to follow him in his campaigns, no matter in what state of health the unfortunate ladies happened to be; and his conduct in the winter of 1678-1679, when, although the roads were in such a terrible condition that the cumbersome coaches of the time sank almost to their axle-trees in the mud at every few yards, he ordered Madame de Montespan, then four months enceinte, to accompany him to Lorraine, was absolutely inhuman.<sup>1</sup>

Early in April 1708, the King announced his intention of paying a visit to Marly, and naturally desired to take the Duchesse de Bourgogne with him. The journey was a short one, but the roads were rough; Fagon intimated that it would be very inadvisable for the princess to undertake it, and Madame de Maintenon suggested that the

<sup>1</sup> See the author's "Madame de Montespan" (London, Harpers; New York, Scribners, 1903), pp. 197 *et seq.*

visit should be abandoned or the young lady left at Versailles. The egotistical monarch, however, who, now that his grand-daughter had presented her husband with a son, saw no reason why he should any longer allow his plans to be disarranged by consideration for her health, declined either to forego the proposed visit or to leave the princess behind, and all that he would consent to, was that the journey should be postponed from the day after Quasimodo to the Wednesday of the following week (April 18). But we will allow Saint-Simon to relate the sequel in his own words :

“On the following Saturday, as the King was taking a walk after Mass and amusing himself at the carp-basin between the château and the Perspective, we beheld the Duchesse du Lude advancing towards him, on foot and alone, which, as no lady was with the King, was a rare occurrence in the morning. We understood that she had something of importance to communicate to him, and stopped so as to permit him to join her. The interview was not long ; she withdrew, and the King rejoined us, without saying a word. Everyone surmised what had happened, but no one was anxious to speak. At length, the King, when quite close to the basin, glanced at the principal persons about him, and, without addressing any one in particular, observed, with an air of vexation, these few words : ‘The Duchesse de Bourgogne has had a miscarriage.’<sup>1</sup>

“M. de Bouillon, the Duc de Tresmes, and the

<sup>1</sup> “*La Duchesse de Bourgogne est blessée*”—“*blessée*” being the term then in use to denote accidents of this nature.

Maréchal de Boufflers repeated in a low tone the words I have mentioned ; while M. de la Rochefoucauld declared aloud that it was the greatest misfortune conceivable, and that, as she had already had miscarriages on other occasions, she might never, perhaps, have any more children.

“ ‘ And if it should be so,’ interrupted the King, with a sudden burst of anger, ‘ what difference would that make to me ? Has she not already a son ? And, if he died, is not the Duc de Berry old enough to marry and have one ? What does it signify to me who succeeds ? Are they not equally my grandchildren ? ’ And he added impetuously : ‘ Thank Heaven it has happened, since it was to be ! and I shall not have my journeys and my plans disarranged again by the representations of doctors and the arguments of matrons. I shall go and come at my pleasure, and shall be left in peace.’ ”

“ A silence so deep that an ant might have been heard to walk succeeded this singular outburst. All eyes were lowered ; scarcely any one dared to breathe. Every one seemed stupefied. Even the servants and the gardeners stood motionless.

“ This silence lasted more than a quarter of an hour. The King broke it by leaning over the balustrade to speak about a carp. No one replied. He addressed himself subsequently on the subject of the carp to the servants, who did not ordinarily join in the conversation, but spoke of nothing else. Presently the King went away. As soon as we dared to look at each other, our eyes met and told all. Every one present was, for the moment, the confidant of his neighbour. We wondered,



we marvelled, we grieved, we shrugged our shoulders. However distant may be that scene, it is always equally present to me. M. de la Rochefoucauld was furious . . . *M. le Premier* [the First Equerry] was ready to faint with horror; I myself examined every one with my eyes and ears, and commended myself for having long since been of opinion that the King loved and cared for himself alone, and was himself his only object in life. This strange speech was reported far and wide—much beyond Marly."

It is possible that Saint-Simon's weakness for the sensational has here tempted him into exaggeration; but, even if it has not, it would be unjust to judge Louis XIV too harshly. Warped though his character was by half a century of flattery, adulation, and arbitrary power, he was far from being the callous despot that some historians would have us believe; and we should regard this petulant outburst on the part of a man generally so dignified and self-contained rather as evidence of remorse for the suffering which his selfishness had brought upon the Duchesse de Bourgogne than as an aggravation of his offence.

Happily, the princess's mishap was followed by no very serious consequences to her health, and, a fortnight later, she is able to assure her grandmother that she is "going on very well and beginning to regain her strength." Nevertheless, the year 1708 was fated to prove one of the most trying of her life, for scarcely had she recovered from the effects of this illness, than she was called upon to face troubles of another kind, which were to test to the uttermost those sound qualities of

heart and mind which had hitherto lain concealed beneath a gay and frivolous exterior, and of which she herself was perhaps as yet only half-conscious.

Since his campaign of 1703 upon the Rhine, the Duc de Bourgogne, greatly to his disappointment, had remained without military employment. Why Louis xiv should have been unwilling to avail himself of his eldest grandson's services is uncertain, but the most probable reason was his belief that, although the young prince had proved himself a brave and conscientious officer, he had no genius for war, and that it would be better for him to remain at Court, than destroy the favourable impression he had already made by futile efforts to follow in the footsteps of the Great Condé. However, as the war proceeded and disaster followed upon disaster, he recognised that the presence of the heir-presumptive to the throne might serve to reanimate the drooping spirits of the French troops demoralised by continuous reverses; and when, in the summer of 1707, Victor Amadeus and Eugène, flushed with success, had the hardihood to invade Provence and lay siege to Toulon, he decided to give the Duc de Bourgogne the command of the army which was intended to drive them from French soil. But the Allies found the taking of Toulon a much more difficult task than they had bargained for, and, a few days after the prince's appointment, raised the siege and retreated across the frontier, to the great mortification of the Duc de Bourgogne, but, we may well believe, to the no small relief of the

duchess, who would have found herself in a singularly embarrassing situation with her husband and her father directly opposed to one another.

Compensation for the prince's disappointment was not long delayed. The events of 1707—the triumphs of Berwick in Spain, the raising of the siege of Toulon, the defeat of the Margrave of Bayreuth, by Villars, at Stollhofen, and the success of Vendôme's defensive campaign in the Netherlands—had done much to restore the confidence of the French armies, and determined Louis XIV to make great exertions to restore the fortunes of war in the following year.

It was, however, in Flanders that the chief effort was to be made. The position of affairs there afforded Louis much encouragement, for opinion had once more declared itself strongly for Philip V, and a single considerable success would undoubtedly be the signal for nearly every town to throw open its gates to the French; while the Dutch, whose deputies had thwarted Marlborough's plans throughout the campaign of 1707, were known to be weary of the war and to incline to a separate peace.

By incredible efforts the strength of the Army of Flanders was raised to close upon 100,000 men, and the nominal command entrusted to the Duc de Bourgogne, with Vendôme to guide him.

“On April 30, after dinner,” writes Saurches, “when the King returned from hunting the stag, he proceeded to the Duchess de Bourgogne's apartments, and informed her that the Duke her husband would set out on May 14, with the Duc de Berry, his brother, to take the command in Flanders,

where he would have under him the Duc de Vendôme.”<sup>1</sup>

Great was the joy of the prince “to find himself,” as he wrote to Philip v, “after an interval of four whole years, re-entering the service, instead of continuing to lead a useless life at Versailles, Fontainebleau, or Marly.” His satisfaction, however, must have been considerably discounted by the King’s choice of the general who was to be associated with him, for no greater contrast could possibly have been presented than that between the Duc de Bourgogne and the victor of Cassano and Calcinato; and it seems astonishing that Louis xiv could ever have imagined that two such contrary natures could work harmoniously together.

Louis Joseph, Duc de Vendôme, at this time in his fifty-fourth year, was the eldest son of Louis, the second duke, who, after the death of his wife, Laura Mancini, the eldest of the five celebrated sisters of that name,<sup>2</sup> entered the priesthood and was created a cardinal and Legate *a latere* in France. He had, however, nothing in common with his devout father, and declared that he “derived his talents from a more distant source,” that is to say, from Henri iv, from whose *liaison* with Gabrielle d’Estrées he was directly descended. It was this direct descent from the first Bourbon King which probably accounted for the extreme indulgence with which Louis xiv treated Vendôme, for not only did he see in him some resemblance to the great ancestor whom he held in almost superstitious reverence, but he hoped that the elevation

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> See the author’s “Five Fair Sisters.”

of a descendant of his grandfather's amours might justify to some extent the elevation of his own legitimated children.

"The King," observes Saint-Simon, "tolerated in M. de Vendôme what he never would have pardoned in a Son of France," and he proceeds to describe, with a wealth of lurid detail which it would be impossible to reproduce, the character of this extraordinary personage, who, according to him, combined the most nauseous of all vices with a "ravenous pride," an intolerable insolence, and a filthiness of person which revolted all decent-minded men.

Saint-Simon probably exaggerates. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Vendôme was shamelessly immoral, overbearing and insolent towards persons of his own rank, though affable and familiar with his inferiors, and inconceivably slovenly and dirty in his personal habits—a fault which he shared with his younger brother, the Grand Prior.<sup>1</sup> But what must have been quite as obnoxious to Louis XIV, was the fact that his kinsman was a sceptic, and that, unlike most of the "Libertines" who, from fear of the royal displeasure, were careful to comply with the religious observances which custom enjoined, he did not hesitate to avow his opinions, which renders the indulgence the King extended to him all the more remarkable.

It must be admitted, however, that the vices and faults of Vendôme were redeemed by great

<sup>1</sup> "These two princes, great-grandsons of Henri IV, neglected their persons to a degree of which the lowliest of men would have been ashamed."—Voltaire.



LOUIS JOSEPH, DUC DE VENDÔME  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



qualities. "He had," Saint-Simon confesses, "a very noble countenance and a distinguished bearing. He was naturally graceful in his movements and in his speech, possessed much innate wit, which he had never cultivated; spoke easily, supported by a natural boldness; knew the world and the Court, and was, above all things, an admirable courtier. Voltaire mentions other and more attractive qualities, about which Saint-Simon is silent. He was, he tells us, "intrepid as Henri IV, kind, benevolent, unaffected, incapable of harbouring envy, hatred or vengeance, and, if haughty towards the princes, willing to treat all other persons as equals." <sup>1</sup>

Vendôme also possessed military talents of a high order, but they were often neutralised by his defects of character. His indolence was almost incredible. When he had found quarters to his liking, nothing was so difficult as to induce him to resume his march. He rose late—sometimes, if we are to believe Voltaire, not until four o'clock in the afternoon—never broke up camp before midday, and invariably halted at nightfall. Such was his carelessness, that he sometimes neglected to post his sentries or to send out patrols, and, on more than one occasion, he allowed himself to be surprised by the enemy for lack of the commonest precautions; while the provisioning of his troops seems to have been left very much to chance.

When, however, he was roused by any great emergency, he was a wholly different man. Then his energy and resource were such as had been found in no French general since the death of

<sup>1</sup> *Siccle de Louis XIV.*



Luxembourg, and "in the day of battle he made amends for all, by his presence of mind and by a genius which danger rendered the more dazzling."<sup>1</sup>

He had the eye of a hawk for a weak spot in the enemy's line ; he seemed to divine instinctively the exact moment when a charge could be delivered with the greatest prospect of success ; the white plume which, in imitation of the hero of Ivry, it was his custom to wear in his hat, might always be descried at the point where the greatest danger threatened, and his splendid courage communicated itself to every man under his command. The soldiers and the junior officers adored him, for he allowed them all the license which he took himself, had a cheery word for all, and would jest and drink at the camp-fires with the youngest recruit. "He was the only general," says Voltaire, "under whom the duty of serving, and that ferocious instinct, purely animal and mechanical, which obeys the voice of the officers, did not drive the soldiers to the combat. They fought for the Duc de Vendôme ; they would have given their lives to extricate him from one of those false positions in which the impetuosity of his genius sometimes involved him."<sup>2</sup>

Greatly favoured by Fortune, which had saved him from the disastrous consequences which his indolence and negligence might have been expected

<sup>1</sup> *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

<sup>2</sup> *Siècle de Louis XIV.* A touching instance of the devotion of which Voltaire speaks is related by Saint-Hilaire in his *Mémoires*. At the Battle of Luzzara, Vendôme's horse was killed under him, and, as he was endeavouring to rise, an Austrian soldier advanced and levelled his musket at him. At that moment, Cotteron, the captain of his guards, rushed forward, threw himself before him, and received in his own body the ball intended for his chief.

to entail, Vendôme's military record was a brilliant one. Beginning his career in 1673, as a subaltern in the Garde du Corps, he passed through every grade to that of lieutenant-general, and could have asserted, without fear of contradiction, that his advancement had been thoroughly earned. Although he showed courage and ability in his early campaigns in Holland, Germany, and the Netherlands, and had at the time of the Peace of Nimeguen attained the rank of *maréchal de camp*, it was not until the war against the League of Augsburg began that he was afforded much opportunity for distinction. His chance came at Steenkirke, where the brilliant cavalry charges which he led checked the advance of the English and materially contributed to Luxembourg's victory. From the Netherlands, he passed to Piedmont, where he commanded the left wing of the French in the Battle of Marsaglia (October 1693) and, eighteen months later, Louis XIV decided to give him the command of the troops in Catalonia. This proved a most happy choice, and a series of successes closed in August 1697 with the capture of Barcelona. Of Vendôme's campaigns in Italy during the early years of the War of the Spanish Succession we have already spoken.

When, in the summer of 1706, Vendôme returned from Italy, he found himself a popular hero, since, in times of national crisis, generals who have never suffered reverses soon attain immense popularity, and people are inclined to exaggerate their services and attribute to them talents far beyond those which they possess. "There was a terrible hubbub," writes Saint-Simon; "boys, sedan-

chairmen, all the lackeys of the Court, left their work to swarm round his post-chaise. Scarcely had he ascended to his chamber, when every one rushed thither. The Princes of the Blood were the first to arrive; the Ministers hastened after them, and no one was left in the salon but the ladies. In a few minutes, he was sent for by the King and *Monseigneur*, and, so soon as he could dress, he went to the salon, carried rather than accompanied by the crowd which surrounded him. *Monseigneur* stopped the music that was being played in order to embrace him. The King left his cabinet, where he was at work, came out to meet him, and embraced him several times. Chamillart, on the morrow, gave a fête in his honour, which lasted two days. Pontchartrain, Torcy, and the most distinguished noblemen of the Court followed his example. People begged and entreated to be allowed to offer him fêtes; people begged and entreated to be invited to them. Never was triumph equal to his; each step he took procured him a new one.”<sup>1</sup>

The enthusiasm of the Parisians surpassed even the enthusiasm of the Court. When he went to Paris to attend a performance of Lulli's *Roland*, which the Opera gave in his honour, cheering crowds lined the streets; every seat in the boxes and the amphitheatre was engaged a week in advance, and, though prices had been doubled, the *parterre* was unable to accommodate half the people who clamoured for admission. From the moment that the hero of the evening took his seat until the opera began, the audience

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

did nothing but clap and shout, *Vive Vendôme!* and the ovation was repeated at the close of the performance. "If he had remained in his box," writes Saurches, "no one would have quitted the Opera."<sup>1</sup>

All this adulation might well have turned the head of a far more modest man than Vendôme, whose natural haughtiness it aggravated to such a degree that he actually declined the post of "Marshal-general of the camps and armies of the King," which had never been conferred upon any one since the death of Turenne, because the patent contained no allusion to his birth. We can therefore readily understand that he must have learned with very mixed feelings that he was to be associated in the following campaign with a young prince, under whose orders he would be nominally at least, and who would rob him of a share of the glory which he confidently expected to reap. Besides, sceptic and profligate that he was, he disliked and despised the Duc de Bourgogne as a sanctimonious bookworm, who was incapable of appreciating the good things of life and allowed priests and *dévots* to lead him by the nose; and he did not doubt that some of the officers whom the King had chosen to accompany his grandson to the army would encourage him to question the general's decisions and thwart his plans.

That Louis XIV should have anticipated that anything but disaster could result from the association of two men, beside whom fire and water were congenial elements, is difficult to understand. Yet,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

so far from entertaining any misgivings on the subject, he seems to have flattered himself that he had made a singularly happy choice. The Duc de Bourgogne's presence, he believed, would inspire the soldiers with a new vigour; his zealous and punctual discharge of his duties would shame Vendôme out of the indolence and negligence which had more than once brought him to the brink of disaster; his caution would temper his colleague's audacity, and his strict ideas of discipline would serve as a useful check upon the license which the other was accustomed to allow his troops.

All this was explained by the excellent Beauvilliers to Saint-Simon, who, unlike his friend, by no means shared his Majesty's optimism. But the chronicler tells us that he declined to be convinced, and predicted that the struggle which was bound to ensue between two characters so opposed must result in the triumph of the stronger, and that "while Vendôme emerged from it covered with glory, the Duc de Bourgogne would be ruined at the Court, in France, and in all Europe." And he adds, complacently: "He soon had good cause to admit that I had not spoken without justice."

Saint-Simon's forebodings were strengthened by the knowledge that there existed at the Court a party, numerically insignificant but, in other respects, decidedly formidable, which for some time past had been actively intriguing to destroy the credit of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne.

The moving spirits of this cabal were two of Louis XIV's legitimated daughters, the Princesse de Conti and *Madame la Duchesse*, of whom we

have had occasion to speak at some length in an earlier chapter. These ladies disliked each other heartily, but they hated the Duchesse de Bourgogne. During the period which separated the retirement of Madame de Montespan from the arrival of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the beautiful and charming daughter of Louise de la Vallière, thanks to her influence over *Monseigneur* and attractions of mind and person which far surpassed those of *Madame* and the Duchesse de Chartres—her superiors in rank—had occupied a sort of semi-royal position, and she had seen with bitter mortification the homage which she had come to regard as her due transferred to the young princess from Savoy. The position of *Madame la Duchesse*, less attractive and less courted than her half-sister, had been naturally less affected by the advent of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; but she had inherited to the full her mother's jealous and vindictive nature, and the extraordinary degree of favour enjoyed by that fortunate young lady was quite sufficient to inspire her with the bitterest enmity.

The two princesses found a couple of efficient allies of their own sex in the Princesse d'Espinoy, and her younger sister, Mlle. le Lillebonne, members of the ambitious and intriguing House of Lorraine,<sup>1</sup> the latter of whom was believed to have contracted a secret marriage with the late *Monsieur's* unworthy favourite, the Chevalier de Lorraine. The two ladies in question, who, according to Saint-Simon, "exuded the spirit of the League at every pore,"

<sup>1</sup> Their mother, Anne de Lorraine, Princesse de Lillebonne, was a daughter of Charles iv. Duke of Lorraine, and Béatrix de Cantecroix, and sister to the Prince de Vaudémont, already mentioned.

had attached themselves to the interests of the Princesse de Conti, and founded their hopes of advancement on their patroness's recovery of her lost supremacy.

Although these four women exercised the controlling influence in the cabal, the male element, which was animated by hostility to the Duc de Bourgogne rather than to his wife, was not unimportant, and included Vendôme, and his younger brother, the Grand Prior,—who was a sort of understudy of the duke in the matter of morals—the Duc du Maine, his half-brother d'Antin, the Duc de Luxembourg, son of the victor of Steenkerke and Neerwinden, and the Maréchal d'Huxelles.

The object of the cabal was twofold : to estrange *Monseigneur* from his eldest son and daughter-in-law, so as to insure that, when that prince should ascend the throne, they would be reduced to impotence, and to destroy the influence of the Duchesse de Bourgogne with the King.

The first part of this programme presented comparatively little difficulty, since all the conspirators were welcome guests at Meudon, and the seed they sowed fell on ground which needed no tilling. The Dauphin, though he was as much attached as his lethargic nature would permit to the lively young Duc de Berry, had never cared for his eldest son, whose ascetic and studious life was a tacit reproach to his own sensual and aimless existence, and he was jealous of the high opinion which the King entertained of him and the favour enjoyed by his wife. The task of poisoning his mind against the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne was soon accomplished, and, though the young

prince endeavoured to disarm his growing hostility by treating Mlle. de Choin with the greatest deference whenever he visited his father's country-seat, and by directing his wife to sit on a stool instead of an arm-chair in her presence, it was to no purpose ; the "*Parvulos*" of Meudon, as the Court called the Dauphin's house-parties, gradually became the centre of all that was hostile to husband or wife, and it was very evident that, if *Monseigneur* survived the King, they would find themselves entirely without influence in the new reign.

But the second object of the conspirators was infinitely more difficult of attainment ; indeed, they recognised that the Duchesse de Bourgogne had secured far too firm a hold upon Louis XIV's affections to be dispossessed by any direct form of attack. Their only hope of success was to strike at the wife through the husband ; to wait for some opportunity of ruining the duke's credit with the King, and, in so doing, to undermine, if they could not destroy, that of the duchess also. This opportunity arrived with the campaign of 1708.



## CHAPTER XVIII

Departure of the Duc de Bourgogne for Flanders—His interview with Fénelon at Cambrai—Conduct of the Ducs de Bourgogne and de Berry towards the Chevalier de Saint-Georges—Composition of the Army of Flanders—Anomalous relations of the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme—Position of the Allies—Advance of the French—Differences between the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme retain the army inactive for a month—Occupations of the prince—Ghent and Bruges taken by the French, who advance to the Scheldt, with the intention of investing Oudenarde—Eugène joins Marlborough at Brussels—The Allies, by a rapid march, interpose themselves between the enemy and his own frontier—Battle of Oudenarde—Question of the responsibility for the defeat of the French considered

ON May 14, 1708, the Duc de Bourgogne quitted Versailles and set out for Flanders. It was the anniversary of the death of Louis XIII, and the fact that the King, who was decidedly superstitious, had selected that day for the departure of his grandson seems to have excited not a little surprise. The Duke's parting with his wife was, according to the *Mercure*, a very tender one, and "the extent to which this princess was affected after the departure of her husband revealed to the whole Court the grief by which she was overwhelmed and the affection which she entertained for the prince."<sup>1</sup>

To accompany the Duc de Bourgogne and assist him with their advice, Louis XIV had nominated

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure de France*, May 1708.

the Marquis de Puységur, the Comte de Gamaches, and the Marquis d'O, one of the Prince's *menins*. The first named, who had already served with distinction in several campaigns in Flanders, was an excellent choice ; but as much could not be said for the others, and d'O, in particular, who appears to have considered that all other considerations ought to be subordinated to the personal safety of his master, was to prove himself a deplorable mentor.

As had happened on the prince's journey to Flanders six years before, he again stopped at Cambrai, where another meeting took place between him and Fénelon. They had not met in the interval, but their feelings towards one another had undergone no change. "The young prince embraced his preceptor tenderly several times, and said aloud that he would never forget the great obligations under which he had placed him, and, though he said nothing which could not be heard by others, he spoke only to him, and the intensity of the gaze which he fixed on the archbishop, coupled with the first words he addressed to him, atoned for all that the King had forbidden, and thrilled all the spectators."<sup>1</sup> A few days later, the prince wrote to the archbishop, asking for his prayers on his behalf, and engaging him to assist him with his advice in the many difficulties with which he was bound to be confronted. Fénelon readily consented and sent his pupil much excellent counsel, not only on spiritual matters, but on those connected with his military duties.

At Valenciennes, the Duc de Bourgogne was met by Vendôme, who had preceded him and

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

established his headquarters at Mons; and here he was also joined by the Duc de Berry and James Stuart, the heir of James II, lately returned from his abortive expedition to the Scotch coast, who served incognito, under the name of the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. The two French princes, Saint-Simon confesses, "took advantage of the modesty of this prince to treat him with the greatest indifference and disdain." And, though the Comte de Gamaches, who was accustomed to speak his mind freely, expostulated with them warmly on their conduct, his remonstrances were unheeded.

On May 26, the Army of Flanders was passed in review by the Duc de Bourgogne, "who was very satisfied with it." He had certainly every reason for his satisfaction, since it was not only numerically imposing, but comprised the best regiments in the French service, commanded for the most part by experienced officers; was exceptionally strong in artillery; possessed an admirable commissariat, and was animated by the finest spirit. In short, nothing which makes for victory was wanting, with the exception of efficient generalship, and, unhappily for France, the efforts of this splendid force were to be entirely paralysed by the dual control under which it had been placed. For Louis XIV's instructions had been so contradictory that neither the Duc de Bourgogne nor Vendôme really knew how far his authority extended; each considered himself entitled to the last word, yet neither was willing to take upon himself the responsibility for any important movement.

Meanwhile, the allies had not been idle. The Anglo-Dutch army, of which Marlborough had

taken the command on May 9, lay at Ghent, and it had been arranged that Eugène, who commanded the Army of the Moselle, should elude Berwick,<sup>1</sup> who had been sent to hold him in check, and unite his forces with those of the duke. Marlborough was eager for battle, for a striking success was imperative in order to revive the waning zeal of the Dutch and save the tottering Government at home. But his inferiority in numbers rendered it inadvisable for him to risk an engagement until the arrival of Eugène, and he therefore reluctantly decided to remain on the defensive.

In the last days of May, the French army advanced from Mons, with the intention, apparently, of marching on Antwerp, where a rising in favour of Philip v was expected. Marlborough, however, had got wind of this affair, and, hurrying from Ghent, barred the way; and the French thereupon turned to the east and halted at Braine-l'Alleud, near the field of Waterloo, in a position threatening at once both Louvain and Brussels. Four leagues only separated the two armies, and, if either had made a forward movement, they would probably have met on the same ground which a century later witnessed the final overthrow of Napoleon. A decisive action, indeed, seemed imminent; but Marlborough, whose plan was to remain on the defensive, fell back to Parc, in order to cover Louvain, and took up so strong a position that Vendôme and the Duc de Bourgogne decided to leave him unmolested.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Fitzjames, Duke of Berwick (1670-1733), son of James II, by Marlborough's sister, Arabella Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> "Marlborough's Despatches," vol. iv.; Allison, "The Military Life of John, Duke of Marlborough."

Hitherto the two French commanders had been in accord, but now differences arose. Vendôme proposed that they should lay siege to the small town of Huy on the Meuse, which promised them an easy prey ; but the Duc de Bourgogne objected, apparently on the ground that the place was not of sufficient importance to justify the exclusive attentions of so powerful an army. As neither would give way, it was decided to ask for instructions from Versailles ; and Louis XIV upheld his grandson. Vendôme next suggested that an attempt should be made to surprise Brussels, where the citizens were known to be ready to welcome the French with open arms. This enterprise, however, was regarded by the prince as far too hazardous, and his view was shared by the King, who was again appealed to. The whole of June was wasted in these discussions, while the army remained at Braine-l'Alleud, from which neither of its leaders seemed to be in any hurry to depart ; Vendôme, because he had found very comfortable quarters ; the Duc de Bourgogne, because he appears to have been satisfied to occupy "a position which enabled them to bear to right or left, according as they pleased," and he expresses a hope that "the campaign which had commenced so well, would continue the same."<sup>1</sup> For all that the French army had effected up to this time, it might just as well have remained in its winter quarters !

The blame for this deplorable inaction, however, undoubtedly lay with Vendôme, since it was obviously the duty of a general of his experience

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Duc de Bourgogne to Philip V, June 20, 1708, published by the Comte d'Haussonville.

to have advocated a bold plan of campaign, and, if he had proposed to advance against Marlborough, and endeavour to force him to an engagement while the Allies were still inferior to the French, there is no reason to suppose that the Duc de Bourgogne, who was eager to win his spurs, would have offered any opposition. Nevertheless, so far as the prince himself was concerned, the time passed at Braine-l'Alleud was far from being a period of idleness, and he exerted himself to some purpose to re-establish discipline among the soldiers, while paying the greatest attention to their health and comfort. He, at the same time, combated the luxurious habits of the officers, to whom he prohibited the use of carriages, and himself set them the example, by using only horses.

The duke had brought his confessor, the worthy Père Martineau with him, and his religious duties were performed with the same regularity as when at Versailles. The whole army, the *Mercure* assures us, was "edified by his piety"; and it relates that on June 7, which was a Saint's-Day, his Royal Highness ordered a procession on the *place* of Braine-l'Alleud and followed it on foot, in consequence of which he did not mount his horse to visit the outposts until the afternoon. The *Mercure* adds, with unconscious irony: "The morning of the same day, Milord Marlborough, accompanied by several generals, went to reconnoitre the fords and ground along the Dyle."<sup>1</sup>

However, in the first week in July, the Army of Flanders at last did something to justify its

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure de France*, June 1708; Comte d'Haussonville, *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV.*

existence. Among those who had accompanied the Duc de Bourgogne to Flanders, was the Comte de Bergeyck, who had occupied the post of Minister of Finance of the Spanish Netherlands, until the successes of the Allies had obliged him to seek refuge in France. Bergeyck had been busily intriguing for some time past with the partisans of Philip v in the principal Flemish towns, and he now proposed that advantage should be taken of the disaffection which existed in Ghent and Bruges to make a sudden descent upon these two places. His advice was acted upon, and the attentions of the Allied army having been momentarily diverted by a feint in another direction, two French divisions swooped down upon Ghent and Bruges, and, with the help of the citizens, took them both, almost without striking a blow (July 4).

The capture of these two towns—and particularly of Ghent—was a success of real importance, and had it been followed up by that of Oudenarde, the French would have been masters of the whole course of the Scheldt, and Marlborough's water communications would have been entirely cut. But the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme could not agree as to the manner in which this was to be attempted, and the arbitration of Louis xiv had again to be sought; and this entailed so much delay, that it was not until July 10 that the French army reached the banks of the Scheldt, where it took up its position at Gavre, some leagues below Oudenarde.

In the meantime, Marlborough had been joined by Eugène, who had arrived at Brussels on July 6.

Eugène's army was still far away, and the prince had hurried on, attended only by his staff. However, his presence alone was worth a considerable force, and the English general welcomed him warmly. "I am not without hope," said he, "of congratulating your Highness on a great victory; for my troops will be animated by the presence of so distinguished a commander."

The two great captains lost no time in deciding on their course of action. Instead of advancing directly against the enemy, they resolved to throw themselves between him and his own frontier, cut him off from his base of operations, and compel him to fight with his face towards Paris and his back to Antwerp.

This plan was as brilliantly executed as it was admirably conceived, and, marching rapidly southwards, the Allies crossed the Dender on the morning of July 10, and took up a strong position at Les-sines, between Oudenarde and the frontier.<sup>1</sup>

Intelligence of the alarming situation in which they were placed reached the French camp on the evening of the same day, but, according to Saint-Simon, Vendôme "treated it with contempt, according to his custom," and, though the Duc de Bourgogne urged that they should cross the Scheldt that night, and endeavour to outstrip the enemy and re-establish their communications with France, he declined to move until the following morning.

However that may be, it is probable that the passage of the river might have been postponed with safety until the next day, if all preparations for it

<sup>1</sup> Allison, "Life of Marlborough."



had been completed during the night. But, inconceivable as it may appear, when morning came, the bridges were not ready, and their construction entailed so much delay, that when at length the vanguard under Biron reached the left bank, it found the whole of the Allied cavalry and twelve battalions, which, under the command of General Cadogan, had crossed the river at dawn, strongly posted on the summit of some rising ground, opposite the village of Eynes.

The battle which followed has been described in detail by so many military historians that a very brief account will here suffice.

Biron, on perceiving the enemy, immediately sent an aide-de-camp to inform Vendôme; but that general, who had not risen till ten o'clock<sup>1</sup> and was tranquilly eating his breakfast, at first refused to credit the news; and it was not until two other aides-de-camp had arrived hard upon each other's heels, that, "declaring that devils must have brought the enemy," he sent orders to Biron to attack, promising to support him immediately.<sup>2</sup>

After an obstinate struggle, Cadogan was driven back, but his resistance had given the main body of the Allies time to cross the Scheldt and form in order of battle, while the bulk of the French were still passing the river. Vendôme and the Duc de Bourgogne, entirely disconcerted at finding themselves engaged in a battle which neither had foreseen, issued contradictory orders; several

<sup>1</sup> Vendôme himself admitted this in a despatch to the King, giving as an excuse that he had been thirty hours in the saddle, and was ill.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

regiments as they came hurrying up in column were charged and broken before they were able to deploy; cavalry and infantry were mixed up together, and the utmost confusion prevailed.

Nevertheless, the French fought with splendid courage, and, if Vendôme, who dismounted from his horse and led the infantry of the left wing in person, had only displayed half as much ability as he did valour, the day might still have been theirs. But, as evening was falling, the old Dutch general, Marshal Overkirk, with the cavalry of the reserve and twenty Dutch and Danish battalions, succeeded in turning the French right, which the Duc de Bourgogne commanded, and drove it in in hopeless confusion. This movement decided the battle, and night alone saved the conquered army from annihilation. As matters were, 95 standards and 7000 prisoners were taken,<sup>1</sup> and the discomfited French fell back in disorder on Ghent, and did not halt till they reached Loven-  
deghe, between that town and Bruges.

Before the retreat began, an improvised council of war was held by the French generals, at which, says Saint-Simon, M. de Vendôme, "furious at being so terribly out of his reckoning, affronted everybody. When the Duc de Bourgogne wished to speak, he silenced him, by saying to him, in an imperious tone, before every one, that 'he had come to the army only on condition of obeying him.' These insolent words, pronounced at the fatal

<sup>1</sup> This is the number given by Marlborough, but the French only admitted to have left 4000 prisoners in the enemy's hands. Whatever the actual number, it must have been much larger, but for the courage and skill with which the rearguard, under the Duchesse de Bourgogne's old admirer, Nangis, covered the retreat.

moment when they were experiencing the consequences of the obedience rendered to his idleness and obstinacy, made every one tremble with indignation. The young prince to whom they were addressed achieved a more difficult victory than that which his enemies were gaining over him, and was sufficiently master of himself to keep silent." Vendôme, he goes on to relate, then proceeded to harangue the assembled generals, declaring that the battle was not lost, and that they could resume it on the morrow, but finding every one but his cousin, the young Comte d'Evreux,<sup>1</sup> of a contrary opinion, flew into a violent passion, and exclaimed, "Oh, very well, Messieurs! I see clearly what you wish. We must retire then." And, turning towards the Duc de Bourgogne, he added, in a tone which left no doubt as to his meaning: "I know that you have long wished to do so, Monseigneur."<sup>2</sup>

This anecdote has been accepted by many historians, both French and English, and Michelet has even endeavoured to improve upon it.<sup>3</sup> But its authenticity is extremely doubtful, for, though Saint-Hilaire, who was one of the officers present on the occasion, admits that Vendôme fell into a passion on his advice being disregarded, he says nothing of any insulting words used by him to the Duc de Bourgogne, and even attributes his obstinacy to his solicitude for the honour and glory of the prince;<sup>4</sup> nor do the letters of the Duc de Bourgogne, though full of complaints regarding the

<sup>1</sup> Henri Louis de la Tour-d'Auvergne. He was the son of the Duc de Bouillon and Marianne Mancini.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>3</sup> *Histoire de France*.

<sup>4</sup> Saint-Hilaire, *Mémoires*.

conduct of Vendôme, contain any allusion to such an incident. It would therefore appear that Saint-Simon has been once more drawing upon those imaginative powers which have led so many historians astray.

In the case of a joint-command, like that exercised by the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme, it is always very difficult to apportion the blame for any disaster. Both Coxe and Allison in their accounts of the battle are very severe upon the Duc de Bourgogne, and the latter writer accuses the prince, "who was jealous of Vendôme's reputation," of countermanding orders issued by his colleague.<sup>1</sup> But the most trustworthy of French historians and contemporary writers, who include several officers who took part in the engagement, are not of this opinion, and though Saint-Simon has probably exaggerated the faults of Vendôme and ignored those of his hero, his account appears to be substantially accurate. The primary cause of the disaster was undoubtedly the time lost on the morning of the 11th in the passage of the Scheldt, due to the bridges not having been constructed overnight; and for this Vendôme was certainly responsible. Nevertheless, as we shall now see, that general, aided by his friends, both in the army and at home, endeavoured to shift the odium of the defeat on to the shoulders of the Duc de Bourgogne, and, at first, with only too much success.

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Marlborough."

## CHAPTER XIX

Efforts of Vendôme to cast the blame for the loss of the Battle of Oudenarde upon the Duc de Bourgogne—The prince seeks the support of Madame de Maintenon—Vendôme resolves to appeal to the public—Letter of Alberoni: sensation which it arouses—Letters of the poet Campistron and the Comte d'Evreux—Violent outcry against the Duc de Bourgogne, organised by the cabal of Meudon—Distress of the Duchesse de Bourgogne—Her courageous defence of her husband—The serious qualities of the princess begin to reveal themselves—She persuades the King to exercise his authority to restrain the attacks upon the Duc de Bourgogne

THE news of the capture of Ghent and Bruges had reached Fontainebleau, where the Court was then in residence, on the night of July 6, where it excited a "frenzied joy,"<sup>1</sup> among all save the personal enemies of the Duc de Bourgogne, who, however, had the good sense to dissemble their mortification. The consternation was therefore all the greater when, shortly after mid-day on the 14th, as the King was leaving the Council of Finance, a courier arrived, bringing "the sad news of a great engagement in Flanders, in which we have not had the advantage."<sup>2</sup> The following day brought a despatch from Vendôme, in which he complained bitterly of the conduct of the Duc de Bourgogne, and had the effrontery to declare that the battle had been going in favour of the French, and that victory was actually in

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

<sup>2</sup> Dangeau.

sight, when the prince, notwithstanding his protestations, had insisted on retreating. In a second despatch, he attributed the reverse to the incompetent officers who abused the confidence of the Duc de Bourgogne, and whose advice his Royal Highness preferred to his, on all important occasions; and he implored the King to recall him [Vendôme], in order to spare him the humiliation of finding his counsels disregarded and of being the witness of the failure of his Majesty's arms.

The Duc de Bourgogne, on his side, also wrote to the King, but he confined himself to informing him that the army had been compelled to retreat to Lovendeghem, and referred him for details to Vendôme. "But, at the same time, he wrote to the duchess, very clearly expressing to her where the fault lay";<sup>1</sup> and this epistle, it is fair to presume, soon found its way into his Majesty's hands.

According to the Chevalier de Bellerive,<sup>2</sup> Louis XIV, after receiving Vendôme's first despatches, had actually resolved to recall his grandson and leave the command of the army to Vendôme, but was dissuaded by the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who, warned by Madame de Maintenon, threw herself at the King's feet and implored him to spare her husband such a dishonour. It seems doubtful if there is any truth in this story, for Bellerive was a particularly ardent supporter of

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

<sup>2</sup> He was believed by many to be a natural son of Vendôme. He accompanied him during the Spanish campaign of 1710, of which he subsequently wrote a history.

Vendôme.<sup>1</sup> However, that general certainly did everything possible to induce Louis XIV to relieve him of the duke, declaring that "the princes were a terrible burden for an army"; that they had nearly as possible been taken prisoners at Oudenarde; that no good purpose could be served by their remaining with the troops during the remainder of the campaign, and that he entreated his Majesty not to continue to charge him with the care of persons so precious.

The King, however, contented himself by advising his grandson "to do nothing except after mature deliberation," and by telling Vendôme that, in order to avoid further regrettable incidents, he had directed the prince to consult with him about their future course of action, and had recommended him to repose in the general all the confidence which the zeal, experience, and so forth of the latter merited.

This, so far from soothing the mortified Vendôme, seems to have exasperated him to the last degree, and he replied by a long and scathing criticism of the Duc de Bourgogne, or rather—since he was too good a courtier to make a direct attack upon the King's grandson—of Puységur, the prince's favourite counsellor, who, he asserted, had persuaded his master to disregard his instructions, and, in particular, to allow a considerable part of the army to remain inactive on a height and "look on at the battle as people look on at the opera

<sup>1</sup> Bellerive's *Mémoires*, which are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, have never been published, but his account of the campaign of 1708 in Flanders has been reproduced by M. Boislisle, in his edition of Saint-Simon's *Mémoires*, vol. xvi.

from the boxes on the third tier.”<sup>1</sup> By the same courier, he wrote to the Minister for War, declaring that, if he had been the master in Flanders as he had been in Italy, all would have been well, and hinting that, in his opinion, the personal courage of the Duc de Bourgogne was more than a little doubtful.

The Duc de Bourgogne, aware that Vendôme was endeavouring to throw the blame upon him, felt compelled to defend himself, and having decided that it would be better to secure the advocacy of Madame de Maintenon than to appeal directly to the King, addressed to that lady a lengthy letter, in which, after expatiating upon the faults committed by Vendôme, both before and during the battle, he declared that the latter had lost the confidence of both officers and men ; that he did “ scarcely anything but eat and sleep ” ; that his health did not permit him to perform his duties ; that he was always convinced that the enemy would never do anything which he did not wish him to do, and believed himself invincible ; and that, in a word, he was “ not a general at all,” and quite unworthy of the trust which his Majesty reposed in him. And he demanded that the King should, in future, invest him [the Duc de Bourgogne] with full powers.<sup>2</sup>

If Vendôme had remained satisfied with venting his spleen in despatches to Louis XIV and Chamillart, little harm would have been done ; but, knowing

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of July 16, published in Pelet, *Histoire militaire*, where the full text is given. M. d’Haussonville, who has also published a portion of it, declares that the responsibility for this extraordinary blunder was Vendôme’s alone.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of July 13, 1708, published by the Marquis de Vogüé *le Duc de Bourgogne et le Duc de Beauvilliers*.



that he could reckon on the support of a powerful faction at Court, he resolved to appeal to the public. During his campaigns in Italy, he had made the acquaintance of a lowborn, unscrupulous, but exceedingly able adventurer, the Abbé Alberoni. This personage, who, some ten years later, was to become cardinal and first Minister of Spain, and to set the country of his adoption and France once more by the ears, had gained Vendôme's favour by his wit, his servile flattery, and his skill in concocting various Italian dishes, and had followed him to France and subsequently to Flanders. At his patron's instigation, Alberoni now wrote to one of his friends in France, lauding Vendôme to the skies and declaring that the disaster at Oudenarde was entirely due to his plans having been thwarted by the Duc de Bourgogne, or rather by his pernicious counsellors, for he did not venture to name the prince.

"I am a Roman," the letter concludes (he was, as a matter of fact, a Placentian), "that is to say, I belong to a race that speaks the truth; 'in civitate omnium gnara, et nihil reticente,' says our Tacitus. Permit me, after that, to tell you, with all due respect, that your nation is quite capable of forgetting all the marvels which the good prince [Vendôme] worked in my country, which will render his name immortal and always honoured; *injuriarum et beneficiorum æque immemores*. But the good prince is perfectly tranquil, knowing that he has done nothing with which to reproach himself, and that, so long as he followed his own judgment, he was always successful."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jean Galbert de Campistron (1656-1723). Saint-Simon describes him as "one of those dirty, starving poets who are ready

This letter created an extraordinary sensation. Its recipient, as was of course intended, showed it to every one he knew ; copies were made of it, and, finally, it found its way into the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, the principal organ of the Grand Alliance on the Continent. It was speedily followed by two others, the first, from the pen of Vendôme's secretary, the poet Campistron, "containing a virulent attack on the Duc de Bourgogne's counsellors ; the second, written by Vendôme's cousin, the Comte d'Evreux, which, though couched in more measured terms than those of Alberoni or Campistron, was perhaps even more damaging to the unfortunate young prince, owing to the high rank and military reputation of the writer.

The chance which the enemies of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne had long sought had at length come, and they were quick to seize it. "The emissaries of the cabal," says Saint-Simon, "paraphrased the letters in the cafés, in public places, among the newsmongers, in gambling-dens, in private houses. Vaudevilles, pieces of verse, atrocious songs<sup>1</sup> about the heir to the Crown, which erected Vendôme into a hero on the ruins of his reputation, circulated all over Paris and throughout

to do anything for a living" ; but his tragedies were considered of sufficient merit to secure him admission to the Academy.

<sup>1</sup> These songs, several of which were believed to be the composition of the malevolent *Madame la Duchesse*, were generally set to popular airs, and were thus assured of a vogue. One was at the expense of the Duc de Bourgogne and his confessor ; another declared that the prince had refused to continue the battle, from fear of sending souls to hell ; while a third—the most cruel of all—accused him of having taken refuge in a mill and remained there throughout the action.

the kingdom with a licence and a rapidity which no one tried to check ; while at the Court and in fashionable circles the " Libertines " and the dandies applauded, and the supple politicians, who know the ground best, joined with them, and so influenced the crowd, that in six days it was thought disgraceful to speak with moderation of the son in his father's house ; in eight, it had become dangerous, since the leaders of the pack, encouraged by the success of the cabal which they had so well organised, began to reveal themselves, and to show that whoever should dare to contradict them would sooner or later have to deal with them."

The friends of the Duc de Bourgogne—Beauvilliers, Chevreuse, and Saint-Simon—were aghast ; to stem the tide of public opinion seemed impossible ; " all France was in the cabal." <sup>1</sup> The Duchesse de Bourgogne was " in a state of extreme affliction " ; <sup>2</sup> for she recognised that her own happiness and reputation were at stake as well as her husband's. Greatly as she was beloved by the King and Madame de Maintenon, and immense as was her popularity with the great majority of the Court, it would be, nevertheless, impossible for her to retain her exceptional position, if the Duke remained under the cloud which now rested upon him, and continued to be an object of derision and contempt to half the nation.

But let it not be supposed that her distress was solely on her own account, for that would

Michelet, *Histoire de France*.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse de Ursins, July 23, 1708, in Geffroy.



LOUIS XIV

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PAINTING BY FITER



be to do her a grave injustice. Notwithstanding her thoughtlessness and frivolity, and her lack of sympathy with her husband's views, she was at bottom a loyal wife, and she was exasperated by the calumnies published about one whom she knew to be a brave and honourable man, utterly incapable of the conduct ascribed to him.

And the shameful injustice of this persecution not only roused her indignation, but drew her closer to its victim, since it often happens that those to whom, in the time of their prosperity, we are comparatively indifferent, become, when misfortune overtakes them, objects of our sympathy and affection. This welcome change in the princess's feelings towards her husband is indicated by Madame de Maintenon in one of her letters to the Princesse des Ursins.

“She [the Duchesse de Bourgogne] shows in these sad circumstances the feelings of a good Frenchwoman, which I always knew she possessed, although I confess that I did not believe that she loved the Duc de Bourgogne as much as we now see. Her affection makes her very sensitive, and she feels keenly the unfortunate result of the first action in which he has taken part. She would wish him to expose himself like a grenadier, and yet to return without a scratch; she feels the difficult position in which the misfortune which has occurred has placed him; she shares all the anxieties which the present position must occasion him; she would like a battle to take place, so that he might win it, and yet she dreads it. In short, nothing escapes her, and she is worse than I am. The distress in which she is gives me, on the one hand, much pleasure, since it is a proof of her good

qualities; but, on the other, makes me very uneasy about her health, which appears much altered by it.”<sup>1</sup>

And in another letter she writes :—

“ I assured him [the Duc de Bourgogne] the other day that he would not understand the extent of her sensitiveness on his account, however great may be his intelligence and his love for her.”

No longer had the Duc de Bourgogne to complain, as in the campaign of 1703, of the absence of his wife's letters, and though, unfortunately, none of their correspondence has been preserved, we know, from the prince's letters to Madame de Maintenon and Beauvilliers, that the regularity with which she wrote delighted as much as it astonished him. “ Nothing makes me better understand,” he writes to the former, “ the affection which you have always said that she entertains for me ”; while to Beauvilliers he declares that “ his belief that she really loves him is confirmed.”

But the princess did far more than send her husband assurances of her loyalty and affection. She constituted herself the guardian and defender of his honour at the Court, and became the avowed enemy of the cabal which was seeking his ruin. She seems, indeed, to have been inclined to champion his cause with rather more zeal than discretion, since we find the duke writing to Madame de Maintenon on August 7, from the camp at Lovendeghem:—

“ It has come to M. de Vendôme's ears that the

<sup>1</sup> Letter of July 23, 1708, Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon d'après sa correspondance authentique*.

Duchesse de Bourgogne has inveighed against him in public, and he has appeared to me extremely pained. Speak to her about it, I beg you, Madame, in order that she may be on her guard that her affection for me may not lead her to vex and offend others; for this affection, though it affords me great joy, would not please me in that case.”<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Maintenon’s admonitions, however, would not appear to have had much effect, for, ten days later, he writes to her that “the affection of which she [the Duchesse de Bourgogne] has given him such signal proofs makes him apprehensive that she has gone a little too far in certain things which she has said.”

His anxiety is, however, all on his wife’s account, and not on his own, for he adds :—

“I have known before to-day that there are persons at the Court who do not love her, and who see with annoyance the affection that the King shows for her. I believe I am not altogether ignorant of their names. It will be for you, Madame, when I see you, to enlighten me more particularly on this matter, that proper precautions may be taken to prevent the Duchesse de Bourgogne from falling into certain very dangerous snares, which I have often perceived that you dreaded. As for mischief-making, it would be very unjust to accuse her of that; she despises it utterly, and her mind is very far removed from what one calls the feminine mind. She has assuredly a solid intelligence, much good sense, an excellent and very noble heart. But you know her better than I, and this portrait is superfluous. Perhaps the pleasure

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Vogüé, *le Duc de Bourgogne et le Duc de Beauvilliers*.



that I derive from speaking of her prevents me from perceiving that I do it too often and at too great a length.”<sup>1</sup>

The tribute which the Duc de Bourgogne pays to his wife in this letter was not undeserved. During the last two years, the princess had altered very much from the frivolous, pleasure-loving girl we have hitherto known, and, though this change had perhaps been scarcely perceptible, save to those who knew her most intimately, it was none the less real. The cruel anxiety she had suffered on behalf of her family in Savoy during the crisis of 1706 ; the terrible end of the unfortunate Maulevrier, for which, as we have said, she could scarcely fail to regard herself as in some degree responsible ; the death of her little son ; the suffering and misery which the war was entailing ; and, finally, the danger which menaced her husband's honour and her own position, had all combined to bring home to her the fact that there is another side to life than that which is represented by balls and fêtes and toilettes and jewels and the struggles of contending vanity, and had strengthened and developed those serious qualities which had, until then, lain dormant within her. “*Ma tante*,” said she to Madame de Maintenon, “I am under infinite obligations to you ; you have had the patience to wait for my reason.” Reason had, indeed, asserted itself at last, and it was well for her husband's interests that its triumph was no longer delayed.

The odds against the princess in her struggle

<sup>1</sup> Letter of August 17, 1708, published by the Contessa della Rocca, *Correspondance inédite de la Duchesse de Bourgogne et de la Reine d'Espagne*.

with her husband's calumniators were heavy, for, though she had loyal friends, none of them were persons whose opinion carried much weight in military matters, and it was difficult to convince Louis XIV that a general in whom he reposed so much confidence, who had hitherto proved himself almost invincible, and whose cause was espoused by nearly the whole Court, could possibly be in the wrong. She had, however, one invaluable ally in the person of Madame de Maintenon; and, emboldened by that lady's support, she did not hesitate to importune the King to use his authority to put a stop to the reports which were in circulation, and even ventured to complain of Chamillart, who had allowed himself to be carried away by the current, and had written a letter to the Duc de Bourgogne, begging him to compose his differences with Vendôme.

His Majesty was not best pleased to see the princess, whose first care had always been to charm away his ennui by her gaiety and high spirits, appear before him with tears in her eyes and complaints on her lips, and one day, according to Saint-Simon, rebuked her in public for her "ill-temper and bitterness." But her efforts were not wasted, for the King, who had hitherto known nothing of the letters which had created so much sensation, reprimanded Chamillart for not having brought them to his notice, and ordered him to write in very strong terms to Alberoni and the Comte d'Evreux, ordering them to keep silence for the future. Soon afterwards, the Comte d'Evreux, at the instigation of his mother, the Duchesse de Bouillon, who was fearful lest he should compromise

himself and his family with the King, wrote another letter in direct contradiction to the first, which his parents went about declaring was an impudent forgery ; and, though this very transparent fiction does not appear to have deceived any one, it brought some consolation to the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

But, if the princess had succeeded in stemming for a time the tide of calumny, she had not as yet succeeded in doing anything to repair the mischief it had already wrought. She felt, indeed, that for the rehabilitation of her husband she must wait until the winter brought the officers of the Army of Flanders back to Court, and the truth became known, and hope that, in the meanwhile, some striking success might redeem the disaster of Oudenarde, and dispose public opinion more favourably towards the prince.

## CHAPTER XX

Position of the rival armies in Flanders after Oudenarde—Failure of Vendôme and the Duc de Bourgogne to appreciate the danger of the situation—The Allies resolve to lay siege to Lille—The French make no effort to intercept the siege-train on its passage from Brussels to Lille—Extraordinary inertia of Vendôme—The army of the Duc de Bourgogne effects its junction with that of Berwick—Character of Berwick—Antagonism between him and Vendôme—The united French armies march to the succour of Lille, but find their advance opposed by Marlborough—Dissension between the French generals: appeal to Louis XIV—Painful suspense at Versailles—Agitation of the Duchesse de Bourgogne—The French fall back to Tournai—Renewed outcry against the Duc de Bourgogne in France: apparent triumph of the cabal—Madame de Maintenon espouses the prince's cause—Affair of Wynendale—Capitulation of Lille—The Duc de Bourgogne sets out for Versailles—Marlborough recovers Ghent and Bruges

IT will be remembered that, after the Battle of Oudenarde, the French had retreated to Lovendeghem, between Ghent and Bruges. A few days later, Eugène's army arrived at Brussels, but, as almost at the same time Berwick's corps, which had been watching it and marching parallel with it, reached Tournai, no real difference was made in the relative strength of the rival forces. The four armies of the Duc de Bourgogne, Marlborough, Eugène, and Berwick occupied, so to speak, the four corners of a chessboard, and whichever general first succeeded in effecting a junction with his colleague would obviously possess a great advantage.

Although France now lay open to invasion, and it was of the last importance to the French to prevent the Allied generals from uniting their forces, the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme entirely failed to grasp the danger of the situation. Vendôme, indeed, refused to believe that the Allies would venture to cross the frontier, leaving so formidable a hostile force in their rear; and he accordingly proceeded to entrench himself in an exceedingly strong position behind the canal which runs from Ghent to Bruges, in the confident anticipation that Marlborough's first movement would be an attempt to recover these two towns. Berwick was ordered to remain at Tournai, to watch Marlborough and repel any incursions which the Anglo-Dutch army might be disposed to make into the Cambrésis or Artois.

Marlborough's intentions, however, were very different from those with which he was credited. On the very morrow of Oudenarde, he boldly proposed to cross the frontier between Lille and Tournai and advance straight upon Paris. But this plan—which was precisely that which Wellington and Blücher executed with such signal success a century later—was considered too hazardous by Eugène and the Dutch; and it was therefore resolved to begin the invasion of France by the siege of Lille, the strongest and most important of the places in French Flanders and the bulwark of the capital.

This was in itself a sufficiently formidable undertaking, since the fortifications of Lille were regarded as one of Vauban's masterpieces, and it was garrisoned by some 15,000 men. Moreover,

the interruption of the water-communications of the Allies, through the capture of Ghent and Bruges, necessitated the transport of everything that was required for the siege by land-carriage from Holland ; and Brussels, the nearest dépôt for ordinary and military stores, was nearly thirty-five leagues distant. Such, however, was the fatuous optimism of Vendôme that, in spite of repeated warnings from Berwick, he scouted the idea that it was the intention of the enemy to lay siege to Lille, and remained inactive in his camp at Lovendeghem ; and on August 12, Eugène, who had returned to Brussels after Oudenarde, appeared before Lille, with a siege-train which comprised eighty heavy cannon, twenty mortars, and three thousand ammunition-waggons. From Brussels to the Scheldt, where Marlborough with a detachment of his army was awaiting him—that is to say, for fully half the journey—this immense convoy, which required 16,000 horses to transport it, and stretched, when in a line of march, over fifteen miles, was only protected by fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons,<sup>1</sup> and had lain exposed to the attack of an infinitely superior force ; and yet not the least attempt had been made to molest it.

The blame for this shameful inaction must rest mainly with Vendôme, who, in a despatch to the King, written on the day after the convoy had left Brussels, had ridiculed the fears entertained at Versailles, declaring that the roads were “ absolutely impracticable on account of rain,” and that it was out of the question to transport siege-guns and heavy waggons along them. It

<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from Allison, “Life of Marlborough.”

is true that the Duc de Bourgogne shared to a great extent his colleague's optimism, although he did go so far as to send, on his own initiative, a detachment to watch the movements of the convoy, and, if necessary, to attack it, which, however, it was far too weak to attempt. But it would be manifestly unfair to blame a young and comparatively inexperienced commander, who had just been so unsparingly denounced for having refused to defer to the counsels of a veteran officer, because he failed to take measures which the latter declared to be altogether unnecessary.

It might be supposed that the news of the arrival of the siege-train at Lille would have spurred Vendôme to some great effort to atone for his blunder, or, at least, have aroused him to some extent from his lethargy. Nevertheless, in spite of the most urgent despatches from the King, who impressed upon him that his sole object must now be to preserve Lille, and the representations of the Duc de Bourgogne,<sup>1</sup> it was not until August 27—ten days after the investment of the fortress had been completed and the trenches opened—that he would consent to begin his march to its succour. Three days later, the Army of Flanders effected its junction with that of Berwick, in the plain between Grammont and Lessines, the united strength of the two armies amounting to nearly 110,000 men, exclusive of a corps of 20,000 which had been detached, under the Comte de la Mothe, to cover Ghent and Bruges.

<sup>1</sup> The despatches of the Duc de Bourgogne to Louis xiv prove that he, at any rate, appreciated the necessity of immediate action.

The appearance of Berwick upon the scene introduced a new and, as it proved, a most unfortunate factor into the situation. This natural son of James II was a brave and high-principled man, and a most capable general, as he had shown by his brilliant victory at Almanza in the spring of the previous year. But he was cold, reserved, sarcastic,<sup>1</sup> and excessively haughty, while his military talents were infinitely more suited to defensive operations than to the kind of undertaking in which he now found himself engaged. He bitterly resented being placed under the orders of Vendôme, whom he disliked and despised; for, though the latter was only a lieutenant-general, while Berwick was a marshal, all the marshals were obliged to take orders from him, in virtue of his rank as a legitimated prince; and this resentment, joined to his predilection for cautious methods of warfare, was to bring him into continual conflict with Vendôme, and to increase the timidity and irresolution of the Duc de Bourgogne, who since Oudenarde appears to have lost all confidence in his own judgment.

The antagonism between the two generals manifested itself almost immediately they met, in a lively dispute as to the line of march the army was to follow. According to Berwick, the route suggested by Vendôme was chosen, but, after the troops had proceeded some little distance, it was found to be impracticable, and the Duc de Bourgogne gave orders for them to retrace their steps,

<sup>1</sup> At the funeral oration of James II, the preacher declared that this pious king had never committed a mortal sin. "And what of me? I am then a venial sin!" Berwick was heard to mutter.



to the indignation of Vendôme, "who laid the blame upon me and made use of very strong expressions, to which, out of respect for the Duc de Bourgogne, I made no reply."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Eugène was pressing the investment of Lille with all the vigour that the imperfect resources at his disposal would permit, while Marlborough commanded the covering army. Although the force under his orders was greatly inferior to that of the recently-united French armies, he had no uneasiness as to the result of an engagement. "If God continues on our side," wrote he to Godolphin, "we have nothing to fear, our troops being good, though not so numerous as theirs. I dare say that, before half the troops have fought, success will declare, I trust in God, on our side."<sup>2</sup>

No sooner did he receive intelligence that the Duc de Bourgogne and Vendôme had effected their junction, than he appears to have divined the point at which they would endeavour to break through the lines of the besiegers ; and when, on September 4, the French reached Mons-en-Puelle, on the little river Marck, they found their redoubtable antagonist awaiting them in an exceedingly strong position, with his right and left covered by marshes.

Vendôme, who, when actually in the presence of the enemy, was always eager for battle, strongly urged an immediate attack ; but Berwick was of the contrary opinion, and declared that Marlborough was so strongly posted that to advance

<sup>1</sup> Berwick, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch of August 30, 1708, in Allison.

against him would be to risk, not merely a repulse, but a crushing defeat. Both appealed to the Duc de Bourgogne, and, if he had decided in Vendôme's favour, the attack would have begun forthwith. But the prince, who found himself very much in the position of a young medical practitioner called in to arbitrate between two eminent specialists on a matter of life and death, declined to take upon himself so grave a responsibility, and referred the matter to the King.

A courier was accordingly despatched to Versailles, bearing long memoirs from both Berwick and Vendôme, setting forth their respective views, and another from the Duc de Bourgogne, in which he carefully avoided expressing any definite opinion, and requested the orders of his Majesty.

For some days past, the Court had been in a state of painful suspense. A courier had arrived on August 27, with intelligence that the two French armies had effected their junction, and were marching to the succour of Lille ; but since then no news had been received. "It was generally believed," says Saint-Simon, "that some decisive battle had been fought. Every day increased the uneasiness. The princes and the chief nobles of the Court were with the army. Every one at Versailles feared for the safety of a relative or friend. Prayers were offered everywhere. Gaming, conversation, ceased. Fear was depicted upon every countenance. If a horse passed a little quickly, everybody ran without knowing where. Chamillart's apartments were crowded with lackeys, since every one wished to be informed the moment that a courier arrived.

The King wrote to the bishops to request that they should offer up public prayers suitable to the danger of the time. It may be judged what was the general impression and alarm."

The Duchesse de Bourgogne was in a state of terrible agitation, since she felt that both the honour and the life of her husband were at stake. "She passed whole nights in the chapel," says Saint-Simon, "when people believed her in bed, and drove her women to despair. The ladies who had husbands with the army followed her example, and did not stir from the churches." And Madame de Maintenon writes to the Princesse des Ursins :—

"She [the Duchesse de Bourgogne] can speak of nothing save that which occupies all her thoughts. She strives to amuse herself, but without success ; her heart palpitates at the arrival of every courier ; she fears for her husband's life ; she fears for his reputation ; she would like him to expose himself like a grenadier ; she cannot endure him to receive the least blame, and would be greatly distressed if he did the least thing that the King disapproved. In a word, Madame, she is at present one of the most unhappy persons in the world, and it is I who preach to her tranquillity and confidence." <sup>1</sup>

On September 7, the general suspense was relieved, to some degree, by the arrival of the courier from Mons-en-Puelle. The despatches he brought caused Louis XIV no little irritation, and he immediately wrote both to the Duc de Bourgogne and to Vendôme, bidding them take the offensive ; while, two days later, he despatched Chamillart to the army, not, as several historians

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon et de la Princesse des Ursins.*

have asserted, to decide whether it was advisable to deliver battle, but to report upon the condition of the troops and endeavour to reconcile Vendôme and Berwick. But, when the King's orders reached Mons-en-Puelle, the moment when it might have been possible to execute them with any prospect of success had passed ; for, taking advantage of the enemy's hesitation, the Allies had succeeded in rendering their already strong position so impregnable, that even Vendôme did not venture to counsel an attack. Accordingly, after a consultation between the three generals and Chamillart, a courier was despatched to explain the altered situation to the King, and it was decided to abandon all hope of relieving Lille by a direct attack upon the investing army, and to confine their operations to opposing the passage of the convoys coming from Brussels, Oudenarde, and Antwerp with supplies and ammunition for the besiegers. With this object, on the 15th, the French fell back behind the Scheldt, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Tournai.

The question whether the French ought or ought not to have attacked Marlborough on first arriving at Mons-la-Puelle—later, as we have explained, the undertaking was entirely out of the question—is very difficult to decide. That Berwick's apprehensions were well founded is proved by a despatch of Marlborough, written on September 3, in which he declares that “ the ground is so much to our advantage, that, with the help of God, we shall certainly beat them [the French.]”<sup>1</sup> But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that

<sup>1</sup> Coxe, “Memoirs of Marlborough.”

there are occasions on which a commander is justified in taking exceptional risks, and the orders subsequently sent by Louis XIV show that he considered this to be one of them.

However that may be, the news of the retreat of the army without giving battle was followed by a renewed outcry against the Duc de Bourgogne in France. The hapless young prince was made responsible for everything. It was he, the cabal and its emissaries declared, who had permitted the convoy from Brussels to pass unmolested; who had been unwilling to march against the enemy; who had shrunk from the prospect of a battle which would have crushed the Allies and delivered Lille, and preferred a disgraceful retreat. Paris was once more flooded with pamphlets and rhymes, some ridiculing a devotion "which preferred to lose a town than see soldiers die unconfessed," others freely questioning the personal courage of the duke; *Monsieur* "readily swallowed all that was said in his son's dispraise,"<sup>1</sup> and spoke of him with ill-concealed disgust; and even the King permitted some impatient words to escape him in private, which were embellished by the servants who overheard them, and reported far and wide. "As for our little prince," wrote Fénelon, "his reputation has been damaged incalculably; not a soul has a word in his favour."

But, if the voices of the Duc de Bourgogne's friends were lost in the general chorus of censure, or rather if they deemed it prudent to remain silent until the storm had spent its violence, he

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

did not lack for supporters ; and in his wife and Madame de Maintenon he possessed two who were worth a host in themselves. Saint-Simon attributes Madame de Maintenon's espousal of the prince's cause to the fact that she was "wounded to the quick at finding, for the first time in her life, that there were people who had more influence over the King than she had" ; but it would seem more just to ascribe it to her affection for the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and to that keen sense of justice which her letters prove her to have possessed, outside affairs of religion. "What," wrote she, "to the Princesse des Ursins, "was our prince, who has not yet had much experience, and finds himself in the most difficult position conceivable, to do, except trust a man who enjoys the confidence of the King [Berwick]. How could he decide or discover by himself that the counsels which were being given him were too timid, and that he ought to abandon himself to the guidance of M. de Vendôme, against whom three-quarters of the army are inveighing ? "

It must be admitted, however, that the events which followed the retreat of the Army of Flanders from Mons-en-Puelle, and the part played therein by the Duc de Bourgogne, were scarcely of a nature to afford much encouragement to those who desired to see his reputation vindicated. The French, as we have said, had established themselves in the neighbourhood of Tournai, in a position which they believed would enable them to cut off the besiegers of Lille from all communication with their magazines in Flanders. In this they were suc-

cessful, so far as those in the interior of the country were concerned; and the only resource left to the allies was to draw their supplies from England, by way of Ostend, their communications with which still remained open. In the last days of September, intelligence was received that a convoy of seven hundred waggons was about to leave that town, escorted by some five thousand men, and La Mothe was ordered to march from his camp of observation near Ghent and intercept it. The Duc de Bourgogne sent reinforcements to the assistance of La Mothe, who, however, without waiting for their arrival, attacked the convoy in the defile of Wynendale, and was repulsed with heavy loss. On September 30, the convoy reached the camp of the besiegers without losing a single waggon, and its arrival practically sealed the fate of Lille.

After the affair of Wynendale, indeed, the Duc de Bourgogne seems to have abandoned all hope of saving the town, and actually wrote to the King to ask his consent to certain measures which he proposed to take "in anticipation of this loss." Vendôme, more optimistic, having obtained Louis XIV's permission to take command of La Mothe's corps, opened the sluices of the canal of Nieuport and laid the country round Ostend under water, in order to intercept the enemy's communications with that port. But Marlborough defeated this device, by causing a fleet of flat-bottomed boats to be built, which carried the waggons containing the stores to Leffinghen, beyond which the inundation did not extend.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Allison, "Life of Marlborough."

Finally, towards the end of October, at the moment when Vendôme and the Duc de Bourgogne, spurred on by urgent despatches from the King, had at last decided on a forward movement, news arrived that Lille had capitulated, "to the great astonishment of all Europe, which believed the Duc de Bourgogne in a condition to besiege Eugène and Marlborough, rather than those generals in a condition to besiege Lille."<sup>1</sup> No reflection, however, rested on its gallant defenders, who had sustained a siege of sixty days, of which thirty were with open trenches, and repelled six assaults; and, after the surrender of the town, Boufflers and the remnant of the garrison retired into the citadel, where they continued their defence, subsisting meanwhile entirely on horseflesh.

Divided counsels continued to paralyse the Army of Flanders, and nothing was done during the rest of the autumn to repair the blunders which had cost France so dear. A feeble attempt was made, in conjunction with the Elector of Bavaria, to divert the attention of the allies by investing Brussels. But Marlborough, marching rapidly northwards, forced the passage of the Scheldt, which the French vainly endeavoured to dispute; the Elector hastened to raise the siege of Brussels, leaving all his artillery and wounded behind; and on December 8 the citadel of Lille, despairing of succour, capitulated.

The same day, the Duc de Bourgogne set out for Versailles, in obedience to orders he had received from the King; while, shortly afterwards,

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*



the Army of Flanders was sent into winter quarters, under the impression that the campaign was concluded—an illusion which was rudely dispelled by Marlborough marching upon Ghent and Bruges, and recovering both these places.

## CHAPTER XXI

Question of the responsibility for the disasters in Flanders considered—The Duc de Bourgogne far from being altogether blameless—His conduct and manner of life while with the army condemned by his friends—His return to Versailles and reception by Louis xiv—He is partially reconciled to *Monseigneur*—Arrival and reception of Vendôme—The King suspends judgment—Vendôme retires to Anet—Outcry against the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne in Paris—Vendôme is affronted by the Duchesse de Bourgogne at Marly—The princess persuades the King to exclude Vendôme from Marly, and to forbid *Monseigneur* to invite him to Meudon—Effects of the Duchesse de Bourgogne's victory—Final discomfiture of Vendôme—He rehabilitates his military reputation by his brilliant campaign of 1710 in Spain—His death

THE loss of Ghent and Bruges was a fitting termination to a campaign which must rank as one of the most inglorious in French military annals. Yet the responsibility for the glaring errors which had marked it from the very beginning cannot be laid upon the Duc de Bourgogne. Nor ought Vendôme to be held wholly accountable, for, though nothing can excuse the extraordinary inertia he displayed at Braine-l'Alleud and Lovendeghem and on the eve of Oudenarde, it is difficult to believe that he would have acted thus, if he had not been aware that another shared his responsibility, while on more than one occasion, when his advice was undoubtedly sound, he was thwarted by the prince's counsellors. The chief culprit was Louis xiv, who, often as

he had blundered in his choice of generals, never committed a more fatal error than when he associated his grandson with Vendôme, with instructions which were so contradictory that neither was prepared to accept the supreme responsibility. And this mistake he subsequently aggravated by attaching Berwick to the prince's staff. "M. de Vendôme and M. de Berwick are two great men," wrote one of the officers of the Army of Flanders to Chamillart, "but they will never be seen sleeping with their heads in the same nightcap. When one said a thing was white, the other said it was black; and this did not fail to cause frequently considerable perplexity to the Duc de Bourgogne."

But let it not be supposed that the Duc de Bourgogne ought, therefore, to be exonerated from all blame. His conduct, indeed, lent but too much colour to the accusations which were levelled against him, and was severely judged, even by his most devoted friends, as the letters of Fénelon<sup>1</sup> and the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon prove. His disinclination to fight except with the certainty of victory; his utter inability to come to a decision, which resulted in the loss of so much valuable time in appeals to Versailles; his neglect to make himself acquainted with the movements of the enemy; his preference for the advice of his favourites over that of far more distinguished officers—all this undoubtedly contributed to the disasters we have just recounted.

Nor was the life which he led such as to win

<sup>1</sup> The letters of Fénelon to the Duc de Bourgogne during the campaign of 1708 will be found in his *Œuvres complètes* (vol. vii. edit. 1851).

the goodwill or respect of those under his command, particularly during the latter stages of the campaign, when he appears to have become quite disheartened, and disgusted with the position he occupied. He seldom mounted his horse, not wishing to show himself to the soldiers, who were naturally inclined to regard the inexperienced prince, rather than the hitherto victorious Vendôme, as the author of their reverses, and even murmured uncomplimentary remarks about him as he rode by. He associated but little with the general officers, fearing that they might perceive the perplexities by which he was continually harassed, and seems to have taken no trouble to make himself acquainted even with the names of those of inferior rank. The greater part of his days was passed in writing despatches to the King and the Minister for War, or long letters to his wife and his friends at Versailles, and in devotional exercises and conversations with his confessor.

On active service, even the most devout were accustomed to abate something of their austerity, but the Duc de Bourgogne scrupled to relax one jot of the narrow religious code which he considered essential to his salvation. The outspoken Gamaches did not hesitate to express his opinion of his master's conduct. "Returning from Mass with the duke on a critical day," says Saint-Simon, "when he would rather have seen him on horseback, he said aloud: 'You will certainly win the Kingdom of Heaven, but, as for the kingdom of this world, Eugène and Marlborough know how to seek it better than you.'"

When in September the army was in camp at

Saulsoy, the nuns of a neighbouring convent invited him to take up his quarters in their guest-house. The prince accepted the invitation, but, scarcely had he done so, when he was seized with the fear that, in residing under the same roof as the brides of Heaven, he was committing a sin, and wrote to ask Fénelon's advice, declaring that, if the archbishop considered it wrong for him to remain there, he would immediately change his quarters. Fénelon seems at first to have regarded such scruples as an unmistakable sign of grace. "*O que cet état plait à Dieu!*" he writes. But, on reflection, he came to the conclusion that his former pupil was going a trifle too far, and assures him that, in time of war, the occasional residence of officers in religious houses was a regrettable necessity. A little later, when rumours of the very unfavourable impression which its commander's austerity was making on the army had reached him, he changes his tone altogether and reproaches the prince with an attention to the minutiae of devotion which was altogether unsuited to the circumstances in which he was placed:—

"Your piety tries to govern an army like a nunnery, and wears itself out in little trifling details, while it neglects everything that is essential to your honour and to the glory of the arms of France."

Saint-Simon himself admits that his hero also consumed a good deal of time, which might have been much more profitably employed, in amusements, some of which were quite unworthy of the

commander-in-chief of a great army, and that his devotion to them was very severely criticised. Thus, when an officer arrived from Lille, bearing the terms of the capitulation for his ratification, he found him playing shuttlecock with the Duc de Berry, nor would he append his signature to the treaty until he had finished the game. The same chronicler adds that, on another occasion, when intelligence which would have necessitated an immediate march was hourly expected, the prince went off to Tournai to play tennis, "which greatly scandalised the army and raised all manner of unpleasant talk."

At seven o'clock in the evening of December 11, the Duc de Bourgogne arrived at Versailles, and alighted in the Cour des Princes, where he was received by Beauvilliers. Saint-Simon, who had been watching from a window, met them as they were ascending the grand staircase, and the prince, wishing to show his gratitude for the chronicler's championship of his cause, embraced him warmly, "which showed that he knew better what was going on, than how to maintain his dignity." After exchanging a few words with his two faithful friends, the duke, who seemed quite at ease and spoke to every one he met, went to salute the King.

Louis XIV, as was his invariable custom at this hour of the day, was working in Madame de Maintenon's apartments, whither the Duchesse de Bourgogne had come to await her husband. Pontchartrain was the Minister in attendance that evening, and he subsequently related to Saint-Simon all that passed. From the latter's account

we learn that, when the King was informed of his grandson's arrival, he became embarrassed and "changed countenance several times"; while the Duchesse de Bourgogne "appeared somewhat tremulous, and fluttered about the room to hide her agitation, pretending to be uncertain by which door the prince would arrive"; and Madame de Maintenon seemed to be lost in thought. The duke entered and advanced towards the King, who at once recovered his composure, went two or three steps to meet him, embraced him, "with some demonstration of tenderness," asked him a few questions about his journey, and then, indicating the princess, said with a smile: "Have you nothing to say to her?"

"The prince," continues Saint-Simon, "turned a moment towards her, and answered respectfully, without moving from his place, as if he dared not turn away from the King. He then saluted Madame de Maintenon, who received him well. Talk of travel, beds, and roads lasted, all standing, some half-quarter of an hour, when the King observed that it would not be fair to deprive him any longer of the pleasure of being alone with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, adding that they would have time to see each other again."

The first interview had thus passed off without anything to indicate that the Duc de Bourgogne was in disgrace, which was an immense relief to the duchess and all his friends, though their satisfaction was somewhat discounted by the much more cordial reception which was accorded the Duc de Berry, who arrived later in the evening, while the King was at supper. As for *Mon-*

*seigneur*, the difference in his attitude towards the two young princes, as may be supposed, was even more marked: towards the elder, he was decidedly reserved; towards the younger, as affectionate as it was in his nature to be.

Three days later, the Duc de Bourgogne had a long audience of the King, for the purpose of giving him an account of the recent campaign. At its conclusion, the prince sent a note to Beauvilliers, in which he informed him that, in accordance with the advice of his *ex-gouverneur*, he had "confessed his faults and spoken freely," and that he had "reason to believe that the King was satisfied with him," since he had treated him with great kindness, and had given him to understand that he should have the command of an army in the next campaign, if such were his wish.<sup>1</sup>

A day or two after this audience, the Duc de Bourgogne went to Meudon, where a long conversation with *Monseigneur* and Mlle. de Choin ended in a partial reconciliation between father and son.

For this happy result the diplomacy of the Duchesse de Bourgogne was mainly responsible. For some time the princess had shown her morganatic mother-in-law so much consideration, that she had quite won that lady's heart, and had, moreover, persuaded Madame de Maintenon to follow her example. Grateful for these attentions, Mlle. de Choin began to regret having permitted the cabal to bring about an estrangement between *Monseigneur* and his eldest son, and determined to

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Vogüé, *le Duc de Bourgogne et le Duc de Beauvilliers*.



employ her good offices to heal the breach ; and, as her influence over the feeble prince was very great, she was in a measure successful.

The enemies of the Duc de Bourgogne had been much disappointed by the comparatively favourable reception which Louis XIV had accorded his eldest grandson. They counted, however, on recovering their lost ground when Vendôme arrived, since, if his reception by the King were a cordial one, which, after making due allowance for the near relationship of the Duc de Bourgogne to his Majesty, could not certainly be said of that extended to the prince, the whole Court would be obliged to regard the King's attitude as a tacit condemnation of the Duc de Bourgogne's conduct in the late campaign, and to trim their sails accordingly.

On December 15, Vendôme arrived at Versailles, just as Louis XIV was rising from the dinner-table. The King received him "very agreeably," but not quite so cordially as the cabal had hoped ; and, when his Majesty told him that he would postpone the audience which the duke requested until the following day, their faces clouded visibly.

As the Dauphin had gone hunting, Vendôme went next to pay his respects to the Duc de Bourgogne. The prince, though by this time fully informed of all the allegations which the general and his friends had brought against him, received him courteously, for it was contrary to his nature, or rather to the principles by which he guided his life, to harbour malice, and, as his letters to his friends prove, he already regretted the irritation which had prompted him after Oudenarde to write in strong terms of Vendôme's conduct.

Presently *Monseigneur* returned from the chase, and Vendôme hastened to wait upon him in the Princesse de Conti's apartments, which were the stronghold of the cabal at Versailles. The Dauphin greeted him very cordially indeed, but, when he begged the prince to honour him by a visit to his country-house at Anet, which would, of course, have been regarded as a public declaration in his favour, *Monseigneur*, who had evidently received a hint from the King, seemed very embarrassed, and asked to be excused from giving an immediate answer. This reply aroused general surprise, and Vendôme, greatly mortified, soon took his departure. Saint-Simon met him in the gallery, on his way to visit the Duc du Maine, and noted with satisfaction that he seemed in a far from amiable temper.

Next day, Vendôme had his promised audience of the King, but it was a comparatively brief one, and his Majesty subsequently showed plainly that it was his intention at present to favour neither party, being of opinion that both were equally to blame for the reverses in Flanders. This was, of course, very far from what Vendôme had expected, and, after remaining a week at Versailles, where "his Abbé Alberoni presented himself at the King's Mass, in the character of a courtier, with unparalleled effrontery,"<sup>1</sup> he took himself off to Anet. His departure seems to have been hastened by the circumstance that he had not been able to summon up sufficient courage to wait upon the Duchesse de Bourgogne, as etiquette required him to do, and that it was impossible for him to remain longer

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

at Court, without paying his respects to the first Princess of the Blood.

Before leaving, he invited a number of persons to visit him at Anet. Twelve months before, such invitations had been not only eagerly accepted, but actually contended for, even by the greatest nobles. Now, however, it was very different, since to accept would have been openly to espouse the cause of one party in a dispute in which the King had postponed judgment. "Some excused themselves from going," says Saint-Simon; "others promised to go, and did not. Every one made a difficulty about a journey of fifteen leagues, which the year before had been considered as easy and as necessary as that of Marly. Anet was deserted. The Duc—or rather the Duchesse—de Bourgogne had scored the first point in the game.

The young couple, however, stood sorely in need of some encouragement, for, if fear of the King imposed silence on their enemies at Versailles, in Paris they could say and write what they pleased; and the scribes of the cabal continued to assail in the most violent manner "this *dévo*t, this shuttlecock-player, this poltroon, trembling at the mere sound of a cannon"—who had brought disaster and disgrace upon the arms of France. The theological opponents of Fénelon, perceiving an opportunity of striking at the master through the pupil, joined in the attack :—

Cambray reconnais ton pupille,  
Il voit de sang-froid perdre Lille  
Demeurant dans l'inaction.  
Toujours sévère et toujours triste,

N'est-ce-pas la dévotion  
D'un véritable quiétiste?<sup>1</sup>

Some of the rhymesters did not spare the Duchesse de Bourgogne. They reminded her of her former weakness for Nangis, and contrasted the bravery which the supposed lover had shown in Flanders with the conduct of the husband; accused her of rejoicing over the Duke of Savoy's successes against France; and, as there was some talk at this time of Vendôme being given the command of the Army of Dauphiné, declared that she desired to ruin him, in order to prevent so skilful a general being employed against her father.

Vendôme remained at Anet until the beginning of February, when he decided that his continued absence from Court might be interpreted as a confession of defeat, and, learning that Louis XIV was about to pay one of his frequent visits to Marly, solicited and obtained permission to be of the party. An invitation to Marly was highly prized, and never bestowed upon any but the most favoured courtiers; and his presence there, he considered, would put an end to any rumours to his detriment which might happen to be in circulation; while, as the rigid etiquette observed at Versailles was relaxed on these occasions, he would

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Saint-Cyres, in his work on Fénelon, has published a translation of these verses, which is so excellent that we cannot refrain from reproducing it:—

Acknowledge your pupil, my lord of Cambrai,  
When Lille is blockaded, he's far from the fray;  
In action takes never a part.  
His face is so doleful, his mien is so sad,  
That—answer me—is not the sanctified lad  
A Quietist after your heart?

be under no necessity of exposing himself to the risk of a public affront from the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

But in this he was mistaken. One evening, the Dauphin and the Duchesse de Bourgogne sat down to play brélan, when, finding that their party was a player short, *Monseigneur* sent for Vendôme, whom he perceived at the other end of the salon, to come and take the vacant place. "Thereupon," writes Saint-Simon, "the Duchesse de Bourgogne said quietly, but very distinctly, to *Monseigneur*, that the presence of M. de Vendôme at Marly was already sufficiently painful to her, without being obliged to play cards with him." *Monseigneur*, who had acted on the spur of the moment, realised his mistake, and, after a glance round the room, called for some one else ; and, when Vendôme came up, he had the mortification of being sent away again, and seeing the place which had been offered him taken by another. "It may be imagined to what extent this superb gentleman was stung by this affront. He turned upon his heel, left the salon as quickly as he could, and soon afterwards retired to his own room, there to storm at his leisure."<sup>1</sup>

But he was only at the beginning of his mortifications, for, so soon as the card-party broke up, the Duchesse de Bourgogne hastened to Madame de Maintenon ; told her of what had just occurred ; declared that, after all the calumnies which Vendôme and his friends had circulated about her husband, the mere fact of his being invited to Marly, implying as it did that he still enjoyed the favour and con-

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.



MARIE ADÉLAÏDE OF SAVOY, DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE, AS DIANA  
FROM THE STATUE BY COVZEVOX IN THE LOUVRE



fidence of his sovereign, was intolerable to her ; and ended by entreating the old lady to use her influence with the King to exclude him in future.

Madame de Maintenon consented, and depicted the princess's distress in such moving terms to the King, that, the very next morning, his Majesty sent his first *valet de chambre* Blouin to inform Vendôme that he must no longer expect to be invited to Marly, since his presence there was distasteful to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and it would be unfair to put such a constraint upon her.

Bitterly mortified, Vendôme immediately retired to the house of one of his friends at Clichy ; but, learning that his abrupt departure had given rise to a report that he had been expelled from Marly, he returned there two days before the visit concluded, to save appearances, and remained to the end, " in a continual shame and embarrassment."

This reverse was soon followed by another. Although excluded from Marly, Meudon was still open to him ; and, as he had a standing invitation to go as often as he pleased, he now took advantage of it whenever *Monseigneur* happened to be there, in order to show that, if the King had been weak enough to sacrifice him to the enmity of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, he was still as high in favour as ever with the heir to the throne.

Now, since the partial reconciliation between the Dauphin and his eldest son, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne had become frequent visitors to Meudon ; and they were exceedingly annoyed to find Vendôme invariably a member of the house-party, and still more by the manner in which he behaved. " To see him at Meudon,



you would have certainly believed him the master of the salon. . . . He never failed audaciously to present himself before the Duchesse de Bourgogne, as if to make her realise that in *Monseigneur's* house, at all events, he was a match for her." The Duc de Bourgogne supported this—"his piety compelled him to do so"—but the duchess was mortally offended, and watched her opportunity to close the doors of Meudon against Vendôme, as she had already closed those of Marly. She had not long to wait.

About two months after the incident we have just related, Louis XIV, Madame de Maintenon, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne came to Meudon to dine with *Monseigneur*. Vendôme, who was, as usual, staying there, had the effrontery to present himself at the door of the coach as the King and his companions alighted, in order to compel the princess to salute him. Deeply offended, the Duchesse de Bourgogne gave him only a mere pretence of a bow, turned away her head, and passed into the house. Instead of taking warning by this rebuff, the duke had the imprudence to approach the lady again after dinner, as she was playing cards, only to experience the same kind of reception, which, however, was on this occasion so very marked, that he was obliged to retire from the room to hide his confusion. As for the princess, she had recourse to the same tactics which had served her so well at Marly, and, after complaining to the Dauphin of the conduct of his guest, she addressed herself to Madame de Maintenon, and, through her, to Louis XIV, "representing how hard it was

for her to be treated by *Monseigneur* with less consideration than by the King, for, while the latter had banished M. de Vendôme from Marly, the former continued to receive him at Meudon."

Nor were her complaints unheeded, for, the following day, while Vendôme, all unsuspecting of the storm which was impending, was playing cards at Meudon, the Duc d'Antin arrived from Versailles, drew him into an adjoining room, on the pretext of discussing some private business, with which, he said, Vendôme had entrusted him, and told him that he had been instructed by the King "to beg *Monseigneur* not to invite him to Meudon any more, as he himself had ceased to invite him to Marly, since his presence displeased the Duchesse de Bourgogne."

The astonishment and wrath of Vendôme may be imagined; but from the order of the master there was no appeal; and when, a few days later, the return of *Monseigneur* to Versailles broke up the house-party, Meudon, like Marly, saw him no more. Nor did he venture to present himself at Versailles, fearing that the implacable princess might cause him to be driven from there also—though it is unlikely that Louis XIV would have proceeded to this extremity, so long as the duke conducted himself with discretion—but retired to one of his country-houses, where he found himself completely abandoned.

The fall of "this enormous Colossus"—as Saint-Simon terms him—immensely increased the prestige of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The Court realised that she must no longer be regarded as a spoiled child to be flattered and amused,

but as an able and courageous young woman, who would prove herself a powerful friend and a redoubtable enemy. "All who were attached to her," says Saint-Simon, "were charmed to see of what she was capable; and all who were opposed to her or her husband trembled. This cabal, so formidable, so swollen with pride, so accredited, so closely united in order to overthrow them, and reign, after the King's death, under *Monseigneur*, in their place—those chiefs, male and female, so enterprising, so audacious, who, owing to their success, had hoped for such great things, and whose imperious words had reduced every one to subjection, fell now into mortal discouragement and fear. It was a pleasure to see them artfully and basely making overtures to those of the opposite party whom they believed to possess any influence, and whom their arrogance had caused them to hate and despise; and particularly to see with what embarrassment, what fear, what terror, they began to crawl before the young princess, and despicably to court the Duc de Bourgogne, employing towards them all kind of obsequiousness."

Saint-Simon has here somewhat exaggerated the gravity of the defeat which the cabal had sustained, for, though the weaker-kneed members, and all the time-serving courtiers whom its momentary success had drawn into its ranks, hastened to make their peace with the victor, its leaders, some of whom had compromised themselves beyond all hope of pardon, continued to meet and conspire at Meudon, until the death of *Monseigneur* came to shatter their hopes.

As for Vendôme, he had not yet reached the end of his troubles. Regarding the disgrace into which he had fallen as due solely to the enmity of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and, in the belief that the King was still inclined to accept his explanation of the reverses of the previous year, he flattered himself that he would be given the command of an army in the ensuing campaign, when another Luzzara or Calcinato might enable him to regain the brilliant position which his pride and arrogance had cost him. He was soon undeceived.

It will be remembered that, in his despatches after Oudenarde, Vendôme had made a bitter attack on the Marquis de Puységur, to whose influence with the Duc de Bourgogne he had attributed the loss of that battle, and in the conversation which he had with the King on his return from Flanders, he had repeated his complaints against that officer, whom he charged with having several times thwarted his plans. Unfortunately for the duke, in April 1709, Puységur, whose military duties had retained him on the frontier during the winter, reappeared at Versailles, and had a private audience of the King, who held him in high esteem, and felt that it was only just to hear his version of the matter. Informed of the charges made against him by Vendôme, Puységur not only defended himself successfully, but carried the war into his accuser's camp, and gave the King a full and detailed account of all the faults committed by that personage from the very beginning of the campaign. It was no longer possible for the King to doubt that

Vendôme had grossly deceived him, for Puységur was a man of the highest integrity, and his statements were corroborated by reports which reached him from other quarters. A few days later, Vendôme was informed that he would cease to enjoy the emoluments of a lieutenant-general on the active list.

Subsequent events were to prove that, in refusing to avail himself any longer of Vendôme's services, Louis XIV committed a grave mistake, though it is one for which he can scarcely be blamed. The sword which his own King had rejected was eagerly demanded by the King of Spain in the following year; and, by one of the most brilliant campaigns in the whole war, Vendôme completely rehabilitated his own military reputation and the fortunes of Philip V, at least so far as Spain itself was concerned.

Burning to remove the stigma under which he rested, he exerted himself to the utmost; and seldom in military history shall we find a greater contrast than that between the extraordinary inertia which he had displayed in Flanders and the almost incredible activity which preceded the battles of Brihuega and Villa-Viciosa.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> "At this crisis, Vendôme was all himself. He set out from Talavera with his troops, and pursued the retreating army of the Allies with a speed perhaps never equalled in such a season, and in such a country. He marched night and day. He swam, at the head of his cavalry, the flooded stream of Henares, and in a few days overtook Stanhope, who was at Brihuega, with the left wing of the Allied Army. 'Nobody with me,' says the English general, 'imagined that they had any foot within some days' march of us, and our misfortune is owing to the incredible diligence which their army made'"—Macaulay, *Essay on Lord Mahon's "War of the Succession in Spain."*

grateful Philip overwhelmed Vendôme with honours, but the victorious general did not live long to enjoy them, as eighteen months later (June 15, 1712) he died at Viñaroz, in Valencia, from an illness which, if we are to believe Saint-Simon, was caused by a surfeit of stale fish. The King of Spain ordered public mourning, and caused the remains to be brought to Madrid and buried in the vaults of the Escorial.

## CHAPTER XXII

The winter of 1708-1709—Misery of the people—Generosity of the Duc de Bourgogne, who inspires his wife with a desire to follow his example—Refusal of Louis XIV to allow the Duc de Bourgogne to serve as a simple officer in the Army of the Rhine—Birth of the Duc d'Anjou (afterwards Louis XV)—The marriage of the Duc de Berry—The King gives the Duchesse de Bourgogne the entire control of her Household

THE news that Vendôme's services would not be required for the campaign of 1709, which was soon followed by the announcement that the Duc de Bourgogne had been given the command of the Army of the Rhine, with the Maréchal d'Harcourt to advise him, indicated clearly Louis XIV's opinion as to where the responsibility for the defeat of Oudenarde and the loss of Lille lay, and gave a great impetus to the reaction in the prince's favour at the Court which the Duchesse de Bourgogne's discomfiture of his traducer had already started. Among the general public, with whom Vendôme had long enjoyed immense popularity, this change of feeling was naturally more gradual, though it cannot be doubted that it would have been considerably accelerated, if the Duc de Bourgogne had not so rigorously observed the Scriptural precept concerning the secrecy of almsgiving.

The winter of 1708-1709 was one of the most

terrible which France had ever experienced ; “ the memory of man could find no parallel to it.”<sup>1</sup> Until the end of the first week of January, the weather had been unusually warm for the time of year, and in the southern provinces the trees were in bud, and it seemed as though spring had already come. But then the thermometer began to fall rapidly, and the most intense cold prevailed. “ In four days the Seine and all the other rivers were frozen over, and, what had never been seen before, the sea froze all along the coasts, so as to bear even heavily-laden carts upon it.”<sup>1</sup> This Arctic weather lasted for three weeks, when it was succeeded by a thaw, and it was hoped that the worst was over. The contrary was the fact, for in a few days the cold set in with greater severity than ever, accompanied by a heavy fall of snow and biting winds, which greatly increased the suffering.

In Paris, the Opera and the other theatres closed their doors, and the law courts suspended their sittings, for neither presidents nor councillors could sit in them, on account of the cold. At Versailles, the great state-rooms and galleries were absolutely uninhabitable, and the shivering courtiers fled from these gilded ice-houses to their own apartments, where, however, the wood-fires, “ which,” says *Madame*, “ scorched the face without warming the body,” afforded them but little protection. According to Saint-Simon, “ the violence of the two frosts was such, that the strongest elixirs and the most spirituous liquors broke their bottles in the cupboards of rooms with fires in them ” ; and he relates how, supping one evening with the

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.



Duc de Villeroy, in a small room which was only separated from the kitchen by a little ante-chamber, they saw pieces of ice fall into their glasses as the wine was poured out, though the bottles had been brought from the kitchen. Many persons at the Court fell ill of pneumonia and kindred diseases, and several cases ended fatally, among the victims being Louis xiv's old flame, the Princesse de Soubise,<sup>1</sup> and the Maréchale de la Mothe, formerly *gouvernante* to the Duc de Bourgogne and his brothers.

If such were the condition of the great, it is easy to conceive what must have been the sufferings of the poor. In Paris, *Madame* declares that "the people died from the cold like flies," and that "every morning one heard of persons who had been found frozen to death"; while among the wretched ill-clad peasants in their tumbledown hovels, where the unglazed windows let in all the cold, the mortality was frightful.

To frost succeeded famine, for the cold had been so intense that it had ruined everything. "There were no walnut-trees, no olive-trees, no vines left—none, at least, worth mentioning; the other fruit-trees died in great numbers, the vegetables perished, and all the grain in the earth. It is impossible to imagine the desolation of this general ruin."<sup>2</sup> The price of bread rose in proportion to the despair for the next harvest; soon it was beyond the means of all but the comparatively well-to-do. The evil was aggravated by speculation and by a monstrous edict which prohibited the

<sup>1</sup> On the Princesse de Soubise and her relations with Louis xiv, see the author's "Madame de Montespan."

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon.

sowing of spring corn. This was subsequently revoked, but too late to undo the harm it had wrought.<sup>1</sup> The Government, indeed, seemed powerless to cope with the situation, and the ordinances it issued did more harm than good, while the King, by forbidding the Parlements to take steps against the monopolists, because of his jealousy of the smallest encroachment on the royal prerogative, did much to encourage the heartless speculators who were battenning on the miseries of their countrymen. "The dearth is frightful," wrote *Madame*. "One cannot go out without being followed by people who are black with hunger. Everywhere one sees people dropping, literally dead of starvation." Food-riots broke out in several towns; in Paris, *chansons*, leaflets, and placards attacking Chamillart, Madame de Maintenon, and even the King circulated freely; and a disturbance among the starving labourers employed on some relief-works near the Porte Saint-Martin, owing to their not receiving the bad bread which was their only wage, might have developed into a regular insurrection, but for the courage and tact of gallant old Boufflers.

The kind heart of the Duc de Bourgogne was deeply touched by the misery of the people. If he, instead of his grandfather, had been at the head of the State, there can be little doubt, from the projects of reform which were found among his papers after his death, that prompt and effective measures would have been taken to alleviate the distress. But his views were far too much in advance of his time to have found favour with

<sup>1</sup> L. Michelet, *Histoire de France*.

Louis XIV and his Ministers, even if he had ventured to express them ; and the only way in which he could show his sympathy with the sufferers was by assisting them from his own purse.

And this he did to an extent which no one but his most intimate friends, and the clergy through whom his alms were distributed, were ever allowed to suspect. "He was so convinced of the obligation of almsgiving," writes the author of a little book entitled *Mémoire des principales actions de vertu qu'une personne de probité a remarquées dans Monseigneur le Dauphin*, who is believed to have been the Abbé Huchon, at that time curé of Versailles, "that he has often told me that I should answer before God for the poor of Versailles who were perishing for want of assistance, if I did not warn him of their pressing needs. It was in this spirit that in the year 1709, in which, owing to the high price of food, they suffered more than in any other, he often gave them all the money he had, without keeping back anything."

The accounts found in the Duc de Bourgogne's desk after his death prove that the writer does not exaggerate the extent of the prince's generosity, since they revealed that, out of the 12,000 livres a month which the King allowed his grandson for his private expenses, he had been in the habit of reserving only 1000 for his own needs ; the rest he dispensed in charity.

Nor did his self-denial end here. Proyard tells us that he would willingly have stripped his apartments of every article of value which they contained, and sold them for the benefit of the poor, if he had not reflected that they were really the

property of the King. He possessed, however, a fine collection of gems, of which he was an ardent connoisseur, and this of course he could dispose of as he pleased. "By degrees, he parted with the most valuable, but he had retained some of them. Precisely in this year 1709, the curé of Versailles having come to inform him that the misery still continued, he took him into his cabinet and handed him his gems. 'Monsieur le Curé,' said he, 'since we have no money, and the poor are dying of hunger, *dic ut lapides isti panes fiant*' ; and the stones were changed into bread." <sup>1</sup>

The same writer relates that the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who was inclined to be extravagant and was frequently in debt, did not at first altogether approve of the excessive generosity of her husband. One day, when her finances happened to be at an unusually low ebb, she ventured to suggest that she herself might not be an unworthy object of his charity. The prince, instead of refusing her, wrote out a list of the persons whom he proposed to assist, with the sums he desired each to receive. This he gave to his wife, telling her that she might strike out the names of any one whose need appeared to her less urgent than her own and keep the money herself. The princess sat down and took up a pen, with the intention of materially reducing the number of the duke's pensioners, many of whom she did not doubt had been imposing on his benevolence. But when she read the names—honest peasants

<sup>1</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.* Saint-Simon relates that the prince sold, on another occasion, two little silver pails which he used to cool his wine, and sent the money to the poor.

of the neighbourhood whom the failure of their crops had ruined, children whose parents had perished of cold and hunger, widows whose husbands had fallen at Blenheim, Ramillies, or Oudenarde—the pen fell from her hand, and she handed back the list, observing: “One must admit that all these people are more to be pitied than I am.”

This lesson was not lost upon the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who had a kind heart, and only required a fuller acquaintance with the misery around her to experience an immediate desire to relieve it; and, some time later, her husband learned, to his great joy, that, without saying anything to him about it, she had not only dispensed a considerable sum in charity, but had made arrangements for forty poor persons to be fed every day at her expense during Lent.<sup>1</sup>

Greatly to his disappointment, the Duc de Bourgogne did not, after all, serve in the campaign of 1709. The revocation of his appointment to the command of the Army of the Rhine, however, was due to financial and not to military reasons, the fact being that the exhausted Treasury was found to be quite unable to support the heavy expense of the entourage which Louis XIV considered indispensable to the princely dignity; and the King accordingly cancelled, not only his grandson's appointment, but those of *Monseigneur* to the Army of Flanders, and the Duc d'Orléans to the command in Spain.

According to Proyart, the Duc de Bourgogne entreated the King to permit him to go to the army unaccompanied by any suite, declaring that

<sup>1</sup> Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.*

he was perfectly willing to live as a simple officer and endure all the hardships of a soldier's life. Such an example could scarcely have failed to produce an excellent effect upon the troops, and would have gone far to remove the unfortunate impression which the prince had made in the previous campaign. But Louis XIV was of opinion that for his grandson to go to the wars without the usual train of equerries, grooms, and lackeys would be most derogatory to his rank, and refused to hear of it.

In the summer of that year, the Duchesse de Bourgogne was again in an interesting condition, and at the end of September we find her writing to *Madame Royale* that she "hopes very much to give her another grandson." Her hopes were realised, and at a quarter-past eight on the morning of February 15, 1710, the future Louis XV made his entry into the world, and received the title of Duc d'Anjou. "He is the prettiest child in the world," writes the proud mother, five weeks later to *Madame Royale*, "and I hope that he will become a beauty. Although it is of no consequence when they grow up, one always prefers to have a pretty child than an ugly one."<sup>1</sup>

On the occasion of the birth of the second Duc de Bretagne in January 1707, Louis XIV, it will be remembered, had forbidden all public rejoicings; but though, in the interval, the condition of France had become even more deplorable, he issued no such orders now, and the event was celebrated by fêtes in Paris and a number of other

<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 24, 1710, in Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances*.

towns. He was no doubt prompted by the same reason which had caused him to insist on some attempt being made to observe the Carnival of the previous year at the Court, notwithstanding the horrors of that terrible winter, namely, the desire to present a bold front to his enemies and to show to Europe that misfortune at home and abroad had been powerless to quell the courage of himself and his people. As for the nation, it appears to have regarded the birth of a prince of the direct line as a presage of returning peace and prosperity, though one would have imagined that the money expended by the municipalities on fireworks, illuminations, and such like methods of demonstrating their loyalty, might have been more profitably employed in relieving the distress in their midst.

The birth of the little Duc d'Anjou was soon followed by another important event in the Royal Family, and one which served to strengthen still further the position of the Duchesse de Bourgogne at the Court. Although the Duc de Berry, the youngest of *Monseigneur's* three sons, was now twenty-four, an age at which most princes had been married for several years, he was still unprovided with a wife. In time of peace, a foreign princess of suitable rank would long ago have been found for him ; but for the past eight years the chief Catholic States of Europe, with the exception of Spain and Bavaria, where there were no princesses of marriageable age, had been at war with France, which had, of course, rendered such an alliance out of the question. However, of late the Duc de Berry had begun to take so much

pleasure in feminine society, that Louis XIV feared that, if he did not marry him without delay, he might engage in some *liaison* from which it would be difficult to detach him, or possibly follow his own and *Monseigneur's* example and contract a morganatic union. In default of a foreign princess, he therefore decided that he must espouse a French one, that is to say, either Mlle. de Bourbon, elder daughter of *Madame la Duchesse*,<sup>1</sup> or the eldest daughter of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans, who was called *Mademoiselle*,<sup>2</sup> since they were the only princesses of marriageable age.

The question upon which of his grand-daughters the King's choice would fall naturally aroused the liveliest interest at the Court. In ordinary circumstances, the fact that *Mademoiselle* was the daughter of the head of the younger branch of the Royal Family, while her cousin was only the daughter of the first Prince of the Blood, would have been generally regarded as sufficient to entitle her to the preference. But the Duc d'Orléans was in very bad odour with the King, owing to the intrigues for his own aggrandizement which he had carried on with the Allies, when commanding in Spain two years before, and his debauched life; he was disliked by Madame de Maintenon, and simply detested by the Dauphin, "who always displayed his hatred in the most indecent manner."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Mlle. de Bourbon was two years older than *Mademoiselle*, and therefore nearer the Duc de Berry's age, and was by

<sup>1</sup> Louise Élisabeth de Bourbon, called Mlle. de Bourbon, born November 22, 1693.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Louise Élisabeth d'Orléans, born August 20, 1695.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Simon.



far the more pleasing of the two young ladies. Most people therefore inclined to the belief that the King's decision would be in her favour.

Now, the prospect of a match between the Duc de Berry and the daughter of *Madame la Duchesse* was not one which the Duchesse de Bourgogne could afford to regard with complacency. In the first place, it would probably result in the Duc de Berry, hitherto so much attached to his eldest brother and to herself, being drawn into the ranks of the opposing faction, and would certainly strengthen the influence of *Madame la Duchesse* over *Monseigneur*, who, resenting the King's prohibition to receive Vendôme at Meudon, had again begun to treat both the princess and her husband with marked coldness. In the second place, she was well aware of the power of novelty over Louis XIV's mind—was not her own exceptional favour a signal example of it?—and feared that if a young, pretty, and vivacious girl, like Mlle. de Bourbon, were admitted to the King's circle, she might find in her a dangerous rival. On the other hand, she and her husband had nothing to fear from the marriage of the Duc de Berry with *Mademoiselle*. They had always been on very friendly terms with both the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans; while the girl herself, though not unattractive in person, possessed none of the qualities which were likely to appeal to the King.

If we are to believe Saint-Simon, it was he who aroused the Duchesse de Bourgogne to a sense of her "great duty to herself, which was perpetually in danger of being stifled by the fictitious and

petty duties of daily life," and he certainly seems to have displayed almost superhuman energy in the struggle which ensued, not even disdaining to make use of his enemies the Jesuits, who, he confesses, "became a powerful instrument." It may be doubted, however, if "all the machines which he regularly wound up in reciprocal cadence every day" would have succeeded in breaking down the aversion of Louis XIV, Madame de Maintenon, and *Monseigneur* to a marriage which would so much increase the importance of a man whom they all three regarded with aversion, had it not been for the persistence and address with which the Duchesse de Bourgogne seconded their efforts. Repulsed at first, she returned again and again to the charge, and at length her efforts were crowned with success; *Monseigneur*, pressed by the King, gave a reluctant consent; the Duc de Berry, who would appear to have been allowed very little voice in the matter, intimated his willingness to obey his Majesty; and, on July 5, 1710, he and *Mademoiselle* were married in the chapel of Versailles, with as much splendour as circumstances would permit.

Both the Duchesse de Bourgogne and her ally, Saint-Simon, soon had cause to regret their work, and the latter confesses that, if he had only known "the half-quarter—what do I say?—the thousandth part of what we have unhappily been the witnesses," he would have worked with even greater zeal to prevent the marriage than he did to bring it about. The young Duchesse de Berry, who, until her brilliant position was assured, had succeeded in conveying the impression that she

was a damsel of a singularly modest and retiring disposition, soon began to give the Court a glimpse of those qualities which were to secure for her such unenviable celebrity ; though it was not until after the death of her husband and of Louis XIV, that she gave her vices a free rein. Her talent for dissimulation, however, seems to have enabled her to conceal the dark side of her character from the Duc de Berry, who, uxorious, like both his brothers, thought her, says *Madame*, " the prettiest person in the world, and that Helen was not half so beautiful " <sup>1</sup>—an opinion which he shared with his father-in-law—and he was as wax in her hands.

At the end of that year, the Duchesse de Bourgogne received what was regarded as an extraordinary proof of the King's favour and confidence. Louis XIV announced that he was giving her the entire control of the affairs of her Household, with the disposal of all posts belonging to it which might become vacant, a privilege which neither the Queen nor the Bavarian Dauphine had enjoyed. Old courtiers could scarcely bring themselves to believe that his Majesty really intended this to be understood in a literal sense, and Dangeau tells us that one of them ventured to observe that he presumed the princess would render an account to him of all that she did. To which the King replied : " I have sufficient trust in her not to wish her to render me

<sup>1</sup> *Madame*—who, it should be remembered, was the lady's grandmother—adds : " In point of fact, she is not pretty, at all, either in face or figure. She is thick-set, with long arms, and short hips ; she walks badly, and is ungraceful in all her movements ; has a discontented face ; is marked by small-pox ; has red eyes—light blue in the iris—and a ruddy complexion, and looks much older than she is. What is perfectly beautiful about her, is her throat, her hands, and her arms, which are very white and well formed."

any account whatever, and I leave her absolute mistress of her Household. She would be capable of more difficult and important matters than that."

This fresh mark of Louis XIV's affection doubtless served to console the Duchess de Bourgogne, to some extent, for the disillusionment she was experiencing over her new sister-in-law, who, so far from showing any gratitude to the princess who had done so much to promote her marriage, had promptly gone over to the Meudon faction. However, in the early spring of 1711, a tragic event occurred, which broke up the cabal, and freed the Duchesse de Bourgogne from all apprehensions concerning her future position.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Illness and death of *Monseigneur*—Scene at Versailles on the night of his death—Grief of the Duc de Bourgogne—Funeral of *Monseigneur*—The Duc de Bourgogne becomes Dauphin—Division of *Monseigneur's* property—Mlle. de Choin—The Duchesse de Bourgogne is accorded honours usually reserved for a Queen—The Duc de Bourgogne, encouraged by the dispersal of the cabal and the confidence which the King shows in him, takes his natural place in society—His extraordinary popularity—His antipathy to the theatre—His projects of reform—Change in the conduct of the Duchesse de Bourgogne—Her devotion to France—"I shall be their Queen!"

WITH the exception of a short, but rather alarming illness in Lent 1701, occasioned by the consumption of an abnormal quantity of fish, *Monseigneur*, who was now in his fiftieth year, had since childhood enjoyed the most robust health, and nothing seemed more certain than that he would outlive the King, who had aged considerably of late, and upon whom the fatigues and anxieties of State were beginning to weigh very heavily. However, it was ordained otherwise.

On April 8—the Wednesday in Easter Week—*Monseigneur* left Versailles for Meudon, where he intended to pass some days. He was accompanied by the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who, however, returned in the evening. On the way, they met a priest, who was carrying the Host to a sick person, and, alighting from their coach, knelt down to adore. They then questioned the

priest, and were told that the Sacrament was being taken to a man who was lying dangerously ill of small-pox, which was very prevalent just then. Now, *Monseigneur* had already had the disease but at so early an age, and in so mild a form, that he was not considered proof against a second attack, and he was terribly afraid of it. The answer he received made him very uneasy, and in the evening he observed to Boudin, his chief physician, that he should not be surprised if he were to have small-pox himself.

On the following morning, he rose early, with the intention of going wolf-hunting, but, while dressing, was seized with a sudden feeling of faintness, and fell back into a chair. Boudin, who was at once summoned, made him go to bed again, and, of course, caused the King to be informed. But, though his patient's temperature was alarmingly high, he expressed the opinion that there was no cause for uneasiness; and Louis XIV, concluding that the illness was but a slight one—perhaps another attack of indigestion—did not think it necessary to visit his son, and, in fact, spent the afternoon at Marly. The Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, however, at once started for Meudon, and remained all day in the sick-room, “the princess joining to the strict duties of a daughter-in-law all that her kindness could suggest, and giving everything to *Monseigneur* with her own hands.” In the evening, they returned to Versailles.

Next morning, *Monseigneur* was much worse, and the nature of his malady could no longer be doubted. Louis XIV, who had never had any fear

of exposing himself to infection,<sup>1</sup> set out for Meudon immediately after Mass, accompanied by Madame de Maintenon and a small suite, having previously forbidden the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, and all persons who had not had small-pox, to follow him thither, with the exception of the Ministers, who received orders to come every morning.

At Meudon, the King installed himself in a suite of rooms immediately above *Monseigneur*, whom he visited several times a day, but never at the same time as Mlle. de Choin, who shared the nursing of the sick man with the Princesse de Conti, *Madame la Duchesse*, Madame d'Espinoy and Mlle. de Lillebonne, all of whom happened to be at Meudon at the time when *Monseigneur* had been taken ill, and had been permitted by the King to remain.

At Versailles, meanwhile, the most intense excitement prevailed; the apartments of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne could not contain the people who flocked thither, many of whom belonged to the Meudon faction and had hitherto held aloof from the young couple, but, in view of the serious condition of *Monseigneur*, were now feverishly anxious to conciliate the prince who, in a few hours' time, might be Dauphin of France. "When the prince and princess rose, when they retired to bed, when they dined and supped, all public conversation, all meals, all assemblies, were opportunities of paying court to them. The Duc

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Caylus tells us that when *Madame la Duchesse* was ill with small-pox, at Fontainebleau, in the autumn of 1684, the King insisted on visiting her, although her father-in-law, the Great Condé, strove by main force to prevent him entering the sick-room.

and Duchesse de Berry were treated almost as nobody. It was like the first gleamings of the dawn.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 13th, *Monseigneur* seemed better, and insisted on receiving a deputation which the fishwives of Paris, with whom he was immensely popular, had despatched to Meudon to inquire how he was progressing. “They threw themselves at the foot of the bed, which they kissed several times, and, in their joy, declared that they would return to Paris and have a *Te Deum* sung.” But *Monseigneur*, who appears to have taken a serious view of his condition from the first, told them that it was not yet time.

In point of fact, on the morrow, his illness suddenly took a turn for the worse; in the afternoon he became unconscious, and about seven o’clock it was seen that he was slowly sinking. But Fagon, whom Louis XIV had brought with him to Meudon, and who, according to Saint-Simon, had obstinately opposed Boudin’s suggestion that they should call in another opinion from Paris, assured the King that *Monseigneur* was in no immediate danger, and allowed him to go to supper in complete ignorance of the actual state of affairs. Just as he was rising from the table, however, the physician appeared and told him that the prince was dying.

The King immediately hurried to the sick-room, declaring that he must see his son again; but was dissuaded from entering by the Princesse de Conti, who met him in the ante-chamber, and assured him that the dying man could recognise no one. He accordingly sat down on a sofa in an adjoining room, where he was presently joined by Madame de Main-

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.



tenon, who took a seat beside him and "tried to weep."<sup>1</sup> She urged him to return to Versailles, as he could do no good by remaining, but he refused to move and stayed where he was, "without shedding a tear, but shivering and trembling from head to foot,"<sup>2</sup> until the end came, soon after eleven o'clock. Then, supported by Madame de Maintenon and his daughters, he descended to the courtyard and entered his carriage, but not before he had called Pontchartrain and told him to inform the other Ministers that the Council would meet the following day at Marly, for, even at such a moment as this, he refused to neglect the duties of monarchy. As he drove away, a crowd of *Monseigneur's* officers lined both sides of the courtyard, on their knees, beseeching him to have compassion upon them, as they had lost all and must die of hunger."

There are few more graphic pages in the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon than those in which he has described the scene at Versailles that April night, when the news arrived that the Dauphin was *in extremis*: the sudden throwing open of doors; the hurried rising and dressing of those who had retired to bed; the rush of ladies in their dressing-gowns to the apartments of the Duchesse de Bourgogne; the departure of the princess to meet the King, at the Orangery, on his way from Meudon to Marly; her return with the news that all was over; the "sobs, cries, nay, even yells" of the Duc de Berry, to whose nose his wife kept holding a bottle of smelling-salts; the "furious,"

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins, April 16, 1711, in Geffroy.

but far from disinterested, grief of that lady ; the Duc de Bourgogne seated on a sofa, "weeping the tears of nature, religion, and patience" ; the duchess sitting by his side and endeavouring to console him, "which was a less difficult task than that of appearing herself in need of consolation" ; the apparition of *Madame* in full Court costume—she tells us herself that she never possessed a *robe de chambre*—among the ladies *en déshabillé*, "flooding them all with her tears and making the château resound with her cries" ;<sup>1</sup> the varied emotions—hope, despair, rage, satisfaction—which showed themselves on the faces of the courtiers ; and the groans and tears of *Monseigneur's* servants, "in despair at the loss of a master who seemed to have been expressly created for them."

At length, the worthy Beauvilliers, whose countenance was absolutely impassive, though his joy must have been as great as that which his friend does not hesitate to confess, suggested that it was time that the bereaved princes were left to themselves ; and the Court retired to rest, or rather to speculate on the changes that must shortly take place, since Saint-Simon tells us that no one closed an eye all night.

Although the late Dauphin had never at any time had much affection for his eldest son, and of late years, thanks to the machinations of the cabal, had come to regard him with a dislike which he was not always at pains to conceal, the Duc de Bourgogne,

<sup>1</sup> And, only the previous day, according to the chronicler, she had had a long conversation with him, in which she did not attempt to conceal her disappointment at the news that *Monseigneur's* illness had taken a favourable turn, and that he seemed likely to get over it.

as the testimony of his contemporaries and his own letters prove, was much affected by his father's death,<sup>1</sup> and was unwell for some days afterwards.

The duchess, on the other hand, could scarcely be expected to feel any sorrow for the death of the man who had permitted himself to be made the pawn of the faction which had so nearly contrived to ruin her husband, and the prospect of whose succession to the throne she had regarded with the gravest apprehension. According to Saint-Simon, she "found extreme difficulty in keeping up appearances," and she must have been greatly relieved when she was no longer required to simulate grief.

Owing to the infectious state of the body of the deceased prince, the honours which would otherwise have been rendered to him were dispensed with, and, on the evening of the 15th, the coffin was placed in one of his own carriages, and followed by another containing the Duc de la Trémoille, one of the Gentlemen of the Chamber, the Bishop of Metz, *Monseigneur's* chief almoner, the Marquis de Dreux, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, and one of the almoners of the King, and escorted by twelve guards, a few footmen, and twenty-four of the King's pages bearing torches, conveyed to Saint-Denis, and lowered into the royal vault, without any ceremony. "*Voilà ou se termine toute grandeur !*" observes Madame de Maintenon.<sup>2</sup>

Few more singular illustrations of the vital

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Maintenon, writing on April 16 to the Princesse des Ursins, describes him as "benumbed, pale as death, speaking not a word, and raising his eyes to Heaven."

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the Princesse des Ursins, April 16, 1711. The solemn obsequies, however, were celebrated at Saint-Denis on

importance attached to questions of etiquette at the Court of Louis XIV are to be found than the fact that, on the very morrow of his only son's death, the King considered it necessary to summon his Ministers to a conference, in order to decide upon the future title of the Duc de Bourgogne. The main question at issue was whether he was to bear the title of Dauphin, which belonged, strictly speaking, to the eldest son of the sovereign, and not necessarily to the heir-apparent to the throne, or that of *Monseigneur*, which was that which his father had always borne, although no one seemed quite to know how the practice of calling him thus had originated. All present were of opinion that the Duc de Bourgogne should take the title of Dauphin, in preference to the other, which Louis XIV now declared ought never to have been used. It was also decided, though not until after a good deal of discussion, that the new Dauphin was to be referred to as "*Monsieur le Dauphin*," addressed in letters as "*Monseigneur le Dauphin*," and in conversation as "*Monsieur*." The Duchesse de Bourgogne would, of course, be referred to as "*Madame la Dauphine*."

Louis XIV offered his grandson the magnificent pension of 50,000 livres a month which *Monseigneur* had enjoyed as heir-apparent. But the prince declined it, observing that he was quite content with the 12,000 livres which he already possessed, and asked that the vacant pension

June 18, and at Notre-Dame on July 3, on both of which occasions the Duc de Bourgogne wore a mourning mantle, the train of which was twelve ells long.

might be applied to the needs of the State—an act of disinterestedness which greatly pleased the public. The King attached to the new Dauphin's person the *menins* of *Monseigneur* and the same number of guards which that prince had had ; and, from motives of kindness rather than from any other reason, the duke took into his service a number of his father's old servants. His Household and entourage were thus considerably increased, but, in other respects, he continued to live very much as he had done during *Monseigneur's* lifetime.

With the exception of his two estates of Meudon and Chaville, both of which he had inherited from *la Grande Mademoiselle*, and a valuable collection of gems and curios, *Monseigneur* had left little behind him. The landed property fell to the share of the Duc de Bourgogne, while the gems and curios were divided between the King of Spain and the Duc de Berry ; but part of the collection had to be sold to defray the deceased prince's debts, which were considerable.

*Monseigneur* does not appear to have made any provision for Mlle. de Choin, but this was no doubt in accordance with that lady's own wishes, since, some three years before, when he had proposed to bequeath her a considerable part of his property, and had actually executed a will to that effect, she had persuaded him to destroy it. After her husband's death, she withdrew to Paris, where she lived in retirement for the rest of her days. The King granted her a pension of 12,000 livres, which the Duchesse de Bourgogne endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to persuade him to increase.

The new rank of the Duchesse de Bourgogne was marked by several important changes in the etiquette of her everyday life. During the lifetime of *Monseigneur*, the Ducs de Bourgogne and de Berry had been on a footing of equality, and, when the latter married, the same honours had been accorded to his wife as to the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Now, however, that the elder brother had become heir apparent to the Crown, Louis XIV decided that the difference in their respective positions and that of their wives must be clearly defined, and directed that at the Dauphin's *lever* the Duc de Berry should hand him his shirt, and that at the Dauphine's toilette the Duchesse de Berry should hand her her chemise. The Duc de Berry raised no difficulty about this, but his wife was furious at the idea of being thus publicly placed in a position of inferiority to her sister-in-law, and vowed that nothing should induce her to undertake what she stigmatised as a menial service, and that, if her husband consented to so debase himself, she should hold him henceforth in the most supreme contempt. The poor prince, after vainly endeavouring to bring her to a more reasonable frame of mind, had recourse to the good offices of the Duc d'Orléans, who eventually succeeded in persuading his daughter to submit to the orders of the King, though it was not until several days later that the young lady condescended to present herself at the Dauphine's toilette and perform the duty required of her. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, who desired to live at peace with her sister-in-law, prudently refrained from any remark upon the

latter's absence on previous occasions, and "acknowledged her services with all the grace imaginable and all the most natural marks of affection."<sup>1</sup>

Not content with directing that the new Dauphine should be accorded all the honours which belonged to that rank, Louis XIV decided that she should also enjoy several of those which had hitherto been reserved for the Queens of France, and that when she dined *au grand couvert*, she should be served in precisely the same manner as Maria Theresa. In fact, during the few months of life that remained to her, the Duchesse de Bourgogne seems to have been queen in everything but the name.

And the change in the outward position of the young couple was accompanied by an inner, personal change, which, in the case of the Duc de Bourgogne, was as astonishing as it was gratifying. The death of *Monseigneur* and the consequent dispersal of the cabal of Meudon, removed the most blighting influence on the young prince's life, and one which had been responsible, indirectly, as well as directly, for much of his unpopularity. So long as his father lived and the cabal flourished, it was impossible for him to be otherwise than timid and constrained in public, aware as he was that he was surrounded by enemies ever on the watch to catch him tripping, to turn his smallest indiscretion to account. This, joined to his studious and devotional habits, had combined to inspire him with a positive distaste for social intercourse, and prevented him from taking his natural part in the life of the Court.

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

But now he need fear no more. There was no longer a prince in the prime of life and robust health between him and the throne ; his foot was already on its highest step, and, in the natural course of events, a few years—perhaps a very few—would see him ascend it. His enemies had melted away ; in their places he beheld only obsequious friends ; what had been sneered at as the intolerance of a bigot, was now belauded as the virtue of a saint ; what had been ascribed to poltroonery, was now attributed to prudence and foresight ; the Court hastened to bow down before its coming master.

And it was not only in the attitude of the Court that he saw a change. The King, who, since the unfortunate campaign in Flanders had been somewhat cold in his manner towards his eldest grandson, at once began to treat him with marked graciousness. Grieved though he had been by the death of *Monseigneur*, he knew that his own loss had been an immeasurable gain to France, who would now have as her future ruler not a phlegmatic, indolent prince, with no taste and no capacity for government, but an industrious and conscientious young man, who had already shown a grasp of affairs far beyond his years. Louis XIV had committed colossal errors, for which France had paid dearly and was to pay more dearly still, but no one will attempt to deny that, according to his narrow lights, he had performed his public duties unflinchingly, and sincerely desired the welfare of his subjects ; and it was an immense satisfaction to him to reflect that the heir to his throne possessed a no less keen appreciation of the obligations of



kinship. "Here," said he, as he presented the new Dauphin to the Assembly of the Clergy, "is the prince who will soon succeed me, and who, by his virtue and his piety, will render the Church still more flourishing, and the kingdom still more happy."<sup>1</sup> And, to show his confidence in his grandson, he broke through all the traditions of his reign, and practically admitted him to a share of that authority which he had hitherto so jealously guarded, by "ordering the Ministers to work with the Dauphin whenever sent for, and, whether sent for or not, to make him acquainted with all public affairs."<sup>2</sup>

In circumstances so favourable, the Duc de Bourgogne rapidly acquired that ease and confidence in social intercourse, the absence of which his well-wishers had so long deplored. Instead of shutting himself up in his cabinet, he mingled freely in the life of the world about him, and lost no opportunity of making himself acquainted with his future subjects. Instead of being timid and reserved in conversation, he spoke easily and naturally to every one, and gained all hearts by his good-humour, courtesy, and tact. "One beheld," writes Saint-Simon, "this prince diffident, unsociable, self-centred, a stranger in his own house, embarrassed everywhere, become little by little easy, dignified, gay, agreeable, presiding over the

<sup>1</sup> Dangeau.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon. The writer represents the Ministers as "bewildered" by this order and "unable to hide their astonishment and discomfiture." But his hatred and contempt for these "*mar-seaux de l'État*" is well known; and it seems more probable that they welcomed the opportunity thus afforded them of ingratiating themselves with their future master.



LOUIS XIV, WITH MADAME DE MAINTENON, THE GRAND DAUPHIN, THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE,  
AND THE DUC D'ANJOU (AFTERWARDS LOUIS XV)

FROM THE PAINTING BY LAROCHE, IN THE WALLACE COLLECTION, AT HERTFORD HOUSE



groups gathered about him, like the divinity of a temple, who receives with kindness the homage to which he is accustomed, and recompenses the mortals who offer it with his kindly regard."

Now, too, the fruit of the years of earnest study began to reveal itself, and those who knew him little marvelled at the wide and varied knowledge which he had acquired. History, politics, science, finance, he discoursed upon them all, not in the manner of a pedant, but in a light and pleasant way, which charmed while it instructed; and people sometimes in gathering about him were less anxious to pay their court, than to listen to the conversation of a man so cultured and widely read.

The prince's popularity increased by leaps and bounds. "From the Court to Paris," says Saint-Simon, "and from Paris to the depths of the provinces, his reputation flew so rapidly that the few people formerly attached to the Dauphin asked one another if they could believe what was reported from all sides." Saint-Simon, however, admits that this astonishing change in public opinion was "not entirely due to the marvellous qualities of the young prince," and that a natural reaction against the hostile feeling towards him that had been excited by the cabal, and the hope that his accession would be the dawn of a more prosperous era, largely contributed to it.

If the Duc de Bourgogne abandoned the almost cloistral seclusion in which he had hitherto lived, it must not be supposed that he relaxed, to any appreciable extent, the severity of his religious principles. It is true that *Madame*, writing in

May 1711, declares that he now "preaches little," meaning that he no longer endeavoured to persuade his friends to look at matters of religion from his own standpoint; but in other respects there was very little change. He still, for example, regarded the theatre with a jaundiced eye, declined to receive a deputation from the Comédie-Française, and refused to attend a State performance there, "because the best theatre for a dauphin's energy was the improvement of the provinces." "But what will you do?" said Madame de Maintenon to him one day, "when you become the master? Will you prohibit operas, comedies, and other plays? Many people are of opinion that, if they were stopped, their place would be supplied by even more reprehensible amusements." "I should weigh carefully the arguments for and against," he replied. "I should examine the inconveniences, which might arise in either eventuality, and then I should choose the course which would entail the least."<sup>1</sup> And Proyart gives it as his opinion, that, if he had come to the throne, he would only have allowed the continued existence of the theatre, on condition of "reforming it on the model of the pieces played at Saint-Cyr."<sup>2</sup>

We shall not attempt to discuss here the various projects for the reform of Church and State which have been attributed to the Duc de Bourgogne: the decentralisation of the administration by the abolition of the intendants and farmers of taxes; the summoning of the States-General and the Provincial Estates, and the establishment of local

<sup>1</sup> *Entretien avec Madame de Glapion*, in Geffroy.

<sup>2</sup> *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis xv.*

Councils ; the restoration of the great nobles to the political importance of which Louis XIV had deprived them—the dream of Saint-Simon ; a redistribution of clerical benefices, to put an end to the scandalous contrast between the wealthy pluralist and the poverty-stricken parish priest ; the rigorous suppression of luxury at the Court, which should thus set an example of economy to the whole country ; a peaceful policy abroad, and all the other schemes outlined by Fénelon and Chevreuse in their *Plans de gouvernement*,<sup>1</sup> or by the Duc de Bourgogne himself in the papers which he left behind him.<sup>2</sup>

If he had lived to ascend the throne, would he have succeeded in regenerating France, and in securing by wise and orderly progress what was only attained at the cost of such terrible sacrifices ? Or had the canker already eaten so deeply into the roots of the social system, that nothing but the revolutionary knife could hope to destroy it. We can only conjecture. Perhaps, with all his good qualities and all his good intentions, he was scarcely the man for the work : too narrow in his religious views—the toleration of Jansenists or the recall of the Huguenots formed no part of his plans—to appeal to a sceptical age ; too inclined to repose confidence in men whose virtues were far superior to their abilities ; lacking that strength of character, that

<sup>1</sup> *Plans de gouvernement concertés avec le duc de Chevreuse pour être proposés au duc de Bourgogne.* These plans were drawn up at Chaulnes, in October 1711, and are often spoken of as “*les Tables de Chaulnes.*” They will be found in the *Œuvres complètes de Fénelon* (edit. 1851), vol. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these documents have been published by Proyard, in his *Vie du Dauphin.*

fixity of purpose, which alone would have enabled him to triumph over the opposition of the more conservative elements in the nation.

What is certain, is that he would have shown himself the most virtuous king since Saint-Louis, and that his exemplary private life would have strengthened the moral authority of royalty as much as his son's unbridled licentiousness did to destroy it. And who can refuse to believe that that son would have been a very different king had he had the advantage of such a father's training and example, instead of being exposed from childhood to the enervating influences which were to prove his ruin? The Duc de Bourgogne might not have averted the Revolution, but he would at least have averted the excesses which accompanied it; he might not have saved the Monarchy, but at least its sun would not have gone down in blood.

And in his efforts to give practical expression to the maxim so often on his lips, that kings exist for the sake of their people, and not people for the sake of kings, he would have found in his wife a loyal supporter. For that gradual change in the Duchesse de Bourgogne's outlook on life of which we have spoken elsewhere had been undoubtedly stimulated by the change in her rank. As the husband had succeeded in throwing off the timidity and constraint which had been so great an obstacle to his popularity and influence, so did the wife recognise that the time had now come when she must put away from her childish things and do all in her power to prepare herself for the great position which she might soon be called upon to fill. The grace, dignity, and tact

with which she discharged her social duties delighted every one. "Madame la Dauphine, in taking a more exalted place," writes Madame de Maintenon, "becomes more courteous and attentive than she has ever been. . . . She makes herself adored by everybody."

She evinced, too, a lively and intelligent interest in public affairs, and particularly in the fortunes of the war, and set the ladies of the Court an example of patriotism worthy of all imitation. "Her great gaiety," writes Madame de Maintenon again, "does not prevent her from showing great sympathy in trouble. . . . There is no Frenchwoman more devoted to the welfare of this country than she."<sup>1</sup>

An instance of this is related by Dangeau.

When, on August 6, 1711, the Court which was then at Fontainebleau, was anxiously awaiting news of Marlborough's expected attack upon those lines which Villars had boasted would prove the English general's *ne plus ultra*,<sup>2</sup> some one suggested to the Duchesse de Bourgogne that she should make up a card-party. "Eh!" she exclaimed, "with whom do you expect me to play? With ladies who have their husbands, or with fathers who have their children, engaged in a battle which must be, according to all appearances, a sanguinary one? And can I be tranquil myself when it is a question of a State affair of the greatest importance?" And, sending for her carriage, she drove

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Princesse des Ursins, January 11, 1712, in Geffroy.

<sup>2</sup> There was no engagement, Marlborough, by a brilliant manœuvre, completely outwitting Villars and gaining the position he desired without firing a shot.



along the high-road to Paris, to meet any courier who might be on his way.

She certainly knew, however, how to make up for the self-denial she imposed upon herself at moments when she considered that amusements were out of place, as the following extract from a letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins will show :

“Madame la Dauphine takes the most lively interest in so joyful a subject [the prospect of peace] ; she revels in it to its fullest extent. She intends to do something on the day that peace is concluded that she has never done before, and will never do again ; but she has not yet decided what it shall be. In the meanwhile, she is going to the *Te Deum* at Notre-Dame ; to dinner with the Duchesse du Lude, in a beautiful brand-new house ; then to the Opera ; to sup with the Prince de Rohan, in that magnificent Hôtel de Guise ; then to cards and a ball, which will last all night, and, as the hour of her return will be that of my waking, she proposes to breakfast with me on arriving. I think, Madame, that you would find such a day rather long, in spite of all its pleasures.”<sup>1</sup>

Louis XIV was more than usually gloomy and thoughtful during that visit to Fontainebleau, for the news from Flanders was bad and the negotiations for peace made no progress ; and even the efforts of the Dauphine were sometimes powerless to charm away his melancholy. One evening in September, when she had been “jabbering all kinds of nonsense and indulging in a hundred childish pranks in order to amuse him,” she caught sight of her two enemies, the Princesse de Conti

<sup>1</sup> Letter of November 30, 1711, in Geffroy.

and *Madame la Duchesse* exchanging disdainful glances. The Dauphine waited until the King had gone into an adjoining room to feed his dogs, which he did regularly every evening, and then, catching hold of her friend Madame de Saint-Simon, with one hand, and of Madame de Lévis, another of her favourites, with the other, she said to them: "Did you see them? Did you see them? I know as well as they do that there is no common sense in what I have done and said, and that it is ridiculous, but he requires rousing, and those kind of things amuse him." And, leaning on the arms of the two ladies, she began to skip about and dance, exclaiming: "Ha! I laugh at them. Ha! I mock at them! I shall be their Queen, and I have nothing to do with them, either now or at any time. They will have to reckon with me, and I shall be their Queen." Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Lévis, much shocked, tried to prevail upon her to be silent, but until the King returned, she continued dancing and singing: "Ha! I mock at them! I have nothing to do with them! I shall be their Queen!"

"Alas!" observes Saint-Simon, who relates this anecdote, "she believed it, this charming princess, and who did not share her belief" <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, *Madame* declares that the *Duchesse de Bourgogne* was convinced that her end was near. "A learned astrologer of Turin," she writes, "had predicted to Madame le Dauphine all that would happen to her, and that she would die in her twenty-seventh year." . . . While Madame le Dauphine was still in good health, she often said: "Well, I must enjoy myself, because I cannot enjoy myself long, for I shall die this year." Where the *Duchesse de Bourgogne* is concerned, however, Saint-Simon's testimony is always to be preferred to *Madame's*.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Letters of the Duchesse de Bourgogne to her mother—The princess in very weak health—Her illness and death—Grief of the Court—The Duc de Bourgogne goes to Marly—A touching scene—His interview with the King—His illness and death—The lying in state of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne—Their bodies are conveyed to Saint-Denis—Death of the Duc de Bretagne—Suspensions of poison—The snuff-box of the Duc de Noailles—Accusations against the Duc d'Orleans—The probable truth

TWO of the few letters written by the Duchesse de Bourgogne to her mother which have been preserved prove that, at the close of 1711, the young princess was in very bad health, which is not surprising, since the autumn had been a very wet one, and the whole country around Versailles was flooded :<sup>1</sup>—

“ VERSAILLES, *December 13, 1711*

“ It is sad, my dear mother, that my brother and I have the same sympathy in toothache. I hope that he has not had it as badly as I had last night ; it made me suffer terribly, though I am rid of it for the moment. *For more than two months* it has seized me from time to time. I have ceased taking precautions against it, for keeping my room does me no good ; and, during the time that I am not in it, I do not think of it, and am

<sup>1</sup> “ Floods surround us on all sides. For a month it has rained every day and all night too.”—Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins, November 30, 1711.

always hopeful that it will not return. I merely avoid the wind in my ears, and eating anything which may make it bad. I believe that the dreadful weather is largely responsible for these inflammations . . .”

“VERSAILLES, *December 18, 1711*

“It is in order not to miss a week in assuring you myself of my affection, that I am writing to-day. For the last seven days I have been, my dear mother, in a state of great exhaustion, which has prevented me from dressing, for the inflammation which I had in my teeth has spread over my whole body. I am scarcely able to move, and my head feels a dreadful weight.

“I wished to anticipate the first day of the year, by offering to all my family the good wishes that I desire for them ; but, since I am unable to do so, I content myself, my dear mother, with embracing you with all my heart.”<sup>1</sup>

From the correspondence of Madame de Maintenon, it would appear that this toothache and rheumatism became less severe just before the New Year ; but, a few days later, the writer mentions that the Dauphine had had “an attack of fever,” and that “the courtiers had been in a state of consternation, and had talked only about the irreparable loss she would be to them.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gagnière, *Marie Adélaïde de Savoie : Lettres et Correspondances*.

<sup>2</sup> Letters of December 28, 1711, and January 11, 1712. In the latter letter, Madame de Maintenon draws a picture of the enviable position occupied by the Dauphine, which, in view of the tragedy which was so close at hand, is invested with a pathetic interest : “She has reason to be happy ; she is happily married, much beloved by the King and the Dauphin, and is assuredly the delight of the Court. The people love her much, because she lets herself be seen very readily ; and she has the most pleasing children that

The rainy autumn had been followed by a severe winter. A malignant type of measles—called by the Faculty "*rougeole pourpre*"—broke out both in Paris and at Versailles, and claimed many victims, among them the young Marquis de Gondrin, eldest son of the Duc d'Antin, and one of the Dauphin's *menins*. On January 18, the Dauphine, who was suffering severely from a swollen face, accompanied the Court to Marly. On her arrival, she felt so ill that she went to bed at once ; but, on learning that the King wished her to be present in the salon, she rose at seven o'clock, and played cards, as usual, "*en déshabillé* and with her head wrapped up."<sup>1</sup> When the card-party broke up, she went to Madame de Maintenon's apartments to talk to the King, as was her custom, after which she went back to bed, where she supped. On the morrow, she did not rise till the evening, when, in spite of the pain she was suffering, she again made her appearance in the salon and at Madame de Maintenon's. On the 20th she was better, and during the remainder of the visit lived her ordinary life. But there can be little doubt that, by so doing, she severely taxed her strength and rendered herself particularly liable to infection.

On February 1, the Court returned to Versailles, and on the evening of Tuesday the 5th the Dauphine had a fresh attack of fever. Nevertheless, she rose at her ordinary hour and passed the day as usual. she could possibly desire, less handsome than yours, but very strong, and perfect pictures ; graceful like herself, and displaying much intelligence."

Everything, in a word, save health !

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon.

In the night of the 6th to 7th, the fever increased, but, as the following day was a Sunday, she rose and attended Mass. At about six in the evening, she was seized with "a sharp pain under the temple, which did not extend to the dimensions of a ten-sous piece,"<sup>1</sup> but was so violent that she was obliged to beg the King, who was coming to see her, not to enter.

This excruciating pain continued all that night and until the late afternoon of the following day, and was proof against tobacco chewed and smoked, a quantity of opium, and two bleedings in the arms. "She has convulsions," writes Madame de Maintenon; "she screams like a woman in childbirth, and with the same intervals."<sup>2</sup>

As the pain subsided, the fever increased. Mareschal, the King's surgeon-in-ordinary, bled her in the foot, but she passed all the 9th in a semi-comatose condition, which greatly puzzled the doctors. Towards evening, a rash broke out, and Boudin, her own chief physician, pronounced her to be suffering from measles. But during the night the rash disappeared, the fever increased, and the doctors were more puzzled than ever. Bleeding in the foot was again tried, but without effect, nor did better fortune attend the administration of a powerful emetic, which operated "*par en haut et par en bas*,"<sup>3</sup> but brought no relief.

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon. Madame de Maintenon describes it as "a fixed pain between the ear and the upper end of the jaw"; adding: "the place of the pain is so small that it could be covered by a thumbnail."

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins, February 7, 1712, in Geffroy.

<sup>3</sup> Sourches, *Mémoires*.

In the course of the 10th, the Dauphin, who had refused to move from his wife's side for three days and nights, save for a short walk in the gardens, which he had only been induced to take by the King's express orders, was observed to be looking very ill, but this was attributed to the strain which he was undergoing and aroused no anxiety.

During the night of Wednesday to Thursday, the patient was several times delirious, and she appeared so near death, that it was thought advisable that she should confess. Accordingly, Père de la Rue, her Jesuit confessor, "whom she had always appeared to like very much," approached the bed and exhorted her not to delay her confession. "She looked at him," says Saint-Simon, "replied that she quite understood him, and then remained silent. Like a sensible man, he perceived what was in her mind, and, like a good man, at once told her that if she had any objection to confess to him, he begged her not to constrain herself, but only to tell him whom she desired, and he would himself go and bring him." The Dauphine thereupon mentioned M. Bailly, one of the missionaries of Saint-Lazare, who had charge of the parish of Versailles, "a man much esteemed, but not altogether free from the suspicion of Jansenism," who was the *directeur* of her *dame du palais* Madame de Nogaret and several very devout ladies of the Court. Père Bailly, however, happened to have gone to Paris, on learning which the princess asked for Père Noël, a Franciscan, whom the Jesuit hastened to bring to the sick-room. This change of confessors, Saint-Simon declares, created a great sensation, and was generally regarded as a repudia-

tion, not so much of Père de la Rue, as of the Order which he represented.

Meanwhile, the Duc de Bourgogne, who had concealed his own illness so long as he could, in order to remain at his wife's bedside, had broken down, and when on the arrival of Père Noël every one withdrew from the room, the King and the doctors persuaded him to retire to his own apartments, where, however, they only succeeded in keeping him by concealing the gravity of the princess's condition.

The Dauphine's confession finished, the last Sacraments were administered, Louis XIV going to the foot of the grand staircase to meet the Host, and conducting it to the door of the sick-room. The princess received them with great piety, and observed to Madame de Maintenon, "*Ma tante*, I feel quite another person; it seems to me that I am altogether changed." She was, however, very uneasy about her debts, and wanted to see her husband, in order to speak to him about them; but the King had given orders that the Dauphin was not to be allowed to return. Madame de Maintenon contrived to quiet her, by the assurance that the prince would see that they were discharged as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Although the doctors had not yet abandoned hope, and had refused to permit the prayers for the dying to be read, the patient herself was under no such illusion, and asked that her ladies might be sent for, in order that she might bid them farewell. But to the King, who came to see her

<sup>1</sup> Mlle. d'Aumale, *Souvenirs sur Madame de Maintenon*, published by MM. Hanotaux and d'Haussonville.



several times during the day, she said nothing which might lead him to suppose that she believed her end to be at hand, telling Madame de Maintenon that "she feared to grieve him."

In the evening, seven doctors of the Court and Paris met in consultation, in the presence of Louis XIV and the ex-Queen of England, who had come over from Saint-Germain. It was decided to bleed the Duchesse de Bourgogne again in the foot,<sup>1</sup> and, if this failed, to give an emetic early the following morning. Neither remedy had any effect, and in the afternoon of the 12th she became unconscious, and it was recognised that the end could only be a matter of hours. As a last resource, a quack remedy was administered, which brought her back to consciousness for a few minutes, during which she recognised Madame de Maintenon. "Madame, you are going to God," said Madame de Maintenon. "*Oui, ma tante,*" replied the Dauphine.<sup>2</sup> These were her last words, for immediately afterwards she lapsed into insensibility, and at a quarter past eight in the evening breathed her last.

A few minutes before the princess expired, Louis XIV, who had been in and out of the sick-room all day, entered his coach at the foot of the grand staircase, and, accompanied by Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Caylus, drove away to Marly. "They were both in the most bitter grief, and had not the courage to go to the Dauphin."<sup>3</sup>

With some few exceptions, such as the odious

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon says that all were in favour of this, but, according to Sourches, two of them protested against it.

<sup>2</sup> Mlle. d'Aumale, *Souvenirs sur Madame de Maintenon*, published by MM. Hanotaux and d'Haussonville.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Simon.

Duchesse de Berry, whom Saint-Simon represents as "transported with joy at seeing herself delivered from a powerful rival," their grief was shared by the whole Court, and Madame de Caylus undoubtedly expressed the general feeling when she wrote two days later, for Madame de Maintenon, to the Princesse des Ursins : "*Tout est mort ici, Madame ; la vie en est ôtée.*" This princess gave life to everything, and charmed us all. We are still stupefied and stunned by our loss."<sup>1</sup>

"With her," says Saint-Simon, "departed joy, pleasure, and everything gracious ; and darkness brooded over the Court. She had been its life, and, if it survived her, it was only to languish. Never was princess so regretted ; never was one more worthy of regret."

Great as was the grief of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon, it was trifling in comparison with the anguish of the bereaved husband. He remained, however, outwardly calm, and showed the fortitude which might have been expected from a man of his intense religious convictions ; but, in reality, he had received a shock which must have largely contributed to the fatal termination of the disease which already had him in its grip.

As, after the death of *Monseigneur*, he had moved into his father's apartments, and his bedroom was immediately below that of the Dauphine, his friends persuaded him to follow the King to Marly, in order to spare him the sounds from the death-chamber, where, after the autopsy always performed on members of the Royal Family had

<sup>1</sup> Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon d'après sa correspondance authentique.*

taken place, the body of his wife would be embalmed and coffined. At seven o'clock on the morning of the 13th, he was carried in a chair—for he was too weak to walk—to his carriage and was driven to Marly. Learning, on his arrival, that the King was not yet awake, he had himself carried to the chapel to hear Mass, and then to his own apartments, where etiquette obliged him to receive visits of condolence from the Princes and Princesses of the Blood and a number of other persons. Several of those who came were loud in their condemnation of the doctors who had attended the Dauphine, and declared that their treatment had killed her, which was probably true. "Whether the doctors have killed her, or whether God has called her," replied the Duc de Bourgogne, "we must adore equally what he permits, and what he decrees."

When Saint-Simon presented himself, he was aghast at the change which had come over the Dauphin since he had last seen him. "His eyes had a strained, fixed expression, with something wild about it"; and he also noticed "numerous marks, livid rather than red, upon his face." It was evident that he was sickening for the same complaint as his wife.

"The Dauphin was standing" he continues. "A few moments later, they came to tell him that the King was awake. The tears he had hitherto restrained began to flow. He turned round, said nothing, and remained motionless. His three *menins* suggested, once or twice, that he should go to the King. He neither answered nor stirred. I approached and signed to him to

go ; then spoke to him to the same effect. Finding that he did not respond, I ventured to take his arm, representing that, sooner or later, he must see the King, who was expecting him, and that it would be more gracious not to defer his visit ; and with that I gently pushed him towards the door. He gave me a look that pierced my heart, and went out. I followed him a few steps, and then withdrew to recover myself. I never saw him again. May God in His mercy grant that I may see him eternally, in that place where His goodness had doubtless placed him ! ”

The interview between the two men who, each in his different way, had loved the dead princess so tenderly, was, as might be supposed, a very touching one. Few words were spoken, for the grief of both was too great for speech. The King, however, was much alarmed at the appearance of his grandson, as indeed was every one at his *lever*, and ordered the doctors who were present to feel his pulse. They at once recommended him to go to bed ; and the King ordered him to follow their advice. He obeyed, and never rose again.

We shall not relate the progress of the Dauphin's illness, which was marked by “ the most incomparable submission and love of God ” on the part of the poor prince, and by the most complete impotence on the part of the doctors, who, finding themselves in the presence of the same symptoms which had confronted them in the illness of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and mindful of the failure of the remedies which they had then employed, seemed afraid to do anything. Early on the 17th, his condition was seen to be hopeless ; at midnight

the last Sacraments were administered, and at a little after eight on the following morning the end came.

"France," says Saint-Simon, "succumbed beneath this last chastisement. God had shown her a prince whom she did not deserve. The earth was not worthy of him." And he adds, "He was already ripe for eternal bliss."

No one who cares to read the touching account of the last moments of the Duc de Bourgogne left by his confessor, Père Martineau,<sup>1</sup> will be inclined to question this last statement.

After the autopsy and the embalming had been performed, the body of the Dauphin was transported to Versailles, and laid beside that of his wife, on a state bed in the Dauphin's *grand cabinet*. Here they lay in state for three days, guarded, on the right, by the *menins* of the Dauphin and, on the left, by the *dames du palais* of the Dauphine, and by four bishops, two on either side of the coffins. All the Princes and Princesses of the Blood passed in procession before the coffins and sprinkled them with holy water.

On the evening of the 23rd, the two coffins, covered by a pall embroidered, on the right with the Arms of France, and on the left with those of Savoy, were transported in great state to Saint-Denis. Although it was after midnight when the *cortège* entered Paris, by way of the Porte Saint-Honoré, the streets were lined by an immense crowd, which, however, maintained the most perfect order, and scarcely a voice was heard, save those of the monks of the various convents on the way,

<sup>1</sup> *Recueil des Vertus du duc de Bourgogne et ensuite Dauphin.*

who came with lighted tapers to chant the *De profundis* as the funeral car passed by. Saint-Denis was reached towards six the next morning, and the coffins formally entrusted to the abbot. For forty days they lay in the church, covered by the same pall, and were then lowered into the royal vault.<sup>1</sup>

Death had not yet finished taking toll of the Royal House. At the beginning of March, both the little sons of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne were attacked by measles, and a few days later the Duc de Bretagne had followed his parents to the grave. His brother, the Duc d'Anjou, recovered, and no doubt owed his life to the good sense of his *gouvernante*, the Duchesse de Ventadour, who shut herself up with him and refused to allow a doctor to enter the room.

In an age in which the deaths of royal and other distinguished persons were so frequently attributed to poison, and in a Court which had not forgotten the crimes of Brinvilliers, the investigations of the Chamber Ardente, and the suspicions which the death of the first *Madame* and that of her eldest daughter, Marie Louise d'Orléans, Queen of Spain, had excited, it was only to be expected that the sudden and almost simultaneous removal of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne should have given rise to the same reports; and, when the two little princes fell ill, in their turn, and the elder died, while the recovery of the younger was ascribed to an antidote which Madame de Ventadour had

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur de France*, February, 1712; Souches, *Memoires*; Dangeau, *Journal*.

given him, few people doubted the existence of a conspiracy to destroy the whole family of the heir to the throne.

Nor can it be denied that circumstances were singularly favourable to the growth of such suspicions. During the visit to Marly which preceded the Dauphine's illness, she had been warned by Boudin, her first physician, that there was a plot to poison both her and her husband; and, on the very next day, the Dauphin had received a similar warning, in a letter from his brother, the King of Spain. Boudin, who made no secret of his information, declared that it was trustworthy, though he did not know whence it came; but, as Saint-Simon very pertinently observes: "If he did not know whence it came, how could he be assured that it was to be relied upon? As for Philip v, he likewise asserted that his information was reliable, though he did not mention its source.

But this was not all, for at the autopsy upon the Dauphin, and again upon that upon his wife, both Fagon and Boudin declared emphatically that death was due to poison.

Mareschal, on the other hand, was equally positive that both had died from natural causes, and besought the King, "for the tranquillity and prolongation of his life, to dismiss from his mind ideas terrible in themselves, false, according to all his experience and knowledge, and which bred only cares and suspicions the most vague and irremediable."<sup>1</sup>

The news of the dissensions between the doctors

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon. We spare our readers the details of the autopsies, but they will find them in Saint-Simon.

soon got abroad, and both Court and city at once decided that the prince and princess had been poisoned. Saint-Simon mentions "a very beautiful box, full of Spanish snuff," which the Duc de Noailles had given the Dauphine on the very evening on which she was taken ill.<sup>1</sup> "This box, when looked for the next day, could not be found, and its disappearance, joined to the illness of the Dauphine, aroused the most sombre suspicions. Nothing, however, was breathed of these suspicions, beyond a very restricted circle; for the princess took snuff without the knowledge of the King, who would have made a fine to-do if he had discovered it." The chronicler adds that the Archbishop of Rheims—a deadly enemy, by the way, of the giver of the snuff-box—believed to his dying day that the Duc de Noailles had poisoned the Dauphine, but that he himself could never bring himself to believe it.

It was upon a more exalted personage than the Duc de Noailles that public suspicion fastened, the Duc d'Orléans, to wit. The future Regent was in very bad odour just then, and people were ready to believe anything to his discredit. If the Dauphin and his sons were removed, said they, would not his son-in-law, the Duc de Berry, succeed to the Crown, and his too-loved daughter become Queen? Did he not openly avow his contempt for religion and morality? Was not his private life a scandal? And, finally, was he not known to be interested in chemistry, and to be the patron of a Dutch savant named Homberg, who had

<sup>1</sup> Snuff-taking had lately come into fashion among the ladies of the Court, although the King strongly disapproved of the habit.



doubtless assisted him in the preparation of the poison? What need to look further for the criminal?

When the Duc d'Orléans went with his mother to sprinkle holy water on the coffin of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the crowd plainly showed its suspicions, and when, on February 21, he went alone to perform a similar office for the Dauphin, he had to endure "the most atrocious insults from a people which believed it was showing him clemency in not falling upon him and tearing him to pieces." Similar scenes were witnessed in Paris, when he passed through it with the funeral *cortège*, in spite of the precautions taken by the police, and "for some minutes there was everything to fear."<sup>1</sup>

By the courtiers the duke was shunned as though he were stricken with the plague, and if he spoke to any one, the person addressed immediately found an excuse for terminating the conversation.

Orléans's conduct was scarcely that of a guilty person, since he demanded that the charges against him should be investigated, and begged Louis XIV to cause Homberg, and any of his own servants whom he thought fit, to be arrested and interrogated, and to allow him to go to the Bastille until the mystery should be cleared up; and, though the King appears for a time to have been inclined to share the general opinion, his natural good sense soon reasserted itself, and when, two years later, the death of the Duc de Berry gave

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon. This is in curious contrast with what Sourches and the *Mercure* tell us of the orderly conduct of the crowd on that occasion; but probably these scenes occurred on the return from Saint-Denis.

rise to the same accusations, he did not hesitate to express his contempt for such reports.

That the debauched but kind-hearted Philippe d'Orléans was, in this instance, a much-wronged man admits of no manner of doubt ; while Saint-Simon's attempt to fix the supposed crime upon the Duc du Maine is too obviously dictated by malice to merit consideration. Indeed, there seems to be no reason to suppose that the deaths of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne were due to any but natural causes, that is to say, to the malignant type of measles then so prevalent, aided by the ineptitude of the doctors who attended them. The opinion of Fagon and Boudin that both had been poisoned was undoubtedly influenced by the warnings of which we have spoken, and by a not unnatural desire to find some plausible explanation of their failure, not only to save the lives of their royal patients, but even to diagnose the disease ; and it should also be remembered that Mareschal, who ridiculed the theory of poison, was a man of unimpeachable honesty, and, in comparison with his contemporaries, a very able practitioner.<sup>1</sup> Finally, modern science has declared that the symptoms which so puzzled the doctors were not inconsistent with measles in a malignant form.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He was the founder of the Academy of Surgery.

<sup>2</sup> See, on this subject, the opinion of Professor Dieulafoy, cited by the Comte d' Haussonville, in *la Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde sous Louis XIV*, vol. iv., and that of Dr. Cabanès, in his *les Morts mystérieuses de l'histoire*.